



M.T.O. Sufi Association Newsletter

*She said:
I saw your eyes, the spark,
I felt your skin, so tender
I smelt your breath, so fragrant
I heard your voice, the melody
I felt your heart, I stole it.*

*Then she said:
Now you are mine, body and soul.*

-Nader Anghia¹

How do we distinguish between knowledge, imagination, and illusion?

Extracted from Sufism and Wisdom²

Knowledge is that which we gain through our own personal experience, whereas, illusion is merely giving shape and form to things and events in our minds that have not been our personal experience. Let me clarify that the word experience does not mean repetition. To repeat one thing over and over, does not create an experience, it simply reinforces

our imagination of that word, whatever that word may be.

As an example, I have a dog, and let's say I call him Sam. The word "Sam" has no meaning nor symbolic reference for the dog, but over a period of time, because I keep repeating the name Sam, he will respond. What is he responding to? He is responding to the sound and the tone of my voice, all of which are within the word Sam. This is a

contract and not an understanding, nor an experience. Experience is another word for the actualization of knowledge in every aspect of life. It is not an entity that is variable and cannot be accessed and used in time of need.

People think that if they read or hear about things, they also know them. For example, you know what love is, if you have experienced it; you know what
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It ill-becomes a man to lower himself before anyone but his God....the sight of humiliation of man before man does not please me. It is the worst form of tyranny that can be practiced.

-Amir al-Mo'menin Ali³

“Know yourself”⁵

Many of us go through life hearing this phrase and wondering what it means.

The path of Sufism and self discovery has taught me that everything that I am and count as me is from the world of appearance and ever-changing illusions. One moment I am in love and the next, I am filled with hatred or sadness. One moment I am driven and energized, and the next I am struggling to get out of bed? Where is that unchanging treasure that the

prophet speaks of?

My teacher has taught me that the stable “I”, is the treasure that exists within me, beyond these layers of judgments and insatiable wants that will never give me peace. Our tasks as seekers of truth, is to be the scientists of our own being and discover the stability within our self to break free from the chains that the world has bound.

“Our tasks as seekers of truth, is to be the scientists of our own being.”

Knowledge, imagination or illusion?

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sadness is if you have experienced it; you know what joy is if you have experienced it. No matter how much effort I exert in explaining any of the above feelings to you, you will not know what I am talking about unless you have experienced it. Perhaps, you can imagine what I am trying to convey, but the experience of those feelings are not yours. Therefore, those words have no reality for you. We must not forget that, “Words cannot transfer the meaning.”³

We let problems be more important than our life journey.

-Nader Angha⁶

Discover the basis of what influences you. You give power to whatever is important to you. As you experience life, you write the book of existence with this pen within yourself.

-Nader Angha⁶



Why worry?

You may be one, or may know a person that worries about situations or problems continuously because you may feel that if you do not worry about a problem it will mean that you do not care and it will grow immensely.

NOTE: WORRYING ABOUT A PROBLEM WILL NOT MAKE THE PROBLEM GO AWAY!

If you are one of these people here is your exercise:

1. Give yourself 15-20 minutes worrying time every day.

2. Get a book, and on one page write down all of your worries/problems and what you can do about them.

Once you have thought about them **thoroughly** close the book.

YOU DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION TO THINK ABOUT THEM ANYMORE THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AS YOUR WORRY TIME IS OVER.

Try it, I promise you it will work :)

References:

1. Angha, N., *Whispering Moments: Inspirations*, 1996, Washington, D.C.: MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications.
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3. Angha, S., *Dawn*, 1989, Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America.
4. <http://mto.shahmaghsoudi.org/principles.html> (Year visited 2002).
5. Angha, N., *Sufism and Knowledge*, 1996, Washington, D.C.: MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications.
6. Larsen, B., *The Perfect Moment Therapeutic Lessons from a Sufi Master*, 2000, Riverside, CA: MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications.

Illustrations:

Top right Pg 1 & Pg 2: Angha, N., *Whispering Moments: Inspirations*, 1996, Washington, D.C.: MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications.