

The Evidence for *al-Ihsaan*

والدليل قوله تعالى:

And the proof is His saying, He the Most High:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ١٢٨]

«Allaah is with those who fear Him and are dutiful to Him; and He is with those who are people of *ihsaan*.» [16:128]

وقوله تعالى:

And His saying, He the Most High:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢١٧﴾ الَّذِي يَرِنَكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٢١٨﴾ وَتَقَلِّبُكَ فِي السَّجِدِينَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾

﴿ الشعراء: ٢١٧ - ٢٢٠ ﴾

«And place your reliance upon the All-Mighty, the Bestower of Mercy. He who sees you when you stand to pray. And who sees your movements along with those who pray along with you. Indeed! He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.» [26:217-220]

وقوله تعالى:

And His saying, He the Most High:

﴿ وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴾ ﴿٦١﴾

«And you are not (O Muhammad *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*) engaged in any matter nor do you recite the Book of Allaah, - nor do you do any action (O people), except that We are witness in your deeds when you do them. And not even that which is of the weight of the tiniest ant is hidden from your Lord on the earth or in the heavens. Nor is there anything smaller than that or greater than it except that it is written in a Clear Book.» [10:61]^[47]

[47] This is the proof for the first level of *al-ihsaan*.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ١٢٨]

«Allaah is with those who fear Him and are dutiful to Him, and He is with those who are people of *ihsaan*.» [16:128]

The *ayah* proves that Allaah is with the people of *ihsaan*. They are those who worship Allaah as if they were seeing Him, so Allaah is with them in a specific sense of *Ma'yyah* - the *Ma'yyah* with regard to aiding, helping, and *tanfeeq* (guiding them to and granting them attainment of correctness).

And His saying, He the Most High:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢١٧﴾ الَّذِي يَرِنَكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٢١٨﴾ وَتَقْبُكَ فِي السَّجِدِينَ ﴾

«And place your reliance upon the All-Mighty, the Bestower of Mercy. He who sees you when you stand to pray. And who sees your movements along with those who pray along with you.» [26:217-219]

This is a proof for the second level. This is a proof for his saying [*sallallaahu`alaibivasallam*]: «Then, He certainly sees you.»

«And place your reliance» Meaning: trust your affairs «to the All-Mighty, the Bestower of Mercy» He is Allaah, the Perfect and Most High.

«When you stand to pray» You stand for worship and the prayer.

«And who sees your movements along with those who pray along with you» He sees you whilst you are performing your *rakoo`* (bowing) and whilst you are performing your *sajdah* (prostration). He sees you in all the states of worship; standing, bowing, and prostrating. He, the Perfect and Most High, sees you.

«Indeed! He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing» The One who hears your sayings. The One who knows your sayings, He the Perfect and Most High.

And His saying, He the Most High:

﴿ وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ ﴾

«And you are not (O Muḥammad *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*) engaged in any matter nor do you recite the Book of Allaah, - nor do you do any action (O people), except that We are witness in your deeds when you do them.» [10:61]

This is a proof for the second level.

«And you are not (O Muḥammad *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*) engaged in any matter» This is an address to the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaibivasallam*. In any affair from your affairs, from the affairs of worship or other than it - all of your actions and your movements - you will not be engaged in any affair at all.

«Nor do you recite from it (i.e. Book of Allaah)» Meaning: from Allaah, because the Qur`aan is from Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic. Or the pronoun could refer back to the affair, so the meaning would be: From the affairs which you are engaged in is recitation of the Qur`aan.

«Nor do you do (O people)» This is [an address] for all of the nation, for the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaibivasallam* and other than him.

«**Any action**» Meaning: Any action from the actions, whether good or bad.

«**Except that We are witness [in your deeds]**» We are seeing you, observing you, and witnessing you. This is a proof for his saying *sallallaahu`alaibivasallam*: «**Then indeed, He sees you.**»

«**When you do them**» You are carrying it out and you are doing it. So, this gives a proof for the second level from the levels of *ihsaan*, in that He, the Majestic and Most High, witnesses the action of every doer of an action. He, the Perfect and Most High, sees him, knows him, and observes him. Nothing is hidden from him.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴾

«**Nothing whatsoever in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allaah.**» [3:5]

As for *ihsaan* between the servant and in the creation, then its meaning is: doing good to them and withholding from harming them. Such that you feed the hungry person, cloth the person without clothing, assist the needy person with your position, and that you intercede for the one who needs to be interceded for. You do that which is good with all the different aspects of good. You are hospitable to the guest and you are generous towards the neighbor. Nothing but good emanates from you towards the neighbor, and you withhold harming him. So, no harm comes from you towards him or towards anyone else. For from the people, there are who are such that nothing but harm comes from them, and from the people, there are those whom harm and good comes. And from the people, there are those whom nothing but good comes from them. This is the highest of the levels.

Doing good towards the people and withholding harm from them is *ihsaan* (good and fine treatment) towards the people:

﴿ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

«**Do good. Allaah loves *al-Muhsineen* (the doers of good).**» [2:195]

Even towards the animals, it is obligatory that you treat them well and make available for them whatever they need and that you withhold harming them and that you are gentle with them. This is from *ihsaan* towards the animals. Even a person who is going to be rightfully executed, you should not torture him, rather, you should execute him in a fine and tranquil manner. A person who is obligatory to execute, and someone it is obligatory to carry a *hadd* (prescribed punishment) upon, then it is carried out upon him with gentleness. There is to be no mutilation, no torture, and no beating to death.

He *sallallaahu`alaibivasallam* said:

«إن الله كتب الإحسان على كل شيء ، فإذا قتلتم فأحسنوا القتلة ، وإذا ذبحتم فأحسنوا الذبح»

«**Allaah has obligated *ihsaan* with regard to everything. So, when you kill, then kill in a fine manner. And when you slaughter an animal, then slaughter in a good manner.**»¹

¹ Reported by Muslim no. 1955 as a *hadeeth* of *Shaddaad bin Aws, radiyallaahu`anhu*.

So, [the principle of *ihsaan* applies] to execution or other than it from that which necessitates prescribed punishment.

«**When you slaughter**» Meaning: when you slaughter animals which are to be eaten, then slaughter in a fine manner:

«وليحد أحدكم شفرته ، وليرح ذبيحته»

«**Let one of you sharpen his knife and give relief to the animal which he is slaughtering.**»

Therefore, you are to treat with *ihsaan* even the animals. Allaah forgave the prostitute woman from the People of Israaeel on account that she gave a drink of water to a dog which had its tongue hanging out from thirst. So, she gave it water to drink and Allaah thanked her for that and forgave her, her sin.² This is a tremendous sin and it is prostitution, meaning: *zinaa* (fornication). But Allaah forgave her on account of that - because she treated the thirsty animal in a fine manner.

So how about something other than a dog? If you were to treat a hungry person from the Muslims with *ihsaan*, or from the descendents of Aadam, even if he is a disbeliever - if you were to treat him well, then Allaah, the Majestic and Most High will thank you for that fine treatment. He, the Most High, said:

﴿وَإِحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (195)

«**Do good. Allaah loves *al-Muhsineen* (the doers of good).**» [2:195]

The third type: It is perfection of the action. Whatever action you do, it is obligatory that you perfect it and not so that it should be said: "So-and-so has done such-and-such very well." There occurs in the *hadeeth*:

«إن الله يحب إذا عمل أحدكم عملاً أن يتقنه»

«**Allaah loves that one when one of you does an action that he perfects it.**»³

² Refer to al-Bukhaaree no. 3467, Muslim no. 2245 as a *hadeeth* of Aboo Hurayrah, *radiyallaahu `anhu*.

³ Reported by al-Bayhaquee in *Shu`ab al-Eemaan* 4/334 no. 5313 and no. 5314 from a *hadeeth* of `Aa.ishah, *radiyallaahu `anha*. [Declared *hasan* (good) by *Shaikh* al-Albaanee in *Saheeh al-Jaami`*. He spoke about it in *Silsilatul-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah* no. 1113].

والدليل من السنة حديث جبريل المشهور:

And the proof from the *Sunnab* is the famous hadeeth of Jibreel:

«عن عمر رضى الله عنه قال : بينما نحن جلوس عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذ طلع علينا رجل ، شديد بياض الثياب ، شديد سواد الشعر»

From `Umar *radhiyallaahu`anhu* who said: «**Whilst we were sitting with Allaah's Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*, a man came to us whose clothing was very white and whose hair was very black.**»^[48]

[48] Speech with regard to *Islaam*, *eemaan* and *ihsaan* has preceded and the pillars of each level. The *Shaykh* (*rahimabullaah*) has mentioned the evidences for each level from the Qur`aan. All of that has preceded and finished. Then, the *Shaykh* (*rahimabullaah*) mentioned a proof for these levels from the *Sunnab*, the *Sunnab* of the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*, so he mentioned the hadeeth of Jibreel. He [Jibreel] came to the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* whilst he was with his companions. He came to them in a form of a man and he sat with the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*, and asked him about *Islaam*, *eemaan*, and *ihsaan*. Then, he asked him about the Last Hour and its signs. This is called the hadeeth of Jibreel or it is called the hadeeth of `Umar. It is a hadeeth which occurs through a number of chains of narration from a group of the companions, so it is an authentic hadeeth. The *Shaykh* (*rahimabullaah*) mentioned the narration of `Umar ibn al-Khattaab⁴ of this hadeeth. There is variations in the wordings of the hadeeth in other narrations. However, the meaning is one and the same.

«**Whilst we were sitting with Allaah's Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam***» It was from their usual practice, may Allaah be pleased with them, that they would gather together in the presence of the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* in the mosque, and that they would take knowledge from him and listen to his (*sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*) answers when he responded to questions. So, whilst they were like that in their normal condition, a man entered upon them through the door. A man «**whose clothing was very white and whose hair was very black.**» Meaning: Jibreel *alaihis-salaam*. He came in the form of this man and he did not come to them in his angelic form, because they would not have been able to look upon him in his angelic form.

⁴ Reported in *Saheeh* Muslim no. 8. Refer to *Jaami` al-Uloom wal-Hikam* of Ibn Rajab 1/93, second hadeeth.