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Title: Love of God – What Does it Really Mean (Part 2)

YouTube Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1JoccTGb5s&feature=c4-feed-u

Hadith: None of you believe in God, till He loves me (the Prophet is speaking) more than his father, his children and all mankind.

If someone says that he is a Muslim, he is bound to admit that he loves the Prophet BUT how and why do we love him?

What is the signifying definition of a Prophet?

* Prophet means *Rasul Allah* (messenger of God)
  + What makes a person a messenger of God?
    - Him receiving a **message** from God (creator of the universe)
    - Through the message, I can establish this very important connection
      * Universe: Created by God
      * Me: Created by God (I am an act of God)
      * Connection between me and God is guided by revelation (**message)**. The **message** helps me regulate my relationship with the universe
      * Revelation teaches me how to utilize my human qualities and how to react with all the other acts of God

When we connect with the universe, we **consciously**  (through our free will) use the human qualities given to us to match with creation in the universe

* By establishing the connection, you have ascended (miraj)
* Connecting your inner feeling with the external world
* I am allowing (through my feeling) the qualities (a trust) given to me by my creator to communicate with the qualities manifested out there
  + Both qualities (my feelings and the qualities in the universe) are from the same source
  + I should be careful to not misuse the qualities given to me by appropriating them to myself
  + Try to always be aware/conscious of the creator’s role in EVERYTHING

Are we expected to follow God’s rules?

* Yes. We ought to pray, fast, give zakat, etc
* But following the rules of God boils down to adhering to an undistorted relationship with God
* If you follow the rules WITHOUT first establishing consciousness of God in all that you are and all that you do, you performing an action has no meaning

I have been given my eyes to see BUT I have been given the option to close my eyelids so that I do not see

* But keeping them open, is the *default* honest choice

Similarly, I have to be conscious of my human qualities and acknowledge that they are trusts given to me by my creator and I should not distort their purposes

Who wants to hurt people’s feelings?

* No one wants to hurt people’s feelings
* But yet we still do.

As we grow up, our parents take care of our growing up

* But there comes a point when we start seeing the mistakes of our parents and begin declaring our own independence. At that point I am assuming my free will.
* This is when the real training begins because you have to start making choices

I need training in my life journey but who is going to train me as to how to use my feelings and how to communicate with the rest of creation?

What is the difference between the sense of sight in animals in comparison to sense of sight in man?

* Man has the capability to restrain their sight
  + Why should you refrain your vision?
  + What is the purpose?
  + According to what should you restrain?

My creator told me not to look at certain things BUT for what purpose?

* Why do I have to obey the rule of my creator telling me what to look at?
* What does He want me to fulfill through my vision?
  + By using my power of sight, my ultimate purpose is to acknowledge who is the giver of the power of sight so that if I acknowledge it, I will be using my eyes within His will, in His name and will not be appropriating the power of sight to myself

The ultimate aim of choosing how to use my senses is not about what is ‘permissible’ or what is ‘prohibited’ but it is either belief in reality or unbelief in reality

* With our power of sight, we have to be conscious of the fact that sight has been given to me
* We acknowledge that the giver of the sight has given it to me and I use my eyes in His name

Belief needs to be the foundation of all our actions

* Only then can we talk about *halal* and *haram*
* The training should first be established on belief
* If you haven’t established the fact that your eyes and vision are from Allah SWT, and then try and live according to the practices of the Prophets, your foundations are missing
  + Yeah, you might tell yourself that you are not supposed to look at women BUT just performing the action WITHOUT establishing why you are not supposed to be doing that runs contrary to your innate need for logic and reasoning
  + However, if you establish the foundation first that your eyes are from Allah SWT and all that you see is from Allah SWT, you have acknowledged your position.
  + Once you have acknowledged your position, it is natural that you will ask how to use it
    - If something does not belong to you, you will ask the owner how to operate the object and you will seek guidance from the owner
    - But if you claim ownership of the object (falsely), your choices on what to do with the object, will be governed solely by your desires

The main message (guidance) we receive from the messengers of God is to let me know

1. Who am I?
2. What is expected of me?
3. How can I fulfil the purpose of myself in this world?

If someone says: Of course, we have to follow the Prophet, remind yourself that the action ( *halal* and *haram*) is secondary. The primary purpose of following the Prophets is to establish belief.

The source of compassion (which I like about my mother) does not belong to her or to me. Rather it belongs to our Creator

* I am expected to meet this loving quality and loved quality in the name of God
* That is the mission of messengership (To teach us how to live in the presence of God)

You love your mother because you are created to love here

* When you love her, you acknowledge that the sense is given to you and you are using it in the name of the creator
* Your mother has been given compassion
* I am expected to make these two elements meet each other in the name of their creator
* My sense of love and compassion in mothers

You will experience that the creator of your mother is giving you the opportunity to experience His compassion in the body of your mother

* So, in reality, you don’t actually love your mother
* Rather, you love the giver of compassion (GOD)
* Only then, you are a believer

How can you be a believer if you attribute all the loving qualities to your mother without acknowledging the true creator of everything?

If you do not connect the feelings you experience and the origin of the feelings in your mother to God, when you mother leaves this world, the attachment you had to your mother will also disappear.

* But if you acknowledge the source of love in me and the source of compassion manifested in my mother, I am connecting myself to the Eternal

The Prophet said: None of you believe in God, till He loves me (the Prophet is speaking) more than his father, his children and all mankind.

What does it mean?

* It means we have to follow the MESSAGE from the MESSENGER of God
* The message says: There is no divine power but the creator of the universe

You have no power to love, but it is given by the creator

You mother has no compassion, except that it has been given to her

* No one can produce their own sense of compassion

We have to learn how to read between the lines of the message brought to us by the messenger

To prevent ourselves from falling into imitation is to ensure that we are on strong grounds when it comes to belief

* If you say that my power of sight has been given to me by my creator
* Once you acknowledge that a property is not yours, how will use it?
* Animals follow their own instincts but we have choices at every moment
* With the foundation of belief set, we can then make appropriate choices for our actions.

**Actions are according to belief**

* Actions get their value from belief
* When we read the Quran and Hadiths we have to follow this principle

If we omit the belief foundation, your action will be devoid of its foundation and it is essentially an act of imitation

None of you believe in God, till He loves me (the Prophet is speaking) more than his father, his children and all mankind.

* Does not mean follow/imitate the Prophet
* Learn from him and his training
* The Prophets train us in our belief (how do we really see our existence and how do we interact with them)
* If you don’t establish your relationship by acknowledging the owner of the universe (MESSAGE), your relationship with the universe will be futile

Of course, it does not mean that the rules (*shariah)* do not have a function, but we will come to this later.

Prophet = messenger of God (it has nothing to do with his physical body)

* If you train yourself according to the message revealed by the Messenger, you are loving the Prophet
  + Otherwise, your claim of love is baseless

We are not expected to love the Prophet because he had the most beautiful eyes, etc

* We are loving him because He is the messenger of Allah not because he was a handsome man

It is easy to follow by imitation because you do not have to think

* What is difficult is to understand his way of reasoning and to develop your own understanding based on what the professor has taught you

There are a total of 5,000 hadiths of which a great majority are not about actions

* Can you sum up your life in less than 5,000 actions?
* Most certainly not
* So clearly the Messenger was not revealed just for his actions

Can you really love the Messenger more than your closest family members?

* Yes, but only if you established the relationship with the rest of the world according to the message we receive from the Prophet
* The message is teaching me the foundations of belief in God
* Learning how to act in the name of God

I have to acknowledge the source and act accordingly.

The sunnah way of actions is to do things in the name of God

* This means that you perform actions by acknowledging that you are obeying the rules which have been established by the creator and communicated to you through the Messenger
* We have to internalize the METHOD in the MESSAGE and not IMITATE the ACTION

When you are walking, you are obeying the rules of the creator

* So if you acknowledge that your ability to walk has been granted by the creator, you are loving the Message of the Messenger which says that all power lies in the hands of God.
* You are walking the name of the One who has enabled you to walk

Everybody knows that just to take a single step, billions of cells are being put into action

* Who is putting these cells into action?
* He has given you enormous grace
* Anything that you experience in this world is from your lord
  + Acknowledge it!

If you really love the teachings of a certain professor, can you hate his personality?

* NO
* Similarly, without realizing the core of the teachings of the Prophet, no one (including his wives) can claim that you love the Prophet
* We are not animals ( we cannot imitate or fake our feelings). We love based on real encounters/experiences/interactions

You do not get married according to flesh and bone qualities

* You look for ‘human’ qualities
* If someone establishes a marriage based on physical attributes, it will be very temporal
* Do not look for ‘sura-physical qualities’ but for ‘seerah-human qualities’ so that he/she will continue loving your spouse even when physical attributes fade

The rhetoric is similar across various religions

* We love Jesus, for example
* But no one has established why do you love him AS A MESSENGER/PROPHET?

Why then do we fall in the same mistake?

* If it is a mistake for the followers of Jesus, then it is the same mistake for followers of Muhammad to be proclaiming their love for him without a base

MESSAGE IS IMPORTANT – if you love the message, you will love the messenger

* That is just how we have been created
* But if you love the messenger without loving the message, it is a temporary love and it will become a burden

When you say things like, I have to pray and feel it to be like a burden, it means that you do not know what prayer is

* You cannot love the one who brought you the burden
* If there was no Prophet, we wouldn’t be praying
* The message that the Prophet brings is so that we can find our human qualities and we can learn what the purpose of our life it
  + We can acknowledge who the Lord of the universe is
  + Life will become meaningful ONLY if you follow the message and follow the message
  + Otherwise, our life is only a series of events between life and death (how meaningless)

“There are human beings who take for worship others besides God as equal with God. They love them as they should love God but those who believe in God are overflowing in their love of God.” Surah Baqarah, Ayah 165

God is ‘Ghay-ur’

* The literal definition of the word is jealous
* Why do you think the creator of the world is jealous? : He does not want us to love anything more than Him
  + Why did the creator of this world make things that I love if He did not want me to love them

Understand this verse, in light of the hadith we have just learnt.

Loving this world and loving God is not contradictory

* In fact, the more that you love God, the more that you will love this world (but without false ideas of love as we commonly experience in our lives)

Methodologically – can you love God if you do not love flowers?

* If there is no beauty out there, how can you utilize your sense of love for beauty?
* But can you ignore God, and love the flowers?
  + Yes.
  + This verse is reminding us not to love the flowers if we do not love the One who made the flower beautiful and the One who gave you the sense of love
  + You can only deny the reality if you love something BUT not God.
    - You have the option to do it
    - But, it will not be an option for a conscious being

Animals, when they are hungry they eat

When it is time to copulate,they do

* They are not really aware of what they are doing
* They are just following instincts

But as a human being, I have been given consciousness (the most important quality that distinguishes me as a human)

* I am aware that I have to attribute these qualities to something else
* I am aware that I have to question the existence of the qualities
* My responsibility is then to take a stand: Are you going to love the source of beauty and your sense of love OR are you going to love the object itself which exists temporarily

If you do not use the love for flowers in the name of the creator of the flowers, your love will be temporal

* When you love objects for the same of themselves, you are subjecting yourself to misery because you know that the object will die and so will you
* Human beings want eternal love and eternal security
* Only by attributing your existence to an eternal source of existence can you feel satisfied in your need for eternity
* There is no other way for human need for eternity to be satisfied because everything is transient

We have to think and question deeply about this!

Ask yourself; why do you like certain things and how do these feelings emerge?

We are created to be fond of perfection and beauty – witness it in your own life

* How then, can I love the beautiful and perfect things in this world when they are transient and are subject to eternal annihilation (eternal if I disbelieve in the hereafter)
* Why bother about existence, about life, about anything?

But we are ingrained with a sense to love perfection and beauty

* So people without realizing, find themselves appreciating such qualities in this world
* They proclaim their love for equality, a peaceful world, non-polluted world, and an ecologically balanced world?
  + Why do you think people bother about the fact that the world will get destroyed?
  + It is because it is innate within ourselves to love perfection

We should use our consciousness to realize this and to confirm that the source is eternal

I have to perform my actions in the name of the one who has placed this sense of love in me and who has created me.

* When you say I believe in God, it means that you acknowledge the lord of the universe, the owner of everything and his omnipotency over everything
* Every creature is precious because they all individually and collectively point to the creator of this universe

Regardless of how small an object is, the object itself proclaims that it has been created by God.

* No one can create ANYTHING in this world
* Nothing can give existence to anything
* We always should be connecting ourselves to the eternal source of existence of this world

Only then, you are secure because you realize that your existence is coming from the eternal source!

That is why, God says in this verse to not love anything else other than Him because it is not worth loving anything in this world as by itself, it is transient, and you are not created to love transience.

* God is guiding us so that we will not contradict ourselves!
* He has created us and He knows how we should function.

Change your paradigm in understanding what religion is by deliberately reflecting on everything.

* Don’t just take statements and experiences at face value
* The more you ponder, the more insight you will gain, inshAllah

God is not exaggerating in this verse

* We are expected to love everything in His name
* Love of God is the base of everything

Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings in which ye delight - are dearer to you than God, or His Apostle, or the striving in His cause;- then wait until God brings about His decision: and God guides not the rebellious. (Surah Taubah, Ayah 94)

* Nothing should be more loved to us than God and His messenger
* We have established why our family, work, etc should not be loved more than Allah SWT and what love of the Messenger means (i.e. love of the Message)

‘Fatarab-basun’ means ‘wait, and you will see’ and it is a threatening word but this verse is not a threat

* God reminds us that we have to be careful in the way we love OR otherwise we will be very sorry
* It does not mean that I should leave my home, my family, my wife, my job BUT rather the verse is reminding us that I have to love the creator of all of this and not the things themselves.
* I love my job in the name of Allah
* The purpose of the verse is not threatening you. It is guiding you that it is not for human beings to love your mother, job, houses, spouses, etc for ITSELF because it will traumatize you
  + If you love your house for it as it is, you will ‘die’ in your house
  + Do not take this option (God is telling us) because we will be very sorry if we live our lives this way

Come to the realization that you have to love God and the messenger (His message) because God is the One who has given you all the opportunities.