

Mohamad Amir Ghachim

Is There Any Reward for
Goodness Except
Goodness?



A Kutbah and Reflective Journal

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

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The background for the illustration is view of the Citadel where the Mosque of Mohammed Ali stands out, photographed from the Islamic cemetery. The flowers are from a seventeenth century Mughal cuerda seca pottery tile that was made in North India or Lahore. The people are from a nineteenth century photograph of an Arab school.

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Dedication

Aya Kabbani and Samer Ghachim

I dedicate this work to my parents, who have always stood by my side and taught me the meaning of altruism from a young age. You gave your all, even in the hardest times, placing the future of your children before your own.

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I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my uncle, Dr. Mohamad Hikmat Kabbani, who supported my family's journey to the U.S. and continued his support thereafter. His insights were invaluable, especially concerning the kutbah I wrote.

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success.

The author image was taken by Rena Laverty.

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Introduction

The topic of Ihsan, Perfection, is one of the most important concepts that needs to be reinforced at the individual and community levels. Explaining this topic based on Quran and the tradition of the Prophet Mohamad, peace be upon him, describes a very important aspect of Islam that makes it very beneficial, not only for the Muslim community, but for its entire surroundings. It simply makes Muslim a source of positive influence without waiting for anything in return since he or she is only interested in being rewarded by the Almighty God and spreading good throughout one's life.

This applies to acts of worship as well as daily tasks and responsibilities and this involves every aspect of life.

--Mohamad Hikmat Kabbani, MD

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Fresco depicting Abbas I, the Safavid Shah of Persia, early seventeenth century.

The First Kutbah

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Verily, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek His assistance, and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Him from the evils of ourselves. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide. Whoever He misguides, none can guide. And I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His slave and messenger.

Now to the point/ And thereafter

Ihsan is Going beyond the call of duty and being satisfied with less from others.

In dealings with people: Being generous, forgiving, and kind, exceeding what is due and expecting less in return. In acts of worship: Performing beyond the obligatory prayers, fasting more than Ramadan, and giving charity regularly.

What is Ihsan?

Ihsan, a profound concept in Islam, is characterized by going above and beyond what is obligatory while anticipating minimal reciprocation. At its core, Ihsan embodies the notion that every virtuous act is performed solely for the sake of Allah. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) beautifully articulated Ihsan

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as a mental state wherein one worships Allah with the conviction of being in His presence. It is a state where, even though we may not physically see Allah, we acknowledge His watchful gaze upon the worshiper. (9) إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

“Saying to themselves,” “We feed you only for the sake of Allah, seeking neither reward nor thanks from you.”

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَارِزًا يَوْمًا لِلنَّاسِ، فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَبِلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ ". قَالَ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ " الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ، وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤَدِّيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ ". قَالَ مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ " أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ". إِلَى آخِرِهِ.

One day while the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, “What is faith?” Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) replied, ‘Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection. “Then he further asked, “What is Islam?” Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) replied, “To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan.” “Then he further asked”, “What is Ihsan (perfection)?” Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) replied, “To

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worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you.” To its complete. Sahih al-Bukhari 50

What are Ihsan levels?

The noblest of goals and the most honorable of purposes is for a person to be eager to do good, to hasten towards it, and in doing so, their humanity ascends. They resemble the angels and adopt the character of the prophets and the righteous. For this reason, Islam, advises humans to do good with others, regardless of their beliefs and backgrounds. God, may He be exalted, says:

(وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا ۖ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ) (البقرة: 148)

And for everyone is a direction for which he turns. So race in goodness. And wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together. He has power over all things. Quran, Baqarah aya 148.

Why should I give to others or help others?

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "مَنْ نَفَسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ بَسَرَ عَلَىٰ مُعْسِرٍ، بَسَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي

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الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ، وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ" الى اخره.

(رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ)

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Whoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him one of the griefs of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever alleviates the need of a needy person, Allah will alleviate his needs in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever shields [or hides the misdeeds of] a Muslim, Allah will shield him in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah will aid His slave so long as he aids his brother. And whoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. No people gather together in one of the Houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that sakeenah (tranquility) descends upon them, and mercy envelops them, and the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them amongst those who are with Him. And whoever is slowed down by his actions, will not be hastened forward by his lineage.

Related by [Muslim] .

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Drawing upon the teachings from the earlier hadith, the importance of mutual assistance becomes abundantly clear. Helping others has a ripple effect that extends far beyond solving an immediate problem; it creates a lasting impact. By fostering a person's growth in a healthy environment, you are not merely aiding an individual but also contributing to the betterment of society. Consider the implications if the person you assist goes on to start or sustain a family.

Many of us enjoy blessings that we often take for granted. When basic survival needs are unmet, one's focus narrows to the immediate present, leaving little room to plan for the future. As humans, our fundamental needs must be satisfied for us to operate effectively in society. For example, a person on the brink of starvation is unlikely to ponder their life five years down the line. To truly understand the urgency of helping one another, it is crucial to put ourselves in the shoes of those less fortunate.

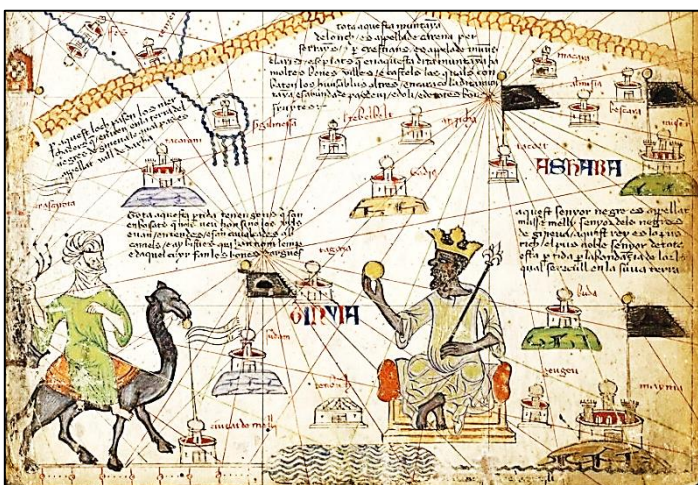
What is perfect Ihsan?

The scholar's emotional response to this verse, emphasizing the promise of Allah. Encouragement

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to strive and practice Ihsan in limited ways, with the hope that Allah will respond with His infinite Ihsan. As humans no matter how much we strive for perfection it will end up being imperfect, Allah said in Surat Al Rahman “هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ” Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?”. Imagine brothers and sisters for our imperfect Ihsan Allah will grant us perfection of Ihsan which Allah is capable of.

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Detail of Mansā Mūsā from the *Atlas of Maritime Charts* also known as *The Catalan Atlas* (1375) which is located in the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Block Museum.

The Second Kutbah

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Who is the worthiest of your generosity?

Allah's command to practice Ihsan with parents and various categories of people.

(وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۗ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا)

And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], “uff,” and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. (Uff) “This is actually a word with significant meaning: it is used to express displeasure or frustration with a person, situation or task. And while not considered a slur, uff should be used with caution because it’s a term mentioned in the Quran in a verse counselling the need for respect toward parents.” Quran. Surah al Isra Aya 23. Saeed, Saeed.

وَعَنْهَا قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ وَأَنَا
”خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي.” الى اخره

Mother of believers Aishah reported God's Messenger as saying, “The best of you is he who is

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best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.” To its complete.

The family serves as the fundamental building block of any society, acting as the backbone that sustains each nation. When families exist in a healthy, supportive environment, the benefits extend to society as a whole. Conversely, if families are mired in dysfunction and corruption, the repercussions are felt throughout the entire community.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him show hospitality to his guest; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain good relation with kins; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Riyad as-Salihin 705

How many of us have relatives whom we rarely communicate with? It is essential to foster robust relationships with our family members, those whom we unintentionally forget to inquire about. Our connection with family is not just about performing

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good deeds; it is rooted in the love and care we should have for one another.

Inevitably, there will be disagreements and conflicts within families. Today, I would like to share some relevant Hadiths on this topic.

Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “He who desires ample provisions and his life be prolonged, should maintain good ties with his blood relations”. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]. Riyad as-Salihin 319

‘Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “The bond of relationship is suspending from the Throne, and says: ‘He who keeps good relations with me, Allah will keep connection with him, but whosoever severs relations with me, Allah will sever connection with him’”. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Therefore, I advise you, and my own flawed self, to fear Allah and to support one another in times of ease and hardship.

(now it is time to say prayers, which are said in Arabic although it is an English kutbah)

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O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You have blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. O Allah, bestow your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You have blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. Grant abundant peace to them. O Allah, be pleased with all of the companions, the rightly guided caliphs, the guided Imams, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, and with all the companions of your Prophet, and with the followers, and all those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

O Allah, be pleased with us through Your grace, Your generosity, and Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful. O Allah, reconcile the hearts of the Muslims with truth, O Most Merciful of the Merciful. Guide them to the paths of peace and grant them victory over Your enemy and their enemies, O Strong and Mighty. O Allah, relieve the distress of the concerned among the Muslims and alleviate the suffering of the afflicted among the Muslims.

O Allah, heal our sicknesses and the sicknesses of the Muslims, O Lord of the worlds. O Allah, forgive our deceased and the deceased of the Muslims. O

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Allah, increase their good deeds and overlook their sins, O Most Merciful of the Merciful. O Allah, make our countries secure, peaceful, prosperous, and generous, and likewise all the lands of the Muslims, O Lord of the worlds.

O Allah, make us safe in our lands and rectify the affairs of our rulers...O Allah, make our end in all matters good, save us from the disgrace of this world and the punishment of the Hereafter, O Al hayy and O Al Qayyom. By Your mercy, we seek assistance. Make our affairs all good. O Allah, protect us from the evils of our own souls and from the evil deeds we do, and save us from the evil of every wrongdoer, O Lord of the worlds.

﴿ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴾ (البقرة: 201)

But among them is he who says, “Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.” Quran. Surah Baqarah Aya 201.

عباد الله: ﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ بِعِظَتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ * وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ (النحل:90-91)

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Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. Remember Allah the Great and Majestic, He will remember you. Be thankful to Him for His blessings, He will increase them. Allah is the Greatest, and Allah knows what you do.

Quran. Surah Nahl Aya 90-91.

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Yahya ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti's "Scholars in library of the House of Wisdom," Al-Makamat lil-Hariri (1236-1237). In the collection of the MET.

Reflections on the First Kutbah

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How I am generous, forgiving, and kind when dealing with people?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I exceed what is due and expect less in return?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I perform beyond the obligatory prayers, fasting more than Ramadan, and giving charity regularly.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

When I perform and act of goodness, do I anticipate some type of minimal reciprocation? Am I less likely to act with goodness if I receive no reciprocation?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Am I aware that I am always under the watchful eye of Allah?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I demonstrate my belief in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I worship Allah alone? Or have there been times when I worshiped false gods such as money, possessions, or social prestige?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How often and how well do I pray? Do I offer prayers perfectly?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I pay the compulsory charity (Zakat)?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I observe fasts during the month of Ramadan?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I worship Allah as if I can see Him? If not, can I consider that He is looking at me?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Am I eager to do good?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I do good for others, regardless of their beliefs and backgrounds?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I benefit from doing good to others?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

In what ways have I experienced the benefits of mutual assistance?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Have I ever seen the ripple effect that extended from a time I treated another person with goodness?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How have I fostered a person's growth in a healthy environment? In what ways did this add to the betterment of society?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Have there been times when my basic survival needs were unmet? How did that impact my ability to plan for the future?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Have I ever put myself in the shoes of those less fortunate so that I might truly understand the urgency of helping another person?

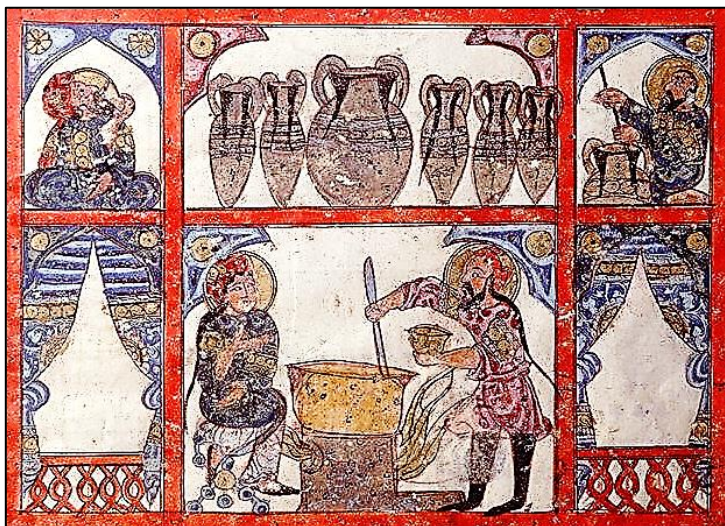
هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Even though I know my Ihsan will be imperfect, do I feel encouraged to strive and practice Ihsan in limited ways, with the hope that Allah will respond with His infinite Ihsan? How do I do this?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠



Calligrapher Abdullah ibn al-Fadl's "Preparing Medicine from Honey", from a Dispersed Manuscript of an Arabic Translation of Greek physician Cilicia's *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides (1224). In the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Reflections on the Second Kutbah

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Who is the worthiest of your generosity?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I practice Ihsan with my parents? With various categories of people.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How am I at my best to my family?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I promote a healthy and supportive environment for my family?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I show hospitality to my guests?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I maintain good relations with my kind?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

If I am unable to speak good, do I remain silent?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I have relatives with whom I rarely communicate? How can I better foster a robust relationship with my family members, those whom I unintentionally forget to inquire about?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

Do I realize that my connection with family is not just about performing good deeds; it is rooted in the love and care I should have for them?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

When the inevitably disagreements and conflicts arise within my family, how do I handle them? How do I maintain good ties with my blood relations?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

We need to fear Allah and to support one another in times of ease and hardship. How do I accomplish this with my own flawed self?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I live in accordance with Allah's order to live in justice and good conduct? For giving to relatives? For avoiding the immorality and bad conduct and oppression that is forbidden?

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

How do I demonstrate that I am thankful to Allah for His blessings? He will increase them. Allah is the Greatest, and Allah knows what you do.

Quran. Surah Nahl Aya 90.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠



About Ehipassiko Press, LLC

Ehipassiko Press was started in June 2023 to publish Open Educational Resources (OERs) primarily in the fields of education, spirituality, and addiction recovery. We have since expanded our mission to include books that serve as reflective journals in a number of disciplines as well as to support student voices.

With the publication of *Is There Any Reward for Goodness Except Goodness*, we are launching our “Student Voices” series which will feature books written by college students. This is also the first in what we hope will be a series of kutbahs.

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هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

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هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

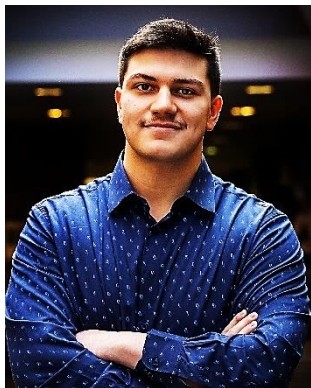


Image Credit: Rena Laverty

About the Author

Mohamad Amir Ghachim, simply called Amir by those close to him, is 21 years old. He traveled from Syria, through Jordan, to the United States. This move was driven by his family's search for safety during a time of conflict. Following a lengthy 12-year period, in 2022, they were able to join their extended family in the U.S.

In Jordan, Amir began his higher education with aspirations to become a pharmacist, studying at the University of Science and Technology. He is currently pursuing a degree in biochemistry at Schoolcraft College where he is an active

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ٦٠

participant in the honors program. There, he has worked on his capstone project, collaborating with the Muslim Community of Western Suburbs (MCWS) to organize and catalogue books for their library.