

MIFTAAH SEMINAR



REVIVING THE HEART

Ustadh Ubaydullah Evans

SESSION 3

Be a Person of Reflection

- If we want to be of those who repent and return to Allah, we must **not** allow our lives to be devoid of reflection even for a single moment.
 - The Prophet SAW would seek protection from those who are heedless.
- The Prophet SAW said: There are divine breezes of mercy. Expose yourself to these divine breezes.
 - We all have access to these divine breezes, whether it be dua at certain times of the day or prayer at night.
 - Some have been given the tawfeeq and the divine realization to recognize these opportunities while others do not realize that they even have this opportunity.
 - It is not just about having the knowledge, but it is about Allah giving us the tawfeeq to act on what we know.
 - A true person of spirituality acts upon what they know, and Allah SWT teaches them what they do not know.

- Ibn Ata'illah stated: Do not let your existence go unexamined. Think deeply about what you do during the day.
 - To think deeply about what you do during the day is referred to as being in a state of muraqaba.
 - Muraqaba is a formal way of saying the process of taking yourself into account.
 - As you do this, you begin to see patterns of your behavior.
- Ibn Ata'illah continued: If you find obedience in your actions, thank Allah for that.
 - We should pray that our actions are a proof for us.
 - We should feel good about our good actions and we should be thankful that we were able to do them.
 - Having the ability to remember Allah SWT is something we should be thankful for.
- He continued: But if you find disobedience, take yourself into account for that.
 - This is something that is very difficult for people to do.
 - People do not want to feel that they did something wrong and often get defensive.
 - In almost all of the books on character development, honesty is listed as a type of courage.
 - Only a courageous person is able to face the truth that they have a flaw or did something wrong.

- Someone who is less brave and courageous is afraid to hear the truth.
- If we do not hold ourselves accountable, we will not be able to grow as Muslims.
- It does not mean you are a bad person if you find faults in yourself, rather that you just have aspects of your character to work on.
- The Prophet SAW said: If the iman of Abu Bakr RA was weighed on one side of a scale, and the faith of the entire ummah was on the other side, the faith of Abu Bakr would outweigh the ummah.
- Abu Bakr RA was asked how he became that way and he stated: Whenever I was given the choice between something which would benefit me in the dunya or something that would benefit me in the akhira, I would always choose that which benefited me in the akhira. Whenever someone came to me and attempted to praise me, I would say, 'praise be to Allah who gave you a good opinion of me, but I know myself better than you know me and Allah knows me better than I know myself.'
 - The source of his spiritual elevation was his willingness to look honestly at himself.
- He continued by saying: So seek Allah's forgiveness, and repent to Him. Indeed there is no gathering with Allah better than the gathering in which you take yourself to account.

- In a different part of the book, he says: Perhaps, it is better for you to commit a sin and see the Mercy of God than for you to do a good deed and become arrogant because of it.
 - It is better for us to go to Allah SWT with a sense of brokenness and needing his help than for us to wake up for tahajjud and walk with a sense of conceit and boastfulness the next day.
- He then says: Do take yourselves into account while you are laughing and enjoying yourselves. Rather take yourself into account while you are serious.
- We should not humor our flaws or speak about them in a joking matter.
- A person will never be able to improve on these flaws if they speak about them jokingly or casually.
- He continues: Your outward appearance at that time should be of serious reflection. You should be saddened (by these flaws), broken, and lowly. When you do that, Allah SWT will replace your sadness with joy. The lowliness you felt, He will replace it with honor. He will replace your darkness with light. And the veil/barrier between you and Allah, He SWT will unveil.
- Many of us crave those moments of true spiritual experience, of a heightened spiritual feeling.
- This can come in different times like Ramadan, ittikaaf, or the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah.

- There are times where you are not in need of theological proofs, rather you feel the reality of God.
- Ibn Ata'illah tells us that we will not get those moments by simply sitting and making dhikr or listening to a beautiful reciter of Qur'an (although these are great rewardable acts).
- Rather we will get these moments by working on our character and holding ourselves accountable honestly.
- If you take yourself to task and work on your character, you will feel more spiritual.
- As the Prophet SAW said: The best thing a person can do is to say la ilaha illallah and be upright.
 - There is nothing more spiritual than that.
 - One of the problems of the West is that we are impressed by the wrong things.
 - People today are impressed by fame and wealth.
 - We should be impressed with acts of charity, prayer, and good character.
- Ibn Ata'illah continues by relaying a story about a man who would sow during the day for a living. He would say: "I would mark my words during the day and at night call myself to account. I found that my words were few. Whenever I found good words, I praised God and thanked Him. When I found other than this, I repented to God and asked for His forgiveness." He would do this until he became a friend of God.

- The Prophet SAW said in a hadith qudsi that Allah SWT speaks about those who become His friends. He says, 'Whoever agitates one of My friends, I declare war upon that person.'
 - The highest caliber is striving to be a friend of God.
- This man was a saintly pious man who was a regular person working a regular job.
- What made him special was a simple action.
- He counted his words and found that he did not speak much, and when he found good, he thanked God, until he became a man regarded for his piety just by being careful of his tongue.
- Sometimes we think that we need to be someone that does not have a job, or someone without human attachments to become a pious, upright person.
 - That is not the case. We should strive to be in the world, but not of this world.