



THE HALLMARK OF LOVERS

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One cannot be a believer possessed of a perfect, obligatory level of faith unless his love accords with what the Prophet, upon whom be peace, came with, in respect to orders, prohibitions, and other matters: loving what he commanded and detesting what he prohibited. This finds mention in the Qur'an in various places, like when Allah, Exalted is He, avers: *But no, by your Lord, they will not believe [completely] until they make you judge what is in dispute between them, and find in themselves no dislike for that which you decide, but submit to it fully.*¹ Allah [also] declared: *It is not for a believing man or believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allah and His Messenger have decided for them.*²

Allah, Transcendent is He, censures those who deplore what Allah loves, or love what Allah has detested: *That is because they bate what Allah has revealed; therefore He makes their deeds fruitless.*³ Allah also states: *That will be because they followed what makes Allah wrathful, and bated His pleasure. So, He made all their works fruitless.*⁴

Hence it is required of every believer to love whatever Allah loves, such that this love leads him to fulfill whatever is obligated on them. If one's love can be strengthened so as to fulfill even those acts that are commendable, then this is preferred. Similarly, one must loathe whatever Allah loathes such that it leads to abstaining from whatever is proscribed. If one's loathing can be strengthened to avoid even those matters that are disliked, but not forbidden, this is preferable. In fact it is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his ownself, his parents, his

children and the whole of mankind."⁵ So a believer will never be a true believer until and unless his love for the Messenger, peace be upon him, comes before his love for the rest of creation: love of the Messenger following on from the love of the One Who sent him.

True and sound love obliges imitation (*mutāba'ab*) to, and compliance (*muwāfaqab*) with, whatever must be loved or loathed. Allah, Exalted is He, said: *Say: "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your tribe, the wealth you have gained, the commerce you fear may slacken, and the homes you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His command. Allah never guides the corrupt."*⁶

Allah, Exalted is He, stated: *Say: "If you love Allah, then follow me; for then Allah will love you and forgive you your sins."*⁷ Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī explained: "The Prophet's Companions proclaimed: 'O Allah's Messenger, we love our Lord fervently.' It was then that Allah sent down this verse."⁸

The two *Ṣaḥīḥs* record that the Prophet, peace be upon him, informed: "There are three things which, if they are present in anyone, will cause him to taste the sweetness of faith: that Allah and His Messenger be dearer to him than all else; that he love someone only for Allah's sake; and that he hate reverting to disbelief after having been saved from it by Allah, as he would hate being cast into the fire."⁹

Whoever truly loves Allah and His Messenger from the depth of their heart will, of a necessity, love whatever

Allah and His Messenger love; loathe what they loathe; find pleasure with what pleases them; and be filled with indignation towards whatever may vex them. The limbs will then comply with what this love and loathing necessitate. If, however, the deeds of the limbs flout any of this; or to put it another way, if an act that Allah and His Messenger loathe has been committed, or if an act that Allah and His Messenger love is neglected - believing in its obligation and possessing the ability [to avoid or fulfill the act] - then this indicates a deficiency in the mandatory level of love. One must, thus, repent from such [act or omission] and return to fulfilling the obligatory aspect of love.

Said Abu Ya'qūb al-Nahrujūrī: "One who claims to love Allah, but does not comply with the Divine commands, his claim is false. And every lover that doesn't fear Allah is living in delusion."¹⁰

Yahyā ibn Mu'adh remarked: "That person is not truthful who claims to love Allah, yet does not safeguard His limits."

Ruwaym was once asked about Divine love; he said: "It is to comply [with the Divine Will] in all circumstances." He then recited this couplet:

*"If it was said to me, 'Die!' I'd like to die in obedience;
Then I could say to death's caller: 'Welcome!'"*

And one of the earlier pietists versified:

*"You disobey Allah and pretend to love Him;
This is an impossible and bizzare affair.
If your love were true, you would obey Him;
For lovers always obey the ones they love."*

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END NOTES

* *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa'l-Ḥikam* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1998), 2:395-97. Translation: Surkheel Sharif.

1. Qur'an 4:65.
2. Qur'an 33:36.

3. Qur'an 4:79.
4. Qur'an 47:28.
5. Al-Bukhārī, no.15; Muslim, no.44.
6. Qur'an 9:24.
7. Qur'an 3:31.
8. Cited in al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, no.6845.
9. Al-Bukhārī, no.16; Muslim, no.43.
10. Cited in Abu Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, 10:356.



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