

O Allah! Open the Doors of Your Mercy

THE IQRA 5-MINUTE COURSE

*The Vital
Sincerity*

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Who should take this Course?

As the course title explains it, sincerity is vital for everyone – that’s because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has said in the famous *hadith* of Al-Bukhari and Muslim:

« إِيْمَانًا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ ، وَإِيْمَانًا لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مَّا نَوَى »

“All deeds are by intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention.”

And remember, a day has 1,440 minutes. All we’re asking is your 5 minutes!

Minute 1

WHAT EXACTLY IS IKHLAS?

Assalamu Alaikum Dear Brother or Sister,

The word *Ikhlas* or sincerity is derived from the Arabic term “kh-l-s”, which means to be purified or refined. *Al-Munavi* defines the term *Ikhlas* as purifying the heart from all impurities which spoils its cleanliness.

As Allah Says in the *Qur'an*:

﴿ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ ﴾

“And purify their religion for Allah (by worshipping none but Allah, and do good for Allah’s sake only, not to show-off).”
[4:146]

That way, *Ikhlas* is to do everything, internal and external - only desiring the pleasure of Allah. It requires that you forget the eyes of the people, and whether they see or appreciate your deeds or not, with the only thing on your mind that Allah is watching you.

Minute 2

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE CLASSES OF *IKHLAS*?

The reality of *Ikhlas* is repudiating from everything except Allah. We can understand it better, when we learn of its two kinds:

1. Sincerity of Religion

What differentiates Islam from the rest, is the *Ikhlas* of Muslims in the worship of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*.

Ar-Raghib said: "The sincerity of a Muslim in religion is to repudiate trinity from Christianity, and anthropomorphism from the Jewish faith."

As Allah Says in the *Qur'an*:

﴿ وَاذْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴾

“...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.” [7:29]

2. Sincerity in Actions

There is an alarming *hadith* recorded by *Muslim* about a Scholar, a Martyr and a charitable man on the Day of Judgment. They were all eager to enter *Jannah* because of their good deeds. Instead, they would be sent to the Hell-Fire, because their deeds were done with the intention of pleasing people - not pleasing Allah. They wanted people to see them as they were doing good, because they sought people's praise.

We also understand from this hadith that *Ikhlas* is between the slave and His Lord – even the Angels had written down the good these people had done; but it was Allah who exposed their true intentions.

We all know the famous story of the prostitute who was rewarded with *Jannah* for giving water to a thirsty dog (See *Al-Bukhari*) – but what was it that actually got her into *Jannah*? Was it just her simple act?

It couldn't be, because as mentioned before – scholars, martyrs and charitable people would be thrown in hell because they were insincere – but she was helping the dog only for the sake of Allah.

That's how pure intention elevates one's deeds.

Minute 3

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

Ikhlas is the base of every action which we do – if the foundation is corrupt, then the building could be easily destroyed.

And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has said in an authentic *Hadith* recorded by *An-Nasai*:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ حَالِصًا وَابْتِغَايَ بِهِ

وَجْهَهُ »

“Undoubtedly, Allah does not accept any deed, except that this is done only for His sake.”

This becomes clear in the words of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) who related, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Three men of

the past were travelling and took refuge for the night in a cave. They entered it and a rock fell down the mountain and blocking the entrance thereby. They said, 'The only thing that will rescue us from this rock is to call on Allah invoking the good actions that we have done!'

One of them said, 'O Allah, my parents are both old and it is my habit never to give milk in the evening either to my family or friends before giving it to them first. One day I went a long way in search of something and did not reach them until they had already gone to bed. I milked their evening drink but found them asleep. I did not want to wake them nor to give my family or friends their evening drink before they had had theirs, so I remained with the cup in my hand waiting for them to wake up until dawn came. The children were at my feet, crying because of hunger. Then they woke up and drank their drink. O Allah, if I did that seeking Your Countenance, then rescue us from the situation

we are, with regards this rock.’ It (the rock) opened up a little but they still couldn’t get out.

The second said, ‘O Allah! A cousin of mine was a person I loved the most. I tried to seduce her and she refused me until one year when she was in dire need. She came to me and I gave her a hundred and twenty dinars provided that she would let me do what I wished with her. She obliged, but when I was about to have my way with her, she said, ‘Fear Allah and do not deflower without having the right to do so.’ ‘I then left her alone despite the fact that she was the one I loved the most of all people – and I also left her with the gold I had given her. O Allah, if I did that desire Your Face, then rescue us from our situation!’ The rock moved a little further, but they still couldn’t get out.

The third one said, ‘O Allah, I’d employed some workers and gave all of them their wages except for one man, who went off without taking what was owed. I invested his wage until it multiplied

in value. After a while, he came to me and said, 'Slave of Allah, pay me my wage!' I said, 'All the camels, cattle, sheep and slaves that you see here have come from your wage.' He said, 'Slave of Allah, do not make fun of me!' I said, 'I am not making fun of you.' He took them all and drove them off, not leaving anything. O Allah, if I did that out of the desire for Your Face, then rescue us from the situation we are in!' The rock moved away and they all walked out."

[Recorded by Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

And there's more. Allah rewards the intentions that are for His sake. He 'Azza wa Jall Says:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ

﴿ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Say, ‘Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the ‘Alamin.’” [6:162]

This verse tells us that everything can be for the sake of Allah. Every actions of man’s life intending for the praise of Allah, comes under the sincerity towards Allah.

Spending your earnings on family members, or the poor can be for Allah, and thus stand rewarded [See *Al-Bukhari*]

Even your sleep can be for Allah; if you say you will sleep at a certain hour, so you can wake up for *Fajr* – then this sleep is for Allah. Imagine being rewarded for 6-8 hours of sleep! [See *An-Nasai*]

And when there’s *Ikhlas* in the action, then even Shaitan can’t get to you. We understand this from the *Quran*, where Shaitan vowed to

beautify the path of evil for mankind,
thereby misleading them all:

﴿إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ﴾

**“Except Your chosen, (guided) slaves
among them.” [15:40]**

That’s why scholars have opined that the heart’s act of worship – is the most important act of worship – it’s the driving force behind all that pleases Allah.

And *As-Soosi’s* words are apt in this context:
“What Allah requires from your (good) actions,” he said, “is *Ikhlās* and nothing else.”

Minute 4

HOW TO CHECK FOR IKHLAS?

Although Allah Knows best with regards to one's *Ikhlas* as we've read before, one way to check for it is by examining our thoughts – both while doing the action and after it. As Imam Al-Ghazzali said:

“If you want to know whether something you did was purely for the sake of Allah or not, you should test your reaction when someone acts ungratefully (after you have done the act).

Did you feel self-righteous, like you were doing the person a favor? Did you feel angry that they did not appreciate your work?”

Or was it that, “We were expecting, at the very least, recognition and respect from the person as a result of the good we did to them.”

So going by that, even if a person has quenched the thirst of another, and if he doesn't thank him – then he would find no difference in his heart, as he did the act purely for the sake of Allah – and not to expect thanks or win appreciation of others in the least.

As Allah 'Azza wa Jall describes His righteous slaves who say:

﴿ إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً

وَلَا شُكُورًا ﴾

“We feed you seeking Allah’s Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you.” [76:9]

Minute 5

WHAT IF THERE'S NO IKHLAS IN MY ACTIONS?

It sure goes without saying that actions that are done for winning people's appreciation constitutes *Riya* – which is a form of *As-Shirk billah*. And we all know that Allah never forgives Shirk. To this effect, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has said in the *hadith* of Ahmad:

« مَنْ صَلَّى يُرَائِي ۖ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ ، وَمَنْ صَامَ يُرَائِي ۖ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ ،

وَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ يُرَائِي ۖ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ »

“Anyone who offers Salat (prayer) for show has undoubtedly done Shirk; and anyone who fasts for show has undoubtedly done Shirk; and anyone who gives Sadaqah (charity and alms) for show has undoubtedly done Shirk.”

Therefore those who have engaged in *Riya* or display, are required to seek forgiveness from Allah 'Azza wa Jall and refrain from doing so anymore. Surely, He is *Ghafoor* or the Forgiving One Who accepts the *Tawbah* of his slaves before their death rattle.

In this connection, Imam Sufyan At-Thawri would say: "When good deeds are practised, the Angel records these in the Record of Goodness. When people speak about their good deeds, the Angel records the deeds in the Record of *Riya* (show and display)."

And Imam Ibrahim Al-Taymi said: "A person sincere to God hides his good deeds as much as he hides his bad deeds."

That's why never forget dear believer that, "*All deeds are by intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention.*"

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