

The Divine Love

Allah the Praised and Most High said to His Holy Prophet, “Go tell the people: If you love Allah Follow me (the prophet) and Allah will love you.” And Allah, Great and Exalted said, “They who truly love me will have deep love for their brothers and sisters-this love for them ever increasing their love for Me.” The Prophet, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, said, “You become a true believer when your love for Allah and His Messenger becomes greater than anything else.” And he also said, “Love Allah for the blessings He has given you and love me for Allah’s love towards me.”

Know, and may Allah bless you, that loving is a noble state given by the Truth to mankind and He has told man about His love towards him. For the Truth, Praised and Exalted is He, is attributed with loving His servant and the servant attributed with loving the truth. Loving Allah means not to associate anything with Him in the complete love. This is a central and important issue in the Faith of Unity. The one who truly loves Allah, loves the Prophet, the family and others but he loves them for and through his love for Allah.

The human being who knows the true value of loving Allah and His Prophet crosses the nonessential characteristics of the outer world, fighting and going beyond worldly possessions, finding the gratification of Allah and obeying the orders of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation. The words of Allah are very clear to each human being facing such a state, “If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates or your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, or the dwelling in which you delight are dearer to you than God or His Apostle or the striving in His cause, then wait until God brings about His decision; and God guides not the rebellious.” (sura at-tawba: 24)

The state of loving Allah and His messenger-were it to be compared with the station of indifference to worldly things (zuhd), brings a human to become a fighter (mujahid) for Allah, a truthful fighter. The jihad, the holy war, is the test in which man confirms his non-attachment to following his desires and appetites and his struggle to comforting his lower self (nafs) and his attachment to people, money, and other things. Divine Love is not only an emotional and mental state, it is an emotional state followed by deeds and by true jihad.

In love there are two kinds of lovers-those who are believers and are attached to Allah and those who have taken the world as what they love, becoming slaves in their relation to this outer world (dunya). They become slaves to the world similar to those who worship for the hereafter, asking for Paradise and fearing Hell. Allah’s Anger comes upon them and He describes them, “Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah as equal (with Allah), loving them as they should love Allah. But those of Faith overflow in their love for Allah.” (al-baqara:165) Divine Love is the longing of the slave to meet his Lord and to find His contentment. This means the believer must follow the example of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation to do as he said and to keep away from things that he denied. This is clarified in the words of Allah, “If you love Allah, follow Me and Allah will love you.”

Al-Qurtubi said in his explanation of the words of the Sufi Sahl B. Abdullah on the love of Allah, “The sign of loving Allah is loving the Quran. The sign of loving the Quran is loving the Prophet, Allah blesses him and grants him salvation. The sign of loving the Prophet is loving the hereafter. And the sign of loving the hereafter is loving oneself. The sign of loving oneself is leaving the outer world. And the sign of leaving the outer world is taking from it only what is needed for survival.

Questions arise: “What is the Divine Love? And when is this love exchanged between Allah and His slave?”

The beginning is that the human being directs himself completely with no regard to Allah. He listens not to what satisfies Allah, with his eyes wondering about things ordered by Allah. He does not walk only to what Allah commanded. We hear about this behavior from the words of the holy people in the hadith Qudsi, “The one who becomes the enemy to one of My holy people is in war with Me. The sweetest way to come closer to Me is by following what I have ordered for humanity. And he comes even closer through supererogatory deeds until I love him. And when I love him I become the ears he hears through and the eyes he sees through and the hands he strikes through and the feet he walks with. And if he asks for something, he is given, and if he asks for refuge, he is granted and I will not hesitate in giving him everything, for I am his Doer. The believer hates death and I hate to cause him any harm, because if I kill him I owe him and there is no difference between He and I.” This means Allah loves the holy people after their love is true to Him and they have deep yearning to come closer to Him. Once they reach this state all their deeds begin to satisfy Allah. For their love of Him causes them to obey Him keeping them away from all that is forbidden. The believer, the Beloved of Allah, tastes a sweetness and joy in his emotions and heart. This is given only to the true worshippers of Allah.

Anas B. Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, transmitted to us from the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, who said, “Three things bring about the beauty of faith: that one loves Allah and the Prophet more than anything else, that he loves people for the sake of Allah, and that he hates going back to sin with the same degree as he hates jumping into fire.” Allah loves his slave and He gives him complete compassion and care. And when the slave loves Allah he obeys him yearning to meet Him. The outer world becomes easy for him. He longs to meet Allah. This makes him a mujahid-one determined and firm for the sake of Allah, not fearing death and not attached to the outer world.

Know, may Allah protect you, that there are three kinds of love: the general love, the love of the truthful and convinced, and the love of the Righteous and Knowers. The state of love flows from the beneficence the knowers receive from Allah and His mercy upon them. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him salvation, said, “Their hearts are naturally disposed to the one that is beneficent and hateful to the one who is harmful.” The condition of this state of love is purity of affection and desire with constant remembrance (dhikr). For when you love something, you constantly mention it and it is known that true love means to be in the heart in accordance with Allah and to be committed to that, to follow the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him salvation, and to be persistent in the remembrance and finding the sweetness of secret conversation with Allah-Being always in the station of praise and appreciation of the Beloved and in obedience and in conformance with Him. As is said:

“If My love is true I will obey you,
For the Lover is obedient to the one he loves.”

The second state comes with seeing the richness of the heart of Allah, His Exaltedness, His Majesty, His Knowing and His Omnipotence. This is the love of the truthful, the convinced. Blessedness comes to the ones who have drunk from the cup of His Love, tasting the blessings of His Exalted Secret Conversations and His Closeness. The sweetness of his love fills his heart and he flies in pleasure with Allah, in rapture with his longing, so much in love his only calm lies in Him. The third state of love is the love of the Righteous and the Knowers, so named for their knowledge of the everlasting ancient love of Allah; their love for Him is everlasting and without weakness. The attribute of this love is complete purity. The complete pure love of Allah removes the senses and the heart from the love until everything is completely in Allah and from Allah. This is the case of the true lover of Allah. Love is only complete when the lover stops seeing the love-seeing only his Beloved, annihilating the love from being his so that when the lover reaches this state he becomes a lover without love.

Junayd was asked about love and he answered, “The entering of the attributes of the lover into the attributes of the Beloved.” It is the seizure of the Beloved over the heart of the lover. Only the attributes of the Beloved are left, annihilating all attributes of self and the feeling for them. Even the love vanishes as you rise completely into the One you love-nothing stays behind. Love is called love because it erases everything other than the Beloved. Love means that the heart turns to Allah and to what is of Allah without constraint. It is giving all of what you are to the one you love. There is a joy in the creation and consumption in the Creator. Consumption meaning you have no more situations of luck or no luck; your love has no weakness and you, no defectiveness. Sahl said, “He who loves Allah lives and he who loves is not alive.” Meaning that life becomes light for the lover who enjoys all that comes from his Beloved, may it be good or bad. Not being alive means out of his fear of not reaching-the fear of losing his life vanishes.

Know that the love of the slave to Allah is exaltation, solving secrets no other can cross. And the love of Allah to His slave is that He draws his attention to Him so that he is deteriorated from all other. This is the meaning of the words of Allah, Exalted is He, “I have made you for Myself!” No other has access to the excess of witnessing the alteration and observance of the states. Some say love has two faces: The love of ifrart which is for both the common and the special people and the love of ecstasy (wajd) in which there is no seeing of the self or creation nor the seeing of the reasons and purposes. Rather one is completely drowned in seeing what is for Allah and what is from Him.

Rabi’a al-Adawiyya, may Allah be pleased with her, has expressed what Divine Love is through her words:

I love You two kinds of love,
A love of longing and a love because You deserve that love.
Through the love of longing I am attracted to You
from all other, through remembrance.
And through the other love,
I cannot see the Universe before seeing You,
But it is not for me to praise in this or in that love,
But the praise is to You in this and that.

Love blinds and deafens. It makes blind all but the Beloved. The Prophet, Allah blesses him and grants him salvation, said about loving in a poem:

Love has made me deaf from all but His words,
For the one who loves inherits deafness.
My eyes wander upon Him,
For love makes blind
In it lies one’s death.

Allah bestow upon me Your love and the love of the ones who love You and the love of the ones who help me come closer to You. Make Your love to me be greater than my love to myself.

