

Tazkiyah Halaqa
The Rituals – Session 17
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh
October 14, 2025
Wellness Centre, London, Ontario

Overview

In this session, Sheikh Adnan continues the short “timeout” sequence within the broader tazkiyah curriculum, offering practical prayer-focused guidance meant to improve ṣalāh while deeper concepts (self-value, mortality, self-honesty, moral frugality, and others) mature over time. He stresses that spiritual refinement is inherently gradual and lifelong, yet it is not appropriate to leave one’s prayer in a consistently weak state while waiting for abstract understandings to develop. These tips function as targeted interventions—small, workable practices that raise the baseline quality of worship and prepare the heart to receive deeper transformation.

Ritual Postures as Spiritual Mirrors

A central framework of the lecture is that Islamic rituals are not arbitrary motions; rather, each physical act is designed to mirror a specific spiritual state. Sheikh Adnan explains that the dramatic movements of ṣalāh—standing upright, bowing, and placing the face on the ground—are intentionally structured to train the worshipper’s inner posture before Allah. He extends this logic beyond prayer to all acts of worship (wuḍū’, ḥajj, ṣawm), arguing that without grasping their spiritual symbolism, rituals can appear irrational or purely mechanical, whereas with iḥsān they become majestic, coherent, and spiritually intelligible.

Revisiting the First Three Tips

Sheikh Adnan briefly revises earlier guidance before introducing the new focus for this week. First, wuḍū’ should be approached with awareness that it symbolises spiritual purification, not merely physical cleanliness. Second, the “pause before prayer” is presented as the most important intervention: the worshipper must interrupt the mind’s momentum, either calming it or intentionally bringing worries into ṣalāh by placing them before Allah in du‘ā’ rather than letting them hijack attention. Third, qiyām is reaffirmed as the posture of dignified recitation: the worshipper stands with adab, recites Allah’s words in their proper posture, and builds both presence and reward through lengthened, meaningful standing and recitation.

The Theology Behind Presence in ṣalāh

To underscore the seriousness of distraction, Sheikh Adnan cites prophetic teachings about the intimacy and accountability of the prayer encounter: a person may receive only a fraction of the reward of their ṣalāh—or, in extreme cases, none—depending on the degree of inner presence. He explains that Shayṭān’s strategy often succeeds before takbīr even begins, making the pre-prayer pause essential because without it the worshipper is effectively “outside” the prayer from the outset. He also notes that some legal schools encouraged practices that slow the worshipper down (such as explicitly articulating intention) not because they are textual obligations, but because they function as behavioural tools to restore attentiveness and seriousness.

Rukū' as the Posture of Exaltation

The primary new focus of Session 17 is rukū' and the spiritual meaning embedded in bowing. Sheikh Adnan explains that bowing historically signifies the recognition of absolute inequality between the one who bows and the one bowed to—something Islam prohibits toward any human being, but commands toward Allah because the reality is truly unequal. In rukū', the worshipper embodies the core of tawhīd: Allah is the Creator and Infinite, the servant is created and finite, and no analogy can collapse that distinction except what Allah permits for limited human understanding. This posture trains the heart to internalise reverence, boundaries, and correct belief—establishing a theological “reality check” that reshapes how a Muslim interprets life, hardship, and divine decree.

The Meaning of Tasbīh in Rukū'

Sheikh Adnan gives sustained attention to the phrase “Subhāna Rabbiyal-‘Azīm” as the defining language of rukū', describing tasbīh as more than casual praise: it is a disciplined declaration that Allah is flawless, exalted, and beyond objection. He argues that this is especially crucial when confronting what the ego finds confusing or painful—death, suffering, injustice, and loss—because the nafs instinctively seeks someone to blame, and without training it may eventually turn its blame toward Allah. Through tasbīh, the worshipper actively suppresses the impulse to question the Divine, refuses to attribute flaw or injustice to Allah, and redirects the focus toward personal responsibility: “What could I have done better?” This is presented as one of the deepest purposes of rukū'—retraining the inner reflex away from blame and toward humility, submission, and self-correction.

The “God Complex” and Why Islam Rejects It

Sheikh Adnan introduces the “God complex” as a human tendency to resist limitation and resent the idea of a transcendent Lord beyond full comprehension. He suggests that humanity historically responds to this discomfort in two ways: either by reducing God to human-like traits (making the Divine feel more “equal”), or by elevating humans toward godlike capacities (the fantasy of transcending weakness and constraint). Islam, he argues, dismantles both impulses through tawhīd and tasbīh—refusing intermediaries, refusing special access, refusing the idea that anyone can bargain around Allah’s law, and refusing any posture of entitlement before the Creator. This is why, in his framing, rukū' is not simply a movement in prayer; it is a weekly and daily training against arrogance, spiritual rebellion, and theological distortion.

Practical Application for the Week

Sheikh Adnan closes by emphasising that these changes must be implemented slowly and consistently rather than all at once. The assigned practice is to give rukū' its proper time—avoiding rushed movement, repeating tasbīh at least three times with deliberation, and consciously reflecting on what it means to exalt Allah and accept one’s servitude. The point is not theatrical humility or performative “magnification,” but alignment with reality: Allah truly deserves exaltation, and the servant’s inner posture must match the truth being spoken by the tongue. The session ends with the promise of continuing additional postural meanings in the next week’s discussion.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMjpORf6dsk>