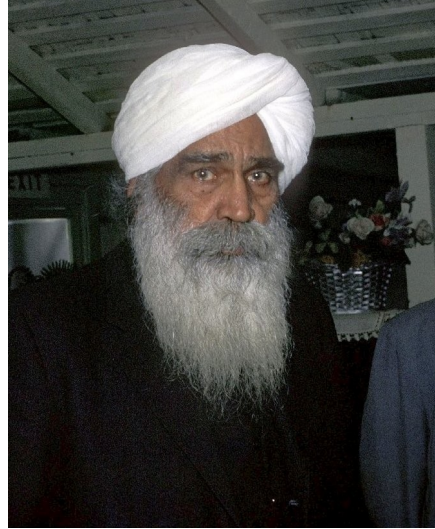


# The First Thing is Love

*After giving initiation, Harmony Grove, Escondido, California, December 15, 1963*

Dear friends, just now at the time I am leaving physically. I have to say a few words to you, so that if you live according to them, you will be helping your own self and helping all others. Most of you have already been put on the Way. Those who have been put on the Way should develop it from day to day by regular practice. All of you have had some experience of the Light of God and also of the Music of the Spheres. I've already given instructions as to how we can develop that, but the greatest part of it depends on our way of living. Truth is above all, but true living is still above truth.



*Harmony Grove 1963*

I think each one of us knows so much. Knowing much won't help you unless you put it into practice — unless you live up to it. The food that is digested will give you strength, but the food that is not digested will cause diseases in you. Everyone knows — it is very commonsense talk — that there is a creator, there is a maker of all of this universe. He is everlasting; He is unchangeable permanence; and the world He has made is changing, being made of matter, which is a composition of many atoms.

We are also conscious entities; we are spirit in man. And God is eternal. We have this man-body, which is considered to be the highest in all of creation; and the highest aim before us is to know God. And to know God we must know ourselves first: that we can do by self-analysis; by liberating ourselves from mind and the outgoing faculties; by knowing ourselves, then we can know that Power which is controlling all of the universe and is keeping us in the body.

For that purpose we have joined various schools of thought. Blessed are we; we are social beings, and we must have some social body to live in. But the highest purpose of joining any school of thought is to find the way back to God — to find the missing link within us. With God's grace, we have found that missing link that is keeping us in the body. The outer aspect of it, or the manifestation of it, is Light and Sound Principle. This has been the basic teaching of all Masters who came in the past. I gave

you instances — quotations — from the various scriptures last night.

As you are now put on the Way, the very Way which is the Way back to God, what things remain for us to do now to develop in a way that we may progress and reach the ultimate goal of perfection? By having initiation one does not become a perfect ideal all at once: one is put on the way to becoming perfect. So simply by having initiation a man does not become a true *satsangi*, as it is called. The word *satsangi* means: *sat* means permanent, everlasting; the unchangeable permanence, which is God; and *sangi* means one who becomes a constant co-worker with it. That takes time. So we have to live in accordance with the principles that are taught us in thought, word and deed.

Actions speak louder than words, and thoughts are even more potent than that. A *satsangi* must, in his conduct, reveal that he is a follower of a true Master. Your life should prove it. And what do Masters prescribe for that? Love God, and love all creation. These are the main teachings of all Masters. The teachings of all Masters hang on this very statement: one is to love God; and the other is to love all of creation.

We are all conscious entities, drops of the Ocean of all-consciousness, with the same controlling power keeping us in the body; so to say, we are true children of God, or brothers and sisters in God. This is the angle of vision that all Masters had. When they came they looked at man from that level. They considered all humanity to be their family members. And the first lesson that we get by coming to a Master is that he says we are all brothers and sisters in God.

But how are we to realize that? The way he suggests is by rising above body-consciousness, by opening the inner eye to see the Light of God. And when that is developed, you will see that that very Light is within you and is within the whole universe as well. When that eye is opened, you will really begin to see that we are all one, not two. This is our ignorance, which has to be removed by actual living. Therefore all Masters tell us that the first thing is love. A man is, truly speaking, worth being called a man, if he is love personified. God is love; our souls, being of the same essence as that of God, are also love; and the way back to God is also through love. If we love God, and God resides in every heart, how can we hate others? "Love one another," Christ said, "so that people may know you are coming to me." This is the first lesson that we learn at the feet of some Master.

Generally when you go to some teacher or another, they simply say, "Our information is the only true one." Well, the truth is there; and truth is one. All Masters who came in the past — those who realized the truth — said the same thing. And to know the truth we must have a true way of

living. And the true way of living is what? "An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theories." Unless you live up to them, what is the use of knowing the principles?

I remember the case of Arjuna, one of the five Pandavas of ancient India. The king brought in a teacher to educate them. For two or three months they were given instruction and after that time the teacher held an examination. Some of the other four brothers remembered the whole book, and others knew half of it; but when Arjuna's turn came up, he told the teacher, "Master, teacher, I've learned only one sentence."

"And what is that?"

"To always tell the truth; that I've learned fully. And I've also learned, not fully, but practically half of, 'Don't be angry.' "

And the teacher was all wroth. He said, "What will I tell the king? — 'Well, in three months you have given this child only one sentence to learn and he has learned only one-half of another?'" The teacher began to slap Arjuna on the face: once, twice, thrice, four times. Afterward he said, "Why don't you tell the truth?"

Arjuna said, "Master, now I will tell you the truth. In the beginning, when you first slapped me on the face, I was not angry. When you slapped me two, three, four, five, six times, I had some anger."

I wish you people to learn that way. Love God and love all humanity. Only learn this, and everything will come of itself. "Love and all things shall be added unto you."

Love is the greatest gift from God, I would say; and that is already ingrained within us, but it has congealed within our own selves, or our own families, or our own classes or schools of thought, or our own countries. What is the result? If that love has congealed within our own selves, we don't even care for our families; they may die. If love expands and remains congealed within the family alone, then there is conflict between family and family. And if it expands to cover the classes, what is the result? Religious wars: thousands of men have been killed on the plea of religious differences. If your love expands to cover all of your country, you become patriots; you love the men of your own country more than anyone else. The result is war. There have already been two great wars, and a third is impending. Millions of people have been killed. So our love should expand to cover all of creation. Let us pray like Guru Nanak: "Peace be unto all the world over, O Lord." Our love should expand.

And what did all Masters say that love is? Love is God and God is love. — If you live up to it? — What will be the result? "Those who do not understand love cannot understand God, for God is love." "Love and all things shall be added unto you." And the tenth Guru of the Sikhs [Guru Gobind Singh] told us, "Hear ye all, irrespective of whether you belong to one religion or the other. I tell you the truth: God is approached only through love."

Remain in any religion you like. You have to develop love and devotion for God; and all these various rites and rituals and saying of prayers go to develop love and devotion within us. If that is so, then you are to derive the full benefit of the saying of prayers or the performing of certain rites and rituals. Otherwise it is only automatic muttering, which has no effect within your heart. And love is a subject of the heart; and God is also a subject of the heart, not of the head, mind that. Our head should go along with our heart — then it's all right. The head alone won't be able to give you anything.

For that purpose, the Masters tell us, "Love." Where there is love, I tell you now again: "Love and all things shall be added unto you." If you have love for someone, are you going to harm him? Or will you even harm anyone who is connected with him, who is dear to him? You will say, "No, I love you. If you have children, will I kill them? No, I will offer them things to win your pleasure." So love is the basic thing. "On the wings of love we can fly to heaven."

So remain in any religion you like. This is the first thing. Are you going to defraud him for whom you have love? Are you going to tell lies to him? Are you going to deceive him? I don't think so. If you have love for anyone, you will always look to his convenience — from that level. For want of love, there is all this unrest in the world. God made man with equal privileges from Him; all are born the same way; the outer and inner construction is the same. And we are divine in nature: we are spirit in man; and the same spirit of God is keeping us controlled in the body. We are all one.

Love beautifies everything. Love knows no burdens; love knows no compensation; love knows service and sacrifice. So this is the Way you have been put on. As God is love, the more you come in contact with God-into-expression, which is manifested in the form of Light and the Music of the Spheres, the more you are charged with love. The love which is ingrained in you is flared up, and you have love for God and for all around you.

Whoever you love, you naturally want to serve with the best, without any outward acting or posing. If need be, you will sacrifice your everything

for him. For whom? For him whom you love.

I will give you a parable from the *Puranas* of the Hindus. They say that the god Vishnu — the god of nourishment — invited all the good and bad people to a big banquet. He served them. The people came; the good men sat in their row and the others also sat in their own rows. All the food was served: It was a very handsome, rich banquet. But before they began to eat, the god Vishnu stood up and said, "Dear friends, all this that is laid before you is for you alone. Eat it to your heart's content. But I lay down one condition. And what is that? Don't bend your arms to bring the food to your mouths!"

Everyone was wonderstruck: What is he saying? If he won't let us bend our arms, how are we to get the food to our mouths?

Most of the people did not follow what he said. They wracked their brains, but they could not solve the problem; and they left in disappointment. They simply considered that the god Vishnu was ridiculing them, and they went away.

The others, who were the good people, sat down and thought: "This is the god of nourishment; a god would not tell us anything that is not good for our own selves — there must be a meaning in it." They considered it and found the solution very easily. What was it? Everyone sat down: Here's the food — instead of bending their arms toward their mouths, they simply stretched them out to the mouths of others. Do you see? All were fed.

This is a parable to show that love knows service. If you feed others, then you will be fed. We feed our own children, while other children die of hunger. If you begin to feed others, then nobody will remain hungry. We amass money—we hoard money—for our own selves. The result is that others are poor. Some people have many kinds of enjoyment, and others cannot live on even one loaf of bread.

So love knows service. If you care to keep others' homes clean, would not your house also be clean? It once happened in Lahore that the sweepers went on strike for three or four days, and the filth gathered in the homes. And what did the people do? They simply took their filth and put it on the walks to others' houses. Instead of making others' homes filthy, they could have considered keeping others' houses clean and put the filth somewhere else. The whole city had a bad odor for three days.

So if you are after having others' houses clean then your house will be clean. It is a very simple thing. You will find that little labor is required for that. If we are only after our own advancement — to feed our own selves

or clothe our own selves — naturally others will suffer. If need be, we should sacrifice our every interest for the sake of others. If need be, we must lay down our lives for the sake of others. If you learn this one lesson, there can be no conflict, there can be no wars.

Why do all these wars commence? Between family and family: One family wants to feed his own children — No! — not to others! They must conflict, and somebody's head will be broken. Between religions: A man follows a religion — he loves men of his own class and hates others. We are all children of God; the very God resides in every heart — then why all this conflict? If you love others, help others. If you have known a higher truth, then lay that down before them; they will understand. Why are countries at war? They want to keep their own countries agoing, and they don't care how other countries are faring. The result is war.

I met some political heads. I told them: "So many children of God have been placed under your care. Each country should live and let others live. If a president or a king of a country cannot look after the children of God placed under his care properly, others should help. What is the use of killing millions of people?" This is a very simple formula — how wonderfully it works! When St. John said, "Love and all things shall be added unto you." He meant something definite.

So for want of love, all this conflict arises — whether in a social way or a religious way or a political way. We should be embodiments of love; love should overflow from every pore of our body. A saint is one who is overflowing with love — for whom? — For all the world over.

These parting words are the only thing I can tell you. You have been put on the Way: develop it from day to day by regular practice; and have true living. And do you know what true living consists of? — Of love — love knows service, love knows sacrifice, love knows helping others. When you have love for someone, there is no egotism. Egotism arises when you love your own self — your own individual self; that is, "I am greater; I know better." If you love others, you will love them out of humility. A true lover is a truly humble man. St. Augustine was asked, "What is the way back to God?" And he said, "First, humility; second humility; and third, humility."

Unless you have humility, you will not dare to go to someone else. Each man believes in his own conceit: that he is the most learned man, that he holds a very high position in life, that he is a very rich man; and he would not care to go to anyone. Even if you go to someone, even then humility is required. Sit down at his feet and see — understand — what he is saying. What little you know, more or less, you already have with you. Just listen to him, to what he says — perhaps he has something to

say that you do not know. A vacant glass put under a tumbler of water will be filled; if the glass is placed above the tumbler of water, then it cannot be filled. So even then, humility is required.

And if you have, by the grace of God, some blessing from God, it is His grace. It is His grace, not you — you have not earned it. When any branch of a fruit-laden tree is full of fruit, it bows down to the earth. Even if you have the true blessing of God — and that is to know Him — you will bow down to everybody; because you will see the same light in everybody. You who are the true lover of humanity are the true lover of God. This one lesson we have to learn. If you have this one, you will observe strict nonviolence in thought, word and deed. You will become truthful; you will never deceive anybody, never kill anybody, never hate anybody. You will become the abode of all virtues.

How does love of God come? I referred to it in the beginning of my talk: God is Love, and God-into-expression Power is manifested in two ways: God is Light and God is Music of the Spheres. The more you have a contact with that by rising above body-consciousness; the love already ingrained within you will be flared up by your coming in contact with the Ocean of All-Love. The definition of a Saint is truly one who has overflowing love for all; not only for mankind, but also for animals, for birds, and even for trees.

I think the best of all is L-O-V-E — only four letters, but I think it is the outer aspect of knowing God. My love — the God in me — is for you all. To the best I can, that which the God in my Master gave me is being extended to you, with all love. With all the love He had for me, then with all that love He gave me — with the same love — I pass it on to you. Live up to it, that's all.

And I want you to be regular. I want you to introspect your lives — to weed out all infirmities day by day by regular self-introspection; and come in contact with the Light and Sound Principle which are the outward manifestations of God-in-action Power. There is hope for everybody. Every saint has his past and every sinner a future. Even robbers can become saints. Man can change, and you also can change — God wills it. Those who have the man-body have the birthright to become perfect and to know God.

So whatever my Master — the God in Him — passed on to me, under his orders that is being passed on to you. You will please make the best use of it by living up to what I've told you. I wish you all to become ambassadors of love — prototypes of perfection. There is hope; don't be disappointed.

During my last tour here, in 1955, two children came up to me. (My point is that even when little children come to me, I give them a little inner contact: "All right, sit down — you will have light." And they do get light, with the grace of God.) I asked them, "What do you want?", and they said, "We want to become Masters." Good ambition! "Well," I told them, "you have been put on the Way; live up to it. When you are developed, you may be selected as a Master." It is not done by voting as you select some president or member or minister; it is God alone who chooses you. He is searching after men, I tell you.

Iqbal, a poet of the Punjab in India, said, "Oh Moses, why did you go up to the top of the hills to find God? You are a man. God is always in search of men who have love for God." Do you see?

So remain where you are. But you have been put on the Way: make the best use of it. And God will be after you.

Kabir said, "By the love of God, I have been so purified, I have become such limpid water, that now I walk ahead and God is after me, calling, 'O Kabir, wait, wait!' " You are God-in man; you are next to God; you are divine in nature. Blessed are you. Just prove what can be done, that's all I can say.

These are my parting words. Later on, with the grace of God, we might meet again physically; but these wishes and thoughts will be with you. That God Power with Whom you have been contacted will always be extending all feasible help and protection. Thank you so much.