

10-16-2016 Readings: Attachment as Barrier for Spiritual Growth

***Acting without attachment and desire** – In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna draws very clearly for us the picture of a person who lives in anxiety and misery and him who lives in peace and contentment. Both may be living in exactly the same situation, for it is not external conditions that make us happy or miserable, but our reaction to them. Krishna makes it quite plain that the secret of happiness or misery lies in the absence of two things: attachment and desire. Those who live in attachment to externalities, anxious to fulfill desire, must suffer and live in frustration. On the other hand, those who live without egoic desire are perpetually at peace.

Nonattachment – Krishna not only holds out the ideal for us, He also tells us how to accomplish it in the following verses from the Bhagavad Gita.

“Perform every action with your fixed on the Supreme Lord. Renounce attachment to the fruits. Be even-tempered in success and failure; for it is this evenness of temper that is meant by yoga”(2:48).

“In the calm of self-surrender you can free yourself from the bondage of virtue and vice during this very life. Devote yourself, therefore, to reaching union with Brahman. To unite the heart with Brahman and then to act: that is the secret of non-attached work”(2:50).

“When your intellect has cleared itself of its delusions, you will become indifferent to the results of all action, present or future”(2:52).

“The world is imprisoned in its own activity, except when actions are performed as worship of God. Therefore you must perform every action sacramentally, and be free from all attachments to results”(3:9).

“Whosoever works for me alone, makes me his only goal and is devoted to me, free from attachment, and without hatred toward any creature – that man, O Prince, shall enter into me”(11:55).

“No human being can give up action altogether, but he who gives up the fruits of action is said to be non-attached” (18:11).

****Unlocking** Contemplation is the key to unlocking the attachments and addictions of the mind so that we can see clearly. I think some form of contemplative practice is necessary to be able to detach from your own agenda, your own anger, your own ego, and your own fear.

I find most people operate not out of “consciousness,” but out of their level of practiced brain function, which relies on early-life conditioning and has little to do with God encounter or grace or mercy or freedom or love. We primarily operate from habituated patterns based on what Mom told me, what went wrong when I was young, and the defense mechanisms I learned that helped me to be right and good, to be first and famous, or whatever I may want to be. These are not all bad but they are not all good either.

All of that old and practiced thinking has to be recognized and accounted for, which is the work of contemplation. Without contemplation, you don’t see clearly. Everything is all about you, and you just keep seeing everything through your own agenda, anger, and wounds. Isn’t that most people you know? Few ever achieve much inner freedom. Contemplation, sadly, helps you see your woundedness! That’s why most people do not stay long with contemplative prayer, because it’s not very glorious. It’s a continual humiliation, realizing, “Oh my God, I did it again. I still don’t know how to love!”

We need some form of contemplative practice that touches our unconscious conditioning, where all our wounds lie, where all our defense mechanisms are operative secretly. Once these are not taken so seriously, there is finally room for the intruding of God and grace!

***Riches

“Riches destroy a fool, but not those who are seeking the other shore. The fool destroys himself by his craving for riches, as he destroys others too” (Dhammapada 355).

Those who seek “the other shore” of Nirvana cannot be harmed by materiality, for they do not let it enter their heart. But those who crave material gain destroy themselves and others associated with them in this pursuit, whether supporters and adversaries. It is poison all around.

Offerings to the wise

“Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of passion; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of passion bring forth abundant fruit.

“Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of hatred; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of hatred bring forth abundant fruit.

“Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of delusion; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of delusion bring forth abundant fruit.

“Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of desire; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of desire bring forth abundant fruit” (Dhammapada 356-359—Harischandra Kaviratna).

Nirvana is unattainable, is untroudden, by earthbound consciousness, but it is attained by one who has cut off the sensual and egoistic life and risen above them. The necessity for this is given by Buddha next, when he says:

“Dhammapalo, the elephant, is hard to control in rut. Even when tied up, he refuses his food. The great tusker is thinking of the elephant forest” (Dhammapada 324).

This is a perfect picture of the human being whose mind has been seized by *moha* (delusive attachment/attraction) and addiction to both senses and the ego. It cannot think of anything but what it wants, or thinks it wants. It refuses even food, for nothing can distract it from its passionate desire. The desire may be for things material or abstract, but the root—delusion—is the same. At such times we experience the incredible ability of the mind to focus on a single thing and direct all its energies toward it. The ability is a great virtue, but it is directed to vice. Buddha is hinting to us that we must discipline the mind before it gets into the Dhammapalo state.

****The time when the second death occurs will vary widely among people. In rare cases, it takes place a few minutes after physical death. However, for most it will take weeks, months, or even years before the soul has fully liberated itself from these remaining personality vestures. The timing is largely determined by the emotional and mental associations an individual possesses. Every human being has attachments deeply held within his/her psyche. These attachments are shackles to the soul. They usually represent cherished feelings and ideas, particularly regarding how a person views him/herself, as well as those left behind. These are the things that must be released to initiate the second death. When it finally occurs, the soul is able to fully return to its natural abode and complete the integration of the lessons learned, as earlier discussed. At this point it may be well to mention that when the emotional and mental attachments are unduly strong, an individual can remain in a state of semi-incarnation for a great length of time, often not even realizing that physical death has occurred. This idea lends explanation to the ghostly appearances witnessed by so many people throughout history. Within esoteric literature, this is referred to as the earth bound soul.

*The Upanashads for Awakening – Abbot George Burke Swami Nirmalanda Giri

**Attachments Richard Rohr Daily Meditation Wednesday, September 10, 2014

***The Dhammapada for Awakening Abbot George Burke Swami Nirmalananda Giri
History of the Dhammapada

(The Dhammapada is not a transcription of a single talk by Gautama the Buddha. Rather, it is a collection of his words on the most important subjects for those seeking Nirvana. It was compiled only three months after his passing away by his enlightened disciples (arhats), who gave it the name Dhammapada, which means “Portions of the Dharma” or “The Way of Dharma.” The Dhammapada consists of four hundred twentythree Pali verses that were gleaned from about three hundred discourses of the Buddha. It is a distillation of forty-five years of teaching. The translation mostly used will be that of John Richards.)

**** Death - An Interlude Between Two Activities - Posted by William Meader on March 16, 2013 This reading describes the death of the second and third bodies, mental and emotional, after the physical death.