

Focus in Prayer

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) [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 People:

All praise is due to Allah, the Beneficent, The Forgiving, the Merciful. His books are a mercy for His servants so He revealed them. And He guided to them through His ordainments. Whoever adheres is guided and saved. And whoever turns away goes astray and suffers. Allah divided prayer between Him and His servant. For his servant praises Him then seeks His assistance and guidance. And Allah accepts his praise and rewards him for it and grants his request and guides him to the straight path. His Prophet

صلى الله عليه وسلم magnified the matter of prayer and had many sayings in this regard. He concluded his life and was instructing to it .

So be conscious of Allah and obey Him. And make amends and seek His forgiveness. And remember His favor upon you and praise and thank Him. And contemplate His decrees upon His servants and magnify and glorify Him. And rely upon Him. For He is the Grand, the Exalted, and All Mighty, Owner of retribution.

وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ-البقرة:

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Al Baqarah (2) 165: **And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the torment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in torment.**

Worships and acts of obedience are differentiated by Allah based on what is in the heart of faith, sincerity, love, fear, reverence and repentance.

And the genuine worshipper is the one who offers it as required and stays away from its breaches in all the forms. He combines sincerity, love, fear and worships in the best manner.

For the sake of clarifying this differentiation and realizing this distinction, let us pause with the greatest obligations of Islam after the two testimonies; the prayer, the pillar of religion.

Allah Almighty describes the attributes of the successful believers starting with the prayer and concluding with those safeguarding their prayers as the ones deserving to inherit the gardens of bliss:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ *
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ * إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ

أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ * فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِأَمَانَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ * الَّذِينَ
يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ-المؤمنون:1-11

Al Mominoon (23) 1-11: (1) Certainly will the believers have succeeded: (2) They who are during their prayer humbly intent (3) And they who turn away from ill speech (4) And they who are observant of zakāh (5) And they who guard their chastity (6) Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed - (7) But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors -(8) And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive (9) And they who carefully maintain their prayers - (10) Those are the inheritors (11) Who will inherit al-Firdaus. They will abide therein eternally.

And in another place in the Book of Allah, the description of the honored people of Paradise starts with regular performance of prayers and concludes with safeguarding prayers.

And Allah said:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا * إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا * وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا * إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ *
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

Al Ma'arej (70) 19-22: (19) Indeed, mankind was created anxious: (20) When evil touches him, impatient, (21) And when good touches him, withholding [of it], (21) Except the observers of prayer - (22) Those who are constant in their prayer

And Allah said:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

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Al Ma'arej (70) 34-35: (34) **And those who [carefully] maintain their prayer: (35) They will be in gardens, honored.**

This praise of those praying is the ultimate praise and the biggest incentive. But the described prayer is a special prayer with special characteristics. A perfect and complete prayer, a prayer of enduring humility and focus, and with comprehensive safeguarding. There are some elements of prayer that if they have a deficiency, then a person's prayer has deficiency equal to that deficiency. Then hope for reward could turn into punishment. Allah Almighty said:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ-الماعون:4-5

Al Ma'oan 4-5: (4) **So woe to those who pray (5) [But] who are heedless of their prayer**

And Allah said regarding the hypocrites:

وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا-النساء:142

An Nisa (4) 142: **And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little,**

And Allah said of the hypocrites:

وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى-التوبة:54

At Tawbah (9) 54: **And that they come not to prayer except while they are lazy**

Khushoo (focus and humility) is a state in the heart that stems from the depths of veneration and reverence of Allah. And humility and subservience within the soul. And softness of the heart. And tenderness that bears submission and passion. And if the heart has Khushoo (focus

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and humility) then the hearing and sight will also have Khushoo (focus and humility). As well as the face and forehead. And the rest of the limbs and senses. If the heart is tranquil and has Khushoo (focus and humility) the limbs and movements and voice will have Khushoo (focus and humility).

Allah said:

وَحَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا- طه: 108

Taha (20) 108: **And [all] voices will be humbled before the Most Merciful, so you will not hear except a whisper [of footsteps].**

And the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned during his ruku' (bowing):

خشع لك سمعي وبصري، ومخي وعظمي وعصبي

Before You my hearing is humbled, and my sight, and my mind and my bones and my nerves [Muslim 771a]

When the righteous predecessors would see someone moving their hand during the prayer they would say: If he had Khushoo (focus and humility) in his heart, his limbs would have been tranquil. And when some of the righteous predecessors heard Allah's words:

لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ- النساء: 43

An Nisa (4) 43: **O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying**

They would say: How many of those praying do not consume intoxicants...but do not know what they say during their prayers, indeed the worries of the worldly life has intoxicated them.

If the heart of the one praying has Khushoo (focus and humility), then he senses that he is standing before the hands of His creator. And he feels the magnitude of his supplication to his Lord. And the one devoted to prayers

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and having Khushoo (focus and humility) is the one who estimates the matter with its true estimate. The greatness of Allah and His majesty have settled into his conscious. His heart is filled with love and fear and his limbs have settled. He is not occupied with other than the prayer and deserves the Quranic praise:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ-المؤمنون:1-2

Al Mominoon (23) 1-2: (1) Certainly will the believers have succeeded: (2) They who are during their prayer humbly intent

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"...من توضأ نحو وضوئي هذا ثم صلى ركعتين لا يحدث فيهما نفسه بشيء؛ غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه." رواه البخاري

"...whoever performs ablution as I have done, then stands and prays two units of prayer without letting his thoughts wander, his previous sins will be forgiven." [Bukhari 1934]

So be conscious of Allah and safeguard your prayers and maintain them with care. And seek refuge in Allah from a heart that does not humble. For it was authenticated that one of the supplications of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ، وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ، وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ، وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يَسْتَجَابُ لَهَا.

O Allah, I seek refuge with You from knowledge that is of no benefit, a heart that is not humble, a supplication that is not heard and a soul that is not satisfied, and from a supplication that is not answered. [Sunan an-Nasa'i 5537]

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 forgiveness from Him, Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَأَشْهَدُ 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:

The scholars have mentioned several aspects enabling presence of the heart and realizing the state of khusoo and the reality of worshipping.

From these aspects is diligence in repelling stray thoughts and distancing oneself from occupying distractions. And the scholars have mentioned that they are two types of distractions. The first kind are outwardly distractions that occupy the hearing and sight. And this addressed by staying close to the sutrah (barrier placed in front of one praying) and focusing one's gaze on the place of prostration. And staying away from decorated and adorned places.

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم once prayed wearing a garment having a pattern. When he concluded the prayer, he said:

اَذْهَبُوا بِحَمِيصَتِي هَذِهِ إِلَى أَبِي جَهْمٍ فَإِنَّهَا أَلْهَتْنِي أَنْفًا فِي صَلَاتِي وَأَتُونِي بِأَنْبِجَانِيَّتِهِ

Take this garment of mine to AbuJahm, for it turned my attention just now in my prayer, and bring a simple garment without patterns.

[Bukhari 5817, Muslim 556b]

The other kind of distractions are internal such as scattered thoughts and preoccupation of the mind. This is addressed by focused thinking and reflection during recitation, remembrance and supplications.

And another type of distraction that should be pointed out is racing the Imam (prayer leader). There came severe warning against this. The Imam is to be followed and should not be preceded. The Prophet ﷺ said concerning it:

أما يخشى الذي يرفع رأسه قبل الإمام أن يحول الله رأسه رأس حمار

Does not the one who raises his head before the Imam fear that Allah may transform his head into a donkey's head? [Bukhari 691, Muslim 427]

And consider the condition of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) with their Prophet and Imam Muhammad ﷺ. Al Baraa bin Azeb was behind the Prophet ﷺ when he went down for prostration from standing. He said:

None of us would bend his back until the Messenger of Allah put his forehead on the ground and said Allahu Akbar. And when he ﷺ stood up, all were still in prostration.

So be conscious of Allah and perfect your prayer and perform the bowing and prostration correctly. And take care of the remembrances and supplications within it. May Allah grant us all understanding of the religion and righteous deeds. 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 عَادَ 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 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، يَعْظُمُ لِعَلَّكُمْ 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.

