

The Prophet's Love

Other than the faith in and following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), another dimension of our relationship with him is our love for him. In Islam, having faith and following his commandments is not acceptable without love. In certain circumstances, following without love is hypocrisy. Love with the Prophet should not be a formality. This love must be dominant over all other loves. The closest relation and the most favorite things should be considered nothing in front of this love. Everything must be sacrificed for this love, but it should not be sacrificed for anything. Quran describes the standard for this kind of love.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

O Prophet, tell them: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your relatives, the wealth that you have acquired, the business in which you fear a loss, and the homes which you like are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger, and making Jihad (struggle) in His Way, then wait until Allah brings about His decision. Allah does not guide the transgressors. (Al Tauba 9:24)

Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) explained this reality in different ahadith (plural of hadith, a description of Prophet's saying or practice).

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا يؤمن احدكم حتى اكون احب اليه من والده وولده و الناس اجمعين (بخارى، مسلم، مشكوة)

Prophet said: None of you can become a perfect believer unless he loves me more than his parents, children and all other human beings.

Another hadith is:

ثلاث من كن فيه وجد حلاوة الإيمان: أن يكون الله ورسوله أحب إليه مما سواهما، [وأن يحب المرء لا يحبه إلا الله، وأن يكره أن يعود في الكفر كما يكره أن يقذف في النار.] (بخارى، مسلم)

The person possessing these three attributes will enjoy the sweetness of faith: (1) (S)he loves Allah and His prophet more than anyone else; [(2) (S)he loves anyone only for the sake of God; (3) (S)he hates returning back to disbelieve like his / her hate for burning in fire.]

Here it must be clarified that the love of Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) under discussion is not like the emotional love of a person with his family or relatives. It is a rational and a principle-oriented love that anyone has with some principle. Based on this association, (s)he keeps this principle and view point above all priorities. (S)he sacrifices everything, every other principle, his / her all desires and decisions for this principle, but does not sacrifice this principle for anything.

For the dominance of this principle of Prophet's love, (s)he leaves everything at low priority and does not accept this principle at a lower priority. If his/her own emotions resist in following this principle, (s)he fights with them. If the demands of his/her family are in contradiction with this

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principle, (s)he always prioritize this principle and rejects the demand of his / her family or nation.

Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ والہ وسلم) himself clarified that this love is principle-oriented and rational.

من احب سنتی فقد احبنی و من احبنی کان معی فی الجنة. (ترمذی)

The person who loves with my path (sunnah), actually loves me. The person who loves me will be with me in the Paradise.

The Love without Following & the Following without Love

From this detail, it is clear that our faithful relationship with the Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ والہ وسلم) cannot be established without the basis of having faith in him, following him, adopting his practice and loving him. It can be derived from various indications that the “following-without-love” is hypocrisy and the “love-without-following” is a deviation from his religion.

Quran contains clear verdicts that the following-without-love is a form of hypocrisy. When Islam established a political state at Madina, various villagers from the outskirts of Madina started following the Islamic laws and teachings. This submission was merely due to political reasons, not on the basis of a sincere and trustworthy faith in and love with Allah and His Prophet.

On various occasions, they claimed that they were doing a favor to the Prophet and Islam and thus were believers. Quran asked the Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ والہ وسلم) to tell them that a person cannot become a ‘believer’ if he accepts the submission to Islamic law. Sincerity and love is an essential condition to become a true ‘believer’. Your minds and hearts are free from this sincerity and love, therefore, your claim for faith is not correct.

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ -

The Bedouin Arabs say: "We have believed." Tell them: "You have not believed; rather say 'We have submitted (to law);' for faith has not yet found its way into your hearts. (Al Hujurat 49:14)

اسلام کا خطرہ، محض ایک وہم یا حقیقت۔ جان ایل ایسپوزیٹو امریکہ کے ایک ماہر ہیں۔ ان کی تحقیق کا میدان 'مذہب اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات' ہیں۔ دیگر مغربی دانشوروں کے مقابلے میں، مصنف اسلام اور مسلمانوں کے بارے میں مثبت اور حقیقت پسندانہ خیالات کے حامل ہیں۔ یہ تحریر ان کی ایک کتاب کے تعارف اور تلخیص پر مشتمل ہے۔ مصنف نے بڑی دقت نظر سے اسلامی تاریخ اور دور جدید کی مسلم تحریکوں کا جائزہ لے کر یہ ثابت کیا ہے کہ اسلام اہل مغرب کے لئے خطرہ نہیں ہے۔

The other side of this coin, “the ‘love-without-following’ is a deviation from the Prophet’s religion”, is derived from various verses and ahadith.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ -

Tell the people O Muhammad: "If you sincerely love Allah, then follow me; Allah will also love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (Aal Imran 3:31)

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من احب سنتى فقد احبنى و من احبنى كان معى فى الجنة. (ترمذى)

The person who loves with my path (the Sunnah), actually loves me. The person who loves me will be with me in the Paradise.]

In this verse, Quran has described the method of loving God i.e. following the Prophet. Without adopting the practices of Prophet, all methods of loving God are deviations from the religion.

Similarly the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) clarified in this hadith that the method of loving the Prophet is that that one only loves him if (s)he follows his teachings and acts according to them. In certain other ahadith, he forbade any extremism in his love similar to the extremism of some Christians in love of Prophet Jesus (عليه الصلوة والسلام).

It is clear from the instructions of the Prophet himself, that the claim of those people, who claim that they love the Prophet but do not follow his practices, is not true. If there is some truth in their claim, then their love without following is a baseless love. If they have invented certain practices which are not according to what the Prophet preached, it is a deviation from the religion. And it is similar to the Christians who, in love of Prophet Jesus, promoted him from the rank of a 'Prophet' to the rank of 'the son of God'.

The love of Prophet's companions to him, was not only merely rational love, but it was emotional love as well. Their emotions never caused them to trespass the limits imposed by the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophet's practices).

On one hand they accepted the extremes troubles that they had to suffer without any complains but even a thorn in the Prophets foot caused them grief. While protecting the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) they used to take the arrows on their own bodies. They used to protect the Prophet at the cost of their own lives. Even women used to protect the Prophet at the cost of their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers.

On the other hand, the practice of Prophet was so important for them, that they used to take care of Prophet's likes and dislikes. Anas (رضى الله عنه) reported:

عن انس قال لم يكن شخص احب اليهم من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وكانوا اذا راوه لم يقوموا لما يعلمون من كراهيته لذلك. (مشكوة بحواله ترمذى)

Anas said: The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) was the most beloved person among his companions but they never stood up for his respect because they knew that he dislikes it.

Based on your capabilities, you should accept the position which you do not deserve. Abu Hanifa

If we look at the Muslims of modern world, we will find that their majority claims to have faith in the Prophet but they do not follow his practice. They claim to love the Prophet but following Sunnah is not important to them. They have invented a few rituals from their own instead of following the Prophet. Some people celebrate his birthday, some cook and distribute food in his name, whereas some organize rallies and pronounce slogans in his name.... They consider that these things are enough to demonstrate their faith in and love with Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم).

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You can find various people, who never perform the prayer, but they conduct congregations on his birthday to praise him. They do not pay the Zakat (the mandatory charity) on their wealth, but they spend thousands of dollars on the deviations they conduct in the name of Prophet.

They never try to read the Book of God and the ahadith of Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and transform their lives in the light of his teachings, but they portray themselves as extreme lovers of Prophet and become adoring when they hear a poem about the Prophet.

This behavior is not limited to a specific class of our society. Our all groups claim to love the Prophet but deviate from his path. Some others claim that they strictly follow the Prophet's Sunnah, but their Sunnah is limited to a few disputed issues. And they spend all their efforts on these petty issues, as Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) was sent by God to convey only these disputed issues.

(This article is adopted from the works of Amin Ahsan Islahi. Excerpts from "Tazkiya-e-Nafs" translated by Mubashir Nazir, reviewed by Muhammad Umar Khan)

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Think about it!

- In your opinion, what are the reasons that people love with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) but ignore his teachings?
- Other than our famous sectarian disputes, identify three practices of our society for the sake of Prophet's love but in fact they are in violation of his teachings.

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