**TRUE LOVE**



3.31. 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.(1)



59.19. And do not be like those who are oblivious of God and so God has made them oblivious of their own selves. Those, they are the transgressors.(2)



19.96. Assuredly, those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, the All-Merciful will assign for them love (in the hearts of the inhabitants of the heaven and many on the earth, so that they will receive welcome throughout creation, no matter if they are weak and small in number now).(3)

**The Excellence of Love for the Sake of Allah**

201. Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the day when there is no shade but His shade: a just imam (leader), a youth who grows up worshipping Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, a man whose heart is attached to the mosque, two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for that reason alone, a man who refuses the advances of a noble and beautiful woman, saying, ‘I fear Allah’, a man who gives sadaqa and conceals it so that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives, and a man who remembers Allah when he is alone and his eyes overflow with tears.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Zakah, 16, Riqaq, 24, Hudud, 19; Sahih Muslim, Zakah, 91).(4)

202. Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Allah the Almighty will say on the Day of Rising, ‘Where are those who loved one another for the sake of My majesty? Today, on the day when there is no shade but My shade, I will shade them.’” (Sahih Muslim, Birr, 37).(5)

203. Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “By the one who has my soul in His hand, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I point out to you something which will make you love one another if you do it? Make the greeting widespread among you.” (Sahih Muslim, Iman, 93–94).(6)

 206. Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Allah the Almighty says, ‘I have declared war against anyone who shows enmity towards a friend of Mine. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything I love more than what I made obligatory for him. Then My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory actions until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. If he asks of Me, I give to him. If he seeks refuge with Me, I give him refuge.’” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 38).(7)

**TRUE LOVE**

Love is the reason for the creation of the universe. It is also the bond between all things, and the light of existence and its life. Since man is the most comprehensive fruit of existence, a love so overflowing as to invade the whole universe has been included in the heart of that fruit, which is its seed or core. One who deserves such an infinite love may therefore only be one with infinite perfection.

Yes, if a lover with metaphorical love for the transitory face of the world sees the ugliness of the decline and transience on that face and turns away from it. If he searches for an immortal beloved and is successful in seeing the world’s other two most beautiful faces, that of mirror to the Divine Names and the tillage of the hereafter, his illicit metaphorical love then starts to be transformed into true love. But on the one condition that he does not confuse with the outside world his own fleeting and unstable world, which is bound to his life. If like the people of misguidance and heedlessness he forgets himself, plunges into the outside world, and supposing the general world to be his private world becomes the lover of it, he will fall into the swamp of Nature and drown, unless, extraordinarily, a hand of favor saves him. Consider the following comparison, which will illuminate this truth.

For example, if on the four walls of this finely decorated room are four full-length mirrors belonging to the four of us, then there would be five rooms. One would be actual and general, and four, similitudes and personal. Each of us would be able to change the shape, form, and color of his personal room by means of his mirror. If we were to paint it red, it would appear red, if we were to paint it green, it would appear green. Likewise, we could give it numerous states by adjusting the mirror; we could make it ugly, or beautiful, give it different forms. But we could not easily adjust and change the outer and general room. While in reality the general and personal rooms are the same, in practice they are different. You could destroy your own room with one finger, but you could not make one stone of the other stir.

Thus, this world is a decorated house. The life of each of us is a full-length mirror. We each of us have a world from this world, but its support, center, and door is our life. Indeed, that personal world of ours is a page, and our life is a pen; many things that are written with it pass to the page of our actions. If we have loved our world, later we have seen that since it is constructed on our life, it is fleeting, transitory, and unstable like our life. We have perceived and understood this. Our love for it turns towards the beautiful impresses of the Divine Names to which our personal world is the mirror and which it represents. Moreover, if we are aware that that personal world of ours is a temporary seed-bed of the hereafter and Paradise, and if we direct our feelings for it like intense desire, love, and greed, towards the benefits of the hereafter, which are its results, fruits, and shoots, then that metaphorical love is transformed into true love. Otherwise, manifesting the meaning of the verse, “**Those who forget God; and he made them forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors** (59:19)“, a person will forget himself, not think of life’s fleeting nature, suppose his personal, unstable world to be constant like the general world, and imagine himself to be undying; he will fix himself on the world and embrace it with intense emotions; he will drown in it and depart. Such love will be boundless torment and tribulation for him. For an orphan-like compassion, a despairing softness of heart will be born of that love. He will pity all living beings. Indeed, he will feel sympathy for all beautiful creatures, which suffer decline, and the pain of separation, but he will be able to do nothing, he will suffer in absolute despair.

However, the first man, who is saved from heedlessness, finds an elevated antidote for the pain of that intense compassion. For in the death and decline of all the living beings he pities, he sees the mirrors of their spirits, in which are depicted the perpetual manifestations of the enduring Names of an Ever-Enduring One, to be immortal; his compassion is transformed into joy. He also sees behind all beautiful creatures which are subject to death and transience, an impress, a making beautiful, an art, adornment, bestowal, and illuminating which are permanent and which make perceived a transcendent beauty, a sacred loveliness. He sees the death and transience to be renewal for the purpose of increasing the beauty, refreshing the pleasure, and exhibiting the art and this augments his pleasure, his ardor, and his wonder.

**“IF YOU LOVE GOD, FOLLOW ME: GOD WILL LOVE YOU”**

The sublime verse, **“Say: “If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. For Allah is the Oft Forgiving and the Most Merciful” (3:31).”** Proclaims in definite fashion just how necessary and important it is to follow the Practices of the Prophet. Yes, among the syllogisms of logic, this verse is the most powerful and certain of the sort called hypothetical or conditional syllogisms.

As an example of a hypothetical syllogism it is said in logic: “If the sun comes out, it will be daytime.” For a positive result it is said: “The sun has come out. It therefore points to the conclusion that it is now daytime.” For a negative result, it is said: “It is not daytime. One therefore draws the conclusion that the sun has not come out.” According to logic, these two conclusions, negative and positive, are definite.

In just the same way, the above verse says: “If you love God, you will follow God’s Beloved. If you do not follow him, it points to the conclusion that you do not love God.” If a person loves God, it entails following the Practices of God’s Beloved. Yes, one who believes in Almighty God will certainly obey Him. And the most acceptable, the most direct, and the shortest among the ways of obeying Him is without doubt the way God’s Beloved showed and followed.

Yes, it is necessary and self-evident that the All-Generous One of Beauty, Who fills the universe with so many bounties, should want thanks from conscious creatures in return for the bounties. And clearly that All Wise One of Glory, Who adorns the universe with so many miracles of art, will make the most excellent of conscious creatures His addressee and interpreter, and herald and leader of His servants. And certainly and self-evidently that All-Beauteous One of Perfection, Who makes the universe reflect the innumerable manifestations of His beauty and perfections, will give the most perfect worshipful stance to the one who is the most comprehensive and perfect measure and means of displaying His beauty, perfection, Names, and art, which He clearly loves and wants to display. He will make his conduct a fine example to others and encourage them to follow him so that his fine conduct may appear in others too.

If you believe in God, you will surely love Him. Since you love God, you will act in the manner He loves. To do that, you must resemble the one God loves. And he may be resembled by following him. Whenever you follow him, God will love you too. Anyway you have to love God so that He shall love you.

Love of God necessitates and results in following the Practices of the Prophet. How fortunate the person whose share of following them is great! And woe on the person who does not appreciate the Practices and embarks on innovations!

These phrases form only a brief and concise meaning of the verse. It means that the most exalted goal for man is to receive the Almighty God’s love. The verse shows that the way of achieving this elevated is by following God aims Beloved and his Practices. If at this station Three Points are proved, the above truth will become completely clear.

**First Point:** Man was created with an infinite innate love for the universe’s Creator. For included in human nature is love of beauty, worship of perfection, and love of bestowal. His love increases in accordance with the degrees of beauty, perfection, and bestowal, reaching the furthest degrees of ecstatic love.

**Furthermore,** contained in tiny man’s tiny heart may be a love as great as the universe. Yes, the fact that writings equivalent to a library of thousands of books may be inscribed in the faculty of memory, which is a coffer of the heart’s the size of a lentil, shows that the human heart may contain the universe and bear love that great.

Since human nature has such an infinite capacity to love bestowal, beauty, and perfection; and since the universe’s Creator possesses infinite sacred beauty, the certain existence of which is self-evidently established by His works to be seen in the universe; and since He possesses infinite holy perfection, the existence of which is necessarily proved by the embroideries of His art apparent in beings; and since He is the owner of infinite bounties, the existence of which is certainly, indeed, observably, established by the infinite varieties of His bestowal and bounties to be observed in living creatures. These surely demand infinite love from man, who is the most comprehensive, the most needy, the most thoughtful, and the most yearning of conscious beings.

Indeed, all human beings are capable of infinite love for the All-Glorious Creator, and in the face of His beauty, perfection, and bestowal, the Creator is more deserving than anyone to be loved is. All the varieties of love and intense attachment a believing human being has for his life, immortality, and existence, his world, his self, and other beings, are droplets of his capacity to love God. His various intense emotions are transformations of that capacity of his to love, and distillations of it in other forms. It is clear that just as man takes pleasure at his own happiness, so does he receive pleasure at the happiness of others to whom he is attached. And just as he loves one who saves him from disaster, so does he love one who saves those he loves. As a consequence of this state of mind, if a person thinks only of this out of all the varieties of Divine bounties bestowed on all men, he would say:

“My Creator saved me from non-existence, which is eternal darkness, and gave me a beautiful world like this one. Then when the time comes for me to die, He will again save me from non-existence, which is eternal extinction, and from annihilation, and bestow on me in an eternal realm an everlasting and most magnificent world. And like He has bestowed on me external and inner senses and feelings with which to benefit from all the varieties of delights and good things of that world and to roam around it and make excursions. So He also bestows innumerable bounties on all my relations and friends and fellowmen, whom I much love and to whom I am attached. Those bounties are also mine in a way, because I am happy and received pleasure at their happiness. Since in accordance with the rule, `Man is the slave of bestowal,’ everyone in a sense worships benevolence, certainly in the face of such innumerable favors. Since I have a heart as great as the universe, it necessitates its being filled with love at those favors, and I want to fill it. If in fact I am unable to love that much, I can do so through capacity, by intention, by belief, by acceptance, appreciation, longing, taking the part of, and by will.” And so on.

Analogies may be drawn with the love for bestowal we have briefly alluded to here for the love man feels for beauty and perfection. As for the unbelievers, they are infinitely hostile because of their unbelief, and even bear a wrongful and insulting enmity towards the universe and beings.

**Second Point:** Love of God necessitates following the Practices of Muhammad. For to love God is to do what pleases Him. And the things that please Him are manifested in most perfect form in the person of Muhammad. There are two aspects of resembling Muhammad’s actions and deeds.

**The First:** Obeying Almighty God’s commands in respect of loving Him and within the bounds of what pleases Him necessitates following them, for the most perfect leader in such matters is the person of Muhammad.

**The Second*:*** Since the person of Muhammad is a most important means to innumerable Divine favors for man, he is surely worthy of boundless love for the sake of Almighty God. If man is capable of resembling someone he loves, by nature he wants to do so. This definitely necessitates that those who love God’s Beloved try to resemble him by following his Illustrious Practices.

**Third Point:** Almighty God has boundless love, just as He has infinite compassion. As He makes Himself loved in infinite fashion through all the fine qualities and adornment of the creatures in the universe, so He also loves in particular conscious beings who respond with love to His making His artifacts loved. It may be clearly understood how important and exalted an aim it is to try to attract the love of a Being one manifestation of Whose mercy are all the subtle wonders and good things and delights and bounties of Paradise. Since it is stated clearly that His love is won only through following the Practices of Muhammad, it is certain that it should be man’s greatest aim and his most important duty.(8)

**“You Are With Those Whom You Love”**

According to this hadith, if you love Prophet Muhammad you will be on his path, and those on his path will be together with him in the world beyond. To prepare his household and Companions for this gathering, the Messenger loved and embraced them. He used this love efficiently.

Bukhari and Muslim gave another example of how he educated them. ‘Ali narrates that:

We had no servant in our house, and so Fatima did all the housework by herself. We lived in a house with just a small room. There, she would light a fire and try to cook. She often singed her clothes while trying to increase the fire by blowing. She also baked our bread and carried water. Her hands became covered in callouses from turning the millstone, as did her back from carrying water. Meanwhile some prisoners of war were brought to Madina. The Messenger gave them to those who applied. I suggested to Fatima that she ask for a servant from her father. And she did.

**Fatima continues:**

I went to my father, but he was not at home. ‘A’isha said she would tell him when he came, so I returned home. As soon as we went to bed, the Messenger came in. We wanted to get up, but he did not let us and instead sat between us. I could feel the cold of his foot on my body. He asked what we wanted, and I explained the situation. The Messenger, in an awesome manner, replied: “Fatima, fear God and be faultless in all your duties to Him. I will tell you something. When you want to go to bed, say subhan Allah (All glory be to God), al-hamdu lillah (All praise be to God), and Allahu akbar (God is the greatest) 33 times each. This is better for you than having a maid. [1]

**What he was actually saying through this conversation was:**

I am turning your faces to the other-worldly realms. There are two ways for you to reach them and be together with me there: Fulfill your duties in perfect servitude to your Lord and fulfill your duties to your husband. If a maid takes your responsibilities, this may make you deficient. You must have two wings to fly to the higher ranks. How can a man or woman become a perfect slave of God? How can a person become a perfect human being and fulfill all of his or her obligations? It is your duty to find the answers to these questions. First of all, become a perfect slave of God. Then, become a perfect human being by performing your duties to ‘Ali, a great man who represents all the saints who will descend from your family. If you do so, you will be with me in Heaven, where all the perfect things and perfect human beings shall come together.

I cannot help but digress to mention a fact about ‘Ali. The Messenger gave him his daughter in marriage without hesitation, because he deserved to have such a wife and to be a Prophet’s son-in-law. ‘Ali was the king of saints, and was created in this nature. The Messenger once told him: “O ‘Ali, every other Prophet had his own offspring. However, mine will come from you.” [2] ‘Ali is the father of the Prophet’s household, namely, his grandchildren and later descendants. For this reason, obeying ‘Ali means obeying the Messenger, and obeying the Messenger means obeying God. Also, those who love ‘Ali should love the Prophet and follow his Sunna.

**[1] Bukhari, “Fada’il al-Ashab,” 9; Muslim, “Dhikr,” 80, 81.
[2] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Lemalar, 4. Lema.**

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