**THE THIRTY -SECOND WORD**

**THİRD STATION**

**How can I appropriate all such instances of love only to the Divine Being and His Names and Attributes?**

**An important question:** **Loving is not voluntary. I have a natural need to love delicious foods and fruits, my parents and children, my spouse and friends, virtuous people, life, youth, this world, spring, and beautiful things. Why should I not?** **How can I appropriate all such instances of love only to the Divine Being and His Names and Attributes?**

**Answer**: Listen to the following four points.

**FIRST POINT:** However involuntary loving is, you can direct it to a certain object. For example, by convincing yourself that something beloved is ugly, or an obstacle to or only a mirror for an object worthy of true love, this feeling of love can be diverted to the true object of love.

**SECOND POINT:** You can love such things, but do so in Almighty God’s name and for His love’s sake. Loving delicious foods and fruits because they are favors and bounties of Almighty God, the All-Merciful and the All-Compassionate, means loving the Names the All-Merciful and Giver of bounties and is a sort of thanksgiving. Love, when done in the All-Merciful One’s name and not the carnal soul’s name, is reflected by lawful earning, contentment with what is lawful, and consuming in gratitude and reflection.

Loving and respecting one’s parents on behalf of the Mercy and Wisdom that equipped them with affection and tenderness, and that raised you through their compassionate hands, are included in God’s love. If done for Almighty God’s sake, you must show your parents much more love, respect, and care when they only can cause you difficulty. The verse: If either or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them “Uff!” (17:23), which tells children to love and respect their parents in five ways and degrees, shows how important parents’ rights are in the eyes of the Qur’an and how degrading and detestable filial ingratitude is.

Since a father typically prefers his children to be superior to him, children cannot claim rights against him. There can be no justifiable cause of dispute between parents and children, for a dispute arises either from envy or a violation of rights. A father never envies his children, and children cannot claim rights against him. Even if they consider his treatment of them wrong, they cannot rebel. Those who do so, or who annoy him, are cruel and ungrateful.

Loving one’s children with utmost care and compassion, as they are the All-Compassionate, All-Munificent One’s gifts, is included in one’s love of Almighty God. The sign that such love is for God’s sake is to show “becoming patience” at their death and not to wail in despair and rebelliousness against Destiny. One should submit to God, believing that judgment belongs only to Him, and think: “My child was a loveable creature of God whom He placed in my custody. His Wisdom required Him to take the child from me and to a far better place. Even if I have one apparent share in that servant of His, thousands of true shares belong to Him.”

Your love for friends, on account of their being believing friends of Almighty God who do good deeds according to the principle of loving for the sake of God, also is included in love of God. In addition, this is true of the love you feel for your spouse, your companion in life, because he or she is a sweet gracious gift of the Divine Mercy. Do not set your heart on his or her transient good looks.

A woman’s greatest charm and beauty lie in her lovable good conduct accompanied with the kindness and grace particular to womanhood, and in her elevated, serious, and sincere compassion. That beauty of compassion and good conduct increase until she dies. It is through the love and respect for her compassion and good conduct that one can observe her rights to the end. If she is loved because of her physical beauty, she is deprived of her rights and the love and respect due to her at a time when she needs them most.

Loving virtuous people like Prophets and saints because they are approved servants of Almighty God, and in His name and for His sake, are included in His love. If you love your life because it is a most valuable capital given by Almighty God to gain eternal life, a treasury containing the faculties with which to acquire all kinds of virtues and perfections, and if you spend it in His service, then this love is included in love of Almighty God, the All-Worshipped One. Loving the prime of youth because it is a sweet, fine gift of Almighty God, and thus spending it in His cause is a sort of lawful love wedded to gratitude.

Loving nature reflectively, especially in spring, because it is a realm displaying the most beautiful inscriptions of the All-Wise Maker’s light-diffusing Names and the most splendid and embellished works of His Art, means to love Almighty God’s Names. If you love the world only because it is the field to sow for the Hereafter, the mirror of the Divine Names, the collection of Almighty God’s missives, and a temporary guest-house of His, then this love is also in Almighty God’s name—provided you are not under your carnal soul’s influence.

In short, love the world and its creatures not for themselves but in the name of their Creator and the meaning they contain. Do not say: “How beautiful they are!” Rather, say: “How beautifully they have been made!” In your heart, do not love that which is not Him. Do not set your heart on that which is not Him, for the heart is the Eternally Besought’s mirror and belongs to Him. So pray to Him: “O God, provide me with love of You and the love of what will make me near to You.”

And so if all the types of love mentioned so far are in God’s name, then they give a painless, pure pleasure and are the means of a union that does not allow separation. In addition, they cause your love of God to grow and can be considered gratitude that gives pure pleasure and a reflection that is itself pure love.

For example, if a noble king grants you an apple in his presence, you will receive two sorts of pleasure and feel two kinds of love. The first type is your love for the apple because it is an apple. Thus you receive as much pleasure as an apple can give. Such a love is not in the king’s name, but arises from your love of yourself, for you love the apple because of the pleasure it gives you. This kind of pleasure is transient and ends when you finish eating the apple, leaving behind regret for the cessation of the pleasure. Moreover, the king may not be pleased with such an attitude.

The second sort of pleasure and love are directly related to the king. If you love and respect the apple because it embodies the royal compliment to you, then this love is in the king’s name and for his sake. The pleasure arising from such a compliment is far greater than the pleasure coming from eating the apple. Such an attitude is pure gratitude to the king for his gift, and the love shown for the apple is a respectful love for the king himself.

Likewise, loving bounties—all foods and fruits—granted to us because of themselves and the pleasure they give is a carnal love, for it is for the carnal soul’s sake. The pleasure coming from eating and drinking is transient and mixed with pain. If you love the bounties you receive on account of their being favors of Divine Mercy and fruits of Divine Bountifulness and Benevolence, and if you receive pleasure from them and have an appetite for them in appreciation of the Divine grace in them, this love is pure gratitude and pure pleasure without any pain.

**THIRD POINT:** Love of the Divine Names has degrees and levels. As pointed out above, sometimes you love the Divine Names because you love their works in the universe, and sometimes because they are titles of Divine perfections. It sometimes occurs that you are in limitless need due to your comprehensive nature and love the Divine Names in need of them.

**For example**, while you are seeking help in utter despair for your relatives or for poor, weak, and needy creatures, someone appears unexpectedly and does for them what you wish to do for them. How much would you love such a person for his munificence and benevolence, and always be thankful to him for those qualities? Similarly, consider only the Names the All- Merciful and the All-Compassionate. As the manifestations of these Names, Almighty God favors your believing parents and ancestors, as well as your friends and beloved ones, in this world with all His bounties. He will also make both you and them happy in Paradise, in the World of eternal happiness, with all varieties of pleasure and bringing you together. Thus, you may understand how much these two Names are worthy of your love, to what extent your spirit needs them, and how proper and necessary it is to say: “All praise and gratitude are for God for His being All-Merciful and All-Compassionate.”

Also, with its creatures being its amiable residents and lovable adornments, with which you feel a profound connection and for whose wretched- ness you grieve, the world is like a home for you. Through reflection, you may perceive how much your spirit loves and to what degree you need the Names the All-Wise and the All-Sustaining of the One Who has organized the world and it creatures and thus governs, grows, and sustains them with perfect wisdom. You also may understand to what extent your spirit needs the Names the Heir, the All-Quickening, the All-Permanent, the All-Munificent, the All-Reviving, and the All-Benevolent, of the One Who brings all of the people to whom you feel connected and at whose death you are grieved, out of the darkness of eternal extinction and settles them in a place far more beautiful than this world.

Since we, as human beings, are noble, elevated beings with comprehensive natures, our endless needs and aspirations make us needy of one thousand and one Divine Names in their numerous degrees of manifestation. Compound or intense need is eagerness, compound or intense eagerness is love, and compound or intense love is adoration. In proportion to the degree of the spirit’s perfection, love increases and flourishes in degrees according to the levels of the Divine Names’ manifestations. Since the Names are titles with which the Majestic Being manifests Himself, love of all Names turns into love of the Divine Being. Out of thousands of levels of manifestations of the Names the All-Just, the All-Wise, the (Ultimate) Truth, and the All-Compassionate, we present one as an example as follows:

If you want to see the Names the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate, and the (Ultimate) Truth in full manifestation in wisdom and justice, consider the following comparison: Suppose an army formed of four hundred companies. Each company has unique uniforms, rations, weaponry, and medicines. If these companies are situated together mixed with one another without the uniqueness of each considered, and yet, out of his perfect compassion and through his extraordinary power and miraculously encompassing knowledge, and with utmost justice and wisdom, a peerless king equips each with unique uniforms and weapons and provides them with appropriate foods and medicines without mistake or help, you may under- stand what a powerful, compassionate, just, and munificent king he is.

**Similarly**, if you want to see the manifestations of the Divine Names the (Ultimate) Truth, the All-Merciful and the All-Compassionate in wisdom and justice, you can look at magnificent armies of plants and animals, which consist of countless different families, genera, and species. All of these set up their tents on the earth’s face in spring, are infinitely mixed with each other, and yet have unique uniforms, provisions, weaponry, instructions, lifestyles, and demobilizations. Although they have no tongues with which to voice their needs and no power to meet them, see how the One with the Names of the (Ultimate) Truth, the All-Merciful, the All-Providing, the All-Compassionate, and the All-Munificent provides, maintains, and raises them in perfect justice and wisdom and without confusing and forgetting any of them.

Is it possible that another hand could share in this amazing order and all-comprehensive organization based on an absolute measure and balance?

Who other than the Unique One of Unity, the Absolutely All-Wise and All-Powerful One, could share in this art, this regulation and government, and this raising and sustaining?

**FOURTH POINT:** **You ask: “What are the uses and results of my love for foods, and my selfhood, spouse, parents, children, and friends, and for virtuous people, beautiful things like spring and the world if that love must be in line with the Qur’an’s commands?”**

**Answer**: It would take a comprehensive book to explain all of the uses and results of such a love. Therefore I will restrict myself to pointing out briefly only a few of its immediate consequences here and its permanent results in the Hereafter.

As explained above, any love in the carnal soul’s name, like that of worldly, heedless people, causes much pain, trouble, and affliction in this world, and the ease, pleasure and enjoyment it gives is little. For example, compassion turns into a painful affliction because you cannot do something. Love becomes a consuming feeling because of separation. Pleasure becomes like a poisonous drink because it is subject to transience. Since such love is not love in Almighty God’s name, it will be useless in the Hereafter. Also, it will bring torment if it has driven the lover into illicit dealings.

**Question: How does one’s love for Prophets and saints become fruitless?**

**Answer**: Love for Prophets and saints, such as that found among Christians who believe in the Trinity, and the Rafidis (a Shi‘a sect) who cherish enmity toward almost all Companions due to their love of ‘Ali, is fruitless.[[1]](#footnote-1) Any love in God’s name and in the Qur’anic manner yields good results in both this world and the Hereafter. **I briefly mention its worldly results below:**

* Loving delicious foods and fruits in God’s name makes them a favor and grace unmixed with pain, an ease that yields pure thankfulness.
* Loving your carnal soul leads you to pity so that you will educate it and prevent it from harmful desires and fancies. When you do this successfully, your carnal soul cannot take you wherever it wishes and enslave you to its desires. On the contrary, you will mount it and guide it to truth, not drive it to passions.
* If you love and has mercy for your spouse sincerely based on her good conduct and her being a mine of compassion and a gift of Divine Mercy, she (or he) will love and respect you. As you both age, this mutual love and respect will grow and increase your happiness. Carnal love based on physical beauty is fleeting. When it disappears, so do your mutual good relations.
* Loving your parents for Almighty God’s sake is an act of worship and increases as they age. With a most elevated feeling and endeavor, you pray for them to live long so that you may get more rewards because of them and receive a pure spiritual pleasure by respecting and serving them. If you find their existence unbearable when they need you and thus desire their deaths, you have descended to barbarism and will suffer a painful spiritual ailment.
* Loving your children because they are Almighty God’s lovable gifts that He has entrusted to you to raise and educate in an agree- able way is a love that brings happiness and blessing. You will not suffer much because of the calamities striking them or wail in despair if they die. Since their Creator is All-Wise and All-Compassionate, you will conclude: “Since it was better for them to die than to live, Almighty God took them away from me.” Thinking that your patience will draw God’s Mercy and that He will bring [both of] you together in an Abode of eternal happiness, you will be saved from the pains of separation.
* Loving your friends for God’s sake means that separation or death will not break the relationship you currently enjoy. You will benefit from this mutual love and spiritual connection. The pleasure of reunion for His sake is lasting. While a second of union for His sake gives the pleasure of a year of union, a year of being together for worldly purposes means a second of union and ends in painful separation.
* Loving virtuous people like the Prophets and saints shows you the Intermediate World of the grave, which appears to the heedless as a dark, frightening solitude, as a mansion illuminated by the existence of those blessed ones. You will not be afraid to go to that world. Rather, you will feel an inclination and eagerness to go there, and the pleasure you receive from your life will not be spoiled. But if you love them as the “civilized” people love famous individuals, you will be grieved at their death, and the thought of their decay and oblivion in the past’s “vast grave” will increase your pain. Thinking that you will enter the grave, which causes even the best people to rot away, you will utter sighs of grief and fear death. But if you love in Almighty God’s name, you will see the grave as a place of perfect rest after discarding the body, and you will look forward to it in warm anticipation.
* Loving beautiful things in their Maker’s name and in a way reminding you of their Creator is a pleasant reflection and will turn your view, which adores beauty, toward the sources of a far more elevated, sacred, and subtler beauty. You will turn from those beautiful works toward the beauty of Divine acts, then to the beauty of Divine Names, and then to the beauty of Divine Attributes and the All- Majestic One’s matchless Beauty. This love is pure pleasure, an act of worship, and a reflection.
* Loving youth because it is a fine blessing of Almighty God, you will spend it in worship and not waste it in dissipation. When you do that, the worship done while you are young yields permanent fruits. Youth disappears, but those fruits remain and you will be protected from the evil consequences of a youth spent in rebellion and dissipation. When you grow old, you will concentrate even more on worshipping God and deserve more from Divine Mercy. Unlike the heedless, you will not weep or regret your five or ten years of youthful pleasures as you enter the twilight of your life. You will not be like the heedless, who say: “If only my youth would return, I would tell it what old age has made happen to me.”
* Loving such exhibits as spring because they are works of Divine Art means that the pleasure of observing them does not disappear when they are removed, for you can recall the meanings they have left in your mind like gilded letters. Like movie scenes, your imagination and time enable you to take pleasure in seeing them, and your mind refreshes the beauties and meanings of the past spring. In such a case, your love continues to give pleasure and enjoyment and does not become painful and temporary.
* Loving this world in Almighty God’s name makes all of its creatures like amiable friends. Seeing it as a tillage for the Hereafter, you find in everything a capital that can be used for the good of your afterlife. Calamity does not scare you, and the transience of your life does not trouble you. You will stay in that guest-house peacefully until your appointed hour. But if you love the world as the heedless do, you will suffocate in a troublesome, calamitous, transient, and fruitless love.

**If, after indicating the pleasures and benefits that the kind of love taught in the Qur’an will give here, you want to hear and know such love’s otherworldly results, read the introduction and nine indications that follow:**

**Introduction:** Through His majestic Divinity, gracious Mercy, supreme Lordship, munificent Caring, vast Power, and subtle Wisdom, Almighty God has equipped the insignificant-sized human body with so many senses and feelings, such a variety of organs and members and systems, and numerous faculties so that He may make each one of us sense and know the innumerable varieties of His bounties, kinds of His favors, and instances of His Mercy. Also, He has done this so that we can measure and love His Names’ countless manifestations. Each bodily member, system, and faculty has different types of service and worship as well as different sorts of pleasures, pains, duties, and rewards.

**For example**, eyes see the beauties of forms and various miracles of Divine Power in the sphere of sight. Their duty is thoughtful and contemplative observation and gratitude to the Maker. Everyone knows the pleasures and pains particular to sight. Ears perceive different sounds, creation’s sweet melodies, and the subtleties of Divine Mercy in the sphere of hearing. They have their own unique type of worship, pleasure, and reward. The sense of smell is aware of Mercy’s subtleties in the sphere of smelling, and also has its own unique pleasure, duty of gratitude, and reward. Like the others, the sense of taste performs many duties of thanksgiving by being aware of the tastes of everything consumed.

In short, all of our senses, organs, and faculties (e.g., the heart, intellect, and spirit) have unique duties, pleasures, and pains. Almighty God, the Absolutely All-Wise One, will undoubtedly reward all of them accordingly. Everyone is aware of their immediate rewards in the world. As for their rewards in the Hereafter, as they are briefly proved in the Twelfth Truth of The Tenth Word, the six Fundamentals of The Twenty-Ninth Word, and The Twenty-Eighth Word, they are also either stated explicitly or alluded to in the Qur’an, the truest word, the most perfect system, the Word of God, the Sovereign, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.

**First indication:** Lawful love in gratitude for delicious foods and fruits yields paradisiacal foods and fruits in the Hereafter and arouses in us an appetite for them. Even saying: “All praise and gratitude are for God” after you eat something will be returned to you as a fruit of Paradise. As suggested by the Qur’an and required by Divine Wisdom and Mercy, any pleasurable thanks given to Almighty God for His bounties and favors will be returned to you in Paradise as the most delicious food.

**Second indication:** In return for loving your selfhood or soul in a lawful manner (pitying it and working to perfect it and guiding it to good), you will be given that which you love in Paradise. Since you gratified your soul’s desires and ambitions and used its organs and faculties in the way Almighty God approves of while here, the Absolutely Munificent One will reward your (lawful) love of it by clothing you in seventy different celestial garments as samples of seventy different kinds of beauty and adornment of Paradise. These will please all of your senses. He also will adorn your body with seventy varieties of beauty and present the houris to you, each of whom is like an animate miniature Paradise. Your love for youth in the world, which manifests itself in your using it to worship God, will result in eternal youth in the Abode of eternal happiness.

**Third indication:** In reward for the sincere love you feel for your spouse due to her (or his) delightful compassion, laudable virtues and good conduct, and protecting her (or him) against disobedience to God and other sins, the Absolutely Compassionate One will make her (or him) an immortal friend for you in the Abode of eternal happiness. She will be more beautiful, better dressed and ornamented, and more charming than the houris. Spouses will be seated on thrones face to face and will take great pleasure in relating to each other their worldly lives they spent together.

**Fourth indication:** As the result of lawful love for parents and children, Almighty God, the All-Merciful and All-Compassionate, will allow them to come together in Paradise and reward them with eternal happy communion, even though the rank and place of each may be different. He will recreate children who died before puberty as the lovable and most beautiful immortal children of Paradise (56:17), in a form worthy of Paradise, and return them to their parents’ arms so that they may enjoy eternally the pleasure of parenthood. Since Paradise is not the place of reproduction, some thought that the pleasure of having children would be absent there. But as Paradise contains every pleasurable thing in its highest degree, the pleasure of having children, at its best, will be there by means of the children who died before reaching puberty. This is a good tiding for those parents whose prepubescent children have died.

**Fifth indication:** The Qur’an explicitly states that, as the result of loving righteous friends for God’s sake, they will be seated on couches face to face in Paradise (15:47) and will enjoy eternally the pure pleasure of talking to each other about their worldly lives in a most delightful manner.

**Sixth indication:** Your Qur’anic love for the Prophets and saints will cause you to benefit from their intercession in the Intermediate World of the grave and in the Place of Supreme Gathering. You also will receive enlightenment from their elevated positions. According to the rule that “One will be with whom he or she loves,” each believer can have a part in the highest rank or position through closeness to the one with that position.

**Seventh indication:** Your love for beautiful things and spring, expressed in seeing them as the Creator’s beautiful works, as well as in appreciating the beauty and harmony of the Acts behind those works, the manifestations of the Names behind those Acts, and the manifestations of the Attributes behind those beautiful Names, will cause you to behold, in the World of Permanence, the manifestations of those Names, which are far more beautiful than their counterparts in this world, and witness His Beauty and Attributes in those Names. Imam Rabbani says: “Paradise’s beauties and subtleties are the embodiment of the Divine Names’ manifetations.” Reflect upon these words.

**Eighth indication:** Your reflective love for this world, on account of its being the Hereafter’s tillage and the Divine Names’ mirror, will be rewarded with an everlasting garden of Paradise as large as the world. Only the shadowy manifestations of the Names from behind numerous veils result in the world’s amazing beauties. In Paradise, the Names will manifest themselves in a most splendid form. God will give Paradise, in relationship to which this world is like a small seedbed, to those who loved this world as the afterlife’s tillage. Also, as required by Mercy and Wisdom and pointed to in the Prophetic Traditions and some Qur’anic verses, our senses and feelings, which are like small shoots here, will be perfected there; our potentials, which are like seeds here, will develop into varieties of perfection and pure pleasure there.

Since we loved the world only in its two aspects concerned with the Hereafter and the Divine Names and not in its contemptible aspect (the cause of all errors), and caused it to prosper through our worship as if we had spent all our lives and body, senses, and faculties in worship, Mercy and Wisdom require that we receive a reward as great as the world. Since we loved the world as the Hereafter’s tillage for the sake of loving the Hereafter and loved it as the mirror of Almighty God’s Names for His sake, we will be rewarded with a world-like object of love—a garden of Paradise as vast as the world.

**Question: What is the use of such a vast and empty garden?**

**Answer**: If you could travel throughout the world and most of the stars with the speed of imagination, you could assert that the world belonged to you. The fact that angels, other people, and animals share this space with you would not negate your assertion. Likewise, if Paradise is thus full, you would be able to say, “Paradise is mine.” The meaning of the Tradition, “Some people of Paradise will be given a Paradise that would take five hundred years (to traverse on foot),” has been explained in The Twenty-eighth Word and “The Treatise on Sincerity” in The Gleams.

**Ninth indication:** The result of your belief and love of God is the eternal life of Paradise and vision of Him. People of spiritual unveiling and verification all agree that a thousand years of a happy life in this world is not worth an hour of life in Paradise, and that a thousand years of life in Paradise is not worth an hour’s vision of the All-Majestic One in His absolute sacred Beauty and defect-free Perfection. Seeing Him is established by the Qur’an and authentic Prophetic Traditions, one of which says: “That vision far excels all the other pleasures of Paradise, so much so that it causes them to be forgotten. After the vision of God, the people of Paradise will have increased in beauty and loveliness to such a degree that the couples will be able to recognize each other only with great difficulty.”

All people feel in the depths of their being a great longing to see such great people of the past as Prophet Solomon, famous for his magnificent perfection, and Prophet Joseph, distinguished for his beauty. So compare how deeply desired and yearned for, and with what degree of passion, is our desire to see Him. And remember that one manifestation of His Beauty and Perfection contains all the beauty and perfection of Paradise, which are far more elevated than all the beauty and perfection seen in this world.

O God, provide us in this world with love of You and of what will draw us near to You, with the uprightness You command, and in the Hereafter with Your Mercy and the vision of You.

All-Glorified are You! We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

O God, bestow blessings and peace upon him whom You sent as a mercy for all worlds, and upon his Family and Companions. Amin

1. Such love is rooted in love for the person loved. As it is not in God’s name, it leads to unforgivable excesses in belief. Due to such excesses, Christians deified Jesus and the Rafidis broke from the majority Muslim community (Tr.). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)