

# ABUNDANCE WITHOUT ATTACHMENT

SWAMI SARVESHANANDA JI'S AUDIO TALK ON YOUTUBE (MAR. 19, 2016)

Ref. Audio talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwq3VJlpuoQ> (Chinmaya Haridwar, Portland, USA)

*Abundance without Attachment* is an intriguing topic. Spirituality is always portrayed as though it is not related to materialistic realm and devoid of worldly pursuit. We naturally conclude that spiritual people have to remain alienated from the materialistic world. But each one of us is an integral part of the cosmos regardless of whether we are a "spiritual" person. We don't live in a vacuum on an isolated island where we are completely detached from the material world.

## Spiritualistic or Materialistic?

It is impossible to be devoid of interactions with the material world. Basic materials are required for surviving in the environment where we exist. Even monks who live in a secluded cave or a monastery or a forest cannot avoid the material world.

A spiritualist, or someone who has trained their mind to gear towards centering themselves has to exist irrespective of where they live. The spiritualist also has to learn how to live. As Sri Adi Shankaracharya mentions in Bhaja Govindam

Yoga-rato va bhoga rato va  
sanga rato va sanga viheena:  
yasya brahmani ramate chittam  
nandati nandati nandat yeve!!

**yoga-rato:** For the one who is centered and established in the core of their existence, it doesn't matter if they are *yoga-rato va*, they are completely centered in meditative equipoise. All great spiritual stalwarts like Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Ramana Maharishi, Ramakrishana Paramahansa, they shun away the materialistic pleasures.

**bhoga rato:** On the other hand, their immediate students Pujya Gurudev was immersed in materialistic environment spearheading a new renaissance in the spiritual world. Swami Vivekananda spread the knowledge of Vedanta across the globe.

**Sanga rato va** – someone in constant association or interaction with the people, material, environment

**Sanga viheena** – completely devoid of such environments



So it doesn't matter whether somebody is in *yoga rato* (meditative equipoise) or *bhoga rato va* interacting with the materialistic world. What really matters is whether or not we are centered in our own essential nature. Once established in this core and rooted within, it doesn't matter whether we are in meditative equipoise or interacting with the material world; whether we are in association or in seclusion.

## Seclusion or Inclusion?

New initiates in the world of spirituality are taught to discipline themselves. To gain mastery or free existence or exuberance, they learn how to live without the support of interaction with the material world. But we erroneously conclude that spirituality stops there. There should be an equipoised mindset and peace within regardless of unfolding experiences and irrespective of interaction with the material world. Seclusion does not guarantee this peace and tranquility. You could have someone completely isolated or living in a forest, yet they are constantly agitated. Or someone could be in midst of the material world, yet remain in complete equipoise. The external circumstances are considered trivial if you can maintain your equipoise. Running away from the world outside is not acceptable because we cannot shy away from our unfolding responsibilities. Instead, run towards your inner world and remain rooted within. This was the same message Lord Shri Krishna gave Arjuna throughout the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna's main problem was trying to take the easy way out in spite of knowing his responsibilities. He tried to use philosophy and misplaced compassion forgetting his responsibility. The Lord brought Arjuna back to his own core, helped him balance himself so that Arjuna could gather himself. He did not escape from his responsibilities, but rather asserted to stay firm and fulfill his responsibilities.

One cannot avoid interaction with the outside world. If we understand this point, then we can easily relate to the topic *Abundance without Attachment*.

## Attachment

Lord Shri Krishna explains in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Bhagavad Gita how one can stoop down to exist without common sense. *Dhyayato vishaya pumsaha Sanghaha teshu upajayatey* The second step itself – the one before the desire, can corrupt our thinking pattern and attachment is the root cause of this downfall. *Sanghaha teshu upajayatey* attachment is the key factor that develops and erupts as a desire. The desire cannot exist without the attachment, so we have to really understand attachment. These first two steps can either build our spirituality or can lead us to our downfall if we don't understand them properly. We need *dhyana* and *sangha* to grow in spirituality; but these very same two factors can lead us to the fall in the materialistic abyss or the bottomless pit. It is not the attachment or contemplation per se that matters; but rather, what matters is the focus of our objects of contemplation and/or our attachments.



Once Pujya Gurudev was asked to explain the entire Vedanta in just two words. He beautifully explained it as "Detach and Attach".

| Detach from ...  | Attach to ...    |
|------------------|------------------|
| Wrong priorities | Right priorities |
| Unreal           | Real             |
| Non-essential    | Essential        |
| Wrong or easy    | Righteous        |

The attachments that create restlessness and agitations of desires that then become *moha* (delusion) removes any and all remnants of faculty of discrimination. Such attachment is bad. Those attachments that create internal agitations and restlessness should be eliminated. Similarly, the attachments towards our convictions, righteousness, or the Lord – such attachments are essential and required.

## Abundance

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda describes abundance beautifully in our pledge – *Giving more than what we take and producing more than what we consume*. Abundance is the exuberance and capacity with which I can be the source of support to an infrastructure. When I have wealth, resources or abilities and capacities or strength in abundance I don't crave for it, but instead provide the environment with it. Observe the creation and see how nature functions:

*Paropakaratham vahanti nadyaha* (rivers flow abundantly for the sake of the rest of the nature)  
*Paropakaratham phalanti vrukshaha* (trees bear fruits for the sake of the rest of the nature)  
*Paropakaratham idam shariram*. Only the human being has to be taught of their moral responsibility to give (not to take) towards the entire creation. You can give only when you have it in abundance.

There is nothing wrong with abundance. What matters is what we end up doing with that abundance. Let us explore *Abundance* from the grossest to the subtlest levels listed below:

### Level 1: Physical level

At the gross physical materialistic level, we have abundant resources of wealth, materials, talent, energies, etc. These have to be inculcated and nurtured to be like the rest of the nature in creation. These resources should be utilized for the nation. Each one may have a certain unique quality in abundance but we all definitely have to learn. Unfortunately, our life goal is directed mainly to earning, instead of focusing on learning! Anyone can earn with even a little bit of talent; but there needs to be a discipline for learning. This discipline can build upon abundance.



## Level 2: Highlights of our Interactions

On a subtler level, we can learn from reflecting on our own life. When we reminisce on our life, our possessions or the material luxuries do not really stand apart. Highlights of our life are the cherished memories of our interactions and the depth of those interactions. When we look back at each year and list the major highlights of these enriching memories, we may be able to recall perhaps one incident per month. Driving down that memory lane couple years further, we may be able to recall one incident per quarter – four experiences that we can remember. As we go further down, we may or may not remember one single incident per year!

We aren't focused on enriching these experiences converting the external abundance into internal abundance. Those memories have to enrich. The external abundances are justified when we use them for bringing a smile and joy to the people around us. Are we putting the abundance of our materialistic gains to good use?

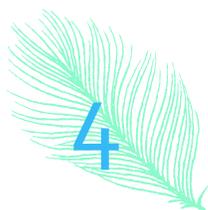
## Level 3: Real Wealth

True wealth refers to those qualities which money cannot buy. For example, one cannot purchase qualities such as love, trust, honesty etc. When we have these virtues in abundance, it builds an inner core of strength. While money can definitely enhance our experiences externally, no amount of money can substitute these inner qualities. Creating that loving trustworthy honest environment and creating people who look up to you for support, courage and direction is independent of one's monetary wealth. Abundance of this inner wealth builds up the inner stability, courage and strength and inhibits feelings of despondency, despair or being shaken up. So being abundant in these qualities is the subtler level.

## Level 4: Unwavering Faith

The fourth one is the the subtlest abundance is having firm faith and trust in that Lord. This is a very crucial one. Faith is the blend in our life that is directly proportional to making our life better. Absence of faith makes our life bitter. It is a choice we make while going through life whether we come out better or bitter.

This faith reaffirms all events unfolding in life to be just, fair and impartial. It endorses and reiterates the conviction the Lord has provided me these experiences for my own growth and learning. When we compare the life of an average human being to the lives of the Pandavas, it puts our lives in perspective. Unlike the Pandavas, we haven't gone through those many years of exile living in a forest, living incognito for a year, being cheated their entire lives,



constantly being targeted for assassination attempts. For most of us, we lead a fairly predictable life that follows a set pattern of weekdays, weekends, vacations etc. Perhaps there may be an occasional curve ball that throws us off, but 90% of our life sails smoothly without any rough patches. While going through a stressful situation in life, one of the seekers mentioned "Concerned I am, worried I am not. I've gone through life without thinking much about God, yet He provided me abundantly. Now that I am thinking of God at this crossroad of my life, I am sure He will not let me down! There will be something that He has planned. I just have to gear up and suit myself for the situation that He is providing." Such is the unwavering faith in the Lord where one is assured that He is taking care of me at every step of my life.

Don't assess each situation as right or wrong with very experience that is brought in. Put the experience in perspective by zooming out of it and look at it holistically in terms of various experiences we go through in life. See where this piece fits in the larger jigsaw puzzle of life. We have to create this ability to adjust our vision. If we are too closely zoomed in, we consider that snapshot as life; or we become callous as we zoom out – both these situations don't allow us to focus on what is required. The beauty or functionality of a good camera is realized by understanding it's flexibility. It allows us to zoom in or out as required. Even in life, we have to zoom in to understand the nitty-gritty details and we have to zoom out to see where it fits in the entire picture. Then we can work around it's execution. That experience itself has been provided by the Lord for me to learn, grasp, improve and progress. The subtlest abundance is the abundance of faith that God is taking care of me.

### Attachment versus Detachment

*Attachment* is the inability to invest the external abundance in the welfare and joy of people around us. On the other hand, the ability to use the abundant external resources it in the right direction by investing them in internal joy of people around us is called *detachment* from the abundance. Our attitude of giving should be giving to the entire creation. But let's think who or what constitutes the "entire creation". It is not humanly possible for us to interact with the whole world. Our immediate scope of interaction is typically with those handful of 4-5 family members, 5-10 friends, 15-20 business colleagues for a total of 30-40 people. We may be interacting with only 5-10 people on a regular basis. We would've created a healthy environment if our external abundance is invested in bringing smiles and joy towards these people with whom we interact. These aren't some stray incidences, but perhaps once a fortnight, once a week, and eventually daily highlights of our cherished interactions. These frequent occurrences build up our confidence and gives us hope to look forward to.



## Values and Virtues

The next level is to take the abundance of the values and convert them into virtues that no amount of wealth can buy. A value is something you understand but don't necessarily apply it; whereas a virtue is when you understand, assimilate and apply a value in your life. For example, you become trustworthy and create a trustworthy environment; you become loyal and create a loyal environment; you become truthful and create a truthful environment; you become loving and create a loving environment. Become abundant in these virtues that cannot be tagged monetarily. For example, love, compassion, trust, loyalty – nurture these virtues and bring it into abundance. Create and extend the scope of your interaction and the circle of people you interact with. When you expand due to your inner ability to become abundant with these values that are converted into virtues. As you spend and invest more and become liberal in distributing these in every interaction, it increases your confidence, will power and strength. You dig into your own powerful forces and gather so much potency that you can face life's unfolding experiences even if they seem overwhelming from outside. If you are well rooted within, these experiences cannot shake you up. ... if you become miserly in these virtues, it becomes attachment.

There is nothing wrong with external abundance. If we ask you to retrieve \$100 from your wallets, it's not that people don't have \$100. The \$100 may not be *accessible* at that moment of time because most of us don't carry dollar bills since we carry credit cards. We cannot use it if it's not accessible. So the abundant values and virtues aren't just to be appreciated but they have to be available, accessible and be used.

## Receiving and Giving Abundantly

Our scriptures have a beautiful perspective. We pray for receiving abundantly so that we can participate in the *yagna-bhav karma*. We seek God's blessings to be showered with abundance. The universality of Hindu prayers is astounding. We never pray just for Hindus but we pray for the welfare of the entire universe (*sarve janah sukhino bhavantu..*). When chanting these mantras you can visualize a better a world if you are in a better place. *Yad bhavam tad bhavati*. So gather the abundance, create the inner environment to relate to the immediate and extended circle so that we can be giving more than what we consume. When a person exists in such abundance with a detached attitude, they aren't worried because there is plenty flowing in. There is enough faith in the Lord that we don't feel the need to hold on to it. We realize that the more we give the more it flows.



In the last portion of Rudram, the seeker affirms that the hands are in fact a blessing and prays that the Lord expresses through these hands so that the sweat generates abundance. The abundant alone can be the source of distribution. Is abundance without attachment even possible? Absolutely. When we go through the process of how we nurture ourselves in abundance from the grossest to subtlest, the insecurities that lead to attachment are washed away clean. Attachments are born out of insecurities and is that type of a layer like lenses that are smeared with oil or various residues. Once we gain self-confidence, in His providence and benevolence, our hearts and hands open up. In that giving there is a lot of sacrifice. We are giving away that which provides a lot of comfort to us. But there is no pain in that giving away. There is immense satisfaction in it.

### Sacrifice and Compromise

Giving that is born out of love is called sacrifice. The giving born out of attachment is called compromise. When we are stuck in compromises, it hurts when something is pulled away from us unwillingly. This sting is similar to pain that we experience when a band aid is peeled off slowly. When the giving is willingly done out of love because of self-confidence in the virtues and expansion that we've build in ourselves, it is an effortless task. As our confidence increases, our external resources also increase, as does the strengthening of the faith in Lord's benevolence. The layer of dirt smearing our vision gets cleared and we become a functional aspect of the creation that opens up for the Lord to then function through us.

### Empty Yourself to Become Instrumental

Take Lord Shri Krishna's example. Once He left a certain place, He never looked back. He left Gokul, Vrindavan, Mathura, and kept moving on without getting attached to the places or people. But the one thing He carried all through his life including in the battle field was His flute. The significance of a flute is that it has seven holes for the raga wherein we manage the wind's flow to create the beautiful melody. It has one bigger hole on the other end to blow the air in and another hole through which the air blows out. So it is a bamboo that has a total of nine holes designed scientifically to produce the harmony. A bamboo with holes doesn't produce music per se – you can use those kinds of bamboos to blow air and manage the fire in the *chula* (cooking pit). The Lord's implicit message here is for us to empty ourselves and He shall flow through these organs of perception and action as the music. Any blocks in this (a.k.a. our ego) turn that music into mere noise.



## Purpose of Life

As our life's purpose, discovering the true motivation, inspiration and enthusiasm within wouldn't it be beautiful to become a channel through which He functions? What if we become apt equipment in His hands? Once that happens, there's only abundance that flows through. Currently, our insecurities block this flow. We have to trust that we are being carried by the Lord, just like how an airplane carries the passengers and their baggage. Shun away from all the insecurities and make an effort in nurturing the abundance within you. Adopt the perspective that you are the channel through which the abundance flows to the world. If we fail to understand this purpose, we will be stuck amidst all luxuries, remaining clueless as to how to truly enjoy those luxuries and bask in the glories and blessings in the grace of the Lord. You can become that channel of abundant expression without creating the friction of aggrandizing, snatching, competing. Instead, you nurture and create the environment wherein that abundance can express. Then you truly become the channel for the Lord to express through.

## Next Steps

Ponder on the following questions and reevaluate ourselves:

- When the Lord has already taken different measures to provide for in my life, why am I holding onto these insecurities?
- What are those insecurities?
- Why do I cling on in spite of knowing the possibilities why am I clinging on to those insecurities?

Address your insecurities through this self introspection and cut them away - one insecurity at a time. Find the right environment for becoming abundant from the grossest to the subtlest working away on our attachments, then observe how the abundance increases. The Lord is infinite; His capacities are infinite; His resources are infinite; When I connect to that Lord, it flows through.

We invoke Pujya Gurudev's blessings and pray that may the Lord flow through us to the world around us as compassion, love, resource, strength, courage.

