

The Amazing Effect of Suggestion on the Soul

How Does *Suggestion* Affect the Soul?

The Effect of Suggestion on the Soul of Human Beings on the Path of Acquiring Spiritual Perfections

Many of us are familiar with the fascinating effects of suggestion in areas like treating physical and mental illnesses, enhancing self-esteem, and achieving success in academic, artistic, or athletic endeavors. But what about the effect of suggestion on the soul and heart? What do we know about this?

Before exploring the effect of suggestion on the soul, we first need to understand what suggestion is in general and how it affects us. In linguistic terms, suggestion means “implanting something into someone’s mind and presenting it as a truth.” Through practice and repetition, we can instill various beliefs and concepts in our own minds or in others, leading to profound changes in our behavior and beliefs. Essentially, through suggestion, we can direct our own thoughts, beliefs, and actions, as well as those of others.

The power of suggestion is unimaginable and can have numerous positive or negative effects. For example, negative thoughts or common phrases like “I’m unlucky,” “People take me for granted,” or “I feel miserable” — which many of us repeat daily without much thought — are forms of suggestion that undoubtedly have a profound negative effect on our mindset, behavior, and, ultimately, our entire life. In contrast, thinking positively or affirming statements to ourselves, such

as "I am a valuable person" or "I love myself," has a huge positive effect on our thoughts and behavior.

Now that we understand the incredible power of suggestion, the question arises: What is the most important and beneficial use of suggestion? To answer this, it is crucial to acknowledge that the profound effect of suggestion on the soul and the soundness of the heart is among its most vital functions, possibly the most vital. Since our happiness and bliss in both this world and the hereafter depend on the soundness of our heart. In fact, we have no greater task than acquiring a sound heart in this world. Therefore, the effect of suggestion on the soul and the soundness of the heart is considered its most important and beneficial effect. In the following, we will discuss the necessity and ways it affects the soul.

The Necessity of Suggestion and Its Importance in Spiritual Growth

Many of us, due to living in a materialistic world, have become overwhelmed by the demands of our animal dimension and focused on fulfilling them. As a result, this dimension of our being is almost saturated and requires only minimal suggestion. However, the situation is different when it comes to the human dimension. The human and divine dimension of our existence is constantly suppressed by the lower dimensions and is always neglected and oppressed, while our entire happiness and bliss in both this world and the hereafter depend on the human dimension of our existence. If this dimension does not grow enough, without exaggeration, an unfortunate end is inevitable for us.

We were born to actualize spiritual potentials within ourselves and to become a manifestation of Allah's attributes. Reaching this position is not easy, as the first

step to become like Allah is loving Him. This love does not exist within us at the first place; instead, it grows over time through suggestion, practice, and listening to sermons. We must instill in ourselves love for Allah and the desire to acquire divine and human perfections through various ways. Gradually, this will stir our hearts with longing, steering us away from trivial and meaningless desires. Our soul is like a rebellious horse that needs to be tamed; just as an untamed horse can throw its rider if not properly trained, our soul, if not controlled, will lead us into the depths of Hell.

Some of us neglect our spiritual and human nourishment for long periods, resulting in a weak and lifeless human dimension. To address this issue seriously, we need education and suggestion so that we can strengthen and fortify our human dimension or *fitrah* and overcome our animal and lower attachments. Suggestion is a universal necessity; no one—be they scholars or prominent teachers—is exempt from the need for sermons and suggestion. We should not assume that just because we know something, we no longer need to hear or be reminded of it. The impact of listening goes beyond mere knowledge; it awakens the heart and eliminates the effects of negligence.

Now that we understand the necessity and effect of suggestion on the soul, the question arises: How does suggestion affect the soul?

The Way the Soul Is Affected by Suggestion

All of us need suggestion to strengthen our human dimension and compensate for its inadequate or improper nourishment. Suggestion can be done in different ways. In general, through listening to sermons, remembering Allah (*dhikr*), visiting the

shrines of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Peace be upon them) and the descendants of the Imams (Peace be upon them), reading the Quran, prayers, and *Ziyarat Nama* [1], or anything else that reminds us of Allah and our origin, we can constantly immerse ourselves in the truth so that we can reach certainty and acquire assets in the human dimension. For example, saying the phrase “*Ashhadu alla ilaha illa Allah*” [2] during the *Adhan* and *Iqamah* [3] is a form of suggestion. By repeating this phrase, we instill in ourselves that our True Beloved and Deity is Allah, and that we have no other beloved besides Him. He is our only hope and desire in this world, and our ultimate dream is to be united with Him. Of course, making such a declaration is a bold claim. While many of us like Allah, we often prioritize other people or things in our lives. When we listen honestly to our hearts, we may find that in pursuing various desires, we frequently overlook Allah’s pleasure. This means that our claim of loving Him is a fake and superficial one which is not rooted in the depth of our souls. Yet, even verbally expressing this phrase is impactful because it is compatible with our essence and if consistently being practiced through suggestion and concentration, it can gradually transform into a true belief and certainty.

Suggestion works miracles in strengthening the relationship between the human being and Allah. As a result, scholars often recommend encouraging children to perform daily prayers before they reach maturity, so that they can cultivate a love for Allah and a desire to seek His pleasure from an early age. This way, they will know their True Beloved and, upon reaching maturity, will be able to worship God consciously and with genuine love. However, it is important to remember that the heart is not always ready for suggestion. Sometimes, the heart is in a state of rejection or turning away, and it cannot accept spiritual teachings and knowledge.

There are many reasons for this state, such as committing sins, associating with negligent people, fatigue, illness, and similar factors. In such cases, the heart should not be pressured, and no *mustahab* (recommended) *dhikr* or action should be forced on it beyond *wajib* (obligatory) worships. Otherwise, this could lead to negative outcomes, causing a person to lose interest in these practices altogether. We will explore this topic further in future lessons.

In this lesson, we discussed the work and effect of suggestion on the soul. Just as suggestion can miraculously affect many areas, such as curing diseases, boosting self-esteem, and achieving success in academic, artistic, or athletic pursuits, the effect of suggestion on the soul is also quite remarkable and considerable. Since our true self is our soul or heart, and our eternal life depends on the soundness of our heart, the effect of suggestion on the soul is of special importance. In general, through indoctrinating the soul, we implant truths within ourselves so that we can attain certainty and acquire asset in our human dimension. For example, by repeating the phrase "*La ilaha illa Allah*," we instill in ourselves the truth that there is no beloved besides Allah, and gradually, we will reach belief and certainty about this reality.

What are your thoughts on the incredible power of suggestion? Do you have any experiences regarding its effects on your soul or body?

References

[1]. A *Ziyarat Nama* is a form of supplication or prayer in Shia Islam recited at the tombs of religious figures, particularly the Prophet Muhammad and his family members (Ahl al-Bayt), as well as other important Shia figures. These prayers express salutations, praise, and often recount

the virtues and sufferings of the person being visited. They are a way to connect with these figures and seek their intercession with God.

[2]. I bear witness that there is no Deity but Allah.

[3]. While the *Adhan* is a general announcement that prayer time has arrived, the *Iqamah* is recited immediately before *salah* (prayer) to signal its imminent commencement.

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