



**Social Gathekas**  
**17. Sufi Mysticism**  
**III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love**  
**By Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Prepared and Presented by **Murshida Nuria Stephanie Sabato**, Fall 2014 Ozark Sufi Camp

**Day 1**

**Opening:** Singing 'ishq allâh ma'bûd allâh

**Reading:** "What is the heart? Where is the heart?" One is accustomed to saying that the heart is in the breast. Yes, that is true. There is a nerve center in the breast of everyone, which has so much to do with the feelings that the heart is always pictured in the breast, that center which is most sensitive to our feelings. When a person is feeling great joy, in that center one feels something light up, and by the lighting up of that center the whole person seems light. The person feels as if he or she flew, there is a great joy in his or her life. Likewise, if depression or despair comes into one's life, this has an effect upon the center. One feels one's throat choked and one's breath is heavy with a load; again it is that center that feels.

But it is not that only which is the heart. It is as if a mirror was standing before the heart, focused on the heart, and every feeling is reflected in this mirror in the physical being of each person. Since people are ignorant of their soul, they know not where their heart is, nor where the center is where their feelings are reflected. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 3:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*You can study God through everything and everyone in the universe, because God is not confined in a mosque, synagogue or church. But if you are still in need of knowing where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for him: in the heart of a true lover.*

**Practice:** 'ishq allâh ma'bûd allâh

'ishq = unconditional love, divine love;

ma'bûd = beloved, worshiped, adored.

The literal meaning is God is Love, God is Beloved. Poetically interpreted by Hazrat Inayat Khan as: God is Love, Lover and Beloved.

**Reading:** This fact is known by the scientists as well -- that it is the heart which is the beginning of the formation of a child. In the mystic's conception, it is the heart, which is the beginning of form, which is also the beginning of the spirit, which makes each one individual. The depth of that spirit is in reality what we call the heart. By this we understand that there is some such thing as a heart, which is the deepest depth of one's being. One first knows something of it from the impression, which one receives in this nerve center.

In these days, people give less importance to sentiment; they rely more upon the intellect. The reason is that when they meet two sorts of people, the intellectual and the sentimental, they find in an intellectual person greater balance than in the one with sentiment. The earth is fruitful and creative, but not so living and powerful as the water. The intellect is creative, yet not so powerful as the heart and the sentiment. In reality, the intellectual person in the end will prove unbalanced too, if there is no sentimental side attached to it. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 2:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*The path to the Truth is a labor of the heart, not of the head. Make your heart your primary guide! Not your mind. Meet, challenge and ultimately prevail over your nafs with your heart. Knowing your ego will lead you to the knowledge of God.*

*Question: What is sentiment? What does it mean to be sentimental?*

**Practice: Ya Latif** (YAA LA-ṬĒEF) ([CLICK FOR AUDIO PRONUNCIATION](#))

Al-Latif is a gentle and refined love. It is the secret of kindness, tenderness, and love. Al-Latif offers a subtle strength in the taming of the nafs. It is the most essential quality for human beings in developing a refined character and a harmonious manner in all relationships. Invocation of Ya Latif is an antidote for coarseness of ego. It brings gracefulness, resiliency, and a softening of our defensive behaviors and rigidities.

Invocation of Ya Latif activates the whole subtle body of refinement, exquisiteness, and gentleness. It can be called a kind of love, and it surely has love in it, but it is more than just love. We learn to know people skillfully by developing a refined quality of empathy that comes in part from not projecting our own ego condition on them. Its subtle power can also go to the mind. It can come from the heart and affect the mind. This allows the mind to become refined in its depth of understanding and gentleness. Our actions then reflect that.

**Closing:** Khatum and Dedication of Merit

## Day 2

**Opening:** Singing 'ishq allâh ma'bûd allâh

**Reading:** Are there not many people of whom their associates say: "I like him, love him, and admire him, but he closes his heart"? The ones who close their hearts neither fully love others, nor allow others to love them fully. Besides, the person who is only intellectual in time becomes skeptical, doubting, unbelieving, and destructive, as there is no power of the heart to balance it.

The Sufi considers devotion of the heart the best thing to cultivate for spiritual realization. It might seem quite different from what many think, but the ones who close their hearts to others, close their hearts to God. Jesus Christ did not say, "God is the intellect." He said, "God is love." If, therefore, there is a piece of God that can be found anywhere, it is not in any church on the earth, nor in Heaven above; it is in the heart of each person. The best place where you are sure to find God is in the loving heart of a kind person. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 4:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)  
*Intellect and love are made of different materials. Intellect ties people in knots and risks nothing, but love dissolves all tangles and risks everything. Intellect is always cautious and advises, 'Beware too much ecstasy', whereas love says, 'Oh, never mind! Take the plunge!' Intellect does not easily break down, whereas love can effortlessly reduce itself to rubble. But treasures are hidden among ruins. A broken heart hides treasures.*

**Reading:** The magnetic centers in the body used in spiritual practices of the Sufis are called lata'if. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

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**Reading:** It may be that by the help of reason one will act according to a certain standard of morals, but that does not make a person good. If one is good or righteous, one is artificially made good. All the prisoners in the jail can be righteous. But if natural goodness and righteousness can be found anywhere, it is in the spring of the heart from which life rises, a spring of virtue, and every drop of this is a living virtue. That proves that goodness is not person-made, it is one's very being. If one lacks goodness, it is not the lack of training; it is because one has not yet found him or herself. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 14:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*God is busy with the completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly. He is fully occupied with you. Every human being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving toward perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed. God deals with each of us separately because humanity is fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture.*

**Reading:** Goodness is natural. For a normal person it is necessary to be good. No one needs teaching to live a good or a righteous life. If love is the torch on one's path, it shows one what fairness means: the honor of the word, charity of the heart, and righteousness. Do we not sometimes see a young man who, with all his boisterous tendencies, finds a woman whom he begins to love, and if he really loves her, he begins to show a difference in his life. He becomes gentle for he must train for her sake; he leaves off things he was never before willing to leave off. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

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**Reading:** In the same way, forgiveness, where there is love, is not a very difficult thing. A child comes before his mother, having offended her a thousand times, and asks her

forgiveness. There is no other to go to. It does not take a moment for the heart of the mother to forgive. Forgiveness was waiting there to be manifested. One cannot help being kind when there is feeling. A person whose feeling goes out to another strikes a note of sympathy in every person; the person finds the point of contact in every soul they meet, because they have love. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 1:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves. If God brings to mind mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame welled inside us. If we see God as full of love and compassion, so are we.*

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**Closing:** Khatum and Dedication of Merit

## Day 3

**Opening:** Singing 'ishq allâh ma'bûd allâh

**Reading:** There are people who say, "But is it not unwise to give oneself in outgoing tenderness to everyone, because people are not trustworthy?" I should say, "If a person is good and kind, this goodness ought to be manifested to everyone; the doors of the heart should not be closed."

A mystic like Jesus Christ said, "Love your friend," and he went so far as to say, "Love your enemy." The Sufi treads the same path. In charity of heart to one's neighbors, the Sufi considers it the love of God; and in showing love to everyone, the Sufi considers this as love to God. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 15:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*It's easy to love a perfect God, unblemished and infallible that He is. What is far more difficult is to love fellow human being with all their imperfections and defects. Remember, one can only know what one is capable of loving. There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither truly love nor truly know God.*

**Reading:** The Sufi says, "It is a trial, but it is to be tried. I shall take up my everyday duties as they come to me." Knowing how unimportant the things of the world are and not giving them too much value, still Sufis are attentive to their duties towards those who love them, like them, depend upon them, and follow them. Sufis try for the best way of meeting those who dislike and despise them. They live *In* the world and yet are not of the world. In this way the Sufis consider loving each person as the main principle in the fulfillment of the purpose of one's life. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 17:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*The whole universe is contained within a single human being-you. Everything that you see around, including the things that you might not be fond of and even the people you despise or abhor, is present within you in varying degrees. Therefore, do not look for Sheitan outside yourself either. The devil is not an extraordinary force that attacks from without. It is an ordinary voice within. If you set to know yourself fully, facing with honesty and hardness.*

**Rule 18:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)

*If you want to change the ways others treat you, you should first change the way you treat yourself, fully and sincerely, there is no way you can be loved. Once you achieve that stage, however, be thankful for every thorn that others might throw at you. It is a sign that you will soon be showered in roses.*

**Practice: Ya Sabur (yaa şa-BOOR)** ([CLICK FOR AUDIO PRONUNCIATION](#))

As-Sabur is the divine power that will always see things through to the end. At the human level, it means to maintain inner equanimity through all trials and circumstances and to persevere to the end of the test. A physical-plane variation of its root means to endure and to stop complaining.

**Rule 8:** *(The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz)*

*Patience does not mean to passively endure. It means to look at the end of a process. What does patience mean? It means to look at the thorn and see the rose, to look at the night and see the dawn. Impatience means to be shortsighted as to not be able to see the outcome. The lovers of God never run out of patience, for they know that time is needed for the crescent moon to become full.*

**Reading:** How true it is that the life of those who love their enemies and yet lack patience is like a burning lantern with little oil. It cannot endure; in the end the flame becomes faded. The oil in love is patience. In addition to this, in the path of love, what is the oil? From beginning to end: unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Those who say "give and take" do not know love, they know business. One says, "I have loved dearly once, but I was disappointed," as if a man would say, "I dug in the earth, but when the mud came I was disappointed." It was true that mud came, but with patience one would have reached the water one day. Only patience can endure. Only endurance makes great. It is endurance, which makes things valuable and people great.

The imitation of gold can be as beautiful as real gold; the imitation of the diamond as bright as a real diamond. The difference is that one fails in the test of endurance, and the other can stand it. Yet one must not be compared to objects. People have something divine in themselves, and they can prove this by their endurance in the path of love.

Now whom should one love, how should one love? Whatever one loves -- whether duty, human beings, art, friends, an ideal, or one's fellow-creatures -- one has certainly opened that door through which to pass in order to reach that love which is God. The beginning of love is an excuse; it leads to that ideal of love, which is God alone. *(Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love)*

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**Reading:** Many say, "I can love God, but not human beings." It would be the same if we said to God, "I love you, but not your image." Can one hate the human creatures in which



God's image is to be found and yet claim love of God? If one is not tolerant and not willing to sacrifice, can one claim the love of the Lord? (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

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**Reading:** The first thing to teach is the broadness of the heart; the awakening of the heart is the inner feeling. If there is a sign of saintliness it is not the power of words, not high position, either spiritual or intellectual, and not magnetism. The proof of the saintly spirit is only expressed in the love of creatures. It is the continuous spring of love from that divine fountain situated in the heart of each person.

Once that fountain is open, it purifies the heart; it makes the heart transparent to see the outer and the inner world. The heart becomes the vehicle for the soul to see all within and without. One not only communicates with another person, but also with God. (*Social Gatheka 17. Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love*)

**Rule 26:** (*The Forty Rules of Intenerate Sufi Mystics as re-interpreted by Shams of Tabriz*)  
*The universe is one being. Everything and everyone is interconnected through an invisible web of stories. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all in a silent conversation. Do no harm. Practice compassion. And do not gossip behind anyone's back – not even a seemingly innocent remark! The words that come out of our mouths do not vanish but are perpetually stored in infinite space and they will come back to us in due time. One man's pain will hurt us all. One man's joy will make everyone smile.*

**Practice: 'ishq allâh ma'bûd allâh**

'ishq = unconditional love, divine love;  
ma'bûd = beloved, worshiped, adored.

The literal meaning is God is Love, God is Beloved. Poetically interpreted by Hazrat Inayat Khan as: God is Love, Lover and Beloved.

**Closing:** Khatum and Dedication of Merit