

# Love and Affection in Islamic Culture

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Love and affection is an asset which God has placed in human hearts. In Islamic culture the heart ought to be the repository of love of God and affection towards people. In other words, love and affection is one of the most valuable characteristics which adorn the human heart and behavior. Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) says: "If the human heart is free from any evil characteristics, all other bodily organs will be pure, and if the human heart is contaminated with evilness, all parts of the body will be contaminated."

Love and affection play a basic role in the life of all human beings, as among the loftiest human values preached by the Prophets. Love and affection are important in social life and in dealing with others. Characteristics like goodness, good temper, forbearance, modesty, abstention from wrongdoing, and humbleness are among the manifestations of love and affection. The practical precedents in this regard were demonstrated by Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) and the Infallible Imams of his household, in daily life, while dealing with people, as well as in their private life. The Prophet says has been quoted as saying: After faith, the intellect is based on affection and kindness to people. In another statement, he says: By God in Whose possession is my life, no one except the true believers will enter Paradise and the true believers are those who have love and affection for each other.

Thus, affection and kindness are among the best ways of moral education in Islam in accordance with human nature. Affection plays a basic role in directing internal emotions and molding lofty traits to the extent that whenever we become interested in something this trend will overshadow all other desires. For imparting proper education, love and affection are of paramount importance to the extent that without such amiable tendencies, our latent talents are not revealed. God has based the creation of the world on love and affection. The numerous divine blessings and the various provisions of life indicate the infinite love and affection of God for His creatures. The Almighty Creator Himself is the First Instructor in teaching love and affection. He has placed this life-inspiring elixir in the nature of all human beings.

Love and affection are part of innate human nature, and are shaped due to various social factors. However, the prevailing atmosphere of a household or society can change this delicate innate nature. If the conditions are positive, love and affection increases in the proper direction, otherwise will cease to play their role. Therefore, Islam has made love and affection as the basis of education. In the holy Qur'an, God Almighty says love and affection were among the

main reasons for the success of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) in propagating Islam. As the Mercy unto the whole creation, Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) was the picture of love and affection. He was caring and sympathetic to all and affectionately guided them towards Islam. He overlooked the faults of others, since no other trait except love and affection can bring human hearts closer to each other. The North African Muslim scholar, Ibn Khaldoun, who is considered the Father of Sociology, writes that if a teacher is very strict with students, they will not just lose their enthusiasm for learning and acquisition of knowledge, but will acquire deceit, trick and negative tendencies. In other words, the teacher ought not to be a dictator.

One should know how to benefit from love and affection in order to prevent extremist tendencies in the society. The purpose of love and affection is to ensure psychological health in life, and salvation in afterlife. For materialization of this objective love and affection should be firmly blended with our nature. Once a person reaches such moral high ground, he/she can turn darkness into light and replace evilness with goodness. There is a magic force in love and affection that removes sorrow and grief from hearts and guides us to the right path. It is the true believer, who adorns his life and spirit with good deeds. Such a person is far removed from the deceit of the devil and easily overcomes all carnal desires. In the holy Qur'an, love and affection have been mentioned in several ayahs. One of them is love in God which is manifested in the form of sincere worship and the doing of good to others in society in order to get close to Him. Love and affection help us reach perfection, since God Almighty is the Source of perfection and goodness. Surah Maidah, ayah 54, says in this regard: "Whom He loves and who love Him"

And in part of ayah 119 we read: "Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him" Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) says: Once God Almighty loves a servant; He calls Gabriel and says to him: I love this person, so you too love him. Then Gabriel proclaims in the sky that God loves this servant so you the people of the sky love him. As a result, all those on the earth and .on the sky will become friend with him