



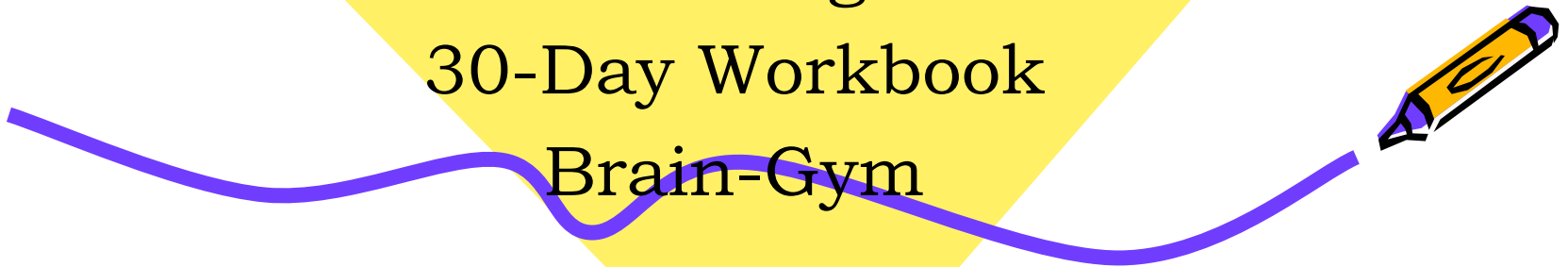
CONCENTRATION IN PRAYER

Certificate Course – THREE

25 Strategies

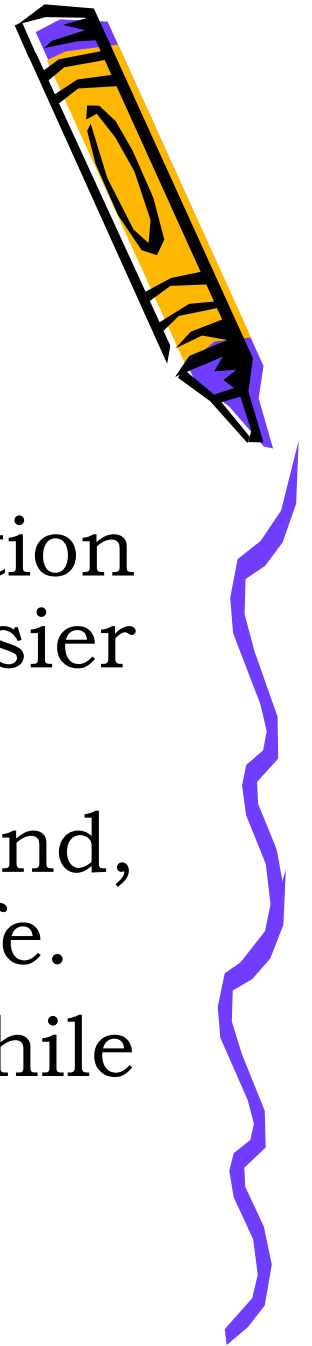
30-Day Workbook

Brain-Gym



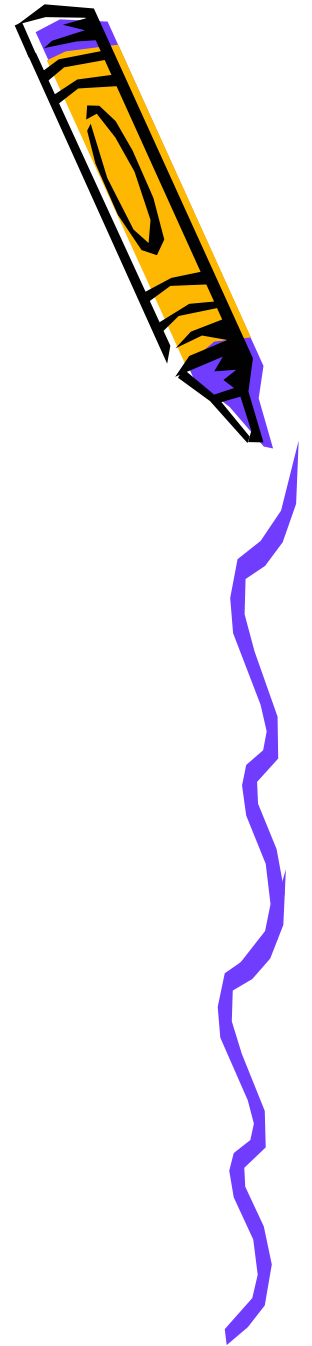
Introduction

- Attention is like a muscle.
- The more you flex your attention the stronger it becomes, and easier to hold.
- The mind functions every second, minute, hour, and day of ones life.
- Train of thought continues while you are saying your Prayer.



Setting The Prayer Scene

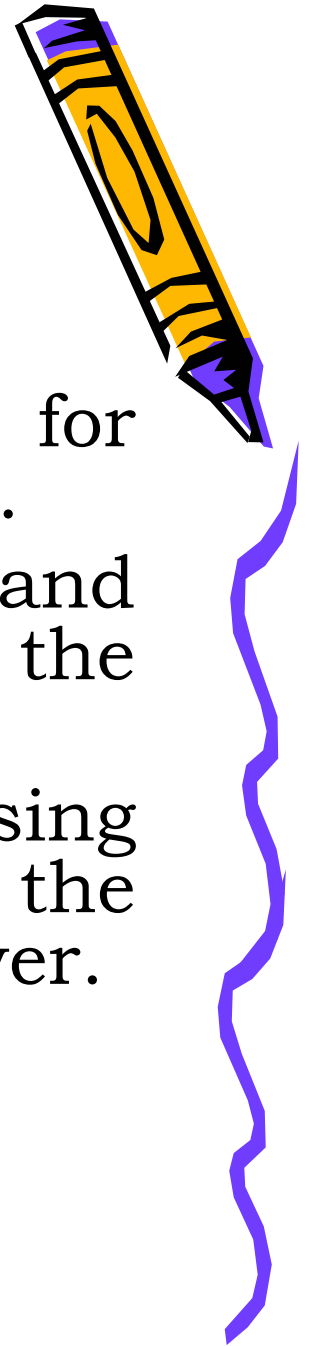
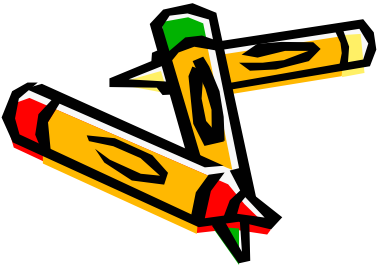
- The room features and qualities
 - Darkness
 - Pictures on walls
 - Neat and clean, perfumed
 - Free from noise and disturbance
 - Use of oil for fragrance
 - The need for essential oils



Wudhu and Attention

- How and why is Wudhu important for developing and maintaining attention.
- Performing Wudhu slowly and contemplating on the words in the invocation.
- no interval of talking and discussing worldly matters between the performance of Wudhu and your Prayer.

INVOCATION OF WUDHU



STRATEGY 1

UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATING ALLAH (SWT)'S PRESENCE

- Pondering the Existence of Allah (SWT).
- Appreciating His presence.
- Saying of Abu Ja'fer, the son of Babawayh Al-Qummi (RA).
- Piety, perseverance and appreciation of the Lord and His Mightiness are effective ingredients in prayer.
- Example of The Prophet (S); Tradition of al-Sadiq (AS).



STRATEGY 2

REMINDING YOURSELF OF ALLAH

- Adhan and Iqamah before prayer.
- (Qura'n - Chapter 3, Verse 90-91).
- Aim in Dhikr – remembrance of Allah.
- Importance of liturgies.
- Remembering Allah at all times.
- Al-Mizan - the happy and unhappy way of living.



STRATEGY 3

A RELAXED AND ALERT STATE OF MIND

- Importance of deep breathing and relaxation exercises before prayer.
- Ali (AS), and two traditions on offering prayer in the state of drowsiness.
- Tradition in Fiqhal-Ridha.
- Posture in prayer.

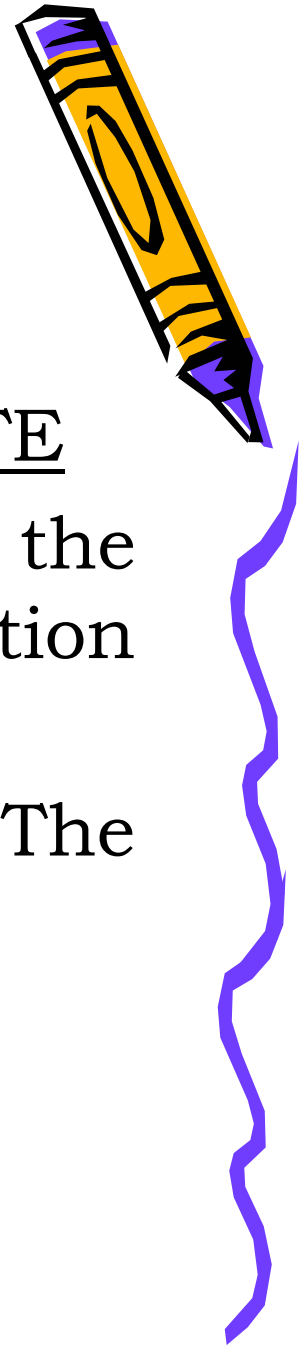


STRATEGY 4

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU RECITE

- Importance of understanding the meanings of the verses and glorification you proclaim in your Prayer.
- Tradition of al-Sadiq (AS) and The Prophet (S).

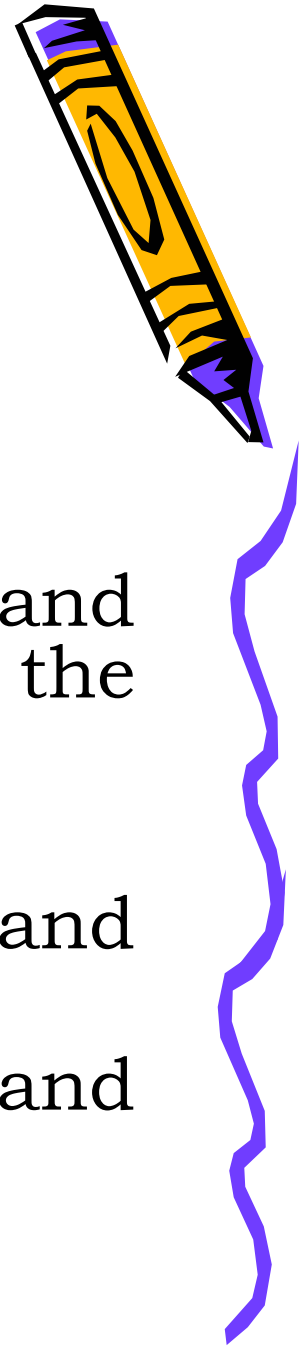
TRANSLATION OF PRAYERS



STRATEGY 5

PROPER PRONUNCIATION

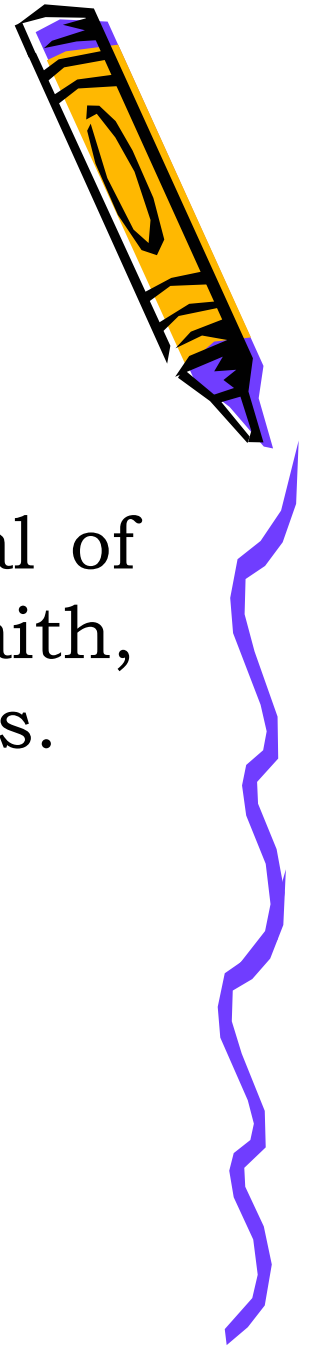
- Arabic language.
- *Makhaarij* (proper pronunciation) and *Tajweed* (following the rules of the Arabic Language).
- Listening to your own tone of voice.
- Combining the rules of recitation and frequency of your whole recitation.
- Prolonging your bending (Ruku') and prostration (Sujud).



STRATEGY 6

CONFIDENCE

- al-Amini - a secluded place, removal of all obstacles, strengthening of faith, remembrance of death, and readiness.
- Consistency and persistence.
- The force of Shaytan is weaker.
- Self-Confidence and Goal-Setting.



STRATEGY 7

ALTERNATING RECITATIONS

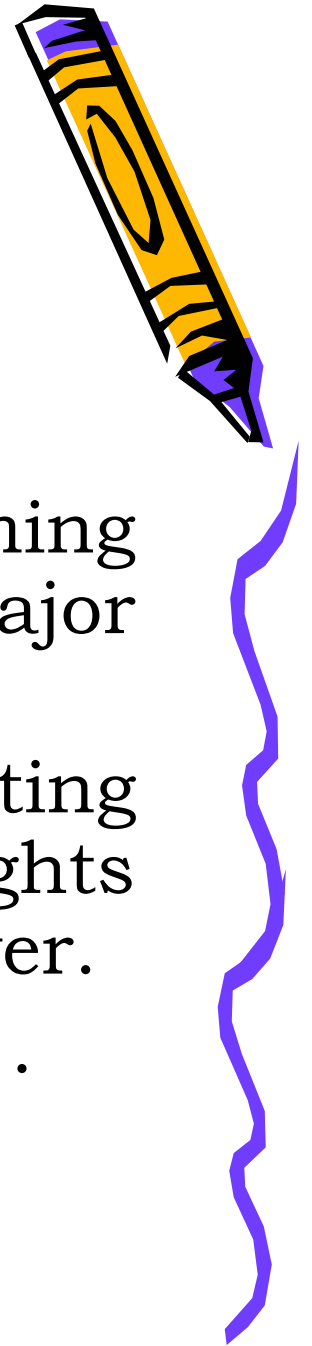
- Reciting different chapters of The Qur'an, different supplications and different forms of glorification in your Prayer.
- Examples.



STRATEGY 8

CONTINUED CLEANLINESS

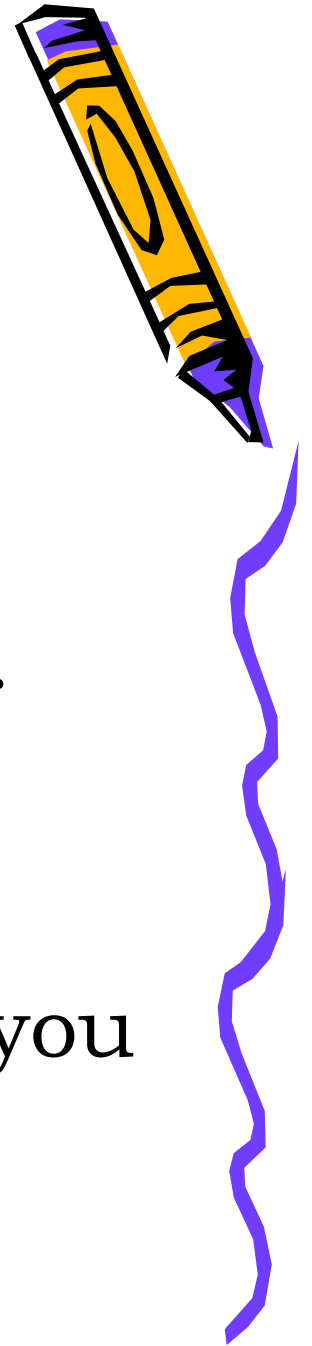
- Ritually pure at all times by performing ablution (wudhu) and ghusl (major ablution) whenever necessary.
- Cleanliness is a barrier preventing lustful ideas and disruptive thoughts from entering your mind during Prayer.
- *Cleanliness is a weapon of a believer .*
- Elements of cleanliness.



STRATEGY 9

SEEKING FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTING LIMITATIONS

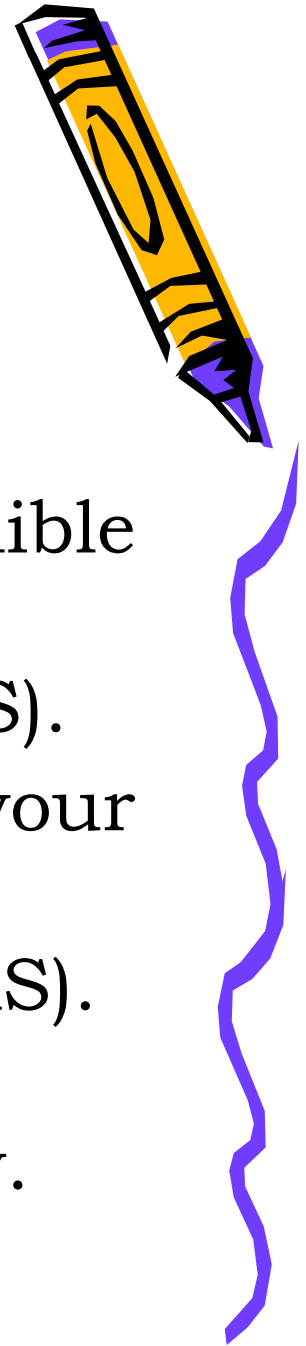
- Seeking forgiveness after prayer.
- Repentance.
- Next prayer.
- Accepting faults will create in you desire to perform even better.



STRATEGY 10

TRUST

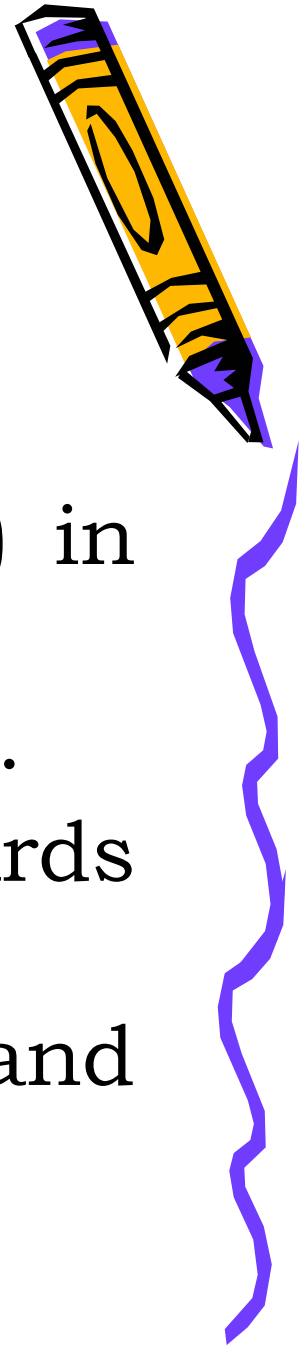
- The state of Ali (AS) and The Infallible Imams (AS) before prayer.
- The state of Ali, son of Al-Husayn (AS).
- Prayer you will be offering may be your last one.
- The imploring moaning of Ibrahim (AS).
- The state of Fatima (AS) during her communication with The Almighty.



STRATEGY 11

STRESS MANAGEMENT

- The advice of al-Khumeini (AR) in The Disciplines of Prayer.
- Stress and its effect on the body.
- HOW less stress can lead towards more attention.
- Importance of meditation and relaxation exercises.

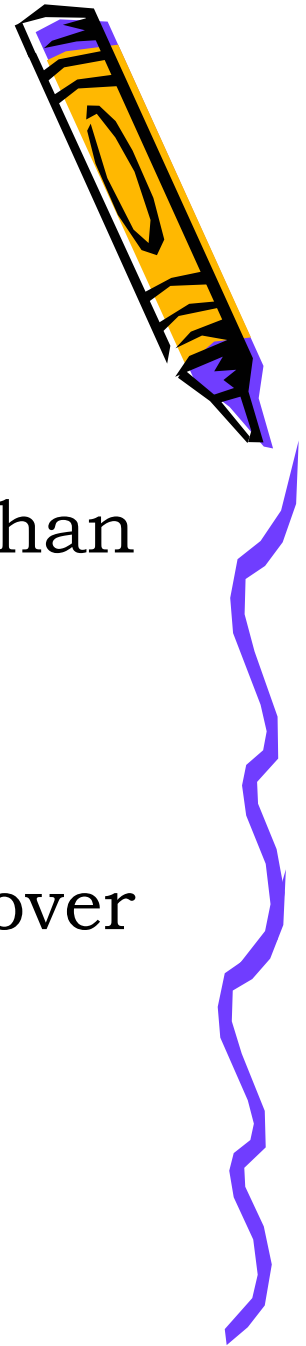


STRATEGY 12

SENSELESS CONVERSATIONS

- There is no worship superior than silence.
- Silence is part of wisdom.
- It is a sign of every virtue.
- Maintaining silence and pondering over every sentence you speak.
- Purposeless talks.

– Saying of Ali (AS).



STRATEGY 12

SENSELESS CONVERSATIONS

I have witnessed the most precious effects of silence. Practicing silence for forty days and nights, speaking only when it is absolutely required and remaining occupied in meditation and invocation until attaining purity and enlightenment.

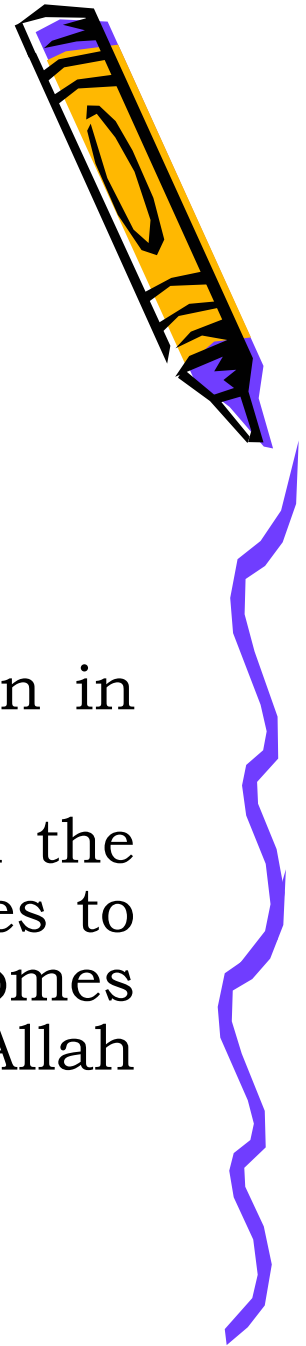
(Taba Tabai (AR))



STRATEGY 13

MODERATION IN EATING

- Excessive food intake is harmful.
- al-Ridha (AS) and moderation.
- Over-eating is a major cause of inattention in Prayer.
- Advice f Luqman Hakim, ‘Dear son! When the stomach is full your faculty of thinking goes to sleep, and your tongue of wisdom becomes dumb and your limbs fail to worship Allah (SWT).’



STRATEGY 14

CHECKING AND INSPECTION

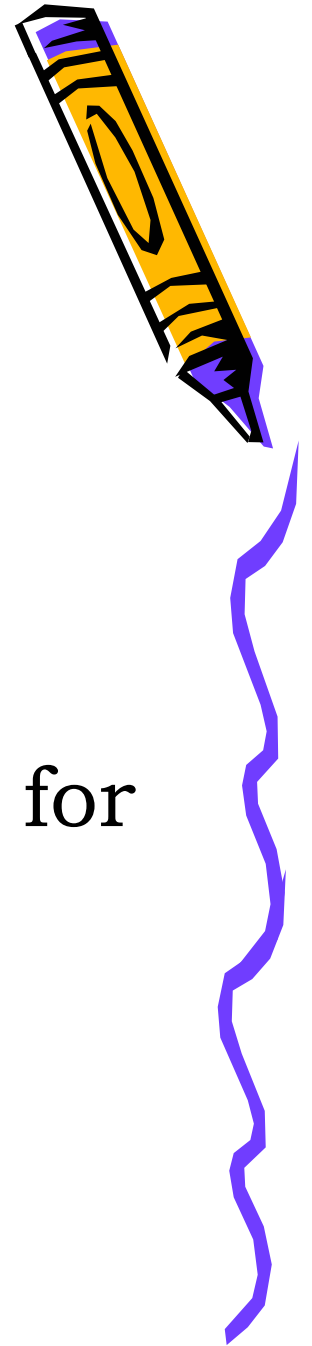
- Keeping track of the level of your attention and concentration in Prayer.
- Self-conditioning, contemplation and self-examination are essential prerequisites.
- Advice by al-Khumeini (AR).
- Reviewing your performance.



STRATEGY 15

PUTTING THOUGHTS IN WRITING

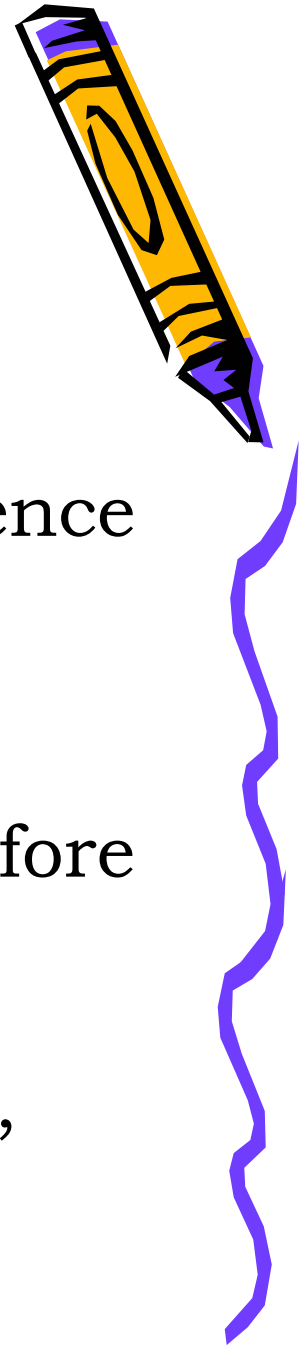
- Thoughts in prayer.
- Writing these thoughts down.
- Refer the 30-Day Workbook for more details.



STRATEGY 16

REMOVING OBSTACLES

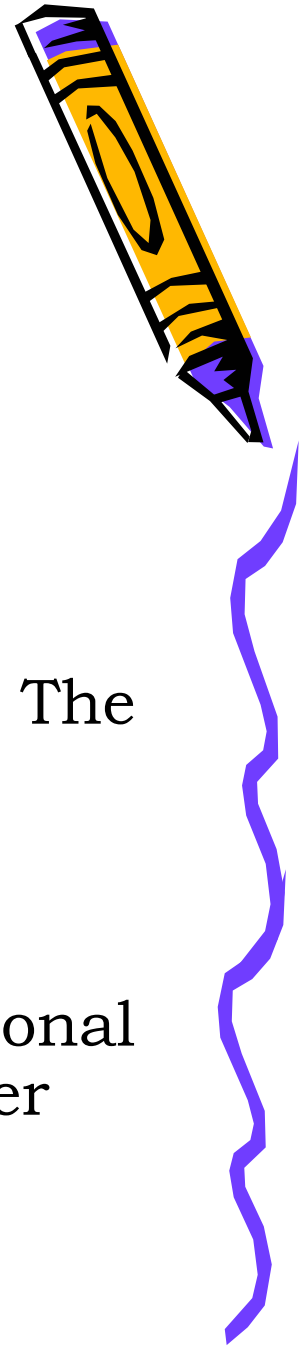
- Obstacles in attaining heart's presence must be removed.
- Hunger, thirst and over-eating.
- Water.
- Eliminate the causes of the worry before Prayer.
- Cloth in prayer.
- Tradition pertaining to al-Sajjad (AS), his cloak and prayer.



STRATEGY 17

GRIEF-STRICKEN, SUBMISSION AND SADNESS

- Sadness, a revolution of the soul.
- Sad minds are more attuned towards The objective (Allah (SWT)).
- Past, present and future sins.
- The Prophet (S) on grief.
- Crying and shedding tears for personal reasons during Prayer will make your Prayer null and void.

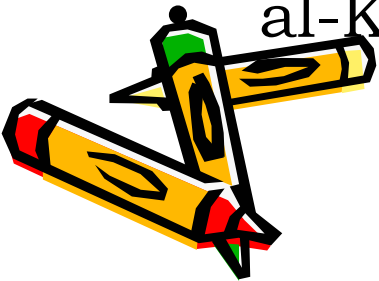


STRATEGY 18

PATIENCE, ACCEPTING FAULT AND ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM TO ALLAH

- Patience with your practice of attention.
- Continued practice of meditation, relaxation and attention.
- Allah, The Mighty, on patience.
- Shaytan, the cause of delay in performing good deeds.

al-Khumeini (AR) – THREE kinds of patience.



STRATEGY 19

FASTING

- Tell our guest that We were his Host last night and wanted to provide him with sumptuous food, but found no better food than hunger!
- Allah said this (on Fasting) to The Prophet (S) during Me'raj.
- Primal source of mental alertness.
- Fasting as a way to increase our mental capability to concentrate.

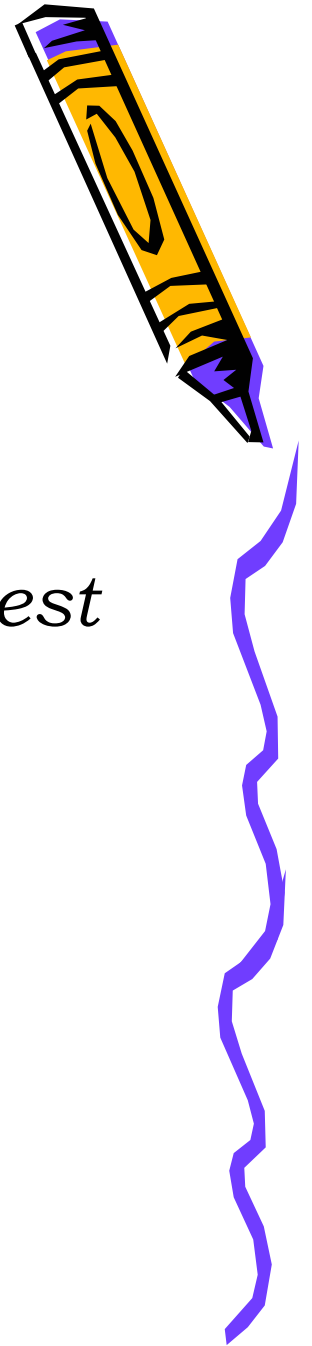


STRATEGY 19

FASTING

- Health benefits of fasting.

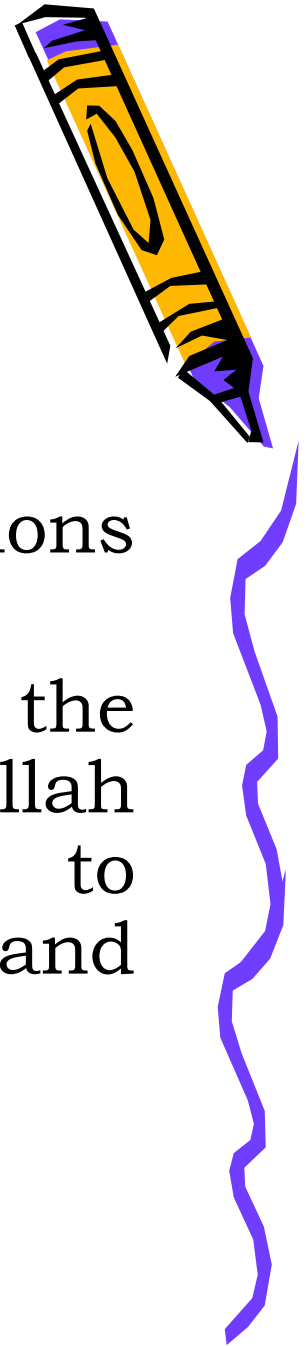
Fasting also offers physiological rest to all the major organs in the body, including the brain, and there is a stabilizing effect on all the vital physiological, nervous and mental functions. Mental powers are thus improved.



STRATEGY 20

THE WORLD AND ITS PLEASURES

- Love of this world and its repercussions according to Allah, The Mighty.
- The greatest obstacle to attaining the state of perfect communion with Allah (SWT) is unwavering attachment to worldly allurements namely, wealth and property, power and position.
- Approved and Disapproved world.



STRATEGY 21

ARRESTING THOUGHTS

- Command *stop*.
- What to do when doubts in the Prayer become too frequent.
- Breaking your Prayer.
- That malignant (Shaytan, the Accursed) wants to be obeyed.
- Concentrating intensely on the unwanted thought and suddenly stopping and emptying the mind.

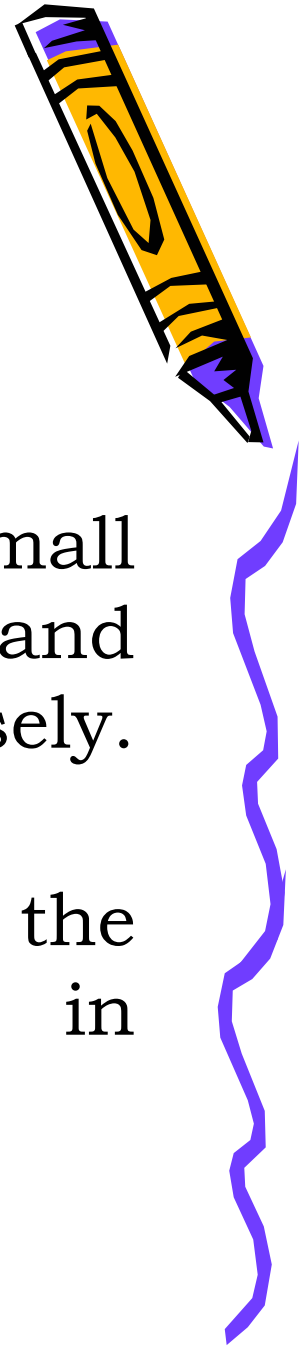


STRATEGY 21

ARRESTING THOUGHTS

- A technique involves drawing a small dot on a piece of paper and concentrating on it very intensely. FIGURE ONE.
- Exploring and listing down all the stressful and negative thoughts in prayer. FIGURE TWO.

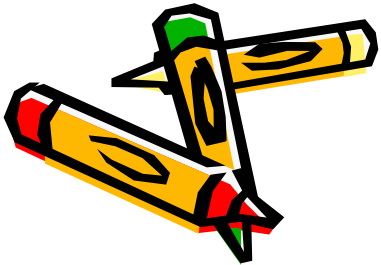
– Consistent motivation.



STRATEGY 21

ARRESTING THOUGHTS

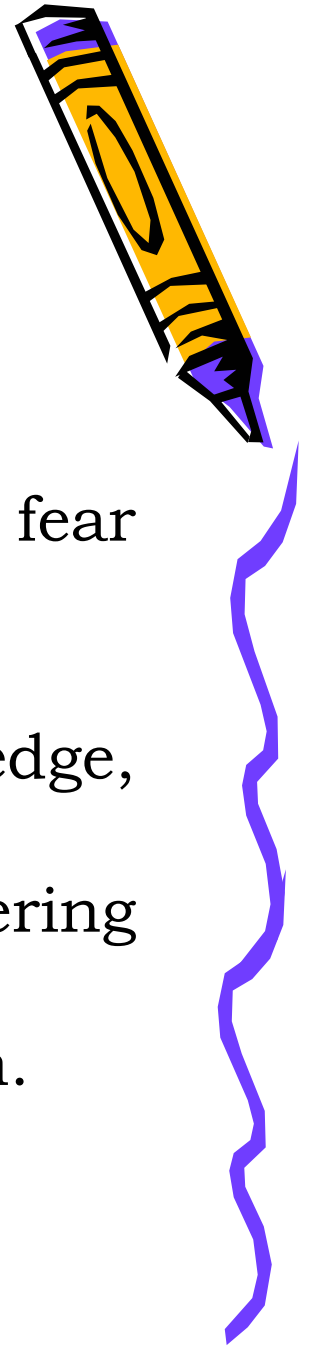
- The main effort is to stifle each thought as it begins, and to concentrate on your Prayer. The thoughts will return less and less readily in most cases, and eventually cease to be a problem.
- Al-Khumeini's (AR) advice.



STRATEGY 22

REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH

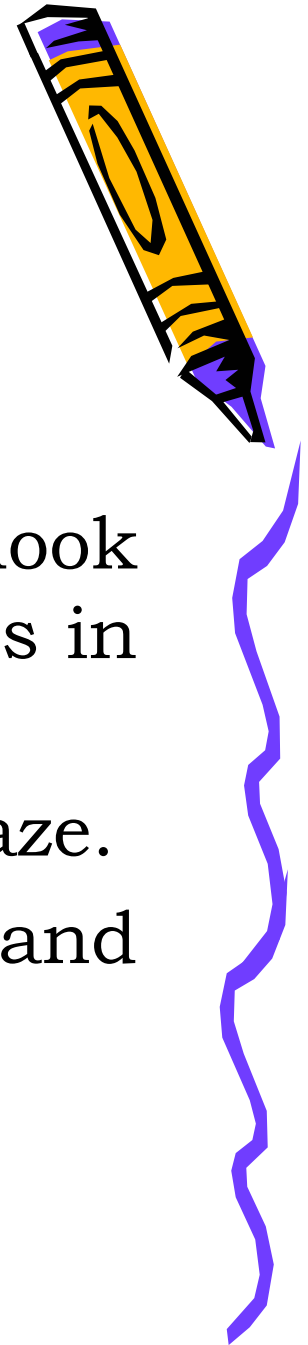
- Reminding yourself of death as a way to fear Allah (SWT).
- Allah, in The Traditions of al-Qudsi.
- The elements in fearing death – knowledge, frequent remembrance.
- al-Sadiq (AS) on the effects of remembering death.
- Tradition by at-Taba Tabai (AR) in al-Mizan.
- Think of death before every Prayer.



STRATEGY 23

FIXING YOUR GAZE

- Prophet's (S) tradition – where to look when performing the different actions in prayer.
- Mir Ahmad Ali (AR) on fixing your gaze.
- Eye movements, attention and concentration problem.
- Eye teaming.

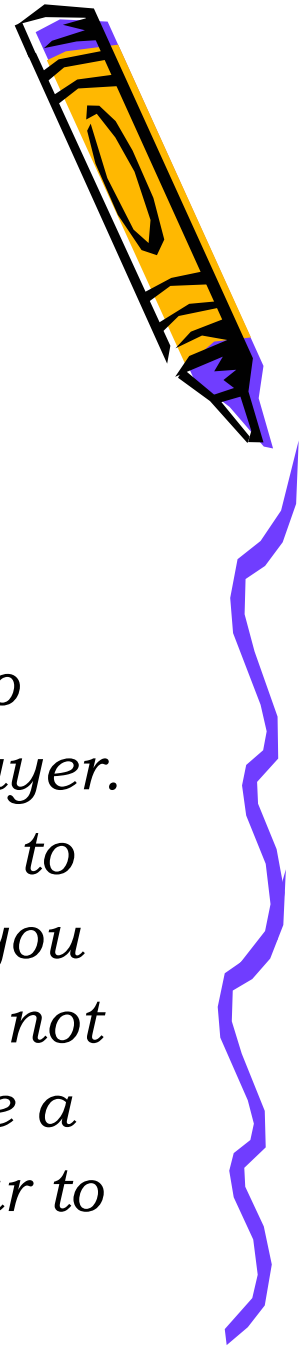


STRATEGY 24

AVOIDING THE WHISPERINGS OF SHAYTAN, THE ACCURSED

- al-Sadiq (AS) and whisperings in prayer.

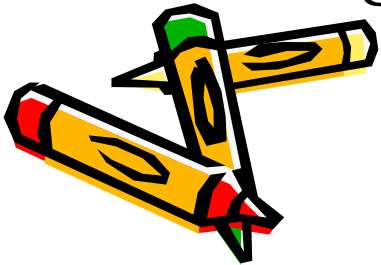
‘Do not let the evil one get accustomed to haunting him by tempting him to break the Prayer. For Shaytan is wicked and gets accustomed to that which he gets used to. So when one of you does not pay attention to his doubt and does not break his Prayer frequently, and this is done a number of times, the doubt will not recur to him’.



STRATEGY 24

AVOIDING THE WHISPERINGS OF SHAYTAN, THE ACCURSED

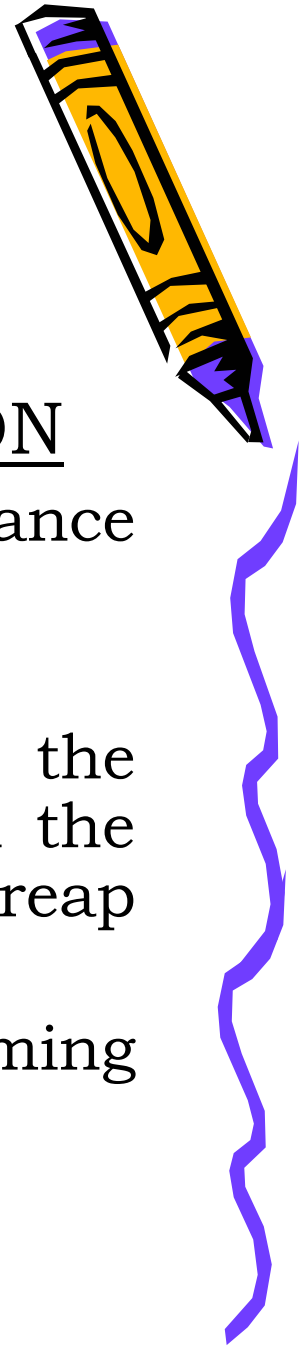
- If you do not permit Shaytan to enter your souls during Prayer, then he has no power to divert your attention during Prayer.
- Certainty, Conviction, Tranquility, Steadiness, and Sincerity.
- al-Sadiq (AS) and striking your left thigh...



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

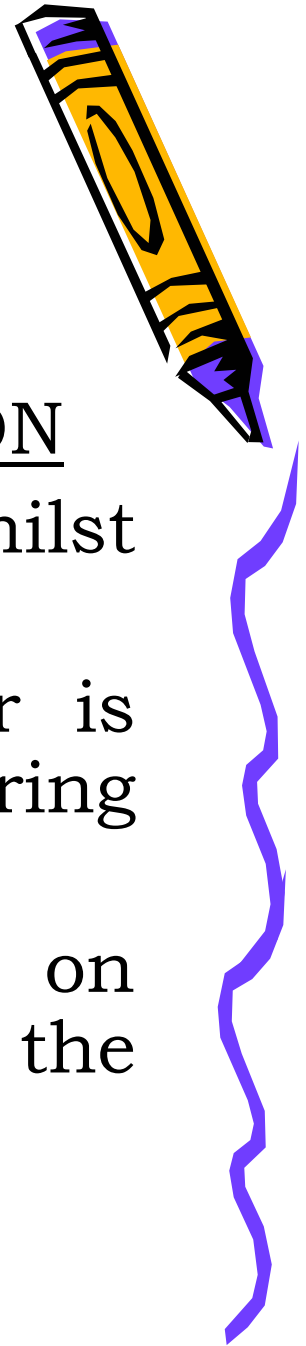
- Meditation - one effective way to enhance alertness in Prayer.
- Heart of meditation in Prayer.
- Repeating liturgies, contemplating on the nature of Allah (SWT), His creations, and the natural phenomena are effective ways to reap benefits from this kind of exercise.
- Contemplation whilst walking and performing our daily chores .



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

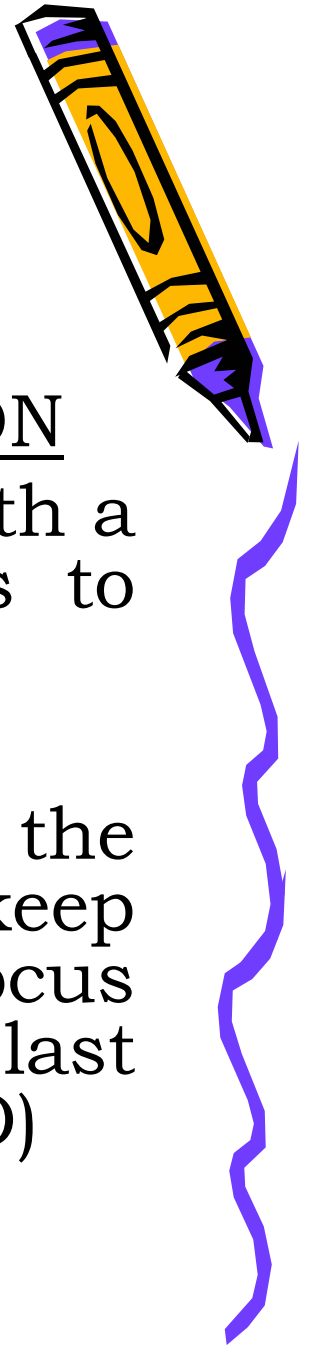
- al-Sadiq (AS) and reflection whilst walking.
- Lowering your gaze from whatever is inappropriate to faith, and remembering Allah (SWT) frequently.
- Concentration on one's silence, or on one's self or on a higher truth, i.e. the names and the attributes of Allah (SWT).



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

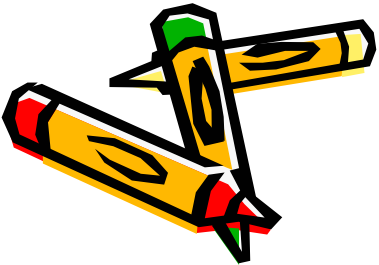
- Focused Meditation Exercise - Sit with a pencil and paper. Allow your eyes to rest gently on the blank paper...
- Continue doing this for 10 minutes.
- When you have the time, continue the exercise as long as the thoughts keep coming. Then continue the open focus for about 5 minutes after the last thoughts came to you. (FIGURE TWO)



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

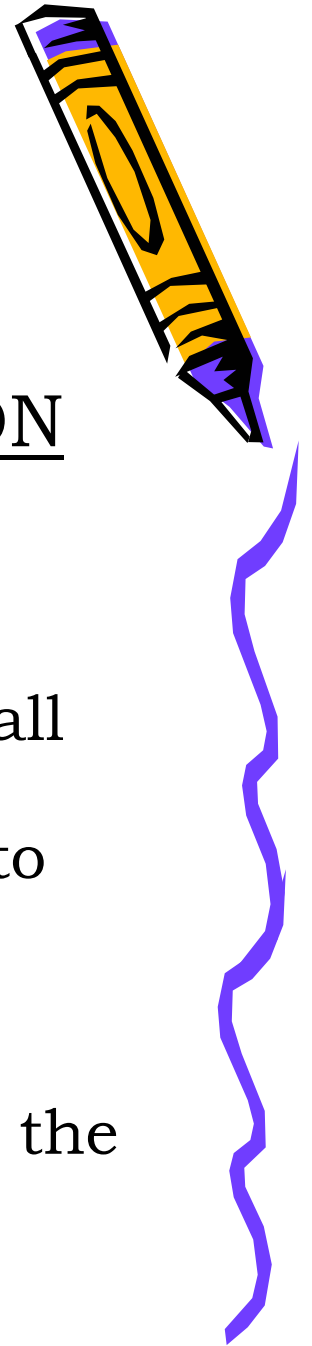
- Another form of this exercise is as follows: An ancient technique is to use a candle as a visual focus.
- Do not JUDGE your meditation.
- Blank Meditation Exercise.
- Breathing Meditation Exercise.



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

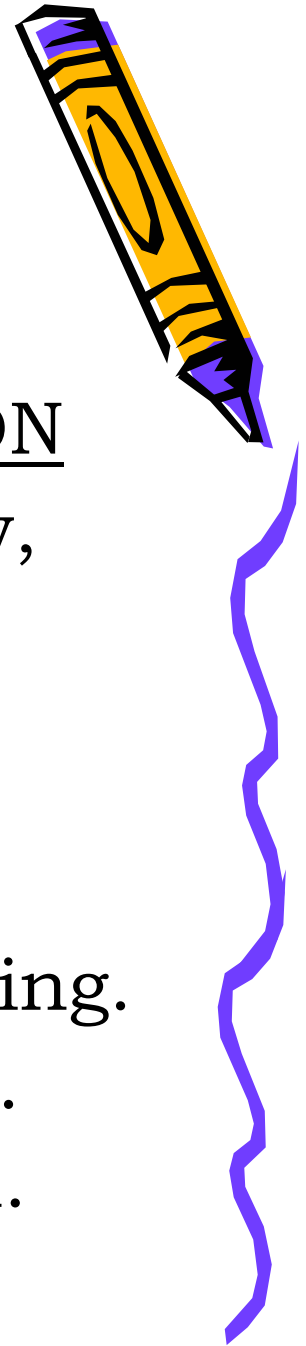
- Respiration – inhalation and exhalation.
- The FOUR stages of Breathing Meditation Exercise.
 - 1) Empty the lungs entirely by breathing out all the air in your lungs
 - 2) Slowly lower the diaphragm allowing air into the lungs. The abdomen swells filling the bottom of the lungs with air.
 - 3) Expand the ribs without straining.
 - 4) Allow the lungs to completely fill by raising the collarbone.



STRATEGY 25

EXERCISES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION

- Air should enter in a continuous flow, without gasping.
- Inhalation, like exhalation, must be silent, slow, continuous and easy.
- Role of Oxygen.
- Effects of stress and irregular breathing.
- Rhythmic and comfortable breathing.
- Frequency, Timing and duration.



Conclusion

- al-Khumeini's (AR) comments on the finality of Prayer.

As you utter the takbir (ALLAHU AKBAR), regard small all creatures in relation to the greatness of Allah (SWT). Examine your heart during the Prayer.

If you tasted the sweetness of the Prayer, and if in your soul you felt pleased by it, and your heart enjoyed the supplication to Allah (SWT) and conversing with Him, stow that Allah (SWT) has approved your takbirs. Otherwise, without feeling pleasure in supplication, and being deprived of tasting the sweetness of worship, you should know that Allah (SWT) has denied you and dismissed you from His Threshold.'

