

## **Practical Steps towards Moral Purification**

### **Part VI: Self-Knowledge**

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One of the first steps towards purifying the soul is self-knowledge. In fact, one cannot attain spiritual perfection, correct his defects, and cleanse his vices, without fully knowing himself. Does anyone go to the doctor for a cure, if he does not know that he is sick? Will a lost person seek to find the way, if he does not know that he is lost? Will a person whose house is surrounded by enemies prepare to defend, if he does not know about it? Obviously, the answer to such questions is negative. Similarly, one who does not know himself and his defects will not try to correct himself and will not seek the advice of those who can cure him.

The relationship between self-knowledge and self-purification and also the relationship between knowing God and self-purification will be reviewed in this article.

### **The Relation between Self-knowledge and Self-purification**

How could self-knowledge lead to self-purification? The answer is simple:

First, through self-knowledge, one sees the dignity and value of one's self, which is a manifestation of God. And appreciating the value of this precious gift, he will not sell it cheaply.

Second, when one knows himself, one realizes the dangers of worldly desires for his salvation, so he will adequately prepare himself for fighting them. It is evident that someone who does not know himself will remain unaware of the existence of these desires. Such a person is like someone who is surrounded by enemies but is unaware of their presence. Such a person will not prepare himself for fighting against them and as a result, will be defeated by them.

Third, if one knows himself, he will recognize the various gifts bestowed upon him by God; he will be encouraged to strengthen them, discover the hidden treasures of his soul, and develop his character.

One who does not know himself is like the one who has precious treasures buried in different parts of his house but does not know about them. Such a person may die of hunger and poverty in his house, while there are treasures under his feet that are enough to feed thousands of people.

Fourth, all vices have roots in the soul that could be recognized through self-knowledge. When vices are known, it is easier to cure them, and therefore self-purification will be more achievable.

Fifth and above all, self-knowledge is the best way to know God, and as will be discussed later knowing God and His attributes of beauty and majesty is the most important factor in developing high morals and attaining spiritual perfection.

If we consider the fact that vices ruin our individual and social life, we will realize the significance of focusing on self-knowledge, which can eradicate these vices.

In his *Man, The Unknown*, Alexis Carrel writes,

Modern civilization finds itself in a difficult position because it does not suit us. It has been erected without any knowledge of our real nature. .... It is not at all actuated by a desire to improve the state of human beings. The discoveries responsible for industrial civilization were brought forth at the fancy of the scientists' intuitions and

of the more or less casual circumstances of their careers. If Galileo, Newton, or Lavoisier had applied their intellectual powers to the study of body and consciousness, our world probably would be different today. (Carrel 1939, 18)

That is why God punishes sinful people by causing them to forget themselves and warns us not to “be like those who forget God, so He makes them forget their own souls. It is they who are the transgressors” (Quran, 59:19).

### Self-knowledge in HADITHS

According to *hadiths* quoted from the noble Prophet (s) and the Infallible Imams (a), self-knowledge results in great benefits:

1. In a *hadith* from Imam Ali (a), we read, “One who knows himself has achieved a great success” (Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 232).
2. Also, he (a) states, “One who does not know himself deviates from the way of salvation and remains in ignorance” (Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 233).
3. In another *hadith* from him (a) we read, “The knowledgeable is the one who knew his self, so he set it free and purified it of whatever leads it to deviation and destruction” (Khansari 1987, 7:243). This *hadith* indicates that self-knowledge results in freedom and purification of vices.
4. The Imam (a) is also quoted as saying, “Those who know themselves best are the ones who fear God most” (Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 232). It can be understood from this *hadith* that there is a close relationship between fearing God, as the root of self-purification, and self-knowledge.
5. In another *hadith* from Imam Ali (a), we read, “Whoever knows his self will struggle against it, and whoever does not know it will ignore it” (Tabataba'i 1417AH, 6:174). According to this *hadith*, the main base of *jihad* with the self, which is called the greater *jihad* in *hadiths*, is self-knowledge.

6. In *Nahj al-Balaghah*, we read, “Whoever regards his self in high esteem, his desires will be insignificant to him” (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Wisdom 449).
7. As self-knowledge is the main foundation of self-purification and high morals, ignorance of the self causes a sense of alienation from the truth and separation from God. Imam Hadi (a) is quoted as saying, “How disgusting is the state of a believer who has a desire that debases him!” (Harrani 1983, 489)

Therefore, self-knowledge is a major factor in promoting virtues and spirituality; one will not reach any spiritual stations, unless he passes this important stage. Because of this, great scholars of ethics strongly insist that travelers towards God should try to know their selves first.

### **Self-knowledge is the Means of Knowing God**

The glorious Quran explicitly states, “Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real” (Quran 41:53).

Elsewhere, we read, “And in your souls [are signs]. Will you not then perceive?” (Quran 51:21)

Based on the Quranic verse about the world of *dharr*, some scholars believe that “self-knowledge” is a prerequisite of “knowing God.” The Quran says,

When your Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their lions, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves. [He said to them] “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes indeed! We bear witness.” (7:172)

In his *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, ‘Allama Tabataba’i writes,

No matter how proud man may become, he cannot deny that he does not own his being and that he is not independent, for if he owned his being, he would be able to prevent death and other difficulties of life, and if he was independent, he would never be subdued by the existential

causes ... Thus, man's need for God, the Ruler and Owner, is the reality of man, and poverty and weakness are his essential characteristics ... This is a fact that can be realized by anyone who has the least human intelligence, with no difference between the knowledgeable and the ignorant or between the young and the old!

Therefore, at any level of humanity one may be, he can clearly understand that he has a Lord who owns and rules over him. How could he not understand this when he clearly realizes his essential need ... Accordingly, some believe that the above-mentioned verse reflects a fact that is realized by man throughout his life, i.e. the fact that in every aspect of his life, he is in need. So, the verse indicates that ... God informed human beings of their needs to Him, and then they bear witness to His Lordship (Tabataba'i 1417AH, 8:307).

Thus, it became clear that knowing the reality of man's soul and its characteristics will lead to knowing God.

The famous *hadith* that "whoever knows himself will know his Lord" is another example. In some sources, this *hadith* has been quoted from the noble Prophet (s), and in some other sources from Imam Ali (a) or from the scriptures of Idris (a). In *Bihar al-Anwar*, it is quoted from the fourth book of Idris (the Book of Knowledge) that "whoever knows the creation knows the Creator, and whoever knows the sustenance knows the Sustainer" (Majlisi 1403AH, 92:456). 'Allamah Tabataba'i mentions this *hadith* and writes, "Shiites and Sunnites have quoted this *hadith* from the noble Prophet (s) and this is a famous *hadith*" (Tabataba'i 1417AH, 6:169).

### Seven Interpretations for This HADITH

This *hadith* could be interpreted in seven different ways:

1. It may refer to the famous argument from design and, thus, mean that one who knows the wonders of his soul and body and the secrets of

creation will believe in the existence of God, because the amazing order of creation could not be created by someone other than an all-knowing and all-powerful Designer. Thus, knowing oneself leads to knowing God.

2. The *hadith* may refer to argument of “necessity and possibility,” because if one thinks deeply about himself, he will find out that he is absolutely dependent; his knowledge, power, ability, intelligence, health—his entire being—is totally dependent and needy; he cannot survive, even for a second, without depending on a Necessary Being. We are like prepositions that need to be connected to other nouns in order to be meaningful. For example, in the sentence, “I went from home to the mosque,” the words “from” and “to” have no meaning without being connected to the nouns, “home” and “mosque.” The nouns give meaning to the prepositions. Accordingly, if one knows himself, he will know his God, for the existence of a contingent being cannot be explained without taking into account the existence of a necessary being.
3. The *hadith* may indicate the argument of “cause and effect”; for if one thinks about his existence, he will find out that his soul and body are the effects of different causes, including his parents. Those causes, in turn, are the effects of other causes. Now, this chain of causes and effects must stop at some point; otherwise, it would be an endless regress that is impossible to exist.

Therefore, this chain has to stop at a first cause, the cause of causes, which is self-existent and not dependent on anything. If one knows himself and the fact that he is dependent on such a being, he has known his God.

4. The *hadith* may refer to the argument from “disposition” (*fitra*): when one explores the depths of his soul, he finds the Divine Light embedded in his nature; thus, through self-knowledge, one will know his God, without needing further proofs.
5. The *hadith* may refer to “the attributes of God”: if one knows his own attributes as contingent and created qualities, he will learn about the

attributes of God. If one knows that he is limited, he will learn that God is unlimited: if God was limited, He would be a created being! If a person knows that he is a mortal being, he will conclude that his Creator is Immortal, for if the Creator was mortal, He would be a created being. In the same way, one could learn about God's independence through his own dependence, and about God's power through his own weakness. In the first sermon of *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Imam Ali (a) stated,

The perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute. (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 1)

6. 'Allamah Majlisi quotes a different commentary on this *hadith* from some scholars:

The soul of a human being is a spiritual creature with worldly attributes and it proves the Oneness of God in several ways:

- The soul is the director and mover of the body, so the universe has a Director and a Mover.
- The soul is one [and unique], so the Creator is One.
- The soul has the power to move the body, so it is an example of the power of God.
- The soul is aware of the body, so God is Knowledgeable.
- The soul has control over the limbs, so God has control over creation.
- The soul has existed before the body and it will exist after it, so God is Pre-eternal and Everlasting.
- No one can discover the true nature of the soul, so the true nature of God is undiscoverable.
- The soul has no specific location in the body, so God has no location.
- The soul is not tangible, so God is not tangible.
- The soul is not visible, so the Creator of the soul is invisible.

(Majlisi 1403AH, 58:99-100)

7. Another interpretation for this *hadith* is that just as no one is able to know his soul, no one is able to know God.

The last interpretation seems to be incorrect, but the other ones could all be true.

So, whoever knows himself will know God; self-knowledge is a way to know God, and, no doubt, knowing God is the most important means for purification of the soul, because God is the source of all virtues.

However, although self-knowledge is a very important step towards self-purification, there are numerous obstacles on the way to it. Below we will discuss some of these obstacles.

### **Obstacles of Self-knowledge**

The first step in curing physical illnesses is diagnosing them. Today there are various methods for diagnosing different diseases, and this makes the curing process much easier. Through taking radiographs of broken bones, surgeons are able to find damaged areas and cure them. Physicians are also able to discover illnesses through different laboratory tests.

In fact, the same process should be undergone for curing vices and spiritual illnesses. If we do not discover the roots of vices in our souls with the help of spiritual physicians, how could we find the cure?

Nevertheless, some people ignore the symptoms of dangerous physical diseases because they do not want to accept that they have a serious disease. Likewise, many people justify their vices and negative characteristics, claiming moral integrity. However, escaping from the reality is not a solution and often has dangerous consequences.

Knowing the self and accepting its shortcomings requires courage, strong resolution, and firm intention, because their pride and selfishness drive human beings to deny or justify their defects.



Accordingly, the main obstacle to self-knowledge is self-centeredness. Knowing oneself is impossible unless this obstacle is removed; one cannot purify his soul unless he knows himself and becomes aware of his defects.

In Islamic tradition, many *hadiths* emphasize on the importance of knowing one's defects:

The noble Prophet (s) is quoted as saying, "When God wills the good for a servant, He makes him knowledgeable in religion, disinterested in this world, and sharp-sighted about his defects" (Majlisi 1403AH, 74:80).

Imam Ali (a) also says, "One's ignorance about his defects is among his greatest sins" (Majlisi 1403AH, 74:419).

But how could one remove the barrier of selfishness and discover his own defects?

In response to this question, the late Fayd Kashani has mentioned that one could become aware of his defects in four ways:

First, he could refer to a true spiritual teacher, who knows the disorders of the soul, and follow his guidelines. Of course, such a teacher is rarely found in our times!

Second, he could ask a faithful friend to observe his deeds carefully and remind him of his mistakes and defects; a great religious scholar has said, "May God have mercy on the one who gifts me with my defects." (Note the use of the word "gift," which shows the receptive attitude that one should have towards those who remind him of his mistakes.)

However, such faithful friends are also few nowadays; most friends either flatter each other or focus too much on their friends' defects. A great mystic was once asked, "Why have you kept aloof from people?" He answered, "What could I do with those who conceal my sins from me!?"

Religious people used to like being informed of their defects, but nowadays we hate those who advise us and remind us of our imperfections. Our reaction to those who criticize us is to say, "You yourself have such and such

defects, you yourself have done this and that”; we get offended and thus deprive ourselves of their advice.

Third, one might become aware of his defects through his enemies, because enemies always observe one’s mistakes and defects carefully, so one can benefit from his enemies in this regard more than from his smooth-tongued friend.

Fourth, one could socialize with others so that by seeing their negative characteristics he could realize his own negative attributes. Believers are mirrors of each other, and one could find his defects through observing others’ flaws. Someone asked Christ (a), “Who taught you manners?” He answered, “No one! I saw the ignorance of the ignorant and I disliked it, so I avoided it.” A similar story is narrated about Luqman that when he was asked, “Who taught you manners and disciplines?” he answered, “Ill-mannered ones! (Fayd Kashani n.d., 5:114).

## Praying and Worshiping God refines the Soul

Another step towards self-purification is praying and worshiping God.

To understand the effect of praying and worshiping God in purification of the soul and developing moral virtues, it is necessary to know what is the reality of worship. A deep understanding of the reality of worship requires a detailed analysis and a comprehensive study of the contributions of great scholars of exegesis, ethics, jurisprudence, and *hadith*.

First, it is important to discuss the relation between the word ‘*ibadah*’ (worship) and the word ‘*abd*’ (servant) which is the root of ‘*ibadah*’.

‘*Abd*’ (servant) in Arabic refers to someone who is owned by another person, does not have an independent will, and obeys his master without hesitation. ‘*Ubudiyya*’ (servitude) is being an ‘*abd*’ of, and showing utmost humility to, someone; thus, only the one who has granted greatest bounties deserves to be worshiped, and that is none other than God. In other words, ‘*ubudiyya*’ means the complete submission to the true Lord and getting closest to Him; it is not merely performing certain rituals.

It is evident that worshiping is the best way to remember God Almighty, avoiding all impurities, and becoming a manifestation of His attributes.

In a *hadith* from Imam Sadiq (a), we read that “servitude is a gem whose depth is divinity” (Imam Sadiq 1400AH, 7). This *hadith* indicates that the essence of servant-hood is to acquire attributes similar to those of the Master and reflect a beam of His majesty and beauty. In addition, it indicates that through servitude one could, with the permission of God, have authority over creation.

Now let us read some quranic verses about the role of worship in developing moral virtues.

1. O mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those who were before you, so that you may be wary. (Quran 2:21)
2. O you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting as it was prescribed for those who were before you, so that you may be God wary. (Quran 2:183)
3. And maintain the prayer, indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs. (Quran 29:45)
4. Indeed man has been created covetous. Anxious when an ill befalls him and grudging when good comes his way [all are such] except the prayerful, those who are preserving in their prayers and in whose wealth there is a known right. (Quran 70:19-24)
5. Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby. (Quran 9:103)
6. Those who have faith, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Look! The hearts find rest in Allah’s remembrance! (Quran 13:28)
7. O you who have faith! Take recourse in patience and prayer; indeed Allah is with the patient. (Quran 2:153)

**Commentary**

In all of the above verses, there is a correlation between worship, piety, abstaining from sins, and developing moral virtues. This indicates that those who want to purify their souls should start with servitude and worshipping God. Travelers of the path of God, who want to purify themselves, should seek help through praying and worshipping. They should purify and elevate their soul through the love of God and worshipping Him.

The first above-mentioned verse addresses all humankind and requires them to be wary of God:

“O mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those who were before you, so that you may be wary.” (Quran 2:21)

The idolaters of the time of the Prophet justified their idol-worshipping, with the excuse that it was the tradition of their fathers. In response, this verse emphasizes that God is the Creator of both the idolaters and their fathers. He is the Creator of everyone and everything, and it is only He who deserves to be worshiped, not the idols. If one sincerely worships God, righteousness will develop in his soul. Otherwise, he will be afflicted with different moral problems.

This verse shows the close relationship between piety and worship in general; the next verse indicates the relation between fasting, as an important act of worship, and piety:

O you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting as it was prescribed for those who were before you, so that you may be God-wary. (Quran 2:183)

When fasting, one can feel pure happiness and spiritual joy and feel closer to goodness and farther from evil. Reliable statistics show that crime rate considerably declines in the month of Ramadan. All this shows that the more one worships God, the farther he will be from evil.

The third verse indicates the close link between performing prayers and avoiding indecencies and wrongdoings. In this verse, the holy Prophet (s) is

addressed as a model: “And maintain the prayer, indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs.” (Quran 29:45)

“Indecencies and wrongdoings” are immoral acts, and we know that all immoral acts originate from one’s negative qualities; in other words, hidden qualities affect the apparent manifestations of the soul.

Actually, that is why saying prayers prevents indecencies and wrongdoings: when one performs prayers, through God’s remembrance, he enters a superior world, i.e. the world of nearness to God, and this nearness keeps him away from main sources of indecencies and wrongdoings, i.e. carnal desires and love for this world.

Because of this, those who truly keep up prayer commit fewer sins; the better the prayer, the farther the performer will be from indecencies and wrongdoings and the more developed his spirituality and morality will become.

The fourth verse first introduces some vices, such as imbalanced anxiousness or happiness, then mentions the prayerful as an exception:

... except the prayerful, those who are preserving in their prayers and in whose wealth there is a known right. (Quran 70: 19-24)

Therefore remembering God, praying, and worshiping have a direct influence on purifying the soul from vices such as stinginess, impatience, and anxiety.

The fifth verse mentions the influence of giving alms (*zakat*) on self-purification. We know that the “obligatory alms-giving” (*zakat*) is among the important acts of worship. The glorious Quran says,

Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby. (Quran 9: 103)

The phrase “purify them thereby” is a clear proof that self-purification is achieved through giving alms; giving alms eradicates vices such as stinginess,

worldliness, and greed from the soul, and cultivates philanthropy and generosity in the heart.

In the sixth verse, the importance of remembrance of God and its influence on the tranquility of the heart has been mentioned:

Those who have faith, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Look! The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance! (Quran 13:28)

The tranquility of the heart is a result of remembering and relying on God and leads to deliverance from materialism, greed, meanness, and jealousy. In other words, if we explore the roots of the soul's discomfort and distress, we realize that they originate from different vices, all of which could be uprooted by remembering God.

In the seventh and last of the above-mentioned verses, the influence of patience and prayer on strengthening the soul is mentioned:

O you who have faith! Take recourse in patience and prayer; indeed Allah is with the patient. (Quran 2:153)

In some Islamic traditions, "patience" has been interpreted as "fasting" (Majlisi 1403AH, 93:254), which is an obvious example of patience. Nevertheless, the concept of "patience" is much broader and includes any kind of resistance against carnal desires, temptations of Satan, and sad events.

It is reported that whenever Imam Ali (a) had a challenge ahead of him, he (a) would perform prayers and then recite the above verse from the Quran (Kulayni 1407AH, 3:480).

In brief, these important acts of worship help develop virtues such as reliance on God, bravery, courage, and patience and keep man away from vices such as timidity, doubt, and anxiety.

## Summary

Based on what was discussed above, it can be concluded that acts of worship have a profound effect on moral purification from different aspects:

1. Remembering the origin of creation and maintaining presence of God in the life help human beings control their deeds and desires; the whole world is in the presence of God, and committing sins in His presence is a great shame.
2. Studying God's attributes of beauty and glory as mentioned in prayers and supplications reflects a beam of those attributes on the supplicant's heart and prepares him for moral elevation.
3. Bearing in mind the Day of Resurrection, when everything will be reckoned, prevents one from committing sins.
4. Worship and supplication, if done with the presence of heart, bring such inner serenity and light that darkness of vices cannot resist it. Thus, after worshipping mindfully, one feels closer to goodness.
5. Our traditional supplications contain many moral teachings that can guide us on our spiritual journey to God. Those who want to purify their souls could reach their goal by following those teachings. Supplicating and worshipping God is itself a key in this journey. Without praying and remembering God, especially in one's solitude and at dawn, no progress can be made.

## The Influence of Acts of Worship on Self-Purification in Islamic Traditions

Many Islamic traditions stress the importance of worshipping God on self-purification:

1. Imam Ali (a) said, "God has obliged faith in order to purify [people] of polytheism, prayer to purify [people] from vanity, *zakat* as a cause

for sustenance, and fasting to test people's sincerity". (Nahj al-Balagha, wisdom 252)

2. In a famous *hadith* from the noble Prophet (s), daily prayer has been likened to pure water running just outside one's house in which he washes himself five times a day and thus there remains no impurity on him. ('Amili 1988, 4:12)
3. In a *hadith* from Imam Rida (a) about the effects of worship, we read,
 

If one asks, "Why did He [i.e. God] oblige the people to worship?" the answer is so that people do not forget His remembrance, do not abandon His guidelines, and do not neglect His commands and prohibitions, wherein are their benefit and subsistence. (Majlisi 1403AH, 6:63)

Therefore, worshiping God awakens the heart and makes the soul alert. It is an opportunity for remembering God, which results in self-purification.

4. In another *hadith* from Imam Rida (a), we read about the benefits of prayer: "[T]herein [i.e. in prayer] exists obligatory and continuous remembrance of God at night and during the day so that the servant does not forget his Master, Ruler, and Creator and does not transgress or rebel. Moreover, in remembrance of his Lord and standing up in His presence, there is prevention from sins and a barrier against various kinds of corruption." ('Amili 1988, 4:9)
5. In a *hadith* from Imam Sadiq (a) about the results of prayer and its acceptance standards, we read, "Whoever wishes to know whether his prayer has been accepted or not, he should see whether his prayer has prevented him from indecencies and wrongdoings or not; the prayer is accepted only to the extent that it prevents him". (Majlisi 1403AH, 79:198) This *hadith* clearly states that the prayer has a direct effect on moral development, and those who do not see such effects have only cared about the form of their prayers and neglected its essence. In other words, they have performed their prayers only to remove their



obligation, not to achieve the real purpose of this great act of worship.

6. In another *hadith* from the noble Prophet (s) about the philosophy of fasting we read, “Indeed, fasting kills the wish of the soul and the passion of the animal nature. It entails the refinement of the heart, the purity of the limbs, the maintenance of the appearance and the inner soul, thanksgiving for the blessings, and generosity towards the poor; it increases supplication, reverence, and crying [for God]; it causes [people] to take refuge [only] in God; it helps cutting off worldly attachments, it decreases faults and increases good deeds; and it has other innumerable benefits” (Majlisi 1403AH, 93:254).
7. We conclude this part with a *hadith* from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a):

Continuous worship is a proof for achieving salvation.  
(Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 198)

## Conclusion

From the above-mentioned *hadiths* and others narrated in famous *hadith* collections, we learn that there is a close relation between worship and self-purification.

The more devoutly, sincerely, and mindfully an act of worship is performed, the more its effects will be. When one performs an act of worship sincerely and mindfully, he feels illumination and refinement in his heart, he becomes increasingly inclined to goodness and disinclined to evil; he feels closer to God and finds his soul humble, modest, and obedient before the Truth.

It is remarkable that all acts of worship have both common and unique effects. Their common effect is developing humbleness, devotion, and submission to God and removing negligence.

As to their unique effects, the prayer forbids indecency and wrongdoing; fasting strengthens the will and helps the intellect control the desires; *hajj*

drives human away from all the attractions and attachments of the world; *zakat* decreases a person's greed, stinginess, and worldliness; God's remembrance causes the tranquility in the heart, and every *dhikr* attracts one's mind and soul towards one of God's attributes of beauty and glory and brings him to a better harmony with the Truth.

Thus, one who performs all acts of worship gains their common and unique benefits and thus effectively develops his spirituality. However, in order to fully benefit from these effective means of self-purification, it is important to learn the purpose behind them, and strive to achieve that purpose by performing the acts of worship in the best and most sincere way possible.

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