

Mental Purification
of
Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan
with Commentary
by
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and
Moineddin Jablonski

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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.

[Chapter 1](#)

Mental Purification

GATHEKA: In as much as it is necessary to cleanse and purify the body, so necessary or perhaps

even more necessary, is it that the mind be cleansed and purified. All impurity causes diseases as well as irregularity in the working of the physical system. The same applies to the mind.

TASAWWUF: From the very beginning of the teachings, even for candidates and in public lectures the stress is that Sufism consists of the establishment of purity, and also there is the proposal that all things are pure by nature. Impurities arise from mixture and the interposition of egos. This is the very nature of Nufsaniat (samsara).

Then there is the lesson of unlearning, but although it is proposed philosophically that there be unlearning, actually only too often “unlearning” becomes another form of learning and instead of going into the worlds of light one only compounds shadows. For every sort of thought and impression (samskara) is, in this sense, of the nature of darkness or shadow whatever be the intention. And in order to purify the mind, it is necessary either to remove these shadow-impressions or flood them with light.

In this sense also “Buddhism” is nothing but a series of purifications. It was meant to be that and not a conglomerate of teachings, sects, schools and rituals. The word “upaya” was applied by Buddha as all means and methods toward purification and enlightenment. But the crystallized teachings limit this word; the doors have been closed and so there are fewer instances of enlightenment in Buddhism than in Sufism.

And according to the first Buddhist teachings brought to the United States (and so to the West) by Paul Carus, mental purification and enlightenment were all but identified.

GATHEKA: There are impurities belonging to the mind which may cause different diseases, and by cleansing the mind one helps to create health both in body and mind. By health I mean the natural condition. And what is spirituality but to be natural?

TASAWWUF: This also becomes a thought. The very thought of purification without the accompanying processes only adds to the confusion. So in Sufism it is not only a philosophy but also disciplines and exercises that must be used. And in applying esotericism and practicing it, the mind becomes pure.

Besides, if we look at the little children, they are not hampered by thoughts and impressions. For a while they see clearly and purely. The Messengers of God have urged that the devotees become like little children. But mostly they are unable; they must hold on to some ritual, some creed and then blame themselves if salvation does not follow.

GATHEKA: Very few think like this. So many people think that to be spiritual means to be able to work wonders, to be able to see strange things, wonderful phenomena; and very few know how simple it is, that to be spiritual means to be natural.

TASAWWUF: Speakers and preachers tend either to berate their audiences or to comply with

them, and even in their berating there is a certain amount of conformity; some like it that way. It makes them comfortable to have others chastised even if they must be scolded also in the process. But this is not the original teachings of any Messenger of God. It is not with the Messengers and it is not in the natural life especially as we find it in children.

There is now a reaction that many people are returning to nature, actually nature and not some thoughts of philosophers called “natural” which are indeed most artificial. And as people turn to the true nature they discover all the artificialities and conventions that have piled on to humanity causing only complexity and confusion.

GATHEKA: Mental purification can be done in three different ways. The first way is the stilling of the mind, because it is very often the activity of the mind which produces impurities. The stilling of the mind removes impurities from it; it is like tuning the mind to its natural pitch. The mind can be likened to a pool of water; when the water in the pool is undisturbed, the reflection is clear; and so it is with the mind. If the mind is disturbed, one does not receive intuition, inspiration, clearly in it. Once the mind is still it takes a clear reflection, as the pool of water does when the water in the pool is still.

TASAWWUF: That is why in all the meetings under the Sufi Order there is some form of silence. This silence may do no more than stop the agitations which are both disturbing and exciting. The trend toward excitement in the world is the basic factor to both disease and unhappiness. It has become a habit. One can not break any habit with a commandment against it, even less with some aphorism, and most aphorisms, despite their seeming beautiful nature, are empty of merit and wisdom, merely just words and no more.

But the next stage is to bring about pacification which is not deadening. Indeed the real pacifying brings in more life. There is much more life to Peace than to anything else. And so it is quite proper to picture one's mind as a pool of water, to learn to see, so to speak, the vibrations which permeate the mind, and then to still them. After a while one can deal with single or complex thought-vibrations as if they were solid and concrete—and on their own plane, they are solid and concrete. Then the will-power can be used for stilling, which is most beneficial.

GATHEKA: This condition is brought about by the practice of physical repose. By sitting in a certain posture a certain effect is created. Mystics in their science know of different ways of sitting in silence, and each way has a certain significance. And it is not only an imaginary significance; it produces a definite result.

TASAWWUF: There is a whole science of postures which first appeared in Patanjali Yoga. But now that the whole world is becoming aware of all the rest of it, we can bring together the postures and breaths of different peoples and someday this will be done for the edification of all.

The Zen Buddhists stress a form of lotus-posture which they have found very valuable. But when a commentator was with a Guru in South India the guru insisted that awakening was a matter of

heart rather than of body. If the back were straight and the heart one-pointed, fixed on God, the result would be the same. Actually the commentator had the same result with the Zen Buddhist masters and the Indian gurus. Still the back was kept straight, the head erect, and the breath rhythmical and soft.

GATHEKA: And it is not only an imaginary significance; it produces a definite result. I have had, both personally and through other persons, many experiences of how a certain way of sitting changes the attitude of mind. And the ancient people knew this, and they found different ways for different persons to sit.

TASAWWUF: We can see this also in the old temples, and the ruins of them, that the meditation halls were so constructed as to enable persons in certain postures to be more comfortable. There was not always the one posture. We can also see this in the works of art, particularly in the Buddhist works of art, that there have been, and there still are, certain postures most valuable.

No doubt bony people and muscular people and ligamentous people can benefit differently. Still being stiff is an attitude of mind as well as body. There must be relaxation and this relaxation must be felt.

GATHEKA: There was the warrior's way, the student's way, the way of the meditative person, the way of the business man, of the labourer, of the lawyer, of the judge, of the inventor. Imagine how wonderful that the mystic should have found this and have had the experience of it for thousands of years—the great effect that sitting in a certain posture has on a person and especially on his mind.

TASAWWUF: This has been introduced in the walk and dance and it can also be introduced in sitting, that by following a certain method, drawn from the occult arts and sciences; also one can sit this way and benefit therefrom.

There are occult sciences and they have teachings and methods that can be applied to every walk of life. Ancients applied them in postures and the moderns have adopted them to walks. In this way the teachings of all the occult arts and sciences and the deeper teachings and methods of mysticism may be adopted and applied in everyday life.

In Sufism there are the names of God and the symbols which can be used. But as mankind learns the walks today as he learned the postures of old the same teachings and methods can be applied. This will lead to a great psychological renovation. But in all of these the breath must be used and the backbone must be kept straight, excepting in a few unusual circumstances as can be learned from Hatha Yoga.

GATHEKA: We experience it in our everyday life, but we do not think about it. We happen to sit in a certain way and we feel restless; and we happen to sit in another way and we feel peaceful. A certain position makes us feel inspired, and another way of sitting makes us feel unenergetic, without enthusiasm. By stilling the mind with the help of a certain posture, one is able to purify it.

TASAWWUF: However we sit, usually it is with the legs tucked under the body in some way. This is both symbolically and psychically a way of controlling the animal nature. And when the head is held up high and straight, it also enables the mind to control the body. But it must not be the stiff position of pride or hauteur. This almost artificial position draws on the psychic energy and wastes it; one does not benefit therefrom.

There are some people who have struggled for years with certain postures popular in the Orient. But if merely performing the Lotus made one more spiritual, how many spiritual persons there would be! Then there are others who have sat in a certain way from childhood. No doubt this makes them peaceful, but it does not always accomplish what is needed in life. So it is that with a certain attitude and certain practices one may obtain the posture; or with the proper posture one may more easily obtain the necessary state of mind.

GATHEKA: The second way of purifying the mind is by the way of breathing. It is very interesting for an Eastern person to see how sometimes in the West, in their inventions people unconsciously apply the principles of the mystical realms. They have got a machine which sweeps carpets while sucking up the dust. This is the same system inside out; the proper way of breathing sucks up the dust from the mind and ejects it.

TASAWWUF: Nayaz is offered to disciples as soon as they join the Sufi Order. It looks like a practice for physical purification and it is a practice for physical purification. But it is used in conjunction with a prayer, "heal our bodies, hearts, and souls." So it is actually a practice for mental purification as well as for physical purification.

To make it effective mentally one should take a longer and deeper breath. One does not begin there. One begins where one is. The continued performance of Nayaz as well as other esoteric disciplines makes it easy and natural to take a longer and deeper breath. But also as the breath becomes refined, it touches the depths. If one were to repeat the Wazifa, "Ya Latif" it would also refine the breath and person. Then the breath would follow and such breathing would be purifying the mind also although there are many methods for this.

With the vacuum cleaner there is a sort of anti-pressure which draws the dirt but in Nayaz it is the direct pressures, and the penetration which removes the impurities.

GATHEKA: The mystic goes further, saying it is not only from the body but from the mind also. If one knew how to remove impurities, one could remove more than one would imagine. Impurities of mind can be thrown out by the right way of breathing; that is why mystics combined breathing with posture. Posture helps the stilling of mind, breathing helps the cleansing of mind; these two go together.

TASAWWUF: This is discussed considerably in the esoteric papers and their comments. One also benefits from the atmosphere of the teacher, his person; or from the atmosphere which he has helped to establish in a room, which can then become a sacred room or a meditative room. And the

more attention one gives to this purification of breath, the more he automatically is cleansing and purifying the mind. For then his attention is taken from the mind and from that part of mind which operates as ego (nufs), and this is of the greatest benefit.

GATHEKA: The third way of purifying the mind is by attitude; by the right attitude towards life. That is the moral way and the royal road to purification. A person may breathe and sit in silence in a thousand postures, but if he does not have the right attitude towards life, he will never develop; that is the principle thing.

TASAWWUF: That was also taught by Buddha. But the phrase “right attitude” does not tell us anything. Many have repeated it over and over. Nothing happens. Nothing happens because the ego is still there and so long as the ego remains one will never understand “right attitude” in its true and effective sense.

GATHEKA: But the question is, what is the right attitude? The right attitude depends on how favorably one regards one’s own shortcomings. Very often one is ready to defend oneself for one’s faults and errors, and is willing to make one’s wrong right. But one has not that attitude towards others. One takes them to task when it comes to judging them. It is so easy to take a step further still and to hate others. And when one is acting in this manner, one does not think one does any wrong.

TASAWWUF: The whole world is filled with aphorisms. There are not only the sayings of the Messengers of God and the prophets and even moral reformers. Even a most wicked man can quote; it is very easy. It has nothing to do with anything. Indeed any aphorism has only the psychic power which was first put into it by its author. And when an aphorism is used against others, one establishes a more fearful karma for oneself. It is not useless, it is demoralizing, and it is not known to be such.

The wise therefore surrenders to God but does not use this phrase “surrender” as an ego-defense. Many religious people verbalize their “surrender to God” and there is nothing in it but empty words.

GATHEKA: Although it is a condition which develops within, one only sees it without; all the badness which accumulates within, one sees in another person. Therefore man is always in an illusion; he is always pleased with himself and always blaming others. And the extraordinary thing is, that it is the most blameworthy who blames the most. But it is expressed better the other way round: because one blames most, one becomes most blameworthy.

TASAWWUF: Although Jesus has said that we should not judge one another, it has become an intimate part of religion to judge, even to condemn. The privilege of condemning others is then arrogated to a particular group of believers and all others are judged for judging. But the other group of believers practice the same way, ignoring the teachings of the founder of their religion and also all other Messengers and prophets; and they talk about “morality,” but it has no meaning.

FATEHA, the most repeated of all prayers which is also found in Qur'an is constantly repeated and constantly ignored. For although the prayer distinctly states that Allah is Master of the Day-of-Judgment, the believers in Qur'an, as all other believers, also arrogate to themselves the privilege of judging and do not accept the moral teaching that whatsoever we do unto others, the same happens to ourselves. So very often religion, instead of benefiting man morally, does more to degrade him than anything else.

GATHEKA: There is beauty of form, of color, of line, of manner, of character. In some persons, beauty is lacking, in others, there is more of it; it is only the comparison that makes us think that one is better than the other. If we did not compare, then every person would be good; it is the comparison which makes us consider one thing more beautiful than another.

TASAWWUF: The rejection of scriptural teachings that Allah-God made man in His own image and that man is the vice-regent on earth, has made it possible to open doors to every form of degradation. It is so easy to find the faults, although it is not always so easy to explain what characteristics are faults and which ones are not.

The modern sciences are showing that everything is made of light; and also the deeper we go into the Buddhist metaphysics the more also we find this teaching. If it were to be applied the whole of mankind would benefit. But as soon as there is some apparently pure teaching it is contrasted with something not so pure and instead of studying the pure teaching, man has become concerned with the differences and distinctions that divide men, and then the purest teachings are covered with the differentiations which they do not teach.

GATHEKA: But if we looked more carefully we should see the beauty that is in that other one too. Very often our comparison is not right for the very reason that although today we determine in our mind what is good and beautiful, we are liable to change that conception in a month's, in a year's time. That shows us that when we look at something, we are capable of appreciating it if its beauty manifests to our view.

TASAWWUF: "Looking carefully" means to use the whole mind's eye, not only the physical sight but the mind's sight and the depth of mind which is heart. And when we do that, we come to see the good and beautiful naturally; it is there. It is only the ego of man, which is to say of ourselves, which keeps us from using it to the full.

In the Darshan, which is the full use of the heart for sight, all that is seen is beautiful. That is also what Buddha meant when he said, "samma dhrishthi" which does not mean "right views" in any dualistic sense. It means to see with the whole personality, to use the body, heart and soul in seeing and when that happens one will find the beauty everywhere.

GATHEKA: There is nothing to be surprised at when one person arrives at the stage where he says, "Everything I see in this world, I love it all in spite of all pains and struggles and difficulties, it is all worthwhile."

TASAWWUF: This is the natural result of using the whole personality. Whether we use Darshan or the Sufic Tawajjuh we are then living in the light. And as the Bible teaches, in the Light there is no darkness at all. One basking in the light will not see the darkness or faults of others. They are only there when one lives in the shadows, the shadows of his own ego.

GATHEKA: But another says, "It is all miserable, life is ugly; there is no speck of beauty in this world." Each is right from his point of view. They are both sincere. But they differ because they look at it differently. Each of these persons has his reason to approve of life or to disapprove of it. Only the one benefits himself by the vision of beauty and the other loses by not appreciating it, by not seeing the beauty in it.

TASAWWUF: Of course we can praise either of these points of view. But when we look at health and happiness we see something else, for the pessimistic person is depriving himself of love and light. He may justify his point of view; he may be justified by it. But still it is not the whole.

The wise therefore look upon the persons of either of these views or of other views, as alike, the beloved ones of God. One does not try to argue against them, but one does try to lighten their burdens and help them toward ultimate happiness.

GATHEKA: By a wrong attitude, therefore, a person accumulates in his mind undesirable impressions coming from people, since no one in this world is perfect. Everyone has a side which can be criticized and wants repairing.

TASAWWUF: The whole principle of Mental Purification is to help one let in the light; or rather to let the light which is indeed there, shine forth. The purification is to rid oneself of darkness. There are so many ways of doing it, by the right attitude, by the breath, by postures, by many esoteric disciplines and all can be effective when sincerely tried.

GATHEKA: When one looks at that side, one accumulates impressions which make one more and more imperfect because they collect imperfection; and then that becomes one's world.

TASAWWUF: When Meher Baba came to the West he taught against the accumulation of samskaras, impressions. But his followers arrogated to themselves the right to criticize others. And instead of finding good in others, they could only see their faults and at the same time they pretended to see only perfections in Baba whether the perfections were there or not, and not to see faults; and whatever Meher Baba did, to them was perfect, even though he himself might deny this.

Meher Baba taught against the accumulation of impressions; he made this his basic teaching. But the followers were saying that Baba could remove the samskaras, so they arrogated all kinds of perfections and excuses to themselves and became more critical of others. This was never his teaching but his coming did not change the moral attitude of his disciples very much.

Then, even before he left, a host of other people pretended to be Messiahs or Avatars. Nor did they

give a purification discipline, but only repeated the same aphorisms which have existed in the world for centuries. But it is not the aphorism, it is the exemplification which is effective. And the exemplification is not greater because it is connected with publications and advertising and pressures. When the Light shines, as Jesus has said, men will praise the Father in Heaven. Words do not make the light shine. Words themselves arise from the shadow world, or manusha.

GATHEKA: And when the mind has become a sponge full of undesirable impressions, then what is emitted from it is undesirable also. No one can speak ill of another without making it his own; because the one speaking ill of others is ill himself.

TASAWWUF: This disease—and it is only a disease—has become so widespread that with the increase of claimants to divine incarnation, there is also an increase of criticisms of others and the followers of others. And thus the new type of devotee does not differ much from the old type of sinner. Both seem to limit virtue to a very small group of persons. And yet they are not blaming God for it. Often they omit any mention of God. And it is very strange to find persons who claim or let others claim that they are God-conscious, or God Himself, and yet otherwise operate as if God did not exist at all.

GATHEKA: Thus the purification of the mind, from a moral point of view, should be learned in one's everyday life; by trying to consider things sympathetically, favorably, by looking at others as one looks at oneself, by putting oneself in their position instead of accusing others on seeing their infirmities.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that a Sufi is one who sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself. But with the growth of communications and inventions, all sorts of legal movements use the term "Sufi" and still do not accept that God alone is; or that one must look at life from the standpoint of another as well as of himself. And they become even more eagerly ready to blame when things in the world do not go right. But things never go "right" in Nufsaniat and it is this self-limitation which increases misery in the world. And to change this, one must let the light in, however one regards the light.

GATHEKA: Souls on earth are born imperfect and show imperfection, and from this they develop naturally, coming to perfection. If all were perfect, there would have been no purpose in their creation. And manifestation has taken place so that every being here may rise from imperfection toward perfection.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." But the average person, even the devotees and orthodox, do not spend much time in considering the perfection of God at all. They are more concerned with egos and then they call them "souls" to justify their attitudes. This justifies nothing. The perfection of God is such that it leaves scope for every sort of imperfection. In God is the perfection of imperfections, while in man's ego there is only the perfection of what he calls "perfect," which is very hard to define and harder still to find.

TASAWWUF: That is the object and joy of life and for that this world was created. And if we expected every person to be perfect and conditions to be perfect, then there would be no joy in living and no purpose in coming here.

TASAWWUF: This subject is delineated in The Purpose of Life and needs no more consideration here.

GATHEKA: Purification of the mind therefore means to purify it from all undesirable impressions; not only of the shortcomings of others, but one must arrive at that stage where one forgets one's own shortcomings.

TASAWWUF: This is the path of Mastery. There one strives more and more against one's own faults. As one strives, it seems to have an hypnotic effect upon others. There was a play, The Passing of the Third Floor Back, in which the leading character began practicing this, and as he seemed to practice, also it had the most wholesome effect upon others. Without trying to improve, they began to stress their best sides; they became more wholesome until a whole boarding house changed itself, or was changed, because of his mere presence.

When we come to the higher practices such as Mujahida and Mushahida, by making every effort to overcome one's own weakness and faults, one helps to improve the world, seemingly outside. For, there is, in truth, one life that penetrates and permeates us all.

GATHEKA: I have seen righteous people who have accused themselves of their errors until they become error themselves. Concentrating all the time on error means engraving the error on the mind. The best principle is to forget others and to forget ourselves and to set our minds upon accumulating all that is good and beautiful.

TASAWWUF: For there is no purification in Masochism. And even the medieval "mea culpa" has many limitations for by its very nature and process it puts the ego first. And in too many affairs we have put ego first. And the only way to rise above is to forget ourselves. For this there are many methods, including concentrations on God or breath, but in all instances, behaving as if the ego were quite unimportant.

GATHEKA: There is a very significant occupation among the street boys in India. They take the earth from a certain place and they have a way of finding in that earth some metal such as gold and silver, and all day long their hands are in the dust. But looking for what? Looking for gold and silver.

TASAWWUF: And the wise behave in that way too, looking for the good in others, or for their potential perfections. It is not of much value to read *Vadan* and about Gold and Silver and Copper rules and not seeing the Gold and Silver and Copper in the hearts of men. By this we come both to perfect ourselves and to see the good in others, and the more we look the more we shall find.

GATHEKA: When in this world of imperfection we seek for all that is good and beautiful, there are many chances of disappointment. But at the same time if we keep on looking for it, not looking at the dust but looking for the gold, we shall find it. And once we begin to find it we shall find more and more.

TASAWWUF: There is a parallel lesson in the Teachings about looking for water, and that if we dig deep enough we can always find it. The very process of looking for something better is itself a means of betterment. And if we can find the gold in the dust, we can surely find it in the hearts of men, symbolically or actually.

GATHEKA: There comes a time in the life of a man when he can see some good in the worst man in the world. And when he has reached that point, though the good were covered with a thousand covers, he would put his hand on what is good, because he looks for good and attracts what is good.

TASAWWUF: As the Bible teaches, God has put His breath into the nostrils of man. When He has put His breath, He has put Himself. If man did not imbibe a modicum of at least one divine attribute, he could not live. It is obvious that there is life in all persons, and where there is life there must be some virtue, for that is the very meaning of the word "virtue." And Christ has said he was in all, and so life is in all, God is in all; and even by the way of breath, the wise can help the most unfortunate, the most wicked, to progress.

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.

[Chapter 2](#)

The Pure Mind

GATHEKA: The pure mind does not create phenomena but is a phenomenon itself.

TASAWWUF: The pure mind is what is called also the Buddha-mind. It is filled with everything as "everything" but is beyond all knowledge of names and forms, that is, of separateness. To be in this state means receiving and knowing only wholeness, yet this is the true knowledge, the Gnosis or Alif.

GATHEKA: A man who wanted a certain bracket for his room did not know where to go in the city to find it. But he had a definite idea in his mind of what it should be like, and as soon as he went out, the first shop that his eyes fell upon had that bracket in it. Perhaps throughout the whole city he could not have found another, but his mind brought him straight to the object he desired. What does this come from? It comes from purity of mind.

TASAWWUF: All Zen Buddhism is based on this. When the mind is pure, it is full of light, which is to say, it is in the Buddhic condition. This stands in contrast to the ego-condition, or as Sufis say, a state of nufs. So long as nufs is active the divine light will not be functioning fully through the personality. When the nufs is assimilated into the Divine Spirit, then one acts as a representative of God, or the universe. This is what is called the hu-man state.

This purity of mind is posited by many religions in different ways. In the teachings of Zarathustra, it is called “the good mind.” But this may also be interpreted as “universal mind.” As man acts for himself he is in the manushic state, but when the light penetrates the person, and the person recognizing it acts as a vehicle for the light, that is the super-human state.

GATHEKA: Mind can be likened to water. Even to look at a stream of pure water running in all its purity is the greatest joy one can have, and drinking the pure water is too. And so it is with the mind.

TASAWWUF: This is also presented in the lessons on symbology both in the esoteric papers and in the literature. The walking on the water of Jesus Christ is one example of it. There are other examples in the Scriptures where the term “flood” may be used or other water functions. All refer to states of mind.

GATHEKA: Contact with the pure-minded is the greatest joy, whether they speak with one or not; there emanates from them a purity, a natural purity, which is not man-made but belongs to the soul and gives one the greatest pleasure and joy.

TASAWWUF: This is referred to in the Gayatri in *Vadan* dealing with Pir, Nabi, and Rassoul. But we also pray to recognize the Divine Light in every inspiring teacher. And this is so; there are many spiritually developed persons and one can tell this by merely coming into their presence, whether by getting a glimpse of their eyes or merely feeling their atmosphere and presence. This will have a remarkable effect on a responsive person, especially one who is highly developed.

The Sufi tries to emanate that Joy to all whether they are responsive or not. He constantly seeks the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty so that he can become a vehicle for the Divine emanations and qualities.

GATHEKA: There are others who have learnt to speak and entertain, and their manner is polished, their wit exaggeration, and their speech artificial. What does it all amount to? If there is no purity of mind, nothing else can give that exquisite joy for which every soul yearns.

TASAWWUF: We can tell it readily from the radio announcers. They do not know that whenever they play their speech, they are indicating both their emotional and spiritual condition. Even if they try they can not produce the mystical effects. It is not there. And when they speak with assumedly gentle voice from the front of the mouth it is artificial; there is no magnetism in it, there is no power even though with some there may be a magnetic effect. But it is superficial and helps nobody.

GATHEKA: There is a saying that a pure-minded person very often seems too good to live and appears to be devoid of common sense; that very often the pure-minded seem not to belong to this world. It is true; but it is not the fault of the pure minded; it is the fault of the wicked world.

TASAWWUF: A really pure-minded person is often stronger than anyone else. Purity does not connote weakness, and real harmlessness is not weakness either. The truly harmless person is not a weakling; he is a strong person who does not use his strength to hurt, even to combat another. But he must be strong to stand up against the winds and whirlpools of life.

The Nufsaniat, or Samsara, always seems strong. It is not necessarily so. Still there is a certain power in the world, only it is not power before God. Therefore Wazifas are used to help overcome the difficulties of the outer life.

GATHEKA: The world has gone from bad to worse. Anyone who shows purity of mind begins by being an outcast and appears to be incapable of doing whatever he may attempt. But what does it matter? One can just as well be pure-minded and wise at the same time.

TASAWWUF: Time and again it has been said that people who go on the spiritual path are subject to crucifixion and many shake their heads and assent they understand. But when one actually goes through test and trial, mostly they do not understand at all. And then there is another test, for the generality or even the ignorant among disciples, that they do not understand the crucifixion or initiation of fellow disciples, and tend to judge rather than understand.

This is natural. One can understand only what he can understand, perceive only what he can perceive. Therefore the wise practice harmlessness toward friends and take a valiant attitude toward foes, be they people, be they situations.

GATHEKA: The pure-minded can also work in worldly matters as thoroughly, as capably, as a worldly man; and the one without the pure mind may be able to make a success in the world, but not an ever-lasting success.

TASAWWUF: There is an Indian teaching, and it has also entered Buddhism, of what is called nishkama karma. That there is action without any desire nature, without self-will, and so there is no personal karma attached, although in another sense this sort of action can not help touch the world. It touches the world but does not react on the person who is the actor. And so it is not only in karma yoga, but in all pure deeds that there is no after-effect. Or as the Gita teaches, it is the duty of man to act but the fruits of the action belong to God.

GATHEKA: When we come to the question of success and failure, there is no principle upon which this is based. It is not true that one must be good and honest and pure-minded in order to make a success. Very often the opposite is more true. But at the same time one cannot say that one has to be the opposite in order to be successful. Very often dishonesty and lack of purity of mind bring great failure upon one. If there be any rule pertaining to this, that rule is that the success of the one who makes a success of something without honesty and goodness will have a failure the day he is honest and good. It is because their paths are different.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* teaches that success leads to success and failure to failure. Good people taking up mystical studies, try to limit the path to what they believe, what they have inherited from their forebears or from society and often they become so fixated in tradition that they are unable to understand anything that is new. And there is always something new in one sense, though not in another.

We cannot overlook the occult forces; the impressions and magnetisms of the planets and of space; the whole effect of circumstances and of personal karma. These stand quite apart from philosophies and formula and one cannot analyze them down to niceties; life is not like that.

GATHEKA: The whole attitude of mind acts upon one's life's affairs; it is most wonderful to watch. The more you think about it, the more it will prove to you that success and failure absolutely depend upon the attitude of mind.

TASAWWUF: Therefore in the spiritual life the Murshid often works with attitudes and this subject is given great consideration in the teachings. But it takes a long time and perseverance to realize it is true. Therefore the science of the Names of God may be expanded in many directions—to suggest, to provoke, to involve, and to promote magnetism, self-awareness, and much that is desirable in life. And until the spiritual optimism is there very often a soul, otherwise good and honest, will not be able to take hold of life and circumstances and find his way. But thus encouraged by a teacher he may succeed where he did not succeed before, still it is by his own efforts.

GATHEKA: I was very interested in what a friend who was a salesman in a big firm of jewelers once told me. He used to come to me to talk philosophy. He said, "It is very strange. I have seen so often on arriving at a house where I thought they were able to pay more than the actual price of things, that I was tempted to ask a much higher price than what I knew the value to be; but every time I gave in to this temptation, I did not succeed. And again I was encouraged to do the same when I saw my fellow-salesmen selling a stone to someone who took a fancy to it for a price perhaps four times its value. Why did they succeed and why do I not succeed?" I told him, "Your way is different, their way is different. They can succeed by dishonesty; you can succeed by honesty. If you take their path you will not succeed."

TASAWWUF: For each has his path in life. One succeeds by following his own path. He makes patterns in the ether, so to speak; there may even be ruts in his road. And if one tries to change

them, just for the sake of change, he does not avoid the patterns or the karmic ruts of samskaras. So each has his own pathway in life. This is almost a universal teaching.

GATHEKA: Thus sometimes he who is busy developing mentally by mental purification may have to undergo small sacrifices, minor failures. But these are only a process towards something really substantial, really worth while. If he is not discouraged by a little failure, he will certainly come to a stage when success will be his.

TASAWWUF: This is a teaching of *Nirtan*, the almost concluding work of Hazrat Inayat Khan. There is a strength in persistence; another in patience. And the Gathas Series I, especially on Metaphysics, bear this out. They should never be looked down upon because they are called “elementary’.”

GATHEKA: Purity of mind sets free springs of inspiration which otherwise are kept closed. And it is through inspiration that one enjoys and appreciates all that is beautiful, and creates all that is good for the joy and pleasure of others.

TASAWWUF: This is a most important teaching and it is also a measuring stick for those on the path, both for the really advanced and for those who claim to be advanced. For the truly wise makes others happy; the others say words and then blame the persons who do not demonstrate what they are merely saying.

The Bodhisattvic consciousness which springs from response to the Spirit of Guidance makes this possible naturally. Mankind is likely to ascribe virtue to particular persons and in a sense this is true. But wherefrom those virtues to the human? They are already there in the sphere, in the space, in the akasha, in the universe. Many Hindus refer to the Supreme as Sat-Chit-Ananda or “being-consciousness-bliss.” But these are empty words unless they manifest; and how do they manifest? They manifest in and through mankind. All of mankind is the instrument of God.

GATHEKA: Once I visited the studio of a painter who had died. I sat there for fifteen minutes, and such depression came upon me that I asked the widow of the painter, “What was the condition of your husband?” And she answered, “A terrible condition. His spirit was torn to pieces.” I said, “That is what his pictures show.”

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed from one point of view in Cosmic Language and in another in Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, which deals with art.

GATHEKA: The effect was such that whoever saw those pictures underwent the same influence. If we have purity of mind we create purity. In all we do, art, politics, business, music, industry, we pour out the purity of mind to such an extent even those around us, strangers or friends, all have part in our joy. One says that diseases are infectious. But purity of mind is infectious too, and its effect creates purity in others. Some keep it for a long time, others keep it for a short time. It depends upon the mind.

TASAWWUF: While this is presented in Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and in the commentaries and elsewhere, we must learn that every person impregnates the sphere. Every exhalation carries his thoughts and feelings into the sphere. That is the real ego apart from the divine spirit in man. The very word nufs (in Hebrew Nephesh) indicates a hardening of the spirit, the individualization of what would otherwise be universal. And this takes on name and form and magnetizes or demagnetizes in some form, physically and subtly at least, the atmosphere.

GATHEKA: The mind is a storehouse, a storehouse of all the knowledge that one has accumulated by studies, by experiences, by impressions, through any of the five senses. In other words, every sound, even once heard, is registered there; every form that our eyes have seen, even a glimpse of it, is registered there.

TASAWWUF: This can be proved by many means such as deep recollection, hypnotic trance, means of regression, concentration. It is also part of the doctrine of samskaras, that impressions are made even from the slightest types of sense-perceptions. They are recorded in the ethers and with the egos. It is only by unlearning that there can be any change.

TASAWWUF: And when our heart is pure it projects the light of the soul just as the light is projected from a searchlight. And the most wonderful phenomenon is that the light is thrown by the power of will on that particular spot in the storehouse of the mind which we are wanting to find.

TASAWWUF: This subject has been dealt with often in the literature and also some in the teachings. But there is a danger that in studying the subject mentally and egoistically that one's very will-power acts upon itself as if it were something different. There actually is only one stream of will in the universe, but it can be divided, it is divided both by breath and by nufs.

Still it is important and in the esoteric disciplines one learns to awaken and increase the capacity for light and also for its functions. And just as the physical light has certain attributes, including warmth and courage, so does the subtle light have subtle qualities which are many, much more than the qualities of physical light, and yet it is light. And the spiritual light also has the endless qualities which are reflected in the Wazifas and Sifat-i-Allah.

GATHEKA: For instance, we saw a person once ten years ago and he comes before us and we look at him and say, "I have seen that person before, but where?" In that moment we will throw the light of our soul on that picture that was made on our mind on one occasion ten years ago. It is still there. We had completely forgotten it, but the picture is there.

TASAWWUF: The mind acts in some respects as a photographic plate. This is also a subject of "The Mind World" and we can learn a little by studying that work. But we can learn much more by awakening the mind, for which there are many prescriptions both in that work and in the subtle and esoteric sciences. And after a while, a person can become so proficient that the time-space processes which extend into the subtle can become as immediate and as conscious as the physical-world functions.

GATHEKA: The moment we desired to see it our soul projected its light on that particular spot; and the most wonderful thing is that there are perhaps a million pictures. Why should the light be thrown on that particular image? That is the phenomenon. It is that the inner light has a great power; it is a power which is creative by nature. And therefore when it throws light, it throws it on that particular spot.

TASAWWUF: When it is stated that the inner light has great power it means it has great power. It has much greater power than the thought of man which can think the single thought “that the inner light has great power.” But this thought itself, this projection of man’s ego, does not have much power. It is not that man can use the power, it is that the power can use man. Man can become its vehicle, its instrument. And so in the esoteric life, in the spiritual life every effort is made to accommodate this inner light that it can come to the surface and function through man to unfold life’s purpose.

GATHEKA: By the word “mind” I mean here what is often called subconscious mind. The storehouse I spoke of above is the subconscious mind. In the storehouse there are things and they live; all thoughts and impressions are living things. There is nothing in the mind that dies. It lives and it lives long; but when we are not conscious of it, it is our subconscious mind.

TASAWWUF: Much has been made of the alaya-vijnana, the storehouse consciousness, which is so important in Buddhist metaphysics. But too often this also becomes one of the myriad thoughts of man; the thought is not a functioning. It is like looking at a map and thinking one is traveling; it is only in imagination that then one is traveling. One is getting no benefit from it. And so all the ideas about the subconscious, the storehouse consciousness and the alaya are like empty thoughts. Until one has the deep experience, the value is very limited.

But when one really realizes the existence of the now unseen and begins functioning therein and continues the functioning, the whole universe changes and man learns more about the universe and the universe functions more in man.

GATHEKA: For instance, a person was told that he must go and see his friend on such a day at a certain time. He had written it in his notebook, but then he forgot it. During his daily occupations there came a moment when he thought, “I ought to be in that place! I have not gone there. I had quite forgotten. I should have been there. Why am I not there? Why did I forget it?” Now this idea that came to his memory was in his subconscious mind.

TASAWWUF: Every note man makes, every impression is there, and the fact that outwardly it has been forgotten is not so different from the experiences of the past which, unless they have made a deep impression, they seem to have been forgotten. But they are there; they may be recalled; they have not been destroyed. Nothing can be destroyed unless there has been complete unlearning, complete purification and even then it is not destroyed. It is written in the universe, it becomes part of the cosmic memory but it no longer remains as man’s individualistic, egocentric memory.

GATHEKA: And as his will wanted to know, it came up; he knew without doubt that he had an engagement, that he was meant to be there. Only for the time being he had forgotten. Where was it? In that part of his mind which one calls the subconscious.

TASAWWUF: Modern Psychology slowly learns this. But Western psychology has made slow progress because it has failed to examine the psyches of other peoples. Sometimes Psychology and Anthropology have been conjoined. This is good. But any Psychology based on the behavior patterns and mental operations of only a small portion of the living humanity can not of itself form the basis of a pure science any more than the study of iron and copper and gold alone would determine the characteristics of all metals, much less than of all chemistry. Yet this has been done, and it has placed a fence and bulwark around a true scientific Psychology.

Then much becomes made of the subconscious but that does not tell us everything. For instance the dream-life has been associated with the frustrations and fulfillment of only a small portion of the anatomical and nervous systems. The rest of these systems have been ignored both in the objective, sensual world, and in the unconscious unseen portion of man's existence. The heart-blood functions to all parts of the body and the nervous system touches the whole anatomy; but the psychologies select as if there were some sort of "soul" more closely associated with the sex-life, or the thought-life, or any selected portion of man's being into consideration.

GATHEKA: A pupil I once had who was very interested in spiritual exercises and metaphysical questions, left me and became a business man. All his time was taken up with business. He forgot me altogether. For ten years he never did his practices. One day I happened to come to the city where he lived, and he remembered his old teacher who had returned. When he heard the lecture I gave, everything which he was taught ten years before became alive in a moment; it was only too eager to come. He said, "It is all living for me. Please tell me what to do." He was now so eager to do things. And so it is. All that is in the mind, all that one never troubles about, is there; and when one has leisure from worldly occupations, it all becomes living.

TASAWWUF: There is a study in Sufism called "Everyday Life" which suggests that there is no strong separation between the spiritual and material, the outer and the inner, the sanctified and the laic. Christian St. Paul says: "That God should be all in all." Dualistic religion has changed that but mysticism reaffirms that. And if we conceive that there is anything apart from God, then there must be something that unites the two divisions which would have to be called "Supergod" or "Parabrahm." But such separations are men's concepts.

The breath is one. The breath is life; and in breathing there is no mark between esotericism and exotericism, so to speak. All is one life. And when we make a mark, or a step, something has been established. What is so established is not disestablished by a whim. And when a person takes the Bayat it binds the Murshid much more than the disciple. For the disciple may not be so advanced, he does not always understand the full meaning of a spiritual step sanctified by a spiritual oath. But the teacher understands and regardless of the actions or behavior of the disciples, strives incessantly to bring him to God-consciousness.

GATHEKA: At death comes leisure; after death the mind comes to greater life, a life more real than here. Death is an unveiling, the removal of a cover, after which the soul will know many things in regard to its own life and in regard to the whole world which had hitherto been hidden.

TASAWWUF: The subject of death and the hereafter is not always clearly explained in Scriptures. And even when books have been written on the subject, they are not always clear. And it is a question whether the affairs of the next world can be explained in clear language for this world when even on earth there are so many mysteries, so much that has never been explained.

The Sufi does all he can to progress here and now. And in Zen Buddhism, (the real, not the literary Zen), every moment is an opportunity and there is no division between the immediate opportunity and the eternity. In Zen one has to see the eternity in an hour.

GATHEKA: Therefore the realization of what is said about heaven and hell which we have accumulated in our mind, in the hereafter will be our own. Today our mind is in us; in the hereafter we shall be in our mind.

TASAWWUF: This subject is broached in the literature which has to do with life and death; and from another point of view in The Mind World. It is only the wise who can understand this fully, and being wise, they are more prone to help people to understand the immediacy than the unseen. There is so much for us on earth, this very minute.

GATHEKA: And therefore that mind which is mind just now, in the hereafter will be the world. If it is in heaven, it will be heaven; if it is another place, it will be the other place. It is what we have made it. No one is attracted and put there. We have made it for ourselves, for our own convenience.

TASAWWUF: In other words, the heavens are “akashas” or accommodations. The different words for it in different religions, throw some light on it. And it is not entirely wrong to say it is up high, although there is no basic foundation for that. The English “heaven” may mean “heaved up,” indicating we have built it. Even if we dreamed it we have built it. And even if we identify it with the sky, this does not clarify what is meant by “sky.”

We can see aspects of this in the literature, in that concerning life after so-called death and in The Mind World. There has also been interest in after-life as in psychic research, but much of this investigation is superficial. There are common agreements neither as to methodologies or collection of phenomenal reports. A million repetitions of “The Kingdom of heaven is within you” does not always effect human endeavor.

GATHEKA: What we sought after, we have collected. A costly dress, if it was really important, is there. If we find out that it is not important, that it is foolish, it is there just the same.

TASAWWUF: For thought is creative; it cannot be otherwise. Even wishing is creative, though without the will-power there may not be so much substance in it. We may repeat also from Omar

Khayyam: "Heaven is the fulfillment of the heart's desire, And Hell the vision of a soul on fire."

The Scriptures do not help much. And we may agree with Buddha that this is not the concern of man, to know too much about, to be concerned too much with the life hereafter when there is so much to be accomplished in the here and now.

GATHEKA: Even useless things take a form in the mind, as everything has a form. But it has a form akin to the source of impression. For instance, not only a painting, a picture, has a perceptible form; music also is a language; the eyes do not see it, but the ears see it. So the mind even accumulates all such forms as sour, sweet, bitter, pungent, all the different tastes.

TASAWWUF: There has been much written about samskaras. Much has been written about them and there have been complicated thoughts derived from the apparently external study without producing much change in the life of the student. We can read everything on moral culture without changing ourselves; we can learn the different views of heavens from the different religions. But this may not produce happiness. Among the ignorant it produces ego-satisfaction and stress on separation and false divisions between good and evil.

GATHEKA: We do not see them, but they are registered in the mind in a form distinguished by us. The eyes do not see the form, but the mind sees it actually in the same way as we had once tasted it. To the mind all these forms are intelligible in the same way, exactly the same as when they come through the different senses.

TASAWWUF: For there is a general sensorium. And Hindu metaphysics has made a deeper study than has the western world and perhaps uncovered much of what is only slowly penetrating the scientific world. Even the most rabid scientist can not proclaim the supreme majesty of eye-sight, that the other senses, or the hidden faculties in man do not contribute to life, character, and unfoldment. The nerves are not only connected with the eyes; they are found all over the body and they represent a mind much vaster than the analytical portion with which many identify themselves.

For every impression of every sort establishes vibrations in the Mind-World and helps build up complexities which may bring knowledge, or which may simply involve the ego and deprive men of mental magnetism.

GATHEKA: Various impressions remain in the mind after death. Because what is individual? Being individual is like being in a mist. When different physical organs cannot any longer hold the spirit then they fail, and the spirit has finished with them. The body departs, the spirit remains. The spirit is as individual as the person was individual in the physical body. After the physical body has gone, the non-physical impressions are more distinct because the limitation of the physical body has fallen away. The physical body is a great limitation. When it has fallen away individuality becomes more distinct, more capable of working, than on the physical plane.

TASAWWUF: That has made the life after death seem more desirable. At least there is not so

much difficulty in attaining the desires. Not only our senses, even our thoughts and wishes come to a sort of objectivity. Not only thinking but even wishing may make it so. It brings us our delights but is also may bring ennui after such satisfaction. When we find that even wishing brings events to occur we become more conscious about what we think, say, and do. We might try this on the physical plane also.

The spiritual life should involve more than the consideration of the life of the spirit. Even prayer should indicate caution, that we really want what we may be praying for. The fact that things come easier does not necessarily mean that they bring more satisfaction, more happiness. It simply means we have to be cautious about freedom to the desire-nature.

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.

[Chapter 3](#) **Unlearning**

GATHEKA: It is most difficult to forget what one has learned. Learning is one thing; and unlearning is another. The process of spiritual attainment is through unlearning.

TASAWWUF: We are given a piece of land. As soon as a tool is used that land is changed. In the same way with mental processes—as soon as anything is done in any way at any level there is a change. It is not exactly the same mind at all.

The Gita teaches constantly that man must overcome shankara and manas and instead of overcoming ahankara (the ego) and manas (the discursive mind), another thought is added, that of overcoming. Indeed the Christian book of Revelation also teaches about overcoming and instead of overcoming there is simply another thought added, that of overcoming. And the thought of overcoming is but another thought, another complication. It itself has nothing to do with overcoming. Nothing is overcome that way, rather it only adds to complexities and people are super-confused.

Meditation is another process. It includes stopping the operations of the discursive mind. The mind is not stultified by it; indeed it can be purified and renovated by it.

GATHEKA: People consider their belief to be their religion. In reality belief is a stepping stone to religion. Besides, if I were to picture belief, it is just a staircase that leads one to higher realization. But instead of going up the staircase people stand on it. It is just like running water that does not flow any more.

TASAWWUF: There are many examples and teachings on this subject in the Gathekas and Gathas. Belief is necessary but when it congeals there can be no progress. Many people are afraid of change, but Buddha taught that change is inherent in everything and when we do not change we congeal and when we congeal we cannot progress.

GATHEKA: People have made their belief rigid, and therefore instead of being benefited by their belief they are going backwards. If it were not so one would have thought that all the believers in God, in truth, and the hereafter would be better than the unbelievers. But what happens is that they are worse, because they have nailed their own feet to their belief.

TASAWWUF: Many stories, many examples of this appear in the literature. But many reading will shake their head and approve, but will not change. The purpose of the literature is missed. It is not for the sake of indulging the readers and criticizing others, it is for the sake of awakening. And therefore, of many seekers, few find.

There are special esoteric practices for this type of disciple. Very often there are elderly people who are most devout, and all their lives have been spent in devotion. But this devotion has not brought any awakening and one can say forever, "Blessed be the poor in spirit" and explain that this means being mild in breath. But the saying does not make the breath mild and the exhorting does not enable them to see light. So instead of turning them aside they are given special exercises.

Very often the young and old will be together and there will be signs of disharmony. In ancient times the young were restricted, and this very restriction was opposite to what Jesus Christ has taught about the children inheriting the kingdom of Heaven. To rise above the distinctions and differences that divide men we have to apply exercises not disciplines, exercises which will enable all devotees to become more aware of the light within. And with the softening of spirit also the mind comes more under control.

GATHEKA: Very often I am in a position where I can say very little, especially when a person comes to me with his preconceived ideas and wants to take my direction, my guidance on the spiritual path; yet at the same time his first intention is to see if my thoughts fit in with his thoughts. He cannot make himself empty for the direction given. He has not come to follow my thoughts, but wants to confirm to himself that his idea is right.

TASAWWUF: But ideas of themselves are neither right nor wrong. And holding on to thoughts, thought which makes for differences between people is itself useless. In the light of God, differentiations depart. And holding on to any differences is itself the worst of thoughts on the

spiritual path. You cannot have harmony in that way; you can not build brotherhood in that way. And in unlearning it is better if we can stop all such thinking, which is not constructive. Differentiations and dualisms and what are called dialectics are apart from any spiritual life. “I am different and you are different” is a barrier to awakening.

GATHEKA: Among a hundred persons who come for spiritual guidance, ninety come out of that tap. What does that show? That they do not want to give up their own idea, but they want to have it confirmed that the idea they have is right.

TASAWWUF: Just as in the physical world that there is to every action an equal and opposite reaction, so in the mind-world it may be that there is an opposing if not opposite thought, some kind of mental agitation which balances off other mental agitations. And this shows that the samsara (nufsaniat) is also applicable to the mental world.

When Buddha spoke of “right thoughts” he did not mean what is “right in contradiction to what is wrong.” He meant that one should try to be on the path of perfection and universal harmony. This is also what Zarathustra taught. Although they seem to have given us something different it is different to those who are looking for the differences. But as in the story of the six blind men and the elephant, all views are right considered from the individualistic narrow aspect and all are in part wrong for the same reason, which is not real reason.

GATHEKA: Spiritual attainment, from beginning to end, is unlearning what one has learnt. But how does one unlearn? What one has learnt is in oneself. One can do it by becoming wiser. The more wise one becomes, the more one is able to contradict one’s own ideas. The less wisdom one has, the more one holds on to one’s own ideas.

TASAWWUF: If we say that wisdom is pure light, we must recognize that pure light is not only something that effects the eyes, it effects every part of the personality—the whole body, the entire mind and the heart. All are born of the light, but of the light manifesting in different grades and gradients. By “grades” one means there are different types of significances, values and divine qualities; by “gradients” is meant that within these qualities there are greater or lesser impulses of it.

In the fine light the coarse things cease to be significant. If the light is very pure and very great it will not notice the differentiations and distinctions. Then all becomes as if One, but One that has capacity for all. And as one increases this capacity, as one increases also the response, all the little efforts one has or has made become insignificant.

Thus even a strong man can lift only so many pounds, and compared to the whole earth this is nothing. A learned man can know only so much but even the most informed do not know much of what is in the encyclopedias, the compilation of all human knowledge. The true humility is to recognize this without belittling anything or anyone. And when one discovers that quantitatively one may know so little, he can the more easily erase.

But if this can be done with knowledge which has some real content, how much more readily it should be done with ideas which may have no content at all. Yes, it is right to say “I believe” for this puts one on a positive path. But it is only a step; no doubt a step in a right direction but still only a step. And when one recognizes the insignificance of ego-accumulations one can more readily call them “maya,” the measurable which is infinitely small contrasted with the vast universe and all the planes thereof.

GATHEKA: The reason is that the wise person can easily give up his thought; the foolish holds on to it. That is why he does not become wise because he sticks to his own ideas; that is why he does not progress.

TASAWWUF: One can easily see, if he wears clothes a long time, there is a certain attrition, a wearing, an erosion. If he gets new clothing it often brings about a psychic and mental change, like a renewal. And to stick to one's ideas is to bring about a stasis. Therefore it is said in *Gayan* that the wise do everything to break down their own egos even if it means changes to go in a new and very different direction. For one can also travel mystically without changing his geography and many sages have done just that.

GATHEKA: Mental purification therefore is the only method by which one can reach the spiritual goal; in order to accomplish this one has to look at another person's point of view. For in reality every point of view is one's own point of view. The vaster one becomes, the greater the realization that comes to one, the more one sees that every point of view is right.

TASAWWUF: This has already been expressed in the dissertations on the six blind men and the elephant. But hearing the story does not infer that it is immediately applied. Too many think they are wise or awakened and if they so think and are unable to identify with others, this shows nothing but illusion and beyond illusion, ego. As the heart becomes opened it becomes awakened, and every mother either knows this or should know it at least for a little while every time an infant is born.

GATHEKA: The vaster one becomes, the greater the realization that comes to one, the more one sees that every point of view is right (a repetition). If one is able to expand oneself to the consciousness of another person, one's consciousness becomes as large as two persons. And so it can be as large as a thousand persons' when one accustoms oneself to try and see what others think.

TASAWWUF: There is a great deal of discussion about expansion of consciousness. When a metal or any solid is heated, it usually expands. When something passes from the liquid state to the gaseous state it takes up more room. This is one form of expansion, but when those substances are cooled they may return to the same state and occupy the same space. There may be nothing learned by such experiences.

So it is with many who have psychic or psychedelic experience. There is an expansion, but it is not

a real expansion of consciousness. If it does not become greater in capacity or realization for what is going on in the heart and consciousness of others, it is not real expansion. And if one then wants more consideration and even honour from others, it proves that it may have been an expansion but it was not a spiritual expansion.

GATHEKA: The next step in mental purification is to be able to see the right of the wrong and the wrong of the right, and the evil of the good and the good of the evil. It is a difficult task, but once one has accomplished this, one rises above good and evil.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in a mother with two or more children, that when they quarrel she is apt to look at both their points of view. When her child argues with another child she may take sides (or may not) but when her own children get into a dispute she tends to see from both points of view. This is excellent. And when one takes another step and sees other children as if they were one's own there is a real spiritual growth, a real expansion of heart.

Now this also is the point of view of a spiritual teacher with regard to disciples. Only there, it is not necessary to act as judge or psychiatrist. One has the internal medicines, the spiritual practices. They, as well as meditations help to mollify the ego and so establish harmonies without interfering with anybody.

This was also the Love-teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan that one began with one's immediacy, with one's own family and then gradually acted as if relatives were members of that family; then friends and neighbors. And so one grew in consideration and justice and this, and not some conception or illusion, is the real expansion of consciousness. The expansion of love is the expansion of consciousness and the expansion of consciousness is the expansion of love.

GATHEKA: One must be able to see the pain in pleasure and the pleasure in pain; the gain in the loss and the loss in the gain. What generally happens is that one is blunted to one thing and that one's eyes are open to another thing; that one does not see the loss or that one does not see the gain; if one recognizes the right, one does not recognize the wrong.

TASAWWUF: This is a theme that is dealt with at length in the voluminous writings of Swami Ram Das. It is not philosophy or injunctions, it is the direct experience alone which enables one to see and understand. Pleasure and pain both are effective, they both take one from universal peace. In both instances the ego reacts and when the ego reacts it is taken from the infinite stillness.

If one tried to see from the standpoint of God; God, so to speak, experiences pleasure in the pleasure of everybody and pain in the pain of everybody. There are even people called "masochists" whose bliss comes with pain, not with pleasure. They get no satisfaction out of pleasure. But this also is egotism; this is not deliverance.

There are spiritual practices which can set the pace. One can perform Fikr and get into a state of consciousness. And anything which affirms or strengthens that state of consciousness can be

called “good” and anything that lessens it, not so good. It is not any affirmation of evil here, but a choice of less good and more good. And when one comes to understand that, he begins to see from the points of view of others as well as of himself, that in all the experiences of life there is a choice.

GATHEKA: Mental purification means that impressions such as good and bad, wrong and right, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain, these opposites which block the mind, must be cleared out by seeing the opposite of these things. Then one can see the enemy in the friend and the friend in the enemy.

TASAWWUF: The Parsi sage, Meher Baba, who called himself “Avatar” wrote in great detail on this subject. Intellectually he was very right; he had some good literature which was very clear and even simple when profound. But that did not mean that his followers could see the wisdom in others. They began by denying the wisdom of other sages and ended by not seeing the wisdom in each other. So instead of going toward spiritual liberty and brotherhood, they fell into the very traps discountenanced by their own teachings.

Actually friendship and enmity are situations of the moment. They do not belong to eternity, they do not belong to the university of liberation. The friend is the enemy in the sense that one has made a differentiation. When one recognizes both friend and enemy as oneself, oneself in a separate body and mind, one is liberated. Or as Walt Whitman said, “In all men I see myself.” This is beyond pleasure and pain.

GATHEKA: When one can recognize poison in nectar and nectar in poison, that is the time when death and life become one, too. Opposites no more remain opposites before one. That is called mental purification. And those who come to this stage are the living sages.

TASAWWUF: A good physician does not see his clients as friends or enemies. He sees ailing bodies and minds which should be corrected. He may resort to one of a number of methods and select one or more of a myriad of medicaments. If he is a good practitioner there will be no dualism. And his only pride should come in the recovery of patients.

So a spiritual teacher sees every one as a covered soul, a soul covered by the darkness of ego and his profession is to remove the darkness of ego and this is done by spiritual means. If other means sufficed, this would not be necessary, but other means, imbedded as they are also in dualism, have not brought health and happiness.

GATHEKA: The third field of mental purification is to identify oneself with what one is not. By this one purifies one’s mind from impressions of one’s own false identity.

TASAWWUF: This can be understood intellectually from the studies on samskaras. But of a thousand persons so studying intellectually, perhaps one actually finds through that studying the need and the way to overcome his own weakness. It is rather through meditation and what Buddha

called upayas, which is the same as the Sufi ryazat, that one gets a greater point of view and through his own greatness is able to harness his own smallness.

There are many methods by which samskaras can be erased and they are found in books as well as in sacred and esoteric writings. But reading such books and nodding the head is even worse than knowing nothing about the subject. For Mohammed distinctly taught that those that had the guidance and did not obey were especially subject to hell-fire, far more than the ignorant whom the Mercy of Allah excuses.

By one's own false identity nufs is meant, against which there are endless warnings, seldom heeded.

[The following stories were omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.] (GATHEKA: I will give as an example the story of a sage in India. The story begins by saying that a young man in his youth asked his mother, who was a peasant-woman living in a village, 'What is the best occupation, mother?' And the mother said, 'I do not know son, except that those who searched after the highest in life went in search of God.' 'Then where must I go, mother?' he asked. She answered, 'I do not know whether it is practical or not, but they say in the solitude, in the forest.' So he went there for a long time and lived a life of patience and solitude. And once or twice in between he came to see his mother. Sometimes his patience was exhausted, his heart broken.

Sometimes he was disappointed in not finding God. And each time the mother sent him back with stronger advice. At the third visit he said, 'Now I have been there a long time.' 'Yes,' said his mother, 'now I think you are ready to go to a teacher'. So he went to see a teacher. And there were many pupils learning under that teacher. Every pupil had a little room to himself for meditation, and this pupil also was told to go into a certain room to meditate. The teacher asked, 'Is there anything you love in the world?' This young man having been away from home since childhood, having not seen anything of the world, could think of no one he knew, except of the little cow that was in his house. He said, 'I love the cow in our house.' The teacher said, 'Then think of the cow in your meditation.'

All the other pupils came and went, and sat in their room for fifteen minutes for a little meditation; then they got tired and went away; but this young man remained sitting there from the time the teacher had told him. After some time the teacher asked, 'Where is he?' The other pupils answered, 'We don't know. He must be in his room.' They went to look for him; the door was closed and there was no answer.

The teacher went himself and opened the door and there he saw the pupil sitting in meditation, fully absorbed in it. And when the teacher called him by name, he answered in the sound of the cow. The teacher said, 'Come out.' He answered, 'My horns are too large to pass through the door.' Then the teacher said to his pupils, 'Look, this is the living example of meditation. You are meditating on God and you do not know where God is, but he is meditating on the cow and he has

become the cow; he has lost his identity. He has identified himself with the object on which he meditates.' All the difficulty in our life is that we cannot come out of a false conception.

I will give another example. Once I was trying to help a person who was ill, who had had rheumatism for twenty years. This woman was in bed; she could not move her joints. I came to her and told her, 'Now you will do this and I will come again in two weeks' time.' And when after two weeks I came, she had already begun to move her joints. And I said, 'In six weeks I will come back.' And in six weeks she got up from bed and had still greater hope of being cured. Nevertheless her patience was not so great as it ought to have been. One day she was lying in bed and thought, 'Can I ever be cured?' The moment she had that thought she went back to the same condition; because her soul had identified itself with a sick person. For her to see her own well-being was impossible, she could not imagine that she would ever be quite well; she could not believe her eyes that her joints were moving; she could not believe it.)

GATHEKA: People can be well in their bodies but not in their minds. Very often they hold onto an illness which they could get rid of. And the same thing happens with misery. People who are conscious of misery attract miseries. They are their own misery.

TASAWWUF: There was once established a "Confraternity" and it consisted of three grades; those who memorized *Gayan*, those who memorized *Vadan* also, and those who memorized all three; *Gayan*, *Vadan* and *Nirtan*. It was hoped that by so doing and repeating the aphorisms these would become examples to follow in their lives.

But they were not all evolved. They memorized the books, they could repeat the aphorisms, they might know all the aphorisms, but instead of producing change in personality it added pride and emotion and made such people pseudo-devotees, proud of their accomplishments and instead of nufs being overcome, it became worse.

There is the opposite trend toward self-effacement and this is done mostly by esotericism, by ryazat or upayas of some sort. These are actual methods. They consist of exercises and not empty words. They are most beneficial. And besides the knowledge of the Names of God offered by Mohammed bring one directly into attunement with the Divine Vibrations. They belong to Fana-fi-Rassoul and Fana-fi-lillah, whereas the knowledge of *Gayan*, *Vadan*, and *Nirtan*, valuable as they are, belong to Fana-fi-Sheikh.

GATHEKA: It is not that misfortune is interested in them, but they are interested in misfortune. They hold that thought, and that thought becomes their own. When a person is convinced he is going downward, he goes downward; his thought is helping him to sink.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the poetry of that great genius, Robinson Jeffers. One of his otherwise excellent compositions ends, "No where else to go but down." And after he wrote that and it was published and he became famous, his life grew worse and worse. He became, so to speak, his own negative guru. And some people followed him in his philosophy, and so his poetry,

which may have established a style, has not held up so well for it took away hope from mankind.

There are many who are like this. Even *Gayan* teaches that success leads to success and failure to failure. We are caught in ruts. The esoteric teachings show how we can get out of the ruts, especially the negative ones. Sufism has teachings and practices which are valuable when applied and useless when used as theoretical philosophy.

Lord Buddha spent his whole career working in the opposite direction. Many have concluded he taught a form of pessimism. But if instead of reading books on what is known as “Buddhism” by non-communicants, we examined the early literature which was still under personal influence we find it impregnated with joy and hope and the highest form of optimism.

GATHEKA: Therefore the third aspect of mental purification is to be able to identify oneself with something else. The Sufis have their own way of teaching it. Very often one holds the idea of one’s spiritual teacher; and with that idea one gains the knowledge and inspiration and power that the spiritual teacher has. It is just like a heritage.

TASAWWUF: Fana-fi-Sheikh is useless as theory. When one holds before him the name, the picture, the ideas of the Murshid and lives in and for the Murshid, it is not idolatry; it is love and attunement and this enables the disciple not only to become a devotee but to absorb from the atmosphere and from the ethers beyond the atmosphere the same qualities that have manifested in the teacher.

Then there is tasawwuri which really means attunement—to take on the rhythm of the teacher in walking and breathing and by that means awaken the same areas of the depths of personality which have been awakened in the teacher. It is not just imitation; it is not becoming a glorified monkey; it is finding the Universe within oneself.

GATHEKA: The man who cannot concentrate so much as to forget himself and go deep into the subject on which he concentrates, will not succeed in mastering concentration.

TASAWWUF: Therefore in the esoteric lessons one learns to control thought by feeling. When we love much we can grow much. We have to have love and sometimes the teacher may use every effort to awaken love and joy in the disciples and generality. There is no sense in calling Sufism the religion of love, harmony and beauty unless there is manifestation and experience of love, harmony and beauty by oneself, in oneself, from oneself.

GATHEKA: The fourth mental purification is to free oneself from a form and have a sense of the abstract.

TASAWWUF: In the lessons on Murakkabah, Concentration, this is what is done. But the learning is through practice and effort. There is no gain from theory; indeed unapplied theories can become obstacles.

GATHEKA: Everything suggests to the eye a form, everything; even so much that if the name of a person whom one has never seen is mentioned, one makes a form of him. Even such things as fairies and spirits and angels, as soon as they are mentioned, are always pictured in a certain form.

TASAWWUF: We can read in the most ancient books of Indian wisdom about nama (name), rupa (forms) and arupa (formless). But these words can not be taken too literally. They may even be applied to the three planes to which we give various names. And it was by tapas, or austerities, that one became aware of different states of consciousness and obtained the knowledges of the various planes.

The same is found in Sufism in the lessons on Murakkabah for the more advanced disciples and in the commentaries thereon, that there are conscious means of becoming sensitive to and aware of what may be called the “unseen.” The “unseen” is not necessarily unseen, but for those steeped in the denseness of earth it is so. We have to become more refined. And it is not only by the refined breath but also by spiritual practices.

The phrase Ya Latif is often repeated to help man become as aware of the subtle as of the gross; to find that there is as much life, and more, in the subtle as in the gross; and thus to help one realize what has been called the Kingdom of the Heavens, which means conscious realization of what is ordinarily not seen or heard. But it can be seen or heard as soon as the veils are lifted.

GATHEKA: This is a hindrance to attaining the presence of the formless; and therefore this mental purification is of very great importance. Its purpose is to be able to think of an idea without form.

No doubt this is only attained by great concentration and meditation, but once it is attained it is most satisfactory.

TASAWWUF: The great inner sciences such as Murakkabah, Mushahida, and Mujahida are dependent upon man's capacity to rise both in and with name and form and also beyond name and form. The teachings of Murakkabah were presented in detail but require all the efforts of devotees to go through the practices one by one. Theoretical knowledge can here be a hindrance. When we have thoughts of things or thoughts of thoughts we are sending out hindrances to pure light.

In Murakkabah every effort is made to let the pure light operate. This is the Nur. And without this Nur nothing has ever been made. Qur'an and Bible agree on this. It is not the agreement that is important but man's endeavor. And so by proceeding up the ladder of attainment this becomes a possession of man and at the same time it can be said that man becomes possessed by it.

In Mushahida man identifies himself with the universe of which he is cognizant and no longer with his small ego-self. In Mujahida one proceeds negatively. It is like the neti-neti of the Hindus, only it is not philosophy, it is constant purification, constant removal, because everything can become an obstacle, a hindrance. This is also taught in the Ziraat, the agricultural esotericism of Sufism.

GATHEKA: And the fifth way is to be able to repose one's mind. In other words relax the mind. Imagine, after having toiled for the whole day, how much the body stands in need of rest; how much more then must the mind stand in need of rest!

TASAWWUF: Usually this is called Meditation. There are many kinds of Meditation, and all are valuable so long as the form, the ritual, becomes a means to attainment, not a barrier beyond which one must not go. True, there are methods which have been most advantageous. But too many schools adhere stringently to the means. Then the freedom is lost, the purpose is lost, and instead of there being relaxation and liberation, there is only another form of bondage. If this were not so, everyone trying the methods of Zen Buddhism would reach liberation. Millions try every year; hardly a handful attain.

GATHEKA: The mind works much faster than the body; naturally the mind is much more tired than the body. And not every person knows how to rest his mind and therefore the mind never has a rest.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi Pir-O-Murshid Syed Moudani said that there was only one real gain in life and that was to praise Allah with every breath and only one loss, not to so praise Him. One may wonder if we cannot protect the body and mind against fatigue and we can certainly do so. For instance the phrase “Ya Haya wa-Khayyum” not only helps one recover from fatigue but even prevents it. There are other sacred phrases which do that and all methods of practicing Akhlak Allah, or the Divine Presence, take one above and beyond ennui and fatigue. And for those who journey on the spiritual path and accept the methods offered by the teacher, not only is it easy to recover from fatigue but even to prevent it and live and work and also enjoy life without any great change taking place.

GATHEKA: And then what happens after a while is that the mind becomes feeble; it loses memory, the power of action; it loses reason. The worse effects are mostly brought about by not giving the mind proper repose. If such infirmities as doubt and fear happen to enter the mind, then a person becomes restless, he can never find rest.

TASAWWUF: It is easy to write a commentary on this, to be analytical, to go into causes. But the main problem is how to prevent such occurrences, to prevent rather than cure. And this is done mostly by Fikr. Fikr has many aspects, but all of them tend to direct the mind away from the ego and samsara toward the One and Only Being Whom we may be calling “God” or “Allah”—it is mostly “Allah” we use in the disciplines and it is not necessary to translate this word at all.

This subject is dealt with in the papers on Esotericism (Ryazat) and in the commentaries thereon, as well as in certain places in the literature.

GATHEKA: For at night the mind continues on the track of the same impressions. Simple as it seems to be, very few know the resting of the mind and how wonderful it is in itself.

TASAWWUF: When the commentator had to submit to a lengthy examination before returning to college, he practiced Fikr continuously and passed with a very high record. Then later he took another examination and depended on memory and failed. After that he always practices Fikr and never failed again and as he passed from semester to semester his records became better and better. Although the ego-self was involved it was remembrance of and dependence on Allah which proved to be all sufficient and practical although one does not generally regard esotericism and mysticism as being practical. Yet they are and it will be found out more and more in time.

GATHEKA: And what power, what inspiration, comes as a reaction from it, and what peace does one experience by it, and how it helps the body and mind! The spirit is renewed once the mind has had its rest.

TASAWWUF: The whole subject of commentaries, the writing of which is an art and science, comes from this sort. It is not to be assumed or presumed that a disciple has the ability to penetrate the arcana of the teacher, but by attunement, and also by the awakening of his own centers, the faculties which are latent come to life. This is one of the verbal purposes of the Sufi Movement. And it can come to life and be most effective.

It is one thing to pray; that is the first step. Then one can experience more and more the Grace, the Glory, the Wisdom, the Joy and the Peace of Allah which are the greatest of all blessings and benefits. And as one gets into the stream (to use the Buddhist terminology) the whole life is changed; this is the spiritual rebirth, renewal and awakening.

GATHEKA: The first step towards the resting of the mind is the relaxation of the body. If one is able to relax one's muscular and nervous system at will, then the mind is automatically refreshed. Besides that, one must be able to cast away anxiety, worries, doubts, and fears by the power of will, putting oneself in a restful state; this will be accomplished by the help of proper breathing.

TASAWWUF: Many going on the spiritual path will be told to relax, they will be given the word "relaxation" and then have to sit in postures and positions which increase the pain of the body while someone keeps telling, even yelling "relax." But this is not relaxation and according to the biochemical type and the customs of childhood, one will find different forms of relaxation.

Swami Ram Das forbade the commentator to take any Asian posture whatsoever. He even came with a stick like a Zen master to see that he sat comfortably. And within two weeks the commentator became so absorbed in Papa Ram Das he said, "It is time to go." He was no longer any ego-self, he has become Swami Ram Das himself. This is the attainment. The union of teacher and pupil is the attainment, or as Jesus Christ has said, "Whenever two or three are gathered together in my Light (Shem) there I am in their midst."

Each one may have a different form of relaxation and it is relaxation and not a posture which is most helpful. Even if one has to take up gymnastics it is no hindrance if there are practices of relaxation, and first this must be for the body; then for the mind.

And then there is breathing. There are so many kinds of breaths but mostly we have to have a refined breath—which can be done at will; and also the relaxed breath which depends on posture and position, those that are easy and pleasant. And when one sits (or otherwise) in the comfortable position and finds refined breathing easy, he is going up the spiritual path which is a path of continual refining of breath, either as a means of discipline and development, or as the result of the Grace which helps to bring the spiritual awakenings.

The more one gets into the refined currents, the more one realizes Ya Latif, the easier it becomes to overcome and prevent anxiety, worries, doubts and fears.

GATHEKA: Great magnetism is produced by having stilled and purified the mind. And the lack of it causes lack of magnetism.

TASAWWUF: We are finding that repeating the Names of God, whether referring to essence (Zat) or attributes (Sifat) becomes most helpful. The devotees who repeat these names find changes going on in themselves, they begin to realize the divine attributes, they become absorbed in the attributes and in the blessings thereof and from this comes an ever increasing magnetism at all levels.

GATHEKA: The presence of those whose mind is not purified and stilled becomes a source of unrest for others as well as for themselves. And they attract little because the power of attraction is lost; everyone is tired by their presence, and their atmosphere causes uneasiness and discomfort. They are a burden to themselves and to others.

TASAWWUF: The more one becomes involved in the spiritual devotions, the more easily he distinguishes between the truth and the false. The true bring zest and the false take away vitality. Nothing can be substituted for the actuality of increased magnetism and with it Baraka or blessing. And after a while pretense is easily discovered.

Then one does not have to be told the advantages of having a true spiritual teacher. He is finding that out for himself.

GATHEKA: Once the mind is purified, the next step is the cultivation of the heart-quality which culminates in spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: Actually this is going on all the time. The true spiritual teacher is doing nothing else, using nothing else and by so doing awakens the corresponding ranges and areas of consciousness in the pupils.

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.

[Chapter 4](#)

The Distinction Between the Subtle and the Gross

GATHEKA: There is a verse in the Bible: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." So what we call living is subtle, what is dead is coarse; in other words, what is dense is coarse, and what is fine is subtle.

TASAWWUF: In the Gathas a distinction is made between Kasif, the coarse; and Latif, the fine. At first it is a philosophical distinction and may be dualistic. But one works with the refined, one is constantly making an effort to become more refined.

The interest in Indian music arises in part because that science and art has always been concerned with refinement. Even in its most decadent form it has elements of refinement not usually found in other music. And it is this which attracts souls who may not at first be accustomed to the sounds. But there is something deep in it which can be very effective.

GATHEKA: It is true as the Hindus say that there was a golden age, then a silver age, a copper age, and an iron age. Certainly we are in the iron age. Never before in any period of history was there such grossness and denseness as mankind shows today. And it is come about by the law of gravitation. When the consciousness is absorbed in the gross matter then a person gravitates toward the earth. When the consciousness is released from the gross matter then it soars toward heaven.

TASAWWUF: It was not only among the Hindus but among other people that this distinction of ages and the corresponding legends have been found. But our objective is not to indulge in such thoughts; our aim is to help mankind to rise above this grossness and we certainly make use of the refined breathing and also the repetitions of spiritual phrases which have a most wholesome effect.

We do not have to indulge in such thoughts. We can learn the breathing methods which even Buddha emphasized by making the breath as refined as possible. Then we also unconsciously no doubt increase our capacity for love, joy, peace and all blessings. We can do it ourselves; we have to do it ourselves and the purpose of the teacher is to give us the means by which we do it ourselves.

GATHEKA: I do not mean to say that people were not gross 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. But when

we study traditions we find that they were also very fine and subtle in perception, more than we are today. Our contact with the earth and earthly things has made us more rigid; they were more placid.

TASAWWUF: There have been some psychological revolutions which also arise from different uses of the senses, and technological and other changes which have helped bring them about. The invention of the printing press and rise of literacy, along with the adaptation of window glass affected the sensitivity of the eyes. And the invention of the keyed instruments covering several octaves affected the sensitivities of the ears. And consciously or unconsciously these and other influences altered the sensory activities.

Very illiterate people are often the most sensitive to the changes of nature. Desert dwellers can perceive from the smallest of signs, and forest dwellers know much about weather. As our attention is turned to other things and to people, there are changes in each of the sense-responses, toward fineness and subtlety or toward gross and coarse factors.

GATHEKA: And if we want proof of this we have only to study ancient languages such as Sanskrit, Zend, Persian, Hebrew, and see the manuscripts of ancient times and the way they explain things. Maybe they are quite strange to our present day mentality and perception, yet their fineness is beyond words. And it seems we are going from bad to worse and are becoming coarser every day. If we only realized how far we are removed from what may be called fine perception!

TASAWWUF: As attention is called to people and events of far away places there is, in comparison, less concern with what is close at hand. Sometimes this is necessary; it may be all part of the tendency toward ultimate recognition of the entire brotherhood of humanity. But along with this is more insensitivity to problems closer to one and there is a rise of uneasiness which is called “getting away from it all.” We see this both in conformists and non-conformists. They may jibe each other but they are not always ready to face the problems of immediacy.

When a teacher performs darshan he can see from every little sign the state and condition of the disciples and non-disciples who come to him. Slight changes in breath, in the eyes and their radiance, even in postures and the way the heads are held often give keys to the complexes which cause others to be unhappy. It is not analysis, it is perfection. And sometimes by making corrections one does not have to go into any details about anything. Besides the only purpose of going into fine details is to correct and bring balance. Often balance alone is corrective.

Now the ancients all held that there were meanings beyond the immediacy. They were more or less consciously aware of what we now call the “unseen,” and perhaps much of this is due to the shift of sense-responses. So the Hebrew Bible was given with four levels of understanding and later Mohammed taught: “Holy Qur’an was revealed in seven dialects and each had an inner and outer interpretation.”

It has taken a long time to get people to accept this. The various theologians, the priestcraft and

leaders often hold to a single view, a single outer view which gets them into conflict with those of other outer views. They refuse to look at the possibilities of integrative outlooks into which they all fit. But the Scriptures were given in those integrative outlooks, from “wholes,” from cosmic perception.

Then there are those who hold the existence of inner meanings and their ideas that there are inner meaning are often themselves fixed—the inner meanings are not fixed but their ideas concerning them are fixed. They become emotional and also proud, and their emotions and pride keep them from the depths of understanding. So there are so called “esotericists” in the East and in the West who separate themselves and while their meanings and perceptions are undoubtedly more correct than those of the ignorant externalists, the difference may be from the philosophical or metaphysical views, but it does not mean a higher moral outlook nor the deep consciousness of spiritual awakening.

GATHEKA: When a person tries to understand subtle things by mathematical calculations alone, he has come into the dense sphere. He does not want to become fine, and he wants to make the spirit, which is the finest thing, gross and intelligible. Therefore it is of the greatest importance for spiritual attainment to develop fine perception.

RYAZAT: It is taught from the beginning that this can come from fineness of breath. So into modern Sufism also have come the practices of Lord Buddha to breathe with the refined breath, to practice it, to take in fine breaths through either nostril or both. And this also puts into practice the words of Jesus Christ: “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” meaning blessed are the refined in breath.

Therefore disciples in Sufism are taught to breathe the refined breaths, and for that usually a teacher is needed, and it is from the fineness of breath that fineness of perception comes, and sensitivity, and deep compassion, and many aspects of subtle awakening.

Also this helps one to respond to various shades of color, and differentiations in tones and activities of the sense buds. All these and more come from the practice of refined breath. And next this also goes into the mental life that one can respond to different gradations of thoughts and ideas and what appear, but are not, to be logical applications.

GATHEKA: I have seen people go into a trance or dive into deep meditation, and yet lack fine perception. And then it is of no value.

TASAWWUF: The entering into another state of consciousness is not transcendence, is not a transformation of the ego. We all sleep and dream and then sometimes our senses are sharpened, they may become keen. But keenness of faculty itself is not a growth in awakening.

Even in ordinary meditation (if there is such a thing), while the ego is dulled, the spirit comes out. This does not mean a revolution. It means that man can at all times persevere and perceive. It is the subduing of ego and senses that makes this possible. The Gita teaches this everywhere but the

Gita also teaches that out of a multitude that practice, few succeed.

GATHEKA: They are not really spiritual. A really spiritual person must have a mentality like liquid, not like a rock. A mentality that is moving, not crude and dense.

TASAWWUF: No doubt in both instances there is some refinement of breath. Those who enter a trance may at times be refined but when they return to objective consciousness there is no change in them. But with many people the very refinement of the breath produces not only change in perception but change in personality. Every meditation does this more or less.

GATHEKA: This question has also a metaphysical side to it. There are two experiences in life. One realm of experience is sensation, the other realm is exaltation; and it is by these two experiences that one tries to experience happiness; but what is experienced by sensation or in the form of sensation is not necessarily happiness; that is pleasure. It might have the appearance of happiness for a moment, but it is only a suggestion of happiness.

TASAWWUF: This is also one of the realms which distinguishes between the metaphysician and mystic. The metaphysical people, the cultists as they are often called, have many claims, many ideas and often are very dogmatic about them. They can verbalize and their words, their ideas, are not necessarily “wrong.” But the mystic operates on a higher plane where there may be something beyond ordinary “right” and “wrong.” And it is this rising above the distinctions and differences which divide men which brings one into exaltation and real happiness.

One of the purposes of the Message has been to bring mankind into the direct experience of exaltation and happiness which may also be called Ananda. There is nothing theoretical about it. It is an increase in life, in capacities of broadness. And on this point there is no meeting between the metaphysician and mystic.

Many people have become interested in phenomena and especially the case of Edgar Cayce has interested them. But with him the depth was depth alone like diving deep into a well. It was not like the ocean at all. It was not all-comprehensive. And therefore few have been able to develop such faculties in themselves and others. Sufis say such states come from Divine Grace, there are no achievements or attainments. The genius himself may have remarkable abilities; all with jinn-faculties have remarkable abilities but this alone does not bring divine nearness.

GATHEKA: Exaltation is something which the mystic experiences. And those who are not mystics experience it also, but they do not know what it is; they cannot distinguish between sensation and exaltation. Sometimes exaltation may be the outcome of sensation; it is possible; but at the same time exaltation which depends upon sensation is not an independent exaltation.

TASAWWUF: This subject is also considered in Cosmic Language and its commentary and elsewhere. It is part of the intrinsic teaching and methods of those Sufi schools which rely on music, dancing, and the experiences of ecstasy (wujud). These come mostly by Grace when a

person is ready. It comes when one is no longer concerned with ego-self. Indeed it is always there and it is only ego-self (nufs) which stands in the way. But a thousand repetitions of Walt Whitman's "the efflux of the soul is happiness," does not touch the hearts of those whose inner beings are like rocks. They have to become motile and mobile and this is not always easy.

The greater uses of Zikr and Fikr and other practices work toward that end. Or it is by awakening that man realizes, "Say Allah and Allah thou shalt become." The soul is effective; the heart-glow is effective and so in the New Age we arise to this consciousness through music and dancing and the transmission of Baraka or spiritual magnetism.

GATHEKA: There are different grades of exaltation. To the Sufi, the soul is a current that joins the physical body to the source. And the art of repose naturally makes it easier for the soul to experience freedom, inspiration, power, because it is then loosened from the grip of the physical body.

TASAWWUF: There was an Indian who came to America and attracted many people by lecturing on what he called "transcendental meditation." He did some meditating too. And when the greatest of living Vedanta teachers came and was asked what he thought about "transcendental meditation" he answered simply; "All meditation is transcendental." This is true. All efforts at meditating of any school, which are practices and not lectures or theories, help to purify and free the mind and ego.

It must be borne in mind that the very nature of life is peace and love and joy. Therefore with the true meditation there will be more manifestation of peace and love and joy. They are there, covered by the ego, and when the ego is removed by meditation or otherwise, they manifest. We do not meditate for this purpose, but they are inherent in and with true meditation.

GATHEKA: As Rumi says in the Masnavi, "man is the captive of his ego. His body and his mind are his prison bars. And the soul is unconsciously craving to experience once again the freedom which originally belonged to it." The Platonic idea about reaching a higher source is the same: that by exaltation, the soul, so to speak, rises above the fast hold of the physical body; it is only for a few moments, but it experiences in those moments freedom which man has never experienced before.

TASAWWUF: Therefore the Sufi methods are to help mankind to experience. All the lectures, all the theories without this exaltation may be useless, may even be barriers to development and awakening. We do not have to have any negative attitude toward body or mind. Any attitude tends to strengthen the ego and keep us in captivity. It is the concentration on God and devotion and sincerity which bring the freedom.

GATHEKA: A moment of exaltation is a different experience at every level. The supreme exaltation is hinted at in the Bible: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

TASAWWUF: Ignorant people picture perfection as a state without flaw but there is a question whether such a flawless state is really flawless. Conceptions are not very beneficial. And many, holding on to traditions and words and thoughts establish obstacles for themselves and others.

“Perfection” really means having had the experience. Or as Al-Ghazzali states, “Sufism consists of experiences and not premises.” But this is very difficult to establish. The mind is always in the way.

GATHEKA: Many religious people will say that it is impossible for man to be perfect; but it is said in the Bible just the same.

TASAWWUF: There is a question and it is now affecting mankind, that the religious people justify themselves by quoting certain passages from the Scriptures. They quote to justify themselves and what they do not accept they tend to skip or omit. And in the end they are manifesting hypocrisy although verbally and egocentrically they adhere to “surrender,” but it is not surrender.

It is only surrender when we accept that which we may not have approved. We have to adjust to the holy writings and not use holy writings to justify ourselves. All the pious people tend to do that and that is why religion is losing its hold and it is not fully sincere.

GATHEKA: At all times the knowers and seers have understood that there is a stage at which, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life, and is given that power and peace and freedom, that light and life, which belong to the source of all beings. In other words, in that moment of supreme exaltation one is not only united with the source of all beings, but dissolved in it; for the source is one's self.

TASAWWUF: We find this in the western world generally in poets and not in the philosophers and clergy. These people could never understand that the game of chess, for example, illustrates the journey of the soul through the different planes to perfection, illustrated by the pawn becoming a Queen. This is one example. There are many examples in folk-lore and these are referred to in western occult traditions outside the religions.

In the East it is different because there are lines of spiritual teachers and the teachers are often those who have experienced the exaltation, the wonder, the wisdom and the supremacy. And the Sufi Movement came to unite East and West, perhaps to bring the western occultism together with the eastern mysticism.

GATHEKA: The source is greater than we can put into words. We can try to conceive it by comparing it with a seed, which is the source of the flowers, the leaves, the stem, the branches, and the fragrance, while if we take the seed alone we do not see all those in the seed; yet they were there all the time.

TASAWWUF: There is a certain advantage and a certain limitation in symbology. Symbology

makes us realize that the literal meaning of Scriptures is not enough. Besides this does not lead to realization. We read and remain ignorant; wisdom does not come through reading or even through devotion. Wisdom comes from awakening.

But many take the symbol to be the finality. It is the key, or as expressed, the seed which contains so much. But the seed is useless unless it sprouts and the key serves no function if it does not open doors and locks.

GATHEKA: On the other hand we cannot really compare even the seed with the source, for the seed depends upon the sun and water and earth for its growth, whereas the ultimate source does not depend on anything.

TASAWWUF: The commentary is written and it consumes words and thoughts and time. And in this the real essence may be covered. It is there, no doubt, but so long as the ego-mind is in operation, some attention is taken from the source.

All things and thoughts depend on something else, but the Source depends upon nothing. Therefore meditation is practiced and in most systems of meditation, efforts are made to get away from reliance upon “others” and to find that which is not dependent upon anything. We in the end find the Self which is none other than Atman which is none other than Brahman, so to speak.

GATHEKA: It is all that is strong and powerful; it is beyond words and beyond our limited conception even to think of the source, excepting that when we get greater inspiration, peace, joy, and magnetism, we appreciate things much better.

TASAWWUF: The term “maya” means measurable, not “illusion.” People are misled by the conception of “illusion” and they set up opposite conceptions to this “illusion” which themselves are illusory. The real distinction is between the measurable and immeasurable. Buddha pointed this out in Udana, but Udana is not studied much. And in one sense it cannot be studied, for it points to what is beyond study and measurement. And that is what is called tathata and buthatata and otherwise.

The Sufi differs from the deep Buddhist only in finding in that “immeasurable” all the virtues, all the peace and magnetism and bliss. All these he finds in Allah Who is really beyond both measurability and conception but is not beyond experience, realization and thankfulness.

GATHEKA: In this way we may understand a little how great the source must be. The greater we are, the closer we reach to that source. As the great Indian poet Khusrau says, “When I become Thou and Thou becomest me, neither canst Thou say that I am different, nor canst Thou say that Thou are different.”

TASAWWUF: This is both the deep proclamation and deep realization of the Sufi. It is found in the depths of all faiths. Believers of different religions say that their Teacher gave this out, but really all

the Prophets and Messengers of all faiths gave this out, for this constitutes a verbalization of ultimate realization which is the same for all. If Sufis differ, it is in that they recognize and realize this in others as well as in themselves.

GATHEKA: The different grades of exaltation are as the different notes in music. As we distinguish lower and higher notes, so it is with the different grades of the experience of exaltation. Even reading a beautiful poem can produce exaltation; good music gives exaltation; and a feeling of great joy does so too. It all breaks up congestion; there are fine cells of the nerves which become free, and the body experiences relaxation.

TASAWWUF: Therefore more and more attention is to be paid to relaxation and exaltation. There are many forms of meditation and they generally produce the self-surrender or fana. Where Sufis differ from some other schools is that self-surrender is not for the sake of self-surrender as such, but for the expression of God through man which is called baqa. Baqa is the existence, the reality, and then the Grace, Glory, Wisdom, Joy and Peace of Allah manifest in man. Whenever one or more of these manifest in man, man becomes the channel for the Divine Essence (Zat) and this is the fulfillment not only of the body being the temple of the Holy Spirit, but of the mind also.

Spiritual purification, Mental purification, means that the whole of personality is surrendered to God, so that through man God works out His intended purpose in His creation. It is not the becoming to nothingness, it is that the realization of the illusion of ego brings about the full expression of divinity in man. Exaltation is the expression of the divinity in us and through us.

GATHEKA: There is a difference between sensation and exaltation, but when we come to words, there is always confusion. One can say that exaltation is the fusion of all sensation; but if one says that through sensation exaltation is experienced, it is true also.

TASAWWUF: For in whatever direction man goes there is God. It is not making any difference whatsoever. The Bible teaches that God is in the midst of the valley of Death, that He is everywhere, and that exaltation is as possible in the midst of Hell as in the Heavens. But the dualistic mind does not accept that. Therefore, in Sufism, realization is important, and all ideas are ultimately found to be of no importance whatever.

The perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty means the perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, and not some thoughts about it.

GATHEKA: As much as we need sensation in life to make our experience of life concrete, so much or even more do we need exaltation in order to live life fully.

TASAWWUF: Now how do we get exaltation in life? We do not get it by thinking about exaltation, nor by meditating nor concentrating. These are efforts of the lower self. The exaltation comes from the higher self, so to speak, beyond the mind-mesh. There are schools which teach against exaltation and bliss. This proves that they are not complete. All the Divine Representatives taught

that this bliss, this exaltation was true, is true, and it is the sign of eternity.

In Sufism there has been great emphasis on Zikr, on repeating the Name of God. It is done in certain ways by Sufis and in certain other ways by others. There are many schools of Yoga which have mantrams and words of power, also words toward bliss. Their repetitions bring about this exaltation. In prema Yoga there is such emphasis on exaltation that bliss alone is wanted, and in other schools it is shunned. Both are in a certain way right; generally exaltation is either the means or the sign of spiritual awakening. No one can know the true spiritual sobriety until he has also experienced the exaltation, the bliss. Otherwise he remains sober and under the control of ego.

To have the bliss one has to let go. It can come by music and dancing, it can come by other means. But it must come, it must be part of human experience or it has no meaning at all. When we free the body of wastes the body enjoys a sort of exaltation, and when we free the mind of wastes we have even a greater exaltation. To have a meaning, they must be realized.

But sometimes the presence of a Teacher alone may produce this bliss. The true Teacher is one who has realized the Kingdom of Heaven. His breath, his magnetism, his presence help. But his verbal teachings do not help so much. And we speak about the speechless but then it is not the speechless. We have to feel that. We can feel that, and when we are able to let go of the ego or control the ego, it is knowledge which becomes our own.

GATHEKA: The lower creation such as birds and beasts also have glimpses of exaltation. They do not only rejoice in grazing and in finding seeds, in making nests or in playing in the air, in singing and in running about in the forests. There are moments when even the birds and beasts feel exaltation.

TASAWWUF: And this is reflected both in their movements and in the sounds they emit. There are dances of birds and beasts and even of insects. There are sounds which come from them which are vestiges of universal sound. They can only make these sounds when they are in ecstasy and they can communicate ecstasy by these sounds. And so it is that poets and seers have been able to feel this and express it in poetry, music and dance. It cannot always be explained, but it should and can be felt and communicated.

GATHEKA: And if we go into this subject more deeply we shall understand what we read in a most wonderful verse of Islamic tradition: "There are moments when even rocks become exalted and trees fall into ecstasy." If that can be true, then man, who is created to complete the experience that any living being can have, must experience exaltation as much as he experiences sensation.

TASAWWUF: This is true. In the end we cannot accept negation; we must accept affirmation. Those who deny the experience of exaltation only prove they have not had it themselves. It is to experience it and rise above it that mastery is attained and demonstrated. But for the sake of helping others it is important to demonstrate it. And besides, the one who has attained the complete sobriety is more capable than anybody else in causing others to know the ecstasies. And

this is particularly true of Darshan or Tawajjeh when, by the light of his own soul, the Teacher awakens the hearts of others.

GATHEKA: What I mean by sensation is the impression one has of line and color; the preference one has for softness in structure; the appreciation one has of fragrance and perfume; the joy one experiences in hearing poetry, singing and music. All these experiences are manifest in the realm of sensation.

TASAWWUF: Even Prophet Mohammed who is said to have leaned very heavily toward sobriety admitted this. It is not often repeated. People repeat mostly selections from Scriptures which support their own lives and philosophies. What does not support them they ignore and so many teachings have been held back from mankind. But the deeper teachings are not in the literature, they are in the lives of men. And so the personality, which contains all the virtues is more capable of arousing any one particular virtue in another. For the Kingdom of God, which is to say the Kingdom of Perfection, is within man, within all of us.

GATHEKA: The world of sensation is one world, the world of exaltation is another; and these two worlds are made for man to experience in order to live on earth fully.

TASAWWUF: If we have too much exaltation we shall be caught in the web of exaltation; but if we do not have exaltation, if we live only in the senses, we are caught in confusion, in pain, in sorrow and in all limitations. If we read about the early Buddhists, their literature is full of references to bliss and exaltation. So they are not studied, they are not read. But they are certainly true, even in the limited sense that they are true because they record the experiences of mankind.

GATHEKA: And yet, with this possibility and this opportunity in life, man continues to live a life of sensation, forgetting that there is another life as well, a life that can be experienced on earth, and something that completes life's experience.

TASAWWUF: Although the Scriptures generally, and the Bhagavad Gita in particular, inveigh against the life of the senses, the real criticism comes in that pure life experience with a continuum of joy does not result therefrom. Jesus Christ said that he who drank of the real waters of life would not thirst again. The people of pleasure are always in thirst and this thirst may even be the basis of the desire-nature. The weakness of the desire-nature is that it does not satisfy itself and the glory of the spiritual life comes in that it satisfies itself.

Besides this, the desire-nature and its life of limitations precludes the unlimited, but the unlimited excludes nothing. To live the life of a Sufi means neither the self-denial of the ascetic nor the indulgence of the pleasure-seeker.

GATHEKA: There is a physical aspect of exaltation which comes as a reaction or result of having seen the immensity of space, having looked at the wide horizon, or having seen the clear sky, the moonlit night and nature at dawn.

TALIM: It is good to have disciples, especially in the early grades, have these outside experiences. *Gayan* says we should cultivate the wide horizon. The first place for this may be geographical and then astronomical. It is even “good for the soul,” so to speak, to break through any spatial limitation. Besides this there is always a sense of freeing and of freedom. It is like coming out of the cave. And especially the full experience of the full moon and of dawn awaken us to our own smallness.

GATHEKA: Looking at the rising sun, watching the setting sun, looking at the horizon from the sea, being in the midst of nature, looking at the world from the top of a mountain, all these experiences, even such an experience as watching the little smiles of an innocent infant, these experiences lift one up and give one a feeling which one cannot call sensation, it is exaltation.

TASAWWUF: All such experiences break through the limitations which man has put around himself. Every such breaking and freeing increases capacity for Akasha, the ether, and all these etheric experiences, so to speak, enlarge the scope of functioning. Each enlargement of scope of function brings exaltation and takes man beyond the limitations into which he has bound himself.

It is one thing to pray; it is another to have the experiences and realizations of every element of one's prayers.

GATHEKA: A higher aspect of exaltation is a moral exaltation—when we are sorry for having said or done something unpleasant; when we have asked forgiveness, and humbled ourselves before someone towards whom we were inconsiderate.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi disciplines the need for an ever increasing application of human consideration is placed before all else. There is no question that a limitation was placed before the spreading of the Message, before the Message was made to include other than human consideration and praise of God. In the teachings these were placed first; in application they were way down on the lists, even on the lists of “musts” and man consciously or unconsciously has placed his own will before the Divine Will. Once this was done, it became impossible to spread the Message; humankind did not respect. Placing praise of God (Allah) and then showing human consideration, when these are emphasized the most, the humankind, the beloved ones of God will surely respond.

GATHEKA: Or when we feel a deep gratitude to someone who had done something for us, when we have felt love, sympathy, devotion, which seems endless and which seems so great that our heart cannot accommodate it; when we have felt so much pity for someone that we have forgotten ourselves; when we have found a profound happiness in rendering a humble service to someone in need.

TASAWWUF: The traditional Sufism placed repentance, that is to say tauba or turning from egoicity to God, first. Indeed all religions teach that in theory. In practice, some theology, some ritual, some forms, have been placed first, consciously or unconsciously, and then the desired end

is not gained. There is a theory and no realization because the ego remains. Even the denial of this is no good; denial is not repression. The ego loves to be considered whether in a positive or negative sense. So long as it occupies the stage there is a self-gratification.

When one finds that one must consider others. Others are really aspects of oneself. The words are there. The Hebrew faith taught that one should love the neighbor as the self. It is there in words. But to be there in words and not in the daily life only ends in hypocrisy, very often unconscious, but certainly very real.

There are teaching methods in Sufism for the softening of heart, for the increased capacity for compassion and for its application. It no longer remains a theory; it becomes very real. Then with every removal of pain and suffering from others, in that also one experiences an exaltation.

GATHEKA: When we have said a prayer which has come from the bottom of our hearts; when we have realized our own limitation and smallness in comparison with the greatness of God; all these experiences lift man up.

TASAWWUF: In the Western world it is often that the poets have expressed far finer vision and morality than either the philosophers or religious people. We see the stress on cults, very often narrow ones, which limit their membership to certain beliefs or disciples or rituals. And if we want to find universality it is mostly in poetry where vision, even broad vision and deep vision, are given.

There will no doubt be a revival of the study of such poetry, both of the East and West and a proper evaluation of it in the lives of men and of society. Besides it can bring comfort that people who are not considered ecclesiasts may have had the awareness of God both in name and form and beyond name and form. Certainly such poets experienced exaltation which is a form of spiritual realization.

GATHEKA: The moment we have these experiences, we are not living on earth, but in another world. The joy of such experiences is very great, and yet they can be gained without paying anything, whereas sensations cost something.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism it is taught that such experiences (singular - hal, plural - ahwal) come through the Divine Grace (inayat). But we can also help toward this in the exaltation of repeating the Divine Name especially in some language used by some great seer or Divine Messenger. The words that Mohammed used echoed and re-echoed throughout the universe on all planes. The devotee chanting such words also benefits from such echoes and re-echoes partly in accordance with the original inspiration and realization and partly according to the attunement for which he has capacity.

Many people chant mantras and otherwise and often they do not have the spiritual realization. Thus in the Prajna-Paramita-Hridaya Sutra, the great Dharani is offered. But the stress is not on the Dharani, it is on the whole Sutra plus the addendum to the sutra added by devotees. There is

no particular emphasis on the Dharani. So millions constantly repeat it but few have the realization.

Prof. Daisetz Suzuki made a vast study of the Gatha portions of Scriptures and emphasized their importance. But intellectuals, looking for deep philosophy, pay more attention either to the rest of the text or to the explanations and so the essence of the great Sutras is lost, lost in the sense that it does not reproduce the experience of the original sages. Thus the literature does not transmit the Dharma.

Really for this an awakened teacher is needed. There are now plenty of readers and reciters, but still few realized souls. For the realization, attunement to a realized man may be necessary. It is not absolutely incumbent, for the Divine Grace is for all, but still it does not usually happen. The people of the Light are the ones who are best fitted to awaken the light in others, for it is already there and just needs the awakening.

We now chant and dance. In this the words of exaltation, the playing of the music on instruments and with the human voice, all add to the basic magnetism which the awakened teacher alone arouses.

GATHEKA: We have to go to the theatre, to go to all kinds of entertainments; all these cost something, they cost more than they are worth; but exaltation which is beyond price comes of itself, as soon as we have shown an inclination towards it. It is only a matter of changing our attitude.

TASAWWUF: The rise of Rock-and-Roll came with the great changes in attitude. For a long time music emphasized individuality. Instruments such as the saxophone and coronet were used to stress such individuality. They provoked a kind of intoxication; it was really auto-intoxication. It was not uplifting, it did not stay. Now there is another kind of music and it is based on harmonics and harmonies. The music is so based and it brings out words which also stress harmonics and harmonies. These encourage movements, movements toward the same ends. And thus capacities are made for exaltations which did not exist earlier in the twentieth century.

GATHEKA: Once I visited a great sage in Bengal. I said to him, "What a blessed life is yours, which gives pleasure and happiness to so many souls." But he answered, "How privileged I am myself that a thousand times more pleasure and happiness comes to me."

TASAWWUF: The life and work of Rabindranath Tagore are too well known to require further comment here.

GATHEKA: Exaltation is a purifying process. A moment's exaltation can purify the evil of many years, because it is like bathing in the Ganges, as Hindus say. It is symbolical. Exaltation is the Ganges, and if we bathe in it we are purified from all sin.

TASAWWUF: This can be recognized. The Zikr, the chanting, the dancing with the Divine Name or Names, bring this exaltation. They bring a change, they subvert the ego; they brighten and broaden

the horizon. Then one does not want to go back to small things. And this is the transformation.

Buddhists write about the Sambhogakaya, the body of bliss. This is one thing. The experience of it, the awakening is another. We may hear, "Say Allah and Allah thou wilt become." As philosophy it seems to be limited, but as the expansion of human consciousness and endeavour it is different. Therefore Sufism has come to stress this exaltation and not just study or ritual. These have their values but they are very limited in the light of the expanding awakening consciousness.

GATHEKA: It does not take much to make us exalted; a kind attitude, a sympathetic trend of mind, and it is already there. If we were to notice it, we would find that [when] our eyes shed tears in sympathy with another, we were already exalted, our soul has bathed in the spiritual Ganges. It comes by forgetting self and by destroying selfishness.

TASAWWUF: It is very easy to say man should be, or become unselfish. But how is this attained? There is a certain amount of selflessness in prayer and the purer the prayer the greater the selflessness. But when prayer becomes formal routine, it loses its purity. One can learn to commune with God and in the end, as the *Gayan* says, these two things can not exist together, self and God. Sooner or later the devotee loses himself in his devotion. He becomes the lover of God and when he becomes the lover of God he is on the way toward pure selflessness.

But there is another way, one more sorely needed, and that is the attunement with mankind, to learn to sympathize with those in need, to feel their pangs and pains. This is the way Buddha took and it was in pursuit of this way toward perfection that he received enlightenment.

GATHEKA: But remember, we can never claim to be unselfish; however unselfish we may be, we are selfish just the same.

TASAWWUF: This is a theme of the Diamond Sutra, which is among the most noble and glorious pieces of literature. He harps on this theme and develops it to the fullest extent. Indeed it seems to contradict even the words of Buddha, but only in the sense that to understand them completely one must also be immersed in anatta, anicca and dukha as cosmic realities, not as thoughts or ideas of limitation.

There are many complications in Buddhist teachings owing to the verbal denial of the ego along with its psychological assumption.

GATHEKA: But we can be wisely selfish, and if we are to be selfish, it is just as well to be wisely selfish.

TASAWWUF: As long as there is name and form there is a modicum of nufs. It is not to annihilate nufs that one strives, but to assimilate it in the Real, become aware of the fullness of existence, so that the part shall pass away, the whole remain. This is even the teaching of the Christian Paul who was a mystic not always recognized or cognized. For the partial, the imperfect goes; the full, the

perfect remains. And this is part of the esotericism and mysticism of all faiths.

GATHEKA: It is the same thing as what we call unselfishness, and it is profitable to be that instead of being foolishly selfish, because the former gains and the latter loses.

TASAWWUF: What is gained? What is lost? It is the partial, the incomplete, that is lost. Yet it is not lost. We do not lose our identity in becoming absolutely full. Even Christ is still Christ, Mohammed Mohammed and Buddha Buddha, though they partake of the same universal consciousness. Only God (Allah) is complete, absolutely complete in all senses. And this can be known only by our realization of it. Therefore exaltation is encouraged.

GATHEKA: The third aspect of exaltation comes by touching the reason of reasons and by realizing the essence of wisdom; by feeling the depth, the profound depth of one's heart, by widening one's outlook on life; by broadening one's conception, by deepening one's sympathies, and by soaring upwards to those spheres where spiritual exaltation manifests.

TASAWWUF: There is reason and there is depth of reason. There is a term *akl* which is translated "reason." Yet in the Gathas the weakness of both reason and logic is explained. Even the great logician, Wittgenstein, one of the greatest in his field has said, "The trouble with reason is that reason thinks it is sublime." But this does not mean we should become irrational. It may mean that so long as egocentricity remains, Logic and Reason both remain irrational; and when the ego is removed, then the true Reason stands forth.

Or as in Sufi teachings, the heart is the depth of the mind. We do not get rid of mind, we do not transmute mind, we flood it with Divine Light. Purification as such may be called "fana" but in the Buddhist teachings this is also done and is often regarded as finality. It is not finality. When the ego, the self withdraws, the Divine Light increases in capacity, outlook, function and creativity.

When the heart is so freed, then the exaltation increases and also descends to the surface, so to speak. That is where and how great creations in arts proceed and beauty comes into manifestation. It is all part of the same process.

GATHEKA: Today a man of common sense or a person who is called a practical person is in the habit of laughing at the idea that someone has visions or experiences of ecstasy, that someone goes into what is called a trance.

TASAWWUF: What happens may be pronounced "trance" but it is real trans, as in transcendent. People will learn to distinguish the trance from the transcendent. One flourishes in darkness, the other in light. One is really a suppression, a diminution, a contraction of consciousness, not a real expansion even though superficially one seems to be aware of much more.

In the Buddhist cosmogony which is essential to all the Mahayana schools this is called **Nirmanakaya**, which means "no mind-body" but really no ego-mind. The Nirmanakaya is subject

to anicca or impermanence, but it is a glorious, a transcendent impersonal, impermanence. It brings about cosmic function through the person. It does not destroy, it fulfills. Light fulfills; life fulfills; exaltation fulfills.

GATHEKA: But there is nothing to be surprised at, nothing to laugh at. All the things are laughable, however, when done by the undeserving; and it is mostly such who make these claims and look for approbation from others for their experiences. Those who really experience these things do not need to tell people that they had this or that experience. Their own joy is their reward. No one else should recognize it; the less others know about it the better.

TASAWWUF: But now there has come a time when innately, intuitively more and more feel that this is so. They no longer evaluate the transient, they want the transcendent. They look for guidance, for methodologies, even for a scientific esotericism that will bring them to the Path, keep them on the path. And it is only those whose Light and Joy shine out that will really help. Anything else is limited and will not help the seekers toward their goals. In the New Age this is intuitively understood.

GATHEKA: Why must we show ourselves to be different from others? It is only vanity.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed, the Lord of Sufis, never claimed to have humility. But he did show the world Sajda, the bowing forward with the head to the earth, in prayer. He kept on repeating, Qur'an repeats, Hadith repeats that he was only a man like the rest of us. This was the greatest humility, this is the only way the highest humility can express itself.

And one's own light, one's own joy can show that man is something different as the first lines of *Gayan* suggest.

GATHEKA: And the more vanity the less progress we make along the spiritual path. It is the worst thing on the spiritual path to try and show oneself to be different from others; those who are really evolved are glad to act as everyone else acts.

TASAWWUF: There are many spiritual souls on earth, mostly ignored by the publishers and newsmen. They often are so buried in their humility and humanity that they hide even their light and wisdom. But they manifest the wisdom in another way. This is explained in *The Inner Life* and the commentaries thereon.

GATHEKA: To novelists it seems beautiful to describe masters as living in the caves of the Himalayas or moving about in the forest somewhere where one cannot go and find them, always keeping aloof and apart so that no one can reach them. But every soul has a divine spark, and therefore if there is any higher stage of human evolution it is for human beings, not for those outside the human world. If they are outside the human world, there is no relation between us and them.

TASAWWUF: There was a time when many believed that the greatest adepts lived in the Himalayas. And even after the passing of Hazrat Inayat Khan there was the famous book and cinema, Lost Horizons. This placed the kingdom of heaven outside of man, and it caused confusion because the theme was that Masters lived in the Himalayas and this made the Tibetans superior people with superior wisdom. Yet life has shown very little manifestation of such wisdom because of its geography.

Then there came such masters as Ramana Maharshi and again the disciples exalted the geography. Only now it was not the Himalayas but southern India. And some said you had to go there. But the Divine Light is even freer from geography than the sun is.

GATHEKA: The great spiritual souls have lived in the world, in the midst of the world, and proved to be the greatest masters.

TASAWWUF: One may take the Bodhisattvic oath which is to save all of humanity. And the way is that one must live among the human beings, not apart from them or over them. And if we study the lives of Buddha and Christ and Mohammed we can see it.

But then there came another teaching that to be superior you had to come from another planet. There may be no evidence for it. In the Hebrew Bible God created Adam in His Own Image. Adam means mankind and the feminine is Adamah which means ground, or Prakrit. It is universal, it has no geography. The rocks and soils of the earth do not differ so much on account of places. They were all subject to comparable forces. The light is in all forms and all beings and there is no evidence of human beings on outer planets, much less superior beings. There may be beings, but that is of no concern to us. We are told over and over that the greatest study of man is mankind, not extra-terrestrial beings. And Man has all the wisdom innately. According to the teachings, Adam was the first prophet.

GATHEKA: Imagine the life of Abraham, of Moses, the life of Jesus Christ, and again the life of Mohammed in war and battles, and yet as exclusive and remote, as spiritual as anyone could be.

TASAWWUF: The social side of the lives of Prophets has become a subject of interest in modern times, especially with movements which tend to stress, even overstress this aspect of existence. No doubt there are seers and sages who have been hermits and they also do play their parts in the founding and continuation of religion, but the greatest have been those who have lived among humanity and often selected their followers from the most humble.

Although there are plenty of valid historical records, a full and proper biography of Mohammed is not yet in existence, for the tendencies are either toward over-adulation or over-criticism. And authors tend to glide over anything they do not admire though it be on record.

GATHEKA: And Krishna, picture him in Kurukshetra fighting in battle, giving a world-Scripture. If they had all lived in mountain caves we would not have been benefited by them.

TASAWWUF: Indeed we have social Scriptures along with metaphysics, mysticism and high moral codes. They may all come together. Only the priestcraft has emphasized, even over-emphasized certain aspects. The full records are there but the pious wish to emphasize certain points, especially those which justify their own habits.

If we look deeply we find that all the Messengers of God gave us not only codes but ways of existence. Thus the Sufis are said to have been meticulous in studying little points in the life of Mohammed and also his mannerisms, his great humanity and compassion which he stressed more than orthodoxy. And the same is true with all the Messengers.

There is an honest objectivity in studying in this fashion, to learn all the different facets in the lives of prophets and messengers and not just particular points, such as ability to perform miracles, etc. Their own lives were the miracles.

GATHEKA: What is the use of those holy ones who never see, never experience from morning till evening the tests and trials of the dense world, where at every move there are a thousand temptations and difficulties, a thousand problems? What can they do, those who are outside the world, for us who are exposed to a thousand difficulties at every moment of our life? And these difficulties are increasing.

TASAWWUF: This was surely prophetic. The life has grown more complex and there is a counter-movement full of escapisms. The worst are those who place adepts on other planes or other planets or far out in putative space. This shows merely wild imagination. For the Kingdom of God and perfect is within man, both within the individual and collectively.

In Buddhist literature we read about the Pratyeka Buddha, the solitary enlightened man and this is not considered as being too noble. And there is no question of a rift among the Buddhists between those who have the individual and social point of view. Perhaps those with the social or humanitarian point of view are right in stressing you can not have both the anatta-doctrine that there is no ego-individual, and yet each can have his own salvation apart from the totality. Still events can not be qualified by doctrines and we must accept the fact rather than any theory or code. There have been too many limitations in all religions which bind rather than free.

GATHEKA: With the evolution of the world, life is becoming heavier, more difficult. No, the mastery, the holiness, the evolution must be shown here on earth. It is very easy to be evolved in the seventh heaven. But exaltation experienced and imparted to others here on earth is exaltation which is more worthwhile.

TASAWWUF: So there have been counter-movements and the appearance of many who proclaim themselves as world-deliverers, messiahs, even Avatars. Only they do not deliver. They do not act as the Sun does pouring light and radiance upon all. The Sun gives and does not demand and the false prophet demands whether he gives or not. Perhaps in the end it will be as Buddha declared, "work out your salvation with diligence."

GATHEKA: As to the grossness and subtlety of human nature, the heroes, kings, masters, prophets, those who have won the heart of humanity, have been fine in perception and in character. They have not been gross. Their fineness was simple; there was always a simple side to it, but at the same time it was subtle, which made it beautiful.

TASAWWUF: We cannot, of course, place barriers around the life, the career, the behavior of an adept. This also has been explained in *The Inner Life* and its commentaries. And the real awakened soul will pour out. The prayer may say, when man appeals to God, "Pour on us Thy light and Thy life, give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls." But this is exactly what the awakened souls do, do for others without making any demands, and sometimes no requirements at all. It is such behavior that constitutes the Buzurg or Mahatma.

GATHEKA: A person who can say without saying and one who can do without doing is a subtle person and that subtlety is worth appreciating. The one who sees and does not see, knows and does not know; the one who experiences and does not experience at the same time, the one who is living and yet dead, that is the soul who experiences life fully.

TASAWWUF: The commentator was placed on the Bodhisattvic Oath by Hazrat Inayat Khan himself. The Pir-O-Murshid used to lecture on the identity of the Spirit of Guidance with Bodhisattva. It was necessary to have some English word and he used this term. For there is this spirit of guidance; it is this universal spirit which takes us above and beyond egoicity and makes possible the exemplification of the anatta. For otherwise, though one will verbalize ego or ego-doctrine or deny ego and ego-doctrine, it will be just empty words until there is some realization and manifestation.

It can not be said that Bodhisattva is either egocentric or egoless. When Buddha was questioned closely on this point he remained silent. It is something like trying to explain the shape of a body of water or even of the sea which is in constant flux. And yet when the heart expands in conscious endeavour the life is greater and clearer; otherwise it is limited and not so clear.

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.

[Chapter 5](#) Mastery

GATHEKA: The purpose of life is to attain to mastery; this is the motive of the spirit, and it is through this motive at the back of it that the whole universe is created. The different stages from mineral to vegetable and from vegetable to the animal kingdom, and from animal to man, are the awakening of the spirit towards mastery.

TASAWWUF: This cosmic evolution is latent in the teachings of the wise. Rumi's approach is well known, but the master-mind Ibn Khaldun has given us much more in Muqadimmah. It is not necessary to study the intellectual part of it. It is not always different from the wisdom of other religions although the tendency has been to over-evaluate the contributions of one's own religions and to minimize that of others. This is unfair besides being false. All sages see the same cosmic picture, obtain the same outlook, and this outlook transcends alike the materialistic conceptions and the orthodoxies which place limitations in all directions.

GATHEKA: By using the mineral and the vegetable kingdoms and controlling the animal kingdom for his service, man shows in the first place that in him is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

TASAWWUF: Moses has told us that God created mankind in His image. It has not been properly qualified or even respected. And therefore humanism has often become anti-religious because the pious have become ego-centric and not humanistic. This is a false view. The whole of humanity constitutes a brotherhood.

If there is any question between the humanistic point of view and the orthodox, the humanist at least gives the broad view, he does not shut out the compassion or humanitarianism and this is needed above all else. It is the expansion of heart which constitutes spirituality, not the exactitude of views.

GATHEKA: His power of knowing, of understanding, of utilizing to the best advantage, is the sign of mastery. But at the same time there is one enemy man has, and that enemy is limitation; and the spirit of limitation is always a hindrance to realizing the spirit of mastery and practicing it. Those who at sometime or other in their lives have realized this principle object for which man is born, have then tried to develop that spirit of mastery in order to defend themselves.

TASAWWUF: The pious, the orthodox, have often identified perfection with flawlessness. But that is not what perfection means; it means having gone through something, and it also means rising above limitation, getting the broad view, becoming all-inclusive or even more inclusive.

There are some who show a tendency of kindness toward the lower creation but not to their fellow-men. This is not kindness, this is sentimentality. It is not wrong but it can be uselessly right. We begin by feeling the pains, the sorrows, the shortcomings of others, including ourselves. We try to surmount them. We do not surmount them by looking without, finding some small fault in those

around us and then making a big crusade about it. This is often done and even when accomplished little is gained by the individual or generality.

As says, Master is he who is master of himself. And Mohammed said toward the end of his career, "I have won the lesser Jihad, and now is the time to crusade the greater Jihad." It is only after great travail that some Muslims begin to realize this and that they have failed to conquer their enemies without because they have not tried to control the enemies within.

GATHEKA: The process of going from limitation to perfection is called mysticism. Mysticism means developing from limitation to perfection. All pain and failure belong to limitation; all pleasure and success belong to perfection.

TASAWWUF: This is not an easy teaching for many who consider themselves better than others, especially among the orthodox of all faiths who keep apart one group from another. Their very approach is limiting. Self-surrender does not come with the words; it comes when one readily agrees with others, or at least tries to assimilate their points of view. The Sufi is one who sees life from the point of view of another and can justify it without adopting it. A left-hand person will remain left-handed and can justify the right-handedness of the majority.

GATHEKA: In one's own surroundings, one will find that those who are unhappy and dissatisfied with life and who make others unhappy, are those who are more limited; those who can help themselves and help others, who are happy and bring pleasure into the lives of others are nearer to perfection.

TASAWWUF: When Buddha sought the causes of sorrow he found them otherwise than modern social philosophers. He said the trouble was with ego, and the social philosophers blame it on what they call "environment" which is a very difficult word to define. Yet it has some meaning in it. When it means narrow limitations into which people are constrained they are right. But these constraints are not necessarily physical nor social nor mental; they may be any of these and more. Constraints of any kind keep one in bondage and produce misery and dissatisfaction.

When people are so dissatisfied they bring misery to others. One can be most loving and sympathetic, and yet most responsive and clear-sighted so that he is concerned with action rather than with reaction. Reactions do not lead to anything positive; that is why there is the teaching about controlling samskaras. It is the widening of heart, the broadening of mind, even the ability to move in physical space which bring freedom and joy.

GATHEKA: What is meant by limitation and what by perfection? These are only conditions of the consciousness. When one is conscious of limitation, one is limited; when one is conscious of perfection one is perfect.

TASAWWUF: Mostly the outlook is to look for or demand perfection in others, and not to see one's own limitations. One who sees the perfections in others is rising above and beyond his limitations.

In “The Diamond Sutra” of Mahayana Buddhism the Perfections are explained; they may be explained literally but at the same time here we have a Scripture which stresses perfections rather than sins or limitations. It opens up grandeur and this opening up, these grandeur are themselves the ways to rise above shortcomings.

Whenever we see short-comings in others we ourselves are bound in limitations. When we reach the exaltations we do not notice them. Rabia, the great Saint of Basra, said that when she was immersed in Allah nothing was imperfect, even pleasure and pain, all delusive and dualist emotions passed away. And when we enter the hal, the ecstasy, the exaltation, it has the merit that then we do not notice the short-comings of anybody, we are moving in and with the light and joy and this is of universal benefit.

GATHEKA: Because he who is limited in the limited consciousness is the same as he who is perfect in the perfect consciousness.

TASAWWUF: Jesus Christ has told us he was the high and low, the first and last, the limitation and perfection. It was the same Mohammed who has given us Qur’an and Hadith, who fought on the battlefield and conversed with friends; who acted as a psychiatrist and cook, as merchant and woodsman, the same person. And the perfection did not come by omitting limitations, no name-and-form can be perfect in all things at the same time, or rather flawless. The perfect is that which integrates the flawless and the failures.

GATHEKA: To give an example: There was a son of a rich man who had plenty of money put in his name in the bank. But he did not know this; and when he wished to spend some money he found very little in his pocket. This made him limited. In reality his father had put a large sum in the bank, but he was not conscious of it. It is exactly the same with every soul.

TASAWWUF: It takes much more than scriptural entries to make us realize that the kingdom of heaven is within, with all merits and possessions and qualities. In the esoteric interpretations of the story of Jonah, he found all the wealth and more in the heart of the whale, so to speak. Everything is within us. Even what seems to be failing without, in space, in time, in conditions, in other people, is really within us. Whatever we are conscious of is within us, without the power of the soul. Therefore man, created in God’s image, has all power of perfectibility, of perfections.

GATHEKA: Every soul is conscious of what it possesses and is unconscious of what is put in its name. What is within one’s reach, one feels to be one’s own, but what does not seem to be within one’s reach one considers to be outside. This is natural. But wisdom opens a door to look out and see if that which seems outside is not meant to be known too.

TASAWWUF: Even the great British Philosopher, Bertrand Russell, said we cannot prove that what is without us physically and spatially may not be within our consciousness; that perhaps nothing may be outside actually. This, he said, we cannot prove, although we may act as if things were outside, and this has been called “realism.” It does not matter so long as it does not become

dogmatic.

But to the mystic everything is within one's power if he only knew it. In God is everything although it is of no advantage to increase the outward without the inward being even more cultivated. And as the inner is cultivated, less and less stress may be put on the outer. Yet it may be as is explained in "Kashf-al-Mahjub" that Tasawwuf or complete surrender to an abiding in Allah is vastly superior to fakr, voluntary or involuntary poverty which still makes a dualism regarding things and thingness.

GATHEKA: Sometimes the mastery of life is known to a person; he may not be a mystic, but if his time comes, he knows it. One day I was interested when a man, who had done nothing but business all his life and made himself so rich that he was perhaps one of the richest men in the country, wanted to show me his park, a beautiful park he had around his house. While I was his guest we were taking a walk. He said, "It is wonderful to come here into my park in the morning and evening." I asked him, "How far does your park extend?" And he said, "Do you want to know? Do you see the horizon from here?" I said, "Yes." He told me, "All this land is mine and the sea besides. All that you can see." It was a wonderful answer, and an example of the theory I have mentioned; he was not only conscious of what he possessed, but of all that was there. He did not make a dividing line between what was his own and what was beyond.

TASAWWUF: Many Indian philosophers speak about "viveka" which they translate as "discrimination." They talk much of discrimination and non-discrimination and cause endless confusion. They make, often, more discriminations than others. They had permitted the caste-system and have all kinds of laws and customs, more than others and yet they discuss viveka. But the real master of discrimination will not use the words.

The sun is for all. It does not recognize limitations and short-comings. And the soul, whether it uses the outward eyes or the inward, does not make any discrimination. And as the eyes are the windows of the soul, all that they see can be enjoyed. Bliss, ananda, is neither limited nor qualified by legalities and worldly short-comings.

GATHEKA: It is a mystery, and it is difficult for anyone to look at life in this way. But this man who was in business, this man who never even thought of mysticism, could also arrive at that conception which the mystic discovers after years of meditation. It was a purely mystical conception.

TASAWWUF: Therefore in Sufism we look for perfections, not for limitations. If one visits Anandashram in South India and sees Mother Krishnabai at work, she never notices the short-comings of anybody in this way. You could not put a child to work carrying heavy loads nor a woman in child-birth to take on social responsibilities. In the harmonies of God each fits into a place with perfection.

As man grows in spirituality and becomes assimilated in the Godhead, he imbibes the various divine virtues; he becomes master of Sifat and also slaves of Sifat and then he can see from the

point of view of everything and everybody for everything and everybody constitutes Allah.

GATHEKA: When dervishes, who sometimes have patched sleeves or are scantily clad, who sometimes have food and sometimes not, address one another, they say, “O King of Kings, O Emperor of Emperors.” It is the consciousness of what is king or emperor which is before them. The boundary of their kingdom is not limited.

TASAWWUF: It is very hard to explain this to those who have not lived with dervishes or worn dervish clothing. Something happens. One becomes like a small or grand universe. Everybody is within, part of self. And so when a question or problem arises, it is natural to see from the point of view of the petitioner and one then is naturally a super-psychologist without even trying.

As the *Gayan* teaches, the answer is in the question. One sees the question and its reflections, the mirror images as is explained in *The Mind World*, and by the laws of karma, the answer is automatically there. Then the sage is called a “seer” but actually the answer is there, in the question. That is why often Sufis and sages are able to help others when the most qualified intellectuals fail.

GATHEKA: The whole universe is their kingdom.

TASAWWUF: On the path of the Master one learns the methods of MUSHAHIDA, which is finding and using the kingdom within as if it were already one’s possession. No doubt this requires inner attention, concentration and vision and practice. But this is the work of certain classes who belong to the Hierarchy, and those who are the underlings thereof.

GATHEKA: It is in this way that a soul proceeds toward perfection, by opening the consciousness and raising it higher. When the soul evolves spiritually, it rises to a height where it sees a wider horizon; therefore its possession becomes greater.

TASAWWUF: For this the practice is necessary. We can only give a “map-picture.” But when one is ready, and especially after he advances in Murakkabah, Concentration, he can rise and rise and rise in this and finds the whole universe within himself. He has only to look within—look but not consider and philosophize about it. As the prayers of Islam say: *As-shadu*, so Mushahida is based on actual witnessing, using the eyes of the soul within the limitations to which one has become accustomed and yet also striving to increase, enlarge the boundaries.

GATHEKA: You might say, “By looking at the horizon it does not become our possession; what we possess is what we call our own.” But Columbus first saw America. He did not possess it first. The possession came afterwards. The first thing is to see, afterwards we possess; but if we do not see how can we possess? And without seeing our possession is not our possession.

TASAWWUF: We may be looking at it legally; we may be looking at it from the material standpoint. But things do not remain that way. Property possessions change, forms change. The outlook of the

eye is far beyond the outlook of the hand, or even of the mind. Our spiritual life is nearer to what the eye sees than what the mind may seem to think. We can own a piece of land without being able to enjoy it all. We can have a great library without having read all the books, and even if we have read the books, we are only burrowing into the limitations of others, regarding them as less circumscribed than our own limitations. But even Qur'an tells us that all the books and libraries, written or potential, hardly touch the Divine Wisdom. And the quoting itself is a limitation. The space of a library is small and in another way the mental accumulations behind the books is also small.

GATHEKA: There are two different ways, two different angles from which one should look at perfection. One way is likened to a perpendicular line and the other to a horizontal line.

TASAWWUF: The symbology of these lines is explained in the Gathas on "Symbology" (Naqshibandi) and in the commentaries thereon.

GATHEKA: The way which is likened to a perpendicular line is the reaching of the knowledge within. How does one reach this knowledge? First of all by concentration one reaches the knowledge within, which means one is able to see concretely and to be conscious of something which is apart from one's physical body. A person may be conscious of a poem, a word, a picture, an idea or something, and if he can be so conscious of it that he can lose the consciousness of his limited body for a moment, that is the first step.

TASAWWUF: This is no doubt the experience of many artists, poets, inventors, dreamers, even schemers. It has been related to the functions of the Pituitary Body which is undoubtedly one of the connecting links between the physical and subtle, between the human awareness and the jinn faculties. People with enlarged or developed pituitaries will have jinn-like qualities as for instance, Manley P. Hall.

Such minds do not necessarily lose consciousness of the world, of the physical, but they find it so small in their inner worlds they tend to de-emphasize it. And then comes all kinds of activities which are regarded as part of man's creativity. And both spiritual development and by conscious Yoga also one can awaken faculties and potentialities.

GATHEKA: Although it seems very easy, it is not so easy. When a person begins to do it, no sooner does he close his eyes in order to concentrate than a thousand things come before him.

TASAWWUF: It is for this reason that Fikr and other esoteric disciplines are practiced, to keep the mind in the proper groove, not to let the externals run in so many directions and counter-directions which deplete one of psychic energy. All of this is explained in the teachings and commentaries.

GATHEKA: Also his physical body becomes restive. It says, "This person is not conscious of me!" And then he gets nervous and twists and turns in order to be conscious of the body. The body does not like a person to be unconscious of it. It is like a dog or a cat; it likes one to take notice of it.

Then a kind of nervous action arises in the body. It feels like moving, turning, scratching, or something. As soon as one wants to discipline the body, the body does not want to accept discipline.

TASAWWUF: From the very beginning of discipleship and even before, the lesson of having the calm, light breath is presented. It is not always taken seriously. Members of many so-called esoteric circles present teachings and methods which do not evince the full spiritual awakening and then set up excuses and reasons. But the very word “spiritual” indicates something connected with the breath. And whether we develop the very refined breath, or it comes through meditative exercises or by descent of grace, when one has that, one is free from the control by the physical body.

This is wonderful for every thought toward nufs, the ego, only strengthens the ego. And every thought given to the body, even that of controlling the body, even the direct exercises for control, nevertheless gives importance to the body. And when there is this psychological importance, all the philosophies and teachings are of no avail; that does not control the body.

But when one reaches a higher stage of consciousness; when one has attained to the broad vista, it is different. Then the body readily succumbs. This also is symbolized in stories about the horse in the literature and teachings.

GATHEKA: The second stage is that instead of being conscious of a thought, one is conscious of a feeling, which is wider still; because thought is a form, and the mind even sees the form. But feeling has no form, therefore to fix one's mind on a feeling and to keep it with the intention of keeping it, is not an easy thing. If once a person has done it and has not given in to the restiveness of the mind, then he certainly feels uplifted.

TASAWWUF: In the lessons on Murakkabah, concentration, this teaching is given. Still one tends to use the eyes and mind in concentration and not always the feelings, the depths of consciousness. So progress may be slow. But when one can use the feelings or be used by the feelings, consciousness is liberated.

It has been said in *Gayan* and elsewhere that pleasure blocks but pain opens the way for inspiration. Pain and love seem to be the two doors. They are both deep feelings, one consciously and the other unconsciously aroused. That is why Swami Ram Das saw pain and bliss together. And that is why the English mystic, Edward Carpenter wrote, *The Drama of Love and Death*. Both were involved with the depths of feeling and with the wearing away of the ego. The ego was left, but only as a vestigial movement in the grand vision and consciousness which awakens from the spiritual life.

GATHEKA: This is the boundary of human progress and further than that is divine progress.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi Invocation may be repeated a multitude of times. The literature may be

read, even memorized, and still the consciousness may be slow in awakening to its full import. It has been said the Path is one in which one moves toward God, with God, in God. But these remain as words until there is an awakening, whereupon one finds they were always true.

GATHEKA: What is divine progress? When one goes further still, then instead of being active one becomes passive. It is a state of consciousness, to be passive.

TASAWWUF: There is a false type of commentary when the mind of man is active and when he uses his intellect and knowledge to select what he finds true or right, to reinforce it. But there is a much higher state in which the mind instead of being dominant is responsive. It is like the solar and lunar states.

In the prayer it is said, "Speakest the word that is put into thy mouth as the light filleth the crescent moon." But it takes myriads of repetitions to make the impression. It is not easy for nufs to get into that passive state. But when one realizes it he finds that this passive state is so much grander, more elevating, more inspiring. Then one finds as it is said in Khatum, that we are listening to the Divine Voice which comes constantly from within. It is no longer words, it is actuality.

GATHEKA: There one does not need concentration, what one needs is meditation. There one gets in touch with that power which is audible and visible within one and of which one is yet ignorant; that power which is busy moving towards materialization of its intended object.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that God works out His intended purpose in nature through man. We do not always see these three aspects of divinity. We may think them, accept them on faith but yet not realize them. Then when we pass into meditation, and receiving this Divine Light, the whole world is transformed before our eyes and we see its beauty and its purpose.

GATHEKA: Once one comes into contact with this experience, one can no longer say in later life that there is such a thing as an accident. Then one will see that all that happens is destined and prepared, when one catches it in its preparatory condition before it has manifested on the earthly plane.

TASAWWUF: It is very difficult for a mystic to offer to the rest of the world his experiences because his time is not the usual time and his space is not the usual space. And when he talks and tells it often arouses hostility or envy, and he is often accused of over egocentrism. It is strange in a world that looks for prophetic utterances or auguries that certain names may be mentioned and much adulation shown and yet the percentage of predictability will be small. And yet with others who actually see, it usually ends, "He will be scorned and rejected of men!"

Philosophers and theologians argue over the irreconcilability of the Infinite Love and Infinite Power of God. But what they are really arguing over is a conception which can only be finite. They cannot reconcile finite love and finite power. They will speak of the infinite but they can not know the infinite, it is just conceptions.

The great Zen teacher Sokei-An Sasaki showed the commentator ways of having the cosmic picture with a warning that both the picture and the person seeing (the seer) would be filled with terror. The whole history of the world from 1931 to 1946 was unfolded. But every effort to break through met with accusation and opposition. One never met those who were curious to see. And whether it was from the subtle world or beyond, there was no acceptance of it. If there had been acceptance one would have seen that in the Infinite the Power and Love, the Forbearance and Mercy and Wisdom are all in equilibrium. It is only in the short ranges that one finds the difficulties, the dualisms, the irreconcilabilities.

The whole inspiration and direction was given to the Jewish people to escape Hitler's wrath. They would not take it. Instead they often turned upon their own people who saw, supporting the accusation of Jesus that the people of Jerusalem stoned their prophets. No doubt it has been given to the Jewish people to furnish seers and prophets and also to persecute these same seers and prophets. And if either the Jewish or non-Jewish people could and would listen, the Divine Guidance would manifest much more in the objective world.

The God of Love, of Mercy, of Compassion, always warns His people, advises them before the Terror descends. The lessons of Holy Qur'an are for all times and for all peoples.

GATHEKA: And if one goes further, there is consciousness in its aspect of pure intelligence. It is knowing and yet knowing nothing.

TASAWWUF: This is the teaching of that sublime Scripture the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra. The human mind crystallizes, separates, congeals. The higher mind sees the flux and the universals but in them still perceives the operations of particulars.

Man as man tends to think in terms of particulars. That is what man and mind mean. But the feeling operation is different. It may perceive and conceive but not in the separative, crystallizing manner. Seeing the all does not deter one from perceiving particulars, in time and in space.

GATHEKA: In other words, when a person is looking in a mirror, his reflection covers the mirror and in that mirror nothing else can be reflected. Therefore when the consciousness is conscious of anything, it is blunted; at the moment it is blunted, or in other words it is covered by something that it is conscious of. The moment that cover is taken away, it is its own self, it is pure intelligence, it is pure spirit.

TASAWWUF: The only real way to know it is to become awakened to it. It is not easy. It requires depth of feeling and attentiveness to the deeper spiritual practices. Even those mentioned in books are not enough. What is in a book, even if it be the key to sublimity is not the fulfillment. The fulfillment comes by practice when the ego is assimilated into something higher. And by growth in assimilation comes also growth in responsiveness, responsibility and ability.

GATHEKA: In that condition, its power, life, magnetism, force, its capacity are much greater,

incomparably greater than one can imagine.

TASAWWUF: We may read much about Malakut, the sphere of the genius; or Djabrut, the sphere of angels or Devas. This last means also sphere of power. And one will ask how can there be power in the harmless? But there is also wisdom there and this wisdom and power go together. It is like the power of the fine vibrations which are most penetrating and yet most effective.

For intelligence is the depth of mind which has also been called Bodhi or Buddhi from which the word Buddha comes. It means in a sense, “enlightening.” And it comes by man’s assimilation of the Divine Light which is filled with capacities and functions and abilities of which we are not ordinarily aware. This also has been called “power of miracle.” It is not usually cultivated but it may come with the higher spiritual development, and attainment.

GATHEKA: What it is cannot be explained except that by the help of meditation one reaches that condition.

TASAWWUF: This may not be the same as the Zen meditation which is negative, which is the perfection of fana. Although fana and nirvana have been identified, this is not exact for the condition of nirvana, if it be mukti or moksha is also positive and inclusive. It does not come by constantly suppressing or by repeating over and over “neti, neti.” In Sufism we say “Allah”; this is both positive and negative. It brings in light, it brings inspiration, illumination, all factors and faculties.

GATHEKA: And if one goes higher still, it is not even consciousness, it is a kind of omniscient condition which is the sign of inner perfection.

TASAWWUF: This has been explained in articles on “Heart and Soul.” Heart is still connected with the individual; soul is all individuals, it is all inclusive, inclusive of personalities, faculties, possibilities; for the soul is all in all. Or as the Hindus say: Atman is Brahman. And it can come from awakening and realization.

GATHEKA: This is one direction of progress. There is another direction of progress; that is to see oneself reflected in another.

TASAWWUF: It is not only given in “Mind-World” that there is this palace of mirrors, it was held by Walt Whitman, “In all men I see myself” and when the Bible teaches that God made mankind in His image, it means also that man has within himself the capacity of the whole of creation and that everything and everybody is reflected in every other person and also every other thing.

There is a whole school of Buddhism known as “Avatamska” (Kegon in Japan) which some claim was the original school and teaching of Lord Buddha. And in that school also they emphasize that everybody and everything is reflected in everything else. This is a beautiful teaching in that it encourages humanity, unselfishness and all virtues. With that attitude we cannot but “love thy

neighbor as thyself.” It is inherent in the teaching.

No doubt this is lost and covered with many other` so-called teachings and doctrines. Doctrines are not truths. Doctrines are derivatives, only possible when the ego comes into activity.

GATHEKA: When one is friends with another person, naturally one’s sympathy, love, friendship, make one see oneself in the other, and this gives the inclination to sacrifice. No one will sacrifice for another except when he is oneself.

TASAWWUF: This is a fundamental teaching given by all prophets and messengers of God. They did not come to divide humanity, to establish sects, cults, different religions. They came to help humanity, to develop respect for oneself and others, and to promote welfare on all levels. If this had not been done the rise of cities, and so of civilization would not have occurred. There would have been no evolution of humanity.

GATHEKA: If this feeling develops, it extends further, not only with the friend, with the neighbor, but with the stranger, with beast and bird and insect.

TASAWWUF: Some start the other way. They make friends, or pretend to be friends with the lower creation. But this is not friendship and sometimes it is a low form of sentimentality, a subconscious self-praise. One begins with those near to one, first relatives and friends and neighbors, and then extends that friendship. First the quality must be established. It is only after the quality has been established that one can extend it. If it is not there it cannot be extended and expanded. It must first be there.

Then one is kind to strangers. This is also a scriptural teaching but it is found among people not always influenced by written Scriptures. Sometimes those who have Scriptures put their faith in the Scripture, in the written word and do not practice anything. The real Scripture is the human heart. There is the throne of Allah. When the fire of Love is kindled it is extended and expanded, but first it has to be kindled.

GATHEKA: One is in at-one-ment with all living beings, and it gives one as much insight in another as the person has into himself.

TASAWWUF: It is, however, not a matter of philosophy. One may practice the meditation that way. The pure Zen has been lost because instead of using a doctrine or teaching, one applies the technique merely to the technique and there is no transformation of personality.

Sufis practice Mujahida which means constant looking over the self to purify it in every direction. They also discipline in Mujahida, contemplation, wherein the devotee acts as if he were the God, at least a cosmic being with all others in his charge. This is the meaning of Avalokitesvara. One appears to be walking all over the earth and looking down on his fellow creatures to help release them from sorrow and suffering. And this is a great mission, only this is more than purification, it is

attainment.

GATHEKA: One knows as much about him as he knows, even more.

TASAWWUF: There are many stories about Sufi teachings and about their prowess in telepathy. But this is not telepathy from the scientific point of view. It does not come from examination and external observation. It comes from attunement and identification. When one is able to perform darshan, or even better the Sufi tawajjuh, one not only pours love and light upon another, one becomes so identified that he knows everything going on internally in the consciousness of another. This is not used for dualistic corrections, to get rid of objectionable habits. It is used to raise the whole consciousness of the other and it is by the raising of the consciousness that corrections come, often automatically, without a word being said. For all of us are sparks of divinity and this is operational, not dialectic.

GATHEKA: This is the simplest phenomenon of this consciousness; not to work wonders. It brings a quick proof that one knows as much about another person as he knows himself.

TASAWWUF: Many talk about divine mind and universal mind and much that is said is correct in this limited sense. But scientific knowledge requires operational achievement and the same is true of mysticism. It is not a spiritual development to exert a super-control on phenomena. This is the work of magic. There are forms of transcendental magic. But even such a presumably materialistic philosopher as H.G. Wells has depicted in at least one of his books that in the end external abilities, working phenomena and correcting social evils brought no happiness, for the hearts of men did not change thereby. The real work has been to change the hearts of man. This can be done. A saheb-e-dil, man of heart, can by attunement awaken others to operate this way and they can establish chains and brotherhoods which alter the whole world.

GATHEKA: But there is another, moral proof; that one becomes friends with the wise and foolish, with the virtuous and wicked, more and more, as if one attracted them.

TASAWWUF: We like this as philosophy. But when one enters a higher stage of consciousness one will not see human beings in categories. One may see all as the beloved ones of God.

There was a mystic in California and he felt he had a mission. He felt he must go to Las Vegas which is a great gambling center in the state of Nevada in the United States. It is also the home of gangsters, or was then. He felt he must go and remain until Jesus Christ appeared to him. So he went. He lived in a station wagon and had his wants supplied.

And he said that when he was there he was treated with respect by all. And he was especially surprised that the worst of the gamblers and gangsters, whom the world regarded as wicked, were often the kindest to him, much more considerate than those who are known as good people. Thus he found the spirit of God in everybody. After a while he said Jesus Christ did appear to him and that was a sign to return to California where he remained until his death a few years after.

GATHEKA: One cannot help it. Sympathy is so powerful that even enemies are melted sooner or later. It is not just a talk that Daniel was sent to the mountain cave and the lions were tamed. In order to see this phenomenon one need not go to the mountains; in this world there are worse than lions; good natures and bad natures; possible and impossible people, and if one can subdue them, one has accomplished something; for it requires a greater power than calming lions.

TASAWWUF: When the lions are tamed within, the lions can be tamed without. This is one of the meanings of Mujahida. In this, one keeps on trying to purify oneself, to keep all forms of agitation from arising. There are also practices called Daroods which are most beneficial. They give the positive aspect. No doubt the purification is needed first and most of all. There are so many forms of mental purification in the various practices of meditation found in many parts of the world. But if purification and meditation do not bring the illumination and attainment, then it is evident something else is needed.

The Sufi's practice of "Allah" and Zikr bring both the positive and negative aspects of the highest accomplishments and perfections.

GATHEKA: One can think of different ideas; agitated ones, antagonistic ones, blunted ones, ignorant ones, ideas full of falsehood or jealousy; how many swords and poisons there are in this world! And it is only one power, the power of one's sympathy, that assimilates all poisonous influences. It takes away their poison, and it does not hurt oneself. One can sooner or later purify them, revivify them, melt them, mould them, and direct them towards the purpose of life.

TASAWWUF: Alchemy was an esoteric science. It was preserved by the Sufis and developed by them. It came from ancient Egypt and had in it all the essences of wisdom of those ancient glorious people. It has nothing to do with dreams and darkness, visions and incomplete aspects of the subjective. This is due to the intervention of intellectual, dialectic and symbolically minded persons who think that complexity means depth and wisdom. Indeed many scientists feel, with all their discoveries and profundities, that in the end they will uncover or discover laws of simplicity.

This is one thing. But there is a finer thing which is not different from common and uncommon knowledge. For Love comes from the fire and light of the higher planes and it is more effective in its world than light and heat are here. It is actually transforming. We can see it in some aspects in the Tawajjeh and in the Darshan of illuminated souls. But even without such help, every person has within himself the seeds and tools of perfectibility. And once he is able to use them, to purify himself, he will find also that he can help others in this manner and help them more by his own self-purification and perfection than in trying to make them change one step at a time. For the teaching is that it may all come in a flash.

The work of Murshids is along this line, in this direction. It is not a dualistic work and one can tell the difference between the false teacher and the true, that the true teacher sees all persons as within himself. His God-identity includes the identity of all God's creatures, beginning and ending with mankind. This is an essential work of all Sufis.

GATHEKA: The world seeks for complexity. If I were to give lectures upon how to get magnetism in order to make people listen to you, and in order to draw them to you; if I were to give twenty exercises for doing these things, it might mean great success for me. But if I tell you simple things like this, that it is the deepening of your sympathy, the awakening of that sympathetic spirit in you which is every power and magnetism, and the expansion of which means spiritual unfoldment, then there will be few to understand. For human beings do not want simple teaching, they want complexity.

TASAWWUF: Profundity does not mean complexity. There have been many philosophers that have given us complexities and some of these are from their own mental developments. They think the developments produce truths whereas these developments are derived from truth.

We have the Germanized Nietzsche and he has influenced many people to think they think that God is dead. They are not thinking it, they are borrowing it from the mind-stuff of another. And if they continued their studies they would also find that Nietzsche had little use for compassion or higher forms of love. Naturally if you get rid of love, mercy and compassion you can say that God is dead. This is death within one and their lives demonstrate the follies of their philosophies; sexual perversions, hardness of heart and such are signs of ignorance, not of development.

Then there are many Germans, too numerous to mention, that have regarded their minds as profound and being profound, spiritual. But all their lives are concerned with their own thoughts, with what they find in a certain part of themselves and this they are able to put into literary form and dazzle others. But after a while they are ignored—in one period heroes, at another time too insignificant to even mention.

GATHEKA: And then there is another stage of expansion, and that is trying to look at everything from another's point of view also, trying to think also as the other person thinks. This is not an easy thing because from one's childhood one learns to think so that one stands upon one's own thought. One does not move to another's thought.

TASAWWUF: This has become the prevalent custom among the people who live in technological societies, where power—however defined, is most important. There is power in the mechanical devices, and then in organization, in all institutions and emphasis takes the place of reasoning and psychology of both logic and depth.

But this is not natural. People of more simple societies may think in groups and then it is easy often to tell what another's point of view is. Only this does not bring development.

The work of the Sufi is to combine development and empathy. And he finds both can be developed without interfering with the other. It is the same again as the two lines of the cross. And it becomes almost like a game, an enjoyable game to be able to see from the point of view of another, to empathize fully and see his attitudes. But this does not mean becoming negative to anyone or anything. On the contrary it leads to an increase in one's own forms of positivity.

GATHEKA: The very fact that one has a thought oneself, keeps one to it. It is therefore a sign of expansion to be able to see from the child's point of view, or from the point of view of the foolish person, how he looks at things.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that the mother is the first teacher. Mothers often find it easy to see from the standpoint of their babies and children. It may be natural. But this naturalness is common to all souls if we only knew it. It is so easy to devise a verbal teaching that Atman is Brahman, but this may have nothing to do with practical affairs. Yet all the wise teach that the everyday life proves spirituality, is spirituality.

One can find this in enigmatic stories of Zen Masters and very simple talks of Swami Ram Das. If one looks closely they both believe that God is everything, in everything. They do not make a grandiose concept apart from the ordinary. In God the ordinary and extraordinary come together.

GATHEKA: And the most interesting thing is that it brings one to being tolerant and patient. In this way one extends one's knowledge to a degree no reading can give. Then one begins to receive from all sources; one will attract knowledge from every plane as soon as the mind becomes so pliable that it does not only stick to its own point of view.

TASAWWUF: In one sense, all the aspects of Truth are found in the prayers. Custom has made man adhere to prayer (or the opposite) and then put values where they do not belong or take them away from where they belong. But we have to have literature. One of the teachings of Qur'an is that Allah taught man the use of the pen. It has its purposes, but also it teaches that all the pens in the world and all the ink can not express the depths of truth from its foundation. So if it is to be understood it is to be understood in another fashion. And this comes from the awakening and expansion of heart.

An animal trainer comes to know the point of view of his charges. Even a flower grower can reach his plants through love and empathy and care. How much more is this true of the teachers of little tots and growing children. And are we not all, in a certain sense, children! We may claim adulthood but if adulthood is just a continuation of childhood with childish outlooks then it is not adulthood, it is super-annuated childhood. Or as it is said elsewhere, man can see from his own point of view; the hu-man becomes universal.

GATHEKA: This process is called unlearning. If you say of a certain man, "This is not a nice person," although you may be quite wrong the general tendency is to stick to that idea. But the greater evolution is to see from that man's point of view also.

TASAWWUF: The judge on the bench could not function if he saw only from one point of view. He has to do a certain amount of unlearning to establish justice. How much more true must this be of the spiritual aspirant!

We can watch the development of jurisprudence and the efforts in some lands to find a universal

justice. This requires wisdom and sometimes wisdom develops in a man whose profession requires him to judge between contending parties. In some lands, even where religious laws prevail, there is still the tendency toward bribery and this has often worked against religion as a whole. But as news becomes more open, and there is danger of exposure, there is also at least circumspection and this leads to more real justice.

Now in making decisions, even the wisest judges have discovered that one cannot always lean on tradition and as soon as one sets aside tradition to establish a new precedent this also is a form of unlearning. Learning in this sense is not just the acquisition of names and forms; it is learning how cosmic principles operate, it is learning how to respond to the divine wisdom which is within. It is, for disciples, the practice of the prayers.

GATHEKA: He has a reason for being as he is; maybe he is too unevolved to see, or he is more evolved and less interested in the other person. Yet, by seeing from his point of view you do not lose your own; your own point of view is still there; but the other point of view is added to yours, therefore your knowledge becomes greater.

TASAWWUF: When Sufism was first introduced into the West it was through persons who had social or other connections and were very proud or who regarded pride as a virtue. They had what to others might be strange approaches—they could not conceive democracy and brotherhood, and they were not entirely wrong either. For there is no question that there are grades and gradients in spiritual unfoldment. But the really advanced persons do not hold on to such differences, seeing the Divine Light in everybody. And there is no gain in requiring adulation.

No doubt there are grades of respect but it is of no value to force respect on anybody. It comes with the opening of heart. And the more advanced, being advanced, can more naturally see the points of view of lesser developed persons and use patience, rather than forcefulness until others rise to proper understanding of respect.

GATHEKA: It means a greater stretching of the heart and sometimes the heart feels pain when you stretch it. But by stretching the heart and making it larger and larger, you turn your heart into the sacred Book.

TASAWWUF: We are told in the Ten Sufi Thoughts that there is really only one Sacred Book, the sacred manuscript of nature. All the Scriptures are endeavors to put this into writing to fit the needs of a particular day. We can not say that any one of them is necessarily for all times and all peoples.

Besides it is man who has been made in the Divine Image and all the sacred Scriptures are really signs of the inner development of mankind. Therefore when a sage speaks, he is really representing Scripture. Sometimes such words if put into writing become Scripture. But Mohammed warned us that not all the words and Scriptures could hold the wisdom of Allah, a point on which many people differ, and no doubt the majority of the more ignorant Muslims also have differed.

The heart is strained and stretched by love and pain. It is also sometimes stretched when one heeds the guidance of the teacher, and sometimes though not too often, by development in devotion and esotericism. But if this growth came just through devotion and esotericism, there would be many enlightened people. It is not by causation, it is by grace that the illumination comes.

GATHEKA: And the third aspect is to feel another person. A man is very often different from what he appears and from what he thinks. Sometimes he acts and speaks quite differently from his feelings; and if your feelings can know the feeling of another, this is a high aspect.

TASAWWUF: No one can have the merit of Pirship without this attainment. There can be legal arrangements, even ceremonies and rituals, but if the presumably advanced person can not see into the hearts of his fellows, then the promotions and ceremonies are of little avail. It has been very hard to awaken the wisdom by precept or even by discipline. But the heart that responds to the voice of God which constantly comes from within will have that guidance which is needed in the spiritual life and also in the everyday life.

GATHEKA: You become a highly evolved personality when the feelings of another can tell you much more than his words and actions can; and sometimes they can give you quite a different opinion of a person from what you would have had if you had only seen him and heard him speak. When one has arrived at this point, human evolution ends and divine evolution begins.

TASAWWUF: There are other practices than what is in the direct teaching. Many belong to the general traditions and literature of Sufism. It is not only the practices but the descent of Baraka, which is magnetism, power and blessing. Not much has been written about it, not much can be told, yet much can be felt.

The Bestowal of Blessing in Sufism, which may also be called the Baraka, is not too different from the Dharma Transmission of Buddhism and Hinduism. Indeed the Sufi Message was brought in modern times to reconcile the two apparent approaches to spiritual awakening.

Hal, the ecstasy or intoxication, is, according to most Sufis, the sign of the Grace of Allah while makam, station or accomplishment, is the result of one's own efforts. Too many philosophical movements, presenting themselves as schools of spiritual accomplishments, act as if certain rituals, certain dogmas, certain exercises are the only valid ways to ultimate achievement. Anything that depends on causal operations must by necessity belong to limitations. Even Buddhists leave ample room for Grace in their theories, and they are right in this. Some even extend the scope of Grace to finality and this can not be disproved by any form of logic. There is no limitation to Divine Grace.

In other words it may be found that the spiritual path is one by which God advances to God-hood under the cloak of humanity. That nothing exists but God-Himself and that our seeming individuality is a guise in cosmic drama.

GATHEKA: Then no doubt one gets insight into what happens in the spirit of man; if he is going to succeed or not, if he is going to be happy or not, or what he is going to accomplish, because there is something going on within that person, preparing his plan of tomorrow.

TASAWWUF: This theme is presented in The Purpose of Life and also appears in many places in the literature. It is all part of what may be called the super-science of perfection. This is really the end of Alchemy also. It is as if Light purposely covered itself and thus darkness appears, and we also find this even in the physical study of light, that there are shadows and darkenesses when light of certain dimensions and vibrations criss-crosses light of other dimensions and vibrations. Then certain types of shadows appear. But they are epiphenomena rather than phenomena themselves; there are after-effects.

The whole consideration of “Hope” as a subject-matter in the Gathas and elsewhere is based on the truth of a cosmic optimism. When the ego stops and the spirit begins, this cosmic optimism becomes very real indeed.

GATHEKA: You begin to touch it and begin to get the impression of it, and that impression is as clear sometimes as anything visible and audible could be.

TASAWWUF: The Life-in-God (baqa) is a full and complete life, which offers a complete view (Samma Dhrishthi) without obliterating the finite. Just as a light can produce many shadows, so there can be a multiplicity of hardships and trials. But behind these is Light.

This was the accomplishment of the Buddha. He sought to find the background and causes of sin, sorrow, disease, death and hardship and when he went deep he found there was behind them Cosmic Being which was the only reality. But when this was put into writing, writing itself being the nature of shadow, words being shadow-stuff, the Universal Primal Light became a thought, not a realization, not an accomplishment, and what is now called “Buddhism” became a substitute for the Arya Dharma which he preached and presented.

Arya Dharma is not achieved by ritual, by dialectic and least of all by priestcraft which makes distinctions and differences between people. Indeed the Sangha, as an institution, became a road-block. Achievement theoretically came by causation, exactly the opposite of what Buddha preached and caused such a worthy as Lama Govinda, to change his way of life completely. For he did not find saints and arhats among his earlier associates. You cannot force or formulate perfection. Only God is perfect.

All the Sufi training, all the writing, is just the unfoldment of the sciences of perfectibility and as Mohammed said, not all the pens and ink in the world can circumscribe it.

GATHEKA: If you go further, then you unite with everything.

TASAWWUF: It is at this point all partials disappear. The Christian Paul also taught that, but not

Christianity, for all particularizing religions lose sight of the Goal. All the prophets and messengers taught it and all the priestcraft and sermonisers and ritual-mongers present something else.

In the highest forms of every faith we find this teaching. Now we must actualize it. We must go beyond “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” and demonstrate it. And how do we demonstrate it? It can be demonstrated scientifically to a certain extent. It can be demonstrated negatively by meditation. But it is demonstrated positively in the spiritual realization. What is called “cosmic consciousness” means to obtain the consciousness of the cosmos.

Certain types of emotionalists have limited this to certain persons. The Orthodox tend to limit it to followers of their own beliefs. But the grand teachings are that everything and everybody is reflected within all of us. This is the only possible meaning of “Atma is Brahma” and “Tat-Tvam-Asi.”

GATHEKA: In this consciousness distance is no longer distance; if you can extend your consciousness so that your consciousness touches the consciousness of another, then not only the thoughts of that person but his whole spirit is reflected in your spirit. Space does not matter; your consciousness can touch every part of the world and every person, at whatever distance he may be.

TASAWWUF: This is taught philosophically by the Avatamsaka School of Buddhism and is the realization of all mystics be they connected with any religion or with none. We find it in Edna St. Vincent Millay and Edward Carpenter. We find it only slightly in Cosmic-Consciousness by Dr. Bucke. We find it especially in the Sufi Poets and their equation of it to love. For in this consciousness there is total love, as Jesus Christ has taught, “God is Love.” This is most certainly not dialectic, nor is it philosophy and all the limitations by dialecticians and philosophers and the orthodox have only produced veils before mankind and divisions and differences in the generality.

In this consciousness there are no divisions and differences, and no generality, but the totality of mankind as is said in the First Epistle to the Corinthians; “The second Adam is the Lord of Heaven.” It is the total realization and the realization of totality. This “Buddha-Mind” is very different from the particularized verbalized “Buddha-Mind” of those who have not reached completion.

This also comes at the end of the practice called “Mushahida” although in some Sufic, Hindu and Buddhist disciplines, the negative principles are carried to completion. But we need the positive too. Otherwise there would be multitudes of realized souls at one time, and this has been very rare, if indeed at all in the samsara.

GATHEKA: And if you go still further, then you can only realize that you are connected with all beings. That there is nothing and no one who is divided and separate from you, and that you are not only connected by chains with those you love, but with all those you have known and do not know—connected by a consciousness which binds you faster than any chains.

TASAWWUF: That is why some mystics and saints criticize no one. And yet there are others, especially among Zen Masters, who feel that purification can be obtained and attained only by casting out all vestiges of ego in others. But if they have not cast out all vestiges in themselves, it all becomes a ritual and attracts the masochists, but does not lead to complete purification and attainment.

All of these things are verbalized in the Sufi prayers and careful attention to them and contemplation thereof will lead to this attainment.

GATHEKA: Naturally one then begins to see the law working in nature; one begins to see that the whole universe is a mechanism working toward a certain purpose. Therefore the right one and wrong one, the good and the bad, are all bringing about one desired result, by wrong power and by right power, a result meant to be, which is the purpose of life.

TASAWWUF: It is as if at the same time God were light (like) a mighty human being with a particular purpose, and at the same time all beings working out all purposes. It is certain that the earth has gone through changes, and if we believe the cosmologists, even planets, stars, and galaxies have their purpose—birth, life, becoming and death. So it is with everything from the atom to the galaxy—all reflecting the same processes.

But for man to have realization he has to become aware of the Light, the pure light which is not only reflected in all things but from which all things come. But this Light also has all the faculties and powers mentioned in the Ninety-Nine Names or Qualities of the One, Only Grand Being.

GATHEKA: Then naturally one holds oneself back from that dogmatic spirit: “you are wrong” and “you are right,” and one comes to the spirit of the sage; saying nothing, knowing all, doing all, suffering all things. This makes one the friend of all and the servant of all.

TASAWWUF: Some have put a command of “silence” and no doubt silence is one of the qualifications. But we cannot boundarize the persons who lead “The Inner Life.” It is wrong to put limits and qualifications around them and it is right to try to understand them no matter what their path or methods. For silence is but one of the attributes and ways and if this is held on to too much, the greatest qualifications, Compassion and Mercy, are overruled by conventions which are themselves signs of limitation.

GATHEKA: And with all the realizations of mystical truth and spiritual attainment, what one realizes is one thing, the only thing worthwhile, and that is to be of some little use to one’s fellow-men.

TASAWWUF: And this puts us back to the Bodhisattvic Oath and Bodhisattvic attainment. Then one’s silence is not one’s silence, one’s speech is not one’s speech and one’s deeds are not one’s deeds. Action or non-action, positive or negative ways, then the whole universe is using that person as its instrument, and one is truly, as Mohammed, the Abdullah, the Servant of God and mankind.

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.

[Chapter 6](#)

The Control of the Body

GATHEKA: Many people think that the physical has little to do with the spiritual. Why not, they ask, cast the idea of the physical aside in order to be entirely spiritual? If without the physical aspect of our being the purpose of life could be accomplished, the soul would not have taken a physical body and the spirit would not have produced the physical world.

TASAWWUF: The divine spirit, from the very beginning, began to operate in two fashions, causing contraction and expansion, fineness and coarseness. What is called “spirit” really means breath and the Divine Spirit, so to speak, inhaling causing a tension and exhaling causing a release. The creation operates as if in constant equilibrium with the Creator. And mankind, made in the divine image, reflects this although human beings act as if a multiplicity and Allah as if Unity.

The Divine Breath enters the body and as the qualities of divinity are assimilated, the personality becomes spiritualized. But if one asks, is not the human being spiritual from the very beginning? The answer is “yes,” but without realization. To have this realization the bodies are created and especially the human body, the only being in creation which has full capacity of the coarseness and fineness together. Or as it is said in the Bible, “The human body is the temple of the Divine Spirit.”

If this were not so the mere existence of the Angels would be the purpose of creation. But the Angels do not have a mind capable of naming, and to name there must be the coarseness and kinds of contraction into thingness and things. The body thus exists, but it is the breath of the body which makes it possible to establish on earth a potentiality for the Divine Light which can still operate on the external planes.

GATHEKA: A Hindustani poet says, “If the purpose of creation could have been fulfilled by the angels, who are entirely spiritual, God would not have created man.” This shows that there is a great purpose to be accomplished by what is called the physical body.

TASAWWUF: However else the various religions and philosophies appear to be on the surface,

they are really consciously or unconsciously accepting this. True there are some who have proclaimed the majesty of the angels. But it is not true. And if we read the Hindu literature we are often noticing how many short-comings the devas have. This is true. Perfection only manifests in the human being and in the human body.

All through the teachings it has been said and emphasized that there is so much in man; that human beings are the beloved ones of Allah; that the kingdom of God is within us individually and collectively. But due to the difficulty of unlearning, many still hold to a supremacy of angelic beings and so put veils and clouds over their own potentialities.

GATHEKA: If the light of God could have shone directly, there would not have been a manifestation such as that of Christ. It was necessary, so to speak, that God should walk on the earth in the physical body. And the conception that the physical body is made of sin, and that this is the lowest aspect of being, will very often prove to be a mistake, for it is through the physical body that the highest and the greatest purpose is to be achieved.

TASAWWUF: There is in Christianity the meditation on resurrection. It has evidently not been a very successful meditation and the reason is due to the fact that dogmas make it impossible to unlearn. Judas had to show the body of Jesus to the Roman soldiers because he was manifesting as a body of light, so that the blind could not see him. And there is the tradition that there was no shadow from Mohammed even in the light of the midday sun.

Of course people who have not seen the resurrection body, or the solar body, as it is also called, will have all kinds of dogmas and be very insistent about them. But as man becomes purified from the elements and especially the mixtures of elements, he gives a greater accommodation to the Akasha and this makes it more possible for the Divine Light to shine through human bodies even while on earth. And this light in quantity and quality is much greater than the accommodation of light for the angelic beings. That is why in so many places in Indian literature we find that sages and devotees prove superior to the “gods” in so many situations.

Now this is still belief until disciples learn to manifest it and the work of the teacher also is to see that in every disciple there is the manifestation, realization and objectification of the Grace, the Glory, the Wisdom, the Joy and the Peace of God. Then Saum becomes reality.

GATHEKA: A person only calls it his physical body in ignorance; once the knowledge has come to him he begins to look upon it as the sacred temple of God.

TASAWWUF: Disciples in early stages are taught to repeat: “This is not my body, this is the temple of God.” It looks simple and elementary. But it can become human experience and when it becomes human experience, one passes from the state of the ordinary man, to the human, the glorified man (hu-man).

GATHEKA: Our experience in life through the physical body has five aspects. The first aspect is

health, the possession of which is heaven, and the absence of which is hell. No matter what we have in life, wealth, name or fame, power or position, comfort or convenience, without health it is all nothing.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi disciplines first attention is paid to this. Many think they are capable of having what they call “higher” practices, but until the body is capable of accommodating them, neither the intellectual knowledge nor the devotional effort is of much value. We have to purify and attune the organ of flesh and then when it makes the accommodation for the vibrations of the spheres, the purification and functioning of the subtle bodies is facilitated.

The Bible and other Scriptures constantly emphasized this but some types of metaphysical people, looking for esoterics and hidden interpretations of Scriptures go beyond the Scriptures. There is a vast difference between the interpretations of Scriptures at various levels and the substitution of other teachings for these Scriptures. That is why so many cults add nothing to the general progress of humanity, at any level.

GATHEKA: When a person is healthy he does not think about it, he does not value it. He cares about things he has not got. He tries to sacrifice his health for pleasures, for material wealth; he is ready to sacrifice his health for his intellectual fancies, for gaiety, for merriment, for a good time, for an ambition he wants to fulfill.

TASAWWUF: The very word “saviour” meant one who could heal—the physical body. And in the life of Jesus Christ first he went around healing the bodies of peoples. The substantiation of a concept called “soul” for the actuality of the flesh has caused much confusion through the ages. Actually it is the soul that heals, that heals the other bodies, and the purification of soul means merely getting free from the ego-interferences which alone keep it from doing its fine work.

GATHEKA: But very often before the ambition or the desire is fulfilled the collapse comes and then he begins to realize what health means.

TASAWWUF: So we begin there and sometimes we end there. And if man can progress with purification it also means keeping the body pure, keeping it thin, getting rid of undesirable poisons and useless thoughts. Both these processes are necessary. But we call in the breath to our assistance, and we do the Nayaz, and the Nayaz alone can be most helpful.

There are schools of Sufis which belittle breath, but they do not know the importance or value of it, that the breath is the method God Himself uses to communicate with the physical body.

GATHEKA: Nothing can buy it, nothing can be compared with it. If we gather together all the blessings that can be received in life and weigh them on a scale, we will find that health weighs heaviest.

TASAWWUF: There are many ways of purifying the body, by diet, by exercises, by asana-postures

and others. All have the advantage of being disciplines and all disciplines help control the ego. All controls over the ego help one to arouse the more sensitive parts of one's being and the awakening of sensitivity is part of spiritual development.

Besides it is part of all cultures to value health either a little or as the highest achievement. They are not wrong. For when the body is fully healthy this also benefits the subtle and causal aspects of man's being.

GATHEKA: It is health which enables man to be material as well as spiritual; its lack robs him of materiality as well as of spirituality.

TASAWWUF: Many have placed materiality as the opposite of spirituality. They presume that materiality keeps man away from spirituality. Some then conclude that lack of health or possessions of material success are signs of spirituality. This is illusion. Spirituality does not stand against materiality, it stands against egotism. The dominance of nufs rather than any sort of prowess displays lack of spiritual development. Control of nufs in any way on any level opens the doors to spirituality.

GATHEKA: It robs him of materiality because his condition is not in order, and of spirituality because it is the completeness of health that enables man to experience spiritual life fully. I do not mean that it is a sin to be ill and a virtue to be well; I mean that health is a virtue and illness a sin.

TASAWWUF: This was also the original intention of the message of Jesus Christ, to purify the body of all short-comings. There are cults which make this the extreme virtue, but dividing man into parts, into bodies, into sheaths, itself produces illusions. Health is of value when it helps man to integrate his whole being, and is of much lesser value when health or the bodily prowess by itself is considered as accomplishment. Still it is better to have this accomplishment. A sound mind in a healthy body has long been a valuable aphorism.

GATHEKA: Another aspect of the physical existence is balance. It is balance which gives control of the body. It is by balance that man is able to stand, to walk, to move. Every action, every physical movement, is sustained by balance.

TASAWWUF: There are many ways to balance but it is not a way to balance by merely holding a thought about balance. The thought alone can be an imbalance or produce imbalance. Many of the greatest teachers held to a middle way and if we examine closely these were all ways of balance.

The commentator was once amused to hear a certain speaker tell the audience that jogging cured a number of physical and even psychic ailments. This evoked much applause but no jogging. Indeed some of those who applauded were not moved by the practice of jogging when it was introduced and there was much criticism of the actual practice. This ambivalent state of mind is itself an imbalance.

There are postures, esoteric exercises, breath practices and all sorts of aid to mysticism and if one looks closely they all inculcate balance in some way or other, beginning with the physical balance. But both the exercises and the philosophy may extend to all planes. The sketch in the last part of The Soul, Whence and Whither shows how the bodies seen and unseen are connected in their operations.

GATHEKA: And the lack of balance will always show some lack in the character of a person and at the same time in the condition of his life. In whatever form the lack of balance manifests, it always means that there is something lacking in the personality. If one studies the walk of a person, the way he moves or looks, everything he does, one sees that whenever balance is lacking, something is lacking behind this which one may not have known but which one will find out in time.

TASAWWUF: The keys to this art are found in the Gathas themselves and more exactly in the commentaries therein. But the awakening of Kashf, insight, makes it more lucid. Or, as has been said, when one is a real developed Sufi he sees the connecting links between himself and all persons and either directly or by methods mentioned in the brochure called Metaphysics and in the commentaries thereon, all becomes clear. But it becomes more clear in the application of Kashf itself than in any intellectual understanding or interpretation.

GATHEKA: For instance, when a person is wobbling, do not believe that it is only an outside defect; it has something to do with that man's character. As he is wobbling in walking, so he will be wobbling in his determination, in his belief. Just as the physician sees the internal condition in the eyes and on the tongue of the patient, so the wise see all that pertains to a man in his every movement, especially by watching the Balance.

TASAWWUF: Before there were Gathas, Hazrat Inayat Khan presented many esoteric sciences which cover this subject but which papers were lost or suppressed. Besides they were not correctly or directly understood by insight. They had to be taken too intellectually and this did not help much.

By the practice of Tawajjeh both insight and observation rise to a high pitch of efficiency. It seems as if the universe talks just as is told in Cosmic Language and its commentaries. Everything speaks, every atom of the body of the person observed, and each in turn gives a key and a keynote to something within. In that way the seer not only sees, but he is able to help others.

GATHEKA: Many Western readers of Oriental philosophy have asked me, "Why is it that your adepts in the East practice acrobatics, sitting in certain postures, standing on one leg, on their heads, sitting cross-legged in one position for a long time, and many other strange things that one would not think of a spiritual person doing? What spirituality is to be attained by it? We consider these things belong to acrobatics and athletics." And I have to answer that all such things as sports and athletics and acrobatic practices when done as a pastime abuse energy, time and work. One does not get the full benefit out of them; but the adepts use them towards a higher purpose. There is nothing in this world, if properly practiced, which will not prove to be beneficial in spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: It is very difficult to perform elongated athletic practices in warm climates. Often the alternative is toward laziness and the body gets used to torpor. Then there is diminished resistance to disease and even digestion does not properly function.

Then there is another aspect, that these practices are non-combative. If anything is to be overcome, it is one's own weaknesses. And besides if one were to consider the body as a vehicle of breath rather than of food it would be different. Hindus teach that there are several bodies and the distinction between the annamayakosh and pranamayakosh comes out in this, that the physical body to most western people and teachings is annamayakosh, the body of food; while to the adepts it is pranamayakosh, the vehicle of breathing.

We have a complete physiology based on the digestive functions but this leaves unsolved the relation of the digestive tract to much of the rest of the body. But when one looks at it as primarily the body-of-breath, one can not only understand it better but can keep it in most excellent condition.

But of course even this is not finality. The Chinese, especially, have a physiology based on the functions of the nervous systems. Not only Tai Chi but much other knowledge has been placed in their possession. And when we bring the whole world together, the three different outlooks of the Western world, the Hindus, and the Oriental will be integrated.

Many ignorant people verbalize and then do not accept the methods of others. Buddha is supposed to have said that there were many Upayas or ways to perfection. But if we look at the Buddhist churches and sects, with one notable exception, they do not accept the methods practiced by others. The time has come to raise above such distinctions and differences which divide men and have no foundation in the universe itself.

GATHEKA: Do not think that going to church or temple and offering prayers, or sitting in silence with closed eyes, is the only way to spiritual attainment. But if we turn all things we do in our everyday life towards the spiritual goal, this will help us in our spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: There are some who say, "Zen is everyday life" or hold on to such verbalisms and axioms and think they have the cosmic wisdom. Besides this is used often to prove that one is superior or others are inferior and these are both signs of self-delusions.

The Message of the Day has not always been successful. The introductions of conventions and partially justified measures has led to the abandonment or belittling of other methods and measures.

Our purpose is toward God-realization and self-fulfillment. Any measures which bring this about are for our good and measures which do not bring this about promote ignorance and delusion.

GATHEKA: Besides, going to church once a week involves very little spiritual work; even when we

say our prayers every night before going to bed, very little spiritual work is done. For every moment of the day we live in illusion.

TASAWWUF: The Introduction of the Universal Worship has not fulfilled its purpose. It has led to the establishment of a new clergy and this at a time when the generality is turning away from religion because there is loss of faith in the priestcraft. The Universal Worship was never intended as a goal, but as a means toward the goal and only one of several means. The emphasis on it led to emphasis on numbers, to hopes in large congregations. These hopes were not fulfilled and they also de-emphasized the mystical purposes of the Sufi Movement. The end must always be God-realization, otherwise it is not Sufism.

GATHEKA: Everything we do has the effect of covering our spiritual vision. That is why every moment of the day we should have a concentration.

TASAWWUF: Zikr and Concentration provide suitable methods but there are also practices called Darood which provide for the most powerful reception of cosmic energy, blessing and vision. And the more we attend to these the more easily we overcome the delusions of life and move towards self-fulfillment.

This lesson is also brought out in the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra. This exalted Scripture has two aspects: (a) the directive uses of esoteric practices such as meditation and dharani; and (b) the application of these and other practices to and with the text itself. Both are important.

GATHEKA: How can we do this if we have our business, industry, profession, a thousand things to do in everyday life? The answer is that we should turn all things that we do into a prayer. Then whatever be our profession, work, occupation, in daily life, it will all help us to spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: The statement has been said that "Zen is everyday life." But despite that if we turn to the Zen schools we find that mostly they are concerned with certain forms of silence and meditation. If these produce the desired results then they are valuable. But too often statements are made and there is no substance behind them. A true advanced Zenist would never pronounce anything that he did not practice, even accomplish.

GATHEKA: Then our every action will become a prayer.

TASAWWUF: We can do this most easily when we have some darood, sacred formula which can be pronounced. This need not be Zikr. Zikr often takes us above the denseness of earth, and again in Zikr the cyclic law operates; the number of repetitions have a definite effect. But we also pray: "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives" and "Thy Voice which constantly comes from within."

The Inner Voice may be operating quite independently of any theology, discipline or anything else. True, in such cases one is subject to accusations; the guidance is called "temptation" and many

who have not been transformed even persecute those who have been the recipients of Grace. Allah's Grace is for all, upon all, all the time.

GATHEKA: Then whatever be our profession, work, occupation in daily life, it will all help us to spiritual attainment. Then our every action will become a prayer. Every move we make towards the South, the North, the West or the East will point to the spiritual goal.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that when man takes one step toward Allah, Allah takes ten steps toward him. We are always thinking of our attainment; we do not leave the scope for Divine Grace. The Grace is there all the time. It is not subject to rules and regulations. It has nothing to do with orthodoxy or heterodoxy. For it has always been said that the Path is the journey God Himself takes with God toward God and in God. It is by losing the ego-self in mergence that one attains.

GATHEKA: Not everyone realizes to what extent he lacks balance in his life; among a hundred persons you can hardly find one really balanced. There is spiritual balance also, but this spiritual balance is attained first by balancing the physical body and its movements.

TASAWWUF: Mostly we are thinking of mental advancement, not necessarily the mental advancement of a scholar, but still a break-through by some mysterious power which will at the same time transform us and not change us at all. This is delusion. We have to begin where we are. Mental projects are of no help and when they enhance the emotions they are actually harmful in spiritual work.

Those who attain show or report something and those who have not attained tend almost always to reject these reports and disrespect those who show the slightest sign of advancement.

GATHEKA: The third aspect of our physical existence is the perfection of our body. There is a spiritual temperament, and that temperament you can see from a person's body.

TASAWWUF: Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men so that they can see your good works" but mostly religion has rejected it. It has not become part of our knowledge of folklore. Very much actually accept Scriptures though (sic) many so claim. They only accept such portions as please them. Instead of making their lives a testimony for the Scripture they restrict themselves to such passages as will uphold their egocentrism. There is nothing wonderful in it; in fact it is absurd.

Literally the spiritual life means the life-of-the-breath and this is carefully measured on the Sufi Path.

GATHEKA: There are sensitive people, maybe a little bit nervous and then there are dense people who have quite a different aspect. A sensitive person who can appreciate music, who can respond to the beauty of line and color, who can enjoy a salt or a sweet, a sour or bitter taste fully, who can feel cold and heat, who can perceive fragrance, distinguish all these, it is he who is born with a spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: This manifests in the lives of individuals and of cultures. The Hindus, for example, are very sensitive to tastes and sounds, the Japanese to line and color. Each has their own approach. By esoteric practices and disciplines sensitivities are awakened. It is of no value to analyze the faults of others. It is of supreme value to accomplish by overcoming first our own weakness and then by example, those of the generality.

It is certainly true that mankind is now becoming more aware of colors, sounds, odors, tastes to which he was impervious in other days. These are signs of the spiritual growth of the race.

GATHEKA: The person who has no love for music, who cannot appreciate fragrance, who cannot understand the beauty of line and color, that person is dense, and it will take time for him to develop. Therefore the experience of all the joy and pleasure that life offers is not in materiality, it is in spirituality. It is not the material person who experiences life fully; it is the spiritual person who does so.

TASAWWUF: When the Message was brought into the western world, there was everywhere tenseness and narrowness. Those who abstained from certain types of sensuous activity were regarded as good people, and particularly did they so regard themselves and others. Consideration came not from the free flowing heart, but from the tightened mind, subjected to code and standards. This was not real spirituality; none of these people had the divine vision.

It has become very difficult for those with divine vision and grace to express themselves. But as the wisdom of Allah is everywhere, we see gradually the responsive in souls, often young in body but free from traditions and fixed outlooks. But now there is a psychic and spiritual revolution, a move from egocentricity to zeal and desire for universal outlooks and consciousness, and the self-assured, divided into numerous camps, find themselves gradually overwhelmed by those with wider visions and grander outlooks.

GATHEKA: One might ask, "Then what about these ascetics who lived the life of a hermit in solitude, who did not eat proper food, who kept themselves away from all the comfort and beauty of life?" These are not for everyone to follow. At the same time it is a mistake to criticize them. Such people are the ones who make experiments of life by the sacrifice of all the joy and pleasure that the earth can give.

TASAWWUF: We can read in the lives of Saints by Fariduddin Attar, and also in corresponding works of Indian and Christians. Mohammed has given us a different outlook. Although he often went in to the solitude, for him spirituality and religiosity meant the everyday life, for in them Allah was ever present. Even some extreme Mahayana Buddhists have declared the identity of samsara with Nirvana.

Perhaps the extreme view is dualistic, even though those who partake of it who consider it not so. The condemnation of asceticism by Mohammed has some value and yet it is among the most respectful and devout of his followers that we find the most excellent example of withdrawal. And it

is also taught that many on the path of Sufism practice Khilvat.

This is also found in Buddhism where a distinction is made between the Bodhisattva and the Pratyeka Buddha.

GATHEKA: By their solitude they experiment, just as a scientist shuts himself up in his laboratory for years and years; and these ascetics who left everything in the world also attained a certain knowledge which they give us. It is not a principle for everyone to follow, for spirituality does not depend upon such things.

TASAWWUF: We have, of course, the example of Milarepa, the marvelous Tibetan Saint. But there were other saints even in Buddhism, who showed by their poetry and psalms that they also reached the splendid joy. It is curious that many metaphysicians, arguing for certain aspects of Buddhism dualistically promote ideas and experiences at utmost variance with the ideas and experiences of those who have attained. We can not lay aside the Indian idea of the identity of the Ultimate being Sat-Chit-Ananda—being, consciousness, bliss, but the metaphysicians who hold to such verbal outlooks and who themselves have not the attainment spread endless confusion.

GATHEKA: Why are the eyes given if not to appreciate all that is beautiful, why are the ears given if one may not enjoy music; why has one been sent on to the earth if one cannot look at the earth for fear of being called a materialist?

TASAWWUF: The Moghul Emperor Aurungzeb held to an extreme orthodoxy. He attained power on earth, no doubt, but without tolerance. It was then that the Muslims attained their greatest physical prowess in India. But they set group against group in their own ranks and among others.

The marvelous poet, Mohammed Iqbal, although he often expressed the most noble outlooks, erred in praising this Emperor. A man who begins his career by murdering his own brothers, so to speak, may attain fame among a certain portion of mankind. But he does not attain approval from the majority and certainly shuts out all the humanistic and humanitarian outlooks.

GATHEKA: Those who make spirituality out to be something like this make a bogey of God, something frightening. In point of fact, spirituality is the fullness of life.

TASAWWUF: The *Gayan* proclaims the wide outlook and the rigid proclaim “goodness” although what they mean by “goodness” is not always clear. Generally it means basing judgment on their own views without due consideration to others.

No matter what our views, our religion, our politics, our philosophy, we probably belong to some minority. There are so many views and God must have permitted them. There are no signs that He condemned them all. It is man who condemns, who restricts.

GATHEKA: With regard to the fourth aspect of our physical existence, man wrongly identifies

himself with the physical body, calling it “myself.” And when the physical body is in pain he says, “I am ill,” because he identifies himself with something which belongs to him but which is not himself.

TASAWWUF: This is emphasized in the early teaching and is also held by many schools of mystical and occult outlooks. But in Sufism we are not concerned with the mere philosophy; we seek to bring about the realization which makes him aware of it.

GATHEKA: The first thing to learn in the spiritual path is to recognize the physical body not as one’s self, but as an instrument, a vehicle, through which to experience life. This instrument is so equipped that one may be able to experience all that is worth experiencing outside oneself and also all that is worth experiencing within oneself.

TASAWWUF: This subject is especially dealt with in the brochure, *Metaphysics* and in the commentary therein. We learn to dissociate ourselves from body, mind, and heart in various stages. But we also learn to appreciate these divine vehicles in the full. Only we learn to rise above our own limitations in so doing. The discovery and awakening of the whole personality does not destroy anything; it only increases the capacity for enjoyment and experience.

GATHEKA: When a child is born and brought up, its first tendency is to enjoy and experience all that is outside itself, and the man usually gets no chance to experience what is within himself. But at the same time the body is equipped with the instrument, with the means, by which we experience both the life outside and the life within.

TASAWWUF: The esoteric life means the full experience and enjoyment of the life-within. The awakening of *Kashf*, insight, makes this possible. We can even extend our awareness of valuable dreams. But life is much more than that. There are areas within us which correspond to everything outside. There is a sort of super-radio in each of us which, by attunement, can make us aware of the life within and the life without, both. And there is no limit to the growth of this sensitivity.

GATHEKA: If a person does not use his hand or his leg for many years, the outcome will be that it loses its vitality, life, energy, and will no longer be of any use. We know the use of our hands and feet which are outer parts of the physical mechanism, but there are inner and finer parts of the physical mechanism which mystics have called centres, each centre having its particular object—intuition, inspiration, impression, revelation—which are all realized through the medium of these centres.

TASAWWUF: These centres are both mentioned and ignored in various parts of the literature and teaching. This is to produce balance, balance in outlook, as has been explained, and balance in breath. We must promote the capacity for life and love and joy. All parts of the body are not equipped for that, in particular the digestive tract which is a sort of complex tube in the body. It itself is not a producer of life, it is an avenue for consumption. It belongs, so to speak, to Shiva, not to Brahma.

The higher centres, deep within the body and thus protected, are like stations equipped to very fine and high vibrations which also are sensitive to the life, beauty and blessings of the inner planes. By their awakening and use they enable man to enjoy more and more and more. That is why in walking, in dancing, in chanting, we concentrate on the different centres and thus produce a widened vitality and sensitivity. Then the words mean something more than a philosophy, they become as if operations within our very being.

GATHEKA: As the organs of our sense can experience life that is around us, so the nervous centers can experience life that is within us.

TASAWWUF: We have explained Hatha Yoga and its relation to the Vital Body, the pranamayakosh. So there is sensitivity to the Manamayakosh. The Chinese have well preserved this knowledge in their esotericism, known to few; more in their gymnastics and still more in their prophylactics and medicine. They have very complex knowledge which will again become universal when man discards his egocentricities.

GATHEKA: But when these centres are not used for many years they become blunted, not destroyed but blunted, and can no longer be put to the use for which they exist. Many who embark upon spiritual work guided by a proper teacher begin to feel a sensation in the middle of the forehead, as if something is awakening there. After some time they begin more and more to notice a sphere of which they were quite ignorant.

TASAWWUF: There are a great many folk-lorish types of traditions which have infiltrated into Western culture, particularly California. One can not say they are wrong. But they are presented in such a way that what we might call cause-and-effect become most determinate. There is no room for Divine Grace and what might be called human evolution is bound by all sorts of conditions which may not exist excepting in people's minds.

But this does not mean that these folk-lorish movements are wrong. They may be uselessly right. And in the presence of a teacher the centres may open more rapidly as if there were some very scientific principles in operation.

When the Message was first introduced into the West in 1911, much attention was given to concentrations on Arsh, which is to say, "the throne of God" and in a certain sense this could be said to be located as if in the center of the forehead. But these concentrations and response to music were not very effective. Other means had to be used, were used, and it took a long time to arrange the mystical teachings of the Orient, and particularly of the Sufis so that they could be assimilated in the Western world, and not merely in intellectual consciousness, but as part of the living personalities.

Now it is possible for teachers to give exercises which awaken the centres consciously and constructively. This is of great benefit. In that way accommodations for joy and exaltations are increased. It has become possible to accomplish in a few minutes what months and years

previously could not do.

GATHEKA: There are some who begin to notice a feeling in the solar plexus which they did not have before. If that feeling is awakened they naturally become more intuitive.

TASAWWUF: In the Zen teachings there are methods which are most effective. They have sometimes been given the name of “hara.” This strengthens the solar plexus, and then the nervous system and then the whole mind. Out of it whole cultures have arisen. Many people have benefitted no end.

Of course we do not produce the illumination by any methods of cause and effect. But we can produce complete mental purification. The hara takes away the confusion of ego-mind. We do not rise beyond manas and ahankara by any self-will, by any exercises, by disciplines or methods which themselves are self-determined. But the solar-plexus methods of the Zen Buddhists have helped interminably in leading multitudes toward spiritual realizations.

GATHEKA: Some feel certain sensitiveness on the top of their head, or in the centres of their throat. With their growth they feel it more and more. Among these people there will doubtless be found some who are intuitive by nature.

TASAWWUF: It has been the especial work of Pir Vilayat Khan to go into this subject mystically, esoterically and occultly, almost scientifically. People who study and practice such methods get a very clear view of the organism and the relation between the gross and subtle.

GATHEKA: The difference between those whose nervous centres respond and those whose nervous centres do not respond is that of a rock and plant. The rock does not respond to sympathy, but the plant does. And so the ones whose intuitive centres are awakened to some extent begin to feel intuitive, and then inspiration and revelation follow.

TASAWWUF: To make this effective the Murshid gives the appropriate exercises such as breathing practices, Zikr and concentrations. These can help bring to the surface the desirable qualities of the mureed. Bear in mind that all people are the Beloved Ones of God and have all the qualities within themselves, latent though they generally be.

All disciples are perfectible. It is not absolutely incumbent on the Teacher to give Bayat to all, but the very phrases applied help to elevate the most degenerate.

There is a vast difference here between the worldly good people and those who can be changed. The worldly good people are the rocks. They usually do not regard themselves as rocks, but when the tests come it is not they that have the visions and the insight and the inspirations. Visions and inspirations are the signs of spiritual Grace or advancement. All the philosophy here is no good; it is an obstacle to purification and unlearning.

GATHEKA: But one should bear in mind that these things are not to be talked about. Those who know least talk most; and then if those who are not yet ready to know these secrets get hold of some theory or other of this kind, they speak about it to everybody.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has said not to cast pearls before the swine. There have been at least two verbal approaches to truth which are of no avail in the opening of heart and do not lead to inspiration or revelation. There is one group that always considers what they call the “esoteric” interpretations and no doubt there are esoteric interpretations and no doubt these people even have the lower facets of these esoteric interpretations. But until esotericism is coupled by experience and enlightenment its value is limited.

Then there are others who are entirely intellectual. They go to college or university. They study literature. They make interpretations of literature. They could not do this in the sciences. People do not study the sciences in order to comment on its literature. They have to have some direct experience; if they do not have direct experience it is not science. Nor is it mysticism until there is direct experience.

No doubt these two schools which are far apart in their approaches have none the less befogged much of what is known as the Wisdom of the Orient, or the philosophies of different parts of Asia. All of these philosophies have some directions about themselves but among the intellectuals and mystery-mongers these directions are overlooked and the veils remain.

GATHEKA: And then they write a book about their own wrong conceptions.

TASAWWUF: There are so many of these wrong books. No doubt the worst concern Zen Buddhism. Zen means “meditation” and no one can possibly have any insight into it until he has practiced some meditation. But these books are not about what the authors have practiced; they are mostly opinions of the experiences of others or about sacred literature. And the result has been, that with all growth of learning, the sayings and the teachings of the Buddha have been overcovered. All kinds of things have been substituted and so there is today much of what is called “Buddhism” which has little or nothing to do with compassion (its exoteric value) or enlightenment (its esoteric value).

In the case of Sufism excepting some intellectuals, largely British, there has not been so much confusing literature. With the efforts of Titus Burckhardt who based Sufic literature upon Sufic disciplines and direct study under the teacher; and with the appearance of Martin Lings’ admirable writings, even the West has some corrective material although it is still the minority of books and has not been most effective. But it will be in time.

Fortunately the application of esotericism to daily life brings out the Grace, the Glory, the Wisdom, the Joy and the Peace which are in every one.

GATHEKA: They have never had the patience, perseverance, and right guidance to help them, and

often they go astray; and many of them have damaged their health and got out of balance trying to awaken centres. They make light of something which is most serious, most sacred, and which leads to spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: Verbally, much of what is said by the intellectuals and superficial esotericists is correct. But it has no deep value. It is functional participation alone which leads to the proper experience, be it in the outer life or the inner life. Only the inner life concerns what is sacred. And when we come to the last part of “Zen Flesh, Zen Bones,” there are practices which begin in devotion and should end in devotion. But mostly they are applied without the devotion and lead to nought.

GATHEKA: Others make fun of it, those of the wrong quality who cannot perceive sympathy as a plant perceives it. They do not see the possibilities in themselves and mock at those who do perceive; and in this way a science, which is the highest of all sciences, has been abused and laughed at.

TASAWWUF: And so there is a law of cause-and-effect, or action-and-reaction, a new generation has been born which in turn derides their elders and perceives the values, or seeks them. For all the illusions and confusions and ignorances of the world cannot forever dim the light of the soul. Truth belongs to man and man belongs to truth and as *Nirtan* teaches, “Truth in the end shall win.”

GATHEKA: In the East a teacher does not give guidance until he has full confidence in the pupil, so as not to allow that which is most sacred to be mocked and laughed at by others. When he gives an initiation the pupil takes an oath that he will not speak about these things before those unaware of their value, importance, and sacredness; and only then is he guided. Also, every individual is guided by the teacher separately.

TASAWWUF: If an assayer is given a number of stones, he will assess their values individually; even when only the economic importance is stressed he may do that. Each has its own characteristics and each has its own path to perfection. Besides the mutual confidence between the teacher and pupil is one of the most beautiful and valuable things in life.

It is said that the sun shines on the just and unjust. So the light is given to each and all and also is from each and all but not always the same processes, or the same values are required to bring the light to fullness and perfection. This is the hardest thing for some Western people to understand.

Also generally a definite religious background was needed with some understanding of devotion, prayers, rituals, and disciplines. Often they prepare the way for higher instruction and development. But the decline of religion and the extreme institutionalization of the clergy, common it would seem to all faiths, has caused many to turn back on such traditions. They found them useless. Still this means even more the mutual trust between the teacher and pupil and the utmost consideration on the part of each.

GATHEKA: Finally, there is the fifth aspect of our physical existence. There are two things: sensation and exaltation. Through sensation one experiences pleasure. Through exaltation one experiences joy. There is a difference between joy and pleasure. What man is accustomed to experience by the medium of his physical body is pleasure; the pleasure of eating, the pleasure of drinking, the pleasure of looking at beautiful things. Therefore everything comforting he knows is that which is experienced by the physical sense. But besides that there is a joy which does not depend upon the senses, which only depends upon exaltation; and that exaltation is also achieved by the medium of the body.

TASAWWUF: This looked so verbal and was verbal until the depths of music and dance were applied in the exoteric and esoteric classes. Reciting the Names of Allah has exactly the effects referred to in literature. But the reading is of no avail. The doing is of all avail.

The message was first introduced with instrumental music. It was not very effective. Then there were lessons but many could not apply them. This till the time came for music, and chanting and dancing, but always with the Names of God. No doubt the beginning was made with "Allah" and the Sufi formulae. But all divine formulae may be operative.

Once the experience of exaltation comes to the devotee the rest is comparatively easy. The heart awakens; the joy awakens. It is no more theory. It is no more philosophy. No doubt in many instances the first steps came apparently from the use of psychedelic stimulants. But what are psychedelic stimulants? If the people involved were not sufficiently advanced psychically or mystically would anything have happened? No! These experiences could come only to the tenderhearted, though often they do not know their own tenderness.

Still one can perceive it in the new poetry and hear it in the new music. It is part of a transformation not only of the individual but of the generality. Consequently the more advanced souls, not so embedded in the denseness of the earth are more easily aroused. It is not only the psychedelics that arouse them, it is their very nature which causes both plant derivatives and chemicals to become psychedelic for them.

Then they find that music and words also affect them. They are easily aroused, they may not always get into a noble exaltation but they are more easily aroused. They are not rocks or stones.

GATHEKA: How is this achieved? There is action and its result and there is repose and its result. It is the result of action which is called sensation, and it is the result of repose which is called exaltation.

TASAWWUF: So it is that the practices of meditation and devotion often pave the way. They are like winding and the unwinding or the movements which follow get their impetus from the winding. And then especially when the teacher is there, the teacher who carries his own atmosphere with him, he is able to bring about the desired result, the exaltation through chanting of divine phrases. This becomes very real and this will affect the whole world, where nothing else has succeeded, can

succeed.

GATHEKA: In the Masnavi of Rumi, the most wonderful poet of Persia, we read the blessing of sleep, where he says, "O sleep, there is no greater bliss to be compared with you; in sleep the prisoners are free from their prison, and the kings do not possess throne and crown. The suffering patients lose their pain or worry, and sorrow is forgotten."

TASAWWUF: There are many stories, especially in Sufi poetry and Sufi literature where even the sorriest prisoners feel themselves as monarchs and monarchs are prisoners. For neither is free from his mental condition. The physical and social shackles, or privileges do not extend beyond this realm. Sleep takes us away from one aspect of the denseness of earth and also from the bondage of egoism (nufsaniat).

There has also been a teaching on The Mystery of Sleep which helps illustrate this very much. Not that we should give too much attention to sleep, but that we cannot give too much attention to hope.

GATHEKA: This shows that sleep is a form of repose, automatically brought about, which lifts us up from anxieties, worries and discomforts, from sorrows and troubles. When this condition of repose can be brought about at will, one will have an experience of mastery, for then one is not dependent upon an automatic condition.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps the difference between the Sufic and Zen meditations has been that the latter stresses negativity and purification, holding that when these are overcome the light will automatically manifest. But the Sufi uses as his method also that there is a God, the Divine Being, who can help us at every step in the way. The negative methods are used for the purification and self-negation, but the positive methods are also used, they come together as in Zikr: La Illaha (negative) and El Il Allah (positive).

GATHEKA: If this condition which raises us above our worries, troubles, sorrows, anxieties, pains and suffering can be produced within ourselves, a great thing is accomplished. And the way of accomplishing it is by the practice of repose. The first thing an adept does in life is to master the five different aspects which I have mentioned, and having mastered them he is ready for the next step in the path of spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: These may be called the paths of purification. We have this from most ancient times in what was called "catharsis." This is often in literature where it is not of much help and in rituals where it has the impetus of starting but does not carry one very far. But in the path where the pupil accepts what the teacher offers, and also pays strict attention to his own inner states of consciousness, in the end he will discover that there are many records, covered and uncovered in the literature of the world.

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.

[Chapter 7](#)

The Control of the Mind

GATHEKA: The tendency to be worried over nothing, to become anxious about little things, to be fidgety and restless, to be afraid, to be confused, the tendency of moving about without any reason, the tendency of speaking without purpose, the tendency of being sad without any motive, all these things come through lack of control over the mind.

TASAWWUF: And how does one get the control over the mind? There may be many ways, but two among them are by repose and by breath. The repose comes in practices connected with meditation; concentration and contemplation, but sometimes also with just complete physical relaxation. But the method of using the breath is most effective when it is combined with the approach of reverence, when one can, by summoning the Divine Spirit, so to speak, help flood out the impurities which have gathered, which do not belong to the self and which often come by reacting against conditions and circumstances.

GATHEKA: Have they also any other effect besides the effect that is made upon one's own personality? Yes; all weakness, errors and mistakes that man makes against his own wish, all these come from lack of control over his own mind. And if there is a secret of success, the key to it is the control of mind.

TASAWWUF: When a person is disturbed in any way, that disturbance is conveyed to the atmosphere. It does not just stop with himself. His every exhalation affects both his own person and his surroundings. It affects the chemistry and alchemy of breathing and this touches the sphere, far and wide.

If we add a strange gas to the atmosphere, such as carbon monoxide or chlorine, it will mingle with the sphere. It is like being dissolved, and so every exhalation carries afar the impurities of the unfortunate as well as the goodwill and blessings of the fortunate. We may talk about selflessness or non-self, but the relation of our breathing in every aspect effects the whole sphere. In this the individual is not apart from the generality, though he may so regard himself. And without this wide-view one cannot possibly understand karma and samsara. Even malignant diseases and epidemics come as the result of this law.

GATHEKA: Intuition, inspiration, revelation, all come when the mind is controlled. And all worries, anxieties, fears, and doubts come from lack of control.

TASAWWUF: The question always arises, what to do? From the very beginning there are lessons in refined breathing. As one advances on the path of the Adept he learns more and more successful methods to bring about this refinement.

Attunement to the teacher enables one to get into the accommodations which he has reawakened in his own personality. This has been called Baraka by the Sufis and is referred to in the Gayatri "Pir" as "In thee I find abundance of blessing." This is a function of the spiritual teacher, particularly on the Sufi path. So by this attunement, the inner life and its potentialities are aroused. Of course the elements are always there. And so when the mind is controlled, one enters into the arenas of intuition, inspiration and revelation.

GATHEKA: What is mind? One part of humanity considers mind as something inexplicable, and another part of humanity considers mind as an action of the brain. It is a very limited conception of mind.

TASAWWUF: It is a very interesting facet of twentieth century psychology, that although there has been very little consideration of traditional teachings, particularly of the East, and a strong emphasis and determination on definitions and presumable functions, there has been a constant change in methodologies, outlooks and conclusions. The result has been a number of schools which we find neither in the so-called pure sciences nor in the mystical traditions. These are not so easily upset by new vistas, new teachings and new determinations; and still less by the almost dogmatic but equally temporary conclusions of a generation, which are soon upset by new schools. And these new schools often attack the mystical and Oriental outlooks while themselves subject to constant change, coupled with an ever growing evidence of disturbed minds.

GATHEKA: The voice reaches, through the wireless, for thousands of miles, but the mind is much finer than the voice. It cannot be limited and restricted to the brain, although the brain is the medium by which thoughts are made clear.

TASAWWUF: With no clear determination as to the nature of mind, the meaning and extent of consciousness and the relation of the subjective to the objective, we can see a sort of confusion, worsened by the refusal to accept it as confusion. With all the controversies going on over psychedelics, and the strange efforts to define "drugs" by psychological and sociological rather than chemical and botanical outlooks, there has been little study of the relation of the nervous system as a whole, or its particular part, of the brain and the glandular system in this relation. Hosts of phenomena are noted, even studied, but studied from very partial outlooks. And even the brain, so uplifted, is often ignored by those who have upraised it. It becomes very confusing.

GATHEKA: Mind, according to the mystic is the real man; the body is only a garb which man wears. This word has a Sanskrit origin; in Sanskrit it is called manas, and from that is derived

manu, which is nearly the same as the English word man. In other words, man means mind; and one sees that this is true when someone calls another person sad or down-hearted or courageous or enthusiastic or well-balanced, for all these attributes belong to his mind.

TASAWWUF: This whole subject is treated at length in The Mind World. It is not that modern Sufism wishes to impose its teaching; it is that modern Sufism wishes man to look into himself, examine himself and know more about mind by knowing more about its functions and also have a sort of consciousness or awareness of what is going on within himself.

But this does not mean analysis or even introspection. Analysis has not proved very efficacious; you do not build up by tearing down. Knowledge of names and forms does not help much in understanding knowledge of processes. Still in the mystical life there is a greater and greater awareness and understanding.

As this is being typed one does not stop to examine how each letter makes its way to the paper. And even if one could do it, he would lose sight of the theme, of the literary efforts and it would not be very helpful. Thus there is an unconscious understanding and the same is true of mental and intellectual processes, there can be an understanding without a complete analytical overhaul at every step. So we use mind and we even more use brain without stopping at every moment to examine details.

GATHEKA: There is a saying that what you are speaks louder than what you say. This means that the voice of the mind reaches further than the spoken word and has a greater effect.

TASAWWUF: Some day we may have more spiritual psychology. This will come when the investigators are as impersonal as they are in geology and petrology and plant and animal classifications. Too much attention has been paid by so-called psychologists to their own egos and consciously or unconsciously they have set themselves apart from mankind, even having a sort of guinea-pig attitude toward the rest of the world.

This is both dangerous and ignoble. Einstein solved the dilemmas arising from the Michelson-Morley experiments and investigations by removing the ego from the picture. He did not say so in so many words, but that is the basis of relativity, to get rid of ego-self. And when this is done we shall have a formidable honest psychology; and this also will come closer to mysticism. Even Karl Jung has started in that direction, but only started.

GATHEKA: It is the mind which creates atmosphere. One often wonders why it is that one feels uncomfortable in the presence of someone without his having done any harm; or that one feels excited in the presence of someone else. Why is it? It is the effect of that person's mind.

TASAWWUF: This is also a teaching of Buddha. It is not always a teaching of Buddhism. It can almost be said that the "lower" Buddhism is concerned with mind and the "higher" Buddhism with wisdom. But we learn the words, have certain philosophies and all the time the mind is active. It

does not control itself. It keeps on going, and this sets up a sort of aura or atmosphere around one. The vibrations are there.

Just as by a certain attunement we can get various radio and television stations we can by attunement also get the essence of another person's mind. It is the "higher" self in each that can do that. When a person is so trained a sort of telepathy becomes very natural. This is best when it can be used for harmonization one person to another. It is also very effective when a group repeats "Toward the One" together.

Analytically, if we are natural and can remove the dominance of our own egos, we can easily become sensitive to another and this should be used to help others, not to express prowess of oneself. In Cosmic Language it is taught how to become sensitive to every sort of vibration.

GATHEKA: The mind that is on fire creates fire in the atmosphere, and everyone within its atmosphere is burning too in the same fire. The mind which is restful and peaceful gives rest and peace to those who come within the atmosphere of that mind.

TASAWWUF: Therefore disciples are disciplined with their own minds, their own atmospheres. It is done partly by breath, partly by meditation and concentration. It is also done by prayer and especially by the prayers of modern Sufism each of which may have telling effect upon a person, a group and an atmosphere itself. For such prayers, and especially by constant repetition and by group endeavour, establish atmospheres of love, devotion, tranquility and health.

GATHEKA: Once I asked my spiritual teacher how we can recognize the godly man. And my teacher replied, "It is not what he says and it is not what he seems to be, but it is the atmosphere that his presence creates. That is the proof. For no one can create an atmosphere which does not belong to his spirit."

TASAWWUF: That is why a sensitive person can always tell sincerity from pretense. The mere words without sincerity, without thought can have an emotional effect only and often do have emotional effects. But they have surface value only and no lasting value.

GATHEKA: It is said in the Bible that first the earth was created and then after the earth, the heavens, which means that the body was finished first and then the mind. An infant is born, so to speak, with a vision of mind, a skeleton of mind, and then the flesh and skin are put on it.

TASAWWUF: If we look on it from the Hindu point of view, the pure spirit is Purusha, and the pure body is Prakrit. There is interaction between them and then the mind appears. And among the Greeks Pallas Athene (or Minerva) did not come first, but was the result of interaction between the empyrean and the earth.

GATHEKA: There is no mind without body; that is to say, before the body was made the mind was only an Akasha, an accommodation. The experience it has gained through the body as its vehicle

has become its knowledge; and it is knowledge that makes mind. The Akasha which becomes mind after the body has been born on earth has already gathered some indistinct knowledge from several minds it has met while coming to earth; perhaps from one mind more than from other minds. In that case it has gained characteristics chiefly from one individual which has passed on from the earth.

TASAWWUF: This subject is dealt with in length particularly in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*. It may not be so important although there are many who are concerned with potential or actual immortality. But it is important also to deal with the immediate movement, to do everything one can to progress in the here and now without bothering about grander cycles. When it is said that God is here, this transcends the immortality.

Nevertheless by its very nature and attunement minds are prone to accept certain knowledges, certain characteristics, attitudes, and interests. It is only after long discipline that the mind can become free from influences internal and external, and it is not always necessary to do that. Even the most perfect of individuals like Christ and Buddha were not blanks. They had characteristics, tendencies, outlooks and purposes.

GATHEKA: Besides, through the parents this Akasha has gained the knowledge or the mentality of their ancestry, their nation, their race, and of the particular grade of evolution of the whole of humanity at that particular time.

TASAWWUF: If this were not so there could be no definite incarnation and there could be no “avataric” cycles. And while the divine light is no doubt in all forms, still there are accommodations, there are, there have been, there will be personalities who could absorb a greater amount of spirituality. But for each person there is a definite purpose, a definite objective, in order to accomplish certain goals in this world.

It has been explained in the teachings that the Sifat-i-Allah, the attributes of Divinity, manifest variously in the forms of life, especially in animals. But they do not possess Essence (Zat) consciously, or perhaps even unconsciously. But these Sifat also manifest variously in types of human beings. From one point of view “races” seem to harbor varying degrees of different Sifat and so there has been rightly or wrongly, identification of these Sifat with different groups of people.

This was also discussed in *The Confessions of Inayat Khan* who saw that certain perfections seem to manifest in certain racial groups. And perhaps it was the manifestations of high attributes that have been more important than the biological processes inferred. Still we find what the Buddhists call “paramitas” and “bhumis” more prevalent, or less prevalent, among racial, religious and culture groups.

GATHEKA: Some say animals have no mind. But that is a wrong conception. Wherever there is a body there is a mind; even a tree has a mind. Luther Burbank once said to me in support of this

argument, "You should watch the tendency of a plant, what is its inclinations; for if you do not watch it the plant will not grow fully. I treat them as living beings. They speak to me, and I to them."

TASAWWUF: Whenever there is a nervous system there must be a mind. The nerves are the connecting nexus between body and mind and in a sense belong to both. We can see the whole of evolution in accord with what has even been called "Darwinism" and Darwinism is not wrong; it simply is not completely correct.

There is also the science of Animal Psychology which is also referred to in the teachings arising out of the work of Jagadis Bose in Calcutta. But he found even metallic psychology and this was first applied in the aeroplane industry and then otherwise without giving credit to the Indian savant. But it is used practically though many theorists may not have heard of it.

GATHEKA: The first thing we can learn about the mind is that the mind is independent of the body as far as its existence is concerned.

TASAWWUF: Electricity was first studied in forms, in physical charges and discharges; in static electricity and in cells and wires. Much later it was discovered that there were electrical charges in space; and then the wireless, the radio, the television, and this will go on indefinitely as man learns more about space and about nature.

GATHEKA: But the mind is enriched by the experience man gets through his senses. There is no doubt that the mind is within the body, but it is outside the body also, just like the light which is both within the lantern and without. The body is the lantern in which there is the light, but the light is not obscured by the lantern; the light is independent of the lantern. It shines out; and so does the mind.

TASAWWUF: When we start using the mind consciously it takes on different aspects. We have an autonomic nervous system which works as if by instinct and this really shows that there is a Spirit of Guidance within man, though his ego may not be conscious of it. And there is the cerebro-spinal system which works through the awakened consciousness. But there is also a higher consciousness, when man learns to function beyond narrow limits and then he attains the Wisdom, and it is the Wisdom that uses him and yet he uses the Wisdom. This is beyond names and forms.

GATHEKA: The brain is not mind, just as the piece of flesh is not the heart. Only, feeling is felt more deeply in the breast, and thought is made more clear in the brain. In other words, spectacles are not eyes; spectacles only enable one to see things more clearly; but the sight is independent of the spectacles, while the spectacles are dependent upon the sight. So the body is dependent upon the mind, but the mind is independent of the body. Body cannot exist without mind, but mind can exist without the body. The mind is the invisible being of the body. It has its seat in the physical being; and it is that seat which is called brain, as the seat of feeling is the heart.

TASAWWUF: We must revert to the analogies in electrical phenomena. As has been explained, it began on a very gross level. The first electrical phenomena known to man were very gross, in the

heavy physical. Then conduction was discovered and the nature of conductors and non-conductors. Then electricity independent of conductors, of physical bodies, as if it were an element of space or Akasha, and perhaps that is exactly what it is.

When Nicholas Roerich went to Tibet and discussed electricity, he found the sages to know much about the energy, little about the conductors and conveyors. The same was true of the Kabbalists who discussed ashmal. It would seem the mystics knew, have always known, much about natural phenomena and sometimes more than the scientists who can observe but not always explain.

No doubt every sort of phenomena has its own vibrational ranges, and not only different degrees of certain types of vibrations, but even different kinds of vibrations, some known, some known but not studied enough, and some always unknown.

GATHEKA: All that the senses perceive is outward, but all that mind can perceive is inward. This means that imagination rises from the mind and that the mind can perceive it; feeling, memory, concentration, reason, all these are perceptions of the mind. One can call the mind more the being of man than the body; when we compare body with mind it is just like the coat a person wears.

TASAWWUF: It has been explained many times in the teachings, the philological relation between the word “mind” and “man,” between mind and processes of thought. But there are the other processes, as explained here, that also belong to the mind. Even physiologists and psychologists do not always know the relation of processes of feeling, memory, and reason to the anatomy. There are many aspects of life for which there seems to be no specially known center in the body and so all kinds of experiments are tried from time to time. But this does not mean that even the most advanced scientists and physiologists know the principles involved, or where the physical center or organ for these principles is located.

GATHEKA: Mind has five different aspects.

TASAWWUF: It says in the teachings that mind has five aspects but these are altered to four, when man passes through processes of initiation and trial, or even death. This is studied in Symbology and also in Esotericism insofar as it is involved with the symbology. So we have the Star and Cross as living symbols.

GATHEKA: The first aspect is the power of thinking. And thinking can be divided into two parts: imagination, which is an outcome of the automatic action of mind, and thought, which is a result of intentional thinking. A thoughtful man, therefore is not necessarily imaginative, nor an imaginative man thoughtful.

TASAWWUF: Some time when the subtle body is more recognized, and also its connection with the physical; when the functions of the so-called “ductless” glands and even of all glands are better known, we shall have knowledge of the relation of the apparently seen (through the senses) and unseen (i.e. unseen through the limited senses). This of itself may not enable us to augment

faculties of thinking and imagination at will but will help in that direction.

Also by the esoteric science known as Murakkabah Man can learn to go further into his apprehension of what is usually called the “unseen,” which is to say the hyper-physical, the meta-physical of Aristotle. And we can also awaken these glands and their functions and work in both the seen and the unseen by concentration and esotericism.

GATHEKA: Both qualities have their place. A person who is accustomed to think and is not capable of imagination is far removed from that beauty which is expressed in poetry and music, as these come from imagination. When the mind is given a free hand to do as it likes, it dances, as it were, and out of its gestures, a picture is created, call it art, poetry, or music. In whatever form it expresses itself it is beautiful.

TASAWWUF: One can almost say that thought is Jelal and imagination Jemal. Also the frontal lobe of the Pituitary gland seems connected with the Jelal processes and the posterior lobe with the Jemal processes. Both are there and both can be developed, and if they are developed man will progress accordingly.

It has not yet been learned how to do this from without. Much of what has been philosophy or metaphysics has become scientific knowledge as man learned through his own experiences. And yet there can be much more development, especially as the subtle is more and more recognized. Or even more as the faculty of Kashf (insight) is aroused.

We definitely need the growth of appreciation of the beautiful, and counterbalances to man's concern with power and conquest. To combat these does not mean progress, but to balance them does. In Sufism it is both taught and learned that balance is needed above all in life. And from this comes Kemal, perfection.

GATHEKA: Many people laugh at an imaginative person. They say, “He is in the clouds, he is dreaming.” But all works of art and music and poetry come from imagination, for imagination is the free flow of the mind, when the mind is allowed to work by itself and bring out the beauty and harmony it contains. But when it is restricted by a certain principle or rule, then it does not work freely.

TASAWWUF: No doubt scientists and investigators have also used imagination. This was particularly true of the French fiction writer, Jules Verne. He may be regarded as the inventor or founder of science-fiction as it is called. As time passed, more than one, indeed many, many of what people have called his “fantasies” have come to be found true objectively.

The same was also true of the English H.G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley, and many others, so that many are now working in fields where both thought and imagination participate. And man has reached the moon.

GATHEKA: No doubt among artists and musicians you will find many who are dreamers and unpractical people. But that does not mean they are less gifted. Perhaps their unpracticalness in some way helps them to accomplish something that practical people cannot accomplish. One need not follow their example, but one can appreciate it just the same.

TASAWWUF: The first aspect one might consider here is whether they may not be what are called “Jinn-souls,” or whether the impressions they received while living in the Jinn-world before coming to earth were very strong; or whether their evolution has not brought them to that state. All of this balances out when one considers life either from their point of view or from a universal point of view.

The next thing to consider is the part they play in the evolution of the race, or in certain aspects of what is called progress. If one looks back one can see this. When the sciences of the Greeks were advanced for their time, the artists were even more advanced. The scientists and philosophers belong to the past, but the Greek artists and sculptors and poets belong to all times.

Then we also see this in the difference between the warlike and peaceful people, that among the imaginative persons we find many more peaceful people and they do not want to hate or fight or destroy. They are, in the certain sense, the builders, the children of Brahma, rather than of Shiva, the Destroyer.

GATHEKA: Besides, no one has believed in God, no one has loved God, and no one has reached the presence of God, who has not been helped by his imagination. Those who argue with the believer and say, “But where is God? Can you show me? How can you conceive God? How do you explain God?”—they are the ones without imagination; and no one can give his own imagination to them.

TASAWWUF: Even the most skeptical must admit the existence of a faculty of imagination. They cannot deny its existence. Even those who are most material can not support a claim that imagination has not in some ways, somewhere, somehow, helped toward certain achievement. If it were not for this the human race would be at a standstill. And then what the Hindus call Samas would dominate.

But how can anyone really give another his concepts either? He can awaken certain areas in the minds and hearts of others but actually he does not give, at most he can only awaken. Nor is it necessary to explain. The heart does not, cannot explain to the head what it is concerned with. The heart must either be aroused or arouse itself; it cannot be moved by mind.

GATHEKA: Can anyone believe in the belief of another? If one can believe in anything one must do it oneself. And of what is the belief formed?—of imagination. It has been said, “If you have no God make one;” and no one has ever reached God who has not been able to make God.

TASAWWUF: This is a natural tendency. The existence of the soul does not depend upon any

man's thought about it, for the soul is. Whether it can be proven or not depends upon whether man identifies himself with mind or not. The mind may or may not try to circumvent all that is in name and form, but it does not always apprehend that existence does not depend upon name and form. But name and form depend upon existence. And on this point many philosophies fail, for they assume the existence of thinker and thought and this assumption makes them fundamental, makes the consciousness separate as if such thought and mind were the first cause. And if they were the first cause this might cause confusion for there are many races of different types of culture which operate on no such premises at all. So they are put down by mind as being the lesser evolved.

But if we were to look at it from the Taoist point of view—and Taoism represents very very ancient philosophy and culture—such suppositions are nothing but the assumptions that shadows are realities; that the thoughts of men are more fundamental than man himself; and that whatever we say, do or think, by our saying, doing and thinking, is fundamentally valid.

Even the Westerners who play with Taoist philosophy never get to its root, for all the time it is the ego and mind playing which is contrary to Taoism. It is also contrary to the whole principle and process of Mental Purification and negates the teachings of Jesus Christ, that unless we become as little children we do not possess the kingdom of heaven. And all man's acclaims to the kingdom of heaven is useless, fruitless, for it is an acclaim and not an accomplishment.

GATHEKA: Truth without God is not satisfying. One ought to reach truth through God; it is that which gives satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: There is a principle in Sufism called riza (we find it often used as a name), and the teachings, especially that of Sheikh Al-Hujwiri, is that we should find our satisfaction in Allah. But most people, even using such words find satisfaction in themselves, in their egos. It is not real satisfaction. It is not accompanied by joy and love and bliss and fulfillment. And without this joy and love and bliss and fulfillment it is nothing at all; it certainly is not satisfaction.

GATHEKA: If all the strength that one derives from food were given in one pill it would perhaps keep a person alive, but it would not give him the joy of eating. If one took the pill of truth, maybe a part of one's being would be satisfied, but that is not real satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: One of the first teachings given to candidates for Bayat is on "The Intoxication of Life." If there were no intoxication, if there were no pleasure, how could infants come to take nourishment? There is something more in it. Even the word "instinct" alone does not explain. According to Sufi teachings there is a spirit of Guidance in instinct, be it conscious or unconscious or subconscious.

GATHEKA: The idea of God feeds a person; he must first make it in himself; with his imagination; but if he is not willing to use his imagination, if he is only waiting for God to come to him, he will have to wait a long time.

TASAWWUF: Sufis teach that if you want the reality of God you must make God into a reality. Most people have a thought, a conception. And for that very reason often Mental Purification is needed, for the God is not only of an infinitude of thoughts passing through the same processes as other thoughts. The God is the Light, the Power, the Energy, the Brilliance in the whole thinking process. And therefore it is necessary to deal with the whole process, the depths, the fundamental; and for this Sufis practice meditation and learn the science of the Wazifas, which enable man to find the reality within himself.

And as soon as man becomes aware of the Light, the Energy, the Brilliance in himself, then his exaltation manifests and it increases as he becomes more and more aware of God and God-power.

GATHEKA: When a person thinks, that is another kind of action. At that time he controls his mind, either consciously or unconsciously, and directs it according to his own will. He becomes reasonable, exact, and thoughtful.

TASAWWUF: This is a subject considered both in the worldly culture and in the esoteric culture. What is called “science” is continually making progress in its knowledge of the intellectual and conscious sides of man, though often it may be a slow process. But in the esoteric disciplines it is not so slow, and especially when Murakkabah or Concentration is learned together with devotion and esotericism.

GATHEKA: Both an imaginative and a thinking person may go to extremes and may fail; but keeping the balance is what brings about desired results. A thinking person, also, may think so hard that he becomes confused by his own thoughts. There are many thinkers who think so hard that they become thoughtless.

TASAWWUF: This idea appeared when Hazrat Inayat Khan saw Rodin’s statue called “The Thinker.” He said, “Yes, no doubt he is thinking, thinking hard.” This is more like brooding and apparently it does not bring any fruit, accomplish results.

When the young people enter college or universities one of the first things they learn from their own experiences is concerning tension and relaxation. It comes naturally and is seldom considered in the courses on Philosophy or Psychology. And they learn from this experience the need for balance between these two states—relaxation and tension. Then they also learn how thinking causes tension but is needed, and imagination is more relaxed but is also an exercise of mind.

And one soon finds that if he adheres too much to either of these practices the mind is either worn out or fatigued or sterile. But gradually the cultures of the world will learn the value of devotion and proper breathing and when this is achieved there will be a more rapid growth toward evolutionary advancement.

GATHEKA: The second aspect of mind is memory. The work of memory is not creative but

perceptive. Its work is to receive impressions and to gather them together.

TASAWWUF: We can see some of this in the mythologies of the ancients that they made a Goddess of Memory and from that Goddess the Muses sprang. Although Madam Blavatsky pointed out the value of mythology it has remained largely symbolical because her followers and successors have been satisfied with symbology; they do not care to go deeper and find this as part of their own beings.

GATHEKA: Some scientists say that the cells of the brain are impressed by every impression that comes through the senses, and it is that which is kept in the brain, to be brought forth when one wants them. But it is not like that, although it can be taken as a symbolic explanation. The scientist has pictured it as it is in the inner plane, but because he does not recognize the inner plane he wants to explain it in physical terms and calls it brain-cells. It is true in essence, but it is not in the brain, it is in the mind.

TASAWWUF: What is called “scientific psychology” has not yet recognized the subtle or inner worlds. One result is that it is always changing; the scientists of one period differ and even differ radically from the psychologists of another period. And there is no necessary continuum. If you study the truer sciences like physics and biology, you can see a sort of continuum, a progression, an evolution. The addition of new discoveries, adds, integrates, but does not often destroy. But during the years the growth of new outlooks in psychology often destroys the older outlooks and there is seeming no end to this process nor can there be an end until research is carried to the depths. This subject is dealt with in “Mind-World” and The Soul, Whence and Whither and other places. But it is best learned through one’s inner development, by one’s own experiences as he becomes conscious of the depths of personality.

GATHEKA: Memory may be likened to a photographic plate; the impressions it takes remain there, and when a person wishes to recollect something this faculty helps him. It is within his reach. As soon as he wants to recall an experience he puts his hand, so to speak, on that particular plate which has received the impression of a certain experience. No experience received from sight, or smell, or hearing, or touch, or taste is lost.

TASAWWUF: This can be ascertained by many methods. Thus hypnotism has been used and besides hypnotism, there are other methods, such as the use of carbon dioxide gas and both artificial and natural devices which make this possible. Thus we find in Alexander Dumas’ Memories of a Physician and in other works of French novelists a great deal of scientific and occult knowledge which proves this by experience.

If we look at it from another point of view, i.e. of karma, then nothing is lost, nothing can be lost until an equilibrium is re-established. Besides there may be truth in the Buddhist teaching of Alaya-Vijnana, which is called “store-house consciousness,” that everything ever said, done and thought is marked on the bosom of the universe itself.

GATHEKA: When people say, “My memory is not good; I cannot remember things; I am absent-minded;” the reason is that they have lost control over this faculty; but the impression is there all the same.

TASAWWUF: And this can be proven, as above, by the methods used artificially or naturally. Besides, when one is able to control his breath and to perform the exercises and disciplines of esotericism, he need not fear any more about the loss of memory. Still one would not wish to keep everything in the conscious mind all the time, there would be confusion.

We can breathe as if through the body and so benefit the body. The adept can send his breath to any or all cells or tubes in the flesh. By this he can renew, renovate, strengthen the body or its parts. And in a similar way also can the breath be sent through the mind. Only for this the breath must be held and also it has to be refined. The more refined the breath the more it can reach through the mind and also, by careful selection of energies, it can send the proper currents through the mind. And for this the esoteric sciences are most helpful.

GATHEKA: Very often a person says, “I know it, but I cannot recall it to my memory.” In other words, on his mind he knows it but in his brain it is not yet clear. For instance when a person cannot remember the name or the face of someone he says, “I think I know it but I cannot find it for the moment.” That means that his mind knows it, that it is there, but that he cannot make it clear in his brain.

TASAWWUF: There is in the science of Physics what is known as “interference” of light. The light, so to speak, is operating, but there is another light, there is another group of rays, not entirely in tune with the first group of rays and there is some action and interaction between them. Perhaps in a similar way, the mind, or rather the ego, is so concerned with affairs, or there is the pall of samsara operating which he does not control. Then it is that the mind does not seem to be working properly.

Very often when people lose or forget things they can go into meditation and it is remarkable how sometimes, with even a short meditation they can go direct to the lost article. It has not been lost but the impressions or samskaras are operating in such a way that there is a haze, a fog. This can always be cleared up by the operations of the inner light, the divine guidance in all of us.

GATHEKA: Memory can also be divided into parts. There are certain things we need not look for, but which are always clear in our memory. We have only to stretch out and put our hand on them, such as figures, names, and faces of those we know. We can recall them at any moment we wish; they are always living in our memory.

TASAWWUF: This has been called the “conscious mind.” Perhaps it is conscious because we are most interested, or because they have become part of our atmosphere, or because they are in some way connected with our functionings and purposes in life. We see the relation between them and also our desires and aspirations, with both the selfish and unselfish parts of our existence.

They are, so to speak, an extension of our own egos.

GATHEKA: But then there is the second part of the memory which is sometimes called the subconscious mind, though in reality it is the bottom of the memory. In this part of the memory, a photograph is made of everything we have seen or known or heard, even once, just like a flash; and it remains there. There we can find it at some time or other, either with difficulty or easily, as the case may be.

TASAWWUF: Reference has been made to two things: (a) akashic records (b) the Alaya Vijnana. Practically we can consider them as identical. We can reach into these areas by deep meditation and also by purification and refinement of breath. The more refined the breath the deeper we can go into the recesses of personality.

No doubt it may take some time and discipline to accomplish this, but Fikr is a great help and along with Fikr the conscious refinement. But this refinement is also connected with the assimilation of the etheric element. If we can increase the influence of the ether breath without diminishing anything else at all, we have a refinement and this refinement reaches deep into the untapped parts of our being.

We can see a little bit of that in the study of Indian music where one learns to have a conscious rapport with closer and closer vibrations of sound and finds them melodious, harmonious, pleasant. One then responds to them readily. But the same can be said of color and of taste and of all aspects of esthetic refinement. But when we refine the breath accordingly the whole personality responds. Therefore esoteric development along with mysticism has both theoretical and practical values.

GATHEKA: Besides these two aspects of the memory there is a still deeper sphere to which our memory is linked, and that sphere is the universal memory, in other words, the divine Mind, where we do not only recollect what we have seen or heard or known, but where we can even touch something we have never learnt or heard or known or seen. This can be found also; only for this the doors of memory should be laid open.

TASAWWUF: The Alaya-Vijnana or storehouse memory is the same as the cosmic mind. This cosmic mind is not apart from humanity, and so there is a Buddhist saying: "Your mind is the Buddha." But this means not only the mind with all its faculties, but also the pure mind which is above the acts as if apart from all the faculties which depend on it, not it on them.

Buddha taught anicca which is to say all things and processes are subject to change. But it is not easily applied. As soon as one practices meditation and especially deep meditation he is no longer exactly the same individual as he was before. Every meditation changes man in some respects; and the more he practices the meditations, the more he changes and either obtains the wide outlook or the capacity for the wide outlook. So man is actually being reborn and renewed with every step and stage of spiritual growth.

When man comes to the deep changes of meditation he begins to operate as what Buddhists call nirmanakaya, that is to say one is no longer dependent on the ego mind but has access to the cosmic mind.

What is called “the Spirit of Guidance” in Sufism is the same as the attainment of the Bodhisattvic function. Then one is no longer dependent on his ego-mind. This also is a teaching of the Gita, but as Sri Krishna has said, only one in a multitude may understand. Nevertheless, we should cognize that deep meditation alters outlook and capacities. Then one can look into the cosmic mind and function with the cosmic mind and one reaches a stage beyond the ordinary intellection and intuition alike, where both are conjoined.

All the loose talk about ego then disappears. Man remains an individual but he is not the separated individual any longer, he is not so different from his fellows. They all can commune in, and with, the cosmic mind. Then anything that has occurred in history or been thought by man can be impressed upon one’s consciousness. That also is the secret of epic poetry. The one who can write epic poetry is surely one who has contacted the Alaya consciously or unconsciously; better, superconsciously.

GATHEKA: The third aspect of the work of the mind is mind-control, the concentrating power. This is done in two ways: with the help of memory and with the help of mind. The concentration that is performed with the help of memory is a negative or passive concentration. It requires little effort to concentrate with the help of memory.

TASAWWUF: No doubt this is a negative, passive or moon-phase of mind. It often appears more expressive in young people while the positive mental functions appear more in elders. But this is not necessarily so, for there are chess geniuses and mathematicians who are often young in years. (They may, however, be “old souls.”)

GATHEKA: The Hindus taught this by placing certain gods and goddesses before a person and telling him to look at them and then to close his eyes and think about them. By looking at a certain object the memory reflected it, and that reflection was the concentration.

TASAWWUF: Sufis have the inner science of Murakkabah which is translated as “concentration.” It has many stages and variations, and modern Sufism is so inclusive that it has preserved all the teachings and methods of many schools. In this it is practical as well as mystical; for there is a final proof in practicality, and what cannot be applied is of no avail. It can be argued for logically, but that does not prove anything.

It has been explained that while in more ancient times there were many gods and goddesses and that the powers of nature as well as archetypes were deified separately, with the coming of Mohammed and with the organization of the spiritual schools which became known as “Sufis” all these trends, teachings and compilations of wisdom became integrated and unified in a single movement. We call this the Sufi Movement.

The practices are essentially the same. We can even use the gods and goddesses, but pragmatically. Also the attributes of the One God known as Sifat. In this way successes can be achieved.

GATHEKA: But those who do not practice concentration automatically retain things of great interest, things that impressed their mind most. It is for this reason that some carry with them a fear which has perhaps been there from childhood. It is carried with them through life.

TASAWWUF: The teachings are that fear is connected with the earth element. Therefore it is possible to surmount this by having the knowledge of the earth element. We can breathe a certain way. We can also have a devotion, and any devotion that is real, that is sincere, will automatically remove the fear. Thus we might have a concentration like that of the lion or even of the serpent. These things are mentioned in The Inner Life and also are explained at length in the commentary thereon.

A full heart-breath with a devout concentration, will always remove fear as well as other negative emotions.

GATHEKA: Some have a sad impression of disappointment; they carry it throughout life, they retain it in their mind. The mind keeps an impression alive by revivifying it, an impression of revenge, of gratefulness, of success, of failure, of love, of admiration. It is kept there, and the mind-cells give it food and keep it alive. Sometimes this is helpful and sometimes it works against one.

TASAWWUF: The mission and function of the spiritual teacher is to encourage the positive, and discourage the negative, emotions. Suggestion and speech play a small role here but the emphasis must be on removing the basic causes, to get deep down into the personality where there is the source of all love and light. Only this is not done by mere words.

The teacher tries to shine, with his love and light and consideration of the pains of others, and with the emphasis on the Being and Qualities of God. He tries to attune the disciples to these Qualities, and through that, on God Himself. This is really the purification, for according to Sufism purification is not merely negative, it is to enable the Divine Light to shine in, through and with everybody.

GATHEKA: Now the psychologist calls it a fixed idea and is always ready to call it a form of insanity, but it is not insanity. Everyone has got it; it is one of the attributes of mind. It is the faculty, the quality of retaining a thought. No doubt it may sometimes seem to be insanity, but insanity only comes from the abuse of the faculty. Any faculty can be abused and make a person unbalanced.

TASAWWUF: And one may ask what causes the psychologist to come to such a conclusion? Is he not acting in exactly the same way as those whom we are analyzing? Only he has a social right to analyze and criticize. It may be very legal and also it may be to his commercial or professional advantage. But in the West little thought has been given to the principle that the doctor is to be paid when one is well and not to be paid when one is ill. So the physician takes upon himself the burden

of curing. But now it is different. You can pay the physician or psychologists and submit to treatment and yet not be cured. And it is not considered the fault of the professional person if you are not cured. You put up money, you put up time and there may be little gain.

Yet there is a true psychology and this will appear when the scientists look more deeply into human nature and also accept the ideas of others cultures, of India and China to the West, just as India and China do accept much of western culture, and also from each other, more than western people have.

GATHEKA: Then there is a positive concentration which is creative. This concentration comes by thinking. When one thinks of a tree or a flower, the mind has to create atoms in order to make that form; therefore it is positive. It needs will-power, a greater action of mind, to concentrate upon an object which the mind has to make. The mind has to work; it is not only concentrating, but creating and concentrating.

TASAWWUF: The whole subject is dealt with in detail in the inner teachings on Murakkabah and the commentaries thereon, and the traditional methods, written or unwritten, associated with the Sufi Orders.

GATHEKA: There are some who have a natural power of concentration and there are others who lack it. But the mystery of success in all directions of life, and the secret of progress, is to be found in the power of concentration.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed at length in the study papers of the Advanced Circle. But it is not only intellectual consideration, but the techniques are needed, which are needed and applied. In this the modern Sufi Message is rather complete when compared with other teachings. For these words alone carry no weight; but when a device is added they carry all weight.

GATHEKA: It is not only progress and success which are to be gained by it, but spiritual attainment is the result of concentration.

TASAWWUF: In the lessons in Murakkabah one begins with name and form. Gradually complications are introduced, such as looking at a number of forms together; then a single form with improvement. And then one is adding the mental power, the unseen power. And once this faculty is awakened, then one learns how to function in the unseen, with the unseen. And when that is attained, one is on a certain path of mastery, and he gradually obtains power over name and form.

GATHEKA: And very often one sees that some make efforts to concentrate but cannot really concentrate, and others do not know that they concentrate, but do it all the same. Prayer and meditation and various other exercises, religious or spiritual, are meant to develop the power of concentration.

TASAWWUF: No doubt being interested is an important factor. One finds this particularly in artistic and creative persons. It is very hard to concentrate when one has no interest, no objective; but instead of making it mechanical the Sufi tries to unite all concentrations with the general purpose of life.

As the heart begins to open, as there is progress in the use of Kashf, one has, so to speak, a new life. This brings the necessary impetus. At the same time both breathing and practices and Fikr should be relied on; they are most helpful.

GATHEKA: In the East it is customary in the mosque for one man to lead the prayers and all the other worshippers stand behind him. Before offering their prayers they first focus their minds on joining the thought of their leader.

TASAWWUF: Therefore many believe that a proper training is needed in Shariat, the religious laws, before one is ready for the spiritual path. And from one point of view this is true, but now mankind, with all its faults, has developed in certain directions. He is ready for something more, something else, both to direct him toward spirituality and to advance him on the paths of spirituality.

[The following story was omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.]
(GATHEKA: Now there was a great mystic who would not go to the mosque to pray. He was always in prayer; he did not need to go to the mosque. But there was an orthodox king reigning at the time, who had decreed that everybody had to attend the prayers. So this man was compelled by the police to go and join in, but in the middle of the prayers he left, which was considered a great crime. When he was brought before the court to be judged he said, "I could not help it. The leader in his thought went to his house because he had forgotten his keys. So while I was praying I was left without a leader in the mosque, and that is why I went out." This shows that as long as there is spirit in a religious form, it is a beautiful form which has life in it; but if there is no spirit behind it, however beautiful the form may be it is of no use. This is what is indicated by the saying in the Bible: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.")

GATHEKA: The fourth aspect of the mind is reasoning. This is mathematical faculty, a faculty which weighs and measures and sees angles, whether they are right or wrong. And it is this faculty which makes man responsible for his actions.

TASAWWUF: No doubt there is a connection here with free-will. And in some languages the word for "man" is more like the word for "will" than the word for "mind." Still in this sense the thought-functions are with the will and the imagination functions without the will as we know them.

GATHEKA: If he is not an individual he is nothing but an atom moved by influences. Whether conditions move him, or climatic influences, or personal influences, he is nothing but an instrument. But if he is held responsible for his actions it is because of this one faculty of mind that weighs and measures and reasons things out.

TASAWWUF: Some aspects of orthodoxy in the different religions have laid great stress on this point. This has led to arguments for and against the freedom of will, its relation to fate, and also the relation of God both to will and fate. It is often very confusing because in this it is naively assumed that man has an ego and there is some confusion also between the ego functions and the will-functions. This has led to many abstruse philosophies, but they are more often complex than deep. Sometimes they are very popular, studied by many, and then in a few generations pass away as if they never existed at all.

GATHEKA: Nevertheless, the reasoning of one person is not the same as the reasoning of another; and the reason of one moment is not the reason of the next moment. Something that is right just now may not be right tomorrow because reasoning will change. And they who dispute over reasonings do it in vain, for the reasoning of every person is different, and the reasoning of every person is good for him at that specific time.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed in the Gatha classes, especially in the Elementary Study Circle. But it takes many studies, and much emphasis, as well as the awakening of Insight to free man from what has become his delusion. For many, especially among the educated, adhere to what they call "reasoning." But Dr. Wittgenstein, who was one of the most profound logicians of all times has said: "The trouble with reason is that reason often considers itself sublime." And we find people who have no depth at all clinging to what they call "reason" which is nothing but the formulation of their own ideas and has no universality at all.

GATHEKA: To urge and force one's reason on the mind of another is useless. The best way to educate a person is to develop his reasoning instead of urging upon him one's own reason, which is what many do.

TASAWWUF: There is no doubt that this was a great stumbling block in the establishment of the Sufi Message in the West. For those who took on the responsibilities of teaching and initiation also took it into their minds to compel their own reasoning on others, and to use will-power rather than love. This was a great stumbling-block for a long, long time.

The lessons for the Teachers make it very clear that this should never be done. Instructing a mureed is in many respects like guiding a new-born infant. For this love and tenderness and caution are needed, to avoid being hard excepting where it cannot be helped; and to augment the capacity in the neophytes for light, love, and wisdom.

GATHEKA: It is wonderful to watch the tricks of the reasoning faculty. When another person has done something, reason says, "Because that person is wicked and has already done ten wicked things, now he has surely done another wicked thing." And when a person himself has done a wicked thing, reason says, "I have done it because I could not have done otherwise, I could not help it." Reason takes the side of the ego.

TASAWWUF: It is a comparatively simple thing to work out syllogisms, or mathematical equations

and formula. The mathematics is no doubt sounder because it is devoid of ego, and yet even there is some subtle assumption. Nevertheless mathematics is superior to literary logic, because it more often leads to the same conclusions or to harmonies.

If we look at the reasoning of most people, it falls in one of two classes. In one case, everything seems centered around the ego. This is especially true of those in the ammara stage of nufs. Often they are incapable of being otherwise, and here we have no right to expect them to be otherwise. In the Education of children, certain steps are advisable and the book Education which appears in the Sufi teaching is excellent in providing for education based on more profound principles and understanding than that which seems current in many parts of the world. And some of these principles may also be applied to much older people, especially those in the ammara stage.

But there is a much more subtle type of reasoning. In this a person appears one moment as if he were speaking for himself alone, and the next moment he appears as a spokesman for a family or group, and the next moment as a representative of a faction or a religion; and then he claims to be speaking for humanity in general. He will drop the "I" and use "we." In this manner he misleads himself and others. The words seem to be fixed in meaning, but the viewpoint is constantly changing to fool, beguile, mislead. In this way many have led themselves and others astray.

GATHEKA: Reason is a slave and a servant of the mind; it is at its beck and call. The mind has only to turn its face to reason, and reason stands there as an obedient slave. It may not be right at all, but it is always there.

TASAWWUF: But a sage is not necessarily anti-intellectual. If we study the history of mathematics, we find many of the great contributors, especially among the Muslims, were themselves Sufis. True, a philosopher like Bergson seems to have worked out a system of logistics into which he has introduced intuition. There is some question of the solidity in the use of this word and its functioning as used by him. His critics say he was ambiguous, while he has insisted that logic by itself may not always be logical. Yet from another point of view, they both may have been right.

The difference between, let us say, Lord Russell and Henri Bergson as opponents, from the standpoint of the Sufi, seems to have arisen from the misunderstanding concerning intuition and insight. The mystic would say that kashf and shahud are cosmic functions which use personality as instruments, rather than as tools of the lower mind. It is only when the mind is pure, it is only when unlearning has become a function in practice that the universal mind manifests in and through mankind. But if one looks at the productions of this universal mind, in whatever direction one examines them, there seems to be a solidity in the logistics which is seldom discernible in the work of egocentrics.

GATHEKA: Reason is the most valuable thing that exists, but it is worthless when it is a slave of the mind. It gives the mind a reason to do either right or wrong. If one went and asked criminals in jail why they had done wrong, each one would have a reason.

TASAWWUF: If we read the mystical philosophers, they have taken this stand both for and against rationalism. But as there has been more exchange between Europe and Asia; and as more profound intellectuals have become disciples in mysticism; and as many disciples of many various schools of discipline have embarked on scientific careers or have examined western culture in general; they have utilized the same tools as the philosophers, and even as the scientists without any sign of egocentricity.

When one reaches the grade of nufs-mutmaina; when one has had the disciplines of mental purification and unlearning, he transcends the intellectual traditions in such a way they become his servants. They are still there, and they become tools in the hands of adepts and masters.

GATHEKA: And if we look still closer at reason we shall see that reason is nothing but a veil and a series of veils, one veil over another. Even when the veils are lifted, at the end there is reason just the same. But as one goes further one will find the more thorough and more substantial reason. It is the surface of reason which is unreliable, but the depth is most interesting; for the depth of reason is the essence of wisdom.

TASAWWUF: We can see certain aspects of this in astrology where the planet Mercury symbolizes both rapid and superficial reason, and the planet Saturn both deep and slow reason. No doubt the superficial reason is more closely connected with emotion, but this alone does not affect its validity. One might say that the philosopher Kant was a Saturnian type, but he did not seem to appreciate a real functioning intuition though he made use of this word. Still, deeper reason is often connected with feeling, and this can be most important.

GATHEKA: The more one understands reason the less one will seek it, because then there is nothing to it; one knows the reason already. It is the unreasonable man who always accuses every person's reason. The more reasonable a person is the more he understands everyone else's reason; that is why the wise can get along with both the wise and the foolish. But the foolish can get along with neither the foolish nor the wise.

TASAWWUF: Often when one depends on insight or intuition alone, he finds he is super-rational, but never irrational. When it is said in the Christian Bible that the world was made by and through Logos, this would imply that there is rationality in the manifested world. This is also latent in the Hebrew word "barashith" which is the very beginning of the Hebrew Bible. It has been translated as "in principle" but then this brings up the question of what is principle? And when we go into it deeply, principle does involve rationality, does involve love and harmony and beauty.

When the term foolish is used here, it means chiefly people in nufs-ammara. When the term wise is used here, it means chiefly people in nufs-mutmaina.

GATHEKA: There is no doubt that there is always a reason behind a reason. And when one arrives at this higher reason, one begins to unlearn, as it is called by the mystic, all that one has once learned. One unlearns and one begins to see quite the opposite. In other words, there is no good

which has not a bad side to it, and there is nothing bad which has not a good side to it.

TASAWWUF: When one has an inspiration, when one wishes to express this inspiration verbally or non-verbally, one will feel it has its own logistics. It may not follow the canons of traditional logic, but it seems true just the same, and even more true. If this were not so, no poetry would ever have been written. If this were not true there would be no means of reconciling differences between human beings.

But there is another aspect of it also—that which is perfect is not subject always to the same laws and rules of the imperfect. Scientists have also found this out that as forms of matter near to perfection their behavior patterns often are quite different than that which could have been deduced by logic alone.

GATHEKA: No one rises without a fall, and no one falls without the promise of a rise. One sees death in birth and birth in death. It sounds very strange, and it is a peculiar idea; but all the same it is a stage. When one rises above what is called reason one reaches that reason which is at the same time contradictory.

TASAWWUF: One may repeat from the Bible, “Every valley shall be exalted and every hill laid low and the crooked places made straight.” Though simple in form, this is so profound as to be almost terrifying. It has been repeated millions of times and yet has made little impression on humanity as a whole.

We also see some of this same super logic in the Buddhist prajna paramita sutra. And when we examine into the depths of Buddha’s teachings as found in the Kegon and Zen schools, we find that even what is usually called “logic” is itself but a species of several types of logistics. And it would seem almost impossible to grasp all these different types of logistics without a complete change of consciousness, without rising above and beyond the ego stage, almost as if one had to be God Himself to understand pure reason.

GATHEKA: This also explains the attitude of Christ. When a criminal was taken to him he had no other attitude towards him than that of the forgiver. He saw no evil there. That is looking from a higher reason. And if we penetrate the thousand veils of reason we can touch the reason of all reasons, and we can come to an understanding that the other reasons can not give. And by that we understand all beings; those who are in the right and those who are in the wrong.

TASAWWUF: Many talk and even talk glibly about different stages of consciousness. Yes, there are many stages of consciousness, but they are certainly not variations of the same state of consciousness which each person may have. Transcendancy involves change of outlook and increased dimensionality of vision. But when increased dimensionality becomes a mere thought form it has no value at all, it is just a noise. That is why many see no great changes in religious people who claim spiritual rebirth without a radical change in functions and outlook.

The sun, the clouds, the space itself do not make distinctions which fall under the norms of traditional reason. Neither does the heart of man. The heart is often irrational, the heart is often superrational, but the heart often achieves what the mind unaided does not. But even here we have to come to the depth of heart itself to get the cosmic vision.

GATHEKA: It is said that the Apostles in one moment were inspired to speak in many languages. It was not the English language, the Hindustani or Chinese language; it was the language of every soul. When a person has reached that state of mind in which it touches the essence of reason then it communicates with every soul. It is not a great thing to know thirty languages; a person may know a hundred languages, but if he does not know the heart of man he knows nothing.

TASAWWUF: There is a vast difference between people who speak in “strange tongues” in a subnormal state of consciousness, when they lose all control of their senses and mind. There is nothing noble in it. If we examine these so-called messages, they are seldom of high import. Sometimes there are repetitive warnings; they do not include, for the most part, any warming, anything encouraging, elevating.

On the other hand, the commentator in high states of inspiration seems to remember every foreign word he has ever encountered, not just read or heard but encountered in any way. He cannot account to it. It is there in the poetry and sometimes also in the prose inspiration.

When Sidi-Abu Salem Al-Alawi came to San Francisco he sometimes needed two interpreters—Arabic to French to English. But in the last part of his talk no interpreter was needed at all. Most of the audience was furious at the interruptions but the Holy Man was most pleased; somebody understood him, somebody already had the Message; it was not necessary for him to establish a Center in San Francisco. And he left his blessing after which the Sufi Movement began to thrive, almost suddenly.

The explanation is not hard to find. It is easy to accept or reject some statement, some teaching out of the ego-mind. The ego-mind will accept or reject without evidence. When the evidence is offered, it requires more than superficial examination or judgment. *Gayan* says, “Heart speaks to heart and soul to soul.” This is very fine. It is often repeated. But when an illustrative example is offered many refuse to accept the evidence. This is nothing but nufs.

Gayan also teaches that God speaks to the prophets in His own language and they interpret it in the languages of men.

GATHEKA: There is a language of the heart. Heart speaks to heart, and that communication makes life interesting. Two persons may not speak, but their sitting together may be an exchange of lofty ideal and harmony.

TASAWWUF: There was a well-known saint, Abdul Aziz of Havelian in Northwest Pakistan. He was so advanced that the Arabs accepted him as Kadi, the only Kadi of this century so accepted by the

Saudi Arabians. Not only that they did not object to his being a Sufi teacher, although many say there is enmity between the two outlooks.

When the commentator was living at Abbottabad in Hazara, Pakistan, which is just to the north of Havelian, he received a strange cable saying that Haji Baba Abdul Aziz was coming and he should wait. He had never heard of the man and only knew a single disciple, yet the holy man knew all about an American who was a disciple in Sufism.

In a few weeks time the holy man arrived, and there was a great celebration at Havelian on a very hot night. There was instant recognition between the Pakistani Haji and the American. But not only that there was instant love between the American and one of the disciples. They sat next to each other and held hands just as we expect from lovers. The American had never before or since had such an experience with a man.

And then the Haji gave the initiation by putting food in his mouth and spitting it and the commentator caught. It contained Baraka, the blessing-transmission, which is so necessary in the establishment of Sufi chains. Later the Haji gave a dinner especially for the American and offered him water from the Zem-Zem well at Mecca. But the people were more amazed at the apparent personal love between persons who could not speak each others' language. It is one thing in the books, it is another thing in the life itself.

GATHEKA: When first I became initiated at the hand of my spiritual teacher in India, I was as eager as any man could be to assimilate, to grasp, as much as I could. Day after day I was in the presence of my Murshid, but not once did he speak on spiritual matters. Sometimes he spoke about herbs and plants, at other times about milk and butter. I went there every day for six months to see if I could hear anything about spiritual things. After six months the teacher spoke to me one day about the two parts of a personality, the outer and the inner. And I was over-enthusiastic; the moment he began I took out a notebook and pencil. But as soon as I did this my teacher changed the subject and spoke about other things. I understood what that meant; it meant in the first place that the teaching of the heart should be assimilated in the heart.

TASAWWUF: This is very hard to assimilate and understand. One may speak on this subject and audiences will say they understand. But as soon as there will be any illustration, any evidence, it will not be grasped by the ego. Therefore we teach about kashf, insight. It is part of heart language, it is part of heart-language which does not disrupt mentality but complements and even perfects it. And if it were not for that, there would be no communication at all because the exact meanings of words are always changing.

GATHEKA: The heart is the notebook for it; when it is written in another notebook it will remain in one's pocket, but when it is written in the heart it will remain in the soul. Besides one has to learn the lesson of patience, to wait, for all knowledge comes in its own time.

TASAWWUF: The teachings affirm that there is a world of body, a world of mind and a world of

heart. But it is very difficult for the mind to fully appreciate it. For instance, at a lower level the mind is not aware of all the processes of digestion, neural activity, muscular movement, etc. These things are left to the part of consciousness called instinct. And at a higher level, so to speak, the mind is not aware, indeed may not comprehend, the levels of emotions, the levels of feelings and the universe of insight.

We are taught that attunement is the key to spiritual development. Actually the attunement is the key to many more things. We turn on radios, television, without analyzing them, yet we benefit therefrom; we appreciate.

In another sense, the heart records verbally, super-verbally and non-verbally. Without deep impressions there cannot be any spiritual advancement.

GATHEKA: I asked myself further if it was worthwhile to come to a place after a long journey, and go there every day for six months to hear of nothing but trees and butter. And my deepest self answered: Yes, more than worthwhile, for there is nothing in the whole world more precious than the presence of the holy one. His teaching may not be given in the theories, but it is in his atmosphere. That is the living teaching which is real upliftment.

TASAWWUF: If we examine the gayatri Saum, Salat and Khatum on one hand, and Pir, Nabi and Rassoul on the other hand, we find there is a difference. The first three seem to imply that we exist, and that God exists, and we hope to be assimilated into God. The next three imply that there are deliverers who carry us to salvation, and not necessarily by the ways of prayer or devotion or even effort. They seem to indicate that there are men, or supermen, who are the instruments of grace. So we benefit by their atmosphere and even by their breath, rather than by any external communication. Indeed the Baraka-transmission is much like the dharma-transmission. It seems to come as a whole, as a transformatory communication rather than as driplets from a fountain.

GATHEKA: The essence of reason is the knowledge of God. Therefore if there is any divine knowledge to be found, it is in the essence of reason that one can find it.

TASAWWUF: Here we find ourselves back again in the midst of the Logos teachings. Logos means word, it means reason, it means divine-intelligent-light. Perhaps it means much more, this more to be obtained by transformatory realization and not by driplet communication just explained. That is why Zen has sometimes been called the Sudden school. But actually all transformatory experiences are sudden.

This would indicate that the dharmakaya of Buddhism is the same as the Logos of Christianity. No doubt there are two kinds of Zen Roshis or spiritual teachers: A.-Those adept in ritual; B.-Those who have been enlightened. You can always tell the latter. It is in their atmosphere, but it is also in their teachings. The Zen masters of the first class make a distinction between Christ and Buddha; they also devalue love.

The attained Zen Masters, indeed the realized Masters of all schools of Buddhism and of all schools of the Dharma make no distinction between Christ and Buddha. So it is very easy for an adept to discern between the true illumination and the ritually appointed prelates of any faith. The universal light is the universal light howsoever it is called.

GATHEKA: And the fifth aspect of the mind is feeling. If this faculty is not open, then however wise and clever a person may be he is incomplete, he is not living. Mind begins to live from the moment that feeling is awakened in it. Many use the word feeling, but few of us know it. And the more one knows it the less one speaks of it. It is so vast that if there is any sign of God it is in feeling.

TASAWWUF: If we study the physical sciences especially, we find the term “field of force.” We find this with magnets. But this knowledge has been extended until in Einstein and his colleagues there have been even cosmic field and their doctrines. No doubt this is true on the physical plane, but it may be even more true in the worlds unseen. That is to say, feeling and attunement may become the determinative factors in our lives.

Something of this kind is indicated in The Soul, Whence and Whither, in dealing with the angelic side of man. It is even more indicated in Education, especially dealing with the development and education of infants and babies. They do assimilate certain vibrations and certain fields which may be called feelings, and in these subtle feelings are often the directives of life. Perhaps these are indicated in horoscopes. There are two aspects of this.

Most of the planets would indicate the personal or voluntary side of an individual. But the distant planets would indicate the fields of operation. The distant planets cover more than the individual lifetime; the nearer planets cover less. But this is the maya-oric or measurable side of man. He is not determined or pre-determined by such, but his instruments and vehicles are somewhat determined.

There cannot be an exact science of feeling. The celebrated psychiatrist Carl Jung has placed feeling, emotion, thought and activity side by side. They are not so separative, and yet they are not the same. Each has its own areas or fields, and these are beyond the capacity of ordinary minds and all machines (which after all are instruments of Mind) to measure.

GATHEKA: Today people distinguish intellectuality from sentimentality, but in point of fact intellectuality cannot be perfect without sentimentality. Neither can the thinking power be nurtured, nor the faculty of reasoning be sustained without a continual outflow of feeling. We speak of heart, but we do not see its real importance, although it is the principle thing, the root of the plant of life.

TASAWWUF: Even neurologists have learned that the nerves, afferent and efferent as they are called, are effected by emotions and feelings. The emotions are separative and can be determined, especially by mystics. The feelings are overall but they also use the nervous systems as their instruments. They cannot always be measured. It is easy to measure currents of electricity carried by wires; it is not easy to measure, it may be impossible, the fields of force around those wires. So

we can be aware of feeling, we can be conscious of sentimentality without being able to measure them.

GATHEKA: We speak of heart, but we do not see its real importance, although it is the principle thing, the root of the plant of life. The heart quality is something which sustains the whole of life. All virtues such as sincerity, respect, thoughtfulness, consideration, appreciation, all these qualities come through heart-quality.

TASAWWUF: We see some of these or all of these presented in the Gatha teachings, especially in Saluk-Moral Culture. It is good for purposes of meditation and concentration to consider each separately. It is still more beneficial in psychic and moral development, and especially as these are presented in walk and dance, to consider them as separate. But actually they are all emanations or effluences from the heart, perhaps parallel to light heat and energies emanating from the sun. Indeed it can be said that the heart is the sun of ourselves. When the heart is awakened and permitted to express itself—which may be called development—the different virtues and qualities begin to manifest singly or in group-clusters.

GATHEKA: If he has no heart a person is not capable of appreciating, nor of being grateful, nor capable of expressing his own soul, nor of receiving goodness and help from another. A person without heart quality remains selfish, even foolishly selfish. If he were wisely selfish, it would be worthwhile.

TASAWWUF: An adept can almost immediately determine the type of nufs of another, both by gradient and by classification. Persons may be classified as demoniac, animal, human, genius, and angelic. Gradient means the depth of development along each and all these lines. Generally speaking we meet with animal-souls or people in nufs-ammara who are consciously or unconsciously egocentric. They are not to be condemned. They are the basic stuff which in masonry is called the rough ashlar which has to be cleansed and purified and polished until it is a fit instrument for the temple of God.

GATHEKA: People very often say that they have no time to show their heart-qualities, no time to allow the heart to develop; they are so busy. But we can be busy every minute from morning to evening and at the same time do what we do with our whole heart, expressing from the depth of our heart.

TASAWWUF: All the deeper schools teach that man has a vehicle of flesh, a vehicle of mind, and a vehicle of heart. Our muscular systems, our digestive tracts, our nervous systems, our breathing, our circulation of blood and other functions operate in the same space/time matrix. No doubt the analytical mind can make a separation of them. This separation is like a map, not like a reality. All our processes operate in the same time space, and to limit, let us say, our neural activities, our respiration, to a timing is folly. Even the most ignorant person can appreciate that. From the standpoint of the wise, since the heart-beat goes on all the time, so the heart operations can go on all the time.

GATHEKA: When the heart-quality is shut out then all one does is lifeless. Feeling is such an important thing in our lives; our whole life depends upon our feeling. A person once disheartened sometimes loses enthusiasm for his whole life. A person once disappointed loses trust completely. A person who becomes heartbroken loses his self-confidence for the rest of his life. A person once afraid sustains fear in his heart forever. A person who has once failed keeps the impression of his failure all through life.

TASAWWUF: From the analytical point of view, we can recognize all this. We can write or read incessantly about the shortcomings of ourselves, of others or of the world. But how many can make a construction or re-construction?

The whole of *Nirtan* is devoted to the heart aspect of life, to the suffering and joy of life and heart-life. But although the heart is tender, although the heart feels, and especially feels pain, it also has all the power and vitality and faculties to heal its own self and to heal others. So in Sufism we are not so much concerned with shortcomings as with methods which are correctives, correctives of body, correctives of mind, correctives of heart, correctives of internal and external. The sciences derived from the Sifat-i-Allah provide for all this.

GATHEKA: People love to watch a cock fight in the East. Two men bring their birds to fight, and as soon as one of them sees that the other bird will win, he takes his bird away while it is still fighting, before it can expect defeat. He prefers to admit defeat while the two birds are still fighting than to allow his bird to be impressed by defeat, for once it is so impressed it will never fight anymore. That is the secret of our mind. And once one learns to take care of one's mind just as in the case of the bird, to go to any sacrifice rather than to give one's mind a bad impression, one will make the best of one's life.

TASAWWUF: We can have a philosophy of taking care of the mind. It is a trap. The mind cannot take care of the mind. The heart can take care of the mind. Jesus has asked if man, by taking thought, could control the hairs of his head or the affairs of life. Jesus also taught man to become like him, but man has self-awed himself into littleness and this is a great misfortune. The whole teaching of the Sufi Message is to get man to awe himself into accepting the greatness within, which is the God within, which is the real self.

The esoteric sciences provide the means to overcome shortcomings and one difference between the esoteric sciences and the outer sciences and exoteric religion, is that these are concerned with man's shortcomings, how to overcome them, and they place values on these shortcomings. Whereas the esoteric sciences place value and emphasis on man's perfectibility and also point the way to perfection.

GATHEKA: One can read in the lives of the great heroes and great personalities, how they went through all difficulties and sorrows and troubles and yet always tried to keep their heart from being humiliated. That gave them all the necessary strength; they always avoided humiliation. They were prepared for death, wars, suffering, poverty, but not for humiliation.

TASAWWUF: Although we have only the complete life of Mohammed with details, if we look at the records, including the legends and myths concerning Zarathustra, Moses, Jesus, Sri Krishna, Rama, and all other purported Avatars and Messengers, the dramatic plots of their lives are not very different. Their misled followers have tried to depict each as unique. Whatever else be said, their lives were not unique; they all passed through similar trials and triumphs, so much so that certain schools regard them either as identical or as reincarnations of each other. It does not matter.

But we have had enough awe, enough veneration. We must learn to take these as patterns of ideals and to gain the strength and wisdom to stand up ourselves through all the vicissitudes of life. True, Jesus has said, "Come, follow me" but this does not mean ego-acceptance; this is a wrong view and has not led to either wisdom or illumination. It means to face life as he did, to face friend and enemy, triumph and trial as he did. To show the same attitude whether it be the Palm greeting or the Cross desertion. That is the way to follow; indeed that is the Way and all the Messengers of God have had the same similar outward experiences just as they had the same or similar inward realizations.

One reason that the Message did not at first succeed was because of the habit of leaders to make distinctions between men. They repeated the same errors as in previous times and they did so despite every effort that was made to open their eyes. They received the words but made the same mistakes, exactly the same mistakes as in previous times.

Now it is important for us not to make the same mistakes. No doubt we shall all have shortcomings, no doubt nobody may be perfection but we should not be so foolish any more as to repeat the same mistakes. And one way to correct this is to emphasize more the perfections and positivities in others. We say that God constantly leads His followers toward the Light. And it is great shortcoming especially for leaders, real or fanciful, to emphasize so much the shortcomings of others. This is a deep shortcoming in themselves and we can in the end see the harmful results.

GATHEKA: Once when I was in Nepal I wanted a servant. I sent for one, and he was of the warrior caste, the Kshatrias, brave fighters in the mountains. And when I asked what work he wanted to do, he said, "Any work you like, anything you like." I said, "What about pay?" "Anything you will give," he answered. I was greatly amused to find a man willing to do any work I gave him and to accept any pay I offered. "Well," I said, "then there is no condition to be made?" He said, "One. You will never say a cross word to me." He was ready to accept any money, willing to do any work, but not humiliation. I appreciated that spirit beyond words; it was that which made him a warrior.

TASAWWUF: This is a very interesting anecdote. It is hardly something one would expect from a Hindu, especially a high caste Hindu. It is something one might expect from a Muslim. It is certain that over and over again Mohammed repeated, "Be not angry." All the records indicate he was never angry with his household servants, never! Indeed, he seems to have been angry only once in his life, for which he repented. From the standpoint of repentance, this is marvelous for it gave Mohammed, the Messenger of Allah, the most perfect of human beings, an opportunity to

exemplify repentance by his own life and actions, and not by sermons and essays.

Yet it is also true that this is one of many behavior patterns of Rassoul Mohammed which is not incumbent on Muslims. That is why there is a legend or tradition that there would be seventy or more types of Muslims and only one (the Sufis) would really exemplify his teachings. And this tale also exemplifies the following of Mohammed by Hazrat Inayat Khan, who has been accused by many of being a heretic or worse. There are no heretics before Allah, there are only heretics in the minds and institutions of man.

GATHEKA: Is there anyone in this world who will own that he has no feeling? And yet there are hearts of rock, of iron, of the earth, and of diamond, silver, gold, wax, and paper. There are as many kinds of hearts in this world as there are objects. There are some objects that hold fire longer, there are others which burn instantly. Some objects will become warm and in a moment they will grow cold again; others disappear as soon as the fire touches them, while one can melt others and make ornaments out of them.

TASAWWUF: One of the basic teachings of Sufism is “unity, not uniformity.” We can recognize a certain underlying atomic or sub-atomic structure in things and forms and at the opposite pole of the universe, we can find the All-Pervading Deity. And there is such a variety between these presumable extremes—actually our mental picture, that human conceptions cannot grasp the cosmos as it is.

We can measure many differences, and find them but not interpret them. That is because the mind is not only a measurer, it is also a potential interpreter. Yet by analyzing alone it can determine nothing, just surfaces and externals.

GATHEKA: And so are the heart-qualities. Different people have different qualities of the heart, and the knowers of the heart will treat each differently. But since we do not think about this aspect we take every man to be the same. Although every note is a sound, they differ in pitch, in vibrations; and so every man differs in the pitch, the vibrations of his heart.

TASAWWUF: Candidates are informed that there is no absolute base of judging human personalities or even forms of life according to any rigid rules. No doubt rules are needed, laws are needed for certain conformities in the outer world. Without them we could not have governments and regulations and even education. But these are not the goals of life, they are means toward, and not only do codes and regulations differ, they seldom avail to elevate mankind to the attainment either of outer desires or inner aspirations.

Words and thoughts are at best droplets from an ocean. Qur'an has taught: “Even if all the seas were ink and all the pens were one great pen, this would not suffice to describe the majesty of God.” So it is very difficult to verbalize, and the more we verbalize the more we are apt to get away from feeling, which alone can describe and understand the universal heart.

GATHEKA: According to the vibrations of his heart, he is either spiritual or material, noble or common. It is not because of what he does, nor because of what he possesses in this world; he is small or great according to how his heart vibrates.

TASAWWUF: There are forms of electrical transformers which can elevate or diminish lights and lighting systems. As Jesus Christ has said, "The light of the body is the eye." Religionists pay little attention to this; mystics and esotericists are quite different. First they can see the quality and quantity of light radiating from the eye. Then they can feel the magnetisms and other differentiations. This is just like looking at the surface of the soul. And a keen mind, an awakened heart can read and determine mediately or immediately just what that means, just what is the evolution of another and his condition at the time.

It is the work of the adept to increase the light, the magnetism, the sensitivity. This is not done by any positive concentration on light, on magnetism or sensitivity. This is done by purification. For the most part purification comes from fana or renunciation, or assimilation of the ego into the beyond. We have to lose ourselves to find ourselves. To gain the universe we must become entirely free from ego determinations. In a sense this is the whole effort of the devotee no matter what the school of discipline and development.

GATHEKA: I have, all my life, had a great respect for those who have toiled in the world, who have striven through life and reached a certain eminence, and I have always considered it a most sacred thing to be in their presence.

TASAWWUF: There is a certain tendency in human nature, and it is often found among people who consider themselves spiritual, to disregard the values of hard labor, of striving efforts. It has been said that the Calvinistic philosophy teaches that those who find rewards in life regardless of effort must have obtained them through some kind of divine grace. This is very contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ who said, "What matters if you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?"

It is certain that the presence, the light and magnetism of the eye, even the majesty of the personality are not connected with social prestige or external philosophies. Even those who aspire in the direction of Mental Purification often separate process from philosophy. Any kind of worldly philosophy is a deterrent on this path. All such things arise from the minds of men, are limitations and keep man limited. That is why the Zen Masters have striven to eradicate them entirely. That is also true of Sufi philosophy, but Sufis not only eradicate they also encourage the creative aspects of human activity.

GATHEKA: This being my great interest in life, I began, at first in the East, to make pilgrimages to great people, and among them were writers, sages, philosophers, and saints; but once I came in contact with a great wrestler. And this man, who had the appearance of a giant with his monstrously muscular body, had such a sympathetic, expansive nature, such simplicity and gentleness that I was deeply surprised. And I thought, "It is not his size and strength that have

made him great, but that which has melted him and made him lenient; it is that which makes him great.”

TASAWWUF: We find similar attitudes among the Zen Buddhists, but seldom do we find them among the literary people who write about and have caused much confusion with their analytical and subjective reports. Every person is a universe, is a reflection of Allah. In Allah all the various Sifat, the qualities of majesty, beauty, and perfection are present and also in a certain sense in equilibrium.

Beauty is not the opposite of power or majesty; it is the balancing thereof. A real majestic person may therefore have a greater aesthetic development than a weakling. A weak person, that is to say one without much majesty or power, still remains negative; it does not mean he has any Jemali development. And a person who is lacking in aesthetic appreciation is not thereby strong physically or mentally. As is taught in Sufism, perfection is related to balance and never to any form of negativity.

Those who sought the teachers of the philosopher Gurdjieff found that they were mostly very humble persons who achieved and not socially important people who intellectualized. Intellectualization can never take the place of achievement. Indeed, we must be constantly aware that commentaries themselves may keep one within the mind world. On the other hand, merely to practice some forms of meditation to emptiness produces the emptiness of the lazy.

GATHEKA: Feeling is vibration. The heart which is a vehicle, an instrument of feeling, creates phenomena if one only watches life keenly. If one causes anyone pain, that pain is returned. If one causes anyone pleasure, that pleasure is returned too. If one gives love to someone, love comes back; and if one gives hatred, that hatred comes back to one in some form or other—maybe in the form of pain, illness, health, or of success, joy happiness; in some form or other it comes, it never fails.

TASAWWUF: Many people say they accept karma. It is often like the consideration of sin. Everybody verbalizes against sin, but this does not always mean that one is more considerate, more loving, even more honest. The concept becomes all important, and the greatest obstacle to human benefit and awakening, any form of awakening, is largely due to our attachments to concepts. We become their slaves.

One of the very first teachings offered by Hazrat Inayat Khan to the western world was that a Sufi must not be bound by principles. This seems horrifying. But it does mean that one must arise above mental attachment. We cannot have mental purification and attachment. We must not even be attached to the sayings of the wise. We have to free ourselves from all encumbrances to be free. But when we become free, then the other aspect of life, baqa, or divine existence, begins to express itself through the personality. It is fana and baqa which verbally express all the processes of Mental Purification and spiritual awakening.

GATHEKA: One generally does not think about this. When a person has attained a certain position in which he can order people about and speak harshly to them, he never thinks about those things. But every little feeling that rises in one's heart and directs one's action, word, and movement, causes a certain action and rebounds; only sometimes it takes time. Could one think that one can ever hate a person and that that hatred does not come back? It surely comes, some time. On the other hand, if one has sympathy, love, affection, kind feelings, one need never tell anybody that one has it, for even then it returns in some form or other.

TASAWWUF: We can never allude too often to the words of the Bible which appear in the "Messiah" which the composer Handel has put to such wonderful music, "Every valley shall be exalted and every hill laid low, the crooked places made straight." In the highest practices of Sufism, especially in Mushahida or awful contemplation this is exactly what is done. It is process, it is effort, it is potential achievement, it is not philosophy, it is not metaphysics, it is action and not intellection. And it is out of such effort, it is out of such endeavor, that the fruits of the kingdom of heaven can be made to manifest first in the internal and then in the external.

GATHEKA: Someone came to me and said, "I was very sympathetic once, but somehow I have become hardened. What is the reason for it? I said, "You tried to get water from the bottom of the earth. But instead of digging deep down you dug in the mud and you were disappointed. If you have patience to dig till you reach water then you will not be disappointed."

TASAWWUF: This teaching has been offered in several places both in anecdotes and in sacred lessons. There is the tradition—and mystics believe it to be true—that one can find everything within oneself, that the kingdom of heaven which means all powers, all faculties, all potentialities is within.

GATHEKA: Very often a person imagines that he has feeling, that he has sympathy. But if he had it he would be the master of life; then he would want nothing any more. When this spring which is in the heart of a man is once open, it makes him self-sufficient and it takes away the continual tragedy souls have to meet with in life. That tragedy is limitation. Very often it is lack of feeling that paralyzes the four other aspects of mind. The person without feeling is incapable of thinking freely. Feeling is what makes one thoughtful. A man may be of powerful mind, but if he cannot feel the power of his mind he is limited, for real power is in feeling, not in thinking.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism the esoteric sciences are applied to enable man to arise above his limitations, not to philosophize about them, not to create further impressions, which establish values when these values themselves are limitations. It is through the awakening of feeling and the depths of feeling man touches first the surface and then the depths of divine wisdom and thus comes to life.

GATHEKA: Sometimes people come to me and say "I have thought about it and I have wanted it, but I never got it." And I have answered, "You have never wanted, if you had wanted you would have got it." They do not believe this; they continue to think that they have wanted it. It may be so, but to want it enough is another thing. If a person went and stood before a bank and said, "Let all

the money in the bank come to me,” would it come? He imagines that he wants it, but he has doubts, he does not believe it will come. If he believed it, it would come. Doubt is a destructive element. It may be likened to the shadow that produces dampness, that hides the sun. The sun has no chance of reaching the place which is covered by it.

TASAWWUF: This subject is particularly covered in the studies for the Advanced Study Circle under the subject of “Sadhana” but it is also covered elsewhere. Actually man has the key to everything. The Scriptures teach that all things have been placed before his feet. Yet the philosophy about it is useless, indeed is an encumbrance. Or as Sri Krishna has taught, “Man’s right is to action.” The action is often beneficial, the thinking about it often useless and worse than useless unless the whole personality is involved. Then it becomes easy.

[The following four paragraphs were omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.]

(GATHEKA: There is a story of Shirin and Farhad, a very well-known story of Persia. There was a stone-cutter and he was laboring at a memorial for somebody. One day he saw a lady who was to be the future queen of the Shah; and he said to her, “I love you.” A stone-cutter, a laborer in the street, asking for the hand of a lady who was to be the future queen! He was a man without reason; but not a man without feeling. Feeling was there, and the claim came with feeling. This lady said, “Very well, I will wait and see if your claim is true, and tell the Shah of Persia to wait.” And to try him she told him to cut a way through the mountains. He went, one man with hammer and chisel. He did not ask if he was able to do it or not. There was no reason; there was only feeling. And he made the road which thousands of people would not have made in a year, because every time he hammered the rock he called out the name of Shirin, the one he loved. He made the way, and when the king heard that it was finished he said, “Alas, I have lost my chance, what shall I do?” Someone in the presence of the king said, “I will see what can be done.” He went to Farhad the stone-cutter and told him, “How wonderful is your love and devotion! It is phenomenal. But haven’t you heard that Shirin is dead?” “Is she dead?” he said. “Then I cannot go on living.” And he fell down lifeless.

The point of this story is the power of feeling. What is lacking at this time is the feeling quality. Everyone wishes to think with the brain, to work with the head, but not with the heart. One can neither imagine and create beautiful art, nor think and make wonderful things, nor can one keep in one’s memory something beautiful, nor retain thoughts in concentration, if there is no feeling at the back of it. Besides, if there is no feeling behind all such words as gratitude, thanks, appreciation, these words are without spirit; they become mere politeness. Today fineness is so much misunderstood; people only learn the outward aspect. If there were feeling behind all they say, life would be much more worth living.

When the mind is troubled it is confused, it cannot reflect anything. It is the stillness of mind that makes one capable of receiving impressions and of reflecting them. In Persian the mind is called a mirror. Everything in front of the mirror appears in it; but when this is taken away the mirror is clear. It does not remain. It remains in the mirror as long as the mirror is focused on it, and so it is with

the mind.

The quality in the mind which makes it still at times and active at other times, which makes it reflect what it sees at one time and makes it avoid every reflection at another so that no outer reflection can touch it, this quality develops by concentration, contemplation, and meditation. The mind is trained by the master-trainer by diving deep, by soaring high, by expanding widely, and by centralizing the mind on one idea. And once the mind is mastered a person becomes a master of life. Every soul from the time it is born is like a machine, subject to all influences, influences of weather and of all that works through the five senses. For instance, no one can pass through a street without seeing the placards and advertisements. A man's eyes are compelled by what is before him. He has no intention of looking, but everything outside commands the eyes. So a man is constantly under the influence of all things of the outside world that govern him unknowingly. A person says, "I am a free man; I do what I like." But he never does. He does what he does not like many times. His ears are always subject to hear anything that falls on them, whether it is harmonious or inharmonious, and what he sees he cannot resist. And so a man is always under the influence of life.)

GATHEKA: Then there are the planetary influences and the living influences of those around him; and yet a man says, "I have free will; I am a free man." If he knew to what little extent he is free he would be frightened.

TASAWWUF: It is so easy to be confused by words. What is freedom? What is will? What value is there in mere wishing? True, if there were no will-power, if man did not have some such ability, everything would be subject to karma and there would be little progress, few changes in the world.

In the physical science we learn there are forces and there are fields. Will-power can be regarded as a force, and astrological factors and social factors and everything known or verbalized as environment and ecology would be recognized as fields. If man understood that, then the rest might be easy.

But there is another difficulty here: man saying he understands when he does not. Understanding requires deep development, knowing much about oneself and one's faculties and having perception and understanding.

GATHEKA: But then there is one consolation, and that is that in man there is a spark somewhere hidden in his heart which alone can be called a source of free will. If this spark is tended, a person has greater vitality, greater energy, greater power. All he thinks will come true, all he says will make an impression, all he does will have effect.

TASAWWUF: The development of Kashf, the awakening of shahud, and the practice of mushahida takes one from ignorance to knowledge. Knowledge is not mere consideration of names and forms; knowledge means insight and ability to experience without what one else seeks within.

GATHEKA: What does a mystic do? He blows this spark in order to bring it to a flame, until it comes to a blaze. This gives him the inspiration, the power which enables him to live in this world the life of free will. It is this spark which may be called the divine heritage of man, in which he sees the divine power of God, the soul of man; and to become spiritual means that by blowing upon this spark one produces light from it and sees the whole of life in this light. And by bringing the inner light to a blaze one is more able to think, to feel, and to act.

TASAWWUF: Here we have in a sense the whole description of what happens in spiritual awakening. Spiritual awakening consists in living experiences and not in any thoughts about them. We can never repeat too much Al-Ghazzali's statement, "Divine Wisdom consists of experiences and not syllogisms." Mankind has been misled, sometimes likes to be misled. Omar Khayyam has derided the false Sufism, the false philosophies, which he says are "about it," and about.

The New Age will appreciate the union of thought, speech and action. This is a most ancient teaching. It was given even by Zarathustra and messengers before him. His devotees are satisfied that he gave the words. This is like admiring a man for taking out a patent, but never availing himself of the patented article. Indeed, his teaching was one of becoming attuned to the Universe, and to and through Vohu Manu, the Universal Mind. All the illuminated messengers of God have taught that.

This would seem to indicate that the way to attain free will is to surrender free will, to make of oneself an instrument for the universe itself. It is as if the universe, so to speak, was a gigantic being or corporation which wished to achieve something and used mankind for the purpose of this achievement. We are always seeing our aims, our objectives, our goals. But there is another aspect of life, which is to say that Allah-God is seeking some aims, some objectives, some goals, and as *Gayān* teaches, He does this through man.

This may help us to understand that the real spiritual life is that God is seeking God, and He does this by immersing Himself in man and surrendering Himself to man and becoming man. Or looking at it from another point of view, verbally it would appear that man, to succeed, must become God, and God to succeed must become Man.

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.

The Power of Thought

GATHEKA: There are some who through life's experience have learned that thought has power, and there are others who wonder sometimes whether this is really so. There are also many who approach this subject with the preconceived idea that even if every thought has a certain power, yet it is limited. But it would be no exaggeration to say that thought has a power which is unimaginable; and in order to find proof of this we do not have to go very far.

TASAWWUF: Many books have been written on the subject of "positive thinking." And the suggestions in some of these books have been helpful to many people, to the extent that they have been able to overcome negative thought-patterns of long standing. Yet even the best books containing the best suggestions cannot enable man—indeed ennoble man—to rise above a certain ceiling which man calls "good."

It takes specific mystical practices, with wholehearted application on the part of the disciple and wholehearted empathy on the part of the teacher, to rise above the ceiling of the mind-mesh, to overcome once and for all the hold of the samskaras.

At the same time it must be said that deep minds, which means inspired hearts, can give verbal keys which—if meditated upon continually—may open one to worlds of meaning beyond doors hitherto closed. In this, the effect is similar to that of Wazifa or Mantra, in the sense that Wazifas have literal meanings in addition to their values from sound-currents—which is a different subject taken up in the Githas on Esotericism (Ryazat) and the Commentaries thereon.

But these verbal keys, often called aphorisms, must come from the depths of a realized soul for any real value to accrue. The marketplace is filled with books written by commercial and egocentric authors, books replete with suggestions for others, yet there is little evidence that those who read these books become transformed or ennobled in the real sense.

GATHEKA: Everything that we see in this world is but a phenomenon of thought. We live in it, and we see it from morning till evening, and yet we doubt if it is so; which shows that this, our beautiful world, itself gives us a pride and vanity, making us believe that we understand things better than we do.

TASAWWUF: The records of history show clearly that many different world-views have been held by the generality. Before Copernicus the universe was thought to be geocentric; the leap forward to a heliocentric view was revolutionary and many suffered ostracism and imprisonment for their ideas—all this in the world of Western scientific thought as it is called. But Eastern schools have held advanced theories of the universe for millennia, theories now being recognized as compatible with the latest findings of Western pioneers in the field of physics, both microcosmic and macrocosmic.

GATHEKA: The less a person believes in the power of thought, the more positively he thinks he stands on the earth. Nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously he feels his limitation, and searches for something that will strengthen his belief in thought.

TASAWWUF: This type of person is called a materialist. And despite the limitations mentation must interpose on the path to supreme awakening, a belief in the power of thought certainly represents a step beyond the confines of materialism and a step forward for the former materialist.

Atheism and materialism often go hand in hand. Yet even ardent atheists have their ideals, their sense of beauty. Often these people are unconsciously more advanced spiritually than a multitude of “fundamentalist believers” who think their particular religion is the only way to God.

GATHEKA: Thought can be divided into five different aspects: imagination, thought, dream, vision, and materialization. Imagination is that action of mind which is automatic. From morning till evening a person is either working, or if he is resting his mind is working just the same through imagination.

TASAWWUF: Imagination is given an important place in all the arts. Yet imagination itself has gradations of importance, of meaning. If the imagination is superficial there is no particular value in it; but when the faculty of imagination is coordinated with noble or spiritual themes, this automatic working of the mind springs from a deeper source. And if the artist is able to lose himself in the contemplation of one or more of these themes, the imagination becomes inspiration.

Too often inspiration is given short shrift in many schools of art and poetics, in favor of a nebulous value attached to imagination and emotion hailed by artists and critics alike. But again this kind of approach never leads to true art; it is more like the world of fashion which changes every few months. Yet even fashion has its deeper nature. The sari, for instance, has been worn for untold centuries and even today represents a kind of beauty rarely seen in the West.

It may be said that inspiration is the culmination of that imagination which rises from the depths of the heart.

GATHEKA: Thought is thinking with will-power behind it; in this way we distinguish between the imaginative and the thoughtful. These two kinds of people cannot be confused; for one is imaginative, which implies powerless thinking, automatic thinking, and the other is thoughtful, which means his thinking is powerful.

TASAWWUF: These two types of mentation are called Jemal and Jelal by Sufis; the Jemal temperament is imaginative, and the Jelal temperament is directive, powerful. Without Jemal there would be little refinement and beauty in life and without Jelal there would be no initiative toward reform and social progress. It is like the Chinese symbol of Yin and Yang: there must be a speck of Yin in Yang, and there must be a speck of Yang in Yin for balanced growth to occur. One devoid of the other may lead to imbalance, even chaos, and we can see this clearly if we only keep our eyes open. This may be a profound theory, but the profundity is not in the words, it is in seeing the

actualities manifest.

GATHEKA: When this automatic action takes place in the state of sleep, it is called a dream. This is distinct and different from imagination, because while a person is imagining his senses are open to this objective world, and therefore his imagination does not take a concrete form. But when the same automatic action of mind goes on in the dream, there is no objective world to compare it with.

TASAWWUF: Therefore, the dream state is its own world; it may seem to have norms, or it may seem to have no norms. It is for this reason that the wise of all ages have referred to even the physical world as a “dream” or an “illusion”—because with all its seeming norms and concreteness the physical world too is subject to constant change and turmoil. But due to the denseness of earth its changes are slower and generally more predictable; the dream-world is much more volatile and often less “logical.”

All states of mind belong more or less to samsara, except for that state which has become quiescent in nufs-alima. This state is called Amal by Sufis, and Samadhi by Yogis.

GATHEKA: The mystic can always see the condition of the mind of a person by knowing how he dreams, for in the dream the automatic working of his mind is much more concrete than in his imagination.

TASAWWUF: There are many ways by which a Sufi perceives the condition of another’s mind. The prerequisite is always that one’s own being be clarified of any blemish, that one be clear like a polished mirror. Then one may operate through a first impression, through intuition, through a knowledge of the Elements and their colors and notes, even in the case of very advanced souls through what is called Shahud—or direct and deep sight.

The generic term for all these methods is called Kashf, or insight. There is no doubt that development of the refined breath and constant vigilance to keep the heart clear of self-thought help more than anything else to develop these faculties of perception.

GATHEKA: There are some who are able to read the character or the future by knowing what the person imagines. They always ask him to name a flower, a fruit, something he loves or likes, in order that they may find the stream of his imagination. From that stream of imagination they find out something about the character of that person and about his life. It is not necessary to be a character-reader or a fortune-teller; any wise and thoughtful person can understand by the way someone dresses or by his environment how his thoughts run, what his imaginings are.

TASAWWUF: The key here is in the phrase “something he loves or likes.” For a Sufi is one who is certain of his ultimate return to the bosom of Allah, and he realizes that this return is his greatest yearning, his noblest love. He also realizes that while the generality may not consciously have this deep love and longing, even the lesser loves and likes of a person indicate clearly the stage of evolution of the person. A Sufi will always trace the direction of a person’s positive and

developmental nature, and give all encouragement to further development. The same cannot be said for those who parade a smattering of occult development under the guise of “soothsaying” in whatever form. Yet, with the rise of real spiritual development in this age of expanding consciousness, there are more and more honest practitioners of the occult and healing arts.

Too often an undeveloped occultist will become involved in the lower strata of a person’s imaginings, the shadow side. The Sufi’s occultism is based upon absolute honesty with himself and others, and it is this honesty that is at the source of the light he is able to shine upon a person’s journey toward, with and in God.

GATHEKA: But since the state of dreaming enables the mind to express itself more concretely, the dream is the best way to understand what state of mind a person has. When once this is understood, there is little reason left to doubt whether the dream has any effect upon a person’s life and future. Indeed, man does not know, man cannot imagine, to what an extent thought influences life.

TASAWWUF: The dream is not necessarily affected by sense-impressions from the objective world, as is the case with imaginations and day-dreams. And while it is true that there are many types of dreams, some shallow, some deep, some coarse, some fine, some false, some true—they all reveal something to the seer.

The Sufic occultism teaches that the time of the dream is important, that a dream in the middle of the night may take a long time to manifest its effect, while a dream just before waking must be productive of its effect very soon after.

But it should be understood that the best dreams are permeated with a feeling of upliftment, there is a sense of light and other fine qualities associated with these dreams. It is in such dreams that some aspect of our true being is felt; whereas in coarser dreams which are often shadowy and confused the falseness is felt, there is no sense of inward satisfaction.

It is rightly said that, “Dreams come true,” in the sense that they will manifest in some way or other. But this example of how our mind influences our objective lives sooner or later is really based on the degree of concentration we give to these impressions. If we give fuel, which is to say attention, to nightmares, then we are creating our own hells; but if we concentrate upon the true dreams we will be storing up our treasures in Heaven.

GATHEKA: Vision can be said to be a dream which one experiences in the wakeful state.

TASAWWUF: This has also been called “open vision,” meaning that it occurs in broad daylight, as it were. There are other experiences, similar in effect, called “closed vision.” In this they are perhaps more akin to certain types of samadhis described in the scriptures of Dharma, experiences where one loses consciousness of the objective world totally.

Open vision is more like the sahaja-state extolled as most desirable by the Gurus; sahaja means natural. So the wakeful or open vision of the Sufis is very close to the natural, or sahaja, samadhi of the Yogis. Generally, the aspirant experiences the closed visions in the beginning, and as he advances the natural state dawns more and more.

GATHEKA: A person who is imaginative or capable of imagination is capable of creating a thought. And when this thought which he has created becomes an object upon which his mind is focused, then all else becomes hidden from him; that particular imagination alone stands before him as a picture.

TASAWWUF: This is literally a description of the Sufic science known as Murakkabah (Concentration). In order for the mind to stay focused upon one theme or thought, the disciple is taught to control the thought by feeling, to allow the heart-faculty to hold the usually restive mental atoms in the desired order.

The master of Murakkabah may rightly be called a master-mind. This means that he has discovered the Divine Will dwelling deep in his own heart, and that all particulars associated with the mental sphere stand ready to do the bidding of that Will. Even physical atoms may be marshaled by one whose will is identified with the Divine Will, or as it is said, "The mountain comes to Mohammed."

And although the effects of a master's thought may ultimately seem to come from his mere wish, he had to start at the beginning, he had to go through the many stages of accomplishment in Murakkabah. When one is close to the Divine Will there may be little or no difference at all between a wish and a prayer, in the sense that all is fulfilled in the absence of ego.

GATHEKA: The effect of this vision is certainly greater than the effect of a dream; the reason is that the imagination which can stand before one's mind in one's wakeful state is naturally stronger than the imagination which was active in one's state of sleep.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism the emphasis is on development from stage to stage, and the ability to hold a vision in the waking state represents an advancement over dreaming in the state of sleep. However, God inspires and reveals His Nature in many ways, and we should not reject any grace simply because of some theoretical ideal. It is quite possible that a clear dream may prove to be more inspiring, more sustaining, to a sincere beginner, than a vision may be to one who assumes he is advanced but who is actually filled with self-pride on account of "his" vision.

GATHEKA: The fifth aspect of thought is materialization. And it is in the study of this subject that we find the greatest secret of life. No doubt a person will readily accept that it is by the architect's imagination that a beautiful building is built, that it is by the gardener's imagination that a beautiful garden is made. But generally when it comes to matter and all things that are connected with matter, man wonders how far imagination or thought has power over them.

TASAWWUF: By materialization is meant the spiritualization of matter, also called Alchemy. Many gardens and edifices have come into manifestation through the combination of vision and effort, and the greater the vision and effort the deeper is the feeling associated with these places such as the Taj Mahal and its gardens and pools.

But the greatest secret lies not in growing gardens or in building beautiful temples, fine as these undertakings may be—particularly when such growing and building are invested with Baraka, the blessings which accrue when concentration upon a spiritual ideal is practiced. The greatest secret is in the transformation of selfhood to Godhood, or as the Alchemists taught, from the condition of dark earth to purest gold.

The initiate knows first-hand the realities of this process, because he has willingly submitted to a master who has himself gone through all the purifications and refinements of this highest of all Alchemies. The empathy and thought-power of the teacher contribute immeasurably to the progress of the pupil on this path. One might even say that the teacher, or master-mind, builds shrines of individual disciples, constructs temples out of the disciples collectively. In this way are suitable accommodations made for the living God.

And when the disciple's development begins to parallel that of the teacher, both through inductive attunement and natural unfoldment, the disciple may be placed in a position of responsibility to his own disciples, thereby becoming a teacher in his own right. This is Dharma-transmission; this is the continuance of the Holy Chain. But a contemporary Sufi master has declared, "All credit for any greatness of realization belongs to one's teacher, not to oneself." This prevents ego from entering in, as symbolized in the *Gulistan* of Saadi by the donkey passing wind when the Murshid started to think how good a Murshid he was.

GATHEKA: Nowadays, as psychology is beginning to spread throughout the Western world, people will at least listen patiently when one speaks about it.

TASAWWUF: Even to listen patiently shows an advance in humility—which gives scope for appreciating points of view other than one's own. No matter what may be said for or against modern psychologies, the ability to listen patiently indicates a general evolution in the right direction.

GATHEKA: But on the other hand there are many who take a medicine with great faith, but if they are told that a thought can cure them they will smile at the idea. This shows that with all the progress that humanity seems to have made, it has gone back in one direction, the higher thought; for man today generally does not believe in the power of thought and he believes still less in what he calls emotion.

TASAWWUF: Despite the seeming sway of materialism, the realities of the mind-world will always prove superior in the end. This is why the Prophet Mohammed spent so much time exhorting his followers to give consideration to the next world. In Sura IX, verse 38, he asks, "Do ye prefer the

life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter.”

The highest thoughts have been given to the world in scriptures, prayers and sacred poetry. The power of these thoughts is proven in their ability to inspire all peoples in all ages. These thoughts have come from such great Souls as Jesus and David and other messengers of the Living God, and these thoughts can cure all manner of disease, shortcoming and confusion.

The higher emotions come mostly through sacred musics and arts, including drama and poetry. It may be said that the heart of the messenger hears an inner music of depth, feeling and meaning; this experience is followed by echoes of emotion and devotion. The echo of these echoes is the poem or scripture he has tried to put into words for the humanity, among whom there are always those few who will trace the echo of echoes back to its source in spiritual realization.

But it should not be assumed that the higher thought and emotion come by wishful thinking. The Sufi poet Rumi says that his poetry was born from the deep pain of separation from the Beloved, symbolized by a reed being torn from its reed-bed. This reed is none other than the human heart which, even after being torn or exiled, is subjected to further wounds through life, wounds symbolized by additional holes made in the reed. And when God sees that His instrument is suitably tuned to express His music, scripture, prayer, poetry and all divine arts may result. The flute of Krishna has the same meaning.

GATHEKA: In point of fact if one can speak of the soul of a thought, that soul is the feeling which is at the back of it.

TASAWWUF: In other words, the essence of thought is feeling. But the words “the essence of thought is feeling” mean nothing without the actual experience. One must enter into the thought-essence, one must have the deep feeling; when this is accomplished one has fulfilled the purpose of prayer, and has begun the real meditation.

GATHEKA: One sees that people become confused when they hear only words behind which there is no feeling. What makes a thought convincing is the power behind it; and that power consists of feeling.

TASAWWUF: The world of commercial advertising is particularly reprehensible in this connection. Not only are the thoughts shallow, but the factor is exploited to the full; products are hailed as miraculous cure-alls, or are touted in such a way as to make the buyer’s ego swell up. From all of this there can only come a fall, a letdown.

The thoughts that really convince come from the heart; even the voice will convey a certain ring when what is expressed comes from deep within. A shallow voice mouthing shallow thoughts sounds tinny and makes no enduring impression; but as a Sufi master has said, “Heart speaks to heart, and soul to soul.” These communications, these communions, are enduring, are evidence

that we are living the spiritual life.

GATHEKA: The general tendency is to wave aside what is called imagination. When one says that a person imagines something it means that he amuses himself. One says to him, "Oh, you only imagine it; it does not exist in reality." But in reality when one has imagined something, that imagination is created, and what is once created exists; and if it is thought that is created, it lives longer, because thought is more powerful than imagination.

TASAWWUF: The tendency to belittle the worlds of thought show the partial decline of Dharma; and when the universe of feeling is belittled Dharma has fully decayed. It is at such times when the gravity-pull of mass culture has so degenerated, that a restoration of the Divine Message is needed. This restoration does not come cosmetically, superficially. It comes from the deepest springs of humanity, a humanity whose cry for regeneration rises higher and higher until that cry is answered.

And how is this cry answered? It is answered by those who feel responsible, by those who have themselves perhaps gone through a phase of degeneration and have overcome their captivity. A wise guide is very helpful, even necessary, to free captive souls; and the responsible ones, those who have lived life and have gone through test and trial, are the wise guides. As it is said, "When the pupil is ready, the teacher appears." This same principle also works on a collective scale; the appearance from time to time of Avatars, Prophets and World-Deliverers has been in answer to the cry of the whole world.

The thoughts these Messengers have given to the world are ever-living. For, as Peter said to Christ, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John, 6, 68). In another sense, the Messenger **is** the Word of eternal life.

GATHEKA: In this way man today ignores that power which is the only power and the greatest power that exists, calling it sentimentality, which means nothing. It is with this power that heroes have conquered in battle; and if anyone has ever accomplished a great thing in the world, it is with this power of heart that he has accomplished it, not with the power of the brain.

TASAWWUF: To refer to qualities that inspire and awaken man from ignorance, and, depreciate these qualities as being merely sentimental, shows lack of character, lack of heart, even lack of thoughtfulness. Again we have the belittling of feeling, the derogation of simple human consideration.

Actually, the power of heart that wins battles, inner and outer, is born of one's character—the greater the development of character, the greater the heart-power. And spiritual unfoldment will always reveal the heart to be like a great sun, while the brain at best will be like the moon, reflective. When through ignorance these functions are reversed, shallow sentiment usurps the real heart-power and thought without feeling prevents the flow of inspiration.

GATHEKA: The music of the most wonderful composers, the poetry of the great poets of the world, have all come from the bottom of their hearts, not from their brain. And if we close the door to sentiment, to imagination, and to thought, that only means that we close the door to life.

TASAWWUF: These musics and profound poems often take us above the differentiations of cultures and even of traditional religious forms. While the brain may make much of distinctions and differences, such as we see in theological disputes, the awakened heart seeks only friendship, camaraderie, unity.

Nor is sentiment to be shunned as unworthy; sentiment is connected with heart but is often also associated with ego. Nevertheless, it represents a beginning of the selfless heart-feeling sought by the devotee. All beginnings must start somewhere; it is development that is important and worthy. It is shallowness that closes the doors to life and meaning. The great poets and musicians have had to dig down to the very depths to find the spring of their inspiration; and if we are open that music and poetry will also deepen our capacity for “life more abundant.”

What is more, even a closed person may be suddenly touched or transformed upon hearing a certain phrase of poetry or a passage of music. Neither is closure invariably an attribute of the generality, nor is openness the sole province of mureeds; we are all more or less closed at times, and God is Al-Fattah, the Opener of the Way.

GATHEKA: The Sufi sees both the Creator and the creation in man. The limited part of man's being is the creation, and the innermost part of his being is the Creator.

TASAWWUF: Therefore, the Sufi sees both God and man, as it were. In this, he is definitely following the example of Mohammed. The Sufi recognizes Zat (Essence) in the Creator, and Sifat (Attributes) in the creation, but this may be too theoretical. When all the veils are lifted, Zat is everywhere, and Sifat are open gateways to the Zat. This spiritual condition so astonishes the Sufi that he can only give up the ghost of self unto certain and absolute Unity.

The Bible says that God made man in His Image. The Sufi tries to realize this at all times. The Bible also says that God created the world, and saw that it was “good.” The Hebrew word for “good” is **tov**—which means good from God's point of view, not necessarily from man's limited view. So the Sufi also practices seeing the creation from God's view. When this becomes reality, the Sufi realizes himself as Ashraf-ul-Makluqat, the Crown of creation. Thus is God's Image revealed in and through man—always through Grace (Inayat), which operates in many ways including devotion, diligence and effort.

GATHEKA: If this is true, then man is both limited and unlimited. If he wishes to be limited he can become more and more limited; if he wishes to be unlimited he can become more and more unlimited. If he cultivates in himself the illusion of being a creation, he can be that more and more. But if he cultivates in himself the knowledge of the Creator, he can also be that more and more.

TASAWWUF: It is the ego-mind, the sense of being separate, that causes and aggravates limitation. All the schools which teach the real wisdom emphasize the eradication of ego-mind. When the sense of being separate has been uprooted and the field of mind has been cleared of the stubble and stones of samskaras (impressions), then the process of mental purification has begun.

It is at this point that the depth of mind, the heart, begins to disclose its secrets: inspiration and guidance. This is a wonderful stage on the spiritual path. It is wonderful because one realizes that the guidance one has sought is found in the depths of one's own heart; and it is a stage because there are ever-greater stages ahead of the sincere pupil. Mohammed, Christ, Moses and all the Great Souls have exemplified the striving to go beyond half-way measures, to fulfill the purpose of the Creator.

The more these Souls divested themselves of limitation, of being caught in the web of creation, the more they became suns of Ishk, of Ilm, of the Divine Love and Knowledge. And by becoming suns they were able to shine upon the creation and gradually absorb the lesser and limited names and forms into the Ramnam, into the Dharmakaya—in other words, into God's Name and God's Form. For, as the Qur'an says, "Verily, unto Him is our return."

GATHEKA: With every kind of weakness, every kind of illness, every kind of misery, the more one gives in to them, the more they weigh one down. And sometimes this can happen even to the extent that the whole world falls on one's back and one is buried beneath it.

TASAWWUF: For this reason one Sufi has said, "Self-pity is the worst poverty." It is the worst poverty because God Himself becomes poor in one's being. And what is the purpose of being rich in self-pity, in misery? This was Christ's theme when he warned against permitting the inner light to be buried beneath a bushel.

GATHEKA: Another person, however, will rise up from it. It may be difficult, but at the same time it is possible. Little by little, with courage and patience, he will rise up and stand upon that world which would otherwise have crushed him.

TASAWWUF: This is perhaps the most difficult hurdle to overcome, particularly at the beginning of one's discipleship if one has come to Sufism through what has been called "the school of hard knocks"—and in one way or other this is the way many disciples have come—there is great initial need for empathy and understanding.

Yet, with empathy and understanding, and with the proper practices given by the Initiator in whom one has reposed all faith and trust, the bushel which had buried one's light begins to fall away. The culmination of this process comes when one can say with Jesus, "My yoke is easy, my burden is light." For, in this stage the self is naught, and God is All. The legend of Sri Krishna lifting the island-realm of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) upon his little finger has the same meaning: God's power is unlimited, man's power is small.

GATHEKA: The former is going down, the latter is rising.

TASAWWUF: The former is going down because he is trying to do everything by himself and with his small power. The latter is rising because he has tuned the instrument of his being to the pitch of love, harmony and beauty; but he does not stop there. He then hands himself over into the hands of the Player, of God, Whose music causes him who is rising to rise even higher.

The complete Sufi Invocation can, with devotion and concentration, affect this rise initially; and the first three words of the Invocation (Toward the One), called Darood, constitute an excellent general practice for beginners and advanced students alike. It may be repeated aloud as a Mantra, or kept on the breath. Its applications are manifold, and its benefits are endless.

GATHEKA: Both depend upon the attitude of mind; and it is the changing of this attitude, which is the principal thing in life, either from a material or from a spiritual point of view.

TASAWWUF: All success, whether material or spiritual, depends upon some form of positivity. Sufis stress the positive outlook much more than some other schools, particularly the schools in India where the chela is encouraged to repeat, "Neti, neti" (Not this, not this). Sufis try to find God everywhere, as the prayer Salat proposes: "Thy Light is in all forms; Thy Love is in all beings."

So Sufism presents the positive outlooks of Light, Love and Life. And even if there are times when resignation is the only attitude one can take, if the resignation is to God the success will ultimately increase, although it may not seem so at first.

GATHEKA: All that is taught in the Sufi esoteric studies and by Sufi practices is taught in order to arrive little by little, gradually, at that fulfillment which is called mastery.

TASAWWUF: While the esoteric studies are instructive and uplifting, and while the spiritual practices are aids to our growth, it should not be forgotten that these efforts are from the side of man. And man of himself cannot compel the descent of Divine Grace.

But man can through instruction and practice overcome, by stages, his lower nature. And the mystery is that what appear to be the efforts of man to crush the ego actually constitute a very efficacious form of the Divine Grace, a form without which it is questionable whether a disciple will ever attain the Baqa, or Salvation. All Sufis of all times have practiced the last words of Lord Buddha: "Seek out thy salvation with diligence." This salvation is not different from mastery.

GATHEKA: Mastery comes from the evolution of the soul, and the sign of mastery is to conquer everything that revolts one.

TASAWWUF: And what revolts one? Limitation. Whether it is limitation in the heart-realm, or the mind-world, or the moral sphere, or physical disability, the work of the Sufi is to vanquish all feelings of limitation. The greater work of the Sufi is to come to God-realization. This is the real

mastery, the real evolution.

GATHEKA: That is real tolerance.

TASAWWUF: Tolerance from the spiritual point of view is based upon the greater and greater accommodation one makes for the indwelling of the Divine Attributes. Man, among all creatures, has this capacity; it has shone most brilliantly in the lives of the Holy Ones. And through their mastery they were able to tolerate situations that would normally break lesser hearts, to surmount difficulties and trials that would undermine weaker wills.

For, when the Divine Attributes have been absorbed into human character and personality, the Manner of God (Akhlak Allah)—which most certainly includes tolerance—is manifested easily and naturally.

GATHEKA: Souls, which have attained to that spiritual mastery show it not only with people, but even with their food. There is nothing that the soul which has gained mastery would not touch, though it may not like it or approve of it.

TASAWWUF: Although the elementary Gathas teach general rules concerning the foods one should eat, and also the foods one should avoid, these are mostly guidelines, not absolute prescriptions. Jesus advised, “Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.” (Matthew, 15, 10 & 11)

Much more important than food is the ability to tolerate the presence of inharmonious influences, of jarring egos. One good way to practice this tolerance is by remembering how raw our own egos used to be before entering the path of wisdom, to recall how our own untamed egos would jar against others as well as against ourselves. A better way to practice toleration is to follow in the footsteps of the Illuminated Ones, to become illuminated oneself. Then there will be nothing that the soul will avoid as unworthy or separate.

Sri Ramakrishna used to gaze upon the prostitutes as living forms of the Divine Mother. Seeing thus, many of the prostitutes became transfigured and entered the spiritual path. The glance of an Illuminated Soul has this power to transform, to raise up those whom the generality regards as untouchable. Toleration of questionable foods is a minor matter compared with the ability to tolerate living human beings of whatever degree of evolution.

GATHEKA: The entire system of the Yogis, especially of the Hatha Yogis, is based upon making themselves acquainted with something their nature revolts against. No doubt by doing this they may go too far in torturing and tormenting themselves, and these extremes are not right, but all the same that is their principle.

TASAWWUF: The friction caused by striving against odds, whether those odds be mental, moral, physical or social, generates more strength of will. One Sufi has remarked that the purpose of

asceticism is only to develop will power. This is no doubt important; but it represents only one side of inner development, the side of keeping the lower nature in harness. The side of emancipation comes otherwise.

Nor has masochism in the name of whatever sacrosanct tradition ever produced enlightened men. Lord Buddha stressed the Middle Way; and Sufis emphasize balance as the key to real development. In this balance is found the secret of the Divine Will, which is the only Will that produces full emancipation.

GATHEKA: It is not the heat which kills a person, but the acceptance of the heat. It is the same with food and medicine, for behind everything there is thought.

TASAWWUF: Sufi poets have written many verses about drinking poison as if it were nectar. This is both symbolic and actual; it is symbolic because the Sufi will accept anything, even the worst unkindness, from the hand of the Beloved—and take it as the purest wine. It is actual because the Sufi will live through and overcome all worldly tribulations which he knows are from the hand of his God, sent for the sake of his growth.

The negative thought enervates the reservoir of man's limited will; this is called "giving in." The positive thought replenishes personal will, and if the thought is upon the Beloved, upon God, the thought becomes so living that even unwholesome foods and bitter medicines will be counted as blessings. The tradition of eating bitter herbs and unleavened bread by the Hebrews during Passover shows the same wisdom, at least in its origins.

GATHEKA: Even now there are Yogis who could jump into the fire and not be burnt.

TASAWWUF: A Sufi might ask, to what purpose? Does one come closer to God by making his body tolerate physical extremes of heat or cold? Does one seek pride or prowess before the submission to God?

Yet, there is a symbolism here too. It is said in Zen Buddhism that Quan-Yin can be found in the deepest hell offering ceaseless compassion to its denizens. This would suggest that the real spiritual teacher will also enter willingly into the flames of hell to assist struggling disciples. It should be remembered that compassion means "to suffer **with**." This may involve visits to hospitals, or mighty struggles in the psychic world; but the teacher will be operating from the standpoint of realization and will not be burnt—except as he may choose or God may choose. A higher purpose is always served, whether the teacher manifests fearlessness and indifference as in the case of a master, or accepts wounds and pains as in the case of a saint.

GATHEKA: One will find that intolerant souls are the most unhappy in the world, because everything hurts them. Why should they be so uncomfortable in the house and restless outside? Because of this tendency of disliking, of rejecting, of prejudice. It is this tendency which must be conquered; and when it is conquered great mastery is achieved.

TASAWWUF: Intolerance shows an inability to be in touch with the deeper self, one's own or the deeper self of others. In other words, there is no heart, there is no love. Why was Jesus called Master? Not because he **said**, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," but because he exemplified these words in his outlook and behavior. When one feels the deep unity with one and all, great and small, mastery comes with ease. All disease comes from lack of this unity-feeling.

[The following story was omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.]
(GATHEKA: I remember my teacher at school telling us that the leaves of the Nim tree had great healing qualities. That did not interest me very much, but what did interest me, as he told us also, was that these leaves were so bitter than one could not drink a brew of them. And the first thing I did was to gather some of these leaves, and nobody understood why I did it; but I made a tea of them and drank it, and to my great satisfaction I did not even make a face! For four or five days I continued this and then I forgot all about it.)

GATHEKA: It is fighting against all that one cannot do that gives one mastery. But generally one does not do that; one fights against things that prevent one from getting what one wants.

TASAWWUF: To overcome inner obstacles of long standing may seem impossible at first. But with the teacher standing by one through test and trial, with the teacher showing fortitude when fortitude is called for, or sympathy when only sympathy will help, the disciple must surely progress. And it is by the disciple's realization of his own progression that the obstacles, all of them, are eventually overcome.

To fight constantly for one's wants and fancies builds up the ego. To take oneself in hand and deny one's lesser appetites is to crush the ego. This is best done a step at a time; otherwise there can be reactions, particularly when one makes extreme or stringent resolutions. The Christian Lent and the Islamic Ramadan are forms of this self-denial. But mostly people do not take these traditions seriously; they look for loop-holes and then proceed to indulge themselves even more than prior to these holy seasons.

GATHEKA: Man should fight only with himself, fight against the tendency of rejecting; this would lead him to mastery. As a general principle in life there is no use in forcing anything, but if we want to train ourselves, that is another thing. It is a process, not a principle.

TASAWWUF: When rejection ceases man makes an accommodation for unity with self and others. The Sufi Al-Ghazzali has declared, "Sufism is based on experience, and not on premises." Experience alone will satisfy the heart of man, and until one has undergone the process of mystical unfoldment, unity and mastery remain as more words.

To wish one's own principles upon others shows a kind of tyranny, often unconscious; and to force others to adopt one's principles is blatant tyranny. But to adhere to one's own principles can lead to growth, especially that growth called character building. And when one is content to practice one's own code, and foregoes wishing that code upon others, one has begun a very real training.

GATHEKA: One may say it is a great struggle. Yes, it is so; but there is struggle in both, in coming down and in going up. It is just as well to struggle and come up, instead of struggling and going down.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that life is generally hard. Indeed, life may be excruciating at times. Often one comes to appreciate the life in God, the benefits of the spiritual path, at these moments of crisis. Knowing this, the teacher will ever proclaim the superiority of love over pain as a means to heart-awakening, even if the teacher himself is a friend of crucifixion a thousand times over.

For the sign of a teacher is this love, this agape, this karuna; and it is the constant ascent of love over all that would bring pain to the disciples that proves his struggle most worthy before Allah. Therefore is the Sufi teacher like unto Mohammed who declared, "Verily, with difficulty cometh ease; verily, with difficulty cometh ease." (Qur'an, Sura XCIV, vs. 5, 6)

GATHEKA: Whenever a person goes down, it only means that he is feeble in his thought. And why is he feeble in his thought? Because he is weak in his feeling. If feeling protects thought, and if thought stands firm, whatever be the difficulty in life, it will be surmounted.

TASAWWUF: It may be heroic to save a drowning man; but it is wise to teach him how to swim. The disciple is trained toward greater ability, greater self-confidence. Then through life's struggles the disciple begins to realize that the true self-confidence is based upon deep heart feeling; the increase of this feeling causes faith (iman) to awaken. And the increase of faith raises the disciple above the maelstroms of life so that he may calm his thought, strengthen his feeling, walk upon the water.

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.

[Chapter 9](#) **Concentration**

GATHEKA: To gain knowledge of concentration requires not only study, but balance also.

TASAWWUF: The studies in Murakkabah begin with explanations to the intellect. But the gains

associated with Murakkabah come only when feeling takes over, and the mind quiets down. A simile may be drawn in the tuning of an instrument; the mind knows that certain pitches must be set, strings must be stretched or loosened to the right notes, before the musician will be able to play to his heart's content. So there are two steps: the intellectual grasp of how to approach Concentration; and the actual immersion in the feeling which is where the real Concentration begins, builds and concludes.

These two steps taken together constitute the balance.

GATHEKA: Before touching this subject I would first like to explain what motive we have behind concentration. There are two aspects of life: the audible life and the silent life. By audible life I mean all experiences, all sensations that we experience through our five senses. This is distinct from the life which I would call the silent life.

TASAWWUF: This subject is gone into fully in the book *The Mysticism of Sound*; particularly Chapter 1 entitled "The Silent Life." The audible life and the silent life are explained also in the teachings of Kabbalah; each day of the week represents a different plane of the universe, a different degree of vibratory activity represented by one of the seven traditional planets, each with its characteristic note.

Six of the planes (or planetary spheres) are always in varying states of activity, which produce the sounds and lights associated therewith. But the Sabbath Day, so named for Saturn, represents the Eternity, the silent life. Therefore is the Sabbath called holy; and thus is God said to have **rested** on the seventh day. The motive behind spiritual concentration is to enter into the silent life of the Sabbath.

GATHEKA: And when one asks what benefit one derives from getting in touch with the silent life, the answer is that the benefit is as abstract as the silent life itself.

TASAWWUF: If we substitute the word transcendent for abstract the meaning of this statement may be clearer. Often in western culture a pejorative connotation is linked with the term abstract, mostly when referring to a person of artistic temperament. This only shows a lack in our culture, an imbalance where grossness is regarded as normal.

Indeed, practicality is needed, but its excess leads to materialism. The balance of practicality with the abstract life constitutes real spirituality.

GATHEKA: The life of sensation is clear; its benefit is clear; and yet as limited as is the life of sensation, so limited is its benefit. That is why in the end we find all our experiences of little value. Their importance lasts as long as we experience them; but after that the importance of the life of sensation is finished.

TASAWWUF: In the Dharma teachings the life of sensation is called Samsara, the unending cycle

of birth, growth, decay and death. The Sufic Nufsaniat has a similar meaning but may be more instructive in that it refers to definite stages of the ego, definite conditions of the breath, from the coarsest to the very highest. In nufs-alima, for instance, one transcends all trace of the life of sensation, even all samskaras (impressions) good and bad, and enters into the sphere of Immaculacy.

To transcend Samsara, or Nufsaniat, is to surpass the Archangels who, though perhaps nearest to God, remain outside the bosom of Eternity. But the Sufi, realizing **La Illaha, El Il Allah**, becomes one with his Beloved God. So a great benefit is gained through entering the Divine Unity; the vibrant love-blessings bestowed thereafter upon the world of sensation and its denizens from a Sufi are known generically as **Baraka**.

When this Baraka permeates the Samsaric life, all limitations formerly associated with concreteness and sensation are revealed as gateways to ultimate glory. "Thy Light is in all forms, Thy Love in all beings" becomes the norm when hearts awaken. Thus is Messiah born, thus are Samsara and Nirvana become one, thus is the purpose of God fulfilled.

GATHEKA: The value of silent life is independent.

TASAWWUF: We can experience this by going into the forest, the desert, our meditation rooms. Many have reported that Nature's cathedrals contain a greater blessing than the edifices built by man. Yet, we have the instructions in *Spiritual Architecture* which are most important. We are, after all, not forest dwellers. And when we co-operate with a the silent life **and each other**, we can realize that "the Lord buildeth the temple."

It often happens that a period of solitude spent in communion with Nature, with the silent life, will charm a person's atmosphere long after he has returned to worldly duties. Silence is first realized as independent; thereafter it is felt as if interpenetrating every thought, word and deed.

GATHEKA: We are inclined to attach a value to something which concerns our outer life. The silent life does not give us a special benefit but a general benefit.

TASAWWUF: Earthly and mental benefits operate through name and form, through the creation. We perceive these benefits through the senses; for instance, we can appreciate foods through touch, sight, smell, taste. Each sense gives a special benefit.

But these particular benefits fade when we enter the silent life. It is as if the silent life has been there all the time in the background. And gradually, or suddenly, the vast reservoir of silence becomes our foreground as well; in other words, the silent life becomes our All. This does not destroy particular benefits; it actually enhances all particulars. For, the silent life itself constitutes unity in realization, while its descent into name and form causes appreciation of unity in variety.

GATHEKA: In other words, if there is a minor wound on the body an external application of a

certain medicament can cure it; but there are other medicines which can cure the general condition, and this is more satisfactory than the external cure, though it is less spectacular.

TASAWWUF: The Twenty Healing Breaths and the prayer Nayaz are an example of “other medicines” which tend to cure the general condition. The rise of what is called Holistic Medicine has produced integrative approaches to disease where diet, breathing, optimism, activity, repose are all harmonized. And the integration of formerly separate outlooks such as the western emphasis on circulatory and digestive systems, the Indian ayurvedic methods, and the Chinese knowledge of the nervous system, show a movement toward synthesis.

Mohammed proposed this thirteen centuries ago when he said, “Seek wisdom, even unto China.” The organic, integrative or holistic approach to healing shows that our world is coming to wisdom. When this attitude also includes the spheres of art, science and religion, wisdom will have come to the world.

GATHEKA: One cannot say exactly what profit is gained by concentration, but in reality every kind of profit is to be attained through concentration, in all directions.

TASAWWUF: Concentration is considered of utmost importance in Sufic training. Initially, it helps one to overcome chaos and confusion; ultimately it produces, maintains and promotes integration and harmony. We see this in the solar system: the sun concentrates its energies in such a way as to function as the heart, and the other planets as auxiliary organs, in the body of the system. It is all the planets working together that shows the sun’s power of concentration.

The same principle operates in individual beings, in groups, in nations and races, in humanity. From this we see there are many grades in Murakkabah; the first lessons are presented in the Githas on this subject, although the series of Gathas on Symbology may also utilize concentration.

GATHEKA: There are two kinds of concentration: automatic concentration and intentional concentration. Automatic concentration is found in many people who do not know that they concentrate and yet they do. They concentrate automatically, some to their disadvantage, some to their advantage. Those who concentrate to their advantage are the ones whose mind is fixed on their business, on their art, on any occupation they have. They are the ones who because of their concentration can work more successfully; be it a composer, a writer, or a musician, according to his power of concentration so will be his success.

TASAWWUF: Automatic concentration upon positive themes shows a natural evolution; automatic concentration on negative thoughts and feelings shows weakness of will, and in extreme cases obsession. Intentional concentration on positive themes shows conscious and willful evolution; intentional concentration on negative patterns shows self-pity, while the same concentration on evil and wickedness constitutes black magic. The biography of the Tibetan saint Milarepa is particularly illustrative, as he went through a period of practicing the black arts before coming to his Guru Marpa who, prior to entrusting Milarepa with the sacred practices, put him through the severest

tests of body, mind and spirit, the very severest tests.

A most profound teaching given in concentration is to be found in the words of Jesus Christ: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all else shall be added unto you.” In other words, concentration of itself is a power, but when God is the object of one’s concentration one becomes selfless. This results in the realization of God as All Power, Wisdom and Love, and all virtues follow naturally in the wake of this realization.

[The following story was omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.](GATHEKA: I once had the pleasure of hearing Paderewski in his own house. He began to play gently on his piano. Every note took him into a deeper and deeper ocean of music. Any meditative person could see clearly that he was so concentrated in what he did that he knew not where he was.)

GATHEKA: The works of great composers which will always live, which win the hearts of men, whence do they come? From concentration. So it is with a poet, so it is with an artist; it is concentration which brings color and line, which makes the picture.

TASAWWUF: Again it must be repeated that concentration is accomplished when **feeling** holds and orders thought. Hearts are won only through heart, through depth of feeling. When concentration has penetrated depths through to the depths—“the moonlight penetrates through the waves, reaching the bottom freely and easily,” in the words of a Zen poem—the spring of inspiration is discovered. All real art, music and poetry come from this spring; as the spring is eternal, so the works it inspires become immortal.

GATHEKA: Naturally, whether it be an artist or a writer, a musician or a poet, or somebody who is in business or industry, in the absence of concentration he can never succeed.

TASAWWUF: Concentration creates order and harmony, and makes a way for the heavenly condition to be reflected upon earth. Lack of concentration in life leads to limbo, purgatory or hell, depending upon the degree of this lack. The pains associated with these regions, these experiences, often are sufficient to cause renewed efforts to center one’s being. So even in chaos is hidden the seed of mercy.

GATHEKA: Sometimes concentration works to a disadvantage. There are some people who always think that they are unlucky, that everything they do will go wrong, who think that everybody dislikes them, that everybody hates them. Then some begin to think that they are unable to do anything, that they are incapable, useless.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, “Every child is born a true believer in the One God.” And the logia of Jesus include the statement, “Verily, I am with little children unto the age of seven years.” These remarks indicate that souls come into the world clear, fresh and pure—not only innocent of denseness but also immune to it for the time being.

The second half of Mohammed's saying is, "... but the child's parents and society turn it from the true belief." This indicates that the coverings the parents have allowed to veil their own souls eventually cast a shadow over the soul of the child; and that the denseness associated with life in the world also contributes its share of shadows. The child is so accepting by nature that it takes all reflections—including those which would cover its light.

If no moral training has been given, if worthy examples have not been set by the parents, it may not be too many steps before the child adopts questionable ways of thinking and behaving. Once a soul has inwardly given up hope of taking a positive approach to life, or has begun to give more and more scope to negative habits—and this process is most subtle in its beginnings—that soul becomes unlucky, bitter and inharmonious. But most of all that soul becomes lonely, and longs unconsciously for its original being.

Very often disciples come to the spiritual path from this kind of background. It is most important to restore positivity and hope to the struggling soul. That is why we pray constantly to know God "as a loving mother, a kind father, an innocent child, a helpful friend, an inspiring teacher." With proper concentration, these examples are no less than powerful medicines to an ailing soul; these examples have power to heal.

GATHEKA: Others out of self-pity think that they are ill. In that way even if they are not ill they create illness. Some by concentration cherish illness, always think of it. No physician could be successful with them. An old physician once said, "There are many diseases, but there are many more patients." Once a person has become a patient through concentration, he is difficult to cure. And there are many such cases of automatic concentration to the disadvantage of man.

TASAWWUF: Once one has permitted self-pity to enter one's consciousness, or has allowed the suggestion of disease to take root in the ground of one's thoughts, the ways of illness stand open. Unless the self-pity and loneliness are taken away, unless hope, faith and love are restored, really restored, the impression of disease will be difficult to uproot.

It is for this reason that Mental Purification, with all its methodologies, is regarded as the pharmacopoeia of Sufism—the Divine Wisdom whose adherents in another age were called "Ikhwan-I-Safa" or the Brethren of Purity. The Mental Purification is based on fana, or self-effacement. The more the limited self is effaced, the more the shadow-impressions associated with disease are erased. And when the blessing of heart awakening comes to one, especially when this state can be maintained, the entire field of mind and heart becomes clarified of all the roots and stubble and stones of disease. This can lead to a restoration of health on all planes.

GATHEKA: Intentional concentration is taught by thinkers, philosophers, and meditative people. The whole of mysticism, of esotericism, is based upon the idea of concentration.

TASAWWUF: Seekers of whatever persuasion have found—and continue to find—the object of their seeking through definite and diligent concentration. This would indicate that keeping centered on a

goal opens a way toward one's object; and keeping centered inwardly tends, at the same time, to attract the object sought to the seeker. Ultimately, concentration is a key that opens the door to mergence of subject and object, which is the purpose of all mysticism and esotericism.

GATHEKA: This mystical concentration can be divided into four different grades. The first is concentration, the next contemplation, the third meditation, the fourth realization.

TASAWWUF: The very suggestion of grades shows that Sufism is not only devotional, nor is it solely scientific. Sufism is a school of training which takes into account all aspects of human nature—and through a combination of science and devotion gradually develops the human nature toward Self-realization through the Ideal of God.

GATHEKA: The definition of the first grade is the fixing of one's thought upon one object.

TASAWWUF: This is gone into and explained thoroughly in the Githas on Murakkabah (Concentration). But the mere reading of the lessons will be of no avail; one must practice concentration, often for many years, in order to advance from grade to grade. Nor is it ever wise to presume a constant advancement; it often happens that the advanced students, being burdened with more responsibilities, will stumble under the weight of numerous concentrations, will become scattered and nervous. This is a definite sign that the students need to come back to the simplest forms of concentration upon one object. The only sin, so to speak, is to rely upon the power of one's small self; the virtue is realized when we rely on the life and power of God.

GATHEKA: One should not concentrate upon just any object that comes along, for what one concentrates upon has an effect upon one. When one concentrates upon a dead object it has the affect of deadening the soul; when one concentrates on a living object it naturally has a living effect. The secret of the teachings of all prophets and mystics is to be found in this.

TASAWWUF: To focus upon objects or events that bring thoughts of destruction, of degeneration, of enervation, by the process of reflection produces a lessening of the life-force—or rather a lessening of the capacity to keep the life-force centered and orderly. This can bring ossification and inertia to one's, spirit if such indulgence is prolonged.

On the other hand, all Symbols of all religions, all signs associated with the various divine Messengers, e.g., the Ark of Noah, the Living Waters of Ezekiel, Moses and the Burning Bush, Jesus and the Bread and Wine, Mohammed and the Night Journey, can bring an influx of life, of spirit, if concentrated upon. Greater still is the influx of life when one concentrates upon the being of the Messenger himself, but the greatest of all life comes when we concentrate upon Him Whom the Messengers themselves know the Living God.

As Sufism is a school of gradual spiritual unfoldment, so Murakkabah is also a gradual training. One may remain in a certain stage for a long time, yet it frequently happens that once the initial stages are accomplished the more advanced degrees follow swiftly. It would not be too surprising if

one were to start by concentrating upon the Cross, then pass to mergence with the heart of Jesus Christ, and at last experience the life of Resurrection (Baqā).

More often human views of time-processes just get in the way, impede the actual spiritual progress that is taking place.

GATHEKA: This concentration is achieved in three different ways. The first way is by action. One makes a certain movement or performs an action, which helps the mind to concentrate on a certain object.

TASAWWUF: The Walks of the Divine Attributes are examples of this kind of active concentration, as are the Dances of Universal Peace. The movements associated with each Attribute assist the concentration, help to bring inner feeling outward so that “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

GATHEKA: Another way is with the help of words. By the repetition of certain words one learns to think automatically of a certain object.

TASAWWUF: This includes the ways of prayer and Wazifa (Mantra). When we add movements to prayer or Wazifa we are putting psychic law into practice. That is to say, we are experiencing how principles operate when feeling, thought and action are coordinated, are harmonized. Action alone can sometimes bring the proper thought and feeling needed to complete the experience; but in the absence of action there can be no actuality, no grounding of the experience.

The spiritual walks and Dances are really based upon the repetition of sacred phrases **with** appropriate movements. It has even been said that the sacred phrase is fundamental, and the action secondary, in the practice of Walk and Dance. Yet both are necessary to complete the experience.

GATHEKA: The third way is with the help of memory. Memory is like a builder’s yard. From this the builder takes anything he likes: tiles, pillars, bricks, whatever he wants. The man who concentrates in this way does the same as children who have bricks to build toy houses with. He collects things in his memory and with them he composes objects in order to concentrate on what he wishes.

TASAWWUF: Ordinary memory is what we recall from our experience of the past. But there may be a super-memory which belongs not to the past alone; the super-memory may belong to eternity—which would include the realms of past, present and future, as well as transcend these realms. The vision of life built by a Prophet would utilize materials from ancient times, from the contemporary world, and would also project the needed elements forward to insure proper foundations for the future humanity.

Yet even ordinary memory is often special; if it were not special we would not remember it. There

are stories of composers who heard a phrase of music during their childhood, and so meaningful and memorable would that phrase become during the course of their lives that whole symphonies would emerge—just from one little line of music. It is like one little seed yielding a whole forest.

But what is memory? Is it not simply the castle we build around a moment sacred to our heart? The castle is only the body of the memory, but the beautiful princess who dwells therein is the soul of that sacred memory. Castles will be built and castles will fall into ruin; but the princess is forever. This is symbolic.

With the help of Zikr (Remembrance), Sufis try to perfect their memory of the Divine Presence.

GATHEKA: As to contemplation, it is only when a person is advanced enough that he can contemplate; because contemplation is not on an object, it is on an idea.

TASAWWUF: Concentration is like sculpting a block of marble; the sculptor holds the thought of the desired object with the power of his feeling. Yet when the sculpture is completed the artist begins to see the spirit of his creation; the idea that was hidden in the block of stone has become realized.

A Sufi poet has said, “First do your duty, then behold beauty.” Concentration is associated with duty; contemplation is associated with the beholding of beauty. And, though it is taught that concentration precedes contemplation, there is also need to consider that some form of contemplation, some inspiration or ideation, precedes the work of concentration. Thus, in any true artistry there is a marriage, a balance, of these two processes.

GATHEKA: No doubt a man may think that he is ready to do anything and that after concentration he can contemplate; but the nature of the mind is such that it slips out of one’s hands the moment one tries to hold it. Therefore before one really starts to think, the mind has already thrown off the object of concentration like a restive horse.

TASAWWUF: Successful concentration may demand special ability, and this ability often comes only after long and arduous self-discipline. In many schools the mind is likened to a great body of water with waves, tides, whirlpools and eddies. In other words, the mind—like the ocean—is in constant motion. It is the work of the disciple to still the waves and turbulences of the mind. When this is accomplished the mind becomes like a clear mirror able to reflect the noble themes of the heart-sphere which arise naturally. This is the beginning of contemplation.

GATHEKA: Mind is not always so unruly; it proves to be unruly when it wants to rule itself. It is like the body: one may feel restful sitting naturally, but as soon as one keeps quite still for five minutes, the body begins to feel restless; and it is still more difficult to make the mind obey.

TASAWWUF: In the Gathas on Everyday Life (Takua Taharat) for first-year students, lessons are given to help refine and harmonize the physical body; and second-year students are taught to

purify the mind. Often it happens that bodily ablutions tend to refresh the mind; and a purified mind in turn reflects life and vigor to the body.

Today all Sufis are given the 20 Purification Breaths as their foundation practice. This practice involves the breaths of the Elements as a means toward the re-vivification and purification of “body, heart and soul”—so beautifully expressed in the Nayaz, or Gayatri of Healing.

When the disciple establishes the regular practice of the 20 Purification Breaths and repeats the Nayaz with all wisdom and devotion, the body will become radiant and healthy, and the mind will become balanced and obedient, even inspired. The regular practice of these Breaths also creates an accommodation for the more advanced practices of Kasab and Shagal which are given at the time of the 4th and 7th Bayat respectively.

GATHEKA: Mystics therefore find a rope to tie the mind in a certain place where it cannot move. What is that rope? That rope is breath. It is by that rope that they bind the mind and make it stand where they wish it to stand.

TASAWWUF: Sufis attempt to center in and with the breath; and while the Elemental breaths are used to start the day, the rhythmic practice of Darood or Fikr may and should be used throughout the day. These practices are not restricted to periods of seclusion or to one’s private daily devotions; these practices are meant to be integrated with one’s work in the world, for it is thus that the Divine Attributes are infused into the practical and earthly spheres.

But these **thoughts** are not Mental Purification. The **practices** of Fikr and Darood are **processes** in and toward Mental Purification. As one Sufi teacher has said, “You can live without thinking, but you cannot live without breathing.” And if the initial endeavors to calm the mind may seem elusive, after a period of regular practice the methods of breath will certainly prove their sufficiency.

GATHEKA: It is like the bird which uses its saliva to make its nest; so is it with the mystic who out of breath creates atmosphere, creates light and magnetism in which to live.

TASAWWUF: Some mystics make an atmosphere as if only for themselves; they are called “pratyeka-buddhas”—adepts who would gain the enlightened condition solely for themselves. But there is a real question whether enlightenment can be so limited.

Sufis would not be in harmony with such an approach. The Pir who established the Sufi teachings in the Western world declared: “What I give to you, you must share with others.” Who are these others? They are ourselves.

Therefore the Sufi teacher will create a nest, an atmosphere, in which his mureeds are placed like so many eggs. The warmth of his attention helps the process of incubation within the shell, and assists the growth out of the shell. The teacher strives every moment of life to give a worthy example to the fledgling disciple so that the disciple in his turn may continue and develop the lines

of transmission when he reaches spiritual maturity. This process is called in Sufic terminology the Chain of Baraka, and it is living, real.

GATHEKA: One characteristic of the mind is that it is like a gramophone record: whatever is impressed upon it, it is able to reproduce; and another characteristic of the mind is that it does not only reproduce something, but it creates what is impressed upon it. If ugliness is recorded, it will produce disagreement, in harmony. The learning of concentration clears the record, makes it produce what we like, not what comes automatically.

TASAWWUF: The learning of concentration and the development of will-power go hand in hand. Even when one concentrates upon an object outside of oneself, the effect sooner or later will be toward a greater inward stability on the part of the disciple. This inward stability, coupled with depth of feeling, ultimately tends to center in heart; and it is in and with the stable heart-centration that the power of will begins to reveal itself.

When the power of will is developed sufficiently, the mind becomes the willing servant of the heart. As lack of heart-feeling, combined with an inability to keep centered, produces in harmony and ugliness, so full heart-centration—ever expanding—creates all virtue and beauty. It is far more important to practice and realize the means toward virtue and beauty, than to worry overmuch about a momentary and passing inharmonious thought.

GATHEKA: In this world one is so open to impressions. One goes about with eyes and ears open, but it is not only the eyes, not only the ears which are open; the lips are open to give out what the eyes and ears take in, that is the dangerous part.

TASAWWUF: The prayer **Rassoul** begins, “Warner of coming dangers ...” We do not generally like to consider coming dangers. It is like skipping certain parts of Scripture because to face the parts we skip over would require facing ourselves, even God, directly. We accept the surface comfort rather than face pains and problems.

It is one thing to allow coarse impressions to gain a foothold in one’s consciousness; it is quite another thing, to thoughtlessly broadcast an unbecoming or harmful impression into the atmosphere at large, the same atmosphere we share with those near and dear to us. If we are thoughtful we will not permit unworthy impressions to take abode in our minds, and if we are conscientious we will never allow such impressions to pass our lips and assume the form of speech.

This is a hard yet very basic lesson in the culture of morality. Once the impulse to speak noisily and unrestrainedly has been quelled, the tendency to commit to speech every little unimportant thought has been governed; we may witness the improvement in ourselves and in the atmosphere. Sometimes, in particularly difficult cases, it is necessary to remind the disciple that the ancient Sufi schools enforced absolute verbal silence upon all neophytes for the first three years of training. But this is a new day, and there is an advanced human evolution. If one only looks for it one will

discover it.

This discovery, however, requires a deeper sight, a special listening, because the impressions of everyday are always there to deter us from our real purpose. But when we listen for “Thy Voice which constantly cometh from within,” when we seek the disclosure of “Thy divine Light,” we will overcome dangers and at the same time we will consciously assist the evolution of humanity to the higher wisdom.

GATHEKA: The third part of concentration is meditation.

TASAWWUF: This subject is taken up in lesson form in the 5th grade of the Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat Society’s esoteric program. Called **Dhyana**, which is Sanskrit for meditation, the lessons show how the methods of Wazifa, Zikr, Fikr and Kasab may all lead to the goal of meditation.

And what is meditation? A Vedanta Swami was asked what he thought about “transcendental meditation.” He answered, “All meditation is transcendental.” Therefore, meditation is a process that overcomes the see-saw of opposites and raises us above the denseness of earth. And if these words are not sufficient indication—and they are not—there is always the practice itself.

GATHEKA: In this grade one becomes communicative; one communicates with the silent life, and naturally a communication opens up with the outer life also. It is then that a man begins to realize that both the outer and the inner life, everything, in fact, is communicative.

TASAWWUF: Thus is experienced unity in variety, and “heart speaks to heart, and soul to soul” becomes the norm. This is a heavenly condition and represents the capacity of its bearer to “makest earth a paradise”—as suggested in the prayer Nabi. Or, as Shakespeare has written of those whose lives are “exempt from public haunt, (they) find tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

GATHEKA: Then a man begins to learn what can never be learnt by study or from books, that the silent life is the greatest teacher and knows all things. It does not only teach, but gives that peace, that joy, that power and harmony which make life beautiful.

TASAWWUF: When the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mohammed and commanded him to: “Read!”—he was beseeching the Prophet to perceive all life, inner and outer, as being pervaded by the silent life, the Name of Allah. Now Mohammed was illiterate in the worldly sense, yet the more he began to **read** in the mystical sense the more he realized the All-ness of his Lord, and the more he became the repository and proof of the divine Sifat. As Mercy and Compassion are the chief Qualities of Allah, so too are Rahman and Rahim foremost among the perfections attributed to the Holy Prophet.

GATHEKA: No one can claim to be meditative. For a meditative person need not say it with the lips. His atmosphere says so, and it is the atmosphere alone which can say whether it is true or

false.

TASAWWUF: A meditative person **need** not say it aloud, but a meditative person may say it aloud. Much can be given as Baraka in the form of sound—and if there are limitations inherent in the nature of speech and verbalism, there are not those limitations upon sounds which can be uttered by the teacher, sounds which resonate from the heart and ring from the soul. At the same time it is true that those who have realized this power of sound also possess more life and love in their silent atmosphere. It is generally the **line of development** of a given teacher which determines whether sound or silence will predominate in his teaching, but he will be proficient in either if God wills.

We have the example of Moses and Aaron. Moses usually kept silent, and Aaron usually spoke. But patterns and rules are made to be broken just as idols are broken; and Moses certainly stood up to Pharaoh with inspired words **and** the power of atmosphere.

GATHEKA: Once I asked spiritual teacher what was the sign of knowing God. He said, “Not those who call out the Name of God, but those whose silence says it.” Many go about looking, searching for something worth while, something wonderful, but there is nothing more wonderful than the soul of man.

TASAWWUF: “The still, small voice,” “the voice of the turtle,” “the peace which passeth all understanding,” are all synonymous with the ring of the soul’s silence. Too often we find so-called religious people, even some who pose as representatives of God, mouthing the Name of God or the name of a favored Messenger; but what they are actually saying is, “Do it our way or be damned to hell.”

The real religious people will strive all their lives to discover the silence of the soul, and when they discover it they will pronounce God’s Name with all their being. Their most eloquent pronouncement may be through the deep silence of their atmosphere, indeed some paths require this silence as prerequisite to the work at hand. But the sounds and even literal words of anyone who has realized the soul will also be eloquent, will be most effective in teaching, in the bestowal of Baraka, in all matters pertaining to spiritual awakening.

Sufis practice Wazifa and Zikr, which have sound-values and literal values, Sufis also practice Fikr and Darood, which are silent and utilize the refined breath. Sufis join in group practices which involve sacred phrases recited or sung aloud, and Sufis join in group silences. But individually or in group, the main thing for Sufis is balances. “What is the sign of your Father in you? It is a movement and a rest.” (Gospel of St. Thomas)

GATHEKA: Realization is the result of the three other grades. In the third kind of experience man pursued meditation; but in this, meditation pursues man. In other words, it is no longer the singer who sings the song, but the song sings the singer.

TASAWWUF: All these gradations are illustrated in the “Ten Ox-herding pictures” of Zen;

everything is there including the pursuance of meditation and the being pursued by it. The Christian “Stations of the Cross” also illustrate this process of gradual awakening to the reality of the soul.

An American Sufi master once remarked to an Indian audience, “The Bhagavad-Gita (The Song Celestial) is the flute of Krishna turned into poetry ...” The reality of all Scripture can be ascertained when we see the prophet or messenger as the inspired **vox humanum** of the Divine Song.

GATHEKA: This fourth grade is a kind of expansion of consciousness; it is the unfoldment of the soul; it is diving deep within oneself; it is communicating with each atom of life existing in the whole world; it is realizing the real “I” in which is the fulfillment of life’s purpose.

TASAWWUF: In short, one who reaches this stage has fulfilled the urging of St. Paul to “put on the Mind of Christ.” Its extent is as great as God, its unfoldment embraces all in utter **agape**; the sea of this love has neither been fathomed as to its depth nor has any shore ever been sighted; every atom is a living being on a journey from the corpus of the first Adam to that of the second Adam; and the “I” with which one is identified is the Only Being, the All-Being.

One may write spiritual poetry or utter scriptures from this realization, in which case one functions in nufs salima. Or, one may keep steeped in the silence of this realization and be in Nufs-alima, the Heart of uttermost repose, the Mind of Omniscience, the Fatherhood of God.

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.

[Chapter 10](#) The Will

GATHEKA: Words such as wish, desire, love and their like mean more or less the same thing; but the word “will” has a greater importance than all those other words. And the reason is that will is life itself.

TASAWWUF: The themes of will, wish and desire are taken up in the published literature (Volume VIII), but will is so important that its connections imbue all of the Sufi teachings, published and esoteric.

The Qur'anic "Kun faya kun!" (Be, and it became!) shows that the command of God originated existence. In this sense, the Attribute "Al-Bari" (The Maker out of Naught) becomes clear. Whether we speak of God or of man, the one who possesses this will, this power of command, is one with the fullness of life both temporal and eternal.

The American Sufi poet Murshid Samuel L. Lewis (Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti) illustrates this principle in the epic poem **Saladin** when he speaks in the voice of Sri Krishna: "So I sing the universe unbounded, and electrify the universe which is bound"

GATHEKA: The Bible calls God love. Love in what sense? Love in the sense of will. The Creator created the universe by what? By love? By will; love came afterwards. Love is the will when it is recognized by its manifestation; then it is called love; but in the beginning it is will.

TASAWWUF: Will is Zat; love is Sifat. They are inseparable. Only in the worlds of multiplicity do we recognize an apparent dual principle. A will without love could not possibly be ascribed to God, and as we have been created in God's Image our own wills are essentially replete with love. The realization of this is the chief attainment of Sufis.

GATHEKA: For instance, the Taj Mahal, the great building at Agra, is said to be the token of the love that the emperor had for his beloved. At the same time, when one looks at it objectively, one cannot call it an expression of love; one would sooner call it a phenomenon of will. For the beginning of the building at least, one may look at the spirit, the impulse which started it, as a phenomenon of the emperor's will; after it was finished one can say it was the expression of his love.

TASAWWUF: The Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote: "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower" This force of creation is the will behind the goal represented by the flower; it is not the force we love, ordinarily speaking, it is the flower we love. Yet it is the flower that shows the love was there in the force from the very beginning.

It may be said that love for an object is the first stage of love; but when that object reveals its soul to the lover, then the lover perceives the Divine Will which gave it life. It is the perception of the Divine Will which leads to absorption in the destination of love: peace—vibrant with immaculate unity.

GATHEKA: When a person says, "I desire it," "I wish it," it is an incomplete will, a will which is not conscious of its strength, a will which is not sure what it wills. In that case it is called a desire, a wish. But when a person says, "I will it," that means it is definite. A person who never can say, "I will it," has no will.

TASAWWUF: An incomplete will is a shallow will; strength of will comes from the depths of heart. A desire or wish may be regarded as lesser degrees of the complete deep will, but really speaking the complete will is transcendent in relation to all degrees. For, the complete will is God's Will.

When man becomes identified with the complete Will of God, he may disclose it verbally as in the case of Mansur Al-Hallaj; or he may reveal it through the power of miracle (**karamat**) as in the case of Jesus Christ and others; or he may simply abide in God's Presence and manifest the Beautiful Names through the course of his everyday life as in the case of Mohammed who is the exemplar for many Sufis.

Nor should we assume one mode of behavior to be less instrumental than another. Al-Hallaj's declaration that he and the Truth were one was for a definite purpose, for the orthodoxy of the time had to be shown that spiritual realization is always pre-eminent over so-called religious views devoid of devotion to a Living God and sympathy toward mankind. Thus he was crucified. Jesus Christ's example of self-sacrifice was the very means by which the power of miracle was able to operate, for when the ego is crushed the Will of God may immediately work through the hand of man. The miracles were for those who needed them in one way or another; but the lesson of crucifying the limited self that the Unlimited Life may be realized is for all times and all peoples.

Sufis generally idealize Mohammed because his life shows the perfection of balance, of a deep and comprehensive spirit, of completion—all this in the midst of human enterprise. But all the Holy Ones have come to earth with the message of Divine Perfection. And as Holy Qur'an says, "We make no distinctions or differences among them (the Prophets)"

GATHEKA: From this we may conclude that will is the source and the origin of all phenomena.

TASAWWUF: The Divine Fiat, "Kun faya kun!" has already been commented upon.

GATHEKA: Hindus have called the creation a dream of Brahma, the Creator. But a dream is a phenomenon of the unconscious will, when the will works automatically.

TASAWWUF: Too much regard for such interpretations of the creation may actually produce cultures where lack of a general direction has become paramount, such as we see in late 20th century India, despite the influences of Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, despite national independence.

GATHEKA: The will is the action of the soul. One can also call the soul the self of the will. The difference between will and soul is like the difference between a person and his action.

TASAWWUF: And when the soul has shed its coverings and become united with the Divine Spirit, all its actions produce pure, sweet and wholesome fruit. A realized soul will always commend the fruits of his or her labors to God—for seed, sunlight, rain, air and earth—all contribute to the great harvest.

Without the Divine Will there would be no seed, and without the Elements there would be no growth, no fruit, no harvest. In a very real sense, the harvest is a symbol for the soul's return to its Source—for as Qur'an declares: "Verily, to Allah is your return."

The soul itself is the action of God. “What is the soul?” one of the companions asked the Prophet. “Amr-i-Allah,” answered Mohammed, “an activity of God.”

GATHEKA: There is a difference between the thoughtful and the imaginative man, and the difference is that the one thinks with will, the other thinks without will. When once a person knows the value of will he then recognizes that there is nothing in the world which is more precious than will.

TASAWWUF: It is those souls who have united with the Divine Will who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. It is the Master who possesses will-power in its greatest degree, and it is the unity of Masters working together which constitutes the Spiritual Hierarchy. This embodiment of Illuminated Souls represents the very Order of God, an Order inconceivable to the mind of man but which may be glimpsed by an open heart and clearly seen by an awakened soul.

Human effort, human will, is a spark borrowed from the blaze of the Divine Will. Its instrumentality to effect change for the better should never be underestimated, yet its power is small in comparison to the blaze from which it has been borrowed. Therefore Sufis strive to annihilate their limited egos by entering the All-Powerful, All-Loving Divine Will—as the moth becomes naught by entering the lantern. When this stage is reached one may rightly be called “a torch in the darkness,” as suggested in the prayer Nabi.

GATHEKA: Naturally, therefore, the question arises in the mind of the thoughtful man, “Have I will in me? Have I a strong will or have I a weak will?” And the answer is that no one can exist without will; everyone has a will.

TASAWWUF: The various degrees of will, from weak to strong, that we see operating through the humanity, show clearly that there is either direction, or lack of direction, in people’s lives. It is those with direction who prove their understanding of will-power, and it is those who lack direction who evidence ignorance of will-power.

One of the first duties of the spiritual teacher is to kindle the heart of the disciple so as to awaken the sense of will. Often a disciple is looking for direction in life, a feeling of order and rhythm, but until the will is awakened one does not experience much ability to direct one’s affairs. In this regard, the teacher must be a living example of the purity, power and unity of the Divine Will, The living example is the greatest of teachings, the distillate of all that is worthy of God and worthwhile for man.

GATHEKA: The automatic working of the mind produces imagination, and the value of imagination depends upon the cultivation of the mind; if the mind is tuned to a higher pitch then the imagination will naturally be at a higher pitch; but if the mind is not tuned to a high pitch then naturally the imaginations will not be at a high pitch.

TASAWWUF: Prayer provides a cultivation which can include concentration (upon sacred themes),

postures and movements based upon psychic law, and devotion. In this way thought, action and feeling are united, and the whole being is involved in willing surrender to God.

And while prayer may bring the benefits of sobriety, this sobriety does not necessarily bring the consciousness of unity; God and man may remain as if separate. Thus, Sufis have held sessions called **Sama**, musical and poetic gatherings where the highest expression of devotion is in the sacred dance. The tendency of these gatherings is to produce types of ecstasy unknown to the generality, but certainly known to heart and soul—even to the body.

Yet one will find that most of these gatherings where poetry, music and singing, and the sacred dance take place are preceded and concluded by prayer. So all ranges of imaginative and devotional thought and feeling are experienced through the combination of formal prayer and modes of bliss. This is a kind of balance outside the ken of orthodox, narrow or fixed outlooks, but it is a balance which the Sufi holds to be of immense benefit in life—not because it sounds good in theory but because the Sufi knows it through his or her own experience.

GATHEKA: Imagination has its place and its value. But when? At that time when the heart is tuned to such a pitch that the imagination cannot go anywhere else but into paradise. The heart which is so tuned by love and harmony and beauty, without willing it begins to float automatically; and in this automatic movement it reacts to whatever it touches, or expresses it in some form. When it is in the form of line or color or notes, then art, painting, music, or poetry is produced; it is then that imagination has value.

TASAWWUF: It is this imagination, which has been called “the symphony of emotions.” All artists and lovers are familiar with this symphony, with this pitch of imagination raised high by the fire of devotion and made pure by the tears of revelation. This is the state which may come to the purified heart of the devotee, yet it is not the **state**, which is sought by the Sufi; the Sufi seeks only God, Who discloses and veils His Being according to His plan.

States (ahwal) are important in spiritual development because they remove the sight of the self from one’s eyes. But unity with God is supreme because then one’s self is God. This is the goal of all spiritual longing and endeavor. As Jesus Christ has taught, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all else shall be added unto you.”

At the same time, one should certainly practice art, poetry or music—or any special talents which inspire one’s heart—as avenues of seeking God, in addition to the practices given by the teacher. This will result in more God-realization on the one hand, and the production of greater beauty through all art forms on the other hand, inshallah.

GATHEKA: But when it comes to business and science and all things which are connected with our everyday life and the world, it is better to leave imagination aside and work with thought.

TASAWWUF: That is to say the will should be active rather than passive. Thought with will should

be goal-oriented. Yet it often happens that the solution to a problem in science or other field of mental or material endeavor will occur when the mind is passive, even in a dream or when one is going to sleep.

GATHEKA: As both night and day are useful, as both rest and action are necessary, so both thinking and imagination have their place in our life. For instance, if a poet used his will to direct his imagination it would become a thought and would become rigid. The natural thing for a poet is to let his mind float into space; and whatever it happens to touch to let his heart express it, and then what is expressed is an inspiration.

TASAWWUF: The poet must be passive to the higher worlds of imagination, yet positive with regard to the world of humanity which he desires to impress with the seal of his inspiration. It is easier if, as in the case of Mohammed with the Qur'an and Rumi with the Masnavi, the prophet or poet can be uttering the revelations as they come, and leave the recording to the amanuenses. It is harder if the poet must also be the instrument of writing, for this brings his consciousness more into the physical realm and his inspirations may be slower or less spontaneous in coming. Yet it should not matter too much, for Sufis learn the lessons of balance, which is to say Sufis master the ability to function at all levels, often at more than one level at a time.

The spiritual teacher is in much the same circumstance. He must be passive to God and Hierarchy, and he must be positive to the disciple. If the teacher is truly selfless before God and Hierarchy, there is no question that the disciple will be selfless before the teacher. As Hazrat Inayat Khan has taught, "Devotion to a spiritual teacher is not for the sake of the teacher; it is for God."

GATHEKA: But when a person has to attend to a business affair he must not let his heart float in the air; he must think of the things of the earth, and think about figures very carefully.

TASAWWUF: Strength of will is built by facing the problems of earth directly, by keeping one's feet on the ground and learning how to stand firmly in the midst of disagreeable situations and especially severe trials. Those who lack will tend to run away from earth-plane responsibilities; those who possess will always combine wit, skill, and optimism in meeting difficult persons or events. An even greater mastery is gained when one faces the enemies in one's own self, and overcomes the forces associated with ego and lower mind. This has been symbolized in the picture of Saint George slaying the dragon.

GATHEKA: Then we come to the question of how we can maintain our will. The nature of the life we live is to rob us of our will. Not only the struggle we have to undergo in life, but also our own self, our thoughts, our desires, our wishes, our motives, weaken our will.

TASAWWUF: The will is like a sturdy and healthy tree. But when ivy, mistletoe, fungus or other parasitic growths attach themselves to the tree, the strength of the tree becomes increasingly sapped. The tree becomes robbed of its full share in life. This is how our own will becomes less through life: by little attachments that grow large if we let them.

If man would maintain his will through life, he must cut away, even uproot, the attachments which become like parasites, preventing the tree of his being from bearing proper fruit in due season.

GATHEKA: The person who knows how our inner being is connected with the perfect Will, will find that what makes the will smaller, narrower, more limited, is our experience throughout life. Our joys rob us of our will as do our sorrows; our pleasures rob us of our will as do our pains; and the only way of maintaining the power of will is by studying the existence of will and by analyzing among all the things in ourselves what will is.

TASAWWUF: Youth is a time in life when there is seemingly a surfeit of willfulness, even to the point of rebellion. The candle is burnt at both ends, as the saying goes. Youth does not recognize, as a rule, how the inner being is connected with the divine Will—although Sufi parents and guardians will try their utmost to make such matters clear to their children of teen-age years.

Usually it takes a trial or sudden blow in life to catalyze a recognition of will, will in its own element as contrasted with the unconscious willfulness of youth. When one is thus awakened to the real nature of will, he or she will begin to understand the processes of steady growth and maturation. There will be more attention paid to maintaining one's center, one's will, one's life-force; and this very attention will serve to sustain and improve the will—if it is not overdone.

GATHEKA: It might seem that motive increases will-power, but no doubt in the end we will find that it robs us of will power. Motive is a shadow upon the intelligence, although the higher the motive, the higher the soul, and the greater the motive, the greater the greater man.

TASAWWUF: This is to say that motive is associated with the ego-personality of man, and is thereby limited. As man's ego reinforces the sense of separation from his fellow man, so his motives can overshadow the light of the divine Will, the perfect Will which is ever ready to give of its inexhaustible wealth.

But as man's ego becomes more refined and harmonious, his motives move that much closer to the impulses of the divine Will. It is in the refinement of self, and in the moving nearer to the perfect Will that the living progress of the spirit is experienced. This is the true Sadhana.

GATHEKA: When the motive is beneath the ideal, then this is the fall of man; and when his motive is his ideal it is his rise. According to the width of motive man's vision is wide, and according to the power of motive man's strength is great.

TASAWWUF: If the motive falls short of the ideal, it is often due to fatigue, inharmony of thought, loss of rhythm and tone. And if one becomes guilty or defensive because of these shortcomings, he or she will only double the weight of the burden. This is the real fall of man which, if not faced with will and optimism, eventually results in the entrapment which we call self-pity.

The antidotes to these shortcomings are proper patterns of activity and rest, hygiene and self-

discipline. But these are only the skin and bones of mystical seeking; our ideal is to dwell in the presence of God. The Sufi Invocation proposes that the God-ideal can be realized through the perfection of love, harmony and beauty. When we seek God through these avenues, we may feel our motive most worthy. This is surely man's rise, a rise which depends not alone upon skin and bones but upon the faculties of heart and breath—which come through devotion and training and diligence.

Perfection in fana leads to the complete baqa. Thus, the symbol of the Cross is used to promote breadth of vision (the horizontal arm) and fullness of purpose and will (the vertical arm). When one becomes the Cross it is as if the intersection of the lines produces effacement of self and revelation of soul simultaneously. This is seen in the Rose Cross, the Rose signifying the Heart of Christ. One must become the Cross for the Rose to bloom.

GATHEKA: Furthermore there is an English saying, "Man proposes, God disposes." One is always faced with a power greater than one self which does not always support one's desire. And naturally a person with will, faced with a greater power, must sooner or later give in and be impressed by the loss of his own will. This is only one example, but a hundred examples could be given to show how one is robbed of one's will without realizing it.

TASAWWUF: That will which can be taken away from one is the limited will of man. For this reason, disciples in Sufism pray: "To Thee do we give willing surrender." For complete and whole-hearted surrender to God (fana) leads to absorption in and expression of God (baqa). When man possesses the divine Will, or rather when the divine Will possesses man, it can never be taken away; for its source is inexhaustible.

This realization led Hazrat Inayat Khan to declare, "Can anyone break me? No. By doing so, he may as well prepare to break God. Neither I nor God can be broken; but the one who would wish to break me, he is broken." (*Nirtan*)

GATHEKA: Very often a person thinks that by being active or determined he maintains his will, and that by being passive he loses his will. But it is not so. Where there is a battle there is an advance and there is a retreat. By a retreat one is not defeated and by an advance one has not always succeeded.

TASAWWUF: The following commentary may not be easily understood. There must be power in one's advance, and there must also be power in one's retreat. A real general knows this. If he is a great general he knows that the maintenance of power in retreat is often more important than power in attack. For power in retreat prevents the scattering of one's forces, keeps one's forces united and whole. This is true even if one must hide for tactical reasons.

It is a challenge to face an enemy in battle. If the battle is outer, the general must have the wisdom and will to know when to advance and when a retreat is indicated. But the real fortitude of the general comes when he is challenged by, and overcomes, the host of internal enemies: loss of

hope, fear, confusion and so on. This fortitude is really the strength of optimism, and it must be realized inwardly and practiced in the world at large. All forces, whether internal or external, rally to optimism and power of purpose.

The story of Abu Bakr and the Prophet is well-known. The two comrades were hiding in a cave, and the enemy horde was seeking to kill them. Abu Bakr said, "What are we to do?"

Mohammed replied, "Allah is among us a third!"

Not only did they manage to elude the enemy, but, as history has recorded, the Prophet of Islam became a light and a guidance to friend and foe alike. Many former enemies willingly entered the ranks of the Muslims. In the words of Hazrat Inayat Khan, "The true sword of Mohammed was the charm of his personality."

Toward the end of his career as a military man, Mohammed gathered his people and said, "We have succeeded in the lesser jihad; now let us undertake the greater jihad." But the truth is that Mohammed had long since succeeded in the greater jihad; it was his supremacy in the inner struggle that led to victory on the battlefields, and to friendship beyond the battlefields.

GATHEKA: A person who exerts his will all the time, strains it and exhausts it very soon. It is like being too sure of a string that one has in one's hand while rubbing it on the edge of a sharp stone.

Very often one, sees that people who profess great will-power fail much sooner than those who do not profess it.

TASAWWUF: A tragedy occurred recently. Two mountain climbers were scaling a sheer rock face. They were using brand new equipment, and their rope was the best available—a type of nylon guaranteed at a tensile strength of several thousand pounds. Unbeknownst to the upper climber, the rope was thrown over a sharp outcrop of rock. The constant back and forth motion of the climber cut and frayed his lifeline. Finally the rope broke and the man fell to his death. Fortunately, his partner survived.

Like the rope, the will of man may test at a certain strength. Through proper training, chiefly Murakkabah, a person's will-power may increase greatly. But one of the fundamental aspects of such training is in knowing how and when to relax one's will, one's efforts. If one keeps the will in a constant state of exertion and force, it is like fraying one's lifeline against the sharp rock.

There are similitudes with two elementary principles of physics: kinetic energy and potential energy. All activity, speech, profession and exertion belong to the kinetic mode—which is the **usage** of, and in extreme cases the wastage of, the vast reservoir of potential energy. Repose, silence and non-profession can lead to baptism in the reservoir of potential energy. When this occurs one experiences the source of true will. It is after this baptism that the Sufi begins to learn what is the real balance in life. There is no failure for one who practices this balance.

GATHEKA: There is also always a battle between will-power and wisdom; and the first and wisest thing to do is to bring about a harmony between wisdom and will-power. When a person says, “I wish to do this, I will do this,” and at the same time his sense says, “No, you cannot do it, you must not do it,” then even with all his will-power he either cannot do it or he will do something against his better judgment.

TASAWWUF: The principles of Yin and Yang in Chinese philosophy, and of Jemal and Jelal in Sufism, denote the conditions of responsiveness and expressiveness. The former is related to wisdom, and the latter is related to will-power. The harmony and balance of these two faculties are essential to understand life better. It is wise to first listen, and if one’s impression is in harmony with one’s conscience, then one may employ the will-power and commit one’s efforts toward a purposeful result. Again, one is simply practicing the balance mentioned above—not thinking too much about it but actually practicing it.

GATHEKA: This also shows us life in another light: that those who are wise but without will are as helpless as a person with will-power but without wisdom. There is no use keeping wisdom at the front and will-power at the back; nor is there any use in keeping will-power at the front and wisdom at the back. What is necessary is to make the two as one, and this can be done by becoming conscious of the action of both in all one does.

TASAWWUF: The founder of Sufism in the West, Hazrat Inayat Khan, instituted an esoteric lodge known as **Ziraat**—with rites and lessons based upon the model of Agriculture. In **Ziraat** the heart is regarded as the field to be cultivated, the field from which all roots, stubble and stones must be purged before the seed of the divine ideal can be sown.

The plough used in **Ziraat** is equipped with two wheels, one representing the Jelal force, and the other representing the Jemal force. If only one wheel were to work at a time, the blade would not open the soil deeply, nor would it make straight furrows. But with both wheels working together the blade will plough properly, opening the heart’s soil for inspection (and introspection).

In the sense that all endeavor, inner or outer, may be regarded as a kind of “ground-breaking,” the symbol of the plough—with the two wheels operating in balance—proves to be most valuable in life.

GATHEKA: At the same time one can practice it in one’s everyday life depriving oneself of things one likes. If a person always has what he likes to have, no doubt he spoils his will, for then his will has no reaction.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, when one makes sacrifices, tiny or great, for the sake of one’s ideal; when one quits habits that stand as obstacles to the fuller functioning of one’s dharma—then the benefits of wisdom and will-power alike accrue to the pupil. And whether one is formally a pupil or a teacher, it must be remembered that we are all pupils of God, the Only Teacher.

GATHEKA: A stimulus is given to the will when one deprives oneself of what one desires: then the

will becomes conscious of itself, alive; it wonders why it should not have it.

TASAWWUF: This very wondering, this questioning, brings the wisdom of **listening**. One can almost hear, nay, one can **hear** the Voice which constantly cometh from within—in other words, the indications of the Divine Will.

There is a tendency to become abstracted in the listening aspect; this is good and necessary in the beginning stages of the spiritual path. But it is only the first half of progress; and if this aspect is indulged in too much it can become a definite hindrance, for then one starts to “receive” impressions for anybody and everybody. This can result in the worst kind of presumption and self-delusion.

For the complete experience one needs the listening and the purposeful action both. This is the ideal balance. The Zen **prajna** and the Sufi **kashf** tend to unite these two apparently separate functions into one simultaneous and ultimately practical process. When one reaches this stage then one's impressions become revelations; and thus are the eyes of the Bodhisattva opened—not the slight faculties of self-presumed psychics, but the grand sight of one whose being is identified equally with God and man, with Heaven and earth

[The following story was omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.]
(GATHEKA: For instance, a person wants to have peaches, but at the same time he is very much attracted to the flower of the peach. He thinks the flower is beautiful, and then the idea comes: why not let it remain on the plant? That will make him decide not to pick it.)

GATHEKA: This gives him a stimulus, because first desire wanted to take hold of it, then sense wanted to work with it; and as light comes from friction, so also does will come from friction.

TASAWWUF: Desire may be natural, but its friction with sense and conscience produces that light which is the divine intelligence operating as will. The Cross is an excellent example of both light and friction; the friction caused by depriving one's being of the false ego results in real light, real will, and the discovery of one's true nature.

GATHEKA: The power of will is in controlling, in contrast with imagination which works without control, for if one wants to control it one spoils it. Nothing in the world, either in the sphere of the mind or on the physical plane, can move without the power of will; but while with one thing the power of will is in absolute control, with the other it is working automatically.

TASAWWUF: Examples of the will in the modes of absolute control, and of automatic working, can be experienced in the Sufic practices of Tasawwuri Mohammed and Allah. In the Tasawwuri Mohammed one makes a deliberate, devotional and willing effort to identify with the being of the Prophet, usually in the form of Walk. This practice requires considerable concentration, even a certain tension, for the perfection of control (and perhaps the control of perfection) to manifest. The tension, the sobriety, the control all result from the striving to maintain absolute spiritual poise in the

midst of Nufsaniat, of Samsara.

The Akhlak Allah, which is to say the practice of living and moving and having our being in Allah directly, is much more automatic and spontaneous. There is no one way to describe Akhlak Allah, for each soul has its unique means of rapport with, and expression of, its Creator. To quote a familiar saying, one “lets go, and lets God.” Yet even in the Akhlak Allah, with all its ecstasy and freedom, one begins with **willing** surrender. What may begin as a dance of **fana**, may culminate in a dance of **baqa**. And while the initial will to surrender may seem imperfect, or even awkward, the more one practices the letting go of self in God’s Presence the more one experiences the perfection of will—replete with purpose, plan, and all manner of blessings.

It is often wise to follow the Tasawwuri Mohammed with the Akhlak Allah, for in this way one learns the actual values and effects of sobriety and tension on the one hand, and of bliss and ease on the other hand. Even the generality is coming to realize the wisdom of relaxation after effort.

GATHEKA: There is another enemy of will-power and that is the power of desire. Sometimes this robs will-power of its strength; sometimes will-power, by a conflict with desire, becomes strong.

TASAWWUF: By giving in to excessive desires, by indulging every habit and whim, one’s power of will is weakened. A kind of dry rot invades one’s fiber. When one deludes oneself that one can coast along smoothly in Nufsaniat, one has certainly pulled the wool over one’s own eyes.

But when one fights the excess and indulgence of desires and questionable habits, one is practicing the battle of life faithfully. This striving to overcome the attachments and habits that drag one’s spirit downward is one aspect of the Middle Way preached by the Lord Buddha; one neither pampers oneself, nor does one become blind and fanatical in the fight. One keeps progressing towards the Ideal of God, of Truth, and finds life’s balance in so doing. In this balance is real strength of will.

GATHEKA: The self-denial taught in the Bible generally means the crushing of desires. It should not be taken as a principle but as a process. Those who have taken it as a principle have lost; those who have taken it as a process have gained.

TASAWWUF: This means that those who merely philosophize against ego-attachments, without employing practical efforts to this end, are self-deluded and lost. But those who actually embark upon a course to crush the ego and its nonsense are those who gain the victory.

GATHEKA: The enemy of sense, of wisdom, is the lack of tranquility of mind. When the mind is tranquil it produces the right thought, and wisdom naturally rises as a fountain.

TASAWWUF: We have sense, and we have wisdom. Sense is the ability to make decisions that will promote practicality and benefit the everyday life. Wisdom, which begins with impression, advances to intuition and culminates in insight (kashf), is the spirit of guidance and the reliance

thereupon. This wisdom is the so-called "Fountain of Youth," which Ponce de Leon failed to find in Florida. If he had sought in his own heart he might have found the reality.

GATHEKA: The Sufis have therefore taught different exercises, both in physical and in meditative form, in order to make the mind tranquil, so that the wisdom which is there may spring up as a fountain.

TASAWWUF: The values of certain postures, of prayer, meditation and concentration, are all presented fully in the early chapters and commentaries of this work. In fact, the original commentator did not stop with simple postures, but also brought the values of spiritual Walk and Dance to the attention of the reader. The Walk and Dance bring the rewards of active devotion, as contrasted with the rewards of the more reposeful arts of Hatha yoga and zazen.

A careful study of the world's different religious cultures will show why certain forms of practice predominate in the Far East, while other forms are practiced in the Middle East. Much of traditional practice is just that: tradition. It may or may not produce the desired result, depending on certain factors, chiefly the presence of a realized teacher who has the power of spiritual transmission.

In the Western world today, and particularly in America, there are many representatives of the various Eastern schools, some quite tradition-bound and some others less so. It is one thing to recognize that there is an advanced human evolution in the West, especially among the young people, and to apply traditional but possibly inappropriate disciplines. It is wisdom to fathom the real needs of the actual people involved, and to provide the practices that will awaken bodies, hearts and souls to the divine presence.

No doubt there is need for both active and passive endeavor. The wise teacher will know what to give to individuals and to groups to produce the balanced unfoldment. For his wisdom has its source in his superior pupilship; and it is earnest pupilship that keeps the fountain of wisdom flowing.

GATHEKA: It is not in disturbed water that one can see one's image reflected; it is in the still water that one can see one's image clearly. Our heart is likened to water, and when it is still wisdom springs up by itself. It is wisdom and will together that work toward successful issue.

TASAWWUF: So much of real spiritual practice is solely for the purpose of stilling the mind, calming the emotions. Once this is accomplished, there is really not much more to do, except to await the favor of Allah. But who is doing the waiting? When we become perfected in the tranquility, there is only Allah. And then we realize who has been waiting for whom.

GATHEKA: Will-power is systematically developed by first disciplining the body. The body must sit in the prescribed posture; it must stand in the place it is asked to stand in. The body should not become restless, tired, by what is asked of it, but it should answer the demands of the person to whom it belongs.

TASAWWUF: The postures and movements connected with the Islamic Nimaz (Prayers) were given by the Prophet Mohammed in order to restore a certain wisdom that had been lost through the decay of previous traditions. This wisdom has been called “movement in accord with psychic law”—which is to say movement that unifies one’s body, one’s mind and one’s attitude into a devotional whole.

Modern Sufism has reaffirmed this approach with the introduction of the Walks of the Divine Attributes and the Dances of Universal Peace, all incorporating movements which accompany a divine name or phrase. The integration of these movements with the sacred phrase can attract very high and noble forms of magnetism from the space, and at the same time can impregnate the immediate and not-so-immediate atmosphere with these magnetic qualities.

No doubt the movements associated with certain forms of Zikr also follow the same principle. But as a contemporary Sufi Murshid has declared, “What must remain is the sacred phrase; this, the sacred phrase, and not the form, is the foundation of development along this line.” While the divine phrase may be all-sufficient, still the combination of phrase with proper movements can augment the instilling of Baraka upon earth.

Regular practice of these devotional methods in the same room or space can result in the accumulation of Baraka to such an extent that centers of living-love-magnetism are established. These centers were known as **thebes**, or arks of refuge, in ancient Egypt; our own meditation rooms today may serve the same purposes of sanctuary and shelter from the vicissitudes of life, and lead to the purification, re-vivification and healing of body, heart and soul promised in Nayaz.

When we praise Allah through His Beautiful Names, using the right movements, we are positivising the space and at the same time feeling the exaltation that heartfelt praise to Allah must bring. This positive side is most important, for sooner or later all human beings recognize their need before Allah; and it is the presence of Baraka that will refresh and restore when, in our need, we come in willing surrender to these places of refuge.

Mohammed has said, “Praise Allah in prosperity, and surrender Him in adversity.” When this becomes our practice, we may be assured of meeting all the demands of life.

GATHEKA: The moment the Sufi begins to discipline the body, he begins to see how undisciplined it always was; then he finds out that this body which he has always called “mine,” “myself,” and for whose comfort he has done everything he could, that this infidel seems to be most disobedient, most faithless.

TASAWWUF: The overcoming of physical desires such as eating, drinking or sex passion—particularly to excess—requires effort, often repeated effort and sometimes great effort. But if one keeps up the effort, and relies more and more upon the aid of God’s Name, (and less and less upon personal strain), the ability to keep the body under control of one’s will comes with surprising swiftness.

It is most important to inculcate with positivity and cheerfulness the vocal or mental repetition of God's Name in all of life's endeavors, even in situations of ease! The rhythm of God's Name as a background to all we do can be a protection and a sustenance. And when we bring God's Name to the foreground, or the Divine Name comes to the foreground of itself, the sunshine of devotion and purity scatters the dark clouds of excessive bodily desires. This experience of overcoming the restlessness and faithlessness of the body is well known to the spiritual student. But in this overcoming, the "infidel" of the body becomes a "believer."

In the Hebrew Bible the Psalmist sings, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." In the Christian Bible it says, "The body is the temple of the spirit." Both of these teachings indicated that the complete spiritual realization must penetrate and enliven every atom of the body. It is this condition that led the companions of Mohammed to exclaim, "He cast no shadow in the noonday sun!"

GATHEKA: After that comes the discipline of the mind. This is done by concentration. When the mind is thinking of something else and one wishes it to think on one specific thought, then the mind becomes very restless; it does not want to remain in one spot, for it has always been without discipline.

TASAWWUF: As the body benefits from the discipline of certain postures, so the mind benefits from concentrating on certain themes. In the Buddha's Jhanas the themes of love, joy and peace are presented. When an individual or group performs the Jhanas with whole-hearted concentration, not only are individual minds benefited but the group mind is unified, is benefited.

And as postures for the body are of little value without consideration of the breath, so the practices involving visual or mental concentration are of little value without some degree of breath-consciousness and heart-consciousness. But when concentration is practiced with breath and heart-feeling, unity comes, calm comes, discipline comes. And while these realizations constitute life-giving hope for the beginner, the advanced student considers such practice indispensable for his work.

GATHEKA: As soon as one disciplines it, it becomes like a restive horse that one has to master. The difficulty starts when one tries to concentrate; it begins to jump, while at other times it only moves about. This happens because the mind is an entity. It feels as a wild horse would feel: "Why should I be troubled by you?"

TASAWWUF: Despite the mind's quicksilver-like nature, it is much more readily concentrated, calmed and unified when the appropriate Divine Attributes are given. The Jhanas of Lord Buddha have been mentioned above, and all religious traditions have forms of concentration upon themes deriving from heart and soul, from God. The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of Allah are especially beloved by the Sufis; Yogis chant the sacred mantras in Sanskrit; and Hebrew is regarded as a sacred language. While all languages may not be "mantric" as such, all sincere praise in any language helps to concentrate the mind toward an appreciation of the inner life, toward the

treasures of Heaven.

The wise teacher will give positive and appropriate themes to disciples to concentrate upon. The wise teacher, like the Prophet Isaiah, believes that “Comfort ye my people” is best for spiritual progress. Therefore, he will not demand that pupils sit in painful postures, nor will he give themes for concentration that are not in accord with the pupil’s purpose and direction in life.

This is much better than forcing any kind of discomfort upon body or mind— and expecting positive results there from. Such tyranny would make even a tame horse rebel. Life has enough pains as it is, and the characteristics of the teacher presented in the prayer **Pir** are sufficient for balanced heart awakening. Only in the most critical cases does the teacher of Sufism employ seemingly, harsh methods, and he never likes to be that way.

GATHEKA: But the mind is meant to be an obedient servant, just as the body is meant to become an obedient tool to experience life with. If they are not in order, if they do not act as one wishes then to, then one cannot hope for real happiness, real comfort in life.

TASAWWUF: The Buddhist considers that mind and body are as one, and the Sufi would not disagree. Indeed, the Sufi—realizing the heart awakening—discovers the bliss and peace of the inner life only when the mind and body repose in the divine presence, either passively as in **zazen** or other forms of silent yoga (union), vocally as in mantric endeavor, or actively as in spiritual Walk, Dance or Akhlak Allah.

All such practices help bring life to body and mind, and healing to the spirit. More could be said, but it is practice—and not philosophy—that brings the blessing.

GATHEKA: The will can become so strong that it controls the body, making it perfectly healthy. But, one may ask, what about death then? Death is not something foreign to will-power. Even death is caused by will-power.

TASAWWUF: Taken from the mystical point of view, the adept indeed attempts to bring the pearl of immortality up from the depths of life’s ocean; in other words, he “dies before death” to realize the life everlasting. This mystical “death” is caused, at least in part, by the adept’s power of will.

But the relative roles of the adept’s will, and the descent of divine grace, in the achievement of spiritual illumination must remain among the secrets of the Great Mystery. One Sufi teacher has said, “It is all divine grace, but we should act as if it came through effort.”

GATHEKA: One thinks one does not invite one’s death; indeed, one does not; but the personal will becomes feeble and the greater Will impresses this feeble will, turning it into itself. For the smaller will belongs to the greater Will. Sufis call the former **Kadr** and the latter **Kaza**. Kaza reflects upon Kadr its command, and unconsciously accepts it.

TASAWWUF: To make a long story short, life is a series of stages like the different movements in a symphony; the final note in that symphony is sounded, or silenced, at the moment of our physical death. But the final note here is the first note of life in the Hereafter. All aspects of life, from the seen to the Unseen, lead sooner or later to the source and goal of All, Whom we call God.

It is the command of Kaza, which is indicated in Holy Qur'an: "Verily, unto Him is our return."

The Initiate strives to merge with the command of Kaza whole-heartedly and consciously; at the same time he attempts to fulfill all his responsibilities on earth, considering them as a most sacred trust given by God. Thus, the life of the Initiate requires tremendous balance, often accompanied by pain. But the awakening to the light of love makes the Path of Initiation and Discipleship the most worthy pursuit in this world or any other.

It is the ordinary person who remains unconscious and blind through life, and whose return to God is beset with adversity, limitation and inertia—all from ignorance of the divine teachings, which are for everyone.

GATHEKA: On the surface a man may still want to live, but in the depth he has resigned himself to die. If man did not resign himself to death he would not die. In the depth of his being he becomes resigned to death before his life is taken away from him.

TASAWWUF: In the depth of man is found the life of God, of the soul. The spheres of mind and heart do not reach to this great depth; therefore it is said that man (manas, mind) is resigned to death. In other words, all phases of the temporal existence must eventually give way to Eternity.

Qur'an says, "All is perishing except Thy Face." And Jesus Christ declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

There may be surface residues which, like honey, can cause temporary adhesions both from stickiness and from addiction to its sweetness. But this does not go on forever. At a certain stage in one's evolution one begins to lose one's taste for the sweetnesses of the physical life; all that one once held near and dear begins to fade in its importance. This is not to say that love disappears, for God is love and abides everlastingly; it is rather to say that loves disappear. It is like Orpheus who had to leave the love of Eurydice's form behind, in order to achieve the love of her essence—for essence calling to essence is to experience the perfection of love, the agape, the Holy Communion with one and all.

GATHEKA: Resignation of the human will to the divine Will is the real crucifixion.

TASAWWUF: This resignation is none other than the willing surrender given for the sake of living the life in God, of God.

There is a Hatha yoga posture called the "corpse position" which represents involuntary surrender;

but Sufis and devotees of Christ can practice the “cross position” in which the arms are out-stretched instead of at the sides. This represents the voluntary surrender to the divine Will, the willing sacrifice of the limited being to the Unlimited.

GATHEKA: After that crucifixion, follows resurrection.

TASAWWUF: This is considered of such importance that the theme is iterated twice in succession in Holy Qur’an: “Verily, with every difficulty cometh ease; verily, with every difficulty cometh ease.”

The real difficulty is the crucifixion of our falseness; the real ease is the rebirth into the holiness of Eternity and Truth.

GATHEKA: One can come to this by seeking the pleasure of God; and it is not difficult, once one has begun to seek the pleasure of God is only when one does not begin to try that one does not know what is the pleasure of God.

TASAWWUF: To begin with, we must never take the Name or names of God for granted. It is God’s pleasure that His Name be called with all devotion and concentration and love, and never as in Aesop’s tale of the boy who cried, “Wolf, wolf!” Yes, it is God’s pleasure that we strive, that we put forth effort in our work—for effort is a form of Grace that cannot be denied. But even more important than effort—which is mostly confined to the earthly and mental spheres—is the awakening to love. This is so beautifully given by Christ when he says, “Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin”

To reach this stage is more than pleasure, it is ecstasy. Yet if one does not try, one may wait for the ecstasy world without end.

GATHEKA: But apart from this there is another lesson which the Sufis have taught: to seek the pleasure of one’s fellowmen; and this is the very thing that man usually refuses to do. He is quite willing to do the pleasure of God, but when one asks him to seek the pleasure of his fellowmen he refuses.

TASAWWUF: There is no better way to seek the pleasure of one’s fellows and sisters than to efface one’s self entirely, then to look the situation as God is seeing it—with all the possibilities of love, harmony and beauty ready to be brought from latency manifestation. This may seem like a “tall order,” so to speak, but really speaking there is no more viable way to see the work of God accomplished than to lose the self in His Glory. Real spiritual unfoldment may begin with the awakening of the so-called individual heart, but it culminates when we awaken to universality, to allness. And like the Good Samaritan there will be no one we can refuse, for everyone will be an immanence of Christ.

GATHEKA: In either case, however, one is seeking the pleasure of one and the same Being.

TASAWWUF: The first American Murshid, Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti, was once asked by a group of Shias (Muslims who revere Ali), “Was Ali as great or greater than Mohammed?” The Murshid replied, “Ali was always aware of Allah. Mohammed was aware of Allah and of mankind as well. Thus he was the Perfect Man.” The Shias accepted this explanation.

We also have the poetry of Jelal-ud-din Rumi: “Whether you have loved man or whether you have loved God, if you have loved enough you will be brought in the end into the presence of the supreme Love itself.”

And in the Sufi Invocation given by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, the opening lines of each stanza are: **Toward the One ... United With All** Realization of these phrases awakens one to the knowledge of the Only Being.

GATHEKA: One begins with resignation; but once one has learnt to be resigned in life, and when one is tuned to the divine Will, one does not need to be resigned, for one's wish becomes the divine impulse.

TASAWWUF: This resignation is not different from the **La Illaha** of Zikr. It is transmitted as philosophy in the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra: All things are in essence empty. But this does not mean empty of essence; the emptiness is of all limitation.

The shadows of limitation teach us resignation to the light of the divine presence in which no shadows ever were or are. The lesson of this resignation is taught over and over again until we finally see, become and manifest that light forevermore. Thus is achieved the **EI IL Allah** of Zikr wherein the attunement to the divine Will is made perfect.

This is the end, of Mental Purification in which is fulfilled the purpose of man, of the individual. Then begins the fulfillment of the purpose of God.

The latter purpose is the unceasing work of the Spiritual Hierarchy.

Note: The preceding three chapters of commentary on Mental Purification by Hazrat Inayat Khan, which were commenced on the URS day of Murshid Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti, January 15, 1979, were completed this 14th day of July, 1979, by his disciple Moineddin Jablonski.