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Yajna

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47. *Yajna:* what it teaches

THE *Vedhapurusha Sapthaaha Jnaana Yajna,* being celebrated every Dhasara at Prashaanthi Nilayam, is a rite that promotes the welfare and prosperity of the whole of mankind. But, it is difficult to convince doubters and disbelievers that this is the truth. Many feel that since such V*edhic* ceremonies can be performed in orthodox style, with all the *manthras* uttered in correct style, only in India, their efficiency, if any, is confined to this land only, and so, they ask, how can this be beneficial in other regions where people have no faith in such rituals and hymns?

Such doubters restrict the meaning of the word, *Yajna. Yajna* means, 'any activity dedicated to the glory of God,' not merely, this activity prescribed in the ancient scriptures. Activity dedicated to the glory of God is being done, and can be done in all climes, in all realms, by all races. The 'dedication' ensures success. Without it, there will inevitably arise anxiety, fear and faction. Every activity in the world is God-directed, God-ward moving, whether you know it or not. Only one has to be aware of it and share in the thrill of that knowledge. If God is not the inspirer and motivator, how can the Universe be moving in harmony, wheeling so smoothly? Else, there will be chaos, anarchy and an inferno of gamble.

Charity and self-control are integral parts of *Yagna*

Do not think that the *Yajna* is only this ceremony performed in this enclosure, marked out as specially holy, attended by readings and recitals from sacred texts and the chanting *of Vedhic* hymns, and nothing other than this. No. *Yajna* is a continuous process; every one who lives in the constant presence of God, and does all acts as dedicated to God is engaged in *Yajna.*

Three processes go together in spiritual discipline, as laid down by the sages: *Yajna, Dhaana* and *Thapas* (Sacrifice, Charity and Self-control). They cannot be partitioned and particularised thus. Charity and self-control are integral parts of *yagna.* That is why *Yajna* is translated as Sacrifice, for, the process of charity or *Dhaana* is essential in *yajna.* Also *thapas,* that is to say, strict regulation of emotions and thought-processes, to ensure peace and faith.

There are various *yajnas* prescribed by the *Vedhas.* This is the *Vedhapurusha Yajna,* a sacrificial ceremony dedicated to the *Purusha* extolled in the *Vedhas,* the *Purusha* mentioned in the *Purusha Suuktha* as constituting the Universe and subsuming it wholly as the limbs of His Cosmic Body.

Every house-holder has the duty of performing for his own welfare and the welfare of the society in which he lives, five *Yajnas* like *Pithryajana (yajna* by which the forefathers are worshipped), *Rishiyajna (yajna* by which the sages are honoured, that is to say, by the study and practice of their teaching), *Bhuuthayajna (yajna* by which the animals and lower-beings are revered, that is to say, by provision of shelters, fodder etc.) and *Dhevayajna* (worship of God).

The *Vedhapurusha* is the *Purushotthama* (the Supremest Person) for by His Will He manifested Himself as the cosmos and its components, out of Himself. There is nothing that is not He; so, how can you be different? In these matters, faith comes first; it has to. Believe that you are Divine; conduct yourselves in accordance with that sovereign status; then, you will be blessed with the *Anubhuuthi---the* experience, the vision, the realisation, the awareness, the bliss. And, as a result, you are merged in that everlasting *Aanandha.*

The only one God can be reached by a thousand Names

Remember, you cannot have the *anubhava* (experience) and the *Aanandha* (Bliss) first. And, you cannot postpone fail:h, until you get them. You cannot bargain: "Give me the *Aanandha* and then, I shall have faith." See the *Purushotthama* in all *purushas. Purusha* means, he who lives in the *pura* (port, city, or town). Each one of us is the resident and the sole resident of a distinct house of God. But, the *Purushotthama---the* 'Supreme Resident in all the cities---is God. You can recognise this *Purushotthama,* if you educate yourselves properly.

Take this *Yajna* performed here. In this One Fire, offerings are made concurrently with the recitation of the names of God, enclosed in elaborate hymns. More than 3560 offerings are made each day, for seven days. Each name describes God as having a special form. But this One Fire consumes all the offerings, and through its intermission every one of the offerings reaches the One God, the One that really IS.

Or, consider this: you perform worship with 1008 Names, a rite called *Sahasranaama archana.* You keep an idol or picture before you and offer one flower at a time at the feet of that symbol of God, repeating the names, one at a time. The one symbol of the One God is only One, though He can be reached by a thousand names.

Though you are ackowledging only One in all these rites, proclaiming the One *Adhwaithic* (non-dualistic) Divine, your sense and your intellect and your mind, its pack of desires, insist on running after the Many. This is the *Maaya* (delusion) that casts its enchantment on weak and ignorant men. It urges man towards wild prolific greeds of the manyfaced senses.

When you take food, do it in a prayerful mode

To realise the One, the Universal Absolute, which personalises itself into God and Creation, there is no discipline more valuable and more effective than *SEVA.* All the 1008 Names of the *Sahasranaama archana* reach the One. All the 1000 names of thousand-faced society connote only the One God that plays in those 1000 roles. The One appears as if it is enshrined in the 1000 bodies. This is the truth you have to realise and cherish as the most precious in life.

You have observed that the *Vedhic Pandiths* (priestly scholars) are pouring ghee into the Fire, every time the recitation of a hymn is over. Every day, when you take food, you are offering eatables to the Fire that God has lit in you to digest food. You have to eat in a prayerful mode, in profound gratitude. The Geetha says that the fire which cooked the meal is God, the meal is God, the eater is God, the purpose of eating is to carry on the work entrusted by God or pleasing to God, and that the fruit of that work is, progress towards God.

You must perform another *yajna* too, every day. Pour the egoistic desires and emotions, passions, impulses and acts into the flames of dedication and devotion. In fact, that is real *Yajna,* of which these are reflections and prompters, guides and prototypes. This *yajna* is only the concrete symbolic representation of the abstract underlying Truth. Just as a child is taught to pronounce the words, head, net, wave, garland, by making it associate the sounds and the letter-forms with pictures of the objects so named, through this *kshara* (temporary) symbol the *Akshara thathwa* (the Eternal Principle) is brought before the consciousness.

Make every thought a longing for God

This *Puuja,* this *Yajna,* and this *Homa,* are arranged here every Dhasara, in order to help you to learn that other, ever-lasting, abstract *Yajna,* which every one of you has to do, to save yourselves from fear, grief and anxiety.

You must have noticed that the *Pandiths* close each day's *Yajna* with a prayer that calls for World Peace, peace for all mankind, peace and happiness, for there can be no peace without happiness and no happiness without peace. *Lokaas samasthaas Sukhino bhavanthu,* they pray. "May all the world have happiness, and peace."

Peace of mind cannot be gained by wealth or fame or scholarship or skill. For that, you have to clean the mind, purify the heart, yearn for service of the divine forms that move around you. Do every deed as an act of worship; make every thought a longing for Him; change every word that comes from your tongue into a hymn in His praise.

This is the lesson that you have to learn from Prashaanthi Nilayam, every Dhasara, during the week the *Yajna* is celebrated.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 11-10-1972

Each of you has struggled upwards from the stone to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to man! Do not slide back into the beast; rise higher to Divinity, shining with the new effulgence of love.

The Divine is the energy that animates, the urge that circulates the blood in your veins, that transmits knowledge and experience through the nerves, that correlates and collects for storage the impressions your senses gather, the conclusions your intelligence garners!

Keep in line with the Divine, by means of Love, Truth and Goodness.

Sri Sathya Sai