

TAZKIAH NAFSI (SELF IMPROVEMENT)

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ
فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،
فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، انْفُؤُوا اللَّهَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be forgiven in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this noble day, let us ponder upon the words of Allah the Almighty in the Quran in Chapter 91 (*Surah Ash-Shams*) Verses (*ayat*) 8 to 9:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Which means: “and inspired it [the soul] to know its own wrong and its own right. Truly he succeeds who purifies his soul”

This verse explains that success in the eyes of Allah the Almighty is not measured by wealth or position, but by the purity of the soul and the purity of the heart that is adorned with noble qualities. On the contrary, the real loss is on those who allow their souls to be dominated by destructive qualities. Therefore, every Muslim is required to strive to purify the soul through a process known as *tazkiah an-nafs*. Imam Al-Ghazali explains that *tazkiah an-nafs* is an effort to purify the soul from moral abominations and inner impurities. Through this purification of the soul, a person gains strength and self-restraint to resist desires and temptations, by increasing worship and *sunnah* practices that draws them closer to Allah the Almighty.

Indeed, *tazkiah an-nafs* is very important because whether a person is good or bad is determined by his heart. The Prophet (peace be upon him [PBUH]) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari:

Which means: “*Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh, which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it is diseased, all of [the body] is diseased. Truly, it is the heart.*”

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

To have a pure soul and heart, we must strive to cleanse it of evil qualities such as envy, arrogance, pride, *riya'* (showing off) and *sum'ah* (desire to be praised and flattered). As long as the heart is filled with these vile qualities, it will not be able to be adorned with noble qualities, because goodness cannot mix with evil. Therefore, let us stay away from all forms of sin, reduce useless actions, and avoid hostility, lying, backbiting, quarreling and hating others, because all these acts will contaminate the

heart and weaken faith. The Prophet (PBUH) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam At-Tirmidhi,

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا أَذْنَبَ كَانَتْ نُكْتَةً سَوْدَاءَ فِي قَلْبِهِ ، فَإِنْ تَابَ وَنَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ صُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ، وَإِنْ زَادَ زَادَتْ حَتَّى يَغْلُو قَلْبُهُ،

Which means: “*When a believer sins there is black spot on his heart, and if he repents and asks pardon his heart is polished; but if he does more it increases till it gains the ascendancy over his heart.*”

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When we earnestly cleanse our hearts from vile qualities, our hearts will be adorned with noble qualities. In this regard, Imam Al-Ghazali advises us to implement the means of soul reformation, namely by attending the gatherings of the study of *fardu ain tasawwuf*, fulfilling all the obligatory and *sunnah* obligations of the *rawatib*, increasing *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness from Allah), and continuously doing self-reflection. God willing, by consistently practicing these, the heart will be filled with noble qualities such as patience, gratitude, fear and hope in Allah, *qana'ah* (feeling content), *zuhud* (detachment from worldly desires), *tawakal* (trust in Allah), *mahabbah* (love for Allah), *redha* (contentment), *ikhlas* (sincerity), righteous, *muraqabah* (feeling watched by Allah) and *muhasabah* (self-reflection). A clean and pure heart will produce a noble personality, not only saving oneself but also doing good to others. Indeed, increasing righteous deeds is the main way to cleanse oneself from *mazmumah* behavior. Abu Darda' said,

Which means: “*Verily, everything has a polish and the polish of the heart is the remembrance of Allah the Almighty.*”

Therefore, let us increase our supplication to Allah the Almighty to be blessed with a clean heart and a pure soul. Practice the supplication taught by the Prophet (PBUH):

اللَّهُمَّ أَتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا، وَزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا، أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

Which means: “*O Allah! Grant me the sense of piety and purify my soul as You are the Best to purify it. You are its Guardian and its Protector.*”

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

To conclude the *khutbah* (sermon),

First, try to perform *tazkiah an-nafs* (purification of the soul) by abandoning immorality and staying away from *mazmumah* (negative) traits.

Second, adorn oneself with *mahmudah* (positive) qualities, including patience, gratitude, fear and hope in Allah the Almighty, contentment, *zuhud* (detachment from the world), trust in Allah, etc.

Third, increase repentance, *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), supplication and good deeds. May a clean heart shape our soul to be calm and prosperous.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُبُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝٨

Which means: “Believers, turn to Allah in sincere repentance. Your Lord may well cancel your bad deeds for you and admit you into Gardens graced with flowing streams, on a Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet or those who have believed with him. With their lights streaming out ahead of them and to their right, they will say, ‘Lord, perfect our lights for us and forgive us: You have power over everything.’” (Quran, [Surah At-Tahrim] 66:8)

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.