True Love

- Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai

Even though you are surrounded by things you covet and people you love, Pujya Gurudevshri explains that such love is incomplete, and it is only the love for the Divine that can lead us to experience peace and fulfillment.

Love is a beautiful state of being. Love means to dissolve the ‘I’, the ego. As love blooms, the ‘I’ loses its importance and eventually ceases to exist. With annihilation of the ‘I’, the one who loves and the beloved become one. There remains no distance between the two. It is not even appropriate to say that they come extremely close to each other, because in closeness also there is a distance. Love makes them one. The fulfillment of love lies in the union of the two. In pure love, there is neither the ‘I’ nor the pain caused by it.

Love is a natural expression of life. Love is a pilgrimage. Those who have reached the Supreme state have done so because of love, and those who have not, have faltered due to lack of Pure love. It is therefore necessary to understand the nature of love.

Love is of three kinds - (1) love for things (2) love for people (3) love for Guru

(1) Love for things

One who is filled with desires craves for things; all he can see is things. The world for him is a marketplace, not a festival. He cannot see people, he can see only things. He buys things, collects them, and dies doing this, but does not ‘live’. He only plans to live but does not actually live. He is constantly planning for the acquisition of wealth, property, status etc.

Love for things cannot be real love; it is an illusion of love. But such love has many advantages and because of the apparent benefits, people embrace it. Let us take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of such love.

Advantages of loving things

Convenience: Things remain surrendered to you and comply with your wishes. If you have a rupee coin in your hand, you have the liberty to throw it in a river, give it to a beggar, purchase something, or place it in the safe. So loving things feel easy and convenient.

Sense of Security: There is an apparent sense of security in loving things. Unlike people, things do not have feelings that can constantly change. Besides, one thing can be replaced by another, but a person can never be replaced. If a car breaks down, it can be replaced. But the loss of a mother can never be recovered.
Things don’t react: If your love for something wears away, it is easy to stay away from it. For example, if you no longer like your car, it can be sold without fear of it reacting or pleading with you to keep it.

Disadvantages of loving things
The ego remains intact: Loving things does not require you to surrender to them. So the ego remains intact and even grows stronger as possessions increase. Love accompanied by ego cannot reach fullness.

Love for the inert makes you inert: Love has the capacity to transform, where the one who loves becomes like the beloved. You are the Self, Pure Consciousness. Things, as compared to you, are trivial and ignoble. When you fall in love with the inert, you lose your greatness and start becoming inert and lifeless yourself.

Disgust for people: One who is in love with things cannot love people because he is always apprehensive about sharing or losing his possessions. He is so attracted and attached to things that love for people does not arise in him.

Indifference towards God: The one greedy for more possessions may visit temples and worship the Lord, but his prayers are for wealth alone. Even if God grants him a wish, he will ask only for property, riches, status, and so on but never ask for God. The one who asks God for anything other than God Himself will never attain Him.

(2) Love for people
The second type of love, love for people is higher than the love for things. Here, love is directed towards someone who is living. For him, loving people is more important than loving things and so he is willing to sacrifice things for the love of people. He is not greatly attached to things and there is a possibility of him turning towards the Guru.

Advantages of loving people
Sharing and renouncing of things: Contrary to one who loves things, for a person who loves people, the attraction towards things has decreased and therefore giving them up becomes effortless. Having tasted a higher love, his interest in inert objects is far less than that in conscious beings. So he is easily able to share things, donate or even renounce them.

The joy of loving the living: Love for things gives security but lacks life. With a plastic flower, there is no fear of its withering, but it cannot blossom either; it cannot give the experience of softness, freshness, fragrance, or joy. Those who have real flowers are not interested in plastic ones. In a lover of people, there is a liveliness that makes life meaningful and joyful.

Disadvantages of loving people
Ego conflicts: When there are two people in two different states of mind with two sets of feelings and two egos, how can they easily unite? Each one expects the other to let go of his ego and
surrender to the first. Each tries knowingly or unknowingly, to bend the other person. This results in conflict. There is no peace.

No interest: Even if one has forcibly made the other person submit to his desires, he has reduced him to a mere object, without a mind of his own. So, there is no interest left in him anymore. The interest then moves to another person and a fresh struggle begins to defeat his ego. Caught-up in this web of struggle and victory, true love never blossoms.

One who loves people suffers more and rejoices less. To remain happy, he now has only two paths open to him. He can feel defeated and stoop down to love things. Or, he can learn lessons from the painful experiences with people and turn towards higher love, the love for Guru.

(3) Love for Guru
The third type of love is love for Guru. This begins as you reflect on your love for people. You realize that the cause of unrest in relationships is not the love, but your ego. The suffering you experienced in love or from your beloved was really on account of your ego. Pure love can gift only the experience of happiness. You now wish to get rid of this cause, but while loving a worldly person, it is not easy to let go of your ego because that person appears so much like your own limited self.

Here, the need for a Guru is felt.

You now yearn for a Sadguru, whose very sight arouses the desire for the ego to dissolve. Your only wish is to find a Guru, who can lead you to the path of supreme happiness. He neither asks nor wishes that you bend, but your heart effortlessly surrenders at His Lotus Feet.

Where surrendering is effortless
To one who loves things, there is no need for a Guru. He is scared of the Guru because a Guru implies surrendership. He may go to the Guru, even bow down but he safeguards his ego. He offers things at His Lotus Feet but does not offer his head, his ego. In love for people, you may surrender but out of helplessness.

Surrendering becomes easy in the presence of the Guru because He is void of ego. By making Him your beloved, you too attain the same state as Him. Love has the power to change you. Love makes you like your beloved. It unites you with Him. Because He is void of ego, you too shall gradually become free from ego. There is no greater darkness than the ego. In the light of love, the darkness of ego disappears. As your ego dissolves, two conscious beings, you and the Supreme, come closer and eventually unite. Thus love attains completeness. When this happens, the supreme illumination of love manifests as absolute liberation. Love for Guru liberates you from your own limited self.