

MAHABBATULLAH (LOVE of ALLAH)

QUR'AN - (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ünal)

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا
لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

Yet there are among humankind those who (devoid of good sense and unable to reason) take to themselves objects of worship as rivals to God, loving them with a love like that which is the due of God only while those who truly believe are firmer in their love of God. If only those who do this (greatest) wrong could see as they will see when they behold the punishment that the power altogether belongs to God, and that God is severe in punishment. (Surah Al – Baqarah, 165)¹

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا وَمَأْوِيكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَالَكُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

He (Abraham) said to them: "You have taken to yourselves idols to worship instead of God, for no other reason than to have a bond of love and attachment between you only in the life of this world. But then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will deny one another (disowning any relation between you), and curse one another. Your final refuge will be the Fire, and you will have no helpers. (Surah Al – Ankabut, 25)²

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

And when (O Messenger) My servants ask you about Me, then surely I am near: I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me. So let them respond to My call (without hesitation), and

¹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=160&show=10

² http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=29&min=20&show=10

believe and trust in Me (in the way required of them), so that they may be guided to spiritual and intellectual excellence and right conduct. (Surah Al – Baqarah, 186)³

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say (to them, O Messenger): "If you indeed love God, then follow me, so that God will love you and forgive you your sins." God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate. (Surah Al - I'mran, 31)⁴

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي
الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ

We answered his call, too, and bestowed upon him John, and cured his wife for him (so she was able) to bear a child. Truly, these (three) used to hasten to do good deeds as if competing with each other, and invoke Us in hopeful yearning and fearful anxiety. And they were utterly humble before Us. (Surah Al – Anbiya, 90)

HADITH

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Seven are (the persons) whom Allah will give protection with His Shade* on the Day when there will be no shade except His Shade (i.e., on the Day of Resurrection), and they are: A just ruler; a youth who grew up with the worship of Allah; a person whose heart is attached to the mosque; two persons who love and meet each other and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man whom a beautiful and high ranking woman seduces (for illicit relation), but he (rejects this offer by saying): 'I fear Allah'; a person who gives a charity and conceals it (to such an extent) that the left hand might not know what the right has given; and a person who remembers Allah in solitude and his eyes well up."⁵

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

* The Shade of Allah to which this Hadith refers to is the shade of His Throne.

³ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=180&show=10

⁴ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=3&min=30&show=10

⁵ <http://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/659>

It was narrated from 'Aishah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him.” It was said to him: “O Messenger of Allah, does hating to meet Allah mean hating to meet death? For all of us hate death.” He said: “No. Rather that is only at the moment of death. But if he is given the glad tidings of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, he loves to meet Allah and Allah loves to meet him; and if he is given the tidings of the punishment of Allah, he hates to meet Allah and Allah hates to meet him.”⁶

Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

When Allah loves a servant, He calls Gabriel and says: Verily, I so and so; you should also love him, and then Gabriel begins to love him. Then he makes an announcement in the heaven saying: Allah loves so and so and you also love him, and then the inhabitants of the Heaven (the Angels) also begin to love him and then there is conferred honour upon him in the earth; and when Allah is angry with any servant He calls Gabriel and says: I am angry with such and such and you also become angry with him, and then Gabriel also becomes angry and then makes an announcement amongst the inhabitants of heaven: Verily Allah is angry with so-and so, so you also become angry with him, and thus they also become angry with him. Then he becomes the object of wrath on the earth also.⁷

Abud-Darda' (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "One of Prophet Dawud's supplications was: 'Allahumma inni as'aluka hubbaka, wa hubba man yuhibbuka, wal-'amalalladhi yuballighuni hubbaka. Allahumm-aj'al hubbaka ahabba ilayya min nafsi, wa ahli, wa minal-ma'il-baridi (O Allah! I ask You for Your Love, the love of those who love You, and deeds which will cause me to attain Your Love. O Allah! Make Your Love dearer to me than myself, my family and the cold water).'"⁸

COMMENTARIES

Tafseer by Ibn Kathir– a verse by verse tafseer

⁶ <http://sunnah.com/urn/1293670>

⁷ <http://sunnah.com/muslim/45/201>

⁸ <http://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/17/26>

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In these Ayat, Allah mentions the condition of the polytheists in this life and their destination in the Hereafter. They appointed equals and rivals with Allah, worshipping them along with Allah and loving them, just as they love Allah. However, Allah is the only deity worthy of worship, Who has neither rival nor opponent nor partner. It is reported in the Sahihayn that `Abdullah bin Mas`ud said: I said, "O Messenger of Allah! What is the greatest sin" He said: To appoint a rival to Allah while He Alone has created you.¹⁰

From the Risale-I Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi –a thematic tafseer

The Letters, The Twentieth Letter, Introduction

Be certain of this, that the highest aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God. And the purest joy for the human spirit and the sheerest delight for man's heart is the rapture of the spirit contained within the love of God. Yes, all true happiness, pure joy, sweet bounties, and untroubled pleasure lie in knowledge of God and love of God; they cannot exist without them.

The person who knows and loves God Almighty may receive endless bounties, happiness, lights, and mysteries. While the one who does not truly know and love him is afflicted spiritually and materially by endless misery, pain, and fears. Even if such an impotent, miserable person owned the whole world, it would be worth nothing for him, for it would seem to him that he was living a fruitless life among the vagrant human race in a wretched world without owner or protector. Everyone may understand just how forlorn and baffled is man among the aimless human race in this bewildering fleeting world if he does not know his Owner, if he does not discover his Master. But if he does discover and know Him, he will seek refuge in His mercy and will rely on His power. The desolate world will turn into a place of recreation and pleasure, it will become a place of trade for the hereafter.¹¹

⁹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=160&show=10

¹⁰ http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=272

¹¹ <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.202.262>

The Words, The Thirty – Second Word, Third Stopping Point, The Second Point Of The Second Topic

An Important Question

You say, "Love is not voluntary. And, as a consequence of innate need, I love delicious foods and fruits. I love my father, mother and children, my wife, and my friends and companions. I love the prophets and the saints. And I love my life and my youth, the spring, beautiful things and the world. How may I not love these things? So how should I rather give all this love to God Almighty's essence, attributes and Names? What does this mean?"

The Answer: Listen to four 'Points'.

FIRST POINT

Indeed, love is not voluntary, but by means of the will love's face may turn from one object of love to another. For example, when a beloved displays some ugliness or shows that he is a veil or mirror to another beloved, who is truly worthy of love, then love's face may be turned from the metaphorical to the true beloved.

SECOND POINT

We do not tell you not to love the things you enumerated, but rather to love them for God Almighty's sake and in the name of His love. For example, to love delicious foods and luscious fruits as being the bounty of God Almighty, the All-Merciful and Compassionate One, is to love His Names of All-Merciful and Bestower of Bounties, and, moreover, takes on the meaning of thanks. This love is to seek gain contentedly within the sphere of the licit, which shows that it is not only for the sake of the instinctual soul but is in the name of the All-Merciful One. It is to eat thoughtfully and with gratitude. Furthermore, love and respect for parents, when for the sake of the wisdom and mercy that compassionately fitted you out and caused them to bring you up with tender care, pertain to God Almighty's love. The sign that this love, respect and compassion are for God's sake is that when they are old and are of no more use to you and bring you only trouble and difficulty, you are even more loving, kind and compassionate towards them. The verse,

Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say to them a word of contempt" (37:17)

summons children to respect and be kind to their parents in five degrees, and demonstrates how important are the rights of parents in the eyes of the Qur'an, and how ugly ingratitude towards them.

A father desires only his son, and no one else, to be much better than himself, however, the son cannot claim any rights over his father in return for this. That is to say, there is no inherent cause for dispute between parents and child. This is because dispute arises from envy and jealousy and there is nothing of this in the father towards his son. Or it arises from abuse of rights and the son has no rights that he can claim against his father. If he considers his father to be unjust, he may not rebel

against him. That is to say, one who does rebel against his father and cause him pain is a monster, a corrupted human being.

And, to love and protect children with perfect compassion and tenderness because they are gifts of the All-Compassionate and Generous One once again pertains to God. The sign indicating that that love is for Almighty God's sake is patience and thankfulness should they die, rather than crying out in despair. It is to say, "He was a lovable little being created and owned by my Creator, Who entrusted him to my supervision. Now that His wisdom requires it to be thus, He has taken him from me, taken him to a better place. If I had one apparent share in that little creature, a thousand true shares belonged to his Creator." It is to submit saying, "All authority is with God."

As for friends and acquaintances, if they are friends of God Almighty by reason of their belief and good works, according to the meaning of 'love for God's sake,' that love, too, pertains to God.

Furthermore, love and cherish your wife as a companionable and gracious gift of divine mercy. But do not fasten your love to her physical beauty, which swiftly fades. Rather, woman's most attractive and agreeable beauty is the fineness of character that accompanies the delicacy and refinement peculiar to her. As for her most precious and sweet beauty, it is her earnest, sincere, sublime and luminous compassion. This beautiful tenderness and fineness of character continues and increases until the end of her days. Moreover, that weak and delicate creature's rights of respect will be protected by that love. Otherwise, when her superficial beauty fades the poor woman will lose her rights, even when she most needs them.

And to love the prophets and saints as God Almighty's most esteemed bondsmen is to do so for the sake and in the name of God Almighty, and from that point of view it pertains to Him.

And to love and preserve life as most precious wealth and capital that will gain eternal life, and a comprehensive treasury yielding eternal perfections which Almighty God has given to you and to all humanity, and to employ it in His service, is, once again, in one respect, love that pertains to the True Object of Worship.

Also, to admire, love and put to proper use the grace and beauty of youth as being a fine, sweet and beautiful bounty of Almighty God is a sort of licit and thankful love.

And to love the spring thoughtfully as being the page of the subtlest and most beautiful inscriptions of Almighty God's luminous Names and the most finely adorned and glittering exhibition of the All-Wise Maker's antique art is to love His Names.

And to love this world as being the tillage for the hereafter, as a mirror of the Divine Names and a missive of God Almighty, and as a temporary guesthouse, on condition that the evil-commanding soul does not interfere, is to do so for God Almighty's sake.

In short: Love this world and the creatures in it as pointing to a meaning beyond themselves, like a word. Do not love them just for themselves. Say, "How beautifully they have been made." Do not say, "How beautiful they are." Do not give any opportunity to other loves to enter into your inner heart because the inner heart is the mirror of the Eternally Besought One and pertains only to Him. Say, "O God, grant us love for You, and love for that which will draw us closer to You."

Thus, if in this form, all the loves that you have enumerated will give a pain-free pleasure, and, in one respect, an unending union. Moreover, they will increase love of God. They are licit loves. And are, furthermore a sort of gratitude which is pure pleasure, and thought, which is pure love.

For example, if a mighty king were to bestow an apple on you, there would be two loves for that apple and two pleasures in it. The first of these is that the apple would be loved because it is an apple, and there would be a pleasure peculiar to and to the extent of the apple. This love does not concern the king. On the contrary, the man who puts the apple to his mouth and eats it in the king's presence loves the apple itself and his own soul rather than the king. It sometimes happens that the king is not pleased with that love which nourishes the instinctual soul; in fact, he detests it. Moreover, the pleasure that the apple gives is very limited and passes quickly. After the apple is eaten it is gone, only regret remains.

As for the second love, it is for the royal favour that is demonstrated by means of the apple. One who holds the apple precious as if it were the sample and embodiment of a royal favour shows that he loves his king. Moreover, the pleasure in that fruit, which is a sort of container for the favour, is such that it is far greater than the pleasure obtained from a thousand apples. This pleasure, then, is the essence of thankfulness. This love is a respectful love for the king.

In exactly the same way, if all bounties and fruits are loved for themselves, if they are thoughtlessly delighted in only for the material pleasures that they yield, that love is merely love of self. Also, those pleasures are transient and bring pain. But, if they are loved as favours proceeding from Almighty God's mercy and as fruits of His munificence, and if pleasure is obtained from them with good appetite by appreciating the degree of kindness in that munificence and favour, then it has both the meaning of gratitude and is a pain-free pleasure.

THIRD POINT

There are levels in the love for God Almighty's Names. As we explained above, sometimes the Names are loved with a love for finely made objects. Sometimes they are loved as being titles of the Divine perfections. Sometimes, man is needy and desirous of the Names by reason of the comprehensiveness of his true nature together with his having endless needs. It is through those needs that he loves.

For example, if someone were to come forward and do a kindness to all your relations, and the poor, the weak and the needy, for all of whom you feel sympathy although you are powerless to meet their need for help, how that person's favour-granting title and generous name would please you, how you would love that person through that title.

So too, think only of God Almighty's Names of All-Merciful and Compassionate. They make happy all the believing fathers and forefathers, relations and friends whom you love and feel sympathy for, in this world by means of all kinds of bounties, and in Paradise by means of all kinds of delights. They cause happiness by showing you in eternal bliss to them, and them in eternal bliss to you. So how deserving of being loved is the Name of All-Merciful and the title of All-Compassionate. And you can see for yourself just how needy for those two Names is the human spirit. And you can understand just how appropriate is the phrase, 'Praise be to God for His mercifulness and His compassionateness.

You are connected to the world and as a result are afflicted by its wretchedness, so if you consider carefully, you may understand just how needy and desirous is your spirit for the Name of All-Wise and for the title of Nurturer. For the Owner of those Names orders, regulates and sustains with perfect wisdom the world, which is like a sort of house for you, and the creatures within it, which are its familiar furniture and lovable decorations.

And you are altogether connected to other human beings and grieve when they die. So, if you consider carefully, you may understand just how needy is your spirit for the Names of Inheritor and Resurrector, and for the titles Eternal, All-Generous, Giver of Life, and Munificent. For the Owner of these Names saves human beings at the time of their death from the darkness of non-existence and establishes them in a far finer place than this world.

Thus, since man's nature is exalted and his disposition comprehensive, he is, by his very nature, needy with thousands of different sorts of needs for the innumerable Divine Names, each of which has many degrees. Intensified need is longing. Intensified longing is love. And intensified love is passion. As the spirit is perfected, the degrees of love unfold according to the degrees of the Names. Furthermore, since the Names are the titles and manifestations of the One of Glory, love of them will be transformed into love of the Divine Essence.

Now, just as an example, we shall explain one of the innumerable degrees of the Names of All-Just, All-Wise, Truth, and All-Merciful. If you wish to see the Names of All-Merciful and Compassionate, and Truth within wisdom and justice to the utmost extent, consider the following comparison.

Let us suppose there is an army in which there are four hundred different sections. And the uniforms that each section prefers are different, the provisions that please them, the weapons they will carry with ease and the medicines to cure their particular ills are all different. Furthermore, rather than being separated into squads and companies, they are all intermingled.

If the peerless and single king, then, out of perfect compassion and solicitude, wonderful power, miraculous all-embracing knowledge and extraordinary justice and wisdom, without confusing or forgetting any of them were himself, in person, without helper, to give all of them their completely different though appropriate uniforms, provisions, medicines and weapons, would you not see what a powerful, solicitous, just and generous personage that king was. Because, if there were individuals from ten nations in one battalion, it would be extremely difficult to clothe and equip them all differently. Whatever people they were from they would of necessity have to be fitted out in the same way.

Similarly, if you wish to see the manifestation of the Names of Truth and All-Merciful and Compassionate within the justice and wisdom of God Almighty, look at the plant and animal armies comprising four hundred thousand magnificent nations with their tents pitched on the face of the earth in springtime. For those groups and sections are all one within the other. And the uniform of each one is different, and the provisions, weapons, way of life, drill and demobilization are all different. Furthermore, they do not have the power to provide for those needs and the tongues to ask for those wishes. So, watch and see the titles of Truth, All-Merciful, Provider, Compassionate and Generous together with order and equilibrium within the sphere of wisdom and justice. See how, without confusing, obscuring or forgetting any of them, He sustains, regulates and administers them all.

Could another hand, therefore, interfere in a matter performed with such amazing and all-encompassing order and balance? What, apart from the One Who is Single and Unique, Absolutely Wise, and Powerful over all things, could even stretch out its hand towards this art, this organizing, this sustaining, this administering? What cause could interfere?

FOURTH POINT

You ask: "So long as they are in the form that the Qur'an commands, what are the results and benefits of all my different and various loves? That is, my love for food, myself, my wife, parents and children, my friends, the saints, the prophets, beautiful things, the spring and this world?"

The Answer: It would be necessary to write a thick book in order to explain all the results. For now only one or two results will be briefly alluded to. Firstly, the immediate results in this world will be explained, then those that will become apparent in the hereafter will be mentioned.

As was explained above, loves such as those of the people of neglect and those attached to this world, that are for the sake of the evil-commanding soul, bring many tribulations, and much pain and suffering in this world. While the ease, pleasures and enjoyment they bring are little and few.

For example, compassion becomes a painful calamity on account of impotence. Love becomes a calamitous misfortune on account of separation. Pleasure becomes a poisoned cup on account of its transience. And in the hereafter, because they were not for God Almighty's sake, they will either be without benefit or will be torment. (If they were illicit.)¹²

FethullahGulen–Sufism 1 – a thematic tafseer

Mahabba (Love)

Mahabba means fondness, tender and kind feelings, inclination, and love. Love that affects and invades one's feelings is called passion; love that is so deep and irresistible that it burns for union is called fervor and enthusiasm. Sufis have defined love as the relation of the heart with the Truly Beloved One, the irresistible desire felt for Him, the struggle to comply with His desires or commandments in all acts and thoughts, and the state of being enraptured and intoxicated without "sobriety" until the time of union or reunion. These definitions can be summed up as "standing" in the Presence of God, as being freed from all transient relationships and worries.

True love means that a lover is set wholly on the Beloved, is always and inwardly with Him, and always has no other desire and wish. The heart of a person who has such a degree of love always beats with a new consideration for the Beloved at every moment. His or her imagination always travels in His mysterious climate, his or her feelings receive new messages from Him at every moment, his or her will takes wings with these messages, and he or she passionately desires to meet Him.

¹² <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.201.668>

Some have defined love, in the context of God's love of His distinguished servants, as doing good, and as obedience, devotion, and unconditional submission in the context of a servant's love of God. The following couplets of the female Sufi saint Rabi'a al-'Adawiya are significant in expressing this meaning:

**You talk about loving God while you disobey Him;
I swear by my life that this is something very strange.
If you were truthful in your love, you would obey Him,
For a lover obeys whom he loves.**

The expressions uttered by profoundly spiritual individuals lost in love of God and intoxicated with love cannot be used as criteria by which to judge them. Otherwise, we may feel enmity toward such friends of God, who are favoured with His continuous company according to the Prophetic Tradition: A man is with him whom he loves, [Al-Tirmidhi, "Zuhd," 50] and, as declared in the hadith qudsi: "Whoever becomes an enemy of My friends has waged war on Me".[Al-Bukhari, "Riqaq," 38.]¹³

¹³ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/1352-key-concepts-in-the-practice-of-sufism-1/24758-mahabba-love>