

ISLAMIC MEDITATION

MASTERING THE ART OF ZIKR

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Islamic Meditation (www.IslamicMeditation.com)

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SECTION 1

What is Islamic Meditation?

“And I have created the jinn and men but to engage in divine service and worship Me.”

— *Surah Adh-Dhariyat (Holy Qur’an, 51:56)* —

Islamic Meditation, known in Arabic as *Zikr*, sometimes spelled *Dhikr*, has been practiced since time immemorial. Throughout this manual, I will be using the terms *Zikr* and Islamic Meditation interchangeably.

Meditation was particularly a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), and it was in fact during an extended period of spiritual presence and meditation that he received revelation in the Cave of Hira on Jabal-Nur, the Mountain of Light, just outside the Holy City of Mecca.

“Certainly, the Remembrance of God is without doubt the greatest.”

— *Surah Al-Ankaboot (Holy Qur’an, 29:45)* —

Forms of Islamic Meditation

The term *Zikr* literally means “to remember,” and with regards to Islamic spiritual practice, encompasses several different forms:

Taffakur

Taffakur, which literally means “contemplation” or “reflection,” is conscious, constructive and purposeful thinking. This is very different from unconscious, automatic, habitual and often negative thinking. Furthermore, specifically within the context of Islamic Meditation, *taffakur* refers to active thought with the purpose of drawing nearer to the Divine Presence.

Tasbih

Tasbih is the chanting or recitation of Divine Names and Attributes, as well as specific key phrases such as the Kalima Tayyiba. Prayer beads, known as *masbaha* or *tasbeh*, are normally used to facilitate this powerful spiritual practice.

Muraqaba

Muraqaba, literally translated as “observation,” is the practice and attainment of a sublime state of surrender and submission, a state of inner stillness and peace, calm, clarity and prescience. It is one of the highest forms of meditation and leads to realization of Truth and Reality, beyond form, beyond mind.

Murabita

Murabita, derived from the root word *irtibat* meaning “connection” or “communion,” is an advanced spiritual practice that cultivates a living awareness and relation with divine spiritual presence.

Although meditation is not unique to Islam, and is in fact part of nearly every spiritual tradition, it is in Islamic Meditation that the practice attains its perfection, Islam being the final revealed religion.

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”

— *Surah Al-Ma’ida (Holy Qur’an, 5:3)* —

With Islamic Meditation, the worshipper is gently guided into the Divine Presence and into *marifah*, or gnosis, knowledge and consciousness, intelligent awareness of the imminence of God. This attainment of nearness to God, awakening, enlightenment, is the very goal of Islam.

Zikr, or divine remembrance, which I have translated into English as “Islamic Meditation,” is the quintessential meditative spiritual practice. For, according to the Holy Qur’an, as well as nearly every other spiritual tradition and revealed religion, before arriving upon this physical plane, our souls existed in a state of subsistence in the Presence of God, yet upon being immersed, raised and indoctrinated in *dunya*, the world of form and

appearance, we lost awareness and consciousness, and so “forgot.” Not only did we forget where we came from and where we are going, but we forgot who we are.

A human being is by nature forgetful. The Arabic word for man, or human being, is *insaan*, and is actually derived from the same root word meaning forgetful, *nasiyaan*.

“He is only called man (insaan) because of his forgetfulness (nasiyaan), and it is only called the heart (al-qalb) because it changes so rapidly (yataqallib).”

— Arab Poem —

And so Islamic Meditation, in addition to leading the seeker to the Presence of God, is simultaneously the practice of self-realization, the awakening to who we truly are beyond form, appearance and illusion, beyond self, beyond ego.

“He who knows himself is as one who knows his Lord.”

— Prophet Muhammad (S) —

Thus, Islamic Meditation is designed to ultimately liberate a human being from the one veil that separates him or her from their Creator, and that barrier to clarity, true vision and sight is the human ego, the self, in Arabic called the *nafs*. For beyond the veil of the self is the imminent Presence of God, yet in an unenlightened state of unconsciousness, a human being is entirely unaware of the very ocean he or she swims in.

“We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.”

— Surah Qaf (Holy Qur’an, 50:16) —

Although we tend to think that God is beyond, somewhere outside of us, the reality is that the Divine Presence cannot be found except within. And so, the journey is inward, away from the world and towards God, from the manifest to the unmanifest, from form to formlessness, from the seen to the unseen.

God has said, "Neither My heaven nor My earth can contain Me, save the heart of a believer."

— Prophet Muhammad (S) —

It was when Jalaluddin Rumi, one of the great masters of Islamic Spirituality, truly realized this with certainty that he began to whirl, to circumambulate, to make *tawwaf*, around his very own center of being.

Having been originally created in Paradise in a state of innocence and purity, in *fitra*, we have as our journey now to seek to return to Heaven, to the primordial state of bliss and grace. And this then completes the journey, from God back to God.

"We are of God, and to God is our return."

— Surah Al-Baqara (Holy Qur'an, 2:156) —

Normally, this cycle is completed with death, after which the soul is freed from the body, the prison of form, and is able to return and reunite with its Source. Yet, with Islamic Spirituality and Islamic Meditation, it is actually possible for a human being to reach this level of awakening while still alive, before death.

"Die before you die."

— Prophet Muhammad (S) —

In fact, many Companions of the Prophet (S) were given glad tidings of Paradise while still alive, signifying that they had indeed reached a state of felicity before death. Likewise, Islamic history is replete with stories of Saints, *Awliya'ullah*, the "Friends of God" who in the way of the Prophet (S) and his Companions attained enlightenment, awakening, and so came to know God experientially, their lives reflections of Divine Grace.

"Behold! Verily upon the friends of God there is no fear, nor shall they grieve."

— Surah Yunus (Holy Qur'an, 10:62) —

SECTION 2

The Blessings and Benefits of Islamic Meditation

God has said, "I was a Hidden Treasure and wanted to be known, so I created creation that I might be known."

– Prophet Muhammad (S) –

There are countless benefits to Islamic Meditation. By consistently engaging in a meditative spiritual practice, particularly in *zikr'ullah*, Divine Remembrance, in addition to growing and developing as a spiritual being, you will gain significant benefits with regards to even your practical life, and this includes the spheres of health, psychology, relationships, family and community.

First and foremost, the spiritual benefits one gains through the conscious and purposeful practice of *zikr* are innumerable. As previously noted, it is only through intentful, mindful, meditative spiritual practice that God is to be found. And without this level of consciousness in worship, practices designed to lead a human being to freedom and to the Divine Presence lose a large portion of their efficacy and power.

"An hour of contemplation is of more value than seventy years of worship."

– Prophet Muhammad (S) –

Essentially what we seek as human beings, often without realizing it, is the Divine Presence of God. All of our searching, struggle and effort is an attempt to reach to a drop of Divine Love. Yet we tend to look in the wrong place, where it cannot be found — in the world of form, in *dunya*.

Any degree of joy, happiness, love, pleasure or goodness that we can experience in the world is but a fraction of its reality. Its fullness, divine ecstasy, can only be found with God.

Because our common culture is now governed by materialism and the need to consume, this presents a fundamental dilemma for the average human being, who by nature and

design seeks happiness. The common programming we are indoctrinated into from birth, and in reality even before, is that happiness is to be found outside of you, from somewhere or something external, in the world.

With the growing adoration of technology and our dependance upon it, the result is a social, psychological and emotional disaster for most human beings, particularly those that are unable to sedate themselves with drugs, alcohol, entertainment and the like.

Despite our material progress, despondency and depression are rising, not falling, and the average human experience is now one that is governed by fear, stress, anxiety, hopelessness and dis-ease. However, this level of discomfort is actually a gift from God, for were we to actually be at peace in the world of form and illusion, in *dunya*, what incentive or motivation would there be to seek Truth, to seek God and Reality, and to awaken to true, eternal happiness that can never be lost?

Through the practice of Islamic Meditation, a profound shift begins to take place. As you cultivate rootedness and presence within, you will become less and less dependent upon the external world. You will discover a hidden spring of Life within yourself, and all joy and happiness flows from there.

In reality, there is no other happiness other than that which is to be found within, in the Divine Presence, and even when we experience temporary happiness in our lives as a result of external circumstances, it is only because something in our experience triggers a momentary connection to Source within, albeit often without our conscious realization.

Unfortunately, we tend to not realize this, and so make the mistake of seeking to sustain satisfaction by seeking it in the world. Hence, the average individual is caught up in a hopeless cycle that becomes progressively more difficult to manage, our needs growing faster than our ability to meet them.

Thus, by learning how to reach and tap into the Source of all Good within, you will continually become a freer and happier person. More importantly, you will progressively inherit your Divine Trust, your *amanat*, and realize your Divine Destiny as a noble Representative of the Divine, a khalifa, and thus a force and pillar for good, for peace and prosperity in the world.

Additionally, by maintaining a meditative spiritual practice, you will quickly begin to experience many benefits in the dimensions of health, productivity and effectiveness, mental and emotional wellbeing, as well as prosperity and practical success.

Because all life is fundamentally electrical, energetic, in nature, meditation can quickly improve the health of one's body. There are subtle energy channels that run throughout the human body known as meridians, and these govern circulation and health within the body, including all organs, tissues and cells. The health of these cells in the body are dependent upon proper internal energy flow so that they can receive not only the nourishment they require for survival, but also the spiritual energy and light that is essential to vibrant life.

Improper diet as well as psychological and emotional stress lead to internal blockages within the body, and these then restrict the flow of energy throughout the system, ultimately leading to sickness and poor health. Dis-ease leads to disease, and so it is important to manage not only one's diet and nutrition, but also one's mental and emotional state, one's spirituality.

In the consistent practice of Islamic Meditation, you will cultivate increased energy flow throughout your entire system, and this will nourish and sustain your very cells, leading ultimately to healing, repair and even correction of disease. Even when initially beginning with the meditative spiritual practice, you can begin to feel a difference of significantly increased circulation, particularly in the hands which are receptive to feeling and where your consciousness is already used to focusing.

Although initially the benefits and improved flow and circulation will be apparent for a short time during meditation, with sustained practice, vibrant health and internal flow and clarity will become increasingly your natural sustained state. As you grow in presence, every facet of your experience will begin to reflect a life connected to the Divine Source of all Life and Peace.

Islamic meditation is the fastest path to stress relief and freedom from fear, anxiety and worry. When analyzed, all stress and drama in life are from a result of fear of death in one form or another. This is because without spiritual development, we learn to identify with a false, temporal form, the body, the life of which is limited to time and space. In other words, the body will inevitably die. And we fear that we will die with it. Hence the incessant struggle to attain safety and security, not to mention the hopeless attempt at eternal youth that now characterizes so much of modern culture.

Yet through Islamic Meditation, fear and anxiety will diminish significantly in you. By developing a real and meaningful connection to God, to Source, you will begin to discover the life of your eternal reality, your soul, which cannot die. And as your identification shifts from the body to the soul within, you become less attached to the world of form, stress diminishes and ultimately dissipates, and you live in a state of persistent peace, joy and happiness.

Islamic Meditation leads to the attainment of the sublime state of surrender, the very meaning of Islam itself, and to a life based in harmony. Through this developmental process, concerns of safety and security wane, for you truly begin to realize that you are fundamentally supported and loved by the Creator of all that is, Allah Almighty. Through surrender, you become friendly with what is, with Divine Will as it manifests in this moment, and thus ultimately becoming a friend of God, one who has become utterly free of internal resistance, complaint and ingratitude. For what is there to fear or worry about when your Friend and Ally is the Creator of Heavens and Earth, the Force Eternal? And so, through Islamic Spirituality and the practice of Islamic Meditation, you will ultimately transcend the self, the ego, allowing it to die, awakening to eternal life and so become utterly fearless.

“Behold! Verily upon the friends of God there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.”

– Surah Yunus (Holy Qur’an, 10:62)

Paradoxically, by turning inward and away from the world thus and by developing a more accurate comprehension of the reality of the Divine, by surrendering to the goodness and grace of God, your external circumstances will begin to improve as they naturally reflect your inner state. A soul in peace, confidence and certainty will naturally attract circumstances and results that correspond.

God Almighty has said, “I am to My servant as he thinks I am.”

– Prophet Muhammad (S) –

Another subtle though wonderful byproduct of progressively becoming free of resistance, by learning to surrender and to relax, is that you open yourself to receiving greater levels of prosperity and abundance. In the normal human state where we identify with ego, with self, that which is separate from all else and thus from Life, the Universe, we literally contract and so pinch off the flow of abundance that would otherwise sustain us in prosperity and ease. God is Gracious, Generous and gives without measure. And His love for creation is limitless. Thus, poverty is not a cause of God not giving, but rather a result of His servants not receiving.

SECTION 3

The Practice of Islamic Meditation

“God guides unto Himself they who turn to Him, they who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the Remembrance of God. Verily, in the Remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction.”

– Surah Ar-Rad (Holy Qur’an, 13:27-28) –

The Islamic Meditation Program has been designed to enable you to instantly begin taking advantages of the benefits of Zikr. You can immediately get started by downloading and listening to the Islamic Meditation Audio Soundtracks to enter into a peaceful state of meditation.

Concurrently, the following instructions will help you establish a long-term productive practice based in the traditional forms of Islamic Meditation.

As I mentioned earlier, there are primarily four types of Zikr, or Islamic Meditation: Taffakur, Tasbih, Muraqaba and Murabita. When practicing, you can focus specifically on a single one of these forms, or combine them to create unique results and experiences.

The following guidelines will help you establish a powerful daily practice that will serve as a foundation for your life and spirituality, and that will gently carry you to progressively better results in both spheres.

Be Consistent

First and foremost, make the intention to be consistent in your practice. Intend to sit in Zikr, Islamic Meditation, at least five days each week. Without consistency, results will be sporadic, if at all.

“The most beloved action to God is the most consistent, even if it is little.”

– Prophet Muhammad (S) –

Think, for example, of exercise. If you wanted to improve your physical condition, but only exercised once every week or so, you probably would not get very good results. After a few months of carrying on with such a sporadic and inconsistent approach, you might even become discouraged as to the benefits of exercising at all. This might make it harder for you in the long run to establish a healthy routine, since in your mind you would have already failed.

Yet if you were to exercise consistently five days every week for two or three months, you would receive undeniable results. In fact, you would begin to enjoy your exercise routine so much, you might very well wonder how you ever got along without it!

Take as another example the planting of a seed. If you wanted to grow a fruit tree, you would plant the seed in fertile soil, give it proper nutrients and water it consistently. Eventually, the seed would germinate and grow into a tree that would produce healthy and delicious fruit you could benefit from.

But if you simply planted a seed, failed to water it consistently, and largely left it unattended, it would die. And you might be left wondering if it's worth it at all to plant in the first place!

With the simple guidelines presented in this manual, you can quickly gain significant benefits and results with Islamic Meditation. Engage your practice with consistency, and in a short time you'll be amazed at what a difference this path begins to make in your life.

Set a Time and Place

By deciding in advance on a time and place when and where you will not be disturbed, and during which you can practice for at least twenty minutes, you will increase the chances of maintaining a consistent meditative spiritual practice, and thus you will dramatically improve the results that you get.

As human beings, we are creatures of habit and routine. In many ways, we behave automatically. And in order to create a change in our lives, we need to create a change in our habits.

By establishing a simple practice where you add meditation to your daily routine at a set time and place, like brushing your teeth, it quickly becomes effortless.

The best time and place for Zikr is when and where you will not be disturbed. Early mornings or late nights are often ideal. And the last few hours of night before morning are praised extensively in the Holy Qur'an as the time most conducive for prayer and meditative spiritual practice.

I personally enjoy meditation early in the morning before Fajr prayer. During this time, the world is asleep, commerce and traffic have not yet started, and the space is conducive to Presence.

By establishing your meditative spiritual practice early in the morning, it will set a positive tone for the entire day. This will draw and attract to you blessings and baraka throughout the entire day, and you will have more good and happy days!

Islamic Meditation Step-By-Step

1. Perform Ablutions

Whenever possible, begin by making *wudu*, or ablutions. This involves washing your hands, face, arms and feet as you would for prayer. Although it is not required to be in a state of *wudu* for Zikr, by consecrating your practice and intention thus, you will gain much more benefit and Presence.

The greater the degree of intention and consciousness you bring into your practice, and thus your life, the greater the results.

Additionally, you will want to pray two *raka'ah* for *Tahiyaatul-Wudu*, consecration of ablutions and beginning Zikr.

2. Make Intention

Based on what you have learned and what feels appropriate, make an intention, *niyah*. This will focus your practice towards a specific purpose and will raise your level of consciousness and awareness, as well as significantly improving the results that you gain.

“The value of an action is based upon the intention.”

– **Prophet Muhammad (S)** –

For example, you might say, “I intend to sit here, now, in this place and allow my soul to increase in Divine Light and spiritual energy.” In this way, your intention would focus your meditation more towards this specific intention, in this case, stimulating healing and the cultivation of positive energy.

3. Sit

Sit in a position that is comfortable, but be mindful of your posture. You will want to keep your spine straight, erect, so as to not diminish the flow of internal energy within.

As you cultivate spiritual energy in Zikr, an obstruction in flow can result in a buildup of energy that will actually make you sleepy, because once you fall asleep and are in a state of rest, the energy will be able to flow better. You can avoid falling asleep by maintaining an erect posture.

There are three main positions that you can sit in. Use whichever feels comfortable and appropriate at the time.

- **Jalsah.** *Jalsah* is the sitting position when one is in prayer, with the legs folded underneath the body. This is an excellent position if you are going to be engaging in Tasbeeh after prayer.
- **Cross-Legged.** This is commonly the most comfortable position. You may use a wall or other vertical surface to support your back in an upright position.
- **Lam-Alif Position.** The Lam-Alif Position, also commonly known as the lotus position, is where your legs are crossed but your feet are resting on your knees. This is a more difficult position for the novice, however it is the most conducive to proper posture and deeper immersion in meditation. As part of Islamic *adab*, manners, however, you will want to cover your feet with a cloth, shawl or blanket so that they do not point upwards.

Alternatively, if you have difficulty sitting on the ground or it is not convenient, you may sit on a chair with your feet flat on the ground, being mindful of your posture.

4. Open Your Hands

There are three main hand positions in Islamic Meditation. Use any which feels comfortable and appropriate at the time.

- **Palms Down.** Your hands resting palms facing downwards on your legs. This hand position is most conducive to relaxation.
- **Palms Up.** Your palms face upward while resting on your legs. This hand position is more conducive to drawing and attracting spiritual energy.
- **Allah-Hu Position.** The Allah-Hu position is where the thumb and index finger are joined, connected, forming mirror images of the phrase *Allah-Hu*. This hand position is most conducive to spiritual unveiling and gnosis, and may be used with either palms facing up or down.

5. Relax

Begin to consciously relax. Recognize that you are now entering a Divine Presence, a Holy Space, and that by fully surrendering, you will be blessed with Good and Grace.

Become mindful of your posture. Become aware of any tension in your body, and gently let it go.

Meditation is meant to lead to a sublime state of surrender and peace, and this is the very meaning of Islam.

6. Breathe

Gently focus on your breath. Allow your breathing to normalize itself. As you release tension from your body, your breathing will naturally become fuller and more relaxed, nourishing your mind and body much more effectively.

Gently remain with your breath. Allow thoughts to fade, and simply stay with your breath.

And don't forget to smile!

7. Begin

Begin with one of the forms of Zikr, as detailed below.

Forms of Islamic Meditation

Tasbih

Tasbih, meaning “to praise,” is the most common form of Zikr, or Islamic Meditation. However, it is generally practiced without the presence and concentration that this divine practice deserves. By meditating in a state of intentful focus in Tasbih, you will exponentially increase the efficacy of this wonderful practice.

Often, a set of prayer beads known as a *masbaha*, sometimes called a *tasbeh*, are used. This is highly recommended and has added benefits in addition to making it very easy to keep count and maintain a consistent practice.

Normally, key phrases such as the Divine Names and Attributes of God are recited. This should be done in a state of relaxed meditation and focus.

We have chose specific key phrases in producing the Islamic Meditation Audio Soundtracks, and a brief description of each follows. You may meditate on the phrases and their effects by either reciting them in Tasbih, or by simply listening to the Islamic Meditation Audio Soundtracks and relaxing.

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem

The phrase *Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem* means “In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.” For a believer, every action should begin with this divine phrase. And indeed, any action that is begun with consciousness, presence and intent, and the Bismillah, is divinely blessed.

With the power of the Bismillah, you can effectively use any intention you wish. Coupled with visualization, the grace and light you can cultivate and attract are without limit!

La Ilaha Il Allah

Known as the Kalima Tayyiba, La Ilaha Il Allah is the foundation of EVERYTHING. It is the foundation of the entire Universe. Literally meaning “There is no god but God,” the Kalima Tayyiba is the essence of all truth, affirming the Oneness of God and the Unity of real existence. “Kalima Tayyiba” means the Best Statement, and it is indeed that!

Allah, Allah

“Allah” is the proper name for God in Arabic, and has very unique properties. It is said that the entire creation glorifies this ancient and holy name.

With the Kalima Tayyiba you affirm that there is no god but God, that there is nothing but God, and that phrase is compromised of two parts, one that negates and one that affirms. Yet with the repetition of simply the Divine Name of Allah, you take your meditation to a deeper level of only affirmation. This denies even the possibility of a separate existence.

Hu

The name, or attribute Hu is used throughout the Holy Qur'an when referring to God. This most subtle of names refers to the Divine Essence, and takes the *zhakir*, he or she who is performing Zikr, ultimately to a place of total effacement in the Divine Presence. Here, there is no individual to even affirm the existence of God, other than God Himself.

The primordial sound of Existence, Hu is a Zikr to be meditated upon gently and slowly.

Salawat

Praising the Holy Prophet (S) is one of the most meritorious and blessed acts a believer can engage in. This dresses the individual with prophetic light and grace, and cultivates in the practitioner the sincerity, humility and love of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S).

The very name of the Prophet (S), "Muhammad" means "The Praised One." Sending love and blessings upon the Holy Prophet (S) is so important in Islam that not only does God command it in the Holy Qur'an, but also states the He and the Angels are praising the Prophet (S)!

"Lo! God and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation."

– Surah Al-Ahzzab (Holy Qur'an, 33:56)

A simple Salawat is the phrase, **"Allahumma Salli 'Ala Muhammadin Wa 'Ala Ali Muhammadin Wa Sallim."**

In order to practice Tasbih, simply choose one of these key phrases, known as *azhkar*, and begin reciting them on a *masbaha*, a *tasbeh*, if you have one. Close your eyes, relax, and focus on the holy phrase. Allow its energy and blessings to dress you, inside and out. Take your time and relax. There is no need to rush. Enjoy the practice. Allow yourself to naturally find the rhythm that feels appropriate.

It is recommended that in order to maintain a consistent daily practice, you keep count of the number of repetitions you perform. You may begin with one hundred, and increase the amount of any particular Zikr when it feels appropriate to do so.

With proper practice, Tasbih is one of the most powerful ways to enter a state of Divine Presence.

Muraqaba

Progressing from Tasbih, we enter into Muraqaba. While in Tasbih we are active in the recitation of *azhkar*, in Muraqaba we enter into stillness, silence, pure presence and awareness. This is sublime.

In the path of Islamic Spirituality, one is continually traveling from self to God. Ultimately, one leaves the self behind completely, and fully enters the Divine Presence, becoming subsistent therein. Muraqaba trains one for this ultimate stage of freedom and non-attachment.

Through Muraqaba, one can enter into the highest stations of spiritual awareness and development. Literally meaning “to observe,” in Muraqaba you become a witness, an observer, a still presence. You become What-Is. You become your true Self before manifestation into form and identity.

By practicing Muraqaba, you will increasingly become aware of the self, the ego, that otherwise takes up the bulk of our consciousness and keeps us asleep in identification with it. The depth of this holy practice knows no end.

To practice Muraqaba, simply sit. Simply Be. Keep your attention on your breath, and begin to become aware of any thoughts that begin to form. Observe them. Simply watch them. Do not judge, do not comment, do not criticize. Simply Be.

Observe your thoughts and be totally indifferent, regardless of what your mind may come up with. Thus transcend your thoughts. Thus transcend your self. By simply observing without attachment in this way, you begin to dissociate from your own thoughts. You begin to dissociate from your very self, the little self you have thus far thought yourself to be.

In Muraqaba, you begin to see and recognize the ego, the illusory self that persists in existence only through your lack of awareness. Ultimately, you will be able to be fully

aware of the ego, and it will have no place in your unconsciousness to hide. With the light of consciousness shining upon it, it will begin to dissolve. And as the ego dissolves, all illusion dissolves. The veils upon the heart, separating you from the Divine Presence, dissolve.

Ultimately, what happens cannot be said. It is to be experienced in a state of total awe and wonder, beauty beyond description. And the proper practice of Muraqaba is the key.

Taffakur

Taffakur means “to think,” “to contemplate,” “to reflect.” It would seem this is the opposite of Muraqaba, which aims to carry you beyond thinking, however there is a place for positive and constructive, purposeful thought.

At its simplest, Taffakur is simply sitting and taking a few moments to reflect, to contemplate, to think. When you do this, much which the soul wants you to know will begin to become known.

In this day and age, the practice of Taffakur is absolutely essential, especially when the entirety of modern culture is aimed at entertaining and distracting a human being from this very act.

Because we generally take so little time to reflect and think, we end up subconsciously suppressing massive amounts of unresolved thoughts, ideas, fears and beliefs. These do not go away, but operate in the background. Consequently, we live our lives with a continual background state of stress and anxiety.

Because so few are taught or trained to think, the average person progressively requires greater amounts of stimulation and entertainment to distract him or her from the mountain of unresolved feelings building up within. This leads to all types of abuse and excess, including the use of food, drugs, alcohol, media, games and the like to effectively self-sedate oneself so as to not feel. We are doing everything we can to run away from our selves!

The solution is to deal with the self. As the old saying goes, “Wherever you go, there you are.” No one can be entertained or drunk twenty-four hours per day (although many try). Nevertheless, this leads to enormous unhappiness, and ultimately to a waste of life, this precious gift God gave us to ascend and to return to happiness, peace, bliss — Paradise.

There are two main ways to practice Taffakur.

1. Contemplate and Reflect

Simply sit and allow to emerge what will. Analyze it, particularly in light of your learning. Resolve it. Cut through the fog of wrong thoughts and beliefs with the sword of truth.

“Truth hath come and falsehood has perished. Lo! Falsehood is ever bound to perish.”

– Surah Al-Isra (Holy Qur’an, 17:81)

With the light of understanding, falsehood cannot persist. It is only in the unexamined state of unconsciousness that fear, doubt and disbelief fester.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

– Socrates –

You may use a journal or notepad to help you surface and become aware of what your underlying thoughts are, and to analyze them in the light of truth. When you uncover a false thought that is making you feel bad, you will feel an immediate relief as you are able to discard it, not unlike the relief one might feel if poison was suddenly withdrawn from the body. For wrong thoughts are no different than poison, and they must be cleansed or they will make the entire system sick.

2. Think and Affirm

To think in Taffakur is to think intentionally, constructively, purposefully and positively. This is dramatically different than the unconscious, negative and erroneous thinking human beings are normally doing.

Think by consciously choosing your thoughts. Choose thoughts that help you and serve you rather than thoughts that harm you and disempower you.

Affirmations are powerful tools to be used, the quintessential affirmation being the Kalima Tayyiba, La Ilaha Il Allah, There is no god but God. This is the fundamental thought and

belief upon which everything rests, the foundation of all truth, and it will guide your thinking from going astray.

Eliminate negative thoughts, affirm positive ones. Only positive thoughts are real, because only God is real, and God is Good. Negative thoughts and thus negative realities are creations of human beings, specifically the self that masquerades as the person and uses our faculties to manifest other than truth and goodness.

“O mankind! Whatever good you experience is from God, yet the evil you experience is from your self.”

– Surah An-Nisaa (Holy Qur’an, 4:79)

Thus, Taffakur is an exercise in responsibility. And through Taffakur, we learn to change our lives and experiences by changing our thoughts and beliefs.

It is helpful to look at the example of Iblis, who worshipped more than any other being. It is said that there is not a space the width of a hand on earth upon which he did not make prostration. Yet what was the benefit of all his striving and worship? Instead of cultivating humility and gratitude as worship is meant to, his worship increased him in pride and arrogance. And so he fell.

“An hour of contemplation is of more value than seventy years of worship.”

– Prophet Muhammad (S) –

Taffakur is an absolutely essential practice, for through it we purify our intentions, which are of utmost importance. The proper intention can make our worship purposeful, meaningful and beneficial, while the wrong intention can actually render our deeds harmful to us and to others.

Murabita

Murabita is an advanced form of Islamic Meditation transcending time and space to cultivate a spiritual relationship with the Prophet (S) and his spiritual inheritors, the true and sincere Scholars, the real *Ulemma*, or literally “they who possess knowledge.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who believe! Be conscious of God and keep the company with the trustworthy.”

— Surah At-Tawba (Holy Qur’an, 9:119) —

Originating from the root word *irtibat*, which means “joining” or “communion,” the practice of Murabita develops a spiritual connection unlocking the secrets of the soul and its limitless potential to transcend both time and space. It is based on the understanding that the most powerful form of progress is through association, absorbing and learning from one more advanced.

“Do not associate with any to whose state you do not aspire.”

— Prophet Muhammad (S) —

In order to practice Murabita, or Rabita as it is also known, simply sit and make the intention that you are connecting your heart to the heart and presence of the Prophet (S), and in doing so, that you absorb from his be-ing, his personality and beautiful character.

With the holy practice of Murabita, you can quickly increase in spiritual knowledge, in sincerity, humility, piety, wisdom and understanding.

Suggested Practice

As a recommendation, and to incorporate a practice that includes all of the above four mentioned forms of Islamic Meditation, the following recommended practice can be used as a simple system to establish a powerful daily practice that will give you the benefit of all forms of Zikr.

1. Al-Fatiha

Open your practice, after praying 2 raka'ah, with the following.

- A. 100 "Astaghfirullah"
- B. 3 Surah Ikhlas
- C. Du'a, or Intention
- D. Surah Al-Fatiha

2. Taffakur

Make a simple affirmation based on truth, and one that is of immediate relevance. Your affirmation, should bring you back into remembrance of fundamental truths, normally diametrically opposed to the programming of the world that leads to fear, insecurity, anxiety and stress. Your affirmation should lead to an awareness and consciousness that results in awe, wonder, gratitude and sobriety.

For example, you might say, "By God's grace, life is good," or "By God's grace, all is well," or "By God's grace, my body is full of life and healing potential." Use any affirmation that is relevant and necessary, and that is based in truth.

3. Murabita

Spend a few moments connecting your heart to the soul and presence of the Holy Prophet (S), or to a pious inheritor, a *Waliullah*, a "Friend of God, a perfected and pious scholar of pure soul who is following in the footsteps of the Prophet (S) and who is a living link to him.

You may send him greetings, peace and blessings, and expect to be dressed with his beautiful character, wisdom, understanding and nearness to God by virtue of your association or companionship with him.

4. Tasbih

Begin reciting any *wird*, or daily Tasbih practice you may have. If you do not already have an established set of *azhkar*, the following are provided as a suggestion and a guideline. Feel free to increase the repetition as feels appropriate.

- A. 100 "La Ilaha Il Allah"
- B. 100 "Allah" by Tongue
- C. 100 "Allah" by Heart

D. 100 Salawat, "Allahumma Salli 'Ala Muhammadin Wa 'Ala Ali Muhammadin Wa Sallim"

5. Muraqaba

Continually throughout your practice, gently flow into a state of calm, clarity, presence and relaxation. A state simply of pure Be-ing. No longer do-ing, but simply Be-ing. This is the primordial state of existence before manifestation into form.

Through this practice, one progressively transcends the self, the ego, and enters increasingly into a state of Divine Presence and Peace. With Muraqaba, a higher state of consciousness begins to operate, one that is rooted in the heart rather than the mind. And with consistent practice, this deeper level of awareness beyond thinking, a state of consciousness based in knowing, begins to become the norm.

SECTION 4

Practical Applications for Islamic Meditation

“Keep your hands busy with work, and your heart busy with God.”

— *Shah Naqshband (Q)* —

The beauty and benefit of a meditative spiritual practice is only fully realized when it is applied to real life, to situations and circumstances beyond the time we sit in formal practice.

The following recommendations will help you not only get far more out of your spiritual practices, but will empower your personal spirituality to become the path it was designed for — a fully integrated and balanced life that propels you towards spiritual growth and development with every day, every situation and even every breath.

Another point of note is to know that anything you practice will increase your overall grasp on the entire subject. In other words, by experiencing and enjoying the following practices or applications for Islamic Meditation, you will compound your depth of realization, ultimately exponentially so.

Breathing

Through the conscious practice of Zikr, you will progressively develop deeper and more fulfilling breath. This will naturally relax and rejuvenate your body and your mind, invigorating your spirit with Divine Energy.

Consciously become aware of your breathing throughout the day, at any point where you feel unconsciousness, and the stress, anxiety and frustration that result from it, arising. Take a moment and breathe consciously, as you would in Islamic Meditation.

The more you practice breathing consciously, the more you will exist in a divine state of surrender and submission. Thus you will be more relaxed, more at peace, more aware, more alert, more focused, more efficient, more capable and more productive at all times.

Most importantly, every action will thus become an act of worship and divine service, transmuting normal daily activities into holy moments of spiritual awakening and illumination. The ultimate goal of Islam and Islamic Meditation is to live each and every moment in Presence.

In fact, breathing is the essence of Zikr, the essence of Life, and the most perfect form of worship when practiced with pure consciousness, awareness and intent. It is a form of communion you can carry with you and access at any time and in any place. Through consistent practice of Islamic Meditation, you will develop a powerful connection to the Divine Presence you can access any time, all the time, in a single moment.

Most people utterly fail to realize the gift of breath, and so live in near total *ghaflah*, heedlessness, unawareness, unconsciousness, when in fact it is only Divine Grace and Love that sustains all creation, all beings, all breath, in every moment.

The believer thus emerges as a force and conduit for Divine Presence, one who is rooted in communion with the Creator, and so becomes a pillar, a pole, a bridge to God, and thus a benefit and mercy to all creation.

God has said, "Neither My heaven nor My earth can contain Me, save the heart of a believer."

— Prophet Muhammad (S) —

With conscious breathing, you will develop an unshakable foundation and center within yourself, and your life will become one walking in Grace and Presence, in Love and Light.

Movement

Another powerful application of Islamic Meditation is in movement, such as walking. All of life is in a state of movement, and all of creation is in a continual state of glorification and reflection of the Divine. Conscious movement is a powerful spiritual practice that will accelerate your spiritual growth and development, as well as catalyze healing, circulation and energy flow.

The ancient Chinese practice of Qigong, pronounced chee-gung, is a good example of full body breathing, breathing with the entire body and mind. Its innumerable benefits are well known. Yet conscious movement is not simply a practice good for your health, but an application of Islamic Meditation that will accelerate your spiritual growth and development.

Walking is a sacred act that is indicative of movement towards a destination, and the ultimate destination of all things is God.

“We are of God, and to God is our return.”

— Surah Al-Baqara (Holy Qur’an, 2:156) —

Thus, by applying consciousness to movement, such as walking, you can transform an otherwise mundane task with no inherent conscious purpose into an act of worship that serves to transmute your consciousness and deepen your state and experience of Islam, a holy and divine state of Presence and Surrender in the present moment, in the Now.

By taking an activity, such as walking, which is normally simply seen as a means to an end, and engaging it as a practice for its own sake, you shift your entire paradigm from the world’s absorption with getting somewhere and living in the future to being here, now. For in reality, this is the only moment there is. And we’re generally missing it!

To practice conscious walking as an application of Islamic Meditation, take a short walk outdoors not to get anywhere, but just to enjoy the moment. Enjoy the beauty and sensations of the physical world. Take note of the blue sky, the clouds, the wind, the warmth, the cold, the sounds, the entire experience. Immerse yourself in it.

Walk slowly and consciously with your awareness on your breath and your movement, and with the intention that you are taking steps towards the Divine Presence. When you feel comfortable, realize that you are walking in Divine Presence. This then is a holy moment between just you and God.

Additionally, you can incorporate awareness, consciousness and intent into any movement. And the more you practice and apply Islamic Meditation to everything you do, the faster you transmute your being, ultimately awakening to the state of Ihsan, or Spiritual Excellence, in which one is continually aware of the Presence of God.

Eating

One of the most important spiritual activities, often given little attention or awareness, is eating. Being present and conscious, in a state of Zikr, awareness and remembrance, during eating is not only one of the best ways to cultivate spiritual development and growth, but also one of the best things you can do for your health.

When you eat slowly and consciously, light and energy, grace and baraka infuses every bit of food that you consume. The food will be processed far better by the body, and you will feel satisfied with much less. This will improve health in every way.

The Holy Prophet (S) said that the Way was to never eat until we are full, but to stop beforehand. Short of strength of will, which we have very limited availability of, the only way that this is possible is by actually finding a deeper satisfaction in eating less, in being light and consuming just what is necessary.

Because through Islamic Meditation you will be tuning into a deeper source of joy and satisfaction, you will progressively find less need to seek happiness outside of yourself. By being connected to God through Zikr, there will be little dependence on substance for satisfaction.

It was this deep and real connection to the Divine that propelled and fueled the love and passion of the Prophet (S), the Noble Companions, and continues to inspire and center their pious successors and inheritors. And it was their immersion in the formless Reality of the Divine Presence that enabled them to embrace *Zuhd*, or Islamic Asceticism, freeing them from all attachment to anything worldly.

Zuhd is a beautiful path, full of joy, awe, wonder, satisfaction, freedom and divine purpose, and one of the most effective ways to discover its hidden reality is to practice conscious eating, and thus finding deeper satisfaction with less.

CONCLUSION

Embracing the Path of Islamic Spirituality

“Keep your hands busy with work, and your heart busy with God.”

— Shah Naqshband (Q) —

The information presented in this manual is powerful and can change every aspect of your life. Islamic Spirituality is a vast ocean of knowledge and light.

“And if all the trees on earth were pens and the oceans were ink, with seven oceans behind it to add to its supply, yet would not the words of God be exhausted.”

— Surah Luqman (Holy Qur’an, 31:27) —

The only way to truly grasp knowledge, to truly know and understand, is through experience. And experience is only attained through practice.

“Experience is the best of teachers.”

— Ali (K) —

In this manual you have been given the tools and techniques to make your practice of Islamic Meditation, Holy Zikr, a bedrock and foundation of a life based in continual personal and spiritual growth and development.

Now, it’s up to you. Enjoy!