



Allah Loves...

—...✦ By ✦...—

OMAR SULEIMAN

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—...✦— By ✦...—

O M A R
S U L E I M A N



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Transliteration Guide



A brief guide to some of the letters and symbols used in the Arabic transliteration in this book.

<i>th</i> ث	<i>ḥ</i> ح	<i>dh</i> ذ
<i>ṣ</i> ص	<i>ḍ</i> ض	<i>ṭ</i> ط
<i>ẓ</i> ظ	<i>‘</i> ع	<i>’</i> ء
<i>ā</i> آ	<i>ī</i> ي	<i>ū</i> أُ



May the peace and blessings
of Allah be upon him.

→ Contents ←



Allah Loves...

Piety

→ 1 ←

Repentance

→ 7 ←

Excellence

→ 13 ←

Angelic Praise

→ 19 ←

Sincere Supplication

→ 23 ←

Those Who Are Trying

→ 29 ←

Tears and Traces

→ 33 ←

Trust

→ 39 ←

Patience

→ 45 ←

Justice

→ 49 ←

The Beneficial People

→ 55 ←

Strength

→ 61 ←



Independence

→ 67 ←

Healthy Pride

→ 71 ←

Honour

→ 77 ←

Gentleness

→ 83 ←

Humility

Without Disgrace

→ 87 ←

Forbearance and

Deliberation

→ 93 ←

Due Diligence

→ 99 ←

Consistency

→ 103 ←

Punctual Prayers

→ 107 ←

Cleanliness

→ 115 ←

The Mosque

→ 119 ←

Love

→ 125 ←

Your Mother

→ 131 ←

The Unnoticed

→ 137 ←

Generosity in Trade

→ 143 ←

Those Who Follow
the Prophet ﷺ

→ 147 ←

Acceptance of
His Gifts

→ 151 ←

Beauty

→ 157 ←





➤ Introduction ➤



The Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) said that one of the supplications of Prophet Dāwūd (*peace be upon him*) was that he would say, “اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ، O Allah I ask You for Your love, وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ، and the love of those who love You، وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ، and all of the actions that would bring me closer to being loved by You.”

Our aim should constantly be to pursue Allah’s pleasure; pursue the reward that He has promised. Furthermore, one should avoid the things that He has told us to stay away from, but to *know* that one is loved by Allah, that is the pinnacle. To strive and remain constantly focussed on that goal to pursue Allah’s love and to meet Him in that state of love is the most special and sacred level that a human being can attain. In thirty short chapters this book will look at who, and what qualities and characteristics Allah loves and how we may become people who are loved by Allah and do things that Allah loves.



1 Allah Loves Piety



The most frequent references in the Qur'an to the love of Allah come in relation to *taqwā*, piety.

Surah al-Baqarah starts with this beautiful *āyah*:

الم. ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

Alif. Lam. Mim. This is a Book in which there is no doubt, it is a guidance for people of taqwā.

People of *taqwā*, people of piety, are the ones Allah loves. He says in the Qur'an: *وَقَانَ اللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ*
And Allah loves the people of piety.

PIETY

The very first command that Allah gives to humanity in the Qur'an is:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O humanity, worship your Lord who created you and created those who came before you so that you may have taqwā, so that you may be conscious of Him.

Specifically, with regards to fasting, Allah declares to us that:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ
Fasting was prescribed upon you the way it was prescribed to those before you so that you may attain taqwā, so that you may attain piety.

One may ask how is this connected to Allah's love?

The starting point is how we understand "Divine" in the first place. Allah created us not to hate us, but to love us. Allah created us not to fail, but to succeed. Allah created us not to burn in Hell but to go to Heaven. He gave us everything that we needed to attain His reward. He has given us all the essentials needed to attain His pleasure but do we



clearly understand and comprehend the fact that we are on this path back to Him, that we don't want to do anything that will compromise His love for us?

There is an ongoing debate about what the true meaning of *taqwā* is: does it mean to be in fear of Him, or to be conscious of Him? What does piety even mean? What does it mean to be God-conscious? How can I fear Him if I need to love Him? If you translate for example **اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ** as *God loves those who fear Him*, then this would need further explanation. Ibn al-Qayyim said that “when you fear something, you run away from it, but when you fear Allah, you run back to Him”. And so the fear of Allah is not the kind that would cause you to flee from Him but to come back to Him because that fear is not like the fear of anything else. *Taqwā* is inadequately understood when defined only in a context of fear.

So how do we merge fear and love? We fear losing His love and that is actually why Ramadan is such an effective way for us to learn how to not lose His love. In Ramadan, we observe carefully how and what we consume. We physically make sure that we



don't consume anything that is going to nullify our fast. Likewise, in our daily lives we make sure that we don't consume anything that would spiritually nullify Allah's love for us. We pay closer attention to ourselves. The narration that really encapsulates this is that from 'Umar (*may Allah be pleased with him*) who said that, "*Taqwā* is like a person who's walking on a path again and again, and on this path back to Allah there are thorny bushes on the way, when they witness these thorny bushes close to them, they pull themselves in tighter to make sure that the thorns don't tear their clothes or prick them." And 'Umar's grandson, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, said that "*Taqwā* isn't praying long into the night, it isn't fasting long into the day; it is that you abandon everything that is displeasing to Allah. Everything beyond that is *ihsān*, is excellence."

Tying *taqwā* to the love of Allah is very important. Are we showing Allah that we want to be loved by Him? Are we demonstrating it by our deeds in a translatable way, that we're not going to do anything that is going to dissatisfy His pleasure? Imam al-Ghazālī said something very profound, "The greatest



consequence of sin is not the punishment that comes with it, but the distance that comes between you and Allah.” If we were created by God to return to Him in a state that is pleasing to Him and if He has given us everything that is needed to do so, then to demonstrate our desire to be loved, we should show caution with things that compromise that love. *Taqwā* is that constant effort and mindset that we are steering back to Allah, and the most practical way to deal with this is, that when we’re thinking about saying something that is displeasing to Allah, we stop ourselves because we don’t want to earn His displeasure. When we see something, and we don’t stare at it because we know it could earn the displeasure of Allah. When we’re about to do something that could earn the displeasure of Allah, we stop ourselves because we know that the greatest consequence is distance from Him. Indeed, the greatest way to be loved by Allah is to show we fear losing that love.

May Allah allow us to never compromise our love for Him, and may Allah entrench within us *taqwā*, that God-consciousness, and may Allah keep us in His favour. *Āmīn*.



*Indeed, the
greatest way
to be loved by
Allah is to show
we fear losing
that love.*



2 Allah Loves

↳ Repentance ↵



As discussed in the previous chapter, with *taqwā* or piety, we have to avoid the thorny bushes that are on the road to Allah. We are meant to go back to Allah, but these obstacles keep getting in the way. We are inevitably going to be pricked by a thorn and there's absolutely nothing we can do about it. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said, “Every single one of the children of Adam is a sinner.” Every single one of us is going to commit sins, is going to get pricked. We're going to fall behind and the best amongst us are those who are going to come back to Allah, *وَحَيْرُ الْخَطَائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ*, *the best of those who make mistakes are the ones who repent to Allah.*



REPENTANCE

This is very important to understand, after going through the concept of *taqwā* and not committing sins, Allah mentions that **اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ**, *Allah loves those who repent*, again framed within the love of Allah.

Allah didn't create us to not sin. Allah created us to know how to deal with sin properly and there is a major difference between the two. The word *tawbah* means turning back to Allah, not necessarily that we have removed all the effects of that sin. Realize that even the word “repentance” relates to our relationship with Allah.

So, how does that work? Being sinful is part of our humanity, and forgiveness is part of Allah's attributes. If we pair those two together, then we acknowledge our sinfulness even when we intentionally committed a sin. We acknowledge our sin and we try to get back on the path to Allah. In doing so, we actually raise our degree of favour with Allah, because He loves *al-tawwābīn*, the penitent, those who turn back to Him. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) mentions that “If you were not to sin



*There is no such
thing as a sin that
can permanently
disqualify you from
the love of Allah if you
repent afterwards
and use that to
propel yourself
towards Him.*



then Allah would have replaced you with a people who would. Then they would seek forgiveness and would be forgiven by Allah, because He loves to forgive. Allah loves repentance and He loves those who repent.” It is beautiful, that in pairing sin and forgiveness together, in Islam there is no such thing as failure—unless you don’t do anything about that failure. There is no such thing as a sin that can permanently disqualify you from the love of Allah if you repent afterwards and use that to propel yourself towards Him. What the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) is teaching us here is the effect of seeking forgiveness on the heart. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said that the dark spot placed in the heart by sin is polished, not just removed, by repentance. As for the effect of repentance on our deeds the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said, “The sin is actually turned into a good deed on your scrolls.” Upon true repentance, that bad deed actually becomes a good deed, a *ḥasanah*.

As for the effect of repentance on us with regards to Allah’s love: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ, *Allah loves the penitent*, those who always turn back towards Him.



Repentance means we actually get closer to Allah than we were before we committed the sin, we become more beloved to Him than before. This is why it's not unjust that Allah created us and gave us the free will to sin, because the degree that He guarantees us for repenting after committing a sin is even greater than that of His sinless creatures, the angels, who have no free will. Penitent human beings ascend even beyond the angels in rank.

Ibn al-Qayyim puts the ideas together and gives us the examples of two Prophets. He explained that *Shaytān*, the Devil, was delighted when he saw that he had caused Adam's fall. What he didn't realize was that when a diver goes into the ocean, he collects pearls at the bottom, and he rises back up again. Adam was better after his *tawbah* even though he had to come down to this earth. His rank with Allah was higher after his repentance than when he was in Paradise. In the same way Yūnus or Jonas was better after he was swallowed by the whale than he was before it happened. That's why Allah says: *فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ*, *His Lord chose him and made him from the righteous*, after he was



REPENTANCE

swallowed by the whale. After Yūnus had prayed to Allah: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ, *There is no god but You, how perfect You are and I was amongst the wrong-doers.* So again our hearts are polished, our sins are turned into good deeds and our ranks ascend in the sight of Allah after we turn back to Him.

We have a Lord that created our past, present, and future. It doesn't matter what we did in the past because He guaranteed us a better future if we learn how to deal with that past, and that will propel us towards Him. We ask Allah to make us amongst those that are beloved to Him in our repentance and in our sin, and in our good deeds. *Āmīn.*



16 Allah Loves

Gentleness



In the last chapter we talked about honour and having a sense of protection. Prior to that we discussed strength, now we are going to discuss it from a different angle. We are going to show how the concept of gentleness is not contradictory to what we have discussed earlier.

The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) was walking with ‘Ā’ishah (*Allah’s mercy be upon her*) in Madinah and there was a group from the People of the Book that yelled out سَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ which means “May death be upon you”. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said وَعَلَيْكُمْ, “And upon you”, keeping himself composed



and calm. ‘Ā’ishah (*Allah’s mercy be upon her*) was outraged by the fact that they spoke to the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) that way and she yelled back at them *وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّأْمُ وَاللَّعْنَةُ*, “And upon you is the curse and the anger [of Allah]”, she started to shout back at them but the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) asked her to calm down. She said “Don’t you know what they said? Didn’t you hear what they said to you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Didn’t you hear what I replied?” and then he said to ‘Ā’ishah (*Allah’s mercy be upon her*) very beautifully that *إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ فِي الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ*, “Allah is gentle and He loves gentleness in all things.”

When we read the *Sirah* of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), do we read it to confirm an attribute that we already have? If a person wants to be strong or wants to justify their behaviour in a certain context, do they go and take an incident from the Prophet’s life (*peace be upon him*) where he demonstrated a sense of anger, or a sense of aggressiveness, that wasn’t commonly in his nature? Or even the opposite position where if a person wants to justify any type of engagement or compromise they normally use the Treaty (*sulh*) of



Ḥudaybiyah as an example to justify their position and so on. But to read the *Sīrah* honestly and truthfully, the default of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) was that Allah loves gentleness in all affairs. If the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) departed from gentleness it was for a good reason. It was to send a very specific message in a very specific context.

So what does that mean and how do we understand gentleness. Just as Allah is gentle, Allah is kind; Allah also has attributes that denote punishment, that denote a sense of anger. A changed context doesn't mean Allah stops being *al-Raḥmān*, *al-Raḥīm* and *al-Wadūd* or *al-Ghafūr*. Rather it means there are contexts that determine that type of response. However, the general default teaching of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) is gentleness in all of our affairs. By understanding the Sunnah in a holistic way we learn to appreciate that we don't have to be loud, aggressive or foul to denote strength, rather those things are actually a sign of weakness.

The Prophet's composure in the face of the taunts and insults he received in Makkah and Madinah were



signs of strength, that he wasn't going to allow his enemies to get into his head or drive him away from his principles, from his ethics. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) speaking in a calm manner, not raising his voice at people to win an argument, not cutting people off and not demonstrating aggression even when he (*peace be upon him*) was at the height of his power, was a symbol of strength. Consider that Allah, despite having complete authority over His entire creation chooses to show us gentleness and kindness.

We too, show our greatest strength when we are in positions of power but we too opt for gentleness and kindness, not in a way that would cause injustice to become rampant but in a way that would stop us from becoming unjust ourselves or departing from our natural core of goodness. So إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ فِي الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ, “Allah is gentle and He loves gentleness in all things.”

We ask Allah to place gentleness within us and to allow us to act upon it even when the Devil tries to stoke our anger and cause us to depart from it. *Āmīn.*



Omar Suleiman explores who and what Allah loves, so that we may become one of those who are beloved to Him.

Looking at our actions, characteristics and beliefs, this book will help us become better people, citizens and believers that are deserving of Allah's endless, infinite and everlasting love. Made up of 30 short and spiritually enriching chapters, this book is a reminder that throughout our lives, the Creator's love is always there, increasing through everyday actions such as showing generosity or remaining consistent with unnoticeable good deeds.



Imam Omar Suleiman is the Founder and President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research and Professor of Islamic studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, USA.



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