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LOVE OF ALLAH

Allah Most High says, “And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah. And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment,” [Q2:165].

Levels of Love for Allah

Know that the servant’s love for Allah is on two levels.

The first level is common love that no believer is devoid of and is obligatory.

The second is an exclusive love singled out for the devout scholars, the friends of Allah and the purified ones. It is the highest of stations and the end of all goals. Indeed, all stations of the righteous (like hope, reliance, and others) are built upon the self’s own lot [*ḥuẓūz al-naḥs*]. Do you not see that the one who is fearful, fears for his self; and that the one who requests, seeks a benefit for his self? This is in contrast to love, since it is for the sake of the beloved and is not for some exchange.

Know that the cause of love for Allah is knowledge of Him [*maʿrifah*]. Love is thus strengthened commensurate to the strength of that knowledge, and weakened commensurate to the weakness of that knowledge.

The requisites for love are one of two matters. When the two of them are combined in one of the individuals of Allah’s creation, he will be at the extent of completeness.

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The first requisite is goodness [*al-busn*] and splendor [*al-jamāl*]. The second requisite is beneficence [*al-iḥṣān*] and radiance [*al-ijmāl*].

Splendor [*al-jamāl*] is naturally loved, since people necessarily love what they deem good.

Radiance [*al-ijmāl*] is like the splendor [*al-jamāl*] of Allah Most High in His extensive wisdom; unprecedented creation; and His shining, illuminating, beautiful characteristics that please the intellect and awaken hearts. And the splendor [*al-jamāl*] of Allah Most High is perceived with insight, not eyesight.

As for beneficence [*al-iḥṣān*]: hearts are naturally disposed to loving whoever is righteous with them. Allah's beneficence to His servants is incessant, and His benefaction toward them is inward and manifest, "And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them," [Q14:34].

It suffices you that He is gracious towards the obedient and disobedient, towards believers and the non-believers. Every act of beneficence attributed to someone else is, in reality, from Him. He alone, thus, deserves affection.

Know that when love for Allah is established in the heart, its effects appear on the limbs. Its effects include earnestness in obeying Him and energy for serving Him; coveting what pleases Him; delight in His secret discourse; contentment with His decrees; yearning to meet Him; and being intimate with His remembrance. Its effects include having an aversion to all others; fleeing from people; seeking solitude through spiritual retreats; and removing this world from the heart. And its effects include affection for all who have affection for Allah; and preferring Him over all others.

Al-Harith Al-Muhasibi said, "Love is that you completely submit yourself to the Beloved; then preferring Him over your self and spirit; then agreeing with Him secretly and manifestly; and then knowing your shortcomings in your love for Him."