

Devoted Love for the *Ahl Al-Bayt* as the Reward for the Mission of the Prophet

Which One Is the Reward for the Mission of the Prophet: Love or Devoted Love for the *Ahl al-Bayt*?

In the Quran, God commanded the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him and his family) to introduce to the people devoted love for his Household as the reward for the mission [1]. In previous lessons, we discussed the difference between *mahabbah* (general affection or love) and *mawaddah* (devoted or committed love). We stated that *mawaddah* is affection accompanied by effort and endeavor toward closeness and similarity to the beloved. In this lesson, we will delve into why *mawaddah* or devoted love has been introduced as the reward for the mission of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him and his family).

Every action in this world has a meaning revealed by its reward and outcome. In fact, regardless of the grandeur and magnitude of the work, until our work bears fruit, we have not received its reward. Consider a teacher who has strived for a lifetime, but their students have neither learned anything from them nor achieved anything. Or a farmer who has spent their entire life and existence plowing and preparing the land but has never reaped a harvest. Have the efforts of these individuals been realized, and have they received the reward for their endeavors?

Naturally, this question gains greater importance when it pertains to the reward of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him and his family), as the highest guide and the seal of the divine messengers: He who undertook the huge task of guiding humanity for years, dedicated day and night to the upbringing of his *Ummah*, and experienced various hardships, tortures, and losses along this path. The question is, why has committed love been the reward for the mission of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family), especially for one who, as the greatest personality in this world, bore the most significant task of all?

The point is that after enduring so many hardships, the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) did not demand financial reward or mere outward respect from people, nor did he even direct his request toward worship, *jihad*, or spending in charity. His sole request was committed love for his Household, who themselves bear the role of completing the mission and, as infallible experts, are our guides on the complex path to achieving the purpose of creation.

In essence, the concept of devoted love and understanding its relationship with the mission is something that, if applied correctly and in its proper context, will position the *Ummah* of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) as a strong arm alongside the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them), aiding us in fulfilling our duty. Although, as we previously mentioned, the *Ummah's* misunderstanding of the relationship between committed love and the mission has led to a different destiny for both the *Ummah* and the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them). In this article, we intend to show why devoted love has been introduced as the reward for the mission, and when we can properly fulfill this duty.

A Reward Not Properly Received

Although we are tasked with fulfilling our duty in this world and not necessarily with achieving the result, just as we mentioned in the examples of the teacher or the farmer, the reward for any action is determined by its outcome. Consequently, if the goal of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family), as stated in the Quran, is to bring people out of darkness into light [2], then his reward only gains meaning when people attain this light.

However, this light is only realized through a connection with the Infallible Successors of the Prophet (Peace be upon them) and by living under divine governance. This is because only in this way will the full possibility of implementing divine laws and moving according to the plan that God has set for us be created. Certainly, achieving the purpose of creation and similarity to Allah will not be realized in a governance whose foundation and structure are laid contrary to God's will. Therefore, the Quran addresses the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) saying, "O Messenger, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you have not delivered His message" [3]. This means that if the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) does not introduce the *wilayah* (guardianship) of his Household, his mission will remain incomplete, and his reward will not be realized.

And indeed, history is a clear example of the manifestation of this truth. During the time of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family), although many people held affection for him in their hearts, had not reached the level of committed love for the Infallible. That is, despite loving him, they were not willing to obey him in practice and place the desires and commands of their mentor at

the forefront of their worldly needs and desires or their tribal and kinship affiliations. This very difference in perspective and misunderstanding in grasping the relationship between committed love and the mission led to the martyrdom of thirteen Infallibles throughout history and the displacement and occultation of the fourteenth Infallible for a thousand years. Had it been so, the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) considered committed love as a factor for humanity's society to reach a "good and human life" under the rule of his Household, and he desired an affection that would have practical results, leading to the realization of committed love, the reward for the mission, through humanity's obedience to the commands of the infallible expert. In fact, committed love for the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them) can be interpreted as a shared fruit of the mission and human life, which both leads to the fruition of the Prophet of Mercy's efforts and brings us worldly and eternal happiness and peace. It is natural that achieving happiness and peace is not possible except through connection with the divinely appointed guardian, who is the source and origin of Divine mercy and absolute, infinite perfections.

Devoted Love: An Impersonal Request

In reality, by choosing committed love, the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) elevated his request from a heartfelt or personal matter to an affection that leads to action, loyalty, and obedience to his Household (Peace be upon them). Just as committed love between spouses leads to cooperation and sacrifice within the family, strengthening its foundations, true committed love for

the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them) leads to accepting them as life role models and acting upon their guidance, bringing us to true perfection.

Therefore, committed love, the reward for the mission, is solely and entirely for our own benefit. It is the path that not only leads to the actualization of our potentials and connecting with Allah on an individual level but also promotes Divine mercy, justice, and a divine way of life under the rule of the infallible expert.

In reality, the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) was tasked with presenting the reward for his work in such a way that its outcome would lead to the raising of individuals similar to himself, the Household of the Prophet, and in a word, similar to the Perfect Human Being. This human being is at the level of Divine deputyship and is familiar with their origin and root, sees themselves as an eternal being, and defines their life within the vastness of eternity. This goal is only achieved when, after the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family), humans are not left to their own devices but have a role model for becoming similar to Allah, and benefit from the guidance of an infallible expert who possesses all the specialized knowledge needed to bring humanity to bliss. Therefore, in the third verse of Surah Al-Ma'idah [4], God introduces the blessing of *wilayah* (guardianship) as the completion of religion and the culmination of the Prophet's mission because only then does the Prophet's mission reach its ultimate perfection, end, and desired outcome.

In summary, if we consider that everyone's reward is defined in proportion to their goal, then understanding the relationship between committed love and the mission will become easier for us. Committed love has been introduced as the

reward for the mission of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) with the aim that the raising of pure individuals, their connection with God, and their placement on the path of similarity to Allah will be realized. This is a goal that can only be achieved through *mawaddah* and *mahabbah*, combined with obedience to the Imam.

Devoted love for the Prophet's Household (Peace be upon them) represents a concrete expression of the mission and genuine loyalty to the infallible guide. In this manner, we are embraced within the school of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) and draw nearer to our true human purpose and ultimate perfection. In fact, by understanding that without committed love, the mission of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) remains incomplete, the relationship between committed love and the mission will also become clearer to us.

References

[1]. "Say, [O Prophet,] 'I do not ask you for a reward for this [message]—only committed love for [my] kinship.'" (Quran, 42:23)

[2]. "... to bring you out of darkness and into light." (Quran, 57:9)

[3]. Quran, 5:67

[4]. "... Today I have perfected your faith for you..."