



Removing Attachment

Talks with Babaji

From your own experience, what would be the biggest obstacle to Self-realization?

Deluded mind. The mind which is colored by our ego, attachment and desire.

So detachment is the hardest part for our Self-realization?

Yes, it's the hardest. The first step is removing attachment. The second step is it will weaken worldly desires. When attachment and desire are controlled, the ego will have no self-expression in the world. Without attachment, the desires become like insipid food. But you still eat it to live. How do we feel ourselves in the world? We are "living." Because we have our needs, desires, expectations. We are attached to our family, friends and property. All these things feed the existence of our ego self. Then how to act in the world if the mind is not attached? A bank manager works hard knowing that the money in the bank is not his. If he is not on duty and thieves break into the bank, he doesn't feel sorrow. But on duty, he will not let anyone loot the bank.

If we are trying to create nonattachment, is it better to forcibly restrain the desires? Or to watch the desires play out, see the pain they create and allow the attachments to die as we begin to see the insipidness of our desires?

Using force backfires. Understanding the attachment and how it creates pain and delusion works better. We see the insipidness of our desires only when the mind functions with an attitude of nonattachment. Pain is one of the causes which brings nonattachment or dispassion.

So you want to be kind of neutral about things but still understand it, not indifferent? If we become detached, there's a problem of not caring.

Nonattached by understanding. If you understand the result of attachment, the mind develops nonattachment but it doesn't mean the duties are gone. You still live in a family, society and you associate with others in your jobs or businesses. You express your sympathy to the poor or those who are in pain. The only difference is your egocentric involvement.

How can discernment and vairagya (detachment, dispassion) go together?

What is vairagya? Vi = without; raga = coloring, or without delusion. Dispassion develops when reality is known; then the mind gets detached to its unreal form.

So you see the reality.

Yes. What does the surgeon do? The surgeon stands and works at surgery for 8-10 hours non-stop. He tries to do a good job but if the patient dies, he doesn't cry.

If one is a householder, there needs to be a certain attachment to the world.

A lot! Two kinds of duty: with attachment and with nonattachment. In our worldly life, we have duties. We have to do everything as the society demands. We have to do it right but if we are acting with attachment but feeling nonattached, there is in reality nonattachment. Two people are in a fruit store. One is attached and one is nonattached. Both look at apples and pick which one is better. Both eat the apples. You will not notice which one is attached and which one is not. Attached person picks the apple, eats it, enjoys the taste and carries its memory. Nonattached person also eats it, enjoys it but doesn't carry the memory. So it's an experienced thing, not a matter that can be judged or tested.

What does it look like for a bhakta or a jnani to be doing the same duties?

In activity, no difference. In feelings, there is. A devotional person is always surrendering to God. A jnani is always experiencing unreality in worldly things.

What's the role of their own attitude and approach to the duty?

It's very hard to see the difference with physical eyes. With attachment and without attachment. There was a saint known as Kaushani Baba. He had a silver cup. He was using this cup to drink water. In traveling, his student was carrying it in his bag. In one place they stopped. They ate, and the cup was used. When they left, the student forgot to pack it. When Kaushani Baba knew his student forgot the cup, he created a big scene as if he will die without the cup. He was from a kingly family of Nepal. Money was no problem to him. He used to give away things all the time. Why did he do it? The student was a very forgetful man. To give him a teaching, he acted that way. Their attitude and approach to the duty is based on others benefit. They may act with compassion in one situation and in another situation they may act with toughness.

What or how is the mind changed when knowledge is gained?

The mind sees things without desire and attachment. Human mind is colored by desire and attachment which colors the perception. If a person buys a new car and it gets dented, the owner feels a dent in the heart. Why? We don't feel it if someone else's new car is dented.

I have heard a description of a saint taking a walk without thought, just being aware of what is around without thinking of it. It seems there was no object of concentration.

It means without attachment. If you stand by the highway, so many cars move. You see them and do not feel anything. When the mind is not pulled by the desire of multiple objects, then the mind is automatically in a concentrated state. Mind's restlessness subsides.

The absolute is not separate from individuals but pervades the mind-body complex but it's not only that. There's a problem of misidentification of the forms of creation with the pure conscious principle, Self.

The "I-amness" which is rooted in the mind is ego self. Some saints who don't have the ego or "I-amness," their mind-body still functions. So the ego which is only the notion of "I-am" becomes the owner of all the functions of mind-body complex. This ego self expresses itself by attachment and desire. The absolute is pure conscious principle. It pervades the whole creation. Without it, nothing can exist. The misidentification appears when the intellect starts thinking I-myself is consciousness, whereas the consciousness in the intellect is separate. It only pervades the intellect.

In living our lives we feel and understand possessiveness and attachment, but it's hard to will that sense of possessiveness away. What do we do?

Who says it is easy? Philosophy doesn't work in practicality. A mother cannot remove her attachment to her baby. Her mind will never accept not to be attached to the baby. As long as the mind is not purified (i.e. rajas and tamas gunas are reduced), it is not possible. What do we do then? The answer is practice meditation on a regular basis which purifies the mind.

How can I become more nonattached?

It's the hardest fight in human life. The Gita's teachings are based upon it. As long as we have the ego, we will have desires, attachment, needs, anger, fear, everything. This is our bondage in life, but we want to get out. So we have to strive for getting out. Where to start? Our bondage is caused by our mind and our liberation is also caused by the mind. So we have to purify the mind by spiritual practices. Spiritual practices means living a virtuous life. In Ashtanga Yoga, the yamas and niyamas (ten rules) are listed. In all religions there are rules included and all great people in the world advise us to live a virtuous life. So we have to trust their words and change our life for our own self-development.