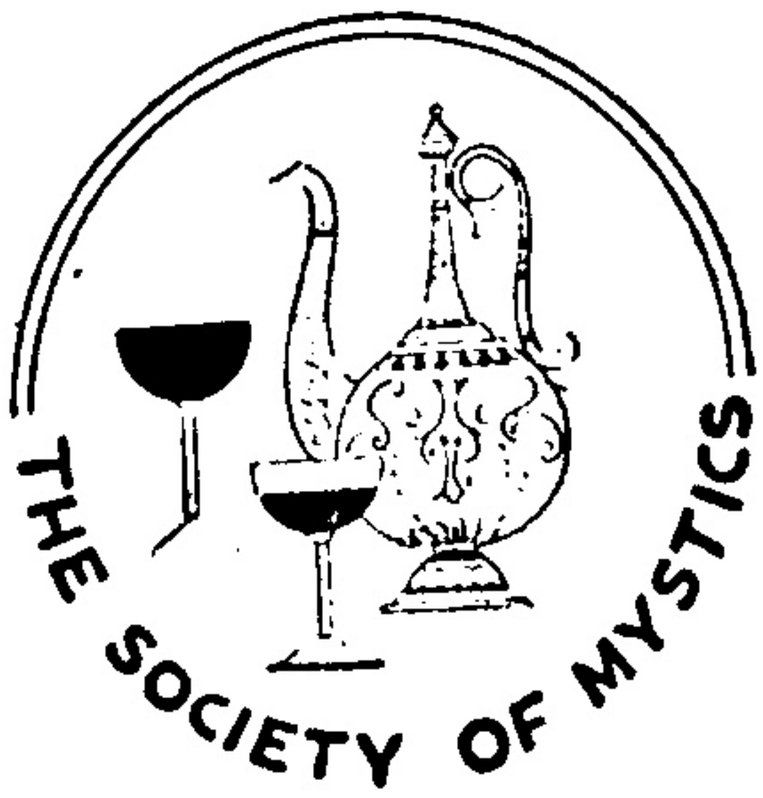
THE ROLE OF THE MYSTIC IN MODERN SOCIETY



Hazrat Dr. Zahurul Hassan Sharib Gudri Shah

LECTURE — DECEMBER — 1977

All Rights Reserved
(INCLUDING THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION)

Our Banker :—
INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK, AJMER BRANCH, AJMER

Published by
Inam Hasan
General Secretary
The Society of Mystics
Sharib House, Jhalra
AJMER 305 001, INDIA
Phone : 20424

Printed by
Ravi Garg
Garg Printers
Devi Bhawan, M. G. Marg,
AJMER 305 001
Phone : Press 22307
Resi. 22908

The Role of The Mystic In Modern Society

At the very outset I wish you a happy, prosperous, and bright New Year. May the New Year bring in its wake peace on earth and love among mankind.

I trust that you have read and digested the previous lectures. In this lecture, I propose to place before you some positive ideals Let me hope, that, you will rise up to these ideals, and herald a New Era of Progressive Thinking, and usher in the New Life Movement.

In the changed social set-up, the mystic has come to be looked upon as a messenger of good-will and love. In recent years, significant advance has been made in the thinking of the people. There is, now, among them, an increasing accumulation of sentiment in favour of reform and progress

Democratic Values

It is true, that freedom, brotherhood, and tolerance are democratic values. But, it is a sad commentary on the state of modern society that, these cherished ideals are not within easy reach.

The advent of opportunity should bring with it the rise of a confident, sure and chesty feeling. Every calamity should be turned into an opportunity.

Society

The harmonious working of society implies a certain degree of foresight and solidarity.

Society is an ever changing comlex system. Society implies the web of social relationships. It is a system of many groupings and divisions. There are different procedures of authority, of mutual aid and controls of human behaviour.

There are laws guaranteeing individual liberty and privacy, and assuring freedom of thought, and freedom to follow any religion, profession, avocation or occupation.

Society involves both likeness and difference. It implies the sense of belonging together.

Every member of society has certain rights and certain duties. Every right implies a corresponding duty. Every member of society, thus, is expected to seek something, and give something.

Every society has a different social system. It may be just, unjust, co-operative, exploitative or parasitical.

Sustaining Forces

The sustaining forces of a society and formal order are customs, conventions, usages, folkways, mores, norms and standards.

They serve, and are recognised and accepted as the guidelines. The individuals, comprising the society, are expected to rise up to them, and derive sanction for their behaviour in society therefrom.

They, in fact, guide and control the society. They seve as social controls.

Religion, too, constitutes an important and potent instrument, of social, moral and ethical progress.

There can be no doubt, that our modern society has been an uniform attempt to avoid the imperatives and social obligations, which rest upon the people.

It is an escape from reality, realism and responsibility.

Attitudes and Interests

Social relationships cover both attitudes and interests. Love or hatred denotes an attitude; whereas friend or enemy indicates interest.

Thus, terms, like love, fear, hatred, pride, sympathy, respect, homage, denote attitudes; whereas, terms, like friend, enemy family, oppressed, depressed, connote interest.

Classification of Attitudes:—

Attitudes may be :
Dissociative;
Restrictive; or
Associative.

Unfortunately, the people yielded to the temptation of putting the pursuits of material acquisitions above the more abiding and exacting goal.

The pathological character of the people is an appropriate reflex of the sickness of society.

The Effect

The birth of mysticism marked a revolutionary change and transformation in the thoughts of the people. When thoughts are changed, action is, sure, to be changed.

The change of thoughts lead to a change in action and deed. The change, in the concept of values and way of life, produced by mysticism, led, also, to a profound change in society. The propagation of mysticism was an attempt to rescue, and to save the ailing and sick society from superstitions, materialism and ethical scepticism.

The teachings of mysticism were, in fact, an unfailing source of inspiration to the multitude of humanity. The contibution of mysticism to world culture was multi-faceted. It included Religion, Philosophy Logic, Psychology, Ethics, Sociology, Literature; Poetry, Arts and Architecture.

These constituted the external expressions and manifestations of the internal excellence in man.

This excellence in man was fostered through the teachings of mysticism, since the dawn of civilization.

An individual has now to decide how to proceed towards the higher values in modern society. He has to decide, what does life hold for him ? Is mere breathing life ? What things are in store for him ? What is to happen to life ? Is life meant to be a high-life walk, or a mere low crawl in the dumps ?

Some people feel sick, tired, exhausted, disgusted and bored, But, life is not meant to be bored, dull and dry. It should not be stiff, broken all round, distressed and depressed.

Environment

A better atmosphere should prevail in society for good cordial relations. A sober and peaceful environment is a sine que non for the healthy growth of society. Environment, in fact, is not the outside world. Life and environment are closely inter-related. A change in human beings involves some change in its relations to environment, and a change in environment results in the changing pattern of life.

Difference in environment means and implies a difference in the habits customs, manners, and ways of living of the people, constituting the society.

On the other hand, the different ways of living and habits of the people create a different environment. Correspondence between life and environment is everywhere felt and perceived.

What retains and maintains the moving equilibrium of life is the process of constant selection and continuous adaptation.

Mysticism, has, as its foundations. the positive ideals. Its influence over the thoughts of men can not be decried or denied. Its positive ideals have lent dignity to society.

Anti-social action is a negative phenomenon, born out of the self assertiveness of man, encouraged by the loosening of social controls, once potent and effective, and now in decay and decline fostered by the dissolution of the super control of the family, helped by the individual being a unit of society, and induced by the disregard of the moral and ethical codes.

No amount of lip service to the ideals of human welfare will provide shelter to man and atone the wrongs done,crimes committed and nefarious activities launched in total disregard to his obligations to his Crea'or Above and to his fellow men on earth.

The relationship of the mystic to society has been to guide, teach and inspire. This relationship was not created all of a sudden by one stroke. It was built upon gradually,slowly,but steadily through the process of time.

It should not abrogate, or renounce or dissolve the preexisting relationship. But infact, should create a positive bond, which may assume a new form and shape mainly through the settlement of a larger share of enlightenment.

Where there is no common interest and a common cause, life becomes dull, dreary, disunited, egoistic, and disintegrating. Common enthusiasm is necessary for an agreeable and stimulating social life

9

The Ignoble Set-Up

Now, mark with what ills the modern society is assailed. The breakdown of the moral fibre of the modern society has resulted in many vices and evils. The trouble is organic and functional both.

We see, every day, in our midst, appalling poverty and fabulous wealth, existing side by side. The lop-sided development of individualism is, partly responsible for the disintegration, decay and decline of the modern man.

In modern times, the stress on individulism, and on the individual legal rights, has led to the disruption of the old fabric of society, based on consent, self-help, mutual-help, co-operative effort, voluntary effort and mutual respect.

Success in life has come to be judged by exploits economic or otherwise, and by spectacular performance on the stage of the world. There is cheap reward for empty praise. People are in search of transient calm and happy scences, which may soothe the outer senses, best-ow inward peace and lull the sense of woe.

The cosmetic culture has come to be recognised as a sign of a higher standard of living. But, it is wrong to judge the standard of living by material acquisition. A higher standard of living, in fact, implies love for Truth, Beauty and Light; a spirit of toleration; patience; perseverance; intellectual and mental honesty; and by simple living and high thinking.

The modern society is sustained by the forces of the pulpit, the platform and the press. The modern methods of publicity, like posterss, pamphlets and processions, dramas, dances and demonstrations, songs, sayings and slogans, serve to create public opinion, which is, more often, neither public nor opinion.

The modern contractual and economic norms and standards have hit hard the solidarity of society.

The break-down of the moral fibre of modern society has resulted in rapine; plunder; sabotage; strikes child delinquency; increasing number of offences; vice; intemperance; brothel houses; hoarding; smuggling; profiteering; black-marketing; evasion of taxes; appalling over-crowding; family break-down; deterioration of housing standards; strikes; student unrest; absence of moral restraints; loss of community initiative and reliance; increasing malad-justment between population and food supply; a low percentage of literacy; acute poverty; indolence; idleness frivolous suits; vexatious cases; malicous prosecutions; false affidavits; perjury; harsh laws; delayed justice; fraudulent weights and measures; increasing number of divorce cases; vindictive litigation; adulteration; manipulation; and exploitation.

In such an atmosphere of jarring and abhorring influence, it is difficult for an individual to work and function successfully.

There is, thus, the lowering of the standard of living, and social collapse, not only of the masses but, also, of a considerable section of the intellectual and upper classes.

Unfortunately, there is a complete break-down of social controls, moral attitudes and ethical standards among myriads of people.

Conflict and Chaos

The society is seething with faction and discontent. The class conflict has deprived the society of organic unity. The class antagonism has led to a profound change in the social and economic set-up.

We see every day in our midst the conflict between landlord and the tenant between employer and employee, between capital and labour, between the teacher and the taught.

The statesman and the politician peer into the mist and wonder, what the end of all this will be.

Legislation is no effectine remedy. Ordinances will serve no useful purpose. Gest-appo agents are of no use. Change must come by persuasion.

The Choice

We have to choose between the rural-agricultural and urban-industrial standards and ways of living; between the traditions of social trusteeship of wealth, and ostentatious display and abuse of riches; between the self-sufficiency of social units and the economic management, and the tendency towards enlarged sphere of State action; between romantic and convenient marriage as opposed to marriage, considered as duty and a sacrament; between family and community recreation and festival, and the passion for unwholesome mass sensation and excitem-

ent; between State action and self-help: between primitive norms and modern standards; between free issues and contributions; between caste and a classless society; between custom and progress; between voluntary effort and compulsion; between persuation and legislation; between co-operation and competition; and between demonstrion and discussion.

The Remedy

The remedy of social disintegration and moral callapse lies in mysticism. It rises above tenets, dogmas, and rituals. It enables an individual to rise from temporality fragmentariness and irrationality to universality. It gives the law of righteousness to individuals and groups. It has rescued itself from intellectualism, formal theology and routine.

The present scheme of values requires re-scaling. We can revive our national morals and faith only on the basis of an inter-change between the truly universal values and groups and institutions.

There can be no doubt, that the ardent mysticism, by its creativeness and transfiguration of life, is capable of giving hope, belief and faith, freedom and goodness to the people. It can provide social justice in the coming economic and political set-up.

There have been various popular mystical movements, such as the Bhakti cult in Hinduism. Sufism in Islam, Calvinism, Puritanism and Methodism in Christianty.

These moral and spiritual revivals, and ethical movements, have, undoubtedly, swayed the masses, making their life, fuller, happier better, and richer.

Let the mystics, now, put the core of spiritual meaning and experience into the life of, the masses and the classes, thus trying to unite man and man.

Demonstration is better than discussion. Man, by nature, is reluctant and unwilling to change his habits of doings things. He wants to have a say-so about changes. He should be shown, if he is to be convinced. The mystic should wine the confidence of the people. Once the confidence has been won, co-operation can, easily, be earned.

Discussion will not leac very far. Discussion is endless. Demontration is a better way, as it furnishes a steady process of self-education.

Mystics, then by demonstration and personal example give stimulus to a new kind of thinking. New kind of thinking will, eventually, lead to a new kind of functioning of society, resulting in the further release of creative human energies.

The mystic should place reliance on meditation, and allow the people to share the benifits of meditation. Meditation, by its very nature, replaces the emotional role by a permanent and construction one, making men and women good, calm, serene, placid mutually helpful citizens able to built up a community.

Sentimental type of spirituality will not be very useful. To treat spiritual emotionalism, as an end in itself, is wrong.

The spirituality, which can be termed as best, is that, which emphsises the practical test of being useful in society, which tries to make and mould efficient persons and good men and women, which lays stress on productive work, takes better stock of the depressed and the handicapped and which makes persons useful members of society and better neighbours.

The essence of genuine spirituality consists in the conservation of human energy for constructive work, and in rational conduct

It teaches how to live and act in harmony with fellow-men, and with the know physical and economic laws.

In the modern set-up, the mystic should lend his helping hand to all the progressive forces, sugg-esting the welfare schemes.

He should, now and then, suggest as to what is wrong and what should be done.

Every convent or monastery should have a trained body of persons fit enough, to act as Urban Leader and village guides.

The mystic should launcha New Life Movement, having as its car inal principles the respect for all religions and removal of illiteracy, based on the slogan "Each one teach one" and removal of social and communal tensions and having its emphasis on contructive work.

A mystic must, then, abhor and condemn outright the forces of casteism, communalism, linguism, parochialism and provincialism. He should fight the sectarian animosities and the disruptive forces

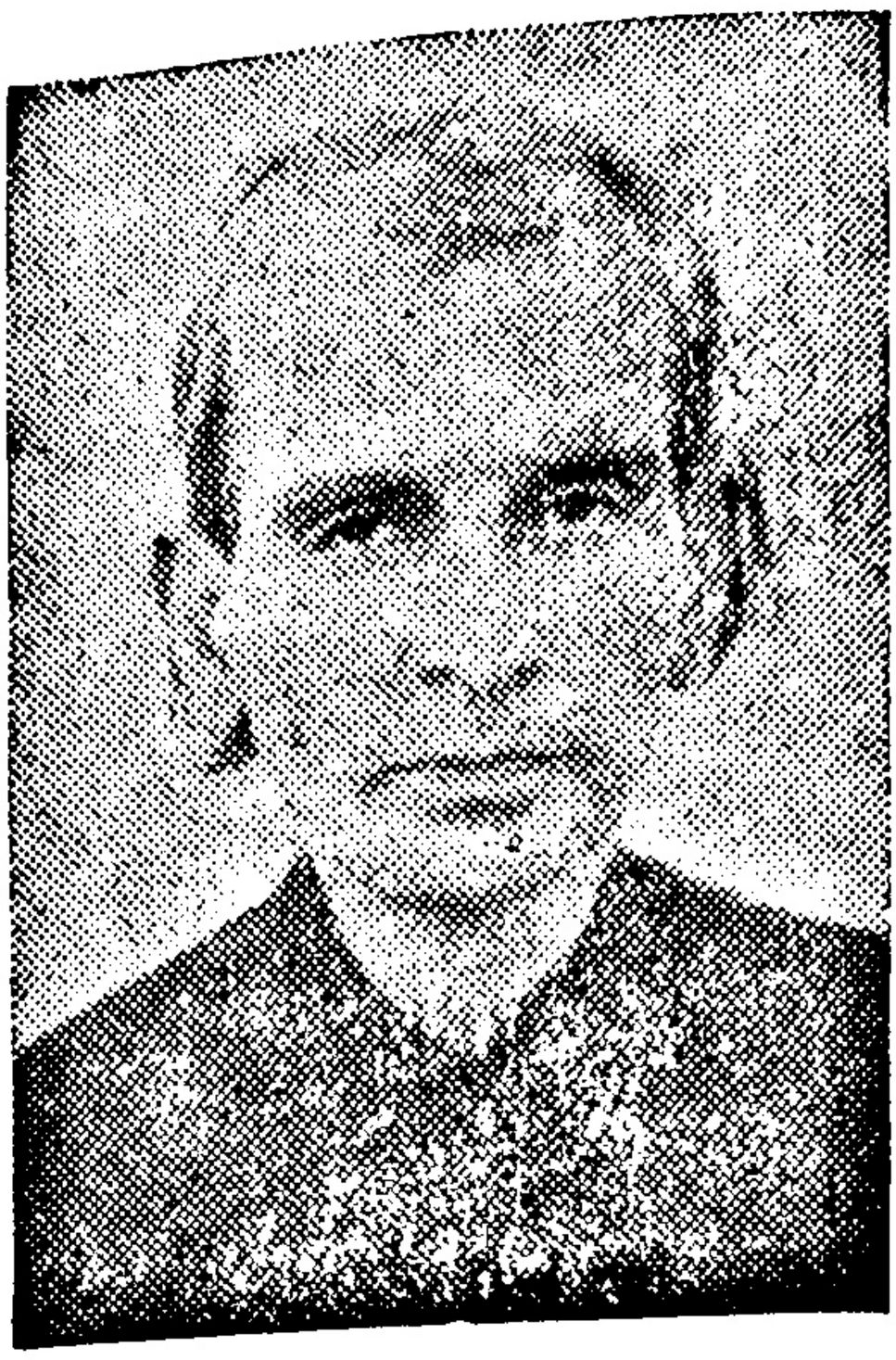
He shohld persude the people to fight demoralization, instead of fighting among themselves. In any scheme of reconstruction. the home, and the women and children can not be left out

He should try to make the world a place of peace, stability and coperation with the combined and harmonised efforts of the masses and the classes. Let the society be made free from fear and tension,

The mystic should be a watch dog of the interests of the poor, and the down-trodden, and not be a lap dog of the rich.

The Foundations

Let the mystic now, build for peace, progress and human happiness, having as his foundaton the conscious satisfaction of contentment, the spirit of toleration the principle of co-operation, abiding humanism and above all on the cementing force of love.



Hazrat Dr. Zahurul Hassan Sharib Gudri Shah

M.A;LL.B.,Ph.D.

The author of these lectures was born on 9th January, 1914, at Moradabad (U. P.) (Northern India). He received his education at Morada-bad & Lucknow University, where he obtained his Ph.D. He is the Head of the Gudri Shahi Order of the Sufis. Under his inspiring guidance, the Order has gained momentum both in the East and the West.

He has written very many books in English, chief amongst them being :-The Life & Teachings of Khawaja Moin Uddin Hassan Chishty, Ghosul Azam Piran-E-Pir. The Mystical Philosophy of Khawaja Moin Uddin Hassan Chishty, Biographies & Sayings of Holy Saints, Khawaja Gharib Nawaz, English Translation of Rubaiyat of Sarmad.

PRICE :—

Members : FREE POST FREE

Non-Members—

Foreigners : 1 DOLLAR POST FREE

Indians : Rs. 8/- POST FREE

To be indifferent to the people has been
my way.
They act and behave, as if, toys made
of clay,
I never care to know, what they do
or say,
In my own thoughts, I am absorbed
night and day.

Dr. Z. H. Sharib