



Practice Of Pratyahara

Majority of yogis may be in a city surrounding with their own families to look after, business to attend to, or service to be done. In their case, *pratyahara* cannot be an unhampered and undisturbed process of *abhyasa*, as they have to practice *pratyahara* in the midst of their daily activities. For them *pratyahara* has to become a way of life. You must learn how to practise withdrawal even when you are right in the midst of lots of things, people and activities.

You must learn the art of inner detachment even in the midst of activity, the art of how to not allow the external objects to go right deep into your consciousness even if they pass before the eyes like a kaleidoscope or a cinema. Detach the mind. Let it have some other background, some other focal point, even in the midst of *vyavahara*. The *yogi* should carry on unbroken God-thought, unbroken God-remembrance within himself, always, always.

Mahatma Gandhi made a Gujrati translation of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and gave it the name “Anasakti Yoga – The Yoga of Detachment”. He said that this was the message of Gita: “In the midst of the world, be detached from the world like the lotus in the lake, unaffected and uncontaminated by water.” You are involved and occupied in various activities. Why? Because it is your *kartavya karma*. Yet, in the midst of it all, know that you have nothing to do with it at all. You are in a crowd, and yet, you are alone. You should learn to give only a part of the mind to external *vyavahara*. Only that much of mind as is absolutely essential and necessary, keeping the rest in God-thought.

There is another aspect to it. Supposing, the impression has already entered the mind. All right. Detach the ego and doership from the mind. Say: “No. I refuse to get dragged into this, I refuse to associate myself with it, I stand apart from it. I am only a witness of it. I am the witness-consciousness. So, disconnect your link with the mind. Be a dispassionate, unaffected witness-consciousness. Arjuna was told in the midst of the war that he was to be completely detached, he was to be established in God-remembrance. “*Maamanusmara Yudhya Cha* – remember Me constantly and fulfil your duty.” [Gita 8.7] Even in the midst of the most intense and dynamically active life, one should be in a state of Yoga inside – “*Yogasthah Kuru Karmaani* – by being established in Yoga, perform action abandoning attachment.” [Gita 2.48]

God Bless You!

■ Swami Chidananda