

Tazkiyah Halaqa
Self Honesty – Session 10
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Transcription

So today, inshallah ta ala, the goal is for me to summarize this topic that I've been talking about for the last nine sessions or so, maybe last couple of months or few months, and just touch a little bit upon the last piece of it, which is the muhasabah, and leave you with some topics to contemplate the next week. Next week and the week after, it'll be I won't be starting a new topic, but I'll just open the space for questions. So next week, I'll open from the beginning the session for questions, so you're welcome to come and either ask up front, or you can put it up there. However, in order for you to ask questions, you have to have listened to this whole topic. Listened to it well.

If your question seems to me that you have not listened to what I've talked about, I will ignore it and move on. So you ask a question, and I know that I've talked about this and you just didn't listen to the lecture. I will say zaka lakheir and move on to the next question. So yes, you're going to have to make sure that your questions are actually well thought through. So listen to the material. It's been seven or eight sessions. I'm going to summarize things today, so at least listen to that. And then next week, and the week after, I give usually two weeks of just kind of open discussion on the topic that we cover to make sure that everyone understands it well. But I am picky when it comes to what people are asking.

You have to make sure that you're literally listening to the topic or else it takes you nothing to walk in, see a title, and just ask the first question that comes to mind. I'm not impressed by that at And yaani wa massa ila fala tanhar fine. I won't lan anhar. I won't perform nahar, but I will ignore. Because that's not in the ayah. The ayah doesn't tell me I can't ignore it. I'm going to ignore it. So you have to really— and the encouragement here within tazkiyah, the point of this and the reason that I'm saying this is because in tazkiyah. What you're encouraged to do is to contemplate and reflect on topics. You're not encouraged to have a thought and then immediately go throw it in someone else's lap for them to solve it for you.

Like the whole point is that you take that thought and you analyze it, and you contemplate, you reflect, and you look for solutions, and you do this for a couple of times in a row. And then you'll come to a brick wall, and that's normal, and that's where we come in to help. But you have to have made that effort to get there. And that's what I'm— the whole point of this series is here to encourage. Okay, so we talked about self-honesty, and I just have this here. so I don't get off track because I don't want to do another week of this, inshallah. I want to conclude this week. So to summarize, self-honesty is the highest form of honesty.

The reason the concept of honesty has the accolade that it does, the reason that sadaq is so significant in Islam, is because of this part of it. It's the importance or the ability to be honest with yourself. That is the highest form, it's the most important form, and it's the most critical part of being honest. Being honest with people is just a result, it's a symptom, it's a conclusion of someone who has learned to be fully honest with themselves. Being honest. with Allah subhanahu wa ta ala is also a symptom, a conclusion, a result of you being honest with yourself. If you can't be honest inwards, you cannot be honest outwards.

It's very simple that way. So when you're honest with people and with Allah subhanahu wa ta ala, that is a result of you being able to be honest with yourself.

When we talked about the four principles of tazkirah, and I sent you back to listen to the earlier, to the tazkirah pearls, there are four principles for tazkirah: graduality, building habits, abstinence from bad deeds or sins, and then the fourth one is self-honesty. It's one of the principles. It's not only a topic. one of the major topics of tazkirah it's also one of the main principles. it's a waste of everyone's time if you it's a waste of your time if you are not able to be honest with yourself. And this shows most in when you hear and you hear someone you hear yourself talking about a dispute how at work your boss did this to you and your colleagues did this and then you did that and you have built a narrative that makes it very clearly their fault.

it makes it very clear that you are targeted. it makes it very clear that you did everything right and that these people have been mistreating you. And when you hear other people talk about their stories they'll do the same. So, the question is: how much of that is actually true? How much of that is actually true? And just like you question when other people say that to you, just like when someone comes and tells you a story, and you have to hear both sides, the question becomes: when you're telling a story, when you're telling a story about a dispute that occurred, where does the other person's narrative fall in? Does it have any validity at all? Does it have any merit, or is your narrative the 100% Haqq and truth?

Only if you have self-honesty are you able to incorporate other people's into the problem that you have or the. story that you're For example, when there's family problems, specifically when there's family problems, when someone gets into a dispute with his spouse or with his spouse's family, or a gets into a dispute with her mother-in-law or father-in-law. All these stories, when you sit down and the people tell you the story, the story is very well put together. That's why I don't do this. That's why I'd rather die. I'd rather be hit by a bus than have to listen to these types of problems, because it's just people who are very, unfortunately, they lack insight. We haven't talked about insight a lot, but we brought it up. But in order to have self-honesty. you have to have some insight. You have to be able to kind of see where you contributed, and a lot of people will sit down and will talk for hours. They have zero insight; they have no ability to see their part within this problem at all, and that's how you're going to fix a problem. You can't fix anything that way. What I'm trying to teach you here with self-honesty is that you don't become that person in the future.

And because of this, tests in life are so because of this, a test, any museeba, or test, or turbulence, or any form of difficulty that you go through in life, in these trials that you have, their importance is because they put you in a where you have to come up with a. And you have to deal with it. And it's a dispute. It's a. So you have to come up with a of how you're going to overcome it. Tests and difficulties, they force like disputes, like fights; they force you to take a look at yourself and deal with them in a certain way. That's why we have a trial. You have to say, well, why did this happen? Am I at fault for this? If I'm not at fault for this, well, how do I accept it?

How do I understand it to begin with? Is it qada and qadr in its essence, or am I somehow, have I contributed to it? And if I did, that's why tawbah is so important in Islam. Because tawbah is the Muslim individual's to identify. that they were at fault, which takes a lot of maturity, a lot of self-honesty to identify. I was wrong; I need to repent from this. I'm not talking about the simple stuff, the things that we do on a daily basis, the making your prayer a little bit late, saying a word you shouldn't have said. These little things that we all kind of fall into that we perform. So I'm talking about bigger stuff in life: being able to

identify I was wrong when I took this stance, I was wrong when I made this decision, I was wrong when I stood by this party and not the other one.

These are the big stuff that require tawbah, and this is the stuff that Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la will hold you to first. Most of the smaller sins, Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la forgives with good deeds. You don't even need a full tawbah for, but it's the bigger stuff that, and you can't really perform tawbah from these things if you're not willing to acknowledge you were wrong to begin with. And you can't acknowledge you were wrong if you aren't able to have some degree of self-honesty. And the reason that we lie to ourselves, the reason that we lie to ourselves, is because we don't like confrontation. We don't like confrontation. We don't like confrontation with others, and we definitely don't like confrontation with ourselves.

We don't like even confronting ourselves about the stuff that we do, and because of a certain degree of. So we don't want to actually talk about what we did, not even to ourselves. We don't want to bring it up. We don't want to admit to ourselves that we were wrong because that may mean that someone else is right, or that may mean that the outcome was our fault. So we don't want to admit that even internally because we see our nafs and ourselves as almost a second entity. And this is why it's important to. It's almost like there's two inside. Qadhaf al hamam zakkaha, and he uses the male and the female almost to say that there's two on the. and that's quite true because we don't like confronting ourselves.

So we lie to ourselves because it just makes it feel when you lie to other people. The reason that you lie to other people is you're trying to gain something or you're afraid of something. And one of the things you can be afraid of is guilt or shame or bad reputation. But why do you lie to yourself? It doesn't make any sense. Well, because the same thing occurs. Because you know that if you tell yourself the then you have to make a change. You have to do something different. You have to either repent or show remorse for your mistake. So if you lie to then you don't have to feel that. shame or guilt, and you don't have to make any changes. And that's where the whole downward spiral begins, is when we start doing that internally.

This need requires you to be an investigator of the truth. So the best person sitting here regarding this topic specifically is the one who is most capable of treating everything that happens to themselves in their lives as an investigator, as a looking for the truth, questioning things. I believe this, or I said this, or I did this. Did I actually do that? Did I actually believe that? How truthful is this statement? And looking for flaws in the argument, looking for mistakes. So the person who and what you're seeking is the truth. You're not seeking flaw. Like, the goal is not to convince yourself that you're wrong because you're not always wrong. That's not what I'm In many situations, you may be correct.

But the fear is, if you don't have a system to know when you are actually right, truthfully and genuinely, versus when you're not, when you're just making it up and you're selling yourself a narrative that makes you feel better about yourself, how do you distinguish between the two? No one else can distinguish that for you. People who are good at they can just always argue back. Teenagers, they're amazing. They can just keep on arguing forever. They can never stop. They always find another argument. And because we figured out in life there's no point arguing with people most of the time, it takes you nowhere. Then, really, the only way for someone to figure out things is some self-employed regulatory system that they must have. And this is what I'm trying to sell to you.

You have to find ways to regulate yourself and filter out and find out when you're actually correct and when you did things for the right intention, the right way, and when you did not, so that you can differentiate between the two. This requires a high degree of and investigatory skills. and willingness to ask difficult questions and come up with the difficult answers. There are a lot of things that we've told ourselves about our lives that are untrue, told ourselves about why we do what we do and what we do that are untrue, and these things need to These things can't change if you're not willing to admit that they're a problem to begin with, or if you're not willing to admit that you were doing them for the wrong reason right off the bat.

And this requires you to analyze a lot of what you do in life. So this takes me to three opposites, maybe if I may. Within self-honesty, these three opposites are helpful. So the first two that I think are important is understanding the difference for yourself between reasons and excuses because understanding that helps you with being honest about accountability. Sometimes it's the same thing; it's the same word that you'll use, but you have to figure out: do you see this as a reason or do you see this as an excuse? Do you see this as one of the contributing factors that helped you make the mistake, encouraged you to make the mistake, or discouraged you from doing the right thing? Or do you see it as an excuse, meaning the existence of this thing here takes away the accountability from you?

You don't have to worry about that anymore because of this one problem here, this one thing that you identified. It's an excuse. This is why I do it. I said those words because I lost my temper. Is that a reason or is that an excuse? If it's a reason, then you ask another question. Well, the reason that I said that is because I lost my... Well, why did you lose your temper? That was the reason. So why? Well, because of this. Well, why is that? Well, because I'm easily irritable. Why are you easily irritable? Well, because you keep on going back until you find the source problem of why it is that you're getting there. If you use it as an excuse, it ends right there and you.

don't feel bad anymore. Like everyone should forgive me, everyone should be fine because I did this when I was angry, and that's an excuse. It's not an excuse; it's a reason for you to figure out and go keep on going back to figure out why you're doing it. So you have to start treating what you used to call excuses as reasons, right? And that helps you with honesty, with accountability; that's the first piece. The second one is patterns versus mistakes. So there's a difference between you making a versus there being a pattern in your life. Something that you, this is not a one-timer. This happens; this is happening all the time. The intervals. the intervals may be once a day, maybe once a week, maybe once a month, Allah knows; but a pattern is different than a mistake.

And this is important because it helps you with honesty about your values, which I talked about. An important part of being honest is honest about your actual values. What do you actually believe? What is your real, what is really your belief system? Not the stuff that we've accepted that Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la has told us, that we all submit to. We all say, Ya Rabb, this is the truth. We know this is the truth. But what do you really believe? Have you taken those beliefs, those statements that Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la put in his book and incorporated them inside your soul, so this is what you actually believe about the world. Or are there certain pieces of his teachings, Subh anaHu Wa Ta A, that you think are cool?

You think they're nice, but you're not really, you're not fully sold. You figured out a way to exempt yourself a little bit from these beliefs. So how you know the difference between the two is between patterns and mistakes. A mistake that happens to everyone, to the best of

us. To the best of us, we'll make mistakes. كل ابن آدم خطأ. That's not, it's not even a But a pattern is different. A pattern exposes a flawed belief system. A pattern the same mistake happening all the time is not a one-time thing where you can just stop it. No, now you have to actually go back and figure out what the reason is. Because now your value system has something wrong in it. Somehow you don't, if you're always getting angry, you're always losing your temper.

If you're always looking at haram, for example, if you're always performing gheeb or namimah, that means you just don't think this is a big deal. You've convinced yourself this is not a This is something Allah Subh anaHu Wa Ta A la بِغُفْرٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ. You make those statements, right? So you make those assumptions that'll be fine. Everyone. people are doing worse stuff. And that's not how Islam works, by the way. And we know that's not how Islam works. But you have to learn that; you have to also convince yourself of the truth. Never in tazkiyah are you asked to tell yourself a lie, ever. I'll never sit here and tell you, lie to yourself this or lie to yourself by saying this.

No, always tell the But the truth sometimes is lost; sometimes you don't even know what the truthful statement is. The truthful statement is that we don't know who is going to be forgiven yawm al qiyamah and who is not. We don't know which of our sins Allah will overlook and which He will hold us to. We don't know which sins He will say are nothing, and others that He will call indi azeem. This is a big deal to me. We don't know. We have no idea. You have no guarantee that anything wrong that you've done in your life, you have been fully forgiven for. You don't know. We have good reason to believe that He will forgive us, especially if you continue to perform istighfar and tawbah, and walk the straight path.

But we don't know for sure. And if you don't know for sure, then you have to have, it has to be a part of you, like a logical part of you that needs to stay a little bit alert and continue to work towards doing the right thing to make sure that this is going to be forgiven yawm al qiyamah right. The difference between a pattern and a mistake. And the final kind of duality that's important here is the difference between states and moments. There are moments of happiness, in moments of rida, of content, moments of success, moments of joy, and then there are states, and this is the highest degree. So if reasons and excuses allow you to achieve accountability, honesty regarding accountability in your life, and if patterns and mistakes allow you to understand honesty regarding your value system, then states and moments allow you to be honest about your life.

If you are only finding joy in that means your state, and your state is miserable, then that's the truth right now. Looking forward to moments of happiness, your time off, the weekend, go out with the fulan, playing the video games, watching the show, getting away from work. And this level of honesty is extremely important because you're not designed, required, or expected to live a life of misery with moments of joy in it; it's the opposite. You're living a state of content, a state of joy, with moments of difficulty that come your way. That's how life is supposed to be. Life is supposed to be that way, even for the people who are struggling the most. even for the extremely ill, severely ill, even for those who can barely make ends meet.

Life, in its essence, in its basic package, basic deal, is a state of contentment and joy because you're breathing, you're eating, you're drinking, you're enjoying the scenery, you're alive. And there are moments of difficulty. But if life has become the opposite, where the state is misery, or the state is anxiety, or the state is disgruntlement and discontent, but there are moments of joy here and there, you go out for a night, you have a vacation planned somewhere else, or you have a few moments where you're happy, you have to

learn to be self-honest about. that piece. Because that now takes you to another. You have to ask harder questions and come up with more critical answers that we'll talk about, inshallah, in another module of Tazkiyah.

But self-honesty at least allows you to start asking these questions: Am I in a state? What is my state? What is my baseline? What are my moments? Why is it that my baseline is this, or if it is the good thing, then alhamdulillah, great! And how do I make sure that I keep that, or I deal with the difficulties that come my way in an appropriate manner? All of this is achieved by performing one of the I gave a number of exercises; I'm not going to repeat them all here. but the one that is most important that I think should be repeated constantly constantly is always trying to go back to understanding yourself in your most raw existence without the hats. We all have roles in our lives that we represent, hats that we wear: spouses, friends, and siblings.

And we are a harm to other people, and we are parents sometimes, and we are employees and employers, and we are colleagues, and we are classmates, and we are advisors, and we are mentors, and we are mentees, and we are coaches. And we are all these things depending on where we are. All these hats, we take them off and put them on depending on you behave. the same way you don't speak to your child, the way you speak to your friend, the way you speak to your dad. If we took a camera and followed you around and filmed you for five minutes as you spoke to your child, and five minutes as you're hanging out with your friends, and five minutes speaking to your father, and we played them all the same, you would say these are three different people, and you would be right.

these are three different people, right? So the question is, but there is an underlying person that you know carries all of them. So who is that underlying person? What is that underlying Raha consciousness that all of these other. roles are kind of being dressed upon. Do you know who that is? Because that's who gets used to this person, because that's who's going to come out of the grave. The rest of them are all going to be dead; all those roles die with you. Once you die, your degrees die with you. The fact that your father dies with you, a son dies; all of those roles, they die with you. They stay in the grave. You come out with none of them.

You come out with just that Raha consciousness, just that simplicity, that simple part of who you are, and you have to know who that is. And you have to be comfortable with that person, and you have to be able to identify him and define him well. that Fu ad that you have the fact that you're a Abdillah Subhanahu wa ta'ala this is who you are this is who I am in my core in essence I'm just a Abdillah Subhanahu wa ta'ala and I have to know that and I have to be comfortable in that and I have to know and everything that I do the hat has to be put on the head of the Abd I can't define myself some other way and then it's like you're putting hats upon hats

I can't be Fulan is the leader of Fulan so then the leader puts the hat of the father and the leader puts the hat of the son and the leader puts the hat of the friend no it's the Abd who's putting these hats on but most of us don't do that most Of us define ourselves some way that's not this, that's not that raw consciousness that is the Abdillah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. We define ourselves, and then we put on that definition. Now, hats, so it's a double scheme; like it's two lies in a row, like it's two layers of lies. The roles that you play, you play them because Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala commanded you to, because He put you on earth here, and He was generous enough to give you all these roles to play.

The less roles you have to play in life, probably the less successful and the less influential, and the less opportunity you had. People don't have a lot of opportunities, so they end up stuck with maybe one or two roles. They can barely be a spouse, maybe, and a father. Sometimes they're unlucky; they can't even have children, so they're just a spouse, or just a like the number of roles, or hats, that they wear becomes significantly smaller. But none of that matters because that's just Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala's qada for you: predestination. He may give you many roles; he may give you a few, but we're all equal in the essence piece, in the raw form we're all the same. So don't go astray from that. Make sure you know that person well.

You're gonna be stuck with that person for all of eternity. After you, that's all that's gonna be No one's there. You don't come out with your PhD, or your business, or your titles, or your accolades, or whatever else you have in life. None of that comes with you. It all stays in the grave. You just come out with just you, Al Abd al Fulani, who has this name, and this is the name of his mother and that's it. So you have to be comfortable with who that is. And you can't reach that person if you're not honest. You have to become, and that person will be the best father if he wears the hat. And he'll be the best employer and best khalif. He'll be the best everything.

What do you think about it? No one, let's say your father's a professor at a big university. And he comes and he's parenting you as the professor. Do you like it? Is it acceptable to you? Or if he's an employer, he has a big company. And he comes home and he's a spouse to his wife. As the boss of the company, it's not gonna work. She's the boss of the company. He's just right. He has to come in. You have to. We don't even accept people coming to us with double roles. Where you're, no, no. You're a father here. I don't, you're nothing else. You're not the doctor as well and the owner of this and the, no. You're just my dad. And you're gonna, that's the one role you're gonna stick.

We expect people not to wear multiple hats at the same time. But yet, we do. expect others not to do it, but we do it. So you have to learn not to do that anymore. You have to go back. That's why the Prophet was so humble at all times: Because he's an That's how he understood himself. That's how he defined himself. He was always humble. Even when he had the hat of the leader of the land, it was the abd who was wearing the hat. So the abd was always humble. But when someone else wears the hat, you can put, you can have a couple of roles of grandiosum wearing hats, and then you have the abd. Modern day leaders learning to love that person, understand who that person is, live that role.

It's very, very peaceful. It's very beautiful. It's very emotional where you can just sit there and just enjoy the fact that you're breathing, that you were created. Someone took the time to make you and give you this opportunity. You are loved and you are cared for just by the fact that you exist. There's almost an infinite number of possibilities of existence. Think about all the different men and women that have lived on earth and are going to live. How many possibilities are there of marriage? How many possibilities are there within marriage of different people being born? Numbers that our brains don't even comprehend. You are extremely unique just the fact that you're Here, very specific DNA put together. So, just sitting there and just enjoying that peace in a state of.

This takes time; it doesn't happen right away. But when you're able to achieve it, it changes a lot of what we've been talking about or what I brought up. Start by contemplating your life through milestones or contemplating your life through ethics or contemplating your life through circumstances or through roles. Meaning, start by looking back at your life and seeing what roles you play or seeing what milestones happen, like what important

moments, what defining moments occurred throughout your life and how you behaved during those moments. Are you proud of how you behaved during those moments? Do you think they're good, or do you think they're bad? You have to learn from them so that you can not do the same when it happens again, or through circumstances where certain things happened, or an ethic contemplating a specific ethic.

How have you been regarding loyalty, or honesty, or trustworthiness, or whatever, or friendship? Just looking at your life through different lenses, and then using that to kind of establish patterns and establish realities. It's one of the ways that helps you to differentiate between all of the roles that you play and all of the mistakes that you've made and who you really are in your essence. Self-honesty at the end is just an approach to life. It doesn't end with these sessions that I'm sharing with you. It's a way to live life. It's how you keep your hand on the steering wheel and you respond to the terrain. You respond appropriately to the terrain under you because if you don't, you can't stay on the Sirat al Mustaqim.

If you're driving on a road and it's straight, if you don't respond slightly to the, if you just keep your hand solid, you're going to be off route soon. You have to respond a little bit to the bumps that happen under you. If you respond in an exaggerated way, you get off. And if you don't respond at all, then you get off as well. So, self-honesty allows you this filtering system where you are responding. You're taking feedback from the world around you, and you're taking feedback from yourself, and you're analyzing, and you're holding yourself accountable, and you're asking questions, and you're seeing where you're doing well and where you're not, and you're making adjustments so you can stay on the straight path. Without Sidq, without self-honesty, you cannot stay on the Sirat al Mustaqim.

It's impossible. That's why the highest ranked human beings after Anbiya. al Siddiqin because they have that very high degree of self-honesty where they don't lie to themselves. They hold themselves accountable at all times. It's not something that should put you in a position of upset, or depression, or low self-esteem. Know that you're far away from where you need to be. If you think about it this way, if you think what are the odds that I'm doing one of my roles perfectly? Zero. That's the odd. The odd that I'm doing anything in my life perfectly, like spot on, I'm getting it all right is zero. It's a mustahid. No one is doing it perfectly. Well, if I told you that you only had one mistake within your role, that means you only have a small space to grow.

That's it. Because everything else is right, and you just have one mistake, so your space for growth is very limited. Because everything is right. And that's depressing. That's depressing. Because if you actually look at how you're doing something, you would love to be way better. In order for you to be way better, you have to be way far. You have to be very far away from being really good. But how are you going to figure out how far away you actually are? How are you going to know how many steps there are between you and being the closest thing you can be to perfection? For example, if you're not honest with yourself you can't take that feedback you can't figure it out. It's depressing to be told that oh you're actually almost at your full potential.

This, this is the full potential. Now this is the best I can be. You're telling me that I can barely do better than this. Now that's depressing. That is very depressing. But if you're telling me you're at 40 right now, so I have more than twice, I can double my That's actually uplifting. It's just bothersome to be told that you're only at 40 right now at the beginning. It's a slap in the face. Be okay with it. Be okay because honesty hurts at the beginning, grants you ease at the end. Just like lies make it feel good now. You pay for

them with interest. You pay for every lie you tell with interest later. It's a guaranteed law of life. Even after your death, you'll pay for it.

If you somehow get away with a dunya, it'll be found out after you die. And the number of people who were exposed postmortem— they had been dead for 100 years once their true stories came out. And they went from people with statues to people who became This has happened so many times historically. So, honesty hurts. To be told that you're mediocre, you're way under par, you're not where you need to be, there's a lot of mistakes here, but it allows you to figure out. oh I have a lot of space to. That means my potential is huge. I can go so much farther. And that's what you should be caring about. You should care less about what people think of you, less about what reputation you carry in the eyes of the people around you, what they'll say about you when they talk about you the one time that they do, and more interested in where you are,

mistakes you're making, how much room you have to improve, and what steps you're taking to make that improvement. That is what your focus should actually be. So the two methods or tools that we use to achieve self-honesty are muraqabah and muhasabah. And these are the words that are used by scholars of Islam that go back as far as the sahaba. These words are not specific to any group: Muraqabah and muhasabah, they're very authentic terms and they're Quranic even. But they're two different things. Muraqabah is the act of observation. It's keeping an eye on things. It's acknowledging and seeing everything. And muhasabah is when you hold yourself accountable, when you actually hold yourself accountable. So they're a little bit different. When it comes to doing muraqabah, you have three things that you can observe.

You can observe your thoughts, you can observe your feelings, and you can observe your The easiest to observe are your because they're right there; they're very obvious. And if you don't see them, well, you can always ask someone else because they're obvious things that you did, so others have seen it too. So you can always, if you miss it, others won't. They're the easiest thing to keep track of. It doesn't take a lot of effort for you to keep an eye on your. Your emotions are maybe the second level of. They're a bit more difficult to keep track of how you feel about certain things, how you feel about other people in your life, or things that you want to do, or things that you don't want to do, or things that are occurring to you.

watching your feelings and emotions. And the third most difficult, the most difficult of the three, is observing your thoughts. Because we have so many of them throughout the day, you could go through a day with only doing one or two or three things that are outside of the routine of waking up, getting dressed, having your coffee. But as you go through life, you'll observe these things as well and how you do them. The more of an investigator you become, the more self-honest you become, the more detail-driven you become in terms of how you're doing things. And you start asking for perfection from yourself and how you do stuff, and there's. nothing wrong with that. And this is actually how you become better: you watch yourself with more of a hawk eye.

Observing your thoughts takes the most time. It is the most effective, though. The most effective way is to watch what you're Your thoughts, at the end, drive what you feel and they drive what you do. You're not held accountable for your thoughts on the Day of Judgment, and that's a very big one for us. We're very fortunate, alhamdulillah, that you're held accountable for a... However, you are held accountable to the thoughts that lead later on to behaviors or thoughts that become values that dictate your decisions. making processes and your choices later on. You are accountable for those. So if a thought jumps in

your mind and you ignore it, you decide that I'm not accountable for this ugly thought that I just came up. If you decide to do that, fine, you're not accountable for that thought, but it's very unwise.

It's a very, very unwise thing to do for you not to ask, why did I think that? Why did that thought jump to my mind? Why did I think that about that person that I thought I liked? Why did I allow my mind to do that? What's the reason? What is the underlying cause for that? And that's a really important window that you're opening into your nafs, into your heart, to figure out more to learn things about yourself. So observation occurs in these three. You choose. I advise that you start with observing your actions. Choose a behavior and observe it. Something that you do good or bad. Start with the bad because it's always easier to pick up on, right? Observe a sin, whether it's ghibah, namimah, whether it's ghadab, whether it's looking at haram, whether it's missing a prayer, whether it's whatever.

Look, maybe arguing with your parents or mistreating a friend. Find something that you think is a problem for yourself and start observing. And make a little bit of a schematic. Figure out, see if there's a pattern throughout a week or two. See if things happen at certain times. See if you can figure out reasons, not excuses. See if you can find patterns, because these are the ways that you're going to figure out how to deal with them. Once you do that, and you can do that with emotions, by the way, you can do that with thoughts too. You don't have to stick to behaviors, but I'm just giving you choose one thing at the beginning. Don't overwhelm yourself. Then you move on to muhasabah. Muhasabah, there are different ways to hold yourself accountable.

If you understand how children are raised, then you don't need to listen to this part of the session, because you will treat your nafs the way you would treat your child. It's almost exactly the same. Your nafs on the inside functions just like your children do. If you are too harsh, it won't work. If you are too lenient, it won't work. If you're unreasonable, it won't work. If there is no reverence or fear, it won't work. If there is no reward or desire, it won't work. So you need all of these things to coexist in order for you to actually make changes in how you behave. So one of the main simple is just the reinforcement, the negative and positive reinforcement that you perform with your nafs. And this is easy.

You find yourself performing yaaniya sin, and you attach that mistake to either a negative reinforcement meaning when I do this I lose this privilege or I'm not allowed to perform this action that I enjoy anymore. Or if I don't do this sin, like if I go through a full day and I don't perform it, then at the end of the day I reward myself. I give myself something that I enjoy doing, and I only allow myself to get that. The idea here is putting the carrot in the direction of what pleases Allah and what's good for you. So your nafs is always following the carrot, always going after the hawa, whatever it desires. So every once in a while, if you can swing the carrot and just align it with your goals then you kind of lose the force of your nafs to get you where you want to go.

You're using the strength, the desires of your nafs, to actually put you on the path or the direction that you want to go. So that's one of the basic ideas. Another one, when it comes to accountability, is that when you fall into a mistake, there has to be a consequence of doing something to make up for it. From the same essence of the bad thing that you did, you have to go and do something to make up for it. All these things, by the way, are prophetic. Everything I'm sharing with you, the Prophet ﷺ taught us before. I'm just summarizing them for you quickly. So when you do a saiyyah; you have to follow it with a hasanah right after it.

So, for example, if you said something bad about someone, you did ghibah, then the way that you're going to deal with this is you're going to go and you're going to do something nice for this person specifically. You're going to say something positive about this person. Now, when you force yourself to do this and you hold yourself accountable to that, you're giving yourself a reason not to say, if you don't like the person, you don't want to do something nice for them or say something nice about them. But if you're going to say something bad, you're going to have to do that. So you're better off not doing either. And that's how you hold yourself back from performing sin. So sometimes just looking for a consequence that is positive or negative from the essence of what it was that you were doing.

And you have to sometimes be creative with these things because everyone knows themselves and what it is that they struggle with and what it is that they do well. Your nafs, being a child, has to be reasoned with or it needs reason in order for it to actually change its ways. When you perform a sin, our first instinct is to get rid of it, do like a quick tawbah, and then not think about it anymore. We don't want to talk about it. It's like when you bring your child and they did something embarrassing or wrong; they don't want to have a conversation about it. They actually will resist that conversation a lot because it's very embarrassing, and they just want to move on. Just move on.

Why do we have to keep going back to this? That's what they'll say. And they're right. That's how they feel. You feel the same way. So whenever you make the mistake, you have to hold yourself to this: Nope, we're going to sit down, we're going to think about it, we're going to contemplate it, we're going to perform proper tawbah, and we're going to figure out why. So you make it painful. You make it psychologically painful to yourself when you perform this mistake, which will demotivate you from doing it again. Because you know that every time I do this, I'm going to have to have this whole contemplation session, I'm going to have to go through reasoning, I'm going to have to look for causes, I'm going to have to hold myself.

And this becomes too much of a headache to endure. You don't want to do that. Because most of us just want the quick istighfar, the tawbah that takes a second, and then we move on. Which is why learning how to do tawbah appropriately is actually a very strong method. And we'll talk about tawbah in its own, I've talked about it during the Cheskia Pearls; you can go back to that if you want to listen to it. But tawbah is actually a very engaging behavior. It's not just sitting there and asking Allah to forgive you. It involves remorse, and remorse requires a proper belief system, so you have to question your belief system, making sure that it's correct so you can actually have it requires a— you have to show Allah that you have a plan of how you're not going to do this again.

The plan has to have some circumstantial changes, some environmental changes, some adjustments to your lifestyle. Because if you just say, 'I won't do this again that's you know that's It can't unfold I'm not going to do it. Oh, oh, you said you're not going to do it, so now somehow magically you're going to stop doing it. Who are you lying to? Show me what changes have happened or what changes you are bringing into your life that are actually going to help you not do this anymore. Nothing. You're changing nothing. You're going to do same lifestyle, same patterns, same friends, same habits. Guess what? The same sin. It's the same problem. Life doesn't change. You don't just make a decision. If it was that easy, we wouldn't be doing this.

If it was that simple, where all you had to do was just make a decision. that you didn't have to do this anymore, then none of this would be required or needed. All right. The last piece

for muhasabah that I'll end with, inshallah, before iqamah or for you have to be very, very accurate or specific about what you're going to do. Specific on what it is that you want to stop. This is the tricky part. What behavior is it that you want to stop? Exactly. Don't generalize. If you generalize, if you just don't want to be better, it's not going to go anywhere. Or I want to not be an angry person. No, no. Specify. Muhasabah works well when you have a very clear target. I want to stop saying this word.

I want to stop feeling this way. I want to stop performing this one action. If you specify what you want out and what you want in, you can get it done. If you generalize, if it's just, I want to change everything all at once, and I want to just be better, you're not going to get anything done. That's not going to work. You're going to waste your time. You're going to end up, you may improve a little bit, but then you'll just relapse afterwards. So muhasabah works best when you specify. It's just like raising a You can't change your kid immediately about everything in their lives. You have to specify, I want you to stop doing this one bad habit. Here's the one habit that you have.

to stop and you focus on it and you drill it in until it. And then you move on to number two, and number three, and number four. If and most people who fail in raising their children, it's because they just generalize. You are this and this and this and this and this and that all has to change. None of it's going to change. And then next time you're doing this and this and this and this, they get upset, so they count the ten mistakes that their children are making, thinking that those by counting ten mistakes, the child is somehow magically going to be able to erase all ten mistakes. You can't even do, you can't even do one for them to do ten.

So if you want to raise a child you have to specify exactly what the target is. It goes the same for you. You have to specify exactly what it is that you want to get rid of. And if you do that, then you have a chance of actually getting rid of it. We'll end with that, inshallah ta. There's a few more things, but next week, inshallah, it'll be the session. Both the session next week and the week after will be focused just on Q A. We'll have a QR code up and I'll answer questions that people want to ask, and I'll answer questions that you put up there, inshallah ta ala, on the topic, on the topic specifically. So please, please, please listen to the seven or eight lectures that cover self-honesty before you come and ask questions, so that we can actually have a proper conversation. Jazakumullah khair. We'll have our follow-up for the brothers up front after Maghrib, and the sisters right after that, inshallah ta.

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y24DnM_zmno