

5. First search and correct faults within yourself

Thus, the first spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is to search for the faults and weaknesses within yourself and to strive to correct them and become perfect.

The unceasing toil of each succeeding day has as its aim and justification this consummation: to make one's last days sweet and pleasant. But each day also has its evening. If the day is spent in good deeds, then the evening blesses us with deep sleep, invigorating refreshing sleep, the sleep about which it is said that it is akin to *samadhi*

One has only a short span of life on earth. But even in this short life one can attain divine bliss, by wisely and carefully using the time. Two people, in appearance the same, ostensibly of the same mould, grow under the same conditions, but one turns out to be an angel while the other stays on with their animal nature. What's the reason for this differential development? Habits, behaviour formed out of these habits, and the character into which that behaviour has solidified. People are creatures of character.

6. Life is a selfless loving sacrifice

To a superficial observer, life appears to be a rotation of eating and drinking, toiling, and sleeping. But verily life has a much greater meaning, a much deeper significance. Life is a sacrifice (*yajna*). Each little act is an offering to the Lord. If the day is spent in deeds performed in this spirit of surrender, what else can sleep be except total immersion in the Godhead (*samadhi*)?

People commit the great fault of identifying themselves with the body. People accumulate a variety of things for the upkeep and comfort of the body. Even when the body becomes weak and decrepit with age, people attempt to bolster it by one means or other. But how long can death be postponed? When Yama's warrant comes, each has to depart. Position, pride, and power all vanish before death. Realising this, strive day and night, with purity of body and mind and spirit, to realise the Higher Self by the service of all living beings. The body must be preserved as a vehicle for this service. But remember, you are not this body; this body cannot be you.

7. Thou art That (Thath-twam-asi)

This is the highest and holiest spiritual maxim (*maha-vakya*); you are the indestructible *Atmic* principle (*Atma-thathwa*). It is for the sake of the *Atmic* principle that you have this body, so, in the attempt to realise the supreme Lord (*Parameswara*) here and now, you must be prepared to offer this body as a sacrifice, at any moment. Utilise your authority over this body to foster the welfare of the world. This body is but an instrument, an implement given by God. Let it serve its purpose.

Until the realisation of the purpose for which the implement is given, it is your duty to watch over it vigilantly and protect it from injury and disablement. During winter, woollen clothes are worn to withstand the rigour of the cold gales, but when the cold subsides, they are discarded. So too, when the cold gales of material life don't affect us in the least, the material body is no longer essential. One is conscious of only the incorporeal body.