



The Concept of Love in Islamic Thought: Between Spirituality and Human Relations

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Abstract

This study explores the concept of love in Islam, emphasizes its spiritual dimension, and relates it to a broader impact on human life. With an in-depth analysis of relevant literary sources, it was found that love in Islamic thought is not only concerned with the relationship with Allah but also includes how love affects social interactions and relationships between people. This concept of love carries a deep spiritual dimension and inspires living life. Philosophical and theological approaches affirm the essential role of love in giving meaning to life, with deep ethical consequences. The harmony between the spiritual and social dimensions of love produces positive impacts in various aspects of life, including interreligious relations, social services, education, and many other areas. Through this understanding, individuals and communities are directed to live life with deep love, which connects spirituality with social responsibility, forms ethical and caring individuals, and contributes to creating a better world

Keywords: *Love; Islamic Thought; Spirituality; Human Relations*

Abstrak

Kajian ini mengeksplorasi konsep cinta dalam Islam, menekankan dimensi spiritualnya, dan menghubungkannya dengan dampak lebih luas dalam kehidupan manusia. Dengan analisis mendalam terhadap sumber-sumber pustaka yang relevan, ditemukan bahwa cinta dalam pemikiran Islam tidak hanya berkaitan dengan hubungan dengan Allah, tetapi juga mencakup bagaimana cinta mempengaruhi interaksi sosial dan hubungan antar manusia. Konsep cinta ini membawa dimensi spiritual yang mendalam dan memberikan inspirasi dalam menjalani kehidupan. Pendekatan filosofis dan teologis menegaskan peran penting cinta dalam memberikan makna pada kehidupan, dengan konsekuensi etika yang dalam. Keselarasan antara dimensi spiritual dan sosial cinta menghasilkan dampak positif dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan, termasuk hubungan antaragama, pelayanan sosial, pendidikan, dan berbagai bidang lainnya. Melalui pemahaman ini, individu dan masyarakat diarahkan

untuk menjalani kehidupan dengan cinta yang mendalam, yang menghubungkan spiritualitas dengan tanggung jawab sosial, membentuk individu yang beretika dan peduli, serta berkontribusi dalam menciptakan dunia yang lebih baik.

Kata Kunci : *Cinta; Pemikiran Islam; Spiritualitas; Hubungan Manusia*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of love in Islamic thought invites us to reflect on the deeper meaning of every action and interaction. Love, as the primary driver of human relations with God and others, teaches that every step, word, and intention has significant moral weight. When the individual recognizes the value of spirituality in love, he is more likely to view all aspects of life with a more empathetic and thoughtful view. The balance between the spiritual dimension and Human Relations allows Muslim societies to acquire a solid moral foundation, forming norms that bring peace and harmony.¹

In a world as complex and diverse as it is today, understanding the concept of love in Islam has profound relevance.² Connecting love with spiritual and relational aspects empowers individuals to face challenges with maturity and wisdom.³ The concept also invites reflection on how our actions, both in personal relationships and on a larger social scale, can build or undermine the quality of life together. Love is one of the fundamental aspects of human life.⁴ Whether in religion, philosophy, culture, or human relations, love is vital in shaping the perception and behavior of individuals and groups. In Islamic thought, love also has a profound and

¹ Benaouda Bensaid and Salah Machouche, "Muslim Morality as Foundation for Social Harmony," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 14, no. 2 (2019): 51–63, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol14no2.5>.

² Amira Shamma Abidin, "Love in Islam," *European Judaism* 37, no. 1 (2004): 92–102, <https://doi.org/10.3167/001430004783515063>.

³ Dirk Van Dierendonck and Kathleen Patterson, "Compassionate Love as a Cornerstone of Servant Leadership: An Integration of Previous Theorizing and Research," *Journal of Business Ethics* 128 (2015): 119–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z>.

⁴ Jaakko Seikkula and David Trimble, "Healing Elements of Therapeutic Conversation: Dialogue as an Embodiment of Love," *Family Process* 44, no. 4 (2005): 461–75, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2005.00072.x>.

complex dimension. The concept of love in Islam is related to aspects of human relationships and contains a profound dimension of spirituality.⁵

The understanding of love in Islam goes beyond just a romantic relationship between spouses. Love in Islam includes the relationship between man and God, the relationship between man, and the relationship with all of his creation. The concept of love in Islamic Thought appears in various forms, including love for Allah (*mahabbāh*), love for the Prophet Muhammad (*muhabbāh*), love for fellow human beings (*ukhūwāh*), and love for the universe as a sign of the greatness of Allah (*Ma'rifā*).⁶ A deep understanding of the concept of love in Islamic thought has significant relevance in facing contemporary world challenges. Individualism, materialism, and divisions between people often characterize the modern Era. Therefore, a deeper study of the concept of love in Islam can provide spiritual and ethical guidance for Muslim individuals in living their daily lives, maintaining human relationships, and strengthening relationships with the creator. The thought of love in Islam also has the potential to be a bridge to understanding and embracing cultural and religious diversity. Through a deeper understanding of the concept of inclusive love in Islam, individuals can develop tolerance, empathy, and understanding towards their fellow human beings regardless of differences in religious, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds.

In a fast-paced and often individualistic modern society, the concept of love in Islamic thought provides a solid moral and spiritual footing. A deep understanding of love in Islam focuses not only on individual happiness alone but also on service to one's neighbor and the search for the pleasure of Allah. Therefore, the study of love in Islamic thought is becoming increasingly relevant, given the urgency to strengthen ethical values and spirituality in everyday life.

Along with globalization and intercultural interconnections, a deeper understanding of the concept of love in Islam can provide a foundation for

⁵ Suud Sarim Karimullah, Mu'adil Faizin, and Aufa Islami, "Internalization of Islamic Moderation Values in Building a Civilization of Love and Tolerance," *Al-Insiyroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 9, no. 1 (2023): 94–125, <https://doi.org/10.35309/alinsiyroh.v9i1.6345>.

⁶ Abrar M Dawud Faza and Ramdayani Harahap, "Mahabbah Menurut Sufisme Dan Cinta Kasih Menurut Bible," *Studia Sosia Religia* 3, no. 2 (2021): 70–82, <https://doi.org/10.51900/ssr.v3i2.8881>.

Interreligious and cultural dialogue. The concept of universal and inclusive love in Islam can be a meeting point to understand the similarities and differences between religions and overcome prejudice and distrust between religious communities. In addition, social challenges such as polarization, injustice, and division between people often appear in various forms. The concept of love in Islamic thought has the potential to guide in overcoming various forms of conflict, easing tensions, and building harmonious relationships amid differences.⁷ By promoting the values of love, tolerance, and compassion, society can develop a new paradigm in establishing human relations based on noble moral principles. In addition, studying the concept of love in Islamic thought can also make valuable contributions to Islamic literature. Although there is already a lot of literature on Islamic ethics and spirituality, a more in-depth and comprehensive study of love can provide a more prosperous and deeper perspective. It can also inspire researchers and academics to develop new thoughts and concepts that can make a sustainable contribution to the development of society and Islamic thought.

Love in Islamic thought is not merely a feeling of affection or physical attraction but also devotion, loyalty, and a desire to draw closer to God. It is a profound call to reflect on the nature of love that transcends physical limits, inviting the individual to recognize the essence of love in its spiritual and relational dimensions. Therefore, this study analyzes how the balance between the dimensions of spirituality and Human Relations in the concept of love can form a solid character and social ethics in Muslim society.

In the Islamic concept of love, aspects of spirituality describe the human connection with God through compassion, obedience, and longing.⁸ Love becomes an inner stream that deepens the meaning of human existence about the creator. On the other hand, human relations become a tangible manifestation of this love, in which individuals are directed to treat others with respect, empathy, and Justice.

⁷ Moh Toriqul Chaer, "Islam Dan Pendidikan Cinta Damai," *Istawa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2017): 73–94, <https://doi.org/10.24269/ijpi.v2i1.363>; Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, "Menjunjung Tinggi Islam Agama Kasih Sayang Dan Cinta Kasih Dalam Dimensi Sufisme," *Reflektika* 16, no. 2 (2021): 241–67, <https://doi.org/10.28944/reflektika.v16i2.523>.

⁸ Paul L Heck, "Mysticism as Morality: The Case of Sufism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 34, no. 2 (2006): 253–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9795.2006.00268.x>; Corrie Decker, "Love and Sex in Islamic Africa: Introduction," *Africa Today* 61, no. 4 (2015): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.61.4.1>.

This study will review how a holistic understanding of love can be a valuable guide in dealing with challenges and conflicts in everyday life.

One of the relevant studies in the understanding of the concept of love in Islam is the works of Ibn al-Qayyim and Imam al-Ghazali. Ibn al-Qayyim, in his work "Madarij al-Salikin,"⁹ elaborated on the concepts of love for Allah and love for one's neighbor in depth. He explained that love for God is a source of spirituality and motivation in worship. In contrast, love for fellow human beings is a way to achieve harmonious social relations. Previous research on their works can provide a solid basis for understanding the concept of love in Islamic thought. In addition, some research on Sufism in Islam is also relevant in this context.¹⁰ Sufism is a school in Islam that emphasizes mystical experiences and spirituality, and the concept of love has a central role in the teachings of Sufism. Studies of the thought of prominent Sufis such as Rumi, Ibn Arabi, and Al-Hallaj have provided a deep understanding of the concept of love in the dimension of spirituality in Islam. The results of research on Sufism can give insight into how the concept of love plays a role in achieving a higher level of spirituality.

Previous research has also considered the role of love in human relations in Muslim societies. The study of ethics and social behavior in Islam, including the importance of loving and caring for one's neighbor, becomes relevant in the understanding of how love affects human relationships in a social context.¹¹ The results of this study can help support the knowledge that the concept of love in Islam

⁹ Ibn Al-Qayyim and Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, "Madarij Al-Salikin," *Beirut: Dar Kutub al-Ilmiyyah*, 2008.

¹⁰ Abdul Wachid Bambang Suharto, "The Concept Of Love In Sufism," *Jurnal Sastra Indonesia* 11, no. 3 (2022): 219–26, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsi.v11i3.52135>; Giuseppe Scattolin and Ahmed Hasan Anwar, "Love in the History of Sufism Experience and Language," 16 *مجلة كلية الآداب جامعة بورسعيد*, no. 16 (2020): 23–59, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jfpsu.2020.44050.1017>; Muntazar Mehdi, Asma Mehmood, and Arshad Ali, "Role of Sufism and Spirituality in Psychological Well Being: A Study of Elif Shafak's 'The Forty Rules of Love' From a Cognitive and Existential Perspective," *Journal of English Language, Literature and Education* 2, no. 03 (2021): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.54692/jelle.2021.020367>; A Gani, "Pendekatan Sufistik Dalam Pendidikan Islam Berwawasan Perdamaian," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 23, no. 2 (2018): 387–412.

¹¹ Lynn G Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, 2008, 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444303070>; Syaidatun Nazirah Abu Zahrin et al., "Relationship between Islamic Concept and Ethical Behaviour Akhlak) of Being in Love among Youth," *Akademika* 87, no. 3 (2017): 5–16; Simone Belli, Rom Harré, and Lupicinio Íñiguez, "What Is Love? Discourse about Emotions in Social Sciences," *Human Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2010): 249–70, <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10023-010-0026-8>.

has strong implications for forming positive social relationships. Based on the analysis of relevant literature from the results of previous research, this study is expected to deepen the understanding of love in Islamic thought, both in the dimension of spirituality and human relations. Through an integrative approach between the knowledge of the concept of love in Islamic thought and the results of previous research, this study can provide a richer and more comprehensive insight into the role of love in the context of Islam and how it affects the spiritual and social aspects of Muslim life.

In Muslim society, the integrated concept of love will contribute significantly to establishing a social order that prioritizes noble moral and ethical values. Love that knit closeness to God and fellow human beings will encourage the formation of tolerance, peace, and mutual assistance. By penetrating the depth of the concept of love in Islamic thought through these two essential aspects, this study aims to provide a more complete and comprehensive insight into how love in Islam not only has an impact on human relationships with God but also the dynamics of harmonious, fair, and compassionate human relationships. Through applying this holistic concept of love, it is hoped that the Muslim community can forge strong bonds, realize peace, and make love the primary foundation for building a better world.

METHOD

The literature study conducted in this study aims to detail and explore the concept of love in the context of Islamic thought. The study approach used is a highly structured and integrated approach, which combines a comprehensive analysis of the literature and a deep philosophical approach. In a comprehensive approach, various sources, including religious texts, philosophical works, and Islamic literature, will be thoroughly explored. The goal is to identify, understand, and unravel the patterns, themes, and views that emerge from these sources.

The philosophical approach in this study focuses more on an in-depth analysis of the works of prominent philosophers and Sufis in the Islamic tradition. The focus is to achieve a deeper understanding of intellectual and philosophical views regarding love in Islam. In this context, the analysis will summarize the

arguments and ideas found in the works of these prominent personalities, as well as review how their philosophical views on love have influenced the development of thought in the Islamic tradition. By combining a comprehensive literature analysis and an in-depth philosophical approach, this study aims to provide an intense and thorough look at the concept of love in Islamic thought, which includes a comprehensive perspective and a deep understanding of philosophy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Spirituality in the Concept of Love

The concept of love in Islamic thought has a critical spiritual dimension. It refers to the inner relationship between man and God.¹² Love in Islam is recognized as the basis for achieving righteousness, that is, piety to Allah. Love for God is considered the basis of all good and righteous deeds. The Qur'an often describes Allah as merciful and merciful, who created a loving relationship between man and him. Love for God is considered a bridge that connects people with him. This love motivates us to keep God's Commandments and avoid his prohibitions. This is not only an obligation but also a deep inner connection. This love encourages human beings to reflect and recognize their purpose in life in the context of God's will, increasing their spiritual awareness. Love also involves the concept of *ihsān*, which is to give without expecting anything in return. Love for God encourages individuals to do good to others selflessly. This view positively impacts society and connects love for God with human relations.

The dimensions of spirituality and Human Relations in the concept of love are inseparable in Islamic thought.¹³ Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of love and compassion for one's neighbor as an integral part of faith. He taught that man should show compassion for all creatures and do good to his family, neighbors, and others. In Islam, love for God and love for one's neighbor are interrelated. Love

¹² June McDaniel, "Love And Wisdom In Some Major World Religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism And Buddhism," *International Proceeding On Religion, Culture, Law, Education, And Hindu Studies* 1 (2022): 241–60.

¹³ Akhirin Akhirin, "Mengembangkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Melalui Rukun Iman Dan Rukun Islam," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2013): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.34001/tarbawi.v10i2.179>.

for God moves individuals to form loving and understanding social relationships. This relationship is also based on the teaching that God loves those who love each other for his sake. In this context, love becomes an incentive to live excellent and affectionate human relationships. These two dimensions complement each other and form the basis of ethics, morals, and harmonious relations in Islamic Society.

The dimension of spirituality in the concept of love in Islamic thought provides a deep and meaningful foundation for Muslim individuals in living their lives. The spiritual connection between man and God through love creates a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Human beings feel connected to something greater and higher than themselves, leading to peace and tranquility. In addition, the dimension of spirituality in love also encourages individuals to reflect and understand themselves better. This self-knowledge is not only in the physical and emotional dimensions but also on the spiritual level. Love for God encourages people to understand their existence in the context of his will and to look at their actions and intentions from a broader and more profound point of view.

The concept of love rooted in the dimension of spirituality significantly impacts social ethics and human relationships. Love for God teaches individuals to be just, understanding, and compassionate toward their fellow human beings. This kind of love creates a social environment filled with mutual understanding, support, and empathy. When individuals feel a deep love for God, it affects how they interact with their fellow human beings. An affectionate and understanding attitude is characteristic in their relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and society.¹⁴ In this case, love for Allah becomes an encouragement to do good, benefit and support each other.

The dimension of spirituality within the concept of love plays a multifaceted role in assisting individuals in achieving a harmonious and balanced life. Love for God transcends mere self-interest, instilling a profound sense of purpose that is a powerful counterbalance to excessive greed and ambition. It guides individuals to lead lives characterized by gratitude, allowing them to prioritize the meaningful aspects of existence. This equilibrium manifests in an individual's capacity to

¹⁴ Irma Siringoringo, Nani Issa Padang, and Melisa Manalu, "Installing Character Education According To The Noble Characteristics Of Bona Pasongit Based On The Love Of God And Neighborhood In Students," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (Bersinar-JOHAS)* 1, no. 01 (2023): 1–5.

confront life's trials and tribulations. The love for God equips them with the serenity and resilience to view every life event as an integral part of a more excellent divine plan.

In the realm of Islamic thought, the spiritual dimension of the concept of love exercises a profound and wide-ranging influence on the beliefs and conduct of Muslim individuals. Love for God serves not only as the foundation for kindness and devotion but also as a wellspring of inspiration for fostering harmonious social relationships and upholding noble ethical standards. Through this profound affection for God, individuals experience closeness to the divine, attain a deeper self-awareness, and cultivate understanding and compassionate relationships with fellow human beings. This spiritual dimension engenders balance in one's life and equips individuals to confront the challenges of existence with inner tranquility and unwavering conviction.

Furthermore, the spiritual dimension inherent in the Islamic concept of love is a potent motivator, propelling individuals toward a deeper spiritual life. Love for God acts as an impetus to delve further into one's spiritual journey through acts of worship, prayer, and contemplation. This love inspires individuals to seek the illumination of truth and purpose in their lives, encouraging them to reflect upon and delve deeper into religious teachings. This love, as a driving force in the spiritual sphere, urges individuals to seek a more profound understanding of their existence within the broader cosmic context, thereby providing a grander purpose and spurring them to continual self-development in the spiritual realm.

Love for God further motivates individuals to strive for moral and ethical improvement. It instills a commitment to introspection, leading individuals to acknowledge their imperfections and mistakes while motivating them to work towards self-improvement to draw nearer to God. This process of self-transformation encourages individuals to become better versions of themselves, characterized by more extraordinary patience, understanding, and wisdom. Love for God also empowers individuals to conquer negative inclinations and unfavorable aspects of their personalities. By meditating on the magnificence of God's love,

individuals can cultivate enhanced self-discipline, conquer worldly temptations, and prioritize virtuous and positive actions.

The spiritual dimension within Islamic love also provides inner strength for confronting life's myriad challenges and trials. Love for God fosters a deep-seated confidence in God's perpetual presence and support for the individual. It imparts a profound sense of tranquility and security, enabling individuals to confront life's adversities with unwavering fortitude and patience. In this perspective, love for God transcends both moments of happiness and periods of hardship. Sincere devotees of God can transform challenges into opportunities for drawing closer to the divine through prayer, trust, and gratitude. Love for God stands as the bedrock of goodness and purity, serving as a wellspring of motivation for spiritual growth, self-transformation, and unwavering resilience in the face of life's trials. This profound understanding forms a solid foundation upon which individual Muslims can construct meaningful, harmonious lives characterized by love for God and their fellow human beings.

The dimension of spirituality in the concept of love in Islamic thought is central to encouraging individuals to worship and develop piety. The love of God is the main driving force in carrying out his commandments and avoiding his prohibitions. A deep love for God motivates individuals to worship with sincerity and love, not just as a formal obligation. Individuals who feel love for Allah tend to understand worship as a means to draw closer to him. Prayer, fasting, zakat, and other worship are lived with sincerity and appreciation. In this view, worship is not just about mechanical obedience but about expressing deep love for the creator. In addition, love for God motivates individuals to seek a deeper meaning behind physical and material reality. This love encourages human beings to reflect and explore the meaning of their existence in the context of their will. Love for God encourages individuals to feel his presence in all aspects of life, including in the beauty of nature, social relationships, and human achievements. In this view, love for God evokes gratitude and admiration for all the grace he has given.

Love of God motivates individuals to be just, loving, and helpful to their fellow human beings. This concept of love allows individuals to see shared values and dignity in every human being, regardless of differences in religion, race, or

background. In addition, love for God also encourages individuals to live an honest and integrity life. Concern for rights and duties becomes an obligation because individuals feel that love for God requires them to lead a dignified and moral life. Then, love for God teaches the individual to admit his mistakes and accept his redemption. Sincere love for God motivates individuals to face mistakes, repent, and seek to improve humbly. This view also teaches about the importance of forgiving fellow human beings, for God Awakens compassion and empathy for the faults of others. In human relationships, this love encourages individuals to live an attitude of spaciousness and forgiveness as they hope to get forgiveness from God.

The dimension of spirituality in the concept of Love also has the potential to be a means of cultural and social transformation in society. Love for God motivates individuals to change cultural norms and social behaviors incompatible with religious values. Individuals with this dimension of spirituality tend to be agents of change in favor of justice, equality, and Human Rights principles. In a society with a variety of social problems, such as gender inequality, poverty, and injustice, the dimension of spirituality in love can be a driver to overcome these problems. Love for God teaches the values of egalitarianism and solidarity, encourages individuals to fight against injustice, and build a more just and dignified society.

The dimension of spirituality in the concept of Love also has implications for the environment and nature. Love for God teaches the values of care and responsibility towards his creation. Individuals who feel this spiritual love tend to have a sense of caring for the environment and nature and understand the importance of preserving ecosystems for future generations. In this view, love for God lays the foundation for sustainability practices, such as energy saving, good waste management, and preservation of Natural Resources. Individuals who feel this love feel responsible for maintaining the beauty and preservation of nature as a form of gratitude and respect for the creator. Love for God also brings individuals together in bonds of love and understanding. It creates a sense of community that transcends religious, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. Individuals who have a solid spiritual dimension of love tend to feel connected to fellow Muslims and humans in general. This love inspires them to share, support, and collaborate for the common

good. Solidarity and concern for the difficulties of others characterize this society colored by spiritual love. Through this dimension of spirituality, love becomes a force that unites people in compassion, respect for diversity, and living a life based on religious values.

Philosophical and Theological Perspectives on the Concept of Love

Love has a deep and complex dimension, especially when viewed from a philosophical and theological perspective in Islamic thought. This perspective involves a deep understanding of the essence of love, its sources, and its ethical and spiritual implications in the lives of individuals and societies. From a philosophical perspective, love in Islam is related to the concept of Existence, Reality, and purpose of life. Islamic philosophers, such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and al-Farabi, considered love a natural impulse that drives man to seek ultimate truth and happiness. They connect love with man's longing to unite with the higher source of existence, God. In this context, love bridges the material and spiritual worlds. Islamic philosophers argue that love for God is the root of all love because, in the search for such love, man experiences transcendence from earthly reality to a higher and eternal reality.

In the Islamic theological perspective, Love is central in the relationship between man and God. The concept of *tawhīd* (belief in the unity of Allah) teaches that love for Allah is the main foundation in the life of a Muslim. The love of God motivates man to obey His commandments, stay away from his prohibitions, and seek his pleasure. Islamic theology also emphasizes God's love for Man. Allah is known as the Most Merciful and The Most Merciful. His love for his creation is reflected in his abundant mercy, forgiveness of sins, and infinite grace. In this view, the love of God becomes a source of hope and blessing for Man.

From an ethical perspective, love in Islam affects behavior and social relationships. The ethics of love teaches that love for God should be reflected in good behavior and compassion toward fellow human beings. The Prophet Muhammad taught that love for Allah and one's neighbor are two sides of a unity that cannot be separated. The ethics of Love also includes the application of the concepts of *Ma'rūf* (goodness) and *nahī munkar* (preventing evil). Individuals who

genuinely love Allah will strive to promote goodness in society and prevent all forms of evil. This ethic of love creates an environment full of mutual understanding, tolerance, and help between people.

Philosophical and theological perspectives in Islam are also closely related to the mystical dimension of love. Mystical thought developed by the Sufis teaches that love is the base of transcendence and direct experience with God. *Ishq* (deep love) in Islamic mysticism refers to deep and burning love, describing the intense connection between man and God. Love mysticism involves searching for and uniting the soul with God. The Sufis argue that man must untie the bonds with the material world and the ego to achieve *fanā'* (drifting in God) and *baqā'* (permanence in God). In this mystical dimension, love becomes a way to experience God's presence fully and deeply.¹⁵

Philosophical and theological perspectives on the concept of love in Islamic thought form a broad and profound view of the meaning of love, man's relationship with God, and its implications in social and ethical life. In this view, love is not just a feeling but also an impulse that drives people to achieve closeness to God, develop good ethics, and undergo spiritual transformation. In this view, love is directed not only to the material world or human relations but also to God as the source of all existence. Love becomes a call to seek God, to know him, and to forge deep relationships through devotion and worship. This perspective inspires spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and dhikr that bring individuals closer to God. Through this spiritual experience, individuals feel the presence and compassion of God, which fills their hearts with a sense of peace and joy.

From philosophical and theological perspectives, love is also considered an ongoing process of self-transformation. *Tazkiyāh*, or self-purification in Islam, refers to an attempt to cleanse the heart and soul of negative traits. Love for God motivates individuals to overcome weaknesses, passions, and sins to reach higher levels of morality and spirituality. This transformation process involves an internal struggle

¹⁵ 'Abd al-Hakeem Carney, "Imamate and Love: The Discourse of the Divine in Islamic Mysticism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, no. 3 (2005): 705–30, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfi076>; Reza Shah-Kazemi, "The Metaphysics of Oneness and Sanctifying Love in Islamic Mysticism," in *Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Mystical Perspectives on the Love of God* (Springer, 2014), 73–101, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443328_5.

and constant effort to develop a better character. Individuals who love God strongly desire to approach perfection in ethics, morals, and behavior. In this view, Love serves as an incentive to become a better individual and closer to the ideal image of Man desired by God. Individuals who love Allah feel that their deeds manifest love and gratitude towards his mercy. In this perspective, love becomes a source of positive energy that moves individuals to fight against injustice, poverty, and human suffering. By loving God, individuals are morally responsible for participating in social improvement and positively impacting society.

Philosophical and theological perspectives associate love with creative and productive work in life. Love for God encourages individuals to use their potential and talents in productive ways for noble purposes. In this view, work is not only an economic obligation but also a means to contribute to creating sound and developing the world. Individuals who feel love for God tend to live the work with dedication, integrity, and a higher purpose. They see work as an opportunity to do good, innovate, and benefit others. Love for God is the driving force to create a positive impact in the field of work and business. In this view, love is not only a feeling or emotion but also an impetus for self-development, devotion, and a positive contribution to life and society. Through this philosophical and theological dimension, love becomes a source of inspiration and direction in living a meaningful life and drawing closer to God.

In the tradition of Islamic Sufism, the *ishq* (deep love) describes how love for God can transform earthly love into a more sublime love.¹⁶ It is the transformation from a love attached to the material world to a love that directs the heart to God as a purer source of love. In this view, love is interpreted as a spiritual force that frees man from addictions to the world and the ego. Love for God helps individuals overcome dependence on temporary happiness and experience more lasting and profound happiness in spiritual connection with him. Islamic scholars such as al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi taught that love is the key to understanding the nature of reality and the relationship between creation and the creator.¹⁷ In this view, love

¹⁶ Joseph E B Lombard, "From Ḥubb to 'Ishq: The Development of Love in Early Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007): 345–85, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etm030>.

¹⁷ Dejan Azdajic, "Longing for the Transcendent: The Role of Love in Islamic Mysticism with Special Reference to al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-'Arabī," *Transformation* 33, no. 2 (2016): 99–109, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378815595237>; Mansoureh

brings the individual to reflect, permeate, and seek deeper meaning in religious teachings. Love becomes the impetus to live a more conscious, reflective, and meaningful life by delving into the secrets of creation and existence.

Islam emphasizes the value of unity and oneness of humanity in love and respect for Allah. The concept of *ukhūwāh Islamiyāh* (Islamic brotherhood) considers that love for Allah triggers solidarity and strong attachment between individuals from various backgrounds. In this view, love becomes a unifying factor in a society of individuals with religious, cultural, and ethnic differences. Love for God overcomes differences and fosters mutual respect, working together and uniting to achieve a higher common goal. Love for God is a source of strength and hope in a world often filled with conflict, uncertainty, and difficulty. Individuals with this spiritual dimension of love feel uplifted by the love and mercy of God, giving them peace and confidence in the face of trials. In this view, love becomes a lamp that directs individuals to make the right decisions, live with integrity, and contribute positively to society. Love for God gives a broader and deeper view of the purpose of life and man's place in his plan.

Philosophical and theological perspectives also raise the role of love in forgiveness and pardon. Love for God teaches the values of forgiveness for the mistakes of others and forgiveness for offenses. The concepts of *hilm* (meekness) and *afū* (forgiveness) in Islam inspire individuals to keep an open heart and forgive sincerely. In this view, love motivates individuals to look at the faults of others with an understanding and compassionate look. Love for God teaches that forgiveness manifests kindness and sincerity in loving him. Forgiveness is also an effort to maintain good relationships with fellow human beings and create peace in society. Through this philosophical and theological dimension, love becomes a source of energy in living life with determination and a strong spirit, directing every action toward goodness and perfection.

Harmonization between Spiritual and Social Dimensions

Ebrahimi, Ahmadali Gholami, and Kamaruzaman Yusoff, "Al-Ghazali's Ma'rifah and Mahabbah's Relations," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 20 (2021): 65–76, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.20.2021.211>.

The understanding of love in Islamic thought is not limited to aspects of spirituality but also involves a strong social dimension. Harmonizing between the spiritual and social dimensions, Love plays a crucial role in shaping a balanced and meaningful way of life for individuals and society.¹⁸ Philosophical and theological perspectives in Islam describe the close relationship between love for Allah and good social interaction. The spiritual dimension of love in Islamic thought is centered on love for Allah as the source of all love. Love for God describes the intimate relationship between the servant and his Creator. In this view, love for God is a feeling and a form of dedication and devotion. This love encourages individuals to obey, follow His commandments, and live life within the framework of religious values.

Meanwhile, the social dimension in Islam teaches the importance of connecting love for Allah with love for one's neighbor. Islam encourages individuals to establish good social relationships, safeguard the rights of fellow human beings, and help those in need. The concepts of *muhabbāh* (compassion) and *ukhūwāh* (Brotherhood) underscore the importance of solidarity and caring in society.¹⁹

The harmonization between the spiritual and social dimensions is reflected in social services. Love for God moves individuals to make positive contributions to society. Social service activities, such as providing assistance to the poor, caring for orphans, and helping the elderly, are considered to be tangible forms of love for God. In this view, social service is a charitable task and a manifestation of love for God's creation. Love for God teaches that helping one's neighbor is a form of devotion that connects love's spiritual and social dimensions. In addition, love for God encourages individuals to behave well and respect others.

Islam teaches the concept of *akhlāq* (ethics), which directs individuals to be fair, gentle, and compassionate in their relationships with fellow human beings. In this view, the ethics of interaction reflects the actual manifestation of love for God. Individuals who love God feel responsible for fostering understanding relationships, avoiding conflict, and creating an environment of peace and harmony. Islam also

¹⁸ Jito Subianto, "Peran Keluarga, Sekolah, Dan Masyarakat Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Berkualitas," *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2013): 331–54, <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v8i2.757>.

¹⁹ Nani Widiawati, "Mahabbah Teaching And The Problem Of Religious Moderation," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 40–52, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v6i1.437>.

teaches the importance of defending the weak, opposing injustice and fighting for human rights. In this view, the struggle for justice becomes a concrete expression of love for God. Individuals who love God feel called to fight for ethical values and justice, linking spiritual aspirations with concrete actions to create a better society.

Love for God teaches the moral and ethical values that shape an individual's character. Islam emphasizes the importance of patience, tolerance, and humility.²⁰ In this view, character education becomes a concrete implementation of love for God. Individuals who love God seek to internalize religious values in their daily actions, making character education a manifestation of love that drives good behavior and social interaction. Philosophical and theological perspectives in Islam teach that love is not only about the relationship between the servant and The Creator but also about how that love is reflected in behavior, social interaction, and devotion in society. Through this harmonization, individuals become agents of positive change that creates an impact within themselves and society.

Love for God also encourages individuals to contribute to shaping a more just, empathetic, and equitable society. This social transformation stems from the understanding that love for God is limited to individual relationships and leads to collective efforts to create positive change in society. In this view, love becomes a driver in the face of social issues that require attention and change. Individuals who love God feel responsible for standing with the oppressed, giving a voice to the voiceless, and participating in social movements to end injustice.

In building a diverse society, Islam teaches the importance of tolerance, respect, and cooperation among religious communities. Love for God teaches universal values inherent in all religions. In this view, love is an incentive to overcome divisions and interreligious conflicts. Individuals who love God will seek to bridge differences and establish harmonious relationships with individuals from different religious backgrounds, creating an inclusive and respectful environment. Philosophical and theological perspectives in Islam teach that love is a source of

²⁰ Hastuti Mulang and Aditya Halim Perdana Kusuma Putra, "Exploring the Implementation of Ethical and Spiritual Values in High School Education: A Case Study in Makassar, Indonesia," *Golden Ratio of Social Science and Education* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.52970/grsse.v3i1.105>.

inspiration in social transformation, the basis of brotherhood between religious communities, the foundation of sustainable development, and the foundation for forming leaders of character. In this view, love is not just a concept that resides on paper but a call to real action that connects the spiritual dimension with social responsibility. Through this harmonization, love can be a driving force in creating more remarkable positive change in oneself and society.

In a society of various tribes, religions, cultures, and backgrounds, love for God becomes the basis for building inclusive and harmonious relationships. Islam teaches that all humans are descendants of Adam and Eve, so human brotherhood transcends the boundaries of external differences. In this view, love drives overcoming prejudices and conflicts between groups. Individuals who love God will strive to see similarities, understand differences, and work together in building a society based on tolerance and mutual understanding. Islam teaches that Allah is *al-Rahmān* (the merciful) and *al-Rahīm* (The Merciful), ready to comfort his servants. In this view, love is a driving force in providing support and compassion to those in need. Individuals who love God feel responsible for helping those suffering, providing moral support, and sincerely sharing the burden of grief.

Philosophical and theological perspectives in Islam teach that love is not only about the relationship between man and his God but also about how it is reflected in social interactions, religious relationships, family, social services, and children's education. Through this harmonization, love becomes a force that links spiritual values with social responsibility, creating a harmonious continuity in the life of the individual and society. Islam teaches that helping the weak and needy is a recommended action. In this view, love is a driving force in supporting social welfare programs, assisting vulnerable groups, and participating in efforts to reduce inequality and poverty.

CONCLUSION

The conception of love in the context of Islamic thought reveals a much broader dimension than simply being a bond between the individual and God. This concept of love involves complex aspects, encompassing how this essence of love is reflected in social dynamics and relationships between human beings. More than

a personal relationship with God, the dimension of spirituality that flows in this concept of love extends beyond the limits of emotional connection, becoming the root of intimacy that forms a source of inspiration in living life's journey. Through a philosophical and theological lens, this concept of love is recognized as a central driver that inspires an existence that has meaning while carrying an ethical impact that reaches the deepest recesses of the heart. This perspective reveals that the harmony between the spiritual dimension and the social dimension in the concept of love not only creates balance but also has an impact that reaches different aspects of life. The implications are reflected in more harmonious interreligious relations, continued dedication to social services, holistic educational changes, and several other elements. This directs individuals and communities to live with love as the center, intertwine spirituality with social responsibility, forge an existence always rooted in ethics, and substantially contribute to building a better world. Its impact is not limited to the individual level but rather permeates into a broader collective dimension. In this way, the positive impact generated is not just a subjective experience but also a transformational force that contributes to the significant changes that elevate our world.

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