

The Love of God: A Theological and Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract

The concept of divine love (muhabbetullah) is a central theme in Islamic theology, philosophy, and mysticism. This paper explores the nature of love for God, its foundations in the Qur'an and Hadith, and its interpretations by Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. The study examines how love for God influences human morality, spiritual growth, and personal fulfillment. Additionally, it discusses how divine love serves as a transformative force, guiding believers towards mystical experience and ethical excellence. By analyzing classical and contemporary perspectives, this paper provides a comprehensive understanding of divine love as the ultimate purpose of human existence.

Keywords: Love of God, muhabbetullah, Islamic theology, philosophy, and mysticism

Introduction

Love is one of the most profound emotions that shape human existence. In Islamic thought, love for God (muhabbetullah) is considered the highest form of devotion and the ultimate purpose of human creation. The Qur'an states, "Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah" (Qur'an 2:165), highlighting the centrality of divine love in faith. This paper aims to explore the theological and philosophical dimensions of divine love, analyzing its role in personal and spiritual transformation. The discussion will also examine the perspectives of key Islamic scholars who have contributed significantly to the understanding of divine love.

Theological Foundations of Divine Love

Islamic theology emphasizes that love for God is deeply rooted in recognizing His attributes and worshiping Him sincerely. The Qur'an and Hadith provide numerous references that underscore the necessity of divine love. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "None of you will truly believe until Allah and His Messenger become dearer to him than anything else" (Bukhari, Iman, 9). This illustrates that faith is deeply connected to the strength of one's love for God.

Perspectives of Islamic Scholars

Al-Ghazali on Love for God

Al-Ghazali, one of the most influential Islamic theologians, argued that love for God stems from knowledge of Him (marifatullah). In his work "Ihya Ulum al-Din," he discusses how divine love surpasses all worldly attachments and becomes the key to true happiness. According to him, moral virtues such as patience, humility, and gratitude are manifestations of one's love for God.

Ibn Arabi and the Mystical Dimensions of Divine Love

Ibn Arabi, a prominent Sufi thinker, described divine love as the fundamental force of existence. He proposed that the entire cosmos is a reflection of God's love and that human beings, by seeking divine love, realize their true spiritual purpose. His concept of "the perfect man" (al-insan al-kamil) emphasizes that the highest state of spiritual attainment is complete immersion in divine love.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi on the Role of Love in Faith

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi emphasized that love is the essence of creation. He stated that "the seed of the universe is love, and love is the manifestation of divine mercy." According to Nursi, true faith is inseparable from divine love, and one who genuinely loves God sees His reflections in all aspects of existence.

Practical Aspects of Divine Love

The love of God is not merely a theoretical concept but has profound implications for a believer's life. It fosters inner peace, moral integrity, and devotion. Practices such as prayer, remembrance (dhikr), and contemplation of God's creation strengthen the believer's bond with the divine.

Conclusion

Love for God is the highest and purest form of devotion. It is cultivated through knowledge, gratitude, and sincere worship. By studying theological perspectives and the insights of key Islamic scholars, it becomes evident that divine love serves as both a moral guide and a source of spiritual fulfillment. Ultimately, loving God transforms individuals and societies, leading them towards righteousness and inner tranquility.

References

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- William C. Chittick, "The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination"