

Halqa Meeting of September 20, 2015

Abdul Hayy Khilwati: The Sufi path is to regain our primordial intimacy with God—It's to cultivate the yearning and passion for directly experiencing the Divine Presence. The Sufis deepen their awareness and spiritual perception, and this is fueled by love. Intimacy with God means communing with the various qualities of Divinity known as the Divine Names.

Everyone is different and each person has a different relationship to the Divine Names. What is fairly standard is that people's egotism prevents them from experiencing intimacy. This is why the Sufis stress love, including worldly love. As soon as there is any genuine love, it modifies and lessens egotism. Beauty and love are partners. There is the beauty of people, the beauty found in nature, and the beauty of thought and ideas. Love can be found in many different places and contexts. The Sufis say that all love is the reflection of our inherent love for God. It is often the case that worldly love is the first step to discovering God's love. The lovers engage in intimate thought and speech with God. They may seem to lack reverence and piety, but as Rumi explains in the following stanza from the Masnawi (Book II, from 1750), intimacy is what distinguishes the 'Creed of Love' from conventional religion.

**A revelation from God came to Moses:
"You have cut My servant off from Me!**

**You came to connect people to Me,
you didn't come to alienate them.**

**If you can, don't alienate people,
"Divorce is something I abhor."**

**I've assigned a way to each person,
I've given to each a form of expression.**

**For him it's praise, for you it's blame.
For him it's honey, it's poison for you.**

**I am above all purity and impurity,
above reluctance and alacrity in worship.**

**I didn't command worship for gain;
Rather, I sought to benefit My servants.**

**Hindus praise with Indian expressions;
Sindis praise in the idioms of Sind.**

I am not exalted by their glorifications
but they are purified and pearl-scattering.

I don't notice the tongues and words;
I watch the spirit and spiritual states.

I observe the heart and its humility
even if the words aren't so humble.

The heart is substance, the words contingent;
The contingent depends on substance, its aim.

How many more words, ideas, and analogies?
I want burning, burning! Tend to that burning!

Ignite the fire of love within your soul,
burn away thought and comparisons entirely!

Moses! The people of etiquette are one sort,
the burnt souls and spirits are quite another.

For the lovers is a burning in every breath,
there's no funding or taxing a ruined village.

Though he errs in speech, don't say he's errant;
If a martyr should die bloody, don't wash him.

The martyrs' blood is purer than water,
the mistake outshines a hundred good acts.

Inside the Ka'aba, prayer has no direction;
So what if the diver has no snow-shoes?

Don't offer guidance to spiritual drunkards
nor order the clothing-tearers to patch them.

The creed of Love is apart from all religion;
For the lovers, God is their sect and creed.

So what if the garnet is not an inscribed seal?
Love is not sad in the great ocean of sorrow.