

## **INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE**

**Dr. Umeshwar Yadav**

*M.A., Ph.D.*

Lecturer

Dept. of Philosophy

C.R.College,Bisun, Kisanpur, Samastipur

Sanskrit terms 'priya' and 'preman' and Hindi word 'prema' are used for the English word 'Love' and the terms 'preya' and 'premaspada' are used for all those appear lovable to us. The term is often equated with Sexual attraction, compassion, affection, fondness, friendship, alliance, some pact or deal and with so many human merits or say demerits in terms of Nietzsche. Is love an object? If it is, the word 'love' in a very general sense, may mean either universal or individual or individual qualified by universal or universal qualified by individual. Since the term 'love' denotes an abstract concept, it denotes as universal meaning which in the analytical scheme is defined by different persons in different ways as per their personal feelings of love in the empirical world and, therefore, it is difficult to come to an agreeable definition of the world. It is not an object? Most of the scholars accept love as such an object that cannot be defined in specific terms. Definitions vary because of it being an abstraction. But if it is so then there is all logical possibility of an abstracted being to be defined agreeably by all those having abstracting capacity.

Plato accepted love as idea that is universal that inheres in all those things appearing lovable. Loving things are teleologically subordinated to the idea-love. It is not a definition of love but an idealistic outlook involved in making the subordination of things understandable.

Is it non-definable? It can be non-definable only if it is not a natural object and then it being non-natural cannot be defined in terms of natural. This, in G.E.Moore's terminology, is non definable because it is a non-natural thing or a whole having no part/particle/a unit without a constituent or not an object at all, a reality having no predicate, no constituent, no essence. If we accept the latter position, we will not add any thing to the subject under consideration and then the interpretation of lovable things that is essences or predicates

will be impossibility. And in case of the Moore's position the love will be indefinable; any attempt of its predication will amount to a fallacy which he calls naturalistic.

Love is understood on three levels- i. bodily, ii. Mental and iii. Spiritual. At the bodily level it is bodily attraction of positive and negative sexes. We can better say it is sexual hunger and is confined to the satisfaction of sex. Can this satisfaction be sublimated to mental and then to spiritual? Nothing can be said positively on this question. At mental level, love creates a peculiar type of a psychological phenomenon in the mind of the lovers because of which both of the lover and beloved find an inclusion or a union of the two is such a way that each other seeks a meaning in that inseparable union. They may risk their lives for any separation. This kind of love has separation as it's opposite. The possibility of opposition indicates that it is not the love, the ideal that one thinks of uncontradicted. Can sublimation of such a love possible. There are feelings of union and separation and any feeling of separation creates fear in the lover and the feeling of union produces happiness. The recurring of fear and satisfaction is opposed to the true nature of love. Love demands sacrifice and that provides strength in both of the lover and beloved. The third and the last type is spiritual love. It is given utmost importance by the religious devotees and most of the philosophers of India take this sort of love differently. On their view, I shall come to discuss after this paragraph. Presently I want to say that all sorts of love are sharable. At the first two levels it is a sharing in between the lover and the beloved; it exists only between the two or more than two. The last one is also sharable. When the socio-ethical thinkers say that to serve a deprived one or to serve humanity is to serve God and like wise to love God means to love his creation including you, they want to point out the same fact of sharing. The love is not an isolated thing that can be experienced in alienation. Love is always to exist in between the two or more than two. Even the idealist philosophers for whom the reality is love and it is all pervading, they do not deny the sharability of love. Love is a term used for one's experience as non-different from the thing loved. The realization of identity or non-difference between the pervading truth and the pervaded phenomena is not against the idealistic approach to love.

Sankarācārya will accept that the Brahman is the love and the lovable are the appearances of the same and the appearances are false (mithyā). This way, love in this world is false appearance and it is beyond the appearances. Sāmkhya will accept that love is attraction, an

attribute, the predicate or an activity of the primordial matter and beyond that there is no possibility of love transcendently. Buddhists will also join hands with sāmkhya and Nyāya as they do not accept any feeling like love in nirvāna.

The Upanisadis seers accept love as every thing- the transcendence and immanence. The love is a sharable thing; it is sharing of individual in Brahman and Brahman in an individual. In individual to individual and the individual to nature the same law of sharing operates. All things and our relation to those things exist because of love and more than that love is not confined only to them; it is transcendental as well.

The Upanisadic dialogue between a wife and a husband on the philosophy of love makes me capable of any stepping on a discussion on the simplest concept under discussion.

Before joining the institution of renunciation (sanyāsāśrama), Yājñavalkya, the Upanisadic seer, calls in both of his wives namely Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī, for the purpose of distribution, between them, of the property, he earned during the institution of household (grhasthāśrama). Kātyāyanī agrees with the proposal but Maitreyī inquires of whether she might enjoy immortality because of wealth. What could she have of wealth if she would not attain immortality out of it? In reply to the question, Yājñavalkya expresses the view that she can get all those things ordinary one gets out of possessing wealth. Maitreyī requests her husband to teach her means to immortality (Amrtattva sādhanam mein mahyam bruhi)<sup>1</sup>. Yājñavalkya preaches her the philosophy of **love** she aspires for.

The dialogue is found in the fourth chapter of the second section of Brhadāranyakopanisad. The original dialogue, commentary of Sankarācārya, Vārttika of Sureśvarācārya, Vārttikasāra of Swāmi Vidyāranya and commentary of

Ānanda Giri on it form an excellent topic for a philosophical discussion. Recently, Jai Sanmugam in his paper entitled 'Yājñavalkya's Teaching on the means to Immortality' published in **JICPR**, Vol. XVIII, no. 4,2001,pp135-150, has presented his study of the said dialogue there in. The author has missed to discuss the basis points of the dialogue. Why is the very soul alone beloved? Why do all belongings appear dear only for the sake of dearness of the soul? Answer to these questions forms the philosophical aspect of the dialogue and is useful in throwing light on

the foundational principle of Advaita Vedanta as envisaged by Yājñavalkya. Aforesaid points prompted me to write the present article.

Soul in this dialogue stands for non-dual spirit that is exclusively dear. Yājñavalkya has given three sorts of arguments in favour of utmost dearness of soul an account of them, in the light of commentaries, is given here below-

The soul is closest to anything. Son, wife, wealth and other belongings are external dear but the parts of body, senses, vital-air are internal and therefore dearer than the former. The external and the internal things are dear relatively to their closeness to soul. The soul is the closest and therefore dearest.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of the argument, according to which those appear different in ignorance are also the same spirit after realization or attainment of the sense of non-duality and therefore dear, is philosophically more significant. Discussion this aspect of argument, Yājñavalkya states with the help of instances that a husband is not dear for the sake of husband and similarly a wife, wealth, Brāhmana, a Ksatriya, deities, wealth, prosperity and all living and non-living beings and belongings are not dear for the sake of themselves but for the sake of soul<sup>2</sup>. They appear dear because of them being perceived as own soul. However, they are not dear independently. In adverse circumstances, they appear non-dear and if they appear dear it is because of their appearance as non-different from the soul.

The soul is dear-in-itself and is bliss by nature. The dearness to be felt in others is relative to the proportion they reflect bliss. The soul never experienced non-dear and therefore absolute dear. Swami Vidyāranya writes 'in dreams, achievement of royal majesty is pleasant but painful to the dreamer in waking. Yājñavalkya's proposal in his dialogue is not hedonistic but renouncing<sup>3</sup>. The statement may appear paradoxical but it is not actually paradoxical. Let me clarify the paradox of the statement with an example. A she-monkey at a time of terrific water flow climbs up on the top of a large tree to protect the life of her kid. She keeps up the kid in her hands to the extent of water below her nose but ultimately puts the kid under her heap to save her own life that is risked due to the flow of water over her nose. This is an example of hedonism. However, it throws light on the fact that her own life is dearer because of being closer than the life of her kid. It is clear in the dialogue that the soul is dear not because of it being my soul or of

my wife's soul but because of it beings. The soul of all pervading and the idea of otherness is due to the sense of duality that is ignorance. The soul never abandons any and it being closest is independently and absolute dear<sup>4</sup>. The mention of dearness of external and internal belongings is relative to proportion of sharing the common reality, that is the dearest or love-in-itself<sup>5</sup>.

After an observation of the discussion in aforesaid paragraphs, we find ourselves in a better position to conclude that it is logically inconsistent and metaphysically ignorance to accept mortal things as dear in itself. Dearness in them is irregular. Cold in summer and hot in winter appear dear but not the vice versa. It is mere adjunct ascribed to the dearness of soul and taken as real not only because of a teleological subordination but also of perceiving the own soul in them that things other than soul appear dear. This is the point keeping in view that Yājñavalkya teaches Maitreyī that the soul is the dear; it is to be heard, to be reflected on and to be meditated upon<sup>6</sup>. By learning, reflecting and meditation on the soul, one becomes the soul of all (sarvātmā). Every thing is dear for him who realizes it in all and himself in everything (sarvam khalvidam Brahman).

This line of thinking is explored in Kāsmīra Saivism also as we find in the following verse of *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī* (savomamāyavibhavam itetaparijānath. Viśvātmno vikalpānām prasare'pi maheśatā)<sup>7</sup>. Śakti is the beloved of the Śiva and the inseparable union (Love) of the two is such that is called 'Ardhanārīśvara'. Śakti, the female part, is Tapapradhāna while the male part, is Yājñavalkya'na. It is the dynamism or creativity of the Śiva without which Śiva ceases to be so. Love makes the dance of Śiva (tāndava) possible without which no creation, no ideation, no sansāra of any kind is possible.

Conclusively, I can say that if love is the coming together of the two or more than two in a way that both of them loose their personal identity to form a union and that unitary living provides the signification of life that is existence and bliss, then the Upanisadic philosophy of love is sound. However, it amounts to an idealistic approach to love with which most of you may agree.

**References:**

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6. Brh.Up.Vārttikasāra 2/4/5, kārikā 24-25.
7. Isvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī - 4/11/1.