

Detachment and renunciation

What exactly is liberation? It is *samadhi* or peace attained through the spiritual discipline of the cleansing of the inner person —the spiritual discipline of negating the impressions that one gets through seeing, hearing, reading, learning, doing, and getting done. People suffering unbearable physical agony don't take any interest in entertainment, do they? Similarly, a sincere seeker and devotee can have no interest in the world's theatre of objective pleasure and petty passion. These inferior desires have first to be renounced and checked. They lie at the root of all misery. Passion is the product of delusion; it dwells in the mansion of activity (*rajas*). Renunciation or detachment (*vairagya*) is resident in the pure quality (*sathwic guna*). Passion is demonic (*a-suric*) in nature. Passion, ignorance, and egotism are all born of delusion. Passion brings about death, while detachment brings about liberation; it is wisdom.

Stabilizing oneself in detachment is itself the highest austerity (*tapas*), the most exacting vow. One has to be ever alert in that austerity and strive again and again. Like a child endeavoring to walk, you might toddle a few steps, falter, and fall, but like the child, you must lift yourself up with a smile and start again. Peace is essential for such persistence. Failures are not boulders that block your way, remember, they are stepping stones to victory.

Be bound to the *Atma* in you; take rest and refuge in That and meditate on That without interruption. Then, all bonds will loosen of themselves, for the bond with which you attach yourself to the Lord or the *Atma* has the power of unbinding all other bonds.

The “unattached” have real love toward all. Their love is not only pure, it is divine as well. It is the embodiment of peace. Without a doubt, one can attain the Lord if one becomes devoid of all passion or attachment (*raga*) and engages in the actions detailed above.

Renunciation or detachment (*vairagya*), of course, does not mean the giving up of hearth and home, or of high estate and even kingdoms. It is the understanding of the divinity immanent in everything, the fading away of all the distinct names and forms, the bliss of experiencing in everything and every place the Divine, which is its reality. That is the true meaning of the maxim “detachment (*raga*-lessness)”. As long as one cognizes the world of name and form, one is burdened with attachment. How can one be desireless when the mind is immersed in thoughts, feelings, and experience of the objective world? One might have given up all, and yet be full of these. Such cannot be said to have detachment. Surely, even for the acquisition of this pure spirit of detachment, peace is very necessary.