

politics».

The position of affection in the moral and educative system of Islam.

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Abstract:

What is affection? To what extent is it effective? In addition to the current understanding of affection, which is actually a superficial one, does there exist a deeper meaning of affection? This article will try to clarify the point that affection is the master key in morality and religious training and can bias the direction of human life more than what the public conceives. With this view, it has been tried to make these effects clear in various dimensions.

Keywords: affection, love, moral and educative system

Semantics:

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Before entering the important issue of affection, we ought to define it more clearly. While discussing affection we encountered two basic and related concepts that are needed to be analyzed in semantics.

Affection

The term of affection has been variously defined. Some have defined it as a human nature's tendency toward delectable matters. In «Aqrab Al-Mavaared» we have: affection means attraction toward pleasant things».¹

Khajeh abdullah ansari has recounted affection as a kind of innate affiliation that arises from a person's efforts to achieve God's vicinity and revelation of divine illumination in his heart.²

In Bayazid's point of view, affection means an understatement on the self's side and overstatement on the loved one's side.³ Marhoom Naraqı is of the view that affection is human nature's tendency toward the matters of delectation.⁴ Allameh Tabatabaei views affection as an existential attachment, a special practice between a complementary cause and its effect.⁵

While reviewing the viewpoints of a number of mystics we can come to this conclusion that by affection they mean: an intense willingness and affection to the beloved regardless of any recompense on his part. In other words, they have delineated the attraction to be more intense and purer than its definition in

1. Aqrab Al-Mavaared, Vol 1, Page 154, The Term Hobb (love), Chapter of Al Ata'.

2. Abd Al-Razzaq Naraqı, Sharh Manazel Al-Saerin, Page 385.

3. Hussein Seyedi, Semantics of Quranic Terms, Page 195.

4. Mahdi Naraqı, Jame' Al-Sa'dat, Vol 3, Page 131.

5. Hussein Seyedi, Ibid.

dictionaries.

Among the above-mentioned definitions for affection the following can be derived and presented as an introduction to its meaning:

- 1) Affection is a spiritual attribute and a carnal issue belonging to the realm of emotion.
- 2) Affection is a formative phenomenon and a part of human nature, even though it can also be formed adventitiously.
- 3) Affection is a carnal phenomenon that enjoys various states. Unlike love, which is referred to as the optimum state of affection, affection can be weak or strong, according to the extent of its tendency.
- 4) Elegance and perfection are not prerequisites to bring about affection; rather the principle concept of affection is the existential attachment of the beloved to the lover.

Love

The author of «Aqrab-ol-Mavaared» has presented the definition of love as excessiveness in affection. Pointing out that in the Arabic language the word «Love» is derived from the plant name «Convolvulus». The author writes: «Basically love means excessiveness in affection and it is derived from convolvulus which revolves around a tree and sears it.»¹

Love associated with chastity is the same as affection, but while associated with malignancy and debauchery turns into corruption.

1.Saeed Al-Khouri Al-Shartouni Al-Lobnani: Al-Mavaared, Vol 3, Page 577.

In the book entitled «Taj Al–Arous», love is illustrated as a beloved or a lover’s wonderment or in other words excessiveness of affection toward the beloved.

The concept of love in the mystics’ point of view is similar to its literal meaning. In a comprehensive illustration about the concept of love, Sheikh Eshraq states the word «love» in the Arabic language is derived from the plant name «Convolvulus», which is a type of plant that grows in the garden. It initially grows in the garden. Eventually, it extends in growth while circulating the tree ensuring that the entire tree is covered. This makes the tree sear.¹

Others have taken the relationship between love and affection into consideration and laid additional emphasis on the point that emergence of love entails beauty of the beloved.

Another group has accentuated that love is not optional.

«Love and its beloved are not optional; love is not the way you think it is, You, who are aware of nothing, love is meant to grow, not to create.»

To summarize, the following can be outlined as the definition of love:

- * Love is one of the spiritual states, belonging to the emotional aspect as opposed to the cognitive and/or behavioral aspects.
- * In spite of some spiritual states, which can emerge in a person’s relationship with himself, love is generally formed in interaction with other beings.
- * Love is not evolved until the one you are dealing with possesses remarkable physical and spiritual attractiveness. Meanwhile,

what plays a more important role in the emergence of love is interaction with other people as well as in daily life.

* Love is not something optional. We encounter numerous statements by poets and mystics in this regard.

* Love has such disturbing effects on the mental equilibrium that in some cases we see that lovers suffer from mental disorders.

* In the case of interaction with others, love leads to illegal relations, sexual corruption, and debauchery unless canonical and moral traits are taken into consideration.

Affection's position in the moral and educative system in Islam

Affection is the basis and foundation of religion

In Islam's point of view, one of the most genuine and basic intentions within the human nature is to like and to love other people and to possess the spirit of being a lover.

The intention to be affectionate enjoys such significance that the Holy Quran has mentioned people's love and affection towards the Holy Prophet's Family as the reward in return for his prophetic mission. «Say, I do not expect any reward, but love toward my family».¹

In normal conditions, worldly desires have consumed mankind and the love for this world has restricted them like a chain. The sole power, relying on which humans can break the chain of passions and free himself from the devil's temptation, is intense fascination and a tendency towards someone else, who is in contrast with worldly desires. Undoubtedly, no inclination is able

1. Holy Quran, Shura 23.

to play such a crucial role as affectively as affection, particularly affection towards God, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), and his Family (Peace be upon them).

Affection's outstanding and unrivalled stance in religious and moral systems of thought can be clearly found by referring to narrations and prophetic traditions of the Holy Prophet's Family (peace be upon them).

The Holy Prophet asked his companions: Which can be thought of as the most substantial and steady tenets of faith? Each of them mentioned one of the ritual acts such as prayer, fasting, and legal alms and so on to be the most substantial tenets of faith. Reiterating the significance of each and every one of them, the Holy Prophet emphasized that the firmest tenet of all is friendship and animosity for the sake of God. The only thing to be done purely for God's sake is friendship and animosity in His path.¹

The only deed to be purely performed for God is friendship and animosity in His path.

In another tradition it has been narrated that: Almighty God asked Moses: Which of your deeds have you performed for my own sake?

Pointing to all the devotional deeds such as prayer, fasting, etc, Moses regards them as the devotional deeds that he has purely performed for God. In response God says: in return for performing each of these deeds specific reward will be allocated. However, the only deed to be purely performed for God is friendship and

animosity in His path.¹

In another narration, it has been briefly emphasized that affection underlies religion and religion is nothing but affection. One of the companions of Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) patiently endured the discomfort and tribulation of travel to quench the thirst of his love for visiting his beloved Imam. When he met with the Imam, he showed his wounded and blistered feet to the Imam and said: “Nothing caused the endurance of the discomfort of travel and the departing from my homeland but your affection.” Responding to his expression of love, Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) said: “Can religion be known by any other identity than affection?”

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Love of God is life's final destination and ultimate goal

«That's you, who have effaced any kind of tendency and willingness toward anything else, except yourself, from your friend's hearts, so that they are not obsessed with anybody's affection except yours».²

As one of the most controversial and disputable issues among scholars, comprehension of man's ultimate goal and final destination becomes one of the most fundamental element when forming thought and directing emotion and desire.

According to their insight level, religious knowledge, and moral

1. Ibid., page 252.

2. Sheikh Abbas Qumi, Mafatih Al-Jinan, Supplication in Prayer, page 498.

and spiritual growth, religious and eschatology thinkers have also presented a particular perception about the ideal and ultimate goal of life.

In some people's point of view, the ultimate goal of life is achieving heavenly blessings, and in some others' point of view it is being set free from the hellfire.

Another group is of the view that the goal revolves around reaching a level intuition and mysticism towards the Almighty God. Others believe that the final purpose is to mediate the knowledge of the world and create rationalistic insight within the origin. In addition to the above-mentioned ideas, there are some other opinions as well, but in order to be brief we will not mention them and focus on illustrating the relation between affection toward God and its final purpose.

Although all these definitions are significant and valuable, in the view of some mystics and saints, the premier stimulus and motive to try and be active is to plunge in the sea of affection and assuage the thirst by God's source of pure affection. In this way, those who focus all their ambition on achieving nearness to God and gaining the permission to enter the holy presence of Allah, not only enjoy satisfaction and security, but also benefit from infinite divine affection. They will float in divine kindness and intimacy. As soon as the first seeds of affection begin to sprout, the compass of the ship of their life in this turbulent ocean will veer to the safe shore of being nigh unto God, and this will guide them to their destination which is the summit of infinite divine love. The challenges, in the beginning, in achieving this state revolve around mental and spiritual obstacles that can possibly decelerate

the movement of the lover towards the beloved.

These obstacles can be considered as hurdles on the path of affection, and chains on the eager lover's foot at the same time causing confusion and bewilderment for God's lover. The glitter of the light of divine insight will remove these hurdles of bewilderment from the eyes of the fascinated lover and show him the manifestation of the light of God's beauty. «*You are the one who makes the heart of your devotees shine to know you and to praise you as the only God*».¹

This is what Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) interprets as «the way of the people of attraction».

More will be presented in this regard under the title of «affection, the reason for attractiveness of habit».

Special effects of affection towards God and the Holy Prophet's Family (peace be upon them)

A) Divine love, the most significant stimulus for the prayer of the devoted friends of Allah.

The majority of thinkers assign rationality as the distinctive characteristic between human and other beings. However, possessing an element that provides the human with a possibility to distinguish between norm and anomaly is not of special value, unless this element is supported by an influential executive power and needed behavioral principles. Otherwise, the rationalistic dimension of man would be worthless. Man without a rationale resembles a country that has a competent legislative power but lacks efficient and capable executive power.

1. Sheikh Abbas Qumi, *Mafatih Al-Jinan, Dua Arafah*, page 497.

In this manner if human insight is not backed by emotion and motive, man will be degraded from his humane status to a status that is beneath animals. And that is the evident loss that God points out in Holy Quran.

In this manner if human insight is not backed by emotion and motive, man will be degraded from his humane status to a status that is beneath animals. And that is the evident loss that God points out in Holy Quran. «Surely man is in loss» (*Sura Al – Asr*)

If man is willing to be saved from this desperate, hopeless condition, he needs to change the direction of his desires, and try to save himself from corruption while attempting to obtain righteousness prosperity.

It is clear that to achieve closeness to God, one must feel a special attraction and tendency in the bottom of his heart towards desirable objectives and pleasant purposes. Because if there is no tendency towards the ultimate end, continuing this way will be extremely difficult and will lead to undesirable results. At its best, it will resemble the worship of the business world, who pray to God hoping to end up in heaven, or the worship of slaves, who pray to God fearing hell and chastisement. In both cases they tolerate the adversity of prayer and bitterness of obligation. Thus, if someone feels no tendency, attraction, and love towards God in his heart and innermost mind, undoubtedly will suffer from extreme loss. He will lack that special enthusiasm in his nature to move on the path with with difficulty, calamity, and disaster. Most importantly, he would not live, longing to benefit from God's pure affection and would not forget anybody else except God and

consequently won't achieve the status of those from whose heart God has effaced the love of others. «You are the one who has effaced everybody but yourself from your friend's hearts to not let them love anyone but you».¹

If someone feels no tendency, attraction, and love towards God in his heart and innermost mind, undoubtedly he will suffer from extreme loss.

If the flame of divine love is not felt in a person's innermost mind, patience and infatuation will not appear in his heart and, similar to animals, they will busy themselves with grazing, sleeping, entertainment, and fun, and will eventually be satisfied with mortal enjoyments and contented with bodily pleasures. But a heart fraught with divine love, enthusiasm, affection, and restlessness to be with God and sleeplessness to be alone with Him, won't be relaxed and satisfied with animalistic pleasures and will always feel a need and a sense of imperfection in his nature. Just like a mother whose child is missing and others attempt to calm her down or keep her mind occupied by making her busy with bodily and sensual pleasures, to salvage her feelings, and relieve her passionate heart from the pain.

«Oh, my God you are aware that if practically I do not worship You, the divine love exists within my nature».

One whose nature has been kneaded with divine love and is void of God's affection, has possibly been exposed to ignorance. Satan provides man and Jinn with the necessary pleasures and tools of ignorance at the same time he paves the way to commit sin. He temporarily extinguishes the flames of affection with the

1. Sheikh Abbas Qumi, Mafatih Al-Jinan, Dua Arafah, page 498.

frigid water of pleasure and the dark dust of ignorance and places a veil between the lover and the beloved. With all his efforts he is still unable to permanently remove that strong will and permanent love that exists within the impatient heart of a lover. Because of this, the lover will wake up amongst the rays of divine grace and will be able to tear the veil of loneliness and face his true love.¹

«Oh, my Lord, I did not possess the ability to pass the chaotic waves of sin to the safe shore of Your servitude. It is only due to the fact that You woke me up with the rays of Your affection and removed the veil that deprived me of the light of Your affection. Now here I am the way You like. So I grant my gratitude to You for including me in Your grace and benevolence, and erasing the impurity of negligence from my heart.»² But what should be remembered is that this will power will only be practical when backed by omnipotence, divine will, grace, and assistance.

B) Affection, the reason for the attractiveness of prayer and removing the difficulty of obedience.

«Oh, Lord, You are the One who has caused Your devoted friends to taste the joy and pleasure of Your companionship, and because of that they are standing in Your presence eulogistically and flatteringly».

One of the most significant reasons for the reluctance in prayer and the evading of the acceptance of Almighty God's commands are feelings of adversity and the having difficulty in performing the obligatory acts. Basically, religious deeds are considered an obligation because performing them entails feeling discomfort and

1. Sheikh Abbas Qumi, *Mafatih Al-Jinan*, Supplication of Sha'banieh, page 286.

2. *Ibid.*, *Dua Arafah*, page 498.

suffering. In Arabic language «obligation» means: being subjected to pain and affliction by someone else.

Taking all these into consideration, we can say that the body of deeds and behaviors that are set and presented by the legislation of religion for the sake of human prosperity has been named «obligation». The psychological illustration for having feelings of adversity, discomfort, and distress in regard to the divine commandments roots from the fact that everybody is naturally willing to perform the deeds that arise from his intrinsic inclination and desires. In other words, no deed is performed nor is behavior emerged from a person until one of his physical or mental needs appears and disturbs his mental tranquility and spiritual calmness.

Losing this tranquility and comfort brings about internal challenges for man. As a result a strong motive and incentive is formed in his nature to satisfy this need and remove the resultant tension resulting in the restoring of peace and quietness.

The appearance of the incentive and making the decision based on that appearance leads to the emergence of a behavior and an associating reaction.

Concerning the fact that the purpose of this reaction is to satisfy the need and eliminate the tension and internal impatience, it is a very calming process one that is extremely satisfying and exhilarating. However if the deed is not in line with the person's natural prosperity and heartfelt desire, and is imposed by someone else's will and inclination, he will feel a sense of hatred and adversity in his heart towards performing that deed. Since the aforementioned deed is not based on the person's natural desire and intention, he will not experience any enjoyment in performing it.

Moreover what intensifies the hatred and annoyance is the illusion that he thinks of that deed to be useless for him while someone else would benefit from that same deed. But the point that should not be forgotten is this, some people have obtained such insight towards Almighty God that not only do they feel no discomfort in performing the deeds and are grateful for the obligation that guarantees their prosperity, but also view God's obedience and prayer as an opportunity for expressing their affection and maintaining an amorous relation and communing with their beloved. One of these magnificent historical images can be painted from the evening of Tasou'a (the ninth day of Moharram), when Obeidollah ibn Ziyad's troops were preparing to launch an attack on Imam Hussein and his companions. The holy Imam (AS) orders his brother Abbas (peace be upon him) to ask the enemy to give them respite for one night so that they may supplicate to the Most High.

The reason behind this request was Imam's enthusiasm for supplication and his eagerness and love for prayer. «Oh, Abbas, go back to them and try to postpone this war until morning and keep them away from us for tonight, so that we can pray unto our Lord and call Him and ask for forgiveness. He is aware that I love prayer, the recitation of Quran, and appealing for pardon».¹

C) Security against Satan:

Satan is an open enemy of man. Having been removed from God's nearness, satan emphatically swore to take revenge from the sons of Adam and try to block their spiritual path in any possible way. Satan said to God: «I shall surely sit and ambush them on

Thy straight path».¹

Nevertheless some of the faithful are free from his domination and are safe from his guile. The former group are God's sincere believers and the latter are lovers of the Most High. Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) said: The Holy Prophet told his companions: «Do you want me to teach you something that when performed will banish Satan from you as far as the east and on to the west?» They said: yes. The Holy Prophet said: «Fasting will lead to Satan's designation; charitable donation will break his back, God's friendship and cooperation in doing proper deeds will cut him off, and asking pardon from God will cut his vessel».²

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D) Devotion to the Imams, expiatory to the shortcomings of slaves' deeds.

Keep your loyalty to us, the Family of the Holy Prophet, since the one who meets God with whole hearted affection to us, will be included in our intercession. Mastership of the Imams is not limited to this world but it is as vast as the entire universe and as long as the creation of beings. In this manner they are guides and leaders of the people in this world. Those who love and believe in them will be safe under the umbrella of the Imam's mastership

1. A'raaf 16.

2. Mohammad Mehdi Rey Shahri, Seyed Hassan Eslami: Friendship in Quran and Narration, page 526.

and protection.¹

E) Love for Imams, the preparatory step to enter the circle of the Holy Prophet's Family.

Whoever loves us is one of us. I heard from the Holy Prophet who said: Anyone who follows me is included in my family.²

The meaning of fidelity and friendship does not match that of need and requirement. Sometimes you like somebody for your own benefit so that he satisfies your needs and sometimes you like somebody because of who they are. You have come to the conclusion that if you lose everything of yours for his sake and even be annihilated in his path, he will revive you and give you everything. You ignore your own needs for the sake of his, and establish a friendly relationship with your enemy and malevolent because of his affection.

Affection per se can serve as an intercessor for man in the presence of the Exalted God.

This affection leads to devotion and obedience. You take him into consideration when dealing with the affairs of life such as: death, friendship, animosity, relations and breaking up. He is the criterion and yardstick of your life. Consequently this obedience culminates in unity and alignment and will make you join the Holy Prophet's family who say:»Whoever follows me, is in my circle,

1. Mahdi Soheili: Purity of Welayah in Imam Hussein's Sayings, p.p 117 -119; Tehran Eshraqi Publications 1978, Forth edition, page 28 - 29.

2. Comprehensive collection of Imam Hussein's speeches (pbuh), page 652.

and whoever rebels against me will seek the assistance of his own remission».¹

F) Affection, human's intercessor

The Holy Prophet and his family's affection can result in intercession; furthermore affection per se can serve as an intercessor for man in the presence of the Exalted God. «My affection to you shall intercede and save you in the presence of Your justice».

The above saying is mirrored by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in Dua-e- Kumail, when pointing out the number of factors that hinder the chastisement for example: whole hearted affection and a willingness towards God.

G) Safety on the Day of Resurrection

Showing affection to God and those who are close to him can bring about Divine grace in the next world while creating a feeling of security against the horrors and panic of the Day of Resurrection. The reality of the Day of Resurrection is so real that it creates admiration and astonishment amongst the angels. Upon asking the reason for such a special grace they reply:»In this world we were devotees of God and in opposition with His enemies».

When the Holy Prophet was asked by a Bedouin regarding those who are neither prophets nor martyrs but have reached an elevated status with God, the Holy Prophet has been quoted as answering they are unknown people and unidentified tribes who have no family relations but have befriended God. On the Day of Resurrection, they will sit on pulpits made of light, their faces

1. Sheikh Abbas Qummi, Mafatih AL-Jinan, Ziyarat Ashura, Purity of Wilayah, page 117 and Mohammad Taqi Mesbah: The Passengers of the Friend's Path, p.p 45 - 54.

will be luminous and they will wear bright clothes. On that day, everybody will be terrified except them. They are the intimate friends of God who neither have fear nor are mournful.¹

H) Entering heaven without reckoning

According to some narrations, it can be understood that the devoted friends of God feel safe from the unbearable fear of the day of Resurrection. Other believers of God are not permitted to enter heaven unless their deeds are reckoned and their righteous deeds exceed their wrong ones, whereas the devoted companions not only will not experience the horrifying and horrendous scene of Resurrection and the gathering place of all mankind on that day, but will also be allowed to enter heaven without their deeds being accounted for.

Abu Hamzeh Somali narrates Imam Zainul Abedin (peace be upon him) as saying: “When God gathers all of mankind together, a voice will be heard asking:»Where are God’s devotees?» the Imam continues: At that moment a number of people will stand up. They will be told:»Enter the heaven without any accountability.» Then he said: “The angles will see them and ask:»Where are you going?» in response they will say:»We are entering heaven without any accountability.» They will be asked «Which group of people are you from?» and they will answer «We are the devoted creations of God.» The Imam added “The angels will ask them «What did you do to deserve such a grand status?» they will answer «We made friends for God’s sake and feuded in his path.» And finally the Imam said “The angels will then say:» Virtuous deeds are truly rewarded!».²

1. Sheikh Abbas Qummi, *Mafatih Al-Jinan*, page 535.

2. *Ibid.*, page 537.

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1) Unity and the oneness of the lover and the beloved.

As soon as Josef entered, it seemed that the sun started to shine. As soon as the audience had the slightest glance of his face, they lost the sense of where they were and became enchanted and fascinated by his radiance. In that state of perplexity and astonishment, they cut their hands with the knives instead of the fruit. Yes - this is the consequence of love. When the human soul becomes attracted to something, the attraction and fear goes beyond one's normal condition. He becomes worried and stressed, and if continued, he becomes bewildered and after that death becomes imminent. In the case of his bewilderment, he won't be able to control his powers and senses.¹

Separation between the lover and the beloved cannot erase the beloved from the lover's mind. On the contrary, it causes the lover to be totally obsessed with the sentimental image of the beloved's face, and to remember him or her at all times.

When the beloved's name is engraved in the lover's heart, inevitably it will emerge in his words. While talking about him or her, the lover tries to relieve his impatient heart. Is not true that the lover and the beloved are one soul in two bodies? We understand that the beloved has such an influential manifestation on the lover's entity that they represent the blood in his vessels or

1. Mohammad Reza Sharifi: Superior Thinking, page 298; Quoted from Tasfir Al-Mizan.