

## INTRODUCTION:

During our second class 'Esoteric Foundations of the Shia Faith' we discussed co-creating a list of ideas for how we can find inner meaning to the actions we take on our spiritual journey. Please feel free to insert your ideas below. This is a safe space with no judgement



## General Recommendations for finding inner meaning

- Reflect on the meaning of duas and the context around which they were revealed (e.g., one Thursday night, reading about the background of Dua Kumail, when/where it was revealed, etc).
- Reflect on the meaning/tafseer of the quran, namaz.
- Engage the senses when in prayer (e.g., play an audio/video of the Adhan and iqamah from a haram/shrine you may have visited and envision yourself standing there in prayer, feel the wind, the surrounding sounds).
- When making dua, engage in a *conversation* with God.
- Breathe and clear one's mind/ balance self before making a clear niyyat and beginning our acts.
- Reflect on the things we are thankful for over the course of the day (muhassabah)
- Form a clear intention before acts of worship that can stay with you for the day and keep you on track with your goals.
- Use selected Quran verses as daily mottos to keep you inspired.
- Spend time on the musallah after namaz to reflect on yourself.
- Recite certain surahs everyday. Sura al-Faith, al-Rahman, al-Mulk, al-Waqiah, al-Hashr . . . are some of the ones recommended in hadith and were part of the practice of great scholars.
- Keep death in mind. Not as a morbid thought but as a reality, an ultimate destination.
- Give importance to relationships with others; family, community, and society at large.
- Beautify your wajibat through extra dhikr <https://youtu.be/9spfgvtlDcQ>
- Spend some quiet time with God, talking, reciting, reflecting or even just sitting quietly.
- Reflecting on our blindspots/unconscious masks/shadow aspects from a space of deep compassion
- Meditate before praying namaaz and reciting Quran <https://youtu.be/9z8sAh6QMY8>
- Clear the mind : Write down in a paper every thought just to clean the head like a shower every morning and night or when too much thoughts in mind. It might help for concentration and anxiety.

## Inner Meaning of Salaat and its preparatory activities

### 1) Wudhu

Wudhu has to include interior purification as well as exterior. Keep the following points in mind as you begin the wudhu.

- Think of the clarity, softness, purity and blessing of water. It is a sign of the mercy of Allah and gives life to all things.
- know that the sins of human beings are purified with the water of mercy.

- Mix with the servants of Allah like the mixture of water with things, It gives to everything its due without any change in its own meaning. The Prophet (s) said; *A sincere believer is like water.*
- Let your clearness with Allah, the Most High, be like the clearness of water.
- Purify your heart with fear of Allah and certainty as you purify your limbs with water.
- Recite the duas of Wudhu to understand the spiritual significance of each action of wudhu - <https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2154/>

## 2) Adhan and Iqamah

- The *adhān* is the announcement to the open and hidden forces and the divine armies to attend the Meeting with Allah.
- The *iqāmah* is to make them present in the Meeting.
- During the recitation of the *adhān* and the *iqāmah*, one should continually inform the heart about the greatness of the Meeting to come.
- Through the takbirs of the Adhan and Iqamah, the reciter announces the Majesty of the Grand Name to all the dwellers of the invisible and visible worlds.

## 3) Takbir

- When you say: *Allāhu akbar*, slight [make insignificant] whatever is there between the heavens and the earth, regarding it below His Majesty.
- The Takbir makes the reciter realize the poverty and humility of the creatures and Allah's Greatness and Majesty
- The Takbir prepares the heart to be exclusively for the Sacred Essence of Allah and to exclude all others from it.

## 4) Ruku and Sajdah

- The *rukū'* is politeness, and the *sujūd* is proximity.
- In ruku droop to Him your limbs like the one who is afraid and grieved.
- Absolute Proximity, which happens in the *sujūd*, is not accessible except through the true *rukū'*.
- The *sujūd* is to forsake oneself and close one's eyes against anything except Him.
- In putting the head on the dust, there is a hint at seeing the Beauty of the Beautiful in the inner heart of the dust and the origin of the world of nature.
- The secret of the position of the *sujūd* is to give up oneself.
- Putting the head on the dust is to debase one's most high position, regarding it to be lower than the dust.

## Inner meaning of Fasting

- Fasting is to refrain from that which distracts you from Allah.
- Imam Ali (a) has said; *Fasting of the heart is better than fasting of the tongue and fasting of the tongue is better than fasting of the stomach.* Fasting of the tongue is to keep the tongue empty of wrong words; lies, backbiting, mean words, selfish words. Fasting of the heart is to keep it away from anything other than Allah.
- During the fast, have an inner silence.

- Fasting is to give yourself to God.
- The month of Ramadan is a time to strengthen and adorn the soul.
- It is a month in which Allah invites us to Him. *I have not seen a more generous master, patient with a wretched slave, than You are with me. My Lord, You call me and I turn away from You* (Dua al-Iftitah).

### **Finding meaning in reciting the Quran**

- The Quran is God's communication with mankind. He talks to you through it.
- The Qur'an is the string connecting the creatures to their Creator.
- Through its instructions there can be a spiritual and invisible tie between the servants of Allah and their Lord.
- Just as the touching of the external form of the Quran is not allowed for the one whose external body is not purified, its knowledge, admonitions and secrets are prohibited to the one whose heart is smeared with the pollution of worldly longings and sins.
- Reciting it with a beautiful sound, or listening to someone reciting it with a beautiful sound, soothes and energizes the soul.
- Reflecting on its verses deepens insight and intellect.
- Memorizing its verses adorn the insides.

(Extracted from Adab as-Salaat: The Disciplines of Prayer, by Sayyid Ruhullah Musawi Khomeini)

### **Interacting with the Quran**

- Make the personal copy of your Quran appealing to you using color, drawings, stickers
  - Highlight some catch phrases which you can memorize and use as your mottos, create personalized statements or even in your day to day conversations to bring the Quran alive in your lives
- Action Plan:
- Put up a verse of the week in a common area in your home and discuss it as a family over meals. If it is a message you are trying to work at, take accountability.
  - Setup a way to remember your personal statement from the Quran
  - Example:
    - Put up a sign on your mirror so that it is the first thing you see in the morning
    - Put your personalized statement as your homescreen or wallpaper
  - Determine an action step
  - Example:
    - Before getting out of bed in the morning I will thank Allah for 3 things that I am grateful for (out loud), before sleeping I will thank Allah for 3 of my blessings out loud (set a timer on your phone to help you remember)
    - I will watch my thoughts and each time I feel worry creeping up into my mind I will restate my personalized statement out loud. I will keep a tally of the number of times I find myself repeating my statement.
  - Find an accountability partner. Decide how often you will check in with each other to make sure you are keeping on track! (will it be daily, weekly?)

- Example:
- Your spouse
- A friend
- \*\* Try to find someone who is also planning to carry out an action plan towards a goal.
- Track your progress!

**Useful Links:**

[https://academyofislam.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Health\\_of\\_the\\_Spiritual\\_Heart.pdf](https://academyofislam.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Health_of_the_Spiritual_Heart.pdf)