

Tazkiyah Halaqa
The Rituals – Session 18
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh
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Wellness Centre, London, Ontario

Overview

In this session, Sheikh Adnan continues the practical “rituals” interlude aimed at improving the quality of ṣalāh while deeper tazkiyah concepts mature over time. He reiterates a guiding principle: every posture in prayer reflects a specific spiritual state, and every transition reflects a spiritual transition—nothing in ṣalāh is random movement. The session revisits qiyām and rukūʿ briefly, then concentrates on the third “offering” to Allah in the first half of prayer: rising from rukūʿ (rafʿ) as an embodied posture of *gratitude* and praise.

Postures as spiritual meanings

Sheikh Adnan explains that the upright human form itself carries symbolism: standing is not one’s most humbled appearance, but one’s most dignified, and that dignity is the appropriate state for certain forms of worship. In qiyām, the servant recites Allah’s words back to Him as an acknowledgement of guidance and as a declaration that these teachings have been accepted, internalised, and taken as a way of life. In rukūʿ, the servant declares the absolute difference between Creator and creation through magnification (taʿẓīm) and tasbīḥ, refusing to attribute flaws to Allah and redirecting accountability inward.

The danger of an untrained nafs

A significant portion of the lecture reinforces why magnifying Allah is necessary: when a person does not exalt Allah properly, the nafs begins to inflate itself and build a “God complex,” either by imagining the self as superior or by diminishing the perfection of the Divine. Sheikh Adnan argues that correct tasbīḥ is not for Allah’s benefit—Allah is not increased by human praise—but for the worshipper’s psychological and spiritual health, because it restores the correct relationship: Allah is al-ʿAẓīm, and the servant is weak, dependent, and limited. This realism is presented as the foundation for sincere worship and for emotional stability in life’s disappointments and trials.

Rafʿ: the posture of gratitude (ḥamd)

The core focus of Session 18 is the rise from rukūʿ and why it is placed where it is. Sheikh Adnan frames the first half of ṣalāh as three directed “offerings” to Allah: (1) acknowledgement of His guidance through recitation, (2) acknowledgement of His exalted status through magnification, and (3) acknowledgement of His generosity through gratitude. When gratitude is expressed, it is done standing upright, head held high, because gratitude “shows” the blessing and reflects well on the One being thanked; it is not expressed in the most humbled bodily posture. This is why the phrase “Samiʿa Allāhu liman ḥamidah” is paired with “Rabbana wa lakal-ḥamd,” and why prophetic practice includes expansive forms of praise that emphasise abundance, beauty, and blessing in gratitude.

Practical tip: never stand without a ni'mah

The week's practical instruction is simple but demanding: do not move into sujūd from the standing after rukū' without first thinking of at least one specific blessing for which there is genuine gratitude. Sheikh Adnan notes that people often begin with obvious material blessings, but the "quality" of gratitude should deepen over time toward foundational gifts: being alive today, waking up, still having īmān, knowing the Prophet, and remaining guided. He argues that gratitude is not a momentary emotion but a lifestyle, and that lack of gratitude eventually destroys a person's wellbeing, relationships, and ability to live contentedly—even when outward circumstances appear good.

Reframing entitlement and "rights"

Sheikh Adnan pushes the listener to confront entitlement by asking: what does Allah owe anyone? Since existence itself, consciousness, and guidance were not self-generated, the servant has no meaningful basis for demanding outcomes, and gratitude becomes the only coherent and appropriate stance in the relationship with Allah. He argues that many spiritual and emotional crises trace back to taking blessings for granted and assuming one "deserves" certain outcomes, rather than recognising that life itself is a gift that already exceeds what could ever be repaid. Gratitude, in this framing, becomes both spiritual truth and psychological protection against despair when expectations are unmet.

Illustrations of lived gratitude

To show gratitude under hardship, Sheikh Adnan narrates the example of 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, who reportedly lost a leg to amputation and then learned of his son's death, yet responded by thanking Allah for leaving him more than He took (three remaining limbs and three remaining children). The point is not forced positivity or denial of pain, but disciplined recognition of what still remains and the refusal to let loss erase awareness of ongoing blessings. He also mentions the Prophetic trait of magnifying even small blessings, tying gratitude to adab with food and everyday experiences, and highlighting how illness can strip away even basic pleasures like appetite and taste—making "alḥamdulillāh" a rational response to ordinary functioning.

Looking ahead: sujūd

Sheikh Adnan closes by explaining that the first three movements are the servant's "offerings" before Allah, and that investing in them prepares the heart for what follows—especially sujūd, where the servant turns more directly to personal need, du'ā', and seeking. He hints at the Prophetic eagerness to "fall" into sujūd after completing these offerings, and notes that the next session will focus specifically on sujūd and its spiritual function.

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrOLIXX_OAI