



Desire and Attachment

Talks with Babaji

I am curious about the relationship between desire and attachment. It seems that desire without attachment doesn't make sense because there is no attachment without desire. Why do we say ego, attachment and desire go together?

Desire and attachments are expressions of ego. Desire without attachment doesn't create reality of anything desired. Without the ego there are no desire and attachment. So ego, attachment and desires are together.

If we just worked on our attachments, wouldn't that work?

Yes, the first step is to develop nonattachment to objects. It will weaken the desires. When attachment and desires are weakened, the ego will lose its control over the mind. Ego is the root cause. But we need steps to lead up to the ego.

Isn't the attachment that we feel to our body more than just the ego? Could it be a physiological function of the nervous system?

Whose nervous system? The experiencer? The ego is soaked in every atom of the body. The body elements are together because they are united by the ego.

Ultimately, it's all in the mind, right?

Yes, because the ego is rooted in the mind. The ego cannot function without the mind. So it is right to say "it's all in the mind."

You've said desire without attachment is no fun. Could you give an example of a desire with no attachment?

A person is craving for ice cream. Ice cream is in his hand and in his mind. Another person gets ice cream because he is thirsty. Ice cream could be replaced by water. Because ice cream was available, he takes it. He goes with no memory of ice cream. The other person leaves with a memory of ice cream because his attachment to the taste created a deep impression on his mind.

So the second person was desiring ice cream but not attached to it?

(Nods yes.) In World War II, everything was rationed. What was given, people would take. There was no question of desire or craving. So there was no memory of it.

Why do you call it desiring ice cream when there is no attachment to it? He didn't really desire ice cream. He was only thirsty.

It's a desire in word, but without attachment, desire has no life.

If desire without attachment is no fun, and we are trying to eliminate attachment, how are we to have more?

"To have more" is based on desire and without attachment, desire "to have more" will not exist. For those who are seeking for liberation, they don't desire to have more. They remain contented on what they get.

What about attachment to another human being?

We are seeking to be less attached but still we are in these relationships. If you are less attached, will you care less or not? If you are more attached, how do you express it differently? Attachment is a feeling in the heart generated by the ego of ownership. It has nothing to do with your outer activities. You still love your mate, children, friends, but you never forget their mortality. You are not attached ignorantly.

So is our attachment to others really an attachment to our self-interest projected onto others?

Ego expresses its existence by desire and attachment and the ego always seeks for its self-interest.

What is the value and responsibility of the family relations? Should we relate to our family members just as any other person or should we hold them in special regard?

You are attached to your family and feel a sense of duty. If you deeply reflect on attachment, you will understand the attachment and duties in the world are separate. We express our attachment in a state of ignorance. We think "the family cannot exist without me." This selfish tie doesn't exist if attachment is understood. But the actions and duties will remain the same.

What about attachment to our family members and people whom we love?

We create our own realities. That reality is "I may live forever and all those who are dear to me will be with me all the time." It appears very real and we cover the truth which is neither will "I live forever" nor "will those dear to me remain with me forever." When this truth is understood, the person still functions as before but doesn't feel the same feelings of attachment as before. A child is attached to the toy. The toy for an adult has not the same meaning, but the parent still keeps the toy for the child. When we understand the truth, we don't stop our duties in the world.

What are the ways to undo attachments that are deep-seated in the mind?

By understanding the nature of the ego. The ego exists and expresses itself by desire and attachment. Desire and attachment are real for ignorants and they are unreal for the wise. Both ignorant and wise do their duties in the world in the same way, but their inner feelings are different.

Could you talk about ways to cultivate nonattachment or dispassion?

Dispassion has no method to cultivate. It develops when knowledge develops. What is that knowledge that develops dispassion? It is the knowledge of understanding the non-reality of the world.