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## **Love - Part II\***

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### **Abstract**



This part of the subject of love concerns the proposition that only God deserves to be loved. To demonstrate this proposition, five reasons are provided. First, man essentially loves himself. Therefore, if he knows that his existence and survival depend on God, then he will surely love Him. Second, man loves benefactors to himself. So if he knows that only God benefits him, sometimes not immediately, then he will love Him. Third, man naturally loves benefactors even when he is not the one who is beneficiary. Therefore, if he knows that God benefits everyone, then he will love Him. Fourth, man innately loves every beautiful thing. So if he knows that God is beautiful and the source of extrinsic and intrinsic beauties, then he will love God. Fifth, it is sometimes congruence and similarities that may make one love something. Therefore, if one assumes the character traits of God, then he will love Him.

### **Keywords**

Love, self-love, benefactor, inner beauty, the assumption of divine traits.

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\* Translated by Yasser Pouresmaeil

## **The Articulation of the Fact That Only God the Exalted Deserves to Be Loved**

In fact, if one loves someone or something other than God not in virtue of its relation to God, it will be because of his ignorance and his failure to know God the Exalted. Love of the Prophet is praiseworthy because it is identical to love of God. The same is the case with love of religious scholars and the pious, since the beloved of the beloved is loved, the messenger of the beloved is loved, and the lover of the beloved is loved. All of this goes back to love of the original beloved; it does not go beyond Him to others. Thus, for insightful people, there is no real beloved except God, and no one deserves love except Him. To illustrate, we make recourse to the five reasons mentioned above: all of these are present in God the Exalted and are not collectively found in anything other than God. They are veridical in the case of God the Exalted, and their presence in other cases is an illusion and fantasy (purely fictitious and not corresponding to reality). When this is established, the opposite of what is imagined by the intellectually and heart-wise impoverished (that is, the impossibility of actually loving God the Exalted) will be disclosed to any insightful person. A close inspection requires one not to love anyone except God the Exalted.

**As to the first reason**, which is one's love of oneself and its survival and perfection, and the persistence of one's existence, and one's hatred of one's destruction, nonexistence, imperfection, and impediments to one's perfection; it is indeed built in any living being. It is impossible to conceive a living being without these. This requires the utmost degree of love for God the Exalted, since he who knows his own self and knows his Lord will certainly know that he has no existence on his own, and that the existence of his essence and the persistence of his existence and its perfection are from God, by God, and to God. Thus, He is his originator and creator, his sustainer, and responsible for the

perfection of his existence by creating perfective attributes and the means to them, as well as the creation of the guidance to exploitation of those means; otherwise, the servant has no existence by his own essence in virtue of his essence; he would indeed be pure nonexistence had God not blessed him with creation; and after his existence, he would perish had God not blessed him with sustenance; and he would be imperfect in his existence had God not blessed him with the perfection of his creation. In general, there is nothing in existence which is constituted by itself except the Sustainer the All-living the Eternal who stands by His own essence, and everything other than Him stands by Him. On this account, if the knower loves his [own] essence, while the existence of his essence is derived from someone else, he will necessarily love the one who gives him, and sustains, his existence provided that he knows Him as the Creator and Maker and sustaining Originator standing by His own self while sustaining others. If he does not love Him, this is because of his ignorance of his own self and his Lord. Love is a fruit of knowledge, which is why it will vanish by the nonexistence of knowledge, weakens by the weakness of knowledge, and strengthens by its strength. This is why it is said: "He who knows his Lord will love Him, and he who knows Hell will avoid it, and he who knows this world will practice asceticism therein."

How might it be conceived that someone loves himself without loving the Lord by whom he subsists. Obviously, if a person suffering from the heat of the sun loves the shade, he will necessarily love the trees by which the shade subsists. Everything in existence is in relation to the power of God the Almighty the Majestic like shade in relation to the tree and light in relation to the sun. Everything is a trace of His power, and the existence of everything is subsidiary to His existence, just as the existence of light is subsidiary to that of the sun and the existence of shade is subsidiary to the tree. Indeed, this analogy is correct in terms of laymen's delusions, since they think that light is a trace of the sun,

which emanates from it and exists in virtue of the sun. This is a blatant mistake, since it has been as clear as daylight for mystics that the light comes from the power of God the Exalted when the sun's light encounters dense material objects, just as the sun's light, the sun itself, its shape, and its form also come from the power of God the Exalted. However, the purpose of analogies is attempting to understand, and we do not seek the truths in them.

Therefore, if one's love of his own self is necessary, his love of someone by whom he persists, firstly, and is sustained, secondly, in his origin, attributes, exterior states, interior states, substances, and accidents will also be necessary provided that he knows this in this way.

Failure to have such love is because one is engaged in his own self and his lusts, being oblivious to his Lord and his Creator; that is, he has not known Him properly and has restricted his perspective to his lusts and the sensible—which is the world of the observable, the joy and blessing of which are shared by animals—rather than *the world of dominion* (malakūt) to which one cannot find a way unless he is similar in form to the angels. He will look into it to the extent of his closeness to the angels in his attributes and falls short of it to the extent of his fall to the abyss of the animal world.

**As to the second reason**, which is one's love for someone who has been beneficent to him by providing him with financial aid and kind words, offering his help to him, assisting him toward victory over, and eradication of, his enemies, attempting to prevent the evil of evil-doers, and serving as a means for all his benefits and goals and those of his children, and his kin; such a person will perforce be loved by him, and this in turn requires one not to love anyone but God the Exalted, for if he knows Him properly, he will know that the only beneficent being toward him is God the Exalted. I will not enumerate the kinds of beneficence He extends toward His servants, since they cannot possibly be enumerated, as God the Exalted said:

“If you enumerate God’s blessings, you will not be able to count them” [Quran 14:34]. We have pointed to some of them in the section on gratitude (shukr). For now, we will rest content with the articulation of the fact that beneficence on part of people cannot be conceived except figuratively—the true beneficent is God the Almighty the Majestic. Let us suppose that someone has blessed you by giving all of his property to you and enabling you to manipulate them in whatever way you wish. You think the beneficence is from him, but this is wrong, for although the beneficence is accomplished by him, by his money, by his power over his property, and by his motivation to spend the money for you, who has provided the blessing of his creation, the creation of his property, the creation of his power, and the creation of his volition and motivation, and who has made him love you and attracted his attention to you and instilled in his mind the idea that it is in his religious and this-worldly interest to be beneficent to you? Otherwise, he would not give you a grain of his property.

When God subjected him to these motivations and inspired in his mind the idea that it is in his religious and this-worldly interest to grant you his money, he was indeed overpowered and compelled in granting [it]—he could not avoid granting. On this account, the beneficent is someone God has motivated and deployed for you and has subjected to motivations leading him to action, but his hand is a means by which God’s beneficence extends to you, and the person is compelled in this just as a water passageway is compelled in the flow of water through it. If you believe that he is beneficent or thank him independently as the beneficent, and not as a means, you will count as ignorant of the fact of the matter, since human beneficence can only be conceived for his own sake; it is impossible for creatures to be beneficent to others, because they do not donate money unless they have a purpose—be it a long-term purpose, such as afterlife rewards, or short-term, such as reminding one of his indebtedness and contempt or receiving praise and popularity and being recognized

as generous or attraction of people's hearts to his own obedience and love. Just as no one throws his money into the sea—as it serves none of his purposes—he does not throw it into someone else's hands except if he has a purpose in mind, which is his desideratum and goal, but you are not the goal; rather, your hand is a means of receiving the money so that his purpose of achieving fame and praise or receiving gratitude or the afterlife reward is fulfilled by your act of receiving the money.

In this way, he has manipulated you in order to achieve his own goal, which means that he is beneficent to himself, receiving, in exchange for the money he has spent, what is more preferable to him than his own money. He would not relinquish the possession of his money at all, had his own benefit not been preferable to him. This means that he is entitled to the gratitude and love in two respects:

First, he is motivated, since God has subjected him to those motivations such that he is not able to resist. He only serves as the king's treasurer, for one is not seen as beneficent if he gives the king's gift to someone. This is because he is compelled to obey the king and comply with his order, so he cannot oppose the king. He would not hand the gift over were it up to him. Similarly, no beneficent person would donate a grain of his property were he left on his own by God the Almighty the Majestic—it is God who has subordinated him to the motivations and instilled in his mind the idea that his religious and this-worldly interests lie in this donation.

Second, he receives, in exchange for what he has donated, what he loves more than what he has donated, and just as a buyer does not count as a beneficent person—since he has given money in exchange for something he loves more—the donor donates in exchange for an afterlife reward or praise, admiration, and the like. Compensation need not be a financial object—all these benefits are such that property and objects are insignificant

relative to them. Beneficence is a matter of generosity, and generosity consists in donating one's money without an exchange or a benefit accruing to the donor, and this is impossible except for God the Almighty the Majestic. He is the one who has blessed the two worlds beneficently and for their own sake, not for a benefit or a purpose accruing to Him, for He is clear of purposes and benefits.

On this account, the attribution of generosity and beneficence to anyone other than Him is false or figurative, and their notion is impossible in the case of anyone but God—this is as impossible as the combination of whiteness and blackness in one place. Thus, He is unique in generosity and beneficence, as well as in endowment and blessing. If our nature involves love of the beneficent, the mystic should not love anyone but God the Almighty the Majestic, since it is impossible for others to exhibit beneficence. God alone deserves such love, and others deserve love for beneficence only if one is ignorant of the meaning and reality of beneficence.

**As to the third reason**—which is your love of the beneficent for his own sake, even if his beneficence does not extend to you—this is inherent in the natures. Thus, if you hear that there is a king who is knowledgeable, pious, just, compassionate with people, and graceful and humble toward them, living in a corner of the earth very far from you, and if you hear that there is another king who is unjust, arrogant, vicious, condescending, and evil, also living far from you, then you will find a distinction between them in your heart; you feel an inclination toward the former, which is love, and an aversion to the latter, which is hatred, though you do not expect any benefit from the former and are immune to the wickedness of the latter, since you do not aspire to immigrate to their lands. This is an instance of loving a beneficent person for his own sake only, not in virtue of his beneficence toward you. This not only requires that we love God the Exalted,

but also requires that we do not love anyone but Him unless he is associated with God by some means.

God the Exalted is beneficent toward everyone, graceful to all types of people firstly by creating them, secondly by making the provision of necessary body parts and means for them, thirdly by providing them with welfare and blessings via creating the means that they might need, even if they are not necessary, and fourthly by providing them with extras and advantages that might serve as embellishments, although they are beyond their necessities and needs. Examples of the necessary among the body parts include the head, the heart, and the liver; examples of the needed include the eye, the hand, and the leg; and examples of the embellishment include the eyebrows being arch-shaped, the lips being red, the eyes being almond-shaped, and other things that are neither necessary, nor needed. Examples of the necessary among the blessings outside the human body include water and food; examples of the needed include medication, meat, and fruits; and examples of advantages and extras include the greenness of trees, the beautiful shape of blossoms and flowers, and the pleasures of fruits and food, which are neither needed nor necessary.

These three types are true of every animal, every plant, and even every type of creature from the top of the Throne to the bottom of the ground. Thus, God is the beneficent. How can anyone else be beneficent while that beneficent person is but a good manifestation of His power, since He is the creator of people, the creator of goodness, the creator of the beneficent, the creator of beneficence, and the creator of the means for beneficence. Again, because of this, the love for anyone other than Him is pure ignorance. If one knows that, he will not love anyone but God the Exalted.

**As to the fourth reason**, which is the love for every beautiful thing for the sake of beauty and not for a benefit accrued from it beyond perceiving beauty, we have elucidated that this is built in the natures, since beauty can be divided into the beauty of outer



forms perceived by the eye of the head and the beauty of inner forms perceived by the eye of the heart and the light of insight. The former is perceived by children and animals, let alone others, and the latter is exclusively perceived by mystics, and is not shared by those who know nothing but an outward aspect of this-worldly life. Any beauty is loved by one who perceives beauty. If it is perceived by the heart, it will be loved by the heart, as we can see this in the case of people's love for prophets and religious scholars, as well as those with brilliant moral characters and desirable morals, and this is conceivable even with the face and other parts of the body being deformed. This is what is meant by the beauty of the inner form, which is not perceived by the sense. Of course, the sense perceives the effects which they display and which signify them such that when the heart is guided to it, it will lean toward it.

Thus, if one loves the prophet or the Imam or a saint, he will not love them except because of the beauty of how they appear to him, which is not for the beauty of their faces or the beauty of their actions; it is the beauty of the actions that has signified the beauty of the attributes that count as sources of the actions, since actions are effects emanating from, and signifying, the attributes. Thus, if one sees the good writings of a writer, the good poetry of a poet, the beautiful painting of a painter, or the construction of an architect, these actions will disclose to him their beautiful interior attributes, all of which go back, after reflection, to knowledge and power. The nobler and the more beautiful and more majestic and greater the object of knowledge, the nobler and more beautiful the knowledge. Similarly, the greater and more majestic the object of power, the more majestic and nobler the power. Now the most glorious object of knowledge is God; hence, the best and noblest knowledge will certainly be knowledge of God the Almighty the Majestic. The same is true of what is close to God—it is noble to the extent of its attachment to God.

Therefore, the beauty of the attributes of the sincere—people who are usually loved by the hearts—goes back to three things: one

is their knowledge of God the Almighty the Majestic, as well as His angels, His books, His messengers, and the judicial rulings of the prophets; the second is their power to improve themselves and to improve God's servants by guidance and policy; and the third is their exaltation from dominant vices, wickedness, and lusts which would distract them from good practices and would attract them to the path of evil. The prophets and religious scholars are loved because of these. Let us now compare these attributes to those of God the Exalted.

As to knowledge, there is no comparison between knowledge of the former and the latter generations and knowledge of God who infinitely encompasses everything such that not an atom's weight in the heavens and the earth escapes Him. The creator has addressed everyone and said: "[A]nd you have not been given knowledge except a little" (Quran 17:85). And if the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth gathered in order to encompass His knowledge and wisdom in the elaboration of the creation of an ant or a mosquito, they would not know even a small bit of it; they would not encompass His knowledge except to the amount that He wants. And the small amount of all people's knowledge is collectively by His teaching, as He the Exalted said: "[He] created man [and] taught him eloquence" [Quran 55: 3-4].

Now if the beauty and nobility of knowledge is to be loved and if it is an adornment in itself and a perfection for its subject, then no one deserves to be loved because of this except God the Exalted. Thus, knowledge of scholars counts as ignorance relative to God's knowledge. Indeed, if one knows the most knowledgeable person of his time and the most ignorant person of his time, it will be impossible for him to love the most ignorant because of his knowledge and ignore the most knowledgeable, even if the most ignorant person does have knowledge of the details of his livelihood.

Now the difference between God's knowledge and knowledge of

people is much greater than the difference between knowledge of the most knowledgeable person and that of the most ignorant person, since the most knowledgeable person is superior in virtue of the finite knowledge he has, which is possible for the most ignorant person to have through acquisition and diligence, while God's knowledge is infinitely superior to the knowledge of all people altogether, since His knowledge is infinite, and people's knowledge is finite.

As to the attribute of power, this is also a perfection, and powerlessness is an imperfection, and any perfection, brilliance, greatness, glory, and dominance is loved, and their perception is pleasurable such that when one hears an anecdote about 'Alī's courage or someone else's courage and power and their dominance over their peers, he will involuntarily feel joy and cheerfulness just by hearing, and much more, by seeing. This will initiate an inevitable love for its subject, since it is a kind of perfection. Let us now compare the power of all people to that of God the Almighty the Majestic.

The most powerful person with the vastest kingdom, the strongest in invasion, the greatest in the control of his lusts, the most able in the eradication of his own wickedness, and the most powerful in self-correction and correction of others has a finite power. In the most extreme case, he has power over some of his attributes and certain aspects of other people's lives, but notwithstanding this, he has no control over his death, life, resurrection, interest, or harm. What is more, they have no power to protect their eyes from blindness, their tongue from dumbness, their ears from deafness, and their bodies from sickness. There is no need for an enumeration of his inabilities concerning himself and others with respect to what is more or less within the domain of his power, let alone what is outside the domain of his power, such as the dominion of the heavens, their celestial spheres and the stars, the earth, its mountains, seas, winds, thunders, mines,

plants, animals, and all of its parts—he has no power over any of these. Moreover, what he has power over in himself and in others is not by and of himself; they are created by God—He has created his power and its means and has given him power over it. If God gives a mosquito dominance over the greatest king and the most powerful animal, it will kill him. Thus, the servant has no power unless his Lord has provided him with it, just as God said about the greatest king on the earth, Dhu l-Qarnayn: “Indeed, We have granted him power in the earth” [Quran 18:84].

All of his kingdom and dominion were granted by God the Almighty the Majestic just in one part of the earth, whereas the whole earth is just a piece of stone relative to things in the whole world, and all the people’s rule on the earth are just dust relative to that stone. Moreover, this dust is a grace and grant of God.

Thus, it is impossible to love a servant of God for his power, policy, ability, dominance, and the perfection of his power, without loving God the Exalted for the same reason, since there is no strong being except Him. No one has his power by and of himself; no one has power or strength except by God the Exalted the Supreme. He is the All-Compeller, All-Dominant, Omniscient, and Omnipotent. The heavens are scrolled in His right hand, and the earth and what is on it are in His fist; the forelock of all creatures is within the grasp of His power. If He destroys them all, not even a little bit of His kingdom and dominion will be diminished, and if He creates the likes of these creatures one thousand times, He will not be exhausted and will not be touched by fatigue, and there is no failure in His invention. Thus, there is no power and no powerful person except effects of God’s power. He has beauty, brilliance, greatness, supremacy, dominance, and superiority. If it is conceivable to love a powerful person because of his perfect power, then no one ever deserves the perfection of power except Him.

As to the attribute of being clear of flaws and imperfections and

free of vices and wickedness, this is among the things that lead to love and require goodness and beauty of the inner form. Although the prophets and saints are clear of flaws and wickedness, the perfection of sanctity and exaltation is not conceivable for anyone but God the Majestic the Munificent. No creature is, however, free from an imperfection and imperfections. Moreover, the very state of being incapable, created, dominated, and needy is a flaw and imperfection. Thus, perfection is exclusive to God, and no one other than God has perfection except to the amount given to him by God; it would be logically impossible that He blesses others with the ultimate degree of perfection. The lowest level of the ultimate degree of perfection is for one not to be a servant, dominated by, and dependent on, someone else, and this is impossible for anyone other than God. On this account, He is unique in perfection, clear of imperfection, and impeccable. An account of His sanctity and exaltation will be lengthy, and it is a secret of the sciences of unveiling, which we do not elaborate.

Again, if this attribute is a loveable perfection and beauty, it will not be fully instantiated except in God, and perfection and exaltation of no one other than God is absolute; indeed, it is relative to what is more flawed than it, just as a horse is more perfect relative to a donkey, and the human has perfection relative to the horse. The imperfection itself includes all the creatures, their difference lying in the degrees of their imperfection.

Therefore, the beautiful is loved, and the absolutely beautiful is the unique God who has no equals; the unique being who has no opposite, the All-embracing who has no disputant against Him, the All-Sufficient who has no needs, the Omnipotent who does what He likes and decrees whatever He wants, and no one stands in the way of His decree and no one can postpone His judgment, the All-knowing from whose knowledge not a grain in the heavens or on the earth would escape, the All-Dominant in the grasp of whose power are the heads of despots, and the Caesars cannot

free their necks from His supremacy and power, the Eternal whose everlasting existence has no beginning and whose eternity has no end, the Necessary Being whose presence is not surrounded by the possibility of nonexistence, the All-Sustainer who sustains Himself and every being is sustained by Him, the All-Compeller of the earth and the heavens, the Creator of solid objects, animals, and plants, the Unique in His honor and power, the only Possessor of the reign and dominion, the Graceful, the Majestic, the Brilliant, the Beautiful, the Powerful, and the Perfect such that reason is bewildered in knowing His majesty and tongues are speechless in describing Him.

The ultimate degree of mystics' knowledge is acknowledgment of the inability to know Him, and the final prophethood of the prophets is the admission of [their] failure to describe Him, just as the Master of the Prophets, peace be upon him and them, said: "You are just as You have praised Yourself; I cannot adequately praise You."

Let me add: And the Master of the Saints [Imam 'Ali] said: "The failure to apprehend the apprehension is an apprehension," and the Master of Prostrators [Imam al-Sajjad] said: "Exalted is He who has not provided people with a method to know Him except by failure to know Him."

Abū Ḥāmid said: I wish I could understand whether those who assuredly deny the possibility of loving God the Almighty the Majestic and believe that such love is figurative also deny that such attributes are attributes of beauty and majesty and qualities of perfection and virtues or deny that God the Exalted has such attributes or deny that beauty, glory, perfection, and greatness are naturally loved by everyone who perceives them. Exalted is He who has hid from the eyes of the [spiritually] blind in order to shield His beauty and glory, lest they are known except by those whose happiness was predestined by Him—those who are far from the fire of the veil—and God has left the losers wandering in the

darkness of blindness and hesitating in the scenes of the sensible and animal lusts; they know just an outward aspect of the life of the world, but they are oblivious of the Hereafter. Praise be to God, but most of them do not know.

Love, based on this reason, is thus stronger than love based on beneficence, since beneficence increases and decreases, which is why God the Exalted has revealed to David that the dearest friend to Me is one who worships Me without a bestowal on My part so as to do justice to the Lordship. As in *al-Zabur*, “Who is more unjust than someone who worships Me for the Heaven or the Hell? If I did not create a heaven or hell, would I not deserve to be obeyed?” Jesus, peace be upon him, saw three worshipers on his way whose bodies were thin. He said to them: “What has made you so thin?” They responded: “We fear the Fire [i.e. the Hell] and we hope for the Heaven.” He said to them: “You fear a creature and you hope for a creature.” He then saw another group of similar people on his way; they said: “We worship Him out of our love for Him and the respect for His glory.” He said: “You are the true friends of God the Almighty the Majestic; I am ordered to stay with you.”

According to a hadith, “None of you should be like a bad servant who does not act if he does not fear, and none of you should be like a bad hireling who does not act if he is not paid.”

**And as to the fifth reason for love**, it is likeness and similarity, since what is similar to something will be attracted to it, and a shape leans towards the same shape. This is why you see that a child is comfortable with a child and an adult is comfortable with an adult and a bird is comfortable with its own species, avoiding other species. A scholar’s friendship with another scholar is greater than his friendship with a craftsman, and a businessman’s friendship with another businessman is greater than his friendship with a farmer. This is evidenced by experience and narratives and hadiths, as were investigated in the section on

brotherhood for the sake of God from the article *On Manners of Companionship*; so please consult that section.

If likeness is a ground of love, then it might be in a manifest respect, such as a child's similarity to another child with respect to childhood, and it might be in a hidden respect such that no one is aware thereof, such as the union between two persons without a consideration of beauty or a greed for money and the like, as is pointed out by him, peace be upon him, in this saying: "The spirits are troops divided in regiments—those who were mutually acquainted are united, and those who were mutually alienated are disunited." Mutual acquaintance is likeness and mutual alienation is dissimilarity.

This reason for love also requires love of God, since there is an intrinsic similarity which does not go back to similarity in the form and shape but to inner meanings, some of which might be mentioned in books and some of which cannot be written but should be left hidden until the spiritual travelers find them after fulfillment of the conditions of the mystical journey. The ones that might be mentioned include the servant's proximity to God the Almighty the Majestic through the divine attributes which he has been commanded to cultivate, as is said: "Assume God's character traits." What is meant by this assumption is praiseworthy attributes that count as divine attributes, such as knowledge, virtue, beneficence, grace, the spread of goodness and mercy among people, well-wishing for them and enjoining them to do good and prohibiting them from wrongdoing, and other attributes dignified by the religion. All of these make us close to God the Almighty the Majestic, not in the sense of spatial proximity, but in the sense of similarity in attributes. And the peculiar likeness that cannot be written in books, which is specific to the human, is what is pointed out by God the Exalted in the verse "They question you concerning the Spirit. Say, 'The Spirit is of the command of my Lord'" [17:85], since it is stated that the spirit is a Lordly entity



outside the limits of people's reason, and it is also pointed out by the word of God the Exalted: "Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth" [2:29], since Adam would not deserve to be God's viceroy had he lacked the requisite likeness. Moreover, this is hinted at in his word, peace be upon him, "Indeed, God has created Adam in His image." The narrow-minded have thought that the only image is the apparent image perceived by the senses, which is why they have believed in anthropomorphism and ascribed a body and a face to God—greatly exalted is God the Lord of the worlds from what is attributed to Him by the ignorant. To this points what God said to a prophet (... [perhaps] to Moses, peace be upon him) "I became sick and you did not pay Me a visit." He said: "How can this be possible?" He said: "That guy became sick and you did not visit him; if you had visited him, you would have found Me in his presence."

Such likeness is not gained except by continuous practice of supererogatory prayers after the rulings of obligatory prayers. God the Almighty the Majestic said: "If the servant always seeks My proximity through supererogatory prayers, I will love him; when I love him, I will be his ear with which he hears, and his eye with which he sees, and his tongue with which he talks."

This is a point where the pen should be contained, since people have branched [and adhered] to different positions on the matter: from the narrow-minded who have leaned toward anthropomorphism to exaggerators and extremists who went beyond the limit of likeness to unification, believing in immanence (ḥulūl) to the extent that some of them said: "I am the Truth." Christians were misguided about Jesus, peace be upon him, saying that he was the God; some others said that the human realm (nāsūt) was clothed with the divine realm (lāhūt); and still others said that the two realms were identical. However, there is a minority to whom the impossibility of anthropomorphism and similarity as well as the impossibility of immanence and identification are evident and to whom the truth of the mystery is manifest.

These are the reasons for love that we know, and all of these are exemplified in the case of God the Exalted literally, not figuratively, and in the highest degree, not the lowest. On this account, what is reasonable and plausible to insightful people is to love God the Exalted alone, just as what is reasonable to the blind is to love things other than God the Exalted only.

Moreover, one who loves a creature for one of these reasons is thought to love other creatures in virtue of a shared reason, and sharing is a flaw in love and a paucity of its perfection. No one is unique in the attribute of being loved—indeed, there is someone who shares the attribute, and even if such a partner in love does not exist, it is possible for it to exist, except in the case of God, since He has attributes that are ultimate degrees of beauty and perfection and has no partner in them actually, and such a partner cannot be imagined to be possible. There is, therefore, no partner in His love, and so there is no way for a flaw to find its way into His love. Thus, he is the one who deserves love itself and the ultimate degree of love in a way that is not shared by anyone.