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The Importance of loving the Messenger ﷺ **By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)**

Allah ﷻ is perfect in all of His characteristics and He is the Master of all the treasures of heaven and earth. He is the merciful One, who bestows countless blessings upon mankind.

If Allah ﷻ did not guide us, we would be misguided; if He did not give us hearing, we would be deaf; if He did not give us speech, we would be dumb; if He did not give us sense, we would be mad; if He did not give us legs, we would be lame; if He did not give us hair, we would be bald; if He did not give us sustenance, we would be in despair; if He did not give us beauty, we would be ugly; if He did not give us health, we would be sick; if He did not give us children, we would be barren; and if He did not give us honor, we would be dishonored.

Everything that man possesses is only due to the grace of Allah ﷻ. It is indeed a great favor of Allah ﷻ upon mankind that he sent among them His Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Love Allah ﷻ because He bestowed upon you favors and blessings, and love me for His sake” The meaning of this *hadith* is that we should love the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because Allah ﷻ loves him.

*Love for the Messenger is the surest path to liberty;
Of settling in the Land of Tawheed.*

Whoever loves the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is in actuality valuing this immense favor of Allah ﷻ, and whosoever recognizes the tremendous value of Allah’s ﷻ favors is always given more. Allah ﷻ said:

If you are grateful, I will add more (favors) unto you (14:7)

Allah ﷻ bestows an even greater favor upon us when we realize the value of loving the Prophet ﷺ. This greater favor is the *muhabbah* and pleasure of Allah ﷻ. Hence, a connection with the Prophet ﷺ means that we are establishing a connection with Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

Verily those who plight their fealty to you do no less than plight their fealty to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands (48:10)

A poet penned the following verses:

I will be yours if you but pledge loyalty to Muhammad,

What value is this universe? Even My Lawh and My Qalam will be yours.¹

Those Companions (*Sahabah*) who swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ actually swore allegiance to Allah ﷻ. One time during battle, the Prophet ﷺ threw a handful of dust towards the unbelievers as a way of rallying his troops behind him. Allah ﷻ said in reference:

When you threw (a handful of dust), it was not your act, but Allah's (8:17)

Proofs from the Holy Quran

1) Allah ﷻ said:

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves (33:6)

This is a spiritual affinity and not a physical one. The best commentary on this verse can be found in *Hadrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi's* ﷺ book *Abe Hayat*.

2) Allah ﷻ said:

Say (O Muhammad), 'If you do love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful' (3:31)

It is stated in the book *Arais ul Bayan*, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If you claim to love Allah ﷻ and are true in your claim, then follow me. I am the master of lovers, the crown of the truthful, the leader of the Messengers, and the guide of the seekers of truth. I will show you everything that is harmful on this path and all that will earn you salvation. I will teach you the rules of observation (of Truth), the secrets of attaining closeness (to Allah ﷻ), and instruct you in righteousness, proper worship, and the best of etiquettes and courtesy so that they may assist you in your path, because Allah ﷻ has revealed the signs of *muhabbah* to me. I am filled with the radiance (*nur*) of His closeness. Obedience to me is indeed showing gratitude for the love of the Beloved (Allah ﷻ). When you show your gratitude this way, then Allah ﷻ will advance you in true love and comprehension"

Our scholars (*ulama*) stated that the heart should be cooked in the fire of desire, and the lover's spirit should come to a boil in this fire. Loving and following the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be as intense as this fire. For example, if a master orders his servant to fetch some groceries in the heat of the day, the servant will certainly fulfill his master's wishes, but only to save his job. He will still complain to himself that the intense heat of the day is no time in which to ask someone to do such a task.

In another situation, a *shaykh* tells his student to go fetch groceries, but tells him to wait

¹ This is a poem written by Iqbal in which Allah ﷻ is replying to a Muslim who had complained to Allah ﷻ that He was not helping the Muslims in their hour of distress. *Lawh* is the Book in which Allah ﷻ has written the destiny of the universe whereas *Qalam* is His Pen.

until the sun has set so that the weather is cooler. The student agrees, but still proceeds in the intense heat because of his strong devotion. This is called fellowship and obedience.

*Fascinating is the love for the King of Madinah,
This is the stairwell leading to the Love of Allah.
He whose breast is scented with this love,
He possesses control over his destiny.*

3) Allah ﷻ 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 way, then wait until Allah brings about His command. Allah does not guide the rebellious (9:24)

Islam is the perfect religion that understands people and their needs. This is why Islam does not order us to break kinship ties or ties with our elders and the community, such as is prescribed in other religions that permit monasticism. Islam rejects this theory of isolation from the world and holds that the way to Allah ﷻ is not through jungles and caves, but through the streets and markets. Man's destiny is much higher than that suggested by monasticism.

The world and its attractions are by no means forbidden, but what is forbidden is to become immersed in them to such a degree that they interfere with a person and his relationship with Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ. This world and all that it contains is to be forsaken if it proves to interfere with one's love for Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

*Your lover wants nothing from this world,
All that he wants are the imprints of your footsteps*

Proofs from *Hadith*

1) *Hadrat* Anas رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

He who has three things will be able to taste the sweetness of faith: he loves Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ more than anything else; whomever he loves he loves only for the sake of Allah ﷻ; and he loathes associating anything with Allah ﷻ as much as he loathes being thrown into the fire.

- *Hadrat* Bilal رضي الله عنه was granted the blessing of reciting the Testament of Faith (*Kalimah*) upon his death because of his enormous sacrifices for Islam.
- A *Sahabi* saw a thief stealing a horse, yet he did not interrupt his prayer because the latter was more valuable.
- A *Sahabi* guarding an army patrol was reciting *Surah al-Kahf* in his prayer when he was struck repeatedly with arrows. He later said that he would have finished the prayer through the tremendous pain had he not been worried that he would faint and hence not been able to warn his sleeping companions.

- *Shaykh Ibrahim bin Adham* رحمته الله used to say, “If the kings of this time were to find out how much peace and contentment this remembrance (*dhikr*) gives us, they would bring their armies to try and take it away from us.”

2) *Hadrat Anas* رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

No one among you is a believer unless he loves me more than his ancestors, his children, and all others.

Nowadays it is for the love of his wife and children that a man is willing to bear and sacrifice all. He is even willing to purchase Hell because of them, in that he is willing to engage in wrongful deeds.

In one narration, it has been recorded that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم supplicated to Allah عز وجل and asked to be united with his lovers. Hearing this, *Hadrat Thauban* رضي الله عنه said, “O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, we are your lovers and we are here, so who is it that you are asking to be united with?” The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “O Thauban - you have seen me; you have seen the revelation of the Holy Quran. You have seen angels descend from the heavens and you have enjoyed the honor of my company. Indeed your faith is very precious. Near the End time, however, there will be some people who will not have seen me and will only have read about me in books. These people will love me so much that if it were possible to buy just one glance of me by selling their children, they would do it. Thauban, these are the lovers whom I am praying to meet.”

3) In another *hadith*, *Hadrat Umar* رضي الله عنه asked the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, “Is my faith perfect? You are dearer to me than everything except my own life.” The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم answered:

I swear by Him whose hand my life is in, no one can have perfect faith unless he loves me more than anything, even his own life.

Upon reflection, *Hadrat Umar* رضي الله عنه realized that he already considered the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم life more valuable than his own because he was ready to lay down his life in the service of his Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. *Hadrat Umar* رضي الله عنه trembled in awe and said, “Now you are dearer to me than even my own life.” The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Now your faith is complete.”

Love for the Prophet ﷺ is the first condition of the True Deen, Any deficiency in this will render everything incomplete.

An Arab bedouin asked the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, “When will the Last Day come?” The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم in turn asked him, “What preparations have you made?” The bedouin replied, “I have neither many prayers nor many fasts, but I love Allah عز وجل and His Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.” The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied:

A Man will be with whomever he loves.

The *Sahabah* said that this *hadith* gave them the most joy after having accepted Islam. If this is not true happiness for a lover, then what is?

On one occasion, *Hadrat* Thauban رضي الله عنه came to the Prophet ﷺ very saddened. When questioned, he replied that his heart would become heavy whenever deprived of the Prophet's ﷺ company. He continued that he himself would be at a lower station in Paradise whereas the Prophet ﷺ would be at the highest stage. *Hadrat* Thauban رضي الله عنه then said, "What joy will there be in Paradise if we are deprived of your presence?" The Prophet ﷺ was quiet and the Angel Jibril عليه السلام descended with the verse:

All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the grace of Allah, of the Prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of truth), the Witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good). O What a beautiful fellowship! (4:69)

Intellectual Proof

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

In the beginning Allah ﷻ created my nur.

Hadrat Maulana Qasim Nanotvi رحمته الله described this in his poetry:

*Before everything, with the radiance of Allah ﷻ,
The essence of the Messenger ﷺ was defined.
Taking a portion from this essence,
The assembly of the universe was convened.*

If one does not know the laws of right and wrong, he should turn to his heart for guidance. The heart will never approve of that which is wrong, except those hearts that have been rusted with evil and therefore cannot tell the difference. True guidance is received if the heart is truthful and enlightened, and then the believer can feel love for the Prophet ﷺ. All of creation is immersed in love for the Prophet ﷺ.

When sacrificing camels after the Prophet's ﷺ last sermon, the *Sahabah* were surprised to see that the camels were fighting with one another, inching their necks forward to be the first ones sacrificed.

*My head under your foot at the time of slaughter,
O what a destiny! Indeed a place to fight for.*

When animals came before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they would tell him their desires and complaints. A camel once came to him and laid his head at his feet, moving his mouth as if saying something. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stroked the camel's head in comfort, then looked up at the *Sahabah* and said, "Fetch this camel's master. He is complaining that his master does not feed him sufficiently and overworks him."

Prior to a pulpit being built for the Prophet ﷺ, he used to deliver his Friday sermons

leaning against the trunk of a date palm tree. When a pulpit was built and the Prophet ﷺ started delivering his sermons leaning against the pulpit instead, the *Sahabah* were surprised when they heard loud wailing coming from the date palm. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ walked over to the tree and caressed it gently as if in comfort, and only then did the tree stop weeping.

Trees were often seen bowing in greeting to the Prophet ﷺ as he walked by, and they used to bend to shade him against the sun on particularly hot days. While gazing at Mount Uhud, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

This mountain loves us, and we love it.

Paper and ink would become exhausted but we would not be done detailing the debt that we owe the Prophet ﷺ or the reasons for loving him.