



ATTACHMENT AND DETACHMENT

Five causes of detachment

Extract from 10/2/07 Satsang

Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha

In this journey of spirituality, perhaps the most important notion is detachment or absence of attachment. As long as we are attached to the objects of the world, to events and to relationships, there is bondage. The more our attachment decreases, the more we become detached, the more we feel liberation or freedom. Yesterday we were reading something about detachment from a book written by Swami Ramsukhdasji. He explained that detachment is very important for obtaining liberation and how it happens in human life. Sometimes it happens because of misery or pain. A painful event may happen. One may, for example, lose a dear one or suffer a similar loss, and one may wonder what use one's life is. So detachment can happen because of pain or misery.

Secondly, detachment happens on account of fear. One is afraid of death, old age, financial loss or losing one's job. Then one wonders again what use life is. So fear is another factor.

Then, thirdly, he says detachment happens by thought, by thinking. If we think, we find that everything around us is temporary and on the point of disappearing. By thinking we develop the faculty of discrimination which enables us to distinguish between what is good and what is bad, what should be done and what should not be done. So detachment also develops through thinking.

Then, fourthly, detachment comes in life through spiritual practices. When you have repetition of the Lord's name in your heart, you are doing *Japa*, you are detached at that time from people and the world. At that time another emotion starts developing in you - love for God or love for a saint. When you take up spiritual practices you lose the mental connection with objects, with people, with your surroundings, with your house etc.

Then, fifthly and finally, there is the detachment of a Self-realised person. The Realised person is attached only to God, and when someone is attached to God, all attachment to material and worldly objects disappears and is finished.

These are the five sources or causes of detachment. They become more and more enduring towards the fifth level in the order that I narrated to you. At the lowest stage detachment is generated by grief or pain. When you have acute pain in your back or legs, you may feel that life is unbearable. But, as soon as the pain goes, the same attachment starts again. This is at the lowest level. Fear also creates detachment, but as soon as the fear goes, you start merry-making! The detachment caused by thinking is more stable. It is not permanent but it stays longer and deeper. But more stable than that is the detachment that comes through spiritual practices like meditation and the repetition of the Lord's name. In chanting, one completely forgets the whole world. This is the reason why we practise chanting. While chanting one is detached from everything. One is in a different dimension of existence and totally detached.

So the fourth one, detachment through spiritual practices, is deeper and stays longer and purifies more. It creates a greater eligibility for Self-realisation. In the same way, one is detached when one's work is carried out with the motivation of giving service to others. Self-

less service is also a very important spiritual practice. You are detached because self-less service means that there is an absence of selfishness and thus no attachment. Similarly, detachment happens when we devote ourselves to charity. What happens to a person who participates in charity? He gets detached from money. Detachment happens at once through charity. All these spiritual practices create detachment.

Finally one who has experienced the Self or Divine love becomes totally detached from everything, because one is permanently attached to the Lord through Divine love. But such detachment is not arid because love comes in place of attachment. There is all the difference between attachment and love. Attachment creates bondage and possessive-ness. You feel that you have a claim over someone. However, with love there is freedom.

Let this detachment increase in you. In a way, in the first two cases, the situation is imposed upon you quite involuntarily. In the case of pain, it is only when you are in pain that you think that life is unbearable. However, when the pain stops, you return to the same state as before. With fear also you feel detached from people and objects only for as long as the fear is there.

But the detachment that comes through thought is voluntary. Therefore, one should think about the purpose of life. Thinking gives you that freedom. Spiritual practice, of course, is totally voluntary. What I mean to say is that you should let this detachment develop in you. The more you become detached from the attractions of the material world (the body, money, wealth, respect or social status) the more you will find that you are attached to God, because God always exists in you. Your soul always exists in you. You are there in your pristine purity and glory. This process is like that. Of your own accord you should contemplate the purpose of life, carry out spiritual practices, read spiritual books, give money to others and perform service for others without any intention of reward. Such activities are important, or rather essential for spiritual development and no spiritual development can happen without them.

These activities should be done in a proper way. There are methods. For instance, one should perform charity without anybody knowing about it. It is actually a duty to donate money if we have more than we need, so why boast about it or feel elevated? This is the path of duty. This is the attitude which a seeker has to adopt in life. I hope that you may gradually develop detachment.

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