

**Tazkiyah Halaqa
Self Honesty – Session 3
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh**

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Overview

In this third session, Sheikh Adnan continues his exploration of the foundational pillar of tazkiyah: self-honesty (*ṣidq maʿa al-nafs*), also referred to in Islamic spiritual terminology as *murāqabah* and *muḥāsabah*. He argues that self-honesty is not merely an occasional exercise, but a lifelong approach to existence. Without it, the soul is easily deceived into believing false narratives about itself, leading to spiritual regression and detachment from one's true state.

The Reality of Self-Deception

Sheikh Adnan emphasizes that one of the most dangerous human tendencies is the ability to lie to oneself and believe it. Drawing parallels to medical practice, he notes that patients often lie to their physicians due to embarrassment—and similarly, people hide painful truths from themselves. The result is the internalization of a false self-image that becomes increasingly resistant to correction.

He reflects on the Qur'anic verse from Surah Al-Mujādilah (58:18), in which people swear to Allah on the Day of Judgment, convinced of their righteousness, though they are objectively in error. This, he explains, is the result of years of internal distortion—lying to oneself until the lie becomes indistinguishable from truth.

The Three Responses to Personal Truths

When faced with a difficult reality about oneself, a person typically responds in one of three ways:

1. Acknowledgement and Change
2. Acknowledgement without Change (living in internal pain)
3. Denial (replacing the truth with a comfortable lie)

The third path is the most spiritually destructive because it leads to self-delusion and the hardening of the heart. Sheikh Adnan likens this to the body's physiological discomfort when lying, as captured by polygraph machines. The soul, he argues, instinctively rejects falsehood, but can be trained—dangerously—to normalize it.

Self-Honesty as an Approach to Life

Self-honesty is not a single event but a continuous attitude. Sheikh Adnan cautions that a lack of ongoing self-criticism results in projecting criticism outward—toward others or the environment. Human beings are naturally critical; if this is not directed inward in the form of constructive self-assessment, it becomes judgmentalism.

He emphasizes that self-criticism does not equate to self-loathing. The distinction is critical:

- *Self-criticism* is grounded in the pursuit of improvement.
- *Self-loathing* undermines self-worth and leads to despair.

In Islamic spirituality, one's inherent value as a servant of Allah (*'abd*) is constant and divinely conferred. It should not be confused with performance in specific roles or behaviours.

States vs. Moments

A key theme of the lecture is the distinction between moments and states:

- Moments are fleeting experiences—joy, entertainment, laughter—that do not define inner well-being.
- States refer to one's deep-seated emotional and spiritual condition.
 - Islam, Sheikh Adnan asserts, is a *religion of states*, not moments.
 - A person may enjoy moments of happiness while remaining fundamentally unsettled due to unresolved spiritual dissonance.

True tranquility (*sakīnah*) is only achieved by addressing one's state, which requires an honest assessment of where one stands.

Practical Framework: Roles-Based Reflection

To aid in the practice of self-honesty, Sheikh Adnan introduces a roles-based exercise:

1. List your roles (e.g., father, son, employee, friend, community member, student, servant of Allah).
2. Evaluate performance in each role honestly and critically.
3. Distinguish between your roles and your core self. You are not defined by your roles, but your performance in them reflects your current state.

This method helps in both identifying areas for improvement and avoiding the mistake of presenting one's roles to Allah instead of presenting one's *true self*.

Final Reflection

Sheikh Adnan concludes with a powerful reminder:

"Make sure Yawm al-Qiyāmah is not the first time you meet yourself."

True transformation begins only when the veils of delusion are lifted and a person is willing to face themselves honestly—before it is too late. Self-honesty, then, is the gateway to real spiritual growth, meaningful worship, and inner peace.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nYteUJek0g>