



23. The Level of Having Ihsaan

Delivered by His Eminence

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All praise is due to Allaah. He made ihsaan the highest level we can attain, and made its people those who will be granted the most virtuous of ranks. I praise Allaah, as He is perfect in every way, and I am grateful for his abounding and unmistakable favours. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner. He is the only One in ultimate control of all blessings. I further bear witness that Muhammad is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. He was indeed a Prophet of many merits. May Allaah grant an abundance of His commendation and protection to His Messenger, as well as to the Messenger’s family and Companions, for as long as the earth and sky continue to remain.

Dear Muslims, you must observe taqwaa of Allaah (i.e. by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions). Allaah deserves that you observe taqwaa and remain mindful of Him whether you are in public or private. In addition, you must devote yourselves to Him by having ihsaan (i.e. worshipping Him in the best way). When you do that, He will grant you immense kindness, mercy, and reward. The most remarkable of people are those who have hearts which love Allaah more than all else, they continually remain mindful of Him, they spend time calling upon Him in private, they do not devote any of their worship to other than Him, they obey Him whenever they speak, they comply with His directives whenever they act, they are happy knowing that He is near to them, they feel sorrow about Him reprimanding them, they cannot bear to be away from Him for even a moment, and they do not utter any word that displeases Him.

Dear Muslims, when people attain certain levels in Allaah’s religion, that leads them to high standing with Allaah, makes them role models for others to follow, and enables them to have Allaah be pleased with them and love them. Servants of Allaah, the pinnacle of those levels is called “ihsaan” in Arabic. It entails doing what is best in the most complete way. It combines the elements of completion and goodness.

Since Islaam’s teachings form the foundation from which all virtues emanate, the level of ihsaan is given the greatest of importance in Islaam’s texts and it is one of the most crucial acts of worship to perform. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said, ((**Allaah indeed instructs you to be fair, have ihsaan, and give to those related to you**)).¹ In addition, our Prophet – the leader of all people in having ihsaan – stated, “Allaah certainly prescribed ihsaan in all things.” This was collected by Muslim.

The starting point of ihsaan lies in a person doing what is best as it relates to his own self, by making himself recognize his Lord and Creator, affirming his Lord’s uniqueness, worshipping his Lord with full mindfulness, and constantly struggling to maintain full sincerity towards his Lord. When a person does those, he would actualize the statement of the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection), “Worship Allaah as though you could see Him; and although you cannot see Him in this world, always remember that he sees you.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim. That level is the highest objective and level, and there is no aim greater than that for a person of eemaan (i.e. someone who has sound beliefs and performs righteous deeds).

By way of having ihsaan, a person becomes as someone would be if he actually sees his Lord with his very own eyes. Can you imagine the degree of what such a person would feel towards Allaah in

¹ Soorah an-Nahl (16):90.



terms of reverence, humility, servitude, and submission? When a person knows that his Lord always sees him, is aware of even his innermost secrets, and is never unaware of anything about him for even the blink of an eye, that person would strive to perform all his acts of worship as best as possible, without any sort of deficiency and without ever feeling any sort of fatigue.

A person of eemaan is to have ihsaan when performing Salaah (obligatory prayers) since those are the times at which he meets his Lord, Allaah, who is to be more beloved to him than all else. Those are the times when he calls upon his Lord in private and he should, therefore, ensure that he does so in the best way. His limbs should come to rest while bowing and prostrating. He should not let any part of his prayer be stolen from him, he should not perform its movements quickly and abruptly the way a bird pecks, and he should not be unmindful or inattentive about what he is doing. He should perform his prayers with composure, humility, mindfulness, and focus.

A person of eemaan is to also have ihsaan when giving Zakaah (obligatory charity). Giving Zakaah purifies one's wealth, makes one's earnings grow, and provides consolation to one's brothers who are in need. Thus, one is to give it to those entitled, and do so at the time when it is due. It is to be given in full, without any decrease. It is to be given with willingness. One must not remind any recipient of having given it, or cause any sort of harm to a recipient. Furthermore, one should not be too stingy to give optional charity in addition to Zakaah, since that would be a further act of kindness and an extension of ihsaan.

A person of eemaan is to also have ihsaan when he fasts. That comes about by foregoing his own desires, and giving priority to what Allaah wants from him. By doing that, the individual worships Allaah in a very special way and attains the level of ihsaan. The individual foregoes the most beloved of things to himself without even the nearest of people to him knowing about that, and he does so giving priority to the One who is aware of all things. This is the essence of ihsaan, and fasting is an incredible means by which ihsaan can be actualized.

A person of eemaan is also to have ihsaan when performing Hajj, which is an act that represents the response of an individual to the call issued by his Lord, who is to be more beloved to him than all else. Hajj further entails an individual setting out to the House of his Lord; performing all acts of worship there sincerely for his Lord alone; and avoiding marital intimacy and its precursors, disobedience to Allaah, and disputation for the purpose of rejecting the truth. In such a state, the individual is to fully devote himself to Allaah and be mindful of the reverence due to the location to which he has come. While at the site of Allaah's sacred house and within the precincts of His favours and blessings, a person must desist from having Allaah see him doing anything unbecoming, neglecting any obligation, or falling short in any act of worship. Thus, Hajj is another major manifestation of ihsaan.

In addition to the preceding, a person of eemaan is to have ihsaan as it relates to others. Once a person has ihsaan as it relates to himself, he should strive to train himself to have ihsaan towards others. There are innumerable ways that can be done including extending kindness, having a pleasant facial expression, helping others in need, assisting others in distress, feeding those who are hungry, caring for orphans, tending to widows, assisting people in getting married, visiting the ill, teaching those who lack knowledge, giving directions to those who lost their way, and so on.

Dear Muslims, further manifestations of ihsaan that provide profound admonition for Allaah's worshipping servants can be found in the hadeeth that mentions seven types of people to whom Allaah will grant shade on the day when there will be no shade except the shade that He grants. Among those mentioned were, "a man who says 'I fear Allaah' when a woman of status and beauty entices him to commit adultery; a man who gives charity so discreetly that even his left hand does not know what his right hand gives; and a man who mentions Allaah while alone and, due to that, his two eyes shed tears



out of reverence for Allaah and yearning to meet Him.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim. These are three truly profound manifestations of ihsaan that only the most complete of individuals would be able to embody.

The first one mentioned is the case of a man who finds himself tested by woman of status and beauty enticing him to commit adultery with her. That situation could very well cause him to give in. However, remembering that Allaah always sees him is like a flame that burns brightly in his heart and it outshines the desires he feels within himself. Thus, he makes a momentous statement by saying “I fear Allaah” due to overcoming his own inclinations and being mindful of his Guardian Lord. That is something that would not be uttered without its roots already being very firmly implanted in the heart. An individual would not reach that level without having an abundant share within himself of ihsaan and mindfulness of Allaah.

The second manifestation mentioned in the hadeeth is the case of someone who gives to the poor in private, doing that as a way of ensuring his sincerity to Allaah, the Most Exalted. Here, the utmost degree of ihsaan is actualized since the person extends his generosity to others, and he also conceals that from the eyes of people. This represents the epitome of ihsaan: performing an act of worship without giving mind to anyone besides Allaah, and making one’s priority the fact that Allaah sees him and knows everything about him.

The third manifestation mentioned in the hadeeth is the case of someone who mentions Allaah while alone and, due to that, his two eyes shed tears because of the fear, love, hope, and yearning that he feels towards Allaah. This type of person is someone who sincerely devotes all of his worship to Allaah and performs his deeds in the best way. This can be understood since he sought to be away from people in order to be focused on what Allaah sees from him, and he then continues remaining mindful that Allaah sees him. This person’s ihsaan is indicated by him being alone, mentioning Allaah, calling upon Allaah in private, and even weeping. There are many facets of ihsaan that such a person engages in.

Moreover, since people with the foregoing qualities gave priority to remembering that their Lord always sees everything about them, Allaah – who is perfect in every way – will grant them a reward on the Day of Resurrection which comes from none besides Him, since there will no shade on that day besides the shade that He grants. Allaah indeed spoke the truth by saying, **((Is the reward for ihsaan (doing good in this world) anything other than ihsaan (receiving good in the hereafter)?))**¹

May Allaah enable all of us to glean benefit from the evidences and guidance He sent down to us, and may He bless us by the Sunnah of the best individual among all of creation. I implore Allaah, the Most Magnificent, to forgive myself and all of you for every sin. Thus, you should also seek His forgiveness since He is certainly abundantly forgiving.



All praise is due to Allaah for His kindness, and I am grateful to Him for His innumerable favours and blessings. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. May Allaah grant His commendation, protection, and blessings to His Messenger, as well as to the Messenger’s family, Companions, and all who continue to follow their path until the Day of Recompense.

My dear brothers who have eemaan, ihsaan regarding both oneself and others leads to incredible results and rewards.

¹ Soorah ar-Rahmaan (55):60.



Firstly, the individual attains the level of having Allaah be pleased with him, and also having Allaah be with him. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, said, **((Allaah indeed loves those who have ihsaan))**¹, and Allaah also said, **((Allaah is most certainly with those who have ihsaan))**.²

Secondly, Allaah's mercy is nearer to those who have ihsaan than it is to anyone else. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said, **((Allaah's mercy is indeed near to those who have ihsaan))**.³

Thirdly, the individual who has ihsaan is promised an increase of goodness from Allaah, the Most Majestic. He said, **((Is the reward for ihsaan (doing good in this world) anything other than ihsaan (receiving good in the hereafter?))**,⁴ and He also said, **((We will grant increase to those who have ihsaan))**.⁵

Fourthly, a person who has ihsaan is entitled to glad tidings of reward from Allaah. He said, **((and convey glad tidings to those who have ihsaan))**,⁶ and He also said, **((They will find with their Lord all that they desire. That is the reward of those who have ihsaan))**.⁷

Fifthly, the rewards of those who have ihsaan are preserved with Allaah, even though they are concealed from people and even though some people may deny them. Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic, said, **((Allaah would certainly not cause any reward to be lost in the case of those who have ihsaan))**.⁸

Sixthly, having ihsaan produces indescribable enjoyment within a person's heart, and this is why some of the scholars have commented "that the greatest enjoyment that can be found in this world is that which comes from having ihsaan." This enjoyment may also be considered part of the glad tidings mentioned earlier.

All of the foregoing provides very strong encouragement to traverse the path of ihsaan such that it is found in all of a person's words, deeds, and circumstances overall. May Allaah make all of us steadfast in adhering to the path of ihsaan. O Allaah, we beseech You to answer our supplication.

¹ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):195.

² Soorah al-'Ankaboot (29):69.

³ Soorah al-A'raaf (7):56.

⁴ Soorah ar-Rahmaan (55):60.

⁵ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):58.

⁶ Soorah al-Hajj (22):37.

⁷ Soorah az-Zumar (39):34.

⁸ Soorah at-Tawbah (9):120.