‘Love’ to ‘Divine Love’: The Odyssey

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Question::

How come God is ‘Love Infinite?’ What is the true nature/essence of God?

(or)

When and Why does the ‘infinity of God’s love’ seems to be impaired?

(or)

How is ‘God’s love’ experienced in the world-of-forms?

(or)

Why do we experience ‘love’ to be limited? When can we experience unlimited/unbounded love?

(or)

How come ‘lust’ binds, and is an expression of ‘selfishness’ and ‘ignorance’?

(or)

Why is it said that- ‘lust’ is a suppressor of ‘pure-love’?

(or)

Why ‘lustful life’ is considered ‘gross’ and “superficial”, from a spiritual perspective?

(or)

How does bodily-sensations nourishes ‘ego-life’?

(or)

How come ‘lust’ leads to suffering?

(or)

What are the different stages, a ‘lover of God’ has to pass through? How does the ‘intensity of love’ vary in every stage??

(or)

How come “longing” is an expression of love? How different is ‘longing’ from ‘lust’?

(or)

What sort of sublimation does lust goes through, when one’s consciousness broadens, ie., when one becomes aware of the ‘subtle-sphere’?

(or)

In which form does “love” expresses itself in the ‘mental-sphere’?

(or)

What are the characteristics of the ‘lovers’ of subtle and mental spheres?

(or)

At which stage on the Path does one’s “Selfishness” disappear? When can love become pure?

(or)

What is “Divine love”?

(or)

How is “God” experienced and realized in this path of love?

(or)

How come “creation” is a toy in the game of love?

Answer:

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Those who try to understand God through the intellect alone arrive at some cold and dry concept that misses the very essence of the nature of God. It is true that God is

- infinite Knowledge,
- infinite Existence,
- infinite Power, and
- infinite Bliss;

but God is not understood in His essence until He is also understood as infinite Love. In the Beyond state– from which the entire universe springs and into which it ultimately merges– God is eternally infinite Love. It is only when ‘God's love’ is viewed in the limited context of ‘forms’ (which arise in the interim period between the appearance of the illusory universe of duality and its merging) that its infinity seems to have been impaired.

When ‘God's love’ experiences itself IN and THROUGH the manifested forms of the universe, it goes through the following phases:

1. experiencing itself as extremely limited;
2. experiencing itself as becoming less and less limited and becoming more and more like infinite love; and
3. experiencing itself to be what it really is infinite in 'essence' and 'existence.'

The experience of limitation in love arises due to the ignorance caused by sanskaras, which are the by-products of the evolution of consciousness. And the process of love becoming infinite is characterized by the shedding of these limiting sanskaras.

As love, latent in the universe, goes through the early, almost unconscious stages of the various kingdoms, it gradually makes its appearance as 'lust' in the animal kingdom. Its appearance in human consciousness is initially also in the form of lust.

> **Lust is the most limited form of love in human consciousness**. In spite of the clear reference lust has to other persons, it is indistinguishable from undiluted selfishness because all the objects lust clings to are desired for the sake of and from the viewpoint of the limited and separate self. At the same time, it is a form of love because it has in it some kind of appreciation for others, though this appreciation is completely vitiated by thick ignorance about the true Self.

When 'human consciousness' is completely caught up in the duality of the gross sphere of existence, 'love' cannot express itself as anything other than 'lust' of some type. One may like curry because it tickles one's palate. There are no higher considerations, so it is a form of lust. It is only a craving for the sensations of taste.

> Mind also has cravings for the bodily sensations of– sight, smell, sound, and touch; and it nourishes its crude 'ego-life' through the excitement derived from these sensations. Lust of every type is an entanglement with gross forms, independent of the spirit behind them. It is an expression of mere attachment to sensual objects.

Since in all forms of lust– the heart remains unfed and unexpressed, it becomes a perpetual vacuum and is in a state of unending suffering and non-

fulfilment. ‘Love’ that expresses itself as undiluted or one hundred percent ‘lust’ is in a state of extreme limitation because it is helplessly caught up in ceaseless craving.

> When the heart is in the clutches of ‘lust,’ the spirit remains, as it were, in a state of delusion or stupor. Its functioning is severely curtailed and perverted by the limiting ignorance it is subject to. Its higher potentialities are denied ‘expression’ and ‘fulfilment’, and this thwarting and suppression of the life of the spirit entails a state of utter bondage.

Lust is the most limited form of love functioning under the thralldom of ignorance. The unambiguous stamp of insufficiency that ‘lust’ invariably bears, is in itself a sign that it is an incomplete and inadequate expression of something deeper that is vast and unlimited.

> Through the manifold and unending sufferings that are attendant upon undiluted lust and the continued experiences of the frustration it brings, the ‘spirit’ is ceaselessly registering its unyielding protest against the utter superficiality of a life of unqualified lust. In this manner, the irrepressible voice of the infinity of ‘God's love’ indirectly asserts the imperative claims of its unexpressed but unimpaired reality.

Even in the lowest lustful life of the gross sphere, God is experiencing Himself as a lover; but, it is the state of a lover who is completely ignorant about the true nature of himself or of God, the Beloved. **It is the state of a ‘lover’ who is inexorably separated from the ‘divine Beloved’ by an opaque curtain of un-understood duality.** It is nevertheless the beginning of a long process by which the ‘lover’ breaks through the enveloping curtain of ignorance and comes into his own truth as unbounded and unhampered Love. But, **in order to get initiated into infinite love, the lover has to go through two other stages that are characteristic of the *subtle* and *mental* spheres**.

The lover in the subtle sphere is not free from lust, but the lust he experiences is not undiluted as in the gross sphere. The intensity of lust in the subtle sphere is about half that in the gross sphere***.*** Besides, there is no gross expression of lust as in the gross sphere.

The ‘lover’ in the gross sphere is inextricably entangled with gross objects; hence, lust finds gross expression. However, the lover in the subtle sphere has gotten free from attachment to gross objects; hence, in this case, lust remains unexpressed in its gross form. This lust has subtle expressions, but it cannot have gross expressions. Moreover, since about half of the original lust of the gross sphere gets sublimated in the subtle sphere, the lover in the subtle sphere experiences “love”– not as undiluted lust, but in higher form, as, longing to be united with the Beloved.

In the gross sphere, then, ‘love’ expresses itself as “lust”, and in the subtle sphere, it expresses itself as “longing”.

- Lust is a craving for sensations and, as such, is completely selfish in motive. It has utter disregard for the well-being of the worldly beloved. In longing, there is less selfishness; and though it continues to be possessive in a way, the object of love is recognized as having infinite worth and importance.

- Longing is a less limited form of love than lust. In longing, the curtain of duality has become more transparent and less obstructive, since, the lover now consciously seeks to overcome duality between the lover and the Beloved by yearning for His presence.

- In lust, the emphasis is solely on the limited self, and the worldly beloved is completely subsidiary to the gross needs of the self. In longing, the emphasis is equally distributed on the ‘self’ and on the “divine Beloved”; and the lover realizes that he exists for the Beloved, just in the same way as the Beloved exists for him.

The lover in the mental sphere has an even higher and freer expression of love. In this case, though lust has not completely disappeared, it is mostly sublimated. Only about one fourth of the original lust of the gross sphere remains, but it remains in a latent form without any expression. In the mental sphere, lust does not have even subtle expression.

The lover in the mental sphere is detached from subtle objects; and he is free from possessive longing for the object of love, which is characteristic of the lover in the subtle sphere.

In the mental sphere, love expresses itself as complete resignation to the will of God, the Beloved. All selfish desire, including longing for the presence of the Beloved has disappeared, as now the emphasis is solely on the worth and will of the Beloved and to be united with Him. Selfishness is utterly wiped out and there is a far more abundant release of love in its pure form.

However, even in the mental sphere–love has not become infinite since there is still present the thin curtain of duality that separates the lover from the Beloved. Love is no longer in the clutches of selfishness; but it is still short of being infinite, because it is experienced through the medium of the finite mind, just as in the lower spheres it is experienced through the medium of the lower bodies.

Love becomes consciously infinite in 'being' as well as in 'expression' when the individual mind is transcended. Such love is rightly called 'divine' because it is characteristic of the God state in which all duality is finally overcome.

In divine love, lust has completely disappeared. It does not exist even in latent form. Divine love is unlimited in essence and expression because it is experienced by the 'soul' through the 'Soul' itself.

In the gross, subtle, and mental spheres, the lover is conscious of being separated from God, the Beloved; but when all these spheres are transcended, the lover is conscious of his unity with the Beloved. The lover loses himself in the being of the Beloved and knows that he is one with the Beloved.

Divine love is entirely free from the thralldom of desires or the limiting self. In this state of Infinity, the lover has no being apart from the Beloved; he is the Beloved Himself.

One thus has God, as Infinite Love, first limiting Himself in the forms of creation, and then recovering His infinity through the different stages of creation. All the stages of God's experience of being a finite lover, ultimately culminate in His experiencing Himself as the sole Beloved.

The sojourn of the soul is a thrilling divine romance in which the lover–who in the beginning, is conscious of nothing but emptiness, frustration, superficiality, and the gnawing chains of bondage– gradually attains an increasingly fuller and freer expression of love. And ultimately, the lover disappears and merges in the divine Beloved to realize the unity of the lover and the Beloved, in the supreme and eternal fact of God as Infinite love.

– Meher Baba

Source ::

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