“Whoever does not establish awe of duty and vigilance (muraqaba, or awareness: muhadarah) in his relationship to God will not arrive at disclosure of the unseen (mukashafah) or contemplation (mushahadah) of the divine.” —Al-Jurayri

Sufi Principles of Meditation

Lecture 16: Awareness, Unveiling, and Witnessing
Three Steps of Initiation

Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition are obligatory steps of the Initiation. Whosoever has raised these three steps of direct knowledge has reached supraconsciousness.

The world of Imaginative Knowledge is a world of symbolic images.

Inspiration grants us the power of interpreting symbols.

In the world of Intuition, we see the great cosmic theater and we are the spectators. We attend the great drama of life.

—Samael Aun Weor, Sexology

Awareness (muḥādaraḥ) is the beginning; then follows disclosure (muḵaṣḥafaḥ), then contemplation (muṣḥaḥadaḥ).

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
Imagination

For the wise, to imagine is to see. Imagination is the translucence of the soul. [...] 

Whosoever awakens consciousness has reached Imaginative Knowledge. This one moves in the world of symbolic images. The symbols that the student saw while he was dreaming he now sees without dreaming, as before he was seeing them with a sleeping consciousness. Now he moves himself among them with an awakened consciousness even when his physical body is profoundly asleep.

When the student reaches Imaginative Knowledge, he sees the symbols but he does not understand them. He comprehends that all of nature is a living scripture that he does not know. The student needs to elevate himself into Inspired Knowledge in order to interpret the sacred symbols of Great Nature.

—Samael Aun Weor, Sexology

Awareness [from the same Arabic root word *hudur*, presence], is presence of heart, which may be produced by the coming together of innumerable small proofs of what is real. It is still behind the veil, even if the heart is present with the overwhelming power of the practice of remembering God.

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
Mindfulness (Murāqaba)

From the field of Serenity the field of Mindfulness is born. God, the Most High, says, ‘They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they even flag or intermit’ (21:20).

Mindfulness involves striving and is of three kinds: being mindful of service, being mindful of the spiritual moment, and being mindful of the inner consciousness.

Being mindful of service is achieved through three things: revering God’s command, knowing the Prophetic tradition, and recognizing pretension.

And being mindful of the spiritual and metaphysical moment is achieved through three things: elimination of passion, purification of thought, and being overcome by divine love.

And being mindful of the inner-consciousness is achieved through three things: losing [attachment to] the world, becoming free from the self, and returning to God through intimacy. —Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Stations of the Sufi Path
Inspiration

Inspired Knowledge grants us the power of interpreting the symbols of Great Nature. [...] When the “I” interferes by translating and interpreting symbols, then it alters the meaning of this secret scripture, and the clairvoyant falls into a crime that can conduct him to jail.

Interpretation must be tremendously analytical, highly scientific, and essentially mystical. There is a need to learn how to see and how to interpret in the absence of the “I,” of the myself.

—Samael Aun Weor, Sexology

After this comes disclosure (unveiling, mukashafah) which is presence which has the quality of proof itself. In the condition the heart has no need of pondering indications or searching for the road, nor seeking protection from occasions of uncertainty, and it is not screened from the nature of the Unseen.

—Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
From the field of Breath the field of Unveiling is generated. God, the Most High, says, ‘The heart in no way falsified that which he saw’ (53:11).

Unveiling is when the heart sees God, and the signs of such disclosure are three: the heart is drowned in the remembrance of God, the innermost consciousness overflows with His gaze, and the inner heart sees the Reality.

The first kind of unveiling involves three things: truthful discourse, fear of people, and inspiration in invocation.

The second kind of unveiling involves three things: stability of states, firmness in sincerity, and recognizing a higher bliss.

And the third kind of unveiling also involves three things: attaining stability and peacefulness, attaining dignity like that of the angels, and attaining steadfastness like that of holy and spiritual people.

—Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Stations of the Sufi Path
The world of intuition is the world of mathematics. The student that wants to elevate himself to the world of intuition must be a mathematician or at least must have notions of arithmetic. […]

In the world of Intuition, we find only omniscience. The world of intuition is the world of the Being; it is the world of the Intimate.

In this world, the “I,” the myself, the ego, cannot enter.

The world of Intuition is the Universal Spirit of life. —Samael Aun Weor, Sexology

Then comes contemplation which is the presence of the Real without any remaining doubt. Suddenly the sky of one’s hidden inner being (sirr) becomes clear of the clouds of the veil, and the sun of vision rises in the sign of honor. The truth of contemplation is as Junayd said, “Finding the Real comes with losing yourself.”

— Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: Principles of Sufism
Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star—lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things.

—Surah An-Nūr (النور) [Qur’an 24:35]
Contemplation and Witnessing (Mushāhada)

God, the Most High, says, ‘Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ears and earnestly witnesses the truth’ (50:37).

Contemplation occurs when the veils between the obedient servant and God are removed. There are three ways to realize contemplation: the first is to advance from the level of knowledge to the level of wisdom; the second is to advance from the level of patience to the level of purity, and the third is to advance from the level of gnosis to the level of divine Reality.

—Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Stations of the Sufi Path
Wisdom, Purity, and Reality

A person will advance from the level of knowledge to the level of wisdom through three things: by putting one’s knowledge into practice, by revering the divine commandments, and adherence to the Prophetic tradition.

Likewise, a person will rise from the level of patience to that of purity through three things: abandoning disputation (munāqisha’), abandoning self-will and personal deliberations (tadbir), and understanding the necessity of contentment. This is the spiritual station of the contented.

Likewise, a person will ascend from the level of gnosis to the level of divine Reality through three things: behaving with awe and respect whilst in solitude and retreat, cultivating humility in service, and acting with self-sacrificing generosity to his companions.

—Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Stations of the Sufi Path
1. Each day, develop your self-observation or inner accounting (*muhasabah*) from moment to moment. As part of your self-observation, become aware of your use of imagination.

2. Every day, practice meditative retrospection. Recall what you perceived externally and internally from the entire day. Question the validity of what you perceived.