

## Concluding Remarks

Strange that Bertrand Russell deemed it fit to emphasize the need for love in the serious sense almost in a moralist vein! His proposed new sexual freedom has not been fully clarified. For, he adjudged chastity and virtue to be dispensable for all sexual purposes. He construed marriage to be in no way obstructive to free sexual love.

He implicitly recommended free sexual relations even with persons other than legal spouses, provided legitimacy of *conception* is ensured. In short, he approved of all kinds of *non – violent* and harmless sexual relations. All these he advocated seemingly because he found no reason to uphold *conventional sexual* morality, except for comparing and coordinating one's private and public interests.

With his extreme thinking, as indicated above, Bertrand Russell could not have been expected to project any correct image of morals, which would seek to regulate human sexuality, in order to nurture it on the basis of tender feelings of love and affection. In any case, it is very clear that Bertrand Russell and others like him have sought to introduce a kind of communal sexuality. Societies where free sexual love prevails can hardly promote any genuine love.

At any rate, in the permissive societies, *love* would not come to mean the same as interpreted by philosophers of old. We may recall that love has been represented as the zenith of one's life and of one's enthusiasm for living a teacher, trainer, inspirer and a catalyst. In fact, people who spend their entire lives without the benefit of love remain unfortunate enough not to deserve to be human.

In the above context, two essential points are notable. The first one concerns the position that love, from the points of view of quality and purpose, is distinct from animal concupiscence and sexual lust. Moreover, it belongs to the realm of spirituality, which aspect is incompatible with the principles of materialism. Yet, it is acceptable for one who ponders over spiritual matters even in what would appear to be a materialistic perspective. This much is admitted by Bertrand Russell himself when he says that "love is something far more than desire for sexual intercourse" <sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Bertrand Russell recognizes love and (ironically enough) sexual morality when he says:

*Love has its own proper ideals and its own intrinsic moral standards. These are obscure both in Christian teaching and in the indiscriminate revolt against all sexual morality which has sprung up among considerable sections of the young generations.*<sup>2</sup>

The second point elaborates on the spiritual aspect of love. Spirituality of love is evidenced in two stages. At the outset, it is indicated by a state of love in which emotional restiveness and *intensity* develops in the absence of the beloved. Subsequently, it manifests itself in sustained agitation of individual spirit. This leads to intellectual concentration and to prevalence of chastity and virtue in the spirit of the lover, so that occasionally geniuses are produced. In either case, human spirit undergoes great changes.

However the aforementioned great transformations of human spirit are possible only in a situation where lovers remain separated and/or their love remains unrequited. No sublime achievements are likely in a situation where lovers do not miss each other. At any rate, in the latter case, even passionate love may not reach the very height of its intensity of which it is intrinsically capable, towards achieving the significant qualities noted by philosophers.

When a person becomes capable of manifesting great love from within himself or herself, then, the spirit becomes agitated and seeks rest in the person or in the image of the beloved.

The image may be construed even beyond its real counterpart. Thus, eventually, the former assumes greater significance to its accustomed lover than that of the real person of the distant beloved.

Where lovers remain united, mutual affection and kindness, as well as sincerity and repose, may be evidenced by them. A soundly endeavouring married couple will take the vicissitudes of life in their stride. Their combined abilities to do so can well be enhanced by their spiritual or intellectual compatibility, too. At the same time, they should be able to keep up their moral integrity, if their society is corrupt and polluted. In other words, they should not be tempted by any prospects of free sexual love offered by their society.

Spouses who are able to continually uphold chastity and virtue do so primarily by confining their sexual enjoyments to their conjugal rights. Then in old age when sexual passions subside, they can keep up their mutual affection through carefully nurtured and established chaste and virtuous companionship. Couples bound by sexual interests alone cannot be expected to evolve a well-integrated family living pattern and a lasting companionship.

A wife's entitlement to alimony and to practically sharing her husband's wealth represent the most significant economic and financial provisions instituted for marriage and family living. These are in

consideration of the exclusiveness of the spouses' conjugal relationship. The genuine interaction between a couple, which is anticipated in marriage and family living, is envisaged in terms of their individual and collective endeavours as well as in the broader context of appropriately maintaining their social environment.

Mutual affection and sincerity, as well as humane compassion and tenderness, are highly desirable attributes in married couples, in the context of their mutual and social interactions. These are often in evidence in societies governed by Islamic moral and legal checks and balances. In the others, such as those in the West, these qualities are seldom noticeable.

In the case of separated lovers, the afflicted individual spirits are likely to become all the more sensitive and poignant. They soar and delve, as well as keep attracting and getting attracted. In the other case of united lovers, who evidence mutually affectionate enjoyment and deep sincerity, their marital union itself will be capable of producing significant attainments. One may be rather sceptical about the former.

However, with regard to the latter, one is more likely to agree.

The Divine creation of the female counterpart of man emphasized their companionship and mutual affection. This is made clear in the Glorious Qur'an, as follows:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً  
وَرَحْمَةً

***“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion,”(Sura ar-Rum, 30:21)***

The above passage contains two keywords, which are indicative of the Divine intention in creating the human pair. These keywords are: (meaning cordiality of love and graciousness). Their significance is very clear that God not merely created woman as mate for man, but indicated also that the pairing had envisaged inculcation of the abovementioned humane qualities.

Needless to add that the above humane qualities are indeed far different from those of human sensuality, or libido, as interpreted by some modernistic societies.

Mowlavi (Rumi as popularly known in the West) reflected the above point in his stanza mentioned below:–

زین للناس حق آراسته است

زانچه حق آراست کی تاندرست

چون پی یسکن الیهاش آفرید

کی تواند آدم از حوا برید

آچنین خاصیتی در آدمی است

مهر ، حیوان را کم است ، آن از کمی است

مهر و رقت وصف انسانی بود

خشم و شهوت وصف حیوانی بود

*The World owes to God its loveliness,  
That which He forms retains its exquisiteness,  
Since He made it as Man's abode,  
How Adam's love for Eve can erode?*

*That is how it is with Mankind  
Humane love is ordained not for animal-kind  
For, pure love and compassion are to Mankind*

### *What aggravation and lust are to animal-kind*

According to Will Durant, love attains perfection when it is sustained through old age. Then, it will provide cushioning effect during the loneliness of senility and approaching death. His view confirms the fact that love extends far beyond libido, in that anyone relying on the latter does so in vain and rather superficially on the basis of the sexual instinct alone.

In fact, Will Durant believed that the spirit of love could survive beyond the last trace of human physiological fitness. In senility, loving hearts retain their fresh spiritual excellence, while emotional needs of the body are perfectly fulfilled on a continuing basis.

To sum up, love assumes significance when its intrinsically humane qualities are nurtured and evidenced. Any separation of lovers accentuates, rather than falsifies, this position. Full blossoming of love is attained with chastity and rectitude on the part of lovers.

Genuine love is unlikely to flourish in sexually and secularly permissive societies. They do not provide the necessary conditions for promoting the same, even in any romantic or poetic contexts. An average married couple in modernistic societies lacks an overall perspective, such as that of Islam, so that they remain unable to attain a deeply unifying and sincere love relationship.

---

1. Bertrand Russell: *Marriage and Morals*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Paperbacks Ed. 1976, p. 83.

2. Bertrand Russell: *Marriage and Morals*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Paperbacks Ed. 1976, p. 86–87.

---

#### **Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/sexual-ethics-islam-and-western-world-ayatullah-murtadha-mutahhari/concluding-remarks>