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PERCEPTION

PERCEIVING ALLAH WITH THE HEART'S EYE

Perception: Perceiving Allah with the Heart's Eye

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim

In the Name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy,
The Source of Mercy

"Certainly, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts
within the *sudur* [chests] that grow blind."

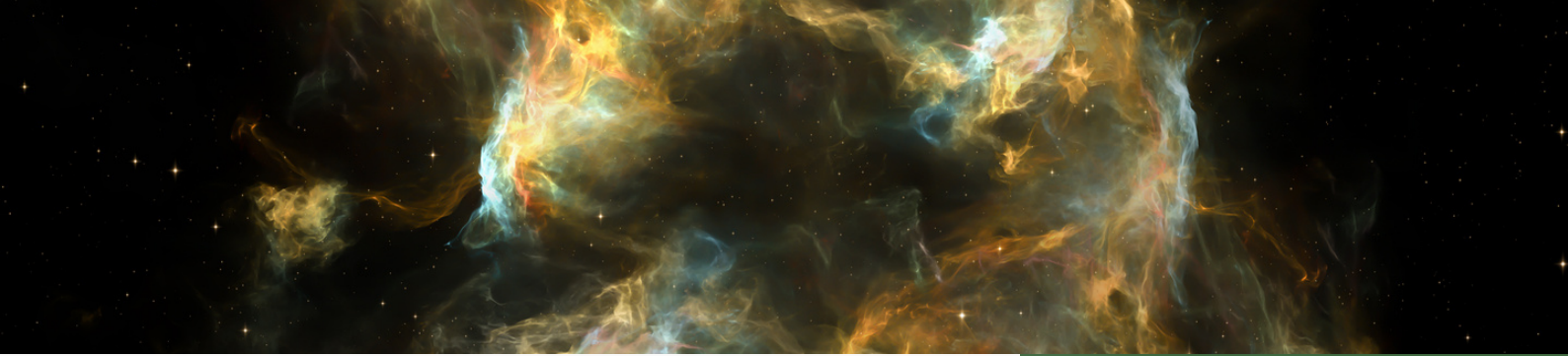
Al Haj [The Pilgrimage]: 46.

Every day our eyes gather thousands of images, yet somehow we still miss what is most important. The physical eyes can only see what is in front of them. But the heart has another kind of sight. The Quran refers to this inner faculty as the *fu'ad* [spiritual heart; perception center]. This is the place within us that truly perceives. In the verse above, Allah moves our attention from the eyes to the heart. It is not simply what we look at that matters, but how we perceive it. This is why Allah speaks of the hearts within the *sudur* [chests]. Perception begins within.

Yet the heart does not perceive in isolation. It receives everything through the many layers that shape us. Our memories, upbringing, culture, fears, desires, and even the *nafs* [self] all colour the way we understand what we see. The Sufi path is therefore a journey of gradually removing these veils, so that the heart may perceive reality with increasing clarity. Every moment then becomes an opportunity to grow. With awareness and presence, even our perceived weaknesses become avenues through which we come to know ourselves. And through knowing ourselves, we begin to know Allah.

This issue:

This article
is the first
in a monthly series
on Perception,
inviting us
to explore
the deeper meaning
of Perceiving Allah
with the Heart's Eye.



The Quran repeatedly invites us to observe and reflect. It asks us to look at the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the mountains, the birds, the rain, and even ourselves. It is as though Allah is constantly inviting us - "Look... and look again." Not because He is hidden, but because we have forgotten how to see.

One of the greatest means of polishing this inner perception is through *zikr* [remembrance]. Through constant remembrance, the heart awakens. When the heart awakens, perception changes. When perception changes, life changes. The world itself may remain the same, but we begin to recognize the Divine Attributes reflected throughout creation.

Every moment becomes an opportunity to witness the Manifestor through His manifestation. We begin to recognize His Attributes reflected throughout creation, for example, when we experience gentleness we recognise the Source, *Al Latif* [The Subtle and Kind One]. This does not mean that we literally see Allah. Allah is beyond all form and beyond anything the physical eyes can encompass or perceive. The world is no longer just a place we inhabit. It becomes a living tapestry of Divine signs, where every experience has the potential to draw us closer to the One who created it. As Allah says:

"We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it is clear to them that it is the truth, reality."
Fussilat [Revelations Expounded]: 53

As our perception deepens, we begin to witness these signs both around us and within ourselves. We begin to recognize His unfolding mercy and love woven throughout creation and quietly reflected within our own hearts.

This is our *suluk* [journey; the life-path of a spiritual seeker]. It is the road of returning to our true nature and discovering our purpose. Throughout this series we will explore the Quran, the Prophetic model, and the wisdom of the Sufi path. Together we will discover that spirituality is not about leaving everyday life behind. It is about entering everyday life with the heart's eye.

- SHAYKH NISHAAT AHMED SIDDIQI

البَصِيرُ

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