

Gatha with Commentary

Pasi Anfas: Breath

Series III

of

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

by

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 1

The Length and Breadth of Breath

GATHA: Mind is creative and thought is living, but out of what does mind create a thought? Out of the atoms of the mental sphere.

TASAWWUF: This is dealt with at length in *The Mind World* and also in the studies on Murakkabah, Concentration. The former work tells about the next plane and may be regarded as anatomical, descriptive. It does not teach how to think and what to think, although meditating on the subject helps.

In Murakkabah one learns to distinguish between favorable and unfavorable impressions, and how to rid oneself of the latter. Techniques therefore are drawn from the science and art of Ryazat, Esotericism. And in this the breath is an instrument not only of purification but towards mastery.

GATHA: But the current which attracts the desired atoms to complete a thought is the breath; not that breath which is outwardly manifest, but that part of breath the action of which is not felt by every man.

TASAWWUF: There are many places in Sufi literature where this subject is mentioned and the teachings also emphasize that we cannot overstress its importance. As the Bible says, Breath is Life and Breath is God. The Hindu wisdom is not very different. Some schools of Indian culture teach us metaphysically, others by techniques.

Finer vibrations and pulsations function in the mind-world. Others operate as connecting nexi between the physical and mental planes.

The mind world constitutes the nexus of our heaven and our hell. Our types of thoughts produce these. But it is also possible to alter our types of thoughts. Thus refinement of breath permits only refined thoughts, while coarseness of breath tolerates coarse thought. The Sufi learns how to control thoughts by right breathing and also how to master right breathing by esotericism.

GATHA: The more length and breadth the breath has the more scope it gives for the creation of thought. It is therefore that the thoughts of the sages and mystics, who have gained mastery over breath, are more substantial and complete in themselves, and besides they prove to be more expressive and impressive.

TASAWWUF: The Bible says, “Many are called and few are chosen.” The Gita teaches that out of a multitude who seek Sri Krishna, perhaps two or three may find him. Gayan proposes that the wide view is needed and this is also a teaching of the original Sangathas. But dualism is not easily overcome; it has become a habit and therefore people prefer some kind of ethical goodness which may be subjective to the wide view which is certainly objective.

The length of the breath determines the degree to which the energy can reach the mind. The short heavy breath touches only the body—thus many animals. Nor is holding the breath alone sufficient unless energies are carried. It is only subtle energies that reach the mind.

Nayaz is taught to disciples almost immediately after Bayat if they are worthy. It consists of two parts, a practice and a prayer. But actually the practice is also a prayer and the prayer also a practice. We can meditate on these also. We thus can appreciate more the rays of the sun, the waves of the air, the all pervading power of space. As we realize them we begin to penetrate deeper into the cosmos and into our own inner being.

Napoleon Bonaparte made it a habit to select his confidants from among those with long noses. He did not know the reason for this. The mystic might say that people with long noses have a capacity for longer breaths. We find many philosophers and mathematicians have or have had long noses. Thus long noses might be associated with intellectual development.

Then the question may arise, is the long nose needed for deep thought? Is this due to heredity? Yes, this may be due to heredity in so far as we can connect heredity with universal evolution. But besides the long breath there is what might be called the broad breath. It is this which carries the energy, holds the breath and produces balance.

One may now ask whether we can use these principles to help the mentally backward. To the mystic there is no question but that we might help the whole world and hasten the evolution by giving instructions in right breathing.

GATHA: The breadth of the breath is its volume. This comes by the facility one has of breathing through wide nostrils and open lungs.

TASAWWUF: Many people ask about breathing through the mouth. Mouth breathing does not benefit the mind. When mouth breathing is practiced, there is often difficulty in the sinuses and also in the depths of thought of the person involved.

This subject is also dealt with in the writings of Pir Vilayat Khan. When the lungs are open there is not blockage of energy, the bloodstream functions properly and the body benefits. When the rhythm is maintained and the breathing becomes more refined then the light of the centers begins to shine out. This subject is treated a little different in raja yoga than in Sufism. In Sufism the majesty of heart and love is always foremost.

GATHA: The secret of the power of voice is to be found in this. The voice of a commander of an army which carries through the army and impresses the soldiers, thus encouraging them to fight, has breath as its secret behind it. Ali by his invocation of the sacred word, which he sometimes used to cry aloud on the battlefield, used to cause the enemies to tremble.

TASAWWUF: This ability of Ali was learned from the Prophet himself. But they did not always use it. From the moral standpoint it should never be used in selfish enterprises. This has not always been followed. It has been used selfishly to success and also selfishly to failure.

In the lessons on Mysticism and elsewhere the secrets of Kemal are explained. Also when to use it and when not to use it. If used selfishly it will bring karmic reaction; if used wisely it will always bring success or victory.

GATHA: The length of the breath shows the length of life; lengthy breath is the sign of long life. This comes not only by wide nostrils and open lungs, but also by the accommodation that the body has for the breath, not only the nose and the chest but also the head and the abdomen.

TASAWWUF: There are many practices in Sufic esotericism. When they are taken seriously the devotee is sure to benefit. In the various practices such as nayaz, kasab and shagal, the disciple is trained carefully so as to obtain longer breaths without upsetting rhythm or equilibrium. The science and art of breathing is never developed by ego experimentation. It does not come out of books; it comes from a living teacher even more than the natural sciences are learned from living teachers.

A study of anatomy and physiology reveals that the torso has the channels of breath and food; one can almost say purusha and prakriti. The food is in a sense restricted to a single channel, but by osmosis the muscles and rest of the body absorb from it. But what is gained from the breath is often energy.

As this lesson teaches, the devotee learns to use wide nostrils, taking in so to speak more of space with each inhalation. If one does this carefully he can easily prolong life especially when each cycle of inhalation and exhalation becomes longer.

In the Sufic walks abdomen centering, heart or chest centering, and head centering are all used. One learns about them through practice and exercise. One does not learn much about them through theorizing and discussing. Yet as the science and art of walking and then dancing, are developed each devotee finds within himself something of which he may not have been aware.

There is a form of nayaz in which drinking in air is used. This enables it to enter the digestive tract. In yoga systems not only is this used but they even take in air through the anus. But in Sufism and particularly in the third year the work is to develop the personality from the within to the without; therefore, heart concentration and refinement become most important.

GATHA: There are some whose breath has volume, or breadth, but not much length, and there are

others who have length and no breadth. But it is the balance of the length and breadth of the breath which gives balance to the mind.

TASAWWUF: Those called “vital people” have breadth of breath. They are often animated. They may have highly developed instinct and may become intuitive but hardly have the mental capacity for thought.

People with long breaths learn to think deeply and even keenly. It is the long breaths also which enable man to live longer, but not necessarily more fully. We find many tall bony people who have lived a long time. A noted example of this was John D. Rockefeller, Sr.; also his father. They had long lives but were not very happy, because they were not balanced.

Actually there is a third element here which is refinement of breath. When the refinement is added to the length and breadth, one has a more fully developed and balanced existence.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 2

Inspiration

GATHA: Inspiration comes from the light thrown upon a certain idea. This comes from the radiance of the breath falling upon the mind.

TASAWWUF: Inspiration thus consists of two elements, the idea and the light. Ideas may come either from the world without or from insight, that is kashf. When it is said there is nothing new under the sun, it means that all ideas are drawn from a storehouse which is accessible to anybody. But the next problem will be how to illuminate those ideas.

Inspiration comes from all light, which is not under the sun, which is a universal light. Everyone has access to it, but everyone does not know it.

Then there is the radiance of breath. This radiance is derived by proper breathing exercises and also by that advancement which comes to every adept who has practiced esotericism. We can refine the breath by mechanical and devotional means alike, but the mechanical refinement will not

stay; whereas, the devotional means, once aroused and used may persist. That is why Fikr is such an important practice.

But also one learns by mysticism. When one is able to become attuned to the etheric currents, then the breath becomes more and more refined and also radiant. If one can combine the Kemalic state, breathing in both nostrils, with the refinement that comes from devotion and esotericism, then the radiance will surely manifest.

GATHA: There are two shadows, one that is projected upon the sky, and another which falls upon the ground; the former known to the mystic and the latter to everyone.

TASAWWUF: We all see the shadow on the ground. We all are aware of the physical shadows and the relation of these shadows to sources of light. The mental plane also has its sun, so to speak, a sun of radiance; but there are many blockages to such radiances. Perhaps we can trace these blockages to nufs, the ego, and so this world of shadows is also known as nufsaniat, which in some ways is identical with samsara.

We can become aware of some of these shadows by the way they persist in dreams. The dream life and also the functioning of imagination show us worlds which are mixtures of lights and shadows. When we have these mixtures of lights and shadows, forms are more easily perceived.

Little children are not always aware of these shadows. At first they may not have any clear perception of the difference between themselves and the mothers, sometimes of the father, and often with other little children. And if we study the behavior patterns of little infants we can also learn a little about the lives of angels, who are embodiments of radiance.

GATHA: When the breath which is developed is thrown outward its radiance produces light.

TASAWWUF: We can become aware of it in the different forms of tawajjeh and darshan. No doubt darshan has been degraded into a mere ceremonial using a glance. This alone does not involve radiance and magnetism. Radiance and magnetism together may be known as Baraka; the Hebrew term “barocha” from the same root has come to mean blessing. This also has been degraded into a mere ceremony or custom—there is nothing wrong in it but this alone does not produce a manifestation of spirituality.

When a true teacher uses the breath and glance there will be a manifestation of light either from his own personality or from the recipients or both.

GATHA: And it is the different shades and grades of this light which manifest in various colours, suggesting to the mystic the different elements which the particular colours denote.

TASAWWUF: This is the subject matter of the Githas on “Mysticism.” At first it is presented intellectually, and this is also true of certain sections of *The Mysticism of Sound*, and also it

appears variously in the literature of the Message.

When esoteric practices and the Baraka of the teacher is added the whole thing becomes the science and art of mysticism.

GATHA: The same breath has a different action when it is thrown within. It falls upon the mind like a searchlight and shows to the intelligence the object of its search as things seen in daylight. Thus man knows without any effort on the part of the brain all he wishes to know and expresses in the way each individual is qualified to express.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi teachings of the day the eminence of breath is stressed. But along with that certain practices derived from the various religions are used and fused. This gives the devotees what is called in the Buddhist literature an upaya, which is to say, skillful means. No doubt in practical Buddhism "skillful means" has been degraded into a mere thought without content, but the disciples in Sufism are given actual practices, including some derived from Lord Buddha, which puts the theories into operation.

Intelligence operates independently of the brain, but intelligence may utilize all the nervous system. In one sense the body forms a whole and in another sense the mind forms a whole, and it is only the intelligence that can function through the whole mind and yet it is more than the mind.

In the inner sciences there is much stress on the intuitive faculty which is intelligence itself, though not necessarily as man knows intelligence, for this intelligence is more than man. In the Indian teachings, particularly Vedanta, it is known as vijana, a term which has been much mistranslated by intellectuals and dialecticians who have not known the inner awakening. We can get some ideas of it from the Upanishads and still more from the Acharayas, with whom may be classed the modern Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and perhaps others.

This faculty works best in states of sobriety. In modern times we find a number of movements which have identified and wrongly identified the states of intoxication (wajud or hal) with mukti or spiritual deliverance. These people are usually dualists. They see others as separate beings (the first mistake) and then as unawakened and of course, unintelligent personalities. This gives the mystic the ability to distinguish between claimants and realizers.

GATHA: Inspiration, therefore, is one thing, qualification another thing. The inspiration is perfect when expressed by the qualified soul. Nevertheless, inspiration is independent of qualification.

TASAWWUF: For all persons are the beloved ones of God, and all are subject to His Grace and the benefits thereof. When one hears people state otherwise, he can be assured they are false claimants. For many who have not reached the highest states, yet pose as spiritual teachers, do recognize the eminence of humanity both individually and collectively. They are leading in the right direction.

Many who are subject to states of intoxication—which are often states of imbalance—suddenly become sober when discussing this subject and deny it to others. The qualified souls retain the blessedness (bliss-Baraka) of intoxication; the others do not. It is like with the magnets: the iron magnet becomes suddenly strong yet does not retain its power; the steel gains in a state of sobriety and retains its magnetism.

Those who receive inspiration because of the direct benefit from a teacher may be called mureeds. But the one who has the Grace and inspiration without the teacher is known as a murad.

GATHA: The light that the breath throws upon the mind is in every case different in its radiance. When far-searching it illuminates the deepest corners of the heart, where the light has never reached, and if breath reaches further the light is thrown upon the mind of God, the store of all knowledge there is.

TASAWWUF: There are many methods by which radiance can be developed. One is by the use of a proper sacred phrase, wazifa or mantra. Another is by a form of deep concentration. Another still is in the refinement of breath which increases the radiance; the more refined the breath the greater the radiance as is explained in the discussions on “Blessed be the poor in spirit.”

We say in the prayer that God is the Divine Light and Spirit of Guidance. No doubt this is the first step. But another step is also given in the Nayaz. As man develops in breath practices, in devotion and in other efforts, he becomes more and more consciously aware of the light in all its forms and phases; and of the faculties which are awakened when he becomes conscious of this Light.

In *The Soul, Whence and Whither* attention is called to the operation of Light on the various planes. Also with the higher forms of Esotericism man becomes more and more aware, and with this awareness, there are grades and strains of real enlightenment which become, so to speak, the properties of the devotee. Or as St. Paul has said, then man becomes conscious of the Light actively and actually.

We can study the biological evolution through the increased complications of the breathing apparatus of animals; and also along with it of the nervous systems and the connections between the two. But as Jelal-ud-din Rumi has indicated, the animals are in a waking state between sleep and full consciousness. Man has received his body from the animals and there are many resemblances. But even the most material of the scientists have recognized man has a color sense which is not found in the lower kingdom and this means he has a greater response of Light from the Beginning.

In the spiritual development, therefore, every advantage is taken of man's faculties. Then many teachings which are found in various scriptures come to realization in him. The mystic therefore encourages humanity to look at its own infinite potentialities, and in the spiritual training the disciple strives toward conscious growth and realization so that he can fully experience what is alluded to in words.

When the breath is refined and reaches the heart-sphere, many faculties begin to function in and with the conscious personality.

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Series III: Number 3

Thought Reading

GATHA: It is the vibrations caused by the breath which become thought-waves which carry the thought from one mind to the other.

TASAWWUF: The breath has been called a lift which carries from plane to plane, stage to stage; or more deeply, the soul is the divine breath which manifests through all aspects of creation and manifestation. When different aspects are mentioned, this means different vibrations, vibrations differing in size, pulsations, qualifications and the common nexus is the breath. Without this connecting breath there would be chaos.

In the science of *Metaphysics* as presented in *The Sufi Message* the relations and co-relations of the different planes and aspects of personality are presented and explained though only in a skeletal form.

The aspects of thought-waves are presented in another manner in *The Mind World*. When we become aware of the vibrations, their differences, variations and relations, we come into control of all aspects of our existence.

GATHA: It is therefore that thought reading much depends so much upon the position in which two people sit with regard to each other, for a certain position makes it easier for the breath to reach than another, although it is not always necessary that a person must be facing one in order to receive thought-waves through breath.

TASAWWUF: Often the teacher has the pupil face him and it would appear to be a courtesy, perhaps it is a courtesy. Indeed many courtesies arise out of psychic laws. At the same time, it enables the teacher to get a full view of the pupil or of any person, and then to utilize the breath and also to see the eyes and feel the personality. All of these alone help to produce a certain

attunement, and when all are used, there is more understanding as well as attunement.

Thought-reading as such is not always encouraged, excepting for purposes of attunement so that the Sufi can help others. Then also he can more easily use his breath, and if he be a master of breath, he uses this vehicle only for the purpose of helping others; never for phenomenon of their own sakes. Still it is not wrong to study thought-reading and telepathy either from the scientific or occult side. It can become natural as one develops.

Spiritual meditation also has the benefit of attuning a whole group to a common pitch and thus consciously or unconsciously leading toward brotherhood.

There are many advantages coming out of people sitting opposite to each other to promote attunement. Those who are bad turns do not look into each other's eyes but when they sit opposite, their breaths begin either to struggle or to adjust. It is certain that in dancing that there are all sorts of adjustments. The wise therefore make use of their principle to promote or restore harmonies.

GATHA: If the thought power is strong and the breath is strong enough to carry the thought-waves, a person, whether facing or having his back turned, must receive thought.

TASAWWUF: The thoughts can be strengthened by Wazifa, Fikr or Darood. The breath can be refined by esotericism and really speaking, the refined breath is more penetrative and therefore stronger than a seemingly coarse breath of a presumably strong will. For forceful will encountered obstacles both from other people from the environment and from the operations of the sphere.

Still thoughts are penetrative. A spiritual teacher becomes able by attunement, by breathing and by heart to gain the wavelengths of disciples and others and promote the love in their hearts. They are also able so to protect disciples and to calm or heal them when in trouble or illness.

There are practices in Concentration, especially in **Tasawwuf**, which enable devotees to attune to their living teachers and thus absorb the virtues of their atmosphere. There are practices in breathing, especially in breathing while walking which make this possible. And as disciples develop they are given those practices which are most beneficial both for their general evolution and to help them overcome the obstacles of the moment.

Practice, and especially practice with the intuitive faculty, enables a person to attune to the teacher, to the holy ones who form the Spirit of Guidance and to all mankind both to protect oneself and others from dangers and also to benefit oneself and others under all circumstances.

GATHA: The mystics do not only project their own breath and see the condition of their being manifest before themselves, but they can make themselves responsive to receive the thought-waves of another carried by his breath. This receptivity does not only enable an adept to read other's thoughts, but also to a mystic the condition of another becomes revealed by the projection

of another's breath upon his heart.

TASAWWUF: Thoughts of another may be received from the channel of the breath and the channel of the heart. Some Sufis call the former mysticism and the latter occultism but these words are used variously in the East and in the West. But no doubt the time will come when these processes are both understood and practiced, especially by adepts.

The science of Mysticism is taught to the Advanced Study Circle in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of inner training. But it is also offered in the literature. It can hardly be understood without a teacher, and many who have tried these methods without a competent teacher have not progressed very far. But it is hoped now with the advanced evolution of the race, with better understanding and ability to submit to discipline, many things which have been forcefully and culturally hidden will come into observation and study.

The moral and psychic training of heart makes it possible for the talib to understand much of what was not clear. No doubt it will come that many will really accept the teaching of Jesus Christ that the Kingdom of Heaven is within and no longer be bogged down with words. As the heart opens, as the functions of intuition are uncovered and as the expansion of love becomes a more common experience, many things will be very different.

In Hinduism the paths of Jnana and Bhakti Yoga may seem far apart, but in Sufism the methods of training contain aspects belonging to each of these and they may even be coalesced. But each teacher may have his own methods and perhaps even every disciple has to be reached and awakened in another way. In the end however, everything will be as in the manuscript called *Metaphysics* which is published in *The Sufi Message* volumes.

The benefits from attunement to the teacher are many although they are not forcefully rammed on any body. Gentleness, tenderness and consideration are needed to help awaken the advancing soul.

The methods of breathing and the science of Mysticism has been given considerably more thought, and this form of awakening is often gradual rather than sudden and can even be studied to a certain point by intellectualism combined with devotion.

GATHA: Plainly speaking, souls are likened to mirrors, and two mirrors facing one another become projected on one another, one manifesting the reflection of another.

TASAWWUF: This subject is also presented in the published teachings on *Metaphysics*. Walt Whitman has said, "In all men I see myself." The Upanishads stress over and over again the oneness of humanity or even of all creation. But as Rumi has beautifully put it, it is only in man that God comes to full realization of himself.

No doubt there has been a sort of scientific beginning in looking at cards or delving into other

experiments. But this is not even surface investigation. The mind must be at rest to do its best work, and then one can find the mirror image. According to the Avatamsaka School of Buddhism it is natural for everybody to find himself in everybody else, and this outlook is not only common to mysticisms but is also finding its way into the race-mind.

The teaching to love thy neighbor as thy self is essentially a qualitative, not a quantitative one. It is by attunement that we grow in empathy, not in forceful passions which have no depth. This was also brought out in Christ's story of "The Good Samaritan," but although this story has been repeated multifold, it has not properly entered into the race-consciousness. Only to the mystic, it is for him, not for others to pursue this path.

In the science of Concentration (Murakkabah) one is brought from step to step in a form of inner development, so that in the end by understanding himself he understands the world, and in understanding the world also he understands himself.

GATHA: The mirror which has not already a reflection is capable of manifesting the reflection of the other mirror.

TASAWWUF: This can often be seen in barbershops and beauty parlors which are sometimes so equipped with mirrors that one can see this outwardly. But the inner significance does not readily dawn on man. And the teachings found in the Buddhist "Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch" need some consideration, for mirroring and reflecting are still phenomena of a sort of dualism, and while this is true of heart, it shows the difference between heart which reflects, and the soul which is thoroughly extensional.

Indeed there are many aspects of the phenomena even of physical light which show in a certain sense the behaviorisms of higher aspects of light.

GATHA: In this way breath enables a Sufi not only to know and see his own condition of life but also to know and understand the condition of those he comes in contact with.

TASAWWUF: This very simple statement needs a tremendous amount of reflection. It is one of the basic teachings of Sufi Mysticism. But we must never forget the teachings of Imam Al-Ghazzali that Sufism is based on experiences and not on premises. No matter how wonderful a doctrine may be, no matter how it appeals, it is the life-experiences alone which avail.

We do verbalize God as the Knower and the Known, but in the spiritual development it is necessary to come to this in conscious realization. Therefore the inner sciences derived from Murakkabah (Concentration) and Mushahida (Contemplation) are of utmost importance. Also one has to meditate on the breath and to develop the intuitive faculties until they become the dominant operations in life. And then one can understand all things, persons and operations through knowledge of the breath and from the breath in its many aspects.

As it is said in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*, “The soul is the divine breath.”

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Series III: Number 4

Nafsi Garm

GATHA: The breath of one person may, so to speak, overpower the breath of another. It is as a little stream can be washed away by a large stream of water. In this is the secret of knowing the condition of another person.

TASAWWUF: There is a law in biology concerning the “dominant” and “recessive” that their offspring often exhibit characteristics of one or another and not necessarily a blending or compromise. When red and blue flowers are crossed, the probability is that the new plants will show either red or blue flowers. And when the breath of a person meets that of another, the probability is that the breath of the stronger person will entirely dominate the atmosphere psychically and magnetically.

A person may seem to have self-will, be obstinate or arrogant, but when he meets a master of breath, the latter knows how to inhale and exhale either to the benefit of the less evolved or to meet the exigencies of the moment. Even if a stubborn person dominates the conversation and the social surroundings, the adept can adjust his breath in such a way as to control the resulting karma. Sometimes also he may be able to pacify the other or cause him to behave differently in his presence.

Self-will is called Kadar by the Sufis. It is valuable so far as it encourages action. It can become powerless in efforts to exert one’s own will-power over another. Sometimes one may be able to compel answers, but when the lesser or weaker person is away he will not be able.

It is possible to protect oneself against a tyrant or dominating person. One may avoid glancing at him, or when glancing practice a Fikr that will bring into operation forces from the higher spheres. It is not necessary to do this; one is not compelled to change the attitude or habits of others. When there is no spiritual gain, it may be a useless process. Besides, as Rassoul Solomon said, “There is a time for all things.”

Mystics know about Kaz, Providence or Divine Will. When one can attune to that, when one has learned to let the Divine Will operate over against one's own self-will, one can then also protect oneself and others when this is necessary. Devotees repeat the Invocation or Darood. This enables them to work together. This constructs powerful atmospheres and great magnetic radiation. Into those radiations all the Baraka of the divine attributes work. Thus it will be that the Divine Will will dominate others which is quite different from one's personal will standing in the way of the obstinate or forceful. One does not have to oppose the obstinate or forceful, and one only opposes them when it becomes obvious they are working against Providence.

GATHA: A Sufi whose breath is lively, which is called in the Sufic terms, **Nafsi Garm**, has the influence of scattering the thoughts, feelings, the vibrations of the atmosphere of another. In this way he is able to convey his thought or feeling, and create his vibrations as the atmosphere for another who needs it for his own betterment. In this way a Sufi brings a life and health to another person, and he can have an influence on the character of another person.

TASAWWUF: The first thing is to learn this breath. It comes naturally when one has performed Fikr, and not only with the Divine Phrase, but with each attribute with each Wazifa. They bring to man the attributes he needs for his own perfection, perfection in character and perfection in action. When one attains these perfections, or virtues, one is automatically able to control the atmosphere and the personalities who breathe in that atmosphere. It is not a matter of self-will. When one is attuned to God by breath and meditation that God, so to speak, operates, manifests; for it is true that in God we live and move and have our being.

Surrender to Allah means more than thinking of it. It is an operation. And breathing in a refined manner, with the Latif, makes one an instrument of Latif. And thus the refined breath is more potent than all the efforts of man. A person may be obstinate, dominant, powerful, authoritative, everything, but he is nothing before God. Therefore dervishes have often been able to dominate assemblies, and by the simplest methods.

Breaths with different vibrations and with different qualities do not necessarily conflict. God is All in All and the Universal Breath is of such a nature it can automatically produce a harmony with anybody or exact a harmony from anybody and everybody. Finer vibrations always penetrate the coarser ones. Though Jelal may seem to dominate Jemal, or Jemal may seem to thwart and direct Jelal, the Kemal breath which comes from the divine attunement can direct any of the other breaths.

GATHA: There is a great difference between a developed breath and an undeveloped breath.

TASAWWUF: Here the developed breath may be one that comes from gymnastics, or from the simple or more advanced esoteric practices. So long as a culture teaches breathing only as a physiological or muscular activity, without any knowledge of Purusha and Prakriti, one can see only a chemistry and this is only the externality of the breathing process.

The Gatha studies themselves suggest a number of operations and the talib is encouraged to practice what he learns, not keep it as mere intellectuality.

GATHA: There is as vast a difference, or even a vaster, between the breath of two persons as in two voices. A specially produced singing voice is quite different from the uncultivated speaking voice. It is a psychological fact that the voice and word of a person whose voice is cultivated makes a greater impression than the voice and word of an ordinary person.

TASAWWUF: We have in singing at least three factors: pitch, volume and quality or timbre. Pitch consists of the range of vibrations in sound which one is able to express, the distance between the highest and lowest notes. A person who has a range of high notes tends toward freedom and imagination. The lower notes generally indicate stability and thoughtfulness. And there is a connection of these aspects of personality with the natural state of the pituitary body, and also they are affected by the esoteric disciplines connected with the Supreme Arsh. The practices bring one spiritual freedom and this spiritual freedom also operates through the voice.

Generally speaking highly developed intellectual people have longer ranges, but this does not necessarily mean finer qualities. The qualities may be developed by training or by evolution.

The volume of the voice depends largely on the control over the breath. There are persons with natural control and there are others who learn it by elocution or singing lessons. But the mystic achieves this by mastery of breath, and also by repetition of sacred phrases which bring blessings and perfection to the breath.

Real volume is more than loudness. A person with a loud voice may affect the atmosphere temporarily, but cannot always sustain that control. There are many loud voices which are not heard far away. Muezzins developed volume and magnitude by repetition of the sacred words of azan, the call to prayer. And if anybody practiced that he could develop not only loudness but many wonderful virtues in his voice and character.

In Islamic countries, and especially where the Sufic traditions have affected the people, one can often hear both loud and beautiful voices. And especially in the Chisti Order much attention is given to perfection qualities in voices. Now this has come down to us both by tradition and heritage, by the teachings and by the awakening of the disciples, so that spirituality manifests as much in the "West" as in the "East."

Qualities are developed both according to the teachings we find in The Mysticism of Sound and also through the progress in each and every form of esotericism. There is the progress through silence and there is also the progress through skillfulness in many practices. So we are now teaching the perfections in walking, chanting and dancing together so that all participants can feel and realize, and thus receive the divine blessings in and through their activities.

GATHA: How much more then must the influence of breath work silently? It is in this that is the

mystery of the mystic's magnetism lies, which is healing, harmonizing, exalting, at the same time invigorating.

TASAWWUF: The difference between the mysticism of sound and mysticism of silence is that in silence magnetism and energy are preserved. When sounds are made, the magnetisms and energies and blessings are shared. And we are learning that the group activity is different from the individual activity. We become united with all the illuminated souls, and then with each other. We chant together, we walk together, we dance together and thus promote brotherhood, and this becomes a reality, not a philosophy.

The way of the mystic is not that of the intellectual. He cultivates refinement and also all sorts of attunements. But it is by progressing with the divine breath that makes it possible for him to meet every situation and be of benefit to all lesser developed persons, be they of one type or another. It is not necessary to analyze them to ascertain how to be of help to them.

It may be asked whether telepathy or silence or suggestion or even direct statements work the best. It all depends on inspiration and insight. A way which is successful with one person may not work so well with others. Thus in the *Gathekas for Candidates*, stories are told as to how spiritual teachers treated both applicants and disciples. There can be no one method, but that method is used which will be of greatest help in the awakening of another, provided it is time to awaken him; or in quieting another if he be not ready for spiritual growth.

The mystic knows the value and limitation of thought-forces. Our whole life is "Toward the One" and "United With All," and the operation is needed to become effective. The whole world of thought is presented in *The Mind World* and also from another point of view in *Cosmic Language*.

The heart-plane is different from the mind-plane in that it is self-sustaining, self-invigorating and this is also presented in *Nirtan*. Any intellectual consideration of love is not pure love. Therefore in the New Age every effort is made to awaken elation and make it a more common experience. And when one feels the elations he realizes there are different stages of consciousness and different mystical states.

Those who can practice fana and tasawwuri benefit more than others, but one does not begin with them. One does not force his will on anybody. As the prayer says, "To Thee we give willing surrender." But now also through the walk, the chants, the dances, these come into active operation for the benefit both of individuals and groups.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 5

The Unknown Dimension

GATHA: Breath is a light in itself, and it becomes projected like the beam from a searchlight thrown upon an object.

TASAWWUF: As is taught in the Message, Breath has been the most important subject of all the scriptures of the world. After the scriptures were revealed the first disciples, either under the influence of the Divine Messenger or because of their own spiritual awakening, knew this although they did not always emphasize it. Love, light and morality were emphasized.

As time passed certain phrases which were not clear became unimportant. Then the scriptures fell into the hands of the clerical profession and finally to the legal profession. Then emphasis was stressed on other subjects.

Breath then became the subject for chemical and physiological considerations and studies. These were not wrong; they were limitations. And there were other people who had psychic or higher faculties. They could see light, they could see color. They thought there were meanings in the lights and colors. They were over-ruled by the dominant forces in society. In the Christian world, for example, both the orthodox and the scientists began to regard breath as an unimportant (or possibly important) subject in physiology. So it was not always easy for the mystics to introduce it. The dominant groups would associate such efforts with those of illiterate or anti-social psychics, and the psychics, being less educated, were unable to present their work publicly, or else their views were caught in studies limited to and by psychism.

If we read in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*, the existence of three planes and three aspects of life are presented. If we go further, we can find these three aspects of religion in all faiths. They being cosmic and true all persons who had cosmic awakening would know, but they would take into consideration the weaknesses and the potentialities of the peoples to whom they appeared. So they gave stress mostly to those teachings which would be of most immediate benefit to the masses of their time. Yet the same truth would either be covered in their words, or if given out, would occupy small space and then not receive always full consideration.

But in the nineteenth century through progress in communication all peoples became aware of the existence of all faiths. Then in the city of Chicago, in 1893, there was a conference of all the religions of the world. The Western people, in particular, were aroused by Swami Vivekananda and he naturally stressed those teachings which he felt the whole world needed. So he taught about breath and then the people of the West began to conclude that the sciences of breath were either

the possessions of the Hindus or best preserved by them. This was true, but only partially true.

When the Sufi teachings were brought to the West by Hazrat Inayat Khan they were presented to those who knew little of spiritual traditions and even less of Islam. The devotees and followers were more concerned with the personality of the teacher than the teachings. We can also see this in other movements, most of which disappeared because the stresses were on personalities and not on God or Truth.

So the teachings of Breath were offered in a simple manner in *Pearls from an Ocean Unseen* and *In an Eastern Rose Garden*. But if one looked at these teachings and meditated thereon and also checked the references to the Holy Scriptures, he would find nothing new was being offered, but stress was being given to ignored passages of holy writings.

When persons became devotees and followed in the paths of esotericism they would learn about Breath, its nature, and its functions, of the existence of the Divine Light on all planes and of the behavior patterns of this Light. The laws governing it were not contrary to the laws already known to physicists but contained much more. And when the adept starts to use the breath as if a searchlight and combines the sensual functions with Kashf and deeper function the Divine Light becomes to him The reality.

GATHA: When the breath is coarse, undeveloped, it is full of material atoms which dim its light, but a developed breath is sometimes not different from the light of the sun but even brighter than that.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi Message of the day accepted all the revelations of all religions—this had already been done by others, such as the Bahai Movement. But it also accepted the disciplines, the practices, and the esotericisms. And this means taking into consideration the methods both of breathing and meditation. Besides this, Lord Buddha himself laid down the example of accepting that which worked—was pragmatic and rejecting methods which failed.

This approach was quite in line with the new scientific age. After Hazrat Inayat Khan, his son Vilayat continued in this blending of mysticism and scientific pragmatism and followed and developed the teachings of *In an Eastern Rose Garden* and *Pearls from an Unseen Ocean*. Then also there are the teachings of the Githas for the advanced disciples which offer methodologies leading to realization both in the ordinary and higher states of consciousness.

The adept can by a glance tell of the breath of anybody. First is to observe whether it is coarse or light, or kasif or latif, to use the terms first presented in the *Gathas*. This is particularly true of the people of Nufs Ammara. So the class work disciples are trained in light and heavy breathing, in the advantage of each, both for physical and super-physical endeavors. They can see how it works in others and they can master how it works in themselves.

Then when they reach the proper development they are instructed in Kasab which helps them to control their own breath and to begin to understand how the elements work in and through the

breath.

When this development is attained the adept is instructed in Shagal, which is to say Pranayama. Only in Sufism this is always blended with love, devotion, and self-emergence (fana). But as has been stated, “A man walks one step toward Allah; Allah walks ten steps toward man.” So every effort to remove the ego is accompanied by increase in capacities for light and brightness and the manifestations of the light from within.

If we study the vegetable world we can discover the “tropisms” or reactions toward light. It is only well in the twentieth century that scientists became properly aware of the reactions of plants to light- intensity and light-duration. But these have become part of science. Then more attention has been paid to the animal world. This is very complex.

Sometimes animals show response to forms of light to which many human beings could not respond. But the denseness of materialism has placed studies in the hands of those who had dense sensory-faculties and they often considered themselves as most normal without any consideration given to the rest of humanity. There is still to be considered the light-capacities and the color-capacities of the whole human race. When this is accomplished, even scientists will recognize that their predecessors were often very narrow. Physicists and psychologists must become as universal as petrologists and botanists.

The real, objective, impersonal studies of this kind may also throw open knowledge of various types of dreams and divisions and break down the barriers which seem to separate material and psychic research.

GATHA: Breath being a light from another dimension, which is unknown to science today, it cannot be visible to the ordinary physical eyes. The glands of the physical eyes must be cleansed and purified first by **Pasi Anfas** before the eyes can see the light of breath.

TASAWWUF: One cannot demonstrate this by any premise. It has been assumed that eyes respond to certain wavelengths. But there is no absolute assurance that there is a universal norm. Metals do not all melt at the same temperature; animals do not all hear the same sounds; and even smells are very different, let us say, in the insects and beasts. So it is really unscientific to assume that there is any normal response to light or color until the subject is investigated thoroughly.

But now it is recognized that there is at least one state which can be called a “trance-state” and there is no universal method of measuring sensory responses in that state. But some day there will be, and then man will learn that there are vibrations which he did not consider, just as the discovery of radium and radioactivity awoke the physicists into a different realm and higher consciousness.

There are also esoteric practices which can arouse and awaken different sensory faculties and response to light activities of which the average man of western culture is unaware.

Eyes are actually projections of nerve terminals. They are aroused by every sort of sensual activity and soothed by every form of meditation. There are both herbal and esoteric methods of healing and benefiting them. But when the heart is healed and under control the whole nervous system benefits, covering all the senses.

GATHA: What people call the aura is the light of breath, but it is not everyone who sees it. A radiant countenance is a proof of an aura which lightens it, and the lack of it is the lack of light in the breath.

TASAWWUF: There is a need for scientists to study many phenomena of light, and they can begin with the physical and physiological worlds. In the case of fireflies and lightening bugs and certain fish this seems obvious. But after the discovery of radioactivity, Mme. Curie and her successors became aware of the radiations of all metals and the whole metallic and solid-state worlds and then of the whole physical world. They discovered all sorts of vibrations and emanations of which the nineteenth century was not aware.

This makes it possible to investigate the radiations of all life, of plants, animals and man. We have already, so to speak, examined the radiations of rocks and minerals. And when the various forms of life are so investigated we may discover both usual and unusual phenomena of the types of vibrations already known; and also discover other types of vibrations. Many of these will be found to be fundamentally physical, but then it may be discovered that even the most fundamentally physical vibrations have overtones or correspondences to and from the worlds unseen.

Then it will be discovered that by controlling the breath man may change and even regulate the vibration which surrounds his body, vibration visible and invisible.

Disciples in the Advanced Study Circle are trained first to observe the colors which impress the eyes and sight, and then to control them and finally to master the whole world of mysticism, all vibration, lights, colors and qualities. These in turn will affect the emotions as is presented in principle on the printed studies called *Metaphysics*.

Each element has its colors; air—blue, water—green, fire—red and earth—yellow. There are combinations and blendings and these can become known by the sight, by the consciousness, by the mind and also by the development of each to a person with awakened consciousness.

Many people may say that this is judging. It is not judging. It is using awakened faculties. And persons who investigate Sufism and wish to become disciples are taught that one of the outcomes of spiritual development is the awakening of latent faculties.

GATHA: A seer sees the sign of a death more clearly and longer beforehand than a physician does. The reason is that the seer sees in the aura of a person whereas the physician sees only the condition of the body.

TASAWWUF: A seer will readily note the ebbing of breath, whether it is being fully inhaled and then penetrating to every part of the body. He will also note the pressure and can tell when the pressure is light. When the breath remains unrefined, when the breath is still heavy in its vibrations but light in its movement one knows that the prana is not being assimilated. And along with that there will be a lessening of light in the aura. These are sure signs of the diminishing of Urouj. Urouj is needed for all activities and when it diminishes it is a sign either of spirituality (positive) or non-materiality (negative) and the latter clearly indicates the body is not receiving the life.

The death of body is often gradual. It does not require a seer to notice that. Often the person's mind may continue to be vigorous but there will be changes in the voice indicating the loss of magnetism. There is often a loss of positivity or optimism.

GATHA: There is a belief in India that there are some cobras that have light in their head, the light by which they find their way through the dark. They make a hole in the earth miles long, and illuminate the hole by their own light which is centred in their head. As two wires, positive and negative, cause the electric light to manifest, so the two currents of breath, Jelal and Jemal, when connected in the head in the way they ought to be, cause the light to manifest.

TASAWWUF: Although there are scientists and skeptics who may not accept the traditions, there are evidences enough among deep sea fishes that prove the demonstration and manifestation of electrical forces in their bodies. As they live deep in the darkness one can see this is necessary but the principles may also hold elsewhere. The electricity in the fishes and in many lower forms of animal life come from need but also from the hard fact that there are positive and negative forces operating. No doubt the element phosphorus serves in part as a constituent of these channels, but without the two poles, positive and negative, there can be no electricity, no light. Hindus mention Ida and Pingala and several schools of Yoga refer to positive and negative forces and also the superior Sushumna. They suggest that man can by will and development control currents. There is no doubt that as the devotee advances in esotericism this happens. And people will some day be able to substantiate this by scientific as well as mystical functionings.

GATHA: Many experience the phenomena of the light of breath, and yet doubt if it can be true, for they think it is perhaps an imagination. Others, who are incapable of seeing that light, confirm their doubt.

TASAWWUF: What is imagination: Are imaginary things true or false, or partly true, partly false? So far as impressions and emotions are concerned, it does not matter. Whatever an imagination be if it effects the functions of the nervous system it must be regarded real in some sense.

GATHA: The Sufi, by the development of breath, experiences this light, which becomes for him a proof of the existence of that dimension which is unknown to the ordinary world.

TASAWWUF: There is nothing in the literature which is not based on the experiences of mankind. As Al-Ghazzali has said, Sufism is based on experience, not on syllogisms. But the logical methods

have become so dominant especially in the western world, that it has become most difficult to present what in the end may be a simple system, based on the experiences, not on the thoughts and speculations of mankind.

All the grades of esotericism and the higher practices in Murakkabah (Concentration) as well as all aspects of Irfan (Gnosis) and Mushahida (Fearful Contemplation) depend on experiences and deep insight.

We can also approach this subject from the standpoint of some Indian philosophies that spiritual development consists of freeing oneself from the controls and complexities of prakriti and uniting oneself fully with purusha, the true being, which is nothing but light. Or as Mohammed tells us in the Holy Qur'an, the Being of Allah is nothing but light upon light. And as man advances he becomes aware of the higher and finer aspects of light through his own awakening. Therefore one always gains by esoteric practices which make him aware of the many grades and gradients of light, to the finest which in a sense may be called the Divine Presence, or even the Divine Being.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 6

Breath and Meditation

GATHA: Why is the breath called Prana by the Hindus? It is because it brings on the surface the essence from within. It is a current which is running from the outer spheres to the inner spirit. What it brings from the outer spheres to the inner spirit is not nearly so great as that which it brings from the inner spheres of life.

TASAWWUF: "Prana" indicates something from within or above. We find something similar in the Greek, that when the scripture says man must be born, it is another, the root being ana or ano which is wrongly translated as "again." It means we must be born with "ana," from "within" or "above"; this means born pr-ana. So the teachings are really the same whether from the Christian texts and in Greek or from the Hindu and in Sanskrit. It is only when the scriptures fall into the hands of those who have not had the realization they become speculative or theological instead of direct.

In another place Christ has said (freely translated): "The breath (spirit) breathes where it will and thou hearest its sound, but thou knowest not whence it comes or where it goes; thus is everyone who has been born of the breath (spirit)." It is one of the purposes of the Message of the day to restore the meanings of scriptural passages, instead of trying to fix the scriptures to our own beliefs.

It cannot be overemphasized that the breath is the channel between man and God. If we study all the passages in the scriptures whether the books of Moses or the Indian sacred literature we find all kinds of emphases on breath, but its importance has been maintained only by a few. The ignorant refer to it as yoga. Yoga is that which raises the consciousness of man from mortality to immortality. And when we come to realize what is said in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*, "The soul is the divine breath," then we come to conscious recognition of immortality in the here and now. (Compare Walt Whitman.)

GATHA: This being the condition, breath is vitalizing.

TASAWWUF: This is inferred in the very first esoteric practices given to all mureeds. All mureeds have the instruction in Nayaz. There is not only breath-techniques, there is a prayer which involves the principles. But at first man is concerned only with the words. It takes some practice to be consciously aware of the essence, the rays of the sun, the waves of the air and the all pervading power in space.

GATHA: Naturally, therefore, the breath of a man in sound health must give health to another in his presence; the breath of a mastermind must vitalize the thought of another; and the breath of a spiritual person must illuminate souls in his presence.

TASAWWUF: We will assume here that the Sufic metaphysical constitution of man is correct. The first esoteric instructions help the Talib to develop a healthy constitution. This is the work of Nayaz.

As a person becomes purified in body, mind and soul, he is not only able to help himself but to help others. Although a few may progress on the path of Shafayat all may unite in Healing ceremonies. In the ceremonies there is a compounding of the magnetisms of the participants, and this compounded magnetism is used to heal and help others.

As man develops, as he advances in esotericism, he becomes the controller of his own subtle body. He then enters that evolution which gives him the faculties of the jinn or gandharva. But man, in this sense, is superior to the fairies and jinns because he can function while in the physical body. This itself shows assimilation of akasha. This is what makes the mastermind, and this is what is meant when it is said that the mastermind can vitalize the thought of another.

While Fikr may be the basic science for this development, the book *Metaphysics* which has been published in *The Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty* has all the teaching on this point. But while everyone can read the words, only those who have mastered the practices can so function. We

must therefore not be deceived by the term mastermind. First one has to master himself, but after he has mastered himself he can help others. Finally, it is said “that the breath of the spiritual person has already been illuminated.” Even persons of moderate development often see light round the body of spiritually advanced people.

The difference between a true teacher and a pretended one is that the true teacher can also awaken the light in others, that the light will shine out from them. So it often happens in gatherings of mureeds there is not only great magnetism, as is taught in the literature, but also great Light, great Power, great Love and great Wisdom. These are the evidences of a spiritual teacher.

After disciples advance in the Fikr they are also trained in Murakkabah, the science of Concentration. This helps them in the construction toward and of their own inner development.

GATHA: By breath a spiritually-developed person can impart his physical energy, ...

TASAWWUF: This is done in several ways. A Murshid may meditate with his pupils and devotees. Or he may use his glance. Or he may use his silent atmosphere as is indicated in the tri called “Pir.” He does not have to give any lectures. He may or may not use his fingers or hands. But he will use his breath. Whatever else he does he is always using the breath, as *The Soul, Whence and Whither* teaches, the soul is the Divine Breath which energizes all the vehicles.

GATHA: ... His thought power ...

TASAWWUF: The thought power may be used along with the physical aspects of the personality or it may be used alone. Fikr development depends on the growth in the use of thought-power whether internally or externally. The atmosphere of the master of Fikr can become sufficiently strong to communicate blessings with or without verbalization.

GATHA: ... And his spiritual influence to the others with whom he may come in contact.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the adept reaches a stage when he can apply in the physical world all the magnetisms, virtues, wisdoms and Baraka which are natural to and on the angelic sphere. The Bible definitely teaches that man is greater than the angel and only a little lower than Elohim. People mislead who emphasize the weakness and lack of evolution in others. Even those of low evolution are the children and blessed ones of Allah and have potentialities grander than those of the angels.

This teaching is fully brought out in the book *Metaphysics* and in the commentaries thereon.

GATHA: It is natural, no doubt, that if the one who wishes to impart has not sufficient power to impart he becomes broken if there is a greater demand on his power and if there is little left with him.

TASAWWUF: One often meets people of metaphysical types who are convinced they are doing good in the world. They believe they are helping others, and one cannot say they are not helping others, but to what goal? Sufism teaches that the devotee may efface himself, and by the effacement of self the Divine begins to work in and through him. But there can be no such thought as "Effacement of self" because when one thinks about it one is thinking about one's self.

Thus in the classes there are many ways of repeating such sacred phrases as Ya Hayy and Ya Haqq. These seem to have a magical effect. They certainly do have an alchemical effect in the same manner as the original alchemists intended they should have. There may have been no proper books on all the wonders of the Sifat-i-Allah. Nor are they necessary. What is necessary is the awakening of the various kinds of light, the various types of magnetism, the different grades of intelligence, and all the inner faculties which can come when man himself becomes the instrument of the Divine.

We have given here the example of a single sacred phrase. When we consider all the phrases known as Sifat-i-Allah, or Wazifas, or Daroods, we can become consciously aware of the marvelous wonders of the fulfilling of the spiritual life.

GATHA: Sufis, therefore, consider breathing connected with meditation much more important than anything else in the world: their food, sleep, or comfort.

TASAWWUF: Sufis do not abandon food, sleep or comfort. Very often in the growth of consciousness, in the advancement of Hal and Makam, the body, the whole personality may care less about food. One does not necessarily grow spiritually by the abandonment of eating. On the contrary growth in spirituality sometimes produces a state wherein there is less interest in the physical. One should not change one's diet for oneself. Spirituality does not consist on promoting good karma, but of rising above the life which is limited by the laws of cause and effect.

The same applies to sleep. No doubt in some schools using less sleep is a discipline. Too much sleep keeps one attached to the physical world. But if one learns to meditate long he will need less sleep.

It is also true that if the person devotes long hours to the repetition of the Divine Name by word or thought he also can get along with less sleep. Indeed he may reach a state where these practices almost compel him to remain awake. It is said that General Napoleon Bonaparte slept little. But in the case of Emperor Akbar who was a Sufi and spent long hours in meditation, devotion, and the performance of esoteric practices, there was no reason for his sleeping more than a few hours. He did not need much repose.

As to comfort, the mastermind, does not need luxury. It may even make him uncomfortable. Comfort can be a state of mind as well as body. At the same time it is wrong to over-discipline oneself to be uncomfortable and to get used to being uncomfortable thinking that that brings one nearer to spiritual awakening. Those concerned with Allah do not bother too much about this.

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Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 7

Breath is Likened to Water

GATHA: Breath is likened to water. The flowing of the breath is like the flowing of a stream. Inhalation and exhalation show ebb and flow. Parts of the earth which water does not touch remain barren; so the centres in the body, with all their intuitive, innate capacities, remain unproductive if the breath does not reach them.

TASAWWUF: Scientists have made a study of water cycles. Thus they understand rhythms. Navigators and meteorologists who are interested in propelling ships or forecasting weather know how important these rhythms are.

There is another cycle of water, that the water is taken up into the air to form clouds, and the clouds in turn produce rain, sleet, fog or snow, and ultimately find their way back to their source. So it can be said that the energies of breath which produced the life of beings on all planes and at all stages of evolution also operate as if coming from one grand Source and back to that Source.

In the mystical and metaphysical studies we learn much about the breath, how it operates on all planes, and how it carries vitality with it. The term prana, which is so often used, indicates both that by breathing and especially by forceful breathing they are adding to vitality. The vitality makes the vehicles of the soul more functional. But thinking about it is a presumption. We do not control weather by thinking; we do not control our breath-vitalities by mere ego assumptions.

Water causes earth to bring forth and the true breath causes the various vehicles to operate to full capacity. But while man is in the flesh he can only functionalize true capacity when the breath reaches and opens the centers within the body. This is also a study of advanced disciples.

It is interesting to know that the Hebrew word for heavens, Shemayam may also be written as Shem Mayam, that is to say the waters of light, or the energies of the cosmos. If we study carefully the teachings of Moses we can find that breath may be functioning like a fountain. It reaches all planes and enables the master to use the bodies of flesh, mind and heart.

GATHA: Besides various diseases, in spite of all their apparent causes, often have one principle cause, and that is the lack of free flow of the breath. Many operations could be avoided and several diseases could be cured by the knowledge of the phenomena of breath.

TASAWWUF: If we really studied the Bible, if we really studied the great scriptures of the world, we might come to comprehend the importance of the Breath. Breath is the channel through which all aspects of Purusha penetrate all the planes, and which enables all sentient beings to live on various planes according to a multiplicity of stages of consciousness. Mankind, made in the Divine Image, therefore made with the capacity and capability of expressing Life or being impressed by Life at all grades, therefore has infinite capabilities. Man differs from all other creatures in his capacity to experience, to enjoy and to suffer at many ranges. He has an almost infinite capacity of understanding, attunement and experience. Every form of disease and suffering indicates a blockage of breath. We can study the sayings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of Buddhism, and more explicitly Sufism and certain types of Yoga which bring this to intellectual consciousness, and even beyond intellectual consciousness.

Yes, by the intellect we can come to comprehend the various operations of Breath. But by esotericism we can not only enter into this state of consciousness, but can control and master them. Therefore the wise direct their disciples in such manners that the Breath becomes a servant. There is heavy breathing and refined breathing; long breaths and short breath; there are breaths to enable humankind, and especially devotees, to function consciously at any and all levels.

One aspect of this can be found in the book *Health*. Another aspect is found in the book called *Metaphysics*. Another aspect is found in the lessons presented in the esoteric classes. No doubt the symbology of the ladder of Jacob given in the Hebrew Bible refers to these tremendous potentialities. That is a step and a stage. Then we must come to those steps and stages in which the devotee consciously operates. When he consciously operates he is on the way to Mastery. It is then no more a matter of theory. It is a matter of direct experience, of actual knowledge.

All these teachings refer to spiritual freedom. The first meaning of spiritual freedom is freedom of breath, freedom of breathing. Spirit means breath. But as the Breath becomes free, so man becomes consciously aware of the tremendous life on all planes of the Universe, and in every aspect of his existence.

GATHA: The Hindu sacred rivers, Ganga and Jumna, are outward symbols of Jelal and Jemal, the two directions of the flow of the breath. And the place where they meet is called Sangam, the meeting or unity, which is considered most sacred by the Hindus. That Sangam is the meeting of these two opposite flows. It is like the meeting of the two directions in the center, which is called Kemal by the Sufis.

TASAWWUF: These opposite flows imply the union of the positive and negative poles, and also in suspension so to speak. The Jelal tendency in man is toward positive expression, the Jemal tendency is toward voluntary receptivity. While we may expect more of the former in the male and

more of the latter in the female, yet in breathing we may be said to be bisexual—not in body, not in Prakriti formation, but in Purusha, in the Spirit.

These aspects may be found in man when he by nature or choice has a tendency one way or the other to expression or response. They may also be found in man when he is undeveloped, when he is a fatalist, when he is under karma. Then his breathing is affected by the movement of what the Hindus call the Tattvas, by the condition of the sphere around him and by natural eurhythmics. But also when man enters into a higher condition either by evolution or by Grace, then also he will exhibit states of activity and receptivity, states of union or perfection. The difference is that under the latter condition he becomes a Master, whether he knows it or not.

The finer the vibrations for which he has capacity the more assured the states of health or equilibrium on all planes, and the more natural his ability to benefit others.

GATHA: The water rises, passes, falls, and runs zigzag, and stands if held. So is breath.

TASAWWUF: In the study of Sufi mysticism we find when the Fire Element dominates the breath then the energies rise. When the Water Element is in control, the tendency is to fall. With the Air Element it is zigzag. And with the Earth Element it passes, for then also retention is difficult. When the Ether Element comes into control all movements are also under control. We have been able to understand this from one series of applications in our studies of Sufi mysticism, studies which are found in the Githas. We are able to understand this from another series of aspects in what might be called Astrological Yoga which is just now being given to the world. But by the understanding of these Inner Sciences the devotee learns to breathe, walk and to perform operations (or to control them) according to his needs or wants. Thus spiritual development leads toward freedom as was implied in the very first book of Hazrat Inayat Khan, *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty*.

GATHA: Every above-said action of breath has a meaning and has a peculiar effect, as even water varies in its power and magnetism while going throughout the above-said directions.

TASAWWUF: The breath of course operates as if the phenomenon belonged to the gaseous, not to the liquid world. Its accommodation is the space itself. Some of the keys to its behavior are found in the first chapters of *The Mysticism of Sound*. Even without sacred papers, persons who have emptied themselves of ego and who have developed their intuitive faculty are able to learn by reading and meditating.

But there is a certain difference that water, a liquid, does not have indefinite faculty for expansion and contraction, whereas breath, operating in a gaseous state, has such a faculty.

GATHA: Water is a tonic, and breath is life itself. No tonic can be greater and better than breath. A spiritually evolved person's presence, therefore, brings about a cure in cases where all remedies fail.

TASAWWUF: As one develops he becomes aware of greater accommodations for types of magnetism of which he had not been aware. This subject is presented in certain ways in Volume II of *A Sufi Message*. Generally it is most difficult to develop these forms of magnetism without a spiritual teacher. But it also happens that as one advances along this line the Divine Grace takes over and directs the human consciousness.

The alchemists used to investigate what they called the universal solvent. It really corresponds to Akasha. The English word quintessence, borrowed from the Latin also refers to this. But in applying alchemical teachings materialistically, many thought water was the universal solvent. But the alchemists also helped discover aqua regia, a strong mixture of acids which can dissolve or decompose many metals and other substances which seem fixed in secure states of being.

One may say that all the Elements rise out of the Etheric and return to it. It also in a sense penetrates the other Elements. And as the lines between the Occult and standard sciences become less, man will learn more and more about much that is now hidden.

We are already aware of auras. Psychedelic experiences have made many conscious of some aspects of the subtle body. When those who become so aware are able to control and direct their breath, they will advance into real higher stages of consciousness. They will learn much more about which they are not the slightest bit aware and do not know that they are not aware.

The difference between the spiritual person and the egocentric one is that the latter is aroused and amazed by that which he cannot control. This has led to much of what might be called "False Magic." But as a man learns to breathe correctly he will pass beyond this falseness; he will learn something about his true nature and about the nature of the Universe.

GATHA: Water is the necessity of life, and breath the only condition for living. Without it life is impossible.

TASAWWUF: Although the scriptures would seem to indicate that God made man out of the dust of the earth, the bodies of all living creatures are principally water. It is only now that scientists are beginning to learn what might be called the esoteric aspects of water. This will open up new doors not only for the physical scientists but for those who look beyond the external world.

The Christian religion has stressed much about baptism with water, and also about baptism with the Holy Spirit. Saint John, the Guru of Jesus Christ, used a baptism with water. It began with the physical cleansing and implied cleansing on all planes. But the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which was applied by Jesus Christ led to the transformation of the human being. He arose above and beyond egoicity (nufs) and thus was born from within. This was the transformation and initiatory experience.

GATHA: Water falls as a rain from above; so breath is free from above also, though from another direction.

TASAWWUF: The breath which comes as if from above also comes as if from another range of vibrations. Madam Blavatsky, in bringing Theosophy to the modern Western World, mentioned several types of ethers or accommodations. Water falls within the spheres of gravity of the earth. But the breath falls from one plane to another, from the most subtle to the densest world. The rain from the clouds touches the earth and benefits it. The vibration of the breath touches the physical body and not only benefits, but can transform it. Thus “another direction” means the breath comes from one plane to another while the water always remains in the same plane of existence.

GATHA: Water rises as vapors; so breath rises with gases, also with joys or depressions.

TASAWWUF: In this instant the inhalation represents the rising of the breath. It is also stronger with the Fire Element, which often helps with exhalation. But exhalation is not just joy. As the *Gayan* states, “Pleasure blocks, but pain helps toward exhalation.” And as man advances he will find that pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow and even presumably opposing emotions deepen his capacities. It is the depth of life which shows progress.

The adept learns how to refine the breath, to increase the participation of the Etheric Element (Akasha). And this refinement enables the devotee to be consciously effected by the deeper parts of the personality, and also to communicate to this world the blessings of the angelic world and beyond that, of God Himself.

GATHA: Pure water is health-giving, pure breath gives life.

TASAWWUF: Pure water is very helpful to the body and this is also taught in the first Gathas. In a sense St. John the Baptist gave the illustrations which symbolically or actually helped the seeker.

But Jesus Christ represented the incarnation and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Breath, which can purify all of man’s vehicles, and can in the end bring Mastery in all aspects of life. Sufi practices such as Fikr, Kasab, Shagal, increase the life-capacity of bodies and minds.

GATHA: Water partakes of all things mixing with it; so does breath.

TASAWWUF: Water has acted in many respects as a universal solvent. Drinks, potions, medicines, flavors and savors are thus formed. Salty water tastes like salt, sweet water like sugar, lemon water like lemon juice, etc. In general, however, this is a subject for scientific study and discussion rather than for esotericism.

But the breath studies are connected with the esoteric sciences. Especially when those are combined with Murakkabah, Concentration, we can learn more about ourselves, best done when one has a spiritual teacher.

Note: This same subject is discussed in part in commentaries on the Symbology of Water.

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Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 8

Breath and Magnetism

GATHA: The mechanism of the human body shows the nervous system as its principal battery, in which magnetism is prepared by the action of breath. It is when the nervous system cannot function that this battery gets out of order and does not work properly.

TASAWWUF: The importance of the nervous system has been studied by anatomists, neurologists, physiologists, apprentices for the medical profession and others. Every now and then they come to conclusions, often in a dogmatic fashion, and then their later discoveries cause them to change their conclusions. There is no sound reason why the public should be excluded from some aspects of this knowledge, for most sciences are open to study.

There is a newer science called Biophysics. This is really a study of force, particularly of life-force within living organisms, including its relationship to other forces within and without. Bio-electricity may sound like an unusual term. In Sufism (as in Volume II of *The Sufi Message*), there is a serious study of various forms of magnetism. All these forms of magnetism have some relation to biophysical behavior patterns in the human being. Now also scientists are investigating various Yoga and Zen techniques, and discovering there are very definite coordinations between what used to be called esoteric practices and the bio-electrical phenomena of the body and of the nervous system.

Of course scientific discoveries do not necessarily promote the devotional attitude. But devotees have within their power faculties which can alter the operations of both the nervous and respiratory systems. As one advances in Sufism, as one learns to breathe in various manners and as one studies the science of the Elements much mystery and superstition will disappear. What has been taught in the Message was offered at a time when there was less scientific knowledge, and what is stated here may also prove to be inadequate as human knowledge advances. But the principles of Sufism are unalterable. They have remained the same during the ages. Sufism and other esotericists, particularly Tibetans, have been aware of many types of vibrations unknown at the time when Hazrat Inayat Khan came to the West. But his coming was in an age that was just beginning to learn about radioactivity, x-ray phenomena, etc. Now the psychic sciences are

gradually being opened and the observations and conclusions will also affect human knowledge.

Every activity, and for that matter, every inactivity, of the nervous system is affected by every performance in and with any and every kind of meditation, concentration and breathing exercise.

GATHA: Many in order to make this battery of the nervous system work properly take drugs and other medicines which stimulate the nervous system. But instead of giving power to it, they take away power from it, and in the end the nervous system becomes accustomed to all such medicines one takes.

TASAWWUF: This has become a very important subject. There have been endless discussions participated in chiefly by persons who have considerable authority but often very little knowledge. The nervous system is really an operation of at least two planes. We can call them mental and physical, but there is a whole universe of emotions which manifest in the fields of inner relations and interaction between the mental and physical. These emotions follow certain definite laws which are studied by disciples in Sufi metaphysics.

There is another aspect to this subject, and that is that the whole race is subject to change and evolution. There was a time when people were quite conscious of the subtle sphere. Some of the best examples of this are found in Celtic literature which refer to faerie. Calling it fairyland does not help us very much. We cannot be sure always whether this is a subjective or objective series of values. Theosophists, mythologists, and others including the late Evans-Wentz, have either studied or evaluated it so it cannot be ignored or negated. We are not even sure of the ranges of Light to which the human eye is sensitive. We cannot be too sure of the relation of the nervous system to vibrations scientifically unknown before the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The psychic sciences have been received unequally by many lands. In the end it may be found that the five vehicles discussed in the Indian Upanishads really exist. When we are not consciously aware of these existences, and especially when we get into highly nervous states, the tendency among the lesser developed of mankind is to resort either to alcoholism or drugs. On the whole, what are called “drugs”—a very inexact term—tend to deaden nervous activities. Alcoholism on the other hand, makes such activity irregular, producing artificial stimulations and reactions therefrom.

As we come to know more about methods of breath and also restore the abandoned sciences of the Elements, we shall be learning how to control our nervous system and emotions.

GATHA: The nourishment of the nervous system is what breath attracts from the space.

TASAWWUF: The term “space” is not always clear. There are often different words from languages like Greek and Sanskrit which are translated into a single English or European word, and thus there is confusion. Indeed, if one were to gather all the books written on what is verbally called “space” one might find sharp contradictions.

Usually space is considered extensionally. When it is considered extensionally, it often becomes subjective. Yes, man has reached the moon, but he is still within that portion of cosmic space controlled by the earth, its magnetism, and emanations and vibrations. Besides this, the cosmogony of the day is often restricted and a restricted cosmology cannot become a true cosmology. As we learn more about the existence of the finer bodies, and when popular literature accepts the discoveries and attitudes of those scientists concerned with discovery there will be a marked change. And as the evolution of the race already demonstrates, the existence of various types of human experience called psychic or otherwise, will be dealt with seriously and even be regarded as normal. They certainly were once regarded as normal and the late Aldous Huxley died when he was trying to restore more ancient normalities.

Most of the psychic and psychedelic disturbances arise from the fact that the breath is the agent which vitalizes and coordinates the physical and subtle worlds. It is the breath which brings the energies and it is also the breath which removes the poisons.

The world is learning and taking more seriously various forms of knowledge and disciplines called Yoga. We are especially concerned here with those forms of Yoga and psychic science which transcend the physical immediacy. Nourishment comes from the inhalation and absorption of Divine energies which arise in the empyrean, penetrate and functionalize on the psychic or subtle plane, and then reach the physical body.

Nayaz is the first discipline and exercise given to disciples immediately after Bayat. It may take years, generations, to realize that there are energies in the rays of the sun, in the waves of the air, and especially in the all-pervading power of space. Accepting this mentally is a real step, but a very small step. As one becomes a devotee, and later an adept, he will learn to absorb these actual rays of the sun, these actual waves of the air, and beyond that, the all-pervading power in space. Every wazifa helps a little; every esoteric exercise in Ryazat helps much more.

GATHA: As far as science goes, it says one gets into one's system oxygen. The mystic goes further in saying, not only oxygen, but that life and intelligence, that power and radiance which makes the nervous system in perfect order, the result of which is not only good health but ever-increasing magnetism, ...

TASAWWUF: We need not overlook oxygen. As a gas it has important physical functions. Those who have gone deeply into chemistry have learned about atomic numbers, and these numbers are based upon the vibration and emanations of every one of the chemical elements. The importance of this has not been fully studied metaphysically. The metaphysical people mostly tend to go off on egocentric speculations. There is far greater wonder in meditating and even introspecting on the collective knowledge of scientists.

When we delve more deeply into the psychic universe and then connect it with the physical world we shall find grandeur and harmony and even simplicity. Oxygen serves as a vehicle for the energies of air and space. The color of oxygen is blue, the color of the air element. Laughing gas

has quantitatively more oxygen than the air, and it may over stimulate the humorous side of man, which is occultly connected with the air element. Ozone is a concentrated form of oxygen and it also may serve as a vehicle of subtle energies. Perhaps it is for that reason that many mystics and adepts have found release by doing their practices on high mountains, or in caves on high mountains. Such practices often vastly increase mental magnetism and often bring to the surface the latent powers in man. This is one of the purposes of the Sufi Movement, as is expressed in the literature.

GATHA: ... Which comes forth from the person in his thought, speech, movement and action, charging his atmosphere with magnetism which surrounds him as a fortification and protection against all influences, physical and mental; thus making man live a fuller life.

TASAWWUF: The term adept is used even in some of the first Gathas. It refers really to those who have developed from ideas, thoughts, imaginings, into actions and realizations. The introduction of Sufi Walks and Sufi Dancing have shown how easy it is to bring about a degree of realization even in early stages of training. In this the body becomes the temple of God whether one repeats this as a thought or Darood or does not. And by such practices the heart becomes purified and radiance manifests in the eyes, the forehead and personality.

A spiritual person thus becomes able to direct both mind and body and so accomplish his life's purposes. The breath may become a wall of protection. It may become a channel of healing. And as one advances in mysticism one learns to absorb the etheric element—one aspect of akasha—both consciously and unconsciously. Then one may operate both under guidance and at will to accomplish what is necessary in this world.

It is not that spiritual exercises, Ryazat, are performed for the sake of gain. Yet it is by holy disciplines that one advances in all directions. As the power and magnetism of God become realized and manifest, one sees the tremendous advantages of becoming free from the shadows of nufs. Then one will no longer have to say, "Not my will but Thy will be done." The life itself will become that.

The power of God is not limited in man, and is not affected necessarily by his following certain patterns of piety or morality. Renunciation is possible when man gives way to the Divine manifestation and thus becomes a vehicle of Grace. This carries one far beyond the self and unites one to the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 9

The Subtle Waves of Breath

GATHA: Inhaling shows the power of absorption which is manifest in all living beings and in all objects. Little germs, worms, trees and plants all absorb, and in that way they breathe. Also in all living beings and in all things there is a tendency to put out an element which does not belong to them, in other words an element which their system will not assimilate.

TASAWWUF: There is a habit among the Jains to wear gauze sometimes to prevent little creatures becoming absorbed in either the breath or the body. When noxious creatures are absorbed in the breath they produce interference with the absorption of cosmic energy. This becomes evident in such diseases as asthma and tuberculosis. It is very easy to blame all sorts of diseases and discomforts on germs, the term so used having no particular referent. In the Prakrit side of man, in the digestive tract, there are both beneficial and harmful organisms. But in breathing, which is connected with Purusha, any organism, no matter how small, introduces a shunt or resistance to the assimilation of the finest vibrations.

We therefore have to be careful in reaching conclusions concerning imperfections in breathing or pneumatic operations and those in the functions of the digestive tract. Even the water we drink has in a certain sense been “breathing,” and any organisms in it also continue their vital functions.

As man breathes, he takes in currents, and these currents may reach all the cells of his body, either through breath operations or the circulation of the blood. Inhalation is thus the basis of life. As the Bible teaches, “God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” The ego—nufs in Arabic and nefesh in Hebrew—indicates the individualization of the breath processes and the psychic, mental, and conscious functions which follow.

There is a balance in this world because plants consume carbon dioxide gas and exhale oxygen, while animals inhale oxygen gas and send out impurities into the atmosphere. When there is no interference these functions produce what may be called “ecological balance.”

This term “ecology” originally was meant to be the science of the dynamics of nature, of the world not interfered with by human processes. If we study historical geology and historical biology, we will probably conclude that there are evolutionary processes going on. Whatever be true of the processes of creation, preservation and destruction—to borrow from Hinduism—it is certain there have been emotional and mental evolutions; that beings capable of absorbing more profound depths of consciousness have manifested on the earth.

If we study what is called true Theosophy there are a great many planes set forth, which may be true or untrue, important or unimportant. But one thing does stand clear, that there is a conscious

cosmic evolution going on, and that it is manifest both in the natural world and in the affairs of man. And if we continue to observe life from the standpoint let us say of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, we shall find far more than is evident from current sociological and other studies which operate as if Shiva alone were divinity. They do not see the other aspects of either nature or cosmology.

We do not have to say that everything is “good.” The original terms for goodness were positive, indicating love, harmony and beauty and were not set up against any real or fanciful “evil.” Evil to the Sufi is the result of egocentricity. Balance comes through the harmonization and rhythmicalization of breath.

We can of course study deeply into the chemical and other aspects of nature as is indicated in the essay on “The Spiritual Circulation Through the Veins of Nature.”

GATHA: It is not only the inhaling and exhaling by the nostrils which accomplishes these two functions, absorption and rejection, but there are minute waves of the breath working in different directions of the body, which perform the above-said two acts in their own way and in their own rhythm of speed; ...

TASAWWUF: This subject is given deep consideration in the Githas on Mysticism and also it is mentioned in the literature. Too often when the deepest aspects of wisdom are presented so that the public can read about them, they are not taken too seriously. It is for this reason that a provision was made in the constitution of the Sufi Order for Commentaries. These Commentaries were not examinations. They were explanations offered by disciples who had the spiritual realizations.

Hazrat Inayat Khan met a Dr. Abrams in San Francisco who had some ideas about measuring vibrations to determine the vigor and weakness of the human constitution. He believed it was possible to correct many defects by vibrational adjustments. No doubt some day there will be scientific and psychical methods to help humankind. Some of these are suggested in the book *Health*. We already have cardiograms and other evidences, but there is not yet the full wisdom of interpretations.

GATHA: ... For instance, the tendency of stretching and contracting, the tendency of blinking the eyes, of expelling water and refuse from the body. When any of these subtle waves of the breath working in any direction of the body get out of order, then an illness originates in that particular part of the body, spreading its influence gradually to other parts.

TASAWWUF: This subject is also discussed in the brochure *Metaphysics*. A very subtle and esoteric document which has been printed so all may read. But the reading does not assure one of comprehension. Stretching and exhalation belong to Nasoul; contraction and inhalation to urouj. Blinking of the eyes may show the presence of the earth element or the absence of the fire or wrong rhythm.

Expulsion of either solid or liquid materials also depend upon Nasoul, the exhalation. From the very beginning the disciple is taught about kasif and latif, the coarse and subtle aspects of life. To know these intellectually helps, but helps very little. In his explanation of "Blessed are the poor in Spirit," Hazrat Inayat Khan taught we should refine the breath. Part of the work of esotericism is to refine the breath. And as the breath becomes refined, the adept controls both the gross and subtle bodies.

GATHA: Balance in man's life and being is maintained by the evenness of inhaling and exhaling.

TASAWWUF: We are told that Kemal indicates the union of the breath of both nostrils, and also of Jemal and Jelal; also that it means destruction. Also that it means perfection. The perfect way of living means there is evenness of inhaling and exhaling, evenness in walking, evenness of the forces on the left and right side of the body. Too much exhalation may cause one to stoop and also to manifest those qualities which astrologers associate with the planet Saturn. Too much inhalation produces pride, often without efficiency. Therefore Sufis, especially endeavor to control urouj as this enhances the activities of nufs.

GATHA: The compass of man's being is as large as the reaching point of his breath. One lives a fuller life, another does not live a fuller life; because the former breathes fuller, the latter does not breathe fuller.

TASAWWUF: As one develops spiritually and masters the refined breath he becomes more and more conscious of the life within, of the worlds within, and of the cosmic forces which make it possible for him to see into the future or even into the past. This is also considered in the lessons of Mysticism. But what is important is not these lessons but the refinement of the breath and an expansion of the seemingly elementary teaching, "It is the soul that sees." As one develops this refinement, perception increases both in the worlds without and within. Also then one begins to find that the path to Mastery may be the most natural path.

Whenever there are wars and turmoil and disturbances one may become aware that such territories may be without hierarchical protection. The grace of God often works through the hand of man to manifest on the earth plane. This is the exact opposite of fatalism. Fatalism often results in destruction. Kemal without wisdom always results in destruction. Any disciple who reaches the grade of Adept and those who have become, so to speak, Bodhisattvas, may also become the channels of blessing to help this world and even the next.

Blessings operate through the refined breath. Thence we have the magnetisms, the powers, the perceptibilities which make the word "wisdom" valid and functional.

GATHA: Very often the reason why a child is a dwarf is that his breathing capacity does not allow him to breathe fully; and often the reason why a youth does not develop fully is that he does not breathe properly.

TASAWWUF: Once the commentator said to the dancer Ruth St. Denis, "Srimati, I am going to produce a world revolution." She asked, "How are you going to do it?" The commentator replied, "I am going to teach little children how to breathe and walk." Mistress Ruth became excited, stood up, and banged on the table, "You have it! You have it!"

The most essential thing for spiritual training of children is to show them how to breathe. When they learn how to breathe, and especially when they become eager to repeat Divine Names, they are already on the path to perfection.

With the evolution of the race, there is every indication that the young of the future will at least listen to the possibilities of learning through the breath. There are all kinds of hazards in life and the failures to solve problems by traditional methods opens the doors to the ways of mystics.

GATHA: A person ages sooner, also, because his breathing is not right. Very often people who have no particular illness feel tired and lifeless, because their breathing is not as it ought to be.

TASAWWUF: In the "Story of Lot," presented in *The Unity of Religious Ideals*, the Indian doctrine of Five Bodies as related in the Taittiriya Upanishad is presented and explained. No doubt the intellectual people who tell about the Upanishads do so without the experiences and thus are not very helpful. For there is not only the principle of five bodies but the functioning of each and all of them. And the intellectuals who write about the Pranayama and Pranamayakosh and who have not had the awakening which may come therefrom, do little good in the world; often spread much confusion.

Right breathing not only means correct breathing according to some physical or gymnastic methods but it also means utilizing the complete principles of life. Thus the need for devotion and aspiration. The term "bhakti" remains an intellectual concept unless there is practical devotion. And the life which may be obtained from the awakening of the finer bodies and their practical applications to the daily life do not help much otherwise. For the Divine Essence can be assimilated through the breath.

In Sufism there are practices such as Fikr, Kasab and Shagal (pranayama) which have infinite benefit. And when they are combined with Darood and other profound aspects of devotional mysticism they bring the divine life and the immortality to those still dwelling in the flesh. Not only that, in Sufism, man may absorb from the infinite without need for retirement; he can draw from God in his daily life. It has been said that Zen is ordinary daily life and this may be true, but without application and realization it is nothing but confusion.

The practice of Darood and Fikr enable the adept to absorb and adopt immortality in the here and now. And while such practices are often called Yoga, "Yoga" has come to mean so many things that it may be used without any adaptation and absorption of the immortality in the here and now. When disciples, or even the generality repeat, "Ya Hayy, Ya Haqq!" they are bringing the immortality to the mortality. When they bring this immortality, they rise above disease and

confusion.

GATHA: The spirit produces this physical body out of itself; so the body in spite of all the physical nourishment, entirely depends upon the spirit to live.

TASAWWUF: This means more than diet. All the dieting in the world does not bring the absorption of the finer vibrations of the unseen, although it removes the blockages which come from heaviness. In other words, diet effects the kasif, the dense; not the latif, the fine.

GATHA: One can live for some time without food and water, but one cannot live without breathing. The result is that as the physical body is made of the spirit, it needs to breathe spirit in, in order to exist. Breath therefore does not only nourish the physical body but it gives subsistence to all planes of man's existence.

TASAWWUF: We have extreme examples like the life of the Tibetan Saint Milarepa, that he absorbed mostly through the spirit. And it can also be determined that mechanical measurements like those of caloric intake and caloric measurements do not explain everything that goes on. A feeble mother can perform miracles if there is danger to her child, and the whereabouts of this energy cannot be explained from the merely physical basis.

The Hebrew book of Genesis posits that God breathed into man the breath-of-life but by itself it does not explain this breath and how, in man's becoming a living soul, he is different from the animals. But if one looks deeply this explains the movements of cosmic energy through all the vehicles as taught in the Upanishads. And when the consciousness is awakened and the devotee or adept rises to the understanding of all the functions of the different bodies, everything becomes quite clear.

Qur'an teaches also that creation came out of love. This is the deepest of all teachings. And the Arabic rahmat is not necessarily different from the Sanskrit ananda, although each is presented from quite a different point of view to peoples of entirely different evolution. And as one becomes consciously aware of the deeper aspects of life, one finds that the principles laid down in scripture and sacred literature definitely hold. Indeed the mind is freed from confusion. The prayer, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls" becomes very clear, very plain.

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Gatha with Commentary

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The Mystery of Breath

GATHA: Breath penetrates, breath permeates, breath strikes, breath absorbs, breath invigorates, and breath heals.

TASAWWUF: Jesus says in the Christian Bible, “God is Breath” and in the Logic, often ascribed to the so-called Gnostics, it says: “My mother, the Holy Spirit, etc ...” From the mystical point of view there is some truth in it. It is not only words, it indicates from the energies of operations. For the breath itself is neither word nor thought, it is an operation.

This energy gives rise to derivative energies. There is more in it than oxidation and chemical reactions. When we consider God as breath it must mean that the divine qualities or Sifat are also there. And in the more advanced classes we have exercises in esotericism which enable the talib to derive these energies from the breath and send them as magnetic qualities. Many of these practices are also inferred, sometimes described in the literature, especially on what is called Psychology, called Amaliat in Sufic terms.

That breath permeates means also it is something like magnetism. From the mystical point of view it is magnetism, the same which is called Baraka in Arabic and barocha in ancient Hebrew. This is not only a magnetism, it is a blessing. But the common view of blessing does not infer benefit; the benefit remains only superficially verbal. That is not it at all. When Allah is involved both the qualities and energies are invoked. They become “realities” in the sense that one can become conscious of them.

In the next stage this breath with all its qualities and energies becomes alive in the unseen as well as in the seen. In the elementary Gathas the ideas of kasif and latif are introduced. As the mureed advances he becomes more aware, more conscious of them. For they are alive and therefore Nayaz is often given soon after Bayat. But it is a mistake to consider this just as an elementary practice to be superseded by other practices. The words and the principles connoted touch every part of human personality.

Breath operates as a nexus between all planes. In the lessons on Breath in the Gathas and on Mysticism in the Githas one learns various aspects of these operations and also the meanings. And by this one comes to master himself and also to retain and maintain vigor and health. Then one can learn how to establish health and vigor first in every part of the physical body, in the cells, tubes, veins, organs and systems; and after that carry on a corresponding process and progress into the unseen. And this can also be done as one advances in Murakkabah or Concentration.

For breath has faculties like the x-ray and even cosmic vibrations. It removes poisons and brings in whatever is needed from the space itself.

GATHA: It is therefore that souls with great powers make their thought and feeling penetrate into the mind and the hearts of others.

TASAWWUF: If we study the languages of the world we find that often “soul” and “breath” are connected, fused even confused. But this philological base which comes from Nature itself, is often dropped when religions fall under the control of theologies and doctrines. Theologies and doctrines, no matter how noble, do not arise from the highest states and stages of consciousness. They are derivatives.

Though thought has many values, feelings have many more and the use of both thought and feeling are presented in the teachings called *Metaphysics* which have been published in *The Sufi Message*. To the mystic these operations are real and it can become a privilege of every disciple to arise into the conscious awareness thereof.

Again in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*, the three-body operation is presented. This is really taught in every religion. But as soon as the priestcraft dispossesses the sage, the knowledge is covered or lost. The criticism about it does no good. It is operations like meditation and concentration that help, and surrender, actual surrender and devotion help much more.

GATHA: As breath creates an atmosphere it permeates the bodies of others, also the sphere, changing the whole atmosphere with its particular magnetism.

TASAWWUF: We can see and feel this in the presence of all people but we can especially feel it from the wise. The Gayatri Pir which appears in *Vadan*, gives the ideas and principles involved. But any sensitive person can feel something of the atmosphere of others. This subject is also discussed in *Cosmic Language* and its commentaries.

The wise make full use of this in their dealing with others. They sometimes use the vibrations of Baraka to help others without any words being spoken. Speech compels the breath and its energies to externalize. Non-speech or silence enables one to utilize the breath and Baraka where these are needed. Even to say: “God bless you” externalizes but sometimes this is more necessary than valuable.

Clairvoyant people can often see colors, vibrations, magnetisms, but sages have a deeper quality which does not depend upon the use of the senses at all. And as one advances in magnetism he can have both approaches and combine them and also know the meaning of all things.

GATHA: The hearts of men are likened to gongs in the temple. Every spoken word strikes them, but by the power of breath one strikes them without a word.

TASAWWUF: The effects of spoken words are both intellectual and emotional. We do reach men’s emotions both by the words we use and the sounds and stresses and all those factors discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound*. But Japanese people make use of laughter and grin and smile on many

levels, with many meanings.

Tawajjeh is a practice of advanced adepts, including teachers, to extend thought, feelings, ideas, emotions to pupils or even to the general public. Tawajjeh comes to perfection when hearts are attuned, even united. It does more than telepathy. The feeling and breath bring souls together beyond words, but with effectiveness not yet understood by psychologists who work mostly on mental levels.

Mysticism is much deeper than science without being opposed to it. Science is the effort of humankind to understand intellectually and concretely. But the time has come when the scientists discover their own short-comings and the simple fact that prowess in observation does not always connect with prowess in other mental operations. And so the scientists are coming into a new age, to study themselves and internal processes as well as improving external efforts.

GATHA: It is by the breath that one contracts illnesses, but also one absorbs defects and the depressions of others, as well as joy and happiness.

TASAWWUF: This enables one to protect himself. The commentator has never been ill during epidemics because of the practice of Nayaz and the use of protecting Wazifas and other practices. One can use the respiratory organs to protect oneself, not to be caught in emotions, in mob movements and above all by illness. For during epidemics the general atmosphere is affected adversely but that does not mean that one cannot discover and absorb the divine energies which permeate at all times and at all levels. What is of God is of God and merely to say, "Allaho Akbar" and not be able to utilize the divine energies evinces a shortcoming, and a necessary stage in growth as well as in health and self-protection.

There are many practices for the refinement of breath and most of these are best presented by the living teacher. Too many persons who have experimented with breathing exercises and especially in what has been called pranayama have come to grief. No one would think of goofing around a chemical laboratory; one should hesitate even more when one is dealing with one's own vehicles.

Shifayats and Khifayats are given exercises and practices which can be of benefit to others. But everyone is not necessarily equipped to be a healer. It requires certain faculties and kinds of refinement which appear only in certain types of bodies and certain types of beings. Otherwise one can deplete both oneself and others. But there are natural healers, as the Christian Bible explains and sometimes one finds them in life. They do not even have to go through the professional training. For the schools both of East and West, though dealing with certain principles, do not always know of the refinements of personalities nor how to draw upon the vibration of the unseen.

GATHA: The breath of personalities healthy in mind and body is vitalizing. The breath of the spiritual beings, whose love and sympathy goes out to others, is naturally healing.

TASAWWUF: This simple statement explains why Sufis and adepts often sit quietly when they

meet a stranger or friend. The attunement often breaks down fear or uncertainty on the part of the other. It protects the more advanced person and benefits the lesser advanced person. In other words the basic philological statement that breath and spirit are one is true for the mystic. Nayaz and Nazar both call upon God as the sustainer of the body, heart and soul. This is possible because, as Nayaz says, "There is an all-pervading Life in Space." As one advances spiritually he is able to absorb more of this all-pervading Life. It enters his personality through inhalation and becomes Baraka or blessing with magnetism, with the exhalation. It is this which is fundamentally helpful and healing to others.

There are healers who may not be spiritual teachers, who become vehicles of the absorption of the all-pervading power in space, but they also benefit from the rays of the sun and the waves of the air. This helps them with functional magnetism. Functional magnetism is not necessarily different from moral magnetism, but in the outer world it so operates, being concerned more with the body and mind than with heart and soul. The spiritual leader tends to be concerned with the inner personality and its purification and health.

On whatever path one travels the feeling of dependence on God comes foremost. One does not say, "God is the healer; I am nothing." It is only too often that the nafs is expressing itself by saying "I am nothing." In our prayers, in our devotions, in our duties, we appeal to God as everything and if God is everything, then automatically before God man is nothing. But if man asserts himself he asserts himself; the language does not matter.

GATHA: It is no exaggeration that the whole phenomenon of life has breath as its mystery, and once the knowledge of breath is attained and breath is mastered by practice, one beholds a most wonderful phenomenon within and without.

TASAWWUF: From the very beginning as one approaches the study of Sufi literature and Sufi personality, the eminence of breath comes to conscious attention. Often a Sufi will mention it. It is stressed in the literature, especially in such works as *In An Eastern Rose Garden*. But in the Western world there has come a tradition that Hindus are more concerned with breathing, and in a certain sense they are. But it goes just to a certain point. And although there are the later Upanishads which cover this subject thoroughly, they have not played important roles in either the spiritual or intellectual life.

It is the breath which produces the within and without. There is breath within the body, and at the same time it may be said the body is within the breath. The breath surrounds the body as the ocean surrounds the fish. There is also breath within the mind and mind within the breath, and thus in another sense the mind is in the breath as the fish is in the ocean.

Scientists who study vibrations have long known that the so-called waves are not what we may call "waves"—that is sinusoidal currents, but the atoms the water moves up and down in single patterns, and it is the energy which pushes the atoms to form what are called waves.

If one were to ask “Where is the soul?,” it is very difficult to define it in the sense that space is the reality. Yes the body is in the space, and also there is space in the body; the mind is in the space, and also there is space in the mind. But the Hindus convey something more when they use the term Akasha; and the Hindus convey something more when they use the term Atman. The only way to understand these terms correctly is by the growth of consciousness into the teaching of mysticism.

GATHA: There are many who remain skeptical till they have fathomed the mystery of breath. Once they know it, they call it, as the Hindus have called it for ages, Breath-Life.

TASAWWUF: Hindus posit Pranamayakosh, which is to say as above, breath-life. Some have written explanations; some have explained it away. The breath cannot be understood by functions of the mind or by any type of thinking. It can be understood by functions of breath. But those people who endeavor breath-functioning without a proper teacher seldom penetrate into the deeper facets of existence. They do not enter higher states of consciousness because the mind and ego are in the way. If breath is done properly there will be an increase in function and magnetism, skepticism will vanish.

The Sufi Message has been brought to the West to reach both intellectuals and devotees, but intellectuals are not able to progress beyond a certain point. Nor is it easy to convince them that for many people, and during many ages, breath and spirit were interchangeable.

As disciples advance they are trained in Kasab, Shagal, and other practices which enable them to absorb the spirit and the spirit to absorb them.