

LOVE OF GOD AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT (PART 1 OF 2)

Rating: 4.9

Description: Types of love, what does loving Allah mean and what it necessitates, and the relationship between love of Allah and worship.

Category: [Lessons](#) › [Increasing faith](#) › [Means to increasing faith](#)

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Objectives

- To understand the different types of love.
- To understand what is meant by the love of Allah and what it necessitates.
- To appreciate how the love of Allah is different from other forms of love.
- To understand the relationship between the love of Allah and worship.

Arabic Terms

- Hajj* – A pilgrimage to Mecca where the pilgrim performs a set of rituals. The *Hajj* is one of the five pillars of Islam, which every adult Muslim must undertake at least once in their life if they can afford it and are physically able.
- Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.

Love is such a rich phenomenon that some scholars suggest that it has no definition, it is known only by its effects. Love is categorized into different types in Islamic worldview. Some forms of love are healthy and encouraged, yet others are blameworthy. Some people or things we love are natural and we have no control over, whereas others build over time and develop into strong relationships.

The first type of love is emotional love, such as the love for one's parents, children, and spouse. However it may vary in a sense, for example, the love of a mother for her child will be different from the love one has towards his or her spouse. In married couples, the love will be stronger if the spouse has qualities valued by the other like beauty, wealth, stability, or religious commitment. This type of love is not within one's control. One is not responsible in front of Allah for loving one child more than the others.^[1]

Love for one's parents is also natural since a child has an innate inclination to love his parents. A child gets love and security from them and realizes the hardship they went

through to raise them. By extension, one also loves his relatives and family members.

The second type of love is romantic love which can further divided into two types. The first type is when someone is in love with another person, yet the person fears Allah, and does not indulge in anything Allah has forbidden and remains chaste. The best solution for someone genuinely in love is to get married to the person if possible. If it is not meant to be, one must turn away from them for fear of falling into something forbidden by Allah.

The second type is when romantic love turns into an obsession. Obsessions in most cases take control of the person and become their main purpose of existence. Thus obsessive 'love' is forbidden and sinful. Scholars consider it to be an ailment of the heart that afflicts a heart empty of Allah's love. Islamic Law has laid many safety nets to protect people from such destructive emotions that they themselves can not control.

The last category is the most sublime and pure form of love, the love of Allah. A Muslim should keep a few simple points in their mind:

First, love of Allah is not optional; it is required of every Muslim. It is an integral component of one's faith as Allah states in the Quran:

"...But those who believe, love Allah more (than anything else)...." (Quran 2:165)

Second, love of Allah is different from all the above categories of love. Love of Allah is not a claim to be made; it is something that resides in the heart. The learned scholars of Islam consider love to be an 'action' of the heart, something that actually motivates the heart and moves a person to obey Allah and leave sins. Love of Allah is strongly related with the concept of worship in Islam and one's faith. Worship is the fruit of a person's love of Allah, and love of Allah in reciprocate is its aim. Love is the fuel behind worship that keeps it from becoming a habit. ALL acts of devotion, worship, and obedience spring from its fountain. The very definition of worship states that it is everything Allah loves and is pleased with. Love enters every good work we do. When we offer *salah*, read Quran, fast, perform *Hajj*, give charity, or remember Allah, His love should be part of it.

Third, love of Allah is different from natural, emotional types of love described above.

True love of Allah is always combined with a feeling of awe in front of divine majesty and glory, a feeling of insignificance in front of divine might. On the other hand, love for one's spouse or child is not coupled with such feelings of awe. What this means is that a person does not just say, 'I love God' and leave it there, but actually carries out what Allah loves and leaves what Allah has forbidden, because a person realizes Allah's might and ability to punish.

Fourth, love of Allah supersedes love for anyone else. Whenever there is a conflict between the two, a person must give precedence to what Allah loves.

Fifth, the more a person obeys Allah and worships Him the more his love for Allah will grow.

Footnotes:

[1]

The parent is not, however, allowed to favor one child over another in terms of gifts or treatment. Islam requires that all children must be treated equally. Loving one child over another is simply a matter of the heart that one has no control over.

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