The Path Of Perfection



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I welcome you again to the "Assembly of sweet silent thoughts". It is about four months back that I had the occasion and the privilege of conveying to you my humble solution, which may relieve us of tension, free us from anxiety and take us to a state of bliss, where there are ample opportunities for the development of an integrated personality.

The previous lecture was meant to be digested, Mere reading in not enough. It should be practised and tested in every day life.

In the present lecture, I propose to deal with a topic, which has a vital bearing on life. People have been talking about it since the dawn of history. Some have extolled it. Some have preached it, and some have practised it.

Is there anyone in the world. Who has not loved in his life ? If there be any let, him come forward. Somebody has loved his parents. Somebody has loved his children. Somebody has loved his wife, Somebody has loved his relatives and friends But, how many of us, can validly claim to have loved God?

If we have love, leisure and light, what more do we want? In fact, we have got everything. The trio_love, leisure and light should be considered as a Divine gift, enough and adequate to make our life noble, sublime, chaste and serene.

Love may be termed as tl.e music of life.

Our life constitutes a book, and love is in fact the introduction to the book of life. Without the introduction, the book of life may not have been so interesting, stimulating and inspiring. Without the introduction, the book of life would have been prosaic, dull and un-interesting. It is the introduction, which has made it, what it is

Let the fools shriek and shout. But the wise man is of a different mould He neither shrieks nor shouts and neither murmurs nor moans, but, he acts in a befitting manner and studies the introduction to the book of life calmly, placidly, quietly and dispassionately. He loves ardently and feverishly.

Love and enthusiasm are the two vital forces which can, undoubtedly, change the destiny.

The mystics have known the secret Love to them is of great consequence It is Open Sesame. Faith is another important factor, which can overcome in-surmountable difficulties

The mystics have given preference to different things. Some have openly said that there is no virtue superior to love. There are others however who hold that faith is the mother of all virtues. Some favour patience, some justice, some piety and some contentment. One thing was common among them all. They did not like that, which they considered as evil, and they loved that which they considered as good, true, beautiful and noble. Thus, by loving those things and focussing their attention on the aforesaid things, they themselves imbibed those very qualities.

A mystic, sitting in his maonarster, sometimes alone, and sometimes surrounded by his devoted disciples, offers an unique

spectacle in an age of feverish hustle, where there is a race for armament, and where the clean edges or ideas and ideals and of noble aims and objects are often blurred and made blunt, so as to fit in with material gains.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that, in every age, there have been people, diffusing mystic culture and seeking nothing, asking for nothing and demanding nothing. They wished to be allowed to pursue Truth, adorn Knowledge and diffuse Love to all, regardless of popular applause or material reward. The thought of wordly reward played no part in prompting them to do what they had decided to do. The reward came unasked for.

The road bearing the sign-posts of Truth, Knowledge and Love led them, and still lead the seekers to a higher realm of thought and action.

They saved them from Circumstance and took them to ecstasy.

On the gambling table of the world, the mystics are willing and prepared to lose everything, but not their faith, their principles and their treasure of love.

Faith without love is incomplete. Thus, the **Holy Prophet Mohammed** observes :—

> *"You will not enter paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith, till you love one another."*

The first Commandment is enunciated thus by **Lord Jesus Christ** : —

"And thou shalt love the lord, thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength"

This is the first Commandment. And as regards the second Commandment he says :—

"And the second is like unto it : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other Commandment greater than this."

This means and implies that to love is an obligation and not to love is a sin. Love is positive as opposed to hatred, which is negative. Where there is love, there can be no hatred. According to **Lord Buddha** :—

"That which is most needed is a loving heart".

and also :—

"Hatreds never cease by hatreds in this world. By love alone they cease. This is an ancient law."

Love is the means to attain perfection. **Saint Paul** says that :—

"Love is the bond of perfection".

To what extent an individual is bound with God, determines the proximity and the degree of perfection that he may have attained.

According to some, Grace is of more consequence, as it supports the bond with God. According to others, it is love, which plays such a role.

St John thus proclaims :—

> *"Who remains in love, dwells in God, and God in him."*

To Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. love is a power, which unites, unifies and makes one.

The idea of unity in love means and implies that love brings men nearer to one another. Those who love come closer to each other. Love implies some degree of similarity in thought and outlook. It begins to give a new orientation to life as a whole. Love removes and eliminates the narrow circle of egocentric self-consciousness. Soon, it so happens that the words 'I', and 'Thou' are moulded into 'We'.

If there is any effectual, efficacious and essential means to union with God, it is love, and love alone.

Patristic, scholastic, speculative and mystical doctrines treat love in the same way.

There is another point in issue. There are two schools of thought. The one school of thought is that, which takes love as the means of salvation. The other school of thought goes to the extreme and holds that without love, the question of salvation does not arise.

To call love as the life of the soul is not going too far. From this, it follows that more perfect the love, better the life. How can life be perfect when love is not perfect? Perfection of life depends upon the perfection of love. The two are inter-dependent. To a mystic, perfection of life is not possible without perfection of love.

To separate love from obedience is to misinterpret the very essence of love. Love, likewise, can not be separated from self-surrender, toleration and the elimination of self.

The Rule of Love is the fulfilment of God's Will.

It is, then, necessary that we should realise ourselves. Self-realisation is better than self–immolation.

Love enables us to do away with all the sense of separateness by living contimuously in the realization of the oneness.

To Maulana Jalal Ud-Din Rumi, an eminent mystic poet, and a saint, who was a disciple of Shams Tabriz

"Love is a physician for all our ills and melodies"

He calls love as :—

"The medicine for all our pride and prejudice".

Maulana Jami, the famous mystic poet says thus :—

"Thou hast become a slave of love,
renounce thy antecedents, O Jami,
For in this path to be such a person or
to be son of such a person has no meaning."

Once filled or surcharged with love, we become a changed person. We begin to realise that in a sense, we are all one. Whom to hart or whom to harm ?

By harming others we harm ourselves. By inflicting injury on others, we inflict injury on ourselves.

Love removes false notions of prestige. Power disappears, Hatreds cease. Enmity and Jealousy go into retirement.

In other words, once we get love, which is another way of saying that once we enter the realm of wisdom, we divest ourselves of intellectual pride and superiority complex. We attain child like innocence We have no will of our own. We are, thus, freed from inner conflict and tension.

Let us remember that the pernicious influence of pre-conceived notions, prejudices, narrow-mindedness, racial, communal, and religious distinctions, and differences of caste and colour, self-conceited opinion and outworn beliefs stand in the way of true wisdom.

The heart, filled with love, gives love to all. It inspires love. The result is that we get wholesome, ennobing, and warming influences of love, in return from those, whom we inspire with love. This leads to the elimination of social conflicts, which are detrimental to the growth and development of a healthy society.

Love can make every heart warm.

It is the cheapest and the best form of central heating. But, for this, we have to exert a little. Love is a much prized virtue. It requires nerve-racking vigilance, and a rare attachment all the time Love then cannot and should not be practised at a certain time or on certain occasions. It is a whole-time job.

Love without servtce is lame.
Love without obedience is deaf.
Love without surrender is mute.
Love without sacrifice is sick.
Love without self-abnegation is feverish

And

Love which asks is a deception.
Love which asserts is a show.
Love which is not constant is a fraud.

And

Love which gives every thing
without the hope of reward is healthy.
If we wish to be loved,
then let us love others first.
Love is the gate of the Citadel of Harmony.
Love is the key to life.

Saints have yearned for it. Mystics have longed for it. Shaikh Farid Ud-Din Attar, an eminent mystic poet and a Sufi saint, has expressed in an unique way his desire to get one particle of love. He says :—

Let idolater get idolatry and let the
pious the piety gain.
One particle of pain (of love) let
Attar attain.

It is said, that, to love is to live. If elaborated further, it means and implies that not to love is to meet a living death.

There is a story in the East. There was a person called Majnu and there was a girl called Laila. Laila was not beautiful. Her colour was black. Majnu fell in love with her. At first, the people thought, that it might have been a mere rumour. But, when it was confirmed, they asked Majnu one day :—

"How is it that you have fallen in love with an ugly and black girl?"

Majnu promptly replied :—

"Had you seen Laila with my eyes, I am sure, you would not have said so. If you see Laila with my eyes, you will find her the most beautiful girl in the world."

And, in a way, Majnu was right. Beauty is a relative term. What may appear beautiful to one may appear ugly to another, and the reverse is also true.

One day, it so happened, that Majnu saw a dog in the street. He showed utmost respect to the dog. People thereupon said to him :—

"You have it seems, really become mad. The dog did not deserve respect. which you showed."

Thereupon Majnu replied :—

"What-ever you say may be true. But I had seen a similar dog in the lane of Laila. It may or may not have been the same dog. But, I paid respect to the dog, thinking that the dog might have been the same-the one that I saw in the lane of Laila, or if not the same, at least the dog bore resemblance to the dog that I saw in the lane of Laila."

At one time, Laila decided to distribute charity Beggars flocked to her door. Majnu, on hearing it, disguised himself as a beggar. The beggars presented their begging bowl, and Laila threw something in their begging bowl The beggars were proceeding one by one. The turn of Majnu came last. He also presented his earthern begging bowl, Laila recognised him. She took the begging bowl, and threw it on the ground. It was broken into pieces Laila left and Majnu was still standing there, laughing and merry-making. The beggars assembled there, seeing Majnu so jolly, happy and gay, were surprised. They had seen with their own eyes a few minutes before that, Laila

There have been very many methods to achieve the Nearness of God. Prayer, fasting, charity, self-conquest, mortification, alms-giving, ascetic practices, seclusion, silence, are some of the practices the msitting in secluded places, meditation and remembrance etc.

But, the truth is that, what all the aforesaid practices collecively can do or are capable of doing, that or more love alone does

Love is a gift of God, given to those, whom He has chosen for His Grace. **The heart is purified by love.**

Hazrat Khawaja Moin Ud-Din Hasan Chishty, an outstanding and towering sufi–saint of the sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan and Bangladesh says thus ;—

> *'The heart of the lover is a furnace. Whatever comes in it is burnt, for there is no fire greater in its intensity then the fire of love"*

The love of God implies surrender to the Will of God. Surrender means to have no will of your own. **Surrender to the Divine will is a source of joy.**

Love is itself a type of prayer It has no fixed time. It is conducted all the time. According to **Hazrat Nawab Gudri Shah Baba** an eminent Sufi–saint belonging to the Gudri Shahi Order of the Sufis.

> *"Love is a cordial prayer, which the lovers have come to acquire".*

Love of God liberates us from the fear of the changing accidents of fate.

If we have love, that is enough.
Then let us ; **Take love as test and leave the rest.**

★★



Hazrat Dr. Zahurul Hassan Sharib Gudri Shah

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For wealth, self and fame was all I cared,
Til in silken threads of love I became ensnared.
Can such changes in a worldly man be wrought.
But by your love profound, so zealosly sought.

Wealth, self and fame all seemed as nought,
With a knowledge of love, your loving looks taught.
These looks act as books, but can never be bought,
Save by your love profound, so zealously sought.

Of desire for wealth, self and fame I am left with no trace,
One single desire, to again gaze on your facc,
How has a fool such a fine bargain wrought,
Save by your love profound, so zealously sought,

The aforesaid stanzas are the result of the poetic imagination of Mr. Faiz Ahmed, who is living in London, and who is an active member of the S. M. and a devoted disciple of Zahur Miyan.

Fasting may be good and
prayer may be sound,

With tenets of religion better
to be bound,

Chaplet in hand and
talisman in neek, round,

But by something else
is the Beloved found.

Dr. Z. H. Sharib