

Tazkiyah Halaqa
The Rituals – Session 20
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh
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Wellness Centre, London, Ontario

Overview

In this session, Sheikh Adnan continues the “rituals” interlude within the broader tazkiyah curriculum, arguing that ritual worship—especially ṣalāh—is a defining core of Islam and must be studied both mechanically (fiqh) and purposefully (tazkiyah). He addresses a common confusion around the Qur’anic claim that ṣalāh restrains immorality and wrongdoing, explaining that this effect does not occur automatically; it emerges when prayer is understood and practised with spiritual depth. The session consolidates the prior weeks’ framework (postures as spiritual mirrors) and then extends it by clarifying how du‘ā’ and istighfār function within ṣalāh as structured opportunities to address one’s present, future, and past.

Re-learning rituals as an adult

Sheikh Adnan stresses that rituals learned in childhood often become mechanical, and that reaching the “age of reason” requires re-analysing inherited beliefs, assumptions, cultural habits, and even religious practice through critical reflection. Ṣalāh, in particular, must be revisited so its design can be appreciated and its spirituality embraced, eventually turning it into a sanctuary of calm and a source of longing rather than a burdensome obligation. He notes that this transformation is gradual and linked to broader inner work (intentions, perspectives, attitudes), not something achieved immediately through a handful of lectures.

The 50–50 structure of ṣalāh

The session reaffirms a key structural model: ṣalāh is designed to be “dead in the middle” as a 50–50 relationship.

- The first **three movements** are offerings directed to Allah: guidance (qiyām and Qur’an), magnification (rukū‘ and tasbīḥ), and gratitude (standing after rukū‘ and ḥamd).
- The final **three movements** are for the servant: two sujūds (requests concerning present and future) and the sitting (jalūs) which is oriented toward the past through repentance and seeking forgiveness.

This framing is meant to reduce mechanical rushing by showing that the servant “invests” in the opening half and then “cashes in” in the second half through du‘ā’ and repentance.

Two sujūds: present and future

Sheikh Adnan explains why sujūd occurs twice: it gives the worshipper a second opportunity in case important requests were forgotten the first time, mirroring the idea that a servant may ask Allah and then be reminded of further needs. He emphasises that the focus of these two sujūds should be the **present** (current struggles, anxieties, obstacles) and the **future** (hopes, fears, direction, and what one seeks to become). Du‘ā’ is presented as the

heart of worship and as an ongoing conversation rather than a “genie lamp” mechanism where a request must be instantly granted to count as a response.

Aligning du‘ā’ with guidance, tasbīḥ, and ḥamd

A central point is that the quality of du‘ā’ reflects the quality of the first three movements:

- If guidance is truly internalised, du‘ā’ begins to reflect purposefulness and a clearer sense of what one *should* want (and may even shift toward asking Allah to remove unhealthy desires rather than fulfilling them).
- If tasbīḥ is internalised, du‘ā’ becomes expansive rather than “conservative,” because the worshipper understands Allah’s limitless dominion and asks based on Allah’s generosity rather than personal deservingness.
- If ḥamd is internalised, du‘ā’ is made with gratitude rather than disgruntlement or entitlement, changing the emotional tone of asking.

He also highlights that divine response to du‘ā’ takes multiple forms: immediate granting, delayed granting, granting something different or better, averting harm, or storing reward for the Hereafter.

Du‘ā’ as emotional truth and khushū’ as outcome

Sheikh Adnan argues that khushū’ cannot be “forced” as a technique; it emerges when the right inner premises are in place. He encourages worshippers to speak to Allah as they truly are—without social masks, titles, or roles—because sincerity in du‘ā’ is emotionally therapeutic and spiritually transformative. He illustrates this with the emotional depth found in prophetic and early Muslim worship, describing how even the toughest men of that era could weep in du‘ā’ while remaining resilient and steadfast outside prayer, because ṣalāh is where the “cape” of identity is removed and the person enters purely as ‘abdullāh.

Jalūs: repentance for the past

This session introduces the sitting posture (jalūs) as the prayer’s dedicated space for addressing the **past** through istighfār. Sheikh Adnan explains that regret requires a posture of humility rather than the full upright dignity of standing, and that repeating “Rabbi’ghfir lī” should not be mindless. The practical instruction is to keep an actual sin in mind—ideally choosing one focus for the week—so that repentance becomes specific, awake, and emotionally real rather than a vague slogan.

Istighfār as antidote to arrogance

Sheikh Adnan links istighfār to curing arrogance: awareness of one’s own sins removes the impulse to fixate on others’ faults or to see oneself as superior. He distinguishes between self-value and self-deception: acknowledging sin does not negate worth, because prayer includes turning to the One who forgives and renews, but it does eliminate the arrogance that grows when a person assumes they are “good” without recognising personal shortcomings. This is presented as a core ethical reversal: humility about the self and generosity toward others, rather than self-praise and relentless judgement of people.

Tashahhud and jamā‘ah as cure for ḥasad

In closing, Sheikh Adnan reframes tashahhud as the formal “wrap-up” of a meeting—concluding a unit of two rak‘ahs with greetings, prayers upon the Prophet, and salutations

that acknowledge the wider community of worshippers. He argues that jamā'ah is not incidental but spiritually curative: it dismantles envy (ḥasad) by training the believer to identify with the ummah ("my team"), so another person's success becomes a collective win rather than a threat. Even when praying alone, the worshipper speaks in the plural and maintains group consciousness, which Islam uses to weaken isolation and competitive resentment.

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