



FACETS OF LOVE: FROM MUNDANE TO PLATONIC IN THE POETRY OF ABHAY K

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Abstract

The paper makes an attempt to study different facets of love present in the poetry of Abhay k.: the poet's journey from mundane to platonic love. It will discuss love in depth with all its passions and as a kaleidoscope of joy and longing, producing a plethora of emotions of unrequited love leading to sorrow and heartbreak. The paper will deliberate on the stages of love from desire to union to separation to agony finally surrender to nature, leading to the union with the Divine.

Keywords: *love, unrequited love, platonic love, union, separation, surrender, Divinity.*



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The poet opens his heart through his emotion filled poems. Each poem is replete with passion, inviting the readers to peak into his soul and analyze his poetry for its varied themes of love. The poet admits his yearnings for the veracious one in his life. Although there has been a lot of come and go, where a few were labeled as serious and the other few were just for fun, puzzling the poet as to decide which the right one was:

I have been waiting,
waiting since years,
for the right one.
Many have come
and many have gone ¹

This ephemeral dilemma of choice of deciding between the right and not so right one, serious and the less serious one, leads to the arousal of various questions in the mind of the poet. The poet is not able to decide whether it is his inclination towards someone or if he needs someone just to kill the boredom of his life or for some other reason. The poet feels as if he is lost and is left clueless. His belief that he could plan things is dashed to the ground and he finds himself very low in confidence. This makes him dubious about life despite his best of efforts:

Now I am lost and have no clue
how to face life's blues?
I always believed I could plan ²

After this **first phase** of love where there are desires and confusions of choice comes the **second phase** of love which is of union of the lover with the beloved. Love is a vital force but often misunderstood, at time people confuse love with lust. Love is a vehicle riding on which life enters into this world. Love helps the new life to grow, it never ends nor die. This union of lovers is actually the true glorification of love. Immersed in the ocean of love the poet very eloquently loses himself in the praise of his beloved. The poet feels she is the reason of happiness in his life and she means the world to him:

Angel,
You are charming and
Your presence warming,
When you smile,
My heart smiles.³

Love is a power that ignites passion into the hearts, it's the feelings that makes one forget the 'fevers and the frets ¹¹' of life. Love lends meaning to the life. The poet feels that the presence of his beloved makes his life complete and thus transporting them into a land of fancy which is unparalleled, giving the lovers a glimpse of eternity and interminable union. In this stage of transportation all communication ceases. It is a stage where love is independent of all the vehicles of expression, as the lovers feel their presence in one another. The intensity of love grows to such an extent that the lovers are now too lost in one another to think about the world, they are too busy expressing their love through the echoing silence that there is no room for anything else:

Deepest love is silent, beyond words,
Beyond earthly judgments,
Beyond worldly absurd ⁴

Finally the poet recognizes that his beloved is the sole reason behind his very existence. He credits her for ironed clothes, great weekends, his glowing face and the reason why the world is so beautiful:

You are the reason
my clothes are pressed and
the weekends feel so great.
You are the reason

there is spring in my gait,
there is a glow on my face.
You are the reason ⁵

After the union comes the separation. A good number of Abhay K's poem disuses the suffering, longing and the pain in a relationship. Every existing identity be it be nature or people or monuments all reminds the poet of his pain of divorcement. That fixation of love causes unbearable pain. This pain is not just physical but also mental. And this pain hurts him so badly that the poet feels suffering of the soul.

The poet says that it's a rainy season and his beloved in a different land. Now the phrase 'different land' could be interpreted in more than one ways. The one meaning could be the literal one, insinuating a different country or a faraway land, the second connotation could be a state of mind in which the intensity of pain intensifies the distance between the two that actually may or may not be that big:

It's raining here, and
You are far away in a different land,
My heart pains and soul suffers ⁶

The poet begins to question as to what went wrong. He starts to introspect and finds himself helpless to express his longing for his love. He is not sure whether it was ego or misunderstanding that led to their disunion:

What went wrong, what happened?
It's raining here.
How do I tell you?
How much I miss you ⁷

Old memories begin to haunt the poet, he takes a walk down memory lane thinking about the place where they first met. Her memories accompany him where ever he goes, beach, evening parties, market places, gardens, universities etc.

The poet's sincerity in his love, despite the pain and agony of separation, is evident from the fact that now where in his poetry we find any ill-will for his beloved. No doubt her absence (physical) has caused a void in his life but still the poet feels the presence of his beloved in his every pore of his body. Its love that is nourishing every cell of his body and paradoxically he call love as "sweetest pain":

..... love
that runs in my veins

The sweetest pain that fills
every pore of me
in the absence of my love.⁸

This unrequited love gives birth to a temporal dilemma- in which the poet contemplates death. The poet now begins to question himself as to what lead to their separation:

What went wrong, what happened?⁹

At this point of perplexity the poet feels its not just the world but also the Nature that has adopted a hostile attitude towards the poet. The poet sees that the sky has now turned red and cold wind now begins to flow straight into his face:

The sky is turning red and
cold wind blows into my face¹⁰

The queries of the mind now begin to mushroom, the heart begins to ache and the soul begins to suffer and the words lose their power:

My heart pains and soul suffers¹¹

He admits, may be it was his ambition that led to their separation:

But I was let down
by the treacherous ambition¹²

Or maybe the poet is too young to dwell on the theme of love and to understand its intensity:

Young are the couples and
Young is their love¹³

Unable to reach any conclusion, the poet find himself enormously complex and vexed. Love was the supreme concern in the poet's mind, the preoccupation of his heart, the focus of his experience and the subject of his poetry. He sought to comprehend and experience love in every possible respect. As a self-appointed investigator the poet examined love from every possible angle, experienced it joys and embraced it sorrows. The poet now feels disillusioned and in this fit of disenchantment towards the mundane, the poet now begins his new quest to find solace in nature. Now we see a change in the approach of the poet as he realizes a divine principle reigning in the heart of nature.

The poet now takes a break from the world of reason and frees himself from the weight of etiquette and superficial gentility. Abhay K. bluntly expresses his plight:

Taking a break from the cyber
World¹⁴

Life begins to have a toll on the poet, bogged down by the burden of life the poet seeks an escape, an escape to freedom in the form of "Return to nature". Rousseau, a French

philosopher said “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.” The same idea is also vocal in William Wordsworth. He gives a faithful, albeit a little rhetorical, utterance to Rousseau's idea of the innate goodness of man:

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was bless 'd as free, for he was Nature's child;
He, all superior but his God disdain d
Walk'd none restraining, and by none restrain 'd;
Confessed no law but by reason taught,
Did all he wish 'd and wish 'd but what he ought. ¹⁵

Like Wordsworth, Abhay too seeks nature for its healing power and comfort. He badly needs an escape from this world where he finds himself ‘locked in cubes’, a world in which he has stopped leaving, a world that is uninspiring and a world that he could bear no more:

Locked in cubes,
Surrounded by uninspiring
and arcane files,
I had stopped living,
Then I could bear no more ¹⁶

In this state of disillusionment the poet express his desire to entrust Nature. Now the poet dissolves his identity and emerges as someone new having oneness with Nature. Or maybe it is the Nature that adopts the poet and the poet now begins to think of freedom:

Looked out of the window,
And I saw leaves dancing with
joy,
And I thought of freedom,
And what it meant to be free ¹⁷

Once in the lap of nature the poet begins to experience moments where he feels that he is a part of nature itself, sky, oceans, mountains, earth:

There are moments,
O Almighty!
O limitless sky!
O vast Blue Oceans!
O High Mountains!
O mother Earth!

I feel one with you.¹⁸

In a state of bliss, now the poet imagines himself to be in a space which has beauty and peace, where sweet melodies fill his ears, where the snow has melted, where the flowers are blooming, singing of the upcoming spring, where the sun rays fall on green leaves, taking all his stress away:

Sweet melodies of birds
fill my ears,
Snow has melted and flowers
are blooming¹⁹

This space of which the poet is talking about is actually a garden behind his work place. Whenever he finds his work place dull and full of stress, he takes a walk into this garden seeking comfort and the moment he steps in that garden and he feels as if he has entered into the dominions of tranquility and bliss, only to be found in heaven:

And the heaven is here
on the Earth²⁰

Now, once in harmony with the Nature, the poet learns that it's the experience that makes one wise and it's the wisdom of man to learn from every fall. In his vivid description of Nature the poet glorifies the fallen leaves of autumn. The poet feels that the fall of the leaves make a sound and that sound has an insight, instigating the poet to bridge the gap between his queries and his peace of mind:

Scattered in abundance,
Celebrating the glories
of the august autumn.
The fallen leaves cry out loud
Words of wisdom²¹

It's worth mentioning here, that despite the fall, the poet hasn't lost his optimism. The poet addresses these fallen leaves as 'pieces of gold', which are celebrating the glory of August autumn and encouraging the poet to find the disguise behind every fall in his life, as their own fall is not without a reason:

Let you find
A cause in your fall²²

Abhay K. after contemplating the fall of the leaves of autumn, learns that Nature has its own mysterious ways. The shedding of every leaf is actually hinting a new beginning, a rebirth as it is the fall that will lead to a new life. The poet now has a pristine admiration for the Nature

and he tries to capture the moments through his words. For the poet the Nature now is Almighty. Abhay K. sees something which is unfathomable and indescribable in Nature and it is these power that the poet and human beings are carrying on with centuries-long cultural and literary traditions. The poet now begins to witness internal beauty of Nature in the form of exotic smell, the green grass carpets, the bright sun rays, the open sky etc. All this makes the poet carefree and blissful as we all were in our childhood. Here the poet finds himself wanting words in order to describe the beauty of life.

Under the open sky,
Under the drizzling day,
Carefree, blissful as children,
How beautiful life can be,
So beautiful... words may not say²³

The poet opens his heart to embrace the Mother Nature. He finds that nights are no more dark but cloudy white, all the stones and rains have come to a halt, the flowers are in their full bloom. The poet finds the crescent curvatures of moon 'smiling' and illuminating the earth:

After the storms and rains;
The green pine trees stood
silent
and half moon smiled over
the green grass carpet²⁴

Overwhelmed the poet takes a walk in the Nature cherishing the night after the rain and storm among the pine trees in 'Seren' flowers under the half lit moon the poet is gently embraced by the eternity and it was his union with the Divine.

I strolled overwhelmed
that night among
the pine trees, Seren
flowers,
half-moon, rains and storms,
That night eternity embraced
me gently,
It was a rendezvous with the
Divine²⁵

As revealed in the discussion of poems from **Enigmatic Love** and **Fallen Leaves of Autumn** we find the poetry of Abhay K. marks a journey which starts from a desire, passing through its various stages end in union with the Divine. The poet feels overwhelmed by the amount of love that is present on earth, by quoting various examples, innocent smiles, blooming flowers, shining stars, fallen leaves of autumn, soft skin of grandma, fathers fingers, mothers hugs, eyes of cats and dogs, the cry of new born baby etc., the poet feels it is love that seeks to penetrate the mystery of God's creation through an ecstatic immersion in it. In each of God's manifestation, as cited above there is a meaning, which without love remains inexpressible.

Love was a supreme concern of his mind and the preoccupation of his heart. Abhay K.'s philosophy of love gives shape to his moral poetry, devoid of all profanity. There is passion and deepest depression in his poetry. Pessimism and sexual themes are nowhere to be found in his works. On one level Abhay k.'s poetry can be compared to that of John Donne, if we exclude the erotic freedom of John Donne.

Portraying his talent for the genre, Abhay never stressed on the physical beauty or on the aesthetic element in passion. In his poem the platonic strand is quite evident as he regards love as holy emotion like a worship of devotee to God. His treatment of love poems is realistic and not idealistic. Abhay K. nowhere seems to draw the physical beauty of the female body, rather he describes its reaction on lover's heart. Abhay K. portrays his love for his beloved, the kind of love that one should reserve for God alone.

Conclusion

Perhaps it's fair to say that failure associated with mundane love and the idolatry of his devotion to his beloved caused the poet to reconsider the nature of true love. The frustration and the disappointment associated with love forced the poet to pursue its antithesis in form of purely spiritual or 'platonic' concept of love. It's with this realization that the poet surrenders himself to Nature and nature gently embraces the poet giving him the glimpse of the Divinity .such was the essence of Abhay K.'s philosophy of love that makes him an archetypal of Platonic Love.

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