

LOVE OF GOD

THE SUFI APPROACH

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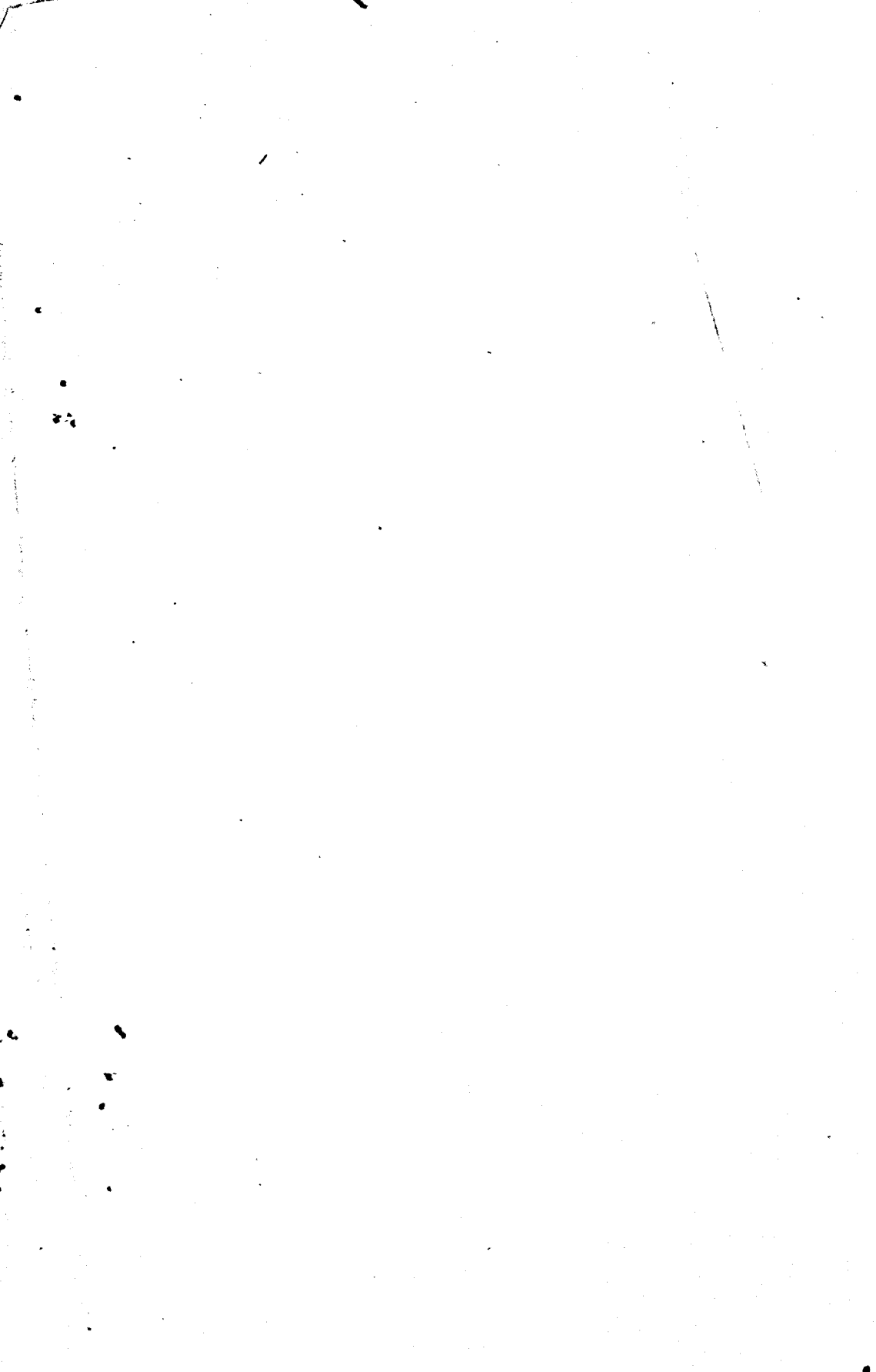
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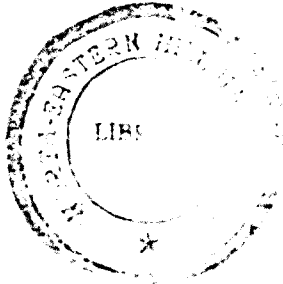
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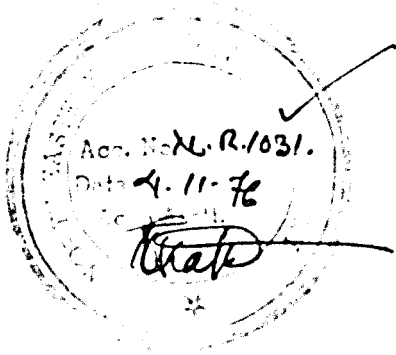
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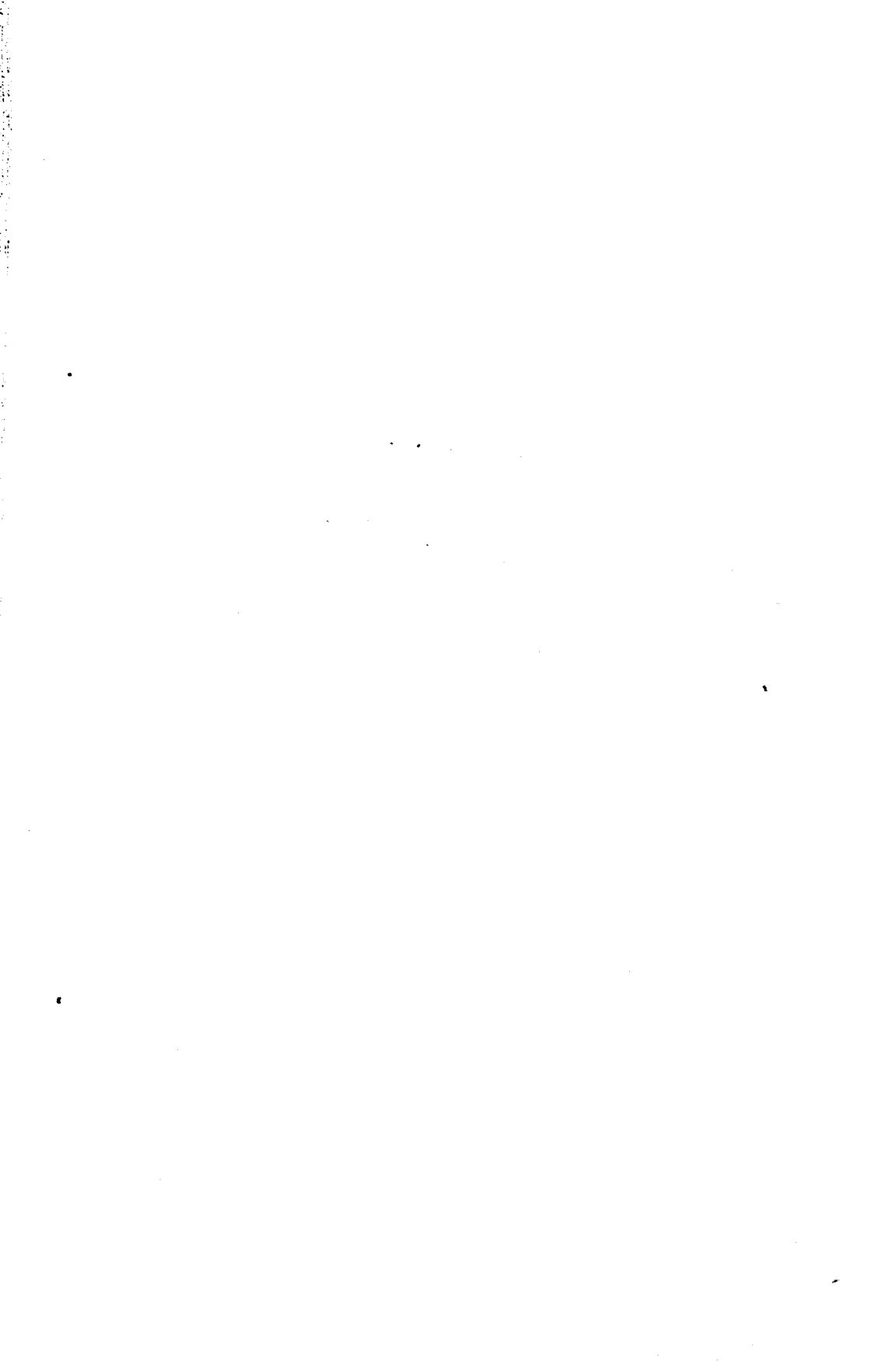
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DEDICATED
TO
PRINCE MUFUKHKHAM JAH

Among the many worthy traditions of the Asafia Dynasty and the great Ottoman Empire, patronage of sciences, arts and literature, always had the pride of place. Prince Mufukhkhah Jah, being a worthy scion of both the great Houses, has naturally kept up this tradition. Instances are too numerous to mention. The author has had the good fortune of being a recipient of his princely patronage and the dedication of this humble work is just an expression of his heartfelt gratitude to this young and benevolent personality. May God grant him long and continuous patronage of real good works.



P R E F A C E

In the following pages an attempt has been made to analyse and determine the nature of Love as understood in a sublime sense. So far as I know, there is no book or treatise of this kind extant either in English, Persian or Urdu. The works of eminent Sufis on Love reflect their own lofty experiences and sentiments and intuitive feelings.

Here, an attempt has been made to explain the quiddity of love. If ardent love ('Ishq) is the name given to excessive affection, what stages has it to traverse to reach the pinnacle? Details could be gleaned from lovers only, but, in the language of emotions, I have presented, here, their findings rather comprehensively, having discovered them by taste and personal experience and I have striven to present them in simple language.

It is now well known how love is prompted in human heart and what the causes or stimuli of love are. Beauty, benevolence, perfection of every kind and mutual affinities are all the stimuli of love. They alone fan its flame. Love is innate, inborn in human nature. It is a boon conferred by the Eternal Dispenser, and is a divine gift. No heart is void of it. External stimuli fan the flame of love and when it flares up man does all that lies in his power; his inward potential perfections come into play, are actualised? they reach their climax, and man realises the highest end of his life—his *ultimo Thule*.

God alone, in the real sense, deserves our love. He alone is in possession of Beauty, Benevolence and every kind of perfection to the highest degree. His Being alone is the most perfect and His attributes only are exempt from every defect or blemish. Every other thing besides Him is only a created, a contingent being, and as such limited and determined, deprived of absoluteness and void of infinite perfection. Whatever perfection is found in a created being can only be a limited one, it does not belong to its essence, *per se*, it is only a borrowed one, a transitory phase of his ephemeral existence! Auspicious is the soul that has assured itself of this truth and regards God alone as its Real Beloved, and abstracting himself from all but God spends the few days of his life in His love only and thus attains supreme beatitude. As Jāmi has said

Perchance with wealth and sons endowed thou art,
Yet with all these ere long thou wilt have to part,

Thrice happy he who gives his heart to love,
And sets affection on the men of heart.

But, this is also an admitted fact that the Absolute can manifest Itself in the phenomenal only. The Absolute, in its Essence, is "Unseen." None can behold it to be enamoured of It. When Absolute Beauty and Absolute Perfection are not perceptible to outward eye, and their manifestation could be beheld in phenomenal forms alone, it is, then necessary to see the forms with the outward eye. This observation, however, is for the sake of intuiting the Absolute Reality manifesting Itself through them, and is never for the sake of the forms themselves. This subtle point has been expressed clearly by an ardent lover, Auḥad-ud-Dīn Kirmānī thus :

The meaning themselves are not clear,
They are manifest in a dead form.
When form is the rising place of Beauty,
Necessarily, I behold the form !

Pure souls behold with their inward eye, Absolute Beauty alone in all lovely phenomenal forms. This beholding of forms takes them to Absolute Beauty alone and they seek and love It only. The same sense is conveyed by the aphorism :

"The phenomenal is a bridge to the Real."

To deny its truth is synonymous with ignorance—abysmal ignorance. An exhaustive treatment of this subject is given in the chapter on Sensory Love of the present work.

A detailed account of the spiritual fruits which grow from the essential nature of love is given in the last chapter of this work. It will be seen from it that man can never attain perfection without such love. When, due to intoxication of love, sobriety takes leave of those who have attained perfection, they involuntarily cry out :

"I am a ray of uncontaminated Light that has penetrated a clod of
earth,
But how can the blind catch its glimpse ?
I am the source of all light,
Neither am I the lamp, nor the wick, nor the oil beneath." ('Aḥḥār)

This subtle point may be overlooked if it is not intelligible ; in some phases of one's life it may become possible to comprehend it. But, Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī's words should be carefully considered. They emphasise that love alone can take the earthly body to the spiritual skies and the loftiest stage of exaltation may thus be attained :

“Through love the earthly body soared to the skies,
 The mountain began to dance and became nimble,
 Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover,
 Sinai was made drunken and Moses fell in a swoon.

It is Love alone which bestows on a lover the rank of “Saint-hood” (Wilāyat) and from there takes him to the stage of vicegerency of God (K̄hilāfat). In the terminology of the eminent Sufis, the “Stage of Saint-hood” is the name for becoming dead to one’s self entirely, being lost in God and passed into Him and being manifested with Divine Name and Divine Attributes, and the “Stage of Vicegerency” is the name for getting control over the “world of dominion” and the external world by the Divine Command. These abstruse points are discussed in the last chapter of this work.

The study of the present work will afford pleasure to those who are spiritual. For those who are ill-natured and of gross materialistic temperament, its study may prove harmful, they should abstain from reading it. The writer agrees whole-heartedly with the ardent lover who has said :

None but the elegant are slaughtered in the abattoir of love,
 The ill-natured and the gross tempered are just let off.
 Do not escape being slain, if Thou art a true lover,
 He who is not slaughtered is just dead meat.

My sincere thanks are due to the University Grants’ Commission of the Government of India for their generosity which has enabled me to write this treatise. It was first written in English and later on vested in the garb of Urdu. The whole work was completed within a period of two years.

I have also to acknowledge gratefully the grant of an adequate amount by the Board of Trustees, H.E.H. The Nizam’s Charitable Trust for the publication of this brochure, but for which the results of my resarch may not have seen the light of the day. This is yet another proof of the fact that the income of the Trust is spent mostly for educational and cultural purpose.

I am deeply indebted to the philanthropic Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Prince Mufukhkham Jah, who has always taken keen interest in my work.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge my deep gratitude to my brother, Dr. Mir Siadat Ali Khan, M.A., LL.B., Fazel (Osm.); B.C.L., (Oxon.); D.Phil., (Oxon) Bar.-at-Law; (Lincoln’s Inn) (London); erstwhile Professor

of Law and Fellow of Osmania University, and to my friend, Mr. Moḥd. Şiddiq, M.A., erstwhile Deputy Director of Information, Government of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, who read this work in manuscript and have made valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to Dr. M.A. Mu'id Khān, Director, Dai'ratu'l Ma'ārif and the staff for the interest they have exhibited in printing this work.

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY,
HYDERABAD.

MIR VALIUDDIN.

FOREWORD
PROF. HUMAYUN KABIR

Dr. Mir Valiuddin is one of the most well-known philosophers of India and has made a special study of Sufism and allied branches of Islamic thought. He has in all cases gone to the original sources and also drawn heavily upon the criticism and interpretation by modern scholars in various languages. The central theme of his study is the concept of love as it has evolved among Sufi thinkers. In some ways, his conception is analogous to that of Spinoza who regarded love as the highest attribute of God.

The philosophical treatment of mysticism is always difficult. There is on the one hand the risk of being carried away in a flood of emotion in which intellectual concepts are submerged and lost. There is the contrary danger of breaking up the unity of experience in arid analysis through mere logic chopping. It reflects great credit on Prof. Valiuddin that he has avoided both the dangers and given an account which is at the same time both sympathetic and critical. I cannot claim any special knowledge in this field and feel that I have learnt a great deal from his book. I hope that all students of Sufi thought will benefit by his account and I congratulate him on a very fine piece of work.

New Delhi, 20th May, 1966.

HUMAYUN KABIR.



CHAPTER I

LOVE IN ITS ESSENCE

THE word 'ishq (Arabic for ardent love) is derived from 'ashiqa. 'Ashiqa is the creeper called *liblāb* in Arabic and 'ishq-*pechān* in Persian. When this creeper twines itself around a tree, it deprives it of its leaves and fruits. The tree turns yellow and a few days later dries up completely. Similarly, when love takes its root in the heart of a lover, every one other than the beloved is effaced in the effulgence of the beloved's beauty; the very being of the lover is annihilated and there remains nothing save the beloved. Some lexicographers believe that the word 'ishq has no root; it is its own root.

The word *mahabba* (Arabic for affection) is derived from *ḥubb*. *Ḥubb* means a seed which when sown in the soil lies embedded in the earth; rain may fall and the sun may shine on it; it braves the weather, summer and winter alike, without any change. It sprouts in its own good time; later it blossoms and bears fruits. Similarly, when love is embedded in the heart it also does not suffer any change by absence or presence, pain or pleasure, separation or union. All the same it goes on developing slowly but surely, and branches, leaves and buds shoot out from it.

Love signifies excess and intensity in affection, as it has been said :

Going beyond extreme in affection is love.¹

Love signifies excessive or intense affection.²

When affection becomes intense and grows strong and overpowering it is termed love.³

It has been said that love signifies excessive affection.

How nicely the beauty inherent has been exposed to view.⁴

Shaikh Muhi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi observes that in the Qur'ān love has been interpreted as 'excessive affection' (*ashadd-i ḥubb*). When such

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | العشق تجاوز عن الحد في المحبة |
| 2. | العشق عبارة عن افراط المحبة وشدتها |
| 3. | والمحبة اذا اشتدت وقويت سميت عشقاً |
| 4. | عشق افراط محبت گفته اند در اين معنى چه نيکوسته اند |

CHAPTER II

THE STIMULI PROMPTING THE FEELING OF LOVE

AFTER comprehending the nature or quiddity of affection and love, we shall now try to analyse the stimuli which prompt the feelings. In dealing with this subject, Imām Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad Ghazālī has brought out a few basic psychological truths. We have drawn upon his epoch-making work, 'Iḥya-ul-'ulūm-ud-dīn, (Revivification of the Religious Sciences) in briefly presenting these truths.¹

The Imām has first emphasised the truth that to love a person or an object, knowledge or perception of it is necessary. There can be no love if knowledge is lacking. The thing which affords pleasure of any kind will be dear to the heart, and that which causes pain will be odious. Consequently, love signifies an inclination of the heart towards an object which is appreciated, and an object is said to be odious when it is hateful. Now, if the inclination of the heart grows strong, it would be styled 'love,' and if dislike for it is increased, it would be termed 'hatred.' After determining the connotation of love, the Imām has shed light on the stimuli which prompt the feeling of love. These stimuli are five in number and hence love is of five different kinds:

1. Love of self, *i.e.*, love of the survival and perfection of self.
2. Love of beauty.
3. Love of those who have attained perfection.
4. Love of the beautiful.
5. Love arising from spiritual affinity.

In other words, everyone naturally loves his own self and looks forward to its continued existence. Benevolence also prompts the feeling of love. Perfection rouses admiration and reverence leading ultimately to love; beauty and excellence fan the flame of love and among individuals, spiritual affinity is one of the stimuli of love. This brief statement requires some elaboration.

1. *Vide* "Kitab-ul-Muḥabbat wa Shawq" being the 6th Chapter of the fourth part of *Iḥya*, pp. 158-196: The Arabic book and its Urdu translation both are printed by Nawal Kishōr Press, Lucknow, India.

CHAPTER III

LOVE, THE HIGHEST REACH OF RELIGION

MMUSLIMS of all denominations agree that love of God is obligatory. But there are a few literalists who hold that "love of God" means merely perpetual devotion to His Service and even for this God's grace is necessary: In love similarity of nature or disposition between the lover and the beloved is indispensable, so that there may be attraction between the two, as is well known: "LIKE ATTRACTS THE LIKE."¹ But, as no similarity of any kind exists between the creator and the created, there can be no love between them.

In reply, it is generally argued that as there is a consensus of opinion among the Muslims that love of God is obligatory for one and all, how can a thing be regarded as obligatory which does not exist at all? How can we interpret love as mere obedience or devotion; for, obedience or devotion is subservient to love and a fruit of it. Love should first be there, then only the lover can obey the beloved. It is for this reason Rābia' Adwia said:

"Hadst thou been true in love, thou wouldst have surely obeyed him.

"For the lover is always obedient to his beloved!"²

Again, in reply to those who deny love for God on the ground of dissimilarity of nature or disposition, it has been said that when God bestows the felicity of His Love on any one of his devotees, He clothes him, first, with some of His own attributes and, then, confers His Love on him. Thus similarity of attributes comes into existence. The Qur'ānic verse "God loves them and they love God" (S. V. 57)³ proves that similarity in attributes does exist.

However, the Qur'ān posits this love and clearly announces it. Reflect on the following verses:

"God loves them and they love Him." (S. V. 57)⁴

1. الجنس الى الجنس يميل
2. لو كان حبك صادقا لاطعته ان المحب لمن يحب مطيع
- 3.4. يحبهم ويحبونه

CHAPTER IV
LOVE AND THE SUFIS OF THE UNITY
OF EXISTENCE ORDER

MANY eminent Sufis rely on a holy tradition which is also cited by Ghazālī and Shaikh Akbar, and men of spiritual discernment concede its authenticity. It is as follows :

“I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to become known. So I created the world in order to be known.”¹

Ḥāfiz Sūkhawī has related this tradition in “Maqāsīd-i-Ḥasna” with a slightly different version and the great scholar and traditionist, Muḥammad bin Ibrāhim has observed as follows :-

“This tradition is narrated by the Sufis, and if you will consider it with the following verse of the Qur’ān you will readily see that it is authentic and true :

“Allah it is who hath created seven heavens, and of the earth, the like thereof ; the commandment cometh down among them slowly, that ye may know that Allah is able to do all things, and that Allah surroundeth all things in knowledge”. (S. LXV, 12)²

Mūllā ‘Alī Qārī states that the meaning of this tradition is in accordance with the following *īpsidixit* of God Almighty :

“I created the Jinn and the mankind only that they might worship me.” (S. LI, 56)³

“That they might worship me” is interpreted by Ibn ‘Abbās as ‘They might attain my knowledge.’

The Sufis have explained this tradition as follows :

The essence of God is a hidden treasure. As far as the knowledge of His essence is concerned nobody except Himself is in the know. In order to

1. كنت كثرًا مخفياً فاحببت ان اعرف فخلقت الخلق
2. الله الذى خلق سبع سموات ومن الارض مثلهن ينزل الامر بينهن لتعلموا ان الله على كل شء قدير وان الله احاط بكل شء علماً (پ ۲۸ ع ۱۸)
3. وما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدون (پ ۲۷ ع ۲)

CHAPTER V
SENSORY LOVE
(*'Ishq-i-Majāzi*)

LOVE is of two kinds: Real and Sensory. The latter is also referred to as love of the phenomenal forms.

When aimed at God (the Divine Eessence, or, *Dhāt*), or, directed towards His Attributes and works, love is real and everlasting. But, when the focus of attraction is 'form,' or, such of its aspects as appeal to the senses, it is known as sensory, illusory, or transient. The latter is not love for its own sake, but related to evanescent factors.

There are two kinds of Sensory love: Sensual and Spiritual.

SENSUAL LOVE

Sensual love (sometimes called 'animal love') is a perversion, or desecration of love, it is infatuation; it is not love at all, but only its masquerade. Its source is lust for corporeal charms and a desire to have sensual pleasure. The victim of such love is enamoured of the outward appearance, that is the colour, complexion, face and symmetry of the limbs of his beloved. Thus, he is desirous of carnal pleasures. Many a man often falls a prey to this kind of love, and according to the psychologists, this is found even in an old woman. If love breeds an eager desire of coitus, it is, a sin and just sexual appetite, as Rūmī says:

'Tis not love which is found among people,

'Tis a mischief caused by eating wheat.¹

This love has also been termed 'Love of forms.' Such love, with the exception of the love existing between husband and wife, has been banned by Shari'a, prohibited by the Tariqa (The Path to God) and is far from wisdom. It is interdicted by Shari'a because it is prohibited by the Qur'ān:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. (S. XXIV, 30)²

1. عشق نبود این که در مردم بود این فساد خوردن کندم بود

2. قل للؤمنین یغضوا من ابصارهم ویحفظوا فروجهم (پ ۱۸ ع ۱۰)

CHAPTER VI FRUITS OF LOVE

I PROPOSE to present here (in the last chapter of this work) the Divine Fruits which grow from essential nature of Love. But before doing this it is necessary to mention a few reactions which love creates and which have been disclosed by those who have gone through this furnace.

One of the surest reactions is that the lover becomes austere...he has no interest in his food, friends or society. He cannot give up contemplation. He is immersed in the thought of the beloved. The more is his soul thus purified the deeper he plunges into love and is overpowered by it.

Another reaction is that the lover is drawn towards lilting notes, sweet songs, harmonious melodies, desire-exciting tales and verses. *Khawja Band-e-Nawāz* cites the following saying of his perfect *Pir Khawja Nasir-ud-din* of Delhi: "That which is attributed with beauty has a close connection with the Sublime World ('alum-i-'ulwī), and the human spirit, too, belongs to the same realm. When it listens to dulcet song or beholds the beauty of some lovely phenomenal form, it recollects its motherland and grows somewhat restless. Just as when a man who is going on a journey experiences strange feelings in his heart when he receives a letter from his native-land en route to destination. The same is true of the spirit also. If, on such an occasion, one engages his mind in contemplating the presence of God, outwardly and inwardly, or, in silent remembrance of God, his soul feels elated and soars to higher domains of spirituality. Consequently, when *Shaykh Farid* would listen to sama' (audition) he would engage himself in contemplation of God, or, in silent remembrance of Him. Truly speaking, this alone is lawful sama,' (audition) and it is one of the strong stimuli of evoking Divine love."¹

1. *Khātima*: (Urdu translation, p. 126)

"Pythagoras and Plato are responsible for another theory, to which the Sufi poets frequently allude, that music awakens in the soul a memory of celestial harmonies heard in the state of pre-existence, before the soul was separated from God. Thus *Jalāluddin Rūmī*,

"The song of the Spheres in their revolutions
Is what men sing with lute and voice.
As we all are members of Adam,
We have heard these melodies in Paradise,

