

25. The paths of devotion, wisdom, and non-attachment are inseparable

Light is wisdom. Without light, all is darkness. If you haven't secured the lamp of wisdom (*jnana*) to illumine your path, you stumble along in the gloom, with fear as your companion. There is no falsehood greater than fear, no ignorance mightier than that. Decide therefore to travel in the daylight of spiritual wisdom and be worthy of this human birth. Through your success, you can even make the lives of others worthwhile.

Non-attachment (*vairagya*) depends upon spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) as well as devotion (*bhakti*). Deprive non-attachment of that basis, and you will find it crumbling fast. Why, this is the prime cause for the want of spiritual progress at present. All these three have to be emphasised in spiritual discipline; they are not to be separated and striven for individually.

Devotion includes spiritual wisdom. Non-attachment isolated from devotion and wisdom, wisdom isolated from devotion and non-attachment, and devotion isolated from non-attachment and wisdom —each is ineffective. The best that each isolated path is capable of is to give some training in purity. Therefore, never develop conceit and declare that you are a devotee or spiritually wise or non-attached. Spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*) must dip in the triumvirate (*triveni*) of devotion-wisdom-nonattachment. There is no other way to salvation.

26. See life as a manifestation of the three qualities

Before everything, be pure and holy. There are plenty of spiritual aspirants, but few of them are pure in heart. For example, observe this fact: Many people religiously read the *Gita* over and over again, many expatiate on its meaning for hours and hours, but people who practise the essence of the *Gita* are rare. Instead, people are now like gramophone records, reproducing someone else's song, incapable of singing themselves, ignorant of the joy of song. They are not spiritual aspirants at all. Their spiritual discipline doesn't deserve the name.

Life must be seen as only the manifestation of the three qualities (*gunas*), as a play of temperaments pulling the strings of the dolls. This awareness must saturate every thought, word, and deed. That is the wisdom (*jnana*) you need. All else is ignorance (*a-jnana*).

27. Be spiritually wise: without ego, without desires, with equal love for all

The spiritually wise (*jnanis*) will have no trace of hatred in them. They will love all beings; they won't be contaminated by the ego; they will act as they speak. The ignorant (*a-jnanis*) will identify themselves with the gross body, senses, and mind, things that are but tools and instruments. The eternal pure *Atma* is behind the mind, so this mistake of the ignorant plunges them into trouble, loss, and misery.

All the names and forms that fill up this universe and constitute its nature are but creations of mind. Therefore, in order to perceive the truth, the mind has to be controlled and its wayward fancies calmed. The ever-flickering waves of the lake have to be stilled so that you can see the floor clearly, right? So too, the waves of ignorance that ruffle the mind have to be stilled.

Keep the mind away from low desires that run after fleeting pleasures. Turn your thoughts away from them and direct the thoughts toward permanent bliss, which is derivable from the knowledge of the immanent divinity. Keep before the mind's eye the faults and failures of sensory pleasures and worldly happiness. Thus, you will be helped to grow in discrimination and non-attachment and to make spiritual progress.

Just as gold melted in a crucible gets rid of dross and shines in its pristine glory, so too, one has to be melted in the crucible of *yoga* by the fire of detachment (*vairagya*). Being possessed of this spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) is the sign of *samadhi*, as explained by some.

For those capable of self-control along these lines, the native power will gradually assert itself, and the Reality that is now misunderstood will be rid of that fog. Patiently cultivate the habit of meditating on your *Atma*-hood and see the particular as the universal. Through *samadhi*, progress is guaranteed and liberation is won.

The springs of egotism, etc., arise from ignorance of the basic truth. When knowledge of the *Atma* arises, ignorance, with its brood of worry and misery, will vanish. The mark of the spiritually wise (*jnani*) is the absence of egotism, the extinction of desire, the feeling of equal love for all, without any distinction. These are the fundamentals of knowledge of Self-realisation (*Atma-jnana*).