

ALI 534: The Concept of Love in Islam

DR IRFAAN JAFFER

Class One Summary

- ▶ Love is transcending the dichotomy between the self and the other
- ▶ Three different types of love
 - ▶ 1. Worldly Love
 - ▶ 2. Human Love
 - ▶ 3. Love of God
- ▶ Loving for the sake of God
 - ▶ To see everything as a reminder and gift from God

Class Two Outline

- ▶ 1. The connection between love and knowledge
- ▶ 2. Getting to know God through the Quran
- ▶ 3. God's love for us (human beings)
- ▶ **Questions?**

Love and Knowledge

- ▶ *Neither My Earth nor My Heavens can contain Me, but the heart of a Believing Servant, contains Me*
- ▶ Humans are capable of knowing and loving God
- ▶ Symptoms: remembrance, contentment, devotion and self-surrender

Love and Knowledge

- ▶ *I was a hidden treasure; I **loved** to be **known**. Hence, I created the world so that I would be **known***
- ▶ Love and knowledge cannot be separated
- ▶ You cannot love God unless you know God
- ▶ When you know God, you cannot help but love God

Love and Knowledge

- ▶ *Hearts are conditioned to love those who are kind to them and hate those who are cruel to them*
- ▶ Imagine how they would feel towards Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim
- ▶ Love (feminine) + Knowledge (masculine) = The creation of the world
- ▶ **Questions?**

Getting to Know God

- ▶ No Goodness comes to us except by the Grace and Mercy of God
- ▶ *O ye who believe! follow not Satan's footsteps: if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful and wrong: and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, not one of you would ever have been pure: but Allah doth purify whom He pleases: and Allah is One Who hears and knows (all things). (24:21)*
- ▶ We have forgotten the power of patiently waiting with faith or surrendering to God

Getting to Know God

- ▶ *Our affairs are attached to the destiny decreed by Allah, and even our best plans may lead us to destruction (Imam Ali)*
- ▶ *Do not elevate yourself to be remembered. Learn and conceal, find safety in silence, you will please the righteous and you will outrage the wicked (Imam Ali)*
- ▶ We still have to make an effort --- Start with dua
- ▶ *And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.*

Getting to Know God

- ▶ Human love = metaphorical love
- ▶ Talking to God, getting to know God and spending time with God
- ▶ All three of these actions are encompassed within the Quran

Getting to Know God

- ▶ Revelation is God telling us who he is so that we can know Him
- ▶ Making Dua = us talking to God
- ▶ Reciting Quran = Listening to God
- ▶ Entering into dialogue with the Divine

Getting to Know God

- ▶ The more you talk to God, the more you spend time with God
- ▶ The more you spend time with God, the more you get to know Him
- ▶ The more you get to know Him, the more you fall in love with Him
- ▶ **Questions?**

Approaching the Quran

- ▶ Need to know how to approach the Quran
- ▶ Like all things, it can lead us closer to God or further away
- ▶ *We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss. (17:82)*

Approaching the Quran

- ▶ Do some self-reflection: what are you bringing to the Quran?
- ▶ You will find what you are looking for
- ▶ Empty yourself out so that God can fill you up
- ▶ *Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.*

Approaching the Quran

- ▶ How do we approach the Quran in a state of quiet surrender?
- ▶ We have been given the teachings that guide our religious practices
- ▶ The paradox of approaching the Quran through the Quran
- ▶ How does this work?

The Transformative Power of the Quran

- ▶ Reciting the Quran brings the presence and greatness of God near us
- ▶ This presence melts away our worldly problems and our worldly selves
- ▶ *The heart gathers rust like iron. Remove this rust by the recitation of the Quran* (Prophet Muhammad)

The Transformative Power of the Quran

- ▶ The more you recite the Quran the more God's presence will enter you heart
- ▶ You will become aware of His perfect Reality at all times
- ▶ This will fill you with love and knowledge of God and you will begin to see God in everything
- ▶ *Oh God, I don't know when to praise you more, when I am healthy or when I am sick (Imam Zain al-Abideen)*

The Transformative Power of the Quran

- ▶ Making Dua, Reciting the Quran and perpetuating the dhikr are all preconditions and symptoms of the knowledge and love of God
- ▶ **Questions?**

God's Love for Human Beings

- ▶ The object of God's love is human beings
- ▶ The most important step is for God to love us and not the other way around
- ▶ *If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (3:31)*
- ▶ God's love is for those people who act in a beautiful or Godly way

Loving God

- ▶ *Love is, when God says to you, "I have created everything for you" And you say, "I have left everything for You"*
- ▶ **Questions?**
- ▶ Thank you!