

Tazkiyah Halaqa
Self-Value – Session 35
Sheikh Adnan Rajeh
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Wellness Centre, London, Ontario

Overview

In this session, Sheikh Adnan Rajeh continues the discussion on self-value, focusing on how distorted understandings of worth affect emotional life, relationships, worship, and personal identity. Building upon the previous lecture, he explains that many emotional reactions are rooted not in reality itself, but in the meanings people attach to events through the lens of ego, insecurity, and comparison. The lecture emphasizes that spiritual growth requires separating intrinsic human value from performance, reputation, and social positioning.

The Emotional Consequences of Conditional Self-Worth

Sheikh Adnan explains that many people unconsciously live according to a system of “conditional worth.” In this framework, a person feels valuable only when:

- They succeed
- They are praised
- They outperform others
- They feel admired or needed
- They meet certain personal standards

When these conditions disappear, feelings of inadequacy, shame, anxiety, or emotional collapse emerge.

The Shaykh notes that this creates a fragile emotional structure because human circumstances constantly fluctuate. A person whose worth depends upon conditions will inevitably experience instability as those conditions change.

Separating Identity from Performance

A central theme of the lecture is learning to distinguish between:

- Who a person is
- What a person does

Sheikh Adnan explains that people often merge identity with function:

- A successful person believes they are inherently superior.
- A struggling person believes they are inherently deficient.
- Mistakes become interpreted as proof of worthlessness rather than temporary failures.

Tazkiyah seeks to untangle this confusion by teaching that actions and performance may be good or bad, strong or weak, but they do not alter the fundamental value Allah granted the human being.

This distinction allows for:

- Accountability without self-hatred
- Improvement without arrogance
- Humility without insecurity

The Role of Comparison in Emotional Distortion

The lecture repeatedly returns to the destructive effects of comparison. Sheikh Adnan explains that comparison creates artificial emotional hierarchies in which people constantly evaluate themselves against others.

This produces:

- Envy
- Arrogance
- Insecurity
- Obsession with image
- Fear of failure
- Emotional exhaustion

Modern life intensifies this problem through constant visibility and exposure to the curated lives of others. Social media, public success culture, and achievement-driven environments encourage people to derive identity from external measurements rather than internal truth.

The Shaykh emphasizes that comparison blinds people to:

- Their own blessings
- Their own unique tests
- Their own responsibilities before Allah

The Difference Between Humility and Low Self-Esteem

An important clarification in the lecture is the distinction between humility and self-deprecation.

Sheikh Adnan explains:

- Humility is truthfulness regarding oneself before Allah.
- Low self-esteem is distorted self-perception rooted in insecurity.

A humble person:

- Recognizes their strengths without arrogance
- Acknowledges weaknesses without despair
- Accepts praise without becoming inflated
- Accepts criticism without emotional collapse

By contrast, a person with unstable self-worth becomes emotionally controlled by how others perceive them.

The Shaykh stresses that Islam does not call believers toward self-hatred or emotional self-destruction. Rather, believers are meant to maintain dignity while remaining humble before Allah.

Ego and Emotional Sensitivity

Another major focus of the session is emotional overreaction. Sheikh Adnan explains that exaggerated emotional responses often indicate hidden ego attachment.

When self-worth is externally anchored:

- Criticism feels existential
- Rejection feels devastating
- Failure feels humiliating
- Being ignored feels deeply threatening

The stronger the ego attachment, the more emotionally reactive the person becomes.

Tazkiyah gradually trains the believer to:

- Separate feedback from identity
- Accept imperfection
- Remain emotionally stable during praise and criticism
- Seek truth rather than emotional comfort

The Prophetic Model of Emotional Stability

Sheikh Adnan highlights the emotional balance of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the ideal model of stable self-worth. The Prophet ﷺ:

- Remained humble despite immense honour.
- Accepted criticism and hostility without insecurity.
- Treated people with dignity regardless of status.
- Did not derive identity from public approval.

Because his identity was rooted completely in servitude to Allah, external reactions did not destabilize his inner state.

The Shaykh explains that the more a person's identity becomes anchored in Allah, the less emotionally controlled they become by people's opinions and behaviour.

Practical Reflections and Exercises

Participants are encouraged to reflect honestly on:

- What most affects their sense of worth
- How strongly they depend upon praise or recognition
- Whether criticism affects them disproportionately
- How often they compare themselves to others
- Whether they confuse mistakes with identity

Sheikh Adnan encourages developing:

- Honest self-awareness
- Reduced comparison
- Consistent dhikr
- Emotional moderation
- Gratitude for Allah's blessings
- Greater focus on sincerity over appearance

These practices gradually weaken ego dependency and strengthen emotional stability.

Final Reflections

The session concludes with a reminder that self-worth rooted in dunya will always remain unstable because dunya itself is unstable. Wealth, recognition, status, beauty, and success all fluctuate and eventually disappear.

True stability emerges only when the believer understands that:

- Human value is granted by Allah.
- Performance does not define identity.
- Comparison distorts perception.
- Humility and dignity can coexist.

When self-worth becomes grounded in truth rather than ego, the heart becomes calmer, relationships become healthier, and worship becomes more sincere and emotionally balanced.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xpm-49inafo>