

Attachment and Fetishizing

By Richard Harvey

Now it is a fact of the genuinely spiritual, as opposed to soulful, worldly, materialistic practice that the less you have, the more you have; the more you give, the more you receive. This is the deeper meaning of Jesus of Nazareth's saying, "For everyone who has more will be given more, and for he who does not have, even what he has will be taken away." Similarly, the more you let go, the more capacity you have for allowing the precious gifts that are offered to you.

To attain the spiritual state of non-attachment, or freedom in other words, we must be free of all attachments. For now, let's focus on the part that includes your attachment to the means to Truth. Once you reach your destination you don't fall down and worship the road. When you have arrived, you have no more need of the road. The means are just that – the means.

When we remain attached to the method, the philosophy or even the teacher in his or her human form or cult-likeness after we have attained, then we are fetishizing spirituality. We are in danger of reducing spirituality – living, breathing, vibrant spirituality and timeless Truth – to religion, by which I mean not true religion, but dry, decaying, prejudiced religion: the religion of the dead.

Some time ago I had three discussions with people who wanted to convert me into adopting their fetish. One urged me to read *A Course in Miracles*, another referred me to Osho, and a third reminded me that Rumi was, is, and always will be and that I could connect with him, like all spiritual masters, if I just knew how. These are all fetishes. I – and I hope you – wouldn't dream of telling people what to do, unless they asked. Even then, we should approach the task with reserve and caution. Unless someone approaches you, we have no right to presume we can take their autonomy, their ability to make and learn from their mistakes, away from them. Spirituality is not some game of trying to find the "right" way and then applying it indiscriminately to everyone.

A Course in Miracles is good, so is Osho, and likewise Rumi, but why on earth should it be the approach that one single individual needs right at this moment and why should you be the one to give it to them, when you haven't even been asked to make suggestions? Fetishizing has become a curse of the modern era. My spiritual teachers, the spiritual teachings I have encountered and have been drawn to are intimations of the truth. When you have seen through the veils – through one or some of the many and varied ways to liberation and realization – you recognize that these are merely the means. Do not worship the road, neither worship the finger that points, nor the hand that beckons. The spiritual adepts, the avatars, the enlightened seers, and spiritual visionaries are personalities that have blended and finally merged into the All and the Absolute. They leave not a trace. This is their blessing and their grace. They are forever transparent to transcendent Love and Truth. They are human beings who have realized the true nature of Self and the true nature of Self – however incomprehensible it seems – is that you are the total existence. As Ramana Maharshi put it, "Many know that the ocean contains the drop, but few know that the drop contains the ocean."

The teaching of Truth is not present so we can erect a religion around it, fetishize it, or build a museum to it. Reality or God is a living vibrant truth. The poet, mystic singer and songwriter Van Morrison has

written some wonderful songs about spirituality. One of my favorites touches on our unique good fortune, the gift of the gate as it has appeared to humanity in the past and present eras. He sings about the light and the truth in the eyes of the spiritual master. Then he turns to express a fabulous, crucial insight. He sings: Why didn't they leave us to wander through buttercup summers? Why didn't they leave us to wander when there was no other?

The agonizing poignancy of this is a test of your sincerity and earnestness. You feel how Truth and Light are not, for the moment, eclipsed in our world, because of those great spirits who have embodied the Eternal and how these beings of extraordinary compassion cared enough to stay and teach the lessons of eternity.

When we have entered the gate, the Eternal is before us. With this thought in the background, see also whether you are ready to let go of your attachment to the gate. After all you have passed through; it has done its work and fulfilled itself in you. So what further need do you have of it? What can you now let go of?

When we truly honor the gate to the very end of the process of honoring, we must also inevitably leave it behind. There is a saying: "Poor is the pupil who does not surpass his master."

Going beyond the gate, going past the teacher, going into the infinite, with nothing; no attachments, no thought, no ideas, no bondage at all – this is why those great spiritual beings have returned to teach, often to sigh, to whisper, and sometimes to shout and scream to humanity, this is it! this is the truth! this is what it smells like, looks like, feels like, sounds like, tastes like!

When you enter the gate, you are entering into a process of loss. Everything you are attached to and everything you carry you will fight hard to hold onto. Through surrender and yielding to the beckoning of the gate, you embrace the golden opportunity, and all will have to be relinquished eventually. This is the meaning of surrendering to the spirit or the tests of the soul. Just how much do you love the Divine? And devotion calls back, "Absolutely."

This article is an excerpt from Richard Harvey's book [Your Divine Opportunity](#).