

THE METAPHYSICS OF DIVINE LOVE

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Let us begin this presentation with a very old saying, “as above, so below.” This speaks to the metaphysical ground of Sufism and Jnana Yoga. It is acknowledged that there is a beyond or an above, a oneness, which one can come to know through one’s awakened inner light. With both Sufism and Jnana Yoga meditation is a way of releasing awakeness. One comes to know through the heart not the head. The inner light at its heart is the light of love.¹

We will first begin with Sufism. To make the move to oneness, one is to overcome the annihilation of separation. Separation divides. One comes to understand that there is only one God. This is unification or oneness.

There are five principles in unification: the removal of phenomenality; affirmation of eternity; departure from familiar haunts; separation from brethren; forgetfulness of the known and the unknown.

Removal of phenomenality consists in denying that any phenomena are connected with unification. That they cannot in any way help one attain oneness with God.

Affirmation of eternity consists in God. God has always existed.

Departure from familiar haunts consists in departure from habitual pleasures and the forms of this world. Also departure from lofty and glorious states or miracles.

Separation from brethren consists in turning away from society of humankind and turning towards God. Anything other than God is a veil of imperfection.

Unification is the concentration of thoughts of God anything else is a dispersion of thought. In meditation perfect contemplation awakens purity of heart only by love.

Now let us turn to Jnana Yoga. To make the move to oneness, one contemplates all things as dwelling within oneself. It is in the light of intuition; a direct awareness in which one comes to understand there is no inner and no outer distinction to be made. Brahman by which all things are illumined is not manifest by their light. In meditation the Self is enlightened, realizing its identity with the Light.

There are three central principles of Jnana Yoga: the principle of superimposition; the principle of dependent origination and the principle of two truths.

The principle of superimposition consists in attributing qualities or relations to something that it does not fit. One basically superimposes on ultimate reality percepts and concepts within their constitution. It is what one looks through to describe the world.

The principle of dependent origination consists in saying that every phenomenon arises and passes away in dependence on other phenomena. No phenomenon is self-existent.

The principle of two truths consists in stating that there are two kinds of truth: the relative conditioned, conventional truth; and the unconditioned, absolute truth.

Relative truth, which is dependent, is lower knowledge and absolute truth is higher knowledge. Lower truth is a view of reality. Higher truth is not a view of reality at all. There are many lower truths but only one higher truth.

The thread of commonality that runs through Sufism and Jnana Yoga are: there is a direct experience of transcendental truth; the unveiling of the Self; and there is an attainment of oneness, Love.

Even though Sufism is basically duality and Jnana Yoga is without duality both Sufism and Jnana Yoga awaken one from ignorance to enlightenment. But in their own way each speaks of percepts or concepts meaning that lower truth deals with plurality of phenomena.

All phenomena are empty in that they are devoid of self-existence and self-nature. There is nothing in the world of phenomena that has own-existence or own-nature. Every phenomenon owes its existence and nature to other phenomena.

Whereas higher truth deals with singularity, there is only one and only one.

Advaita Vedanta clearly shows not only the unity of Sufism and Jnana Yoga but also all religions. To make the move to oneness, one comes to understand that the human being is divine; the human being must recognize that it is divine; and that all religions are on a path toward the One.

Philosophy usually attempts to explain love relationships between the categories of the Divine, the self and the other. The view presented here is

that love is a co-constituted relationship, not categories. The Divine, the self and the other cannot be separated. They cannot be separated because love is when one stands above where the view is the clearest. Both Hinduism and Islam agree on this in the sense that everything is a manifestation of Brahman and in Islam everything is created from the light of God, which is Allah.

Love has nothing to do with thought. In love there is neither past nor future, there is neither like nor dislike, there is no beautiful nor non-beautiful, there is no respect nor disrespect, there is no supply nor demand. In love there is only love. Love is when one stands above right here and now.

Go to the park and look at a rose. When one is close to it, it gives one fragrance and beauty. When one is far from it, one can still feel the fragrance. To the rose there is no difference between one or another person. That is love; it is love for love. When it comes to humans, the life of Gandhi represents that the opposite of injustice is love; it is not justice. Instead of an eye for an eye, it is love for an eye because an eye for an eye is enough to make the whole world blind.

Love has no time of past and future, cannot be manipulated or controlled, and it has nothing to do with thought. Because thought is conflict, time and sorrow. Love is fresh and alive; it has neither beginning nor end. It cannot be comprehended because it is a leap beyond rationality. To love is to reach the fullness of humanness through intuition. It is when a human tells a rose, tell me about God or Brahman and the rose blossoms.

The universe exists as a whole. Everything within the universe is part of the whole. To love is to be within the whole. To love is to be within the universe. Anything besides love is disastrous to the whole universe. To do anything other than love within the universe is to ask the universe as a whole to function without one or more of its parts, that is impossible. To shut down love, is to shut down the energy in the whole universe.

The form of the formless Ultimate Truth is truth and the only way to be closer to the Ultimate Truth is to love in truth. Humans, the universe and everything within it are manifestations of God or as described in Islam created in the light of God, the only way to be and exist is to love. The relationship among everything is a field of energy that is ignited by love.

For us to exist perfectly is to love. To be wholly is to love. To be one within the One is to love. Since God is love and love is God, the only way to be a manifestation is to love. This love cannot be manipulated or controlled because it is the self that is God.

Neither God nor Brahman has any kind of desire. So all actions are taken only for the benefits of others. This is Ultimate Love. Neither God nor Brahman gains anything from anyone. Being fully human is to be one with Brahman or God.

Love cannot be taught. It cannot be comprehended through thought. One comes to love when silent and empty one hears nothing and sees nothing. One comes to love when one is free from looking for, wanting or needing anything. Existence, says Rumi, was born when we fell in love with emptiness. One comes to love when the mind is quiet. No wonder both Sufism and Jnana Yoga call one to meditate.

Notes

- 1) This presentation is dedicated to Sunnie D. Kidd and Nahad Tawfeeq. Prepared for Presentation at the Thirteenth International Congress of Vedanta, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 12-15 September 2002.