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Cultivating the Practice of Self-Reflection

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ، وَأَمَرَنَا بِالتَّقْوَى وَالْخُلُقِ
الْكَرِيمِ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ
أَجْمَعِينَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ، وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ.

Zumratal mukminin rahimakumullah,

Let us adorn ourselves with taqwa towards Allah s.w.t. Ensure that every action we take aligns with His commands. Guard ourselves from transgressing His limits and prohibitions. Seek Allah's help and guidance in all our affairs, for He is the best Protector and the Most Merciful towards His servants. May Allah s.w.t. grant us ease in our hearts and steadfastness in faith as we navigate the journey of life. Amin, ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

Dear blessed congregation,

With each passing day, the end of the year is fast approaching. At the beginning of this past year, some of us may have set goals – what do we want to achieve over the course of the year? Yet, today, some of these plans may have not materialised, perhaps due to the demands of daily life or other distractions that pulled our attention away.

Amidst this busyness, we may not have found the time to take a moment to pause and ask ourselves – why am I doing what I am doing? What is my **intention** or purpose in life? How do my actions and work each day impact my standing in the Hereafter?

This is an example of introspection, or **muhasabah**, which is commanded upon every believer. Allah s.w.t. says in Surah Al-Hasyr, verse 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمتْ لِغَدٍ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

Which means: "O you who believe, fear Allah. Let every soul look to (or **reflect** upon) what it has put forth for tomorrow (the Hereafter), and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

In his tafsir, Imam As-Sa'di explains that this verse forms the foundation for every servant of Allah to engage in **muhasabah** or **self-reflection**. For this, he outlines three steps:

1. **If we have made a mistake, correct it immediately.**
Abandon the mistake, repent sincerely, and avoid anything that may cause us to repeat it.
2. **If we have any shortcomings in fulfilling Allah's commands, always seek to improve.** Ask for Allah's help to refine and perfect our deeds.
3. **Compare Allah's blessings with our own deficiencies.**
When we recognise how vast Allah's favours are compared to our shortcomings, it will lead us to feel deep humility and shame before Allah, and encourage us to be more obedient and grateful.

My dear brothers,

No matter how great our achievements are, there will always be room for **self-improvement**. Yet, we may miss the opportunities to **reflect** if we are always occupied and never pause to ask ourselves: Which areas need effort to **improve**? How can we plan ahead better so that our life's goals remain clear and our good **intentions** are fulfilled?

That is why it is of utmost importance for every Muslim to practice **muhasabah**, or continuous **self-reflection**. Allow me to share two key points in this regard:

First: Muhasabah is a process of introspection that enlivens the believer's heart

An eminent scholar, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, once said: *“A believer continuously evaluates himself in every matter. Whatever he does, he feels there is still something lacking, therefore he **regrets** and holds himself accountable. As for the heedless and bad person, he lives on without ever questioning or correcting himself.”*

Through **muhasabah**, a person humbles the ego and recognises his or her shortcomings. For example, we may, including myself, serve others courteously in public spaces, yet show less patience with our own family. We may exhibit good manners and pious deeds before others, yet commit sins in private. We are courteous to those similar to us, who share similar cultural background or views, yet may fail to treat others equally, forgetting that we are all creatures of Allah.

Thus, the practice of **muhasabah** ensures that we are not deceived by the small good deeds we manage to perform, for we are far from perfect and there remain many areas for **improvement**.

Second: Muhasabah for self-development

When we pause to **self-reflect** on our deeds and work, we may feel **regret** or disappointment when a noble goal has yet to be achieved, or a bad habit has yet to be abandoned.

The Prophet s.a.w. said that which means: *“**Regret** is (the beginning of) repentance.”* (Ibn Majah)

Feeling **regret** is important so that we avoid repeating mistakes in the future. We may **regret** wasted time that could have been used productively, or health that was neglected until illness struck. This **regret** should encourage us to be more conscious and **intentional** in our future actions.

Beloved congregation,

Muhasabah is not merely a process of improving our lives; it is also a preparation for the Day of Reckoning. As the saying goes: *“Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable.”*

Remember, every action we take carries weight in the sight of Allah. **Muhasabah** helps us fulfil our responsibilities at work, act with proper etiquette in society, and be patient in the face of challenges. It cultivates **ihسان** – living as if we see Allah, or at least, with full consciousness that Allah is always watching over us.

May our constant **self-reflection** guide us to become more aware, more grateful, and more **intentional** in our lives. May Allah s.w.t. lead every step we take toward attaining His pleasure. Amin, ya Rabbal ‘Alamin.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ
الرَّحِيمُ.

Second Sermon

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا كَمَا أَمَرَ، وَأَشْهَدُ 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. أَمَا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فِيمَا أَمَرَ، وَانْتَهُوا عَمَّا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ وَزَجَرَ.

أَلَا صَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْمُصْطَفَى، فَقَدْ أَمَرَنَا اللَّهُ بِذَلِكَ حَيْثُ قَالَ فِي كِتَابِهِ الْغَرِيزِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ.

وَارْضَ اللَّهُمَّ عَنِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهَدِّينَ سَادَاتِنَا أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعُثْمَانُ وَعَلِيٌّ، وَعَنْ بَقِيَّةِ الصَّحَابَةِ وَالْقُرَابَةِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ، وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ، وَعَنْ مَعَهُمْ وَفِيهِمْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا لِرَحْمِ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ. اللَّهُمَّ ادْفَعْ عَنَّا الْبَلَاءَ وَالْوَبَاءَ وَالزَّلَازِلَ وَالْمَحَنَ، مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ، عَنِ بَلَدِنَا خَاصَّةً، وَسَائِرِ الْبُلْدَانِ عَامَّةً، يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ أَنْصُرْ إِخْوَانَنَا الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ فِي عَزَّةٍ وَفِي فَلَسْطِينَ وَفِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ عَامَّةً، يَا لِرَحْمِ الرَّاحِمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ بَدِّلْ خَوْفَهُمْ أَمْنًا، وَحُزْرَهُمْ فَرَحًا، وَهَمَّهُمْ فَرَجًا، يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ اكْتُبِ السَّلَامَ وَالْأَمْنَ وَالْأَمَانَ لِلْعَالَمِ كُلِّهِ

وَلِلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ. رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى، وَيَنْهَى عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ، فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ
يَذْكُرْكُمْ، وَاشْكُرُوا عَلَى نِعَمِهِ يَزِدْكُمْ، وَاسْأَلُوهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ يُعْطِكُمْ، وَلَذِكْرُ
اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ، وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ.