Love is a kind of Madness

CHINTITO

You would probably not be accused of *faux pas* if you were of the understanding that famous people remained so absolutely busy doing their thing (pun not intended) that they would be in the least interested in (what in your imagination would be) 'mundane affairs' for them. In fact, they are the ones most in love, be it with their respective partner, other's partners or, for the more romantic, with the entire *mahalla*, read mankind.

Love obviously has many connotations. While Archie would be head over heels for Vernonica, Jughead would rather be married to a burger, and as for Reggie, you know the type, he is in love with love itself. Aren't we all?

Mother Teresa was in love with the suffering humanity. She embarked on a mission. She considered it more a difficult task to remove the hunger for love than the hunger for bread. Deny it or not, choose to take an involuntary vow never to be married, and yet love is a God-gifted human yearning. One is born with it. One is most usually born of it.

Some have the right to query what love has got to do with wedlock, but to others the sway of the hearts as they bond together whether the *shanai* was played or not is the obvious culmination of meeting as strangers and becoming lovers at first sight. But there is more to looking at each other; and that too for how long! According to Frenchman Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 'love does not consist of gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction'.

Despite the popular adage, love is not always triggered by ocular glances. Then the blind would never have fallen in love. There is speech, companionship, humour, security... Many meaningful and lasting affairs have blossomed over associations and time. While Albert Einstein was of the opinion that 'gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love', some couples took so bloody long to come to the fore that one of the parties concerned retired hurt, or frustrated, went on to graze in more responsible and responsive pastures.

Love is usually natural, a spurt, it is. It comes. It grows. It just does. It is then very much understandable by both partners and each hankers to take credit for its bloom. Love has to be like that for 'when love is not madness, it is not love' so said Pedro Calderon de la Barca. But, Mark Overby warned us, 'love is much like a wild rose, beautiful and calm, but willing to draw blood in its defence'.

Sadly though, often love subsides, even if it began as true love. It just does. In many cases, when it ends, at least one partner does not understand what went wrong. If both do then they start blaming each other for the 9/11. There is no shortage of useless listeners. The true lover then recalls the proverb, 'Love is a sweet tyranny, because the lover endureth his torments willingly'.

If pain is a possibility then why embark on this risky meeting of hearts? To take solace let us fall back on Somerset Maugham, who said, 'Love is only a dirty trick played on us to achieve continuation of the species'. That is perhaps why Sandra J. Dykes said, 'Forget love - I'd rather fall in chocolate!'

Love is however a blessing. Love is divine. Love for parents, family, for a friend, for the deprived, for the sick, confirms that it is never always physical. But, when great people went on record about love, they more often than not went beyond the platonic.

When in a boy-girl type of relationship we believe the oddest of statements, such as the one by Rosemonde Gerard, 'For you see, each day I love you more; today more than yesterday and less than tomorrow.' Crap, the seasoned lover would assume.

Or 'You don't love a woman because she is beautiful, she is beautiful because you love her', or 'Love is a symbol of eternity. It wipes out all sense of time, destroying all memory of a beginning and all fear of an end'. So pretentious that both the statements have been ascribed to authors anonymous.

Love has been summarised as (attributed to an unknown author) 'a wildly misunderstood although highly desirable malfunction of the heart which weakens the brain, causes eyes to sparkle, cheeks to glow, blood pressure to rise and the lips to pucker'.

Often we misunderstand infatuation for true love. But who has not fallen victim to this feeling of butterflies in the tummy? More often than not we have compromised love as infatuation when we want out or have felt like the monkey reaching for the moon.

Although not necessarily confined to the domain of womankind, Judith Viorst wrote in Redbook (1975), 'Infatuation is when you think he's as sexy as Robert Redford, as smart as Henry Kissinger, as noble as Ralph Nader, as funny as Woody Allen, and as athletic as Jimmy Connors. Love is when you realize that he's as sexy as Woody Allen, as smart as Jimmy Connors, as funny as Ralph Nader, as athletic as Henry Kissinger and nothing like Robert Redford - but you'll take him anyway'. I could Bengalise that with as sexy as Razzak, as smart as Neaz Murshed, as noble as Shaikh Siraj, as funny as Hanif Sanket, and as athletic as Akram Khan.

True love is not to be rushed. One should wear a seatbelt, especially him. Haste can be a killer. Jonathan Carroll wrote 'You have to walk carefully in the beginning of love; the running across fields into your lover's arms can only come later when you're sure they won't laugh if you trip'. Or take the cue from a Malagasy Proverb, 'Let your love be like the misty rains, coming softly, but flooding the river'.

Let me lovingly conclude with one from Peter Ustinov. 'Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.'

It may sound like I am in love. But I am not. Then again do not all affairs begin with a 'no', sort of?

Eid Mubarak!

<*chintitoforever@gmail.com*>