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TRUTH AND LOVE IN SEXUAL ETHICS OF ISLAM

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini berpretensi untuk mengelaborasi salah satu unsur penting dalam etika seksual Islam yakni cinta untuk memperkuat dasar pernikahan. Cinta adalah dialog dan perjumpaan antara dua ‘Aku’ yang kemudian melebur dalam ke-aku-an kekasih. Pandangan ini menunjukkan adanya beberapa komponen dalam cinta. Pertama, dialog dan perjumpaan mengisyaratkan kesetaraan eksistensi dan subyek yang otonom yang memiliki kebebasan determinasi-nya. Kedua, konsekuensi logis dari relasi

dialog adalah mutualitas di mana masing-masing saling berbagi kasih sayang. Ketiga, kesatuan antara dua aku yang tidak menghilangkan subyektifitas masing-masing aku. Cinta meniscayakan adanya kemuliaan dan kesetiaan seperti yang digariskan oleh moralitas dan agama. Cinta juga sangat berkaitan dengan panca indera, karena penggunaan yang tepat berbasis pada prinsip abstinensi justru akan menguatkan ikatan cinta. Selain itu, akal juga penting dalam cinta, karena eksistensinya dapat mencegah efek negatif dalam memaknai dan merealisasikan cinta. Terakhir, cinta sangat terkait dengan pernikahan, karena hanya dengannya cinta dapat mencapai kondisi sempurna dan mengantarkan seseorang pada kebenaran dan kebijaksanaan.

Abstract

This article pretends to elaborate profoundly one of the important elements of sexual ethics of Islam, that is, love to strengthen the marital foundation. Love constitutes dialogue and encounter between two 'I' and melts in the beloved's I-ness. This insight is clearly indicative of several components within love. First, the prevailing dialogue and encounter imply an existential equality and the recognized autonomous subject with freedom for determination. Second, the logical consequence of dialogue is mutuality in which one another share affection. Third, a merger between two I-ness without any diminishing each subjectivity. Love precisely prerequisites honor and fidelity as it is prescribed by morality and religion. Love is as well deeply related with five senses for their proper use based on the principle of abstinence enables one to reinforce love bond. Love is tightly connected with the reason for its importance to avoid negative effects love might occur in signifying and realizing the very nature of love. The relation between love and marriage are given a strong emphasis that only within marriage love will be manifested perfectly and lead one to achieve truth and wisdom.

Keywords: Love, Truth, Sexual Ethics

A. Pendahuluan

The increasing number of divorce in Indonesia caused dominantly by disharmony within a marital relationship is intensely importune to cope with not only to eliminate divorce cases¹ but moreover to preserve family as an institution within which social capital is intensively transferred and internalized to members of the family.² In another word, the growing number of divorce will risk diminishing family potential for providing cultural and social capital indispensable for creating strong progeny. Hence, this paper seeks to overcome the risk offering discussion on love and truth regarded as one of the significant element to strengthen the marital relationship and thus alleviate the risk of disharmony and divorce.

B. Love as an Existential Encounter

In *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, Quraish Shihab quotes Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah's insightful statement that "because of and for the sake of love, sky and earth are being created, all creatures are brought into reality, through which all the motions attain their goal and the beginnings are being connected to the end. It is with love that all soul gains their hope and gets their beloved and thus become free from all the things making them restless".³ This statement is profoundly ontological in defining love that all existences definitely come into being only because of, through and by love. Hence, love is perceivable as an existential matter of which everything in the world not only becomes realized and manifested but also reaches a state of happiness, peace, and tranquility. In term of Kierkegaard, love is perceivable as "the source of all things... and the deepest ground of spiritual life," and as well "the source of emotional life."⁴

Given that love is the source and the reason for existence both physical and psychical, it pervasively embeds and permeates the universe, whole aspects of life, and all kinds of relationships

¹ <http://www.dream.co.id/news/angka-percerai-menngkat-lima-tahun-terakhir-1601200.html>

² Joseph S. Roucek and Roland L. Warren, *Sociology: an Introduction* (New Jersey: Adams & co., 1961), p. 98.

³ Quraish Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an, Kalung Permata buat Anak-Anakku* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), p. 23,

⁴ Rick Anthony Furtak, "Love and the Discipline of Philosophy," in Edward F. Mooney (ed.), *Ethics, Love, and politics in Kierkegaard* (Bloomingtoon & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 63.

divinely, naturally, humanly, and etc. On that ground, in respect of object in general, there is love to God, human being, animal, things or goods. In respect with human beings, it varies in object, such as to father/mother, husband/wife, spouse, brother/sister, friends and etc. While in terms of strength, there is a powerful love embedded sharply within heart like a deeply rooted tree with bearing huge fruits in its tip of a leaf. Instead, there is also love prevailing only on the surface that only lasts for a while easily to fracture.

Love, for Quraish Shihab, is profoundly defined as “dialogue and encounter of the two ‘I’ as well as mutual relationship yielding responsibility of the two ‘I’”,⁵ but further this I-ness melts within the beloved’s I-ness.⁶ Some insights can be drawn from this definition, but the fundamentally underlying thing is the prevailing two existences on which love is likely to manifest. The emphasis of two existences entails of recognition to both that each has its own personality and characters necessary to be acknowledged. Hence, the lover does not need to force his/her partner to be like him/her, since in certain extent each has its particular tendency and potential. Selfishness and egoism are therefore not essentially called as love for lacking recognition to both existences and indeed compelling one interest over another. The feeling of pity is as well as not considered as love, for though there is two ‘I’ and equal in position but one side tends to only give and another to take.⁷

Quraish Shihab exemplifies the love of parents to their children that it supposedly does not intend to make them be “like father and mother” for if it is so there will be only one “I”. Love of the parents is embodied not to make one “I” rather guide them to find out their “I” and bring their truly “I” into reality.⁸ In this sense, Shihab clearly insists that loving other is not only keeping and admitting other “I”ness but also seeking to maintain the perpetual effort to foster and realize their personality (“I”).

In this respect, following Foucault theorization that in love there is a twofold relation to truth, that is, relation to his/her own desires and to the object of desire.⁹ In the first relation, the lover

⁵ Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 26.

⁶ Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 83.

⁷ Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 26-27.

⁸ Shihab, *Perempuan* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), p. 84.

⁹ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), p. 244.

strives to restrain his/her desire to impose power to the loved to be what he like the loved to be. This effort yields particularly and especially of beneficial for the lover that he/she could seize their own desires. In terms of Foucault, it is this stance that one is stronger than him/herself that she/he is capable of mastering him/herself over desire and self-pleasure. It simultaneously marks the prevalence of the second relation, which is the object of desire, that love is as well oriented and benefit for the loved from which he/she could foster and attain its I-ness. Loving means as much as to keep and ensure the other to achieve its own being. In a sense, love here is directed ontologically not solely for preoccupying to attitudes of honoring and recognizing the loved for its own sake, rather it does it especially for the advantage of the lover itself.

Taking recognition of both existences into account implies a significant implication personally, socially or even politically.¹⁰ Recognizing one's existence not only yields accepting him/her physically and psychically, but also affirming rights that he/she deserves to and obligations each has to fulfill in correspondence to the rights each possesses. It is in this sense that recognition generates responsibility to hold tightly in love relation. In contrast, being unrecognized means lack of recognition of its existence along with its uniqueness, personality, rights, and subjectivity.

Based on the principle of isomorphism between sexual and social relation,¹¹ Foucault depicts inequality within sexual relationships based on hierarchical social structure within which one is supposedly morally in superior and therefore in an active position and other is inferior and passive. While in Shihab formulation, love is essentially depicted as recognizing both existences (the lover and the loved) mutually meaning that it obviously insists of equality within sexual relationships. There is no hierarchical structure in which men are posited as dominant and superior over women of

¹⁰ Being recognized, misrecognized or even unrecognized, will result a great impact both in individual, social, even in political sphere. Being recognized means affirmation of our existence as individual, society members and citizens. Otherwise, being unrecognized means exclusion, marginalization and oppression in all levels. This is what Taylor mentions as the politics of recognition that recognition especially in political sphere will generate those practices mentioned above. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 37-39.

¹¹ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 215.

which the former has higher authority over the latter. The emphasis is that both are acknowledged in their places where both have rights and in turn responsibilities to hold.

Provided that recognition of an equal existence, the supposed prevalent problem on the unequal relationship within romantic loving as criticized by Simone de Beauvoir as tending to idolize the lover and in turn voluntarily subordinate oneself, is capable of avoiding.¹² Equal relation demands one to acknowledge and respect other, to make cooperation with him/her, trust and appreciate each other as having freedom and autonomy.¹³ In this sense, as maintained by Erich Fromm, love is freedom and autonomy itself embedded within power, self-autonomy, self-integrity that enable one to maintain the truth of loving and of being loved. Love is a spontaneous action presupposing capability of acting for his/her own will. Conversely, losing of self-power and autonomy remarks of one's incapability of loving since he/she is considered as not afford to "take root on oneself."¹⁴

Since love is particularly deemed as dialogue and encounter, the two existences are not conceivable independently rather framed within dialectical relationship within which each is mutually significant for other and otherwise other is equally important for one. According to Chris Falzon, the fundamental encounter is not distinctively in the position of reducing other to our categories, nor of negating ourselves to other. Each has a potential to influence and to be influenced, to transform and to be transformed by both sides. The individual is not a sovereign transcendental subject who creates himself/herself by his/her own, rather there are external forces contributing to shaping self.¹⁵ In result, our interpretation to others evolves within conceiving others according to our categories, and simultaneously others actively resist and criticize our interpretation that results in a modification of our insight. It is in this sense, that love is not to make up other to be like us, or otherwise we must be like what other imposes on. "Within dialogue, embodied participants

¹² Skye Clearly, *Existentialism and Romantic Love* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 132.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁴ Erich Fromm, *Cinta, Seksualitas, dan Matriarki: Kajian Komprehensif tentang Gender* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2011), p. 232.

¹⁵ Christopher Falzon, *Foucault and Social Dialogue, Beyond Fragmentation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). P. 32-33.

actively to give shape to or impose forms on each other activities in a fully reciprocal, ongoing interplay of interpretations.”¹⁶

As consequence of dialogue and encounter, which is also “the general frame of our being-in-the-world,”¹⁷ love affirms of reciprocal and mutual relation. Mutuality and reciprocation of affection, attention, kindness, and responsibility are of constituent elements of love that both lovers supposedly conduct and express in their attitudes and love relation. Using Xenophon terms, it is friendship expressed with “reciprocal attention, kindness to one another, and shared feelings” that love must be embodied and the lovers must be enamored.¹⁸ As Sartre holds, “the purpose of loving must be to be loved in return.”¹⁹ It suggests that reciprocity is actually inherently embedded within love. Love will only manifest as there is a hope of reciprocity without which one will remain merely as an admirer not as a lover.²⁰

Love is, in turn, a dialectical motion that both lovers move dialectically and reciprocally to become affectionate, attentive, kindly and even altruistic to each other. The dialectic of love demands both the lovers equally and alike to be active subjects possessing agency to choose and determine what nature and form love should be experienced. Foucault states that “the ‘dialectic of love’ in this case calls for two movements exactly alike on the part of the two lovers; the love is the same for both of them since it is the motion that carries them toward the truth.”²¹

True love only prevails as there are characteristics longed for that do exist on the beloved and it is definitely felt of profoundly.²² It is this feeling that encloses both and unites them. The stronger and more characteristics to admire of and to be felt from the beloved, the stronger love’s bound ties them. The admired qualities of the loved could be physical or psychical, rather Shihab stresses that admiration of the former is not long lasting and thus love coming out from this

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁸ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 234.

¹⁹ Ethel Spector Person, Ethel Spector Person, *Dreams of Love and Fateful Encounters, the Power of Romantic Passion* (Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, inc., 2007), p. 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

²² Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 25.

way stays in short. Otherwise, psychical consideration ultimately makes love keep long lasting for it stands longer. It is what in ancient Greeks attributed to good love instead of the bad one for its preference to psychical qualities of the loved. While physically admiration is undervalued for only guiding one to follow one's lust and bodily pleasure.

Hence true love is less preoccupied with bodily matters than with physical ones referring to characters or personality of the beloved. On this ground, there is a differentiation between *mahabbah* and *mawaddah*. The former particularly refers to love stemming from one's attraction toward bodily performance, while the latter points to love for personality.²³ It is the latter that warrant a perpetual tranquility and happiness within love relation. In ancient Greek, Xenophon divides between the love of the body and of the soul and disqualifies the former and makes the latter as the true love.²⁴

The last point indicative to Shihab's definition of love is the melting of two I-ness into a union or merger. Love is frequently perceivable as one's journey to find out one's other half. As one loves another one finds other half and they then become complete. Person convinces that each person is not independent in existence within love rather sought to be united for love is never be experienced in solitude but always in a shared world of the two souls. "The aim of love is nothing less than to overcome separateness and achieve union or merger with the beloved. In that merger (...*imaginative* merger) the lover achieves an exaltation of feeling and a deep sense of release."²⁵

The inclination to the union is one criticized by existentialist as inauthentic loving for each subject is inclined to give up freedom and in turn abandon oneself. Beauvoir, for instance, condemns union for her insistence that each is a separate being with unique characteristics, independence of thinking and freedom of choice.²⁶ Merging indeed diminishes subjectivity, loses existence and renders them to be inauthentic. For being authentic within the union, Beauvoir suggests that both lovers appreciate each other's difference

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 88-89.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 233.

²⁵ Person, *Dreams*, p. 58.

²⁶ Cleary, *Existentialism*, p. 134.

within which both maintain their subjectivity while opening up to other's existence.²⁷

The objection of Beauvoir on the union as yielding inauthentic loving is resulted from her insistence to preserve the lover's difference and subjectivity. However, being united does not mean as losing one's subjectivity for that is considered as selfishness. Love, as Beauvoir puts it, is "intersubjective experience"²⁸ that each subject is actively involved in dialogue brought within differences, similarities, potentialities, and qualities each possess to communicate equally. Hence, Shihab insists that instead of diminishing other's subjectivity and forcing other to be like what the lover wants, love is indeed fostering one's personality and assist one not only to find it out but also to strengthen its authenticity. Irving Singer holds the same way that loving others does not seek to alter them and force them in line with our desires and inclinations but just being themselves.²⁹

Love of the other including different sex is *fitrah* (naturally inherent) within human beings given by God. Nothing makes human feel more wonderful and excited than to love and to be loved. In Kierkegaard sense, "love is what illuminates the world, enabling us to perceive the distinctive significance of things, and thereby providing us with focus and orientation in a life that is worth living." It is love that makes one's life is meaningful. Love has bonded us to what it is beyond us, creating self and the world the "engagements in which we find ourselves."³⁰

Here heterosexual love is substantially construed as natural in concordance with natural laws and divinely given in that it is religiously natural since it suits with God's law. The naturalness of this kind of love serves as a tool of definition and a standpoint from which what kind of love is natural or not, or what love relation is legitimate and illegitimate, are obviously determined and then valued. This religious naturalization provides a basis of, in terms of Martha C. Nussbaum, "normative judgment"³¹ by which the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁹ Irving Singer, "Love and Autonomy", in Judith Kornberg Greenberg (ed.), *Love in World Religions* (England: ABC-Clio, 2008), Vol. I, p. 23.

³⁰ Furtak, *Love*, p. 63.

³¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 262.

appropriate object of love and its characteristics, and kinds of love relation to be pursued, are made in reference to such judgment. Though such judgment is socially and culturally constructed, since it is naturalized as divinely and naturally given it soon becomes normative and legitimate.

C. Phases of Love

Love is not something spontaneous and instant in its emergence rather undergoes a long process that finally ends with the highest stance of love, that is, a true love. It is not as well given and transcendental without any effort of the individuals. It does involve hard attempts not only to preserve it but also to make it more truly in the qualitative notion. Quraish Shihab explains that art of loving needs efforts and skills that enable individuals to attract other's attention and sympathy later leading to the emergence of love. "No men or women are lacking love potential, the only thing is that they are not smart enough to carry out attractive things overawing other's admiration and love."³²

He further elaborates phases to pass through to reach the peak of love including things that are generally conducive for embodying each phase. The first phase is a feeling of closeness between both sides as an initial phase to reach the next one. This feeling in question will encourage them to be acquainted with one another overtly. Such feeling can be stimulated by the prevalent similarity in terms of social, cultural, religious, and other aspects. Shihab stresses the importance of similar background for it is quite difficult to attain closeness with the lack of similarity. Accordingly, religion as well puts emphasis on this similarity in its tenet on *kafa'ah* (similarity) in several aspects, such as religion, educational level, social or cultural status and so on. The success in passing through this first phase will lead to the next phase.

The second phase is self-revelation within which each initiates and being able to reveal the deepest side of self voluntarily on hope, will, aspiration and even anxiety. Self-transparency delineates that one entrusts the truth of one's feelings to other for the prevalent emotional closeness attached them. The similarity of background is

³² Shihab, *Pengantin*, p. 27.

by and by perceivable as a significant element to urge and fasten this process, hence is able to achieve the next one.³³

To reach intimacy, mutuality and genuine love, one needs to “open up psychically” through revealing one’s weaknesses though it risks of being hated and humiliated.³⁴ At this stance, one is openly and voluntarily to be vulnerable for revealing the depth of self to other. In result, self-transparency here serves a significant way to know each other deeply particularly on psychical qualities which are by no means an important prerequisite for creating intimacy and reciprocation. For true reciprocation must be precisely preceded by trust achieved through mutual sharing and self-revelation.

Within this phase, self-identification proceeds in two ways dialectically. There transpires mutual identification between the lovers resulting that “each has an authentic sense of the subjectivity of the Other, a knowledge of the Other’s point of view that assumes equal importance with his own.”³⁵ In this phase, each willingly endeavors to move beyond one’s perspective and embrace that of other to gain a real and comprehensive understanding of other’s subjectivity. It is the dialogue between the souls sharing one another from which intimate knowledge and emotional closeness come into being.

The third phase is a mutual dependency in which each relies on his/her beloved the fulfillment of personal needs and aspirations on the ground that in the deepest of his/her heart, each honestly admits and hopes other to share and rely on either in happiness or sorrow.³⁶ In this phase, both no longer hesitate to express what they feel, the face of, be anxious about, be worried about and be glad hoping for help and share. It further leads to the capacity of both to automatically feel “the heartbeat of one’s spouse” without even any sayings.

This phase marks mutual willingness to share joy and sorrow and fix them together. There is a strong trust between the lovers that each will not only listen to other’s discomfort and happiness but also strives to cope with. The stressing point in this phase is that each can

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁴ Ethel Spector Person, *Dreams of Love and Fateful Encounters, the Power of Romantic Passion* (Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, inc., 2007), p. 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

relies on other anytime and anywhere. Emotional boundaries are passed over for even without any verbal expression the lover could feel what the loved to feel and face off.

The fourth phase is the fulfillment of the beloved personal willing and needs and reaches at its peak self-sacrifice for the sake of the beloved needs at pleasure. Shihab quotes a statement that “humans experience love only as they enable to meet the emotional needs of the beloved and that fulfillment at the same time constitutes emotional needs for them as well.”³⁷ He means that fulfilling the beloved’s needs grounded with no love feeling in depth is hardly conceivable as reaching the higher stage of love yet, that is *mawaddah*.

Self-sacrifice is an overwhelming willingness that lover performs showing a virtuous capacity to “have moved beyond any wish for purely personal personal”.³⁸ Person classifies two different forms of self-sacrifice and relates it to sex difference. The first form is that the lover chooses to break love relation for sake of the beloved good and it is likely more appropriate for men. The second one is that the lover maintains the relation while sacrificing his/her personal benefit in the favor of the beloved. The latter is likely more attached to women.³⁹ However, in Shihab view, as the lovers have reached the last phase or in the stance of *mawaddah*, self-sacrifice applies to both of them, men and women. Both equally demand themselves to do the best for the beloved and simultaneously to give their self-interest away for the beloved good.

On this point, Kierkegaard states that “to see things with loving eyes is to embrace their concrete particularity in the most favorable light, appreciating them for being exactly what they are; to love (or to care for) someone is to take unselfish interest in his or her interests, without asking for anything in return.”⁴⁰ Here love ultimately constitutes a powerful force for altruistic inclination in prioritizing other interest than that of the self. However, it does not mean that committing self-sacrifice is merely deemed from a single point of view as renouncing one’s pleasure, but this altruistic compartment carried out is itself also one interest. Within self-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

³⁸ Person, *Dreams*, p. 96.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Furtak, “Love”, p. 63.

sacrifice, one substantially engages with oneself or one's good through other selves.

The last stage using Rousselot's categorization on love is included as the psychical conception of love. This kind of love is different from two other conceptions of love, that is egoistic that reduces love for self-interest or the love of self and of desire, and ecstatic conception of love holding that the ideal form of love is absolute sacrificing the lover's personhood to the beloved's one and therefore placing the loving subject is "outside of itself ." The psychical love is grounded from fundamental identity from the love of self and of other. Here the love of self and the love of friendship are harmoniously combined so that one finds one's own good in loving others. Self-love is considerably necessary for creating true love, but it is disposed within the love of other for it is naturally appropriate with one's desire. Simply formulated, "the more one gives oneself to others, the more one finds and gains for oneself".⁴¹

In similar line with Kierkegaard, Shihab mentions what he calls as friendship-motivated love is comprehensible as an embodiment of one's trust to humanity values and recognition of special virtue and peculiarity possessed by the loved. In this manner occurs "personal exchange" within which there prevail efforts of supporting one another to find out and perfect one another "I-ness." The peak of friendship love is embodied in the ways that the lover finds him/herself within the loved driving him/her to give as if he/she gives for him/herself.⁴² Here within the love of friendship, there is a harmonious combination, as Aquinas says, between a love of other and a love of desire of which through loving others "one finds fulfillment, happiness, and joy for oneself."⁴³

The last stance is concisely abstracted in Shihab' statement that "love is not a demand to meet a temporary need; rather it is a bestowal, a generosity, and self-sacrifice."⁴⁴ Different from Foucault's depiction on Greek's ethics that love is the pursuit of truth and wisdom that takes on men side only, while in Shihab this pursuit is both for the sake of the loved and the lover, for men and women.

⁴¹ Alan Vinclette, "Introduction," in Pierre Rousselot, *The Problem of Love in Middle age, A Historical Contribution* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), p. 14-17.

⁴² Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 84.

⁴³ Alan Vinclette, "Introduction," p. 22.

⁴⁴ Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 99.

In the stage of *mawaddah*, the truth of love is pursuing the wisdom in which both the lover and the loved will appropriate other pleasure as absolutely his/her and seek to render the best for other. In this sense, the loved highly restrains his/her desire and self-pleasure for other so much that another pleasure is essentially indeed his/her own sake.

D. Love, Honor, and Fidelity

Quoting Ibn Hazm, Shihab argues that the highest and most enduring love is love to God and human tied on behalf of God. Love among humans including love between different sexes if bound in the name of God will definitely be embraced and filled by chastity and fidelity. Though love emotionally encourages wonderful and exciting feeling, as it is framed within a sacred intention it will keep human in honor and chastity.⁴⁵ It implies that God and religious values serve as a determinate factor that decisively affects on the proper realization of love embodied in practical manifestation respectful of honor.

Following this framework, Shihab contends that honor is definitely stronger than love as such that the later must orient to and designate to protect the former. Love, in turn, will encourage the lovers to maintain the honor and the chastity of one another and to be respectful of social, cultural and religious values.⁴⁶ Otherwise, as it is detached from religious values, it will be a trivial thing that is meaningless and becomes easy come and go.

Love hence absolutely demands of fidelity of both the lover and the loved. Fidelity here is signified that the lover should fulfill his/her promises, care about the beloved and his/her reputation, keep him/her away from bad things that likely threaten and destruct him/her, help to improve his/her personality and appearance, cover up the weaknesses and forgive his/her mistakes.⁴⁷ Love will maintain perpetual fidelity such that it is supposed to end only with the death of the loved. This insight suits with the notion of the highest phase of love that is *mawaddah*, which fills within the lover's

⁴⁵ Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 91-92.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

heart drive to sacrifice and desire to realize the loved's joy and happiness. Therefore, it will last forever in memory and heart.⁴⁸

Love indeed urges the lover to commit good attitudes and activities, such as courage, generosity, sacrifice and so on. It generates a positive motion constitutive for meaningful and happy life.⁴⁹ In a sense, (romantic) love, for Anthony Giddens, always performs as "a generic social force" for its great influence on entire personal and social life.⁵⁰ It triggers the development of both individual and social and as well stimulates the personal and social change.

The meaning of love has undergone a significant shift in the contemporary era. Social, economic and cultural factors have implicated a decisive change in the ways love is comprehended and manifested. Sexual practices in the West taking intercourse as the sole and predominant orientation initially resulted from political consequences of war has dismissed more virtuous values attached to love. What was left is merely sex revolved around the fulfillment of bodily needs and of physical enjoyment.⁵¹

Globalization has created a borderless world in which one area is in a short moment connected and therefore influences others. Freedom as one of the values held in this era exerts great influence on many aspects of human life such as politics, culture, religion and including in love matter. Shihab convinces that love has gotten into free market that makes it run under the economic principle of supply and demand. The most interested good is the most interesting appearance it is. In consequence, everything is measured as valuable from material and surface side. Human in this condition serves not as an active subject but otherwise as object and means of a powerful force of economy and as a commodity of the market. Such condition definitely, in turn, affects the form of relationship shaped among individuals that are more individual and instrumental.⁵² Within this commodity setting, love loses its fundamental meaning for a human. Since human itself is instrumental in its existence, love is meant

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94-95.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁵⁰ Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy, Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 44.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵² Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 98.

merely as fulfilling temporary willing and desire. It lacks valuable virtues of sacrifice, generosity, giving and others.⁵³

The critique above must be located in recent reality that displays society's emphasis on a superficial matter. Surface dominates substance referring to the tendency of society being tempted to put more concern on trivial things without any adequate profound reflection. Appearance, social symbol, and status are more valuable than personality, spirituality and other fundamental values. The excessive penetration of technological rationality⁵⁴ has allegedly increased commoditization that Vincent Mosco defines it as "the process of transforming use values into exchange values."⁵⁵ Exchange value symbolic in nature replaces use value yielding on consumption not the essence of commodity rather its symbol, status, and privilege. As it reaches to love, the effect will be tremendous for as an essential thing in humanity, love will be getting more and more trivial and superficial thing, lack of its philosophy and in result loose its reparative and transformative potential.

E. Love, Lust, and Pleasure

Quraish Shihab clarifies a prevailing precept misconceiving love as similar with lust or lust as a prerequisite of love to come forth. According to Shihab, love is ultimately different from lust that the former points to the inclination of the soul to both physical and psychical characteristics of the loved.⁵⁶ Such inclination is certainly born out from the depth of knowledge and comprehension of both physical and psychical side of the loved. Hence, there is no the so called "love for the first sight." It does not call love yet for impression coming out from first sight is not adequate enough to yield deep information indispensable for knowing and understanding the loved that further generates admiration of his/her soul. As such,

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ Herbert Marcuse uses this term to refer to the contemporary rationality character that conceiving things to be rational as they can be manipulated, made use of and exploited for the sake of economic and material profit. Herbert Marcuse, *Manusia Satu Dimensi* (Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2000), p. 1-27.

⁵⁵ Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication: Rethinking and Renewal* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), hal. 141.

⁵⁶ Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 33.

first sight only serves as an initial step for reaching love stance completely and perfectly.⁵⁷

To define love in such a way reveals the prevailing dominant consideration to take into account in constituting love. Recognition, as mentioned above, is certainly significant for yielding empathy and further generating virtuous attitudes such as attention, respect, responsibility, and fidelity.⁵⁸ In result, love urges one to give a profound interest to the loved, to preserve in kindness, to keep away from anything bad polluting the soul, to improve quality and appearance, to cover up weakness and forgive fault, keep on fidelity and even to sacrifice for.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, in contrast with love assigned more to psychical, lust, in particular, refers to an only bodily aspect or sex appeal. It tends to drive one to pursue bodily pleasure and satisfaction.⁶⁰ Here applies lust for the sake of sexual pleasure itself that in turn affects the ways it is realized in sexual practices disregarding religious and social values. Since the objective is solely physical satisfaction, the ways, and means to attain that objective obviously become free of value. Even marriage and love itself is no longer significant to hold for such physical satisfaction is not necessarily to presuppose both matters to precede.

Since love more puts emphasis on the dialogue of souls or psychical communication, it inevitably produces intimacy what is unavailable in lust. As the latter only preoccupies with bodily satisfaction, it is never able to attain intimacy which for Giddens is “reparative in character.”⁶¹ Accordingly, love has a transformative potential for personal and social change for its idealization of other and its projection of future development. Meanwhile, it is definitely absent in lust. Even if love ends in tragedy, it actually and simultaneously gains triumph, “a conquest of mundane prescriptions and compromises”.⁶²

Sexual and physical satisfaction is not prohibited in religion, even it is conceivable as a natural need, good for a human being and a part of religious devotion. In the Qur'an, it is emphasized that

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Shihab, *Perempuan*, p. 99.

⁶¹ Giddens, *The Transformation*, p. 45.

⁶² *Ibid.*

“emotional and sexual relief couples provide for each other”.⁶³ “And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts).⁶⁴ There is also a tradition mentioning that the man who marries takes possession of half of religion. Commenting this tradition, Abdelwahab Boudilba views that the fulfillment of one’s personality lies in the intimacy of the sexes.⁶⁵

It strikingly differs from Christianity that prohibits any sexual relation for pleasure as such. The only religiously legitimate aim is only for procreation to generate offspring. Weber contends that sexual pleasure can threaten any attempt to respond religiously to sinfulness. Even it is perceivable as irrational that is potential to break rational organization such as self-control and life planning.⁶⁶

However, in terms of sexual pleasure, Islam sets up that it must be oriented and embodied in accordance with religious and moral values. Religion prescribes that such satisfaction has to be fulfilled within the legitimate and sacred bond of marriage and love. Therefore, the satisfaction is certainly not oriented for a temporary enjoyment rather more everlasting joy. The drive to pursue it is primarily soul, not physic within which the latter considerably partakes little portion compared with the former. On this ground, the ways to fulfill the pleasure must be as well attached with religious and moral values so that its realization is not morally excessive and uncontrolled. “One relying on physic within sexual relation does not understand the sacred marital relationship; therefore good religious men and women when having such relation will cover most part of their bodies instead of opening them up”.⁶⁷

Religious affirmation on sexual pleasure is also sanctioned by tradition that indeed in particular case prioritizes fulfillment of

⁶³ Leonard Lewisohn, “Romantic Love in Islam”, in Judith Kornberg Greenberg (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Love* (Oxford: Abc-Clio, 2008), Vol. I, p. 513.

⁶⁴ ‘Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary*.*The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Maryland USA: Amana Corporation, 1989), p. 1012-1013.

⁶⁵ Abdelwahab Boudilba, *Sexuality in Islam: Peradaban Kamasutra Abad Pertengahan*, transl. Ratna Maharani Utami (Yogyakarta: Alenia, 2004), p. 184.

⁶⁶ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body & Society, Explorations in Social Theory* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), p. 19.

⁶⁷ Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 34-35.

pleasure than religious devotion. As in the case of women's fasting, it is not justified to continue her fasting and therefore must be canceled as her husband wants her to have intercourse.⁶⁸ Satisfaction in question is significant in maintaining both women and men identity that for the former it is that makes them truly women for their sincere submission to men. While for the latter, it also makes them feel like real men for their bearing on responsibility for taking care of their women.⁶⁹

F. Love and Five Senses

Quraish Shihab deciphers a close relation between five senses and love that each sense contributes positively or negatively either for fostering and strengthening love or indeed reducing and dismissing it depending on ways to control and restraint its excessive and improper use. Eyes, for instance, is beneficial to see the not only physical performance but from the former can reveal one's personality. For women, as stated by Quraish Shihab, a sight to men's appearance is frequently connected with their strength to protect women and their children and their power of "making love."⁷⁰ The physical impression is clearly considerable as important for strengthening love and making sure of his potential to be the guardian of the family.

However, this potentially eye's power for creating love is as well anticipated by religion for its negative potential. Shihab quotes Qur'anic verse an-Nur (24): 30 as that God commands the prophet to tell the "believers that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts; that is purer for them. God is aware of the things they work and say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts, and reveal not their adornment save such as is outward".⁷¹

In tradition, there is an affirmation on allowable sight and not allowable for being considered as directing to lust. When meeting other, first sight is allowable and tolerated but the second and the next is deemed as a manifestation of lust that therefore not permitted

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷¹ Arberry, A.J. *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Allen and Unwin, 1955), Vol. II, p. 49-50.

to follow.⁷² Another tradition told the story on followers of the prophet who saw a beautiful woman pass in front of them. The prophet then suggested them that if they looked at impressing women it is better for them to “touch” their wives.⁷³ For this negative or destructive potential, religion enjoins on not showing sex appeal, not inviting seduction, not viewing instead of his/her spouse what religion forbids to see.

The second sense, that is hearing, plays a significant role in affecting soul either good or bad. Soft-spoken will draw sympathy, arouse desire and foster love, otherwise speaking loudly will precisely bear on antipathy, create hate/antagonize and even eliminate love.⁷⁴ Hence it is supposed to manage voice and control it in order that instead of generating destructive effect for love it indeed strengthens the love relation.

The next sense is smelling that its capability of inhaling enables it to smell important for “arousing desire to close” or “drive to sheer of.”⁷⁵ It can create pleasure and yield a wonderful imagination necessary for making love relation closer and as such attain happiness. On this respect, Shihab emphasizes two things to warn. The first is an advice for women not to be overdressed and use perfume excessively intended particularly to attract people’s attention for such attitude is included as “*zina*.⁷⁶ The second is an advice for women that their husband only smells the scent of their bodies.⁷⁷

The fourth is a sense of groping necessary in love. As such, religion also sets forth a significance of this sense so touching between different sexes is conceivable as illicit and therefore has to perform purification (*wudhu*) before conducting prayer. In terms of marital relation, this sense is primarily important and indispensable in having intercourse.⁷⁸ As well as only touching, after intercourse, it is also obliged to purify through *janabah* (obligatory bathing).

Here instead of affirming the significance of the sense of grouping in love, religion also establishes illicit and licit touching

⁷² Shihab, *Pengantin al-Qur'an*, p. 38.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

including its consequences. It means that the use of this sense is only legitimate and allowable as it suits with religious teachings and rules. Though it is even allowable, there exist obligated conducts to do for self-purification. Accordingly, as religion compels purification, it implies that this sense has a great potential compared with other senses for arousing sexual desire and in making love.

The last is a sense of tasting that if connected with love and sex it is not dealt with kissing for it is included within the sense of groping. Shihab exactly construes it metaphorically by pointing out prophet tradition in respect with the sexual relation between husband and wife: "*Hingga engkau mengecup/merasakan lezat 'madu'nya, dan dia pun merasakannya.*" The relevance between this sense and love, for Shihab, is seemingly related to its connection with food. Delicious food prepared by wives for their husbands can be instrumental for showing their care as a housewife that further increases their husbands love to them. There is as well a quoted mother's advice for her daughter that within marital relation "she must concern on times of meal and rest of husband for its late for a meal can cause displeasure and its lack of rest can invite anger".⁷⁹

The principle of abstention underlies the potential of five senses through which the strength of love is firmly established depending on the ways they are made a use of based on the principle in question. Those senses must be exploited properly and proportionally in a suit with moral and religious tenets evoking strict restraint in order that their use does not render to promiscuity or violation of moral and religious rules. Otherwise, the correct use of those senses will be inevitably positive for reinforcing tie of loving relationships and for paving a way to a perfect manifestation of love itself embodied in honesty, fidelity, responsibility and etc. In case, the existence of this sense is not viewed independently for only physical objectives, but it is comprehensively integrative for attaining psychical ones.

G. Love and Reason

The connection between love and reason is frequently ignored especially by the young that hold a misconception of love such as love is blind, love can fix everything or love is an extraordinary experience and thus mind has no role. Shihab criticizes those

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

assumptions holding that love needs both heart and reason equally. In Shihab term, “Find out rational legitimacy for that conscience is for the sake of perpetuating love.” In this matter, love needs mind or reason to make sure that love will be undergone meaningfully in life. Rationalization is as well necessary to view the loved properly not blindly resulting on profound consideration on weaknesses, strength, economical capacity, approval of the closed people such as a parent, differences, and sameness among them, and so on.⁸⁰ On this ground, the use of reason not only strengthens the lovely bond, makes love dynamic, maintains its power, but also minimizes conflict.

Researchers on love indeed justify love’s potential to be in a state of extraordinary within which emotion dominates reason and as such dismisses capacity to differentiate right or wrong. However, Shihab insists that one needs to provide within one’s conscience a space for reason in order to view things instead of love rationally and to participate in setting right measure to face problems within love relation.⁸¹ In addition, it is difficult to value one’s personality if one is in love for at the time everything on him/self-seems to be entirely good.⁸² In this sense, in tradition there is an advice to love or hate one properly and not excessively for the one loved could be an enemy in future and otherwise, the one hated could be a friend.⁸³

Shihab’s insistence on taking reason into account in love matters results from the existing realities especially in young cases that in the name of love they commit everything even that contradict with religious norms. For the sake of love, they voluntarily carry out free sex, promiscuity and sex pre-marriage that indeed affect on the increasing abortion, early marriage and mortality of young mothers and their babies. These effects are in particular generated from hindering the use of reason actually indispensable in entwining love relation ranging from understanding the nature of love, choosing the right partner, and realizing the ways the relationship is properly manifested in accordance with social and religious norms.

Moreover, since falling in love raises overwhelming emotion or exultation, it drives one to admire the loved excessively without giving space for a reason to view profoundly about personality,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸² *Ibid.* p. 47.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

characters, weakness, strength, differences among them substantial in forming long-lasting love relation. It is this overwhelming feeling that frequently renders the young to have a relation with the wrong one and embodies this relation in wrong ways. Therefore, for Shihab, the reason is very important to control this excessive emotion and warrant that the feeling will be manifested in a right way.

On this principle, Shihab asserts that reason-based love will lead one to admire and hate other moderately, possess a deep conscience on the essence of love and the ways of loving properly, scrutiny the partner's personality, control emotion, and have a deeper consideration to accept both the strength and weakness of the partner. It is through the unity of reason and love that love relation will be getting stronger and longer.

Matter of love, according to Hegel, is frequently conceived as personal experience as such being included in subjective knowing in private sphere contrasted with reflective rationality performed in public sphere. He criticized that "it is the deeper, subjective knowledge of conscience that is essential to ethical life but that is not recognized or vindicated by reflective rationality."⁸⁴ However, since this subjective knowledge is further conceptualized as public reasoning such as in form of regulation or exegesis, it then becomes reflective rationality on which ethical life of subjects is drawn from. In this sense, religious reasoning on religious tenets on love serves and provides a basis on which reflective rationality on love must be made reference to. Accordingly, love is not just following one's desire and fulfilling one's lust but it is through reason or reflective rationality one is likely to achieve the truth and wisdom.

H. Love, Marriage, and Wisdom

In respect with Greek ethics, love is not pursued its own sake rather for loving the truth and gaining master of love and wisdom. Such state will only be attained through seizing desires that make subject become "stronger than himself".⁸⁵ Hence, abstention and austerity were regarded as proper ways of conducting oneself. There was a massive interest in, if not a cult of, chastity. For some, this was merely a matter of self-restraint which again attested to their higher

⁸⁴ Alice Ormiston, *Love and Politics, Re-Interpreting Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 105-106.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236-241.

status; for others, chastity was a source of wisdom and access to the truth.⁸⁶

While for Shihab love for gaining wisdom is able to be pursued only through marriage. He stresses that love and marriage are closely connected, though not all marriage must be preceded initially by love, it must exist in marital relationship. Quoting al-Ghazali view that each human soul has its unity on which as it could be acquainted with one another it will yield an intimate relationship and otherwise if it not it will generate a quarrel.⁸⁷ It is further metaphysically explained through illustration that God has created human soul and gotten it torn apart and then made it turned around God's throne. The soul being torn apart and meet its part in that outer worldly life will walk out intimately in the worldly life.⁸⁸ Through this illustration, Shihab seeks to emphasize that love in part pre-exists before one's existence in worldly life. Love relation in this world represents a metaphysical existence of soul unity in outer worldly life. It means that a harmonious relation in this life occurs because of the union and prevalent love among them in their metaphysical life.

This insight reveals a prevailing view discerning love as searching self-half and thus union within love regarded as its succeed of finding that half. This discourse was also existent in Greek society that discoursing love as naturally meeting one's half of being. "A boy will love a male if he is a half of male's being".⁸⁹ Love is in turn existentially conceivable as a primordial encounter of a divided self. It is as well clearly described in religious text mentioning that God has created a person from oneself from which other's half is destined as one's spouse.

Here marriage is conceivable as a natural institution of love as that of heterosexual principle grounded on divided self and normative judgment of divinely and naturally given. On this respect, Shihab further elaborates the differences of love after marriage and before that renders the former as better than the latter. Love underwent before marriage is commonly closed in nature that there is still many secrecy to hide and so much pretense of maintaining. While love in marriage is mainly characterized by openness between

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93-94.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 232.

the spouses, with self-revelation of frailty each has.⁹⁰ As one loves other, he/she has to be ready to reveal themselves though it seemingly will inciting hate or critique of other. In marriage, the loved is not longer afraid of being vulnerable for the self-revelation one undertakes.

Second, love before marriage primarily renders the spouse to incline to be inward-oriented meaning that state of egoism, self-interest, hesitance, and fear of losing the loved are more asserted than the latter. This, in turn, leads to the occurring feeling of excessive jealousy and hesitance of fidelity. While after marriage, these feelings will be reduced in a significant amount that yields both a proportional jealousy and lasting fidelity. Even along with the intense relation and unity between them, there is no necessary of each to ask for what is liked and disliked, for each has served as other's eyes, tongue, ear, reason, and soul.⁹¹

Third, love before marriage is just an emotional exultation without any conscience and as such easy to break off. While within marriage, that feeling is commonly prevalent for marriage supposedly preceded by free choice with full conscience and responsibility.⁹² Manifesting love in marriage needs initially profound consciousness of entwining love relation, not for temporary objectives rather that for everlasting one, that is, to yield offspring, to share joys and sorrows, to take each responsibility for family welfare and happiness. As such failure of marriage will be more painful and great in impact than the former that is quite unstable in emotion and consciousness and evolving less party.

Here marriage is not considerable as just instituting love for only natural and religious reason, but love will reach its perfect state and ultimate realization only within marriage. Values of honesty, equality, fidelity, responsibility, conscience, and intimacy will be fully fostered and perfectly realized in marriage. Based on the notion of one self, the spouse is so intimate and closely related one another that the half self can feel the anxiety, hesitance, sadness, happiness of other even without any saying. It is this stance that each seeks to embrace other's joy and pain and deeply responsible for the fulfillment of other willing and pleasure voluntarily and selflessly.

⁹⁰ Shihab, *Pengantin*, p. 51.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51-52.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Briefly speaking, it is within marriage that love yields its perfect manifestation that leads one to attain the truth and wisdom.

I. Concluding Remark

A brief elaboration on love and truth in sexual ethics of Islam affirms a tight connection between love and truth that the former is not pursued its own sake rather for attaining the latter. This contention is initially built on the perception of love as an existential encounter entailing dialogue and encounter of two existences, mutuality, responsibility and merger or union. Shihab also depicts phases of love consisting of the feeling of closeness, self-revelation, mutual dependency, and the fulfillment of the beloved's need. Passing through all these phases will lead one to come with the truth of love marked in a stance of self-sacrifice not in an altruistic sense for the benefit of other as such rather for the sake of both, the lover and the loved (another pleasure is indeed one's).

Love definitely maintains honor and fidelity as it is framed within the religious and moral framework. Even honor is more fundamental from love to which love must be signified and manifested in comportments in line with the establishment of honor. As love deeply related with honor being concerned, Shihab indicates the relation between love and five senses which its proper use and holding the principle of abstention will strengthen love tie and further reach the peak of love. The connection between love and reason is given a significant emphasis for using reason will hinder negative effects on the ways love will be manifested and also strengthen and maintain the lovely bond. In the last, love and marriage is highly considerable as indivisible on the ground of natural and religious reason. Only do they unite that love will reach its perfect state and ultimate realization. It is within marriage that love will leads one to attain the truth and wisdom. [.]

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