

Spiritual Misalignment: Understanding Separation Beyond Failure in Human Relationships

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Accepted: 20/06/2025

Published: 04/07/2025

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How to Cite this Article:

Gupta M. (2025). Spiritual Misalignment: Understanding Separation Beyond Failure in Human Relationships. *Shodh Sagar Journal of Language, Art, Culture and Film*. 2(3), 13-17.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36676/jlacf.v2.i3.40>



Abstract

Traditional interpretations of separation, particularly within intimate or marital relationships, often equate parting with failure. This research challenges that notion by introducing the concept of *spiritual misalignment*—a deeper, non-pathological reason for separation between two individuals. Using philosophical, psychological, and historical lenses, the paper explores how parting may arise not from dysfunction but from diverging inner callings, existential growth paths, and misaligned spiritual destinies. Case studies from spiritual history—such as Siddhartha and Yashodhara, Tulsidas and Ratnavali, Yajnavalkya and his wives, Meera, and the divine bond between Krishna and Radha—are explored to validate this thesis.

1. Introduction

The dominant narrative around relationship dissolution frames it as a consequence of failure—emotional, moral, or interpersonal. This paper posits a more nuanced view: *Two souls may part not out of failure, but out of spiritual misalignment*. Rather than condemnation, this framework invites compassion, introspection, and a redefinition of success in human relationships.



2. Defining Spiritual Misalignment

2.1 Terminology

- **Spiritual Misalignment** refers to the divergence of two individuals' inner paths, values, or existential callings.
- It is not rooted in conflict, betrayal, or inadequacy but in an evolving mismatch of purpose, vision, or resonance.

2.2 Philosophical Basis

- Rooted in **Sankhya-Yoga** and **Buddhist doctrine** where union is seen as harmonious when *dharma* (righteous path) aligns.
- *Vedantic* and *Sufi* literature acknowledges soul-level paths that sometimes require solitude or non-attachment.

3. Historical Case Studies

3.1 Siddhartha and Yashodhara

- Siddhartha Gautama (later Buddha) left behind a devoted wife and newborn son.
- Traditional narratives frame this as noble renunciation; this paper reframes it as spiritual misalignment.
- Yashodhara, too, later became a nun—indicating her independent spiritual journey.

3.2 Tulsidas and Ratnavali

- Tulsidas's devotion to his wife turned into transcendence after her harsh rebuke.
- The emotional rupture served as a catalyst—not of failure, but of divergent destinies.

3.3 Yajnavalkya and His Wives: Maitreyi and Katyayani

- In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, sage Yajnavalkya informs his wives of his intent to renounce worldly life.
- **Maitreyi**, the philosophically inclined wife, engages him in profound spiritual dialogue, seeking immortality of knowledge.
- **Katyayani**, content with material life, accepts his decision without resistance.
- This parting reflects spiritual misalignment—not conflict. Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya resonate temporarily, but his pursuit of renunciation leads him beyond domestic ties.



- The episode emphasizes differing spiritual aspirations and mutual respect over emotional drama.

3.4 Meera Bai and the Royal Household

- Meera Bai, a Rajput princess and poet-saint, was married into the royal house of Mewar.
- Her deep, mystical devotion to Lord Krishna led to estrangement from her husband and royal expectations.
- The spiritual intensity of her path was often misunderstood, resulting in emotional and physical alienation.
- Meera ultimately left the palace and embraced a life of wandering devotion.
- Her story illustrates the archetype of spiritual misalignment—when inner devotion eclipses social and marital obligations.

3.5 Krishna and Radha vs. Krishna's Wives

- The bond between **Krishna and Radha** transcended conventional relational forms. Though Radha was not Krishna's wife, their connection symbolizes a deeper spiritual resonance.
- Unlike the royal marriages Krishna had with **Rukmini, Satyabhama**, and others—often depicted within dharma and political obligations—Radha represents *bhakti rasa* (pure devotional essence).
- Their spiritual alignment was based not on social contracts, but on the eternal longing of the soul for the divine.
- This contrast illustrates that spiritual connection does not always conform to institutional structures, and may even outshine formal relationships in depth and intensity.

4. Modern Psychological Viewpoint

4.1 Differentiation Theory

- *Bowen Family Systems Theory* highlights the importance of personal individuation within relationships.
- Separation may indicate growth when one or both partners evolve beyond the relational system.



4.2 Existential Psychology

- Viktor Frankl's logotherapy emphasizes purpose (*will to meaning*) as a central human need.
- If purpose trajectories diverge, parting may be a psychologically healthy outcome.

5. Implications for Society and Relationships

5.1 Redefining Relationship Success

- Relationship longevity is not always indicative of alignment.
- Emotional maturity includes recognizing when paths diverge with dignity and grace.

5.2 Encouraging Compassionate Closure

- Recognizing spiritual misalignment reduces shame and blame in separation.
- Supports narrative healing and self-compassion for individuals who part ways.

6. Conclusion

Not all separations are signs of failure. In many profound cases, they are necessary milestones in individual spiritual evolution. By adopting a lens of spiritual misalignment, society can move beyond simplistic narratives of right and wrong, and embrace the complexity of human growth, impermanence, and inner truth.

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