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The first question: *How do I detach emotionally from concepts, thoughts and people? How do I love and have compassion while being detached?*

It's good that we look at our attachments. Master stressed that often. It's very important that we introspect on that and work on being non-attached. Master said that attachment is a wall between you and God. Anything that is between us and God is not a good thing so we need to work on it.

But there's two rules to attachments and the first rule might come as a surprise. **We actually have to be attached to something.** There's no way around it. Every single person on this planet is attached to something.

Second rule: If we have a strong attachment to something this will weaken our attachment to other things. So how can we use these tools to our advantage on the spiritual path? Br. Allen says he thinks he has given enough clues here for most of us to figure it out but he's going to say it anyway. The only way we are really going to break our attachments to things of this material creation...remember this creation is just a dream, mind you...it's not real. The only way we are going to break our attachment is to form an attachment to God.

That... If you want to know how to become unattached...detach from things. Again, we have to be attached to something; we need to move our attachment to God. And that right there is the whole purpose of Self-Realization Fellowship. It provides us with scientific direct means for forming that unbreakable attachment to God so we can realize our oneness with God in this material creation. That is our purpose...that's our purpose. As individuals that's our purpose in life. That's the reason we came. Now we have to work our way back to God.

Now as we work to this state, we know it's not easy, right? We're all trying to get to this state of being non-attached to creation and attached to God. There's still some things outside of practicing the SRF Lessons and doing the meditation techniques and following Master's guidance on meditation, there are some other things we can do to stay non-attached. Br. Allen won't go into a lot of detail on these because he talks about them a lot. They're his favorite things to talk about so he's just going to glance through them quickly. But if we want to...besides meditation and to try to form that attachment to God...there are some things that can help us become non-attached.

First of all, practicing life as a dream, right? That's the standard thing. Don't take life too seriously. It's all part of the same thing Master often encourages. He said: "The greatest thing you can do to cultivate true wisdom is to practice the consciousness of the world as a dream. The greatest thing you can do to cultivate true wisdom is to practice the consciousness of the world as a dream."

As far as not taking life too seriously someone once said, "It's almost impossible to overestimate the unimportance of most things." There's a lot of wisdom in that. THIS WORLD IS NOT REAL! Let's not take it too seriously.

Secondly, to help us become more non-attached is to see God in and behind all people and conditions in our lives. No matter who or what comes into our lives we need to realize that God is behind it. Everything is a part of God. What other source of anything could there be but God? If we keep that in mind we won't be so attached to this world. We will be able to let go.

Now that doesn't mean we accept all conditions in our lives. That we accept everything that comes into our lives gladly because some times part of the reason something comes into our lives is for us to overcome it. It may be a test for us to gain a certain strength. And maybe there's somebody in our lives constantly abusive or whatever. We don't have to put up with that. We want to keep our composure...stay calm...but again there maybe a reason...there's something we need to learn from it. That doesn't mean we have to put up with it forever, okay! I'm not saying that we're doormats.

Sr. Gyanamata in a letter to Daya Ma once said: "Each day accept everything as coming to you from God." There is no source of anything in our lives that does not come from God. Remember that.

The third way. See God as the doer. Right? Master talked a lot about this, too. We're part of God, period. Everything is done by God's power. Sure if we see ourselves...if we identify too much with us being the doer of things it's a sure way to misery, right? Because it makes these attachment and things aren't always going to go as we'd like. So we need to start right, seeing God as the doer. If we do our best, play our role...if we see this life as a movie... If we play our role as best we can but we've got to always remember that the power behind everything is God's power.

Lastly, and Master encouraged a lot...and there are other ways to work on non-attachment and Br. Allen is just throwing a few out there...is to do everything as a service to God. Everybody here think for a minute. What if God appeared before us or maybe he sent one of the gurus and they said I have this one little task I'd like you to do for Me. How enthusiastically would we do it? We'd get a big smile on our faces...a sure thing...and all this joy and love would be flowing through our veins. Well, maybe let's try to practice that a little bit during our day-to-day lives. God really does have things He wants us to do and He is asking us to do them. God may not appear directly but He is asking us to do them and if we start seeing what we're doing as a service to God it helps to lighten the load. It will help us to relax and not be so attached to things. We'll do our best and move on.

One little thing with regards to attachment that is often overlooked and just as important as not being attached is not feeling a strong compulsion to circumstances or things that come into our lives. This is really just a form of attachment, okay? Because what we're attached to is a certain condition not being in our lives, right? The tendency is if we feel really strongly against something it's just go to be wrong, right? If I don't want to do this...this it is not a part of my life...that's not always the case. So Master said repulsion is another thing we need to guard

against. Sometimes we have things to do that we don't like; we all have them every day. So just wanted to throw that out there to remind you. And again, repulsion is overcome by this non-attachment.

The next question: *Why does SRF use a cross? Also, why a picture of Jesus?*

Well, according to Paramahansa Yogananda, Jesus Christ has a direct connection with Self-Realization Fellowship. In the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons Master poses the question: "How shall we seek God" and this is how he answers it. "Through Self-Realization Fellowship, the greatest dispensation sent by the world...sent to the world by Christ and Babaji." So again he is encouraging us to practice the Lessons and the teachings. He goes on to say: "All credit belongs to the great Jesus Christ and to Babaji, who together sent this work to unite the original Christianity and the original Yoga. Christ felt the real lack of real God communion in the churches. They are all doing good but they must show people how to seek God. That is why Christ and Babaji sent me here and why Self-Realization Fellowship is the new dispensation that was promised in the scriptures. Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost after he departed. Where is he? Holy Ghost means the state of Cosmic Vibration." And Master goes on to say: "To be in tune with that vibration and practicing of the SRF meditation techniques." He finishes with "if you practice and you are in tune with that sacred vibration you will be one with the Lord through that Christ Consciousness."

That Christ Consciousness...if you're new, it doesn't mean Christ's consciousness. Master called Christ Consciousness...is the consciousness that pervades all creation, which Jesus Christ was one with.

You can see the connection Master felt when he said Christ and Babaji brought this forth. So of course, he's going to want to honor Christ. Besides that one of Master's missions which he said God wanted me to do was to unite the East and the West when he came to this country. And the biggest Western religion is Christianity. So of course, Master wanted to show that all true religions are trying to accomplish the same thing. They are trying to get in contact with God, to make that connection. So, it's just logical that he would bring Christ into our teachings and show the connection and the similarities. We can find God through any true religion if we practice it and that's what Master is trying to show you. Remember when he first came to this country he made a big thing of calling some of the churches "Church of All Religions"...Churches of all Religion...showing that all churches were trying to accomplish the same thing.

Third question: *Is it possible to forgive someone and decide that you don't want to be around that person any longer? Or is that a sign that you really haven't forgiven them?*

Now this person, obviously, sees the importance of forgiveness and it is a good lesson for all of us, too. Our Guru said: "God is forgiving, we...and we His children should be forgiving."

People come into our lives. We all evolve at different rates, we all evolve in different ways and how many times have all of us connected with people in our lives for a while and then separated. You know, it happens and there's nothing we can do about it. And I don't feel that this person has an obligation to hang around somebody forever just because they had a disagreement or

whatever and now they're not sure whether they're forgiven or not. If it's time to separate, it's time to separate. That's just no big deal. It's going to happen. It's happened in the past and it will continue to continue to happen for the rest of our lives.

There are seven billion people on this planet. We can't be friends with everybody. We can't have everybody in our lives. Until we know God, of course, once we realize our oneness with everybody we have that love for everyone once we get to that Christ Consciousness state.

So, it's okay that if we get to the point where we feel like it's not necessarily the greatest to have that person in our lives right now or maybe for the rest of this life. That doesn't mean that we don't forgive 'em. Even Master says there comes a time that it may be best to pull back from a relationship, maybe even if there's disharmony. Sometimes things just don't work out and are we going to spend our whole lives focusing on trying to make this relationship better when there's not really going to have that much advantage to it. We have more important things to do. So there may come a time for that. Now if we're running around and separating ourselves from everybody in our lives thinking that it's going to make life easier that's not the right attitude either.

Now if you find later on maybe there is something there...that you still feel some resentment even after you've separated from this person in this particular life and it's bothering you, keep working on forgiveness. You can visualize that person in God's light, visualize that person in God's love and send that person God's love as you can; pray for them. Don't let that anger or resentment take root inside us. We have to let go of it. That still doesn't mean that person has to be a part of our life.

The last question: *If food prices continue to rise to the point where they are not available and you live in an apartment without land what should one do since you cannot grow your own food?*

There's actually three parts to this question.

Master encouraged people to grow their own food if they had the chance. But if you live in an apartment, that's just not an option and you have to accept that, okay? It's not a big deal. Br. Allen never grew his own food when he was in Florida and he lived in an apartment so he could totally relate to that.

The next part of the question. *What if food becomes inaccessible at all for even to the middle class? What should one do?*

We have to accept the fact that maybe there is nothing we can do in that situation, okay? We are not in complete control of the situation here with life on this material plane.

The food shortage is only one type of problem; if you want to play this little game, like figuring out all the things that can go wrong and then we can have a really, really bad earthquake tomorrow, right, especially living here in California with the ways things are going with terrorist activity and everything somebody could drop a nuclear bomb here in California. There is just nothing we can do about some of this stuff! And if it comes we are going to have to deal with it.

Don't play this thing where you're bringing up all these worries and fears. Because you know how powerful our minds are, right? We think a thought and we focus on accomplishing something, we can accomplish it. You know our minds are just as powerful when we are thinking a bunch of negative things. You don't want to dwell on these things because we can draw them into our lives.

So, we make common sense preparations. The authorities recommend a certain amount of water in the house, a certain amount of food in case we do have an earthquake or some other type of disaster. Make those preparations and forget about it. That's all we can really do.

That analogy...it's about a card game, poker. And no, we don't play poker in the Ashram. It's something Br. Allen played when he was younger. But there's some times in poker we're dealt a bad hand, right? So you've got your cards there and none of them match up, none of them do anything and there...no matter how good a poker player you are there is absolutely nothing you are going to be able to do to win that hand. And unfortunately, life is like that sometimes. We may all be presented with something we can't deal with. We live in the same area. If you run out of food, Br. Allen is going to be out of food, too. But he's not going to worry about it. We can only do the best we can and we have to... we have to deal with the cards we're dealt so that's the way it is.

Now we do have a few of the monks who have little gardens in little corners of the Ashram. But if you add up all that food together it's going to last us about a day or two, okay. We're going to be hungry pretty quick also. The tomatoes and the corn and the squash...this isn't going to do a lot for me either.

Master was pretty adamant in asking people to grow food so much to prepare for anything. He just wanted people to get back into nature and have a simple life and to enjoy the earth a little bit. That was his main concern. Not as a preparation for anything that could come our way as far as a disaster goes. Even if we don't have a major role in disasters; it's on an individual level. You know, people get deadly diseases all the time. I mean anything can come our way any time. Most important thing for us to do is to put our mind on God right now wherever we are and not worry about all these things we don't have any control over. So let's just put our mind on God.

And there's a third part to the question : *If you are able to grow food...Br. Allen says he shouldn't even answer this but... If you are able to grow food, if you're lucky, should one use firearms or guns to protect the food from those people who would want to steal it?*

SRF does not have a policy on guns and Br. Allen is sure they're not going to get into the middle of that one.

He did hear once that Brother Bhaktananda was asked about this and he's probably a little braver than most monks and he was willing to go a little bit into this area. And he said Brother what if there's an emergency and, you know, I have food and people come to try to take it and I have a gun. What should I do? He goes well why don't you just shoot above their heads until they run away and he says okay but what if they keep coming? And then he didn't answer that part of it.

So that's a choice we're all going to have to make as individuals. Don't worry too much about it, again. We've got other things to think about.

So, in *Whispers from Eternity* Master has a little inspirational poem called: "May I Overcome Fear". It applies to this last question.

Master says: "Free me from paralyzing dreads. May I not visualize accidents and calamities, lest by the power of thought I invite them to externalize themselves."

So we're back to the negative thinking, again...our minds are powerful. But they're powerful in both ways. They are powerful when we're positive and they are powerful when we're negative. So we must keep that inner control and let's not dwell on this. Also, he's saying in "May I Overcome Fear"...he said: "Inspire me to put my trust in Thee, not in human precautions only. I can pass safely where bullets fly or dread bacteria abound if I realize Thou art ever with me."

In the end that's what it comes to. If we do our best, do our best to take precautions, then have faith in God. In the end we're all going to die anyway, right? And you know, maybe there will be some disaster and maybe we will die but you know what we'll be right back here again in another seventy or eighty years, or whatever it is we spend in the astral. So we never are really...our souls don't die. So death is not just not that big deal. It's something we all have to deal with. And Master said that's actually...fear of death is the fear that brings on all the other fears. So if we kind of deal with that in our mind and understand that we're all going to go through that and that it's not that big of a deal. Master said death is not that big of a deal but he said as soon as we die we don't even care anymore. We've forgotten about this body that we were so protective of. We just let it go; we don't even remember.

In regards to our lives, Master said, "No matter what happens inwardly say, 'It is all a dream. I am only dreaming in God's dream. Nothing can touch me. I am happy. Nothing holds me.'" And here's dealing with the Spirit, he said...he goes on to say, "I am praying ever minute, Lord. To walk out on this dream or to remain to do Your will." Master goes on to say, "Then you will be free." That is a wonderful thought.

So know that Master said when we get in contact with God we can "stand unshaken amidst the crash of breaking worlds". Just focus on God and get in contact with God. Nothing can touch us then. We don't have to worry about these things at all.

Here's another excerpt from that same..."May I Overcome Fear" from *Whispers from Eternity*. Master said, "Teach me, O Infinite Spirit! that whether I am awake or asleep, alert or daydreaming, living or dying, Thine all-protecting presence encircles me."

So even now God is all around us, protecting us. Nothing can ever happen to us that shouldn't. Br. Allen closes with Master's words:

Master said: "Have no fear. If you live in fear health will go. Rise above diseases and troubles. Be strong inside with full faith in God. Then you will conquer all limitations of the world. You will be a king of peace and happiness. That is what you want to be."