

October Sunday Tea Presentation

I'm glad you could join us today. Since we try to use these teas as an opportunity to introduce guests to some of the central elements of Sufi practice, I thought it might be helpful to offer a few brief quotes on both the basics of our central meditative practice, *dhikr*, the remembrance of God, as well as its goal. Sufism is basically the process by which we attempt to realize God's oneness by breaking down all barriers between us and him including all our ideas about ourselves and the world. That being the case, Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh tells the reader in his book *The Crucible of Light*: "Wrong is your existence and right is God. Stop existing so that only he exists!" (p. 40). He goes on to quote Bayazid Bastami, who remarks, "in the presence of God's oneness, there is neither any commanding of right nor forbidding of wrong" (p. 40).

To reach this "presence with God," we cultivate remembrance of him as a meditative practice (*Discourses on the Sufi Path*, p. 35). Though there are various means of practicing the *dhikr*, the most basic is to sit silently and repeat God's name with each breath, since "presence of breath is a necessary condition for presence of heart" and "the consequence of presence of heart is absence from self, and with the attainment of presence of heart, rememberer and Remembered finally become one" (*Discourses*, p. 35). Having said that, I hope that we'll be able to spend the next twenty minutes or so in silent meditation, sitting and attending to our breath.