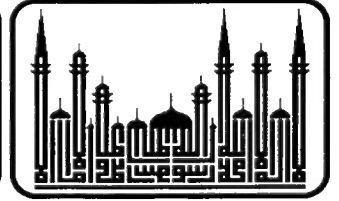




بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Perspectives



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Editorial

The medical profession has acknowledged that spirituality affects healing. A number of medical schools are now adding religion to their curriculum. Medical students are learning to integrate the patients' response to prayers with their physical diagnoses. Many physicians are accepting the fact, known to the believers in God, that healing is from God, and they (the physicians) are just instruments of the healer. Allah tells us about this fact in the Qur'an

وَإِن يَمَسُّنَكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ .

(سورة الأنعام - من آية ١٧)

"If Allah touches you with an affliction, none can remove it but He."

(Qur'an 6:17)

The same fact was also acknowledged by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) long time ago, as stated in the Qur'an:

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ.

(سورة الشعراء - آية ٨٠)

"And when I (Ibrahim) am ill, it is He (Allah) who cures me. (Qur'an 26:80)

Giving the same medication to two different patients, with the same medical problem, can lead to two different results.

Although the Qur'an is not a book of

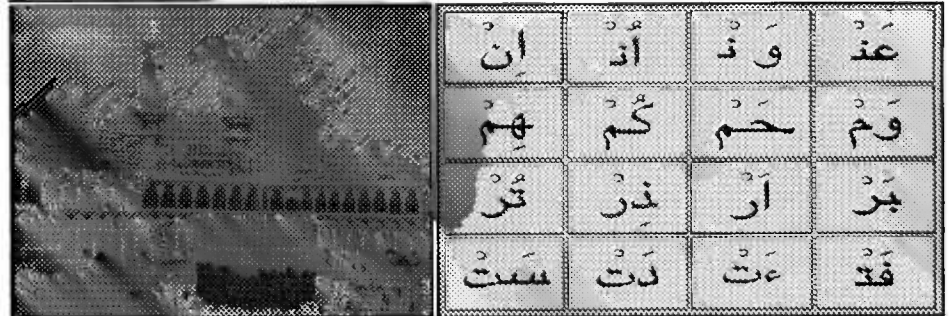
see *Editorial* / page 5

In This Issue:

- *Ihsan* Page 2
- *Divine Revelations mentioned in the Qur'an* Page 6
- *Two aspects of disbelief* Page 7

New Multimedia Qur'an Tutor

A multimedia program for teaching the Qur'an entitled **Al-Ustaadh** has been produced by **Par Excellence computers cc** in **Johannesburg, South Africa**. The program includes recitation of the Qur'an by Sheikh Al-Husri; search facilities; subject index; lessons beginning with *Alif, Ba'a, Ta'a* progressing to advanced aspects including *Tajweed*; instructions on *Wudu, Azan* and; *Salah*; the attributes of Allah; *Everyday Du'a*; Islamic months, and days of the week; clip art, coloring book and songs for children. The program is distributed by **Sharaaz and Associates, 59 Washington St., Suite #118, Santa Clara, CA 95050, Tel (408) 971-4846, Fax (408) 971-4165.**



Reflections

Dr. Ahmed K. Noor

Ihsan

الإحسان

Ihsan is one of the important qualities required for the establishment of a sound and healthy society. The word *Ihsan* and its derivatives are mentioned 44 times in the Qur'an, as well as in several sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). In this article an attempt is made to explain the meaning of the word *Ihsan*, the importance of *Ihsan*, and the rewards for *Ihsan*.

Meaning of the word *Ihsan*

The Arabic word *Ihsan* إحصان does not have a single equivalent English word. It refers to perfection and excellence (of faith, worship, and actions). It also refers to such humane and moral qualities as produce sweetness in life and develop high values. Among these qualities are benevolence, generosity, politeness, compassion, sympathy, tolerance and forgiveness. A number of different aspects of *Ihsan* are described subsequently.

Ihsan (perfection) of worship

This refer to adopting the attitude of an obedient servant to Allah - submitting oneself wholly to the service of Allah, entrusting all one's affairs to Him, and making Allah's guidance the law of one's entire life. The one who does that is referred to in the Qur'an as a *Muhsin* (plural, *Muhsinoon* / *Muhsineen*).

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ .
(سورة البقرة - من آية ١١٢)

"Nay - whoever submits his/her whole

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا
ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ .
(سورة يونس - آية ٢٦)

"To those who have done *Ihsan* is the best (reward) - and even, more (than in measure)!
Neither darkness nor shame shall cover their faces! They are the dwellers of the Garden;
They will abide therein (forever)!"
(Qur'an 10:26)

self to Allah and is a *Muhsin*, he/she
will get his/her reward with his/her
Lord." (Qur'an 2:112)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ
وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ .
(سورة النساء - من آية ١٢٥)

"Who can be better in religion than
one who submits his / her whole self to
Allah and is a *Muhsin*."
(Qur'an 4:125)



"For Allah loves those who are
Muhsineen."
(Qur'an 3:134)

وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ
الْوُثْقَى .
(سورة لقمان - من آية ٢٢)

"Whoever submits his whole self to
Allah and is a *Muhsin*, has grasped
indeed the most trustworthy hand-
hold." (Qur'an 31:22)

The Prophet (PBUH) was asked by
angel *Jibreel* (when he came in human
form, to teach the companions their
religion) about *Ihsan* of worship. His

answer was

الإحسان أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه
فإنك إن لا تراه فإنه يراك .
(حديث شريف)

Ihsan is to worship Allah (submit to Him
unreservedly and follow His commands)
as if you are seeing Him. If you cannot
see Him, then you should realize that
He sees you.

There are two aspects of *Ihsan* of
worship: First - to worship Allah as if
you are seeing Him, i.e. you perform,
and perfect, all the duties and
obligations towards Him. Second - to go
beyond the obligatory duties, and
perform the optional virtuous acts
(*Nawafel*) which bring you closer to
Allah. Allah refers to that in the
Qur'an:

ءَاخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ .
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ .
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ .
قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ .
وَبِالْأَشْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ .
وَفِي
أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ .
(سورة الذاريات - آيات ١٦-١٩)

"Taking joy in the things which their
Lord has given them. Verily, they were
before this *Muhsinoon*. They used to
sleep but little by night. And in the
hours before dawn, they were (found)
asking (Allah) for forgiveness. And in
their properties there was the right of
the beggar and the poor who does not
ask the others." (Qur'an 51:16-19)

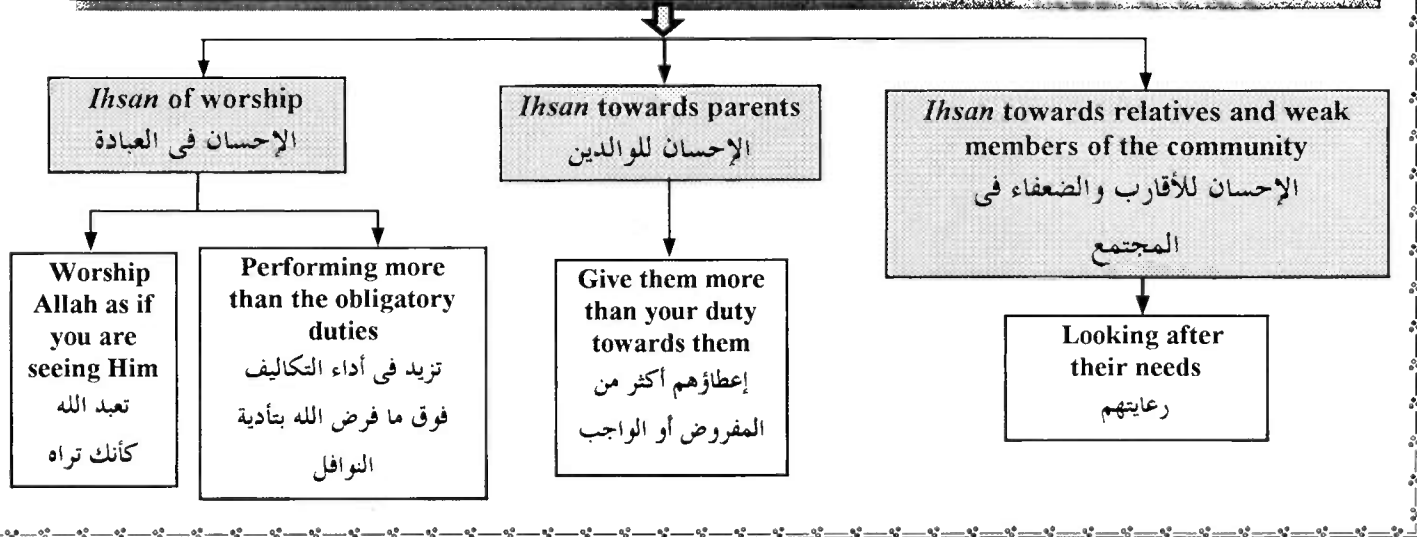
***Ihsan* refers to perfection and excellence**

الإحسان في كل شيء هو إتقانه إتقانا

***Ihsan* can be done with knowledge, power, passing experience to others, or removing hardship from a Muslim**

الإحسان قد يكون بالعلم، أو بفضل القوة، بإعانة الضعيف أو بإكساب الخبرة للآخرين أو

بتفريغ كربة عن مسلم



Three Spiritual levels of (*Ihsan*) perfection of worship

المقامات الثلاثة للإحسان في العبادة

1 worship in a way that fulfills its obligations, by observing all its conditions and integrals.

العبادة على الوجه الذي يسقط معه الطلب بأن تكون مستوفية للشروط والأركان

2 Contemplative spiritual vision - *mushahahadah*. In addition to (1), to be immersed in the sea of Gnostic inspiration (*mukashafah*) until it is as if the worshipper actually beholds Allah Most High.

المشاهدة - العبادة كما في ١ والعبد يفعلها وهو مستغرق في بحر المكاشفة حتى كأنه يرى الله تعالى

3 Vigilance (*muraqabah*) In addition to (1) and (2), to be aware that Allah sees the worshipper.

المراقبة - العبادة كما في ١ و ٢ العبد يفعلها وقد غلب عليه أن الله تعالى يشاهده

Muslim scholars have identified three spiritual levels of *Ihsan* (perfection) of worship (see the bottom figure on page 3). The *Ihsan* identified in levels 2 and 3 is the mark of the elite, and not possible for many. When one reaches the level of *Ihsan* of worship, he/she loves Allah sincerely and deeply. One will put his/her whole heart, mind, soul, body and other resources into the work of Allah. Such a person will not rest content with the mere performance of a duty which requires nothing more than the fear of Allah, but will exert his/her utmost to do it with excellence for the love of Allah.

One of the graphic examples given in the Qur'an about *Ihsan* is that of prophet *Ibrahim*, he saw a vision that he was offering the son, which he was yearning to have, in sacrifice for Allah. He fulfilled the vision by submitting to Allah and preparing to sacrifice the son for His sake. Through this test, the *Ihsan* (excellence) of Prophet *Ibrahim* was brought out, he was exalted to high ranks, and Allah saved the life of the son.

قَدْ صَدَقْتَ الرَّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ .
(سورة الصافات - آية ١٠٥)

"You have already fulfilled the vision!" - thus indeed do We reward the Muhsineen." (Qur'an 37:105)

***Ihsan* towards parents and kindred, and the weak members of the community**

Allah commands us to have *Ihsan* towards the parents, the kindred, the orphans and those in need.

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ .
(سورة البقرة - من آية ٨٣)

"Treat with *Ihsan* your parents and kindred and orphans and those in need." (Qur'an 2:83)

For the parents, *Ihsan* means doing more for them than our obligations

towards them: treating them with great consideration, humility, and tenderness; and speaking only kind words to them. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

رضا السرب في رضا الوالدين
وسخطه في سخطهما .
(حديث شريف)

The pleasure of Allah is in the pleasure of the parents, and His displeasure is in their displeasure.

Allah urged the husband to have *Ihsan* towards his wife, even when she has lost charm for him (Qur'an 4:128). The husband is admonished to be conscious of the presence of Allah in his dealings with the wife. He should imagine how he would fare if Allah withheld His favors from him on account of some defects.



For other relatives, *Ihsan* means treating them well, sharing their sorrows and pleasures, and helping them within lawful limits. It also means sharing one's wealth with them according to one's means and the need of each relative. The first duty of the well-to-do members of the family is to fulfill the needs of their own near relatives and then those of others. The Prophet (PBUH) has emphasized this fact in many traditions, according to which a person owes rights to his parents, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, and other relatives, in accordance with the nearness of their relationship.

The Prophet (PBUH) said

إن الصدقة على المسكين صدقة
وعلى ذي الرحم إثنان صدقة
وصلة .
(حديث شريف)

The charity to the needy is (rewarded as) charity, and the charity to the relative is (rewarded as) charity and joining the kindred.

أفضل الصدقة على ذي الرحم
الكاشح .

(حديث شريف)

The best charity is that given to the relative who bears a grudge against you.

***Ihsan* towards those who harm (or do wrong to) you**

Three levels of goodness of character can be identified in responding to the one who harms (or does wrong to) you. The *first* is to control your rage كظم الغيظ, thereby making the one who harmed you ashamed of himself/herself. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

ليس الشديد بالصرعة إنما
الشديد الذي يملك نفسه عند
الغضب .

(حديث شريف)

*The strong person is not the one who overcomes the people by his (physical) strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself/herself while in anger. The second level is to pardon the one who harmed you العفو, get the rage and grievance out of your heart, as if the harm has not taken place. The third level is *Ihsan* إحسان - to respond to the evil and harm with good. If one adopts the positive attitude of feeling that the person who harmed him/her did him/her a favor: bringing Allah to his/her side, then he/she will be able to respond to the evil with good. Allah describes the three levels of goodness in the Qur'an.*

وَالكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ
عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ .

(سورة آل عمران - من آية ١٣٤)

"(Those) who restrain their rage and pardon the people, for Allah loves

those who are *Muhsineen*.”

(Qur'an 3:134)

The *Muhsineen* referred to in this verse do not get ruffled in adversity, or get angry when other people behave badly. Their mind is free from a sense of grievances. They forgive and cover other people's faults. Moreover, they redouble their efforts. For *Ihsan* is all the more necessary in adversity.

Rewards for *Ihsan*

Allah has promised many rewards for *Muhsineen*, including:

- Allah will be with them (support, protect, and guide them). He teaches them at every step the way of winning His approval and goodwill, and He shows them the light, at every turning point, to discriminate between the right way and the wrong ways of life.

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ .

(سورة العنكبوت - من آية ٦٩)

“And verily, Allah is with the *Muhsineen*.”

(Qur'an 29:69)

- Blessings and bounties without measure (see Qur'an 10:26 at the beginning of the article), and increase in their rewards.

سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ .

(سورة الأعراف - من آية ١٦١)

“We shall increase (the reward) for those who are *Muhsineen*.”

(Qur'an 7:161)

Allah multiplies the rewards for the good doers - ten and seven hundred folds, but for the *Muhsineen* he grants them what is best and more.

- Good and well-being both of this world and the hereafter.

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا

حَسَنَةً وَلِذَلِكَ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ .

(سورة النحل - من آية ٣٠)

“For those who do *ihsan* in this world there is good, and the home of the

hereafter will be even better.”

(Qur'an 16:30)

- Mercy from Allah

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ .

(سورة الأعراف - من آية ٥٦)

“Surely, Allah's mercy is (ever) near those who are *Muhsineen*.”

(Qur'an 7:56)

- Gardens of eternity (see Qur'an 10:26 at the beginning of the article).

Epilogue

As Muslims we have to attempt to achieve *Ihsan* (perfection and excellence) in everything we do. The following two sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) clearly demonstrate this fact

إن الله يحب إذا عمل أحدكم

عملاً أن يتقنه .

(حديث شريف)

Allah wants us to strive for excellence in everything we do.

إن الله تعالى كتب الإحسان على

كل شيء ، فإذا قتلتم فأحسنوا

القتلة ، وإذا ذبحتم فأحسنوا

الذبحة ، وليحد أحدكم شفرته ،

وليرح ذبيحته .

(حديث شريف)

Allah wants excellence in everything, when we kill or slaughter we have to perfect it, one has to sharpen his blade, thereby not making the animal suffer.

In collective life, justice is the foundation of a sound society, and *Ihsan* is its perfection. Justice protects society from violation of rights and bitterness, and *ihsan* makes it sweet and joyful and worth living.

I pray to Almighty Allah to give us the guidance, strength and support needed to be among His servants which are *Muhsineen*. Ameen □

Continued from page 1

Editorial

medicine, it contains guidelines for promoting good health and healing. Allah tells us about the healing power of the Qur'an:

وَنَزَّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ .

(سورة الإسراء - من آية ٨٢)

“We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe.” (Qur'an 17:82)

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا
فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ .

(سورة يونس - آية ٥٧)

“O ye people! there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy.” (Qur'an 10:57)

Three types of healing from the Qur'an can be identified:

a) **Direct healing**, through recitation of the Qur'an by the sick person. The Qur'an provides healing for broken spirits, hope for spiritual future, and joy in the forgiveness of the person's sins. Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) became sick, he would recite the two *surahs* in which refuge in Allah has been sought - *Al-Falaq* and *Al-Nas* (Qur'an 113,114), and blow his breath over his body. Some Muslim physicians have found that listening to the recitation of the Qur'an can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and causes smooth muscle relaxation, even in non-Muslims who do not understand Arabic. They attribute this to the echo and rhythm. The Prophet (PBUH) recommended that we attempt to recite the Qur'an with beautiful voice

Divine Revelations Mentioned in the Qur'an

الكتب السماوية المذكورة في القرآن

Suhuf (Scrolls)
of Prophets
Abraham and
Moses
صحف إبراهيم
وموسى
(Qur'an
87:18-19)

Zabur (Psalms)
given to
Prophet David
الزبور
(Qur'an 17:55)

Torah sent
down to
Prophet Moses
التوراة
(Qur'an 5:44)

Injil (Bible)
given to
Prophet Jesus
الإنجيل
(Qur'an 5:46)

Qur'an sent
down to
Prophet
Muhammad
(PBUH)
القرآن
(Qur'an 5:48)

- Basic message of all the books revealed by Allah (SWT), is the same. Differences are only in some specific regulations. Later revelations abrogated or brought some new legislation (Qur'an 5:48).
- The Qur'an is the final word. Allah has undertaken its preservation (Qur'an 15:9).
- Believing in the Qur'an entails:
 - a) Taking it as our way of life.
 - b) Abiding by its injunctions regarding the permissible and the forbidden.
 - c) Following the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) (Qur'an 59:7).

Continued from page 5 / Editorial

حسنوا القرآن بأصواتكم .

حديث شريف

"Beautify the Qur'an by reciting it with a good voice." (Prophetic Wisdom)

b) **Preventive healing**, resulting from the prohibition of harmful drinks and foods (such as, *khamr* - intoxicants, and pork), and harmful behavior (such as, *zina* - fornication and adultery); and the identification of wholesome foods (such as honey).

فيه شفاء للناس .

(سورة النحل - من آية ٦٩)

"Wherein (a drink from within the bodies of the bees) is a healing for people." (Qur'an 16:69)

c) **Indirect healing**, resulting from performing obligatory acts of worship prescribed in the Qur'an (viz., medical benefits of prayers and fasting).

We pray to Almighty Allah to make the Qur'an the life of our hearts, the light of our breasts, a departure for our sorrow, and a release for our anxiety.

Ameen ☐



Important Dates

Muharram 1, 1420 ... April 17

Ramadan 1 December 10

Eid-ul-Fitr January 8, 2000

Eid-ul-Adha .. March 17, 2000

Muharram 1, 1421.....

April 6, 2000

Note: Please contact the National Organizations listed on the back page for confirmation about these dates.

