

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Friday Khutbah – 28/03/2014

Realisation of *Ikhlas*

I was talking to you in a previous khutbah about *al-Ikhlas* (sincerity); its importance, the reason why it is difficult to realise and some of the qualities of sincere people.

The importance of *Ikhlas* lies in that it is one of the conditions for the acceptance of the acts of worship and acts of obedience of Allah. Allah does accept any act done without *Ikhlas* - without it being intended purely for His sake. Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says: "So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."

He (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) also says: "And We will proceed to whatever deeds they did, and will turn them into scattered dust."

These are the deeds which were done in contradiction to the *Sunnah* or done for other than the sake of Allah. They will be turned into scattered dust because they lacked one or both of the conditions for the acceptance of deeds - which are sincerity and following the way of Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*)

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said in *Hadith Qudsi*: "Allah says: I am the most self-sufficient of all *Shuraka* (partners.) Whoever does an act and make a sharer with me in it, I leave that act for the sharer."

As for the difficulty of realising *Ikhlas*, it is indeed difficult for the *Nafs* and hard to achieve. This is for a simple reason that the *Nafs* loves to show its merits and virtues; it loves to be praised, and *Ikhlas* requires exactly the opposite. *Ikhlas* requires that one should hide one's good deeds and that one should not look for praise and prestige. For this reason realising *Ikhlas* requires great *Mujahada* (struggle.) This *Mujahada* is not only needed by ordinary people, but everyone needs it. Even scholars and strong righteous people and worshippers need it.

Imam ath-Thawri said: "I have never dealt with anything that is harder on me than my *Niyyah* because it keeps changing all the time."

Abullah ibn Mutrif said: "Filtering the action until it becomes pure is more difficult than the action itself."

As for the signs of sincere people, these include:

- 1) Their hiding of their good deeds. They don't like publicity. They are keen to put their good deeds out of sight as others are keen to conceal their faults and mistakes.
- 2) They do not seek the praise of people. When people of sincerity do something good to others, they do not see themselves as having a favour upon others. For them they did what they did for the sake of Allah alone. They are like those whom Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says regarding them: "And they give food, in spite of their love for it to the poor, the orphan, and the captive. (Saying): We feed you for the sake of Allah only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you." (*Surah Al-Insan* 8-9)

Since *Ikhlas* has this high position in Islam, then gaining and perfecting it is one of the most important tasks for a Muslim to achieve.

Some of the means and ways for gaining *Ikhlas* include:

- i) Learning *Ikhlas*: By knowing its reality and the things which contradict and negate it. People of knowledge have always urged Muslims to learn *Ikhlas*. One of them said: "Learn

Niyyah because it is more important than ‘*amal* (action.)’ *Niyyah* is more important than action, because action without *Niyyah* is of no value. However, one can reach with one’s *Niyyah* –even without action- the degree of one who acts. Rasulullah (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: Whoever intends to do a *Hasana* (good deed) but he does not do it, it will be recorded for him as *Hasana* (good deed.)

He (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) also said: “There are in Madinah some people who are with you (share the reward) in whatever distance you travel and whatever valley you cross. They said: O Rasulullah! And they are in Madinah! He said: yes, and they are in Madinah! Sickness kept them behind.” In another narration: ‘whatever distance you travel and whatever valley you cross – they will get an equal reward like you.’

Since there is great need for learning *Ikhlas* one of *as-Salaf as-Salih* said: “I wished there are some *Fuqaha* (learned people) who only teach people *Niyyah* and intentions behind actions - and nothing else other than that.”

The reality and essence of *Ikhlas* is that the intention behind the action should be purely for the sake of Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) alone; not for showing off, not to gain praise or prestige and not for any worldly benefit material or non-material.

2) One of the ways to gain *Ikhlas* is by watching over ones *Nafs* and struggling with it in order to correct one’s intentions. One should watch over his *Nafs* before performing the act asking oneself: What is my intention behind it? If the intention is good, then one should go ahead. If it is otherwise, then one must correct his intention before acting.

That was the way of *as-Salaf as-Salih*. Salman said: “Remember your Lord when you intend and when you make a judgement.”

Al-Hassan said: “May Allah have mercy upon a slave who stops and ponders when intending to act, and so if it is for the sake of Allah, he goes ahead and if it is otherwise he stops.

What is meant by stops here is that he waits until he reviews and correct his *Niyyah* and then go ahead – not that he abandons action completely for fear of *Riya’* (showing off.)

It was said to Nafi’ ibn Jubair: “Would you not attend the funeral? He said: Wait a minute until I make my *Niyyah*. He reflected for a short while and then said: Let us go.”

Second Khutbah:

3) One of the ways to gain *Ikhlas* is by not caring much about people’s opinion of you as long as you are not doing wrong. If you are concerned about how people view you, and love their praise and dislike their criticism, then you are falling into the trap of *Riya’*. Therefore, you should have no interest in people’s praise because it would not benefit you.

4) One of the ways to gain *Ikhlas* is by keeping company with good people. People are naturally affected by the traits of their companions –even without realising. Whoever keeps company with people of sincerity will develop *Ikhlas*, and whoever keeps company with people who show off will be affected by them. Rasulullah (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) “A man follows the religion of his friend so let one of you see whom one takes as a friend.”

5) One of the ways to gain *Ikhlas* is by seeking the assistance of Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) to help one and guide one to *Ikhlas* and keep one away from *Riya’* and anything that contradicts *Ikhlas*. The hearts are held between two fingers of *Ar-Rahman* and He turns them in whatever way he wills. Most of the *Dua’* of *Umar ibn Al-Khattab* was: O Allah! Make all of my ‘*amal* correct and purely for your sake, and do not let there be in it any share for any human being.