

ḤADĪTH OF JIBRĪL: IḤSĀN

1.0 The levels of the religion.

1.1 In the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl, the three levels of the religion have been outlined:

- 1.1.1 The first level is ‘Islām’, it relates to the very primary physical statements and actions a person must accept to be a Muslim.
- 1.1.2 The second level is ‘Imān’, it relates to the inner beliefs of a Muslim after fulfilling the basic physical aspects of Islām. So it is a higher level of religion.
- 1.1.3 The third and highest level is Iḥsān. It can be summarised as being the perfection of worship after the physical actions and inner beliefs have been fulfilled. It is therefore the highest level of the religion.

1.2 The literal meaning of Iḥsān is to offer goodness.

- 1.2.1 It is the fulfilling of rights, whereas its opposite is violating rights.

2.0 Two types of Iḥsān.

2.1 ‘Iḥsān’ or ‘showing goodness’ is in fulfilling the rights of:

- 2.1.1 The Creator – this is by worshipping Him as He ought to be worshipped.
- 2.1.2 Creation – this is by fulfilling their rights.

3.0 Iḥsān towards the Creator.

3.1 The general meaning is to perfect or ‘make good’ one’s worship of Allāh, by fulfilling His right of obedience upon us.

3.2 The Prophet ﷺ classified the worship of Allah to two levels: *“Iḥsān is to worship Allah as though you see him, if you cannot do so, know he sees you.”*

3.3 There are two levels of worship:

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3.3.1 Worshipping Allāh with love and desire.

3.3.1.1 This means that the cause which inspires a person to worship Allāh is a person desiring His reward; A person yearns to worship Allāh to please Him.

3.3.1.2 This is the meaning of the statement: “*worship Allāh as though you see him...*”

3.3.2 Worshipping Allāh upon fear.

3.3.2.1 This means that the cause which inspires a Person to worship is Allāh is a person fearing Him and wanting to escape punishment.

3.3.2.2 This is the meaning of the statement: “*if you cannot do so, know he sees you.*”

4.0 Balance between love, hope and fear.

4.1 The above levels of Iḥsān do not negate the importance of a Muslim maintaining balance between hope and fear.

4.2 The balance is through hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allāh, and fearing His punishment.

4.3 By remaining in balance between these two stations, a person avoids going towards the extreme of sinning and feeling safe from the punishment of Allāh; and losing hope in the mercy of Allāh due to sins.

4.4 {Inform My worshippers, that I am truly the all-Forgiving, the most Merciful, and my punishment is a painful torment} [15:49]

4.5 {Those whom they invoke, they themselves seeking to their Lord an avenue, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest; they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment} [17:59]

4.6 Ibn al-Qayyim said, ‘the heart, in its journey to Allāh is like a bird. Love is its head, whilst fear and hope are its two wings. As long as the bird’s head and wings are healthy, it will fly proficiently. If the head is cut, the bird dies. If one of its wings are disabled, the bird is exposed to every predator.’ [Madārij as-Sālikīn]

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5.0 Ihsān towards creation.

5.1 This is to fulfil the rights of every type of creation in attempting to benefit others.

5.2 Different types of creation have differing levels of rights upon us. Islām is a religion of priorities:

5.2.1 Rights of the Prophet ﷺ.

5.2.2 Rights of the companions.

5.2.3 Rights of parents.

5.2.4 Rights of family.

5.2.5 Rights of relatives.

5.2.6 Rights of neighbours.

5.2.7 Rights of women and children.

5.2.8 Rights of a guest.

5.2.9 Rights of Muslims.

5.2.10 Rights of non-Muslims.

5.2.11 Rights of the poor, weak and oppressed.

5.2.12 Rights of animals.

5.2.13 Rights of the environment.

5.3 {Seek, with what Allāh has given, the abode of the Hereafter, do not forget your portion of the worldly life; show Ihsān (goodness) as Allāh has been good to you, and do not corrupt the land} [28:77]

5.4 {good (Ḥasanah) and evil cannot be equal. Repel [an evil action] with an action which is better, then he, between whom and you there was enmity, will become as though he was a close friend} [41:34]

5.5 {Do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope; Surely, the mercy of Allāh is ever near to the people of Ihsān} [07:56]

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5.5.1 Ibn al-Qayyim said, 'the key to attaining the Mercy [of Allāh] is Iḥsān [perfecting] the worship of the Creator and striving to benefit his people.' [Ḥādī al-Arwāḥ]

6.0 The complete balance of Islām.

6.1 The above study shows the balance of Islām in:

- 6.1.1 A person's outlook between hope and fear.
- 6.1.2 The demands of life and the desire of the Hereafter.
- 6.1.3 The rights of Allāh and the rights of creation.
- 6.1.4 Prioritising the different levels of rights and responsibility of every level of creation.