

ALI 534: The Concept of Love in Islam

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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 Summary

- ▶ Love and Knowledge are inseparable
- ▶ Approaching the Quran in a state of surrender
- ▶ Cultivating the love of God through the Quran
- ▶ God's love for virtuous human beings

Class Three Outline

- ▶ God's love for human beings
- ▶ Love and its connection to patience, suffering, and death
- ▶ Questions before we begin?

God Love the Righteous

- ▶ The Quran focuses on God's love for human beings more than Human beings' love for God
- ▶ The goal is to be loved by Allah but being beautiful on the inside and doing beautiful on the outside
- ▶ One of the Qualities that God loves the most is patience

God Love the Righteous

- ▶ Love and patience are intimately connected
- ▶ If God loves you and you love God, then He will bring you closer to Him
- ▶ In order to get closer to God we must be purified and therefore, we must go through trials and tribulations

God Love the Righteous

- ▶ *The most severely tested people are the prophets, then the next best, then the next best. A man will be tested in accordance with his level of commitment to God. (Prophet Muhammad)*
- ▶ Therefore, we cannot get close to God without learning to be patient
- ▶ Questions?

Facing Difficulty and Hardship

- ▶ Hardships can be an obstacle that stops us from loving God (neglected and resentful) or from God loving us (proud and arrogant)
- ▶ *When a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call to Allah, offering Him sincere devotion. But when He has delivered them safely to land, there are among them those that halt between (right and wrong). But none reject Our Signs except only a deceitful ungrateful (wretch)! (31:32)*
- ▶ *Then why, when Our punishment came to them, did they not humble themselves? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan made attractive to them that which they were doing. (6:43)*

Facing Difficulty and Hardship

- ▶ Why do we face these test and trials? The Quran gives us at least two answers:
- ▶ *Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars. (29:34)*
- ▶ Reason One: God tests us so that He can show us our true selves and the level of our faith. It is a tool for self-reflection and self-correction.

Facing Difficulty and Hardship

- ▶ Reason two: God tests us in order to purify us, strengthen us and help us reach our true human potential
- ▶ Trials are a mercy and a gift from God. We should be grateful for them
- ▶ *...but (all this was) that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts. For Allah knoweth well the secrets of your hearts. (3:154)*
- ▶ *...Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favor on you, so that you may be grateful. (5:6)*

Facing Difficulty and Hardship

- ▶ *Keep walking in your sickness for as long as possible (Imam Ali)*
- ▶ Therefore, our difficulties lead to:
 - ▶ Purification
 - ▶ Growth
- ▶ Questions?

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ What are we being purified from?
- ▶ Purification is the implementation of *la ilaha illAllah* in your heart
- ▶ We are being purified from the *ilaha* (gods) so our hearts only have illAllah
- ▶ The journey of purification IS the journey of love

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ This should not frighten us
- ▶ God replaces what we lose with Himself
- ▶ *By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love; and whatever ye give, of a truth Allah knoweth it well. (3:92)*
- ▶ *And whosoever fears Allah...He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. (65:2-3)*

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ The first stage is purification from the world
- ▶ The world is illusion and God is Reality, and therefore, the two cannot coexist in the same heart.
- ▶ *Be indifferent to the world and God will love you* (Prophet Muhammad)

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ *Die before you die* (Prophet Muhammad)
- ▶ The first death is voluntary; It is choosing to leave the world by removing it from your heart and therefore, lifting the veils from your eyes
- ▶ *And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind. He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allah] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten."* (20:124-126)
- ▶ *But those who were blind in this world, will be blind in the hereafter, and most astray from the Path.* (17:72)

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ Therefore, love requires death, the death of *ilaha*
- ▶ This death is feared by the lovers of this world and welcomed by the lovers of God
- ▶ These deaths happen over and over as you move closer and closer to God.
- ▶ Death the world and the individual ego is also a birth into *illAllah*
- ▶ *Questions?*

Love and Patience

- ▶ On the journey to God, patience is the best companion
- ▶ Patience has the potential to turn every negative into a positive
- ▶ *How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good... If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him. (Prophet Muhammad)*

Love and Patience

- ▶ Patience has a passive and an active side
- ▶ Passive patience is to endure our suffering until it ends
- ▶ Active patience is the way we are and the way we act during our suffering
- ▶ We cannot avoid trials, but we can choose how to understand and handle them
- ▶ *Patience is not sitting and waiting, it is foreseeing. It is looking at the thorn and seeing the rose, looking at the night and seeing the day. Lovers are patient and know that the moon needs time to become full (Rumi)*

Love and Patience

- ▶ How do we become more patient
- ▶ Islamic practices and their transformative power
- ▶ There is no magic pill
- ▶ *...surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition (13:11)*

Love and Patience

- ▶ Starting is the most difficult part
- ▶ The deeper our faith becomes, the easier it becomes to handle this world
- ▶ As a person's spirituality grows their difficulties increase in number, but their burdens decrease in weight
- ▶ Questions?