

viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love

production of www.yoga-intervision.com

the context in which 'viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love'
is situated one can find at the webpage 'bhakti yoga'

van 'viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love'
verscheen een uitgebreidere nederlandstalige versie onder de titel:

zielenpijn in transpersoonlijk perspectief eveneens in pdf beschikbaar

**dedicated to
the dearest one
I was separated from**

1. viraha

Viraha, the pain caused by unanswered love, lost love by dying, absence of the beloved one(s), unfulfilled love ... viraha, the feeling of separatedness ... once this pain will enter everyone's life. Although some say that time cures all, the pain caused by lost love is of a kind that never leaves us. And in so far time heals, the pain of lost love will repeat herself. This is because losing beloved ones, as part of life, will happen again and again.

So, in stead of trying to get rid of that pain we better search for what this pain is telling us. Can it be there is hidden in it a deep transcendental meaning? Can it be this pain is a gift of the lord, a gift of life, for to deepen our love? Can it be life offers situations, even when caused by ourselves, in which we meet with viraha? As mentiond in the little poem below. Expressing the pain of mary, mother of christ.

viraha

the most dear the
most far away

such a painful delight
can that be right?

2. viraha as a gift

Sure this is right. The lord is doing this, life is offering this, because only by virahabhava, only by the mood (bhava) of viraha (lost love), we will discover what real love is. Since there is no deeper, no more intense love than our love for the absent ones. Only by viraha we will be able to transform human love in transcendental love. So, the question out of the last

sentence of the little poem is no question! But a statement, saying: yes, this painful delight is right ! This is because the ones who do receive viraha from the lord, from life, will unveil their immortal invulnerable soul as well as their soul's quality to love all human beings, all living beings, whole existence.

This is because after some time, - it can take years and years - , by the grace of the lord, of life, or by the intermediary of guruji (spiritual teacher), the pain of viraha, our crying, will purify us. As a corresponding result we will encounter, increasingly, the absent beloved one(s) in everyone everywhere everytime. As said by lord krishna in chapter 6 of his bhagavad gita (vs 29 - 32).

This purifying does rise out of our wounded, broken hearts. Then we know: our hearts cannot be wounded, cannot be broken. By that they just open themselves. Realising their essence: sensibility, being moved. Capable to feel the pain of others as well as to rejoice their happiness. Enjoying the little things of life. As if being a child again. Once we come near to this, by and by our crying will end. Our thrust in love will be restored. Even ananda, quiet joy, heavenly bliss, will come. As a result of unconditional universal love as pointed unto in the bhagavad gita-verses as mentioned before.

3. conventional life, pain included, as unreal

Of course our feeling of pain, caused by unanswered love does exist, once we feel that pain, since we feel that pain. It would be cruel, very cruel to deny that. Nevertheless we don't live totally identified with that pain. We are not the pain. Much more we are. Or better: all we can feel we just are not. None of our innumerable identity-aspects we experience, may it be by joy, may it be by suffering, can define our identity essentially.

For that wisdom we don't need to sit at the feet of advaita vedantists, zen boeddhists or whatever teacher we like to go to. We by ourselves can notice it. By observing our pain. By observing the situation that causes that pain. The situation we are involved in. Then we see: almost at the same time as we feel our pain, it seems as if our pain as well as that situation are **not** real. As if, deep down, we are not hurt. As if, essentially, we are not moved by that.

Trust it. It is true. Life, although conventionally real, essentially is a dream. The only thing we have to do is to trust this experience. Indeed nobody, nothing can hurt our soul. Indeed, it is no other than our soul, our eternal invulnerable soul, we do meet in that „unrealness-observation“ ours.

As said: trust is needed. This is because in psychological sense the experience of unrealness most often will be seen as denial. Denial of traumatic events. For the time being necessary for surviving. But in case denial takes too much time trauma-psychologists do fear denial will turn out as a fundamental disturbance for healing. Leading even unto worse, unto forms of depersonalising. So time is needed. For going into that pain. For confrontation with our pain.

4. we need someone who dares to confront us

For coming near to these realisations we need someone who, in time, is saying: stop crying! Someone, guruji or a dear one to us, who dares to say: your crying shows that you don't really

accept life, that you don't accept opposites in life. Who dares to say: your grieving shows you don't really believe in man's untouchable immortal soul. As Krishna is stating (Bhagavad Gita ch. 2 vs 11 - 30). Someone we need who says: this, your crying, shows you don't believe in your experiencing conventional life as a dream. As „at the same time-unreal“. You don't believe that that feeling indicates the only real: your soul.

Of course this transcendental counseling doesn't help if done premature. If done immediately after dramatically life-events. Timing is very important. For example: suppose a man or woman doesn't get "own" children, then first he or she has to mourn. Being sad about it. As long as needed. You can't immediately say to him or her: "you can love all children, since there are so many who need your love". Saying that in the midst of their mourning, how well-meant it may be, will be experienced as cruel. The same will be experienced in case of premature help of this kind when someone loses his beloved parents, his beloved life-partner. By death or betrayal or whatsoever.

Or suppose a man loses his child, and, then again, he loses a child, you can't immediately say to him that his pain is known as *viraha*, that this pain, his pain, is a gift of the lord, a gift of life. First he has to undergo shock. By feeling the reality of what did happen. So he has to cry and to cry and to cry. And if he doesn't, everyone is hoping that he soon will start crying. Then, slowly, slowly, there will come the moment that *guruji*, or a dear one to that man, carefully can point to him that his soul reveals herself to him. That *viraha* is the case as well.

Sometimes *guruji*, or that dear one, after a first trying, has to wait some time more. But, surely, once there will come the moment that the shocked ones will start crying. And, after that, the mourning ones will understand. So finally *guruji* or a dear one to them, they will be heard when saying: stop crying ... accept life ... accept opposites in life ... no one, nothing, can touch man's immortal soul ...

5. ultimately transformation of pain is the way

This hearing will surely happen. If not in this life then in next life or in the next one. This is because our inherent nature is to love all and everything, unconditionally universally. Since our core's quality, our soul's quality, is love. Ultimately *viraha*, the pain caused by unanswered love, is the means for to discover that core, for to discover our soul, as well their quality.

Psychological help, although surely needed, will bring no final solution neither will bring us to that - , our inborn love-state. Psychological help is useful and necessary for to overcome shock, for to bring crying into presence. For bringing us back to the reality of daily life.

Nevertheless in time psychological help will be turned out as contraproductive. This is because mourning as everlasting process ultimately is conditioning us unto love as a claim. Unto attachment towards the not-real. Towards the not-self. As long as we are doing that, *viraha* as part of life will come again and again. Only transformation to a transcendental level will give the solution. Will give birth to our soul and her quality, which is, as said before, universal unconditional love. In fact it is more difficult to reach this state when one does have luckily "own" children. This is because of our natural clinging to own children. The most clear in case of difficulties. Then there is the tendency to exclude other children in favour of ours.

6. we are souls on a karmic way

Although “own“ children, seen out of a transcendental scope, are no other than a direct bridge towards universal unconditional love, this is, generally spoken, a rare phenomenon. This is not only because of our clinging to them, but also because of our blindness for the existence of each of our children, as well of all children, as a specific manifestation of the same eternal soul we all are. All of them on their way towards their final divine destination. Through and passing many many lives.

The same of course is the case with ourselves. Our genetic heritage (nature) as well as our social- and educational development (nurture) we are involved in, are, although important, not essential in the way we often think. Of course we have to deal with our genetic potential, to accept and to explore our inborn capacities. And sure, if needed, we have to heal from miseries out of our development-history. More essential however is the fact that our social as well our genetic characteristics are no other than the material resp. expressions of the karmic predispositions we brought with us as a result of our former lives.

Together they form the basic as well as the instruments with the help of which we have to bring our souls unto a higher plane. Seen out of the scope of the law of karma, they, - our genetic luggage, our social-educational context as well as our karmic predispositions - , do offer the best suitable possibilities for that.

7. the meaning of relationship

Although we may speak about that in this way we don't really encounter our children with deep respect for this truth. Most of the time we do forget that they did take birth at us not as a result of a so-called own decision but that they were trusted to us for passing through a stage within their own karmic voyage as said before. Otherwise, if we did realise that truth, we were more successfully with allowing resp. facilitating them to go their own path.

Feelings of guilt towards them, our children, feelings of shame, and so on, these feelings indicate our ignorance. We are not the ones who finally determinate the development of our children and their lifegoings. We only facilitate their voyage by a given genetic structure (nature) as well as by our love and care (nurture). Even when we fall short. The same is the case as far as the growing of our love and care towards unconditional universal love is concerned. In order to bring our love on a higher plan our children, our children indeed, they in turn, are facilitating us.

Therefore, related to our children, in a way our falling short to them is no other than falling short towards our own life-mission. No other than falling short towards all sentient beings. Towards whole existence.

That's indeed what is meant by the karmic wisdom that says: “parents and children they do fulfill each others karma“. Karmic interrelated they are offering each other the opportunity and support to transform themselves to a higher plane. Not entangled in - , but with the intermediary of their relationship.

8. krishna in disguise

This is the case with all human relations. Also, if not especially, with and between the happily married ones. They in particular are fulfilling and supporting the karmic voyage each one of them is going. Towards unveiling their souls. If giving consciously support to each other they are transforming their relationship unto a sacrament. Making their lives holy. However, often it is difficult for them to reach that holy goal, the divine goal we all strive to: the state of unconditional universal love.

Seen out of the scope of male-female-relations the way towards that is to worship in every man the lord, the creative principle. And to worship in every woman shakti, divine mother. The care-principle. Helas, this truth is nowadays seldom heard. Man and woman are inclined to consume their love for each other on human plane only. In stead of to worship each other, celebrating their karmic interrelatedness.

Because this sacramental secret of relationship is disappearing these days, the solitaries often they reach more easely the state of transcendental love, the state of unconditional universal love. By the grace of the lord, or by intermediary of guruji or a dear one to them, once they will transcend and transform viraha , - their pain because of their unfulfilled desire to love one another human in particular - , unto unconditional universal love. Encountering **everyone** as beloved one. As krishna states (bhagavad gita ch 6 vs 29). Understanding: no one is **ours**.

Experiencing the other, whoever it may be, as krishna in disguise. Since it is he, it is life, who does arrange our relational circumstances. His play we are.

9. dedication

I hope these thoughts will bring relief to the ones who mourn, shocked by unanswered love, lost love, unfulfilled love-desires and/or traumatic events. Deeply I hope they will meet the source of their mourning, the purpose as well the results: love, unconditional universal love.

May be these considerings will bring some support as well unto those who are undergoing the pain of not being able to help in case of dear ones' love-sufferings. May be 'viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love' will be useful for those, who, witnessing the pain of their dear ones, have to give them actual freedom for their own karmic way.

Finally I hope this will bring parents, children and happily related ones, some more understanding about the transcendent meaning of their relatedness.

Anthony Draaisma

christmas 2003

in order to continue your exploration please go back to
www.yoga-intervision.com

NOTES

(1) Ultimately „viraha“ stands for the feeling of being separated from the beloved divine. This is called by christian mystics „dark night of the soul“. Within krishna-bhakti viraha is very prominent. Viraha is the core of the relation between radha and the gopi's (cowherd-maids as well as krishnadevotees of all times) at one side and krishna at the other. Especially by his absence, by his play of hide and seek, the gopi's resp. krishnadevotees are experiencing their love for krishna. This is expressed in many bhajans (songs of praise). The most famous of this kind are the bhajans of the female saint meerabai (16e century).

(2) In christianity the most famous archetype of viraha is maria, the mother of jezus. In many icon's maria is looking at her young son on a sad way. Often even she looks away. She knows soon she will loose him. The little viraha-poem out of the essay is adressed to her. To maria, with jezus, her son on her lap. In the socalled piëta maria is holding jezus, this time after his dying, on her lap too. This also is a very famous expression of viraha. Numerous exemples of the piëta one can find at christian cemeteries.

(3) Probably the most pregnant, the most transcendental exemple of viraha in christianity is jezus himself. His pain was not at the first place a fysical one but is concerning the pain caused by man's incapability to answer his love by love. As can be concluded hearing his words on the cross: father please forgive them since they don't know what they are doing.

(4) In greek drama one can find viraha expressed, for example, by the mythe of orpheus and euridice as well as by the narcissusmyth. Shakespeare's romeo and julia (late middle ages) shows the like. One of the most famous viraha-expressions of the last centuries can be seen when visiting rodin's „fugit amor“ (love that flees/unanswered love). This sculpture (musée rodin, paris) shows a desparate lover, named paolo, who is stretching in vain his arms backwards towards his beloved, named francesca. She is desperate too. These two lovers are figuring in dante's famous divina comedia. Their love was forbidden since francesca was engaged to giancotto, paolo's elder brother. After being murdered the punishment of paolo and francesca in hell did consist out of eternal being near without being able to touch each other. By the way, rodin did sculpture paolo and francesca also very close to each other. That sculpture, far more famous than „fugit amor“, is known as „the kiss“. Although now they are kissing each other, in a way they are hiding it: we can't see fully their meeting lips. Moreover, closely looking one can see clearly how they hesistate to go more intimate. Especially paolo. Knowing their love was forbidden, knowing they soon would be seperated roughly, rodin shows in „the kiss“ their kissing as sweet as well as painful at the same time.

(5) Viraha in psychological sense is known as a positive commitment to others and/or to unselfish life-values. However without fulfilment, without positive response. As a result of that this love, this commitment, leads to negative feelings as depression, despair, helplessness, fear, seperatedness, guilt, anger etc. As explained by the dutch personality-psychologist hubert hermans in his famous valuationtheory. Hermans did call these feelings „fugit amor“, love that flights (see note before). Shortly notated as (A -). In that (A) stands for “another“ and (-) for “negative feelings“. The (A) motive is one of the basic motives of man. Next to the (Z) motive. That (Z) stands for “zelf“. In english: the self, the own person self (not the higher self). In case of dominancy of (Z) we go for selfesteem, selfcertainty, capability, proudness.

(6) For more about viraha in psychological sense see hubert j. m. hermans, els hermans-jansen, willem van gilst: „de grondmotieven van het menselijk bestaan, hun expressie in het

persoonlijk waarderingsleven“, uitg. swets & zeitlinger, lisse 1985. Also: hermans hubert j.m., „het verdeelde gemoed; over de grondmotieven in ons dagelijks leven“, uitg. nelissen, baarn 1986. For publications by hermans in english language see www.socsci.kun.nl.

(7) Seen out of the scope of our transcendental way, our way towards unconditional universal love, our viraha, our (A -) feelings, are hidden (Z) feelings. If we don't transform our (A -) feelings, our pain of viraha, the pain caused by unanswered love, unto unconditional universal love (A) we stay captured by (Z). Captured by our ego.

(8) Viraha makes clear the essence of our heart. This essence is: vulnerability. Indeed, before reaching universal unconditional love, first our heart has to be broken. Although it never breaks. It is, by the pain of viraha, just opening herself. Because of this, although often unconscious about that reason, so many old people's tears are so prone. The heart's vulnerability is not contradictory to the truth of man's untouchable immortal soul. The latter completes the first, does strengthen the heart. Otherwise, finally, by witnessing and/or helping others to endure their pain our own hearts will collapse.

(9) For more about how to strengthen our hearts while growing in compassion, please visit www.worldprayer-lordhavemercy.com and read the essay „praying for the world“ (subtitle: how to relate to the pain of the world).

(10) Corresponding to aging most of us experience their tears as more prone as before. Sometimes / some older people are bothering about that. Ashamed not being able to prevent or repress their tears. Once they understand their hearts sensibility, as the positive result of their former viraha-experiences, they loose their shame as well as regain their selfcontrol as far as needed. This is since the sensible heart is no other then the immortal invulnerable soule. When conscious of that, our heart is equally strong.

- - -

there is no dutch translation of ´viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love´ available - one of the other yoga-intervisionproductions, in dutch language only, concerns approximately the same issues as covered by ´viraha´ - even more elaborated - called ´zielenpijn in transpersoonlijk perspectief´ - this dutch version is also in pdf available - via www.yoga-intervision.com

van ´viraha, sweet pain of unanswered love´ is geen nederlandse versie beschikbaar - een van de overig yoga interviesieproducties gaat echter over ongeveer dezelfde materie - echter uitgebreider - getiteld ´zielenpijn in transpersoonlijk perspectief´ (over de zin van relationele verwickelingen en pijn) - beschikbaar in pdf via www.yoga-intervision.com

- - -

visit also www.worldprayer-lordhavemercy.com
another initiative taken by the yoga-intervisioncircle