

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَالَ اللَّهُ أَغْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي

وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا أَعْنَى الشُّرَكَاءِ عَنِ الشِّرْكِ، مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا

أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ مَعِيَ غَيْرِي تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكُهُ

Respected Muslims!

The subject of today's khutbah will be showing off (riya) and sincerity (ikhlas).

Allah the Almighty has commanded us to perform every deed, especially our acts of worship, with sincerity and purity of intention. Ikhlas means performing our worship solely for the sake of Allah the Almighty, with the goal of gaining His pleasure. This worship must not be based on any desire for status, personal gain, or seeking favor in the eyes of people. Otherwise, one would be associating others with Allah in the act of worship, meaning they would be attributing a hidden partner to the Exalted Lord.

The value of a performed act of worship lies not in its outward appearance, but rather in the sincerity and love hidden within the intention of the heart. Ikhlas is the lifeblood of worship. Just as even the strongest and most beautiful body is doomed to decay, stink, and disintegrate when left without a soul, similarly, acts of worship devoid of ikhlas are like lifeless corpses that have lost their meaning and value.

In a sacred hadith (Qudsi), Allah the Almighty says: **"I am the One most free of need from partners. Whoever does a deed in which he associates someone else with Me, I will abandon him and that which he associated with Me."** (Muslim)

Worship must be performed solely with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure, and no other thought should be partnered in the heart. Because what matters most in worship is the servant's devotion. When this devotion shifts away from Allah the Almighty, that deed ceases to be worship and becomes a burden of sin.

Regarding this matter, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: **"Whoever beautifies his prayer because people are looking at him has committed shirk (associating partners with Allah)."** (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad)

Ikhlas is a secret hidden between the servant and Allah; neither does an angel know it sufficiently to record it, nor does Satan understand it sufficiently to corrupt it. What damages it is the servant's own ego. A person possessing ikhlas performs their private and public deeds with the same sincerity and diligence. To be careless in deeds done in private and meticulous in deeds done in public is nothing but riya.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: **"What I fear most for you is the lesser shirk."** The noble companions asked, **"What is lesser shirk?"** The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: **"It is showing off (riya)."** (Ahmad ibn Hanbal)

Respected Muslims!

Riya is performing acts of worship for purposes other than seeking Allah's pleasure, such as gaining people's admiration, attracting their approval, receiving their praise, acquiring status, obtaining benefits, securing advantages, or satisfying egoistic desires. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: **"Whoever seeks worldly gain through an action meant for the Hereafter will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise."** (Abu Dawud, Knowledge, 12)

Valuable Believers!

One of the great saints said: **"The most precious thing in the world is ikhlas. Because no matter how much I struggled to remove riya from my heart, it would sprout again in another color."**

This shows that riya is a subtle disease of the inner-self (the nafs). A person can fall into it even without realizing it. Therefore, we must constantly check ourselves and question our intentions.

Let us not forget that what matters is not the quantity of a deed, but whether it is accepted by Allah. A small deed done with sincerity and ikhlas is far more valuable than great deeds done for show.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: **"Allah does not look at your appearances or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds."** (Muslim)

Valuable Believers!

Life is the name of an unending struggle with the commanding nafs (nafs al-ammara). This struggle requires patience, attention, effort, and perseverance.

It must not be forgotten that ikhlas and love are not things the servant can attain by their own power, but rather divine favors bestowed by Allah the Almighty. However, turning towards the path that leads to this favor is left to the servant's will, and that is submission. If the servant turns towards the Truth and the people of truth, submits, and sets out on the path of purifying the nafs and cleansing the heart with the provisions of knowledge, remembrance (dhikr), patience, sincerity, and effort, they should know that Allah the Almighty will surely help those who walk this path with sincerity.

I conclude my khutbah with a noble hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: **"Whoever acts with ikhlas for Allah for forty days, springs of wisdom will begin to flow from his heart to his tongue."** (Al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, al-Bayhaqi)