216483 - Does Love for the Sake of Allah Bring You Closer to Allah?

the question

Is love for the sake of Allah and doing what is dictated thereby an act of worship that will bring one closer to Allah, may He be exalted? Is it equivalent to nafl (supererogatory) acts of worship or Hajj, as al-Hasan al-Basri said to someone: “O A’mash, do you not know that going and putting effort into helping your brother is like performing Hajj after Hajj?” Did he say that to him by way of simply motivating him, or is the reward for it actually as he said? How can a person reach such a level with the one whom he loves for the sake of Allah that he will stand in the shade of the Most Gracious and reach a point where Allah’s love becomes due to both of them?

Summary of answer

Love for the sake of Allah is one of the strongest bonds of faith, and is one of the most important foundations on which Muslim society is based. Love for the sake of Allah is one of the greatest acts of worship and one of the best of righteous deeds. Among the seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the Day when there will be no shade but His are “two men (people) who love one another for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting on that basis.”

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Importance of love for the sake of Allah

Love for the sake of Allah is one of the strongest bonds of faith, and is one of the most important foundations on which Muslim society is based. It is the basis by means of which ties of friendship and harmony among people are attained, so that they love one another, visit one another, are sincere towards one another, intermarry, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, thus attaining true Islamic brotherhood. Through it people find the sweetness of faith in their

interactions, companionship and friendship.

Ahmad (18524) narrated from al-Bara’ ibn `Aazib, that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Indeed the strongest bond of faith is to love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah.” (Classed as hasan by the commentators on Al-Musnad; also classed as hasan by Al-Albani in Sahih At-Targhib (3030).

Love for the sake of Allah is one of the greatest acts of worship and one of the best of righteous deeds.

Al-Bukhari (13), Muslim (45), and An-Nasa’i (5017) narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, no one of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself of good.”

Al-Hafiz ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Al-Kirmani said: It is also part of faith to hate for his brother what he hates for himself of evil.” (Fath Al-Bari (1/58)

If faith, which is obligatory, is not complete unless one loves good for one’s fellow Muslim and hates evil for him, then loving the Muslim himself and being allied with him is more important and is of a higher level.

Authenticity of the Hadith “Do you not know that your going and striving to help your brother is better for you than performing Hajj after Hajj?”

Ibn Abi Dunya narrated in Qada’ Al-Hawa’ij (103) and in Istina’ Al-Ma`ruf (163) via Al-Hakam ibn Sinan: Malik ibn Dinar told us: Al-Hasan sent Muhammad ibn Nuh and Humayd At-Tawil on an errand for his brother, and said: Tell Thabit Al-Bunani to come to me with you. Thabit said to them: I am in seclusion worshipping my Lord (i'tikaf). Humayd went back to Al-Hasan and told him what Thabit had said, and he (Al-Hasan) said to him: Tell him: Do you not know that your going and

striving to help your brother is better for you than performing Hajj after Hajj?

This is a weak isnad. Al-Hakam ibn Sinan is weak in hadith; he was classed as weak by Ibn Ma`in, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Sa`d, Abu Dawud and others. Ibn Hibban said: He is one of those who were sole narrators of fabricated hadiths from trustworthy narrators, so no attention should be paid to him." ((Tahdhib At-Tahdhib (2/367)

Even if we assume that it is sound, it may be understood as being by way of emphasizing and encouraging people to go about helping Muslims with what they need.

More sound than that is the hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "To go about with a brother of mine, trying to help him, is dearer to me than spending a month in seclusion (i'tikaf) in this mosque of mine. The one who goes about with his Muslim brother, trying to help him, until he meets his needs, Allah will make his feet steadfast on the Day when feet will slip." (Narrated by At-Tabarani (13646), Ibn Bashran in Al-Amali, and others, classed as hasan by Al-Albani in As-Sahihah (906)

In Az-Zuhd (746), Ibn Al-Mubarak narrated that Abu Ja`far said:

"A man came to Husayn ibn `Ali to seek his help, and he found him in seclusion for worship. He said: Were it not for being in seclusion, I would have gone out with you and helped you with what you need. Then the man left and went to Al-Hasan ibn `Ali, and told him what he needed, and he went out with him and helped him. The man said: I did not like to bother you and ask for your help, but I started with Husayn and he said, Were it not for being in seclusion, I would have gone out with you. Al-Hasan said: To help a brother in faith of mine is dearer to me than secluding myself in worship for a month.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Helping Muslims with what they need is more important than secluding oneself for worship, because helping them benefits others and yourself, and doing something that benefits others and

yourself is better than doing something that benefits only yourself, except when the deed that only benefits oneself is one of the obligatory and essential duties of Islam." (Majmu` Fatawa wa Rasa'il Al-`Uthaymin (20/180)

Reward for love for the Sake of Allah

Among the seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the Day when there will be no shade but His are "two men (people) who love one another for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting on that basis", as it says in the sahih hadith on which the scholars are agreed.

Ahmad (22002) narrated from `Ubadah ibn As-Samit that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "[Allah says:] `My love is due for those who love one another for My sake; My love is due for those who visit one another for My sake; My love is due for those who help one another for My sake; My love is due for those whose hearts are free of grudges and who uphold ties with one another for My sake.'" (Classed as sahih by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Jami` (4321)

It is possible to attain these high levels by means of sincere love for one's brother, intending it solely for the sake of Allah, cooperating in righteousness and piety on a basis of love, sincerely advising one another to do good, getting together to do acts of worship, and casting away evil and inappropriate words and deeds; and by loving for your brother what you love for yourself, hating for him what you hate for yourself, sharing his joys and sorrows, helping him to obey Allah, helping him in matters of concern to him having to do with this world or the Hereafter, defending him in his absence, not hesitating to help him or any of his family members, speaking well of him, concealing his faults, not backbiting about him, and not telling lies about him; and by treating him as well as you would treat your own brother, if not better than that.

To sum up, you should treat him in all good ways that you would like to be treated yourself, in word and in deed, in his absence and in his presence.

And Allah knows best.