

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## The Great Importance of Ikhlas in Worship, Actions & Statements

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Allaah, Subhanahu wa Ta'Ala, states in the Quran: "So, call you upon Allah making, (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none except 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)."<sup>1</sup>

"And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allaah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and give Zakat: and that is the right religion."<sup>2</sup>

"Say (O Muhammad): 'Verily, I am commanded to worship Allaah (Alone) by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for Allaah's sake only and not to show off, and not to set up rivals with Him in worship.'"<sup>3</sup>

"Say (O Muhammad): "O My slaves who believe (in Tawheed), be afraid of your Lord (Allaah) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those

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<sup>1</sup> Surah Ghafir, 40:14

<sup>2</sup> Surah al-Baiyinah 98:5

<sup>3</sup> Surah az-Zumar 39:11

who do good in this world, and Allaah's earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allaah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning."<sup>4</sup>

Ikhlas (sincerity) is the cornerstone of every righteous action and statement in Islam. Without sincerity, deeds become void, and their reward is lost. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ emphasized this principle in the famous hadith narrated by the leader of the believers, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه "Verily actions are by intentions, and for every person is what he intended. So, the one whose Hijrah was to Allah and His Messenger, then his Hijrah was to Allah and His Messenger. And the one whose hijrah was for the world to gain from it, or a woman to marry her, then his hijrah was to what he made hijrah for."<sup>5</sup>

This hadith underscores the importance of the intention (niyyah) behind every action and statement, determining whether an act is accepted by Allah or rejected.

### **The Statements of the Salaf on Ikhlas**

The righteous predecessors were deeply aware of the significance of sincerity in their worship and deeds. Some of their statements include:

'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه said: "You should be more concerned with the action being accepted than performing the action itself!"

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله emphasized the significance of sincerity in all actions. He stated: "Deeds without sincerity are like a traveler who carries dirt in his water jug; the carrying of it burdens him and it brings no benefit."

Imam Ibnul Qayyim رحمه الله said: "The level of the slave's sincerity in his intention, determination, aim, and fervent desire determines Allah's Tawfeeq (i.e., Allah's guidance for a slave and enabling him to act upon it) and His Aid for him. Aid and Assistance from Allah descends upon the slaves in accordance with the sincerity in their determination."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Surah az-Zumar 39:10

<sup>5</sup> Agreed upon

<sup>6</sup> Al-Fawaa'id, 181

He also رحمه الله said: "He who gets himself in the habit of doing actions just for the sake of Allah, there is nothing harder upon him than to do an action for other than Allah. And he who gets himself in the habit of doing actions based upon his desires, then there is nothing harder upon him than to try to do an action sincerely to Allah."

He also said: "The deeds of the heart are the foundation, and the deeds of the limbs follow them and complete them. If the foundation is firm, then the matter is strong."<sup>7</sup>

Yahya ibn Abee Katheer رحمه الله stated: "Study al-Niyyah (intention), for it is indeed more serious [a matter] than deeds."

### **The Words of the Scholars on Ikhlas**

Imam 'Abdur-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sa'dee رحمه الله stated: "Know that sincerity for Allah is the foundation of the religion, and the essence of Tawheed and worship. It is when the worshipper intends all of his deeds for the Face of Allah, for His rewards, and His favors. He does not intend to be seen, nor heard, nor does he do it for position or worldly matters. By this, he will have completed his emaan and Tawheed."

Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan حفظه الله has emphasized the critical importance of ikhlas (sincerity) in worship. He defines ikhlas as performing deeds solely for Allah's sake, free from any form of shirk (associating partners with Allah), riya' (showing off), or seeking worldly gains. This means that one's actions, intentions, and goals should be directed exclusively toward seeking Allah's pleasure.

Shaykh al-Fawzan حفظه الله also highlights that ikhlas entails purifying one's heart from hypocrisy and deceit, ensuring that both outward actions and inward intentions align in truthfulness and dedication to Allah. He references the hadith where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated: "The religion is sincerity (an-naṣiḥah)."

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<sup>7</sup> Madārij al-Sālikīn

## **Signs of Ikhlas**

Consistency in Worship – You continue your good deeds regardless of whether people see or praise you, laugh or be little you.

Lack of Concern for Praise or Criticism – Your focus is only on Allah's pleasure, not people's (supposed) approval.

Avoidance of Showing Off (Riya') – You do not seek validation or status from others through your acts of worship.

Increased Worship in Private – You worship more in solitude than in public, because your heart seeks Allah, not an audience.

Detachment from Outcomes – You perform actions purely for Allah, without being attached to personal benefits or results.

## **Safeguarding and Protecting Ikhlas**

To maintain sincerity, one must take proactive steps to safeguard their intentions from corruption.

The following are practical ways to protect Ikhlas:

Regular Self-Examination (Muhasabah) – Continuously question your intentions before, during, and after every action. Constantly question yourself: "Am I doing this for Allah alone?" If even a trace of seeking approval creeps in, purify your heart.

Ikhlas is rooted in Tawheed. The more you perfect your Tawheed, the stronger your sincerity will be.

Staying Away From Sin – both purify yourself internally and have external discipline. Sins darken the heart<sup>8</sup> making it harder to act solely for Allah. Keep in mind: Ikhlas is light; and sins/zulm is darkness.

Staying Away From Fitnah – Fitnah can come from doubts (shubuhah) or desires (shahawat), and both threaten sincerity. Reinforce your heart through knowledge, action and constant remembrance of Allah.

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<sup>8</sup> Surah Al-Mutaffifin 83:14

Stay Away From Fitnah and It's People – Types of People to Avoid: People of Desires (Shahawat) → Those who openly engage in sins and normalize them. People of Doubts (Shubuhah) → Those who spread misguidance, deviant ideologies, their desire and innovations. Argumentative People → Those who constantly debate, create conflicts, and cause confusion. Neglectful People → Those whose lives are dominated by dunya, laziness, and heedlessness.

Stay Away from Bid'ah (Innovations) – Innovations in religion corrupt sincerity because they mix desires with worship. Follow the Sunnah precisely — that is the safest way to preserve sincerity.

Be Firm Upon the Sunnah – The safest path is sticking closely to the Qur'an and the Sunnah as understood by the Salaf.

The Prophet ﷺ warned: “Whoever innovates in this matter of ours that which is not from it, it will be rejected.”<sup>9</sup>

Concealing Acts of Worship – Perform good deeds in private to avoid seeking praise or recognition from people.

Free of Riyaa (Showing Off) – Be vigilant against hidden pride and seeking status through acts of worship. The Prophet ﷺ warned against minor shirk (riyaa), which creeps into one's heart silently.

Making Frequent Du'a – Supplicate to Allah to purify your heart and keep your intentions sincere for His Sake Alone.

Seeking Knowledge and Reminding Yourself of the Purpose of Life – Understanding the reward of sincerity and the danger of insincere acts strengthens one's resolve.

Keeping Righteous Company – Surround yourself with people who remind you of Allah and encourage sincerity.

**Ikhlas as a Fortress Against Shaytan:** Shaytan vowed to mislead mankind, but he admitted that he could not influence those with pure sincerity:

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<sup>9</sup> Bukhari & Muslim

"Except Your chosen servants among them (al-mukhlaseen)." <sup>10</sup>

This means the more ikhlas you have, the more protected you are from Shaytan's whispers and deception.

### **The Fruits of Ikhlas**

With Ikhlas, Allah blesses the actions of those who strive for His sake. A sincere person will:

**Purification of the Heart:** Ikhlas purifies the heart and removes any hidden desires for fame, wealth, or recognition from others. It strengthens one's connection with Allah.

**Acceptance of Actions:** Sincere deeds are more likely to be accepted by Allah. When one's actions are done solely for Allah's sake, they are elevated and have more value in the sight of Allah.

**Clarity in Purpose:** Ikhlas helps to maintain clarity of intention, ensuring that all actions are directed solely to please Allah, avoiding distractions and conflicting desires.

**Inner Peace:** A sincere heart is at peace because it is free from the need for validation from others. Ikhlas leads to tranquility and contentment with Allah's decree.

**Increased Reward:** When actions are done even more sincere, they carry greater reward in the Hereafter, as Allah rewards actions done only purely for His sake.

**Free of Riyaa (Showing off):** Ikhlas protects the believer from the harmful trait of showing off or seeking approval from others. This leads to a more humble and honest approach to worship and actions.

**Strengthening of Faith:** Sincerity strengthens one's emaan because it focuses the heart on seeking Allah's pleasure, increasing devotion and commitment to worship Him Alone correctly.

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<sup>10</sup> Surah Saad 38:83

Guidance from Allah: Allah grants further guidance and opens doors of wisdom and success to those who are sincere in their intentions and actions. Also increasing in help and assistance.

Protection from Shaytan: Ikhlas helps guard the individual from the whispers of Shaytan, who often seeks to corrupt one's intentions, diverting them from Allah's path.

Ease in Life: The sincere person experiences ease in their life, as their heart is focused on it's purpose and what is truly important, allowing them to overcome challenges and hardships with faith.

Connection with Allah: Meaning, sincerity establishes a closer relationship with Allah. The believer is constantly seeking Allah's pleasure and feels His presence more strongly in their life.

Influence and Blessing: Sincerity brings barakah (blessings) into one's life and work, (including their work in da'wah) and often results in positive influence over others, as people are drawn to the sincerity and honesty of the believer.

Elevation of Status: Allah elevates the status of those who are sincere in their worship and actions. Sincerity leads to a higher rank in both this life and the Hereafter.

Allah promises: "As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (Allah's Religion – Islamic Monotheism). And verily, Allah is with the Muhsinoon (good-doers)."<sup>11</sup>

### **Tawheed & Ikhlas as the First Step in Rectifying the Ummah**

Tawheed & Ikhlas is the first and most crucial step in rectifying the Ummah because it directly addresses the core issue that prevents the Ummah from progressing—purity and sincerity of intention in worshipping Allah Alone. When sincerity in worship, actions, and intentions is established, it paves the way for true reform.

Unity of Purpose: One of the greatest challenges faced by the Ummah is its fragmentation. Ikhlas brings unity of purpose, as all actions—whether personal or communal—are directed toward worshipping Allah Alone and

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<sup>11</sup> Surah Al- 'Ankabut, 29:69

seeking His good pleasure. When individuals and communities are focused on the same goal, they are more likely to work together effectively. The diversity in the Ummah becomes a strength rather than a source of division, as different talents, cultures, and backgrounds are united in their sincere worship and devotion to Allah Alone.

**Purification of The Heart:** The Ummah is often divided and weakened due to impurities in the hearts of individuals—moving away from Tawheed and sincerity and increasing in pride, jealousy, and desires for status or wealth. These internal issues lead to disunity, mistrust, and conflict. Ikhlas purifies the heart from these negative traits by ensuring that actions are done for the sole pleasure of Allah, not for personal gain or recognition. When hearts are purified, the Ummah becomes more united and stronger.

**Authentic Worship:** Ikhlas ensures that worship is sincere and free from any form of show-off (riyaa). This is vital for the Ummah's revival, as the Ummah's strength and success depend on genuine worship of Allah. When individuals engage in acts of worship purely for Allah's sake, they gain divine support, blessings, and guidance, which ultimately help the community as a whole.

**Strengthening of Emaan (Faith):** Ikhlas nurtures emaan and a strong connection to Allah. It leads to a deeper commitment to the faith, which naturally strengthens the individual and, by extension, the Ummah. When the faith of each member is sincere and steadfast, the Ummah becomes a strong and resilient entity capable of withstanding challenges, both internally and externally.

**Elimination of Hypocrisy (Nifaq):** Hypocrisy Nifaq is a major cause of corruption within the Ummah. Ikhlas guards against hypocrisy, which breeds division, deceit, and disloyalty. When a person is truly sincere in their faith and actions, they are protected from hypocrisy and will act according to the principles of Islam in emaan rather than personal or worldly motivations.

**Effective Leadership:** Leaders who are sincere in their intentions lead by example, inspiring the Ummah to follow. Ikhlas in leadership ensures that decisions are made for the sake of the Ummah's welfare, not personal interest. When leadership is free from corruption and self-serving motives, the Ummah can progress with fairness, justice, and effectiveness.



**Collective Accountability:** When members of the Ummah are sincere in their actions, they are more likely to hold themselves and others accountable in a positive, constructive manner. Ikhlas fosters a culture of responsibility where people encourage one another toward good, correct mistakes, and uplift each other, working together for the common good of the community.

**Divine Support & Blessings:** Allah grants His help and blessings to those who are sincere in their faith. Ikhlas opens the door to divine assistance, which is essential for the success and progress of the Ummah. With Allah's help, the Ummah can overcome trials and emerge victorious, both in this life and the Hereafter.

**Setting a Good Example:** When individuals embody Ikhlas, they become role models for others. A sincere Ummah attracts others to the truth and inspires them to follow the path of righteousness. Sincerity, in both personal and communal actions, sets a good example for future generations and contributes to a lasting, positive legacy.

**Removing Divisiveness and Conflict:** Much of the division within the Ummah arises from personal egos, competing interests, desires and pride. Ikhlas removes these barriers, fostering an environment of cooperation and mutual respect. With Ikhlas, the Ummah can overcome sectarianism and focus on what truly unites them: their worship of Allah Alone in truth and following His Messenger ﷺ.

Ikhlas is the first step in rectifying the Ummah because it addresses the root cause of disunity, corruption, and weakness—the lack of purity of intention. By cultivating sincerity in every aspect of life, the individual and the collective are able to align their actions with the will of Allah, leading to a revitalized, united, and successful Ummah that is capable of achieving its divine purpose.

## **Conclusion**

The people of knowledge have defined Ikhlas as: "To single out Allah – free from all imperfection – in one's intention (qasd) in one's obedience (to Him)."

Achieving Ikhlas requires continuous self-examination and a sincere struggle against the whispers of Shaytan. Through it, one attains Allah's pleasure, success in this life and the next, and true peace of heart.

The Ultimate Level of Ikhlas: The highest level of ikhlas is when a person becomes mukhlis lillah—one whose entire existence is for Allah alone, where even their inner thoughts and emotions are directed toward His pleasure. At this level, every breath, movement, and stillness is an act of devotion.

May Allah grant us true sincerity and make our every deed and statement purely for His sake. Ameen.

