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How to Let Go of Unhealthy Attachments

Fri, 11/08/2013 - 18:15 -- admin



Last week, we examined how to make our Yoga

practice of being present, *abhy?sa*, stable and strong (YS I, 13-14). This week, we are revisiting the other side of this practice ? how to let go of unhealthy attachments, *vair?gyam* (YS I, 15-16), standing in our way of being present.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra-s (YS) I-15 D??t? (seen)-anu?ravika (or heard about) vi?aya (sense objects)-vit?? (thirst)-?asya (gone) va??k?rasamjn? (one who has mastered the senses) vai (no)-r?gyam (attraction)

For one who has mastered the senses, anything either seen (directly via the senses) or heard about (indirectly from others) is no longer attractive to this Yogi.

Attachments can Serve or Harm us Our attraction (*r?ga*, YS II-3) to the world around us is endless. We see a beautiful new dress, and we want to buy it. We hear about a new style of Yoga, and we want to experience it. We are attracted to, and then become attached to, whatever we desire. The longer we feed that attraction, the stronger that attachment becomes.

These attachments are not bad in themselves. The question is whether these attachments are serving or harming us - will they keep us from being grounded and centred (*tannirodha?*, YS I-12) or will they bring us closer to that yogic state of mind-body?

A *Va??k?rasamjn?* is a Yogi who has complete mastery over the senses. She no longer thirsts for anything that takes her off the path of being present. She no longer desires those unhealthy attachments that keep her from being deeply grounded in her own being.

Letting Go Takes Its Own Time Detachment (*vair?gyam*) must come naturally as a result of our practice (*abhy?sa*). The more we link with our-Selves through self-care practices, the easier it will become to let go of unhealthy practices that throw us off-course. If we try to let go of something before we are ready, it will not last. We cannot use our willpower to let go. We must let it happen naturally like a ripe fruit falls off a vine when it is ready. That ripening process takes its own time. Our effort should be placed on letting in the new (*abhy?sa*) rather than desperately trying to let go of the old (*vair?gyam*). Sooner or later, that state of letting go will naturally arise and our unhealthy attachments will just fall away.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra-s (YS) I-16 *Tat (that)-param (which is higher) puru?a (Self)-khy?te? (known) gu?a (mental states)-vair??yam (do not play tricks on us anymore)*

An even higher level of detachment (*vair?gyam*, YS I-15) occurs when our mental states no longer play tricks on us. This only happens through Grace.

Freedom from the Mind's Games - A State of Grace The Yogic tradition, based in S??khy philosophy, describes three mental states (*guna-s*): *tamas- not enough energy, rajas - too much energy, or sattva ? balanced energy*. When these mental states no longer throw us off balance, we are in a state of Grace. We cannot control when this deeper level of detachment will occur. We have to patiently wait for that state of Grace to strengthen our resolve to let go of unhealthy attachments that are no longer serving our path towards wholeness.

This is one of my favourite *Yoga Sutra-s (YS)*. It a reminder to surrender to what IS, to trust that our lives are perfectly orchestrated to bring us home to our true Selves (*Puru?a*). If you believe in *Parampuru?a*, the Great Spirit, this *YS* can also be a reminder to ask for help when lost in unhealthy attachments. Ask for healing, and Grace will come when you are ripe for Freedom.

Yoga Sutra Questions What unhealthy attachments do I want to let go of right now? What self-care practices can I do to help me let go (see October 20th *Tools of Support*)? Can I ask

for help?

Yoga Sutra ^[1]

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