

as Sami'

السامي
عجل جلاله

The practices for the seven leading names have been given by Pir Zia for the whole membership of the Sufi Order to participate in over successive lunar cycles, beginning on the new moon. These are the commentaries for the fifth name, *as Sami'* – the All-hearing. The previous name was *al Mureed* – the Desirer.

The Seven Leading Names

I would like to focus on one grouping of the 99 names, which have been highlighted by the classical Sufis as being especially important. They are the names which refer to aspects of the consciousness of God; so the Sufis have given them priority and have called them the *al asma al ayima al sabaha*, that is to say the seven leading names. There is a kind of hierarchy within the names in terms of the order of ontological precedence. Within that hierarchy these seven are considered to occupy a special position. At the Abode of the Message, we have been working with these names successively one after another for the last year. And I have composed instructions based on Murshid's teaching and Pir Vilayat's teaching and the teaching of the ancient Sufis for each of the names including practices to do relating to each of the names. I hope you will find these are names you can use in your own work. Most of them I think you will be familiar with.

Zia Inayat Khan

Ya Sami'

Of the seven leading names the fifth is Sami', the All-hearing

Be silent, O Israel, and listen!

Deuteronomy

Listen to the reed pipe, as it tells its tale

Masnavi

So we turn now to the fifth name: *ya Sami'* – the Listener. These are words of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan:

Abstract sound is called saut-e-sarmadi by the Sufis. All space is filled with it. The soul of the listener becomes the all-pervading consciousness, and her spirit becomes the battery which keeps the whole universe in motion. This sound develops through ten different aspects because of its manifestation through ten different tubes of the body. It sounds like thunder, the roaring of the sea, the jingling of bells, running water, the buzzing of bees, the twittering of sparrows, the vina, the whistle, the sound of the shankah or conch shell, until it finally becomes hu, the most sacred of all sounds. The word hu is the spirit of all sounds and of all words and is hidden under them all, as the spirit in the body. It does not belong to any language, but no language can help belonging to it.

Practice: Wazifa

Wazifa: ya Sami' ۲۱x

Fikr: Sami' on inhalation ۱۱x

Fikr-i sirr

The *wazifa* is simply *ya Sami'*, which as a *fikr* is done on the inhalation.

other practices:

Notice the ratio of speaking and listening in your daily life, and resolve to listen more often than you speak. When speaking, be aware of yourself as the object of another's active listening. When you are speaking, you are thinking of yourself not only as speaking, but you are thinking of the person who is listening to you and thinking of yourself as the object of listening. Be aware in speech and silence, both, that all verbal and mental words register in the cosmic record of sound and are ultimately heard by each and all.

Zikr

Listen to the zikr of a bird – that’s a wonderful introduction to the next recommendation – walk in nature and listen to the zikr of the elements, minerals, plants and animals. Shah Kalim Allah Jahanabadi says, “There is an individual zikr for everything extant.” Everything has its zikr. In the manuals of meditation of the classical Sufis, there are chapters devoted to the zikrs of the birds.

Some of the zikrs that we do were learned from the birds, if you can believe it. The Sufis would go out into the desert and sit under trees and they would be listening to the sounds of the animals, and they would imitate those sounds in their zikr. That’s how they learned.

It’s important to listen, when you hear the sound of animals, because it is the mode of remembrance. It’s not as easy if you live in the city, but if you do live in the city I hope you get away from time to time, and walk in the forest. Then listen inwardly to the vibration in the heart – listen to the heartbeat. That is an instruction which Murshid gives very clearly; in fact, these teachings are to be found in the *Gita Dhayana* papers, which I would recommend all of you to re-read. These are papers that are not contained in the *Gatha-Githa-Sangatha-Sangitha*. It is a section of *Githas* that has been apparently edited and perhaps even interpolated by Murshida Martin, so it’s not the exact words as Murshid spoke them, but it contains some very important instructions on meditation that aren’t to be found elsewhere. Those papers have been compiled and given in their original form in the Complete Works series from East West Publications: *Original Texts: Lectures on Sufism 1923 vol 1: January-June*.

Murshid says, listen always to the vibration of the heart. That is the essential thing in meditation, to hear the heartbeat. First you hear the rhythm, the beating of the heart, and as you practice zikr, this rhythm of the heart becomes perceptible to you as a hu sound that repeats itself continuously in the rhythm of the heart.

The Sufis say there are stages of zikr.

First you practice zikr in a circle, and you follow the ritual, but your mind is elsewhere and your heart is not attuned.

There is a second stage where your mind goes in and out – sometimes you concentrate, at other times you're distracted, and your heart begins to become attuned.

In a third stage your mind is focused, your body is moving in rhythm, and your heart is opened and attuned.

You might think that is the pinnacle of zikr, but they say there is a fourth stage. Even after you leave the zikr circle your body discontinues the ritual, but your heart continues to say the zikr. You may notice that – the more that you do zikr – at other times throughout the day you can hear that repeating hu in the heart.

But even this is not the ultimate stage of *Sami'*, because beyond the rhythm of hu, there is the discovery of the tone. After some time – months or in some cases years of being conscious of the beating of hu in the body – then you begin to hear an overtone, which doesn't have a rhythm, but is a continuous drone. Murshid described the ten sounds. Those are the analogs. It's like a single continuous drone you hear in the body, and you let it fill your entire body, expanding and pervading.

Practice: *Shugl*

There are practices that help to cultivate this sense, and one is to do *shughl*, focusing on the sense of hearing. It means only closing the ears, not closing the other senses, but closing the ears with the fingers and listening inwardly for the sound of hu.

This can be done in conjunction with ringing a gong or bell – Murshid suggests one hundred times in the morning – and feeling the resonance of the sound filling your body. Become tuned to the sound of the bell.

This is a practice that Murshid himself gave. I find that a bowl-shaped gong is better than a bell, particularly a Tibetan gong.

Just as the sound is beginning to fade, strike it again so there's a continuous tone, and receive the vibrations. After doing that one hundred times, if you can find the time each day – otherwise it could be less – exhale fully, inhale, hold the fingers in the ears and listen for the internal sound. When you hear that sound it's important to interpret it, as Murshid says, as the inner working of the whole universe. With your consciousness you reach out into the cosmos and feel the sound that you hear is the total sound of all sounds.



Sufi Order International
North American Secretariat
P.O. Box 480
New Lebanon, NY 12125