

10. I and you, we, should become He

When you perform an activity (*kriya*) as an offering to the Lord, your good, the higher good, and the highest good (*swartha*, *parartha*, and *paramaartha*) all become one. First, I and you become we. Next, we and He become identified. The individual soul, the 'I' (*jiva*) should accomplish identity first with the creation (*prakriti*) or 'you' and then with the Supreme Spirit, He (*Paramatma*). This indeed is the significance of the mantra *Om Tat Sat*. (which expresses the identity of the individual and the Universal Brahman).

Today, yesterday, and tomorrow *Om Tat Sat* is, was, and will be. "He" and "I" are always there. The spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is also always there. Just as the sun is inseparable and is never apart from its rays, under no circumstances should any aspirant be without their spiritual practice. It is only when spiritual aspirants adhere to their spiritual disciplines in such an incessant manner that they can be said to be one with *Om*.

11. Shed attachment to worldly pleasures, develop attachment to God

The heart's blemishes have to be washed by a moral life and doing of one's duty. A time may come when one becomes tired and weak, but one should then pray thus: Lord, things have gone beyond my capacity. I feel further effort is too great a strain. Give me strength, O Lord!

At first, God stands at a distance, watching one efforts, like the teacher who stands apart when the student writes out answers to questions. Then, when one sheds attachment to sensual pleasures (*bhoga*) and takes to good deeds and selfless service, God comes encouragingly near. Like the sun god (*Surya-narayana*), He waits outside the closed door. Like the manservant who knows their master's rights and their own limitations, He doesn't announce his presence or bang on the door but simply waits. And when the master opens the door just a little, the sun rushes in and promptly drives darkness out from within. When His help is requested, He is present by a person's side, with hands extended to render assistance. So what is wanted is only the discrimination (*viveka*) to pray to the Lord and the spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) to remember Him.

12. Good character, virtue is wisdom

Spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) means understanding, but it is not just an intellectual feat. “Eating” doesn’t mean placing food on the tongue; it is worthwhile only when food is chewed, swallowed, digested, assimilated into the blood stream, and transformed into muscle and bone, into strength and vigour. So too, spiritual understanding must permeate and invigorate all moments of life. It must be expressed through all the organs and senses (*karmendriyas* and *jnanendriyas*). One must reach up to this high stage.

Mere accumulation of learning is not spiritual wisdom (*jnana*). Only good conduct (*sat-guna*) is spiritual wisdom. In order that one might do selfless service (*seva*), a little eating (*bhoga*) has to be gone through. Such eating is a part of sacrifice (*yajna*). To make this body-machine function, the fuel of food (*anna*) has to be used. Food is not sacrifice, but it makes sacrifice possible. Therefore, eating food is not to be laughed at as catering to greed, as feeding of the stomach. It is part of worship.

Worship (*puja*) is not merely plucking a flower and placing it on top of the image; the gardener who toiled to nurse the plant that gave the flower is also a worshipper. It is only when food is given that the body can function. Even the means for a sacrifice is an offering (*yajna*).

All action (*karma*) done for the sake of three goals is sacrifice, viz. to utilise the world for the worship of the Lord, to establish peace and justice in society, and to control and coordinate the functions of the body. The first is called a holy, sacrificial ritual (*yajna*); the second, charity (*dana*); the third, penance (*tapas*). All human acts must subserve these three needs.