

Chapter –VIII

Mystical Love in Superlatives

In a poem *God* Sri Aurobindo expresses his mystical love.

“Thou who pervadest all the world below,
Yet sist above,
Master of all who work and rule and know,
Servant of love!
Thou who disdainest not the warm to be,
Nor even the clod,
There fore we know by that humility
That thou are God”.

According to Ben Ami states of mysticism are of three divisions: the type of passion or involvement; the type of passionless or detachment and the type of both passion and passionlessness which is the union of involvement and detachment.

According to Shri Ram Chandraji (Babuji) “passion is an excitement in passion”. The broad ideal includes every superlative passion. It has been held by some mystics. It fits more easily into the third type of passion which is “Love”. For the word Shri Ram Chandraji created a beautiful image.

“Love is what is alive when a flower blooms and will never come again when the flower closes”. There he gave his final definition:” Love is craving for Reality. Opening ourselves to Reality is love”¹

Naturally such love tends to personify its object which is imagined as the divine father, mother or spouse. Mystical love, with its yearning for union, sees the divine beloved most usually perhaps as the spouse. Mother is a frequent ideal.

Among the Muslims mystical love was developed by the Sufis. The robe of rough wool (*suf*) was an indication. Love was particularly the theme of the Persian Sufis, to whom God, beautiful beyond reason and imagination, had an indescribably intense magnetism. The encounter with him was a shock, a stupor, a painful ecstasy -*majd*. This ecstasy is a flame born in the interior of being. It springs out of passionate desire and when it comes the limbs are shaken by joy or sorrow.

The Sufi resents the minutest distance between himself and God. He wishes for annihilation (*fana*) into the ontological density of God. The poet Rumi says of the annihilated man. The essence of his being survives but his attributes are merged in the attributes of God, like the flame of a candle that in the presence of the sun.

If we put cotton on it is burnt away. It does not exist because it gives us no light. The light of the sun has annihilated it.

According to Sufi theory annihilation is paralleled by the subsistence (*baqa*) of the unity of everything. One contemplates at the ultimate, God as the essence of universe. The veils of the world removed, reality is there naked, the soul is freed.

The greatest of the Sufi poets is Jalal-al-Din Rumi, whose image of the candle-flame in the sunlight has been quoted. He was lean and hypnotic-eyed, tolerant to everyone, and infinitely modest. He was eager to pass the time with the simplest men. On 28 November 1244 an elderly wandering dervish Shams-al-Din of Tabriz, arrived at Komia, and Rumi fell in love with him. Rumi was so transported and smitten that for a time he was thought insane. When, to Rumi's great sorrow, Shams finally vanished, Rumi fell in love with one of his own pupils, when this pupil died, with another, who was to succeed him as head of the Sufi order he founded.

Rumi loved Shams as the annihilated ideal man, that one, who has become identical with God and allowed God to become conscious, in him, of himself. Rumi wrote a collection of poems which he attributed to Shams.

Rumi wrote:

“I have put duality away I have seen the two worlds are one,

One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call,
He is the first, He is the last, He is the outward, He is
the Inward.”

The dervishes are in the situation of single body. If one of its members feels pain, all the other parts are diseased. The eye gives up its seeing, the ear its hearing, the tongue its speaking, all assemble in that one place. The condition of true friendship is to sacrifice oneself for one's friend to plunge oneself into tumult for the friend's sake. For all are directed one and the same thing; all drowned in the same sea. That is the effect of faith and condition of Islam. So, wherever we are and in what ever condition we find ourselves strive always to be lovers. Once love has become our property we will be always lovers in the grace, at the resurrection and in paradise for ever and ever. Rumi advised to love so constantly that it would become impossible to stop.

Mystic love is in the Indian tradition. One of its sources is a tenth or eleventh century compendium of stories, the *Bhagavatha Purana*. Its hero is Krishna, the dark skinned, lotus-eyed incarnation of the God, *Vishnu*, who descends to the world periodically to help the righteous against the evil.

Born into a human family, Krishna, even as a *babe-in-arms*, begins ridding the country side of its demons. As he grows up, the

girls, who are occupied with cow-herding, fall altogether in love with him. Neither moral values nor husbands can hold them back, when husband tries, his wife is so avid that her spirit hurries out of her body to Krishna. When autumn comes, his flute sounds in the forest and the cow girls beautify themselves and rush to him. They find him to crown him in peacock feathers. Mockingly he reproves them for leaving their husbands. They dance and sing with him. But Krishna thinks he is in their power and he vanishes. They search for him and finally he relents and reappears explaining that he, who is the fulfiller of all desires cannot be judged like others. He divides himself magically and dances with them all, one Krishna to each girl. They put their fingers in his fingers and whirl about with rapturous delight. Krishna in their midst is like a lovely cloud surrounded by lightning, singing, dancing, embracing and loving. They pass the hours in extremities of bliss. All this rouses the passionate *bhakti* which will lead to self-consecration to Krishna and life-long devotion to his service. Such devotion leads speedily to release.

The ideal of passionlessness is selective. The ideal of superlative dispassion is hardly natural to us, but it was approached in ancient times by the stoics and by the Epicureans. When they worshipped the impassive self-contained gods, they were

imagined living in the spaces between the worlds. Plotinus, who compares the mystic love to the union of lovers, finds beauty everywhere. It is the transcendental beauty. But he instructs us in negation and in the thinking away of space and time and every shape and pleasure they contain. This, he says, is the life of gods and divine and blessed men. A life, which takes no delight in the things of this world, escapes in solitude to the solitary.

The Hindus who followed the ninth century philosopher, Shankara, adopted an ideal which, like that of Plotinus, has some muted suggestions of passion. The passion lay in their view that reality was, at bottom, pure consciousness and pure bliss. But the purity of this bliss led them to reject every pleasure including sexuality, as a delusion. In their eyes, the only ordinary experience that could suggest the ideal was deep, dreamless sleep. They shunned involvement, or rather the passion of involvement, and sought only the fixed inner self, the *atman*.

The things perceived by the senses cause *Shankara* neither grief nor pleasure. He is not attached to them. Neither does he shun them. Constantly delighting in the *atman* he is always at play with himself. He tastes the sweet unending bliss of the *atman* and is satisfied.

The knower of the *atman* does not identify himself with his body. He rests with in it, as if with in a carriage. The man of contemplation walks alone. He lives desireless amidst the objects of desire. The *atman* is his eternal satisfaction. He sees the *atman* present in all things.

“Sometimes he appears to be a fool, sometimes a wiseman, sometimes he seems splendid as a king, sometimes feeble-minded. Sometimes he is calm and silent, sometimes he draws men to him. Sometimes people honour him greatly. Sometimes they insult him. Sometimes they ignore him. That is how the illumined soul lives always absorbed in the highest bliss.”²

Faith and love are sure medicines for all kinds of diseases of the mind and its weaknesses. It is the brave who conquer battles of life as well as attain bliss. Our job is to remain firm and sincere to our duty. To feel angry for what He gives or what He does not give is against the principle of true love and devotion. We must learn how to create within the heart the feeling of universal love. It is the surest remedy of all evils and can help to free us from the horrors of war. To come up to the level of real happiness we must necessarily rise above ourselves. It is essential for the creation of atmosphere of universal love. Every body can be won by love, even the ferocious

animals are tamed by this very instrument. God can also be tamed if a man moves a little to Him.

“Almost in all the religions direct love with God has been preached. It means surrendering to God alone. It can only be acquired by dependency and love. Trust crossing its own boundary becomes faith. Faith when it crosses its own boundary becomes love. And love when it crosses its own boundary becomes surrender.³

All religions preach love. It has formed the major theme of the world's output of great poetry. At the individual level every one seeks it in his or her own life. Love has been responsible for heroic deeds. It is true that behind every act of human endeavour lies the search for love. And its glorious working of unsurpassed beauty is in the manifestation of faith. Faith at all levels is culminating in the mystical life. There love finds its supreme flowering and glory in the search for the unknown ultimate.

In the immortal words of St. Augustine love is:

“Man is what he loves.

If he loves a stone he is a stone;

If he loves a man he is a man;

If he loves God-----I dare not say more,

For if I said

That he would then be God,
Ye might stone me!”

In words of Blake, a great western mystic, love is:

“Oh Saviour! Pour upon me
Thy Spirit of meekness and love.
Annihilate the selfhood in me.
Be Thou all my Life.”⁴

The starting point is that yoga begins with love, with nothing else. And where there is love, fear cannot exist, doubt cannot exist. We approach yoga merely from the point of knowledge, acquisition of knowledge, acquisition of physical valour, physical strength then of course, we face with limitations, very practical limitations, sometimes insuperable limitations. But when we approach the yoga with only love in our hearts all barriers are broken and transcended and the guru’s grace flows because love ‘knows no barriers of any kind. Almighty Himself cannot deny to us what our love demands.

If love depends on physical existence it is a transitory love. It is not love at all. We can call it by so many other names: affection, attachment, passion-all these names or terms are applicable. But true love exists beyond eternity because the presence is unnecessary for it. When the physical form is necessary, the presence is necessary, there is a limitation of time, there is a

limitation of space. But when we have transcended the physical form and then the physical form perhaps disappears from our vision one day, and that love continues to grow beyond all possibilities of growth. Here is a true lover of the ultimate. Such a person has transcended eternity himself, because all the physical factors have been obviated from his vision. He is now a master.

Love makes every task easy and paves the way for the shower of God's grace to smoothen the way to the ultimate goal. 'Love is the hunger of human soul for divine beauty' according to Socrates. And Love is the inner awakening to Reality. Love Him who loves all and thus everybody is automatically loved through Him.

There is a beautiful story in the *Bhagavata*. It deals with the life of Lord Krishna. Everything is over, and Lord Krishna is leaving for his divine abode. All who were with him loved him madly especially the ladies of *brindavan*. They had only to listen to his flute-playing somewhere, and they would become mad and run away, leaving everything just like that. There was immense love in their hearts. Krishna called one of his disciples, called Uddhava, and told him, "These people love me madly, but they love me as a human being. I have not been able to teach them what divine love is. I am leaving you behind to teach them how to love the divine as the divine."

There are two important lessons in that small story.

The first is: Our love for the divinity must not be of the human sort. Our love has to become progressively refined. Our love becomes a divine love for the divine.

The second important truth is that:

Krishna, the divine *avatar*, could not do it himself. What God cannot do, therefore, a divinely endowed man has to do. A divine being provides us a form to love. He comes with divine blessings and divine commands to transform us. That is He loves us with a divine love and also teaches us to transform ourselves. Similarly we have to approach him in two ways:

“We have to love Him with a total love, with total obedience to His teachings and practice. The divine principle in Sahaj Marg, is that love itself brings out our obedience. This obedience makes us grow faster and faster, refines and develops our love progressively, till we reach the goal. It is the divine person who is Love personified. So the individual human heart acts as the vehicle for love to join with the divine.”⁵

Spirituality tries to put the approach back in its right perspective that we must love God because He is inside us. He is not something external to us waiting with a rod in his hand to

punish us for our transgressions. He is inside us and being inside us if He punishes us, He has to endure the punishment Himself whether He likes it or not. Because that which is inside must suffer as much as that which is outside does. When skin suffers, body suffers. And how can God escape from suffering? So when we turn our minds inside and approach Him with this love, then there is no question of suffering and there is no question of punishment. The Godly spirit is the spark of divinity enshrined in our hearts. It begins to be fanned by the breeze of our love, and as it grows, the voice of conscience begins to develop again. We call this the 'flowering of the consciousness.'

Conscience is nothing but the growth of a superior consciousness in us. When this real conscience develops, we find true morality develops and true ethics develop. Our inside tells us 'this you shall do and this you shall not do'. So, love breeds communion with the ultimate, that communion makes Him grow in us.

In the Christian tradition they say, 'God is a jealous lover' He wants to be alone in us. God says, "You love me. I am your beloved, you are my lover. Then let us be alone. Only you and me. No third person!" With a third person it is no longer sacred. A love which

can be looked upon by a third person is no longer lover. It is brought down to the level of the marketplace.

When love is personalized towards oneself it becomes selfishness. It is love of the self for the sake of the self. When this is thrown outward, it becomes universal love, where we can love each other, with a pure impartial love. There is no partiality in it. 'One cannot serve somebody because he belongs to one's community or to one's village or to one's nation.' A human being is a human being wherever he may be born, and by virtue of being a human being, he or she is my brother or sister. So, these concepts of universal brotherhood are taught fundamentally in a spiritual situation.

Love means responsibility. But we don't want responsibility; therefore we don't want love. Unfortunately pleasure is equated with love, when we can have pleasure without love and without responsibility. We have the pleasure and nothing else. And then we find that the pleasure turns to pain. Because love has no opposite. As Babuji has said, opposite of love is not hate. Absence of love is hate. This is something which we must clearly understand, because people often say, "Oh, love and hate are two extremes, cold and heat are two extremes." It is a stupid concept; western concept; psychological concept. The true thing is, where love does not exist, there hate exists. They are not opposite. When love comes, there

can be no hate. It disappears. It is like, when the sun comes, there can be no mist or fog. It just disappears. Can we say therefore that the sun is the opposite of fog! In the presence of the one, the other cannot remain. We have this peculiar phenomenon in society that lack of love has brought about disintegration in families, disintegration in love relationships, disintegration in society, mutual disharmony, religious intolerance, social intolerance, national intolerance. And therefore we are at war, at all levels, with in the family. Sri Aurobindo tried to integrate all the communities under spirituality.

Notes

1. A.J.Born *Tears&Laughter*, SriRamChandraMission, U.S.A,
(pub- 1990),p.62,63.
2. Ben Ami Scharstein *Mystical Experience*,(pub-1973),pp.
7,8,9,10,11, 12.
3. Sahaj Marg Educational Series *Love* vol-3,pp.53,54,56,57.
(Letters between Sri Ram Chandraji
&Dr.K.C.Varadachari Retired professor of Comparative
religion Ethics Philosophy under the Vivekananda Chair
Madras University. Letters between Shri RamChandraji
&P.RajaGopalachariji), (pub- 2000).
4. Shri Rajagopalachari *My Master*, (pub-1975), pp.61,171.
5. Sahaj Marg Educational Series *Ibid*, pp.86, 89, 93.