

HABBATUL MAHABBAH

THE GRAIN OF LOVE



Mahmoud bin Fadl-Allah Al-Uskudari

Translated by Lamya Al-Khraisha

M مِثْلَات BDA

The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ
أُنبِتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ
يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

“The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of God is as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains; so God multiplies for whom He will; God is Embracing, Knowing.”

Qur'an: Al-Baqarah, 2:261

HABBATUL MAHABBAH

THE GRAIN OF LOVE

by Mahmoud bin Fadl-Allah Al-Uskudari
(d. 1038 AH)

Translated by Lamy Al-Khraisha

Habbatul Mahabbah, the Grain of Love

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

He is the sheikh and mystic Aziz Mahmoud ibn Fadl-Allah al-Qustantini al-Uskudari, also known as Mahmud Hudayi. (Üsküdar is a municipality of modern-day Istanbul.) He was born in Şereflikoçhisar, Turkey around 955 AH (1548 CE). He was a Hanafi jurist, poet, judge, and one of the most prominent sheikhs of the Jelveti Sufi tariqa. He has a zawiya in Üsküdar that bears his name in which he is buried. He was the sheikh of the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I and was the first to lead the Friday prayers in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul. He served as a judge in Edirne, Bursa, Egypt, and the Levant. He was well-known for his piety and moral fortitude. He wrote ap-

proximately 30 books in Arabic and Turkish. He died in Üsküdar in the year 1038 AH (1628 CE). May Allah have mercy on him.

It is related that Abu Al-Abbas Al-Dinawari, *quddissa sirruh*, said that the people of knowledge (*ahl al-‘ilm*) vary in the order of their seeing things: one group returns from things to God ﷻ, so they see things then return from them to God ﷻ. Another group returns from God ﷻ to things without having been absent from Him, so they see nothing without seeing the Truth (*Al-Haqq*) before it. A final group remains with things because they have no path to God ﷻ with which to traverse them.



*In the Name of God,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Praise be to God who grew the seed of love in the hearts of those He loves and chose as ‘...*a seed that sends forth its shoot and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises firmly...*’ (*Al-Fath*, 29:48). May prayers be upon the Beloved who ‘...*drew near and drew closer still, until he was within the length of two bows away or [even] nearer*’ (*Al-Najm*, 53:8-9), and upon his family, companions, and loved ones to whom [the promise of] the best reward went beforehand from God.

This letter is for the lovers, and I have titled it “*Habbatul Mahabbah*” (*The Grain of Love*) because it is ‘...*as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains...*’ (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:261). It contains sections that I ask God to make a method to reach Him.



CHAPTER ONE

ON LOVING GOD

God  says: ‘...*a people whom He loves and who love Him...*’ (*Al-Ma’idah*, 5:54). The Almighty loves them out of His Primordial concern (*‘in-ayah*); not for any reason, but for themselves. And the lovers love Him for His Essence, not for any of His Attributes, for the love of Attributes changes according to their manifestations. For he who loves The Gentle One will not maintain his love if He manifests Himself under the Attribute of the All-Compelling, and he who loves the Bestower of Blessings (*Al-Mun’im*), his love will dissipate if He manifests as The Avenger (*Al-Muntaqim*). As for the love of the Essence (*Al-Thatt*), it remains unchanging even with the changes in manifestations. And so that kind of lover is thankful when faced with trials (*ba-*

laa') just as he is thankful when faced with blessings (*na'maa'*). This is as opposed to the lover of Attributes: he is not thankful when trials occur, but he is patient. Thus Yahya ibn Mu'ath said: 'The truth of love (*mahabbah*) does not increase with righteousness (*birr*) and does not decrease with harshness (*jafwah*)'.

It is said that the love of believers is of three degrees:

The first is the love of the commonalty (*al-awaam*). It originates from observing favours (*al-minnah*) and seeing excellence (*al-ihsan*). One who has this hopes for reward and fears the fires [of Hell].

The second is the love of the elite (*al-khawass*). It originates from observing the proofs of perfection (*shawahid al-kamaal*). Thus, their love pours forth from glorifying (*ta'theem*) [God] and professing His majesty (*ijlaal*). As it is said:

‘I will worship God, not hoping for His reward but a worship of glorification and exaltation.’

One who has this love is forced to expel anyone other than God from his heart, enthralled by seeing His beauty one moment and His majesty the next.

The third is the love of the elite of the elite (*akhass al-khawass*), and it is the ultimate aim of the slave. It is a love that seizes the individual, and it originates from the gravitating pulls of the Truth (*Al-Haqq*) which originate from the pre-eternal love found in the secret of ‘I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known, so I created humankind that they might know Me’. This is as opposed to the two previous loves—the first being through the door of acts and the second being through the door of Attributes. Those of the third level, and I mean the elite of the elite, are the ones who are prepared for perfect knowledge due

to previous primordial [divine] concern (*'inayah azaliyyah*). As God says: *'Indeed those to whom [the promise of] the best reward went beforehand from Us...'* (*Al-Anbiya'*, 21:101). So He told of His eternal love and indicated that they loved Him until He loved them Himself firstly through His sheer concern.

Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan said: 'I had a Byzantine handmaid (*jariyah*) and some nights she would sleep by me. One night I turned to look for her and could not find her so I asked for her. I found her prostrating and saying "O God, by Your love for me, I implore You to forgive me!" I said to her: "Do not say that, but rather say by my love for You." She said: "My master, through His love He took me out of polytheism into Islam, and through His love He awakened me while many people slept." Thus God's love for them existed in pre-eternity without flaw, so when He extracted them from Adam's 

back, His love for them manifested itself over their hearts, thereby attracting them and annihilating them from themselves. They thus entered the world in this state. The reality of love (*mahabbah*) in this state is that it annihilates the lover through its power and remains without him just as fire annihilates firewood through its power and remains without it. For certainly love ‘*neither spares nor leaves behind.*’ (*Al-Muddathir*, 74:28)

It was related that a reciter read God’s words: ‘*...a people whom He loves and who love Him...*’ (*Al-Ma’idah*, 5:54) before Shaykh Abu Sa’eed, so he said: ‘He does not love other than Himself’, meaning that there is none other in the universe (*al-kawn*) except Him, and anyone else is of His making. And when a maker praises his work (*san’atahu*), he has praised himself. Thus, love does not extend beyond himself and so he only loves himself. Al-Junayd said: ‘I heard Al-Sirri say: “love

between two is not right until one says to the other ‘O myself’ (*ya ‘ana*)”.

It is also related that Samnoon spoke on love and the lanterns of the mosque broke. Ibrahim bin Fatik said: “I heard Samnoon speak on love and a little bird came next to him and then drew closer and closer until he sat on his hands. Then the bird pecked the ground with its beak until it bled and died.” Samnoon used to give love (*mahabbah*) precedence over knowledge (*ma‘rifah*) while most people put knowledge before love. According to the realized (*al-muhaqqaqeen*), love is being consumed by delectation, and knowledge is witnessing in bewilderment (*heerah*) and annihilation (*fanaa*) in grandeur.

Some of the greats (*kibaar*) have said that love is the first valley of extinction (*fanaa*) and effacement (*mahw*). The ranks of effacement are various: effacing one’s actions in the actions of The

Truth, effacing one's attributes in His Attributes, and the effacement of the self (*thatt*). The station of *mahabbah* is the last station of the commonalty (*'awaam*) and the first station of the elite (*khawass*). Those who lag behind the ones at the forefront in reaching the Presence of Unity (*Al-Hadrah Al-Ahadiyyah*) and remain in the valleys of annihilation are among the weak of the elite. Lovers are pure slaves who work purely for their Beloved. Others are hired hands (*ujaraa'*) who work for a purpose and for a return. Love leads to complete yielding and internal prostration, which lead to closeness. As God says: '*...prostrate yourself, and draw near...*' (*Al-'Alaq*, 96:19). Thus the Prophet ﷺ said in this prostration: 'I seek refuge in Your pardon from Your punishment; I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath, and I seek refuge in You from You', thereby indicating the stages of annihilation in acts, attributes and essence.

Understand that the tree of love is planted in the meadows of hearts and grows in the basins of giving and in the generosity of The Knower of All Unseen Things as is stated in the holy words (*kalimat qudsiyyah*): ‘I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known, so I created humankind that they might know Me’ and ‘I made Myself beloved to them through blessings until they knew Me.’ Thus the Essence of Unity (*Al-Thatt Al-Ahadiyyah*) loved for His perfections—which are stored in the collectivity itself (*‘ayn al-jam‘*) and in unseen things (*al-ghuyoob*)—to manifest, so He deposited them in the metals (*ma‘adin*) of the elite. And He placed them in the visible world (*‘alam al-shahadah*). And He made Himself beloved to them with trials in the form of blessings and punishments (*nigam*) so that they may know Him when His Attributes appear to them and so that they become manifestations (*mathahir*) of Him at

the end as they were treasure troves (*ma'adin*) and stores (*khaza'in*) in the beginning.

Love is a truth that originates from Him and returns to Him.... '*Do not all things reach God at last?*' (*Al-Shura*, 42:53), for He is loving and is beloved; requester (*talib*) and requested (*matloob*). It is said that the call (*da'wah*) of love is an easy matter, but the essence of love is mighty (*'aziz*). Among the signs of truthfulness in this respect is that [the lover] does not hate death, for in it he will be rid of the veil. The honest lover does not hate meeting the Beloved. Another [sign of truthfulness] is that he prefers God's approval (*rida*) over his own whims. Another is that he loves the remembrance of God, for the lover loves to mention the beloved a lot. Another is that he loves all that is related to God ﷻ in terms of His words and the words of His Prophet ﷺ. If his love is strong, he loves every creature and everything that is in existence, in the sense

that everything is the True Beloved's creation. And another is that he loves to be alone (*al-khulwah*) with the Beloved and have intimate dialogue with Him (*munaajah*). Yahya ibn Mu'ath said: 'He who claims to love Him and does not keep His bounds is not honest.' And Al-Junayd said: 'If love is true, the conditions of politeness (*adab*) fall away. And in this vein Ustaz Abu Ali sang:

'If affection (*mawaddah*) be pure between peoples
And loyalty remains, praise becomes dull (*samej*).'

And he used to say that you do not see a tender-hearted father praising his son while addressing him even when others are ceremonious when addressing him, and the father says 'O so-and-so.' Sahl said: 'Love is embracing obedience (*taa'ah*) and leaving disobedience (*mubayanat al-mukhal-fah*). And some have said that love is to prefer the beloved (*ithaar*) to what the lover loves. And it is said that love is to prefer the beloved over all com-

panions (*mashoob*). And it is said that love is conformity with the beloved in his presence and in his absence. Abdullah Al-Qurashi said: the truth of love is to give all of yourself to the beloved so that nothing of you remains. It is related that Abi Sa'eed Al-Jazzazz said: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream, so I said: "*O Messenger of God*, forgive me; for the love of God has kept me busy from loving you." So the Prophet replied: "*Ya mubarak*, he who loves God loves me". And God revealed to Jesus ﷺ: "If I look into the heart of a slave and do not find love for the *dunya* and the hereafter; I fill him from My love."

Some lovers have said: 'Forty houris (*hawraa*) clothed in gold and silver were unveiled before me in the air. I looked upon them and was reproached (*'utibt*) for forty days. Then eighty even more beautiful houris were unveiled before me and I was told to look upon them. I prostrated and said: "I seek

refuge in You alone, I have no need of them”. I continued to supplicate God ﷻ until He dismissed them from me’.

Abu Hafs said: most of the corruption of states (*ahwal*) stems from three things: the straying of mystics from the right course (*fisq al-‘arifeen*), the betrayal of lovers, and the lying of aspirants (*al-murideen*). Abu Uthman said: the *fusq* of mystics is when they allow their limbs, tongues and ears to roam about matters of the *dunya* and its benefits. The betrayal of the lovers is their choosing their whims (*hawahom*) over God’s pleasure (*rida Allah*). The lying of the aspirants (*al-murideen*) is that the remembrance of created things and seeing them overpowers the remembrance of God and witnessing Him (*ru’yatibi*).

Abu Huraryrah said: the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘He who loves to meet God, God loves to meet him, and he who hates to meet God, God hates to meet

him.’ He also narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said to Jibreel: ‘O Gabriel, I love so-and-so, so love him; and Gabriel would love him and then call to the people of heaven (*ahl al-samaa*) that God loves so-and-so and the people of heaven would love him, and acceptance (*qabool*) on earth would be written for him.’



CHAPTER TWO ON LOVING THE MESSENGER OF GOD ﷺ

God ﷻ says: ‘Say: *If you love God, follow me, and God will love you more [yuhbibkum]...*’ (*Aal Imran*, 3:31). I know that the Prophet ﷺ is the pole (*qutb*) of love and its manifestation (*math-hariha*) and therefore the *habib* of the Lord of the Worlds and the Master of the first people and the last people. All who claim to love God ﷻ must follow the Prophet because the beloved of the Beloved is beloved. And there is no doubt that loving him is only through following him and imitating his ways in word, deed, morals, states, *sirah*, and *aqidah*. He who has no share of the Prophet’s way (*tariqah*) will not have a share of love. As for one who follows him well, his interior (*batinihi*), his innermost secret (*sirrihi*), his heart (*qalbihi*) and his soul (*nafsihi*) become in harmony with

(*naasab*) the interior of the Prophet ﷺ, his innermost secret (*sirrihi*), his heart (*qalbihi*) and his soul (*nafsihi*). In this case he will have a share of God's love inasmuch as he has followed the Prophet ﷺ. God will cast upon him love from Him, and the light of that love passes through from the interior of the Prophet ﷺ to the person so that he becomes beloved in God (*mahbubun billah*) and loving of Him (*muhibban lahu*).

Understand that the world is all one person, and the people of the world are like that human's organs, and the beloved among them is in the station of the eye among organs. So he who God provides (*razaq*) with love, He has granted him the witnessing [of the Divine] (*al-shuhood*) and has blessed him by seeing Him in the images of things, and he is not enthusiastic about anything but his Lord or His manifestation (*aw fi majlaah*). Indeed, the entire world is from the attributes of The Real's man-

ifestation, and the matter is concealed (*mastour*) between The Real (*Al-Haqq*) and creation (*Al-Khalq*). Therefore He says: '*and He is the Forgiving, the Loving*' (*Al-Buruj*, 85:14). He mentions the Divine Name The Forgiving with the Divine Name The Loving in order to conceal (*li'ajl al-sitr*). For example, it is said that Qays loves (*ahabb*) Layla although he only loves the Real Beloved.

Al-Shaykh Al-Akbar said that a human can see someone and fall in love with them without knowing who they are, their name or where they live. Love will give that person the motivation (*bathaa-lah*) to seek out their name and where they live so that he can stay with them at all times and know about them when they are absent through their name and lineage and ask about them if they go missing. And such is our love for God ﷻ: we love Him in His manifestations, for we love the Name while we do not know the Essence. As for created

beings, we know the essence and love it though we may not know the name.

Love refuses but to have knowledge of (*ta'reef*) the beloved. Thus some of us know Him in the *dunya*. Others among us do not know Him until he dies in love and it becomes apparent to him when the veil is lifted that he loved none but God. Furthermore, understand that the People of Love (*Ahl Al-Mahabbah*) are four groups:

The first group's love is spiritual and intrinsic (*ruhaniyyah thatiyyah*) based on the harmony (*ta-naasob*) of spirits in eternity (*al-azal*) due to their closeness in the Presence of the Unity (*Al-Hadrah Al-Ahadiyyah*) and their equality in the Presence of Oneness (*Al-Hadrah Al-Wahidiyyah*). Regarding this, the Veracious One [ﷻ] said: '...those of them who recognise one another bond.' For when they appear in this creation (*nash'ah*) they long for their homelands (*awtaanihim*) of [Divine] proximity

(*fil qurb*), they align themselves to the truth, and they rid themselves of their garments (*al-malaa-bis*). Thus, when they meet, they recognize each other, and when they recognize each other, they love each other because of their original similitude (*tajanus*), their corresponding attributes (*tama-athulihim al-wasfiy*) and their agreement in orientation (*wijhab*) and path (*tariqah*). Each benefits from the other in their behaviour and knowledge and in their remembrance of their homelands. This is a true, complete love (*mahabbah taammah*) that never fades, such as the love of Prophets (*anbiyaa'*), friends of God (*awliyaa'*), the pure (*asfiyaa'*), and martyrs (*shuhadaa'*).

The second group's love of God is based on the harmony (*tanaasob*) of attributes and morals and the similarity of beliefs (*'aqaa'id*) and good deeds, such as love that the righteous (*al-sulahaa'*) and the pious (*abraar*) have for each other and the

love that the knowers (*al-urafaa*'), and friends of God (*al-awliyyaa*') have for them and the love that Prophets have for their nations (*umamihim*).

As for the third group, their love is of the self (*nafsaaniyyah*) based on sensory pleasure and partial things such as the love that spouses have for one another only out of lust, or the love of profligates (*fujjar*) and the people of error (*ahl al-dalal*) who work together (*muta'awineen*) in the gratification of desires and the earning of money.

The fourth group's love is rational (*'aqliyyah*), based on facilitating the means of living and easing worldly interests, such as the love that traders and craftspeople have, and such as the love a beneficiary has for his benefactor. The last two groups of love are in the realm of what will perish and fade because they are based on a perishing non-essentiality and a reason that will fade. Every love that is based on a fading reason and a false (*baatil*) non-essenti-

ality fades when its reason fades and turns into enmity. For this reason, God ﷻ says: *'Friends will, on that day, be foes of one another, except for the God-fearing'* (*Al-Zukhruf*, 43:67).

The majority of worldly people (*Ahl al-Dunya*) are of the last two groups. As for the God-fearing who are complete in their God-fearingness and who reach the ultimate aim, they have first avoided disobedient acts (*al-ma'aasi*), then that which does not concern them (*al-fudool*), then acts (*al-a'maal*), then attributes (*al-sifaat*), then entities (*al-thawaatt*). Thus, nothing remains of them such that they might compete for it, and their love thereby manifests. Indeed, nothing remains of them except love itself. This group is fewer in number; rarer and dearer than red sulphur. This is the first group: those who love each other through God (*fi Allah*).

As for the second group: those who love for God's sake ﷻ (*li Allah*), they are content with what

is outward of God-fearingness, and so their love remains because the reasons for it remain: comparable (*mumaathilah*) attributes and similar aspects (*hay'aat*) in: desiring the reward and approval of the Knower of the hidden (*Allaam al-ghuyoub*), avoiding punishment, and keeping away from committing sins.

Regarding God's ﷻ words: '*Beautified for humankind is love of lusts...*', some say that God ﷻ created people at three levels: ordinary people (*'awaam*)—they are the lords (*arbaab*) of their egos, and what dominates (*al-ghalib 'alayhim*) them is impulse (*hawa*) and lusts (*shahawat*); the elite—they are the lords of their hearts, and what dominates them is guidance (*huda*) and God-fearingness (*taqwa*); and the elite of the elite—they are the lords of their spirits, and what dominates them is love (*mahabbah*) and longing (*shawq*).

Sahl bin Abdullah said: 'The lover of God in

truth is he whose states (*ahwaalahu*), actions (*af'aalahu*), and sayings (*aqwaalahu*) follow those of the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn 'Ataa' said about God's ﷻ words: '*Say: 'If you love God, follow me...' (Aal Imran, 3:31)*, that He ordered those blind to the higher light to seek the lower light.

Al-Shaykh Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami said: 'There is no reaching the higher light except for those who are guided to it by the lower light. And whoever does not take holding firm to the mannerisms (*adaab*) of the lower light and following it as his path (*sabeel*) to the higher light is blinded to both lights and is garbed in the garments of arrogance (*ig-hтираар*)'. Abu Uthman said: 'What is meant is: be honest in your love for Me by following My beloved (*habeebi*), for there is no means to reach My love except by putting forward (*taqdeem*) his love and following him in his way (*tariqah*)'. Certainly, his way is the most exemplary, and the one that deliv-

ers unto the Highest Beloved (*al-Habeeb al-A'laa*).

Muhammad ibn al-Fadl said about this verse that [even] the name of love is negated from whoever contradicts anything of the sunnahs of the Shari'ah externally or internally or does not follow the example of the Prophet in subtle (*daqq*) and manifest (*jall*) matters, for a follower is one who does not differ from his way in anything.

Some of the greats have said that the Prophet ﷺ made (*ja'ala*) love a condition for faith, for when Abu Razeen Al-Uqaili asked him: 'O Messenger of God, what is faith (*iman*)?', the Prophet ﷺ replied: 'That God and His Messenger be more beloved to you than anyone else.'

Al-Bukhari narrated that Abdullah ibn Hisham said: 'We were with the Prophet ﷺ as he took Omar's hand and Omar ﷺ said: "O Messenger of God, you are more beloved to me than everything except myself." The Prophet ﷺ said: "No, by He

in Whose hand is my soul, not until I am more beloved to you than yourself.” Then Omar said: “Then by God, you are more beloved to me than myself.” Then he said: “Now, Omar.” Meaning that now your faith is complete, Omar.

Abu al-Hussein al-Warraaq used to say: ‘The mark of loving God is following His beloved ﷺ.’ Some of the greats have mentioned regarding God’s words: ‘Say: *If you love God, follow me...*’ (*Aal-Imran*, 3:31) that following him has three levels (*darajaat*):

The first is how ordinary people follow, and it is in following his actions ﷺ.

The second is how the elite follow, and it is in following his character traits (*akhlaaqihi*) ﷺ.

The third is how the elite of the elite follow, and it is in following his states (*ahwaalihi*) ﷺ.

Realize that when the sun of love rose from the East of eternity and the point (*matla'*) of ‘I was a

hidden treasure, so I loved to be known', it lit the hearts of mystics (*al-'arifeen*), and the light of 'so I created humankind and made Myself known to them' appeared, and the Earth shone with the light of its Lord. It was said to the ordinary people of knowledge (*Ahl al-Ma'rifah*): follow me with good deeds and the extermination of actions, He will love you (*yuhbibkom*) with mercy and the manifestation of actions. It was said to the elite: follow me with noble character traits (*makaarim al-akhlaaq*) and the extermination of attributes, God will love you with bounty (*fadl*) and the manifestation of Attributes. And it was said to the even more elite: follow me by expending existence (*wujud*) and the extermination of your selves, He will love you with the pulls (*jathbaat*) of pre-eternal love (*al-mahabbah al-azaliyyah*) and the manifestation of His Essence (*Al-Thatt*).

CHAPTER THREE

ON LOVE OF THE FAMILY OF THE PROPHET ﷺ AND HIS KIN, MAY GOD BE PLEASED WITH THEM ALL

God ﷻ says: ‘... Say: *I do not ask of you any reward for it, except the affection for [my] kinsfolk ...*’ (*Al-Shura*, 42:23).

It is said that the exception here is disconnected (*munqati‘*). As for ‘...for [my] kinsfolk...’, it is part of an implicit circumstantial expression; i.e., the affection—being such that it is—for my kinsfolk. The meaning thus being the negation (*nafy*) of reward (*al-ajr*) to begin with, for the fruit of affection for his kin (*ahl-qaraabatih*) returns to the lovers (*muhibeen*) as it is the reason for their salvation (*najaatihim*). This is because affection entails (*yaqtadi*) the spiritual occasion required for their meeting during the Gathering (*al-hashr*) [i.e., Resurrection]. As the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘One

is gathered (*yuhshar*) with those he loved (*ahabb*)'. Thus, it would not be right that the Prophet ﷺ would have a reward in this. He whose spirit is turbid (*takaddar*) and distanced from them by a degree cannot love them in truth. But he whose spirit is enlightened (*tanawwar*), knows God, and loves Him from amongst the people of monotheism cannot but love them. For none love them except those who love God and His Messenger and those who are loved by God and His Messenger. Had they not been loved by God from the beginning, the Messenger of God would not have loved them, for the Messenger's ﷺ love is exactly (*'ayn*) His love manifested specifically following his having been in the collectivity itself (*'ayn al-jam'*).

It has been narrated that when this verse was revealed, someone asked: 'O Messenger of God, who are those of your kinsfolk who we should feel affection for?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Ali, Fatima, and their

two sons.' Thus, it is incumbent upon one to love the purified progeny of the Prophet, may God ﷻ be pleased with them all. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'He who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad dies a martyr. Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad dies forgiven. Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad dies a believer of perfected faith (*iman*). Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad, the angel of death will give him good tidings of his entering Paradise (*al-Jannah*) followed by Munkar and Nakeer. Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad will be taken in procession to Paradise (*al-Jannah*) like a bride is taken in procession to her husband's home. Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad, God will open two doors to Paradise for him. Indeed he who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad, God will make his grave a place of visitation for the angels of mercy. Indeed he

who dies loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad dies on the course of those of Prophetic practice and community (*Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah*). Indeed he who dies abhorring the kinsfolk of Muhammad comes with “despairing from God’s mercy” (*aayis*) written between his eyes on the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm Al-Qiyamah*). Indeed he who dies abhorring the kinsfolk of Muhammad dies an infidel (*kaafir*). Indeed he who dies abhorring the kinsfolk of Muhammad will not even smell the scent of Paradise.’¹

On the authority of Miqdaad ibn Aswad, the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Knowing the kinsfolk of Muhammad is absolution (*baraa’ah*) from the Fire. Loving the kinsfolk of Muhammad is passage (*jawaz*) along the Path over Hell (*sir-aat*). Allegiance (*wilayah*) to the kinsfolk of

¹ *Kitab Takhreej al-Ahadeeth wa al-Athar al-Waqi'ah fi Tafsir al-Zamakhshari* (3:238).

Muhammad is safety from chastisement (*'athaab*).⁷ It is said that the meaning of knowing the kinsfolk of Muhammad is knowing their dues, for whoever knows the inviolability of his kinsfolk and considers that their dues are rights, that knowledge is absolution from the Fire. What is meant by allegiance (*wilaayah*) to the kinsfolk of Muhammad is loyalty (*muwaalaah*), which is the opposite of enmity (*al-mu'aadat*). Allegiance also means friendship and coming to their aid (*nusrah*). Being their friend and coming to their aid is the cause for safety from chastisement.

He ﷺ also said: 'Paradise is forbidden to he who is unjust to my household (*ahl-bayti*) and he who harms me in my progeny.' 'He who does good to one of Abd al-Muttaleb's offspring and they do not reward him for it, I will reward him for it tomorrow when he meets me on the Day of Resurrection.'

The Prophet ﷺ used to say: ‘If a noble (*kareem*) person from a people (*qawm*) comes to you, treat them nobly (*fa akrimooh*)’. There is no one nobler than the kinsfolk of Muhammad: they are all great (*kabeer*), there are no paltry (*sagheer*) people among them.

On the authority of Damrah, Omar bin Abd al-Aziz (God have mercy upon him) said to a son of al-Hussein Ali bin Abi Talib ؑ: ‘Do not stand for even an hour at my door, for I am ashamed from God ﷻ that you would stand at my door and not be permitted entry to me.’

Some of the greats have said that they do not live where there are many Prophetic scions (*saadaat*), for they are so honourable that one cannot do them justice in terms of veneration (*ta'theemihim*) and reverence (*tawqeerihim*). It was also narrated that Imam Abu Hanifah, (may God have mercy on him), would stand up repeatedly during his classes.

When asked why, he said: 'A child of the Alawite Prophetic scions was playing with the other children, so every time I saw him I stood up out of veneration for him.'

It was narrated that there was a trader in Baghdad who had a modicum of goods. It so happened that he prayed in congregation. After the prayer finished, an Alawite stood up and said: 'I have a young daughter who I wish to marry off. For the sake (*bi haqq*) of my grandfather, the Messenger of God ﷺ, give me that with which I can arrange her trousseau.' The trader gave him his capital, which was five hundred dirhams. When night fell, the trader saw the Messenger of God ﷺ in his sleep, and he ﷺ said to him: 'Young man, what you have gifted me (*athaf-tani*) has reached me. Go to the city of Balkh for there you will find Abdullah ibn Tahir. Tell him that Muhammad sends his *salaam* and says that

a saint (*wali*) who I owe has been sent to you, so pay him five hundred dinars.’ The trader went and told his wife about it. She said: ‘Who will pay for our needs until you return from Balkh?’ He then went to a nearby baker and said: ‘If you give my family what they need for the duration of my absence, I will give you a dinar for every dirham upon returning.’ The baker said: ‘The one who ordered you to travel to Balkh has entrusted me to check on your family until your return.’ The trader was overjoyed and headed towards Balkh. When he was close, he was received by Abdullah ibn Tahir, who said: ‘Welcome O messenger of the Messenger of God ﷺ. He who sent you to us entrusted us with being generous towards you.’ And so he hosted him excellently for three days then gave him five hundred dinars according to the command of the Prophet ﷺ and [another] five hundred dinars for being the messenger of the

Messenger of God ﷺ. He sent a group with him who saw to his reaching his home.

Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi mentioned that an Alawite woman who had poor orphans set out with them to Samarqand. Upon reaching it, she took them into a mosque and went out to search for sustenance. She met a Muslim who was the sheikh of the land, explained her need, and asked for sustenance for one night, mentioning that she was an Alawite. He said: 'Prove to me that you are an Alawite.' She said: 'There is no one here who knows me.' So he turned away and left her. Then she saw a Magian (*Majoos*) and told him what happened, so he gave them an expenditure (*nafaqah*), clothing, and honourable dwellings. The Muslim had a vision that the Day of Resurrection had arisen and that the banner flew over Muhammad ﷺ. He saw a palace of green emeralds and asked: 'Who is this palace for, O Messenger of God?' He said: 'For a

Muslim who professes monotheism.’ So he said: ‘I am a Muslim.’ [The Prophet ﷺ] said: ‘Prove to me that you are a Muslim.’ He woke up crying and slapping [himself]. He thereby sent for the Magian and asked: ‘Where is the Alawite woman?’ [The Magian] said: ‘With me.’ He said: ‘Take a thousand dinars from me and hand her over to me.’ He refused and said: ‘The palace you saw is mine, and God has favoured me and my household with Islam. Through the blessings of the Alawite woman I have seen the Prophet ﷺ and he said: “The palace is yours and you are of the People of Paradise”.’

It was narrated that a thief tried to get at Abdullah ibn Tahir but could not overtake him. The thief later entered a town with his companions during the winter and lived there. [One day] a poor Alawite woman passed by their door and asked something of them. They told her to come inside the house for there were women there. When she

did, they tried to seduce her, but she withheld and said: 'I am an Alawite'. When their chief heard her, he rushed to her, gave her dirhams, and asked her not to complain to her grandfather, the Messenger of God ﷺ. Then Abdullah [ibn Tahir] captured them in a hideous way and imprisoned them in order to kill them the next day. However, he saw the Prophet ﷺ [in a dream] interceding on behalf of the thief, upon which he woke up. Then he slept and saw the same three times, so he took the thief out of the jail and asked: 'Have you done any good-deed these last few days?' So he told him the story of the Alawite woman. He set them free and said: 'Take heart with good tidings, for the Messenger of God ﷺ interceded on your behalf. The thief began to cry and said: 'If that much is not hidden from the Messenger of God ﷺ, how will the enormities (*kabaa'ir*) that I have committed be hidden?' He then repented and took to worship.

Realize that kinship (*qaraabah*) is either of clay (*teeniyyah*) or religious (*deeniyyah*). The first is related to ancestry (*nasab*) while the second is through the similitude of souls (*mujanasat al-ar-waah*), the similarity (*mushaabahat*) of moral character (*akhlaaq*), and the harmony (*munasabat*) of good deeds. This is how people of spiritual travel (*Ahl al-Suluk*), God-fearingness, and those who follow him ﷺ in the path of guidance (*huda*) are counted amongst the members of his household and his close kin. This is according to what Anas رضي الله عنه narrated: “They said: “O Messenger of God, who are the kinsfolk of Muhammad?” The Prophet ﷺ said: “You have asked me something that Muslims have never asked me before; the kinsfolk of Muhammad are all God-fearing people.”

It was related by Iyas bin Salamah bin al-Akwa' that his father said: “The Messenger of God ﷺ said: “The stars are the safety for those in the sky

and my household are safety for my Ummah.” Al-Shaykh Abu Abdullah said: ‘His Household (*Ahlu Baytihi*) are those who follow his way after him. They are the utterly truthful ones (*siddiqoon*) through whom disliked matters are held back from the inhabitants of Earth and trials are held back from mankind. Through them people are given rain and provided sustenance. No man of them dies without there being one who succeeds him, for they are the successors (*khulafaa*) of the Prophets. God chose them for Himself. He substituted their character traits and purified them. Whenever a man [amongst them] dies, God ﷻ replaces him with another like him whom He rectifies and refines until he takes the former’s place. They are a group from the Ummah of Muhammad who are not the betters of people through much fasting and praying, but through beauty of character, sincere meticulousness, and

soundness of heart towards all Muslims--that they might reach God's pleasure.

One of the greats said that some people exhaust themselves through spiritual exercises and struggles to reach a [spiritual] station (*maqam*). Had he only secured a place in the heart of one of the people of the heart through service or a virtue, he would have gotten what he desired without tiring, for the hearts of this group (*taa'ifah*) are the well-springs of Divine considerations (*mawaarid al-anthaar al-Ilaahiyyah*), so he would have received a portion of such. He also said to make your supplications with tongues pure of the contamination of sins. By this, he meant to humble yourselves before God's friends and draw from them until they supplicate for you, for their tongues are purified.

Thus, it is incumbent that you love God; love the Master of Messengers and Beloved of the Lord of the Worlds ﷻ; love the the kinsfolk [of the

Prophet ﷺ], his companions, and followers; and love all who are close to them in religion and the strength of [their] certainty.

“He loves them and they love Him”

Qur'an: Al-Ma'idah, 5:54



