

Self-Critique

First Khutbah

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ , نَحْمَدُهُ , وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ , وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا , مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ , وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ , وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

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 our selves. 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 servant and messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ [آل

عمران:102]

Al Imran(3) 102 : **O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.**

Oh Believers:

Indeed, in His wisdom, Allah Almighty has ordained three types of inner selves that influence people at different times throughout their lives, depending on how much control a person allows them to have: the self that commands evil, the self that blames, and the tranquil self. To clearly understand one's own state and determine where one stands among these three inner selves, it is essential to open an important door—a door that should never be closed or, worse yet, locked entirely. This door is the principle of self-critique, being honest and candid with oneself, so that one can recognize points of deficiency and correct them with the blaming

Khutbah.info

inner-self, and identify points of correctness and enhance them with the tranquil inner-self. Thus, by utilizing both of these inner-selves, they tighten the reins on the inner-self that commands evil, so that it cannot reach what it would have otherwise reached without self-scrutiny and holding themselves accountable with complete impartiality.

Scrutinizing oneself is one of the noblest and most courageous tasks, despite its burden on one's soul and the breaking of its pride to compel it towards what is right. Through self-examination, we confront our shortcomings and strive for self-improvement. Through it, mistakes are corrected, the ugly is replaced with the beautiful, and the bad with the good. No one knows a person's faults and mistakes better than themselves, no matter how many excuses they make. As Allah Almighty says:

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ * وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

Surah Al-Qiyamah (75)14-15: (14) **But man will be a witness against himself, (15) even if he presents his excuses.**

We are all in dire need to engage in self-scrutiny without hesitation, fear, or procrastination. By focusing intently on examining and cleansing ourselves, we overlook others' faults and instead recognize the flaws within ourselves. Indeed, in Allah Almighty words:

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

Al-Qiyamah (75) 2: **And I swear by the self-reproaching soul.**

There is clear evidence of the importance of self-critique, self-blame, self-correction, and giving them constant attention without neglect. Allah does not swear in His Book except by something of great significance. And in his interpretation of the Quran, Ibn Kathir cited that Al-Hasan Al-Basri said: "By Allah, we do not see the believer except blaming himself: 'What did I intend with my word? What did I intend by eating? What did I

intend with my thought?' Whereas the transgressor proceeds without blaming himself."

It has been said long ago: "The inner self is like a treacherous partner; if you do not hold it accountable, it will take your wealth." One of the righteous predecessors said: "It is incumbent upon the wise person not to neglect four hours: an hour in which he calls upon his Lord, an hour in which he holds himself accountable, an hour in which he meets with his brothers who inform him of his faults and are truthful with him about himself, and an hour in which he allows himself to enjoy the permissible and commendable pleasures; for in this hour is support for those other hours and relaxation for the hearts."

To effectively critique oneself, it is necessary to follow a structured approach based on three stages.

The first stage is admitting the mistake, and not letting pride and arrogance prevent them from that. Admitting one's mistake is better than persisting in it, and no one is free from error. In the authentic hadith, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ، وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ

All the children of Adam are sinners, and the best of sinners are those who repent. [Sunan Ibn Majah 4251, Grade: Hasan]

The second stage in self-critiquing is desisting from the mistake and correcting it by moving from it to what is right, with all humility and submission. This includes making amends and seeking forgiveness and apologizing to the one that they wronged, and ensuring that their apology is not worse than their mistake. Otherwise, they fall into two errors instead of one.

The third stage is being cautious not to repeat the same mistake, for the believer is not stung from the same source twice. This means learning from one's errors to prevent future missteps. Also, one should beware of

falling into what others have fallen into. For the happy are those who takes heed from others, and the wretched are those who fail to learn from others and persist upon their mistakes.

And self-critiquing does not mean excessively reproaching oneself to the point of stifling or psychological burnout or becoming consumed or among the doomed. There is a difference between constructive criticism, which moves one from purging to adorning, from bad to good or from good to better, and destructive self-criticism that leads to despair. And self-critique does not mean self-contempt and disdain that leads to despair and laziness, resulting in the disease of procrastination or inability to act, which both lead to regression and failure. For indeed, the one who overexerts themselves neither covers any ground nor preserves their resources. The one who critiques themselves within the ordained framework is occupied by their own faults over the faults of others. It becomes a motivator for them to work on what benefits them and does not harm them, and what sparks their ambition, not what dampens it. They are concerned with understanding themselves before understanding others, thus adhering to the advice of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he said:

إِحْرَاضٌ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِينُ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزُ

Strive for what benefits you, seek help from Allah, and do not be helpless. [Muslim 2664]

أَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

I say what you have heard and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and you from every sin. So seek forgives from Him, Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

All praise is to Allah, and peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, and I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His slave and messenger.

Oh people:

Know that self-scrutiny is the first stage of praiseworthy criticism. We highlight its importance and its impact on improving the individual's character—which necessarily reflects on the society composed of individuals—because it is foundational; if it is good, the branches will follow suit in goodness. A society improves when its individuals improve themselves.

However, it should be noted that during self-scrutiny, a reprehensible trait may afflict a person: that is casting blame on others to justify their mistakes and shortcomings, and absolving themselves from their faults and failures. Thus they fall into what is called psychological projection, which is a defensive mechanism that the deficient person employs to escape the consequences of their shortcomings and misdeeds. They attribute the cause of that to others, fleeing from admitting their mistakes and thereby avoiding blame. As the old proverb says: "She accused me of her own faults and slipped away." This is a downfall with its own perils, which those whom Allah has granted hearts to understand with, eyes to see with, and ears to hear with, should not overlook. Allah reproached the believers on the Day of Uhud when He said about them:

أَوَلَمْ آصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَيْهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

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Al-Imran (3) 165: **Why [is it that] when a [single] disaster struck you, although you had struck [the enemy in the battle of Badr] with one twice as great, you said, 'From where is this?' Say, 'It is from yourselves.'** **Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.**

Therefore, it is befitting for Muslims to be clear with themselves, candid in their self-critique, earnest in their correction, and sincere in rectifying their path. For if the tree trunk is straight, its shadow will necessarily be straight. Otherwise, they risk becoming burdens to themselves and their society, weighing down various aspects of communal life. Such is the case only with the lazy and idle who wait for the sky to rain gold or silver while they recline on their beds. They expect rewards without effort, while contributing nothing to their community.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَخْدُو فَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَهُ فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقُهَا

Every person goes out in the morning and sells himself, thereby setting himself free or destroying himself. [Muslim 223]

May Allah benefit us and you with the guidance of His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ. Indeed Allah is All Hearing, Answering.

هَذَا وَصَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى نَبِيِّكُمْ كَمَا أَمَرَكُمْ بِذَلِكَ رَبُّكُمْ , فَقَالَ

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon your Prophet as your Lord commanded:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Al Ahzaab (33) 56: Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنَا فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنَا فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيمَا
أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنَا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ إِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَذُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ
تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

O Allah, guide us with those whom You have guided, grant us well-being among those You have granted well-being, be an ally to us along with those whom You are an ally to, and bless what You have bestowed upon us, and save us from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree over You. He whom You support can never be humiliated. Glory is to You, our Lord, You are Blessed and Exalted.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ
مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا
سَأَلَكَ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَاذَ بِهِ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ
الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ
عَمَلٍ وَنَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ كُلَّ قَضَاءٍ قَضَيْتَهُ لَنَا خَيْرًا

O Allah, We ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we seek refuge with You from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we ask You for the good that Your servant and Prophet has asked You for, and we seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your servant and Prophet sought refuge. O Allah, we ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and

Khutbah.info

we seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And we ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning us good.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Servants of Allah. 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.

أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا يَزِدْكُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا يَجْعَلْ
لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَخْرَجًا ، وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Remember Allah, the Great - He will remember you. Thank Him for His favors - He will increase you therein. And seek forgiveness from Him - He will forgive you. And be conscious of Him - He will provide you a way out of difficult matters. And, establish the prayer.