

#### 14. Develop non-attachment: Be in the world but not of it

The mind that is in bondage craves for objects, for the company of men, and it prefers this location or that. Attachment is bondage; non-attachment is liberation (*moksha, mukthi*). To crave is to be imprisoned, to die. To withdraw the mind from all attachment is to be free, to live forever.

For people, it is the mind that either causes bondage or grants liberation.

*Mana eva manushyaanaam kaaranam bandha mokshayoh.*

The mind runs after an object and gets attached; the senses are alerted; an action results; the mind is rendered happy or unhappy; feeling ensues; fear enters; anger grows; affection develops. Thus, the bonds are tightened.

Fear, anger, and affection are the closest comrades of attachment, the comrades dearest to its heart! All four are inseparable companions, moving always together. That is why even Patanjali was forced to assert, “Attachment runs after happiness.” And what grants happiness? The fulfilment of desire, right? Desire leads to hatred of those who thwart it, fondness for those who feed it, and the inevitable wheel of opposites of likes and dislikes. There is no escape from this for the ignorant.

Impure gold is melted in the crucible and emerges shining and bright. The mind rendered impure by passion (*rajas*) and ignorance (*thamas*), by anger and conceit, by the impressions of a thousand attachments and desires—this mind can be made bright and resplendent by putting it into the crucible of inquiry and heating it on the coals of discrimination. That brightness is the light of realisation, of the knowledge that You are the *Atma*.

Like the dust storm that covers everything with dust, desires, attachments, thirsts, and cravings all blacken the mind. They have to be kept away so that the splendour of the Self might merge in the splendour of the Supreme Omniself (the *Paramatma*).

Whatever the crisis, however deep the misery, don’t allow your grip over the mind to get loose. Tighten it further, fixing your eyes on the higher values. Don’t allow the mind to stray away from the holy tabernacle of the heart. Make it bow before the *Atma* within.

Thus, one can proceed from merging with the differentiated (*sa-vikalpa-samadhi*) to merging with the undifferentiated (*nir-vikalpa-samadhi*). Delusion must disappear without even a trace; then only can one merge with the Undifferentiated. There is no duality there; it is Brahman and Brahman alone. All bonds of ignorance (*a-vidya*), desire (*kama*), etc., fall away, and one is genuinely, fully free.