

## IKHLAS – SINCERETY or PURETY OF INTENTION

**QUR'AN** - (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ünal)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

We have sent down to you the Book with the truth (embodying it, and with nothing false in it); so worship God, sincere in your faith in Him, and practicing the Religion purely for His sake. (Surah Az-Zumar, 2)<sup>1</sup>

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّيَهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

When they embark on a ship (and find themselves in danger), they call upon God sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign). But when He brings them safe to land, they begin again to associate partners with God! (Surah Al-Ankabut, 65)<sup>2</sup>

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلِصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا

And mention Moses in the Book. He was one chosen, endowed with perfect sincerity in faith and practicing the Religion, and was a Messenger, a Prophet. (Surah Maryam, 51)

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّى إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنِ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ( ) فَلَمَّا أَنْجَيْتَهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِالْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغَيْتُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

<sup>1</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=39](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=39)

<sup>2</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=29&min=60&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=29&min=60&show=10)

He it is Who conveys you on the land and the sea. And when you are in the ships, and the ships run with their voyagers with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it until there comes upon them a tempest, and waves surge towards them from all sides, so that they are sure that they are encompassed (by death, with no way out). and they call upon God, sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign): "If You save us from this, we will most certainly be among the thankful. " But when He has saved them, they behave rebelliously on earth, offending against all right. (Surah Yunus, 22)<sup>3</sup>

## HADITH

### **Narrated: Abu Huraira**

I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying: The first of the people whose case will be decided on the Day of Judgment will be a man who died as a martyr. He will be brought forth. Allah will make him know about His blessings (which He had bestowed on him in the world). The man will acknowledge them. Then Allah will ask him: What did you do with them? He will say: I fought in Your way until I died as a martyr. Allah will remark: You are lying. You fought so that you may be called a brave warrior. Then orders will be passed against him. So he will be dragged along on his face and cast into Hell. Second will be a man who studied (religious) knowledge. Then he taught it to others and recited the Qur' an. He will be brought (for Judgment). Allah will remind him of His favours (showered on him in the world). He will admit them (having enjoyed them in his life). Then Allah will ask him: What did you do with them? He will reply: I acquired knowledge and imparted it and also recited the Qur' an for Your sake. Allah will observe: You have told a lie, for you got knowledge to be renowned as a scholar; and you recited the Qur'an to be marked as a Qdri (one who recites the Qur'an according to the rules). Then orders will be passed against him. So he will be dragged along on his face and thrown into Hell. Third will be a man to whom Allah had made abundantly rich and granted him every kind of wealth. He will be brought for Judgment. Allah will let him know about His gifts conferred upon him in the world. He will recognize them. Then Allah will inquire: What did you do with them? He will say: I left no way in which you like money to be spent without spending in it for your sake. Allah will say: You are lying. You did so to be described as generous (in the society); (It means you got your reward in the world according to your intention). Now you deserve nothing in the Hereafter except Hell). So orders will be passed against him and he will be dragged along on his face until he will be hurled into Hell. (This Hadith is sound and reported by Muslim and Nasa'i) The purity of intention is behind any deed. If you spend for show, there is no reward. Eventually, if one loves another for something worldly this shall not count in the Hereafter. But love for the sake of Allah is great virtue in the Hereafter. Such love can be a Muslim's love to learn from him or to take as a companion for good deeds, without any worldly considerations, once there is something worldly, the intention is not pure.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=10&min=20&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=10&min=20&show=10)

<sup>4</sup> <http://ahadith.co.uk/chapter.php?cid=144>

**It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar that:**

The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever seeks knowledge in order to argue with the foolish, or to show off before the scholars, or to attract people's attention, will be in Hell."<sup>5</sup>

**Narrated: Abu Hurairah**

"The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: 'Seek refuge with Allah from the pit of grief.' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what is the pit of grief?' He said: 'A valley in Hell from which Hell itself seeks refuge four hundred times each day.' It was said: 'O Messenger of Allah, who will enter it?' He said: 'It has been prepared for reciters of the Qur'an who want to show off their deeds. The most hateful of reciters of the Qur'an to Allah are those who visit the rulers.'" <sup>6</sup>

**Narrated Ammar:**

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: He who is two-faced in this world will have two tongues of fire on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

## From the Risale-I Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi – a thematic tafseer

### The Flashes, Twentieth Flash, Third Cause

O man greedy for reward in the hereafter and the performance of deeds entitling you to that reward! There have been certain prophets who had only a limited following but received the infinite reward of the sacred duty of prophet hood. The true achievement lies, then, not in gaining a vast following, but in gaining God's pleasure. What do you imagine yourself to be, that saying, "Let everyone listen to me," you forget your function, and interfere in what is strictly God's concern? To gain acceptance for you and to have people gather round you is God's concern. So look to your own duty and concern, and do not meddle with God's concerns.

Moreover, it is not only men who earn reward for those who hear and speak the truth. The sentient and spiritual beings of God and His angels have filled the universe and adorned its every part. If you want plentiful reward, take sincerity as your foundation and think only of God's pleasure. Then every syllable of the blessed words that issue forth from your mouth will be brought to life by your sincerity and truthful intention, and going to the ears of innumerable sentient beings, they will illumine them and earn you reward. For when, for example, you say, "Praise and thanks be to God,"

<sup>5</sup> <http://sunnah.com/urn/1252520>

<sup>6</sup> <http://sunnah.com/urn/1252550>

<sup>7</sup> <http://sunnah.com/abudawud/43/101>

millions of these words, great and small, are written on the page of the air by God's leave. Since the All-Wise Inscraper did nothing prodigally or in vain, He created innumerable ears, as many as were needed to hear those multiple blessed words. If those words are brought to life in the air by sincerity and truthful intent, they will enter the ears of the spirit beings like some tasty fruit in the mouth. But if God's pleasure and sincerity do not bring those words to life, they will not be heard, and reward will be had only for the single utterance made by the mouth. Pay good attention to this, you Qur'an reciters who are sad that your voices are not more beautiful and that more people do not listen to you!<sup>8</sup>

### The Seventeenth Flash Thirteenth Note

There is a Hadith which says: "All will perish save those who know, and those who know will perish save those who act, and those who act will perish save the sincere, and the sincere are in grave danger."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the only means of salvation and deliverance is sincerity. It is of the greatest importance to gain sincerity. The tiniest act performed with sincerity is preferable to tons performed without sincerity.<sup>2</sup> A person should understand that what gains sincerity for his actions is his doing them purely because they are a divine command and that their result is divine pleasure, and he should not interfere in God's business.

There is sincerity in everything. A jot of love, even, with sincerity is superior to tons of official love for which return is wanted. Someone described this sincere love as follows: "I do not want a bribe, recompense, return or reward for love, for love which seeks recompense is weak and short-lived."<sup>3</sup> Sincere love has been lodged in human nature and in all mothers. The compassion of mothers manifests this sincere love in its true meaning. Evidence that through the mystery of this compassion mothers do not want or seek a reward or bribe for their love of their children, is their readiness to sacrifice their lives and even their eternal happiness for them. All a hen's capital is its life, and one hen sacrificed its head in order to save its chick's head from the jaws of a dog – as Hüsrev witnessed.<sup>9</sup>

### Twenty First Flash

O my brothers of the hereafter! And O my companions in the service of the Qur'an! You should know – and you do know – that in this world sincerity is the most important principle in works pertaining to the hereafter; it is the greatest strength, the most acceptable intercessor, the firmest point of support, the shortest way to reality, the most acceptable prayer, the most wondrous means of achieving one's goal, the highest quality, and the purest worship. Since sincerity comprises much strength and many lights like those mentioned above; and since at this dreadful time, despite our small number and weak, impoverished, and powerless state and our being confronted by terrible enemies and suffering severe oppression in the midst of aggressive innovations and misguidance, the extremely heavy, important, general, and sacred duty of serving belief and the Qur'an has been placed on our shoulders by divine grace, we are certainly compelled more than anyone to work with

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.204>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.181>

all our strength to gain sincerity. We need more than anything to instil sincerity in ourselves. Otherwise what we have achieved so far in our sacred service will in part be lost and will not persist; and we shall be held responsible; we shall manifest the severe threat contained in the divine prohibition,

Nor sell my signs for a small price. (2:41, etc.)

We shall otherwise destroy sincerity, thus harming eternal happiness for the sake of meaningless, unnecessary, harmful, sad, self-centred, tedious, hypocritical base feelings and insignificant benefits. And if we were to do that, we would violate all our brothers' rights, transgress against the duty of service to the Qur'an, and be disrespectful towards the sacredness of the truths of belief.

My brothers! There are many obstacles before significant good works. Satans put up a powerful struggle against those who assist in them. In the face of those obstacles and satans you have to rely on the strength of sincerity. You should avoid things that harm sincerity as you avoid snakes and scorpions. In accordance with the words of Joseph (Upon whom be peace),

Nor do I absolve my own self of blame; the human soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Sustainer do bestow His mercy, (12:53) the evil-commanding soul cannot be relied upon. Do not let egotism and the soul deceive you! To gain sincerity and preserve it you should take as your guide the following rules:

#### YOUR FIRST RULE

You should seek divine pleasure in your actions. If Almighty God is pleased, it is of no importance if the whole world even is displeased. If He accepts an action and everyone else rejects it, their rejection has no effect. Once His pleasure has been gained and He has accepted an action, even if you do not ask it of Him, should He wish it and His wisdom requires it, He will make others accept it. He will make them consent to it too. For this reason, to seek divine pleasure should be the sole aim in this service.<sup>10</sup>

## Fethullah Gulen - Sufism 1 – a thematic tafseer

### Ikhlas (Sincerity or Purity of Intention)

Ikhlas has been interpreted as being upright, sincere, and pure; being distant from show and ostentation in one's intention and conduct; and being closed to whatever clouds or fouls the heart. Purity of intention, straightforwardness in thought, pursuit of no worldly purposes in one's relationship with God, and loyalty in servanthood to God are also included here.

Ikhlas requires that one pursue nothing worldly while worshipping and obeying God, that one fulfils the duty of servanthood only because God orders it, and that one remains silent concerning any

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.213>

personal experiences of God's special treatment and special gifts and seek only His approval and pleasure.

Sincerity is one of the most significant qualities of those most faithful or loyal to God; loyalty is regarded as a source, and sincerity as a sweet water originating from it. The most eloquent of humanity, upon him be peace and blessings, declared that one who drinks uninterruptedly from this water for forty days will find channels of wisdom opened from his or her heart to his or her tongue, and that such a person will always speak wisdom.

Loyalty or faithfulness is the primary attribute of Prophethood, and sincerity is its most lustrous dimension. Sincerity is innate in the Prophets; all other people try to obtain it during their lifetime. Among them, for example, the Qur'an describes the Prophet Moses as one made sincere (19:51).

Faithfulness and sincerity were as intrinsic and essential to the Prophets as air and water are to the lives of those who communicate the Prophets' message to others in every age. In addition, they were the Prophets' most important sources of power. The Prophets were convinced that they could not take one step forward without sincerity, and the representatives of the cause of Prophethood must believe that they will be able to achieve nothing without it. Faithfulness and sincerity are two wings or two deep oceans extending from Divine Favor and Grace to an individual's heart. One who can sail in these oceans or fly with these wings will reach the destination, for they are under God's protection. God values that which is done to please Him, regardless of its apparent size or importance, not the quantity of deeds. Therefore, He values a small deed done with sincerity over many deeds done without sincerity.

Sincerity is an attitude of the heart, and God views an individual according to his or her heart's inclination. The Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, declares: Assuredly, God does not consider your bodies, nor your appearances. Rather, He considers your hearts. [1] Sincerity is a mysterious Divine credit granted to those who are purehearted in order to increase what is little and to deepen what is shallow, and to give finite (limited) worship infinite reward. One can use it to purchase the most valuable things in the markets of this world and the next, for it is esteemed, welcomed, and respected where others suffer great misery. This mysterious power of sincerity caused God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, to declare: Be sincere in your religion; little work (with sincerity) is enough for you, [2] and: Be sincere in your deeds, for God only accepts what is done with sincerity. [3]

If we consider a deed to be a body, sincerity is its soul. If a deed represents one wing of pair of wings, sincerity is the other. A body without soul is of no worth, and nothing can fly with only one wing. How fine are Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi's words:

You should be sincere in all your deeds,  
So that the Majestic Lord may accept them.  
Sincerity is the wing of the bird of the acts of obedience.  
Without a wing, how can you fly to the abode of prosperity?

The following words of Bayazid al-Bistami are also very apt:

I worshipped my Lord for thirty years with all my strength. Then I heard a voice saying: O Bayazid!  
The treasures of God Almighty are full of acts of worship. If you intend to reach Him, see yourself as small at the door of God and be sincere in your deeds.

For some, sincerity involves hiding from others when performing supererogatory deeds and avoiding all show and ostentation. For others, it means that whether one is or is not seen while performing

religious deeds is not important. Still for others, it means being so involved in worship or religious deeds in consideration of God's pleasure that one does not even remember whether one should be sincere or not.

Self-supervision is an essential dimension of sincerity, and a truly sincere person does not consider any possible spiritual pleasure that may be derived, or speculate upon whether it will ensure entrance to Paradise. Sincerity is a mystery between God and a servant, and God puts it in the hearts of those He loves. One whose heart is awakened to sincerity does not worry about being praised or accused, exalted or debased, aware or unaware of deeds, or being rewarded. Such a person does not change, and behaves in the same way in public and in private.<sup>11</sup>

[1] Muslim, "Birr," 33; Ibn Maja, "Zuhd," 9.

[2] 'Abd al-Ra'uf Munawi, Fayd al-Qadir, 6 vols. (Beirut 1093 ah / 1682 ce) 1:216.

[3] Ibid., 1:217.

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<sup>11</sup> Jul 1992, Vol 14, Issue 162, <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/1352-key-concepts-in-the-practice-of-sufism-1/24738-ikhlas-sincerity-or-purity-of-intention>