

A vibrant sunset over the ocean with rays of light and a close-up of water splashing in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow and long rays of light that penetrate the water. The foreground shows a close-up of blue water splashing, with bubbles and droplets visible. The overall scene is bright and hopeful.

SINCERITY
IS THE WAY TO
SALVATION



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SINCERITY
is the way to
SALVATION

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THIS BOOK BELONGS TO





PREFACE

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful...

All praises and thanks are due to Allah Who has guided us to this. Sincerity is a great and vast topic. In Arabic, it is called “Al Ikhlas” (الإخلاص) and one of the chapters of the Qur’an is named after it. Despite being made of up four verses, its meaning is equivalent to a third of the Qur’an. Our deeds would not be acceptable if they are not done sincerely for the sake of Allah and following the way of the Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings be upon him).

This book came about as a result of the great importance of sincerity in the religion, though it is easily overlooked or disregarded. Our deeds are based on our intentions, and in this book, we explore how to be sincere in different forms of worship.

The book is divided by defining the meaning of sincerity, its importance and its application.

The source used in this book is:

1. الاخلاص طريق الخلاص - عبد الهادي بن حسن وهبي

We ask Allah to accept this work and pray that those who read it will find it easy to understand and will benefit from it.



INTRODUCTION

True freedom can only be achieved with sincerity. Sincerity to Allah is an honorable attribute that is sufficient to take us out of every hardship.

IN THE QUR'AN:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرِينَ بَيْنَهُمْ
بِرِّيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ
كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِن
أُنجَيْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein, Then they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him Alone, (saying): "If You (Allah) deliver us from this, we shall truly be of the grateful."¹

¹ Surah Yunus 22

To reflect on the above ayah (verse), we see that Allah subjected the land and sea to us. Imagine yourself on a ship, sailing on a pleasant breezy day when all of a sudden, a robust wind and mountainous waves rock your ship violently from side to side. In these moments of terror and desperation, what do you do? You invoke Allah with complete sincerity and rely on Him alone; knowing that only He can save you from this destruction.

This illustrates the nature of humankind; in times of need, salvation is only in returning to Allah with complete SINCERITY.

CHAPTER

01

DEFINITION OF IKHLAS

Ikhlas (sincerity) means to purify the heart from impurities and perform deeds purely for the sake of Allah. There are several types of impurities that can spoil our heart and deeds:

DESIRE OF THE SELF: This impurity may seem like a "natural" desire but it is the greatest impurity that can spoil the heart. What does desire of the self exactly mean?

1. **SEEKING TO BEAUTIFY YOUR IMAGE IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE:** There is nothing wrong with people thinking good of us by their own accord. However, when we want the praise of others based on our

desires, this becomes problematic. We should only seek to be good in the Eyes of Allah, and wanting recognition and praise of others is a form of shirk (associating partners with Allah).

2. **SEEKING PEOPLE'S PRAISE:** This refers to wanting praise of people for good deeds or character. A believer seeks the pleasure of Allah alone, seeking His Face; this is salvation. However, when we seek the praise of the people, this is self-destruction and an imprisonment to the acceptance and praise of people. The heart is free when it is not attached to people and seeks only the Pleasure of Allah.

3. **ESCAPING FROM PEOPLE'S DISPRAISE:** Sometimes we do deeds only so that others do not speak negatively of us. For example, we may visit or gift them, to avoid dispraise and fear of a bad reputation. We need to purify our hearts from depending on praise of others, as all honor lies in the Hands of Allah; we need to seek honor with Him alone. Hypocrites, do good deeds for the sake of people and

avoid being seen doing sins out of fear of their reputation with others.

4. **SEEKING PEOPLE'S RESPECT:** It is a favour of Allah when people respect an individual without the respect being sought. However, if one's heart desires this respect from others, it spoils the heart, deed and its sincerity. This also leads to self-destruction because the person is constantly unhappy and worried, as the heart is preoccupied with the opinion of people and seeks the respect and approval of others.
5. **SEEKING MATERIAL GAINS FROM PEOPLE:** Seeking something tangible with worldly benefits.

These are what chains and captures the heart. We must purify ourselves from these attributes and detach ourselves from the praise and acceptance of people.

Indeed, freedom is only attained by sincerity, 'SINCERITY IS THE WAY TO SALVATION'.

Sincerity is to purify one's insight, from seeing anything except Allah. When performing righteous good deeds, the heart should be free from seeking anything besides the Face of Allah. As soon as the eyes seek the approval of people, the person will desire something from them, which is a predicament. In order to solve this problem, we need to live in this life in a one to one relationship; one slave for One Master because we are created to worship Allah.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).²

There are times we perform deeds and our heart turns to our spouse, children, or friends. In spite of that, we need to remind ourselves this a turn of the heart which is imprisoning us. When our eyes are looking at Allah then we seek everything from Him; respect, praise, reward, money, etc.

² Surah Adh Dhariyat 56



Ihsan (excellence) is to worship Allah as if one sees Him or He sees you, and Ikhlas (sincerity) is to free oneself from attachment to anyone other than Allah.³

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

Say (O Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]): "Verily, my salat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exist)⁴

This means to live, speak, remain silent and give sincerely for Allah; to love and hate for Allah. Consequently, our every utterance, action and intention must be purely for Allah. Our life and death should be seeking the Pleasure of Allah, purified from our worldly desires.

³ Sahih Al Bukhari Book 65, Hadith 4777

⁴ Surah Al An'am 162

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ﴿٥﴾

And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform as-salat (the prayer) and give zakat (charity): and that is the right religion⁵

Islam is the religion of steadfastness. Allah created us to worship Him with **SINCERITY**. Ikhlas (sincerity) is a command from Allah. Allah wants us to be free, and that is why Islam is the deen (religion) of salvation. There is no way to salvation without ikhlas (sincerity), and the desires of the self lead to nothing but destruction. Without ikhlas (sincerity), how can one establish the prayer and give zakat (charity)?

⁵ Surah Al Bayannah 5

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ
الدِّينَ

Verily, We have sent down the Book to you (O Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]) in truth: so worship Allah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only.⁶



Ibn Al Taymiyaah said: “Al-'Ibadah (worship) is a comprehensive term covering everything that Allah loves and is pleased with - whether it is utterances or actions, outward or inward.”⁷

Worship is not only sincerity in prayer and fasting because Islam is a way of life. We cannot be sincere in our life without the Qur'an. The more we interact with the Qur'an, the more purified we will be because our eyes will be focused on listening to Allah.

⁶ Surah Az Zumar 2

⁷ [Majmu' al-Fatawa (10/149)]

When a mother is always speaking to her young child, this child will look at the mother when doing something. And to Allah is the best example; when we are exposed to kalam Allah (Allah's words) all the time, our eyes will only be looking at Allah and we will be sincere because we are exposed to the truth.

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الخَالِصُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣﴾

Surely, the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allah only. And those who take auliya' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah." Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever.⁸

The pure religion belongs to Allah; He wants us to be pure because all purity belongs to Him. How can one be sincere in one's relationships? When one is sincere to

⁸ Surah Az Zumar 3

Allah. Do not only be sincere to a spouse or child, rather we need to have a higher goal, which is to be sincere to Allah.

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾

Say (O Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]): "Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah (Alone) by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only.⁹

We need to be sincere in our relationships with people and all our dealings with them for the sake of Allah. Being chained to the people leads to unhappiness.

قُلْ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ﴿١٤﴾

Say (O Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]) "Allah Alone I worship by doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only (and not to show off, and not to set up rivals with Him in worship)."¹⁰

⁹ Surah Az Zumar 11

¹⁰ Surah Az Zumar 14

We are commanded to worship Allah sincerely. Even when dealing with people, Allah's creation, we are dealing with Allah. That is why 'Sincerity is the Way to Salvation'.

Allah commanded us to do everything with ikhlas, and this shows us that ikhlas (sincerity) is an honorable and great action. With ikhlas (sincerity), one will be able to achieve in the duniya (worldly life) and akhirah (hereafter) and solve all their problems. Ikhlas (sincerity) is the head of all actions of the heart and it is an adornment of the heart. Ikhlas (sincerity) is the secret and soul of servitude – its true essence.



CHAPTER

02

THE IMPORTANCE OF IKHLAS

Ikhlas (sincerity) is a light in the heart leading to ihsan (excellence) which ultimately leads to success. This shows us there is no success without the correct foundation, which is ikhlas (sincerity). When we try to purify our deeds, it adds light to our heart, thus perfects our deeds.

The number of deeds is not important, rather it is their quality that gives them value.

Allah tells us:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ

الْغَفُورُ

Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.¹¹

In the duniya (worldly life), Allah tests the quality of our good deeds. The ultimate success is to ensure our deeds are done purely for the sake of Allah, even if they are the smallest of deeds.


Anything that does not have ikhlas (sincerity) in the duniya (worldly life) will be cursed, meaning there will be no mercy in it¹². Every action of ours should be for Allah alone because only He will put mercy and barakah (Allah's Blessings) in what is sincere and deserving.

For an action to be sincere and deserving, it needs to be done for the Face of Allah, seeking His Pleasure. This approach needs to be applied in all our actions and

¹¹ Surah Al Mulk 2


¹² Hadith: (The duniya is cursed and all that is in it is cursed except what is sought for the sake of Allah) – (الراوي : أبو الدرداء المحدث : الألباني - المصدر : صحيح الترغيب الصفحة أو الرقم: 9 خلاصة حكم المحدث : حسن لغيره)

relationships. We need to seek Allah's Mercy in even the smallest of actions, such as combing our hair and taking care of ourselves. Once we modify our intention for Allah because it is something He loves, then our actions will be full of mercy and barakah (Allah's Blessings).



Ibn Al Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:
“Deeds done without sincerity are like a traveler who fills his luggage with sand, making it heavier and useless.”

This illustrates that deeds done for ourselves or seeking approval of others are an absolutely futile exercise. When we say or do something not for the sake of Allah, we are overburdening ourselves which can lead to ill consequences.



Ibn Al Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:
“Deeds done without sincerity are like a building above waves, it will never stand still nor be firm.”

Imagine a building with waves continuously crashing upon it. This building will not hold upright and eventually will collapse. Similarly, if we want stability in any relationship, then we should perform deeds and worship with ikhlas (sincerity). Deeds done for others are like the waves that come crashing upon the building. When deeds are done for Allah, they will be guaranteed stability, giving us happiness in the duniya (worldly life) and reward in the akhirah (hereafter).

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٢٧﴾

And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever.¹³


¹³ Surah Ar Rahman 26-27

Everything will perish and die except the Face of Allah. This means anything not done for the sake of Allah will perish, and will not benefit us on the Day of Judgement. If we want our deeds to be preserved, then we need to protect them with sincerity. If we see any turmoil in a deed or relationship, then we need to go back to the root because the foundation of the action was not correct.

RELATION BETWEEN IMAN (FAITH) AND IKHLAS (SINCERITY)

What is the relation between iman (faith) and ikhlas (sincerity)?

One cannot have iman (faith) without ikhlas (sincerity). In fact, iman (faith) leads to ikhlas (sincerity).

 Sheikh Bin Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Sincerity to Allah is the focus of a person's worship and is to draw closer to Allah."

A person's focus is to be sincere to Allah in the following:

☞ Sincere to Allah in loving Him

☞ Sincere to Allah in magnifying Him

☞ Sincere to Allah in all internal and external actions



CHAPTER

03

APPLICATIONS OF IKHLAS

We need to be sincere in all our actions and situations. This section will cover the ways in which we can make ikhlas (sincerity) a way of our life.

DEEN (RELIGION)	TAWHEED (ONENESS)
SEEKING KNOWLEDGE	RECITING QUR'AN
RELATIONSHIPS	LOVE
SITTING WITH EACH OTHER	VISITING
GIVING	FEEDING PEOPLE
SUPPLICATION	ANGER
PATIENCE	REPENTANCE

01

SINCERITY IN THE DEEN (RELIGION)

Deen (religion) means the way of life. Ibn Al Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: the deen (religion) revolves around four pillars:

🌀 **LOVE:** if there is no love for the deen (religion), then we would not be able to follow it. For example, we need to love Allah, the Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings upon him), and good deeds.

🌀 **HATE:** to hate sins, bad behavior, the shaitan (devil), and any actions which are displeasing to Allah.

🌀 **ACTION:** to do all that pleases Allah. For example, performing actions such as prayer, fasting and giving charity.

👉 **LEAVE:** to leave all that Allah commands us to leave, such as worldly desires, false speech, and the like.

Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “If anyone loves for Allah's sake, hates for Allah's sake, gives for Allah's sake and withholds for Allah's sake, then he will have perfect faith.”¹⁴


Whoever loves, hates, acts, and leaves for Allah has completed his faith. The hadith (saying) of the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him)) does not highlight acts of worship but acknowledges these four matters. To love, hate, give, and withhold for Allah show honor; love and hate are emotions, while giving and withholding are actions done sincerely for Allah.

When we love, it is important to love purely for Allah in order to draw closer to Him, and not to love for our desire in order to gain something from people.

¹⁴ Sunan Abi Dawud 4681, Graded Sahih by Al Albani

When we hate, we hate for Allah, and not for our desire. For example, when Allah forbids us from certain actions, we must hate them as well. Allah hates Pharaoh and the shaitan (devil), so similarly, we must hate them too. On the contrary, when a person hates according to his desires then his heart tightens.

The higher a person's faith, the faster Allah will nurture him. But when a person's faith declines, then his nurturing will become slower. For example, when the Great Slander incident took place, Abu Bakr As Sideeq (may Allah be pleased with him) stopped giving charity to a relative who spoke against his daughter Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). An ayah (verse) was revealed to show him he should continue spending on this relative despite the relative's wrongdoing. Abu Bakr's faith was very high and he was able to take this level of nurturing immediately.



The deen (religion) is not only about praying and fasting, but one should also be aware of the reason for giving, smiling, and greeting one another. Allah is teaching us to upgrade our faith and this is a blessing we need to undoubtedly be grateful.

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “If his love and hate is for Allah, which are actions of his heart, and if he gives and withholds for Allah, which are actions of his limbs, then this shows his complete love of Allah and his complete faith.”

One of the signs of loving someone is to love what they love. And to Allah is the best example; when we love Allah, we will love all that He loves. Our love for Him will increase when we learn Who He is by His names. This will intensify our love for Him and elevate our faith.

02

SINCERITY IN TAWHEED

Tawheed means there is no one worthy of worship except Allah. This statement of tawheed (attributing Oneness to Allah) is a declaration that one will not attach to anyone out of love and magnification except to Allah.

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “Whoever says none has the right to be worshipped but Allah sincerely will enter paradise.”¹⁵

¹⁵ As Silsalah As Saheeha 2355, Graded by Al Albani as Sahih

Ikhlas (sincerity) will save us from entering the Hellfire. As for whoever enters the Hellfire, it is because there was no ikhlas (sincerity) in the declaration, rather there was shirk (associating others with Allah) in the heart.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) said: "No worshipper has ever said: None has the right to be worshipped but Allah (la ilaha illallah) sincerely, except that the gates of heaven are opened for it, until it reaches to the Throne, so long as he avoids the major sins."¹⁶

Whoever declares tawheed (attributing Oneness to Allah) with sincerity, the gates of heaven will open for him to the Throne of Allah. So what about other deeds done with ikhlas (sincerity)? This shows us Allah appreciates ikhlas (sincerity) but the condition is to avoid major sins.

¹⁶Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3590

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ
وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ.

Whosoever desires honour, (power and glory) then to Allah belong all honour, power and glory (and one can get honour, power and glory only by obeying and worshipping Allah [Alone]). To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (i.e. the goodly words are not accepted by Allah unless and until they are followed by good deeds).¹⁷


The scholars said they did not struggle for anything more than struggling for ikhlas (sincerity).

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “Whoever bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah sincerely from his heart then he will enter paradise.”¹⁸

To be sincere is to be free from anything that can spoil it. When there is no riya’a (showing off in front of others), then this sincerity is yaqeen (the truth).

¹⁷ Surah Fatir 10

¹⁸ Sahih Aj Jami’e 6333, Graded by Al Alabani as Sahih



The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “Allah has made the fire of Hell unlawful for him who affirms that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah.”¹⁹

The impacts of ikhlas (sincerity) in the word of tawheed (attributing Oneness to Allah) are that one will seek the pleasure of Allah by following His commands and abstaining from sins. Therefore, we must be sincere in our external actions as well.

¹⁹ Riyadh As Saliheen, Al Bukhari and Muslim Book 18, Hadith 1529

03

SINCERITY IN SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

Seeking knowledge is a very honorable attainment, but our own desires can spoil it. These spoilers are:

1. **TO LOVE BEING VISIBLE AND APPARENT:** When one acquires knowledge, he desires to be seen by the people.
2. **TO BE BETTER THAN OUR COMPANIONS:** When the motivation to acquire knowledge is solely to be better than others, including family and friends.
3. **TO SEEK PRAISE:** When one wants to be known and praised as this is something that our heart desires.

4. TO WANT PEOPLE TO LOOK AT US: This desire can destroy the knowledge.
5. TO DESIRE THE RESPECT OF THE PEOPLE.
6. TO SEEK WORLDLY BENEFITS AND/OR TO GET AN HONORABLE POSITION.

Learning about the spoilers of knowledge must not discourage us to attain it because it is an obligation to seek knowledge. Rather we need to struggle against ourselves to purify the heart and attain sincerity. When there is sincerity in seeking knowledge then we find the following:

🌀 The focus of seeking knowledge is the Face of Allah.

When we are sincere then we will find ourselves able to complete tasks until the end and our deeds will benefit us on the Day of Judgment.

🌀 Sincerity in seeking knowledge will illuminate our heart.

🌀 We will feel sweetness within when there is sincerity.

With ikhlas (sincerity), we will not find seeking

knowledge difficult; rather it will be easy and sweet. However, when we are doing it for people or the teacher then it will be a mere formality and overload.

☞ Closeness to Allah on the Day of Judgement. Before seeking knowledge, one needs to have the intention for the Face of Allah and to know His legislations and obligations.

☞ After learning the legislations and obligations, one needs to act upon them and teach others. This is because when one truly seeks knowledge for the sake of Allah and does so with sincerity, there is a desire to establish and spread the deen (religion) of Allah; to be one of the soldiers of Allah granting victory to Islam through spreading knowledge.

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

If we seek knowledge sincerely it will be accepted, purified, increased and blessed.

However, if knowledge is sought without sincerity then it will be fruitless and we will be among the losers.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) said, “He who does not acquire knowledge with the sole intention of seeking the Pleasure of Allah but for worldly gain, will not smell the fragrance of Jannah on the Day of Resurrection.”²⁰

STUDY CIRCLES ARE THE GARDENS OF PARADISE

Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) said: “When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, then sit.” They said: “And what are the gardens of Paradise?” He said: “The circles of remembrance.”²¹

One must reflect on this hadith (saying) by wondering how can the one who did not enter the gardens of paradise in the duniya (worldly life) enter the gardens of paradise in the akhirah (hereafter)?

²⁰ Sunan bu Dawud, Book 13, Hadith 1391

²¹ Jami' At-Tirmidhi 3510, Graded as Sahih by Al Albani

One who is sincere in seeking knowledge will be satisfied even if there are disturbances by students, teacher, or the overall environment. A sincere person will overlook these disturbances for the pleasure of what he seeks. On the contrary, the insincere seeker of knowledge will complain about everything. Instead of elevating their faith to a higher level, they will descend to the lowest of matters.

Study circles are paradise on earth because one learns:

🌀 Knowledge about Allah

🌀 To love Allah


🌀 To feel content about knowing Allah

🌀 To obey Allah

🌀 To long to meet Allah

The first people to enter Hellfire, even before the disbelievers, are those who sought knowledge only to be known by others. For this reason, it is important to make the study circles free of any worldly benefits.

Our desire should be to be elevated in the Eyes of Allah and not in the eyes of others.



Sheikh As Sa'ady (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding both teachers and students of knowledge: "It is important to make the foundation of our movements and stillness sincerely to Allah and to draw closer to Him."

All of our utterances, actions, and silences are to be for the sake of Allah. Some people will use knowledge to put others down or to gain a position.

When acquiring knowledge, there needs to be ikhlas (sincerity) in all matters. From learning sincerely for Allah to teaching others, from writing sincerely for Allah, listening sincerely for Him, memorizing for Him, repeating the knowledge sincerely for Him and even revising and researching sincerely for Him.

Acquiring knowledge is the best of deeds. If someone has to choose between acquiring knowledge or a voluntary act of worship, then acquiring knowledge is better. However, to acquire knowledge without sincerity is the worst of sins.

DESTROYERS OF KNOWLEDGE

🌀 Riya'a: Seeking knowledge to be seen by others


🌀 Reputation: Seeking knowledge to have a status and reputation among people.

It is important to remember that it is Allah Who sees and hears us and not people that see or hear. Riya'a (showing off) and seeking a reputation will spoil the knowledge, and the barakah (Allah's Blessings) will go away. We want the barakah (Allah's Blessings) to remain even after we die.

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

And grant me an honourable mention in later generations.²²

²² Surah Ash Shu'ara 84




Anyone in the duniya (worldly life) can have desires so we should not praise people in this life as it can change their intention. Little knowledge with ikhlas (sincerity) is more beneficial and greater in barakah (Allah's Blessings) than too much knowledge without ikhlas (sincerity).

04

SINCERITY IN RECITING THE QUR'AN

It is a command from Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings upon him) to recite the Qur'an and we should seek the Face of Allah and ask Him solely for His pleasure, reward, and closeness. We should not recite the Qur'an as a way to win the pleasure and praise of people.

It is important to purify our reciting of the Qur'an from any desires of the self. We need to safeguard ourselves from using the Qur'an for competitions, wanting praise, honor, or respect from the people.



A Muslim should read the Qur'an for the Face of Allah alone in order to attain great rewards and high ranks.

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “The majority of the hypocrites of my Ummah are the reciters of the Qur’an.”²³

This hadith (saying) is a stark warning for us as it mentions the majority of the reciters of the Qur’an are munafiqeen (hypocrites) and the minority are believers. It can be very tempting for people to use the Qur’an for praise, honor, and respect. However, before we recite or teach anyone the Qur’an, we need to teach them ikhlas (sincerity). The first ones to enter the hellfire are those who recited the Qur’an not for the Face of Allah.

If we are reciting the Qur’an without understanding it, and it is not impacting our behavior, then there is no ikhlas (sincerity). One ayah with ikhlas (sincerity) is better than the entire Qur’an with no ikhlas (sincerity). This does not mean we stop reciting the Qur’an because that is not the salvation. The salvation is sincerity,

²³ Sahih Aj Jami’e 1203, Graded as Sahih by Al Albani

because the carrier of the Qur'an needs to have ikhlas (sincerity).



05

SINCERITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

The human being is social and likes to mix with others, so it is important to see how to be sincere in relationships.

Abu Idris Al Khaulani (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Mu'adh bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) as saying: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) saying: 'Allah, the Exalted, says: 'My love is due to those who love one another for My sake, meet one another for My sake, visit one another for My sake and spend in charity for My sake.'"²⁴

²⁴ Malik Book 1, Hadith 382 in Riyadh As Saliheen

In any relationship, whether marriage, children or friendship, these four matters are the foundation: to love, meet, visit, and spend for Allah. The hadith (saying) begins with the ultimate motivation that Allah will love those who love for His sake.

The invitation to sincerity in relationships is to do the following for the sake of Allah:

🌀 Love each other

🌀 Sit with each other

🌀 Visit each other


🌀 Gift each other



06

SINCERITY IN LOVE

To love is a natural desire of humans, but when we love sincerely for the sake of Allah, this love becomes a worship. In addition, loving for the sake of Allah protects the love from diminishing and continues to benefit the person in the hereafter.



The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “Whoever is delighted to find sweetness of faith, then let him love a person only for Allah.”²⁵

This means to love someone in order to please Allah and to draw closer to Him by this love. Loving a believer will

²⁵ Sahih Aj Jami'e 6288, Graded as Hasan by Al Albani

lead one to the sweetness of faith, but it must be sincere for Allah. It should not be distorted with worldly benefits, meaning one should not expect anything from the person. Loving a believer should also not be spoiled by human emotions; for example, wanting love and mercy from that person.

These two matters will spoil the love and make it impure. Demands and expectations will spoil that love; it will not be a cause of sweetness but a cause of sorrow.



Pure love should not make one cry and it should not make one disturbed, pure love should make one feel content and fulfilled.

Whoever loves for a worldly benefit or emotional need will see their love perish. To have ikhlas (sincerity) is the most difficult struggle and even more so with love because it involves a multitude of emotions. If we are sincere in love, then that love will never discontinue.

Sometimes we think we need something to keep that love going, but the “fuel” is ikhlas (sincerity). Sometimes we find a worldly love that we need to connect with all the time otherwise it will not continue, but this love is not sincere because the foundation is wrong. When the foundation of ikhlas (sincerity) is present, we find stability in relationships.

If we truly love for Allah, we will be tested by the one we love. We will see things that will make us get affected. If we truly love someone for the sake of Allah, then even if we face a “volcanic” disruption, it should not affect us because the root of ikhlas (sincerity) will overcome this turmoil.

The love of a believer is a constant job whether we are close to the believer or not. Sometimes we see believers on the street, we do not know them but we still love them for the sake of Allah. It is easier to be sincere in our love to those we do not know than those we do know because there is something worldly with those close to us.

Love for Allah is the sweetness of life, without wanting anything worldly in return. Loving for the sake of Allah is the hardest and very rare, hence the reward is very high. No one can achieve this unless they have gone through Allah's nurturing. This is something a person has to live through in order to understand it.

The object of love constantly changes depending on then needs. In the beginning, a child will get love from their mother, then their teacher, and finally the love of their friends; such love is temporary as it is based on needs being fulfilled. On the contrary, when we love sincerely for Allah, we will love that person even if they move away, disconnect, or die. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) loved Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) even after she died.

Whoever loves us for a need, their love will discontinue depending on whether they got what they wanted or not. This is how the majority of people love each other and they will not be rewarded for it in the akhirah (hereafter)

nor will they benefit from it because they already got their worldly share.

Love is not supposed to make one feel chained but rather it is supposed to set one free. When we do not love sincerely for Allah, it can lead to hypocrisy and eventually compromise our faith. That is why sincerity is the way to salvation.

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except Al-Muttaqun (pious slaves who act according to what is pleasing to Allah).²⁶

If we love sincerely, then we need to have taqwa (piety). True friendships that will last forever are the between the muttaqeen (pious slaves who act according to what is pleasing to Allah). They place a barrier in the heart so that they do not follow the desires of the self when they love someone. On the Day of Judgment, all friends will be enemies except those who loved each other with

²⁶ Surah Az Zukhruf 67

sincerity and were muttaqeen (pious slaves who act according to what is pleasing to Allah).

The muttaqeen (pious slaves who act according to what is pleasing to Allah) are the ones whose love and friendship will last forever; they had taqwa (piety) and strove hard to not bring duniya (worldly life) in between their friendship. Friendship for Allah will last and end if it were for anyone rather than Allah.

We want love to be a fuel to reach paradise, not a means of pain. We do not only want love in the duniya (worldly life) but also want to be shaded under the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgment.

VIRTUES FOR LOVING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) said: "Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection: "Where are those who love one another through My glory? Today I shall give them shade in My

shade, it being a day when there is no shade but My shade.””²⁷

Those who love because of Allah’s Majesty are those who magnify Allah in their heart and love each other for His sake. They are pious and preserve the boundaries of Allah while fearing Him. They know they are created to worship Allah and be sincere to Him. For a businessman, time is money, so he wants to make every action of his profitable, whereas the believer wants to take every moment and transform it to worship with ikhlas (sincerity). All the actions of a believer will be with ikhlas (sincerity) whether it is a call, a visit, a smile or love of someone. Those who love for Allah is because they magnify Him, love Him, and want to seek His pleasure. Allah will shade them under His shade on the Day of Judgment.

CHARACTERISTICS WORTHY OF LOVE

People may love others because of their looks, money, or kindness, but for Allah the only quality that makes a

²⁷ Al Bukhari, Hadith 23

person worthy of His Love is their faith. A person is worthy of love because they are calling to good, they love performing good deeds, or because they learn and teach the religion of Allah. This means we need to love believers because of their faith.

Faith combines all that is good, so if we love a person because of their belief, then we have loved them for Allah. In study circles, we love each other for their faith because people are gathering to learn about and glorify Allah. As each day passes, the love increases, and there is barakah (Allah's blessings) in that love. Our faith is what keeps us connected.

Whoever loves for Allah, then he will love Awliya Allah. Who are they? Awliya Allah are the believers and muttaqeen, the pious who fear Allah. Their manners and behavior are an indication of their faith. A person's good behavior will truly show in times of travel and in a very difficult situation. A scholar said, "If I want to take a friend as a close companion and trustee, then I will try to

make him angry and see how he will react. If he is forbearing and good, then I will take him as a close friend.”

Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, then let him tell his companion that he loves him for Allah and the companion should reply by saying, “May He love you for Whose sake you love me.” If we love a person for Allah, then Allah will love us more.

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “No two people love each other for the sake of Allah in absence except the one more beloved to Allah is the one loving the other person more.”²⁸




Love for Allah is not just a word but a feeling of love that resides in the heart. When we truly love a person for Allah, we will support them and advise them against committing sins and oppressing others.

²⁸ Sahih At Targheeb 3016, Graded as Sahih by Al Albani

When we love for Allah's sake, we support our loved ones in obedience to Allah and encourage them to increase in righteous deeds. At the same time, we would hate for any evil to befall them, just as we would hate for any evil to befall upon us. We would love any good for them as we would love good for ourselves.

When we love someone for Allah's sake, we defend their honor and chastity. If anyone speaks ill about our beloved, we defend them. We also pray for the one we love sincerely in their absence.

Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) as saying: "There are people from the servants of Allah who are neither prophets nor martyrs; the prophets and martyrs will envy them on the Day of Resurrection for their rank from Allah, the Most High." They (the people) asked: "Tell us, Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He replied: "They are people who love one another for the spirit of Allah, without having any mutual kinship and



giving property to one. I swear by Allah; their faces will glow and they will be (sitting) in (pulpits of) light. They will have no fear (on the Day) when the people will have fear, and they will not grieve when the people will grieve.” He then recited the following Qur'anic verse Surah Yunus 63: (Behold! Verily for the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.)²⁹

Now we know the great reward of loving sincerely for Allah. Look at whom you love and why? Sincerity in love is the way to salvation from all problems in the duniya (worldly life) and akhirah (hereafter). Love should not be hurtful; rather it should give one happiness and be a cause for one's salvation.

²⁹ Sunan Abi Dawud 3527

07

SINCERITY IN SITTING WITH EACH OTHER

Sometimes we just want to sit with each other to pass the time, but even with sitting we need to be sincere. We need to purify and free this sitting from any personal needs or desires.

The Companions would sit with each other in order to remember Allah and draw closer to Him. If a gathering is going to increase us in faith, then it is better to sit, but if a gathering is going to decrease us in faith and take us further away from Allah, then it is better not to attend it. Aswad bin Hilal (may Allah be pleased with him) said to Mu'adh bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him): "Let

us sit together and believe for an hour”³⁰, meaning remember Allah. As our faith increases, we will eliminate gatherings just for the sake of gathering because we know time is precious.



When we sit with people with sincerity, Allah will talk about our magnificence and righteousness in front of the angels.

Indeed the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) came out upon a circle of his Companions and said: “What has caused you to gather for this sitting?” They said: “We have gathered for this sitting to remember Allah, and praise Him for His having guided us to Islam, and having bestowed blessings upon us.” So he said: “By Allah, nothing caused you to gather for this sitting except for that?” He said: “Indeed, I did not ask you out of suspicion, verily Jibreel came to me and informed me that Allah boasts of you to the angels.”³¹

³⁰ (الإيمان لأبي عبيد) 45, Graded as Sahih by Al Albani

³¹ Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3379

We must be adamant on sitting with those who are righteous and sincere in order to pick up on good speech and to speak only if there is benefit; this especially applies in study circles.



08

SINCERITY IN VISITING

Abu Idris Al Khaulani (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Mu'adh bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) as saying: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) saying, 'Allah, the Exalted, says: "My love is due to those who love one another for My sake, meet one another for My sake, visit one another for My sake and spend in charity for My sake.'" "³²

When we visit others, we should not want to visit out of habit, formality, or because it makes us feel good. Instead, we should want our visit to be rewarded by Allah alone.

³² Malik Book 1, Hadith 382 in Riyadh As Saliheen

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said, "A man set out to visit a brother (in Faith) in another town and Allah sent an angel on his way. When the man met the angel, the latter asked him, "Where do you intend to go?" He said, "I intend to visit my brother in this town." The angel said, "Have you done any favour to him?" He said, "No, I have no desire except to visit him because I love him for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and Glorious." Thereupon the angel said, "I am a messenger to you from Allah (to inform you) that Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake)."³³



Visiting a person for the sake of Allah is one of the greatest ways to draw closer to Allah, but it must be free of worldly benefits, personal desires or to return a favor.

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: There is no Muslim slave that visits his brother for the sake of Allah except that a caller will call from the sky: "Be

³³ Muslim Book 1, Hadith 361

purified and paradise is purified for you” Allah will say “My slave visited for My sake and I will not accept anything for him less than Paradise.”³⁴

Some people have to be purified from hellfire before entering paradise, but the person being referred to in this hadith (saying) will be purified without entering hellfire.

This truly shows us that when we do things with ikhlas (sincerity), nothing can make us angry or upset. For example, when we visit someone and we are told to go back, we have to return; this should not upset us if our intention is for Allah’s sake.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him), said, “When a man visits his brothers, Allah tells him, ‘You have been good and your evening will be good and you can take your place in the Garden.’”³⁵

³⁴ As Silsalah As Saheeha 2632, Graded by Al Albani

³⁵ Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 345, Graded Hasan by Al Albani

We do not want our visits to be in vain; the one practicing ikhlas (sincerity) wants to make every opportunity and task purely for Allah.

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

Iblis (Satan) said: "By Your Might, then I will surely mislead them all, except Your chosen slaves amongst them (faithful, obedient, true believers of Islamic Monotheism)."³⁶

When we are sincere, the shaitan (devil) will not be able to mislead us. Sincerity will take us out of the whispers and traps of the shaitan (devil). We can find that when we are not visiting for Allah, then the shaitan (devil) can easily distract us and make the visit inconvenient.

³⁶ Surah Saad 82 to 83

09

SINCERITY IN GIVING

Sincerity in giving means gifting each other with no desire except for the sake of Allah. There are three levels of giving, but all three levels require sincerity.

The lowest level is contribution in wealth. This means if we have money or any other valuables leftover, we may give them away. For example, when we buy something, we buy what we want for ourselves, and from what is leftover, we buy to give someone else.

The middle level is when we have something for ourselves without having extra, so we divide it in half and give it to someone else.

The highest level is to give from what you have, even if you do not have enough to spare; it means to give away your share of money, food, or water. The more faith we have, the sincerer we will be and easier it will be to give. It is easy to give to someone we know, but our only motive to give to an unknown person is for the sake of Allah. Also, when we become used to giving to someone we know, it is important to make the intention sincerely for Allah.

The highest level of giving is preferring others over ourselves. This level of faith is reserved for the truthful one. They are not looking at their money and what they are capable of giving; instead they are only looking at Allah. This is the highest level of love for the sake of Allah.

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوَقِّ شَحًّا نَفْسِهِ ۖ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

And (also for) those who were settled in al-Madinah and (adopted) the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give (them) preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.³⁷

Our greed makes us prefer ourselves over others. To overcome our greed is the way to salvation. This is what it means to have sincerity in giving for the Face of Allah. It is not easy to have sincerity in such matters, but we ask Allah to grant us sincerity. This shows us that Islam teaches sincerity in all aspects of life; not just in prayer

³⁷ Surah Al Hashr 9

and fasting, but even in relationships. If we love, sit, visit, and give, all for the sake of Allah, He will love us.



10

SINCERITY IN FEEDING PEOPLE

When feeding others, we need to make our intention sincerely for the sake of Allah; only then will Allah reward us immensely.

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾
إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿٩﴾

And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (the poor), the orphan, and the captive, (Saying): "We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you."³⁸

Those who give with ikhlas (sincerity) do not ask for appreciation, prayers, or praise from people.

³⁸ Surah Al Insaan 8 to 9


The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “And requite him who does a favour to you, but if you are unable to requite him, go on praying for him till you are sure that you have requited him adequately.”³⁹

The one who gives while he has the upper-hand, does not give to seek reward. However, Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings upon him) advised the one who has received help to reward the giver. The least that can be done is to pray for the benefactor until the receiver feels he has been sufficiently rewarded.

This hadith (saying) teaches us balance. When a person receives a gift, he should also return the favor with a gift or supplication to keep his reward with Allah. The one who is sincere wants this reward from Allah.

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated: “I gifted the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) a goat”, he said: “Divide it.” When the servant

³⁹ Abu Dawud and An- Nasa'i Book 18, Hadith 1723 – Riyadh As Saliheen



returned, Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) would ask, “What did they say?”. The servant said: “May Allah bless you all.” Then Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) would say: “And may Allah bless them.” We reply to them the same as what they said, and our reward (from Allah) remains for us.”⁴⁰

The one who is sincere has no expectations from others. If the recipient does not thank the giver, it should not matter because the motive is to give for Allah. Our test is to remain sincere.

⁴⁰ Al Kalim At Tayyib 239, Graded as Good by Al Albani

11

SINCERITY IN SUPPLICATION

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّل لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا
يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾
فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

It is He, Who shows you His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and sends down (rain with which grows) provision for you from the sky. And none remembers but those who turn (to Allah in obedience and) in repentance (by begging His Pardon and by worshipping and obeying Him Alone and none else). So, call you (O Mohammed (peace and blessings upon him) and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allah making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only and not to show off and

not to set up rivals with Him in worship), however much the disbelievers (in the Oneness of Allah) may hate (it).⁴¹

In these ayat (verses), Allah is showing us His signs so we may believe in Him, and of these signs is Him bringing down provision for us from the sky. We also learn that only the one who is muneeb (the one who returns to Allah), will remember that provision is from Allah; we are being reminded to have ikhlas (sincerity).

The ayah (verse) also reminds us to invoke Allah with sincerity. Supplicating with ikhlas (sincerity) purifies our way to Allah. If we want provision, we must know it is not with people.

In addition, we need to supplicate with sincerity and believe in the Oneness of Allah even if the disbelievers hate it. We should not let this discourage us nor worry about being blamed.

⁴¹ Surah Ghafir 13 to 14

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

He is the Ever Living, La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), so invoke Him making your worship pure for Him Alone (by worshipping Him Alone, and none else, and by doing righteous deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only, and not to show off, and not to setting up rivals with Him in worship). All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).⁴²

We need to ask Allah and expect from Him alone because He is The Ever-Living Who never dies. People are unstable, they can change, they die, but only Allah has the perfect life; He never dies. For this reason, no one deserves attachment except Allah because no one is like Him. When we believe this, we will automatically turn to Him alone.

⁴² Surah Ghafir 65

On the authority of Abu Abbas Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: “One day I was behind the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) riding on the same mount and he said, ‘O young man, I shall teach you some words (of advice): Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah (alone); and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah (alone). And know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.’”⁴³

Those who are sincere do not want anything from people, but only from Allah, thus they invoke Him alone. We must be grateful Allah is The Ever-Living Who never

⁴³ At Tirmidhi 2516

dies, that only He is worthy of attachment and worship, and that He is our Nurturer and Reformer.

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Say (O Mohammed (peace and blessings upon him)): My Lord has commanded justice and (said) that you should face Him only (i.e. worship none but Allah and face the Qiblah, i.e. the Ka'bah at Makkah during prayers) in every place of worship, in prayers (and not to face other false deities and idols), and invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him (by not joining in worship any partner to Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for Allah's sake only). As He brought you (into being) in the beginning, so shall you be brought into being (on the Day of Resurrection [in two groups, one as a blessed one [believers], and the other as a wretched one [disbelievers]]).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Surah Al 'Araf 29

Allah commands us to have justice in our worship, and to not commit oppression. This means we must stay away from extremism, and focus on fulfilling the conditions of worship and also in our dealings with people.

The second command from Allah is to make our face “established”, straight and directed towards Allah; meaning we are only looking (with our heart) at Allah. This will guide us to be completely focused when completing our worships, especially during prayer. The prayer needs to be purified from every shortcoming and many things can spoil it. Prayer is our connection with Allah.

The third command from Allah is to invoke Him sincerely for His Face. Sometimes we make invocations for the sake of people in order they be pleased with us. Invocation to Allah is a worship and we should not use it to fulfill our desire. We do not need to tell others we are supplicating for them. We should not boast to others

implying piety. Invocation should be made for the pleasure of Allah and to worship Him. Ikhlas (sincerity) is when we supplicate for each other in each other's absence.

We need to know that just as Allah created us the first time, we will return to Him for the Resurrection. So why are we not being sincere? Do we not want to be pure when we return to Allah? There are many tests for ikhlas (sincerity) because it is precious and requires constant struggle.

SINCERITY IN SUPPLICATING FOR THE DEAD

When we supplicate for the dead, they cannot do anything for us; they cannot praise or reward us. We find that Allah will bring someone to supplicate for us when we are dead.

Jibreel (peace be upon him) came to the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) and told him: “O Mohammed, live as you wish for you will die, and love as you wish, for you will part him.”⁴⁵

This hadith (saying) illustrates the nurturing of Allah to the Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings upon him) and how he was taught to live this life independent of people.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) said: “When you pray over the dead, make a sincere supplication for him.”⁴⁶

Our supplications for ones we see can tend to be enthusiastic compared to when we are praying for the dead. Humans respond to visual cues more than the unseen; however, the one with faith relies on knowledge of the religion to understand matters around him. The

⁴⁵ Saheeh Aj Jami' 73, Graded as Hasan by Al Albani

⁴⁶ Sunan Abi Dawud 3199

dead are in need of our supplications and many scholars suggest they are waiting for someone to supplicate for them. We must be sincere when making dua'a (supplicating) for the deceased.

When supplicating for the deceased, it is important to do so with presence of heart while remaining humble and in need of Allah. There is a difference between a person invoking Allah sincerely versus a heedless and inattentive person. Obligatory prayers or Qur'an will not reach the deceased, but sincere invocations to Allah will reach them.

Invocation is a worship, and requires a sincere heart, whether it is for the self, a loved one, or the deceased.

Allah teaches us that ikhlas (sincerity) is needed in all aspects of life – it is the way to salvation. Ikhlas (sincerity) is what ensures our deeds and time on earth are not depleted in the hereafter.

12

SINCERITY IN SUPPRESSING ANGER

The one who suppresses anger absorbs it, and does not expose the effects of it. When a person does this without ikhlas (sincerity), it is possible to suffer consequences. A person needs to evaluate why they are suppressing their anger? Is it for people's praise or respect? The person one who suppresses his anger for people has no reward. It is imperative to suppress anger sincerely for Allah. Anything done sincerely for Him will not harm us.

Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "There is nothing that is swallowed greater with Allah in reward than a slave of Allah who swallows and contains his rancor out of desire for the pleasure of Allah."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 1318

The one who suppresses anger for Allah awaits a great reward.

Ibn Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Chain your anger with the chains of forbearance otherwise it is like a dog let loose, destroying things along the way.”⁴⁸

Numerous relationships are harmed as a result of anger; but what humans fail to understand is that moment of suppressing anger guarantees paradise. Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) never expressed anger; he suppressed it for Allah. Allah called Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) His sincere slave because of his patience with Banu Israel (people of Israel).

⁴⁸ Al Fawaaid by Ibn Al Qayyim (Page 91)

13

SINCERITY IN PATIENCE

Patience is a praiseworthy quality; however, it can negatively impact a person if he does it for the sake of others or himself. There are people who are patient by nature, but they need to change their intention for the sake of Allah; this is their struggle.

Sometimes we find people are patient because they fear blame or need to prove a point. Patience that is not for the sake of Allah is dispraised and does not bring forth reward. When we are patient with ikhlas (sincerity), we have a firm foundation of faith.

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَدْرُءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٢﴾

And those who remain patient, seeking their Lord's Countenance, establish the prayer, and spend out of that which We have bestowed on them, secretly and openly, and defend evil with good, for such there is a good end.⁴⁹

This ayah (verse) illustrates that patience is nurturing from Allah. Patience with sincerity is their motive; they are patient in seeking the Face of Allah, their Nurturer and Reformer. In addition, they establish prayer, spend secretly and openly, and repel evil with good. Allah has promised them a good end.

Patience is to the ability to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset with Allah. It is done while seeking His pleasure and hoping to draw closer to Him. If a person does not believe in Allah and is being patient, there is no reward for his patience. During times of difficulty, one should remember the reward Allah has promised for the sincerely patient believer.

⁴⁹ Surah Ar Ra 'ad 22

وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

And endure you patiently (O Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]), your patience is not but from Allah.⁵⁰

Only Allah can guide us to be sincerely patient. Allah tells us in Surah Al Fatiha – “You alone we worship and You alone we seek help”.

The secret to having ikhlas (sincerity) is asking Allah for help and relying on Him in all matters. Sincerity in patience is essential when praying, fasting, dealing with people, abstaining from sins, and accepting the decree.


⁵⁰ Surah An Nahl 127

14

SINCERITY IN REPENTANCE

Repentance is asking for forgiveness and returning to Allah after sinning. Repentance itself is purity, but when we repent, we need to be sincere. The conditions for repentance are:

1. To sincerely give up the sin
2. To sincerely regret the sin
3. To sincerely conclude never to return to the sin
4. To return any stolen items or belongings to their rightful owners



Sincere repentance is not for the praise of people or a good reputation. This means using repentance as a tool to look good in front of others.

There is no sincerity in such repentance and it will not be accepted. Some people repent to draw closer to a person and not closer to Allah.

People are a trial for one another because they can affect our ikhlas (sincerity). We may get affected by people's praise and dispraise. Our test is to maintain the quality of our deeds. People are tangible, but Allah is unseen and the path to Allah is ikhlas (sincerity).

When a person repents, the objective should be to return to Allah. When repenting, our hearts and minds must be present, because only Allah forgives transgressions. Sincerity is a condition for repentance and for the acceptance of righteous good deeds.

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾


And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. ⁵¹

⁵¹ Surah An Noor 31

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ
 عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ
 بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا نُورَنَا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا
 إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾

O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise) - the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet (Mohammed [peace and blessings upon him]) and those who believe with him. Their Light will run forward before them and (with their Records - Books of deeds) in their right hands. They will say: "Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us (and do not put it off till we cross over the Sirat [a slippery bridge over the Hell] safely) and grant us forgiveness. Verily, You are Able to do all things.⁵²

⁵² Surah At Tahreem 8



The believer sincerely repents to Allah while knowing it is the ultimate success. There is no savior from stress and calamities except with ikhlas (sincerity). The higher the person's faith, the greater their ikhlas (sincerity). We are all poor in front of Allah, and He is the Most Rich, and we need Him to accept our worship, good deeds and repentance.

We conclude by asking Allah to grant us ikhlas (sincerity) in all our worships, friendships and matters for sincerity is the way to salvation in this life and the next.



MAY ALLAH HAVE MERCY ON US
AND MAKE US AMONG THE
MUKHLISEEN (SINCERE ONES).
AMEEN.



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