

**Tazkiyah Halaqa  
Self Honesty – Session 1  
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### **Transcription**

So the plan, inshallah ta'ala, is to make the tazkiyah sessions semi-public. What I've been doing over the last few years, and this is something that I attended when I was younger, obviously, in a different language and in a different place and a different setting in many ways.

When we talk about this concept, when we talk about Tezquia, it is something that requires some degree of follow-up. It's not designed to be open lectures. And the reason that it's not designed to be open lectures is because a lot of what Tezquia is, as I'm going to explain a little bit today, are isolated exercises that are designed to expose certain aspects of our interaction with our souls. And these interactions can sometimes be difficult to understand or a bit complex in terms of our comprehension of them. And if there's no follow-up at all, then they can become challenging. It can be hard to know what to do next or how to deal with them, which is why you need some degree of close groups where discussions can occur.

Another thing is that there is a general habit that people have of listening to Islamic concepts and moving on, just hearing them. And then it's kind of going on with our day. When it comes to Tazkiyah specifically, the topics that are addressed, then what is required from the person who is listening is to go and actually try these things out, meaning the action plans or the tasks. Many of them are contemplation and reflection-based. They need to be practiced, and they have to be practiced over a certain period of time in order for them to have any impact on ourselves. And when that doesn't happen, you end up with just a lot of information. And that information can just become extremely confusing over long periods of time, and it doesn't really do much for you.

And that is the fear, really, which is why this knowledge is not necessarily just dished out for free or publicly, which is why I've never run these sessions openly before. But when we tried the Tazkiya Purils on Ramadan, I think there was some degree of interest in continuing them. So what I'm going to do, is I'm going to take the topics that I usually talk about within these close-knit sessions and run them after Fajr on a Sunday. Once I'm done, it's around 45 minutes or a 50-minute lecture talking about a specific topic, the group of Shabab will go up front and they'll do the Wird, and I'll come and join them at the end and ask them some questions. I'll do some follow-up questions. We'll just broadcast the lecture.

We won't broadcast all the questions and answer or the follow-ups. I'll respond a little bit to questions in this room here, whoever is attending it. Then the sisters will have their follow-up on a Wednesday evening to keep the compartmentalized a little bit in terms of follow-up and the ability to answer questions and for people to discuss the topic a little bit and talk about it. And I'll see if this works out or not. I don't know if it's going to work. This is the first time trying it out, but inshallah khair. So what I'm going to do first is I'm going to go through a little bit of a schema of what it is I'm hoping to cover, what we're going to talk about a little bit throughout these sessions.

I do expect that anyone who wants to attend these to listen to the Tezkiya Pearls series, the 20 lectures that are online, and the Empty Space 7 lectures, so 27 lectures in total. I think if you're going to attend this, then you should definitely go through those lectures and hear them, and maybe make some notes for yourself of them, so that as I kind of talk about these topics, and some of them will repeat, and some of them we have not gone through fully, but I just do expect you have a little bit of an understanding of what it is that we're talking about, so that it's not completely new. In Tezquia, the concepts serve as building bricks, meaning when you learn something, the next time we talk about a topic, it will be building on what we learned the time before.

So if you don't do that, and you just parachute into a session, then some of the terminology, some of the nomenclature may be a little bit foreign to you, and some of the concepts may be a bit more difficult to grasp because I'm basing it on the fact that we've already talked about one, two, and three, and today we're talking about four, and I can't go back and repeat everything. Not every time we sit, I can go through one, two, three, and four, or one, two, three, four, and five. The sessions will become nine-hour sessions at the end for us to get through stuff. So there's going to be some degree of building on information. The reason being is that most of what Tezquia is follows an algorithmic, illogical approach, meaning you're learning a little bit about the intrinsic workings of your inner self.

In doing that, you're picking up certain pieces of information and then adding them together and drawing a picture or getting a general sense of what's actually going on. In contrast to there being isolated pieces of information that we're sharing. Some aspects of Islamic study or learning Islam, you can afford just a parachute anytime. Tafsir, for example, you can just decide to show up anytime you want, and the verses that we're reading, you'll benefit from understanding what they mean, because the Quran is just designed that way. When it comes to these topics, they don't really function in the same manner. All right, I think I just need someone to press the thing so that I can control the, I will make slides just for ease, purposes of ease for yourself and myself as well, inshallah, as we go through.

Is it working? What I'm going to do today is, I'm going to talk about the four domains. There you go. Just maybe make it a little bit bigger. I want to talk to you a little bit about the rules. I want to talk to you about the purposes, the principles, forgive me. I want to talk to you about the daily focuses, and I want to talk to you about the methods. And then next week, inshallah, we'll kind of dive into the first topic and start talking about it in a little bit more depth. So even for those who have been attending this with me for the last two and a half years, consider this a little bit of a revision post-Ramadan in terms of what we're doing here.

So there are four basic rules in order for Tazkiyah to work. Thank you. The first rule is that everything that you learn within Tazkiyah has to be projected upon yourself. It is not designed to be projected on other people, which is the main danger of it, really. The main danger, the reason that it's not turned into public sessions is for protection of individuals. Because if you take what you're listening to and you decide that you're going to project it upon other people, upon your spouse or your sibling or your friends or the general public, then it actually completely backfires. Meaning everything that you learned in Tazkiyah will harm you. It will make you a worse type of person and it will ruin your inner peace if you have any of it.

The first, second, and third rule of Tezki is just everything that you listen to, all of the topics that I'm explaining, are designed for you to take them and then project them upon yourself. You hold yourself accountable to these things, not other people. To you, as far as Tezki is

concerned, like the way that Tezki is put together, is that other people to you are constants. They're just, the variable is your nef's because you're capable of changing it. Everything else is greyed out. You can't click on them. You can't click on anyone and implement this topic upon them because you don't control them. And they're not your responsibility. And they didn't invite you to come and do that to themselves. But rather, the only variable is this.

You have the ability to move things around within you and change certain things. And because you have that ability, it's all about you. What you're listening to is about you. You're going to be compelled multiple times as we talk about things to take some of these concepts and run with them towards someone else. And ask them to please listen to this. When you feel that way, remember the first rule. This is about you. And I'm telling you, this is very important. The moment you break this rule, it's a very slippery slope after that. Udo. Leave everyone else. People will be people. People will behave the way people will behave. They are the way they are. You don't look at them and say, well, see, they did this because of that, or they behaved because of, no, no, none of my business of why they do what they do.

They just do things. I take this and I apply it to myself. Only when someone puts you in a position of mentoring them, teaching them, educating them, are you allowed to do such things. Only when you're in a position to actually mentor people are you required to learn these topics and then hold them accountable to them because they have asked you to do so, because they put you in that position where they're asking you to be that spiritual counselor or guide. So I'll do that to people who are attending, who are listening. When questions are asked or when follow-ups come up, I'll put that because in the moment you stop, we go back to square one. It's none of my business what you do and why you do what you do.

I don't judge you and I don't hold you accountable and I don't assume things about you. And this is how we have to carry ourselves. So as someone who's listening to this, be careful. And even projecting it upon your children. Your children, they didn't invite you to become their spiritual guide, by the way. You are there to raise them, not to be this. It's not the same thing. Raising people is not the same thing. So be careful. Be careful how you apply these rules and apply these concepts and how you approach your children. So that's rule number one. Rule number two, you have to have a daily word. Regardless of anything, it's called within the science itself, it's called the covenant or the AHD.

It is something that you agree to and you stick to for the rest of your life. You take a specific daily word. We offer what I ask people to do. To start out by twice daily. Once in the early part of the day. And once in the later part of the day. It doesn't have to be after Fajr and after Maghrib. It's great if you can do it that way. But it doesn't have to be. It's whatever. Some people, most people do it before they go to work. And then you start with Istaghfar. 300 times Istaghfirullah. Then 100 times Salah al-Nabi alayhi salatu wasalam. You can use any Sighah. Any form of Salah al-Nabi alayhi salam. Allahumma salli ala Sayyidina Muhammadin abdika wa rasoolika al-nabiyyi al-ummi wa ala alihi wa sahbihi wa salim is the term or phrase that I use.

But you can use anything else you like. And then a hundred times, la ilaha illallah. And once you're done doing that, la ilaha illallah wahdahu la sharika lah, la hul mulku, la hul hamdu, yuhyi, wa yumaytu, wa ala kulli shay'in qadir. You're going to say Surah Al-Fatiha, and Surah Al-Ikhlâs, and Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah Al-Nas, and then you make dua. You make dua for yourself and for others who are walking this path and for Muslims everywhere. And

this forces you every single day to have a certain degree of invocation of dhikr and a certain degree, a certain amount of Quran that's been recited outside of salah and a small amount of dua. So if you do that, then you're doing this twice every single day.

Now, an important part of doing this is that the Prophet, alayhi salatu wasalam, when he emphasized, when he emphasized rituals, outside of the fard that he emphasized the most was the concept of dhikr of Allah as he said, he was asked by one of the Sahaba what give me something to hold on to from Islam it's too complicated for me. So he said, may your tongue continuously be moist in the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. And then if you go and you just, you can do a personal Google search in all the hadith where the Prophet ﷺ talked about invocation, you'll find that there are actually more than I can put together within a session even and share with you.

He went on this long tangent, should I not tell you, the best of your deeds, the ones that Allah loves most, that are most purifying for yourselves, better than spending all of your wealth, is better than going into combat. So they said, Ya Rasulallah, then what is? for you to invoke and remember, engage in the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. So never in your day should you Should you go over, should a 24-hour period go by without you taking a few moments and just doing dhikr of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. You don't necessarily have to do it in a closed session. This is the ideal way of doing it. But you don't. You can do it as you're driving, commuting to work.

If it's a 20-minute or 50-minute commute, then you can do it on the way there. You can do it on the way back. However, as we move along, I will ask you to grant this a specific amount of time. Like, I will ask you to give the word its own time, and then we'll talk about why that's important. Or I'll bring it up now so that I don't forget, because I'm going to forget. What you'll find, and this goes for a lot of things in your life, is that as long as you perform an action within time that is to you dead, it's okay. But to give it its own time becomes a little bit less attractive. You'll find that doing things on the go are not too difficult.

Like if you're commuting, or if you're walking, or if you're standing in the kitchen doing the dishes, or you're performing a task, or you're doing a remembrance of Allah. There's no problem, because this time to you was dead anyways. But when I tell you, okay, give this its own 15 minutes, it becomes much more difficult. Why? Because in your mind, this is time that could be used for something else. And the reality of the matter is that this action is not very high on the priority list. So you don't really want to give it any time. And you're going to have struggles with that. And this comes down to an inner understanding of what you want to use or utilize your time for.

So there's a part of us that knows or has a specific list of what is most important, what is least important. And even though we don't broadcast that list, and even though we sometimes don't even look at it, our nafs knows that list. So when you take a piece of time and decide to dedicate it towards something that the nafs has very low on the priority list, it doesn't want to do it. You struggle with getting it done, so it becomes hard to sit down for 15 minutes and just do dhikr of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. But it's no problem when you're commuting. It's easy. And to make your life easier, I don't mind. You can make the majority of this word done on a commute.

No problem. Because I just want you to get used to the fact that you are going to be engaging in the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala so that you can hold on to it twice. Which is why the majority of people who do this will struggle on the weekends. They

have no problem on the weekdays. No problem because they get in their car, they drive for 15 minutes this way, drive. Like you're off, it should be easier. It's not because of this problem. Because of the problem that deep down inside we have not taken the remembrance of Allah and bumped it up the priority list to the point where it's actually the most valuable thing to do. Where it's something extremely, extremely important and it's very, very helpful.

When it is, that's how you'll feel about it and you won't have a problem. This is why I get you to do these things. Because you get to experience that feeling. You get to experience, oh, this is why I can't do it. And this is why you struggle with doing everything within time. Anything that you find difficult in time, you find difficult because at a certain level, you don't think it's that important. You were told it's important. You're kind of convinced that it's important, but not really. Not to the point where you actually believe that it's important. And these are the three levels of conviction, of believing things, whatever. So you kind of believe, it's nice, but it hasn't sunk in as something that you truly accept. And this will take time.

And I know it will take time, which is why I'm okay with you starting out by doing it on the commute. But you absolutely have to do this. You have to do this, and then over maybe the course of four months or five months, once you've stuck to it, then we'll add something to it. You'll do an extra Tasbeeh. Maybe a hundred Subhanallah Wa Bihamdi Subhanallah. Then maybe an extra Hawa, La Hawla Wa La Quwwata. And then we'll add another hundred Istighfar. We'll keep on adding to it. I have teachers who used to perform maybe. Five seven thousand this be ha Yanni and each timing once at the morning once the evening and it took nothing out of them They actually enjoyed it.

It's something that they found, Yanni, peace of heart and mind by doing it didn't they didn't they weren't born that way. It didn't just click one morning. They woke up and decided to go from zero to five thousand. No, they it took it's a very radical to it over time. What ends up happening? And this is something I get back. Why do we have to do it this way? Why can't we just openly do tasbeeh? I just fill my time all the time. I don't have to do it 300, 300. It's because your nafs doesn't like when it's being obligated to do something. The nafs doesn't like to be obligated to do things. You're obligated to pray your five prayers. Certain things you've accepted by now.

Certain things, your nafs is at the point where it's accepted it. It's not fighting. We're going to pray. You'll continue to be bothered through your conscience. I should pray. It's time. It's already half an hour. I should have done this a while ago. You've accepted it because it's been with you for a number of years. You even forgot when you started to pray. You're a fard every single day. But your nafs is not willing to pick on or to take on new obligations. It doesn't like that. And this is not really an obligation. Allah did not obligate you to do what I'm telling you to do here. Not at all. But it's you obligating yourself. This is very meaningful. This is a very important thing that you should be able to do in your life.

Whether you obligate yourself to do something that Allah ﷻ did not obligate you to do. Out of love for Allah ﷻ and the desire of being better and being closer to Allah ﷻ, the Almighty. The ability to do that is of extreme importance here. The ability to actually force yourself to do it and hold yourself accountable to doing this is very important. Keeping it open takes that piece away. Saying that as long as I'm moving around, I'll be saying astaghfirullah and subhanAllah, alhamdulillah. That takes away any form of obligation. And the nafs is happy with that. Because it knows over time, it'll make you forget all of it. And there's no timeline stuck to it. There's no time frame that you have to stick to.

And that is why this is important. It's important to hold yourself to a word and to hold yourself to a hijab. Maybe you recite a certain degree of Quran. Maybe, maybe. The Quran piece is easy. It's simple. You recite two or three verses a day, you're fine. It doesn't have to be long verses or large amounts of the Quran. But the word is more difficult. It takes a little bit more out of you. And you have to learn how to figure out, you have to figure out your day, to plan your day out so that you can get it done. And after over a period of time, you'll find that the nafs will stop fighting it. Just like the nafs accepted salah, accepted fajr, and accepted dhuhr, and accepted asr, and accepted maghrib and isha, it'll accept this as well.

And it'll go along with it. And once it gets to that degree, then you start adding to it, and it becomes much more powerful. So keep that. That's rule number two. This has to happen. You have to do this. There's no such thing as tazkiyah without having a wurd. Every sahabi had a wurd. The Prophet, alayhi salam, had a wurd. He would recite certain, but he did way more than we can even possibly imagine. You'll come to a point where all you do all day long is just remember Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) in different forms. Whether it's in the form of Tasbeeh and Istighfar and Salah Ala Nabi Alayhi Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam and Tahleel, or it's in the form of reciting the Quran and contemplating, or it's the form of da'wah, or it's the form of, all of it, your day will just turn into a day of where you're remembering Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) in different ways.

But you start by at least holding yourself, holding yourself to something simple. Rule number three: is contemplation and reflection. Everything, every day, you have to perform this task. You have to make sure that you contemplate and that you reflect on the topics that we talk about. Whatever I share with you over the week, you are asked to contemplate these things and reflect upon them. Give yourself a couple of minutes a day where you sit, you just think. About some of the topics that were covered or the topic that has been covered once we I'm done going through the rules and the you know the basics, it'll be one topic one topic for weeks. It'll be one topic that I talk about for a number of weeks looking at it from the different angles that I can bring to your attention, and uh yeah, for as long as you can put up with it.

At a certain point, people get bored of the same topic, so we have to move on. Not that we're done, but just move on so that people don't get too frustrated. But these topics have to be contemplated. If you don't think about them, if you just depend on the fact that well I semi-attended the DARS, I was half asleep, but I just listened to a few things he said, you're not really going to get very far with it. It's not going to help you. You have to actually take time and internalize what we're talking about here so that you can experience it on a personal level. So that you can have questions about it, so that when you sit with your group or we talk, you have some questions.

I can help you. Most of the time, the topics that I'm sharing with you, I know what it is that you're going to come back to me with. I mean, I know once you try it, what wall you're going to hit first. It's natural. Our experience as human beings is pretty similar. Whatever you experience is similar to what I experienced and to what the people before me did. But you're supposed to experience it. If a student is always hand-fed the answer, they will fail the exam 100%. They have to sit there and do cases and answer questions and make mistakes. If you're preparing for an exam, you have to go through questions. You have to go through a number of MCQs as a part of any exam passing or exam studying process.

You have to try things out. You have to give it a shot. How would you answer this question? Try writing it down so you can see what your answer looks like, so you can figure out where your deficit is, or where it lies. And if you don't do it that way, you just depend on listening to me, talking. If you do this, this is how you're going to feel. And then if you feel that way, that's because of this. And then if you do it again, then you'll feel this way, that you're not learning anything, because you're not trying it out. You're not actually feeling it. You're not experiencing the emotion, you're not experiencing the pushback that you'll get from the nafs, you're not experiencing any of it, so you're not learning anything about yourself.

Every nafs is unique. There are certain things that they have in common, but everyone is unique. So the feeling you have will be a little bit different than the one that I do. But there will be general parameters that allow us all to learn from the same source of knowledge, which is what we're doing. Contemplation and reflection require, and of course the fourth rule is exercise, and I'm talking about them together to a certain degree. Contemplation and reflection are difficult to do up front. The reason being is that we're not used to centralizing and thinking about things in depth. What we're used to doing is identifying a topic in our lives, a thought as important, and then just putting it in the back seat and allowing it to come forward every once in a while as we go throughout our day.

We don't actually focus on it. We just keep it there. And then go through our work and go through our family problems and issues. And then every once in a while, as we're going through life, we take a look back at it and then we continue. Then we take a look back at it and continue. Meaning we actually think about it. We just think about it over a long period of time. That's why people take so much time sometimes to actually offer you an answer or come up with a decision or decide what they want to do. Men do this all the time. Which is why I go. Your wife will ask you, 'What are we going to do?' Like, well, later. Why? Because he doesn't want to think about it right now.

And he knows I just keep it parked in the back. He'll figure it out later. Like, it'll come to him as he goes along, right? But that's really not how concepts work. You can do that in aspects of your life. It's fine. It works for a lot of things. It doesn't work for these things. And because of this, we have to sit down and contemplate and reflect. The Prophet ﷺ performed Tafakkur and Tadabbur. Go back to the session where I talk about this specifically in Tazkia Brows and listen to it because it's important. He would perform these behaviors. He would do I'tikaf for hours. He would sit and think. I will ask you to try and do this for a couple of minutes. You will fail. You will fail miserably.

You will maybe be able to focus on one thought for maybe a couple of seconds. And then you will find some other thought will race right in. And then some other aspect of your life will take over. And then you'll centralize again for a couple of seconds and then something else will come in. We're not used to focusing on one thing. We're used to thinking in an abstract way. We're used to ideas just coming back and forth and we just give each idea maybe a couple of seconds here and there in the background and then just moving on. Because sometimes it's hard to focus on one topic because it overwhelms us. The amount of The amount of emotion that it requires, the amount of time that it requires, the amount of risk and danger that surrounds us sometimes overwhelms us, so we prefer to allow it to think about it on the go.

On the go. Imagine a child sitting there waiting to get their vaccination. Remember? Standing in line for vaccination. I don't know if you remember this. I remember maybe they stopped doing this that way. We used to stand in line to get our vaccination. Those were the worst minutes of our lives. You hand down the worst time of your life of standing in line

waiting for vaccination. Your name was called. That was the scariest thing. That was like death row. It was like you were being taken to be executed. Then you sit there down. You're sitting there. You're just getting more and more anxious. What do they do with children? They distract them. They distract them. They do funny things. Sometimes the painful process is easier when you're distracted.

Thinking about things is a painful process. It really is. I don't know exactly why, but it is. It's a bit painful, so we prefer to do it while distracted. We prefer to do it on the go, as we are playing or working or walking or talking to someone else, or maybe just thinking about it by talking to people. A lot of people, the only time they think about something is if they engage in a conversation about it with someone else. They're actually doing their thinking about it right then and there. They have not thought about it before. Because it's too painful to do it on your own. You have to rip that band-aid off. You have to learn to do this. You have to learn to sit down and perform deep thought, deep reflection on topics of importance.

And keep a journal if needed. Some people keep journals. I do. I used to write notebooks. Now I just use my phone because it's just one note. It's easier. But you just keep a journal of some of the conclusions that you're arriving at. Some of the ideas that pop up as you're going along. Don't expect to actually wrap your head around any topic over a week or two. It'll take longer than that. Sometimes it takes months for you to come to a conclusion. We don't like that. We're very impatient as human beings. We want everything to be fixed quickly. We want the sheikh within the next couple of sessions to fix us. No one has that ability. For you to change and for you to get where you're going is going to take time.

But if you perform this, then you will slowly you will see differences in yourself over the course of a year or two. You'll find that you're much more capable of doing things that you could not do before. And you can actually take time and think about things. The fourth rule and the final rule is exercises. Exercises, I will actually ask you to do something. Don't worry, I won't ask you to harm anyone or to blow through your savings, but I will ask you to try and perform a specific task. It's a very each task that I ask you to do, is designed to isolate an abstract concept, an emotion in a safe environment. Something that if you do, you get to feel something about yourself.

And then identify what that feeling is so that later on when it comes up again, you recognize it. You need a reference point. You need a reference point in your life to be able to understand what's happening on the inside. Now you can just wait for life to dish out all of its masaaib to you and you'll learn. Or you can use this safe environment of the time that you have right now and try things out and recognize certain feelings. So later on when they happen, you're like, I know what that is. I know what that sound is. I know what that voice is. That is my nafs not wanting to do one, two, or three. So I know better than to listen to it. I know better than to give up.

I know that I continue to do this regardless. And the tasks are usually quite simple. What you're going to find in these tasks when you do an exercise is that you will fail the first time. You'll come back and say, 'I couldn't do it.' Or 'I did it this way.' Or you maybe even argue against it that this is a stupid task to do. Which is normal. All that is natural. What you're learning, really, as we do these things, is that that's not really you speaking. That's not you talking. There's someone else who's saying these things. Because what I'm asking you to do is absolutely reasonable. But there's someone else on the inside who doesn't like what you're attempting to do. So it's convincing you of this narrative.

And over time, you'll start to learn that. And once you figure that piece out, then you'll start, you'll go on your road. And everybody who has attended these halaqat know that this is how it works. We start out, we ask them to do a certain act of service or maybe one of the most common ones that people struggle with. I ask them to make dua for someone they don't like or someone they despise or someone that they are envious of. And of course, you get a million reasons of why we shouldn't do it. Everyone comes back and says, 'I can't do it' for this reason. No, you can. You just don't want to. Your nest doesn't want to do it, so it gives you excuses of why it can't be done.

And then you come back and you argue that. To me, what I'm trying to get you to do is identify that it's not you arguing with me. I'm not arguing with you right now. Someone else is telling you this stuff. You know when someone has someone else's ear? You're feeding them, and they come and talk to you, and you're like, that's not you. If you have children, you know this. Because your child will come and say something. You're like, that's not you. You're not smart enough to say that. I know that you're not smart enough to say that yet. Someone else said this to you. Who said this to you? Who are you getting this from? And then you do some research. You figure out who has their ear and who's kind of feeding them.

Many times when you're objecting to things, it's not you. Someone else is feeding you this. See, that someone else is always there with you. And you just have to figure out who they are. You have to take some time to identify that they're there. And they do have access to you. And you have access to them. And you have to understand them. And they have to understand you. And that's what Telsky is. It's purifying a part of yourself. Of you. You are a complex being. You're not as simple as most people think you are. None of us are. So identifying that that sound is the sound of someone else who does not like doing certain things. And then as we go along, I'll explain to you why your NEFS doesn't like doing these things.

Why? And after a while, you won't need me to explain it because you'll know. You'll know that the NEFS will only do things that are self-serving, only do things that it gets credit for, only do things that allow it some degree of win in terms of its survival and in terms of its status and power in the short term. It'll only do things for that. It's not willing to even remotely consider doing anything else. And it takes time for you to get to a point where it will change its mind. Like the neefs will only change its mind over a long period of time, a long period of performing the exact word that this whole process is named after, which is Teskia. You are purifying it, purifying it.

You are teaching it so that it comes to a point where the neefs doesn't understand long-term plans. It doesn't understand death or what comes after it. These are concepts that don't; imagine trying to explain these concepts to a three-year-old. Does a three-year-old understand these concepts? Can you explain to a three-year-old death? Can you explain to a three-year-old that in 10 years, if you do this right now, you'll thank me? No, they don't understand. They don't have the capacity to understand that. It takes time. Your nervous is very, it's like a child. It takes time. You have to. It takes a long time. And even if you do it right, it'll still always want al-ajilah and not want al-akhirah. It'll always want that which is present, which is right now, which is temporary, which is close, which is near, which is soon.

It doesn't want anything that is delayed later on, which is, as we know, any mature being understands that most things that are worth having in life are things that you have to be patient for, that will take that are delayed, that will take years to get there. Almost nothing that you receive in the immediate sense is worth having. People who are granted things in

the immediate sense usually don't even value what they're given. If you're given anything way before it's time, you don't really deal with it very well. There are studies on children who become famous; on children who achieve fame at a young age. There are studies, there are actually large studies, and they don't really require, there's cheap studies because they have a large cohort of individuals to look at, all of the actors, the children actors who go into Hollywood.

You understand that 90% of them end up addicted to drugs and doing very, very unwell in their lives. It's very sad because these are individuals that you saw. When you watched on TV, they were cute, they were kids. Then you look at what happens to them when they grow up. Why? Because they were granted something way too early, something that's very hard to achieve, which is fame. You achieve something that actually takes a lifetime of work to achieve at a very young age, and it's hard to know how to deal with it. It's very difficult to figure out what to do with this, and they don't know what to do with it, and it ends up ruining their ability to think and to understand themselves and to figure out where they're going with their lives.

So these are the four rules. Everything I talk about within these sessions needs to be projected on yourself. Don't project on anyone else. Make sure that that daily word is something you hold onto. It has to be twice a day. Once in the early part of your day and once in the later part of your day. You're holding yourself to this. This is you holding yourself to this. There's a lot of value in that because I'm going to come back to it as we go along, of why this is important. Make sure that you have a certain degree of contemplation. Everything that you learn, you have to engage in some degree of deep thought upon it in order for it to mean anything to you.

And then some of the exercises that we offer, you have to do. These are the rules. If you don't follow these rules, then really you're wasting your time. This is not going to do much for you. You're better off doing something else. The principles. There are four principles. I'm going to share with you some of these principles today. I thought I was going to get through more, but I'm not going to get through as much as I thought today. That's okay. So there are four principles, though it's all a set of fours. Number one, there's the graduality principle, meaning change happens very gradual, very, very gradual. Nothing is sudden or severe. You will almost not be able to identify the changes that are happening because they're so gradual.

Think of it as the growing process of a young person. As their parent, you don't really see it. You don't really see them growing. You can't identify it. It's only through comparisons of certain time points that are well, that are far away from each other that you can identify growth. You have to look at them now and how they were four years ago. Like, okay, there's a difference. But you didn't see that. You didn't actually see that, that it was so gradual and so slow that you don't identify it. So it's important as you go through tazkiyah that you identify where you are right now. What you're feeling. That's why if you take, if you identify certain things in your journal, when you look back at how you were feeling two or three years ago, or how you understood things two or three years ago, you'll be able to say, okay, I've come a little bit, I've come a long way, actually.

These topics don't bother me anymore. I don't struggle with this anymore. I find this quite easy. I have different challenges, but those challenges, those older challenges, I don't have anymore, alhamdulillah. But this takes time. You're not going to feel that to happen in real-time. It's very gradual. And it's actually important for it to be gradual because if you overwhelm yourself with too much change all up front, if it's a harsh change, it doesn't

really work. If you make harsh changes to your routine or to your life upfront, You may be able to stick to it for a while, but then it crumbles. Because your nafs has been overwhelmed, overburdened with change that it can't handle.

So you want to make changes to your life and to your nafs, you have to do it gradually. Give yourself the space that you need to actually change. So remember that. Number two is that you have to base this on building habits. It's about, as Aisha would say, **وَكَانَ آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ إِذَا عَمِلُوا عَمَلًا أَتَّبَعُوهُمُ** Meaning not just the Prophet ﷺ but all those who followed him. If they do something, they would do it consistently. Meaning he did it consistently. The most beloved actions to Allah are those that are consistent even if they're small in amount.

So you have to make sure that you start building habits. Which is why I gave you the word at the beginning. It's a habit that you'll build, you'll stick to, and over time, it'll start to actually do something for you. You'll find the barakah and the nur of doing this. But you have to start by building habits. Number three, which is what we're going to be talking about. This is going to be the first topic that we're going to cover, inshallah ta'ala, within this series, which is self-honesty or self-accountability. As I'll show you in a moment, there are certain pillars for Tezquia. And one of the five pillars that we go through is self-honesty. Self-honesty, as in your ability to tell yourself the truth about yourself. Without this piece, all is lost in Tezquia.

Nothing really works. Actually, learning Tezquia can backfire in many situations. And I've talked to you throughout the Tezquia Pearls. I gave some examples. For example, if you don't have humbleness, Tazkiyah will backfire. Because what you learn can go to your head. You're learning things that maybe other people don't understand. You're experiencing things that people haven't experienced. You're coming to realizations that others don't have. And this can go to your head. This can actually make you arrogant, make you feel superior. And that's walking you down off a cliff, basically. So it's a mishap. What you learn has to increase your degree of humility and humbleness. But without self-honesty, then whatever I say to you will just turn into validation. Just use it to validate your own feelings, validate your own choices, validate your own mistakes, because you lack insight.

When we say self-honesty, the human being has insight upon himself. But that insight has to be established. You have to really learn what that means. The mask that we wear on our faces in front of people, that's not who you are. Treat yourself as that, then we have a problem. We have a problem that I don't know if it's fixable. I don't know if it's something that's repairable, really. I project upon you a certain image, because socially this is how this works, and you do the same to me. We should not change that. You're not supposed to come and expose yourself in front of others. But as far as the way you deal with yourself, in front of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, you have to deal with yourself, with who you are, with the reality of who you are.

So you have to have that self-honesty. If you lose that self-honesty, and you have rationalized all of your behaviors and you stopped recognizing what you're doing wrong in your life, then Tezquia does nothing for you. It actually makes things worse. It absolutely makes things worse. Which is why usually these sessions are close-knit and they're closed. Why? Because my job is to identify. If you're like that, then I'm going to ask you to step away. For your own sake. You're better off. Because you're going to use all of this as fuel to continue. It's going to take you farther away. You're going to go further away from where you needed to be to begin with. So we're going to talk about self-honesty in some degree of depth over the next few weeks, inshallah.

That will be the topic of the upcoming sessions, inshallah ta'ala. It's one of the four principles. And the fourth principle is the substitution abstinence. Meaning once you stop a bad habit, you have to stop at cold turkey. And you have to have an alternative for it. The graduality of change for the nafs is the general rule. Meaning you add, nafs does not, but when we talk about a bad habit, something of haram, you can't stop that gradually. You just have to stop it. You have to end it. And then you have to stay away from it for the rest of your life. If you picked up a bad habit and you're doing something wrong, you cannot fathom the idea of shouldering it as you go along.

That's why, for example, alcoholics, once they stop, they are not allowed to take a sip of alcohol ever again, or to go to a bar, or to be in the presence of alcohol ever again in their lives. And this is one of the basic rules that they have. And if they do that, you reset. You reset your number again. Even if you take a sip of alcohol, you reset your number. Now you're at high risk. Why? Because they've tried this out. Learning about the nafs comes from, obviously, it comes from khitab and sunnah. But also, reflection of life, you'll learn things about yourself. A lot of the human race and humanity, or human-based sciences, have figured out a lot of aspects about the nafs, and they're almost exactly what we've been taught in the Qur'an, and so we know them.

You have to stay away. That's why, مَنْ مَنَّهُنَّكُمْ عَنْهُ فَاجْتَنِبُوا What I tell you not to do, you stay away from. وَمَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ فَأْتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ What I tell you to do, what you can, what can you do? Do that. Add to it next time. No problem. Because good habits, they take time. But bad habits, you have to rip them out.

But there has to be alternatives. When you remove something bad out of your life, you have to come up, okay, what am I going to do in the time that I used to perform this action? That's why people who smoke, it's hard for them to stop smoking. Because what are they going to do in the time that they used to smoke? And after Ghada, when he would get up, right, and go wash his hands, and then go outside, and stand outside, and turn it on, and sit there for five minutes. This was a task that they did after each meal. This task means something to them. So you tell them you can't smoke anymore. So what are they going to do after they eat? What are you going to do after he eats?

Sit there and fight with his wife. Yell at the kids. Curse at the TV. Because the task that he was doing, you have to figure out what is going to be the alternative. If the person figures out an alternative, then he can get rid of a bad habit. Do this instead. It may not be as fun, it may not be as enjoyable, but this is what I'm going to be doing instead. And that goes for a lot of bad habits. A bad habit, you want to rip it out, you have to find something else to do. So people, for example, who gather and perform some degree of ghibah. In order for them to stop this, there has to be an alternative. What are we going to talk about?

Give me something that's juicy and fun to talk about. Well, it's never going to be as fun as Ghibah, honestly. There's nothing as fun as Ghibah. Ghibah is the funnest thing of all. Sit down and go through a list of people and just rip them to shreds. It's fun. It's very fun. The nafs loves it. Why? It feeds a certain degree of superiority. It swings the pendulum towards vanity and arrogance. It's great. It's awesome. It's a fake emotion, but it does put you on a temporary high. So you're not going to get that. You're not going to get that. No matter what you do, you're not going to get that. You're going to get something different. With time, it will become very meaningful once you learn why real emotions actually.

I want you to imagine. And I talked about this a little bit in the Tuskegee Apparel, but I won't do that. When the pendulum swings, it gives you an emotion that is similar to what

you get when you're on drugs. People who are on drugs, people who take cocaine, for example, or heroin or methamphetamines, they end up experiencing highs that make, to them, the rest of their lives boring. The rest of their highs that they experience, like you get a high from helping people, from teaching people, from spending time with your children, from being with friends. It's a nice feeling, right? But then if you take cocaine, it doesn't compare. This is so much more concentrated. It's so much more. So it desensitizes you and it numbs you to actually enjoy the raw and genuine experiences of life itself.

The pendulum swing is the same thing. They're not real emotions. When you feel good about yourself because others are being put down or because you are overestimating the effort that you're putting in, they're not real. These are not real emotions. They're fake. They're fake, but the alternative, which are raw and genuine, they're not as intense. They're not as intense, so you don't want them. You want to go back to that. But once you're able to get rid of this and actually experience genuine, raw emotions that have fulfillment in them, They mean much more to you in the long run. Because the high that comes from feeling better than others in comparison, it doesn't; it runs out. Just like, okay, it runs out. No matter how much you snort, it doesn't do anything for you anymore.

And it starts to harm you. It starts to physically and mentally harm you. So what I'm trying to, we're trying to learn here is the same thing. I know it's the same analogy. It's getting rid of these toxic emotions and feelings that, yes, they may seem meaningful, but they're not. In the long run, they're not helpful. And you lose the ability to enjoy raw emotion, actual genuine emotion. You stop knowing what it means to actually love and to actually experience fulfillment and experience companionship. You stop knowing what that means and what that feels like. That's very sad when that happens. So these are the four principles. The change happens gradually. You have to learn to build habits. Make sure that you have a certain degree of self-honesty, which I will help you with.

We're going to talk about this over the next few weeks. And bad habits need to be ripped out. They have to be removed quickly, and they have to bring alternatives. I'll talk about all these things I'm going to talk about. The reason I'm putting them here for you is because you're responsible for this. I'm not responsible for your teskia, just so this is clear. I'm not responsible for you at all. This is your life. You do with this whatever you want to do with this. My contribution is very simple. I'm just going to try and simplify and kind of compartmentalize certain ideas for you so you can think about. But this is up to you. I'm just giving you the breakdown of what you're supposed to do.

You're supposed to figure out how to do all these things. We're going to, inshallah, try to help you out with the best of our ability. So I'm giving you now so that you can start working on them starting today. So it's already. I ran, I think, 45 minutes. So I'm going to stop with that. Next week, I'll go through the daily focuses, the methods. Then I'll talk to you a little bit about the pillars of tazkiyah. I'll talk to you about the basic tools of tazkiyah. I'll talk to you about the main goals of tazkiyah. And then we'll start going through self-honesty. So maybe next week we do one more session of just a general recap and review of what we're supposed to do. Then the week after, Inshallah Ta'ala, we'll dive into the first topic.

The topics that I talk about won't take one week. They'll take maybe two to three to sometimes four weeks of just slow comprehension. I will look at one topic from four or five angles. I'll repeat some of the ideas as we go along. I'll give you an exercise, ask you to come back, and then I'll build on it again until we all come to the feeling that, okay, this topic now makes sense to us. We understand it, and we're able to practice it so we can

move on to the one after. Again, please listen to the lectures that were run throughout Ramadan in the empty space. These 27 lectures are essential. If you don't listen to them, and you will struggle with this, and you will come and ask me questions that will boil my blood. So make sure that you listen to it so that I also don't have to struggle with my own Tazkiyah. Jazakum Allah khair. The younger brothers, the original Tazkiyah group, go up front. If you don't mind, I'll start the word. I'll be sitting here for the next 15-20 minutes, and I'll answer questions for anyone who wants to ask a question or wants to follow up.

**Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEZE4o5h8oc>