

Union of the Lover and the Loved: A Study of Krishna Consciousness in Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni*

¹Dr. Pallavi Gupta & ²Swati Vijay

¹Lecturer, University of Jammu, J&K (India)

²Research Scholar, University of Jammu, J&K (India)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 04 May 2018

Keywords

Self-Realisation, Colour Blue, Bhakti
Yoga and Krishna Consciousness

Corresponding Author

Email: swativijay666[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to study Krishna Consciousness in Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni*. Krishna Consciousness is a state of realisation in which an individual acts in complete accord with the Divine or Krishna in order to attain Self- Realisation i.e. to become one with God. The present paper will try to study the journey of Draupadi from a state of *Trishna* (hunger) to Krishna Consciousness through her unconditional devotion and surrender. It will also explore how the colour Blue is used by the author as a metaphor of Pure Consciousness and expansiveness of human heart. The focus of this paper will be on how Blue is one of the aspect of Krishna's Divinity and how its magic worked on Draupadi to become with God.

In the Indian Philosophy of Vedanta, the God is the highest knowledge beyond which there is nothing further to be known. Vedanta philosophy further says that the Universe is called *Brahmand*. It means the eternal principle, the spirit; the *Parmatman*. *Brahmand* is a composite of two words, *Brahma* and *anda*. The word *Brahman* is derived from the root *brh* meaning "to grow or expand" (Hiriyanna 20). Hiriyanna further mentions that Upanishads say that it is *Brahman* that is below and is above, that is to all the directions, to the west and to the east that is to the south and to the north. *Brahman* is the whole universe (19). Also, '*anda*' is the 'egg'. *Brahman* is the creator, the Spirit or atman that is trapped in the egg. The ultimate task before this Brahman is to break the shell of the egg and become one with the *Parmatman*. This *Parmatman* is the state of *Sat-Chit-Anand* which is the same as God in Vedanta Philosophy. But often the atman is entrapped in its worldly affairs and deviates from its path of knowledge which is to become one with the *Parmatman*. And it is then that the pure Consciousness manifests itself in the form of Avatar to guide the atman back to its righteous path. As God himself has said in Gita in Chapter 4, Verse 7, "*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bhārata abhyutthanama dharmasya tadat manam srjamyaham*" (87).

Vikrant has translated it as,

Anytime or place true religion starts to bend,

Irreligion rises, and that time I descend.

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, and a predominant rise of irreligion, O descendant of Bharata, at that time I descend Myself. (109)

Devdutt Pattanaik, in his article *The Complete Man* says that Krishna is considered "Divinity in totality (*purna-avatar*)."
Man is the miniature counterpart of Krishna. Krishna is the Macrocosm in which the Microcosm exists. Krishna defines himself in Bhagwad Gita as

Na me vidhu sura-ganah

Prabhavam na maharsayah
Aham-adhir-hi devanam
Maharsinam ca sarvasah

Neither the Gods nor the great rishis know any birth of Me, for I am altogether and in every way the origin of the gods and the great rishis.

Yo mama ajam anadim ca
Vetti loka-mahesvaram
Asamudhah sa martyesu
Sarva-papaih pramucyante

One who knows me as unborn and without a beginning; the great Lord of the worlds- is undeluded among mortals and is liberated from all negative acts. (169-170)

The Present paper is an attempt to study Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni* in the light of the above concept where Draupadi is an *atman* which desires to become one with Krishna who represents the *Paramatman*. The paper traces the devotional evolution of Draupadi's Consciousness where she initially identifies herself with the materialistic world and loves Krishna as another to the awakening of her Consciousness where she no longer sees him as a separate entity but himself and her as 'one'.

Draupadi is not a regular girl; she is "born from red fire" (296). She is considered to be the manifestation of Goddess Durga. In the novel, Draupadi took birth for preserving dharma on earth. When she was born her father gazed at the sky and said softly,

O Krishna! It is to you that I shall offer my Krishnaa. After all, you are the best of all men in Aryavart! A hero! And the establishment of Dharma is the goal of your life. You are pride humbling Govind. On giving Krishnaa into your hands my lost honor will return. It is for this that Krishnaa's birth has taken place. (9)

Her father named her Krishna at birth, therefore the moment she was named, an unbreakable bond between Krishna and Krishna developed. Draupadi first hears about Krishna from her Sakhi. Her Sakhi describes Krishna to her in the most beautiful hues of colour Blue. Therefore, Draupadi starts associating him with the colour Blue and comes under the spell of his Blue aura. She imagines him to be like "blue tamal tree" or like "the blue black clouds", his eyes to be like "blue lilies", his hair like "sapphire blue of Peacock feather", his hands and feet like "lotus buds" and chest like "the blue sky". Yajnaseni always imagined Krishna in the blue light. Wherever she looked, she saw, "Krishna...blue...Krishna...blue...the whole world full of Krishna...full of love...honeyed. Krishna pervading the world!" (12)

Every colour has energy of its own and this energy changes from one individual to another depending on the energy which a particular individual expresses at a particular time. This energy is nothing but the vibrations which these colours carry. It has been seen that these vibrations affect our daily lives constantly. Over a period of time, different cultures across the world have assigned different meanings to different colours. In the Scriptures Krishna is described as having a blue colour, which is not the colour of material body but the eternal spiritual body of the Lord. Blue colour of Krishna is not only of great significance in Indian Scriptures but is a universal colour of Divinity.

Blue plays a symbolic role in many religious traditions. It symbolizes the infinite and the great because it corresponds to the colour of the sky, sea and vastness. Eastern orthodox churches often sport a dome that symbolizes the heavens, and invariably it is painted blue. Blue is the colour of Mary's cloak, the mother of the Christ, The Christ bearer. In the Torah the Israelites were ordered to put fringes on their garments with a twisted thread of blue woven within them. A rabbinic tradition teaches that Blue is the colour of God's glory. We are instructed to meditate on sapphire, which a likeness of throne of God according to Ezekiel; This is a very special meditation on the "Chariot of Yahweh" that contemporary scholars believe John the Baptist taught Jesus, and that Jesus in turn taught his disciples. The man in that chariot is surrounded by fire. Indeed, the Hebrew word for "Glory" (Kavod) means "blue" in Arabic. Many vessels in the Ark of the Covenant were covered with blue cloth when they moved from place to place. (157)

The colour Blue has always been a symbol of heaven, divinity and Holy Spirit across different cultures. The colour Blue is all encompassing. Anything which is beyond human being's perception and cannot be measured and tends to be blue in colour like the vastness of the sky and the depth of the ocean. In the novel *Yajnaseni*, the colour blue serves as a tether that links her *atman* with Krishna. Even Nitambini, Draupadi's Sakhi remarks,

If Krishna were the blue sky then you would be the evening clouds enhancing its beauty. If Krishna were the waters of a blue lake then you would be the mountain ranges reflected swimming in it. If Krishna were the peaceful vast blue sea, then you would be the tender moss on it. Who is greater than whom? One

enhances the glory of the other. You and Krishna, too, are like that. (21)

But Krishna is not the regular lover; he is the Divine who wants to reinstate *Dharma* which focuses not just on the 'self' but also the 'other'. Therefore it is believed that the divine took the form of Krishna and began his cosmic *leela*. His ways are playful and ever-changing. Ray's Krishna admits:

Playing with the infinite Universe is my weakness. Whoever loves me most, I harass him the most. He whom I love, I throw into danger. He who imagines, 'Krishna is mine' –I become an illusion to him. He who imagines, 'I am Krishna's' –I become bound to him. That which I build, I also destroy. It is in this that I find delight. (370)

Draupadi who is helplessly in love with Krishna becomes an important instrument in his re-establishment of Dharma. Krishna is Draupadi's first love. The mere mention of his name was enough to ignite all her senses. She could smell Krishna in the fragrance of heena, hear him in cuckoo's spring call and see his dark tender form in the tall champak tree. Her whole being becomes transmuted. Her heart, like a bird, has taken a flight towards Krishna, where it has made a breakthrough from the gilded cages and has become one with Krishna. Her '*trishna*' for Krishna is ever-increasing. Draupadi's birth has taken place for the fulfilment of a special purpose wherein she has to avenge her father and destroy his enemies. Krishna tries to uplift Draupadi's spiritual Consciousness by making her see beyond her personal interests. He presents her with idea that the true satisfaction lies not in the personal victory but in having compassion and of being service to others. Krishna desired Draupadi to marry Arjun and on his behest she agrees to marry Arjuna because she sees Arjuna in the light of Krishna. As she ponders,

First I was offered to Krishna. Krishna did not accept me and ordained that I was for his *sakha*, Arjun. I did not feel any hesitation, for Arjun had been born of a portion of Krishna himself. In Arjun's body it was Krishna who was the life and soul. I had not surrendered myself to Arjun's body. It was before his character, his soul that I had offered myself. In other words, it was Krishna that I had surrendered myself in a different way. I had thought that in getting Arjun I would find Krishna. (33)

Draupadi's love has crossed that stage where there is a demarcation between a lover and a beloved. Her essence of self has merged with the blue radiant essence of Krishna. She has become one with Krishna and surrenders herself to the wishes of Krishna. As she says, "As an ignorant infant, I should play with whatever toy my master placed in my hand, be happy and go on living. Who was I to ask who would be my toy and why?" (24)

Her love for Krishna surpasses the love for all things worldly. Her love is constant and is centred in Krishna and Krishna

alone, and cannot be shaken under any circumstances whether in prosperity or adversity. This kind of love is called Bhakti Yoga. Swami Vivekananda defines Bhakti Yoga as, "Bhakti-Yoga is a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing, and ending in line. One single moment of madness of extreme love to god brings us eternal freedom" (1). He further explains, "Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Yoga, because these are intended for an object in view, while Bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end" (1). Draupadi's devotion towards Krishna is nothing but Bhakti-Yoga as she is enchanted by the beauty of Krishna and her mind is always engaged at his 'Lotus-feet'. Prabhuji in his work *Bhakti-Yoga: The Path of Love* suggests that Bhakti-Yoga leads every devotee to self-realisation.

Conclusion:

In the process of Self-realisation, Draupadi understands that she will have to shun her pride in order to enter the gateways of

heaven. In the end of journey of life, she surrenders herself unconditionally to Krishna and attains Krishna consciousness and reflects:

The soul of Bharata is permeated with Krishna, bliss, love. It is a heart full of love that is the foundation of such grace. You cannot love God if you detest man. Therefore, O greatest of lovers, let me be born as a lover. Let me be born again and again as the beloved of Krishna and a lover of the world. I am realizing the Krishna consciousness of great Bharata. Spirituality and the feeling for Dharma will touch the consciousness of all mankind. Someday the entire world will be filled with the consciousness of Krishna. (397-398)

Works Cited

1. Ray, Pratibha. *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi*, translated by Pradip Bhattacharya, New Delhi, Rupa and Co., 1995.
2. Fox, Matthew. *The Hidden Spirituality of Men: Ten Metaphors to Awaken the Sacred Masculinity*, Vol.1, New World Library, 2008.
3. Hildebeitel, Alf. *The Cult of Draupadi, Volume 1: Mythologies: From Gingee to Kuruksetra*. UP of Chicago, 1988.
4. Hirianna, M. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2008.
5. Pattnaik, Devdutt. "The Complete Man." The Week www.theweek.in, 27 December 2015.
6. Vivekananda, Swami. *Bhakti Yoga*. Jazzybee Verlag, 1946.
7. Prabhuji. *Bhakti-Yoga: The Path of Love*. Prabhuji Mission, 2016.
8. *Shreemad Bhagavad Gita- Verses and Translations*. Bhakti Marg Publications, 2016.
9. Tomar, Dr. Vikrant. *Rule the World as Krishna Did*. Author House, 2015.