

**Tazkiyah Halaqa
Self-Honesty – Session 2
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Transcription

This morning I will complete the general revision of what the series of Tezkiyah will be covering or talking about over the next number of months or longer. And you may touch. Touch upon the first topic that I'm going to be covering inshallah towards the end of it. And before we can really start going through concepts slowly and surely, it's important that there's a little bit of a schema of what the progression is going to look like and what you're required to kind of know or have with you as we move along. And last week, I pointed out the rules. There are four basic rules, and these rules are important. They apply at all times. The benefit of going through it this way is that, you see, in any science or in any discipline or domain of Islamic knowledge or any domain of science in general, It's always helpful to point out the concepts that are always applicable.

That are always applicable. Those are important. You should always start with those. Because there are other concepts later on in every domain or field of science or field of knowledge that are not always applicable. Meaning they're important in certain moments. In other moments, they may not be that important. You can live without them. And those have to be covered later, right? So what we're doing, what I'm trying to do now is to go through the basics. What is it that, what aspects of Tezgih are always applicable? So these rules are always applicable. In Tezgih, anything that you learn is always going to be about you. You're never going to take anything that you learn in Tezgih and project it on someone else. Ever. It's never going to apply that way.

It's always going to apply upon you. This is essential. You're always going to perform the daily word. This is important. If you don't, then you have to reset and start again. And if you fail, then you reset and you start again. And you keep on resetting. You keep on finding, figuring out how you're going to do it until you are consistent with your word twice a day. And then once you're consistent for a couple of weeks, you let me know and we start adding things. I start giving, okay, add another 100 istighfar once a day and then twice a day and then add this to it. And slowly over time, you build up your capacity to perform tasbihat. And then the time, the fillers within your day become mostly dhikr of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

And this is an extremely important part of your behavior as someone who's walking a path of dhikr. You're always going to contemplate. There's a rule. Everything needs contemplation. Nothing that I share with you here is going to be fully understood, fully comprehended, and practiced after listening to it once or even twice. You have to think about it yourself. You have to journal your thoughts on the topic, and you have to take some time and really think deeply about what they mean. You're always going to be required to perform exercises. You're going to have to try and do things. Now, for example, the Wird itself is an exercise. It is a very, very powerful exercise. There's a lot of aspects, a lot of things you learn about yourself from just performing the Wird on a daily basis that I will point out for you as we go along.

But for now, just do it. Then I'll say there's a lot of things that you learn from performing this. It's an exercise. The only way you can learn things about yourself is if you're put in situations that expose weaknesses or expose strengths. It's not all negative. There's a lot of positives as well. At the beginning, we're critical and we point out the negatives just so that you don't miss them. But there's a lot of positives about the human experience and about yourself that, inshallah, you'll also appreciate and find quite uplifting. But you have to engage in exercise, because if you don't, then life will be the teacher. And life is a cruel teacher. Life is a very cruel teacher. It rarely shows any form of mercy when it's teaching you a lesson.

So the slap hurts. However, if you put yourself in an isolated, controlled environment, you try something, you experience a feeling, an emotion, a thought process. Well, at that point, you can learn something about yourself, and you didn't really lose much. You just tried something out that your nafs didn't want to, didn't like, didn't enjoy. You heard its moaning and groaning. You heard your nafs not liking it. And that sound becomes familiar to you. So you start learning a little bit more how to tease out that which you don't want to do, meaning you actually don't want to do, versus what your nafs doesn't want to do due to selfish purposes or different diseases of the heart. So these are the four rules. They always apply. The principles always apply as well.

Everything that you, all change is going to be gradual. You have to learn to bring in habits. It's all about habit building. One-timers don't help. Habits are extremely important. Self-honesty is what we're going to be starting with, inshallah ta'ala. Self-honesty is an absolute must. It's a principle here. If you don't have these apply all the time. You always have to be self. There's no point. There's no point within Tazkia where I will say, you know what, put that aside, lie to yourself about this. No, no, never lie to yourself, ever. I'll never at any point tell you to tell yourself a lie about anything. Actually, it's the absolute opposite. And this is important because you will be in situations in life where you'll feel compelled to.

Elude yourself, or to tell yourself something that's not absolutely true, just to make things easier, to cushion the fall a little bit, and to make your life a little bit less difficult. And in essence, that's not what you're asked to do. No, you tell yourself the truth, always. And then when you substitute, when you remove things, when you stop a bad habit, you have to substitute it. There has to be an alternative. Without an alternative, it doesn't work. Meaning, if you perform the best tawbah in the history of tawbahs, but there's no alternative for the mistake or for the problem that you have, Then you're just going to fall right back into it again. I have two more things I want to share with you that are always applicable. The daily focuses.

These are daily, hence the name. These are focuses that you should have every day. Things, four topics or four concepts that you should think about daily, every single day. Not everything in Tuscan needs to be thought about every day. Not every single aspect of Tuscan needs to be thought about every single day. But these have to be touched upon every day. You have to make a point of doing that. Every day you have to think about these four. Number one, you have to think about the concept of ihsan. What do I mean by that? You have to remind yourself daily, at least once, that what you're doing in your life has at least two layers. The physical apparent layer that people see, that is physical, that is mechanical, where you're doing the actual action, you're performing the activity, you're performing the ritual, or whatever it is you're doing.

And then there's a spiritual aspect to it as well. Everything that you do. If you give salams to someone, there's two layers to that. There's the putting the hand out and saying the

words, and then there's what's happening on the inside. What you thought about it, what you felt, what your intention was. Everything has a spiritual aspect to it. And that is something you have to remind yourself of every single day. Because we get caught up in this physical world and we start judging ourselves based on how well we are performing physically. When Allah is absolutely judging you based on how you're doing spiritually. And if you lose sense of that, if you lose focus on that, then we're going to run into trouble. Run into trouble because this is what ihsan is.

Ihsan is making sure that when you do things, it's not just that you do them, it's that you do them well. Doing them well is not only a physical thing. It's very much a spiritual thing. It's a third of what Islam is as a faith. And I tried to explain that as much as I could through a series of khutbas. It's not just the actions and the beliefs. It's also the spiritual piece, the Ahsan piece, the psychological, if you want to speak more scientifically. Number two, your Abudiyya. I remember this phrase because this was the first phrase I heard when I attended. The first word I heard the Shaykh talk to us about was this phrase. And I carry it with me till this day. The first word, we attended a thousand.

This is the first word he said and still applies. Meaning you are constantly reminding yourself, searching. And questioning whether you have established yourself as a proper servant for Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala or not. Al-abudiyya is who I am. And it's who you are. I am a servant of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. That is my description. That's who I am. Am I a good servant or am I a bad servant? Do I remember that I am a servant, or do I not? If you're going to your job and you're sitting at your desk and you forget what you do, this is a; This is not a good situation. There's something absolutely wrong if you're at your job and you don't know what you're there to do.

Like, you have no idea what your job task is and you don't know what you're supposed to be performing. This is a musibah. You're going to get fired very soon. You're going to get maybe even a lawsuit. So, you have to know, I am an Abd Lillah SubhanAllah. What type of abd am I? So, throughout the day, at least once, you have to remind yourself, I am a servant. How good of a servant am I? How are my actions reflecting on my service shift to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala? How is it reflecting on my abudiyah to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala? Is this how an Abd would have behaved? The choices I made today, are these choices of an Abd of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala? Or are these choices of someone else?

So, these are daily. I need you to do these every single day. They will become second nature soon enough. You do them for a couple of months, after a while they just happen. You don't have to really necessarily calendar them. You just need, they'll just happen. You'll just be asking yourself about the spiritual aspect of, even what you do at your work. I enter a room, I speak to a patient. There's the apparent piece. My bedside manner, how I approach the situation, what we talk about. But then there's a spiritual part to this as well. What my intention was when I went and how, all that is there and that's important. It has to be valued. You have to ask yourself if you're a proper *عبد لله سبحانه وتعالى*.

Number three, you have to take time and work on your intentions. So just remind yourself of *النية. تصحيح النية*. Your *نية* will never be perfect. Inshallah, one day it will be. Inshallah, one day it will be. It's very hard to perfect it. It's about purifying it. It's about identifying that the *نية*, the intention, *إنما العمال بالنية*, it's everything, all deeds, are going to be judged based on their intentions first. There's other criteria for judgment, for sure. It's not just the intention. But it's going to start with the intention. If that piece sucks, then it doesn't really matter what else happens. If your intention was perfect, okay, good. That's the first check mark. Now,

let's see if you did things right. Did you make wudu appropriately? Was it the time for salah?

Did you pray on time? Were you towards qibla? Did you recite? All the other check boxes have to be filled. But the first one is going to be intention. If that doesn't work, then there's no point in going through the others. And that's scary because if that's not taken care of, then you just wasted a lot of time. You just spent a lot of time checking all these other boxes when the first one didn't get checked and it was the key for everything else. So purifying your intentions, making sure that you ask yourself, what was my intention when I went and did this? Any act of worship, or any action in general. And number four, and the final one, is the acceptance of deeds. Qabul al-amal.

Is thinking about or contemplating the fact that deeds are only worth anything if they're accepted. If they're not accepted, then what value do they carry? You prayed Fajr. May Allah accept from me and you. If it's not accepted, then what value did this action carry? What did you do? You just woke up in the middle of the night. Drove over to a place. What was the point of it? If it gets rejected. So these four things are daily. You have to think about them every day. At least once you have to think about the concept of Ihsan. Doing things with excellence. Of making sure that you care about the spiritual part, about the baton part of things. You have to ask yourself if you are being a good abid lillah subhanahu wa ta'ala versus not.

Whether your actions reflect abudiyya or they reflect something different. You have to look at your intentions at least once. Ask yourself if your intentions are good. And you have to contemplate whether your deeds are going to be accepted or not. Honestly, the last one is enough for most of the concepts of Tazkia to just self-generate for you. Like most of the things I'll teach you or I'll talk about here or I'll share with you will self-generate if you just contemplate whether your deed was accepted or not. Because if you get scared enough, then you're going to start looking far and wide. Because you start thinking, well, what about my time? Like if I'm doing all these deeds and there's a possibility that they all get rejected. Why did I do any of them?

And what is the criteria for things to be rejected? Is the criteria just the physical piece or is there a spiritual piece for rejection as well? So these are the four focuses. They need to be thought about daily. So, write them down in a note somewhere. Every day, at some point when you're sitting down, take a moment, open them and look at them one by one and ask yourself these quick questions. You do that once a day for a couple of months and then you can delete it. It'll just happen. You'll always be asking yourself about your intention. You'll always be asking yourself about the acceptance of your deeds. You'll always be asking yourself about your abudiyya. You'll always be thinking about the concept of ihsan. You see things to be dual.

Dual in nature. You don't just see the apparent action. You're also seeing the other part of things. And it's important to you. It's important to you where your heart was when you were doing it. What emotions were involved in it? What intentions? What thoughts were involved in it? Finally, the methods. So we've talked about the rules, the principles, the daily focuses, and now finally the methods. And I have a few more things, but these four domains make sure that you have locked down and you understood. So there are four methods to perform Tezquia. The first method is going to be external forces. Like this one here. Right now, this is an external force. You're coming here, listening to me babble for an hour, that's an external force. You're getting external input.

You're actually, you're listening to someone who, aside from yourselves, talk about something, and you're taking that information in for yourself. It's adding to your repertoire. Now you have a number of pieces of information that you didn't have before, and you have something new to work with. So external forces. Another one, for example, is sohbah, good companionship. If you're surrounded by good people, being in a masjid, all of these, anything that affects you from the outside, this is an external force. So Tezquia, a part of it, is external forces. It's not just internal. The reason that I have to point these things out is because Tezquia is a very intimate, personal journey that you're going to do on yourself. However, one of the methods for it to be achieved is utilizing external forces.

You're not expected to be able to perform all of these tasks completely on your own. You're going to need help. You're going to need some degree of assistance and support, so you have to seek that out. Surround yourself by people who are similar to you, who are thinking in the same way. You have to put yourself in an environment that's going to support these types of behaviors. You can't perform Tazkiyah. If you don't do these things, you're not going to learn about topics that, depending only on your personal understanding of it. You're not going to perform tazkiyah if everyone around you has no interest in this topic at all. If you don't attend masjid, if you're not, no, it's impossible. It's impossible. It's not, it won't be your, technically it won't even be your fault.

But the only way for you to get this done is you have to make sure that you allow external forces to help you. The Prophet, alayhi salatu wasalam, received an external force. Think about it that way. How did alayhi salatu wasalam go from Muhammad to Rasulullah, alayhi salatu wasalam? It was an external force. It was Jibreel alayhi salam bringing him knowledge and bringing him information and he used that. And then the Prophet alayhi salam became the external force for the Sahaba who later on became the external force for others. So this is where this becomes important. Second method is the internal forces or efforts that you put forward. And this will include all of the contemplation and the reflection and the hizb of the Quran and the word of dhikr and all the different behaviors that you are going to engage in.

The cycle that you're going to, where your thoughts will affect your emotions, affecting your behaviors, all these, this is what the internal efforts are. You're going to put in a lot of efforts on your side to try and help yourself along. And this is what I'm going to be helping you with to the best of your ability. I can't necessarily fix the external forces in your life. You have to figure that out. If you're surrounding yourself by bad influences, if you are staring at your phone for six, seven hours a day that is filled with garbage and nonsense, I can't fix that for you. That's something that you have to do. It doesn't need tazkiyah. Don't come and ask, how do I do this? Throw your phone out the window when you're driving.

I don't know. You have to be selective with what you're going to allow to influence you and affect you in your life. These are decisions you have to make. This doesn't require a Tezquia session. It doesn't require a session dedicated to it. It's a decision that you make. You just go, you press on the app long enough until it starts to dance, and then you delete it. You're done. You don't have to deal with this garbage. But if you don't, then you're allowing external forces to harm you. The internal efforts are the ones that are a bit more complicated, that require a little bit of help. It's a skill to help you pick up that skill, hone it, nurture your ability to perform it. And then after a while, it becomes second nature to you.

It becomes easy, so you can perform it. Whether it comes to contemplation or reflection or a certain understanding or the acts of ibadah that we're going to point out. Number three, lifestyle changes. The reason I'm doing this dars after fajr is because if your lifestyle does

not allow you to pray fajr once on a weekend in a masjid, then you have bigger fish to fry. You have a problem that is beyond, if you can't make the Fajr once a week on a weekend when you don't have work, then we have a big problem. If your lifestyle is that bad, if your lifestyle is so poor that it's impossible, it's unfathomable that you make it to Fajr at a masjid on a weekend, then you really need to make some lifestyle changes.

Lifestyle changes are extremely important. A healthy lifestyle in terms of how much you eat, food on a daily basis, how much sleep you get every day, how much exercise, what your daily routine looks like. This is very important. These are changes. You could put them in. They're taken as their own domain. You could say this is all internal, this is external, a mix of both. It's a lifestyle. Lifestyle is important. If you sleep every night at 2:30 for five or six hours, and they're not good, and then you wake up, and you go to work, and you're half-asleep. You are miserable, and then you have headaches, and you require trucks of caffeine to keep yourself functioning. This is a lifestyle issue. This is a lifestyle issue. This can be fixed.

You'll be surprised how much of tazkiyah is just falling under this simple piece. And I'm finding this more and more, I guess, here. You know what's funny? This part was not a problem. In Syria at all when I did this I was to teach it was easy for sham You know why because we didn't have electricity for like 18 hours a day So after I say you just went to sleep because there was nothing else to do There was no electricity anyways and for you to you know get one of those small Mowgli dots and turn it on and you needed benzene and benzene was cost a lot of money like Gas cost cost money, and it made a lot of noise like yeah, so you just didn't do it How long do you think you can stay awake in a dark environment after Isha?

Try it. Wallahi, I think the government should just do this for the fun of it every once in a while. Just cut the grid after Isha. Just once every couple of weeks. People, it's helpful for their mental health. Wallahi, their batteries run out within a few hours and then khalas. You have nothing else to do. You'll sleep. And people will sleep for a couple of hours in a row without that external noise. If you sleep a couple of nights in a row at a reasonable time, 10, 30, 11, you'll wake up for Fajr. You'll feel refreshed. It's a good way to start your day. If you wake up, you pray Fajr. You start your day with a prayer. You have a shower. You get dressed. You leave your house.

If you don't overeat throughout that day, if you don't waste too much time stressing out or performing activities that are harmful to you, Small lifestyle changes are important. There's a whole point of me doing it at this time. If you can't show it up to this, then you don't qualify. You don't qualify for this lecture series altogether because you should be able to make it on a weekend. I get it on a weekday in the summer. It's hard. It's 5 o'clock. But on a weekend, you should be able to do it. If you absolutely can't, if you look at it and say, this is impossible, I can't wake up for 5 o'clock, then you need to revise kind of how you're living your life.

Which is what, as you look around right now, most of the people who attend this aren't even here. The majority of people who should be here aren't. Why? Because the lifestyle sucks. We've been talking about it for years, and people aren't listening. There's no actual change occurring. People aren't making the small changes to their lives. Your norm shouldn't be that I'm up until 1:30 and 2 o'clock every single day. That shouldn't be your norm, even if you have no work in the morning. People do it when they have work in the morning. I see them. I see the people with the red eyes walking into the hospital every

morning. I know. This person didn't sleep before. He slept at two and woke up at least once in the nighttime before they came in.

This is not healthy. This is not sustainable. Even if you run through your 20s, you're able to do it. It will catch up to you later on. It will catch up to you. And you'll be lying there on the cath lab with people putting things into your heart and trying to keep you alive. It's not healthy. It harms you severely. And then finally, the reinforcements. Using the tools of worship and rituals I'm going to share with you. So there's external forces, you're putting yourself in the right environment, making sure that you're seeking knowledge, you have good friends. There's internal forces where you are going to contemplate and reflect and work on yourself. Lifestyle changes, make some changes to the way you live your life. Basic, simple stuff.

You go into a psychiatrist, this is the last thing. If any of you goes to a counselor, I worked in psychiatry for a fair share of my internship years. And this is something they're taught in the first couple of years, and this is what they all do. You walk in, before they talk about medication, they sit down with a piece of paper and start drawing out what you're asking, what is your, give me your daily routine. All right, what time to go to sleep? What time do you wake up? What do you do when you wake up? When you leave the house? And they take it. And almost every person who's coming in with mental illness has a horrible, horrible lifestyle. Like absolutely horrible. When they actually admit to how bad their lifestyle is, it's very exciting.

And then before medications are even talked about, the first thing you need to do is to sleep at this hour the latest. Wake up at this hour the latest. Have a shower. Have breakfast. Get dressed. Get out of the house. Go do something. Go walk. Just go walk for a kilometer. Just get out. Move. Just the basics. This is extremely healthy for you. You need to do this. And then, okay, take this and try this and all the other stuff. But a bad lifestyle is absolutely detrimental. And then reinforcements, meaning you using the tools that I'm going to share with you to reinforce the same ideas. So topics only sink in when we reinforce them time and time again over a long period of time, and they become a part of who you are.

The changes that I'm telling you, like you're gradual, right? Everything is gradual. So you listen to this, like, I want to make that change. It's not going to happen tomorrow. You're not going to become, call us a perfect lifestyle tomorrow morning. No, no. But you'll start tomorrow. And if you stick to it long enough, and you reinforce these ideas over a couple of months, it'll work out. You'll start to have a better lifestyle. It'll be easier to. So what are the pillars of Tezquia? These are five pillars that, again, this makes life easier. These are always applicable. They're always applicable. They should be talked about all the time. These are the basics. There are a lot of concepts in Tezquia. These are the basics. These are what you build your journey on.

This is what needs to be understood and practiced before. We get into anything a little bit more complicated before you talk about complicated topics and complicated ideas. These five have to be clear. Usually, they take two years to be covered. Usually, they take around two years for us to go through slowly and comfortably. Now we could do this; we could go through them over an hour and then you can just pick them up and go think about them. But usually, it takes around two years to go through here in Canada. On the speed that I'm going at, it'll take around 15 to get through them. They're taking way longer than I thought they were going to take, way, way longer, like crazy. I think we've been doing this for three years now.

We got through maybe the first one and maybe half of the second one, and that's pretty much all I was able to do. And still the people who are attending with me, if I ask them questions, they're not going to be able to answer anything. We're not close, I think, for a number of reasons, which is why we're doing this a little bit differently this time around. Hopefully, we can actually make some changes. So the first. So here are the five. Number one, we have to talk about self-value. Under that, you're going to find tawadwa. You're going to find rahmah. These two basic concepts and a number of other concepts that will come up with time. But it's talking about self-value and how you understand self-value. Number two is mortality.

Qisr al-amal. These are the words that you'll find used in the books of Tasawwuf and Tazkiyah where they talk about having a short time, You understand that it's short. You comprehend this. This is not going to go on for very long. You accept your mortality. You're ready. You're prepared when death actually occurs. Number three, you have to have a certain degree of self-honesty or self-accountability and all the concepts that will kind of lie or fall under al-muraqabah or al-muhasabah. Number four, you have to have an understanding of what haya and adab mean. They come together. And that is sensitivity and etiquette. And then number five, which is moral frugality and asceticism. These are the five pillars of Tizka. These apply at all times. There's no point in your life where one of these won't apply.

They're the basics, the pillars. You have them strong and clear. The foundations are clear. Then you can build upon them as much as you want. You can learn a lot of things. You're safe. You're safe, right? Meaning you're going to be in a position where whatever you're learning is not going to harm you. You have the tools to always fix your course, always get your direction corrected. You can correct course at any point if things go wrong, because you have the basic pillars. If you don't have these five, then you run the risk at all times. You run the risk of learning something that will later on harm you. The Prophet [ﷺ] talks to us about people being thrown into Jahannam. And this is a Qara, and this is a Hafiz, and this is an Alim.

Why is this happening? Why would someone who knows the whole Quran go to Jannah? Why would an Aalam be thrown in Jahannam? Why would a philanthropist, a Kareem, be thrown in Jahannam? Why would a Shaheed? We read these Ahadith and then we just ignore them because these are not fun to listen to. These Ahadith are not. This is what he said, alayhi salatu wasalam. Why would he say something like this? Well, there's a problem. There's a problem. Where if you don't have the basics of this knowledge, if these pillars aren't clear, then you could easily get caught up into an action that you won't be rewarded for, if anything you'll be punished for. Because these weren't there. Something caused arrogance, or it caused riyah, or it caused ostentation.

It caused something, and then you ended up with no ajr at all at the end of it. So what we're going to be covering, and this is just how, these five can be covered in any sequence, really. They don't have to be, they're not sequential. I usually start with self-value, because I think it's the most important. That's my personal take on it. Now, the fact that I've been doing this for a couple of years with many of the people who attend here, so we've talked about self-value a lot, and we've talked about mortality a lot. Just in the interest of not boring people, I'm going to start with number three. And then once we go through a couple, we'll come back to self-value and come back to mortality.

So we'll cover all five within this lecture series. But just in the interest of not boring the attendees, I'm going to start with number three, if that's all right, which is self-honesty or

self-accountability. The concept of muraqabah and muhasabah. The last things that, yeah, there are basic tools of this. There are tools that we're going to, we're going to cover them slowly throughout the lecture, just sporadically as I talk about things, as I give you exercises, we'll cover all these tools. We'll talk about the cycle of thoughts and actions and emotions. We'll talk about contemplation in some degree of depth. We'll talk about different exercises, about the rituals and how to understand them. We'll talk about salah. We'll go through it step by step, movement by movement.

I'll give you little things that you can do before salah to help improve it. We'll talk about taqwa and jihad and tawakkul and tawba. All these are tools. In Islam, these are the tools that you're going to use to purify yourself, to perform tazkiyah, to course correct, to help you stay on the path. That's what they are, really. In nature, that's kind of what they're utilized for. And I'll cover them slowly as we kind of go through the different concepts. Finally, what are the four main goals of tazkiyah? Those are the four main goals of tazkiyah. So when you wonder, well, where, Shaykh, is ikhlas? Ikhlas is really not a, Ikhlas is a goal. It's what you're trying to achieve. You're trying to get to a point where you have ikhlas.

Ikhlas is not really, I can explain, I'll talk to you obviously about it, but it's something that happens later. It's more of a consequence. It's more of a result. If you do a number of things correctly, the result will be ikhlas. And then I talk to you about it, or we learn certain things about it, and then you'll be able to actually solidify it. But it is a result. It's a goal. Self-value is not a goal. Self-value is something you have to learn, you have to change how you understand it and how you deal with it. Ikhlās is something you end up with later on. Submission is full Islām, full Islam. Khushūr. Khushūr is not something you do. Khushūr is a result.

It's a result of, it's a concept, but it's more of a result than it is a decision. For me to tell you stand there and have khushūr, it's ridiculous. I might as well tell you, stand there and pop up muscles. Okay, pop them up. I want to see your muscles pop up. Either you've been going to the gym for the last three or four years, or you haven't. I can't expect you to do it. It's not something you can just do at the moment. It's not something you can just perform. It's a result. It comes from the accumulation of ongoing efforts, of you learning things within a path of tazkiyah. You've been walking for a while to arrive at a certain degree of it, and then you learn what it is and you learn more about it.

You can improve it, you can perfect it, you can figure out why, but it's not something you just do. Same thing with the consistency of ethics. This is not going to just happen. This requires us to go through the values, to talk about tawabu, to talk about haya, to talk about rahma, to talk about honesty. You have to talk about these values so they become consistent. It takes a while for them to become consistent. You're not born that way. Ethics to us are just only when they're favorable. We like them only when they're favorable, only when they help us. When they don't help us, it becomes less; we're not too intrigued to do them. So that consistency of ethics is a result. And then purified tawheed, actual tawheed.

That's the goal, is for you to have the purest form of la ilaha illallah in your heart. The purest form of it, where there's no aspect of any degree of shirk at all. Nothing, not the apparent aspect of shirk and not the spiritual aspect of shirk. All shirk is gone. And you have an absolute, pure comprehension of la ilaha illallah, that reflects in your behaviors, meaning not only do you fully comprehend la ilaha illallah, but your lifestyle also reflects a pure form of la ilaha illallah. It's both. You have to have both. You have to have the understanding of it and the reflection. These are the goals. For me, it's like, okay, live la ilaha illallah. I can say that to you, but what am I saying to you? What I'm saying to you is to go back and

learn all the things that will lead you there. You can't just do it. You can't just pop it. It's going to require time. So that's kind of what I wanted to share with you over. So we're going to start with the concept of self-honesty. And we're going to go over it over the course of the next few weeks.

So let's begin. I have a little bit of time, it's six, so we can go to maybe 10 minutes, inshallah. The goal is that these lectures will be around 45 to 50 minutes. I'll allow for 10 minutes or so for questions. The Shabbat will go up front, they'll do the word, and then I'll come up and answer their questions. Feel free to ask questions within the time that's allocated for follow-up and questions, I will. Direct yourself as you ask questions, how to ask questions and what questions are worth asking out; questions give back to you, you figure that piece out. Tazkiyya is an important element of it-that you have to take the idea and think about it yourself, and deal with it, and grow, and try to figure out faith, find out ways to solve the problem that you're struggling with.

The question that you ask should be a second-level or third-level question. It shouldn't be a question that just pops into your mind. Give yourself time, think about stuff. You're required to learn to do that process. If you ask anything that comes to mind, that means you're putting no effort, you're making me do the work. I could think about this and figure it out, but I don't want to. You seem to know what you're doing. You just tell me. No, no, no. You have to do this yourself. And then when you hit that. Brick wall, you know I've tried everything-I can't seem to get around it. We can help you get over this hurdle; I'll give you a piece of information that will help you move move on or move along.

So, it's very important that you share your experience when I... when if you're given an exercise, uh, you share your experience when you're given something to contemplate, you share your thoughts, uh, you ask questions and so that I help; I hear where you where you are and help you kind of move along.

So, starting with the concept of self-honesty. It has a... this concept in the knowledge or the science of tazkiyah has a number of names, depending on which scholar you're listening to. Al-sidqo ma'an nafs is my preference. Others are muraqaba and muhasaba as well. Self-honesty as a concept exists in three, separate domains. The first one, which is the simplest of them all, is the honesty; it's you being honest with people. You're telling people the truth when they ask you a question. You're telling them as it is without lying to them. That's the simplest form of honesty. That is the ethic that people will judge you by within your life. If you're caught in a lie, if you're caught in a lie too many times, then you'll be known as someone who lies. And that's obviously a problem. And the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, talks about, and then he talks about, and in both situations, he says,

The person will continue to perform acts of being honest until they are written in Allah as someone who is honest or the opposite. So you'll establish yourself in terms of this ethic with people. So that's one domain. The second one is your honesty or siddqa ma'a Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. In terms of how much you actually want what you say that you want. When you ask him, اهدين الصراط المستقيم or you ask him for جنات النعيم, how honest are you about asking him that? When you say لا إله إلا الله, you just made a claim. How honest is that claim? How truthful is that claim? When you come here and you listen and you learn and you seek knowledge and you try hard.

These are actions that are, you know, that are siding on the side that what you're requesting is honest, that you actually want to learn this, you actually want to be closer to Allah, you want to be a better person. It's apparent through your actions, right? So, means

that you actually want what he has to offer, you actually want what he has to offer. And your actions are reflecting that. And these are two simple ones. Honesty with people, honesty with Allah. These will happen or they won't. It's up to you. The third piece is what I'm here to talk about. And this is much more complex. This is much more difficult, which is honesty with yourself. Your ability to be honest with yourself.

I sit here in front of you with a number of defining characteristics that allow me to exist socially with you, just like you do. You do the same thing. You exist here. This is not who you are physically, and it's not who you are spiritually. Physically, I am covered. I am covered, so this is not exactly who I am. You don't know exactly what I look like physically, right? Because I'm not going to show that to you, and I should not do that either. Spiritually and psychologically, the same thing. I am here with a specific description. Hat on my head, this is Sheikh Fulan, this is his name, this is what he does. All these descriptions of, just like you, you sit there, you're Abu Fulan, Dr.

Fulan, Ustad Fulan, business owner, whatever you do. You have your description. There's a social construct that makes you, that puts you in a place that helps you exist within society. It's important. You need that. Absolutely don't lose that. You're not asked or it's haram for you to actually ditch it or for you to decide that you're going to come and tell people about all of your sins and all of it. No, no. It's always better. The issue is self-honesty means your ability to see yourself for really who you are without those. This mask that I wear socially, the mask that you wear as well, this is for people. This is so that we can exist and coexist appropriately, understanding who we are and where we are. This person is older.

They're wiser. Your father is your father. You think about it. Your father is just a guy. Think about it. Your father is just a guy. He's just a random guy walking down the street. But to you, he's not. He represents something to you just like you represent something to him. These social constructs are very important. They define how life works. But when your father sits with himself, does he see himself as your father? That's how he speaks to himself? Are you understanding what I'm trying to say here? When you see him, he's your dad, so you're going to speak to him in a certain way. You're going to deal with him in a certain way. But when he sits with himself, is that how he addresses himself?

As I am the AB of Fulani, so I'm going to hold that. No. Self-honesty means the ability to remove the mask that you wear as you walk around society presenting yourself. And seeing yourself for who you actually are, what you actually are, where you actually are in your life. This is much more difficult than it sounds. We believe the social constructs that we build for ourselves. We start to believe them after a while. We start to believe that you are of this status, that you are worthy of this degree of respect, that you are knowledgeable, and that you have experience, and that you have experience. Status and that you have this and that. We start believing it after a while. We start to accept this about ourselves. When really, that is not the case.

That is not how Allah sees you. Allah sees you for who you are. You won't get anywhere in tazkiyah if you're not able to see yourself for who you are. You'll get nowhere. It'll be an absolute waste of time. Really, if you don't have self-honesty. The things I teach you in Tezgia will only strengthen your previous beliefs that you have. You'll just become someone who's even more difficult to convince that maybe the opposite is correct. You'll just reinforce your ill beliefs that you have because you don't have self-honesty. The key of hirtazkia is to be honest with yourself, to know who you are, to remove that mask, to see yourself. Look at the mirror and see the real you, the real one, the one who is lost and scared and confused and uncertain, the one who is weak in nature, who is very sinful.

See yourself, you. No one else should see you that way. No one should be able to have access to that. You shouldn't share that with anyone. But you should be able to see yourself that way. And you should be able to question yourself and question your intention and question why you did things. If you don't question why you're doing things or what you're doing, then how are you going to improve? It's impossible to improve. Or else, what I end up doing is I tell you things and you use that to reinforce your beliefs. You say, no, I'm good. The Sheikh said this and I always do this. Do you? Ask yourself this question a little bit more. Are you sure that this is what you do?

Or is this what you like to believe that you do? You would love to believe that this is how you are and this is how you behave. And I see it. People who lack self-awareness, another word for what this is. They lack self-awareness. They're not able, they're not aware of who they are and what they're doing. They've been lying for so long. SubhanAllah. They've been telling themselves lies for so long that now they believe their lies. People on the Day of Resurrection are going to come that way. They're going to come in that form. **يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ**

وَإِحْسَابُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ أَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاتِبُونَ Indeed, when Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala resurrects them, they stand in front of Allah and they swear, Ya Rabb, we swear to you that we were like this. Just like they would swear to you in dunya. And they believe they're on to something. ۝ The Quran is very accurate with the wording. They believe that they're right. They're like, 'no, no, we actually were, we didn't do this for that reason.' Like, 'yeah, they're lying to Allah.' But they believe, but they don't think they're lying.

The Quran is saying that they swear to Allah, they're lying to Him. But they don't think they are. They think that they're saying the truth. You're wondering, how is that possible? Oh, how is that possible? Happens all the time. Happens all the time. You convince yourself of lies until they're no longer lies to you. And then you live that lie. And you lose the ability. You lose the ability to be honest with yourself. You lose that self-honesty piece. That person comes Yawm al-Qiyamah, they swear, they lie to Allah, and they think they're honest, and then Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala goes back, rewinds the tape, shows them what they really did and why they really did it and what point they failed to level with themselves.

They failed to look themselves in the mirror and tell the truth and say why they actually. It's one thing to sin. It's another thing for you not to see yourself sinning. It's one thing to make a mistake. It's another thing for you to lose the ability to see yourself making that mistake. If you lose awareness of the fact that you're making the mistake, that is a different level of mishap. Sin is actually not that problematic. We all do it. We all perform sin all the time. It's a part of being human. But if you lose the ability to identify that that was wrong, and that was on me, that was my fault, no one else's fault, no one is to be blamed for this action but me.

I have no one to hold accountable for this mistake but myself. If you lose the ability to do that, then that's a whole different type of problem. That's a whole different. And that comes from this problem here. This basic, basic pillar of tazkiyah is self-awareness, self-accountability, or self-honesty. You're willing to be honest with yourself. What I'm going to ask you to do over the course of the next week is take some time. And again, as I pointed out, most of what we exercise are contemplation-based. They're based on reflection and some degree of any deep thought. Sit there and describe yourself to yourself. Just talk to yourself. Imagine you're talking about yourself to someone, freely, freely, with no need for that artificial humbleness where you add, no, just talk about.

Actually describe yourself freely and fully to yourself. You will have multiple attempts at doing this. Multiple attempts at doing this. Because the first thing that you're going to do is you're going to describe yourself as you would like to be seen. It'll take you quite some time to get over that piece. We describe ourselves in ways that we would like, what I want you to think I am. And then it'll be, okay, no one's listening, so I'm going to describe myself how I would, what I would like to think, what I would like to think I am. But I want you to keep on peeling those layers off until you're able to describe yourself to yourself as you are. I guarantee you this is the most painful thing you'll ever do.

It is the single most painful exercise you will ever perform in your life. Everything else is easier, in my opinion. This is why I never start with self-honesty. And I push it down as much as possible, because it's the ugliest of all the exercises. And you won't get it right the first time, and probably next week you won't have it right, or the week after. It'll take some time. But I want you to start doing that. I want your contemplation pieces, your 10-15 minutes a day, to be only on this. Sit there and describe yourself. If you need to write it down, write it down. Why what was going to happen is, and I'll give you a little bit of a disclaimer before you do it.

You're gonna find that the barometer is gonna go back and forth. You're gonna start by describing yourself how you want to, and then you're gonna self-loathe for a little bit. And it's gonna hit at the end. And you're gonna start, you're a piece of you're an absolute now. I'm not you start writing. It's neither. It's neither of these things are you right? Neither of these things are you? But our nature as human beings is if we're not what we want to be, then we don't want it at all. Everything is, get rid of all of it. No, no, it's neither. That's not the case here. You're not exactly what you would like to be or what you would like to believe you are. You're not as bad as the self-loathing piece.

You're somewhere in between. Self-honesty is just what really is it. Where really are you in your journey? On a professional level, as a spouse, as a sibling, as a son, as a daughter, as a father. We're going to talk about this, inshallah, next week. In terms of your roles, sit down and describe. Do it until you start feeling comfortable. You may end up doing it quickly, especially if you're younger. This is actually easier when you're younger because you have not been polluted by the biases that most of us have been polluted by. You see, I have a few letters at the beginning of my name and the one after it. And I have a card that has like all these little things and assistant this and whatever. So I can believe that I'm something.

I ain't. I know who I am. See, that's the important part of self-honesty. If you come and say, oh, you know me? Better than me? No, you don't. I know me. You don't know me. Thank you for the kind words, but I know me. You're not going to. You're not going to fool me about who I am. If I allow you to fool me about who I am, how naive am I? I'm going to accept your word. I'm going to accept your assessment of me. You see me once, twice a week. I live with myself all day long. You have a better assessment of me than me. Again, this is very protective. When we talk about self-value, a way to understand it, a way to protect it is self-honesty.

It protects it for you. It protects it from both. It protects it from those who come and praise you meaninglessly or those who come and destroy you. It doesn't mean anything because you know you. You've already established who you are. You know it. You see it. You look at yourself in the mirror every day, deeply. Nothing anyone can say can change the reality of who you actually are, knowing it. But it requires some time. So I'm going to ask you to do

that, inshallah, over the next week. Next week, I'll give you some more pointers in terms of what that means and how to kind of deal with it. The younger brothers will go up front, inshallah. They can start the word. They'll come to you in a few minutes. For those who would like to ask any questions from the group, you're welcome to do that. If not, then I'll just go up front. You're welcome to.

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