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### The Concept of Love in the New Testament and the Qur'an

Seyyed Abo Al-Hasan Musavi Ghadamgahi <sup>\*1</sup>; Mojgan Sarshar <sup>2</sup>; Seyyed Mohammad Ayazi <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> PhD Student, Qur'an and Hadith Sciences Department, Islamic Azad University, Sciences and Researches Branch, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor in Qur'an and Hadith Sciences Department, Islamic Azad University, Sciences and Researches Branch, Tehran, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor in Qur'an and Hadith Sciences Department, Islamic Azad University, Sciences and Researches Branch, Tehran, Iran

Email: Tarannom110@gmail.com<sup>\*</sup>; Sarshar2008@gmail.com; Ayazi1333@gmail.com

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#### **Abstract**

This article studies the concept of love in the Qur'an and the New Testament. The purpose of this article is to examine and compare the concept, approach and scope of love in these books. Thus, the concept of love has been first clarified and then it has been proved that love means unusual passion, not passion beyond ration. These two books have been then compared in the field of love. The most important findings of this article are in monotheistic approach which introduces God as infinite, the meaning of unlimited passion and blessings of God overlaps the concept of love and they have paradigmatic relation with love. Moreover, concept of love is the most important commonality between these two books, because they have gnostic approach to the existence and concept of love has been strongly emphasized in both. Finally, the scope of love in both include mutual love of God and humans, humans' love for all humans and humans' love for all existence.

**Keywords:** *Love; The New Testament; The Qur'an; Monotheism; Agape; Rahmat*

#### **Introduction**

One of the issues concerning to the New Testament and the Qur'an is the presence or absence of the concept of love in these two books. Another questionable issue is these two book's approach to the concept of love. Hence, the study of the Christian and Muslim's holy book in field of love is the subject of this article. The theme of this article is the comparison of the concept of love in the most important source of Christianity and Islam.

The comparison of the Qur'an and the New Testament's commonalities and differentiations in field of love can provide the ground for inter-religion dialogues, paving the way for the identification of the common roots in Islam and Christianity. One of the benefits of this comparison is to help disambiguate the concept of love in the Qur'an and the New Testament, focusing on the commonality of Islam and Christianity in the field of love. Paying attention to the common ground in the Qur'an and the New Testament concerning the field of love, creates and promotes better understanding between Muslim and Christian scholars and their followers, and brings their views closer.

Another benefit of this comparison is to eliminate misunderstandings and wrong views relating to Muslims and Christians about love, as well as to create and to increase atmosphere of love and affection between Muslims and Christians. Moreover studying the differences between the Qur'an and the New Testament in the field of love can also help better understand the concept of love in Islam and Christianity comparing to one another. Studying the Differences of these two books in the Concept of Love can help understand the Position of the Concept of Love in Islam and Christianity Comparing to Each Other.

This comparison aims at identifying common and the difference points between the Qur'an and the New Testament in the field of love. In other words, the purpose of this article is to explore the concept of love in main source of the Christianity and Islam, and their approach to love. This article seeks to study the concept of love in the New Testament and the Qur'an by examining its apparent and unapparent angles, thereby removing the ambiguities of the New Testament and the Qur'an.

The issues this article touch are whether or not the concept of love exists in the New Testament and the Qur'an, and if so, what is the approach of these two books to love; moreover, what results we can get comparing the concept of love in the Christian's holy book and Muslim's one. In other words, studying the consequences of love in the Qur'an and the New Testament is another topic this article covers.

The New Testament consists of twenty-seven texts that are considered sacred to Christians. Among them, the four books namely Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John, each called the Gospel, are dedicated to describing the life of Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him). Each of the four Gospels, written by separate authors, is named by its author. Matthew and John were apostles of Jesus Christ, Mark the special disciple of Peter the Apostle, and Luke the disciple of Paul (Soleimani, 1383 SH, pp. 33-34). Among the four Gospels, Mark is the oldest, written about sixty-five to seventy AD. Jesus Christ did not write his teachings, but instructed his apostles to travel and teach others what they had learned and memorized (Naas, John. B, 1375 S, P.576). The word Qur'an means interesting to read and in Muslims' point of view, it is the name of the book that has been revealed by God to His Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) for prosperity of people (Qurashi, 1354 SH, vol.5, p.262).

Among the books include texts on the concept of love in the New Testament are following: *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, on Christianity, by Ernst William Benz and Lorig Clarence H; *New Catholic Encyclopedia* on Agape, by Bernas, C; *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, on Love, by George Boas; *Encyclopedia of Religion*, on desire, by Roland, A Delattre; *Encyclopedia of Early Christian*, on Paul by Robert Jewtt; *Encyclopedia of Christianity Theology*, on love by Jane Harder. There are also many books about love in the Qur'an including: *Rasel of Avicenna* by Ibn Sina, *al-Mabda and al-Ma'ad*, *al-Hakmah al-Mutaliyah fi al-Asfar al-aghliah* and *al-Tafsir al-Qur'an From Sadr al-Din Shirazi*; *Futuhaate Macci* and interpretation of the Holy Quran by Mohyeddin Arabi; *lama'at* by Fakhr al-Din Iraqi and *Hekmate Elahi* by Elahi Qomshei.

This research has been done through library method. The questions that this article specifically seeks to answer are how the concept of love in the New Testament and the Qur'an and their approach to love are.

### **1) The Meaning of the Word Love**

According to Arabic dictionaries, love is an Arabic word that is also widely applied in Persian. In Arabic, the word love means over-usual passion or the surprise of the lover by the beloved (Fares, 1404 AH, vol.4, p.321; Ibn Manzur, 1376 AH, vol. 10, p.251). In other words, overwhelming passion is called love (Johari, 1404 AH, vol.4, p.1525). Thus the commonality of the various meanings expressed for love is intensive passion. Abu Hilal has stated in *Forugh al-loghah* that the difference between love and passion in Arabic language is that unlike passion, love is applied for humans only, and the desire for a person who is deeply loved by another as if the connection is not possible, the lover may die and so determination for doing love affair when accessed. In Arabic, love is not used for things like food, drink, and possessions, but passion is used for living and non-living things (Abuhilal, 1400 AH, p.116).

Dehkhoda quotes the meaning of love is the amazement of the lover by the beauty of a beloved, or unusual love, which includes piety or sins. The word was inspired from ivy and it is a plant that climbs up a tree (Dehkhoda, 1373 SH, v.34, p.265). Some philosophers defined love as the talent of perfect love to the beloved and believe that intensive passion is love (Elahi Qomshei, 1363 SH, p.52). In the commentary of *Esharat* written by Avicenna, Mohaghegh Tusi said: "When love goes beyond the ordinary passion, it is called love" (Tusi, 1996, vol.3, p.360). In this regard, Alusi said: "When passion is emphasized, it is called love. Love is perfect and emphasized passion" (Alusi, 1415 AH, vol.3, p.330). A group of Muslim Gnostics and philosophers have described the word *hobb* (passion in Arabic) and love as synonymous. Mulla Sadra and his followers, who regard love as deep passion, believed the word *hobb* and love have the same sense, and have used both as synonyms in most cases (Shajari, Morteza, Najafzadeh, Shahin, spring and summer 1393AH, p.147). Sabzevari also consider these both words as synonyms (Sabzevari, 2004, p.176).

It may be said that there is a sense of extreme in the word love, and God is exalted, so this is why the word is not used in the Qur'an. It is wrong, because as we mentioned above, in dictionary books the word love means unusual passion, not irrational one. In addition, according to the principle of monotheism, whatever attributes are attributed to God, we must remove from them any limitations, imperfections, flaws and excesses, exactly as it is done for words such as mercy, affection, and satisfaction. Consequently, the concept of love for God is in infinite passion, because God is the exalted of extreme, imperfection, and limitation.

### **2) Monotheistic Love, The New Testament and The Quran's Common Approach**

The New Testament and the Quran have a monotheistic approach to love. The intensive passion of unique God for humans is clearly seen in the New Testament and the Quran. Believers' strong passion for unique God is another common ground in the Qur'an and the New Testament. The Qur'an and the New Testament encourage all human beings to have overwhelming passion for the unique God and the people of the world. According to authentic dictionaries particularly Arabic and Persian, overwhelming passion is called love (Ibn Manzur, 1376 AH, vol.10, p.251; Fares, 1404 AH, vol.4, p.321; Johari, 1404 AH, vol.4, p.1525; Dehkhoda, 1373 SH; vol. 34, p.265).

### *2-1) The New Testament's approach to monotheistic love*

The New Testament has a monotheistic approach to love. Thomas Mitchell stated in his book *Christian theology* that the Trinity theory reflects an understanding of a spectrum of Christianity about God that introduces Him as threefold truth. The Trinity is called Christian monotheism and an attempt to express God's oneness. According to the Trinity, God is one, but is manifested in the three distinct persons namely Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These three persons, while distinct, have one essence and are not separate from one another. In the writings of Christian scholars and writers, the importance of the oneness of God is emphasized, and any interpretation of the Trinity to the triad of the essence of God is rejected if it does not conform to the oneness of God (Michel, 2002 AH, p.75).

In Christianity, the only one God is called love. In the monotheistic approach, God is infinite affection and His passion has no limitation. The Gospel John states, "God is love" (1 John 4:16). God's infinite passion overlaps to the concept of love, and has a paradigmatic relationship with love, because extraordinary passion of God and the word love can replace each other.

### *2-2) The Holy Quran's approach to monotheistic love*

The concept of love for the unique God was explicitly stated in the Qur'an. The Qur'an states: "Those that believe love God more ardently". In Arabic version of this verse, the word "hobb" (passion) has been used which in monotheistic approach which introduces God as infinite passion is in full accordance with the literal meaning of the word love (Ibn Manzur, 1376 AH, vol.10, p.251 Fares, 1404 AH, vol.4, p. 321; Johari, 1404 AH, vol. 4, p. 1525, Dehkhoda, 1373 SH, vol.34, p.265).

The most important subject about love for God is monotheism. Monotheism is the basis of all beliefs in the Qur'an, because anti-monotheism is the most abominable sin. This is why it is never forgiven. The Qur'an states: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whomever He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin" (Nes'a: 48).

Monotheism means to believe in unique God who is infinite beauty. The Qur'an states: "God, there is no god but He. To Him belong the names Most Beautiful"(T'ah'a: 8). God is so beautiful that it has no resemblance. God stated: "and equal to Him is not any one" (Ikh'l'as: 4). According to monotheism, God has no limitations, numbers, and components, and is infinite beauty (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365 SH, vol.30, p.517). So God's infinite passion overlaps love.

### ***3) The Holy Quran's Approach to Monotheistic Love in Christianity***

From the perspective of the Quran, Muslims and Christians share such important views in the field of monotheism and love for the One God, that He commands Muslims and people of the Book to unite according to Faith and Love for the One God (Al Imran: 64 ). Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and S'abians are referred to as the people of the books (Tabatabai, 1417 AH, vol.14, p.358; Fazel Lankrani, 1382 SH, p.31). Hence, according to the Qur'an, Muslims and Christians share a monotheistic approach to the oneness of God and to the concept of love, believing that God is infinite love.

From the Qur'an's perspective, believing in Trinity by Christians does not mean to deny the oneness of God, and despite the difference in views between Muslims and Christians about the concept of God, there are also important commonality that can unite them. Since the concept of love is contained in

the word of Allah (Azhari, 1421 AH, vol.6, p. 222), the Qur'an actually emphasizes the unity based on love for the unique God. The following are verses from the Qur'an showing God emphasizes the focus of the monotheism and the love based on monotheism that is shared between Muslims and Christians.

### *3-1) Monotheism, the center of love in Christianity and Islam*

According to some verses of the Qur'an, in terms of oneness, God of the Muslims has the same meaning as the God of the people of the Book. The Qur'an states: "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him" (Spider, 46). The phrase "And our God and your God is one" indicates that there is a commonality between Muslims and the people of the Book regarding the oneness of God. God the people of the Book agree on his oneness is the same God that Muslims believe in. Thus the belief in the One God is the common point of the Muslims and the people of the Book, but they disagree about the Trinity, the physicality of God and such points. (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365, vol.23, p.77).

The concept of faith in God is the same as the one of tremendous love. The Qur'an states: "Those that believe love God more ardently (Baqara, 165). It was narrated from Imam Sadiq (as): "Is faith other than love and hatred?" (Koleini, 1365 SH, vol.2, p.125). Basing on monotheism it was emphasized on outmost passion for God in Islam and Christianity. Concerning overwhelming passion is called love, both Muslim and the people of scripture, who believe in one God, share the concept of divine love.

### *3-2) Love based on monotheism, the foundation of Muslims and Christians unity*

From the Qur'an's perspective, love based on monotheism can create the basis of unity between Muslims and the people of the Book, including Christians. The Qur'an states: Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]" (Al-Imran: 64). According to this verse, not only should there be no tension between Muslims and Christians, but faith and love for unique God should establish the foundation of unity between them. According to the author of *al-Mizan*, the common point of all prophets was monotheism, and all the followers of the divine religions claim it. Monotheism requires to deny the partner for God, and faith in God, to love Him and not to obey the teachings, but God's ones (Tabatabai, 1417 AH, vol.3, p.247). Thus according to monotheism, faith in unique God and love for Him originate the basis of unity between Muslims and the people of the book including Christians.

### *3-3) Love of a spectrum of Christians, base on Qur'anic monotheism*

According to the Holy Qur'an, some of the people of the scripture have exactly the same belief in the concept of monotheism and love based on it as Muslims do. The Qur'an states: "They are not [all] the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer]. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And whatever good they do - never will it be removed from them. And Allah is Knowing of the righteous" (Al-Imr'an, 113-115). Considering the meaning of the verse as well as its context that praises some of the people of the book, the concept of God in some of the people of the book is exactly the same

as the concept of God among Muslims. Meybodi believes in his interpretation of the Qur'an that this verse implies some of the people of the book believe in the Qur'anic monotheism (Meybodi, 1371 SH, vol. 2, p.248). According to monotheism, the faithful should love God and His creatures for His satisfaction as much as they can.

#### *3-4) Qur'an-based love in a group of Christians*

In Qur'an's perspective, a group of Christians believe in God and love Him according to the Qur'anic teachings. Moreover, some people of the book also believe in the Qur'an as a divine revelation. The Holy Qur'an states: "And indeed, among the People of the Scripture are those who believe in Allah and what was revealed to you and what was revealed to them, [being] humbly submissive to Allah. They do not exchange the verses of Allah for a small price. Those will have their reward with their Lord. Indeed, Allah is swift in account" (Al-Imr'an: 199). Some of the people of the book believe in the Qur'anic monotheism and love based on it, as well as to believe in other Qur'anic teachings and their affection is in accordance with the Qur'anic teachings (Tabrasi, 1373 SH, vol.2, p.917).

### **4) The gnostic approach of the New Testament and the Quran**

One of the commonalities of the New Testament and the Quran is the gnostic approach. In the gnostic approach, all existence is full of love. This is why it is being observed with love. In this approach, the whole existence has been created and embraced by love.

#### *4-1) New Testament gnostic approach to existence*

According to the Gospel, all the laws can be summarized in two points: a) love for God b) love for neighbors (Mark, 12: 3). The Gospel John speaks entirely about love. The letter of John also states: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). According to this Gospel, Jesus came to this world to witness the love of the Father for the Son and the love of God for His servants (Harder, 2005, vol.2, v.952). From the perspective of the Gospel John, man has a gem called love and the essence of human love is a response to God's love for man (Long, 1986, vol.8, p.38).

According to the Gospel John, there is no contradiction between wisdom and love. Love does not destroy wisdom, and more importantly, love expresses voluntary emotions rather than involuntary and unwise emotions. According to the Bible, love is equal to the law abiding heart (Gibson, 2006, P.287). For Paul, love is the most perfect law (Romans 13:10). In his view, it is only love that values creatures and without love, nothing has any value (Osborn, 2004, p. 693). From the perspective of the New Testament, the condition of love for God is love for people. Love for God is only possible through the love of people, and love for God is conditional on the love of human for his fellowmen (Barros, 2003, vol.8, p.831).

#### *4-2) Gnostic approach of the Holy Quran to existence*

The Gnostic approach is taught in the Holy Qur'an and the interpretive narrations of Prophet Muhammad (s) and his progeny. In this approach, religion is equal to love and has no meaning other than that. In this view, concerning the prophet Mohammad (s) is the seal of the prophet hood (Ahz'ab: 40), love is the pinnacle of all the teachings of divine prophets as well as the spirit of all religious, moral, and

jurisprudential teachings. For example, Qur'an states: "Those that believe love God more ardently". It is also quoted in the Qur'anic commentary by Imam Sadiq (a) who said: "Is religion other than love? Surely Allah said, "Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah then follow me, [so] Allah will love you." (Al-Imran, 31) and said: "They love those who emigrated to them" (Hashr: 9). Is religion other than love? (Noori, 1408 AH, vol. 12, p.219).

Some commentators of the Qur'an have a gnostic approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an. This group of commentators cites the Holy Qur'an and the authentic narrations of the Prophet (s) and his progeny. In the gnostic approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an, God is love, existence is equal to love and all existence is full of love. Gonabadi states in his interpretation of the Quran that the truth of humans and the distinctive point of humans and animals was love. The essence of God is love and there is nothing in the universe, but love. Love is one of God's highest attributes. Skies and galaxies were constructed by love. The pillars of everything are filled by love. If there was no love, there would be no earth, no heaven, no world kingdom and nor heaven one. Love is one of the highest qualities of humanity and the cause of the flourishing of humanity (Gonabadi, 1408 AH, vol.2, p.353).

One of God's characteristics is passion. According to innate monotheism, the passion of God is infinite, which overlaps to the concept of love in the sense of intense love. Consequently, God's endless passion is the example of the most perfect and supreme love. According to the monotheism of attributes, God's passion means God is infinite love, because God's attributes are the same as His infinite essence. There are verses in the Holy Qur'an that make explicit the monotheistic approach to the mutual love of God and man. For example, the Qur'an states: "O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion, Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing" (M'aedeh: 54). In a monotheistic approach that introduces God as the infinite as well as the only one who deserves extreme love, this verse shows that there is a special love affair between God and some of His servants. Because intense affection, Arabic hobb, in monotheistic approach overlaps the concept of love and have paradigmatic relation with it. The love of God is commensurate with His dignity and His dignity is infinite love (Alusi, 1415 AH, vol.3, p.329). The meaning of God's love for humans is that God wills to bring them closer to Him and to devote them to love Allah (Ghoshairi, nd, vol.1, p.431).

### ***5) The New Testament and the Qur'an's View to the Truth of God and Existence***

Another commonality of the Qur'an and the New Testament is that in the eyes of these two books, God is love, all particles of nature and galaxies are full of love and God creates nothing but love. We compare now the view of the Qur'an and the New Testament about the truth of God and existence.

#### *5-1) Love, the Truth of God and existence from the view of the New Testament*

From the perspective of the New Testament, the truth of God is love. The New Testament states: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). It is stated in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* that this sentence in John "God is love" indicates that love is the truth of all existence. Love is the creator and ruler of the world. The love that flows through the worldwide among humans is created by God (Strahan, 1980, p.164). Fitsgrald in his book *The Christian Spirit* states that the cause of God's love is Himself (Fitsgrald, 2004, p.131). So God does all works with love. The *interpreter's Bible* says that when God creates a creature, he creates it with love; God also put rules with love; God also judges with love when He judges.

All people should know that God's love is an energetic force that creates mobility. In other words, love is the stimulant force. The extent of man's love for God depends on the type of human relationship with his fellow humans. When John states "God is love", this is the result of his mental reflection of the manifestation of God in Christ (Hoon, 1985, vol.12, p.279).

### *5-2) Love, the Truth of God and existence from the perspective of the Quran*

According to Arabic dictionaries, there is the meaning of love in the word "Allah". According to the root of the word Allah, there are three meanings simultaneously in the word "Allah":

- (a) The beloved God (Al-zohar, 1421 AH, vol.6, p.222).
- (b) True worshiped deity (Ibn Mandhur, vol.13, p.469).
- (c) The God who is infinite beauty and because of His multitude beautiful attributes, people are amazed by Him (Ibn Mandhur, 1374 AH, vol.13, p.467).

It is quoted from the commander of the Believers, Ali (a): "Allah is a worshiped God whom people are enthralled by Him and love him. Allah is the One who is veiled from the eyes and from the thoughts and intellects of the people" (Majlis, 1404 AH, p.3, p.222; Sadugh, 1357 S, p.89). Paying attention monotheism founds the basis of all Islamic thought (chapter Ikhlas), it can be said that God is infinite beauty and love (Ikhlas:4). According to the principle of monotheism, God is infinite and His passion is infinite and the great passion overlaps the meaning of love. The result of God's infinite love is that God's endless passion, mercy and affection encompass all existence in all galaxies.

## **6) God's Special Love for All Human Beings in the New Testament and the Holy Quran**

Another common point of the New Testament and the Holy Quran is God's particular love for all human beings. Studying this issue can be helpful in presenting the concept of love in the New Testament and the Qur'an comparing to each other.

### *6-1) God's special love for all humans in the New Testament*

One type of love in the New Testament is God's particular love for humans. It is quoted from gospel John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). According to this part of the New Testament, God loves all existence in the world, but He specially loves humans. The most important components of God's love for humans are summarized in two subjects: (a) The generality of God's love; (b) The beginning of creation, especially the creation of humans with God's love (Knox, Vol.9, PP.457-458; Wilder, Vol.12, P.280). This fact that Jesus Christ was sent by God to guide people to prosperity is the sign of God's particular love for human beings. Concerning this word of John, it has been written in the book *divine love* that God's love for humans is so great that God sent Christ (peace be upon him) to save people from destruction. In this section, John expressed the summary of whole gospels. God loves all human beings, black and white, rich and poor. Everything begins with God's love for the world (Ghazazani, 1394 SH, p. 58). God has determined to save all humanity. It is a human who has to choose between salvation and destruction and between eternal happiness and eternal misery. The second letter of Peter states, "but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter, 3:9).



## 6-2) *God's special love for all humans in the Quran*

There are two types of love for humans in the Qur'an. The words "Rahman" and "Rahim" have been applied in many verses of the Qur'an particularly at the beginning of al chapters, each representing a particular scope of God's love. In the monotheistic approach that introduces attributes of God as infinite, the two types of God's love for human beings overlap the concept of love, meaning intensive passion, and have a paradigmatic relationship with it.

### 6.2-1) *Rahmanic love, a common point of the New Testament and the Qur'an*

God's entirely encompassing love is called Rahmanic love. God's love overwhelms the whole existence. In the monotheistic approach, God is infinite and bestows all existents infinite mercy and passion. God's infinite mercy and passion overlap the concept of love. God's love encompasses all good and bad people as well as devotees and sinners. Hence the Qur'an stated: "but My mercy encompasses all things" (Ar'af, 156). According to the Qur'an, God's passion encompasses all the particles of the existence. From the monotheistic perspective that introduces God as infinite, God's overwhelming passion and mercy is accordance to the concept of love. According to Mohyeddin Arabi's interpretation of this verse, we all see that Almighty Allah provides a good opportunity for all good and bad people to benefit from His blessings in order to attain felicity (Ibn Arabic, 1422 AH, vol.1, p.243).

The intensive and special grace of God encompasses all human beings in this world and in the hereafter, especially true believers. This concept is seen in the first verse of the Quran, the most frequent verse in the Qur'an: "In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful". The monotheistic approach to this verse shows that the word Rahman, English entirely merciful, in this verse represents Rahmanic, all-encompassing love and Rahimic, particular love for the true faithful. In monotheistic approach, the attributes of God are infinite, and God is infinite merciful, beneficent, and affectionate (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365SH, vol.30, p.517). Rahman is one of the most important attributes of God and shows that God's grace in the world and in the hereafter includes all creation and guidance of all phenomena, including animals, plants, galaxies, and good and bad human beings (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365SH, vol1, p 86). God does not love only those whose souls are surrounded by ugliness of oppression (Baqarah, 81), and the evil effects on their personality have become so apparent that they have left no way for salvation (Tabatabai, 1417 AH, vol.1, p.216). God loves infinitely all people, whether believers or unbelievers, whether good or evil. Because He creates them, makes them alive and capable of delivering sustenance (Tabresi, 1994, vol.1, p.93).

### 6.2-1-1) *The supremacy of God's entire love over love of all phenomena*

According to the Holy Qur'an, the love of God at every moment is greater than the love of all phenomena at all times. Because one of the most important attributes of God, which is repeated in the verses of the Qur'an, is "the most merciful of the merciful". In the monotheistic approach, this phrase means God, whose infinite passion and mercy embraces whole existence and exceeds the love of all phenomena. This concept overlaps the concept of the peak of intense love and had paradigmatic relation with it. Thus, with the monotheistic approach, infinite and universal divine mercy can be stated by the love climax. The commentators of the Holy Quran have interpreted the phrase "the most merciful of the merciful" that God loves us more than us (Beizawi, 1418 AH, vol.3, p.36). There is nothing within humans except the divine mercy which expresses His infinite love (Fazlollah, 1419 AH, vol.12, p.239).

Sadr al-Din Shirazi is one of the 11th century exegetist who has a philosophical and gnostic approach to the Qur'an and all existence. He has interpreted the Qur'an with the method of interpretation

the Qur'an by the Qur'an. The Qur'an states: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth" (Noor, 35). According to this verse, God introduces himself as the light of the heavens and the earth. From Sadr al-Din Shirazi's view, according to this verse, the existence of phenomena is the manifestation of God's light. In his view, light and existence are the same (Sad al-Din Shirazi, 1366 SH, Vol.4, p.347). Moreover, the Qur'an states: "My mercy has overwhelmed all things" (Ar'afa: 156). In his view, the light that encompasses all phenomena in the heavens and the earth is the very divine mercy and extensive passion, and the mercy and extensive passion of God is the very existence of phenomena. By the manifestation of the light of God, the nature of the phenomena, which is the infinite divine mercy and overwhelming passion, is revealed. It is also stated in the Qur'an: "everything but the essence of God is mortal" (Qasas: 88) (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1990, vol.9, p.375). From his point of view, God's infinite passion encompasses all existence, and there is nothing but light, mercy, and infinite passion that overlap the concept of love. He quotes some gnostic who said: "If there was no love, there would be no earth, nor sky; no land, nor sea; no air, no water" (Shajari, Morteza, Najafzadeh, Shahin, summer 2014, pp.164-174).

### *6.2-2) God's especial love for the believers in the Qur'an*

Although God loves especially all human beings, nevertheless he does love the true believers very particularly. In the Qur'an, God's very special grace is expressed by the word "Rahim", particular love. This term implies that God's very special love in this world and in the hereafter applies to righteous believers only (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365 SH, vol.1, p.86). The word "Rahim" is especially applied for believers, because God provides them with special blessings in the world and in the hereafter, for example God helps their success in the world by their unseen aids and provide them with valuable mercies; He brings them to Paradise, honors them, and forgives their sins (Tabrasi, 1994, vol.1, p.93).

## **Conclusion**

This study shows that the word love is an Arabic word that is also widely used in Persian. According to Arabic and Persian dictionaries, the word love means passion more than usual, not more than rational. From the point of view of a group of Islamic scholars, such as Sadra Shirazi and his followers as well as Sabzevari, the words love and "hobb" have the same meaning and are synonymous. Not only does the concept of love exist in the New Testament and the Qur'an, but the most important commonality of Christian and Muslim's sacred book is love and gnostic approach. This means that the New Testament and the Qur'an's approach to existence is a gnostic approach that is very much emphasized in these two books. Furthermore, the approach of the New Testament and the Qur'an to God and creation is monotheistic love. In this approach, God is love, He creates nothing but love, and there is nothing in the universe but love.

The monotheistic love establishes the foundation of the beliefs and ideas of Christianity and Islam. From the Qur'an's point of view, Christians believe in one God and the Trinity in Christianity does not mean to believe in three Gods, and Christians never associate with God. Although the Qur'an does not accept the Trinity, it emphasizes the belief in the one God who is the commonality between Christianity and Islam. The Qur'an, therefore, commands unity with Christians on the basis of monotheism and amorous worshipping of unique God.

Another common point of Christianity and Islam is that from the perspective of the New Testament and the Qur'an, the truth of God and existence, is the same as love. Moreover, God loves especially all human beings, Rahmanic love. In fact, Rahmanic love is the commonality between the New Testament and the Qur'an. In other words, from the perspective of the Qur'an and the New Testament,

God loves all his phenomena, and His love is superior to the love of all phenomena. Although God loves all human beings deeply, He loves very much especially true believers, who love God and his phenomena. God's special love for the truthful is referred to as Rahmanic love. Moreover, it is impossible to love God without loving His phenomena, including humans, animals, plants and environment. Finally, the atmosphere of the New Testament and the Qur'an is love.

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