

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

The Importance of Spiritual Exercises

They are important, but, of course, they are not the 'be-all and end-all', the whole story.

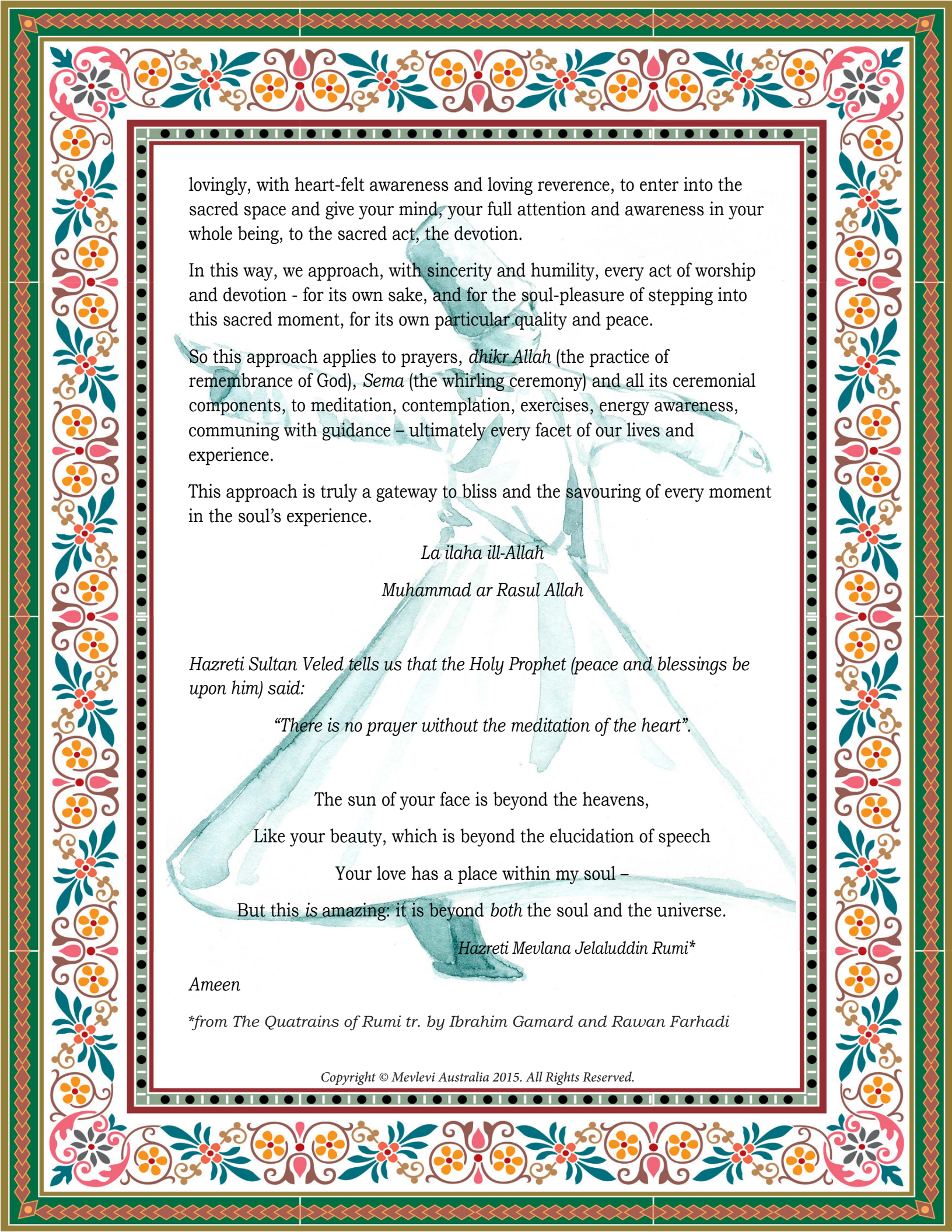
It is necessary as much as possible, whilst maintaining a light heart and a smile, to acquire a level of self-discipline and structure in your life to enable your spiritual awareness to develop.

Regular times and regular practices are indeed a great aid in furthering one's development.

Such attempts to focus the mind in a considered and persistent way are beneficial in training the consciousness into exploring new pathways of awareness.

However, (and you knew there would be a 'however', didn't you?) however it is even more important to approach all practices, be they prayer or meditation or energy raising exercises, any devotional activities, with LOVE and with a willing, gentle heart. Sure, sometimes a bit of effort or will-power is required to maintain a regular and consistent approach, but the essence of meaningful, helpful and truly developmental practice is the willingness of the soul. The attitude, and more importantly, the feeling of loving willingness, acceptance, and even wonder. To step into the devotional space with anticipation, with a feeling of pleasure and friendliness towards the action.

This opening of the heart towards receptivity and accepting blessings is so much more important than merely doing the actions. Everything should be approached with the feeling awareness of a special moment, a special kind of pleasurable concentration – for the act itself, the moment itself. Not for the promise of a future reward, or quid pro quo, the idea that if I do this x number of times, then I become x times holier or more spiritual, but simply,



lovingly, with heart-felt awareness and loving reverence, to enter into the sacred space and give your mind, your full attention and awareness in your whole being, to the sacred act, the devotion.

In this way, we approach, with sincerity and humility, every act of worship and devotion - for its own sake, and for the soul-pleasure of stepping into this sacred moment, for its own particular quality and peace.

So this approach applies to prayers, *dhikr Allah* (the practice of remembrance of God), *Sema* (the whirling ceremony) and all its ceremonial components, to meditation, contemplation, exercises, energy awareness, communing with guidance – ultimately every facet of our lives and experience.

This approach is truly a gateway to bliss and the savouring of every moment in the soul's experience.

La ilaha ill-Allah

Muhammad ar Rasul Allah

Hazreti Sultan Veled tells us that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“There is no prayer without the meditation of the heart”.

The sun of your face is beyond the heavens,
Like your beauty, which is beyond the elucidation of speech
Your love has a place within my soul –
But this is amazing: it is beyond *both* the soul and the universe.

*Hazreti Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi**

Ameen

**from The Quatrains of Rumi tr. by Ibrahim Gamard and Rawan Farhadi*

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