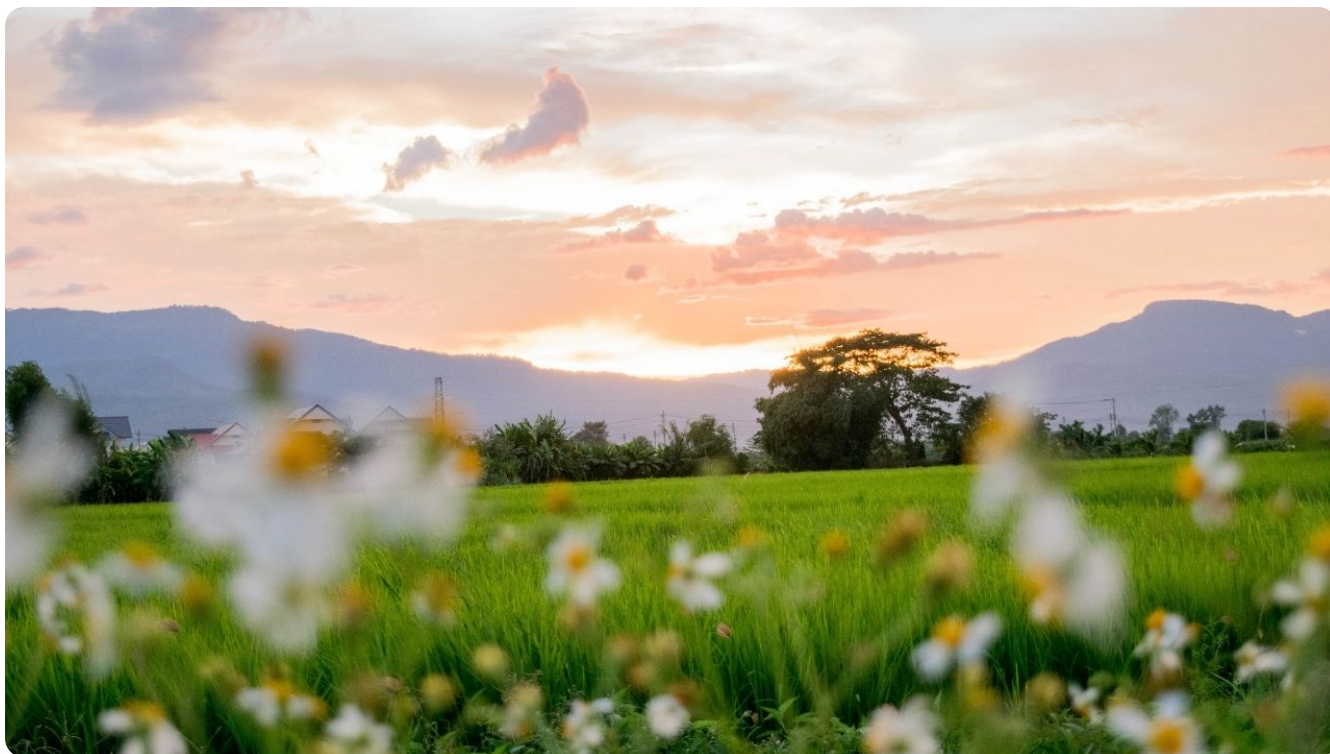


Love of God Is the Source of Worship and Good Morality

God's love for man manifests itself in the countless blessings that encompass every moment of our lives. In every breath we take, in every beauty we see, in every pleasant moment we experience with our loved ones and in every new day given to us, we feel God's mercy and generosity. Man desires to express his love for his Lord, Who bestows so many blessings upon him, not only through his words, but through his entire life. Acts of worship are among the finest expressions of this love we feel for God.

Acts of worship do not merely consist of formal duties that must be fulfilled; nor is their true purpose to provide a technical or worldly benefit. Each one is an expression of the bond of closeness a servant establishes with his Lord. Ablution is not merely cleansing the body, prayer is not merely performing certain movements, and fasting is not merely abstaining from food at certain hours. All these acts of worship are great blessings that enable man to express his love, devotion, gratitude and submission to God, and that draw his heart closer to his Lord.

God has presented acts of worship to us as unique opportunities for us to draw closer to Him and earn His love.



Prayer Is One of the Finest Expressions of Love for God

Prayer is love for God; it is a compliment to God. It is a person's turning to his Lord many times throughout the day, remembering Him, giving thanks to Him and showing his love for Him. Standing in the Presence of God five times a day, glorifying Him, praising Him and prostrating oneself before Him is a great blessing for a servant.

Prostration is one of the finest expressions of man's submission to and love for God. In prostration, a servant experiences one of the moments when he is closest to his Lord; he opens his heart to Him and shows that he never forgets Him.

God reveals this fine quality of believers as follows:

“And who (strictly) guard their prayers.” (Surat al-Mu`minun, 9)

Prayer enables a person who loves God to remember Him throughout the day and to keep his heart alive with His love.



Fasting Means Placing the Love of God Before Everything Else

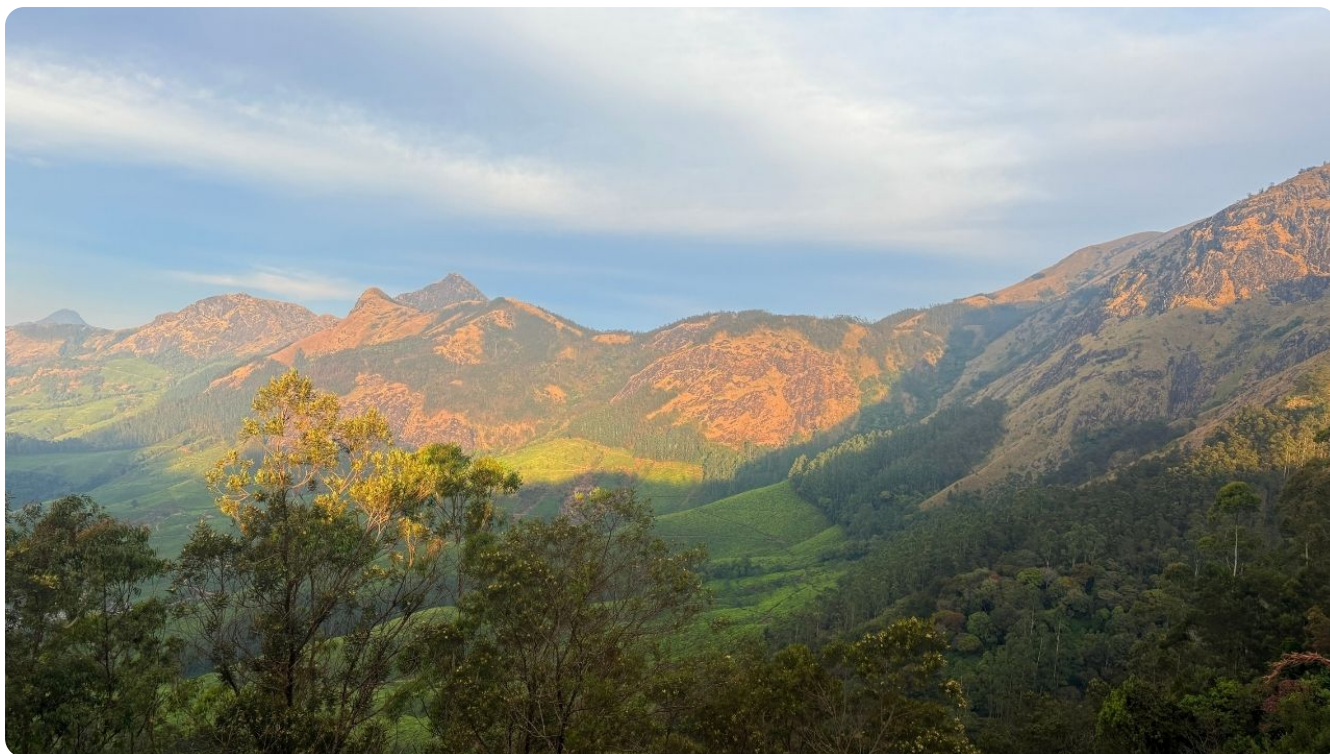
Man loves to eat, rest and benefit from the blessings of this world. Despite this, being able to stay away from these for a certain period when God commands it shows a servant's love and devotion to his Lord.

Fasting does not teach man only about hunger. It also teaches him to give thanks, to be patient, to share and to understand the condition of others. A person who knows what hunger means feels the troubles of people in need more deeply; his mercy and compassion toward them increase.

God reveals as follows:

“They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives.” (Surat al-Insan, 8)

Thus, fasting becomes a beautiful act of worship that strengthens both man's profound love for God and the mercy he feels toward God's servants.



Alms and Charity Mean Sharing Love

Sharing the blessings God has given us with others is also a beautiful result of the love of God. Alms and charity remind us that the true owner of wealth is God and enable man to share the blessings in his possession with his brothers.

Meeting a person's need, bringing joy to a heart and easing the burden of a brother in distress mean sharing with love the blessings God has given us.

God commands as follows:

“Perform prayer and give the alms. Any good you send ahead for yourselves, you will find with God. Certainly God sees what you do.” (Surat al-Baqara, 110)

As a person gives, he does not merely please the person before him; he also feels more deeply in his own heart the beauty of God's love and mercy.

Hajj Means Experiencing the Love of God Together

Hajj is a great means of love and brotherhood in which Muslims from all around the world come together for the same purpose.

Even though people coming from different countries of the world have different languages, colors, cultures and social positions, they turn toward the same direction of prayer and serve the same Lord. The rich and the poor, the young and the old, women and men express their love and devotion to God within the same spiritual atmosphere.

God commands as follows:

“In it are Clear Signs – the Maqam of Ibrahim. All who enter it are safe. Hajj to the House is a duty owed to God by all.” (Surah Ali `Imran, 97)

Beyond all the differences in the world, Hajj reminds people that they are servants of the same Lord.



Prayer Is the Servant's Heartfelt and Loving Conversation with His Lord

Prayer is man's turning to his Lord and expressing his love, trust and submission to Him. When a person prays, he does not merely ask for something; he also feels that God hears him, sees him and is close to him.

Prayer brings about a sincere closeness between a servant and his Lord.

God commands as follows:

“Say: ‘What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him? But you have denied the truth, so punishment is bound to come.’” (Surat al-Furqan, 77)

For this reason, prayer is one of the finest means of closeness God has granted His servant. A person can tell his Lord about every condition he is in, open up his troubles to Him and trust in Him under all circumstances.

Cleanliness and Beauty Are Also a Reflection of the Love of God

God loves beauty and cleanliness. The Prophet (saas) also drew attention to the importance of cleanliness by saying, “God is clean and loves cleanliness.” (Tirmizî, Edeb, 41)

A person desires to appear beautiful and clean in the presence of those he loves. He also desires the environment in which he lives to be clean, orderly and beautiful. Yet above all, this is done to please God and earn more of His love and approval.

God commands as follows:

“... wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer...” (Surah Al-A`raf, 31)

A clean and beautiful environment brings peace to people's souls. A beautiful appearance, a beautiful word and beautiful behavior help increase love and affection among people.

Tests Are a Means of Earning God's Love

God tests people in order to measure their love for Him. By means of these tests, He draws the servants He loves closer to Him and further increases His blessings upon them.

Every event we encounter in life may not appear the same at first glance. Some blessings make us happy, while some events require us to be patient. However, under all circumstances, a believer reflects on the wisdom God has created for him and continues to trust in his Lord.

God reveals as follows:

“Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,” (Surah Al Baqara, 155)

For a believer, patience is a fine indication of trust in God, while submission is a fine indication of the love of God.

When a person knows that every event that befalls him takes place within the knowledge and will of his Lord, Whom he loves very much, his heart finds peace. He gives thanks in times of joy and is patient in times of trouble. He learns to trust in God's wisdom and, regarding what he gains, to remember that the true owner of the blessing is God.

It is commanded in the Qur'an as follows:

“No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: That is truly easy for God: In order that ye may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favours bestowed upon you. For God loveth not any vainglorious boaster,-”
(Surah Al-Hadid, 22-23)

A profound peace forms in the heart of a person who puts his trust in God. That is because he knows that it is God Who created him, loves him, watches over him and is close to him at every moment.



Repentance Means Turning to God Again and More Strongly for His Love

Man can make mistakes, do wrong and be defeated by his lower self. Yet God's mercy is infinite. When a servant makes a mistake, he turns to Him in all sincerity and repents in order to earn more of his Lord's love. He sees that the door of God's mercy is open to him.

God commands as follows:

“But those who do wrong but repent thereafter and (truly) believe,- verily thy Lord is thereafter Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surah Al-A`raf, 153)

A person who knows God's forgiveness does not fall into despair. He knows that every new day is a new opportunity to be a finer servant of God.

Love Lies at the Foundation of Self-Sacrifice

True love does not consist merely of fine words. Love requires self-sacrifice. A person who loves places the well-being of the person he loves before his own comfort. This is also one of the finest indications of believers' love for one another.

God describes as follows this fine moral quality of the believers of Medina, who embraced the emigrants who migrated from Mecca to Medina:

“But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)....” (Surah Al-Hashr, 9)

While the emigrants left behind their possessions, homes, work and the life to which they were accustomed in order to earn God's love, the believers of Medina welcomed them with love and shared their means with them.

This fine moral quality has led to love and respect for them forming in Muslims' hearts for centuries.



Sincerity Is the Foundation of the Love of God

God desires acts of worship to be performed sincerely and solely with the desire for His love and approval. Showing off, however, impairs this sincerity

God commands as follows:

“O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury,- like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in God nor in the Last Day...”
(Surah Al Baqara, 264)

A sincere person does not aim for the good he does to be seen by people; he desires it to find value in the Sight of God. For this reason, true love is far removed from showing off, sincere and unconditional.

Unity and Brotherhood Increase the Beauty of Love

God's bringing Muslims together is a great blessing. As people come to know one another and witness one another's fine moral qualities and self-sacrifice, the love and brotherhood between them grow stronger.

God commands as follows:

“To each is a goal to which God turns him; then strive together (as in a race) Towards all that is good. Wheresoever ye are, God will bring you Together. For God Hath power over all things.”
(Surah Al Baqara, 148)

Hearts can only be truly united by the will of God:

“And (moreover) He hath put affection between their hearts: not if thou hadst spent all that is in the earth, couldst thou have produced that affection, but God hath done it...” (Surah Al-Anfal, 63)

People whom God brings together and whose hearts He unites feel more closely what a great blessing love and brotherhood are.

The Response to Love of God Is Again Love

God welcomes those servants who turn to Him with His love. Every step a servant takes toward God is a door opening onto God's mercy and love.

It is revealed in the Qur'an:

“That is (the Bounty) whereof God gives Glad Tidings to His Servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say: "No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin." And if any one earns any good, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof: for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).” (Surah sh-Shuraa, 23)

God's granting many times the reward for good deeds shows how great His mercy and favor toward His servants are:

“He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit: He that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them.” (Surah Al-An`am, 160)

Forgiveness Is One of the Finest Expressions of Love

True love, when it sees a flaw, prefers not to withdraw at once, but to reveal the beauty behind that flaw. A believer treats the mistakes of the person before him with tolerance; he gives him the opportunity to correct himself and turn away from his mistakes. That is because he knows that a person may make mistakes and that he himself is not free from faults. Therefore, love means not magnifying a fault, but nurturing beauty; not constantly reproaching someone for a mistake, but helping him turn toward what is right.

God reveals:

“Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want, and those who have left their homes in God`s cause: let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that God should forgive you? For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surah An-Nur, 22)

A person who desires God's forgiveness also knows the beauty of forgiving others.

Indeed, God reveals:

“Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!” (Surah Fussilat, 34)

Sometimes a single kind word, a sincere apology or heartfelt forgiveness eliminates all resentment between two people and strengthens love and loyalty.

Humility Draws Hearts Closer Together

Humility is a fine moral virtue that makes the person before one feel valued. A humble person does not regard himself as superior to others; he listens to what people say, benefits from advice and does not hesitate to admit his mistakes.

Everyone feels valued and at ease in the presence of such a person. That is because humility removes pride from a person's heart and replaces it with love, understanding and thoughtfulness. It is revealed in the Qur'an:

“And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!";” (Surah Al-Furqan, 63)

Humility is one of the finest moral virtues that enables people to draw closer to one another and warm love to arise between them.

Loyalty Is One of the Strongest Signs of Love

Love manifests itself more strongly in difficult times. A person does not abandon someone whom he truly loves and to whom he is devoted, not only in good times but also in difficult times. Loyalty to God is the same. No matter how difficult the circumstances become, a believer preserves his

devotion to his Lord. This loyalty demonstrates the sincerity of his love for God.

God reveals:

“Only those are Believers who have believed in God and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of God: Such are the sincere ones.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 15)

There Are Traces of Love in Every Beauty of Life

In fact, not only acts of worship, but many beauties in our lives are also directly connected with love. A person uses the means he possesses for the good of those he loves. He prepares a beautiful home, wears beautiful clothes, buys gifts for those he loves and meets their needs. Love always lies behind all these things.

The beauty in art, the splendor in architecture, the unique scenes in nature and all beauties that give peace to the human heart are also means that remind us of God's infinite beauty. Everything beautiful should be a means for us to turn toward the true Owner of beauty. That is because it is God alone Who gives love to the human heart and Who creates beauty.



The True Source of Love Is God

While seeking true love, a person is in fact seeking a great blessing that God has bestowed upon him. That is because the source and true Owner of love is God alone.

God reveals that He will create love in the hearts of His servants who believe and perform righteous deeds:

“On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (God) Most Gracious bestow love.”
(Surah Maryam, 96)

This verse shows that love is not merely a feeling that a person creates through his own efforts, but a very precious blessing that God places in hearts.

Therefore, if a person wishes to attain love, he must first turn toward the true Owner of love. He must love God, desire to earn His love and strive to live by good morals in every sphere of his life.

A person who loves God also loves people, shows compassion, forgives, shares, makes sacrifices, displays humility and strives to increase beauty. In the life of such a person, worship is not merely a duty to be performed, but an expression of the love he feels for God: Prayer is not merely a request, but a sincere bond he establishes with his Lord. Charity is not merely property that is given, but a means of bringing joy to a heart. Repentance is not merely regret, but a way of earning God's love. Patience is not merely enduring difficulties with good grace, but the beauty of trusting in God. And as a person seeks God's love at every moment of his life, an entirely different peace and beauty arise in his heart. That is because love is one of the greatest blessings that come from God. What is incumbent upon a Muslim is to appreciate this blessing, strive in good morals and righteous deeds in order to earn God's love, and beautify his life with the love of God.

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/love-of-god-is-the-source-of-worship-and-good-morality>