Sufi Principles of Meditation

Lecture 14: Remembrance

“Remembrance makes people desire the journey; it makes them into travelers. What is sweeter than the remembrance of the Friend? Hey, do not sit idle like this! Invoke!” — Rumi
Dhikr, the practice of remembering God, is a strong pillar in the way of the Truth. Indeed, it is the mainstay of this Way. No one attains to God except through continuous remembrance.

There are two kinds of remembrance: that of the tongue and that of the heart. By means of the tongue’s remembrance, the servant reaches constant remembrance of the heart. Its object and result is the remembrance of the heart. If the servant becomes one who remembers both with his tongue and with his heart, the state of his spiritual search is described as perfect.

—Al-Qushayri,
Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
One of the special features of the practice of remembrance is that it has no assigned time. Indeed, there is no moment in which the servant is not commanded to the remembrance of God, whether it be an obligatory duty or a recommended one. The ritual prayer, though it is the noblest of all devotions, is not possible at some times, while the heart’s remembrance is continuous in all circumstances.

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
Remembering God with the heart is called the sword of the seekers. With it the seeker slays his enemies and drives off troubles that are headed for him. Even if difficulty should overshadow the servant, his fleeing to God Most High in his heart immediately turns away from him the thing he hates.

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
The Sweetness of Devotion

Hasan al-Basri said, “Seek sweetness in three things: in prayer, in the remembrance of God, and in the recitation of the Qur’an. If you find it, good. If not, know that the door is shut.”

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
Another special feature of remembrance is that it produces remembrance in response. God Most High has said, “Remember Me—I will remember you!” (2:147). According to a hadith, Gabriel said to the Messenger of God, “God Most High says, ‘I have given to your community what I have not given to any other community.’” “What is that, O Gabriel?” the Prophet asked. “It is the saying of the Most High, ‘Remember Me—I will remember you.’ He has not said that to anyone outside this community.”

In one of the holy books it is written that Prophet Moses said, “O Lord, where do You dwell?” God Most High revealed to him, “In the heart of My believing servant.” The meaning of this is the indwelling of remembrance in the heart, for the Truth, may He be glorified and exalted, transcends every kind of inhabiting and incarnation. It is only the affirmation and attainment of remembrance that is intended here.

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
The Forms of Remembrance

From the field of Reflection the field of Remembering God is born. God, the Most High, says, ‘only those who remember turn to God in penitence’ (40:13).

Remembrance is to bring to mind what one has received and accepted. The difference between reflection and remembrance is that reflection is seeking but remembrance is finding.

Remembrance comprises three things: harkening with fear to the divine warning, gazing with hope upon the herald who proclaims the Friend’s promise, and acknowledging with supplicant tongue one’s indebtedness to God’s beneficence.

—Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Stations of the Sufi Path
Remembrance through Fear, Hope, and Need

Remembrance through fear is in respect to three things: fear of what is hidden within the practical application of ethics and the Prophet’s habitual practice, being fearful for the unseen outcome, and remorse for the time and moment spent in distraction.

Remembrance through hope is in respect to three things: sincere repentance, caring intercession, and luminous mercy.

Remembrance in supplicant neediness is in respect to three things: continuous invocation, familiarity with that Pre-eternal grace that heralds joy, and an open heart gazing upon its Lord.

—Abdullah Ansari of Herat, *Stations of the Sufi Path*
It can come to pass that we are incorrectly related with ourselves. Accordingly, we suffer deeply due to the lack of inner enlightenment.

Obviously, if the lamp of our room is not connected to the electrical installation, our room will be in darkness.

Therefore, those who suffer from a lack of inner illumination must connect their mind with the superior centers of their Being. [...]

During times of rigorous temptations, discouragement and desolation, one must appeal to the intimate Remembering of the Self.

—Samael Aun Weor, *Treatise of Revolutionary Psychology*
1. Each day, develop your self-observation or inner accounting (*muhasabah*) from moment to moment.

2. To facilitate mindfulness, mentally recite a mantra throughout the day, instant by instant.

3. Every day, vocalize a mantra for 30 minutes to an hour. Adopt a meditation posture, relax completely, then focus 100% attention on your vocalization.