

Tazkiyah Halaqa
Self Honesty – Session 9
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Transcription

Now I've covered a number of aspects of self-honesty and what I think we have to focus on, the aspects of it that are probably the most important of all. So where self-honesty becomes most effective, most impactful, and most significant is regarding your relationship with Allah and your value system. This is where self-honesty is most important. Now everything I've talked about up till now has been thinking about it regarding your emotions, your behaviors, your scenarios, moments where you made mistakes, stuff like that, roles that you play, hats that you But really this build-up was so that we could talk about self-honesty regarding the two most important pieces of it, which are your relationship with Allah and your value system or your belief system, because that's where self-honesty is very impactful.

I'm going to talk about them each separately today because they're important. The first one, let's talk about your belief in Allah. And this is the problem for the majority of people, Muslim and non-Muslim, that it's one thing to claim that you actually believe in Allah and you have iman; it's another thing to actually have that. They're not the same thing. When it comes to accepting acknowledging la ilaha illallah, this extremely important phrase that we carry within our deen. It's one thing to claim that you accept it, and it's another thing to actually have that embedded in your heart, in your DNA, and to be something that you accept deeply. Otherwise, the majority of people like the idea of belonging to la ilaha illallah. They enjoy believing that they believe la ilaha illallah.

They want to be a part of the group that it encompasses because it seems like it has a nice ethical system that works. But when the truth of the matter is that you don't really believe in la ilaha illallah, it's just a matter of time before life exposes that in you, meaning you run into trouble you run into. an actual problem or you run into a threat or a near-death experience or something of the sort, and you lose, and you find that you don't really have that same, the actual amount of belief that you thought that you did in the concept of God. And that's where self-honesty needs to be analyzed. You have to take time and really think about this because this is where this whole topic has been leading to this one point: do I really believe in, or do I just say that I believe in God?

Well, in order for us to understand this, we have to go back to something that I talked about previously, and I'm going to remind you of. There are different levels of belief. or acceptance of things in life or abstract concepts or any form of topic. There is a superficial degree of acceptance where you like the phrase, you think the phrase is correct, you think the statement is right, and you acknowledge that the statement is a good statement, and you put your word behind it. But that doesn't mean that you necessarily believe it. Which is where Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la differentiates, when قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ نُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا

When the Bedouins say that we have Iman, Allah said don't say that. Say Aslamna, we've accepted Islam, meaning we gave the shahada. وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ Iman has not entered your hearts yet; meaning this concept of la ilaha illallah is still superficial. It's in the peripheries; it's floating around. You have captured it in the periphery of your mind, but it has not sunk into your value system yet. And this goes for almost every abstract concept. And both

things I'm going to talk about today, which are self honesty with your relationship with, and then self honesty regarding your value system, will follow the same basic process of acceptance.

When it comes to la ilaha illallah, you have to be able to diagnose or identify whether it is a concept or a belief that you have fully embraced. It has sunk as deep as it can go. It is not something that is questioned anymore; it's not debatable. You don't have any doubts about it; you're not struggling with it. You don't have good days and bad days regarding it. That is what Iman is. That piece you have to be honest about, mainly because you can't really fix it if you're not honest about it. You convince yourself that you have that level of Iman, but you don't. You will fail to take the steps needed to achieve that level of Iman, and you'll say, what's the problem?

As long as I believe that I have it, the problem is at some point you will be facing a situation. or an actual problem, theological or otherwise, or life-based problem, that will come to shake the foundation of your Iman. And if the foundation of your Iman is actually not solid, then that illusion will fade away, and then you'll struggle. And people who lose their faith and lose their Iman lose it because of that. This is the main reason. If you see people lose their faith, and they were Muslim for a long time, you wonder, how is it that they were Muslim for 20 years? It's because at no point during those 20 years did they ask themselves, or did they question themselves, or were they honest with themselves about the true extent of their Iman And the reason that I'm saying this is because a lot of symptoms that occur to us in life, when it comes to fluctuation in our degree of adherence to the rules,

when it comes to how we deal with shubuhah, with challenges, theological or spiritual challenges, is mainly connected to how strong your belief in God is. When people are shook or moved or bothered or troubled by a hadith that they read, for example, or they read a story in history and it troubles them and it bothers them and they're struggling, and they come and they need to ask the question now so that they get the answer now. The reason that's there is because their belief in Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala is not where it should have been. It's a superficial belief that exists in the periphery of the mind. So all it takes is one challenge to push it out, and then it's out. So it's not deeply embedded.

People who have proper iman in Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala, these tertiary and peripheral challenges and shubuhah, or questions or doubts, they don't bother them. They deal with them in a much more mature manner, and they have no problem or issue with actually seeking knowledge and seeking the answers for their questions. And because of that, self-honesty regarding this topic is extremely important. You have to ask yourself that question, and you have to be honest with yourself. Have you achieved that degree of belief in Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala? And if you have, alhamdulillah, you still have to protect it because any value or any belief, even if it's deeply embedded, can leave. It can be ripped out. We're very fluent as human beings. The fluidity of our nature is why we have to continuously have this safety valve. We have to keep on asking that question as we go through life: Where is my iman? Is it nice and solid? For example, Omar al-Khattab has a quote that I think is a powerful one that I want to share with you just so you can understand what I'm talking about he was saying

if I saw Jannah and not with my own eyes I wouldn't increase in my... in his mind he's like I would increase in my reverence I would increase in my desire for sure those things would increase I would have more reverence of Allah I would have more desire in... but my iman wouldn't because my iman is already there it's already achieved the level of belief where

seeing it is not going to make it more it's already as much as it can be and this is what you have to... you can't achieve that however if you're not able to diagnose that you're not there yet and that's where all the tricks or all the exercises of self Honesty become important for you to sit down and figure out what is your actual level of acceptance or acknowledgement of la ilaha illallah.

And once you diagnose, or once you figure out that you're not actually at where you thought you were or where you think you should be, which is the 100, nothing less, then you identify the work that needs to be And you identify where the work needs to be. Because it's different when you know what the goal is. The goal is for you to have that solid iman where this topic is not debatable, you're not subject to challenges or doubts, and you're not struggling with the concept of God anymore. It's natural. to do so though It's very natural for the human being to struggle with the concept of God as they grow up. There's nothing abnormal about it.

The abnormal piece is that if you study this topic appropriately and you reach and you conclude that there is la ilaha illallah and that is the truth, for you not to have that topic, that concept embedded deeply within your psyche, within your heart, if you allow it just to continue to float around subject to every doubt and every question and every trouble and every mistake and every difficulty of life, that's the abnormal piece. But why does that happen? It's because it doesn't get to the point where it needs to be, but we claim that it is. We claim we put the show on. And we've learned to do that in life. We've learned to put these fronts so that people think that we have that.

Whether we have it or not is not as I am asking you to stop caring about the front that you're putting up for people and start caring about what exactly it is that you have on the inside. Because the front doesn't really matter. What people think you believe, what people think you accept, how people think you are has to stop mattering to you. So that what can matter to you is really what you believe and where you are with that belief. So you can focus on fixing. It And this is the main problem. We claim la ilaha illallah. That's why in the hadith of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the Hadith al Qudsi, where we're told that this is how Fatiha works, and you recite Surah al Fatiha, and you say **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ**, which is literally the declaration of your faith.

It's you and only you whom we serve and worship. It's you and only you whom we seek aid from, which is the meaning of la ilaha illallah. The answer from Allah is this is between you and me. This is the answer: **هذا بيني وبين عدي**. This is between us. That's what he's saying. We'll see. We'll see if that's true. You're saying it's true, but you have to actually prove that it's true. Meaning that's something that is still up for, you know, it has not been verified yet. Yes, your acceptance of Islam, saying the word has been verified; you've said it in front of people, you're a But to have actual iman, that requires a different process. That requires you have to take steps towards achieving that.

But you won't take those steps if you have not acknowledged that you're not there. Self-honesty, the first piece, or the endgame of this is that it allows you to discover where you are in terms of your relationship with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. Am I close? or am I far away? Am I very far away? What am I doing? Am I taking steps? Am I coming closer? Am I drifting back? If you have no idea, then how are you going to help yourself? Like if you don't know where you are in terms of the path, then how do you ever get back to it if you fall off? You have to know where you are. Self-honesty to me is just turning on the lights in a dark night ride.

If you're driving at night without the lights on, you have no idea if you're on the road or not, if you're on the terrain or not. So self-honesty is actually just turning that on so you know where you are. Am I far away? Well, I'm far away. I'm far away. Okay, it's not good, but at least now you know. Because before this moment, you didn't even know. And yes, you didn't worry because you didn't know. But what were you hoping for? How was this going to end well? How was this going to end well if you were off track completely and you had no idea you were off track? Did you think that somehow, coincidentally, you were going to find your way back to the road again? Who rolls the dice on that?

Who rolls the dice on their lives like that? No one does. No one. No one in their right mind does. And that's the first piece: self-honesty with the relationship with Allah. This has to be established. That's why you seek knowledge. That's why you come. to Durood. That's why you go to the Masjid. That's why you have good companionship. That's why you read the Qur'an. That's what you do with these things. Why you're solidifying this Iman. So when life throws an earthquake at you and it shakes you to your core, your Iman stays put. Because the only Musiba in life really is losing it. Every other Musiba in life is downranked. It's overrated in comparison to losing your Every Musiba falls under losing one's If you lose your Iman, you've lost everything.

There's nothing to preserve after that, really. So if this is that important to you as a Muslim, then you have to preserve it. And you can't preserve it, if you don't know where it is. If you don't know how strong it is, how weak it is, how much time and effort are you putting towards strengthening it, how far away and how close you are, self-honesty is just kind of lifting the veil so that you know exactly where this topic is. Because this is the most important relationship in your life. It's the one with Allah subhanahu wa ta. So, being honest about it, that's the first one. The second piece, it's about your value system. And I talk about this multiple times in the Tazkiyah series.

Like, as we go through Tazkiyah, this will come up three or four times. It comes up when I talk about the concept. of tawbah on its own I talk about it just under the umbrella of repentance because it serves well there. But really, where it belongs is here in self-honesty. This is where it belongs. It is the end game or it's the outcome of you learning how to practice this important Islamic concept. Going back to the example I gave, at the when it comes to abstract concepts, some of them you capture one. You accept it. But then it kind of floats around in the periphery of your psyche. And before it becomes an actual belief, it has to kind of sink in. Your values are the concepts that have sunk in.

The concepts that have already sunk in. Those are your value. system We have three different ways of going by our We have values that we tell people about the values that we want others to think that we have the values that we think that we have between ourselves and then the values that we actually have. And there are three levels of them, which makes this a little bit more complex than the other problem. Meaning, when it comes to any Islamic value, and the example I give often for Shabab is when it comes to looking at Haram, it's the one that probably they can relate to the most. And maybe for sisters, maybe I don't know. Whatever I say is going to get me canceled, so I'm not going to say anything For Shabab, I know this is a very, very common one.

When it comes to the Haram, it's a very common one. Maybe think of something that's more common, for I'm sure there's something. But what I'm talking about is that if I pull out any Shabab Muslim and I ask him, is it Haram to look at this? And they say yes, it's absolutely Haram. It's absolutely Haram. Do you do it all the time? So why? Why is that the So the reason being is that we have these distinct levels of values. We have the values that

we project to the world. If you ask me this is Haram and I embrace it, then I think it's the right thing. And then I tell myself that I think it's Haram. But then I keep on falling into the sin of doing it, and I wonder, Shaykh, I can't get rid of this.

Because the reason is because there's the third level of values, which is I call the black box, meaning it's going down deep into your heart and yourself, and breaking the lid in the basement off this, and looking at what your values actually are. What do you really believe about this topic, what you're telling me? Not the scripted answer, the Qur'anic scripted, the one that you wouldn't want Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala to hear; otherwise, you want Allah to hear this one. You want the Prophet alaihi salam to know that from you. You want me to know that. You wouldn't dare tell yourself otherwise. But really, what do you really believe about this topic? And then, if you are able to access that, that requires a certain degree of self-honesty, you will find there's a long scroll.

Well, Allah says it's Haram, and I'm sure it's not that helpful. But in today's context, it's really difficult, and I don't think it's this problem. And everyone does it anyways, and if they didn't want it to be looked at, they wouldn't do it that way. And what I'm actually doing, you have this long, long, this long explanation. This is what you really believe about this. That's your actual belief. That's your actual value. That's your actual value Gossip, for example. People gossip. If I ask them, is gossip Haram? Yes, it's Haram for sure. Well then, why do we keep on doing this? It's because deep down inside, we're like it's Haram, but it's not the worst thing in the world. And I'm sure I have enough hasanah to make up for this one mistake that I do.

And some people, honestly, they deserve it. If I don't get it off my chest, I can't sleep at night. And then I can't do it. So it's a scroll. It's this long explanation of why this action is not that big of a That's your value. That's your actual value. The value that you're supposed to have, if you're Muslim, is that ayuhibbu ahadukum an yaakula lahma akhihi mayta. Do you like to eat the flesh of a dead person? No. Then you don't do this. That's the value that should be inside. It's not the one inside. Self-honesty is not the solution to the problem. Self-honesty is just you being able to identify that that's not the value that's in there. That's all I'm asking for right now.

Are you able to identify the reason that you're performing this mistake? That's why remember I talked to you about, at the beginning of self-honesty. I told you there's a difference between mistakes and patterns. We talked about certain things, moments, states, excuses, and reasons. The third one I talked about was a mistake and a There's a difference between a mistake and a pattern. There's an underlying reason for it 90% of the time. The underlying reason for a like a mistake that keeps on happening is because deep down inside you don't really believe that it's a Like you're not sold on it. You feel like somehow you're exempt from this rule. That yes, this rule applies to other people and you'll definitely make it apply to your son and your daughter, but not necessarily to you.

An example: people who smoke—they smoke, but they don't want their kids to. We know that it's well established. If a guy two packs a day, if his son touches a cigarette he's willing to kill him. Well, see, that doesn't work. That doesn't work. See, that doesn't work in the world. Like, it doesn't actually achieve anything. You don't get anywhere. If you decide that the value system that your children have to carry is different than the one that you are actually carrying on the inside, you're gonna fail. Your children will absolutely follow what your true values are. Whatever exists in the box, not what you project. Not what you project. Your children, because people can pick up on these things. Because people who live beside, they pick up on what you actually are.

Remember, I told you to ask a friend about how they felt about you. Most of you making this a much easier series to run. Because what was going to happen next, I was going to ask you to go and ask someone who doesn't like you. The step after that was to go ask if you learn, you build the courage and the thick skin and the ability to accept feedback from someone you love. And you hear something you don't like, and you work on it and you take that as an opportunity. And the next step was to ask someone that doesn't like you and let them say some things about you, right? And then listen to them. Don't argue and don't defend. Just listen to them and then go ahead and try after that.

to see if there's something in it for you, right? Just kind of, it's a helpful exercise for us to do. Now, I don't think we necessarily can do that, but this is where this becomes important: the ability to take in that feedback, the ability to actually listen to something that is truthful about you, but you don't want to. It's hard to believe, for sure. Like, it's not an easy pill to swallow by any measure. But if you're not able to identify that this is actually what you believe about things, how is it ever going to change? Like, how are you going to actually make a put a dent into how you're behaving in your life if you don't recognize that I act Like, I believe this, but I don't really believe it.

Your kids will pick up on that. If you've been married for more than 10 years, ask your It's hard; this is a relationship-ruining thing if you're not mature enough. But your spouse knows things about you that no one else will. And your spouse can actually give you more insight about you than anyone else because they live with you all the time. They know. Women carry that power, by the way, when it comes to men. Men struggle with this piece more than anyone else. Men need to keep that front up, and the women know the reality of the man. And if she actually tells him the reality, she'll crush him. She'll absolutely crush him. But I'm just telling you, as a man, that you're not doing a good job.

There's no point in doing this. You're transparent. People know. People who are close enough to you know the reality of So just be honest. Practicing self-honesty is better for you, because the front you're putting up is not that good, and you've been figured out anyways. So you're wasting your time. You're trying to put up a front that people are seeing right through. So what's the point? You're putting all this energy into lying to yourself and lying to others, and not acknowledging, and not admitting, and not changing, trying to keep up a front. because you're scared of what people will think if they knew the truth about you. Again, the word truth, which is what you should be seeking, not anything else. Forget about it. It's not even working. It doesn't even work.

So you might as well just actually figure out what the truth is and work on it. See this is the difference between the Prophet, peace be upon him, and others. The more time you spent with him, the more you loved him. All people who are famous when they have people who are in PR, HR people who help them out, tell them don't get people too close. Don't get too personal. Keep them. Why? Because we don't want them to actually know who you are because if they do, then you're not gonna be loved as much. But the people of God, the people of Allah, the people who have self-honesty, by the way, it doesn't matter. The closer you get, the more you fall in love with the character, the more you enjoy their company, the more you are convinced that this person is the real deal.

That's how he was; people who loved him the most, the people who were the closest to When you think about it, Aisha was young when she married him. The way the story is supposed to be, the way that we're used to it, at least in this world, the way it should have been is after he died and when she became immune and had money. She came out and said

how horrible it was to be married to a guy who was older. How he, the absolute opposite happened. Every positive thing that we have about his personal life came through her mouth, alayhi salam alayhi allahu anha. It was Aisha who told us about him, alayhi salam, how he actually was. It was Abu Bakr and Umar.

It was Abu Huraira and Anas ibn Malik and Fatimah Zahra, alayhi. These people who spoke about him, alayhi salam, were the people who were very close to him. Muslims don't even care about the documentation, the recollection, or the testimonies of people who went to him once or twice. We want the people who were there. with him every day to listen to what they have to say. They didn't have to because he passed away way before all of them. They outlived him by a decade. Like if you're scared for a year or two after. But then after that, khalas, you go, you live far away, and then you say whatever you want to say about how it was and what the experience was. Does it not strike you as mildly odd that no one said anything?

But you would think there would be, right? You'd think somewhere in the history there'd be people who, after he passed away, came out and bravely said what they thought about his character, alayhi salam, alayhi salam, right? Not one. And our history. books are filled with everything our history books are filled with narrations that are strong and weak. It's not like we filtered anything out. No, no, nothing was filtered out in Islamic history. The Quran, there are narrations of the Quran that are shahadah that still exist that we don't use in Quran. We don't, there's agreement that we don't use, but they're there. People have tried everything that was narrated by people arrived to us and none. That's how powerful this tool can be if you use it.

If you actually practice it appropriately and you become self-honest and you care less about the mask and the front that you put up in front of people you care less about what they think of you and what they see of you, and more of what you actually are and how you actually are, what you really believe, and you work on those things, you change them. So how is it that you change a value? How do you change your belief system, right? That's a whole different domain. It's not for the module of self honesty, but this is where you have to spend some time thinking and actually putting in effort, because that's where we all struggle with. You wanna get rid of a bad habit. You have to change the way you see it.

You have to change the way you actually believe about it. You have to be, I don't see this to be a All right now we're somewhere. But it's haram to say that. I know I'm not asking you to go on the minbar publicly to tell people that that's the truth. I'm just saying that are you able to at least level with yourself and say this is what I think? How do I change that? And then when it comes, you seek knowledge and you learn and you change. There are ways to do this, obviously. So what are the two main tools to achieve self-honesty so you can achieve this peace in your life and actually get there? Muraqab and muhasabah. I want to make sure that at the end of this module you have a good grasp on these two concepts.

So let's start by just imagining something together because this is probably the easiest way to. And I gave you an exercise last time to start with muraqab, so we start thinking about it. But we're going to go into a little more depth today. I want you to imagine yourself on the Day of Judgment. This takes a bit of time, but it's worth within your 15 minutes of contemplation that you do daily. I need you to incorporate this piece for the next week or so. I want you to really take some time and imagine what it's like for you to be yawm al qiyam and not, forgive me, but don't think immediately jannah and nar, just not yet. Just maybe put those aside, just for now.

And just think about who the person that's coming out of the grave is that day. Like, as you are being brought out of your who this person really is. Because what you're going to have to remember in this process is that you don't have a house anymore; you don't have a job anymore. There's no bank account. Not coming out with all of your friends, and you're not even clothed yawm al-qiyam. You don't have any titles; no titles matter whatsoever. Most people, if not all people, have no interest in talking to you. Neither do you have almost any interest in talking to others, at least not at the... and you know that you're going to be held accountable. At that moment, who is this person?

You need to figure out who that is going to be and how you describe them honestly, because this is the honest truth of who you are. Who you are right now is who that person is, yawm al qiyam. Who you are right now, you just have to be able to identify that now. Most of us don't. Most of us enjoy all of the hats and the masks. We enjoy that now. But yawm al qiyam is all going to be taken away, literally and figuratively, it's gone. And literally, people are going to be naked, like actually physically naked and figuratively naked. There's nothing but just the core being, which is why I asked you to think about that a couple. of weeks in a row who you are at your core.

But I want you to imagine yourself yawm al qiyam. What are the stuff that you're worried about? That person, that thing, with nothing aside from just whatever is written in the book that they authored; what are you worried about? And what would you be wishing that you did more of or less of? It's complex. It's going to take the full week daily. If you don't do it every day for the week, you probably won't get there because there's too many mind blocks you have to learn to get through. But when you do this, you'll start pinpointing, at least to yourself, where the flaws you truly believe you have are. Now those flaws are important to identify for a couple of One is it gives you a target, something to work on, something that you will now acknowledge that you have to prioritize to get rid of in life.

And if you prioritize to get rid of something, you'll get rid of it. If you prioritize and you do the right thing, you'll get rid of it. Number two, the second reason is that are these the right things to be worried about? Because you may be even thinking about yourself yawm al qiyam and you're like, I'm worried about this. Is that the right thing to be worried about? Like, are you worried about the right stuff for yawm al? Are you even delusional about? what you're going to be in trouble for, yawm al qiyam, as well. Because that's a whole nother. Now we're even in more trouble than we thought we were. If you're worried at that moment, as you imagine yourself coming out of the grave with what's awaiting all of us, if you're thinking about things that you're worried about or that you wish you didn't do, or you wish you did, if they're the wrong things, then now we have to actually even go, we have to go even deeper.

Why are we worried about the wrong things, yawm al qiyam? I understand in life, I understand in life what it is that we worry about. We worry about exposure and loss of safety, whether it's physical, financial, or social. There's certain things we worry about. But yawm al qiyam, none of that's there anyways. You're standing there in the nude. You have no titles, no one around you. You don't care. The focus is just very specific. It's on whatever it is you're going to be asked about. So what is it that you're worried about? What is it that you're? So figure those things out and then ask those questions. Those flaws are my priority. I need to get rid of them. Why are they my priority? How am I going to do that, number one?

Number two, are they the right things I should be worried about, or am I actually scared about things that don't? really carry much weight yawm al qiyam. And these aren't the right

things to be worried about. There are other things that are way more problematic, which is why this topic is especially so important. The more you do this, the more you now, and the person that you're going to end up being, which is who you are on the Day of Judgment, will start coming closer together. The goal of self-honesty is to make sure that it's the same guy, the same lady, the same person. The person living now, the mentality of the person living now, is the same person who's going to be resurrected on the Day of Judgment with the same mindset.

There's going to be no surprises. there's going to be nothing that is found out, then nothing that you're going to figure out at that moment, that you should have figured out before. It's all going to be the same. You're still going to be dressing well and going to your job and enjoying life, but you have a certain understanding of it that makes sure that on the Day there's no discrepancy between these two people. Because Allah is going to judge that person Furada. You come to Allah alone **كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ** As you were created the first time around. Very simplistically, He's going to talk to that person.

He's not talking to Dr. Fulan or Shaykh Fulan. or Ustad Fulan or Abu Ilan or Al Hajji Fulan. He's not talking to that person. He's not talking to you with your big name or with your background or with your family name or with the support of your friends or the support of your community or the support of your family or the support of anybody. It's just you. So he's talking to you and he knows you and he sees you. The question is just do you know you and do you see you? And are you guys on the same page here? So when it comes to muraqabah, which is observation, and Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la has named it al raqib. And I'll end with that.

We'll probably continue this in more depth, inshallah, next. week I'll do five more minutes, inshallah, and then we'll cut. We'll talk a little bit about muraqabah. Muraqabah, one of Allah's names, is al raqib, the observant one, the one who's always watching: al raqib. And of course, many names fall under that: al basir, al samee, ah, al hasee ah. Many names. Al raqabah, the observation means, and in Arabic, when we use the word raqabah, we use it for regulation, not just observation. But the translation in English will become regulation, some form of regulation. That's what raqabah actually is. You have to observe one of three things, and you start by just choosing one and doing that for a while so that you get comfortable with it and then observing another and then observing a.

You're going to observe the three pieces of that triangle that I explained at the beginning of this course: your actions, your emotions, and your thoughts, the three things. It's hard at the beginning to observe all three. You have to choose what you're going to be. Are you going to do raqabah or muraqabah on your thoughts? Are you going to do muraqabah on your emotions? Are you going to do muraqabah on your actions? Scholars have suggested a sequence for this that I think is important for you to consider taking. The last thing that you observe usually are your thoughts You leave them to the end, even though they're probably the most effective. But you leave them until the end because they're the hardest to actually observe. They take the most effort to.

The easiest thing to observe, probably, are your actions because they're very visible, and then something in the middle are your emotions. So start by observing, doing muraqabah upon your actions, the things that you do, the things that you actually perform, leaving out the other pieces. You're not looking at your thoughts; you're not looking at your feelings; you're just focused. You're fully focused on doing muraqabah on behaviors. on And you don't choose all of your actions because that's way too complex at the You just choose one You choose one behavior that you either think is good and you want to improve and

preserve or something that you think is problematic and sinful You start with the sin You always start with takhliyah. You always start with the removal of the bad.

You have to remove the stuff that is negative. Before you can add good things, you have to get rid of some of the bad stuff. So you start by observing one sin. You choose one sin, one problematic sin that you have in your life, and you observe it, you muraqabah, meaning you bring forth or forward. a certain degree of energy just to focus on this one. You don't let it go unnoticed. Even if it's the smallest, let's say you have a temper or let's say it's certain things you say where you shouldn't say them. Or it's certain behaviors, for example, the example I give the shabab is nathar haram. Do muraqabah of this for yourself. See how many times, where, and when, and how this occurs.

If you do muraqabah, you'll find it occurs when you're watching TV, when you're on your phone, when you're driving your car, when you're sitting having your food, when you're in a public space. When you do this, you start doing muraqabah. You start figuring out. the places where this is happening. For example, you just take a gossip. Just watch when it happens. When you say something about someone that you shouldn't have said, you know is wrong, and just putting a pin in that and coming up with a Muraqabah requires you coming up with a. Over a week or two or three, every time it happens, you make note. It's like you have a separate calendar just for this, and you just put in when this happened, how many times you start observing for a.

And if you do this, you will find a, you will be able to establish when this is happening the most and the surrounding circumstances. But you start with that, at least Muraqabah. tf after you do that for this one sin, you start observing your emotions that surround this action, whether before it or after it, or during it. You start observing not just the action, but the change of heart, or the emotion, or the feeling that comes with it. And then, if you identify that feeling, you start observing how many times that feeling actually comes through. Usually, for example, when it comes to gossip, it's usually a feeling of frustration or anger with another individual. Not every emotion is going to lead to an action. Not every time you feel frustrated, you'll say something bad.

Because what's feeding all of this is your thought process When you think about someone negatively, when you allow yourself to blame someone for something, when you put yourself in a where you feel that this resentment towards someone, or you pinpoint them as the cause of your struggling or the cause of your agony, then you feel a bad way about them. Then you say something bad about them. And then you start seeing how many times you identify this thought. And once you do that, you start drawing, you get a little bit of a pattern in your life. And when you get that pattern, then you are going to start actually performing the second feature, which is muhasabah. But you have to start with muraqabah at least.

At the beginning, you have to start with muraqabah, where you're watching yourself. You're not letting— because what the nafs likes to do is to slip all of the negativity under the—just slip it all under the. Make sure that you don't pay attention to it. It happens; you move on. Happen, you forgive yourself. It happens; you forget about it. Happens, you don't really think about it for too long. Happens, you just kind of brush it off and get up and keep on. No, no. For this, for self-honesty, you have to know: Nope, that happened. I'm going to put a pin in that. I'm going to document it, remember it, take note of it. Move on. It happens again. later on I take note of it again. And then I start quantifying.

I start quantifying how many times this action happens. And I quantify the emotions that come correlated with it. Then I quantify the thought process that is attached to it. I'm not saying this is a simple thing to do, but it is what muraqabah is. Muraqabah is your ability to watch yourself. You have to imagine, you have to actually imagine that you're taking a step outside and you're just watching yourself behave. You're living your life and you're watching. And you're, oh, that nope, that's not a good thing. We have to pause on that one. We have to identify. We don't like doing that If you think about it whenever you make a you don't want people to

And you don't want someone to spend more than a pointing out that you made a You want to just move on move on because you're embarrassed about it You don't want to keep on thinking about it Because that's how we are We want to just kind of brush it off Plus I learned I won't do it again No most of the time you will do it again And most of the time you didn't learn from the first time around And the reason is that we want to come off to others as if we're not flawed And we don't make these When we are Because we care about how people think we are more than how we actually are

And if you learn to change that mentality a little bit, then you will pause when you ever make a mistake and say, OK, this needs to change Because I have to become a better person And I have to improve And I have to change my value system And I have to be closer to Allah subhanahu wa ta ala And it has to start by me observing why and when and where these things are happening So I can actually start taking steps towards changing them So I'll end with that, inshallah ta We're not done I'll have to conclude this next week, inshallah ta I'll talk to you about muhasabah a little bit And then we have to do kind of a summary of the topic But for this week I've given you a few things to think about.

Muraqabah may be difficult. If you find that hard, just make sure that you take note of what I talked about today because that's really what the long-term plan for all of us is going to be. But see, when it comes to your value system, are you capable of asking yourself those questions? What do I really believe about certain things? What do I really believe? How do I really feel about this? I know what the scripted textbook answer is. I know what the Quran says about it. I know what the hadith says about it. But how do I actually feel about it? And if you're able, some things, they'll be there. So just so you don't feel like it's all negative. Some things will be there. This is what Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says.

This is what I actually feel about it. I feel about this to my core exactly how He says it, subhanahu wa ta. Good. Great. That has to be preserved too because you can lose that with time. No question. You can easily lose that with time. But then figuring out the things that you don't aren't correlated, meaning what Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala taught us is one thing and how you feel about it, what you see, it black box belief, the one that actually dictates behavior is a different one. So if you can spend some time on that one because you will come to some conclusions on it. And those who have been in Tesla with me for a while have come to I've actually done this and come back with some interesting insights on themselves and how they function.

And they conclude that, yeah, I just don't believe that's a problem or I don't care about it enough or I feel like I'll be forgiven for it or I feel like it's not going to, that the threat for punishment of it is not real or it's not for us, it's for a different people at a different time. This is what they actually believe deep down inside. They don't say it out loud, but they've told themselves this narrative long enough. And now that narrative is actually dictating their behaviors. And now they can't seem to get out of this downward spiral until they identify

that piece. And we all have a little bit of that somewhere. Everyone here has a little bit of that somewhere. It's impossible for you not to.

It's just you're human. You're going to have some of that. Al shatir, the educated one amongst us, is the one who has enough self-honesty to be able to at least acknowledge it. Because acknowledging it, as I pointed out before, is half the And it will guarantee that inshallah yawm al qiyam, you'll find mercy. Because you won't be lying about it to God. And you won't be acting like it's something different than it actually is. But it also gives you the opportunity to fix it in this life. I'll end with that, inshallah ta. We'll continue this discussion, bithna ta ala, next week. So the brothers will go up front. The younger brothers will go up front for follow-up. And the sisters will stay. The follow-up will also happen in the extension after Maghrib for the sisters as well.

The brothers, they can go up to the extension, inshallah. So go up to the The way I've been trying to do it is just to make sure that the adults, those who aren't a part of either follow-up groups, get to ask questions in the last five minutes. of the session. So for the next five minutes, if there are any questions from the general attendees, then you're welcome to put your hand up and ask it. We provided a, we've made a QR code. We made a QR code for this, I'll see it up front. We made a QR code for anonymous questions. I think today we just, I don't know, I think Brother Omar is not feeling well, so he's not here. But next week we'll have the QR code up.

So what we'll do is we'll have, there'll be a way for you to put up questions regarding the topic, and then we'll filter through some of the, I'm not gonna answer questions that are random; they're gonna have to be attached or related to the topic itself at least. And I'll make sure the last five minutes of this session is just answering two or three of those questions. And then the follow-up for the separate groups will happen in the extension, inshallah, afterwards. So if there's any questions from the general attendees, I'm happy to take it now. Otherwise, if you're attending the follow-up, you can just leave it until then, inshallah ta. This is just for general those who don't attend either follow-up sessions; they're welcome to ask any questions, inshallah.

It's okay if there's no. Yeah, go ahead. Yeah, no, no, no, it's a sign-up, but you can sign up for it, yeah. So for the brothers. it's usually guys under a certain age, under 25 or 30, attend up. And Abu Malik will sit here with me after this one. And for the sisters, it's whoever signs up with Sister Lunda and Alia. But those who don't attend either are welcome to ask questions in this period. Again, next week we'll have a QR code. We were supposed to have it this week; I just didn't. The brother who put it together just didn't show up to do that. So we'll have it, inshallah ta'ala, next week. So any questions at the back? I'm happy to entertain. Go ahead. Go ahead.

So, I mean, when you observe yourself doing something, you'll probably cut it short at some point. And you may not, sometimes. You won't; you'll just keep on going with it. And at this point, that's not my interest, but I don't care whether you are successful in stopping the bad behavior or not. I'm just interested in you taking note that it happened and then having some sort of log of that so that you can later on look back at it. You have to be able to do this. You have to be able to do this. You have to be able to know the frequency of the mistake and when the mistake happens and what surrounding circumstances the mistakes are there. Because it's just an important part of the process of changing the behavior and changing the value that is generating the.

So you may be able to actually observe it and stop it. You may not right now, that's not it's not as important to me in this phase. It's just as long as you're able to take note. Because most of us just, we just go into autopilot mode when we're making mistakes. Just turn off the system upstairs. Just turn it off and act like we're not paying attention so that we can get through the sin, we can make the mistake, we can cause the, and then we go back again and we regret and we feel remorse and whatnot. But we just keep it at that, we keep it at the aftermath. Like we just deal with it. But to actually prevent the mistake from happening, you have to, it takes a lot more work to prevent things habits from occurring. You have to start observing frequency and surrounding circumstances. You have to observe the emotions related and the thoughts that come with it in order for you to actually change it. It won't happen. If it was an easy fix, you wouldn't need to hear me talk about it. You would just fix it. Yeah, good.

So very good. So that's why I want you to do this because you need to figure out what you prioritize now and then you. So everything in life you are going to hold it up to what the Qur'an and the Sunnah are saying. And those are the questions I'm supposed to be, like the questions I'm supposed. to be answering or I try to answer, but no one's interested in the answers for those questions. They want the other questions, not this one. Is what is more important than other things? Like what my job is to provide—no, this is actually a hundred percent. This is absolutely not. This one here, there's some difference of opinion. This one is less of a— That's my job, that's not your job or the YouTube or Google or AI to tell you that.

I'm supposed to tell you that, right? Because that's really what the job of a Shaykh is: to make sure that I keep the priority list very clear of what is absolutely not on the table and what is more or less. Because It's a ranking to flaws like not all flaws rank the same, right? They're different, but doing this is for you to figure out what your priority list is first. So you have to learn that, and then you say, and then you may feel the urge to, but no, this is a bigger problem than actually—no, it isn't. This is the bigger problem, and I have these arguments all the time where I tell them this is not an issue. No, it is an issue. It isn't. This is the issue.

This is the actual problem that you're doing. This is what you're doing wrong. You have to change that, but no, I can't help you. I can't help you if you're not going to accept at least the priority list if you're. not going to accept from me that these are the bigger problems; these are the lesser problems. And the reason that we argue with these when these things happen is because the ego plays into this. This is where the ego comes in, is that we don't want to be told also what's bad and what's not. Like we've come up with our own value system, and we want to validate our value system through the Qur'an. And Islam is the opposite of that. Islam is that the Qur'an provides the value system and I adapt to it.

I find the Shaykh that is going to say what I want to hear, because that's what we want to do. We want to find the guy who will say the stuff that we like to And that's what the algorithms of social media are there for: to make sure that you only hear the stuff that you're comfortable with. It's not what Islam is at all. Islam is always going to be like: my job is to actually challenge you and challenge your thought process and challenge your belief system and challenge the norms and the traditions and the habits and the behaviors. That's my job, or else I'm not really doing it. And it's not hard, by the way, for us. And Allah's Shaykhs don't do this. They give up. It's too tiring, so they stop.

And they figure out what people want to hear, and they say it, and then they live in harmony with everyone. But everyone is broken. Everyone is walking with a because nothing is being changed, no reform is happening, and we're all just accepting the fact that

things are not the way they are, acting like they're good and they're not. So it's a very good question, but that's the whole point of this: that you first figure out how have you prioritized your flaws. What is the actual problem here? And I gave an example the other night: someone who's worried that I don't make enough du'a, but they take haram, they take gifts in their work, and they take bribes, and they accept this, and they take riba. If you're worried about the fact that you didn't pray.

sunnah I'm sorry he's not going to ask you about the sunnah prayers, but you're going to absolutely be drilled about every penny that entered your pocket and where it came from. You're going to try and talk about other stuff, and no one is going to want to talk to you about it. Allah won't even listen to you. Talk about this first. If you don't know what you're going to be talking about first, then you're in. If you're focusing on something that's fourth or fifth in and you're missing number one, number two, and number three, and you have problems in them, then you're in big trouble. Harming, for example, is a high ranked one, whether it's people's blood or people's integrity or people's wealth or people's well-being or reputation.

These come very high, and if you're falling into problems regarding that and you're causing harm and you're worried about something else, like you're worried about something, then you're in. So that's why this is an important exercise. You do it, and you figure out your own priorities, and then I get to kind of, no, it's not me. You can just ask. This is a simple question. These questions are easy. You will even know them almost all yourself. Most of the time, when you look at what you prioritize in terms of flaws, and then you actually look at. the Deen and the Kaaba and stuff you're like yeah this is the problem here. Self-honesty is just you learning to do that. Learning to admit that yeah it's not what I... yeah it's different. I've told myself stuff that isn't true and I need to start accepting the truth. Any other suggestions I have to? Excellent. Jazakumullahu khair. Barakallahu feek. We'll see you inshallah.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0Aw3E1GK-8>