

## Twenty-Fourth Rule

### EXERCISES

The following instructions have been highly recommended for a wayfarer before, during and after his or her spiritual journey. These steps should help one establish a stronger base for the journey and make certain that the future steps that require more attention and energy does not let one down and stop the journey.

These steps mentioned here exactly as the Scholars who undertook this journey and are enjoying its benefits have written them.

First: Before every thing else a devotee must purify his self from sins and moral abjectness by means of repentance. In the beginning with the intention of repentance, take a bath (ghusl) and during bathing, think about your past sins and esoteric contamination and then with a feeling of shame, present your self before The Most Merciful and Most Compassionate Lord saying, *Oh Lord! I have repented and have returned to you. I have taken a firm decision never to sin again. As I cleaned my body with water, I have also cleaned my heart from sins and moral abjectness.*

Second: Consider yourself all the time under the presence of God-Almighty. Try your best to remember God in all circumstances and if occasionally negligence overtakes you try to return to the previous state immediately.

Third: One must be strict in guarding his self against contamination with sins. During a period of twenty-four hours, he must fix a time for self-scrutiny, with extreme accuracy should review his daily deeds, and should seriously demonstrate his self.

Fourth: One should remain silent and should speak whenever it is necessary to speak.

Fifth: One should eat moderately to meet his physical needs and should strictly avoid over-eating and becoming a slave of belly.

Sixth: One should maintain his ablution all the times i.e. whenever he terminates ablution he should perform it again. The Holy Prophet (S) narrated a tradition,

The God-Almighty said: Whoever after termination of ablution does not perform it again has been unfaithful to me; whoever after performance of ablution does not offer two units of prayer has done oppression, and whoever after performance of ablution offers prayer and requests for his worldly and spiritual needs, if I don't grant them, I have oppressed him. However, I am not the oppressor God.

**Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 1, page 268**

Seventh: One should fix a time during 24 hours preferably during night before dawn for practicing concentration and presence of heart, by sitting alone in an isolated place, lowering his head upon knees, concentrating all the senses towards face and strictly avoiding entry of all external thoughts and memories. One should remain in this state for a while. May be this action would result in some spiritual contemplation for the wayfarer.

Eight: Invocation: "Oh Self-Existent, Eternal, there is no god save Thee," (Ya Hayyu Ya Qayyum Ya Man La Ilaha Illa Ant), should be recited continuously by tongue together with heart's presence i.e. whatever is being chanted by tongue is also comprehended by the heart.

Ninth: During a period of 24 hours, one must perform a prolonged prostration with concentration and presence of heart in proportion to one's strength and should repeat the invocation: "There is no god save Thee. You are glorified. Lo! I have been a wrong Doer." (La Ilaha Illalla Anta Subhanaka Inni Kuntu Minadh Dhalimin). The prolongation of prostration has proven as very effective and produces good spiritual revelations. Some of the devoted wayfarers have repeated this invocation as much as four thousand times during a single prolonged prostration.

Tenth: One should fix a certain time during 24 hours and with presence of heart should repeat the invocation, "O' You Who are free from needs and O' You Who is The Granter of Our needs." (Ya Ghani Ya Mughni!)

Eleventh: One should recite The Qur'an with presence of mind daily, preferably in the standing position and should ponder over the meanings of its verses.

Twelfth: One should awake a little before the call of Adhan for the morning prayer, after performing required ablutions should offer Night Prayer (Namaz-e-Shab or Salat-ul-Lail), and after finishing it should recite the following verses of Chapter of Heights (al-A'raf) with heart's presence, which is useful for attaining certainty and negation of external thoughts.

"Lo Your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He The Throne. He covers the night with the day, which in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment Blessed is God, The Lord of the worlds."

"(O' mankind!) call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo! He loves not the aggressors. Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof, and call on Him in fear and hope). Lo! the mercy of God is nigh unto the good."

**(Qur'an - Chapter 7, Verse 54-56)**

al-Kafi, vol. 1, page 344

In order to achieve the desired result the above-mentioned instructions are practiced for a period of 40 days. It is possible that the wayfarer may succeed in receiving God's attention and might be blessed with spiritual contemplation. However, if after passing forty days one is not fortunate enough to receive such blessings, instead of becoming disappointed, the program should be repeated again and again till the desired results are accomplished. Without giving up seriousness, action, and struggle the wayfarer should remain seriously committed towards his spiritual migration and seek favor from The Most Merciful Lord. When ever, he develops the required decency and competency to receive God's special blessing -it will be bestowed upon him.

In case a wayfarer in the beginning does not have the strength to perform all of the above-mentioned guidelines, he may begin with few gradually adding others. However, most important among these deeds are pondering, self-control, heart's presence, and attention towards God-Almighty. It is crucial that a wayfarer should thoroughly negate all sort of external thoughts and should pay absolute attention towards God- Almighty, which is a difficult task indeed.

The negation of other than God could be achieved gradually in three steps:

First: During first stage while reciting invocation, try your best to concentrate all your thoughts towards the invocation while strictly preventing the entries of all external thoughts.

Second: During this stage one should recite invocation exactly like the first stage with the exception that, while reciting complete attention should be paid towards its meanings and contents, in a manner that mind should become clearly aware of this occurrence. At the same time, efforts should be made to strictly prevent the attack of all sorts of external thoughts and memories. This program should be exercised until one is able to prevent the attacks of all external thoughts during the entire period of invocation, while being remained attentive to their meanings and contents.

Third: During third stage, try your best first to memorize the meanings of invocation inside the heart, and since it has accepted their meanings and believes in them, orders the tongue to recite them. In this case, the tongue actually follows the heart.

Fourth: At this stage try your best to negate all the meanings, contents, interpretations, and even the imaginations of invocations from the heart, thus, making it readied for receiving Divine blessings and illuminations. Try to pay absolute attention towards God-Almighty with your entire existence cleansing your hearts thoroughly from all sorts of external existence, opening its gate for the entrance of God's-Celestial Light. At this stage it is quite possible that one might succeed in receiving God's special attention, may utilize His grace and illuminations, and submerged with His attraction may ascent further higher and higher upon the ladder of perfection in his spiritual migration towards God-Almighty.

At this station of his Gnostic journey, the wayfarer might become so much absorbed that he would be seeing nothing except God-Almighty even forgetting his own self and actions. It is better for me to leave the description of these most sublime realities for the God's favorite saints who had seen the end of journey and have tasted the most delicious taste of the stages of desire, affection, and countenance.

### **Instructions of The Commander of The Faithful Imam Ali (AS)**

Nouf had narrated,

"I saw The Commander of The Faithful Imam Ali (AS) while passing by with speed, I asked him, 'Oh my master! Where are you heading for?' 'Nouf, leave me alone, my desire is forcing me towards my beloved. 'Replied the Imam. 'O' my Master! What is your desire?' I asked him. 'the one who is supposed to know about it -already knows, and there is no need to describe it to some body else. The decency demands that a servant of God should not include others (as partner) as for as the blessings and wants are concerned.'" Replied the Imam.

"'O' Commander of The Faithful! I am afraid of being dominated by selfish whims and greed in my worldly affairs. 'I said. 'Why are you negligent towards the Saver of fearful ones and Protector of pious ones?' Said The Imam.

"'Introduce Him to me.'" I requested. 'He is The God-Almighty The Magnanimous through whose special benevolence your wishes are granted. Pay attention towards Him with your full strength and do not allow Satanic whispers to enter inside your heart, and if you find it difficult then consider me as your guarantor. Return to God and pay absolute attention towards Him. The glorious God has said,

"'I swear to My Majesty and Splendor that: Whoever puts his hope in some one other than Me, I will cut off his hope, will dress him in the robe of disgrace and wretchedness, will deprive him from My Nearness, will cut off communication with him and will hide his memory. Woe be upon him, who takes shelter in other than Me during difficulties, while the solution of difficulties rests with Me. Does he hope in others while I remain Living and Eternal? Does he go to the homes of human beings for solution of his problems while the gates of their houses are closed? Does he leave the door of My house while its gate remains always open?

"'Was there anyone who trusted Me and was betrayed? The hopes of My servants are tied to Me, and I take care of their hopes. 'I have filled the sky with those who never get tired of My praise, and have ordered The Angels never to close the door between Me and My servants. Does not, the one who face the problem, know that no one can solve it except with My permission? Why does not the servant approach Me for his needs, while I had already blessed him with favors without his being asked for them?"

"Why does not he ask me instead of asking others? Does he imagine that in the beginning I bestow My favors upon the servant and will now deprive him after his request? Am I miser that My servants regard me as miserly? Do not the world and Hereafter belong to me? Do not the merry and benevolence are my characteristics? Do not the blessings and favors rest in My hand? Do not all the desires end with Me? Who has the power to terminate them?"

"I swear with My majesty and splendor that if all the needs of all of the world's habitants are summed up, and if I bestow upon them in accordance to their wants, not equivalent even to the weight of a tiny particle will be decreased from My Kingdom. Whatever is bestowed by Me how could be it susceptible to loss or reduction? How destitute and wretched is the one who is hopeless of My Blessings? How helpless is the one who disobeys me, indulges into forbidden deeds, disregards My limits and transgresses?"

The Commander of the Faithful, after narrating this narration said, 'O' Nouf! recite the following prayer:

*"O' God! If I adore you -it is because of Your Mercy and Compassion, if I glorify You -it is because of Your Commandments, if I sanctify and attribute inviolability to you -it is because of your energy, if I chant the world of Monotheism with my tongue -it is because of Your Power. If I raise my eyes -I see Your Blessings all over, if I practice thriftiness, it is because to save Your Bounties, O' Lord! Whoever, You do not engage in Your invocation, and bestow upon him the grace of journeying towards Your countenance -life becomes for him like death, and death becomes for him a regret and disaster.*

*"O' Lord! Those who are able to see -look towards You with their esoteric eyes, mysteries of their hearts became manifested and their wants are granted, the veils of ignorance have been removed between You and them,. your Divine illumination has enlightened their hearts, they breath the breeze of Your Blessings, Your Majesty and Splendor has overwhelmed their hearts, they witness the signs of Your Absolute Power every where, there souls have reached near Your Sacred Throne and with dignity, tranquility, and humility engage themselves in Your invocations. Like a friend, You pay attention towards them, listen to their words, grant their, wants, and communicate with them.*

*"Please bestow upon me similar positions as attained by them, let the veils of ignorance be uplifted so that my soul could see the Divine illumination of Your Celestial Kingdom, and may receive an exalted position therein. Indeed, You have the absolute power over all things. 'O' God! How fearsome and terrible is journeying on the road which does not terminate in you. Whoever, chooses a shelter of other than you -would certainly be disappointed. Whoever puts his trust in other than you is like sitting upon an unstable base."*

*"O' God! who had induced hope within the hearts of all the hopeless ones and have removed their pains and sufferings, please do not deprive me from the grace of performing righteous deeds and preserve me -the shelter less and destitute- in Your Shelter. How come those, who put their trust in Your Mercy, could be inflicted with deprivation? While you remain absolutely free from the need of inflicting loss upon sinners."*

*"O' God! All sweetness and pleasures eventually are terminated except the pleasure of faith, which increases every day. O' God! My heart is looking towards You with plenty of desires; please let my heart taste the sweetness of seeing those desires granted. Indeed You have absolute power over all things."*

*"O' God! As some one who has reached near the enlightenment of Your Essence, I beg You, to bestow upon me all the blessings which are worthy of a believer. In addition, protect me from all sorts of evils and calamities the way You protect all Your favorite servants. In deed You have absolute power over all things."*

*"O' God! My request to You is as if the request of a confused beggar who does not have any shelter or support and except from you does not seek the help of any other helper. I request by The Name, which became manifested for Your favorite saints, thus, enabling them to become enlightened about Your Holy Essence, comprehended You as One, and worshipped You with sincerity indeed. Please bestow upon me too the learning to comprehend Your Holy Essence, so that I may admit the reality of Your Divinity and Godhood, and do not include me among them who worship Your Name only without paying attention to its meanings."*

In addition, allocate at least a certain moments (among various moments) to pay attention towards me thus, enlightening my heart about Your Sacred Essence as well as the essence of your favorite saints. Indeed, you have absolute power over all things.

**Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 94, page 94**

### **Instructions of Imam al-Sadiq (AS)**

Unwan Basari, an old man of ninety-four years has narrated as follows,

"For the sake of acquiring knowledge I used to visit Malik bin Anas. When Ja'far bin Muhammad (AS) came to our city, I went to visit him, because I wanted to acquire knowledge from his distinguished and eminent personality. One day he said to me:

*"I am a person who had received God's special favor and attention and have incantation and invocations for every hour during day and night, therefore, you should not prevent me from their recital and like before continue to visit Malik bin Anas for learning knowledge."*

"Hearing these words I become sad and disappointed and left his company. I said to myself. 'If Imam had discovered some goodness within me, certainly he would not have deprived me from his company. Then I left for The Prophet's mosque and offered salutation to him. Next day, I went to The Prophet's tomb and after offering two units of prayer raised my hands up and said,

"O' God! O' God! Make Ja'far's heart soft for me so that I could utilize his knowledge, and guide me towards straight path."

After that with a heavy broken heart returned home as well as visited Malik bin Anas, because love and affection for Ja'far bin Muhammad had penetrated far deeper inside my heart. For a long time I confined myself within the four walls of my home and did not come out except for offering mandatory daily prayers till my patience was exhausted one day I went to Imam's house and after knocking the door asked permission to enter inside. A servant came out and asked me."

"What do you want?' 'I would like to see the Imam and offer a salutation. 'I replied. 'My master is offering his prayer, replied the servant and returned inside the home, while I kept waiting outside the door. After a little while the servant returned and said: 'You may come in."

"I entered inside the house and offered salutation to Imam. He replied my salutation and said: 'Please be seated, may God-Almighty bestow upon you forgiveness. "Then he lowered his head and after a prolonged silence rose his head and said: 'What is your name? 'Abu Abdullah,' I replied. 'May God-Almighty bless you with His Special Grace and bestow upon you firmness. What do you want?'

"In this meeting there is no any other advantage for me except this prayer - even this much is going to be extremely precious for me. ' I said to myself Then I said: 'I asked God-Almighty to soften your heart for me so that I may utilize your knowledge. I hope my prayer would have been granted by him.

"Oh Abu Abdullah! Knowledge cannot be acquired by learning rather real knowledge is the light, which illuminates a person's heart that is blessed with His Guidance. Therefore, you are seeker of the knowledge; first make your heart comprehend the reality of (God's) servanthood, then request knowledge by means of deeds, and ask God-Almighty for comprehension so that he could make you understand. 'said The Imam.

"I said. 'O'! Honorable one!' 'Abu Abdullah!" "Please continue.' said the Imam. 'O' Imam! What is the reality of servanthood?' I asked.

The Imam replied. "The reality of servanthood consists in three things as follows:

First: A servant should not consider himself the owner of things, which have been bestowed upon him by God-Almighty, because servants never become owner of things rather consider all the wealth as God's property and spent it exactly in the same manner as prescribed by him.

Second: A servant should regard him as helpless in managing his own affairs.

Third: A servant should engage himself continuously in performance of deeds recommended by God-Almighty and avoidance of His forbidden deeds.

"Therefore, if a servant does not consider himself as the owner of the wealth, spending it for the sake of God's way would become easier for him. If he trusted God-Almighty as a competent manager for managing his affairs then tolerance of worldly hardships would become easier for him. If he kept himself engaged in performing Divine commands and sustained himself from committing forbidden deeds his precious time would not be wasted in nonsense amusements.

"And if God-Almighty honored a servant with these three characteristics then dealing with world, people, and Satan would become easier for him. In that case, he would not endeavor for increase of wealth for self-glorification, and would not wish for things whose possession is considered as means of prestige and superiority among the people and would not waste his precious hours in false pleasures. This is the first rank of piety, which have been described by God-Almighty as follows:

As for that abode of The Hereafter, we assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption, the sequel is for those who ward off evil.

**(Qur'an - Chapter 28, Verse 83)**

"O! Abu Abdullah! Please bestow upon me practical instructions. 'I said. The Imam said,

'I recommend you to follow the, following nine items. These are my recommendations and instructions for all those wayfarers who are journeying towards God-Almighty, and I pray that may God-Almighty bestow upon you His Special Grace.

The following are the guidelines: 'There are three guidelines for practicing self-asceticism, three guidelines for forbearance, and the last three guidelines are for education. Preserve them and, be careful not to act negligently in their practice'. Unwan Basari said: 'I was listening to Imam's instruction with my entire existence, then the Imam continued '.

The three instructions recommended by me for self-asceticism consist of:

1. Be careful, do not eat any thing until and unless you feel an appetite for it, because otherwise, it would be a matter of foolishness and ignorance.
2. Do not eat any thing until and unless you feel hungry.
3. When you eat always recite phrase in the Name of God (Bismillah) and eat only lawful foods.

The three instructions recommended by me for forbearance consist of:

1. Whoever tells you: 'For each sentence you speak to me, I will speak ten sentences in response. 'You should say in reply: 'If you speak ten sentences to me, in reply you will not hear even one sentence from me.
2. Whoever threatens you with abusive language, you should promise him good wishes and advice.
3. Whoever accuses you, you must say in reply: 'If you said it right may God forgive me and if you lied then may God forgive you.

The three guidelines recommended by me for education consist of:

1. Whatever is unknown to you ask from the learned ones, but be careful not to question them with the intention of examining their knowledge or giving them hard time.
2. Strictly avoid following your whims and as much as possible act prudently.
3. Strictly avoid issuance of religious decrees (fatwa) without religious documents. As much as you would like to run away while encountering a wild beast, similarly be careful not to offer your neck as a bridge for people's crossing.

"Then he said: 'O' Abu Abdullah! You may leave now. I have given you sufficient advice. Do not disrupt me from continuation of my incantations and invocations, because, I believe in the dignity of my own self: Salutations be upon those who are obedient to guidance."

**Kashkul, Shaykh Bahai, vol. 2, p-184 - Biharul-Anwar, vol. 1, pp 224**

### **Instructions of Allamah al-Majlisi (AR)**

One of the most eminent wayfarers of Gnostic journey -the great learned Divine Scholar Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi writes,

"Whatever this servant has discovered during his period of self-building and Gnosticism is related to the period when I was busy in studying commentary of The Holy Qur'an. One night, while I was in a state of partly sleep and partly awakened I saw The Holy Prophet Mohammad (S) in a dream. I said to my self that it is a good opportunity to take a profound look about the perfection and moral ethics of The Holy Prophet (S) The more I paid attention towards him I found his splendor and illumination spreading till it brightened the entire space around me."

"At this moment it was revealed to me that The Holy Qur'an is The Perfect Manifestation of The Holy Prophet's moral ethics. Therefore, to know more about Holy Prophet's moral ethics I must ponder deeply about The Holy Qur'an. The more I paid attention upon the verses of Holy Qur'an the more I discovered the sublime realities till at one instant I felt that a lot of realities and learning have been descended upon my heart."

"After that whenever I pondered about a Qur'anic verse, I felt that a special talent for its comprehension has been bestowed upon me. Of course, appreciation of this incident by some one who has not been blessed with such a grace is naturally difficult rather impossible, but my aim was to advice and guide the fellow brothers for the sake of God-Almighty.

The guidelines for asceticism and self-building consist of:

*Useless talks, rather any thing other than God's Remembrance should be strictly avoided.*

*Living in luxurious, beautiful and comfortable housing as well as consumption of expensive foods, drinks and fancy clothing should be renounced. (one should limit himself to the extent of fulfilling his genuine needs).*

*Social mixing with other than God's most favorite saints should be strictly avoided.*

*Excessive sleep should be avoided and God's invocation with complete dedication should be recited continuously.*

"One should become God's favorite saint by continuous recital of invocations namely: "O! Self-existent O! Eternal " (Ya Hayyu Ya Qayyum!) in addition "There is no god but God" (Ya Man La Ilaha Illa Ant), were able to obtain good results. I too have practiced the same invocation but perhaps my favorite invocation is "O! God"! (Ya Allah), with thorough cleansing of heart from all existence other than God, together with absolute concentration towards Him.

Of course, what is important is that God's Remembrance should be accompanied with absolute concentration and heart's presence.

Also, all other deeds do not come close to the importance assigned to invocation.”

“If this is done for a period of forty days and nights continuously then certainly the doors of wisdom, learning, and love will be opened for the wayfarer enabling him to ascent towards the most exalted Gnostic positions of annihilation in God, or achieving permanence with God-Almighty.

**Rozatehal-Mutaqin, vol. 13, p-128**

**Letter of Akhund-Mulla Hussein Quli Hamdani**

The most eminent learned Divine scholar and Gnostic (late) Akhund Mulla Hussein-Quli Hamadani (AR) in his letter to one of the scholar in Tabriz writes,

"In The Name of God, The Beneficent, The Merciful"

"Praise be upon God of The Worlds, salutations be upon The Muhammad and his Holy Progeny and may be the curse of God be upon their enemies.”

“It should not remain hidden for religious brothers that there is no way to achieve the nearness of The Lord of Splendor and Majesty except strictly following the sacred religious law of Islam (Sharia) in all movements, pauses, conversations, and instances etc. Superstitious methods practiced by some pseudo mystics and ignorant ones in accordance to their intellectual taste do not produce any desired result except their taking farther distance from God-Almighty.”

"Even a person who forbids upon himself meat and leaves the hairs of his mustache untrimmed is blessed with the blessing of faith, (i.e. belief about the immunity from sin for The infallible Imams of The Prophet's Progeny) must understand, that unless and until he strictly practices their instructions and traditions for invocations, he would become farther away from God-Almighty.”

"It is therefore, necessary that he must regard the sacred Divine Law (Sharia) with special reverence and should attach utmost importance for its execution. Whatever have been emphasized in the sacred religious law as well as whatever have been comprehended by this poor servant by using intellect and deliberating traditions may be concluded: "The fulfillment of the heartiest desire of all creatures -God’s Nearness depends upon their making serious efforts and endeavors to quit sinning.”

"So, if this is not done, recital of invocations and pondering over Qur’anic verses would not produce any useful result for heart, because the services rendered by some one who is in direct rebellion against The King would be useless. I do not know, what sort of King? The exaltedness belong to that king of Splendor and Majesty, and which enmity could be more worst then enmity with such a King?”

"You must better understand that your efforts and endeavor for achieving God's Nearness -while still sinning and being contaminated is a serious mistake. How come this matter has remained hidden from your eyes that it is the sin of a sinner that causes The King to feel hatred towards him, and this hatred can never be summed up with His Love."

"Since you know it with certainty that avoidance of sins is the beginning, end, apparent, and hidden of faith, therefore the sooner you engage yourself in self-struggle the better it would be. With absolute dedication from the moment you awake, all along the day till the time of sleep you must monitor your self strictly. Be careful to remain respectful because you are continuously in the presence of The Lord of Majesty and Splendor and know that all your body parts and members, including the finest particles of your existence are the prisoners of His Power Therefore, do not forget to observe the rules of etiquette. Worship him in a manner as though you are actually seeing Him, and if you do not see Him, any way He sees you."

"Be conscious about His Majesty and your humility, His Eminence and your lowness, His Magnanimity and your abjectness and His Freedom from needs and your neediness. Be aware that if you act negligently in remembering The Lord of Glory and Magnanimity but He does remember you, and in his presence stood like a helpless, wretched servant. Like a bony dog put your chin upon din before His feet. If this distinction and honor is not sufficient for you that He has permitted you to utter His Holy Exalted Name by your filthy tongue ? The tongue that had become unclean due to pollution of sinning."

"O' dear! Since The Most Compassionate and Most Merciful Lord has made the tongue as the reservoir of the mountain of light, to be commissioned only for His Holy invocation it is indeed shamelessness that The King' s reservoir be polluted by refuse and filth of lying, backbiting, cursing, teasing, and sinning. It should be a place full of perfume and rose water instead of being filled with filth and refuse. Beyond any doubt since you acted negligently in supervising your self strictly, you don't know what some of horrible sins and transgression have been committed by your body parts namely: ears, tongue, eyes, hands feet, belly, and sexual organs."

"What sorts of devastating fires have you ignited ? How much corruption have you induced in your religion? How much prohibited wounds have you inflicted upon your heart through the tongue's swords and arrows ? It will be surprising if it has not already been killed. If I want to comment about the details of these deviations even this entire book would not be enough, what can I do with one page? You, who have yet not cleaned your body parts from the filth, how do you expect someone to write for you about the heart' s condition ? Therefore, make haste, hurry up to perform a true repentance and seriously guard your self."

"In summary, after making his best endeavors for strictly guarding the self a wayfarer striving for God's Nearness should not be negligent about night vigil awakening before dawn and offering the night prayer (Namaz-e-Shab) with concentration and heart's presence. If time permits, he should engage himself in hymns and invocations but at least a part of night should be spent in invocation with heart's presence. In all these situations the wayfarer should not be without grief and sorrow and if he is -he should acquire its causes."

"In the end recite the following,

1. The rosary of Hazrat Fatima al-Zahra (AS)
2. Qur'anic Chapter of al-Ikhlās 12 times,
3. "There is no god but God. There is no partner, there is no kingdom except yours." (La Ilaha Illa Hu Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahul Mulk) -10 times,
4. "There is no god but God" (la Ilaha Illa Hu) -100 times,
5. I Beseech God's forgiveness and offer repentance" (Astaghfirullah Rabbi Wa Atubu Ilaihi) -70 times,
6. A portion of Holy Qur'an and the famous prayer named Dua Sabah of The Commander of The Faithful Imam Ali (AS).

"One should remain in the state of ablution continuously and it is preferred to offer two units of prayer after performing each ablution. Be careful not to inflict the least damage or hurt the feeling of fellow human beings and you must strive sincerely in meeting the needs of fellow Muslims especially the scholars and pious ones. He should not attend any meeting where there is a possibility of sinning, even socialization with the negligent ones is harmful. Also, excessive involvement in world affairs –although permitted religiously, too much humor, nonsense talking, and listening to false rumors are injurious for the hearts condition ultimately making it a dead heart."

"Without practicing strict self-control simply engaging in invocation and deliberations would be fruitless and would not produce the results even though if one succeeds in achieving ecstasy, because it won't be durable and one should not be fooled with ecstasy achieved without self-surveillance. I do not have lot of strength and I beseech you to pray a lot for me and do not forget this humble wretched sinner full of guilt. Do recite Qur'anic Chapter of The Power (Qadr), one hundred times on Thursday night and Friday afternoon."

**Tazkirateh al-Muttaqin, p-207**

**Instructions of Mirza Javad Agha Malaki Tabrizi (AR)**

The most celebrated perfect Gnostic Mirza Javad Agha Malaki Tabrizi writes,

"The Holy prophet (S) through his repeated recommendations has emphasized the importance of prolonged prostration, which indeed is an extremely important matter. Prolonged prostration is the most nearest aspect of servanthood, and it is because of this consideration that two prostrations have been incorporated in each unit of prayer. About the prolonged prostration of Infallible Imams (AS) of The Prophets Progeny and their Shiite's, a lot of traditions have been narrated."

In the one of his prolonged prostration Imam al-Sajjad has repeated the following invocation one thousand times:

(La Ilaha Illa Hu Haqqan Haqqa, la Ilaha Illa Hu Tauban Wa Riqqa, La Ilaha Illa Hu Imanan Wa Sadqa)

*"There is no god but God-truly and Justly." "There is no god but God I bow in humility in front of him." "There is no god but God is the truth indeed and is my faith."*

About Imam al-Kadhim (AS) it has been reported that some times he prolonged his prostration from morning till noon, and similar incidents have been narrated about his companions namely: Ibne abi Amir, Jamil, and Kharbouz.

"During my stay in Najaf al-Ashraf, I had a learned pious scholar who was a Marja' Taqlid for religious students. I once asked him, 'What special act have you tried in your own life which is effective for a wayfarer in his spiritual Gnostic journey?' He replied,

To prolong the prostration during a period of twenty four hours and reciting of invocation: (La Ilaha Illa Ant Subhnaka Inni Kuntu Minadh Dhalimin). "There is no God save Thee. Be Thou Glorified. Lo! I have been a wrong doer." While reciting this invocation he must pay attention to the fact that God-Almighty is for inviolable to oppress me rather I am the one who have oppressed my own self and have blamed Him for that."

"My teacher recommended this prostration to those who were interested in Gnostic journey, and those who performed it obtained good results especially, those who prolonged it more. Some of them repeated this invocation in prostration one thousand times, some of them a little more or less and about some of them I heard that they repeated it three thousands times in their prostration."

**al-Moraqebat, p-122**

**Instructions of Sheikh Najmuddin (AR)**

"Know that engaging in invocations without paying due regards to recital manners and relevant etiquettes will not produce useful results. First a devoted wayfarer should prepare himself thoroughly to meet all the requirements of moral etiquette. When a true devotee is inflicted with the pain of desire for undertaking the spiritual journey, its symptoms are that he develops intense affection with invocations and feels frightened with the people until reaching to a point whereby he turns his face away from the people and takes shelter in invocation, as The Holy Qur'an says,

"Say God! Then leave them in the play of caviling."  
**(Qur'an - Chapter 6, Verse 91)**

"As he continues to guard his invocations he should not be negligent towards its basis which is true repentance and should not commit sins. While, engaging in invocations it is preferable to take a bath (ghusl) and in case it is not possible one must make ablutions, because invocation is tantamount of waging wars against enemies in the battlefield, which cannot be done without armaments, and this is why the ablution has been called as the armaments of believers.

The clothing of devotee should be clean and should meet the following four requirements:

First: Cleanliness from impurities such as blood, urine, excrement etc.

Second: Cleanliness from oppression i.e. the clothing should not have been obtained through oppression.

Third: Cleanliness from sanctity i.e. it should not consist of forbidden (haram) material such as silk (for men).

Fourth: Cleanliness from vanity i.e. its length should be short in accordance with Islamic traditions and should not be dress of vanity.

The place of invocation should be dark, clean, and isolated and it is preferred to make it perfumed by burning some incenses. He should sit in the direction of Mecca, sitting in a squared position, a position, which is forbidden all times except for recital of invocation because Khuwaja (AR) after offering morning prayer used to sit in squared position until sun-rise. He would place his hands upon his thighs, making his heart and eyes readied with all due respect would start reciting the invocation (La Ilaha Illa Hu). "There is no god but God" - with his entire existence in a rhythmic cycle in a whistling manner without raising his voice.

"He would recite the invocation firmly and continuously pondering about its meanings within his heart as well as negating all the external thoughts. Like the meanings of "There is no God" (La Ilaha) he should negate whatever thoughts that enter inside his heart, meaning that he would no longer desire any thing else and would not like to have any other beloved except God-Almighty. In totality he should negate other gods and should affirm The God-Almighty as the beloved and ultimate desired object."

"While chanting each phrase of invocation the heart should accompany the tongue from the beginning till end negating and affirming, and in this process whenever he looks inside his heart and if discovers his heart attached to something else – he should discard it, returning the heart to God-Almighty. By negating -"There is no god" –he must nullify heart's attachment towards other than God, thus, destroying the roots of his attachment to other objects and replacing it with God's love."

"In this manner the devotee should chant invocation continuously, so that gradually the heart becomes cleaned and purified from all sorts of usual desirable objects achieving a state of heart's absolute domination with invocation. When it occurs the devotee becomes totally annihilated by the invocation's illumination turning him as singular, purifying his essence with all sort of attractions and obstacles, and enabling him to pass through the material and spiritual worlds swiftly."

"As it is said: that the heart of a believer is the place especially reserved for the union with The God-Almighty. Nevertheless, so far as the heart's domain is occupied by the alien elements, God's Majesty and Exaltedness does not consider it befitting for His entry. However, once the herald of "There is no God" announces the cleanliness of heart's domain from alien elements, one may then expect the entry of the Lord of the Majesty and Splendor. As The Holy Qur'an says,

So when thou art relieved still toil and strive to please thy Lord.  
**(Qur'an - Chapter 94, Verse 7-8)**

**Marsad al-ebad, page 150**