202343 - Humans are created with the natural desire to love Allah, and this love may be increased by learning about Allah and His names and attributes

the question

“Love of Allah is not something that man is born with, but it is something that he may acquire. This is why Allah gives a great reward to those who attain that love, and the basis of that love is having correct knowledge of Allah and His attributes, and being sincere in putting this knowledge into action.” I put these words on a website, and people responded by saying that this is nonsense, and they asked for evidence. Because it is difficult to find evidence in English, I hope that you can answer by giving sufficient evidence, because I know that love of Allah is something that a person acquires by learning about Allah’s names and attributes, finding out what He loves and doing it. I also know that there is a difference between one who says that he loves Allah without knowledge or doing actions that Allah loves, and one who loves Allah on the basis of what he has learned about Him and doing the deeds that he has learned are pleasing to Allah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

With regard to your saying “Love of Allah is not something that man is born with,” there are reservations about what this phrase appears to mean, for people have a natural inclination to love their Creator, may He be Glorified, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Adhere exclusively and sincerely to the true faith of monotheism, the natural disposition that Allah instilled in humankind. There can be no change in what Allah has created. This is the right religion}[Ar-Rum 30:30].

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: People have a natural inclination to love one

who does them favours and is kind to them, so how about the One from Whom all favours and blessings come? Whatever blessings people enjoy come from Him alone, and He has no partner or associate, as He, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Whatever blessing you have, it is from Allah, then when misfortune afflicts you, it is to Him that you cry out for help }[An-Nahl 16:53].

See: *Ad-Da' wa'd-Dawa'* by Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 228.

In principle, loving the Creator, may He be Glorified and Exalted, is something innate in man, a natural inclination that is created in him.

With regard to your saying "but it is something that he may acquire" and so on, it is correct to a large extent, because even though love of Allah, may He be Exalted is something innate, it increases as one learns more about Allah, may He be Exalted. The way to learn about Him is by learning His names and sublime attributes, and by looking at and reflecting on His creation, which points to His perfection, majesty and greatness, as well as reflecting on the blessings that He bestows on His slaves.

This is the kind of love that is based on a person's acknowledging that he is a slave of Allah and on strong faith in Him, which is obligatory. That is the kind of love on the basis of which there will be reward or punishment, praise or condemnation, faith or disbelief.

Al-Bukhari (16) and Muslim (67) narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There are three characteristics, whoever attains them has found the sweetness of faith: when Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than all else, when he loves a man and does not love him except for the sake of Allah, and when he would hate to return to disbelief after Allah has saved him from it as he would hate to be thrown into the fire."

Al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Love of Allah sometimes stems from having knowledge of Him, and proper knowledge of Him may be attained by learning about His

names and attributes and His sublime actions, and reflecting on His creation and what it contains of precision, wisdom and wonders, for all of that points to His perfection, power, wisdom, knowledge and mercy. And sometimes that love stems from reflecting on His blessings. In the marfu` hadith of Ibn `Abbas it says: “Love Allah because of what He bestows upon you of His blessings, and love me because Allah loves me.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi in some manuscripts of his book (no. 3789). [Al-Albani classed it as weak (da`if) in *Da`if al-Jami`*, 176].

One of the early generations said: Whoever comes to know Allah will love Him, and whoever loves Him will obey Him, for love leads to obedience, as one of the devoted people said: Loving Allah means complying with His commands in all situations.(*Fat-h al-Bari*, 1/51).

Learning about Allah, may He be Exalted, by learning about His names, attributes, blessings and kindness is a means of increasing love of Allah through one’s own efforts, and that will increase that faith which is obligatory. Moreover, it is also a means of increasing the innate love of Allah with which people are born. So if a person knows that Allah, may He be Exalted, is the Creator Who created him, shaped him and made his form beautiful, he will love Him and increase in love of Him, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

If someone knows that it is Allah, may He be Glorified, Who is the Provider, the Controller, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining, the One Who runs the affairs of His creation, sends their provision and takes care of them in all situations, and their condition cannot be sound except through His blessings, then he will increase in love of Allah and nearness to Him.

If he reflects on the blessings that Allah bestows upon him and His kindness to him with every breath that he takes, he will undoubtedly love his Lord, for people’s hearts are naturally inclined to love those who show them kindness and to hate those who mistreat them, and there is no one who is greater in showing kindness than Allah, may He be Glorified, for His blessings shower His slave with every breath he takes and at every moment, and he enjoys Allah’s blessings in all situations. There is no way to list all the categories of blessings, let alone their many types and

every single blessing.(*Tariq al-Hijratayn* by Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 315).

One of the signs of loving Allah, may He be Exalted, is obeying Him, complying with His commands and prohibitions, accepting His religious decrees and submitting to Him and following His religion and His Prophet wholeheartedly, as He, may He be Exalted, says:

{Say: If you love Allah then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful}[Al 'Imran 3:31].

Allah has ordained that the sign of loving Him is following His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). This indicates that love of Allah cannot be complete without obeying Him and following His Prophet.

Hence al-Hasan said:

You should realise that you will never truly love Allah unless you love to obey Him.(*Jami` al-`Ulum wa'l-Hikam* by Ibn Rajab, 1/212).

As for one who claims to love Allah, may He be Exalted, yet he goes against His commands and disobeys his Lord, he is lying about that love.

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to enable us and you to do that which He loves and which pleases Him, Amin.