Course Understanding the Bible, Egypt, 2011 Part 3
The art of meditative listening (Summary & worksheet)
Niek M. Tramper, June 2011

1.
Explanation of the concept ´meditative listening´. Meditative life belongs to the normal Christian life. Two consequences:

* Living from the ´outside´ is balanced by living from the ´inside´.

* The ´inner person´ is equally fed comparing to the ´public person´. Illustrations from the life of king Saul (1 Sam. 11, 13 and 15 etc.) and king David (1 Sam. 16, 17 etc.), from the attitude of Mary and Martha (Luke 10: 38-42).

2.
The ´Meditative reading´ compared with the ´Inductive reading´ (as was presented in lecture 2). The Word as the holy bread to be eaten (St. Augustine).

Exercise in meditative reading. (Psalm 119 : 52 and 53)

´I remember your ancient laws, o Lord, and I find comfort in them.

Indignation grips me because of the wicked, who have forsaken your law.´

Reflect on these verses and take one or two words that strike you for some reason.

à What are your associations (other words that you connect with these word)?

à What are images/pictures/metaphors provoked by these word?

à Where do you see a connection with your life?

3.
The meditative way of the so called *Lectio Divina* (first described by Guigo the Cartusian, 12th Century). Lectio Divina means: *prayed reading*. Honest prayer goes together with honest attitude and action. Three main phases:

- Receiving
- Ruminating
- Contemplating

4.
Extended exercise in the art of meditative listening. 1 Kings 19 verses 4-8

´He went himself a day´s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. ´I have had enough, Lord´, he said, ´Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.´ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.
All at once an angel touched him and said: ´Get up and eat´. He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then he lay down again.
The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said: ´Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.´ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.´

à Reading and listening (1). Try to ´taste´ on or two words or small parts of the text. You can do this by:

- reflect about comparable words, synonyms
- reflect about pictures, images, metaphors that come forward
- reflect about situations in your life which are connected with this word/part of the text.

à Reading and listening (2). Try to understand more carefully what is the main thrust of this passage, what the Lord wants to say to you.

à Answer in prayer. How can this text bear fruit? E.g. how do we react after reading en reflecting? What shall we give back to God in our prayers? Where does it touch our attitude, our plans, our actions?