

HOW TO ATTAIN LOVE FOR ALLAH

In order to attain true love [*'ishq haqīqī*] for Allah ﷻ, the following principles must be established:

SINCERE YEARNING [*TALAB*]

The foremost condition of attaining love for Allah ﷻ is to sincerely crave such love. A person may acquire the material world [*dunyā*] passively, but true love [*'ishq*] is a treasure; therefore it cannot be acquired unless one actively seeks it.

*I am humbled by my abaseness, and in awe of Your exaltedness,
Yet, what can I do of my heart, still it desires to reach You.*

A person may be made of dust and earth, yet far does his gaze travel when he desires the countenance of the True Beloved ﷻ.

*Where is this [lowly] heart, that it may desire to attain the Beloved?
Where is the King of the beautiful? And how far are we?*

When a person sits to remember Allah ﷻ, but discovers his heart full of heedlessness and neglect, he should recite the following prayer to himself:

*O Beneficent One, have grace upon me, I am in great agony,
I am sitting before You, yet still I remain veiled.*

A person must make firm intention in his heart to acquire true love for Allah ﷻ and must be prepared to sacrifice everything for this goal.

RELINQUISHING WORLDLY PLEASURES

To attain the True Beloved ﷻ, it is imperative that one abandon all worldly pleasures. The seeker of the material world [*dunyā*] can never become the seeker of the Lord [*Rabb*]. Every desire must be removed from the heart until it is empty, and one can say:

*Every desire has departed from my heart,
[O Allah] Come now [into my heart], now there is solitude.*

It is necessary to pass three stages in order to abandon everything besides Allah ﷻ.

Stage One: Estranging One's Own Existence

All the desires of the lower self [*nafs*] must be abandoned. Until the seeker [*salik*] vanquishes his *nafs*, he will not reach his Lord.

*In the end, I lost all awareness of my own self,
When at last I was apprised of my Lord.*

Stage Two: Abandoning the Material World

The pleasures of the *dunyā* must be relinquished. Indeed, this is a difficult task.

*Absorbed in the remembrance of Allah,
The heart is granted kingship,
But it is no simple feat to forsake the dunyā and all that it contains.*

Stage Three: Diverting One's Primary Focus From the Blessings of the Ākhirah
A *sālik* should not solely seek the blessings of the Hereafter in reward for his worship [*'ibādāt*], but must also become a seeker of the True Bestower ﷻ.

*An ascetic will attain his goal,
Only when he forsakes all,
Now that you have forsaken the material world,
Forsake the rewards of the Hereafter as well.*

ABUNDANCE OF TAHLĪL

The continual reciting of “*Lā ilāha illa'Llāh*”²⁹ is called *tahlil*. This is a powerful weapon; it annihilates all false deities that may reside in one's heart.

*When the flame of love roars,
All besides the Beloved are extinguished,
The sword of 'Lā' destroys all but the True One,
See what remains thereafter,
It is Allah who remains, all else has vanished,
Welcome, O love, a warm welcome to you.*

REFLECTION [FIKR]

Reflection is essential in attaining love for Allah ﷻ. In this method of *dhikr*, a *sālik* imagines that the spiritual blessings [*faidh*] of Allah ﷻ are descending on his heart. He should keep in mind the following two hadiths:

²⁹ *Lā ilāha illa'Llāh* literally means, “There is no god except Allah.”

إنما الأعمال بالنيات

Verily, actions are based upon intentions.

and,

أنا عند ظن عبدي بي

I (Allah) am to My servant as he thinks of Me.

The greatest amount of spiritual blessing [*faidl*] is obtained through reflection [*fikr*]. *Fikr* is the method of *dhikr* practiced from the tenth to the final lesson of the Naqshbandi *tarīqah* [spiritual path].³⁰

*My heart yearns for those unfilled days and nights,
When I would remain in reflection, thinking of my Lord.*

COMPANY OF THOSE WHO ARE TRUE IN WORD AND DEED

[*SĀDIQĪN*]

Allah ﷻ states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

*O you who believe, fear Allah, and be with the truthful
ones. (9:119)*

If a *salik* keeps the company of lovers, he too will become an *'ashiq*. Giving a pledge of self-rectification [*bay'ah*] to a *shaykh* and

³⁰ There are thirty-five lessons of the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi *tarīqah*. The great scholars of our ummah derived these from principles established by the Quran and *sunnah*. From the first to the seventh lesson, the emphasis is on the *dhikr* [remembrance] of the name “Allah.” The eighth and ninth lesson consist of *tahsil* [the continual recitation of *Lā ilāha illa 'Llāh*]. From the tenth lesson onwards, emphasis is placed on *fikr* [reflection], wherein a seeker contemplates upon the mercy and blessings of Allah ﷻ descending upon his heart.

spending time in a sanctuary devoted to spiritual reform [*khānaqah*] are the practical ways of keeping the company of the truthful ones [*sādiqīn*]. Once *Hadrat* Shah Fazlur Rahman Ganj Muradabadi (rah) asked *Mawlānā* Muhammad Ali Moongiri (rah) if he had ever seen a store where love [*ʿishq*] could be obtained. He thought for a moment and then replied, “*Hadrat*, I have seen two such shops. One, the *khānaqah* of *Hadrat* Shah Ghulam Ali Dehlawi (rah) and the other, the *khānaqah* of *Hadrat* Shah ‘Afaq (rah).”³¹ By spending a few days in the company [*subhah*] of a *shaykh*, a person’s heart is transformed and his entire life is changed.

*The scenes of the Day of Judgment have been embedded in my heart,
By spending but a few days under an attentive gaze.*

The *shaykh* directs the *sālik* to perform *dhikr* abundantly in the secluded confines of the *khānaqah*.

*My shaykh has erased the gulf between You and me,
By teaching me the essence of ‘Lā ilāha illa’Llāh.’*

When a *sālik* feels the love for Allah ﷻ increase in his heart, supplications [*duʿā*] for his *shaykh* pour from his heart.

*O Lord, let the tavern of my shaykh remain full of patrons,
For here the drink of love is given to all who come.*

A *sālik* who spent some time with *Hadrat* Shah ‘Afaq (rah) described the beneficial effects of his company in these words:

³¹ Both *Hadrat* Shah Ghulam Ali Dehlawi (rah) and *Hadrat* Shah ‘Afaq (rah) were prominent *shaykhs* of the Naqshbandi *tarīqah*.

*O Hadrat Shah 'Afaq, most eloquent one,
Tell me once again the signs of Him who has no signs,
You extinguished my knowledge of syntax, grammar, and logic,
And have inflamed the fires of love for Allah.*

When the heart of the *sālik* is overwhelmed with love for Allah, then every step leads to his ultimate destination.

*Filled was I with love for You, wherever I turned I found only You,
I set out on the path toward You, no direction or guide with me.*

The sincere lover proceeds along the way of love simply by traveling it, without a compass or a guide. The traveler wonders not whether he will reach his destination, but focuses on his journey, as he is but a traveler.

*O Allah, how does one navigate this road of love?
This path moves with the traveler.*



*Once you set out to traverse this way of love,
Seek only the pleasure of being on the path,
Ask not one another whether the end is near or far.*

PRAYER AND RECOURSE UNTO ALLAH [ILTIJÂ']

When a *sālik* has done everything in his capacity, he should pray to Allah ﷻ for His help and assistance, because ultimately it is He who leads the seeker to his destination. Allah ﷻ states:

و لولا فضل الله عليكم و رحمته ما زكى منكم من أحد أبداً و لكن الله يزكى من يشاء

*Were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy,
not one of you would ever be purified. But, Allah purifies
whom He wishes. (24:21)*

The blessing of love for Allah ﷻ is rapidly acquired by rising in the last portion of the night and crying profusely while making *du'a*. The blessed Prophet ﷺ preferred the following supplications [*du'at*], as mentioned in hadiths:

اللهم اجعل حبك أحب إلي من نفسي و أهلي و من الماء البارد

O Allah, make Your love more beloved to me than my own self, my family and cold water.

❦

اللهم اجعل حبك أحب الأشياء إلي و كلها و خشيتك أخوف الأشياء عندي و اقطع عني حاجات الدنيا بالشوق إلى لقائك و إذا اقرت أعين أهل الدنيا من دنياهم فاقرر عيني من عبادتك

O Allah, make Your love the most beloved thing to me of all loves, and make my fear of You be the most fearful thing to me of all fears. Free me from the necessities of this world, by [granting me] a desire to meet You. When the eyes of the people of the world are cooled by their worldly belongings, let my eyes be cooled by Your worship.

❦

اللهم اجعلني أخشاك كأنني أراك أبدا حتى ألقاك

O Allah, let me fear You as though I always see You, until I meet You.

❦

اللهم إني أسئلك إيمانا يباشر قلبي و يقينا صادقا حتى أعلم أنه لا يصيبني إلا ما كتنت و وصنا من المعيشة بما قسمت لي

O Allah, I ask of You faith which enlightens my heart and certainty such that I know that nothing will afflict me except that which You have written, and only that livelihood will I receive which You have apportioned for me.

بِسْمِ

اللهم أني أسئلك التوفيق لمحابك من الأعمال و صدق و التوكل عليك و حس
ظن بك

*O Allah, I ask of You the success to do those acts beloved
to You, [and ask of You] truthfulness, trust, and reliance
upon You, and good thoughts about You.*

بِسْمِ

اللهم أني أسئلك نفسا بك مطمئنة تؤمن بلفائك ترضى لقضائك و تقنع بعبثائك

*O Allah, I ask of You a contented soul and faith in
meeting with You, and contentment with Your decree, and
satisfaction with that which You bestow upon me.*

بِسْمِ

اللهم افتح مسامع قلبي لذكرك. أنت ترحمني فارحمني رحمة تغني بها عن
رحمة من سواك

*O Allah, open my heart to Your remembrance. You are
Merciful, have mercy upon me — a mercy which will
render me independent of others' mercies.*

بِسْمِ

اللهم أني أسئلك قلوبا أو اهة مخبئة منيية في سبيلك

*O Allah, I ask of You a heart that is humble and
repentant, in Your path.*

بِسْمِ

اللهم اجعل وساوس قلبي خشيتك و ذكرك و اجعل همتي و هوائي فيما
ترضى

*O Allah, make the whispers of my heart [to be] Your fear
and Your remembrance, and make my desires and
aspirations in conformity with Your pleasure.*

بِسْمِ

اللهم أقسم لنا من خشيتك ما تحول به بيننا وبين معاصينا

*O Allah, decree for us Your fear, such that it will form a
barrier between us and our sins.*

In addition to these transmitted *du'at*, any *du'a* offered in one's own language or words, is also beneficial.

To obtain love for Allah ﷻ is no simple matter. In fact it is something that requires one's full attention and devotion.

*Know that this affair of love is not an easy one,
It is a river of fire, whose depths the lover must cross.*

Nevertheless, a *sālik* traverses these stations of struggle and exertion and finally prays to the Lord, Most Generous:

*I wish the endless limits of Thy love,
Tis' but my naïve innocence, that I wish for such a thing.*