



# Aligarh Journal of Interfaith Studies(AJIS)

International Peer Reviewed, , Open Access Journal  
ISSN: (in process) | Impact Factor | ESTD Year 2020

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## Concept of Love in the *Quran* (A Study of Sadruddin Islahi)

**ROOHNUMA PARVEEN**

Research Scholar,. Department of Islamic Studies,  
A.M.U., Aligarh

| ARTICLE DETAILS   | ABSTRACT  |
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| <b>Article History:</b><br>Published Online:<br>_Published_   | Love is a vital pre-requisite for the nourishment of the soul. It is the most powerful tool to establish prosperous ties with other fellow-citizens. The word love ( <i>Hubb</i> ) originates from the Arabic word referring to seed. The <i>Qur'an</i> appeals to human beings to comprehend the actual definition of love and implement it in the quotidian practices. This leads to the absence of superiority complex thus maintaining a balanced or stable life. As far as Sadruddin Islahi is concerned, he has discussed about the basic elements of Sufistic love ( <i>Ishq</i> ), elaboration on the Quranic concept of <i>Din</i> and the essential requirements of religion. This paper aims to provide his views on the above cited notions along with a critical approach. |
| <b>Keywords:</b><br><i>Love, Hubb, Qur'an, Sadruddin Islahi, Sufistic love, Quranic concept of Din.</i> |   |

## **Introduction:**

### Nature of Love in the Qur'an

The love is wrongly interpreted as always of a single origin and base, as discussed by the lexicographers, the learned scholars of the *Qur'an* as well as the actual facts, argues Islahi. Imam Raghīb al-Isfahān had defined 'love of God' terms of "linking a thing that may be resulted possibly or certainly to a good." Ibn Manzur has equated this with the word '*widad*' which stands in opposition to '*bughdh*'. This linking and disliking, says the writer, may be both natural and emotional. The Love, therefore, is categorized into two:

- i. Love based on thinking and reason, and this retains its original position in whatsoever it develops, and
- ii. Love based on emotions and natural instincts, and this, when crossed its limits turns into '*Ishq*'.<sup>1</sup>

The Love of God and the realization of him is certainly based on the reason and thinking, and not on the sensations and feelings. This may be verified by the citations of the *Qur'an*. Maulana Sadruddin Islahi here cites the Quranic verses:

The Holy *Qur'an* Says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا  
يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

"Yet there are men who take (for worship)  
others besides God, as equal (with God):  
They love them as they should love God.



But those of faith are Overflowing in their  
love For God".<sup>2</sup>

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ  
اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say: If you do love God, Follow me: God will  
love you and forgive you your sins: for God is  
oft-forgiving, most Merciful.<sup>3</sup>

These verse, argues the learned writer logically, proves not only the obligatory position of completely following to the Prophet (Peace and blessings of God be on him) but also states implicitly that whatever love to God is required in the *Qur'an* forms exactly the same in its nature, reality, necessities and practical manifestations as the love of the Prophet towards his constituted. What kind of love to God the Prophet had was fully reflected in his practical life the entire details of which may be minutely seen in the *Qur'an*, the *Hadith* and the *Sirah* literature. A cursory sight at this Prophetic life-the following of which is obligatory for the Muslims-reveals that these were the fruits and products of the love that was rational and dogmatic in nature and not the one based on the '*Ishq*'.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Basic Elements**

In order to explain the practical manifestations and demonstrations of the Quranic concept of love to God as opposed to Sufistic '*Ishq*', Maulana Sadruddin Islahi to the Quranic verses:

The *Qur'an* says:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ  
اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say: If you do love God, Follow me: God will  
love you and forgive you your sins: for God is  
oft-forgiving, most Merciful.<sup>5</sup>

*Allah* Says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ  
بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ  
يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ

“O Ye who believe! If any from among you turn  
back from his faith, Soon will God produce A people  
whom He will love As they will love Him, Lowly  
with the believers, Mighty against the Rejecters, Fighting  
in the way of God, And never afraid of the reproaches  
of such as find fault”.<sup>6</sup>

This verse clearly states, argues Sadruddin Islahi, that those love God certainly possess the following qualities and perform accordingly:

- Attitude of humility and lowliness towards the faithful,
- Struggle continuously with all the means for to safeguard, support and victory of the truth, and
- Avoidance of the reproaches, ridicules and derisions from others for the cause of the faith.



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Islahi says, all these qualities and performances are the necessary outcome of the love to God.<sup>7</sup>

### ***'Ishq* the Sufistic Term**

Sadrud-din Islahi has refuted the Sufistic concept of love (*Ishq*) as to be in contradiction to the Quranic concept of love (*hubb*). Forming not the Quranic Religion: why did the holy *Qur'an* not prescribe *hubb* (love of God) the essential concept of *din* while it implicitly stated the *'Ishq* as the non-desirable and avoidable concept, and not the *hubb*. It has, rather, pronounced the *hubb* as the spirit of the faith and therefore it deserved to be the fundamental concept of the *din*. This question was responded seriously by the learned writer. He discussed the three points in this regard:

1. The term of the fundamental concept of the *din* may not be possibly applied to the Quranic "love to God" (*hubb*) because the comprehensiveness of this term is far greater than the word love (*hubb*). There is no commandment or teaching of *Shariah* that may not be covered by the 'Concept of *Din*' while the word 'love' (*hubb*) is too shorter to cover all the aspects and teachings of the religion.

2. The *Qur'an* has described love (*hubb*) as the spirit of faith and the identity of the faithful but has not used an imperative form, grammatically, even in a single place to command the followers uphold the love of God. This is a clear indication that the 'love of God' despite of all its significance does not constitute the 'fundamental concept of the *din*; it is rather amongst the necessities



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of it. The love is a too desirable concept but is in nowhere its entire object.

3. The logic behind this Quranic way of expression is intelligible. It was not merely by chance that the *Qur'an* did not use the imperative form to describe the love since it would have gone against the inimitability of the *Qur'an*. There must be some specific interest behind this Quranic style of expression. This mystery is exposed when one goes deeper into the larger interests of the religion, in the Quranic wisdom of expression, in the implied ambiguities of the word 'love' and in the history of the religions. Keeping in mind the facts that the love of God (*hubb*) is commonly rooted in the '*Ishq* in as much as that the people consider the two words interchangeable; the followers of the religions, historically, having neglected the great difference of far-reaching consequences between the two, have been playing with the nature and object of the religion of God, it becomes quite clear that the *Qur'an* did not use the imperative form because of the interest of safeguarding of the fundamental concept of *din* from all such corruptions.<sup>8</sup>

In order to strengthen the impossibility of the Quranic *hubb* as being stated the fundamental concept of the *din*, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi again cited Ibn Taimiyyah from his *Al-Ubudiyyah* to the effect:

“Some scholars of mystic knowledge and gnosis have thought



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undesirable to accompany those who speak of love to God without

describing and thinking of the fear of God. One pious man of the predecessors used to say that a man who worships God with the sense

of love only, is a heretic one (*zindiq*); one who worships Him with the sense of hope (*rija*) only is a entitled to *murji*; one who worships Him with a sense of fear only is a *haruri*; but one who worships Him with all the three sense of love, hope and fear is an Unitarian Muslim. Consequently there are a number of later Sufis who were proud of their claim of love to God."

Think over, Islahi concludes this discussion, in case the love of God had been a fundamental concept of din how a well-versed, scholar like Ibn Taimiyyah and others would have dared to say that speaking regularly of the love of God was religiously undesirable, and worshipping God with the sense of love only was a heresy (*zandaqah*)!

Maulana Sadruddin Islahi having provided with the rational of the Quranic concept of religion (*din*), elaborated its following essential requirements:

1. 1 Glorifying and loving God extremely.
2. Pleasure of God.
3. Avoiding of Monasticism.
4. Unity of the religion.
5. Unavoidability of the Revelation.



6. Following *shariah* unconditionally.
7. Obeying the prophet inevitably.
8. Invalidating any Distinction in the law..<sup>9</sup>

## **The Essential Requirements of Religion**

In the *'Ishq*- based religion no dogmatic practical requirements may be discussed with certainly and precision because these were not recorded in the form of précised words or systematic sentences, and more importantly the feelings and emotions that play crucial role in the philosophy of *'Ishq*, are not the same in all the circumstances. The requirements in this concept of the religion may be therefore estimated only on the three bases, namely:

- i. Nature specific to this concept,
- ii. The practical results of following this concept as recorded in the history of the world religions, and
- iii. The literature produced by this concept of religion.

Keeping in view all these three bases the following may be considered as the distinct requirements of the religion:

- Visiting of God
- Neglect to the World
- Disinterest in the Revelation
- Limited Concept of Religion
- Homogeneity of Religions

## **Conclusion**





Maulana Sadruddin Islahi, one of the towering personalities of Islamic scholarship in modern India has discussed in detail the concept, the dimensions and the implications of the love in the *Quran*. He found the Quranic *hubb* as opposed to the Sufis' concept of *Ishq*. His opposition to the concept of *Ishq* is however, addressed to the non-Islamic elements penetrated in the *Tasawwuf*. He has accepted the Islamic version of *Tasawwuf* and has equated it to the Quranic concept of *Tazkiya* and to the term of *Ihsan* used in the famous Hadith of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Fahad, Obaidullah, “*Islamic Critique of Sufism*”, 2014, Jnanada Prakashan, New Delhi, P. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The *Qur'an*, 2:165.

<sup>3</sup> The *Qur'an*, 3:31.

<sup>4</sup> Fahad, Obaidullah, “*Islamic Critique of Sufism*”, *op.cit.*, P.75.

<sup>5</sup> The *Qur'an*, 3:31.

<sup>6</sup> The *Qur'an*, 5:57.

<sup>7</sup> Islahi, Sadruddin, “*Din ka Qurani Tasawwur*”, 1968, Markazi Maktaba-e-Jama'at-e-Islami Hind, Delhi, P. 98.

<sup>8</sup> Fahad, Obaidullah, “*Islamic Critique of Sufism*”, *op. cit.*, PP. 79-80.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, PP. 81-91.

<sup>10</sup> Islahi, Sadruddin, “*Din ka Qurani Tasawwur*”, *op.cit.*, PP. 93-97. The concept of *wahdat-e-adyan* (unity of religions) may not be wrongly mixed with the *wahdat-e-din* (unity of religion); both are contradictory to each other in spirit and contents. The first is the purely secular and anti-Islamic one dealing with all the religions along with their deviations, distortions and perversions as equally true, authentic and acceptable. The latter is the Quranic concept that believes in all the revealed religions in general and finally in Islam in particular, but declares Islam the only way to salvation because the older scriptures were distorted by their



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followers and were not safe. See for detail, Islahi, Sultan Ahmad, *wahdat-e-Adyan Ka Nazariyah Aur Islam*, Aligarh, Idarah Tasneef-o-Tahqiq, 1995, P.192.*Ibid.*, PP. 81-91.

<sup>10</sup> Islahi, Sadruddin, “*Din ka Qurani Tasawwur*”, *op.cit.*, PP. 93-97. The concept of *wahdat-e-adyan* (unity of religions) may not be wrongly mixed with the *wahdat-e-din* (unity of religion); both are contradictory to each other in spirit and contents. The first is the purely secular and anti-Islamic one dealing with all the religions along with their deviations, distortions and perversions as equally true, authentic and acceptable. The latter is the Quranic concept that believes in all the revealed religions in general and finally in Islam in particular, but declares Islam the only way to salvation because the older scriptures were distorted by their followers and were not safe. See for detail, Islahi, Sultan Ahmad, *wahdat-e-Adyan Ka Nazariyah Aur Islam*, Aligarh, Idarah Tasneef-o-Tahqiq, 1995, P.192