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## **OSHO'S IDEAS ON LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND FREEDOM IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

**ABSTRACT:** This piece of research paper digs deep into the thoughts of Osho about love, relationships, and freedom and how these philosophical thought-provoking concepts can be applied in our day to day lives. A modern spiritual instructor, Osho, placed a strong focus on being true to oneself, overcoming the influence of the social condition, and living freely in every possible respect. Love as a trans. formative power is not perceived as an emotional experience but as a way of leading to self-awareness and emancipation as taught by him. Osho sees relationships as a medium of personal realization and it should be rooted in connectedness and freedom instead of dependence. The paper explores the ways through which the ideas of Osho touch the traditional ideas about love and relationship and how they promote a free kind of love that is neither possessive nor attachive and full of expectations. Moreover, an idea of freedom in the philosophy of Osho is described how it can be applied to society today and lead people to override the restraints of cultural dictums as well as personal phobias. Once such concepts are applied in everyday life they are able to make relationships with others more meaningful and attain a more harmonious relationship with the other persons, and live more fully and authentically with inner content.

**KEYWORDS:** Osho, love, relationships, freedom, selfawareness, personal growth, authenticity, dependency, attachment, liberation.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Osho (1931-1990), an Indian spiritual teacher and mystic, disputed the traditional constraints of love, human connection and freedom. His doctrines also asked individuals to abandon all semblances of strict traditions and believe in living by pure means and perceptions. Love did not exist as a responsibility or obligation per se to him but a way of being (Osho, 2001). Instead of relationships that are seen as dependency, they were perceived as a means of growth (Osho, 2006). It is based on the idea that freedom was the essence of spiritual realization- the way to live a trainful

and meaningful life (Whalen-Bridge, 2014). The paper discusses how the stated perspectives can be implemented in everyday life but will also consider the drawbacks of implementing them in the present society.

### **1.2 Rethinking Love**

Osho made a distinct distinction between love and attachment. He said that the attachment is most times premised on fear and possession but not love which does not start until both individuals are free (Osho, 2001). In the contemporary context, it entails abandoning a possessive attitude to relationships and embracing compassion, empathy and non-judgment. Practically, it promotes the idea that one has to learn to love themselves in the first place, only then, we can love others (Gianotti, 2005).

### **1.3 Understanding Osho's Philosophy of Love and Freedom**

What is central to the philosophy of Osho is the concept of unconditional love and freeing the self. He underlines that love in its purest form is not subjected to emotional needs and expectations of the society, but it is born out of state of inner freedom and self-awareness. Love is not something which is either given or taken away by others as Osho says but it is an inbuilt expression of our true nature. Freedom here is understood to be defined in terms of living without fear, judgment or attachment. Osho does not see love and freedom as conflicting forces, but these are harmonious forces complementing one another designed to create a harmonious lifestyle. Through the release of societal and fear of rejection or loss, one will be able to love without moderation, and allow the release of emotional and spiritual freedom.

### **1.4 The Essence of Love: Beyond Emotion and Attachment**

Osho in his approach to love gives it an elevated scope going beyond the emotional attachment which is commonly understood as love in normal terms, or the other form of the dependency approach of love. He opines that conventional love that is characterized by possessiveness,

attachment and expectation locks down real freedom and causes emotional hurt. To him, love is a condition which is person-centered and it is not dependent on situations. Osho claims that when love is based on attachment it becomes selfish, possessive, confining. In his view, true love is all pervasive and self emancipating- it comes when people do not feel the need to possess or dominate other people. Such love is founded on respect, trust and understanding by both partners where they have freedom to develop and blossom. To Osho, detached love is a high spiritual bonding that lets both mates bring out the real qualities in them without the fear of being bound down.

### **1.5 Osho's Concept of True Freedom in Relationships**

True freedom in relationship refers to the freedom of both individuals that are involved in a relationship to be liberated of societal pressure, personal insecurities and the restraint of the currently held perspectives on relationships and commitments in relationships. In most relationships, he is of the view that people cling together due to fear, insecurity or the need to possess. This suppresses individual development and causes codependency. According to Osho, love is not a weapon to be applied in order to dominate others or to control them. Rather, it must be about mutual respect and the consideration of each others freedom. The real freedom in relationships implies such freedom to develop oneself, grow individually, and express oneself. To Osho, relationships should be regarded as the arena of spiritual development, instead of being an emotional cobweb or a dependency. In this respect, freedom is not lack of love but is the condition of unconditional love that does not want to possess and to restrict.

### **1.6 The Role of Self-Awareness in Love and Relationships**

Self-awareness as a factor in love and relationships is very dominant in Osho. Only when such people know themselves and accept themselves are they able to have loving relationships. Self-awareness is the understanding of how they feel, what they want, what they fear and what they feel insecure and being capable of overcoming those in order to allow deeper love and connection. It helps people to love without expectations, be vulnerable and to accept people, or yourself as you

are. According to Osho, people go into relationships to find satisfaction or to have their egos validated but this only brings dissatisfaction and tension. By learning how to be self-conscious individuals become free of these ego insecurities and desires and can enter relationships on a grounded peaceful platform of authenticity. In such a manner, self-awareness is the stepping stone towards an establishment of a harmonious, well-balanced relationship where both partners are allowed to be their true selves and leads towards greater love and understanding.

### **1.7 Freedom from Dependency: A Key to Healthy Relationships**

The principal thought in the establishment of healthy and valuable relationships is the idea of not being dependant, which was found by Osho. He thinks that most of the people go into relationships because they require security, acceptance, or validation, which might make them dependent on emotions. In such relationships, one may get lost in the other person and they put their desires and needs aside. According to Osho, true love is based on a sense of freedom; freedom to not rely or depend on affirmation and attachment. In good relationships, the partners do not lose their identities and encourage one another to grow. When a person rids oneself of dependency, s/he is able to present the full, true self to the relationship, leading to more connectedness and tolerance. This liberation does not mean that one refutes the power of love, rather it is an acknowledgment that love should not be fueled by dependency or fear, but should be upon free will, and respect.

### **1.8 Love as a Path to Self-Liberation: Osho's Transformative Vision**

Osho considered love to be an extremely strong tool of personal and spiritual release. In his teachings, love does not refer to just an emotional connection between two individuals, it is an experience that can work on a person as to take him/her to self-realization and liberation. In his own words Schopenhauer thought that love is capable of taking apart the ego and these obstacles that divide us with our real selves. Loving people teaches them to adopt vulnerability and openness, as well as way to be real. It is used as an instrument of releasing the layers of training and trepidations that block freedom. Love is a result of inner peace and self-understanding and enables

people to rise above their own relative boundaries and into a greater purpose and wholeness, according to Osho. In such a manner, love is transformed into a spiritual and a transformative process of self-liberation.

### **1.9 Breaking Societal Norms: Love and Freedom in the Modern World**

Osho philosophy of love and freedom places challenge to traditional norms as dictated by the society regarding relationships especially the rigidity of love, marriage, and attachment of emotions. He criticized how, in traditional relationships, possession, control and fear of being left seems to circulate. Osho encouraged one to free themselves of the cultural conditioning and establish their own identifications of love and liberation. The concepts of Osho that can be found in the modern world where an individual is often subordinate to societal demands propose that the love be free and non-possessive in nature and is something that is liberating. In this respect, true love cannot be bounded by socially constructed roles and duties, and should be a natural goodness, flexibility traveling, respecting the freedom and self-realization of the individual. By refusing these norms imposed on them people are able to find relationships to be more genuine, fulfilling and find harmony.

### **1.10 Attachment and Possessiveness: Osho's Critique of Conventional Love**

According to Osho, love and attachments cannot go together and attachments and possessiveness are the antonym of genuine love. The classical definitions of love contain the feeling of owning a partner to dominate or own him and the partner. Osho opposed this possessiveness saying that this was a result of fear and insecurity and this was not love. He asserted that attachment to an individual, an outcome or a certain type of love is a source of dependency, dependence and inhibition of individual developmental processes resulting in emotional suffering. To Osho, love is not a proprietary and controlling force. The unconditional love is emancipating when attachment and possessiveness is removed. Osho felt that a genuine love can exist only when each member of



the relationship is free to be himself with no one to command or dominate in the relationship. Such out-of-control love based on freedom will lead to great emotional attachment and self-satisfaction.

### **1.11 Putting Philosophy into Practice**

To apply Osho teachings to everyday life may be that simple and yet so powerful:

1. Meditation, Mindfulness- Osho used to emphasize on meditation as a means of awareness creation (Osho, 2010).
2. Acceptance and Non-Judgment – Non-judgment accepts the uniqueness of individuals, which would keep relationships out of control (Whalen-Bridge, 2014).
3. Achieving a Balance Between Autonomy and Togetherness - Autonomous growth plus togetherness is made possible through true companionship (Gianotti, 2005).
4. Having a different sense of success- success is rather defined differently through not trying to seek validation but rather self fulfillment (chryssides, 1999).

### **1.12 Challenges and Criticism**

In spite of their popularity, the views of Osho have faced a cultural opposition. His sexual statements and their refutation of the religious norms led to many conflicts with conservative societies (Urban, 2005). Practically, it is also hard to be completely independent of social norms as modern life presupposes certain degree of conformity. Critics claim that the concept of radical freedom at the hands of Osho can be termed as a misleading thought of irresponsibility (Puttick, 1997). These difficulties indicate that his thinking is revolutionary, but implementing it in the real world provokes the need to find compromises and good judgment.

## CONCLUSION:

The teachings of Osho on love relationships and freedom give a life changing vision of relationships, a guide that goes beyond normative and into a dimension where it is really possible to be in loosened relationships and not lose anything. His philosophy suggests that there is nothing attached, possessive or an issue of emotional dependency in true love, but a manifestation of inner freedom and self realization. In relationships, Osho promotes a love that develops personal transformation, openness, and overcoming the social rules and requirements. His thoughts motivate a person to go beyond the bonds of ego and fear though love is liberating and transformational force in life.

A proper application of Osho in concepts of freedom, love and personal awareness, one is able to form a relationship not only satisfying but more satisfying spiritually. Love without possessiveness and attachment, is a mirror to self discovery and path to self liberation. A critique by Osho of the conventional relationship provides an opportunity of rethinking and redefining relationships with other people towards relationships that are characterized by mutual respect, freedom, and the process of growth together. In the end, Osho is encouraging us to see love and relationships in their deepest and liberating manifestation or form-based on self-knowledge, truthfulness and the liberating dynamics of freedom.

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