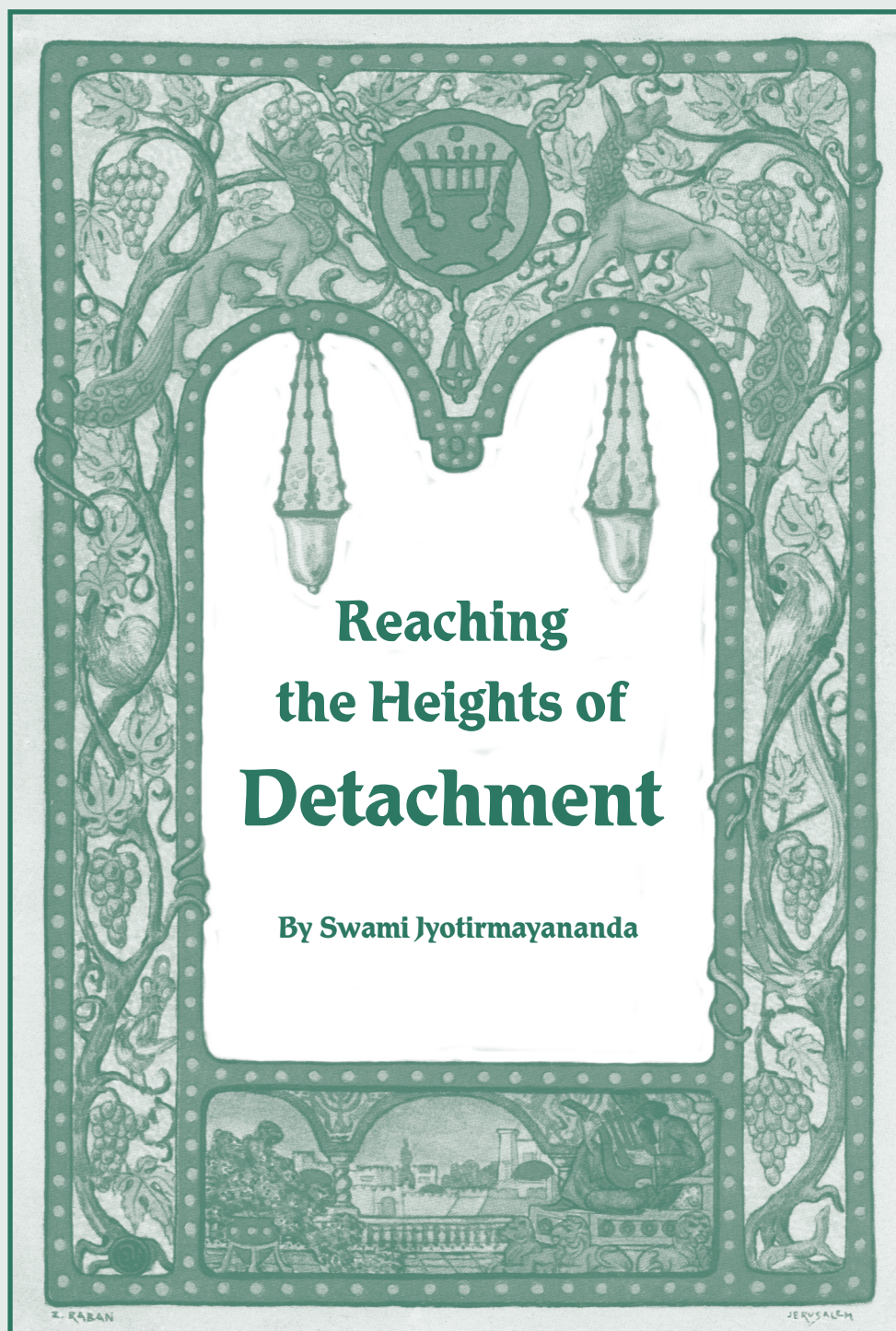




As described in the New Testament, Lord Jesus gave a profound message to his closest disciples saying, “...I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” (Matthew 10: 34-35) This is a shocking statement. Everyone knows that Jesus came to establish peace. But then, what did he mean by this paradoxical statement?

And what was he expressing when he continued, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 10: 37-39)

When Jesus states that he had come with a sword to set man at variance with his fellow man, he is referring to doing battle with the attachments and illusions that are based on egoism. The relatives represent the reality of worldly relationships in which people feel, “He is mine, she is mine, these children are mine.” The more you increase I-ness and mine-ness—known in Sanskrit as *ahamta* and *mamata*—the more you intensify the cloud of ignorance that blocks out the luminous light of God, just as clouds shut out the shining sun. This illusion of ownership forms the fabric of the world process, and drives one to wander in vain pursuit of achievements that end in emptiness.

However, when you turn to God, He descends upon you with a sword of light. As the sun rises, it sends forth swords of rays that pierce the heart of darkness. From the point of view of the darkness, the sun is a terrible force—it comes to destroy darkness with a sword – turning relative against relative. But from the point of view of the light, it is a wondrous development. Similarly, when God within the heart tears asunder the illusions created by the mind steeped in the darkness of ignorance, the very cause of pain and suffering, there unfolds the unimaginable beauty of Divine Love, the ultimate source of peace and supreme joy.

The ideal behind every religion is to discover the love of God. Just as a fish out of water struggles to return to the water, so too, every soul yearns to be reunited with God. Unfortunately, this yearning is obstructed by numerous illusions: “This is me. These are mine. I have done all this

work to secure my happiness and that of my family. How great am I!” Illusions such as these prevent a person from communing with God and reaching the ultimate state of fulfillment. This is why Lord Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me....”

Develop the great insight that all living beings are sustained by God. It is God Who shines through the eyes of the child that a mother holds in her arms. It is God Who operates through your friends and dearest relatives. When you develop this insight, you adore God while serving your relatives.

The ideal that one must love God in others is one of the foundations of the Hindu religion. Saint Kabira sang: “*Ghat ghat me hai sain ramata katuka vachan mat bol re*”—“In every individual abides the Lord. Therefore, do not speak harsh words.” Rather, seize by the forelock every opportunity that God gives you to serve others. Be careful not to create egotistical impressions of *dwesha*—hatred, greed and jealousy—as well as impressions of *raga* or attachment. These impressions abide on both sides of one coin.

In general, people are confused about the meaning of “detachment” because this is a very subtle and advanced philosophical concept. If you do not understand the concept properly, you may misinterpret it to mean that one should be cold, indifferent, or even cruel. A person who has just attended a Yoga lecture about *vairagya* or detachment might go back home and tell his relatives, “I’m no longer attached to you. Do whatever you want. Let the baby cry! I don’t care. I’m detached!” But, of course, that is not the real meaning of detachment.

Detachment is meant to withdraw you from your illusions and direct your vision to the Divine, which is Supreme Love. To the extent you withdraw from illusory forms of love, to that extent a more profound love unfolds within your heart towards others. A love of this sort is like sunlight. When the sun rises, clouds catch the rays and

begin to glow, decked with multicolored attire. Similarly, as more profound love unfolds in your heart, it touches every aspect of your personality, making it magnanimous and beautiful.

There is a parable that provides a vivid description of the imprisoning nature of attachment. There was once a king who was especially fond of his pet hawk. It was his custom to take the hawk to a nearby forest to hunt with him. Often, while the hawk was flying over the forest, he would pass a hut where an old woman lived and he would fly down and peer inside. It seemed like such a warm and cozy place to the hawk, and there was usually a nice fire going in the fireplace. Whenever the woman saw the bird, she would beckon to him, saying, “Come little child. Come take some warm food by the fire.”

On one occasion, the hawk, thinking that it would be wonderful to live with someone who would give him so much love, decided to enter the old woman’s hut. No sooner had he flown through the window than the woman caught hold of him, tied a string around his neck, and clipped some of his extraneous feathers so he could not fly. As she did so she said, “I’m doing all this just for you because I love you. Stay here with me forever.” And so the hawk became a prisoner. From the woman’s point of view it was all love, and the hawk fell for it. But the moment he did so he lost his freedom of flight.

Love based on attachment runs the same course. When you love someone with attachment, your ego is always planning to tie that person down so that he or she may always stay as close to you as possible. When your love is conditioned by attachment, you have unwittingly created bondage, not only for the other person, but bondage for yourself as well. When higher love develops, however, you realize the joy of inner freedom for yourself as well as for the other person. You no longer feel threatened by the possibility that the person may leave you. Your purpose then becomes one of helping the soul to fly, not tying it down.

Unless there is deeper love, one cannot let go of lesser love. As you discover the deeper love of God, attachment melts away and you find that you have no expectations as you perform duties for the people you love. The very fact that you have loved another person and helped that person grow is fulfilling. A simple illustration is a mother’s love for her child. The mother’s love for the child is so exhilarating that she expects nothing in return. Have you ever heard of a mother who itemized all the expenses for her child’s care and then presented the bill to him when he is grown up? The fact is that the child’s very presence is deeply rewarding to her.

When you have profound love in your heart, you do not develop attachments, because the exhilaration you feel surpasses ordinary human love. This is the implication of Jesus’ statement: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

The moment your mind becomes caught up by names and forms—“mother” and “father”—you develop attachment. You want to tie down different individuals in the network of *raga*. But when you develop Divine Love, you are sacrificing, self-effacing, enduring and forgiving, just as a mother is with her child. You wait with patience because you understand that people change for the better, not through force or compulsion, but through the expression of love. Thus a love that waits, sacrifices, and inspires emanates from one’s heart when attachments fade.

Taking Up the Cross

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16: 24-25) Taking up the cross is a constant effort to let go of the illusions that one’s ego has created. As you go on sacrificing your egotistical attitudes with

vigilance and valor, you constantly affirm the cross. He who goes after only the individualized, physical life of his personality gains nothing. But he who no longer clings to individuality—a development that characterizes the state of Enlightenment—gains eternal life. This is what Jesus implied when he spoke to his disciples about taking up the cross.

According to *Raja Yoga*, there are five *kle-shas*, or afflictions of the unconscious: *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha*, and *abhinivesha*. *Avidya* is ignorance. Out of ignorance arises *asmita*, or egoism. Egoism sets up two currents: *raga* and *dvesha*, or attachment and hatred. These create karmic entanglements making one attached to one's physical life. This attachment or "clinging" to physical life is called *abhinivesha*. It is this attachment that Jesus refers to.

As you know, a cross has two lines: vertical and horizontal. The horizontal line symbolizes vision that is caught up in the world of relativity, the world of names and forms. The vertical line represents the transcendental—the vision of love that enables one to see all living beings in the light of God. The whole of creation is just a vast temple that God has placed you in, and He has given you the ability and opportunity to serve and adore Him in an infinite number of ways. Therefore if love of God has developed in your heart, and if you are filled with the awareness of the Divinity in all, then you become worthy of Jesus. And it is for that goal that Jesus and other great incarnations such as Rama, Krishna, and Buddha came with the same profound message: to detach from the world and be attached to God. Detach and attach. This is the subtle secret of all religions.

May Lord Jesus bless you to achieve the detachment that will allow your soul to fly like a hawk in the vastness of eternity and infinity!

Ashram Festivities 2025

MAR 1:	Mahashivaratri
APR 5:	Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti
APR 19:	Easter
MAY 10:	Buddha Purnima
JULY 12:	Guru Purnima
AUG 16:	Krishna Janmashtami
AUG 30:	Ganesh Chaturthi
SEPT 25-OCT 3:	Navaratri (DAYS 1-9)
OCT 4:	Vijaya Dashami
OCT 18:	Deepavali
NOV 22:	Thanksgiving
DEC 20:	Christmas

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