

Ninth Rule

HASTENING AND PROMPTNESS

The scholars have advised us to make haste in performing good deeds. We should try to be of strong will-power and resolution, so that we may not go from this world as a person without resolution.

One's audacity to commit sins converts him little by little into a man devoid of will-power and takes away the noble essence of humanity from him. Our respected teacher (AR) used to say that more than anything else, giving the ears to the sounds of music and songs, steal from men their will-power and the power of resolution ... May Allah (SWT) bestow His Graces and Favors upon you. May he escort you in the coming dangers, since the path of life is full of great risks and hazards.
(al-Khumeini (AR))

Opposite is the case with performing disobedient acts and we should be courageous enough to question every thought lest it be from The Accursed, for these thoughts then turn into actions. We also have to learn to be patient enough on each thought; and if positive and is an act that is liked by The Almighty, then we should perform the act without hesitation if there is time and allowance for it. Shaytan is always there to convince us otherwise.

Here is an easy exercise that should be performed on a daily basis for it to be effective.

1. When experiencing a recurring thought that causes you to be forgetful of Allah, you should first say "Stop" and make sure it is from The Accursed. This introduces the idea to you to stop having these thoughts. You can say it aloud or to yourself but this is a necessary first step.
2. Negate the thought that you are having on a recurrent basis. "I will not ..." or "I can not .." is how this statement usually starts.
3. Make a positive self statement about a feeling, which instills confidence, should be made. "I will ..." or "I can ..." is how this statement usually starts.
4. Take a cleansing, relaxing breath. It is important to note that thought stopping will work best if you have mastered the breathing technique since this is a key in pairing the provoking thought with relaxation.
5. In order to achieve maximum benefit from this technique in the shortest time possible, you should do steps 1 to 4 EVERY time you have the recurrent thought. Failure to do this is likely to result in thought stopping not being effective.

Besides the STOP method, these might work.

Thought Replacement

When an unwanted thought enters, immediately replace the thought with a positive, rational one.

Substituting a Healthy Thought Pattern

If you have a tendency to think of sinning and disobeying The Almighty, you can develop a positive pattern of thinking by challenging every thought that comes to mind, asking, is this a thought from Shaytan, The Accursed? If not, what is sinful about it? What would be a positive replacement for this thought?

Replacement Visual Image

If you have a tendency to visualize negative images that lead one to sinning, replace these negative images by positive images that lead one to obedience of The Almighty.

Aversive Replacements

If you have a tendency to think of an sinful behavior, immediately replace these images with more positive "what will happen" images, i.e., thoughts of different kinds of sinful acts can be replaced by the words "God is displeased," "I will be accountable for this," "God is watching over me."

A Brief Note on Breathing

- 1) Empty the lungs entirely by breathing out all the air in your lungs.
- 2) Slowly lower the diaphragm allowing air into the lungs. The abdomen swells filling the bottom of the lungs with air.
- 3) Expand the ribs without straining.
- 4) Allow the lungs to fill by raising the collarbone.

Throughout this procedure, the air should enter in a continuous flow, without gasping. It is essential to breathe silently! It is of great importance to concentrate the mind entirely upon the action of breathing in the first few minutes.

Inhalation, like exhalation, must be silent, slow, continuous and easy. Do not blow yourself up like a balloon! Breathe easily without straining. Remember that the ideal respiration is deep, slow, silent, and easy.

As we all know, Oxygen plays a vital role in the circulatory and respiratory systems. As you breathe, oxygen that is inhaled purifies your blood by removing poisonous waste products circulating throughout your blood. Irregular breathing will hamper this purification process and cause waste products to remain in circulation. Digestion will then become irregular, leaving tissues and organs undernourished. Improper oxygen consumption will thus ultimately lead to fatigue and heightened anxiety states.

Irregular breathing elicited during stressful situations not only makes it hard to cope with them but also contributes to a general deterioration of health. By careful control of your breathing pattern, you not only rejuvenate your system, but you also counter the unhealthy effects of stress. Although one can practice this exercise in a variety of postures, the following is recommended for beginners, at night before sleeping,

Lie down on a blanket or rug on the floor. Bend your knees and move your feet about eight inches apart, with your toes turned outward slightly. Make sure your back is straight. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push up your hand as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little and only with your abdomen.

Continue until your breathing becomes rhythmic and comfortable. Now, inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, making a quiet, breezy sound as you gently breathe out. Your mouth, tongue and jaw will be relaxed. Take long, slow, deep breaths raising and lowering your abdomen. Hear the sound and feel the texture of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.

When you first begin this technique, do it for five minutes. When you become more comfortable with it, you may extend it up to 20 minutes. Upon ending a session, stay still for a few minutes and try to keep the entire body relaxed.