CHAPTER VII

LOVE.

I. To assume the qualities of God, to become one with God, is the ultimate end of the soul. To attain to this end it has to undertake a pilgrimage — the flight of the Alone to the Alone, as Plotinus calls it; 'to return' as Rumi would have it.

What is the force that draws the soul to God, so that it becomes one with God? What is the force that releases the soul from its phenomenal manifestation and drives it to realise its original nature? Rumi says that force is Ishq or Love. A Supreme Ruler of man's destiny, love is the great impelling force that surges in on him, works on him, transmutes him and elevates him.

The problem of reaching the Highest through love has been a perennial problem in religious philosophy. In Indian as well as in Western thought Love of God is the means of self-realisation. The Bible and the Qur'an talk of it, the Bhagavadgītā and the Upanisads emphasise it, as also the various saints and philosophers who have advocated it down through the ages.
The evolutionists find it difficult to imagine that a God of Love ordains and witnesses the struggle for existence, life for them being nothing more than the survival of the fittest and the extinction of the unfit. It is evident that their conception of life does not interpret the struggle for existence, because the whole range of life bears witness to something quite different from hatred and strife. Nutrition and reproduction are the two main activities of all living things, the one concerned with self-assertion and the other with self-sacrifice. If the object of one is to secure life of the individual, the object of the other is to secure life of the species through self-abandonment. In the light of this it is not too much to assert that life is not only an abode of the strong, as the evolutionists would like us to believe, but a home of the loving too. Love may be condemned as a delusion; but it is so only in so far as the whole life is a delusion. Once the fact of life is accepted it is unphilosophizing to refuse to accept the fact of love.

The highest and most satisfying faith of Rumi clusters round his simple confession that 'God is Love'. God, being a God of Love, not only creates all things in Love but also sustains all things in Love and brings them to perfection in Love. The pure Love which glows and
burns the human soul is a fire kindled and cherished by God Himself. It is the genius of Love to sacrifice, a quality that has its source in God's eternal self-giving. All human love is purified by the touch of God and smitten with a new ardour by the genius of God because all human love is identical with God's own uncreated flame of Love.

Love is a complex psychical experience. It is a 'sentiment' or 'passion', the term 'passion' being understood as a deep and steadfast enthusiasm rather than an explosive emotional outburst. Both sentiment and passion stand for stable and complex organisations of the emotional life. But while sentiment implies a higher intellectual development and a greater refinement and subtlety of emotional feeling, passion has forcefulness as its characteristic feature. Love is different from any mere passionate emotion. It is a system of organised emotions and desires, which, due to its systematic character and its principle of unification, is stable, regulative and inclusive.

Rumi maintains that it is not possible to give an exact description of Love either in psychological or in philosophical ways because the innermost experiences of an individual cannot be defined. Love is an experience. It is a personal experience and not a theory and for this
reason defies all analysis and escapes all criticism. A
mystery of life itself, it is its own evidence and can
only be lived. Love is indefinable, indescribable and ineffable. To use Rumi's own words:

"Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation
of Love, when I come to Love itself I am ashamed
of that explanation." 1

II. Nevertheless, Rumi does present a philosophy of
Love. A part of his arguments can be traced back to Plato
who, with his conception of a supersensible Reality, has
exerted an enormous influence on all mysticism.

Love is the cosmic Principle, the origin of all
life and the end of all life. It is not merely an indi-
vidual sentiment, but the very essence of life, the source
of it and the goal of it. This essential Principle under-
lies all existence and controls all existence, so that
everything in the universe works for its own fulfilment.
Through it alone the soul's longing to be reunited with
the Eternal Beloved is realised, there being no force more
powerful than love, no bond stronger than love, that would
fructify the union of the human and the Divine. One who

is endowed with this cosmic feeling has the Perfect Beauty as his sole object, for Love is nothing but a movement towards Perfect Beauty. The intenser the Love the deeper is man’s penetration into the Divine secrets. Everything gains worth in proportion to its realisation of this Perfect Beauty. Love is the inherent desire of everything for immortality and it is the sole principle through which this desire is realised.

The Greeks were the upholders of this view. Hesiod, for instance, taught that Earth and Love were the first things to spring from the chaos. Earth was the dead matter on which worked the informing principle, Love. In his Phaedrus, Plato talks of Eros as belonging to the oldest gods. He postulates that Love is a movement towards Perfect Beauty, which he identifies with the Highest Idea. The soul strives to rise from matter to this Perfect Beauty in order to perceive it in its pure form. Love is a craving after immortality through pro-creation or through intellectual or artistic productions. It is, thus, a mediator between the two worlds, the sensible and the Ideal. "Marvel not then", said Socrates, "at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and interest is for the sake of immortality." 2 and

2. Plato: Symposium; 208 tr. by Jowett.
what is Love? "He is a great spirit and like all that is
spiritual he is intermediate between the divine and the
mortal." 3

In the words of Rumi:

"Had it not been for pure Love's sake how should
God have bestowed an existence on the heavens?
He has raised up the lofty celestial sphere that
thou mayst apprehend the sublimity of Love." 4

Being the Principle of unification and assimila-
tion, Love is the force of attraction in every atom, a
force that impels one form of life to lose itself in
another form of life. It is this process that results in
growth. Love is a paradox, wherein by giving one takes
and by dying one lives. Inorganic matter becomes organic
by dying to itself and his thereby raising itself to the
higher life of plant. Plant is exalted higher still into
the life of animal by the same process of dying to one's
own life. This principle of dying to live pervades the
whole course of evolution and it holds good not only in
the evolution of man from matter, but also in the further
evolution of man to the all-embracing spiritual whole —
God.

"If there had not been Love, how should there have been existence? How should bread have attached itself to you? The bread became you through your love and appetite." 5

"Love makes the dead bread into spirit; it makes the spirit that was perishable everlasting." 6

The highest principle of explanation for Haim is the principle of growth and development through the power of assimilation. He repeatedly speaks of this power of transformation pervading the universe, even though he admits that he cannot explain this phenomenon in terms of spatial contact and causation. One might try to explain it, he observes, by the principle of identity of cause and effect. But what we find in Reality is qualitative transformation which points to the incommensurability of the cause and the effect — fuel turning into fire and bread turning into life and consciousness.

"How would an organic thing disappear by change into a plant? How would vegetative things sacrifice themselves to become endowed with spirit? 7

Why is this relation inexplicable? This relation is inexplicable because love is inexplicable. The nature of God and the nature of soul are ultra-rational, and so must be their deepest and ultimate relation:

"There is a union beyond description or analogy between the Lord of Man and the spirit of man." 8

This point has been emphasised by many philosophers from ancient times. Anaximander developed a remarkably similar theory about the origin and evolution of living beings. He believed that in the beginning the earth was fluid. This fluid evaporated, and from its heat and moisture living beings were produced. At first there were beings of a low grade, which, by adopting themselves to their environment, gradually evolved into higher organisms. Parmenides believed that heat and cold, or light and darkness, are the two forces that held the world together. The more hot a thing is the more real it is, and conversely, the more cold it is the more unreal it is. Heraclitus expressed the same view when he said that the universe is a harmony of opposites. Everything necessarily contains in itself the two opposite principles. and

8. Ibid. Vol.IV, 760.
in their struggle consists its life and existence. Without this conflict everything would cease to exist. Even Democritus, the atomist, said that love and hate are the two forces that brought about the movement of the atoms. The universe is held together by the force of love, and it is disintegrated by the force of hate. Similarly, in Indian thought the Upaniṣads talked of Anna being turned into Prāṇa.

Haeckel gives a similar conception when he says, "The irresistible passion that draws Edward to the sympathetic Ottília or Paris to Helen and leaps over all bounds of reason and morality, is the same powerful 'unconscious' attractive force which impels the living spermatozoon to force an entrance into the ovum in the fertilisation of the egg of the animal or plant — the same impetuous movement which unites two atoms of hydrogen to one atom of oxygen for the formation of a molecule of water." 10

Thus for Rūmi, it is the function of assimilation and growth that explains life, and not any system of

10. As quoted by Perry (R.B.): Present Philosophical Tendencies; p. 73.
metaphysics. Love is the impelling force behind this process. But this love is fundamentally different from the Eros of Plato. That, being a means to the realisation of theoretical Truth, is nothing more than gazing at the impersonal intellectual beauty, hence more akin to Spinoza's intellectual love of God than to the Love of Rumi. The central conception of Rumi's thought is life, and his Love makes man a partaker of Infinite Life, a living organ in the One Unitary Life.

"Oh, happy is the man who was freed from himself and united with the existence of a living one." 11

Love is the essential substance of man and not an accidental attributes. It is the divine spark in man, his true self, which cannot die. From this spark man catches the scent of the Eternal Beloved. All men are endowed with greater or less capacity for loving the Divine Beloved, for man cannot escape the shafts of Divine Love, escape the snare that is eternally fascinating. Gamble your life for Love, says Rumi, if you are a brave

soul, as it is the weak soul that dare not make such a venture, and it is undoubtedly inferior to man.

"This is characteristic of Man alone: to the other animals love is wanting, and that want of love arises from their inferiority to Man." 12

Love is righteousness. It is the yearning for the Good and for the contemplation of the Beautiful. It is the desire to assimilate and absorb the Highest, the desire that results in the creation of values and ideals and in the endeavour to realise them. The fault lies in man himself that he is prone to sin. Lust is not Love.

In the words of Rumi, Love is God’s messenger, chaste and pure, and ever hidden from the faithless hearts. It is the Fountain of Immortality, the Life Eternal that reneweth the life of death, this Fount of Immortal Life being nothing but the sprinkling of the Divine Grace itself.

"If life be gone, fresh life to you God offereth, A life eternal, to renew This life of death The fount of Immortality In Love is found;"

12 Ibid. Vol.1, 2432.
Then come, and in this boundless sea
Of Love be drowned.” 13

Plato agrees with Rumi when he describes love as
the love of the everlasting possession of the good. As
Socrates says in the Symposium, "wisdom is a most beauti-
ful thing, and love is of the beautiful; and therefore,
love is also a philosopher or lover of wisdom. 14

Love is a divine gift. As such, it cannot be
acquired nor can it be repelled as one wishes. A boon of
its own kind, it overtakes man at the touch of God's
Eternal Bounty in such a manner that the lover neither
knows it nor hopes for it. As a sudden revelation it
dawns upon him and overwhelms him; makes Mount Sinai
drunken and makes Moses fall into a swoon, as Rumi puts it.

Consequently, the soul deprived of Love is a
desolate soul. It is dead and static, as it has no power
to move, much less the spiritual yearning that is so essen-
tial for its upward journey and its ultimate union with
the Divine Beloved. Rumi would say it is a soul spurned
by God. The true seeker, therefore, prays ceaselessly to

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God never to destitute him of Love, his only ray of hope in the thorny path of self-realisation.

"When Love hath no care for him, he is left as a bird without wings. Alas for him then!" 15

Although a God-sent grace, man’s efforts in the form of prayer and aspiration are essential to gain Love. These efforts are destined to bear fruits, for he who sows alone shall reap. The seeker is bound to be the finder.

"Do service to God, that per chance thou mayst become a lover: devotional service is a means of gaining Love: it comes into action (produces an effect)." 16

Love is a means of self-purification and consequently a means of man’s ascent to the Divine. It is the only true basis on which all moral perfection and spiritual knowledge depends. The bliss of union cannot be experienced until the bodily nature is entirely spiritualised and Love alone, that bespeaks utter self-

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renunciation, self-sacrifice, in fact a complete forsaking of everything, wealth, honour and life for the sake of the Beloved, can work to this end. It eradicates all the evil within man, destroys his passion and rends the veils of egoism, of reason and of shame and fear. All the subtleties of book-learning and dialectics are spurned by the soul, so that the lover dwells with his Love alone.

"When in my breast
Thy flame of Love was lit,
that is but Love my heart possessed
Love's fire consumed it
The subtle brain
The school, the book I spurned;
The poet's craft I strove to gain,
and rhyming verse I learned." 17

Love is the real purpose of all religion and the real essence of all religion. The external manifestations and dogmas of religion are not identical with it, because it transcends all external religious laws. Rumi maintains that every duty and every service as emphasised by the Qur'an is nothing but a guise of Love.

Consequently, one who experiences this sublime sentiment is truly religious. To him everything is lovable as to him there is nothing but God everywhere.

"Servitude and sovereignty are known: loverhood is concealed by these two veils: Verily, the circumambulation performed by him who beholds the King is above wrath and grace and infidelity and religion." 18

Ibn al-Arabi repeats these words of Rumi when he says that the religion of Love is the most sublime religion. It is the essence of every creed and every religion. "Our Plato and our Galen" as Rumi calls it, "the only remedy of all human ills, of body and of soul." One moment of it is better than a thousand years of service of God. "To feel at one with God", says Shiibli, "for a moment is better than all men's acts of worship from the beginning to the end of the world." 19 And Rumi says:


"He alone whose garment is rent by a mighty love is purged of covetousness and all defect. Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain - thou that art the physician of all our ills." 20

Endowed with this Essence man can express his faith in any form, and yet be religious. If he speaks theology, says Fāzī, it turns into a discourse on spiritual poverty; if he speaks infidelity, it becomes true religion and if he speaks of doubt, his doubt turns into certainty, for he is the Pure Source that throws away all impurity; he is the sea of sincerity, whose falsehood adorns even the Truth.

"Whatever the man in love with God speaks, the scent of Love is springing from his mouth into the abode of Love." 21

Love is different from the psycho-physical feeling of pleasure and pain. Transcending all human sorrow and joy, all human fancy and imagination, it constitutes

a rare state of consciousness that is not identical with the psycho-physical states. It knows no end and it knows no decay. As such, its possessor is not bound by his bodily attributes; he soars higher, transcending all duality and all good and evil of existence.

"In the verdant garden of Love, which is without end, there are many fruits besides sorrow and joy."

"Our emotion is not caused by grief and joy, our consciousness is not related to fancy and imagination." 22

However, this form of affection does involve physical attraction as a necessary element in the development of the sentiment of Love, because although in its worst the physical attraction leads to lust, in its best it carries man beyond the bondage of the senses.

Love is more than any mere synthesis of joy and sorrow with their respective impulses. And yet, it finds its expression in joy, joy that is characteristically spontaneous, expansive and vital. Joy is an active

disinterestedness, its instinctive impulse being not only to maintain its object but to surrender itself to it and to abide in it. It is the joy in the object for its own sake, a valuation of the object for its own sake, so that when one experiences joy in beauty one simply trusts to the inspiration of beauty. This joy of presence is followed by the sorrow of absence because Love includes both joy and sorrow as interpenetrative emotions.

Pure Love is disinterested and the lover has no selfish purpose to serve through it. God is not worshipped with the hopes of attaining heaven, or from fears of hell. God is worshipped because the lover wants God Himself and because he is aware that he himself is a particle of God. As Sābiā remarks: "My absolute and uninterrupted love for God alone leaves no room for love or hatred for anyone else." Likewise Dumūn cries in the spirit of Sābiā, "Fear of being parted from the Beloved is the worst of all fears. Fear of fire in comparison with fear of being parted from the Beloved is like a drop of water cast into the mightiest ocean." It is this boundless love, this implicit faith, that

creates in the lover the keen yearning and the inflexible resolution to attain a permanent union with God.

Love is the rapture of the lover whose Beloved is God. It is the wine of inspiration that is so essential for the union of the two. The consumption of this wine is followed by the state of Ḥāl or ecstasy wherein the glory of God is revealed to the intoxicated soul.

"Especially consider the effect of this spiritual wine which is from the jar of Ṣalā — not the wine whereof the intoxication lasts only one night." 24

Thus enraptured the lover sees God in all creatures and pours forth his universal love in words and deeds. Beholding the Divine Beauty in all souls, and by submitting himself completely to his love, the lover ascends to the love and knowledge of the Highest Beauty. "Man's love of God", says Ḥūjwīrī "is a quality which manifests itself in the heart of the pious believer in the form of veneration and magnification." 25

Love is incommunicable. It is incommunicable because it has no necessary connection with the external

world and all that belongs to it. It is quite different from science and art which can be learnt through words and practice. Love is the Essence and Reality that does not belong to the phenomenal world although it is the very principle that harmonizes and unites the lover and the beloved in the phenomenal world. It is something that can be awakened by personal touch alone.

Love cannot take form because God cannot take form. It is the artificer of form, without which nothing can be compacted and nothing can be realised. Nevertheless, it is itself in need of form just as the painter and picture are in need of each other. As Rumi puts it, "it is like the moving of the finger with the moving of the ring." 26

Love remains hidden; only its effects are manifest. If at all there is any medium through which it can be expressed it is music. Love, in fact, descends to the phenomenal realm in the garb of music — music which is as paradoxical as love itself. Love is paradoxical, "Poison and antidote at the same time" as Rumi calls it. So too is music that is its instrument, as the sweetest songs are those that carry the saddest

thoughts. Music charms our soul because it derives its melody from Love. Music is the food of Love, which fills the soul with joy and peace. As Dhu'l Nun observes:

"Music is a divine influence which stirs the heart to seek God: those who listen to it spiritually attain unto God and those who listen to it sensually fall into unbelief." 27 And Rumi says: "Whoever saw a poison and antidote like the reed? Whoever saw a sympathiser and a longing lover like the reed?" 28

But the mysteries of Divine Love cannot be communicated to everyone vulgar. It is a secret to be jealously guarded from their eyes, as everyone hears what is suitable to his understanding; and how can the unripe understand the state of the ripe? As Rumi puts it:

"Only to the senseless is this sense confided: the tongue hath no customer save the ear." 29

Love is the loss of self-hood. God is the real self of man and there can be no communion with Him as long as the dark phenomenal self persists. Like the

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blind stone that resists the Sun and refuses to be turned into pure ruby the phenomenal self repels the influence of the Divine. The illusion of self-existence, the thorn-eating existence, as Rūmī calls it, is a veil that abstracts the vision of the Unseen. This veil can be torn asunder only through the harmonising and unifying spirit of Love. Love is the renunciation of all self-will, a renunciation that bestows upon the soul its true freedom and raises it far above the myriad of Time by fostering its emergence in a timeless being.

"To remain in the state of stoniness and then to say 'I' is absurd: 'tis time for thee to become lowly and naughted, dead to self." 30

In death, therefore, consists the life of the lover. Love is his idol and God Himself is his witness. As Rūmī says, with a falcon's pace and a tiger's pride he treads the path of death to the abode of his beloved, ever splendid and ever magnificent in his chase.

"If it be the road

The lover travelleth.

Endeth at one abode:
Naughting, and death;" 31

And, with Rumi, Jami says:

"What though a hundred arts to thee be known:
Freedom from self is gained through love alone." 32

The lover seeks the Beloved, but when the
Beloved arrives he becomes naught. He becomes dead to
himself and he becomes dead to the world. Living in the
Beloved he sees nothing but the Beloved. He is the
eternal slave of the Beloved whose vision is the only
robe of honour he seeks. In his servitude he has attained
to perfect freedom because he knows that he who
cannot be a slave cannot be free.

In him there is no desire of his own because his
desire is the Beloved's desire and his pleasure is the
Beloved's pleasure whether he be enjoying the bliss of
union or suffering the torments of separation. He has
no knowledge of his own, no thought of his own and no
power of his own, and yet he is all-knowing and all-
powerful through the power of his Beloved. The lover
is naught in God, says Rumi, like vinegar in the sea of

honey, like a drop in ocean, so that he is everywhere
and nowhere, so that his self-love is his love for the
Beloved and his love for the Beloved is his own self-
love. To see him is to see God and to love him is to
love God, as he is the mountain that echoes the cry of
the Beloved, as he is the image of the Beloved painted
by the Beloved Himself.

"Oh, the life of lovers consists in death:
thou wilt not win the Beloved's heart except
in losing thine own. Of my existence there
is nothing left in me but the name; in my
being there is naught but thee, O thou whose
wishes are gratified." 33

True love, thus, is that which empties one's
self of everything except God. It is the shedding
of one's own attributes and being clothed with the Divine
attributes. As Jûnayd defines it, love is "the substi-
tution of the qualities of the Beloved for the qualities
of the lover. In other words, love signifies the pass-
ing away of the individual self - it is an uncontrollabl*

rapture, a God-sent grace which must be sought by ardent prayer and aspiration.\textsuperscript{34}

What is love? asks Rumi. It is, he says, the sea of not-being, wherein the intellect is shattered to pieces. It carries with itself the conviction that comes from immediate intuition, the certainty of which cannot be shaken. Hence all faith that depends on intellectual proofs and dialectics, on forms and ceremonies, and all worship that is inspired with the desire to gain everlasting happiness, are futile. "O God" says Kābīlā in the spirit of a true lover, "If I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee in hope of paradise, exclude me from paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty."\textsuperscript{35} Rumi echoes these words of Kābīlā when he says: I turn towards the qibla because of my love for Thee; otherwise I am tired of both the prayer and qibla. If the whole universe is offered to me I would still prefer the never-ceasing bounty of this hidden treasure.

With this selflessness and with this humility the ardent lover undertakes his pilgrimage so much so

\textsuperscript{34} Nicholson (R.A.): The Mystics of Islam; p.112.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p.115.
that he is not even conscious of himself as loving. He has emptied himself of all otherness and is enraptured in contemplation of the Beloved. Being occupied with one's own love and one's own seeking is a sin, because such a love and such a seeking are sin. The lovers of God, says Bayāzīd, are separated from God by their love. True love is that wine in which the alloy of man's self is purified, transmuted and spiritualised.

"Pierce not all life that has passed without love;
Love is the water of Life: receive it in thy heart and soul." 36

Love is divine. The distinction between spiritual Love and the so called material Love should be set aside, because the real object of Love, whether it be love of the things of the phenomenal world or of the world beyond, is not the outward form. If its object were mere form, then the lover would not have abandoned it as soon as the spirit departs from it. He would have continued to love it because the sensible form is perceived in the same way by the senses and so the mere fact of the spirit's leaving the body would make no

difference to him. Again, if the form were the true source of attraction, then all those who have senses would have been attracted by that particular form in the same way. But that is not the case. The lover ceases to love the form as soon as life goes out of it; and the reason must be that the real object of his love was something other than the outward form itself.

"That which is the object of love is not the form, whether it be love for the things of this world or yonder world. That which you have come to love for its form — why have you abandoned it after the spirit has fled." 37

The phenomenal form cannot be the object of love at all. Love is never unfaithful to its object, as it never changes its constancy. Its object is always the same and it is God. Man can love nothing but God. The thing he loves is the thing on which the Divine radiance has fallen. It is a proof of the Sun to which man ultimately turns his gaze. To God alone belongs perfect and Eternal Beauty. All things beautiful in the world...

of phenomena are only a passing reflection of this Eternal Beauty, to which they are related as sun-light is related to the Sun. The phenomenal beauty is like the illumination of a wall by the Sun. Hence the love of the worldly man who perceives nothing but the form, as well as the love of the Perfect Man who loves Reality, regarding the outward form as a mirror reflecting this Reality, is the love of God who is the only true object of all love. In other words, all love is spiritual and the real object of all love is spiritual. Human love too is essentially a spiritual passion, for, as Rumi puts it, it is gilded by the gold from that mine. Plato expresses the same view, although differently, when he says that the beautiful alone deserves our love. It is this conception that leads him to conclude that man's love is always the love of the Beautiful — a conclusion quite similar to that of Rumi who says:

"That friendship was a radiance cast upon their wall; that sign of the Sun went back towards the Sun. On whatsoever thing that radiance may fall thou becomest in love with that thing, O brave man." 38

Consequently, Love is an ascending step towards the knowledge of God, whether its object be divine or phenomenal. The phenomenal beauty paves the way to the noumenal origin of all Beauty, and all eyes are turned towards this one Eternal Light, as soon as all the reflections fade away. One cannot attain to Reality by pursuing its shadow, yet every shadow is the bridge to Reality. Every fancy of yours, says Rumi, is the go-between towards your union with the Eternal Beauty. The name is not the Named, and yet it is identical with the Named, in so far as it leads to the Named and objectifies it.

"Whether Love be from this earthly side or from that heavenly side, in the end it leads us yonder." 39

Jami echoes Rumi's words when he says:

"Even from earthly love thy face avert not, Since to the Real it may serve to raise thee." 40

"To worldly love thy youthful thoughts incline For earthly love will lead to love divine

First with the Alphabet thy task begin
Then take the word of God and read therein."

Plato gives degrees of love: Interested Love that corresponds to the conventionalities; Disinterested or Mad Love, which has sense-object as its object and Disinterested Love towards the Unseen. "And the true order of going or being led by another to the things of love," said Socrates, "is to begin from the beauties of earth and which mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty" because Love is satisfied in the Perfect Beauty alone. It begins with the beauty of earthly things, proceeds by regular steps, reaching at last a beauty in which all existence is seen as harmonious and one. And the true lover beholds the ideal beauty in all things — the ideal good, which is regarded not only with the eye of knowledge but of faith and desire too! He is thus the spectator of all time and all existence.

Ghazzâlî talks of different types of love: Self-love, which involves man's desire for his own safety and

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42. Plato: Phaedrus; 265.
43. Plato: Symposium; 211. tr. by Jowett (B.).
preservation; Love for the sake of the benefit derived from the thing loved; Love of a thing for its own sake. This, he says, is the real Love, and it endures as the Love of Beauty and Goodness. Then there is Love that is inspired by Goodness and Beauty in the moral sense, wherein the moral goodness and beauty of character are loved; and Love that springs from the secret affinity existing between the lover and the beloved. One loves a person not for beauty or pleasure but simply because of the kinship of spirits.

One who has combined in himself all these causes of love and one in whom the attributes which are loved have reached their perfection, has reached the highest degree of Love. In God alone all these causes are combined and all things lovable found in their highest perfection. 44

Furthermore, the Love of the love for the earthly beauty is God's own Love for Himself as God is both Absolute Love and Absolute Beauty. He loves Himself and He knows Himself for, as Rumi puts it, 'none but God contemplates the Beauty of God.'

44. Smith (Margaret): Al Ghazali, the Mystic; pp.175-76.
Rumi regards woman in her essential nature as the Eternal Beauty because she is the medium through which the Uncreated Divine Beauty manifests itself and exercises its creative activity. Viewed as an earthly beauty, she is the highest type of earthly beauty and viewed apart from the veil of form she is the revelation of the Divine Glory itself. She creates love in man, and thereby makes him seek the true Beloved.

Ibn 'Arabi declares that the most perfect vision of God can be enjoyed only in woman, who alone combs in herself both the aspects of creation simultaneously—that of agents, fa'iliyyah and that of patients, mu'iliyyah. What is essential here, as Rumi observes is the mystical perception for seeing the Divine Beauty in her, for seeing the One Reality through the veil of her appearance.

"She (woman) is a ray of God, she is not that earthly beloved; she is creative, you might say she is not created." 45

And so, she has her sway over the good and wise. Man's domination over her is a false domination; or in

reality he is always her captive. Water extinguishes fire but is it not fire that annihilates the water in the kettle and converts it into air? Man is enslaved to woman and it is the good man that is enslaved to her. Consequently, he who governs her is the ignorant man, as in him animality predominates over the human nature. He lacks all tenderness, kindness and affection, the essential human qualities; and he ceases to be a man, and love is the characteristic of man alone.

"The Prophet said that woman prevails exceedingly over the wise and intelligent. While, on the other hand, ignorant men prevail over woman, for in them the fierceness of the animal is imprisoned." 46

Love of God originates in God. Love is the essence of God. Therefore the basis of all love is God. God is Absolute Beauty and Absolute Love. He is, therefore, both the Lover and the Beloved. Man's love for God is the reflection of God's own love, for God alone inspires it in his soul. He loves those who love Him

46. Ibid. Vol. I, 2433-34.
and when He loves them He leaves nothing of themselves in them. His lovers are His beloveds, who are one with Him. Divine love brought man into existence, bestowed upon him spiritual perception and created in him the yearning for the Divine Beloved. It is this love that made Mount Sinai drunken and it is this love that made Moses fall in a swoon. Consequently, if there is any lover and any beloved in the world it is God Himself.

"When love for God has been doubled in thy heart, without any doubt God hath love for thee. That exaltedness too hath desire and love towards the soul: from this fact understand (the meaning of) He loves them and they love Him." 47

In other words, the attraction between the lover and the beloved is a mutual attraction. Love seeks and desires Beauty; so also Beauty seeks and desires Love. As a matter of fact, Love seeks Beauty because Beauty seeks Love, and Beauty seeks Love, because Love seeks Beauty. Man needs God, says Ibn'l-Arabi, but no less does God need man. The lover aspires to union with the

47. Ibid. Vol. III, 4396 and 4440.
Beloved, says Rumi, because there is love in the heart of the Beloved Himself. Hence the Beloved never fails to respond to the call of the lover. The thirsty souls seek the Water of Life because the Water of Life has exerted Its attraction on them. In the words of Rumi, all kings are the slaves of their slaves. Everyone dies for those who die for him. The fowler is a prey to the birds, because the birds are the prey to the fowler. The thirsty man is a victim of water, because water is the victim of the thirsty man. In other words, every lover is a beloved and every beloved is a lover.

"Whomsoever thou diest deem to be a lover, regard him as the loved one, for relatively he is both this and that. This thirst in our souls is the attraction exerted by the water: We are Its, and It is ours." 48

Consequently, Lover and Beloved are mere names for different aspects of one and the same Essence, Love. Lover and Beloved are identical, as Love cannot be predicated of any being except God. Both are the rays of the same sun. God is all; the lover is merely a veil with the illusion of self-existence.

"The Beloved is all and the lover but a veil; the Beloved is living and the lover a dead thing."

"For assuredly there is a window from heart to heart: they are not separate and far from each other like two bodies. The earthenware basins of two lamps are not joined, but their light is mingled in its passage." 49

Although the attraction between the lover and the Beloved is a mutual attraction it manifests itself in different ways, in the form of sovereignty in the Beloved and in the form of submissiveness and service in the lover. The lover is opposed to the Beloved as want is opposed to contentment. The Beloved wants nothing, and His love illumines His whole being. The lover's being is nothing but want and desire and his love consumes his soul. The lover is irreverent to the Beloved in so far as his claim of love involves equality with the Beloved.

"But the desire of the lovers makes them lean, while the desire of the loved ones makes them fair and beauteous." 50

But there is no irreverence and no opposition present in so far as his inward aspect is concerned, for both he himself and his claim have become naught in the presence of the Beloved. Love harmonises them and unites them. Rumi illustrates this point with the help of the following example. In the sentence 'Zayd died', he says, Zayd is the agent only in so far as he is the grammatical subject. But, in reality, he is not the agent, because he is non-existent. There is the real oneness of the lover and the Beloved; and this oneness is difficult to explain.

"Never for one instant do they cease from seeking; never for one moment do they cease from pursuing each other. In the lover's heart is naught but the beloved: there is nothing to separate and divide them." 51


51. Ibid. Vol. VI, 2677 and 2680.
Love is the fruit of knowledge and knowledge is the fruit of Love. Love is concomitant of gnosis and the true lover is the true gnostic. In other words, Love and Knowledge are inseparable, both being co-equal aspects of the same reality.

Love is the root of all thinking because it inspires in man the tendency to abandon himself to his object and to identify himself with it. It has the power of facilitating concentration and whole-hearted interest as also the determination to cleave to the problem through thick and thin. Love's reason is born of sympathetic insight and it is, for this reason, the best reason. In this Republic Plato connects the philosophical element in man with that which makes him fond of what he understands, and in turn makes him understand what he is fond of. In one word Love and Knowledge are correlative terms and are implied in all human endeavours at speculation.

Consequently, he who is deficient in Love is deficient in knowledge, and he who is deficient in knowledge, is deficient in Love. Such a frail mind is the sole cause of all doubt and disbelief in the erring souls which attach themselves to phenomenal objects that
receive their transient life from God. To use Sūfi's words, they consider lightening to be the Sun, as they are screened from the fancy of the Sun by their own false imagination of the Sun. He therefore regards it the duty of man to work for the perfection of his own mind. The Prophet said, if you are deficient in body you are the object of God's mercy. But, if you are deficient in mind, you become the cause of His curse, for, perfecting the body is not in your power, while perfecting your mind is not beyond your power.

"This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge: whoever sat in foolishness on such a throne? On what occasion did deficient knowledge give birth to this love? Deficient knowledge gives birth to love, but only love for that which is really lifeless." 52

Love is not unreasonable belief. Unreasonable belief is different from love. Love is beyond reason; and that which is beyond reason cannot be unreasonable. Believing without proof something that is capable of proof is unreasonable. But believing something that is

52. Ibid. Vol.II; 1532-33.
beyond all proof is a matter of experience. In other words, Love enters where the matter is incapable of proof; its only proof being the testimony of personal experience.

Rūmi here deals with the contrast between Love and Reason, the two factors inherent in the personality of man. This conflict is described by him as the conflict between Shara wa Ishq, Law and Love, or as the conflict between Shari'at wa Haqiqat, Law and Reality. Rūmi asserts the supremacy of Love over Law and Reason.

Love is opposed to Reason which is, by its very nature, dualistic. Reason cannot overcome the dualism of subject and object, and, for that reason, fails to grasp the essential unity of being. Life, owing to its immediacy, can only be felt and lived. Being suprarational, it can neither be described nor explained, but can only be known through immediate intuition. Knowledge of Truth gained through reason is superficial, its analysis of life being nothing more than an examination of a dead and static thing. To use Rūmi's words, the intellect sees double that which is one; it splits into two that which is one, without binding it again. It is only a form of life, and being a form of life, how can it know the whole of life?
It is love alone that is the highest principle of unification and that apprehends reality in its wholeness. As against reason that differentiates and separates, love binds and assimilates the heterogeneous and thereby makes it homogeneous with itself. In Socrates' second speech on love in Phaedrus, Plato maintains that love is not utilitarian. Rumi emphasises the same point when he says that the aql-i-ma'ash, the discursive reason, is utilitarian by nature, as it weighs profit and loss before advancing even a single step. Reason hesitates and stops. Love rushes headlong towards its goal tireless and dauntless of all difficulties and all impediments. Rumi, therefore, calls love the madness, the divine madness, the all-consuming madness, that melts everything that dares to obstruct the path of the lover. Without it his journey is difficult. It is impossible.

"How should Reason wend the way of despair? 'Tis love that runs on its head in that direction. Love is reckless, not Reason: Reason seeks that from which it may get some profit." 53

Rumi, therefore, disparages the discursive intellect, as 'child's intellect', as 'sick man's intellect', and as 'the fetter of mankind'. It is clever in word and deed, he says, but all its cleverness fails before the inner experience. The source of real knowledge is spiritual perception, whose origin lies in Love. As Gandhi observes, reason has its own place, but it must not usurp the heart. Reason is a corrective and it can perform its duty only if the heart is sound. 54 And Rumi says:

"When the lover (of God) is fed from within himself with pure wine, there reason will remain lost and companionless. Partial discursive reason is a denier of Love, though it may give out that it is a confidant." 55

One is here reminded of Bradley's characterisation of reason as involving dualism and contradictions as well as Bergson's conception of it as inadequate instrument to know reality. Both maintain that reason cannot grasp the essence of reality, as it cuts reality

54. Gandhi (M.K.): The Supreme Power; p.34.
and presents it piecemeal. Life is ultra-rational, says Gandhi, in its essence, and its underlying Reality is God. It can be realised not through discursive reason but by direct experience, and this is possible through Love. We must, therefore, "be satisfied with nothing less than personal experience." 56

Love is the source of intuition. It is the spiritual faculty in man, the Infinite Itself, that doubts the Finite and that questions the Finite. Love is illumination, that attains to Truth by transcending all contradictions and all relations, a kind of direct feeling about the unity of Being in the midst of plurality. It is the source of enlightenment.

In other words, Love is intuition of identity that absorbs all distinctions of fidelity and infidelity, good and evil, right and wrong. It is amoral and non-rational, in the sense that it is neither identical with law nor with morals nor with theoretical reason, nor with any other outward form. Its essence is a cosmic feeling, an intuition of oneness with the spirit of the universe. Rumi therefore observes:

"I have tried far-thinking (provident) intellect; henceforth I will make myself mad."  

Tagore repeats these words of Rûmî when he says:

"I have wasted my days and nights in the company of steady wise neighbours. Much knowing has turned my hair grey, and much watching has made my sight dim..... I swear to surrender this moment all claims to the ranks of the ranks of the descent. I let go my pride of learning and judgement of right and wrong .... With the foam of the berry-red wine I will bathe and brighten my laughter."  

Consequently, relying on any means other than love in order to obtain union with the Divine Beloved leads only to separation. The sea of Reality casts away all the forms that are used as means of approach to it.

"Love makes the wine of realisation to bubble: He is the cup-bearer to the siddiq (true lover) in secret."  

52. Tagore: The Gardener; p 42.
This is the poetic picture of love as the source of inspiration and knowledge presented by Rumi. Intuition transcends reason. It is primarily cognitive in nature although it does involve supra-mundane elements of satisfaction in enlightenment. The Buddha's enlightenment, for instance, was the supreme experience which he got suddenly through intuition. And in every case, as in the case of the Buddha, love is the source of intuition and enlightenment.

"And being, O Priests, myself subject to birth," said the Buddha "I perceived the wretchedness of what is subject to birth, and craving the incomparable security of a Nirvana free from birth; myself subject to old age ... disease, ... death, ... sorrow ... corruption. I perceived the wretchedness of what is subject to corruption, and craving the incomparable security of a Nirvana free from corruption. I attained the incomparable security of a Nirvana free from corruption. And the knowledge and insight sprang up within me." 60

Rumi identifies love with Adam and the discursive reason with Iblis, Satan. Love, he says, is the characteristic of Adam and the particular discursive

reason is the distinctive quality of Iblis. Adam, who is the symbol of humanity in its original essence, is divine. The knowledge given to him was of intuitional nature, quite different from intellectual knowledge and it was given to him through Love.

Iblis is the principle of evil. He could not appreciate the divine dignity of man, because the intellect, being materialistic, cannot realise the eternal value of man. This realisation can only be gained through Love alone, and Iblis had only knowledge and no Love. Hence for him Adam was nothing but a figure of clay. Being the master of esoteric knowledge he is like the host, who knows nothing more than the names, titles and descriptions of the quests in his own house. Rumi says, intelligence is like swimming in the sea, wherein the swimmer is not saved. Love is the ship that can offer refuge to the soul, sweeping away the seven seas like straw. He says:

"Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment; intelligence is opinion, while bewilderment is (immediate) vision. He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows
that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam." 61

The discursive reason must be freed. It must be superseded by aql-i-ma‘ād, the transcendental Reason or the spiritual Reason. In spite of the fact that it controls the knowledge gained through the senses, it is itself subject to fantasies and is ever entangled in perplexing speculations that are its own creations. From these chains it needs to be released, and this release is achieved only through the power of the spirit.

Rūmi compares the senses and the sensual thoughts to the weeds on the surface of water. It is the work of the intellect to sweep them aside, so that the clear water is made visible. The intellect can perform its job properly only when it is freed by the spirit, and unless it is freed the weeds increase on the surface of water. Thus freed it becomes aql-i-ma‘ād, the Transcendental Reason, subdues the senses, and apprehends the things of the yonder world.

"Sense perception is captive to the intellect, O reader; know also that the intellect is captive to the spirit. The spirit sets free the chained hand of the intellect and brings its embarrassed affairs into harmony." 62

This transcendental reason is akin to the Neo-Platonic Universal Reason, the first emanation from the One, Aql-i-Kul, as Rumi calls it, and is akin to Aristotle's conception of Pure Thought thinking of itself. Plato equates the Absolute with Universal thought and Aristotle likewise considers God as the thought of thought in so far as God is the absolute subject and object of His own thought. Hegel talks of the Absolute Spirit as the self-thinking Idea, as the knowledge of God, for him, is the perfect self-knowledge.

Aql-i-ra-ad, the Spiritual reason is not imagination. The spiritual reason is opposed to imagination, the counterfeit of reason that resembles reason, to use Rumi's words. Reason is set against sensuality and

imagination is attached to sensuality and to the discursive reason, from which it cannot be distinguished without a touchstone.

Imagination cannot apprehend the essential truth of things. The spiritual faculties are threatened with destruction by it, in so far as it tends to lead one to wild fancy. As Rûmi says, man can walk safely without imagining in the path half an ell wide; but he will stagger if he is made to walk on the top of a high wall, even if the path is two ells wide. What causes him to tremble is his own force of imagination. Such a force cannot be akin to the spiritual reason.

"Reason is the contrary of sensuality: a brave man, do not call by the name of reason that which is attached to sensuality."

"That which is a beggar of sensuality — call it imagination: imagination is the counterfeit of the sterling gold of the rational faculties." 63

63. Ibid. Vol.IV, 2301-2302.
The spiritual reason is not opinion either. Opinion is midway between ignorance and knowledge, the one-winged bird, as Rumi calls it, that flies and falls and flies again in the hope of reaching the nest. False opinion distorts perception of truth, just as a hair of the eye-brow across the eye distorts the sight. And when man's whole nature is perverted his spiritual vision is impeded and distorted too.

In other words, opinion is defective and for that reason it cannot be attached to the spiritual reason. It is attached to the discursive reason, and unless man is delivered from it, knowledge cannot dawn upon him. In the words of Rumi, knowledge is the two-winged bird that flies to its destination on the wings of certainty. The possessor of the spiritual reason alone is the possessor of knowledge. One devoid of this reason is spiritually blind, and is absolutely involved in error.

"Imagination and opinion are the bane of the particular (discursive) reason, because its dwelling place is in the darkness." 64

64. Ibid. Vol.III, 1558.
A similar conception is given by Socrates and Plato. Socrates gives three stages in the movement of thought and maintains that conventional belief is not knowledge. It is only in the third and final stage of thought, when the conventional belief becomes founded upon concepts, customs, that it becomes knowledge. Plato asserts that opinion is not knowledge. Opinion is merely the instinctive belief based on faith. One may instinctively feel that something is true, but so long as this belief is not grounded on reason it cannot be called knowledge. Again, knowledge can only be true, unlike opinion which can be either true or false. 65

The transcendental reason is the inner light of the Perfect Man. The transcendental reason is divine in nature and the Perfect Man is one with it. If he appears to be different from the Intelligence, it is to serve the divine purpose. Even angels became separated from it for the sake of God's wise purposes. The Perfect Man has affinity with the angels in so far as he too receives his portion from the Divine radiance. The angels pay homage to him, for was not Adam created in the image of God?

The Perfect Man is the organ of Universal Reason. He is, therefore, the selfless traveller who goes by his own light, the follower of himself, as Rumi calls him. The half intelligent man puts faith in him in order that he may be saved. It is the ignorant man who journeys in wilderness without a candle and without a guide because he neither possesses the perfect intelligence that would guide him aright nor does he possess the half intelligence that would enable him to follow the Perfect Man.

"Excellently well said the complaisant Prophet, a mote of intelligence is better for thee than fasting and performing the ritual prayer. The Angel as well as the Intelligence is a finder of God: each of the twain is a helper and worshipper of Adam." 66

However, all this does not mean that the discursive reason must be suppressed or discarded. It only means that we must not fail to recognise something else in us, by whose power reason itself is sanctified and brought to perfection. The partial reason is the ray of

the Universal Reason, which is the Light of God, the Sea of wisdom, whence emerge all waves of thought, and all phenomenal activities. It is sustained by it and is governed by it. Apprehension and retentiveness are its essence, memory and other mental faculties being its attributes.

Consequently, the discursive reason aql-i-juzi or aql-i-ma'ash is an indispensable means to the attainment of the Universal Reason. It reveals the mysteries of the Universal Reason, from which source it perpetually receives the inflow of Divine Knowledge. Divine wisdom necessitates the manifestation of these mysteries through it, and its possession is essential, although it pursues trivial things. The part seeks to attain to its whole, so also the particular reason tries to find its own whole, the Universal Reason.

Hence man deficient in reason can have no memory of his true Beloved, and so can suffer no pain of separation. He is full of folly and he cannot escape the consequences of his folly. He is eternally doomed, as he is incapable of gaining even the faint glimpses of Reality. The discursive reason also bids us weep in self-abasement, says Rumi, so that the cloud of sensuality
is dissolved by our tears. It is the signal for a heavy rainfall, which causes the sky to clear.

"Since thou hast not reason, forgetfulness is thy ruler; How can a demented child play? There must be in him a part of reason in order that the part may attain to the whole. So become old in intelligence and religion, and become like the Universal Intelligence, a seer of the inward reality." 67

God has bestowed reason upon man, to the end that he may seek to reach Him by that means. When this is ignored reason has become dangerous and must be abandoned.

"He gave you that staff that ye might approach Him with that staff ye struck even at Him in your anger." 68

Thus, in his views about the relation of the intellect to life Rumi anticipates the views of Schopenhauer and Bergson, who believe that the intellect is merely an instrument in the will to live a fuller life, and hence is incapable of measuring the depth of life. Fichte says that the world can be understood only from

the standpoint of spirit. All reality is the product of
the ego, which is itself pure activity. So too Schelling,
who expresses the same view when he says that both nature
and spirit are essentially identical. Nature is nothing
but the preliminary stage of spirit, much less its anti-
thesis. Even for Hegel thought and being are
identical because all that is real is rational and that
is rational is real. The Absolute is a system of ante-
mundane concepts, which descends into the unconscious
sphere of nature, but which awakens to self-consciousness
in man. In other words, all being is the embodiment of
a thought: The world is a thought in becoming, every-
thing in it being a modification of thought. For Green
too, the Universe is nothing but one eternal activity,
whose essence is to be self-conscious. Men are the mani-
festations of this Universal consciousness. Self reali-
sation or perfection is their moral ideal and the reali-
sation of this ideal consists in the progressive repro-
duction of the divine consciousness, which reproduces
itself in men alone. 70

All this goes to show that, as Khalifa Abdul
Hakim rightly points out, there is a striking resemblance

69. Falelkenberg: History of Modern Philosophy; p.419.
70. Ibid. pp. 489, 490, 581.
between Rumi's views of Love, the ultimate intuition as Rumi himself calls it, and the philosophy of intuition in Post-Kantian idealism. It is quite similar to the intuition of Schelling and Bergson, just as his conception of the Pure Ego is fundamentally the same as that of Fichte, for whom the absolute ego is nothing but the image of God, and the world, the image of the absolute ego.

The Perfect Man alone is the true lover. He is invested with the Divine Essence and the Divine Attributes, and thus invested he is deified and ceases to exist as an individual. His soul is a pure soul, a steel-mirror reflecting the Divine Essence and the Divine Attributes, and consequently, is the real subject and object of all love.

Laila's beauty can be beheld only through the eyes of Majnu, for what was poured forth through her was nothing other than the Divine Beauty itself. The pitcher belongs to this world, the wine to the Unseen. The pitcher is evident, the wine is hidden. The uninitiated failed to see anything in her because they perceived only the pitcher and not the wine. God gives to every man poison and honey from the same pitcher.

Rūmī therefore says spiritual gardens of faith, knowledge and Love bloom in the hearts of the Perfect Men, the sweet-scented Roses, as he calls them, and the spectators of all time and all existence, as Plato calls them, the friends of God, who behold beauty with the eye of the mind. They reveal the Divine mysteries and diffuse the Truth everywhere. They love themselves and they are loved by God. They are loved by God, because God is loved by God Himself and by none else. And when God loves them, He is their ear, so that they hear by Him, their eye so that they see by Him and their tongue so that they speak by Him. "When God loves man" says Bayāzīd, "He endows him with three qualities in token thereof: a bounty like that of the sea, a sympathy like that of the sun, and a humility like that of the earth." 

"God has said to the saints. I am thy tongue and eye: I am thy senses and I am Thy good pleasure and Thy wrath." 

In his poetic exuberance Rumi describes Love as the astrolabe of divine mysteries, as the force that turns copper into gold, bitter into sweet, and as the alchemy that changes the base metal of man's self into a spiritual substance. He calls it the Boundless Ocean whose depth is invisible and of which the two worlds are merely a flake of foam, the all-comprehending Eternal Principle in which everything dead and alive is implicit, the all-consuming dynamic force which devours everything else except itself, and as the Mighty Power which turns the heavens and the earth, rocks the sea and makes it boil like a kettle, pours rain from storm-clouds, cleaves the sky and makes the earth tremble. This tremendous Power extends to limitless boundaries. Not contained in speech and not contained in thought it overwhelms every soul that speculates on it.

In Phaedrus and Symposium Socrates speaks in praise of Love as the universal phenomenon, as the great power of nature that is stronger than death and as the great spirit which interprets between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods. It is, he says, the highest inspiration

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of intellectual desire, as it is the desire of the everlasting possession of the good.

Love is the Creative Power of a new life, the supreme virtue that is characterised by moral excellence and that vitalises the activity of the mind for the idea of the common good. It is the source and very essence of moral volition, the great transforming and inclusive agency that enables man to lead the best life because it is the ultimate virtue of the spiritual life which aims at Universal Good. A regenerator of all moral indignation and justice, it shifts one's attention from the private ego to the all-including other self, because it is as ready to be grateful as it is to be generous, as ready to receive as to give. Love's rise and progress are the result of continuous effort and the more perfect it becomes the more does it overwhelm the soul.

Rumi talks of the thorny path of Love which is full of torture, agony and pain. The fire of Love, he says, consumes the lover, chastening him with a thousand agonies, its flame seizing everything but the Beloved.

"Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved." 76

Tagore repeats Rumi's words when he says:

"But it is love, my beloved. Its pleasures and pain are boundless, and endless its wants and wealth. It is as near to you as your life, but you can never wholly know it."

And who is the lover? The lover is the soul separated from God, the caged bird and the fish out of water. He is the reed that weeps over its separation from the reed-bed, the spiritual world where it dwelt in the state of pre-existence. Now that he has remembered his past union with the Divine Beloved, he must go back to him. "I am eager and wakeful" says Tagore in the spirit of Rumi, "I am a stranger in a strange land. Thy breath comes to me whispering an impossible hope. Thy tongue is known to my heart as its very own." But the sorrow of the lover is incommunicable, as none but one of his own kind is in a position to offer him sympathy.

But the ardent lover never despair. Men are given as they endeavour and if the lover is faithful in love, the Beloved also will never fail. Keep your end

78. Ibid. 5.
of the thread, says Rumi, and He will keep His own.

"Shed tears and lay the dust, like a passionate lover,
For while we are in this dust we cannot see the Beloved's face." 79

Tagore again echoes Rumi's words:

"Pleasure is frail like a dew drop, while it laughs it dies. But sorrow is strong and abiding. Let sorrowful love wake in your eyes." 80

The spirit that does not wear the garment of Love is a shame. It is a soiled mirror, soiled with the rust of sin and worldliness and needs to be polished by the spirit of Love. God is the Divine Beloved, the Supreme Ideal, and it is Love that raises man to the worth of his ideal, to the height of his aspiration.

"Know that your value is equal to the object for which you are quivering with desire;
On this account the lover's heart is higher than the empyrean." 81


80. Tagore: The Gardener; 27.

Love is all that exists and the glory of Love is revealed by every thing in the universe. Everything that exists in the universe is brought into existence by Divine Love, so that the sublimity of Love is apprehended. God is the reality of all these things; He alone fulfills their destiny by His own Infinite love. In the words of Rumi, every atom, on the ground or on the air, glad or sorrowful, is dancing in an ineffable ecstasy. Thus intoxicated, all the phenomenal forms excite in him nothing but desire for the Divine beloved.

"Come forth, O day!
The motes are dancing gay;
The spirits in delight
Dance wildly through the night.
Draw near draw near!
I'll whisper in thy ear
His name, whose radiance
Laketh the spheres to dance."  

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