



Love with an Object

a Theosophical view on one of the great questions of philosophy
“Is the love of forms, persons, or objects, true love?”

A presentation at the United Lodge of Theosophists
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edited extracts from the article [Love with an Object](#) by H. P. Blavatsky

Image: Great Crested Grebes kissing, kind courtesy of Glen Bartley Photography.

The Bhagavad Gita

Krishna speaking to Arjuna on self-restraint, the first step in the love of spirit:

When he hath renounced all intentions and is devoid of attachment to action in regard to objects of sense, then he is called one who hath ascended to meditation. He should raise the (lower) self by the (Higher) Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and in like manner, self is its own enemy. [...]

And he is esteemed among all who, whether amongst his friends and companions, *in the midst of enemies or those who stand aloof or remain neutral, with those who love and those who hate, and in the company of sinners or the righteous, is of equal mind.*

He who has attained to meditation should constantly strive to stay at rest in the Supreme, remaining in solitude and seclusion, having his body and his thoughts under control, without possessions *and free from hope.*

(Gita, Ch 6, pages 44-46)

The Bhagavad Gita (2)

Krishna speaking to Arjuna about *the omni-present Spirit*:

I will now make known to thee that path which the learned in the Vedas call *indestructible* into which enter those who are free from attachments, and is followed by those desirous of leading the life of a Brahmacharya laboring for salvation. He who closeth all the doors of his senses, imprisoneth his mind in his heart, fixeth his vital powers in his head, standing firm in meditation, repeating the monosyllable OM, and thus continues when he is quitting the body, goeth to the supreme goal....

But there is that which upon the dissolution of all things else is not destroyed; it is indivisible, indestructible, and of another nature from the visible. That called the unmanifested and exhaustless is called the supreme goal, which having once attained they never more return—it is my supreme abode. This Supreme, O son of Pritha, within whom all creatures are included and by whom all this is pervaded, may be attained by a devotion which is intent on him alone.

(Gita, Ch 8, pages 59-61)

Questions raised by H. P. Blavatsky

in *Love with an Object*

- Can a feeling directed solely to the Eternal and Infinite, which takes no cognizance of earthly illusions, be called love?
- Can love have no object?
- Is the love of forms or objects true love?
- If a man loved all things in the universe alike and without preference would not such a love be practically without any object?
- Wouldn't it be equal to loving nothing at all? Because in such a case the individuality of any single object would be lost sight of.

A Theosophical view of Eternal Love

Love directed towards all things alike (universal love) is beyond ordinary conception; yet this love which bestows ***no favours upon any one thing***, seems to be that ***eternal love*** recommended by all the sacred books of the East & West.

As soon as we begin to love one thing more than another, we not only ***detract from the rest an amount of love which the rest may rightfully claim***; but we also become ***attached to the object of our love***, a fate against which we are seriously warned in the pages of these books.

The Curious Paradox of Letting Go

HPB writes that on almost every page of the *Bhagavad Gita* “we are instructed only to direct our love to that which is *eternal* in every form, and let the *form itself* be a matter of secondary consideration.”

She quotes: “He must be regarded as a steadfast renouncer, who neither hates nor *desires*.” *Those who have knowledge* see the ***same thing*** in a learned and modest sage, or a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcast...

“Let no man rejoice in attaining what is pleasant, nor grieve in attaining what is unpleasant... He who is happy in himself, pleased with himself, who finds also light in himself, this Yogin, one with Brahmâ, finds *Nirvana in Him*.” (not outside)

Old Christian Conceptions of Love (1)

The *Bible* also tells us that “God is Love,”³ and that we should love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.⁴

While it teaches that we should love nothing else but God,⁵ who is All in All,⁶ yet it affirms, that this God is omnipresent, eternal and incomprehensible to the finite understanding of mortals.⁷

³ 1. John iv., 8.

⁴ Math. xxii., 37.

⁵ Math. xx., 37.

⁶ Ephes. i., 23.

⁷ 1. Timoth. vi., 16.

Old Christian Conceptions of Love (2)

The Bible teaches this love to be the most important of all possessions, without which all other possessions are useless,⁸ and yet this God, whom we are to love, is not an “object,”⁹ but everywhere. He is in us and we in Him.¹⁰

We are to leave all objects of sense and follow Him alone,¹¹ although we have no means of intellectually knowing or perceiving Him, the great Unknown, for whose sake we are to give up house and brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children and lands.¹²

⁸ 1. Corinth, xiii., 2.

¹⁰ Rom. xii., 5.

¹² Mark x., 29

⁹ John i., 5.

¹¹ Luc. v., 2.

Divine Love Described

What can all this mean, but that *love itself* is the legitimate object of love? It is a divine, eternal, and infinite power, a light which reflects itself in every object while it seeks not the object, but *merely to reflect itself in it*.

It is an indestructible fire which burns, shedding a light that shows its own image.

Love falls in love with nothing but its own self, ***it is free from all other attractions***. A love which becomes ***attached to objects of sense ceases to be free***, ceases to be love, and becomes ***mere desire***.

Pure and eternal love asks for nothing, but gives freely, but earthly love is attracted to persons and things.

Divine Love is the Power of Cohesion

Love is the supreme power of all. It holds together the worlds in space, it clothes the earth in bright and beautiful colours, it guides the instincts of animals and links together the hearts of human beings.

Acting upon the lower planes of existence it causes terrestrial things to cling to each other with fond embrace; but love on the spiritual plane is free.

Paradoxical Questions on Immortal Love

Love is an universal power and therefore immortal, it can never die. ***We cannot believe that even the smallest particle of love ever died***, only the instruments through which it becomes manifest change their form...

- How then could we possibly imagine a human being possessed of a love which never becomes manifest?
- How can we possibly conceive of a light which never shines and of a fire which does not give any heat?

Perfect Impartiality & True Love

“As the sun shines upon the lands of the just and the unjust”
... likewise divine love manifesting itself in a perfect man is distributed alike to every one ***without favour or partiality.***

Wherever a good and perfect human being exists, there is divine love manifest...

The more perfect he is, the more will his love descend upon and penetrate all who come within his divine influence.

Immortal Love Provides All

Let those who desire to come into contact with the Adepts enter their sphere by following their doctrines; seeking for love, *but not for an object of love.*

When they have found the former, they will find a superabundance of the latter throughout *the whole extent* of the unlimited universe; they will find it in everything that exists, for love is the foundation of all existence and without love nothing can possibly continue to exist.

A Definition of Divine Love

Divine love is the source of life, of light, and happiness. It is the creative principle in the Macrocosm and in the Microcosm of man. (compare with *KamaDeva*, slide 16)

It is *Venus*, the mother of all the gods, because from her alone originates Will and Imagination and all the other powers by which the universe was evolved.

It is *the germ of divinity* which exists in the heart of man, and which may develop into a life-giving sun, illuminating the mind... it originates from the centre (of the universe) and to that centre it will ultimately return.

Only in the Absolute does Love Fully Attain

Love can exist without form, but no form can exist without love. It is pure Spirit, but if its light is reflected in matter, it creates desire and desire is the producer of forms.

“But above this visible nature there exists another, unseen and eternal... from which they who attain to it never return.” (Gita 8:20)

This is the supreme abode of Love without any object... for there no object exists. There ***love is united to love***, enjoying supreme and eternal happiness within her own self and that peace. Non-existent for us, and yet existing in that Supreme *Be-ness...*

Love creates Compassion; Tsong-kha-pa

The causal relationship between compassion and the love that is the wish for beings to have happiness is not definite.

These three objectives

1. recognizing all beings as your mothers,
2. recollecting their kindness, and
3. wishing to repay this kindness...

are the basis for both the **love** that wishes beings to have happiness and the **compassion** that wishes them to be free from suffering; so you must make effort to cultivate these three.

This love gives rise to Compassion. *Lam Rim*, Vol 2, p32 (Snow Lion, 2014)

Kamadeva, the Eastern *Immortal Love* (1)

Kamadeva (Sk.). As the *Eros* of Hesiod, degraded into *Cupid* by exoteric law... so is Kama a most mysterious and metaphysical subject.

Kama is the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE.

The Theosophical Glossary, 170-1

Kamadeva, the Eastern *Immortal Love* (2)

“Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity”, or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi*.
(from *The Rig Veda*)

There is no idea of *sexual* love in the conception. Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later... that Kama became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.

Practical Considerations

Charity is the first Golden Paramita (the Voice of the Silence) and must be practiced, however this needs discrimination:

- It's an old proverb not to let 'a shadow' come between you and the object of your charity (ie give help directly to the person in need).
- Use your charity to help the other *develop self-reliance* and not dependence. (eg give rods, not fishes)
- Those who have not learned frugality and simplicity etc cannot be helped and must learn fortitude and gentleness.

Removing Defects, Raising Consciousness

Krishna instructs Arjuna:

“He who attendeth *to the inclinations of the senses* (objects), in them hath a concern, from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all!”

The Gita, Second Chapter

Anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love—absolute toleration—are cultivated.

Culture of Concentration, by W. Q. Judge

Summing up

Love is... the most important of all possessions, without which all other possessions are useless... this God is everywhere. He is in us and we in Him.

It is a divine, eternal, and infinite power, a light which reflects itself in every object.

A love which becomes attached to objects of sense ceases to be free, ceases to be love, and becomes mere desire.

Pure and eternal love asks for nothing, but gives freely.

Love is the supreme power of all. It holds together the worlds in space, it clothes the earth in bright and beautiful colours...

... love is the foundation of all existence. HPB

Q&A