The Sufi Path of Self-knowledge
Lecture Eight

Spiritual Perception
Wherever the delusion of your selfhood appears – there’s hell. Wherever “you” aren’t – that’s heaven. –Abū Sa’īd in Ibn Munawwar: Ḩabr al-tawḥīd, ed. Shafī‘ī-Kadkanī, 299
“He who knows himself knows his Lord.” – Sufi Proverb

On the authority of Abu Abbas Abdullah bin Abbas: Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. Recognize and acknowledge Allah in times of ease and prosperity, and He will remember you in times of adversity. – Hadith Nawawi 19
What now is Right Understanding?

1. To understand suffering;
2. To understand the origin of suffering;
3. To understand the extinction of suffering;
4. To understand the path that leads to the extinction of suffering.

This is called Right Understanding.

–Buddha, Dhammapada
One cannot behold God by the eye of ratiocination derived from reason, for only through the eye of the heart, which is known as the faculty of inner vision, can one behold God. As long as you do not focus this eye, so as to sharpen its vision with the collyrium of asceticism, spiritual conduct, purgation of the soul, purification of the heart, and illumination of the Spirit, you will be unable to witness the Friend’s Beauty in contemplation. All the masters of the Path are in accordance that this reality can be realized only through the guidance of a Perfect Man who knows and contemplates God. –Lâhîjî: Mafâtîh, 66
The Ten Non-Meritorious Actions

Body
◇ Destruction of living beings
◇ Stealing
◇ Unlawful sexual intercourse

Speech
◇ Lying
◇ Tale-bearing
◇ Harsh language
◇ Frivulous talk

Mind
◇ Covetousness
◇ Ill-will
◇ Wrong views
In general, it is to the measure of one’s alienation from one’s own ego that one attains direct knowledge of one’s Lord... I heard Abu Ali al-Daqqaq say, “One of the tokens of the gnosis of God is the achievement of deep awe and reverence for God. If someone’s realization increases, his awe increases.” And I heard him say, “Gnosis requires stillness of heart, just as learning requires outward quiet. If someone’s gnosis increases, his tranquility increases.” —Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah
The key to success in worship lies in meditative reflection (*fikrat*)…whoever persists in such reflection in the heart will behold the invisible realm in the spirit.

Whoever contemplates God through keeping watch over the thoughts which pass through his heart will be exalted by God in all of his outward deeds.

—Dhū’l-Nūn Miṣrī in ‘Aṭṭār: Tadhkirat, 154-155
We must only extract the golden fruit from reasoning. 
The golden fruit of reasoning is comprehension. 
Comprehension and imagination must replace reasoning. 
Imagination and comprehension are the foundation of 
the superior faculties of the understanding. 

Samael Aun Weor, *Igneous Rose*
[Al-Jurayri] said that whoever does not establish awe of duty and vigilance in his relationship to God will not arrive at disclosure of the unseen or contemplation (mushahadah) of the divine. — Al-Qushayri, *Al-Risalah*
Those who have no knowledge say, ‘Why does not Allah speak to us, or come to us a sign?’ So said those who were before them, [words] similar to what they say. Alike are their hearts. We have certainly made the signs clear for a people who have certainty. –Al-Baqarah [2:118]

Knowledge does not come about except by the prior fulfillment of its conditions—that is, one must examine things in a pertinent and relevant way. Then when hints of the divine become continuous and clear demonstrative evidence has been obtained, the perceiver, through the succession of lights and his deep reflection upon them, becomes seemingly independent of the consideration of proof. This is the state of certainty. –Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah: On Certainty
When the seeker realizes the station of contemplation (mushāhida), which is witnessing God’s Essence comprehending and encompassing all phenomena – “Does not your Lord suffice, since He is witness over all things” (41:53) – he continually witnesses lights from the mundus invisibilis. From such a mystic’s perspective, this world and the hereafter are one and the same. This can only be realized by a vision that is all heart and spirit, not a view bound by mere mud and mire. –Ibn Karbalā’ī, Rawḍāt al-janān, II 164
Awareness (muhadarah) is the beginning; then follows disclosure (mukashafah), then contemplation (mushahadah). –Al-Qushayri, Al-Risalah

Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition are the three obligatory paths for the Initiation.

We reach these ineffable heights by means of Concentration, Meditation and Samadhi.

Whosoever has reached these ineffable heights of intuition has converted himself into a Master of Samadhi. –Samael Aun Weor, Igneous Rose
In the beginning [of meditation], the disciple perceives fleeting images. Later, the disciple totally perceives all the images of the suprasensible worlds.

This first stage of knowledge belongs to ‘imaginative’ knowledge.

–Samael Aun Weor, *Igneous Rose*

Awareness [from the same Arabic root as *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*
The disciple contemplates many images that are mysteries for him because he does not understand them.

Yet as long as he perseveres with his practices of internal meditation, he will then feel that the supra-sensible images produce certain feelings of happiness or pain.

The disciple then feels inspired in the presence of the internal images. He has thus risen to the stage of inspired knowledge.

—Samael Aun Weor, *Igneous Rose*

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*
Later, when he sees an internal image, instantaneously he knows its significance and the reason for many things. This is the third stage of knowledge, known as intuitive knowledge.

-Samael Aun Weor, *Igneous Rose*

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*
No one has improved upon the explanation of the achievement of contemplation (mushahadah) given by Amr bin Uthman al-Makki. The gist of what he said is that the light of God’s manifestation falling upon the heart one after another without a break, with no veil or disruption intervening among them, resemble flashes of lightning seemingly linked together continuously. For just as the darkest night, through the repetition and persistence of lightning-flashes in it, would take on the brilliance of day, when continual divine manifestation takes place in the heart, the heart is full of daylight, and not night. —Al-Qushayri, *Al-Risalah*