



CONTEMPLATION

Contemplative meditation is another practice prescribed for the student of *tasawwuf*, by which he or she hopes to reach the enlightenment of spiritual knowledge. The deep contemplation of the Sufi is known as *tafakkur*. In *tafakkur*, the *murid* (Sufi student) poses a question in his mind, makes *rabita* (spiritual cnection) to his heart (to his shaykh, to Allah), and waits for the answer to reveal itself. Along the way, he uses deductive reasoning to help his mind work in conjunction with the heart. The mind asks the question, the heart answers, and the mind acts as interpreter, bringing the solution to the forefront of consciousness with clarity.

Hz. Abdul Qadir Geylani said in *Secret of Secrets*:

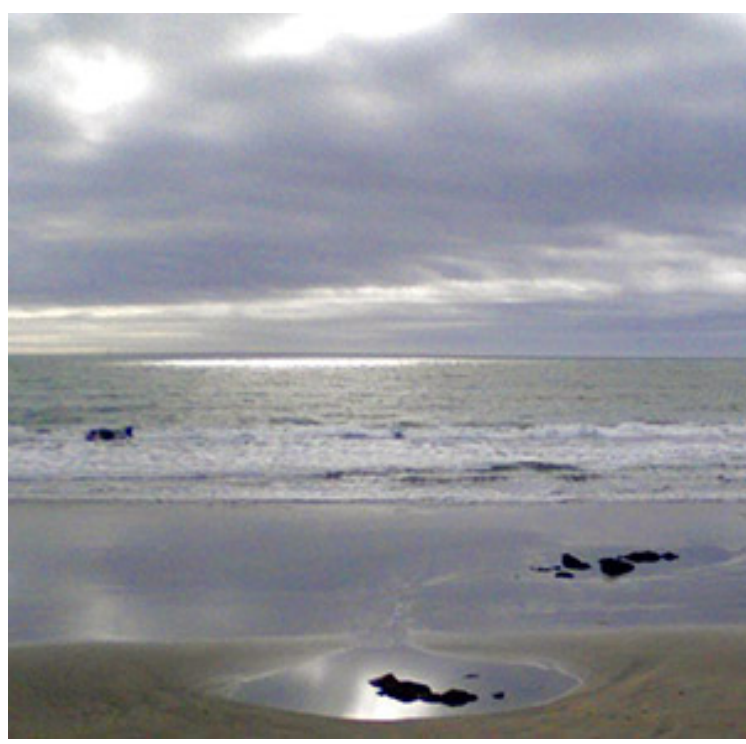
“Whoever contemplates divine knowing, and wishes to attain a complete sense of knowledge about Allah The Most High, his contemplation equals a thousand years of ritual worship. The real knowledge of knowing is this. By this knowledge I mean the state of unity. The one who knows reaches his Beloved, the One whom he misses, through this. The end of this state is to fly spiritually to the realm of real closeness.”



THE HONOR OF *AQL*

by Hz. Ahmed er Rifai

The greater *alem* (realm; world) is *aql* (intelligence; mind; the power of understanding and discrimination), and it is with you. You understand what and who you are in the context of where you exist with this *aql*. This is because, if your existence and your corporeality had not had the honor of including such a greater realm, you could not occupy your prime position or state of being. When you show an effort befitting the fleshly figure that possesses such a valuable realm, the greater *alem* that exists in you shines everywhere and can take you to great heights of accomplishment.



Allah has ordained all transactions based on *aql*. Whatever He gives, He gives according to *aql*; whatever He forbids, He forbids according to it. Union, separation, expansion, contraction are all connected to *aql*. It is the honor of the universe; it is the first created of all facets of humanity. Our Prophet, peace be upon him, has professed, “*Aql* is the first creation.” If you make an effort for your name and honor to be elevated with this spiritual being you possess, and to avoid belittling your humanity, you will be saved from getting stuck behind veils and will be elevated.

Aql can possess and hold *ilm* (knowledge; science). For the created, the honor of *ilm* is with *aql*. *Ilm* is completed with *aql*. Imam al-Shafi said, “Reigning without *aql* is like sitting on garbage and, more than that, it is a post of humiliation.” Some say *ilm* is higher than *aql*. This saying pertains to the divine *ilm*, because divine knowledge is among the attributes of the eternal. As for *aql*, it is created. If our *aql* and *ilm* are weighed, we find out that *aql* is on a higher level because if there is no *aql*, there is no *ilm*. If a person with *aql* falls down, we are sure that he will get up, but if a fool without *aql* falls, we are afraid that he may not be able to get up.

– from *Guidance to Mysticism*, translated by Shaykh Taner Ansari in *Grand Masters of Sufism*

ON CONTEMPLATION

by Shaykh Taner Ansari

All humans have *nafs* (egoistic or animalitic nature), brain and a line to God. We have to find the correct way. Allah is *Rahman* and *Rahim* (Merciful), so He helps us find the right course by logic, by contemplating and deduction. The first thing you have to accept is that there is a God, but it's not you. Our job is to find our essence through contemplation. Islam is acknowledgment of the fact that there is a God, and don't try to be God yourself. You have to accept that there are rules and regulations. You have to be in sync with this. Do we have free will? Yes, if we didn't have free will, Allah wouldn't have created us, because Allah wants to be chosen scientifically with our own free will, with no force. If Allah wanted to force us, everyone would believe. Making the choice of choosing Allah has to be the beginning of your life. Everything has to be based on this. This is the truth and this is what we have to make peace with. Islam is making peace with Allah's decrees and Allah's systems. This is physics. If you think you have power too, show it to me. I am not going to ask you to make a galaxy. I am going to ask you not to eat again. If you think you have power, do this.



Allah gives you power and He is testing you. Power comes from *Al Qadir* and *Al Muqtadir* (names of Allah that describe Allah's power). Just imagine somebody says, “Please hold on to my money,” as a trust. This is temporary, for safekeeping. You can only spend when the owner says you can. Similarly, this is Allah's life. He has set up a general course through us. He owns your life. He owns everything. You need His permission for this and that. We are nothing.

A sea turtle hatches 1,000 eggs. Only three of them make it to the sea, and one out of 1,000 will grow to adulthood. Allah makes billions of people, but only a few of these people are going to choose Allah willingly and only a few of them will reach the sea of Love and swim. We are trying to raise consciousness. Allah is doing this with us, through us. I can see this in us. What I noticed is that people are stuck to forms that are related to the five senses. We not only have outer senses, but also inner senses. In order to learn Allah, you have to study both – inner and outer. It is easy for us to go to church and kneel down. It is easy to go to the mosque and do your prayers. But going to the mosque, doing these forms is not the goal. There are certain meanings in these packages. What is the message with these packages? Allah is in constant communication with you, and why are you not in constant communication with your Creator?

Forms make it seem that everything is separate. Allah made it like this to see how hard you are going to contemplate to get to know Allah. You cannot love blindly. Some people are just singing love songs; do they understand what love is? First of all, Allah will love you, then you can love back, and none of this is going to happen if you don't get out of your comfort zone and act according to your claim.

One of the rules of being a Sufi is that you have to be on the lookout for Allah's signs. Listen to my advice. Surrender and learn the easy way. My students have to be conscious of what they are doing. Each action has to be willing. I don't want habitual actions. This is the killer of all faiths. Mean what you say each time.

My students should all be positive – no negativity. We will pray, be positive, we will be patient, we will observe, we will help people in general, and we will not help the people who are doing bad. We are all in this earth together. For Allah there is only one thing – do you acknowledge Him or not? We do not make any distinctions among the prophets. They are giving you the same message. What is the important thing, the prophet or the message? The prophet is helping you establish this *iqam al salat*, this relationship with Allah.

CONTEMPLATION EXERCISE FROM SHAYKH TANER ANSARI

Allah and the universe; you and your body – there is something in common here. What is it? Both have *ruh*, soul, and body. You are in your body, you don't see yourself or the *ruh* but you see the manifestations, which are perceived by these eyes and these five senses. Allah is in this universe too; what you are seeing is the manifestation. All over the world, especially in Buddhism, there are meditation methods. Now I give you some Sufi meditation:

1. Contemplation of Breathing

You breathe in “Allah” and breathe out “*Hu* (name of Allah in the third person).” There are two things happening in the universe: passive energy and active energy. You are being with Allah with the breath. You are breathing in Allah – literally breathing in Allah, not the sound of Allah or the thinking of Allah, but the reality of Allah. All contemplation is understanding and getting to the reality, realizing the reality. The reality is when you breathe in slowly through your nose and say, “Allah,” and breathe out with your mouth (and acknowledge it) with, “*Hu*”. You can sit down and be with Allah through breath. Every moment you should be with Allah with breath. Allah The Most High says in the *Qur'an-i Karim* (Generous Qur'an):

"*Wakulla insanin alzamnahu ta-irahufi'aa unuqihi* (The summary of what you do will be put around your neck.)" (17:2) This is what's happening in your neck.

You have an outer *zikr*, which your breath is doing and you have an inner *zikr*, which your heart is doing. Outer and inner have to go together.

2. Contemplation of Heart *Zikr*

Allah the Most High says in the *Qur'an-i Karim*:

"*Alam ya'ni lillazina amanu an takhsa'aa qulubuhum li zikri Allahi* (Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should join in the *zikr* of Allah?)" (57:16)

Allah says to join your heart in the *zikr* of Allah. What is this *zikr*? It is your heartbeat. Make *rabita* (spiritual connection) to your heart, listen to your heart when it is saying, “Allah,” and when it is saying, “*Hu*.” Your heart is pumping in blood with “Allah” and pumping out with “*Hu*.” Your heartbeat is changing that passive energy into kinetic energy by pumping the blood and Allah's energy to all your cells for life. Life comes to you from all points, everywhere. With breath you get life from Allah into your lungs, and then your heart pumps it through your whole body to maintain this manifestation with *zikr*: “Allah *Hu*.” You can simulate this with your glottal vibration – this imitates your heart. You have breath and vibration. You are breathing in and at the same time vibrational *zikr* is happening in your body. When you hear this, then you have passed the level of *sharia* (the body of Islamic religious canons). When you see your body doing *zikr* in your sleep or awake, you have passed the level of *sharia*.

So, as you can see, this is true. This is actually happening. Do you see how your existence is totally dependent on Allah? Are you with Allah or not at all times?

There is a correlation between your breath and your heart. When you stop breathing, your heart stops. When your heart stops, your breathing stops. When they both stop, your brain stops. So your manifestation goes into de-manifestation.

When does the heart say, “Allah”? And when does it say, “*Hu*”? Allah in, *Hu* out, just like breathing. You should do this contemplation every day.

3. Seeing Allah in Other People

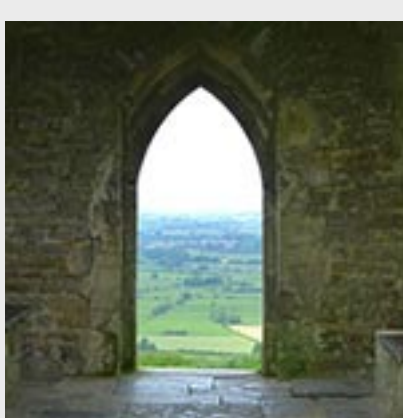
If this is so, you can see this in yourself, right? Go sit in a café; your job is to watch people and not to judge them – just study them and try to see Allah in them and show respect to Allah in other people, not telling them, but by saying “*Hu*.” Just because they are manifesting *nafs*, ego, does not mean Allah is not there. As you can see, Allah is in every manifestation, but Allah gives us time to realize and come to terms of endearment so that we can have an exposition of love between us.

All of it starts with good *adab* – acting the way Allah wants a human being to act. Be connected, thinking, overcome emotion with knowledge, research, and then put into action with the connection, and ask help from the Creator for the result. Everything starts with the intention. Are you intending to be god yourself and reinvent the wheel? Or are you intending to accept what is out there as is and do your part? Intend to find your purpose, your role in this big picture, and intend to do your part voluntarily and then lovingly. This is what is expected of us.

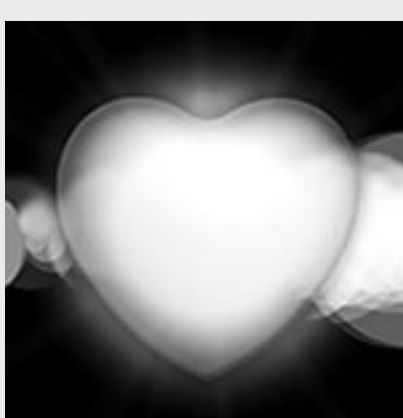
4. The Way to Pray

Our (AQRT) motto is “*Ya Wadud* (O Love), *Ya Salaam* (O Peace), *Ya Jami* (O Togetherness), *Ya Nafi* (O Goodness).” When we are praying, we have to imagine that energy by going into our hearts, then find that energy and give it to the universe. “*Ya Wadud*” – distribute love to everybody, “*Ya Salaam*” – give peace to everybody, “*Ya Jami*” – put togetherness among everybody. “*Ya Nafi*” – for goodness. You have to think, live and give, for goodness.

Practices Overview



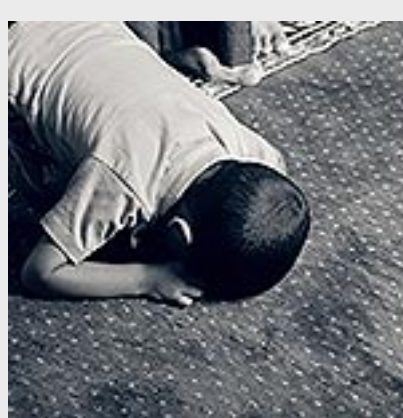
Rabita



Adab



Surrender



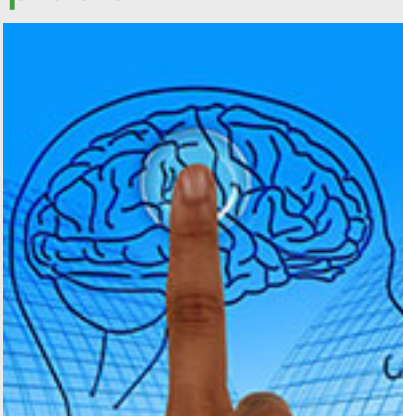
Zikr



Sohbet



Contemplation



Service

