

Love and the *Guru-Disciple* Relationship

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Cynthia: Dear Ram, today I had a quite extraordinary experience. Don't worry, I won't cling to it, for I very well know its passing nature, but I would like to share it with you.

Firstly, I understand more and more why experiencing the self in its peculiar, subtle and delicate forms and knowing that all life's expressions are the self helps not only being aware of it continuously but also strengthens the faith to retain to what you tell me, that I am it and not my personal beliefs.

This knowledge, THE IT, needs to be restored by knowing and experience because it has become slack, flabby and weak, like a magnificent gown hanging in the darkness of a wardrobe for many years. To live again it needs a body and a consciousness to wear it in a way that allows it to shine in all its brilliance. Spiritual experiences back up the knowing of It.

Ram: What a beautiful metaphor! You are right. Knowledge and experience work together.

Cynthia: I assume the constant increase of specific sensations and happiness in the course of the last two months as an effect of so many precise and detailed descriptions given by you personally in your writings and by scriptures you quoted in emails. True, as you mentioned before, I already had those experiences but they were weaker, shorter, and so they were mysterious and I could not really distinguish the self.

By supplying me with the most important of all: a mixture of spirit, knowledge and information your words brought out a clear understanding that helped me to embody the "gown."

Secondly, I want to share the experience itself. I remember I had it twice before some years ago. It is as if I were the personification of Eros. Each cell, skin, muscles... everything in the whole body seemed to become fluid. Or it was like a house with many windows and doors opening wide. It felt like bathing in a warm ocean and being nourished by a kind of loving food that was flowing over and through me. It felt quite erotic. It was a bit strange but wonderful.

Why was it strange? Because I fear my mind is taking you as object/lover, at least I can't clearly discriminate the object. Or is it possible that the spiritual union of self and personality can be experienced like a love affair with according feelings, sensations and visions – I don't think here in terms of visualisations like you described the union of wisdom and love. It puzzles me in a way because I now can imagine what could be responsible for the frequency of love affairs between spiritual teachers and disciples.

Ram: The *guru-disciple* relationship is the most important love affair there is

because it ends in freedom from all relationships. When someone helps you to get free – just the intention is enough – it is natural to love that person. And from the *guru's* side there is nothing more attractive than a person who is in love with freedom. I loved my *guru* in the same way you are describing. It is a total kind of relationship insofar as the self pervades every inch of one's body and mind, and when it wakes up the whole organism from top to bottom is enlivened. So there are sublime as well as sexual thoughts and feelings.

The best way to think about this kind of relationship, as you say, is as “the spiritual union of the self and the personality” and take the outer relationship as a symbol of that. Yes, this happening is responsible for many love affairs between teachers and disciples. But it is very dangerous to try to make it into a physical relationship because physical/emotional passion is completely contrary to the development of a discriminating, meditative intelligence. I have no way of knowing, but I think that most teachers who let the relationship go in this direction are not really committed to the self-realization of their students – although there are exceptions. In any case it certainly makes things much more difficult than they need to be.

Cynthia: Since this work breaks down the walls of personality, earlier or later, one is overflowed by love, and the mind is accustomed to only experience things in relationship, so it hastens to a potential object and also vice versa.

Ram: Yes, it is very natural to have these feelings. There is nothing wrong with it.

Cynthia: But to be frank and honest, I felt an attraction from the very beginning I saw you and this feeling increased little by little. For example, in your teachings you told little stories or gave hints which gave the impression to me of you as a man who loved many women in his life and not only before enlightenment. And although you are a little bit hidden behind your beard, one can partly see the beauty of your face, besides the beauty of your radiation, only to mention some facets. I can imagine that women often fall in love with you.

Ram: Yes, it is true that women fall in love with me often. I can't “fall” in love, because I am love, but I generally reciprocate the love in such a way that it is sublimated into self-inquiry. I had a love affair with a disciple five years ago, but when she proved to be possessive I stopped it. This did not end the relationship; in fact the relationship deepened spiritually and within a short time she realized who she was and is now a great spiritual light. We are the best of friends today and I stay with her for two or three months every year. There is nothing physical going on, which suits both of us, but it is a great pleasure to live around someone who is deeply happy. Every moment is *satsang*, with and without words.

I don't make a hard and fast rule about it, because I operate from the self, not from ideas. I have a lot of experience in this area and I can tell almost immediately how strong a person's desire for freedom is. If the desire for freedom is very intense it usually means that the person is over the sexual/emotional “in love” business and it doesn't make much difference whether or not you involve yourself physically. Some people are quite sophisticated and can play at love without getting all bent out of shape. I certainly can – but it is rare.

Many people have a middling or indifferent desire for freedom and these people will almost always be quite happy to fall in love with a spiritual person if the situation is right. It's not the kiss of death, but it certainly is a waste of precious time.

Cynthia: Or in your book you wrote: "There are many ways to relate to the self, but I see it as an intimate lover, in whose presence I feel deliciously comfortable. Try surrendering, melting into its compassionate embrace."

Maybe the whole topic dissolves because through our personality we both occasionally have a similar way of experiencing the self in loving visions, and it is good to refrain from any connection.

I feel your love for me, as you know mine for you, Ram, but only you know if yours is solely the impersonal love of the self through you or also the man who is attracted by a woman. Maybe you are completely clear, I'm not until now. I only feel some turbulence in the atmosphere, for I am a lover of clarity. I had the wish to share it potentially to identify and decloud mind. Do I catch something from the atmosphere or is it only my mind or is it a certain self-experience, a mixture of all or the challenge to only observe and let go as well as everything else arising in mind?

Ram: It's good to talk about these things and I appreciate you bringing it up. In my case I have neutralized my *vasanas* and they are all non-binding, so sexual love is not a problem. I don't make a big deal out of it – I've been accused of being a typical male, but it really isn't like that. Sex is an activity like any other and it only becomes a problem when a person is spiritually unfulfilled. In practice I'm getting old and my lifestyle makes it virtually impossible for me to do justice to a proper relationship and I'm not into one-night stands. So don't worry, I won't try to take advantage of you even though I find you very attractive. Lover of clarity is best. After clarity you can think about relationship.

Cynthia: It is an important question because I'm aware of the necessity to discriminate as sharply as a sword the self from the not-self and I'm sure that unlike me you are well-trained in this activity!

The fire in me should not get drowned anymore by the countless appearances of the world on the path to the reunion with the self, as it burns stronger than ever before in my life.

Ram: I'm here to feed the fire, Cynthia. What turns me on most about people is their love of *moksa*.

~ Yours in love, Ram