

Eros and Kamadeva

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

Eros and *Kamadeva* name the primordial power of creative love in the Greek and Vedic symbolic languages compared by Theosophy. In their highest meaning, they point toward the first movement of desire in manifestation, the bond between being and its unmanifest ground, and the impulse through which unity unfolds into a living cosmos. Their comparison invites care with levels of meaning: an archetypal creative power and a personal feeling are related in the teaching, but they are not interchangeable.

H.P. Blavatsky links archaic *Eros* with *Fohat*. In the phenomenal universe, *Fohat* is the occult, electric, vital power which, under the Will of the Creative *Logos*, unites forms and gives them the first impulse that becomes law. In the unmanifested universe, however, *Fohat* is no more this than *Eros* is the later winged Cupid. *Eros* is potential creative power before cosmic differentiation, the mysterious impulse through which the latent becomes manifest.

Kamadeva gives the same mystery in the Vedic field. In *The Secret Doctrine*, *Kama* is the personification of the feeling which leads and propels to creation. It is the first movement that stirred the One after manifestation from the abstract principle. The *Rig Veda* states that desire first arose in It, the primal germ of mind, the bond connecting Entity with Non-Entity. This is not animal desire. It is cosmic desire, the root of relation, mind, and manifestation.

In *The Theosophical Glossary*, H.P. Blavatsky describes the earlier conception of *Kama* as an all-embracing desire for universal good and tender compassion toward all that lives. She distinguishes this meaning from the later sexual personification. The distinction does not erase the other uses of the word. It gives a key to their relationship: a power conceived universally can acquire increasingly restricted forms of expression. The reader must ask which level is intended before drawing an ethical or psychological conclusion.

The difficulty is that love is easily degraded. Professor Iyer warns that no word has perhaps been so abused in the present age as “love.” Selfish, personal love, often based on passing passion, may wear the mask of selfless and immortal love. Earthly love may be a shadow of ethereal love, but it may also become a perversion. Blind and selfish love contains the seeds of violence because it is based upon untruth and uses illusion to gain its ends.

This warning does not deny human affection. Finite personal love is not bad in itself. It becomes frustrating and spiritually useless when it remains possessive, exclusive, and self-enclosed. It must gradually purify and make more impersonal and unselfish the force of *kama* in the

incarnated personality. Only then can love become a non-violent, unifying power that produces strength and peace.

The transformation depends on *Manas*. The ancient teaching says that *Manas* is dual: lunar in its lower aspect and solar in its higher aspect. Lower *Manas* descends into the animal soul and listens to selfish and sensual desire. Higher *Manas* turns toward *Buddhi*, the seat of true love and real compassion. Love is transformed when the mind turns upward, when desire becomes aspiration, and when personal affection becomes increasingly transparent to wisdom.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception gives this teaching its practical direction. It cannot be satisfied with loving one person against the world, or loving humanity in abstraction while ignoring the nearest duty. True love seeks the SELF of all amid the conditions of earthly life. Professor Iyer teaches that true love is a creative force emanating from the One *Logos* and that its expression is governed by the universal law of cosmic and human interdependence. Love that harms, imprisons, manipulates, or narrows another being is not yet the higher Love. True love strengthens, liberates, unifies, and serves.

This is why *Eros* and *Kamadeva* support Human Solidarity and Universal Brotherhood. If true Love emanates from the One *Logos*, then love is not a private possession. It is a law of relation. Nothing that harms another can be called love in the higher sense, because all beings participate in one essence and one life-field. To love truly is to act in the light of interdependence.

Professor Iyer connects *Kamadeva* with *Kriyashakti*, the creative potency of self-conscious thought. In this account, divine imagination becomes fully active through compassionate and universal motives. The link gives love a creative meaning: it can inspire and sustain forms of service, rather than remain a feeling admired within oneself. The governing image is a hearth. A gathered flame can give warmth and support a common life when its energy is held within a faithful purpose.

Consider friends preparing a room in which neighbours can meet and learn. Enthusiasm supplies an initial warmth, but love must also become a thoughtful arrangement: clear access, dependable hours and a welcome that does not require agreement with the organizers. The ideal acquires a form through practical intelligence. When someone raises a difficulty, the group can treat it as help in making the room more useful. Creative goodwill becomes more exact as it listens.

The same undertaking can expose attachment. A founder may feel wounded when others change an arrangement or receive the thanks. There is an opportunity to distinguish the common purpose from ownership of its expression. Releasing a needless claim does not erase the founder's contribution. It allows that contribution to bear fruit in other hands. The hearth

can remain warm because the work is shared, and devotion becomes more durable as it grows less dependent upon personal control.

The relation to *Makara* and the *Kumaras* adds another layer of symbolism. Professor Iyer associates *Kamadeva* with the awakening of intelligent humanity and its capacity for perfectibility. These correspondences belong to a metaphysical reading of sacred names, not a claim that Greek and Vedic traditions are identical in every detail. Their value lies in illuminating relations among creative love, self-conscious intelligence and responsibility. A comparison becomes fruitful when it preserves distinctions while allowing a larger meaning to emerge.

The practical test of love is direction. Does it widen or narrow? Does it free or bind? Does it strengthen truth or require deception? Does it awaken compassion or feed fear? Love is tested not by intensity alone, but by what it does to the freedom and dignity of another. A personal attachment honestly examined may become a lesson in self-knowledge. A painful loss may reveal the difference between love and possession. A moment of beauty may awaken the love of wisdom rather than the wish to possess the beautiful object. The question is not merely “What do I feel?” but “What does this feeling serve?”

When *Manas* turns toward *Buddhi*, love ceases to be a private fever and becomes luminous strength. It remains tender, but it becomes less possessive. It remains warm, but it becomes more truthful. It learns to serve without owning, to comfort without binding, and to rejoice in the welfare of others without calculation.

Contemplation gives this work an inward rhythm. One can gather a generous intention, examine what it requires and allow it to mature before rushing into action. The pause is useful when it brings motive and method into closer agreement. A wish to help needs understanding of the actual need, and an imaginative plan needs the patient corrections that reality supplies. Love becomes creative through this continuing conversation between aspiration, discernment and responsible work.

Eros and *Kamadeva* remind the student that love is not merely something one feels. It is a cosmic responsibility, a creative law, and a path of transformation. The flame of divine desire that arose in the heart of the One becomes, in the purified human heart, the power to bless. Desire becomes aspiration. Attachment becomes service. Love of one or few widens toward love of wisdom, humanity, and the SELF of all.

Glossary

Absolute — The unconditioned Reality, beyond the limitations and distinctions of manifested existence.

Agathon — The Good in Greek philosophical usage; the ideal toward which spiritual intelligence and action are directed.

Agni — Fire; the Vedic divine figure associated with sacred fire and creative spiritual energy.

Agnishwatta Pitris — Solar progenitors associated with the awakening of human self-conscious mind; the spelling *Agnishwatha* also occurs in the sources.

Aja — Unborn; a name expressing the ungenerated character of the primordial creative principle.

Ancient of Days — A biblical and Kabalistic designation compared with creative spiritual principles in Blavatsky's cosmogony.

Anthropomorphization — The attribution of human form or characteristics to a divine or abstract principle.

Archetypal — Pertaining to an underlying pattern or ideal; an archetype is such a pattern.

Atma-bhu — Self-existent or self-born; an epithet used in the symbolism of divine origins.

Atma-Buddhi — Universal Spirit considered in relation to *Buddhi*, its spiritual vehicle; commonly called the human Monad.

Buddhi — Spiritual intuition or wisdom; Buddhist means pertaining to this higher discernment.

Chaos — Primordial Space or an undifferentiated condition in the cited cosmogony; not merely disorder in the ordinary sense.

Correspondence — A meaningful relation between different orders or levels; an instrument of analogy that requires attention to context.

Cosmogony — An account of the origin and unfolding of the cosmos; cosmogonic means pertaining to such an account.

Cupid — The later personification of love distinguished from archaic cosmic *Eros* in Blavatsky's comparison.

Dharma — Sustaining law, duty, or right relation; the precise meaning depends upon the context.

Differentiation — The emergence of distinct forms, functions or levels from a less divided condition.

Discernment — The capacity to distinguish what is true, fitting and spiritually significant; Buddhist discernment transcends personal preference.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception — Enlarging the field of thought to include wider relationships, consequences and the welfare of others.

En-Soph — The Boundless or Infinite in Kabalistic terminology; also written Ain Soph.

Entity and Non-Entity — Being and its unmanifest ground in the quoted cosmological language; the contrast is not simply between a thing and empty nothingness.

Eros — The Greek figure of love, interpreted cosmologically as a primordial creative power and ethically through the education of human affection.

Fohat — The dynamic relation between cosmic ideation and substance, described through several levels of potentiality and manifestation.

Gæa — Gaia, Earth in Greek myth; named in Blavatsky's comparison of cosmogonic triads.

Human Solidarity — The shared dignity and interdependence of human beings, expressed through responsibility for the welfare of others.

Kabalistic — Pertaining to the Kabala, a Jewish mystical tradition whose symbolism Blavatsky compares with other cosmogonies.

Kama — Desire; it can designate a cosmic creative impulse or personal craving, according to context. Kamic means pertaining to desire.

Kamadeva — The divine figure of desire and love; in the Vedic interpretation used here, associated with creative compassion and universal good.

Kriyashakti — The creative power of thought and will; in the spiritual teaching its highest expression is inseparable from selflessness and universal good. Also written *Kriyasakti*.

Kumaras — Spiritual progenitors associated with the awakening of human self-consciousness in Theosophical teaching.

Latent — Present as a possibility or capacity that has not yet become active or manifest.

Logos — The divine Word or formative spiritual principle; *Logoi* is the plural and Logoic the adjective.

Lunar and solar mind — Symbolic expressions for the lower, desire-associated and higher, spiritually receptive aspects of *Manas*.

Makara — A symbolic aquatic creature and the Sanskrit zodiacal name associated with Capricorn; its interpretation varies by context.

Makara-Ketu — Bearing *Makara* as an emblem or banner; a name applied to *Kamadeva*.

Manas — The principle of self-conscious mind and moral choice; Manasic means pertaining to it.

Manifestation — The expression of differentiated existence from a subtler or unmanifest condition.

Mara — The tempter or personification of illusion; the quotation gives an esoteric relation between this figure and *Kamadeva*.

Metaphysics — Inquiry into the fundamental nature and principles of reality; metaphysical means pertaining to that inquiry.

Microcosm and macrocosm — The smaller and larger orders considered through correspondence; especially the human being and the cosmos.

Occult — Hidden; in this context, concerning the spiritual philosophy of unseen causes and levels of existence.

Personality — The temporary identity, habits and instruments associated with a particular life, distinguished from enduring spiritual individuality.

Phenomenal — Pertaining to manifested appearances or experienced forms; phenomena is the related plural noun.

Pitris — Ancestral or progenitor beings in Theosophical cosmology; lunar and solar classes have different functions.

Primordial — Belonging to an original or pre-differentiated condition.

Rig Veda — A foundational collection of Vedic hymns, including hymns concerning cosmic origins.

Self-Knowledge — Knowledge of the spiritual Self, joined in practice to examination of motive and conduct.

Shakti — Power or energy; a creative potency.

Shekinah — Divine presence in Jewish mystical usage; a term in Blavatsky's comparison of cosmogonic principles.

Shraddha — Spiritual faith or conviction; joined in the quotation with moral necessity and selfless purpose.

Universal Brotherhood — The spiritual kinship of beings, expressed ethically through care extending beyond personal or sectarian boundaries.

Vedic — Pertaining to the Vedas, the early sacred texts of Hindu tradition.

χάινο — The Greek term printed in Blavatsky's cosmogonic comparison and glossed there as void or Space.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, pp. 397–398.

“As *Eros* was connected in early Greek mythology with the world's creation, and only afterwards became the sexual Cupid, so was *Kamadeva* in his original Vedic character the primeval creative urge, *Atma-Bhu* (selfexistent), *Aja* (unborn), sometimes regarded allegorically as the son of Dharma, the moral Law, and of *Shraddha*, faith, but elsewhere depicted as *Agni*, the fire-god.”

Meditation thought: Contemplate the creative impulse through more than one symbolic language, keeping its universal scope in view.

2. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 173, “Kamadeva”.

“*Kama* is the first conscious, all embracing desire for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE Force, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE.”

Meditation thought: Imagine desire purified into a wish that living beings may receive help and kindness.

3. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 173, “Kamadeva”.

“Says the *Rig Veda*, ‘Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity’, or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi*.”

Meditation thought: Reflect on mind as capable of joining conscious action to a deeper spiritual ground.

4. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 173, “Kamadeva”.

“There is no idea of sexual love in the conception. *Kama* is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphization its grandest ideals into cut and dried dogmas, that *Kama* became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.”

Meditation thought: Distinguish levels of meaning before applying the same word to cosmic creation and personal appetite.

5. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 109.

“As in the oldest Grecian Cosmogony, differing widely from the later mythology, *Eros* is the third person in the primeval trinity: Chaos, *Gæa*, *Eros*: answering to the Kabalistic *En-Soph* (for Chaos is Space, *χαῖνο*, ‘void’) the Boundless All, *Shekinah* and the Ancient of Days, or the Holy Ghost; so *Fohat* is one thing in the yet unmanifested Universe and another in the phenomenal and Cosmic World.”

Meditation thought: Let the image of a creative impulse enlarge the meaning of relation and participation.

6. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 398.

“True love is a creative force that emanates from the One *Logos* and its expression is under the universal law of cosmic and human interdependence.”

Meditation thought: Consider what a generous purpose asks of the method by which you pursue it.

7. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 399.

“Finite, personal love is not bad in itself but it is frustrating and useless to the human soul unless it can gradually purify and make more impersonal and unselfish the force of *kama* in its material manifestations through the incarnated personality. Only thus can love be transformed from a violent and divisive tendency in human relationships into a non-violent, unifying power that produces strength and peace.”

Meditation thought: Bring one close relationship into the light of freedom, truthfulness and mutual growth.

8. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 399.

“The imperishable thread of radiance which is *Manas* serves man as a medium between the highest and the lowest, the spiritual man and the physical brain.”

Meditation thought: Contemplate the mind as a mediator. What would make its transmission of a good intention clearer?

9. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, pp. 399–400.

“When the solar pole of *Manas* is positive, *kama* becomes *Agni* or divine fire and is capable, like the *Agnishwatta Pitris*, of conserving its energy as well as of sacrificing itself to the good and salvation of Spiritual Humanity. The distinction here is between finite love and the more enduring love which is a link between passion and compassion and which finally culminates in the highest spiritual love.”

Meditation thought: Let a strong feeling become sustained care through a deliberate and unselfish choice.

10. R.N. Iyer — “The Scope of Self-Consciousness”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 278.

“*Kamadeva*, the Vedic *Logos*, is *Atma-Bhu* – unborn and self-existent – one with *Agni*, and also *Makara-Ketu* – he who bears the emblem of *Makara* on his banner. The *Kumaras*, sprung from *Kamadeva*, preside through *Makara* over the birth of the spiritual microcosm as well as the dissolution of the physical universe and its passage into the realm of the spiritual.

Mysteriously, *Mara*, the mocking demon of illusion and the god of darkness and death, is yet another name for *Kamadeva*, the Vedic *Logos*, and the unconscious quickener of the birth of the spiritual. Rising like a crocodile out of the waters of the sacred river of life to greet the fiery rays of the rising sun, *Makara* and the host of the *Kumaras* are the archetype of nascent intelligent humanity and its infinite capacity for perfectibility.”

Meditation thought: Ask what motive would make imagination more spacious and less concerned with personal advantage.

11. R.N. Iyer — “*Kriyashakti*”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. III, p. 196.

“Like all the mighty *shakti* powers hidden in the human constitution, *Kriyashakti* can be fully aroused and made active only out of the most compassionate and universal motives. The divine imagination can be awakened only in the service of universal good. This capacity to enact in manifestation an ideal vision of the *Agathon* is a self-conscious embodiment of the creative compassion of the cosmos symbolized in *Kamadeva*. Ordinarily, the current of *kama* is a force that makes for human bondage. This impact of *kama*, however, is but a shadowy reflection of the cosmic principle of divine creativity and universal compassion.”

Meditation thought: Hold creative power and responsibility together. An idea deserves scrutiny before it receives your energy.

12. R.N. Iyer — “Eros and Kamadeva”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 400.

“Such love can only arise when *kama* is under the influence, even if intermittently, of a *Manas* that tends upwards to *Buddhi*. This love is silent rather than clamorous in its expression, marked by inward depth rather than by outward display. The silences of love lie in wait for us, night and day, at our threshold, and those who have loved deeply in this way come to learn many secrets that are unknown to others, the secrets of sharing and sacrifice and duty well done.”

Meditation thought: Allow fidelity to a good purpose to find expression in quiet, dependable work.