

a selfish end may not be a sin ; but it is not so meritorious as a prayer offered for common weal. An action becomes sacred to the extent the ego gets obliterated. All thought, word and deed require to be directed to the glory of the Lord and the good of the world.

Partaking of food is an obligatory work. Cooking the daily food has therefore to go on as a matter of course. But one ought to think of and provide for the hungry and the needy as much as for oneself. He who is exclusive and self-centred in the procurement of food and in the partaking of it, is a sinful man. What he eats is nothing but sin. The bondage of sin that he creates for himself is boundless.

The king Yudhishtira performed a great *Rajasuya Yajna* when he ascended the throne after the great war was over. The learned and the wise unanimously praised that *Yajna* as unparalleled. A mongoose having one side of its body turned golden, entered the sacrificial hall, rolled on the ground and pronounced the extollers as liars. But the assembled great men pleaded that they only spoke out their considered opinion and that they did not lie. The half-golden creature then explained itself :— “ A few years back a terrible famine raged in a particular province causing death to people in large numbers. A pious teacher, his wife, son and daughter-in-law lived a humble but dutiful life in that region. In the midst of privation the teaching went on regularly. When life was somehow lingering in that family, a scanty offering of flour was made to it by a devoted disciple. The famished four baked four pieces of bread with that flour, offered them to the Lord and sat to partake of the sanctified food, when there was a knock at the door. The family felt itself blessed because the deity of a guest had arrived just in time when they had the semblance of a meal to offer. All the four fading souls reverently parted with their little shares, intent on appeasing the increasing hunger of the new comer. He blessed them heartily for their hospitality and went his way. But the whole family perished