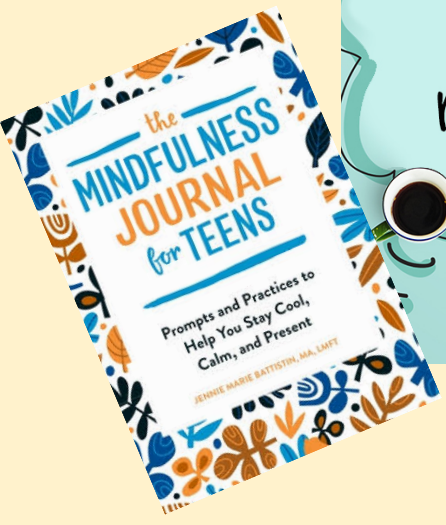


Mindfulness and Spirituality:

A Critical Islamic Perspective

December 2020



Center of dependence

“Say out loud to yourself, ‘I have strength, intelligence, and courage.’
Look at yourself and hold these words to be true.
Say out loud to yourself, ‘I am strong, intelligent, and courageous.’
Look at yourself and hold these words to be true.
Now close your eyes and imagine yourself taking care of all the tasks
of the day and feeling proud.
To finish, take four deep, slow breaths.”

- Excerpt From: The Mindfulness Journal for Teens, 2019 (J. Battistin)

Imam ar-Rida (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever recites this after the morning prayer will have his needs granted by Allah, and Allah will take care of his worries. In the name of Allah. May Allah bless Muḥammad and his divine household. I hand over my affairs to Allah. Surely, Allah is All-Seeing in relation to His servants...Only that which Allah wills (shall come to pass). There is no strength nor power, except with Allah. Only that which Allah wills shall come to pass, not that which people will. Only that which Allah wills shall come to pass, even if people detest it. Sufficient for me is the Nurturer against the nurtured. Sufficient for me is the Creator against the creations. Sufficient for me is the Sustainer against the sustained. Sufficient for me is Allah, the Lord of the worlds...”

Your Lord has said, "Call Me, and I will hear you!" Indeed those who are arrogant and disdainful of worshipping Me will enter hell in utter humility. (40:60)

And when Moses said to his people, ‘Allah commands you to slaughter a cow,’ they said, ‘Are you mocking us?’ He said, ‘I seek Allah’s protection lest I should be one of the ignorant!’ (2:67)

‘Yet I do not absolve my [own carnal] soul, for the [carnal] soul indeed prompts [men] to evil, except inasmuch as my Lord has mercy. Indeed my Lord is all-forgiving, all-merciful.’ (12:53)

Secular	Islamic Spirituality
Identify your challenges and worries at the start of the day	Present your tasks and worries to Allah after the Fajr prayer
Acknowledge your traits and abilities	Acknowledge your abilities and where they come from
Believe you will be able to overcome your challenges	Call upon Allah with your requests, and they will be answered. Allah will always do what's best for you.



Aversion, dislike, and
change in others

“Aversion is the hidden source of anger and aggression. It arises from the notion that if we could just manage to get rid of something or someone, then we would be happy. What we humans wish to get rid of in order to become happy could be as trivial as a mosquito or as large as a nation.

There are few ideas more absurd than the notion, “If I could arrange things—and people—to be just as I want them, then I would be happy.” It is absurd for at least two reasons. First of all, even if we had the power to make everything in the world perfect for us, that perfection could only last a second because all the other people in the world have different ideas of how they would like things to be and are working to get them their way. Our “perfect” is not perfect to anyone else. Secondly, forcing perfection on the world is bound to fail because of the truth of impermanence—nothing lasts forever.”

- Excerpt From: Jan Chozen Bays, MD. “How to Train a Wild Elephant.” Apple Books.

“In this practice we say yes to everyone and everything that happens. When you notice the impulse to disagree, consider whether it is really necessary. Could you just nod, or even be silent but pleasant? Whenever it is not dangerous to you or others, agree with others and with what is happening in your life.”

- Excerpt From: Jan Chozen Bays, MD. “How to Train a Wild Elephant.” Apple Books.

Among them is one who denies evil with his hand, tongue, and heart. That is the one who is seeking to perfect his virtues.

And among them is one who denies evil with his tongue and heart, and does not deny with hand. He has clung to two characteristics among the virtues and has lost one of them.

And among them is one who denies evil with his heart, but leaves aside denying it with his heart and tongue. He has lost the most honorable virtues among three and has clung to one.

And among them is one who leave aside denying with his tongue, heart and hand; that is dead one among the living.

- Amir al-Mu'mineen Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

Secular	Islamic Spirituality
Be pleasant with those you disagree	In order to qualify as being alive, take a stand with your heart, tongue, and action
Try to agree with them, as long as its not (physically) dangerous to you and others	Fulfill your responsibility of caring for the spiritual well-being of others by doing al-Amr bil Ma'roof and an-Nahy anil Munkar



Gratefulness

“The Exercise: At the end of the day, write a list of at least five things that happened during the day that you are grateful for”

- Excerpt From: Jan Chozen Bays, MD. “How to Train a Wild Elephant.” Apple Books.

“The Exercise: When you eat, take a moment to look into the food or drink as if you could see backward, into its history. Use the power of imagination to see where it comes from and how many people might have been involved in bringing it to your plate. Think of the people who planted, weeded, and harvested the food, the truckers who transported it, the food packagers and plant workers, the grocers and checkout people, and the family members or other cooks who prepared the food. Thank those people before you take a sip or a bite.”

- Excerpt From: Jan Chozen Bays, MD. “How to Train a Wild Elephant.” Apple Books.

“The Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh writes,

There are some people who eat an orange but don't really eat it. They eat their sorrow, fear, anger; their past and future. They are not really present, with body and mind united. You need some training just to enjoy [your food]. It has come from the whole cosmos just for our nourishment . . . this is a miracle.

Final Words: When eating, just eat. When drinking, just drink. Mindfulness is the very best seasoning, for your food and for your entire life. Enjoy each bite, enjoy each moment!”

- Excerpt From: Jan Chozen Bays, MD. “How to Train a Wild Elephant.” Apple Books.

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) said when interpreting the Qur'anic verse, “And most of them do not believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him”, “This is in reference to man's statement: ‘Were it not for so-and-so I would surely have perished’, or ‘Were it not for so-and-so I would indeed have been afflicted’ or ‘Were it not for so-and-so my family would be at a loss.’ Do you not see that he has associated a partner to Allah in His Kingdom, [a partner who] gives him sustenance and protects him?” He was subsequently asked, “What if one were to say, ‘Were it not for Allah granting me so-and-so's help, I would have perished...?’” Imam replied, “There is nothing wrong with saying things like this.”

“Whoever is not grateful to the deliverer of a blessings from among the creation has not been grateful to Allah the Mighty and Grand.” – Imam ar-Rida (peace be upon him)

Imam ar-Rida (peace be upon him) used to frequently recite this poetry:

When engulfed in blessings, desist from conceit;
Say instead, ‘O Allah! Protect and complete!’

“And I witness, my God, by the truth of my faith, the knotted resolutions of my certainty, my pure and unadulterated profession of Unity, the hidden inwardness of my consciousness...the paths of my ears' canals, what my lips close upon and compress, the movements of my tongue in speaking, the joint at the back of my mouth and jaw, the sockets of my molar teeth, the place where I swallow my food and drink... that had I taken pains and had I striven for the duration of the epochs and ages were my life to be extended through them to deliver thanks for one of Thy blessings, I would not have been able to do so, except by Thy grace, which alone makes incumbent upon me never-ending and ever renewed gratitude to Thee...” – Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)

26. In al-Kāfī: Narrated from al-Muthannā al-Ḥannāṭ, from Abī ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام who said: When something pleasing befell the Noble Prophet ﷺ he said:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى هَذِهِ النِّعْمَةِ.

Praise be to Allāh for this blessing.

And when something distressing befell him he said:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ.

Praise be to Allāh in every situation.²

Secular	Islamic Spirituality
Be grateful at certain times throughout the day	Be thankful at all times, including certain special times of the day
Select events that you should be grateful for	Be grateful for everything, knowing it is from Him and is random.
Acknowledge the apparent conduits of your food	Acknowledge the apparent and hidden conduits of your food
	Acknowledge the blessing of being able to
	Seize the opportunity to remember the greater purpose and supplicate
Be present when you eat and feel satisfied	Be present, feel satisfied, acknowledge the Cause of all Causes and feel infinitely indebted to Him



Encouraging individual
and community Islamic
spirituality

Questioning modern forms of spirituality

- When do you feel fear?
 - Or are you taught to not fear anyone?
- How prominent is the hereafter?
 - Or are you told to forget the past and future and be concerned only about the present?
- How much of your spirituality is individualistic and self-serving as opposed to taking care of the rights of others?
- Who chooses what, when, and how you should worship? Is it up to you or someone else?
 - Is it based on what is convenient to you? Are you your own prophet / imam? Who is your imam?
- How can you measure the value of a ritual? Is it based on what happens instantly to your emotional state?
 - Is it a form of instant gratification?
- Who are the role models, exemplars, and guides you are asked to follow?
 - Or is it based on you and you alone?



Promoting genuine Islamic spirituality

- Meditation over the past (in order to help the present and future)
- Meditation over death and the Ahkirah
- Developing of spiritual works in English
- Quran circles
- Prayers in congregation
- Daily sadaqah
- Daily istighfar (100 times)
- Daily salawaat (100 times)
- Have dua with commentary
- Istighfar on a daily basis
- Promotion of etiquette and rituals of the Ahlul Bayt
- Study of Hadith Unwan al-Basri and other spiritual traditions
- Learning the spiritual path of the Ahlul Bayt with help of scholars
- Re-evaluating community rituals



4. In al-Kāfī: In his narration from Ibn al-Qaddāh, from Abī ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام who said: When the Noble Prophet ﷺ went to bed he would say:

اللَّهُمَّ بِسْمِكَ أَحْيَا وَبِسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ.

O Allāh! By Your name do I live and by Your name do I die.

...and when he awoke he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانِي بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ.

*All praise be to Allāh who gave me life after causing me to die, and to Him is the return.*¹

The Prayer of the Oppressed

O You, whose mercy is a refuge for all those
In dire need who flee to You to lose their woes,

O master of reprieve, whose pardon is so near,
You answer all in need; they know that You do hear!

We beg for Your relief, redeemer of the weak;
You are enough for us, both humbled and so meek.

No strength can ever match Your awesome majesty,
No might can ever breach Your just authority.

The kings all bow like us to Your great sovereignty,
You choose whom to abase or raise decisively.

Table 9.3 The six M's—daily log

	<i>Beginning of the Day</i>	<i>End of the Day</i>
<i>Mushāraṭah</i> (goal-setting or stipulation)	What is the action or non-action that is desired?	
<i>Murāqabah</i> (self-monitoring)	List the triggers, cues and thought processes that lead to both success and failure.	
<i>Muḥāsabah</i> (self-evaluation)	How many times during the day will you stop and evaluate yourself?	How would you rate your achieving of the goal you set today?
<i>Mu'āqabah</i> (consequences)	What consequence will you give yourself for not achieving the goal?	Did you give yourself the consequence for not achieving the goal?
<i>Mu'ātabah</i> (self-reprimand)	What will you say to yourself when you are not achieving the goal?	Did you use this self-talk/reminder?
<i>Mujāhadah</i> (exertion)	What do you need to do in order to fulfill your goal throughout the day?	