



Love and Affection in Sufism

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The Sufism is “DilAllah”, that is Sufism is God’s Heart Garden. This Garden is His Heart. If one likes to see the beauty of this Garden and to be nourished from it must be a Sufi. To enter into this Garden one ought to try to gain the consent of God. For this, one must learn and apply His commandments and prohibitions. It is possible only through obeying the Islamic Sharia truly.

The human ought to love first God and then His Messenger. To win the consent of God and His Messenger that he loves, must fulfill of their requests. In the regard of loving Him, God addresses to His Messenger in the following verse as:

“Say, “If you love God, follow me and God will love you and forgive you your sins; God is most forgiving, and most merciful.” (Al-Imran, verse 31)

According to this verse, the head of love in Islam is to obey the Prophet Muhammad (sav) and to assume that he brought and to comply full with the binding duties and sunna.

Almighty God created the universe out of Love. This love is spread to all creations and all businesses. In a hadith is said that:

“There was Allah and was nothing with Allah”

That is there are not world, heavens, angels, demons and people but Our Lord exists. In an another sacred hadith Our Lord states that:

“I was a hidden treasure, I liked to be known and created all creatures for they know me.”

According to this sacred hadith, Our Lord created all existences in the universe to know Him. What is then our duty according to this hadith? Our duty is to know God and to seek Him.

Almighty God has created first the soul and light of Prophet Muhammad (sav). Then He created all creatures from the Prophet’s light. Almighty God helped the people to know Him by removing up the veil of His Garden of Heart. Only after this it would be possible to see the secrets and beauty of His Heart Garden by the wisdoms. And they invited the people to know God by Love of ecstasy. This love of ecstasy is placed in the hearts of servants and so the hearts of servants could be fond of God. This can be achieved through the Sufi path.

Love and affection

Affection is to feel a tendency towards an object which gives pleasure to him. If this affection is strengthened, then it is called love. The degree of Love could be so high that everything may be sacrificed for the beloved.

According to Sufism, love is to tear the curtains of God's Heart Garden and to discover the secrets in it. The author of the book "Fütûhât-I Mekkiyye", Ibn Arabî (pubh) explains the signs of love of people who love God as follows:

"Revealed a split in the hearts of those who truly love God. Thus they see the glory of God with their lights of hearts. They wander among the ranks of the angels and observe what works in reality. They worship Him fondly with their most forces without desiring to heaven and fearing the fire."

Today some people think that it is possible to enter into God's Heart Garden by loving Him and saying plainly their loves to God. They argue for that it is not necessary to apply all the worships of Islam. According to them, the shortest way to arrive the consent of God is loving of God. They believe if a human has faith to God and ratifies it by tongue, there is no any pangs of hell for them hereafter.

This idea is completely contrary to Islamic Sufism. Because the occurrence of love in Sufism is only possible by deeds not only by words. To be successful for Sufi who wants to achieve love of God, he has to obey and worship God. This reality is stated in the following verse of Quran:

"I created the Jinn and mankind only so that they might worship Me." (Al-Dharyat, verse 56)

Therefore the first principle of being servant is to worship God. So if one loves God, he should worship Him, that is, five daily prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage. He is also increasing his worship to get closer to God by adhering the sunna of Prophet (pbuh).

Sufis say that the real love would become perceptible through the following three principles:

- 1) The lover would prefer the words of beloved to the words of others.
- 2) The lover would prefer the being together with his beloved to the being together with others.
- 3) The lover would prefer the getting of consent of his beloved to the getting of consent of the others.

Accordingly, if people want to love God, these three actions are duly applied. To do so, it must be complied with the basic principles of Sufism described in our Article “What is Sufism in Islam?”. Otherwise, to enter into the Heart Garden of God is impossible.

Some people argue that the love in Sufism covers all the people in the world. Therefore everybody should be loved. This idea is contrary to Islamic Sufism. Because Muslims are commanded not to love the enemies of Allah. In the first verse of The Sura “Al-Mumtahanah” is stated:

“Believers! Do not offer friendship to those who are enemies of Mine and of yours. Would you show them affection when they have rejected the truth you have received?...”

Who are the enemies of Allah? The enemies of Allah are the people who try to destroy Islam. They try to deviate the Muslims from the true faith by distorting the principles of Islamic faith. In the verse above is stated that the enemies of Allah are also the enemies of Muslims. Therefore Muslims do not take them as friend and lover. God is becoming unlikeable the enemies of Islam. Because of this, the prophets got away from a person when it became clear that he is the enemy of God. This reality is also obligatory to Muslims. The relationship between Abraham (as) and his father is an example for this reality. Prophet Abraham (as) has turned away from his father when he has realized that his father was the enemy of God.

Below we mention some of the pithy statements of Sufis about love in Sufism.

- ▶ Love is the turning towards beloved through the surrounding all parts of love.
- ▶ Love is an attribute of God.
- ▶ Divine love is that God loves us for us and for Himself.
- ▶ The pleasure of Wisdom saves us the life in which there is no human death.
- ▶ Supererogatory worships and keeping on them regularly save the servants the sovereignty of the God’s attributes. And those obligatory provide his whole to become light.

► There is no more beautiful than the universe, because God loves the universe. God is most beautiful, and God is loved because of the essence of His beauty. Therefore all universe loves God. The beauty of God's creating spreads on all creations and the universe is the place of the reflection of His Pleasure and Beauty.

► God saw His Beauty in the universe and loved His Beauty.

► God liked the affirming His Unity in His creations. So who unities Him, is beloved of God.

► God does not like the person who does not unity Him.

► Wise man knows that all seeing, all hearings and all talking are from God. So God manifests this reality to His Lovers.

► If a servant is honest in his claim loving Lord, he has to have conduct through the names of God.

► If one wants to enter the presence of God, he must leave his mind and put the Sharia in front of him.

► Happy people are who stand in God's borders and does not go beyond of them.

► Wherever and whatever is the case, try to be friendly and lover. When affection is your property, you could be lover for ever, whether you are in grave or in the Day of Judgment or in heaven. If you sow wheat, it is grown wheat and you get wheat in your granary and on your tandour.

► The evidence of affection is the statement: "I thank God for His granting us everything." The evidence of love is the statement: "I thank God in every case."

Moulana Rumi

Moulana Rumi was born on 1207 in Balkh, Khorasan and died in 1273. He was one of the most famous Sufi. He was also poet, jurist, Islamic scholar and theologian. Moulana Rumi writes in his book "Fîhî Mâfih":

"All prophets and holy man are the heart of the universe. They walked in the realm and escaped from human being and so they learned the secrets of the

universe. They invited people to learn and know these secrets. They said that this world you see is poverty. We found a nice place where there is no poverty and deficiency. Here the soul, in all cases, is associated with love.”

The opening verse of Moulana’s most famous and loved poems, “ghazals”, is
“I was dead, I became alive, I was tears, I became laughter.”

It is as if with such a start, reaching the sovereignty of love and transforming to everlasting sovereign – all in one verse – he is telling us: Now do you want to take this journey with me? And since the real source who is inviting us is He who speaks through the tongue of Moulana; we say “Yes”. And when we ask how? We hear the same answer that Ibn Arabî heard in one of his intimate conversations, when he asked Allah “How could one get close to You?” And Allah responded, “Through an attribute that I do not possess, meaning “ubudiyet”, which means servanthood. The servanthood is necessary in order to open the way for the majesty and sovereignty of love to enter.

Moulana ratifies the statement of Ibn Arabî about the signs of Love above and explains in a verse of his book “Mesnevi”:

My heart felt the glow of the soul, my heart opened up and split,
My heart weaved a new satin, I became enemy of this ragged one.

This is a very important verse. After submitting the ego- self willingly, comes this crucial point that the light of the soul splits open his heart and weaves a new fabric made of atlas, which is soft silky satin. It is at this point that he realizes or sees what a shabby fabric the old one was; and becomes the enemy of the ragged one. He is pointing to stages of transcendence, since only after arriving at each level of the ladder of transcendence one gets to see the reality of the level before, through the light that is given accordingly. The stages of the spiritual journey are to prepare us to arrive at the light. The light is not absent, but we would need to find it in order to reach the reality. The Reality, the Light has always been there, but our eyes can not see because we are veiled from it.

We know that the highest level of transformation of the self (nafs) is to become cleared of our distortions of the Commanding self, and the Blaming self and to reach the stage of self at peace and become the mirror which reflects Allah.

The path of Sufism is based on the transformation of the self. So Moulana says in the following verse

Looking at me is looking at yourself, I am that mirror.

You looked at me (pleased) with laughter, and became the whole flower field of laughter.

This verse correlates with the Quranic verse when Allah is pleased with His servant and says:

“O you human being that has attained to inner peace! Return your Sustainer, well pleased and pleasing Him. Enter My true servants. Enter My paradise.” (Al-Fajr, verses 27-30)

One of the reasons that Moulana’s poetry are so alive after 800 years and will continue to be so, is because they transmit the message of Divine love and servant-hood, the inner and the outer, the apparent and the hidden aspect of the rope which takes man to God.

The words of Moulana moves people and talks to their inner hearts. By his words is got of the scent of the Beloved.

I am His cup and His wine jug I am the dispenser of the scent of His perfume.

Come to me so that you could receive the scent of His perfumed quality.

Imam Rabbani

The famous Sufi Imam Rabbani was an Islamic scholar, a Hanafi jurist and a prominent member of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. He was born on 1564 in Sirhind, India and died in 1624. He writes in his well known book “Mektubat” about the Divine Love the followings:

“Poverty, pain and trouble are necessary for God’s Love. It means if you choose the way to be Sufi, it would be necessary for you to get troubles. God wants to have a Lover who is contented only by Him. The Lover ought to cut all relations to others absolutely. The main support to be Sufi is Love and genuineness. Do

not be sorry if you do not notice any progress in Sufi path. If you assign a direction to Love and genuineness you could get the progress in a short time.

He who is still in Love with his Nafs (self), does whatever he does for his own sake whether he is aware of it or not. But when the love for the self disappears and is replaced by the Love of God, then whatever he does, he does for the sake of God, whether he deliberately attends to his intention or not. You need to specify your intentions when you have alternatives; but when you have no alternative you do not need to specify.”

Shaykh Ibn al-Arabî

The famous Shaykh Ibn al-Arabî is born on 1165 in Mürsiye, Andalusian and died in 1240 in Damascus. He is considered by many to be the greatest Sufi. He writes about the Divine Love in his well known book “Fütûhât-I Mekkiyye” the followings:

“The Divine Love derives from God’s names Beautiful and Light. Light goes forward to the entities of the possible things and dispels from them the darkness of their gaze upon themselves and upon their own possibility. Thus the created thing is object of God’s love constantly and forever.

The entity of the possible thing becomes a locus of manifestation for God, so it becomes non manifest within Him and is annihilated from itself. Hence it does not know that it loves Him. Or, it is annihilated from itself in Him while in this state so it does not know that it is a locus of manifestation from Him. It finds from itself that it loves itself, for everything is innately disposed to love itself. Nothing is manifest in the entity of the possible thing but God. God alone is the Manifest.

The subtlest thing that you may find in love is an excessive passion, a longing, an agitated yearning, a passion, a wasting away, and an inability to sleep or to take pleasure in food all the while that you do not know who it is or how it is that you love, and beloved does not become specified for you...

The whole cosmos is one human being that is the beloved. The individuals of the cosmos are the bodily parts of that human being. God did not describe the beloved through the love of its Lover. Rather, He made it a beloved, nothing else. Hence God’s lovers in the cosmos correspond to the pupil of the eye in the eye.

God bestows witnessing upon His lovers because He knows their love for Him. This knowledge of His is a knowledge of tasting. So His activity towards His lovers is the same as His activity toward Himself.

The entities of the cosmos are all lovers because of Him, whatever the beloved may be, since all created things are the pedestals for the Real's self-disclosure. Their love is fixed, they are loving, and He is the Loving."

Some of his poems about Divine Love are below:

When my Beloved appears,
With what eye do I see Him?
With His eye, not with mine,
For none sees Him except Himself.

While the sun's eye rules my sight,
Love sits as a sultan in my soul.
His army has made camp in my heart...
Passion and yearning, affliction and grief

When his camp took possession of me
I cried out as the flame of desire
Burned in my entrails.
Love stole my sleep, Love has bewildered me,

Love kills me unjustly, and I am helpless,
Love has burdened me with more than I can bear
So that I bequeath him a soul and no body.

I am the slave of passion and the slave of the Beloved.

The fire of passion burns my heart

And the One I love is in my mind,

Passion has seized hold of the reins of my heart,

So wherever I turn my gaze

Passion is facing me.

Yunus Emre

Yunus Emre was a poet who was constant to Islamic Sufism. Accordingly, he expressed his opinions about the Divine Love in his poetry. The main point of his sight is that there is only one real being in Sufism. It is the one God, Allah. As all of the other Sufis he acts from this thought. He illuminates the concept of presence, death, love and the universe from this perspective. Yunus focuses on Allah, Divine Love, existence and abstinence, life, death and the love of other human beings. He was born on 1240 in Sarıköy, Anatolia and died in 1320.

The main study of Yunus includes his real poems, which is called Poetry of Yunus Emre. Although there are over one thousand poems attributed to Yunus, there are approximately 300 of his poems in his divan (a collection of poems). Some of his poems about the Divine Love are given below:

When in love, the soul burns,

Melts like wax as it churns.

Stone hearts are like winter,

Dark, harsh, with all warmth gone.

Yunus, leave such fears behind,

Drive all care out of your mind,

Love is what one must first find,
One's a mystic from then on.

Burning, burning, I drift and tread,
Love spattered my body with blood,
I'm not in my senses nor mad,
Come, see what love has done to me.

I'm Yunus, mystic of sorrow,
Suffering wounds from top to toe,
In the friend's hands I writhe in woe,
Come, see what love has done to me

Yunus is my name, I'm out of my mind,
Love serves as my guide to the very end,
All alone, toward the majestic Friend,
I was kissing the ground – and I arrive

Re-union with that Beloved of his
Gives Yunus the lover his ecstasies
I have smashed the bottle against the stones,
What would I do with honor and prudence?

The lover's heart is the Creator's throne
God admires and accepts it as his own

The man who breaks a heart shall groan and moan
In both worlds, suffering sorrows and cares.

I have disclosed all my secrets today,
And found my soul by giving it away
Heart and soul adoring the Beloved,
In whose embrace I cherish my heyday

I found the Loved One, I need no one else
Let my store be plundered this very day
Earth is mine, sky is mine, heavens are mine
Under my tent, I put them in array

No wonder the name Yunus is disgraced
They read my poems and learn what I say.

Friends! Almighty God lets us to be the true servants who realizes the beauty and the secrets in His Heart Garden and is fed through this Garden.

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