

accusation. So long as a believer shows such loyalty and faithfulness to the Lord and lives in such humility, the doors of heaven will be thrown open and an invitation will be extended: Come, O faithful one. You have intimacy with Us. This is the station of intimacy. We have found you a faithful one. Every day he or she is honoured with a new, heavenly journey in the spirit. It is God Himself Who swears by such a purified soul in: Nay, I swear by the self-accusing soul! (75:2). The Final Judgment may end up mild for some simply because they were quick to adjudge themselves in this life.

Honest self-criticism is an important way to purify our souls and to light the path of blissful success. “Truly they have succeeded who purifies their souls. And truly, they have failed who defiles it.” (91: 9-10) One has to be honest with oneself – but this is exceedingly hard. Pride prevents us from owning up to faults.

For those still surging with youth, is the misconception that honest self-criticism prevents us from that ultimate youthful quest, “having fun.” It behooves us to recall that being honest with ourselves is actually the best way to enjoy ourselves, rather than making it tougher. To commit haram acts we have to lie and this makes life less pleasurable for ourselves and others. Lack of honesty damages the human spirit and throws us off-balance. It causes us to live a life of misery, full of contradictions and is a source of great mental pain. “Who is further astray than one who is in uttermost schism?”

It is redundant to say all humans err. Whilst this is true we cannot continue to play with fire. At least to ourselves we must acknowledge the flaws in our character. This allows us to disburden ourselves of guilt. **Guilt left to fester can quickly and lethally metastasize.** Confessing our faults to ourselves and to God, and doing our best to eliminate them is an act of high faith. It converts our negatives to the positive side of our records. Criticize & appraise yourselves before you are criticized & appraised on the Day of Judgment.

The pathway to proper faith is to assess our actions with honesty. Verbalizing unpleasant realities of our deeds are invaluable in our meditative sessions. Statements like: “I have a tendency to berate others when I don’t get my way,” or “I have been yelling at my parents for far too long now.” “Why did I in my anger injure such a valuable friendship?” “Why do I lie?” **Note: without** self-honesty there is no self-criticism.

One of the most important mechanisms of **self-supervision** is self-criticism. As this method of self-control allows believers to become aware of personal faults and their causes, they can find the truth in their hearts and then display it in their conduct. In this spirit, the meaning and mystery of: Glory be to Him Who sees me, knows my place and hears my speech manifests itself. Such people know that the Divine Knowledge and Will always keep them under control and, regardless of location or action, seek only God’s pleasure by trying to act in accordance with His wishes.

Investigating the soul & its feelings thoroughly, a believer goes through a spiritual renovation and gets closer to God. Those who have made much progress fly in the heaven of love toward the highest point. They live in the bright climate of the Quran as embodiments and examples of the good morals of the Prophet (p). Muhasaba in the world of soul is similar to the light of truth & freedom, or to a noble warm-hearted teacher. This feature is the mortal enemy of such satanic feelings as nagging grief & despair. The transforming power of self-purification & self-conquest comes through self-criticism.

The more experienced and shrewd a believer is in the analysis and the investigation of their inner world, the world of impressions, reactions and aspirations, the more progressive and successful current life appears to be in contrast to their yesterday. They regularly draw up the balance sheet of their lives, depicting their spiritual assets and liabilities. Since it is the **conscience** of person that is the centre of spiritual renaissance and renovation, and their final goal is the aspiration for the contentment of the Almighty, the Muslim does not pay a lot of attention to the wrong attitude of people towards them.

Undoubtedly, a believer can and sometimes even must protect against unjust criticism & take preventative measures against the damage of bitter tongues. At the same time they should preserve generosity of soul & good behaviour. Accept in silence the minor aggravations, cultivate the gift of taciturnity & consume your own smoke with an extra draft of hard work, so that those about you may not be annoyed with the dust & soot of your complaints. You feel better. The world is better. You feel an immense sense of transformation. Self-criticism makes you more involved with yourself. You do not feel de-centred, lost. The good thing about self-criticism is that it can be alchemical: you can use it as an opportunity to recognize your negative energy as a learning experience, an invitation to cultivate self-love.

Self Criticism

A fault Denied is twice committed

The Quran states that our book of deeds are like meticulously preserved records, precise chronicles of all that we ever said and did, righteous or not. Better than Twitter & Facebook combined. Cannot be deleted or deactivated. Everyone will stand witness in the Divine Judgment of their own earthly deeds. Hence, it makes profound sense to take note of our deeds, with most of our focus on the actions we need to improve or eliminate ...seeking forgiveness for all our substandard performances. We should impartially sit as a judge over ourself & review our yearnings & motivations. In this way, one progresses from the state of “the soul that incites to evil” to the state of “the self-reproaching soul,” which censures its owner whenever they plunge into sin or fall short of expectations. The Prophet (p) exhorts us: “It behooves any wise person to have four periods of time” and one of the four is “a period in which one engages in self-criticism.”

Do not deny your faults: for a fault denied is twice committed.

Profound spiritual intelligence (a product of self-criticism) is the only foundation for eternal fame...for immortality.

The very purpose of spirituality is self-discipline. Rather than criticizing others, we should evaluate & criticize ourselves.

**Whether you make known
what is in your souls or hide it,
God will bring you
to account for it**

Muhasaba literally means reckoning, settling accounts, and self-interrogation. In a spiritual context, however, it takes on the additional meaning of the self-criticism of a believer who constantly analyzes their deeds and thoughts in the hope that correcting them will bring them closer to God. Such a believer thank God for the good they have done, and tries to erase their sins and deviation by imploring God for forgiveness & amending errors & sins through repentance & remorse. Muhasaba is the very important & serious attempt of asserting one's personal loyalty to God.

Righteous people would either write down or memorize their daily actions, thoughts & words. They then analyze & criticize themselves for any evil or sin they had committed. They do this to protect themselves from the storms of vanity and the whirls of self-pride. They would ask God's forgiveness after this self-analysis & would repent sincerely so that they might be protected against future error & deviation. Then they would prostrate in thankfulness to God for the meritorious deeds or words that the Almighty had created through them.

Self-criticism may also be described as seeking and discovering one's inner and spiritual depth, and exerting the necessary spiritual and intellectual effort to acquire true human values and to develop the sentiments that encourage and nourish them. This is how one distinguishes between good and bad, beneficial and harmful, and how one maintains an upright heart. Furthermore, it enables a believer to evaluate the present and prepare for the future.

Again, self-criticism enables a believer to make amends for past mistakes and be absolved in the sight of God, for it provides a constant realization of self-renewal in one's inner world. Such a condition enables

one to achieve a steady relationship with God, for this relationship depends on a believer's ability to live a spiritual life and remain aware of what takes place in his or her inner world. Success results in the preservation of one's celestial nature as a true human being, as well as the continual regeneration of one's inner senses and feelings.

A believer, in his or her spiritual life, cannot be indifferent to self-criticism. On the one hand, he or she tries to **revive their ruined past** with the breezes of hope & mercy blown by such Divine calls as: Repent to God (24:31); Turn to Your Lord repentant (39:54), which come from the worlds beyond & echo in their conscience. On the other hand, warnings as frightening as thunderbolts & as exhilarating as mercy are contained in such verses as: O you who believe! Fear God and observe your duty to Him. **Let every soul consider what it has prepared for the morrow** (59:18) bring the believer to his or her senses & make one alert against committing new sins. In such a condition, a believer is defended against all kinds of evil, as if enclosed behind locked doors.

Taking each moment of life to be a time of germination in spring, a believer seeks ever-greater depth in their spirit and heart with insight and consciousness arising from belief. Even if a believer is sometimes pulled down by the carnal dimension of their being and falters, they are always on the alert, as is stated in: Those who fear God and observe His commandments, when a passing stroke from Satan troubles them, they immediately remember God, and lo! they are all aware (7:201).

Self-criticism resembles a lamp in the heart of a believer, a warner and a well-wishing adviser in their conscience. Every believer uses it to distinguish what is good and evil, beautiful and ugly, pleasing and displeasing to God. Through the guidance of this well-wishing adviser, the believer surmounts all obstacles, however seemingly insurmountable, and reaches the desired destination.

Self-criticism attracts Divine mercy and favour, which enables one to go deeper in belief and servanthood, to succeed in practicing Islam, and to attain nearness to God and eternal happiness. It also prevents one from falling into despair, which will ultimately lead to reliance on personal acts of worship to be saved from Divine punishment in the Hereafter.

As self-criticism opens the door to spiritual peace and tranquillity, it also causes one to fear God and His punishment. In the hearts of those who constantly criticize themselves and call themselves to account for their deeds, this Prophetic warning is always echoed: If you knew what I know, you would laugh little but weep a lot. Self-criticism, which gives rise to both peacefulness and fear in one's heart, continuously inspires anxiety in the hearts of those who are fully aware of the heavy responsibility they feel the anxiety voiced as in: If only I had been a tree cut into pieces.

Self-criticism causes the believer to always feel the distress and strain expressed in: The Earth seemed constrained to them for all its vastness, and their own souls straitened to them (9:118). The verse: Whether you make known what is in your souls or hide it, God will bring you to account for it (2:284) resounds in every cell of their brains, and they groan with utterances like: I wish my mother had **not** given birth to me!

While it is difficult for everyone to achieve this degree of self-criticism, it is also difficult for those who do not do so [to be sure that they will be able] to live today better than yesterday, and tomorrow better than today. Those who are crushed between the wheels of time, whose present day is not better than the preceding one, cannot perform well their duties pertaining to the afterlife.

Constant self-criticism and self-reprimand show the perfection of one's belief. Everyone who has planned his or her life to reach the horizon of a **perfect**, universal human being is conscious of this life and spends every moment of it struggling with himself or herself. Such a person demands a password or a visa from whatever occurs to their hearts and minds. Self-control against the temptations of Satan or the excitement of temper are practiced, and **words and actions are carefully watched**. Self-criticism is constant, even for those acts that seem most sensible and acceptable. Evening reviews of words and actions during the day are the rule, as are morning resolutions to avoid sins. A believer knits the "lace of his or her life" with the "threads" of self-criticism and self-

**Self-Criticism, Self-Awareness, Self-Care
The Foundations for Self-Control**

Zamals Software Co.; 6 Dowding St. Kitty
shamal2007@yahoo.com; Brochures on zamalsgy.com
Please Donate: Call Shamal 225-9031