

Non-attachment or Vairagya

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Shearer translation:

1.13. The practice of yoga is the commitment to become established in the state of freedom.

1.15 Freedom (vairagya) is that triumphant state of consciousness that is beyond the influence of desire. The mind ceases to thirst for anything it has seen or heard of; even what is promised in the scriptures.

This is a very interesting concept to explore because it can easily mean different things to different people.

Vairagya, which translates as 'without colour' refers to a state of neutrality where the mind is quiet, and as thinking subsides so our conditioning is not present, and we perceive clearly.

At first, we experience a quiet mind in our practice and experience the releasing effect of that, it is a beautiful release that relaxes our mind/body. Then later, with practice, through the repeated immersion in deeper states of consciousness we will find that state will become more prevalent within our daily life bringing a kind of freedom from the roller-coaster of life's ups and downs where we remain more and more centered within. It is like a cloth being repeatedly being dyed and dried in the sun so that gradually more and more of the dye becomes fast within the cloth.

Ultimately as it says in 1.15 there is no attachment to anything whether inside or outside of ourselves; where we can experience things moment to moment and allow the experience and our responses to easily move through us. You could say we know we are done when there is nothing to be done, and this is not a negative circumstance but rather one where there is such as **sense of fullness inside nothing else is needed to make us whole.**

This relates to the Kleshas, the Five Afflictions, where we now know what we are so Avidya or ignorance is no longer present. Asmita or the need to refer to relate everything to 'I, me and mine' is no longer a central concern. The Kleshas of Raga and Dvesha, of attraction and aversion respectively, do not create disturbance within and there is no anxiety or fear, Abhinivesha.

Non-attachment can at first seem to mean cultivating a beige, passionless existence but this is not the case. Rather it means that when we meet all things equally, being fully present to what arises, not trying to change what has arisen or hold on to it, then paradoxically there is more peacefulness and enjoyment, there is a more integrated relationship with life. Ultimately, it is the nature of the experience of Purusha, and being established within that we are no longer affected by Prakriti or change, we are the changeless, infinite Pure Consciousness and can only see the Beauty in all of Nature.

Can you think of ways in which we might approach this concept in the act of teaching and ways we might interweave the concept of Vairagya into our classes as an underlying theme?