

# Ihsan in Ramadan

## Lecture 2-

When Allaah (Ta'ala) mentions that He loves certain people or certain characteristics, then one should know that it (Ihsan) can be obligatory or recommendable.

Allaah has mentioned that He loves Al-Muhsineen in 5 verses in the Qur'an.

"If the slave is ordered with Ihsan in killing (setting penalty upon) those who deserve it among the human beings, and the practice of Ihsan when slaughtering the cattle, then what about other cases?" [Shaikh As-Sa'dee in Bahjat Qulub al-Abrar, pg. 119]

Allaah (Ta'ala) Commands His servants with Ihsan in Surat An-Nahl (16:90):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Verily, Allaah enjoins Al-'Adl (i.e., justice and worshipping none but Allaah Alone) and Ihsan [i.e., to be patient in performing your duties to Allaah, totally for Allaah's Sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in a perfect manner...]"

Ihsan is something loftier than 'Adl (justice). Being keen to be just is obligatory and being keen to practice Ihsan (perfection) is voluntary and recommendable.

Based on this, Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat An-Nisaa' (4:125):

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ

"And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allaah and he is a Muhsin (a good-doer)."

Kulaib (Radia-Allaahu 'anhu) narrated that Allaah's Messenger (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Allaah loves when the doer does any action to practice Ihsan." [Reported by Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Imaan no. 5315 and authenticated by Al-Albaani in Saheeh Al-Jamie no. 1891 and graded Hasan].

No matter what good action it is, perfect it.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (Rahimahullaah) said in "Al-Kafiyah Ash-Shafiyah": "Allaah is not pleased with the abundance of our deeds. Rather (He is pleased) with the best of it (accompanied) with Imaan. The learned people seek Ihsan of their deeds (to be perfect and for Allaah's Sake and in accordance to the Sunnah of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), while the ignorant ones were being blinded from Al-Ihsan."

Al-Ihsan is the ultimate goal of human existence. Allaah ('Azza wa Jall) says in Surat Al-Mulk (67:2):

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deeds.”

In Surat Al-Kahf (18:7), Allaah (Ta'ala) says:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds. [i.e., those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them (deeds) totally for Allaah's Sake and in accordance to the legal ways of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam)].”

And He (Ta'ala) says in Surat Al-Kahf (18:30):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

“Verily, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, certainly We shall not make the reward of anyone who does his (righteous) deeds in the most perfect manner to be lost.”

Ash-Shanqeeti said in Al-Adhb an-Nameer, “Allaah (Ta'ala) did not say أكثر عملا "abundant in deeds". If the slave knows that he is created in order to be tested in

perfecting his deeds, he would be keen to be in the state that makes him succeed in this test.

The result of this test will be shown on the Day of Judgment; whoever did not succeed in it will be drawn to Hellfire, so failure in this test is destruction.

Jibreel ('Alayhis-salaam) wanted to warn the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) about the seriousness (greatness) of this matter. He said to Prophet Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam): 'O Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam)! Tell me about Ihsan (which the creation is created to be tested concerning it).'

The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) answered that the only way to it is the way of observation and knowledge, saying: 'Al-Ihsan is to worship Allaah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion, then know that He sees you.' [Al-Bukhaari]" [End quote]

Ihsan is to do good in a perfect way i.e., to act sincerely for Allaah's Sake and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and by doing it in a perfect way. It is nearness to Allaah. Your striving and effort to be Muhsin is considered an act of nearness to Allaah ('Azza wa Jall).

Let us see the texts in which Allaah praises Al-Ihsan.

Whosoever's way is Al-Ihsan, then Allaah will do good to Him. Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat Ar-Rahmaan (55:60):

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

"Is there any reward for good other than good?"

This is a confirmation inquiry i.e., Is there any reward for one who has practiced Ihsan in worshipping Allaah and doing Ihsan to the servants of Allaah except that Allaah will do good to him in reward?

Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat Yunus (10:26):

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

"For those who have done good is the best (reward i.e., Paradise) and even more (i.e., having the honor of glancing at the Countenance of Allaah). Neither darkness

nor dust nor any humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise; they will abide therein forever.”

In Surat Al-Baqarah (2:195), He (Ta’ala) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Truly, Allaah loves Al-Muhsinun (the good-doers).”

The love of Allaah is the utmost wish that the believer desires and the best of what the supplicants ask for. Its means of attainment is that the slave is from among the Muhsineen in Allaah’s Worship and Muhsin to His servants. Hence, he will attain Allaah’s Love and Allaah’s Mercy according to what he did of Ihsan.

Allaah’s Love for His believing slave is above (greater than) His Benevolence and gifts and rewards.

They also attain His Companionship.

He (Ta’ala) says in Surat Al-‘Ankabut (29:69):

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And verily, Allaah is with the Muhsinun (good doers).”

Also, in Surat An-Nahl (16:128):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

“Truly, Allaah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty unto Him), and those who are Muhsinun (good doers).”

In Surat At-Tawbah (9:91), He (Ta’ala) says:

مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

“No ground (of complaint) can there be against the Muhsinun (good-doers).”

In Surat Az-Zumar (39:10), He (Ta’ala) says:

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ

“Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world.”

Accordingly, all these texts push you to Ihsan. Allaah will love you, Allaah will be with you. Therefore, you should take care of Ihsan

1. Because it is a Command of Allaah for us, so it is an act of worship
2. Because it is a means of attaining Allaah’s Love
3. Because it is a means of the Companionship of Allaah for us

Moreover, Allaah (Ta’ala) recompenses Al-Muhsineen with a great reward on the Day of Resurrection. Allaah (Ta’ala) says in Surat Al-Mursalat (77:41-43):

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلِّ وَعُيُونٍ

“Verily, the pious shall be amidst shades and springs.

وَفَوَكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

And fruits, such as they desire.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Eat and drink comfortably for that which you used to do.”

All this reward, is for what reason? In (77:44) Allaah (Ta’aala) says:

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Verily, thus We reward the Muhsinun (good doers).”

Because they were Muhsineen in the Dunya, this is their reward.

Ihsan of the slave is of two kinds:

First: Ihsan (perfection) in worshipping Allaah which is mentioned in the Hadeeth of Jibreel (‘Alayhis-salaam) when the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “To worship Allaah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion, then consider that He is looking at you.” [Al-Bukhaari]

This is the state of observation in which the slave reminds himself and becomes aware of Allaah's Nearness and Watchfulness of him. He imagines that he is standing before Allaah ('Azza wa Jall), and Allaah is watching him in his movements, silent moments, his secrets, and open (public) affairs. This is the station of sincere observation; this is the lesser state of Ihsan.

The second state which is the utmost state of Ihsan is when the slave witnesses, with his heart, Allaah's observation as if he sees Allaah and Allaah sees him.

Whoever reaches this state has reached the ultimate Ihsan, and faith in his heart becomes seen. He knows his Rabb and feels joy in his seclusion, he feels delighted when he remembers Him, talks to Him secretly, and while invoking Him. [Fat-h Al-Bari and this is said by Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali (Rahimahullaah)]

Abu Hurairah (Radia-Allaahu 'anhu) narrated that a group of people from the desert came to Prophet Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said: "O Messenger of Allaah! Some of our relatives visited us and told us that 'No deed will benefit without Hijrah (emigration) and Jihaad (struggle in the Cause of Allaah).'" Allaah's Messenger (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Wherever you may be, perfect your worship of Allaah, and receive the glad tidings of Paradise." [Reported by Al-Bayhaqi and authenticated by Al-Albaani who graded it Hasan in Al-Silsilah As-Saheeha no. 3146]

Second: Ihsan (doing good) to the servants of Allaah by extending all kinds of good to them, Ihsan to the servants of Allaah and created beings generally by statement, action, and monetarily, and the greatest Ihsan is to teach the ignorant ones, guide the astray ones and give advice to all mankind.

Also, from the Ihsan is,

1. To help the needy ones, rescue the distressed ones, remove harm from the distressed ones, and use one's status and position among people to intercede for people in matters that benefit them.
2. From monetary Ihsan is to collect Sadaqah (money) whether for spending on the poor people or on Islamic projects (Islamic centers).
3. Also from the types of Ihsan is to give gifts to the poor and rich, specifically to relatives and neighbors, and those who have rights upon us of close friends, helpers, and others.

4. One of the greatest Ihsan that we can do for the servants of Allaah is to pardon the wrongdoers and those who did evil to us and forgive their mistakes (the small and the great ones).” [Fat-h Ar-Raheem, Al-Malik Al-‘Allam, by Shaikh As-Sa’dee.]

There is an example for us in Surat Yusuf of how Yusuf (‘Alayhis-salaam) pardoned his brothers.

Allaah (Ta’ala) has promised the doers of both types of Ihsan with reward, as He (Ta’ala) says in Surat At-Tawbah (9:120):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Surely, Allaah wastes not the reward of the Muhsinun [those who do good sincerely for Allaah’s Sake and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)].”

Ibn Al-Qayyim (Rahimahullaah) said in his explanation of the means of the opening (expansion) of the breasts: “One of the means of opening the breasts is one’s Ihsan (doing good) to the creation and benefitting them with one’s efforts in regards his position, in addition to other kinds of Ihsan, and with as much as one can afford of his wealth. Indeed, the person who is generous and who is a Muhsin (good doer) is one of the people whose breast is opened (expanded); he has a blissful heart which comes from having a deeper concern/ compassion towards others. On the other hand, the miser who does not do good to others will feel the constriction of his breast and will be more miserable in life, having many concerns (worries) and grief.

The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) has set forth an example in the Saheeh tradition, for the miser and the alms-giver: “They are like two people wearing iron cloaks from their breasts to their collar bones, and when the alms-giver gives in charity, the cloak becomes spacious till it covers his whole body to such an extent that it hides his fingertips and covers his footprints [obliterates his tracks (i.e., his sins will be forgiven)]. And when the miser wants to spend, it (the iron cloak) sticks and (its) every ring gets stuck to its place and he tries to widen it, but it does not become wide.” [Saheeh Al-Bukhaari no. 1443 and Muslim no. 1021, the Book of Zakaat]

These are the examples of the opening (expansion) the breast of the alms-giving believer and the constriction of the breast of the miser and the straightening of his heart.” [Zaad al-Ma’ad]

Every time he wants to spend, his heart is constricted, and the miser's heart is always constricted in intensive worry, grief, and concern. He is not helped in his affairs, nothing of his needs is fulfilled.

5. The greatest Ihsan to the creation is teaching mankind what benefits them in their religion and what will be a means of their salvation in this world and the Hereafter. And that is knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the jurisprudence of the Salaf (the predecessors)- knowledge by which man is guided to ways of goodness and nearness to Allaah, and by which he is warned against the ways of evil and destruction. This is the duty (task) of the Messengers and the followers of the Messengers. In this way, they became the greatest of the people in Ihsan (doing good) to the creation.

Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat Aal-'Imran (3:164):

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“Indeed, Allaah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger [Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)] from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur’an), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur’an) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)] while before that they had been in manifest error.”

Sources:

- 1- An-Nahj Al-Asma by Shaikh An-Najdi
- 2- Al-Asma Al-Husna wa As-Sifaat Al-Ulaa by Shaikh Wahbi
- 3- Fiqhul-Asmaa Al-Husna by Shaikh ‘Abdur-Razzaq al-Badr