



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Love



Valentine's Day, February 14, is traditionally a day about love. But every day is a good day to love God. As much as we love our children, our parents, our spouses, our family and friends, or even material things like our job—we must love God the most.

[2:165] Yet, some people set up idols to rival GOD, and love them as if they are GOD. Those who believe love GOD the most. If only the transgressors could see themselves when they see the retribution! They will realize then that all power belongs to GOD alone, and that GOD's retribution is awesome.

What can start out as love (e.g., for prophets), can end up as idolatry. If you search the internet for "love Je-

sus" or "love Muhammad", there are plenty of blasphemous pages dedicated to loving them.

Prophets and saints aren't the only ones that people idolize through love. Sometimes, humans idolize their spouses or their children. Or we can idolize (love too much) money or material things in general.

[89:17-20] Wrong! It is you who brought it on yourselves by not regarding the orphan. And not advocating charity towards the poor. And consuming the inheritance of helpless orphans. And loving the money too much.

Our Children Can be Idols [7:189-92] He created you from one person (Adam). Subsequently, He gives every man a mate to find tranquility with her. She then carries a light load that she can hardly notice. As the load gets heavier, they implore GOD their Lord: "If You give us a good baby, we will be appreciative." But when He gives them a good baby, they turn His gift into an idol that rivals Him. GOD be exalted, far above any partnership. Is it not a fact that they are idolizing idols who create nothing, and are themselves created? Idols that can neither help them, nor even help themselves?

It's not that we can't enjoy God's provisions or love our family. God is the One who puts love and care towards them into our hearts (30:21). God is the One who designed believers to be members of one family. Submitter brothers and sisters love each other; we are all members, God willing, of the eternal family. But we need to love God the most. And it's logical. If we believe that anyone can help us in any way or that the source of the help is from other than God, that would be committing idol worship. We know what happened when Joseph thought the wine-butler prisoner could help him (12:36-42). It's a lesson for us. We must remember the statement in Al-Fatehah: *[1:5] You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help.*

If we think about it logically: Who gave us the child or the spouse or the believing family? It's "His gift" (7:190). Who gave us and them a heart and mind so they can feel the compassion, caring or appreciation? Can we control anyone's minds or hearts or even make someone love us? Who allows the relationship to be a source of joy? Who lasts forever, even if the spouse or child turns away?

[18:46] Money and children are the joys

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of this life, but the righteous works provide an eternal recompense from your Lord, and a far better hope.

[9:24] Proclaim: "If your parents, your children, your siblings, your spouses, your family, the money you have earned, a business you worry about, and the homes you cherish are more beloved to you than GOD and His messenger, and the striving in His cause, then just wait until GOD brings His judgment." GOD does not guide the wicked people.*

**9:24 Since the odds are overwhelming against any human being to actually believe and devote the worship to God alone (12:103, 106), it is virtually impossible to see a whole family believe. Thus, most believers have been faced with the question: "Either me or God and His messenger." This question is consistently stated by spouses of the believers, or their parents, their children, etc. Consistently, the believers made the right choice. This is a mandatory test for all believers (29:2).*

Moses and his brother Aaron give us a good example of the role people play in our lives, and why we love them, but how it's ultimately all about God. Moses asked for the support of his brother so that they might both glorify and remember and commemorate God together, as partners.

[20:29-35] "And appoint an assistant for me from my family. My brother Aaron. Strengthen me with him. Let him be my partner in this matter. That we may glorify You frequently. And commemorate You frequently. You are Seer of us."

All of the things of this world, such as provisions, should help us to praise God more and appreciate and thank Him more, and therefore love Him more.

So, what is love? Wikipedia on love **breaks it up into: "human bonding", "cultural views", "religious aspects", and the philosophical theories of why love exists and whether it's rational.** We can conclude that the comprehensive concept of love is broad and difficult to define. Understanding what

God tells us He loves (or does not), helps us understand love better.

In light of the Quran, who does God not love? The aggressors (2:190), disbelievers (3:32), unjust (3:57, 42:40), betrayers/guilty (4:107, 8:58, 22:38), wasters (6:141), gluttons (7:31), transgressors (7:55), unappreciative (22:38), arrogant (28:76), corruptors (2:205, 28:77), boastful/proud (57:23).

And who does God love? The charitable (2:195, 3:134), just (49:9), repenters, clean (2:222), righteous (3:76, 5:93, 9:4, 9:7), steadfast (3:146), good doers (3:148), benevolent (5:13), equitable (5:42, 60:8), those who purify themselves (9:108), trust in Him (3:159), and fight in His cause united in one column (61:4).

These are characteristics that God finds pleasing, and they are also commandments. They work for the soul, and they also teach us good behavior that works in any dimension or any relationship of love and trust.

[3:148] Consequently, GOD granted them the rewards of this world, and the better rewards of the Hereafter. GOD loves the good doers.

God willing, we view every day as an opportunity to love our Most Gracious, Most Merciful Creator. To seek to please God, to trust in Him, and love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Mark 12:29-30, Quran 3:18). And to be among those in: *[3:31] Proclaim: "If you love GOD, you should follow me." GOD will then love you, and forgive your sins. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

[5:54] O you who believe, if you revert from your religion, then GOD will substitute in your place people whom He loves and who love Him. They will be kind with the believers, stern with the disbelievers, and will strive in the cause of GOD without fear of any blame. Such is GOD's blessing; He bestows it upon whomever He wills. GOD is Bounteous, Omniscient.

[19:96] Surely, those who believe and lead a righteous life, the Most Gracious will shower them with love.

Way of Life

What is so fascinating about Islam (Submission) is the simplicity with which it encompasses our life. It is not just mosque-based "only on Fridays", or like the Church which hits home on Sundays. It does not encourage hermitism (57:27) and seclusion from the world as an exhibition of faith. It is not restricted to prayers and rituals alone but spread over the entire scope of life. Any step or deed we do for the sake of God is an act of worship. We will be duly rewarded or punished for all our actions performed in our lifetime as our activities are closely scrutinised by our Creator.

[50:16-18] We created the human, and we know what he whispers to himself. We are closer to him than his jugular vein. Two recording (angels), at right and at left, are constantly recording. Not an utterance does he utter without an alert witness.

Many people get lost in the ceremonial aspects and the detail of rituals and miss "the big picture" or purpose behind them. If one tiny detail is missed or a hair left unwashed during ablution, it need not become a federal case. At the same time you cannot live "footloose and fancy-free". You do need to sincerely follow your worship practices.

Our acts of worship should, God willing, change our thinking and behaviour. If there is no significant transformation or improvement it means that we are not receptive (83:14). Take an example — we use a sharp knife to cut a slice of fruit and it does so cleanly. Later, the fruit is covered with a steel mesh and the same knife is used to cut it. It cannot cut it. The knife has not lost its capability but the fruit has lost its receptivity. The same is with the case of prayer.

[2:45] You shall seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). This is difficult indeed, but not so for the reverent.

Faiz

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To get a crop we first have to sow the seeds. God provides us the sunshine and the water. And for us, God has planted a seed of monotheism.

[30:30] Therefore, you shall devote yourself to the religion of strict monotheism. Such is the natural instinct placed into the people by GOD. Such creation of GOD will never change. This is the perfect religion, but most people do not know.

Then we must nourish it with the practices—Salat, Zakat, Fasting, Zikr and Hajj. *[33:41-42] O you who believe, you shall remember GOD frequently. You shall glorify Him day and night.*

Another appealing feature of Islam is the concept of moderation and equivalence. There is no inflexibility of thought. We have the commandments of God which includes living in peace with and taking care of family, friends and the poor. Take our daily prayer schedule and the Jum'ah congregational prayer. What an effective device we are given to use as a "template for time management." We should schedule our worldly activities around this and God willing, it will work out. Your total time spent on the five daily Contact Prayers (*Salat*), including time for wudu, takes no more than 20 minutes per day. If the prayer is our priority, it will not interfere with our school, work or play.

If you are having a "bad hair day" or worse, focus on Zikr (commemoration of God). Centre on it and experience the amazing power it has to cool you off. Use it to connect with the Almighty, and a great tranquility will descend on you.

[15:98-99] You shall sing the praises of your Lord, and be with the prostrators. And worship your Lord, in order to attain certainty.

These rituals are better than the best worldly mood elevators. God does not need us to be grateful to Him; He is far above all needs.

[35:15] O people, you are the ones who need GOD, while GOD is in no need for anyone, the Most Praiseworthy.

[29:6] Those who strive, strive for their own good. GOD is in no need for anyone.

If we are thankful and grateful for God's favours and bounties it is for our own benefit.

[14:7] Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you." But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe. It is the foundation of our faith and submission to God. There is nothing we can do, no matter how benevolent, to add to God's treasury.

[15:21] There is nothing that we do not own infinite amounts thereof. But we send it down in precise measure.

We need to thank God for the guidance He has sent us — in the Quran (2:185), or through those He chooses to do His work (2:150-152), such as prophets, messengers, saints, the ones inspired by Him, and so much more. When we give thanks we show in our conduct and behavior that we appreciate the bounties of God and we are ready to use them in a manner most pleasing to Him. We improve our condition now and in the all important Hereafter.

We need to concentrate when performing Salat and studying the Quran. Remember God is watching us at all times. Even a tiny act done with good intent may carry more weight with God than grand acts done without sincerity of purpose. *[2:225] GOD does not hold you responsible for the mere utterance of oaths; He holds you responsible for your innermost intentions. GOD is Forgiver, Clement.*

We have a responsibility to live our life in sync with the Decrees of God. We have to be patient, persevere and be steadfast. Implore God to strengthen our hearts and souls and strengthen us. *[29:45] You shall recite what is revealed to you of the scripture, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), for the Contact Prayers prohibit evil and vice. But the remembrance of GOD (through Salat) is the most important objective. GOD knows everything you do.* There is a moral and spiritual impact. We can't perform our 5 daily Salats and then carry on doing grave sins, because it indicates that the

prayer has no moral and spiritual impact. Yet the Most Merciful gives us so many chances to repent and reform.

God is the core of Islam around which all Quranic teachings revolve. The unifying theme therein is that wherever we are and whatever we do, we must seek to please God alone. *[6:162] Say, "My Contact Prayers (Salat), my worship practices, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to GOD alone, the Lord of the universe.*

[2:207] Then there are those who dedicate their lives to serving GOD; GOD is compassionate towards such worshippers.

Try to commit yourself to God, work towards what you want and pray for it. Take your effort and your prayer, gift wrap it nicely and present it to God. Leave the net result, after that, to God. What He does with it, is His will. We have to accept it with thanks if it comes true and be patient if it does not, always keeping in mind that God is Omniscient, Most Wise and there will always be benefit for us.

[57:11] Who would like to loan GOD a loan of righteousness, to have it multiplied for him manifold, and end up with a generous recompense?

[9:72] GOD promises the believing men and the believing women gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever, and magnificent mansions in the gardens of Eden. And GOD's blessings and approval are even greater. This is the greatest triumph.

Alim

[4:147] What will GOD gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? GOD is Appreciative, Omniscient.

[35:30] He will recompense them generously, and will multiply His blessings upon them. He is Forgiving, Appreciative.

[35:34] They will say, "Praise GOD for removing all our worries. Our Lord is Forgiving, Appreciative.

MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel: (520) 323 7636

internet web site www.masjiduntucson.org

e-mail: info@masjiduntucson.org masjiduntucson@gmail.com

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ORPHANS

I was sitting here thanking the Almighty for my kids and praying to God that they all find their correct way to God and for Him to have mercy on them like He had mercy on bringing them to us in the first place. I know that we gave the message to all of our kids—ten boys and one girl—and they all accepted Islam. But some have gotten affiliated with different sects. They know the message of worship God alone, but I pray they truly choose to be with God alone.

Most of them came from foster homes and others from the streets. It was God who put it in my heart to adopt these children, and I had a husband who felt the same way. We never had our own birth children, but God says in the Quran to raise them as your own (33:5), and we did that. We gave plenty of love and guidance from God alone; exposed them to many things such as travel, different people and ideas; and all my brothers and sisters in submission helped throughout the years (2:215), so we could do all the things we did with them. They all read Quran and tried to follow it, but this society continues to fall under the sway of Satan. This is why I pray for them. All of them came with different hardships and abuse or neglect. We were poor in money, so we did not have worldly gifts to give to our children (2:220, 4:5-6). But we gave all we could, and that meant giving them the message of God alone. We raised

them up as believers, doing Salat and Zakat, following Quran alone. Now it's up to them to continue on God's path.

A lot of times I wish I could have given them a college education, a house, a car, a big bank account. But we couldn't, and off in this big world they went. The boys and my daughter are grown now and responsible adults, praise God. Thank You, God, for all the help with all the orphans You had me be guardian over. I may have been their worldly guardian, but the One truly watching over my children and all our children is God. They all knew the message. I thank God and the believers for all their support. To those who have orphan children, just remember to continue to trust in God alone, and God will bring you all through A-OK, like He brought my family. Never despair of God's mercy and grace.

[4:127] They consult you concerning women: say, "GOD enlightens you regarding them, as recited for you in the scripture. You shall restore the rights of orphaned girls whom you cheat out of their due dowries when you wish to marry them: you shall not take advantage of them. The rights of orphaned boys must also be protected as well. You shall treat the orphans equitably. Whatever good you do, GOD is fully aware thereof."

[93:5-11] And your Lord will give you enough; you will be pleased. Did He not find you orphaned and He gave you a home? He found you astray, and guided you. He found you poor, and

made you rich. Therefore, you shall not forsake the orphan. Nor shall you reprimand the beggar. You shall proclaim the blessing your Lord has bestowed upon you.

And remember the story of Moses and his teacher and how God protected the orphaned boys. *[18:82] "As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city. Under it, there was a treasure that belonged to them. Because their father was a righteous man, your Lord wanted them to grow up and attain full strength, then extract their treasure. Such is mercy from your Lord. I did none of that of my own volition. This is the explanation of the things you could not stand."*

[Bible James 1:26-27] If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

[Psalm 146:9] The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Dedicated to God, and for my children: Sharonne, the twins Cecil and Cedrick, Dewaun, Aaron, Tiwaun, Chavez, Nigel, Cedric, Eric, and Shannon, who died at age 19.

Carolyn