

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

Khalil Gibran's concept of love reflected in *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*

Hiramoni Goswami

Research Scholar, Dept. of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, Assam, India

Hiramoni Goswami. Khalil Gibran's concept of love reflected in *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*--Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(7), 10739-10743. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Khalil Gibran, *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, Kalidas.

ABSTRACT

Khalil Gibran is a famous poet, painter, writer, philosopher, theologian and visual artist of the nationality of Lebanese and America. He was born in 1883. Gibran wrote a good number of books among those *The Prophet*, *Sand and Foam*, *Wisdom* etc. are popular among the readers. Gibran's best known work is *The Prophet*, a book composed of 26 poetic essays. The work speaks of love and marriage, joy and sorrow, reason and passion, beauty and death and conveys the yearning for a Unity of Being that can only be achieved through love. His unique concept of love is reflected even in the works of master poet Kālidāsa of 4th century A.D., who authored two Mahākāvyas, two Khaṇḍakāvyas and three dramas. One of those works where we find the reflection of Khalil Gibran's concept of love is *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, the master piece of poet Kālidāsa, is a famous drama in the whole range Sanskrit literature. This drama contains a famous love story between Duṣyanta, the hero and Śakuntalā, the heroine. Kālidāsa through this unique love story gives us some messages regarding how ephemeral love can be elevated to divine love. As we know Kalidas is a poet of love and nature so we find that in almost all his works the poet depicts his concept of love. Kālidāsa always is in opinion that physical love is not at all real love. Physical love arises more or less from lust. It is not the true concept of love at all. True love evolves not from lust but from the core of heart. These kinds of concepts of love are also seen in the poems of Khalil Gibran. Therefore, in this paper it is proposed to discuss Khalil Gibran's concept of love reflected in *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*.

INTRODUCTION

Khalil Gibran's poems regarding love always indicate that he supports true and divine love. According to Gibran separation is the key to purify one's love. Gibran says love knows not its depth until the hour of separation.¹ It means separation makes one's love stronger and deeper. This concept of separation is also elaborately seen in Kālidāsa's work. Kālidāsa always assays to show in his works how ephemeral love can be elevated to divine one. For this purpose the poet shows the ways and means for the purification of ephemeral love. To him separation is one of the most effective means to purify the thinking of the love. In the first act of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* we see that Duṣyanta, the king, fell into love with Śakuntalā just at the first look at her due to Śakuntalā's exquisite beauty. On the other hand Śakuntalā also admits herself that having seen Duṣyanta she felt within herself a particular sense which was quite opposite to that of the hermit life.² This was the beginning of love between the duo- the hero and the heroine. But this was the bodily attraction. Therefore, Kālidāsa wanted this sort of love ought to be purified. And that sort of purification should be made through separation. Therefore, Kālidāsa introduces the curse³ of Sage Durvāsā which bears great significant in the purification of love between Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā. The curse of Durvāsā is the keynote of this separation because due to effect of the curse king Duṣyanta couldn't recognize his own wedded wife Śakuntalā when later she arrived at the court with her retinue consisting of Gautamī, Śārangarava and Śārdvata. So, Duṣyanta disowned Śakuntalā. This curse has a great significant in the fulfillment of divine love of the hero and the heroine. The Indologist Gaurinath Sastri says that the curse produces a chastening influence on both of the hero and the heroine whose love which was more of the flesh in the beginning turned out to be spiritual in the end.⁴ S. Radhakrishnan also says that Kālidāsa doesn't judge the first union of lover as a moral lapse. They are not sinners but they have to grow through suffering.⁵ Therefore, separation between lovers is always seen in Kālidāsa's works. In the *Meghadūtā* also we find this separation between Yakṣa and Yakṣa's wife.⁶ Like Kālidāsa Gibran also doesn't agree with the love consists of physical attraction. He also accepts the true and divine love. To achieve this pure love one should get rid of from lust. Gibran says that love has no other desire but to fulfill itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: to melt and be like a running brook that sings that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness.⁷

Another important point is that both the poets assert that we should never forget our responsibilities and others for love. Love can never be an excuse in the path of one's duty. In Kālidāsa's work we see that he never would compromise with the negligence of duty for the sake of love whoever doesn't attain his or her duty. On the plea of love should be chastised because such kind of attitude creates hindrance to realize the true concept of love. In the drama *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* both the hero and the heroine are seen to have neglected their duty as they were engrossed in love towards each other. Duṣyanta didn't obey his mother's calling to come back to the capital to attend the *putreṣṭhi* sacrifice for

the simple reason that he had to stay in the hermitage of Kaṇva to protect the inhabitant of there. Although he could have appointed any other minister to protect them and he could have attend the sacrifice. But as Duṣyanta was in love with Śakuntalā therefore he sent Mādhavya to the capital. And Duṣyanta also instructed Mādhavya to take easily his attraction towards Śakuntalā as Duṣyanta knew he would disclose this secret in front of his mother.⁸ On the other hand Śakuntalā also failed to perform her duty. She was entrusted with to receive guest like Durvāsā in the absence of Kaṇva. Śakuntalā couldn't be heard the voice of Durvāsā as she was absorbed in thinking of her husband. Therefore, she couldn't come to receive the guest. Thus both of them were in fault. Hence they ought to have been purified and was through the curse of Durvāsā they separated from each other. So, inattention in duty for the sake of love is not to be done. In the Sanskrit novel *Avināśi*, the author Biswanarayan Shastri also seems to have been in support of this concept of love as he says in the speech of Bhāskaravarmā that the primary duty of a king is to protect his nation and there is no way for existence of emotions of heart.⁹ This concept is also found in Gibran's poem when he says love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed.¹⁰ Although the poet doesn't indicate here that love can never be an excuse in one's duty but we can explain it in that sense. Here it is said that love gives nothing and it takes nothing. It doesn't hold anything. It means we should not take anything from others for love and also should not give anything for love. More or less it indicates that we should not engross in love that make hindrance in pursuing our duty.

Next point is that both the poet accepts that reunion of lovers should be made in divine form. Gibran says that love to be in its divine form must be in three – the husband, the wife and their offspring.¹¹ In the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* we find that Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā however feel guilty they may be in the persuasion of the curse of love had to be reunited. The reunion was affected at the hermitage of Sage Mārīca. As Duṣyanta was coming back to earth from heaven after assisting the lord of gods, by a chariot with Mātali, the charioteer, he happened to see the Golden Pick or *Hemakuṭa*. The natural beauty of the *Hemakuṭa* attracted Duṣyanta so much so that he asked Mātali to land at that pick. When the king stepped at the hermitage his attention was immediately drawn by a young boy who was fighting with a cub of a lion. That boy was no other than his own son. As Śakuntalā was taken away by her nymph mother Menakā from the place of Duṣyanta she kept her pregnant daughter at the hermitage of Mārīca. There, in that hermitage Śakuntalā get birth to Duṣyanta's son Sarvadamana. It was through Sarvadamana, their child through whom the union of the hero and the heroine was made. A little after sage Mārīca narrated to them all about Durvāsā's curse that befell Śakuntalā effecting their separation. At that moment neither Śakuntalā nor Duṣyanta was of that vary mood that could be seen in the hermitage of sage Kaṇva. Because we find in the sixth act that when Duṣyanta reminds Śakuntalā after seeing the ring he is again absorbed in the thinking of Śakuntalā. But he also performs his royal duties with proper care. He does justice to Dhanamitra's property¹² and also accepts the invitation of Indra.¹³ In the seventh act Śakuntalā, emaciated through

the practice of vow, is also seen wearing a pair of dusky garments and having a single braid of hair.¹⁴ They were with their chest hearts. Here, *Hemakuṭa* or golden pick is a rather symbol of heaven signifying that the love between the hero and the heroine was divine and that was made possible through their son Sarvadamana, later known as a Bharata. So, in this way Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā achieved the divine reunion and they also obtained the true and divine love. S. Radhakrishnan again states that love is not a mere affair of the senses; it is a kinship of spirit. Both Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā suffered, were disciplined by sorrow, and obtained the reward of a spiritual harmony.¹⁵ Khalil Gibran states some quotes regarding the survival of marriage life like love one another but make not a bond of love. Let it be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.....give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.¹⁶ A reflection of this kind of concept of Gibran regarding marriage life is seen in the drama *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. In the fifth act of the drama when Duṣyanta was in his kingdom Hastināpura, we see that Duṣyanta was worried about his wife Hamsavatī. He just after hearing a song of Hamsavatī understood her mantel status. Duṣyanta immediately sent Vidūṣaka to solace Hamsavatī.¹⁷

So, from the discussion presented above it is revealed that in the treatment of love both the poet Kālidāsa and Khalil Gibran bear close similarity. The logic and concept in the treatment of love given by Kālidāsa and Gibran, is admirable. Both the poet accepts separation in the course of love which makes it pure and divine. Their concept of divine love is unique. Gibran states his view on love concisely. But when one reads *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, then he can treat this book as an explanation for the concepts of love of Gibran.

References

1. *Avināśi of Biswanarayan Shastri*, published by Manjushree Publication, 1994.
2. *The Abhijñānaśākuntalam of Kālidāsa*, edited by M. R. Kale, published by Motilal Banarsidass, Varanasi, 2005.
3. *The Prophet by Khalil Gibran*, Published by Wordsworth Editions, 2012, Internet.
4. *The Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa*, edited by S. Radhakrishnan, published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1962.
5. Apte, V.S., *The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, Dehli, 1989.
6. Keith A. Berriedale, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, Dehli, 1993.
7. Sastri Gaurinath, *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Motilal Banarsidass, Dehli, 1998.

8. *The Journal Surabhāratī*, Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, ISSN No. 0976-4488, Vol. XII, 2011-2012.
9. Sharma Thaneswar, *Sanskrit SāhityarItibṛtta*, Chandra Prakash, Guwahati, 2007.