

Divine Dance

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To understand raasleela, the dance of celebration, what is first necessary to know is that the whole of life is a meeting of contradictory forces, and that all its happiness comes from this union of the opposites. The very mystery and ecstasy of life lies hidden in this unio mystica. To begin with, it is good to understand the metaphysical meaning of the celebration that our universe is. And then, together, we will go into the life of Krishna, a complete miniature of this celebrating universe. Raise your sights and look at whatever is happening all around in this vast universe of ours. Is it anything other than a dance, a celebration, an abounding carnival of joy? It is all celebration, whether it is clouds gliding in the heavens or rivers rushing to the seas or seeds on their way to becoming flowers and fruit, or bees humming or birds on the wing or love affairs between men and women. It is all a panorama of play and dance and celebration. Raas has a universal meaning; it has a cosmic connotation and significance. Firstly, the meeting of opposite energies is the cornerstone of all creation, of the universe. To construct a house with a door, we put an arch at the top of the door with the help of opposite shapes of bricks to support it. It is just this placing of opposite kinds of bricks in the arch that upholds not only the door but the whole building. If we use uniform kinds of bricks in the arch, it will be impossible to construct a house. In the same way, the whole play of creation, at every level of life, begins when energy becomes divided into two opposite parts. This division of energy is at the root of all creation, of all life in the universe, and with the cessation of this division all life's play comes to a full stop. When the same energy becomes one, when it returns to its primordial state, total destruction, the ending of the universe happens. And when the same energy again divides itself into two, creation begins anew. Raas, the dance of celebration, is the most profound attribute of the mighty stream of creation. And creation in itself is the interplay of polar opposites -- thesis and antithesis. When opposites collide with each other it results in conflict, hostility and war, and when they embrace each other there is love and friendship. Without the meeting of the two, creation is impossible. So we have to go into the significance of Krishna's raas in this context. It is not all that we see when Krishna dances with the gopis, the milkmaids, but we can see only that much with our gross eyes. Krishna's raas with the milkmaids of his village is not an ordinary dance, on a small scale it really represents the universal dance of creation that, since

eternity, goes on and on. It epitomises the everlasting drama of the making and unmaking of the universe. It gives you a glimpse of that divine dance and Divine Dancing: Raas Leela T 11 universe. It gives you a glimpse of that divine dance and that immense orchestra. It is for this reason that Krishna's maharaas ceases to have a sexual connotation. Not that it prohibits any sexual interpretation, but for certain sex has been left far behind. In reality Krishna does not dance as a mere Krishna, he represents her, the whole of the male element in creation, known in Sanskrit as purusha. And similarly the gopis represent the entire female element, prakriti. The maharaas represents the combined dance of prakriti and purusha. People who take the maharaas as a sexual representation of life are mistaken; they really don't understand it. And I am afraid they will never understand it. To put it rightly, it is a dance of the meeting of the male and female energies, of purusha and prakriti. It has nothing to do with any individual man and woman; it represents the mighty cosmic dance. It is because of this that a single Krishna dances with any number of gopis. Ordinarily it is not possible for a single man to dance with many women at a time. Ordinarily no man can be in love with many women together, but Krishna does it, and does it beautifully. It is amazing that every milkmaid, every gopi taking part in the maharaas, believes that Krishna is dancing with her, that he is hers. It seems Krishna has turned into a thousand Krishnas so that he pairs off with each of the thousand women present there. It is utterly wrong to take the maharaas, the celebration dance of Krishna, as that of an individual person. Krishna is not a person here; he represents the great male energy, purusha. The maharaas is a representation in dance of the great meeting between male and female energies. But the question is: Why is only dance chosen as a medium for this representation? As I said this morning, the medium of dance comes nearest to the mysterious, to the non-dual, and to celebration. Nothing can express it better than dance. Let us look at it in another way. Dance is the most primitive form of human language, because when man had not yet learned to speak, he spoke through gestures. If one man had to communicate with another, he made gestures with his face, his eyes, his hands and feet. Even today a dumb person only expresses himself through gestures. Verbal language came much later. Birds don't know a language, but they know how to chirp and dance together. Gestures make up the whole language of nature. It is used and understood all over. So there is a reason why dance came to centre stage for the raas, the celebration. Gesture is the most profound medium of expression because it touches the deepest parts of man's mind and heart. Dance reaches where words fail. The sound of the ankle bells of a dancer says a lot even where speech is ineffective. Dance is more articulate than anything else. A dancer can go from one end of the earth to another and will, more or less, make himself understood through his dance. No language will be needed to understand and appreciate him. No

particular level of civilisation and culture will be required to understand a dance. Dance is a kind of universal language; it is understood everywhere on this planet. Wherever a dancer goes he will be understood. Man's collective unconscious is well aware of this language. To me, the great raas happening in infinite space, with millions of stars like the sun and moon dancing rhythmically, is not an ordinary dance. It is not meant for entertainment; it is not show business. In a sense it should be described as overflowing bliss. There is such an abundance of bliss in the heart of existence that it is flowing, overflowing. That is what we call the river of existence. The presence of the polar opposites in the universe facilitates its flow. Man alone cannot flow; he needs the presence of woman. Without the woman man is inhibited and closed. In the same way, without man the woman is inhibited and closed. Their togetherness causes their energies to spring into the form of love. What we know as love between man and woman is nothing but the flowing of yin and yang together. And this love, if it is not personalised, can have great spiritual significance. The attraction of man and woman for each other is what brings them together so that their latent energies flow into the stream of love and life. That is why a man feels relaxed with a woman and a woman feels at ease with a man. Separated and alone they feel tense and anxious; coming together they feel as light as feathers, weightless. Why? Because something in them, some subtle energy has become alive and moving, and as a result they feel at home and happy. Unfortunately we have been trying to put man and woman in a cage, the cage of marriage. But as soon as we bind them with marriage and its institution, their energy ceases to flow, it stagnates. Life's play has nothing to do with institutions; it cannot be institutionalised. Krishna's raas does not have an order, a system; it is utterly free and spontaneous. You can say it is chaotic. It is chaos itself. There is a significant saying of Nietzsche's. He says, "It is out of chaos that stars are born." Where there is no system, no order, only the interplay of energies remains. In this interplay of energies, which is raas, Krishna and his milkmaids cease to be individuals, they move as pure energies. And this dance of male and female energies together brings deep contentment and bliss; it turns into an outpouring of joy and bliss. Rising from Krishna's raas this bliss expands and permeates every fibre of the universe. Although Krishna and his girlfriends are no more with us as people, the moon and the stars under which they danced together are still with us, and so are the trees and the hills and the earth and the skies that were once so drunk with the bliss of the raas. So, although millennia have passed, the vibes of the maharaas are still with us. Now scientists have come forward with a strange theory. They say although people come and go, the subtle vibes of their lives and their living remain suffused in existence forever. If someone goes to dance on the grounds where Krishna once danced with his gopis, he can hear the echoes of the maharaas even today. If someone can play a flute near the hills that in the past echoed

with the music of Krishna's flute, he can hear those hills still echoing it, everlastingly. In my view, the raas symbolises the overflowing, outpouring of the primeval energy as it is divided between man and woman. And if we accept this definition, the raas is as relevant today as it was in the times of Krishna. Then it is everlastingly relevant. Lately I have received a suggestion from many friends that men and women should be segregated from each other when we go for meditation, because they think it will help their meditation. This suggestion is utterly stupid. They don't know that if men and women are segregated from each other, if they are put into separate blocks, it will make them two homogeneous groups cut off from each other, blocking the flow of energy between them. Friends who come up with such suggestions are ignorant of their implications. I hold just the contrary view on the matter. If men and women meditate together as a mixed gathering, it can be immensely helpful to their meditation. Then something can happen to both of them without their knowing it, and it will deepen their meditation. Your being here together without any reason -- you are not here as husbands and wives -- will help you in catharsis as nothing else can do. The very presence of the opposite sex will stir many deeply repressed emotions in both men and women, and it will then be so easy to cathart them. 13 Read or Listen to Full Discourse on www.oshoworld.com is passing at the moment is the result of this segregation, this apartheid of men and women. We have separate schools and colleges for boys and girls; men and women sit in separate groups in churches and temples. Everywhere the sexes are being made to keep a distance from each other. Much of our present-day trouble and misery stems from this unnatural and unhealthy practice, because it violates the basic laws of nature. In this world the entire structure of life is based on the togetherness of the opposite forces. The more natural and spontaneous this togetherness, the more beneficial it is. The significance of raas, the dance of celebration, is everlasting, it issues from the fundamental principle of life. This fundamental principle says that men and women are incomplete in themselves; they are fragments of a single whole. And they become whole and healthy only in close togetherness, in union with each other. If this togetherness happens unconditionally, it will complete the two in an extraordinary and unearthly way. On the other hand, if the union is conditional, if it has a motive, it is bound to lead to enormous difficulty and trouble in the process of its completion. However, so long as men and women exist on this earth, the raas will continue to be in vogue in many shapes and sizes. It may not attain the height and depth it had with Krishna, but if we grow in understanding and wisdom it is not impossible. More or less every primitive community is aware of the beauty and significance of the raas, of their own kind of raas. They work hard through the day, and at night both men and women gather together under the open sky and dance with abandon for hours and hours. While dancing, they forget their family relationships and

mix freely with each other as men and women, and dance madly, as if all of life is meant for dancing and celebrating. They go to sleep only when they are utterly tired, and so they enter into a sleep so deep it may cause the civilised societies envy. It is for this reason that the peace of mind and the joy of life these poor people enjoy is unknown to the most affluent people who, just by wishing, can have all the good things of life. The rich are missing some basic truths of life for certain, and somewhere they are erring very grievously.

References:

-Osho, Krishna: The Man and His Philosophy Oshodham - New Delhi Osho Dance Meditation Camp 13 to 17 December Inauguration : 12th December, 6.30 pm Conducted by : Swami Sambodh Viram (Holland).