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Detachment

Attaining & developing detachment



Our greatest efforts must be directed towards detachment from the things of the world; we must strive to become more spiritual, more luminous, to follow the counsel of the Divine Teaching, to serve the cause of unity and true equality, to be merciful, to reflect the love of the Highest on all men, so that the light of the Spirit shall be apparent in all our deeds, to the end that all humanity shall be united, the stormy sea thereof calmed, and all rough waves disappear from off the surface of life's ocean henceforth unruffled and peaceful.

The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment.

– `Abdu'l-Bahá
Paris Talks
Bahá'í Faith

O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge, and toward all Thy signs I set my heart.

O Lord! Whether travelling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.

Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy!

Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.

Thine is the absolute authority to command.

– The Báb
Bahá'í Faith

Some of us would much rather drink than think
Some would rather live at the kitchen sink
And some of us would rather play than pray
While some would rather stay in bed all day.

Some don't give a thought to what lies ahead
And some of us might just as well be dead!
Caught up in the myth of earthly joy,
And material pleasures that choke and cloy.

Some of us stumble and dodder and sway
While attempting to tread God's way
Reaching out for spiritual liberty
Attempting to be where we ought to be.

Some use their prayer beads, some recite the psalms
And some seek the comfort-zone of His strong arms
But most blest are they who receive His Grace
And are ready to meet Him face to face!

– Joy Philippou PhD
Bahá'í Poet

The man who ponders over objects of sense forms an attachment to them; from (that) attachment is produced desire; and from desire anger is produced; from anger results want of discrimination; from want of discrimination, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, loss of reason; and in consequence of loss of reason he is utterly ruined.

But the self-restrained man who moves among objects with senses under the control of his own self, and free from affection and aversion, obtains tranquillity. When there is tranquillity, all his miseries are destroyed, for the mind of him whose heart is tranquil soon becomes steady. He who is not self-restrained has no steadiness of mind; nor has he who is not self-restrained perseverance in the pursuit of self-knowledge; there is no tranquillity for him who does not persevere in the pursuit of self-knowledge; and whence can there be happiness for one who is not tranquil? For the heart which follows the rambling senses leads away his judgment, as the wind leads a boat astray upon the waters.

Therefore, O you of mighty arms! his mind is steady whose senses are restrained on all sides from objects of sense. The self-restrained man is awake, when it is night for all beings; and when all beings are awake, that is the night of the right-seeing sage. He into whom all objects of desire enter, as waters enter the ocean, which, (though) replenished, (still) keeps its position unmoved, he only obtains tranquillity; not he who desires (those) objects of desire. The man who, casting off all desires, lives free from attachments, who is free from egoism, and from (the feeling that this or that is) mine, obtains tranquillity.

– Bhagavad Gita
Hinduism

Thou hast inquired about detachment. It is well known to thee that by detachment is intended the detachment of the soul from all else but God. That is, it consisteth in soaring up to an eternal station, wherein nothing that can be seen between heaven and earth deterreth the seeker from the Absolute Truth. In other words, he is not veiled from divine love or from busying himself with the mention of God by the love of any other thing or by his immersion therein. For it can clearly be seen that today most of the people have seized upon fleeting baubles and clung to defective goods, and have remained deprived of perpetual bounty and of the fruits of the blessed Tree.

Although a wayfarer upon the path of the Absolute Truth might reach a particular station, without detachment he would not be able to perceive that station or any other plane. This topic, however, shall never be mentioned by any translator, nor shall any pen set it down or any author discourse upon it. This is from the grace of God; He bestoweth it upon whoso He willeth. By detachment is not meant giving away and depleting all one's wealth. Rather, it denotes turning unto God and supplicating Him. This plane can be attained in every precinct and is manifest and visible from every thing. He is detachment, and is the alpha and the omega thereof.

– Bahá'u'lláh
Bahá'í Faith

Empty the boat of your life, O man; when empty it will swiftly sail. When empty of passions and harmful desires you are bound for the land of Nirvana.

From preference arises sorrow, from preference arises fear, but he who is freed from preference has no sorrow and certainly no fear.

From affection arises sorrow, from affection arises fear, but he who is freed from affection has no sorrow and certainly no fear.

From pleasure arises sorrow, from pleasure arises fear, but he who is freed from pleasure has no sorrow and certainly no fear.

From sensuality arises sorrow, from sensuality arises fear, but he who is freed from sensuality has no sorrow and certainly no fear.

From craving arises sorrow, from craving arises fear, but he who is freed from craving has no sorrow and certainly no fear.

Well may people hold dear the man who is endowed with morality and insight, who is well established in righteousness, a seer of the truth.

– Dhammapada
Buddhism

Ye are even as the bird which soareth, with the full force of its mighty wings and with complete and joyous confidence, through the immensity of the heavens, until, impelled to satisfy its hunger, it turneth longingly to the water and clay of the earth below it, and, having been entrapped in the mesh of its desire, findeth itself impotent to resume its flight to the realms whence it came. Powerless to shake off the burden weighing on its sullied wings, that bird, hitherto an inmate of the heavens, is now forced to seek a dwelling-place upon the dust. Wherefore, O My servants, defile not your wings with the clay of waywardness and vain desires, and suffer them not to be stained with the dust of envy and hate, that ye may not be hindered from soaring in the heavens of My divine knowledge.

– Bahá'u'lláh
Gleanings
Bahá'í Faith

A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to an act which, if I do it, will cause Allah to love me and people to love me."

He said, "Renounce the world and Allah will love you; renounce what people possess and people will love you."

– Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi
Islam

Be in the world as if you were a stranger or a traveller.

– Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi
Islam

The essence of detachment is for man to turn his face towards the courts of the Lord, to enter His Presence, behold His Countenance, and stand as witness before Him.

– Bahá'u'lláh
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
Bahá'í Faith

O SON OF BEING!
Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test Our servants.

– Bahá'u'lláh
Hidden Words
Bahá'í Faith

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ***It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.***”

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

– Mark 10:17-31
Christianity