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Love - A Dominating Feeling in Human Relationship

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Determining Element in Love between Individuals

Love as a feeling is as old as the hills. It has been there since God made Adam and Eve as the first divine couple. The love of Adam and Eve was blissfully innocent and sharing. He was for her and she was for God in him. When Eve ate the forbidden fruit, disobeying God's command, Adam also suffered the consequences by eating the fruit for her sake. This kind of act on the part of Adam showed his selfless love for Eve. Since then,

Love has been a dominating feeling in the relationship of human beings and as such, it becomes the cause of not only the cordial but also strained relationship among the beings.

Attitudes and responses of man and woman towards each other determine the sincerity and strength of their love between them. The positive attitudes such as flexibility, trust, understanding, the policy of give and take, forgetting, forgiving, uncomplaining nature and adjustment should necessarily exist between them. Otherwise, there will be a discordant note in their relationship, leading to near total chaos in the entire household. It is a known fact that there is no true love without quarrel. However, there should be some limit whether there is love or quarrel because too much of anything is good for nothing.

Views on Love

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Many points of view are prevalent in the society regarding love. A.S Hornby in his Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English has defined love as “a strong feeling of affection for somebody or something” (913). The New Testament brings out the virtues of love in human relationship:

Love is patient and kind. It is not jealous or boastful or proud. It is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always and preserves and never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

William Shakespeare in his Sonnet 116 has said “Love is not love/which alters when it alteration finds” (5). Dr. Johnson in his Johnsonian Miscellanies has stated that ‘love is the wisdom of the fool and the folly of the wise” (23). William Blake in his poem titled

The Clod and the Pebble has listed real virtues of love:

Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care;
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell’s despair. (11-14).

A Spontaneous Feeling

Love is a spontaneous feeling and as such it is purely a personal affair. It is an irresistible desire and so it has to be desired irresistibly. It may or may not end in the marriage of loved ones. However, it is only marital relationship and love which go hand in hand with together because only love rules between man and woman as husband and wife. If love does not lead to the marriage of the loved ones, their love will become lust. If there is no love even after marriage, the married life of the partners will be meaningless. Moreover, when love is merely possessive, it itself is worthless. It should entertain the feeling that the ego of the loved one is as important as that of the loving one and hence, it should realize and respect each other’s feelings with all sincerity and truthfulness.

Different Turns

Love in the life of man and his wife takes different turns as years go by and yet it continues to remain as fresh and strong for ever between them till the end of their earthly life. A woman loves her parents till she gets married to a man as his wife. After her marriage, she begins to love her husband more than her parents. As soon as she becomes a mother, her love for her husband is transferred to her children. As far as man is concerned, his love for his parents remains stronger till a woman comes into his life as his wife. The moment he gets married, he begins to love his wife more than any one who is dear and near to him because it is stated in the first book of the Bible Genesis that “as woman was taken out of him, man as a husband should leave his father and mother and

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be united to her” (2:23). As he is all in all for his woman and her happiness, he should live up to her expectations and hopes.

Love in the Materialistic World

Human beings have become purely materialistic in a scientifically advanced society. As a result, they simply go on living without any faith both in the moral and spiritual values of life. Their loss of faith has made their life not only meaningless but also continuously miserable. Sometimes, their miseries are more painful and sometimes more bearable but they are always there to torment them. Even in the midst of such a miserable life, the human beings find some sort of consolation and solace in the faithful expression of true love to one another. Hence, love has to play a vital role in some form or other in the relationship of human beings. Many poets, dramatists and novelists have focused their attention on the feeling of love and explored its various aspects in the human relationship but there are no identical conceptions of love.

Significance of Love between Man and Woman

Matthew Arnold through his poem with the title *Dover Beach* conveys the significance of love in the relationship between man and his wife at the time of any crisis. Arnold feels that the appearance of the materialistic modern world is very deceptive. Outwardly, the modern world appears to be varied, beautiful and new like a land of dreams. But in reality, it is devoid of joy, love, loyalty, security, peace and relief. Hence, it is nothing but the darkling plain like a field engulfed in darkness. It suffers from internal divisions and struggles. It is like a battlefield where the human beings are involved in endless and purposeless conflicts for unknown reasons. In such a distressing state, both man and his wife can find consolation and peace only in a faithful love relationship between them. Therefore they should be true to each other and promise their loyalty to each other. In the strength of their loyalty and true love for each other, they can certainly hope to find the best substitute for the lost faith.

Nissim on Love, Sacrifice and Scorpion

Nissim Ezekiel has given love a very conspicuous place in his poetry. While describing love, he explores various facets of love such as fulfillment, fear, possessiveness, passion, surrender, waiting, separation, yearning, offering, thrill, impatience and joy. In his poems like *At the Hotel* and *Sparrows* he brings out the relationship between man and woman.

In the former poem, he reveals the mere existence of lust in their relationship but in the latter poem he gives the picture of an ideal relationship between them. In his *Marriage*, he brings out the bitter reality married life saying that marital life begins with joy, ecstasy and illusion and ends with frustration and disillusionment. His *A Night of the Scorpion* a mother’s sacrificing and selfless love is brought out in her expression after her suffering

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of scorpion bite for nearly twenty hours: “Thank God, the scorpion picked on me/ and spared my children” (45-46).

Dominant Feature in Shakespeare’s Plays

Love as a dominating feeling is seen in the plays of Shakespeare too. His King Lear illustrates both positive and negative aspects love seen in King Lear’s three daughters Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. The love of his first two daughters, Goneril and Regan, to their father is just pretence and in reality they are after his possessions. But the love of his last daughter Cordelia to him and to her husband is genuine and in her show of true love, she stands as the best example of how a woman ought to be both as a daughter and a wife in her love. King Lear is carried away by the pretence of love and fails to see the real love as a result of which he suffers at the hands of his two elder daughters and only his death puts an end to his suffering.

Love is a power greater than the earthly power of men because it goes beyond the limitations of the world. In Antony and Cleopatra. Antony as one of the triumvirs ruling Rome never minds giving up his earthly power for the sake of his love for beautiful Cleopatra. It is the love between them which becomes an invincible destroyer of their power and life on earth. Their love, though voluptuous, aggressive, disgraceful and perfidious, is true to itself. It is nothing but mad passion through which both search for the unlimited. Love in Romeo and Juliet is more admirable and heroic. The love for Romeo and Juliet who belong to two warring families with each other conquers everything, first the prolonged enmity of their two families and finally the death itself. Theirs is a true love because it does not run smooth till their death. Both sacrifice their precious lives for the sake of love.

Shakespeare’s Comedy dramatizes a tale of love on various levels. It is a tale of love at first sight and this love always ends with the ringing of marriage bells of the lovers. His Twelfth Night offers an immense variety of love through the characters of Duke Orsino, Olivia, Viola and Malvolio. Orsino’s love is purely sentimental, Olivia’s passionate and aggressive, Malvolio’s vain and self-conceited, and Viola’s sincere and sacrificing. It is only Viola’s love, which has a beauty, and which is considered to be Shakespeare’s concept of ideal love:

She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i’ the bud
Feed on her damask cheek; she pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief. (2:3).

The Merchant of Venice is a play about true and selfless love of a friend for a friend seen

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in the actions of Antony for Bassanio, those of Bassanio for Antony and those of Portia for her husband's friend. It is very difficult to find such characters in the present day world of materialism.

Mother Against Laws of Nature

It is the laws of nature that man becomes more attached to his wife soon after his marriage than to his mother. It results in his affectionate mother turning jealous of the wife of her son for having stolen her son and his love from her. But a mother La Cachirra in Somerset Maugham's short story The Mother is one who refuses to accept the laws of nature. She is very possessive in devilish manner and she wants to claim her son entirely to herself. She also expects her son to return his love towards her with the same intensity.

When her son falls in love with a woman called Rosalia and becomes indifferent to her in his love and affection, she becomes a murderer of her son's love to get back her son and his love. Thus love is both a binding force and a humanizing power, strengthening human relationship.

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