

An Explanation of Surah Al-Ikhlās

Description: To understand the meaning and importance of the 112th surah of the Quran and know that it is also a clarification of the meaning of *Tawheed*.

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Arabic Terms:

- *Ansar* - helpers. The people of Medina who opened their homes, lives and city to Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca.
- *Aayaat* - (singular " *ayah*) the word *aayaat* can have many meanings. It is almost always used when talking about proofs from Allah. These include evidences, verses, lessons, signs, and revelations.
- *Tawheed* - The Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah with respect to His Lordship, His Names and Attributes and in His right to be worshipped.
- *Ikhlas* - sincerity, purity or isolation. Islamically it denotes purifying our motives and intentions to seek the pleasure of Allah. It is also the name of the 112th chapter of Quran.
- *Surah* " chapter of the Quran.
- *Shahadah* - Testimony of Faith.
- *Rakah* - unit of prayer.
- *Hadith* - (plural " *ahadith*) is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- *Sahabah* - the plural form of "Sahabi," which translates to Companions. A *sahabi*, as the word is commonly used today, is someone who saw Prophet Muhammad, believed in him and died as a Muslim.

Surah 112 Al-Ikhlās (also known as The Purity, The Sincerity or the *Surah* of *Tawheed*) is only four *ayaat* (verses) yet it sums up the essence of Islam. Allah is one and there is nothing comparable to Him.



Say, He is Allah, (the) One. Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). He begets not, nor was He begotten; And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.” (Quran 112)

Surah Al-Ikhlās was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him) during the early days of Islam. The polytheists and pagans of Mecca one day approached and challenged him saying, “Give us the genealogy of your Lord.” It was then that Allah revealed this *surah*.

Surah Al-Ikhlās proclaims the Oneness of Allah and this concept is presented in the first *ayah*. The second *ayah* declares that Allah is As-Samad implying that He has all the attributes of perfection. As-Samad is one of the Names of Allah. It means the one Who everybody depends on, but the one who doesn’t depend on anyone, it also indicates that Allah is unlike His creation. The third *ayah* describes that He was not born nor did He give birth and the last *ayah* declares that Allah is beyond comparison. *Surah* Al-Ikhlās directly supports the first pillar of Islam, the *shahadah*. “There is no true deity but Allah”.

Surah al-Ikhlās is an affirmation of Allah’s oneness and as such it negates all forms of polytheism and idolatry. This is very important because the foundation on which our faith is built is the absolute belief that Allah is One. Belief in One God entails certainty.

Muslims worship Allah alone, He has no partners, associates, or helpers. Worship is directed solely to Allah, for He is the only One worthy of worship.

Surah al-Ikhlās is one of the first *surahs* that many Muslims remember learning as a child and this is also true for those who convert to Islam. After a person has learnt the basics of the five daily prayers they are usually anxious to recite the shorter *surahs* of the Quran in their prayers, and almost always *surah* Al-Ikhlās is one of them.

Reciting *surah* Al-Ikhlās may be the means of attaining Paradise and earning Allah’s love. From the *ahadith* we are able to find some of the many benefits of loving, reciting and living by the principles outlined in this short *surah*.

Prophet Muhammad sent a man as a leader of an expedition. During the journey, in every prayer he concluded his recitation of the Quran with *surah* Al-Ikhlās. On their return his companions mentioned this to Prophet Muhammad, who replied, “Ask him why he did so”. When the man was asked, he answered, “In this *surah* the attributes of the Merciful Allah have been stated; therefore, I love to recite it again and again.” When the Prophet

Muhammad heard this reply, he said to the people, oeInform him that Allah holds him in great love and esteem.”[1]

A man from among the *Ansar* led the prayers in the Quba Mosque. His practice was that in every *rakah* he first recited *surah* Al-Ikhlās and then would add another *surah*. The people objected to it and said to him, oeDon’t you think that *surah* Al-Ikhlās is by itself enough? Why do you join another *surah* to it? You should either recite only this *surah*, or should leave it and recite some other *surah*. He said: oeI cannot leave it; instead, I would rather give up leading the prayers.” The people did not want anyone else to lead, so they brought the matter before Prophet Muhammad. He asked the man, oeWhat prevents you from conceding to what your companions desire? What makes you recite this particular *surah* in every *rakah*?” The man replied, oeI have great love for it.” Prophet Muhammad said, oeYour love for this *surah* has earned you entry to Paradise.”[2]

Surah al-Ikhlās has been described as being equal to one-third of the Quran. Reciting it has the same reward as reciting one-third of the Quran.

Prophet Muhammad said to the *sahabah*, oeAssemble in my presence, for I will recite to you one-third of the Quran.” When they had assembled, Prophet Muhammad came out to them and recited *surah* Al-Ikhlās, and then he returned to his home. The *sahabah* began speaking to one another about it. Someone said, oeI think a revelation has just come to Him from the heavens. That is why he went back inside.” Then the Prophet emerged from his home and said, oeI told you that I would recite one-third of the Qur’an. That is indeed one-third of the Quran.”[3]

A man heard another man reciting (in the prayers): oeSay, ‘He is Allah, the One.’” And he recited it repeatedly. In the morning he went to the Prophet and informed him about that as if he considered that the recitation of that *surah* by itself was not enough. Prophet Muhammad said, oeBy Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is equal to one-third of the Quran.” [4]

Briefly and in conclusion, *surah* Al-Ikhlās is one of the shortest chapters in Quran, yet it is one of the most profound. It is a chapter outlining the foundation of the Muslim’s faith, and it is equal to a third of the Quran.

For those who would like to memorise and recite *surah* Al-Ikhlās please see this highly recommended web site: <http://www.mounthira.com/learning/surah/112-al-ikhlas/>

Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[3] *Saheeh Muslim*

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