****

***Love, Life Joy***

Written and delivered by Stephanie Nuria Sabato

July 14th at the 2016 Summer School

Katwijk, Netherlands

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

The theme of this year’s Summer School is ‘The Living Heart’. This talk draws its inspiration from this theme and is titled, *Love! Life! Joy!*

Here at the beginning of this talk, reach out and touch someone, and let us say the Sufi Invocation together. Insert Invocation Here.

Let me ask you question, have you every heard a song that seems to have a special message. For example, a love song?

Recently I heard an old pop tune by Petula Clark. Do any of you remember Petula Clark? Well as a reminder I brought a little sample of the beginning of one of her songs to share with you. Don’t worry if you don’t understand all the words, I will share them with you. The title of this song is, I Couldn’t Live Without Your Love.



As I read the words from this song, consider that this song is not being sung to any individual person, but the song is being sung to God. The words go like this:

*You're the only one that I rely on*

*A shoulder there for me to cry on*

*And the hours alone that I'm without you*

*All I ever do is think about you*

*No one knows that you're so understanding*

*Even though my love is so demanding*

*Every time you look at me*

*Then you'll know we'll both agree*

*That no other love’s for me*

*I couldn't live without your love*

*Now I know you're really mine*

*Gotta have you all the time*

I would encourage you to listen to the whole song sometime, because from one view it is just a pop tune – love song. Yet in another way, it is a beautiful chronicling of the quest for the experience for God’s Love and the spiritual journey. It also speaks to the way we play a kind of hide-and-seek with God, and perhaps God does with us. As Murshid would say, it is a ‘veiling’ and ‘unveiling’.

In Hindism we are taught to be a ‘Lover of Dharma’, and reminded that ‘God is seated in everyone’s heart’. We take it as our sacred duty to see God seated in the heart of everyone, and as the words to the song say, I couldn’t – that we couldn’t live without Your Love – without God’s love manifesting through you, and you, and you. Through all of you and every living thing!

In the Hindu Scriptures, known at Yajur Veda, we read:

*The one who loves all intensely begins perceiving all*

*living beings as a part of oneself.*

*One becomes a lover of all,*

*a part and parcel of the Universal Joy.*

*and flows with the stream of happiness,*

*and is enriched by each soul.*

Now notice this verse does not say that *we are enriching every soul*, but that every soul is enriching us. (Story of H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche is inserted here)

In Murshid’s Prayer Salat we affirm every day that, “Thy Light is in all Forms, Thy Love in All Beings.”

In the Gayan, Murshid teaches us:

*True happiness is in the love-stream that springs from one's soul, and the man [woman] who will allow this stream to flow continually, in all conditions of life, in all situations, however difficult, will have a happiness that truly belongs to him [her].*

Murshid’s not saying that life’s path is all puppy dogs, unicorns, and rainbows. No! He is indicating to us what it means to have a Living Heart, “the love-stream that springs from one's soul… in all situations, however difficult.

Does Murshid teach us that we are ‘love-streams’ only when people are nice to us, or we feel at peace, and are happy, and everything is going our way? No! Murshid says in all conditions, however difficult!

Let’s take a minute now to reflect on this Murshid’s message, *True happiness is in the love-stream that springs from one's soul…* (Meditation can be heard on audio recording).

Breath into your heart, and invoke a feeling of love. Think of Murshid, a loved one, a place in nature – whatever it is that invokes a feeling of love. Let that feeling arise in the heart, and let it become like a stream – a stream flowing outward.

*True happiness is in the love-stream that springs from one's soul, and the man [woman] who will allow this stream to flow continually, in all conditions of life, in all situations, however difficult, will have a happiness that truly belongs to him [her].*

Let the ‘love stream’ flow from your heart. The wellspring of God is Infinite! Tune to this wellspring. Try to remember to do this today, tomorrow, and every day.

Remember, Friends, that in nature it is very hard to go against a current or a flow. If your love-stream is flowing nothing can work against you – nothing can come in to harm you. If it does come towards you, be mindful and as Ibn Arabi teaches us, ‘Seek to know that which transpires behind that which appears’ and turn within, watch the breath, observe the natural tendency to contract and withdraw. Then do exactly the opposite. Turn up the eternal spring of God’s love and increase the love-stream moving outward from your heart.

The Great Buddhist Saint, Shanitdeva, gives another view of this love-stream of which Murshid teaches. Please listen to these deeply moving words in Shantideva’s prayer titledThe Far-Reaching Thought of Bodhicitta~Shantideva.

*May I become food and drink in the aeons of famine for those poverty-stricken suffers.*

*May I be a doctor, medicine and nurse for all sick beings in the world until everyone is cured.*

*May I become never-ending wish-fulfilling treasures materializing in front of each of them as all the enjoyments they need.*

*May I be a guide for those who do not have a guide, a leader for those who journey, a boat for those who want to cross over, and all sorts of ships, bridges, beautiful parks for those who desire them,*

*and light for those who need light.*

*And may I become beds for those who need a rest, and a servant to all who need servants.*

*May I also become the basic conditions for all sentient beings, such as earth or even the sky, which is indestructible.*

*May I always be the living conditions for all sentient beings until all sentient beings are enlightened.*

[I have made copies of this prayer and they are available at the back of the Universelle. If you feel drawn, please feel free to take one and keep it with you, and consider reciting it from time to time.] (Click to Download a PDF)

This prayer, like Murshid’s quote on True Happiness call upon our wisdom and illuminated mindfulness to the conditions and needs all around us, and to love! Not love that is filled with sentimentality, but a love that is filled with equanimity giving rise to loving each being fully without attachment. Just loving without any expectation – without any bias.

In the Holy Zenda Vesta we read, *With the Eyes of Love, made by Mazda and holy the god of wisdom, intelligence and harmony.* ‘With the Eyes of Love.’ What does that mean to us?

The Prophet Zoroaster teaches us to, *“*[*Be good, be kind, be humane, and charitable; love your brothers and sisters; console the afflicted; pardon those who have done you wrong.*](http://izquotes.com/quote/355647)*”*

Pardon those who have done you wrong! We find these same teachings echoed in Jesus’ message in the Holy Bible.

In book of Matthew. Jesus is asked,

* ***36****Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*
* ***37****Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*
* ***38****This is the first and great commandment.*
* ***39****And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*
* ***40****On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*
* *Matthew 22:36-40*

*In Book of Luke, Jesus teaches,*

* ***27****… I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,*
* ***28****bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*
* ***29****If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.*
* ***30****Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.*
* ***31****Do to others as you would have them do to you.*
* ***32****“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.*
* ***33****And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.*
* ***34****And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.*
* ***35****But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.*
* ***36****Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)*

Love our neighbors as ourselves, and what is more: Love our enemies. Beautiful words ­– yet not always so easy to do. Yet everyday, every moment, every challenge situation, every hurt is an opportunity to practice this teaching.

Murshid says: *Many seek protection from all hurting influences by building some wall around themselves. But the canopy over the earth is so high that a wall cannot be built high enough, and the only thing one can do is to live in the midst of all inharmonious influences, to strengthen his will-power and to bear all things, yet keeping the fineness of character and a nobleness of manner together with an ever-living heart.*

Remember also what Murshid teaches us: - *Love is the Divine Mother's arms; and when those arms are outspread, every soul falls into them.*

A few words of dedication of this talk before departing.

To my Mother, Maggie Sabato, she was truly an example of a Living Heart, and a woman of Great Faith. Those of you who had the opportunity to meet her – know this.

To Murshid’s Hidayat and Aziza for their unfailing love, encouragement, wisdom and their most loving friendship over these years.

To Murshid Karimbakhsh, who has honored me in the most courageous and gracious way by inviting me to way to follow in his footsteps as his successor as Representative General of the International Sufi Movement.

To Shaikh-ul-Mahshaik for his friendship, wit, and the immense dedication to The Sufi Cause.

To Murshid Nawab for his intelligence, his scholarship, his humor, his advice and his brotherly support and sensitivity. You are a true gentleman.

KarimaGita, for a friendship that has endured for over half our lives. Savitri and Hakima who journey from across the Great Pond to share these moments together at summer school, and all the mureeds in our Circle of Light!

Thank you to all of you who for being here; for your friendship, your openness, your support, and for your commitment to the Sufi Message of Murshid.

And lastly, let us dedicate our days here to our families, our friends, and to all those in the world who are in need of love.

May we always be awakened, living expressions of *Love! Life! Joy!* – living examples of a Living Heart , and we pray, *Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our until we reflect Thy Grace, Thy Glory, Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace.*

I conclude here with these parting words from the 20th Century philosophers, The Beatles. They sang us this advice… *All we need is love! Love is all we need!*

