



# Self Interest

Talks with Babaji

**Recently you said that we should put our self-interest at the back, that our duty is to see what is missing for someone, to provide that, and out of that we receive our share. If there is self-interest in one's actions, how is it possible to put it at the back? Even in putting other's interests first, still one's own self-interest is there.**

*That is the path of Self-liberation, to work with no self-interest and for the good of others. But life in the world needs some self-interest. Those who try to reduce their self interest, they progress spiritually.*

**And yet self-interest is still present.**

*Yes, what happens in this process is that self-interest strengthens the ego. Others' interests weaken the ego. The hardest thing is the easiest. But how to do it?*

**It seems dangerous even on that path because more comes for me as well as others. So even this method can be a trap. As the accumulations come, I realize my own self-interest is satisfied.**

*That is the key we always forget in our own pocket. What is that key? Doing our duty in the world honestly and selflessly removes attachment in the heart. The fruit will manifest by itself.*

**Can you say more about how the hardest thing is the easiest?**

*It is the easiest when one understands that I am only an instrument, not the owner, performer, etc. The ego is the hardest thing to remove but if we work as an instrument of God then it is easiest.*

**In this country, there doesn't seem to be much survival value if a person doesn't seek for any self-interest.**

*It's a universal thing. In every country, every person is running to seek for self-interest. The question is how to liberate ourselves from the effect of seeking for our own self-interest. The answer is by being nonattached to the fruit of actions. To take action to help others with no self-interest brings a greater sense of peace. That creates a desire for more peace.*

**Is it okay to focus on that peace or does one need to look beyond that to some higher purpose?**

*Yes. The peace develops when the restlessness of ego calms down. Ego is in the mind. It doesn't work separately from the mind. What is the cause of that peace?*

**Reduction of self-interest.**

*In other words, by weakening the demands of the ego. Reduction of self-interest removes restlessness of the mind. Restlessness is the nature of our ego. Ego is desiring everything and getting attached to objects which makes the mind restless.*

**What are the ways of changing our rajasic nature of devotion to sattvic?**

*The difference is only self-interest and selfishness. How to remove our self-interest is a big question. We could read great philosophies; we can follow great masters; but still we are bitten by our self-interest all the time. Why is it so? Rajas guna is passion. This passion is an expression of the ego. Passion is reduced by living a virtuous life.*

**It's hard when we really see our suffering is caused by this.**

*It's hard because our ego wants to exist and exist with all powers. That power of ego comes by negative aspects of life. Think back in your own life. How much do you remember of good actions and how much do you remember of bad actions? Bad actions are always fresh in the mind. Good actions are vaguely remembered. Why so? In good action, ego involvement was little.*

**If you are stuck in an ego position, how do you get from there to right action?**

*All are stuck there. The greatest power becomes the greatest obstacle. The ego is our power in all levels of life. As long as the ego is only for self-interest, it is an obstacle. If self-interest is reduced, the same ego is our greatest power to progress in spiritual life.*

**I can't discriminate between the ego which is our power and also our sense of ownership. If a thought comes to my mind and I identify it with the ego as "my thought", how does that relate to the ego as our source of power?**

*Ego is a notion of "I am." In all identification, it is "I-am". So all identifications are ego. It has a very short definition and yet it can't be defined in a few words. "I am" is ego. All identifications are ego. Identifications are millions. Ego is the expression of power too. But this power is for removing the negative power of the ego. Sense of ownership is in both positive and negative powers of the ego.*

**In terms of the battle between ego and intellect in determining right action, it seems the ego is permeating the mind.**

*Intellect can discriminate; ego can't. Intellect knows the ego's self-interest. Ego doesn't know the intellect's discrimination. The ego is rooted in the intellect and becomes the owner of all the activities of the intellect.*

**Why does the ego rooted in the intellect feel its existence more in negativity?**

*The intellect is a superior mind. It discriminates, judges, and decides, but all these actions of intellect are selfish. That's why it is said the ego is rooted in the intellect. In negative actions and thoughts, we feel pain, anger, fear, hate, etc. These negative feelings are deeply rooted in the mind, so naturally the experiencer, ego, is more in negative things.*

**Why don't we learn more quickly from these painful experiences? Instead it seems that the intensity of the experience makes the ego go more in that direction.**

*In selfish life, there is pain, anger, etc. We are addicted to selfishness. So we don't want to change.*

**Could you explain what it means to be selfless?**

*The Self has two forms: individuality and universality. Every living being lives with the sense of individuality but, except humans, no other species has the concept of universality. Individuality is established by selfish actions, desires and attachments. Universality is established when selfishness is wiped out.*

**In Buddhism they say that you should do your spiritual practice for the benefit of all sentient beings.**

*It's a sense of universality. The Gita also says "what is left for one who has achieved enlightenment, except to help others?"*