

Asaktiḥ

absence of a sense of ownership

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Asakti means **the absence of the attitude of ownership**, absence of the attitude that anything peculiarly belongs to me. Ownership is notional; possession is factual. **Asakti** is reduction of all false relationships involving claims of ownership to factual relationships.

Analysis shows that no claim to ownership can survive close scrutiny. Nothing is really mine. I cannot claim exclusive, permanent title to anything, to land, to knowledge, to people, to things, or even to my own body-mind unit.

When I analyse anything that I think I own, I find that there is nothing to own; there is only something to possess.

MY HOUSE - MY TEMPORARY POSSESSION

I cannot claim to be the sole author of anything. I did not create the land on which my house stands. I did not make the materials that went into the house. Fire and water were needed. The work of many other people went into the house-masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and so on. Conformity to certain physical laws, not my creation, made possible the assurance that the walls will stand.

Thus, my house, which is made up of the materials available in an existent creation, as assembled by or in accordance with the knowledge of countless human beings unknown to me, some long dead, is simply an aggregate structure available for my temporary possession and control.

IS MY BODY MINE?

But there is something uniquely and specially mine, for which I certainly can claim factual ownership. That unique thing is my own body.

Who else can claim my body?

Many others can make claims over any given body. The mother can say, "I bore this body. It is flesh of my flesh. It is mine, not separate from me"

"No", says the father. "I am the instrumental cause of this body. I was involved in its creation. Not only did I provide all the food necessary for this body to grow but the clothes and shelter also to protect it".

The society, the community has a claim to the body. Collectively the efforts of many have made available the things necessary for this body to be nurtured and have provided a society in which it can live.

It is endless- the people, the creatures, the materials and substances that can claim rights to this body.

Thus, even for my own body, I am only a managing trustee, nothing more than that. I am the in-dweller of this body. It is my possession. As possessor I can say, my body, but only in terms of possession, definitely not in terms of ownership.

POSSESSION - OWNERSHIP

An attitude of **possession** rather than an attitude of **ownership** towards anything is a relief whether it is towards house, money or one's own body. An attitude of **possession** puts the relationship with the thing claimed in factual perspective that promotes dispassion and objectivity.

WITHOUT A CLINGING ATTACHMENT

The relationship is seen for what it is, non-exclusive, impermanent but at the same time a presently existing entrustment of possession to be enjoyed and properly maintained.

This is the right attitude towards my mind, towards any wealth I may have, towards the people around me, to all of them I relate with **asakti**, without a clinging attachment, without an attitude of ownership.

I recognise ownership as purely notional; that possession alone is a fact. I reduce all my false notional ownership, relationships to factual relationships.

NON-ATTACHMENT - DISPASSION

Asakti, non-attachment in the sense of seeing my relationship to things objectively, is another example of dispassion, **vairāgya**. I gain a **dispassion** toward sense objects when I recognise that sense objects do not have the capacity to produce lasting happiness or security.

In **asakti** the **dispassion** highlighted is the relationship between me and objects.

It is the **dispassion** I discover when I see clearly that there can be no valid nor lasting attachment to anything; that is, there is no valid ownership of anything.