

When Does the Love of Allah Save a Person From Punishment?

Will a person who loves Allah enter Hell? There are many non-Muslims such as Jews and Christians who love Allah, and similarly there are immoral Muslims who love Allah. They would never say that they hate their Lord. Can you clarify this matter?

Praise be to Allah.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah

have mercy on him) said regarding this matter:

There are four kinds of

love, which we must differentiate between, and those who go astray do so because they do not make this distinction. The first of them is love of Allah, but this alone is not sufficient to save a person from the punishment of Allah and to earn him His reward. The Mushrikeen (idolaters), worshippers

of the cross, Jews and others all love Allah. The second is love of that which Allah loves. This is what brings a person into Islam and out of disbelief. The most beloved of people to Allah is the one who is most correct and most devoted in this kind of love. The third kind is love for the sake of Allah, which is one of the essentials of loving that which Allah loves. A person's love of that which Allah loves cannot be complete until he also loves for the sake of Allah. The fourth is love for something alongside Allah, and this love has to do with shirk (paganism). Everyone who loves things alongside Allah but not for the sake of Allah has taken that thing as a rival to Allah. This is the love of the Mushrikeen (pagan). There remains a fifth kind of love which has nothing to do with our topic; this is the natural love which is a person's inclination towards that which suits his nature, such as the love of a thirsty person for water or of a hungry person for food, or the love of sleep, or of one's wife and children. There is nothing wrong with this unless it distracts a person from remembering Allah and keeps him from loving Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meanings):

“ O you who believe! Let

not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of

Allah ” [63:9]

“ Men whom neither trade
nor sale (business) diverts from the remembrance of Allah ” [24:37]

(Al-Jawaab al-Kaafi,
1/134)

And he said (may Allah
have mercy on him):

The difference between
loving for the sake of Allah and loving something alongside Allah is one of
the most important distinctions. Everyone needs to make this distinction and

is indeed obliged to do so. Loving for the sake of Allah is a sign of the
perfection of faith, but loving something alongside Allah is the essence of
shirk (paganism). The difference between them is that a person ’ s love for
the sake of Allah is connected to his love of Allah; if this love becomes
strong in his heart, this love dictates that he will love that which Allah
loves. If he loves that which his Lord loves and he loves those who are the
friends of Allah, this is love for the sake of Allah. So he loves His
Messengers, Prophets, angels and close friends because Allah loves them,
and

he hates those who hate them because Allah hates those people. The sign
of

the love and hatred for the sake of Allah is that his hatred for the one
whom Allah hates will not turn into love merely because that person treats
him kindly, does him a service or meets some need he has; and his love for
those whom Allah loves will not turn to hatred simply because that person
does something that upsets or hurts him, whether it is done by mistake or
deliberately, in obedience to Allah or because the person feels that he has
a duty to do it for some reason, or because the person is a wrongdoer who
may yet give up his wrongdoing and repent. The entire religion revolves
around four principles: love and hatred, and stemming from them, action
and

abstinence. The person whose love and hatred, action and abstinence, are
all

for the sake of Allah, has perfected his faith so that when he loves, he
loves for the sake of Allah, when he hates, he hates for the sake of Allah,
when he does something, he does it for the sake of Allah, and when he

abstains from something, he abstains for the sake of Allah. To the extent that he is lacking in these four categories, he is lacking in faith and commitment to religion. This is in contrast to the love of things alongside Allah, which is of two types. One is diametrically opposed to the principle of Tawheed (Oneness of Allah) and is shirk; the other is opposed to perfection of sincerity and love towards Allah, but does not put a person beyond the pale of Islam.

The first kind is like the love of the Mushrikeen for their idols and gods. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“ And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah ” [2:165]

These Mushrikeen love their idols and gods alongside Allah as they love Allah. This love and devotion is accompanied by fear, hope, worship and supplication. This love is pure Shirk which Allah does not forgive. Faith cannot be perfected unless a person regards these idols as enemies and hates them intensely, and hates the people who worship them, and regards them as enemies and strives against them. This is the message with which Allah sent all His Messengers and revealed all His Books. He created Hell for the people of shirk who love these rivals, and He created Paradise for those who strive against them and

take them as enemies for His sake and to earn His Pleasure. Anybody who worships anything from the vicinity of the Throne to the lowest depths of the earth and takes a god and a supporter besides Allah and associates other

beings in worship with Him, will be disowned by the object of his worship when he is most in need of it [i.e., on the Day of Judgement].

The second kind is love for the things which Allah has made attractive to people, such as women, children, gold, silver, branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. People love them with a kind of desire, like the love of the hungry person for food and the thirsty person for water. This love is of three kinds. If a person loves them for the sake of Allah and as a means of

obeying Allah, he will be rewarded for that; it will be counted as a part of love for the sake of Allah and a means of reaching Him, and he will still find enjoyment in them. This is how the best of creation [i.e. the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] was, to whom women and perfume were made dear in this world, and his love for them helped him to love Allah more and to convey His Message and fulfil His commands. If a person loves them because they suit his nature and his own desires, but he does not give them preference over that which Allah loves and is pleased with, and he gets them because of his natural inclination, then they come under the heading of things which are permissible, and he will not be punished for that, but his love of Allah and for the sake of Allah will be lacking somewhat. If his sole purpose in life is to get these things, and he gives priority to that over that which Allah loves and is pleased with, then he is wronging himself and following his own desires.

The first is the love of al-Saabiqoon (those who are foremost in Islam); the second is the love of al-muqtasidoon (those who are average) and the third is the love of al-zaalimoon (the wrongdoers).

Al-Rooh by Ibn al-Qayyim,
1/254.

May Allah bless our
Prophet Muhammad.