

CONCENTRATION IN PRAYER – Distance Learning Course

PART FOUR

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LEARNING TO CONCENTRATE ON YOUR DAILY PRAYER

A COMPLETE 30-DAY WORKBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The ability to focus attention with sufficient intensity to accomplish the goal five times a day is a skill that needs to be developed. Those people who have learned how to concentrate and can apply their minds to a particular task whenever necessary appreciate this fact. Unfortunately, it is more difficult to concentrate on the act of Prayer simply because it is a repetitious act of worship. As a result, the effort required to fulfill this task is greatly increased.

The 25 strategies for concentrating in Prayer discussed in the Prayer booklet can be further divided into three categories: those that have to be well analyzed and understood; those that have to be applied before the Prayer, and the remainder applied after you complete your Prayer.

This workbook includes a 30-day exercise to significantly increase your concentration in Prayer and solve the problem of distracting thoughts and sounds.

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CATEGORY ONE

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

- 1 Have I understood and convinced myself of Allah (SWT)'s presence?
- 2 Am I aware that I am standing in front of Allah (SWT)?
- 3 Do I understand what I recite?
- 4 Am I making the correct pronunciations in Arabic?
- 5 Am I aware and practicing the Rules for Reciting The Qur'an?
- 6 Have I understood the main reasons behind the Five Daily Prayer?
- 7 Do I have the motivation and energy to sustain my attention?
- 8 Am I confident enough that Allah (SWT) is with me and that He is assisting me in my Prayer?
- 9 Have I refrained myself from heedless conversations?
- 10 Do I remember death often?
- 11 Do I fast often enough to increase my mental clarity?
- 12 Have I convinced myself that each Prayer I recite maybe my last Prayer?

If you have answered YES to 6 of the 12 questions above, you may proceed with the workout. However, even one negative answer means that you have to go back and invest more time and reflection in that particular aspect. Otherwise, the workout will not be very effective.

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CATEGORY TWO SETTING THE SCENE OF PRAYER

- 1 Am I satisfied with the environment, the surroundings?
- 2 Am I wearing pure, clean, preferably white clothes?
- 3 Am I clean, pure and scented?
- 4 Am I confident enough in alternating recitations?
- 5 Am I in a relaxed and alert state of mind?
- 6 Have I been moderate in my food intake?
- 7 Am I grief-stricken and submissive?
- 8 Have I satisfied my hunger and thirst, as well as other needs?
- 9 Have I separated myself from the disapproved world and all its attractions?
- 10 Am I confident enough in arresting distracting thoughts in Prayer?
- 11 Have I connected my Ablution to the recitation of Adhan?
- 12 Have I connected my recitation of Adhan and Iqamah to the Takbeer in Prayer?

If you have answered YES to 6 of the 12 questions above, you may proceed with the workout. However, even one negative answer means that you have to go back and invest more time and reflection in that particular aspect. Otherwise, the workout will not be very effective.

This exercise works effectively with FOUR units of Prayer, employed only once a day, AFTER evening ('Isha) Prayer. Your intention for this four unit Prayer should be for any lapsed Prayer (Qadha).

In this workout, you will employ a *Trigger Mechanism* and pay the *Debts* you are obligated to. There are TWO types of debts: one, which has to be paid during your Prayer and the other, after you complete your Prayer. You have to work and complete the whole program as laid out.

Using a personal Trigger Mechanism will provide you a signal to get ready for a moment of concentration, while you complete the obligatory task assigned to you. The detail of this workout is described below and has to be employed for a full 30 days, without a break. *Answering a complete YES to 6 out of the 12 items (in both categories) is also a requirement for the 30 days.*

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WORKOUT—30 DAYS

Your first Trigger Mechanism is the **Takbeer** (Allahu Akbar) that you pronounce before you start your Prayer. This is the signal to your mind that you are now standing in front of your Lord, the Most Powerful in this Universe. You have to appreciate the fact that you are standing in front of Allah (SWT) and He is watching over you.

Al-Sadiq (AS) is quoted to have said:

When you say, *Allahu Akbar*, slight whatever is there between the high (heaven) and the earth, regarding it below His Majesty, because if Allah (SWT) looked into the heart of the servant while telling the Takbir, and saw therein something contradicting his Takbir. He would say, *'O' You Liar! Are you deceiving Me? By My Might and My Majesty, I will deprive you of (tasting) the sweetness of remembering Me, and I will exclude you from My proximity and from getting pleasure through your supplication'*.
(*Mustadarak Al-Wasa'il, Chapter 2, Tradition 9*)

You promise to recite **5 SUBHANALLAH** each time you have a significant distraction and you entertain the distracting thought for a few seconds. This debt has to be repeated as many times you get distracted and whenever you can pay the debt. All debts are to be paid **ONLY** in the state of Ruku' (bending) or Sajdah (prostration).

For example, while reciting Surah Al-Hamd, you get significantly distracted twice, then on your next Ruku', you will pay your debt of **10 SUBHANALLAH** first and then continue with the recitation normally assigned for Ruku'. If the distracting thought happens to occur whilst in Tashahhud or Salaam, then you will pay your debt as soon as you complete your Prayer.

CAUTION

The above debt and **SUBHANALLAH** forms part of your prayer and you should have that intention before and during your practice prayer. The debt should be paid **ONLY** in the state of bending (Ruku') or prostration (Sajdah), the additions will otherwise make your Prayer **NULL** and **VOID**, even though your practice Prayer is lapsed and not a compulsory Prayer.

In any case, you have 4 Ruku' (bending) and 8 Sujood (prostration) in the four unit Prayer to pay the debts you owe. Do not concentrate on how many times you get significantly distracted as you will be aware of this fact when it happens, and you will pay your debt in your next Ruku' or Sajdah.

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You will generalize this activity throughout your 4-unit Prayer. After you complete your act of worship, you will recall how many times you had to repeat the **5 SUBHANALLAH** and how many debts you had to pay. Now you promise to recite **5 ASTAGHFIRULLAHA RABBI WA ATUBU ILAYH** for every debt. If you had paid 10 debts during your Prayer that means you recite **50 ASTAGHFIRULLAHA RABBI WA ATUBU ILAYH** as soon as you complete your Prayer.

You will now record in your chart the number of times you had to pay the debt during your Prayer, 5 or 10, may be 3.

This is the end of the WORKOUT.

CAUTION

The above exercise is **ONLY** a workout to increase your concentration and plays no role in your daily obligatory Prayer. Also, this workout is to be practiced passively during the Prayer and only active after your Prayer - meaning that if you concentrate too much on the debt, then you might distract yourself from the major objective.

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CATEGORY FOUR

EXERCISES AND MENTAL WORKOUT BEFORE SLEEPING AT NIGHT

30 DAYS – 15 MINUTES EACH NIGHT

Spend the first 3-5 minutes contemplating on the distracting thoughts that significantly distracted you from achieving a high level of concentration in your Prayer. Work them through and convince yourself that none of those thoughts play an important role in Prayer and neither are the thoughts solvable during Prayer.

Spend the next 3-5 minutes contemplating on the creation of Allah (SWT) and make sure you are not distracted by any thought - you can spend this time reading The Qur'an, recite invocations, or read a book, whatever suits you. You should not exceed 5 minutes.

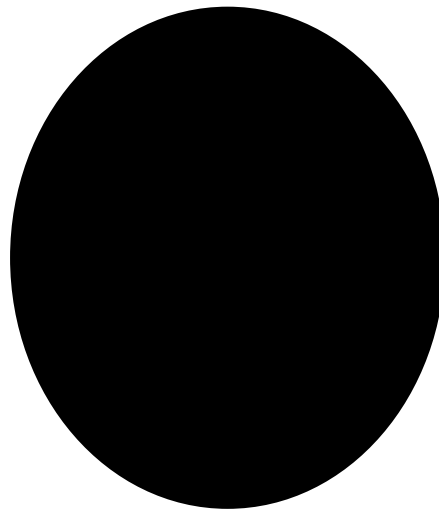
Spend the last 3-5 minutes doing a meditation exercise. You can employ any other similar technique you are aware of. However, make sure it has a deep breathing element in it.

You may want to review your chart at this time.

Congratulations, you are done with Day 1 of this workout. Similarly, you may proceed with Day 2 until you reach Day 30. After 30 days, you may review your Charts and see if you have made any kind of improvement. Your goal is to get to a 10 with Concentration, Energy and Motivation, and a 0-2 with Debts.

For assistance on this workout, please contact the author at jameelyk@aol.com

FIGURE ONE



No interference -

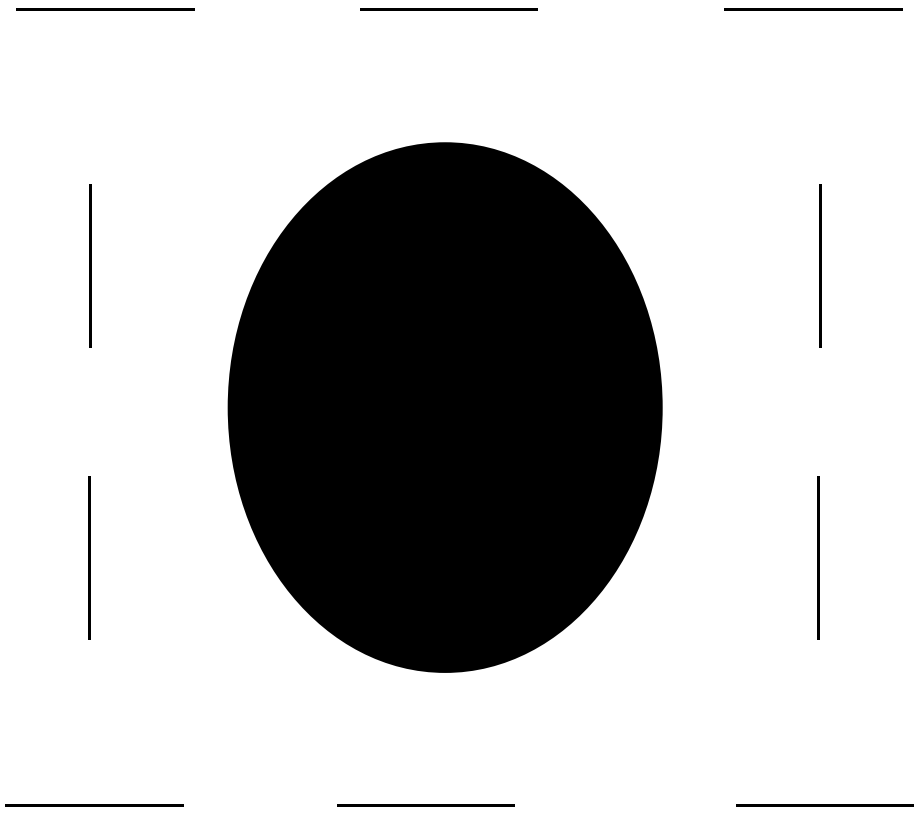
Interferes a little -

Interferes moderately -

Interferes a great deal -

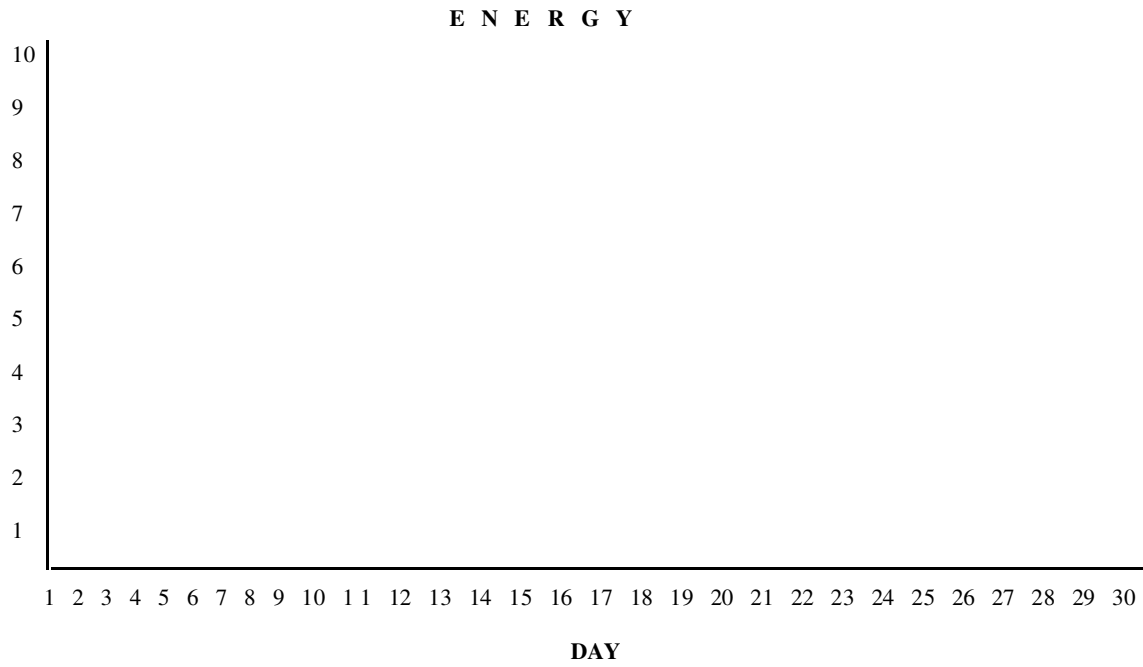
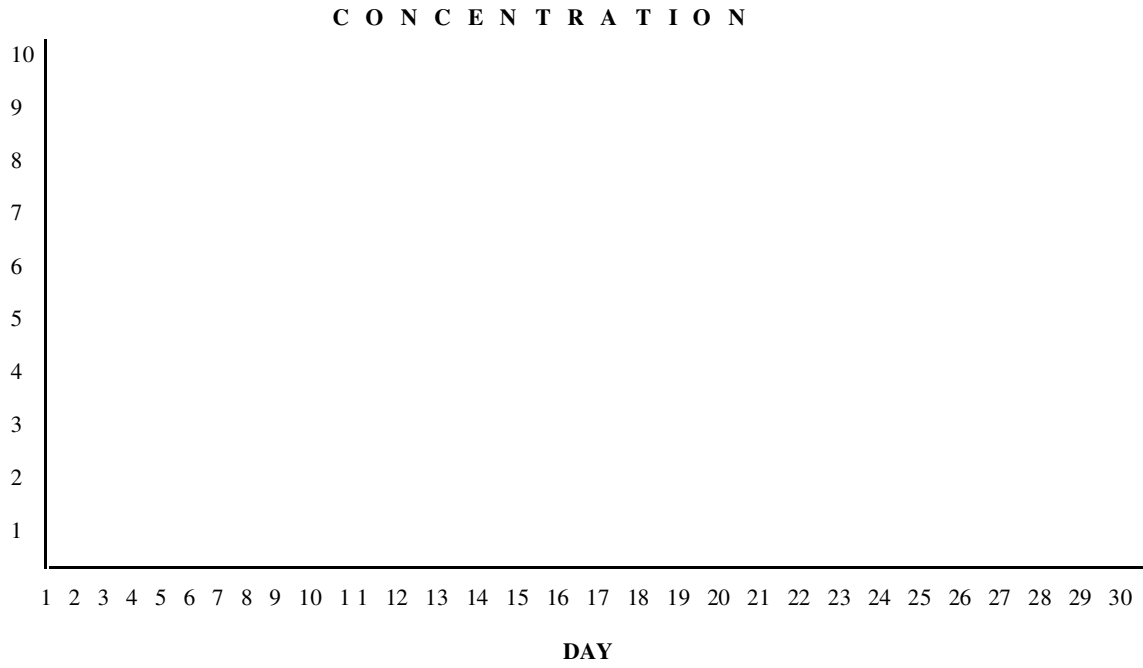
Make as many copies you would like

FIGURE TWO

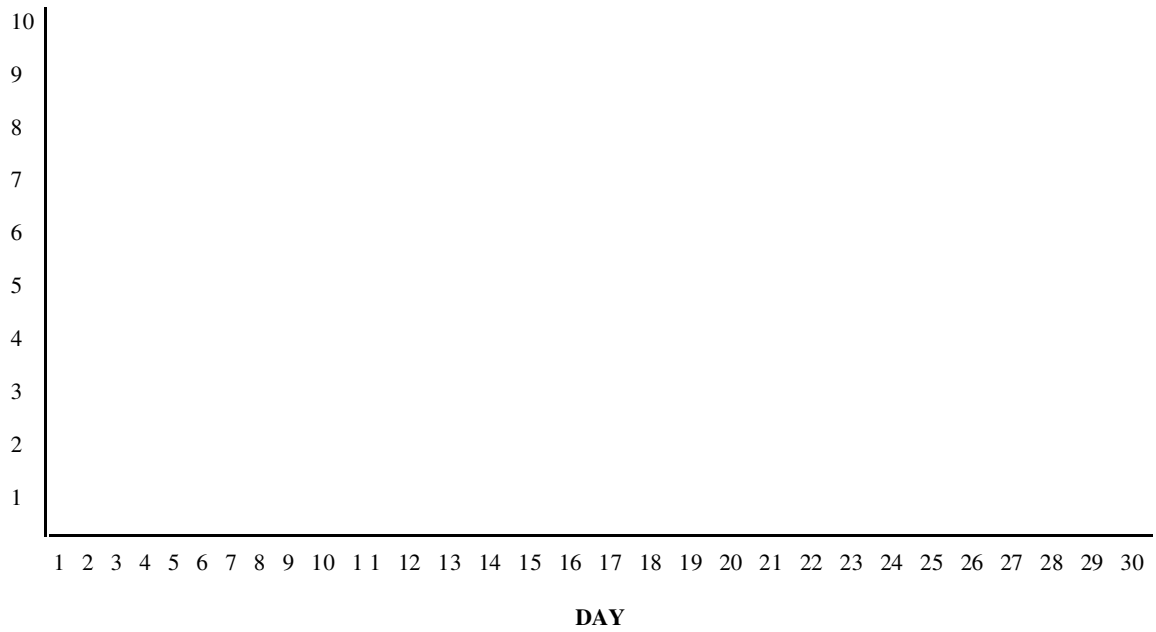


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FIGURE THREE



M O T I V A T I O N



D E B T S

