

Tazkiyah Halaqa
The Rituals – Session 15
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh
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Introduction

In this fifteenth session, Sheikh Adnan Rajeh offers a comprehensive review for both returning participants and newcomers, highlighting the core structure of spiritual self-improvement in Islam. He asserts that every individual, knowingly or not, maintains a conceptual framework for beliefs, worship, and ethical living. The session marks a transition from focussing purely on theoretical comprehension of tazkiyah (self-purification) to the exploration of practical spiritual routines, especially the enhancement of salah (prayer).

Session Overview

The session covers the three foundational dimensions every Muslim requires: an understanding of one's beliefs (*maslak i'tiqadi*), a personal approach to worship (*madhhab fiqh*), and an active method for spiritual and ethical accountability (*mashrab suluki*). Tazkiyah is positioned as the third pillar, where personal honesty, regular self-questioning, and practical exercises enable genuine spiritual growth.

Key Themes and Concepts

1. The Three Pillars of Religious Life

- Every individual has a worldview, a method of worship (whether formal or not), and a way to approach ethics and spirituality—even those unaware of these elements.
- Islam asks conscious commitment to all three: seeking understanding of what and why one believes, worshipping systematically, and building a personal, honest approach to ethical and spiritual life.

2. Tazkiyah as Four Categories

- Tazkiyah includes four dimensions: comprehension (theory and definitions of intangible concepts), connection (building spiritual relations), rituals (acts of devotion), and exercises (practical challenges intended to grow character and spirit).
- Previous sessions emphasised comprehension but now shift to practical development, with a focus on rituals—particularly perfecting salah.

3. The Necessity of Self-Application and Accountability

- Self-improvement is a personal journey; participants are repeatedly cautioned not to project spiritual lessons or criticisms onto others.
- Regular routines (*awrād*, *adhkar*, daily *surahs*) as well as deep contemplation and the willingness to try assigned exercises, even if they seem uncomfortable, are essential for transformation.

4. Four Rules and Daily Focuses

- The four rules of tazkiyah: (1) Everything discussed is for self-application only; (2) Commit to daily routines of *dhikr* and *Qur'an*; (3) Engage in genuine contemplation; (4) Attempt every assigned practical exercise, even when resistant.

- Four daily focuses are reiterated: seeing a spiritual dimension in every action (*ihsan*), repeatedly questioning one's servitude to Allah (*ubudiyyah*), continually purifying intentions, and regularly contemplating whether one's actions are accepted by Allah.

5. Graduality and Consistency in Change

- True change is only possible through gradual, consistent effort—never through radical or forced reform.
- Sheikh Adnan draws a parallel with effective parenting: lasting transformation is a battle of wills, won through persistence and small, incremental progress.

6. Practical Routines: Improving Salah

- Focus for this session and subsequent weeks is actionable: offering practical steps to re-energize and improve salah.
- Two foundational tips are offered:
 - a. **Intention in Wudu:** When making wudu, pause to reflect on the act's purpose as a spiritual purification, not just a physical one.
 - b. **Pause Before Salah:** Before starting prayer, take a 10–15 second mental pause to settle the mind, disconnect from distractions, and consciously recognise the significance of the moment and the One being addressed.

7. Barriers and Excuses

- The nafs resists meaningful ritual because it does not perceive value; Sheikh Adnan advises treating these routines as deliberately valuable, worthy of time and mental investment.
- Creating a habit of pausing and refocusing, especially before obligatory prayers, shifts the internal perspective on salah from burden to opportunity.

Practical Reflections and Exercises

- Daily awrad: Consistent dhikr, specific surahs and invocations twice daily as a character-building routine.
- Dedicated contemplation: Set time aside for deep reflection, connecting theory to personal, lived experience.
- Salah rituals: Before each obligatory prayer, reflect on the purpose of wudu and take a purposeful pause before entering prayer.
- Incremental change: Apply new routines gradually, building consistency over time and resisting the temptation for sudden, unrealistic overhaul.

Conclusion

Session fifteen marks a renewed commitment to practical tazkiyah, beginning with foundational improvements in salah. Sheikh Adnan asserts that the culmination of tazkiyah theory is ultimately manifest in meaningful, transformative worship. Participants are urged to root their practice in personal accountability, consistent routines, and gradual, persistent change—trusting that even small adjustments, internalised over time, yield deep spiritual transformation.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78YGmvETrOA>