

Githekas on:

Self-Protection

Series II

by

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(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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.

Githeka Series II: Number 1

Blame

The path of Sufism in ancient times was called the Path of Blame. One forsaking this world and seeking God was held to blame by the generality. Besides this, in seeking one not only may incur the blame of the world, one must be equally cautious not to blame other persons. The world blames the Sufi through individuals, but the wise, while seeing all, may keep silent.

One does not look for great comfort or ease or approbation in treading the path to God. Rather one seeks to perform those deeds and duties which are impressed from within. Riza, the satisfaction of the Sufi, is with God, not with man. Therefore one does not have to justify one's mode of life overmuch before man, but seek at all times to keep his peace with Allah.

Sura 96 of the Koran reads: "Nay, verily, man is insolent because he seeth himself possessed of riches. Verily, to thy Lord is the return of all. What thinkest thou of him that holdeth back a servant of God when he prayeth?" This explains the idea of blame before the world. Whoever turns his face to Allah, such a One has turned his back on the world and the world blames him.

The Sufi performs his deeds for the favor of Allah. This may be done outwardly by observing so far as possible the customs of the generality, but not making a fetish either of minute observance or of breaking or disregarding them. Beginners on the path in the world of Islam observe all the external rules, and other Sufis have lived according to the rules of other religions. This is often good as discipline, especially for the devout person. But others may live as free-thinkers, and yet be most spiritual.

The Sufi may blame another only when he does it in the name of Allah. When he does it in the path of duty, although he will be blamed by the world, he may serve God as the prophets did before him. But when the Sufi blames the world from choice, he is worse than that world. For those of the world who blame make no pretense to spirituality. Toleration can best be expressed by a loving heart, a generous mind, a kindly expression and a gentle voice.

Humility for the Sufi is a living ideal. When the world blames, remember Christ and Hallaj and Shams-I-Tabriz walked that path. In protecting others and absolving others from blame, one protects oneself. When the nufs is effaced, even martyrdom becomes a joy in God.

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Githeka Series II: Number 2

Praise

The study on Praise is a continuation of the lesson on Blame and follows it in the Koran: "Nay, verily, man is insolent because he seeth himself possessed of riches. Verily to the Lord is the return of all." (Sura 96: 6-8)

On the path to God spiritual pride may become a great danger. When one's riches are of this world, there is avarice; when they are of that world, there is pride. When Christ taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," he indicated that the further one advanced toward the Kingdom of Heaven, the more detached one must be even from those blessings which are bestowed by Divine Grace, and explained this by saying, "To him that hath shall be given but to him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Receiving praise from humanity may be more dangerous than receiving blame. Blame may elevate but the praise of the outer world can only help in the outer, never in the unseen spheres. So all praise is due to Allah alone. Yet he may render you a service through a child or a very elderly person or a beggar or even a thief. Therefore more important than accepting or rejecting praise is the discernment of Allah's presence or absence in that praise.

The same applies to blame. The world may blame the traveler for going upon the path of rectitude, but it also blames hypocrites and sinners. Therefore one does not necessarily see the blame of the world as the satisfaction of God. The world blames the upright and also blames the wicked, and when the spiritual person sins, the blame is greater because he has insight and has not used it. Even the carol of the lark may be a warning and the croaking of the frog a hymn of praise.

Self-blame and abasement only lower one. To be disregarded by the crowd does not bring nearness to Allah. False humility is more a detriment to spiritual progress than crime. The wicked person retains his personality upon repentance, but the self-abased is slow to repent honestly and having made himself a nobody is lacking in personality. He is little in the sight of man and nothing in the sight of God whereas the truly humble person is alive.

Worse than this is inordinate self-praise. This is a double sin for praise which is due God is given to self and the blessings which should come from Allah are veiled as one is constantly assuming blessings which are not blessings and cannot tell the false from the true.

No doubt the self-abaser is a hypocrite and the self-praiser is also a hypocrite, but while the self-abaser has lowered himself to earth, there is room for God in Heaven. In the self-praiser the nufs is

supreme and there is no room for God in his heaven. The Sufi therefore refrains from both self-abasement and self-praise and makes Allah alone the object of his search and diligently regards his favor.

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Githeka Series II: Number 3

Protection Against Oneself

Of all man's enemies there is no doubt that the greatest is himself. Let us take an example: One has a headache and in most cases it will be found to have come from heedlessness in habit, eating or drinking something that is not agreeable or eating at the wrong hours, or living unnaturally. If at that time another makes the slightest noise, that one is blamed by the person who does not control his appetite at table. Yet that appetite has caused many more headaches than any noise.

The same is true of disease. While no doubt there are communicable diseases, most illness comes from within. Even the communicable diseases may not harm one who has taken proper precautions or who leads a normal life. It is said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it is true that the spiritual practices greatly diminish susceptibility to disease, especially the breathing exercises. Therefore these are given to talibs early in their journey.

Meditation is the greatest medicine. By meditation one can regulate not only the functions of the body, but one can control the mind and emotions, and best of all, center the heart on God. When this is accomplished, self-control comes naturally. This self-control is really God-control. It is only God who can protect us against ourselves. Our spiritual teacher can give us the medicine, but he cannot make us take it. When there is surrender to God, then the ordinary appetites and passions no longer control us.

Self-control does not imply atrophy. We may consciously control our legs by sitting down. That does not atrophy the legs. The same is true of the instinctive impersonal habits which belong to the body. Therefore fasting and celibacy are not necessarily included in the spiritual training. Sometimes, it is true, fasting assists in certain undertakings and sometimes for more advanced souls, celibacy may be as natural as the sex-life for others. But it is one thing to control sex and another to have sex in control; likewise there is the greatest difference between a forced celibacy and mastery over the pelvic organs.

The Sufi path, which is of spiritual liberty, enables the talib to control all organs and functions. To keep silent when in anger, to speak seldom when in controversy, to watch the breath at all times, to fix the heart and mind on God—all these help to control the self, the nufs.

Best of all is the response to the voice of God in the heart, whether it comes in the form of impression or intuition or whether the guidance comes in another manner. Some are gifted with vision or have dreams or telepathic warnings; others are wise in trusting the teachings implicitly, and when the trust is great, it overcomes weakness of will. Others are very conscientious in following the dictates of the conscience.

Conscience is not the same as intuition. Conscience is the best in oneself gleaned from the past. Intuition comes out of the unknown into the known. The source of conscience is the intellectual light but intuition springs from the spiritual light. Nevertheless one who heeds his conscience will seldom repeat an error, and so finally reach mastery. So as the Gita teaches, by whatever way one comes to God, for him that is the best way.

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Githeka Series II: Number 4

Protection Against Another

Protection against another is not so different from protection against oneself. Really the harm another can do us is little, but by our attitude we can magnify it greatly. This does not mean that either the criminals or the vicious or those who may be called private enemies cannot cause us some difficulty in life, but our very attitude toward them and toward life strengthens or weakens our own position.

Fear is a great detriment and can be overcome by rigid concentration on a spiritual ideal and also some by the proper regulation of the breath. From the psychic point of view fear itself is a disease and the real protection is required against one's nufs, the ego. It is to be remembered that another has power over us only so far as he is powerful and we are weak. In any circumstance, no matter how great his power, it is as nothing in the sight of God, and no one can overcome a person who continues steadily in Darood. This was the real power of David against Goliath and of Samson against the Philistines. Its greatest example was when the Prophet Mohammed stood alone against the whole Arab nation and yet emerged victorious.

When one is weak a door is open where another can enter and take advantage. This includes not only personal or public enemies, but competitors in business or in games. Even salesmen and strangers who contact us may break down the little resistance that is offered by a negative person, to the harm of the latter. Every such situation is an opportunity for the spiritual student, and if nothing else, it offers an opportunity to teach ourselves.

In comparison with oneself, one should never underestimate others, not only enemies, but friends and strangers. At the same time, in contrast with Allah, not all the armies in the world have very much power. This shows the need of humiliating the ego and exalting God. The more the ego is suppressed, the more the weakness is overcome; the more God is praised, the more one attracts and assimilates the divine attributes.

Continual practice of Wazifas and Darood generally preserve the atmosphere and so protect one. The truth is that in reality Wazifa is never used against any one so its practice before enemy or stranger is not wrong. The difference between the Darood in the presence of a friend and the Darood or Wazifa before hostile persons or in difficult situations, is that harmony requires a certain thought to continue it, and disharmony requires another thought in order to create harmony from it.

“Ishk Allah, Mahbood Lillah” is an excellent practice in a harmonious atmosphere or to hold toward a friendly person. It produces a sort of music in the mental atmosphere. But the same practice in the face of the enemy would drive the energy to the heart instead of manifesting it outwardly where it is needed.

“Allaho Akbar” alters the atmosphere greatly and overcomes the emanations of all concerned, both of oneself and of another. It substitutes divine activity for personal activity, and as in the presence of God naught but God is, and therefore there is no disharmony, so by the use of this Wazifa, both one’s own nufs and the nufs of another are controlled by a higher atmosphere.

Envy and greed in oneself and jealousy toward another are both checked by it. In fact it is not necessary to analyze an emotion and it is not required either to apologize for it or to enter into detailed self-criticism. There are other forms of praise and blame. Both deter the progress of the soul, whereas what is important is that both oneself and another give way to God.

“Toward the One,” as Darood, occupies a midway place between these others and can also be used in their stead and at all times for any purpose. The others are used mostly where the atmosphere is sensed and there is a strong and definite pleasant or unpleasant feeling. When the atmosphere is indefinite this form of Darood is better. It is also used at Sufi gatherings where all kinds of atmospheres, feelings and thoughts mingle and produces a spiritual harmony from them.

Even in a friendly atmosphere “Toward the One” is sometimes preferable to “Ishk Allah, Mahbood Lillah” as it tends more to balance. It is often more beneficial than “Allaho Akbar” on the mental plane except when utterance is necessary. However each practice is used, after it is once mastered, according to one’s feeling, and any Darood is better than none. There is no such thing

as a harmful Wazifa only some are more suitable than others to meet all requirements and problems in life.

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Githeka Series II: Number 5

Protection by Nimaz

Prayer has been the most common form of seeking spiritual protection. It has been especially used by Hebrews, Christians and Muslims through the ages, and while the reason has not always been known why it is helpful, it has done great benefits. Some have opposed prayer because it has sometimes been misused, but this difficulty has arisen because there has been some confusion between the types of prayer.

There are three forms of prayer which correspond to the principles of Urouj, Kemal and Nasoul. Of course these types may not always be distinguishable. There is no harm in including them all in one prayer, but there has been some tendency to overuse the Urouj type to such an extent that it is not always a prayer to an all-embracing King, but rather a petition to an Infinite Giver for gifts, not as He sees our need, but as we seem to need. This centers the prayer around one's personality instead of around God, and brings about the prostitution of prayer, substituting human will for Divine Will.

The Urouj form of Nimaz is really a petition. It is best when used as a general petition instead of asking for particular things. God always knows best; still concentration is practiced by the Sufi for his requirements and the attainment of his desires. Prayer for the health of oneself or for another can never harm, and when added to Fikr is often very beneficial.

The "Lord's Prayer" of the Christians is an excellent example of the Urouj type of prayer. This form is distinguished by the fact that it contains the words or ideas of giving, sending, furnishing, helping, bestowing, teaching, etc. us, the reception of some gift of Divine Grace or Power by man. It is not wrong to petition Allah but He being Infinite, understands our needs better than we do, and has always given to us the faculty of concentration.

The reason for this form of prayer of concentration is that at some point in the Cosmos the Universe must become particularized. The higher the plane of attainment, the more spirit is there. Thus on the heart plane the attributes of God are transformed into all particular ideas and forms of

beauty and strength, and all qualities appear in relation to them, yet not as discrete qualities. Development of the heart develops all qualities in man and for this purpose sometimes meditation is superior to prayer.

On the mental plane concentrative power acts very much as selectivity in radio. While there are circumstances under which concentration may be difficult, the more it can be applied, the more man will master the gifts bestowed upon him. But if the Urouj form of prayer is directed to this plane, it is like asking God to assume our burden. No doubt such prayers are often answered, but at a cost. Man may become a slave, not to the Will of God, but he comes to love God for what he can get from Him, and not for His own sake. Then, instead of prayer being a benefit, it can even become debased into a vicious demand upon the Universe which must be requited sooner or later.

As a result of this two classes have arisen: those who would pray instead of work, and those who abhor prayer. These classes are the result, one of the other, and neither properly understands the nature of prayer.

The Nasoul prayer is of the opposite type. It consists of expression of praise to and love for God, and it is a common characteristic of the Hallelujah psalms. This form of prayer is most related to music and can easily be transformed to music. It is especially the prayer of angels and is also used by children in churches. It is a pity that adults consider one form of prayer is beneficial for children and another is better for themselves.

Nasoul prayer can never harm, can never hurt, can never be abused. Its basis is faith. The Fateha of Islam is the best prayer of this kind, yet it is also an Urouj prayer in the sense of being a call for aid. But this call is not particularized. The praise is of God's Wisdom and this enables the Spirit of Guidance to help us in our blindness and ignorance better than we can help ourselves.

There is also a Kemal form of prayer. This is a little hard to describe for it is a prayer and is not a prayer at the same time. Wazifas of the Sufis such as **Ya Allah, Ya Fattah**, etc. belong to this class. The idea in this form of prayer which may be called adoration, is to lose sight of the self in the Selfhood of God. This is the form of the worship of lovers and devotees who seek not and need no self-protection because self no longer exists and thus permits the Divine Light of Allah to manifest.

Among the modern Sufis who have instituted the Universal Worship as well as private prayers and practices, Khatum is of the Urouj type, Saum belongs to the Nasoul classification, and Salat which deals only with the attributes, names and forms of God is a true Kemal prayer. Yet Saum also seeks and Khatum also praises, so there is also balance in prayer, only the keynotes differ. But each form of true prayer which comes from the heart invigorates the heart, and gives the greatest self-protection.

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Githeka Series II: Number 6

Protection by the Breath

There are many means by which breath may be adopted for self-protection. Wazifa, prayer, Fikr and music all tend to keep the breath in rhythm, and to attune one to the Divine Spirit. This is of the greatest value.

It is always possible that one may be surprised unawares, and be thrown off guard. In such cases, attention should be paid to the breath immediately. Darood and other practices serve to restore equilibrium, and yet the breath also can tell one of the nature of the difficulty. When someone touched the hem of the garment of Jesus, thinking thereby to be healed, he knew through the change in the direction of his breath what had occurred.

The breath contains the elements air, fire, water and earth besides the etheric element or akasha. In a friendly atmosphere or one which is controlled by the mystic, these elements bear a certain relation one to the others, and there is also a relation between them and the predominating emotion. The attitude of indifference is connected with the ether, softening the nature of the breath and hiding one's condition, which is a great safeguard. But when one enters a hostile atmosphere, one may feel weak. This is often because the fire element is lost from the breath and needs replacing.

The same thing may occur in conversation. Sometimes one may suddenly feel that one's remarks have not produced a desirable or harmonious effect, or that some other person has spoken what is untrue or disagreeable. While impression or intuition no doubt play an important part in this, nevertheless in such instances there is invariably a break in the natural rhythm of the breath. It is like the sudden awakening from sleep or repose, or the injection of an out of the way topic—it is mixing element with element so as to arouse antagonism, and then one feels a sudden change in the breath.

All persons may not have developed the intuitive faculty, but if one is trained in breath control, by the aid of concentration one can quickly tell whether there is agreement or not. Harmony brings strength and disunion fosters weakness. At the same time strength builds harmony and weakness prepares the way for disagreement.

In such cases analysis of the breath is the first step. Even if one is an advanced mystic, it is better to resort to Wazifa than to play with the breath. It is also well to maintain silence, and not only

restraint of speech but silent in thought also. Without endeavoring to change the subject, one should enter into a quiet or meditative mood, and through concentration change the subject so as to stop argument and avoid hostility.

There are periods of silence during the day when conversation seems difficult or impossible. At such times it causes disruption, but whether at those instances or at other times, meditation and silence are always great pacific factors.

All persons cannot master the breath but all persons can surrender to God. Concentration on any ideal tends to regulate and strengthen the breath. This is not only true of the musician and mystic, but also of the artist, the poet, the engineer and the intense and earnest worker. In these cases and in such moments the breath is strong and interruption can cause harm. That is why an interrupted person grows angry sometimes and has a powerful voice.

The voice of the prophet is especially powerful, but all persons may cultivate a strong voice. For this there are many methods besides physical culture. Voice control is really breath control; speech is nothing but breath formulated by mind and then materialized.

Speech has therefore three elements: mind, breath and physical energy. Behind all these is will. Strength of purpose is therefore of greatest importance. Mind is strengthened by concentration and will-control; breath is mastered through rhythms and various other means, and there are many ways by which physical energy can be built up, but the spiritual foundations always make it possible to erect the strongest structures.

By keeping the mind and heart on “**Allaho Akbar**,” by regulating the rhythm of the breath, and by holding that condition until hostility disappears, whether in atmosphere, person or thought, one not only protects oneself against another but even aids in the spiritual evolution of others, no matter how inimical they may have seemed.

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Githeka Series II: Number 7

Protection Through the Heart

The heart is the center of many faculties which can be lumped under the heading of Intuition, although in active aspects, Kashf or Insight is a better term. The heart is a constant warner and the

heart is a constant protector. The heart can always lead aright, and yet the heart can permit itself to be veiled and go astray.

Whatever the aspect or condition of the heart, the same practices protect it, and these can be summed up as remembrance of its relationship with God. In Urouj the heart may be in darkness and enter the state of contraction wherein it is veiled and in darkness, and in Nasoul the heart may enter into intoxication and be veiled by light. When the heart and soul are regarded as a unit, these states are called Kabz and Bast and are of great importance to the spiritual life in maintaining rhythm and balance.

Ordinarily the consciousness is veiled in the physical body, in the emotions or the mind. In these cases the heart may get under the sway of the nufs. Darood precludes the need for self-examination, but the heart itself indicates its own condition. All real goodness and selflessness strengthens it; all else has no effect or ill effect.

What is called Impression is more than an instinct. It is a guidance which has penetrated the intellectual sphere and is trying to make itself heard, so to speak. One who knows how to hearken to impression is blessed. Some have unknowingly confused it with help from a spirit, but help from a spirit is a very unsafe and unsure method of self-protection, especially if at the same time one is not gifted with clairvoyance or other powers.

The action of impression is the natural development of life on the inner spheres trying to express itself. This is the real self-expression, beyond nufs. While it may often have protective value, its real value is in activity. In other words, there is an aspect of the spiritual life which can best be expressed in action, and the covering of it is like death. This activity may be inner or outer, it may be accompanied by inspiration, but if not heeded, the power is lost and one is subject to the pains and tribulations of life.

God is wise and although it seems that man has been launched into a turmoil of wretchedness, actually his faculties are very much greater than his trials. In fact if man rose to the realization of his inner power, much of the evil and sorrow he has to undergo would be escaped. Initiation does not free one from difficulties nor make life full of ease, but it helps man to differentiate between those misfortunes which are the result of his weaknesses and those which are the natural experiences of life itself.

If one would heed to this call in the heart, even in pretense, in time it would become a great reality, so great that nothing else in life could compare with it. What is sometimes called the royal knowledge is nothing but these vibrations which flow through the heart and which bring all knowledge, all wisdom, and all love. This is the kingdom of heaven, which is in our very midst.

There is no book of revelations except the music of the heartstrings. Many think that by some miracle, by some unexpected awakening, the heart will suddenly be filled with light and all knowledge be gained. Perhaps this is possible, but the real spiritual journey consists of making

realities out of impressions, in trusting them, in having faith in them, and in time they will blossom into spiritual jewels and flowers.

Verily there is no guidance like that which comes from the heart, for there the voice of Allah is ever calling, ever speaking and blessed is he who, listening, responds to the divine directions.

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Githeka Series II: Number 8

Protection Through the Glance

The eye plays a most important part in the psychic life and the use of the glance as well as its protective aid is of great significance. The veil used by so many women in the East is more for the preservation of their psychic power than for anything else. Behind the customs of most nations is often a law or principle which is not always understood even by those who practice it.

If in listening to music one also sees the musicians one often seems to get much more out of that music. This is because the eye is then in a negative condition and assists the ear in reception. But if a person at a concert began to observe others in the audience, glancing at one's neighbors, then the attention would be partially withdrawn and the enjoyment of that music would be diminished.

Often one finds oneself in a hostile audience or listening to words one does not wish to hear. Then it is always good to lower the eyes. This draws some attention away from that undesirable speech, which thereupon does not produce any harmful psychic effect. Modesty is always pictured with eyes lowered as if to protect some inner agency, and there is much truth in this. The shifting of the glance can always be a great protection.

When another stares at your eyes in order to create a strong impression with some argument or for some other purpose, being negative you will fall into a spell of hypnosis, though it may have only a slight effect. Orators or salesmen consciously or unconsciously use this psychic principle at times to gain their ends. In fact it is not wrong for a spiritual student to look another straight in the eye, especially when holding good thoughts or tender wishes. Often there is no better way of conveying an intended impression than by the glance.

When a glance is directed to a spiritual student, one method of protection is to lower the eyes or turn aside or even look away. Another method is to stare back, keeping in Darood or even

concentrating on Allaho Akbar, keeping the breath in rhythm, the mind one-pointed, and the glance fixed between the eyes of the other person. The effect is something startling, especially as the more the mind is fixed on God, the greater the spiritual power which can manifest through the eyes.

In the first place it often comes unexpectedly. Then the other person, who has expected to be on the offensive, so to speak, and who has a Jelal breath, and is prepared for an offensive, does not expect any counter-attack. There is a saying, "he took my breath away," and that is founded upon a very definite psychic law. The rhythm of that person's breath is shattered, even for an instant only, but in that instant, by keeping your glance unwavering upon them, the victory is won before they regain balance. Besides that, by concentrating the mind on a spiritual phrase, and on the breath, this holds the glance in place and one does not need to consume much psychic energy.

Meantime the other person is using up psychic fire, and unless such a one is very strong, their attempts can only end in a terrible reaction. This practice of theirs has sometimes been called black magic and in some respects it is like black magic. Its weakness lies in having no defense, depending upon the inadequacy of the human will in others, but being worse than useless before one attuned to Divine Power.

Both salesmanship and sales resistance deal with the utilization of psychic energy. A spiritual salesman may use his glance but also does not neglect his breath, intuition, impressions, reason and all faculties with which God has endowed him, at the same times realizing that the faculties actually belong to Allah and are only loaned to him for an accommodation. So he has a great advantage over another person. And a spiritual person who wishes to resist a persistent salesman or any objectionable and intrusive person can do so to advantage by this method.

The glance, however, may be used other than by evasion, by turning aside, or counteraction through staring. It can also express soft and gentle moods. These are sometimes of greatest benefit in conveying feelings of mercy, sympathy, love or encouragement. Generally it is better to control these emotions through the heart and breath; then the glance will take on a natural condition, at the same time expressive and positive, yet full of the gentle Jemal qualities.

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Githeka Series II: Number 9

Protection by the Hands

Persons who are most cautious about the blandishments of sex are often unaware of the subtle methods by which magnetism can be transferred from one body to another. Often some people naturally draw strength from others. There are even fiendish persons who have learned to take the life energy out of other's bodies. While generally this is only possible when the others are extremely negative, nevertheless there are those who, consciously or unconsciously, have learned a subtle art of drinking, so to speak, the waters of life from another's reservoir.

There are several methods by which this may be done and all are unnatural, deteriorating and harmful in the extreme. No moral person would countenance the sapping of the vitality of youth by an older person, whether of the same or the opposite sex. But there is also a sex exchange which resembles ordinary sex attraction in some respects and so is able to disguise itself as sex allurements, yet is nothing more or less than thievery of magnetism.

In order to guard against it, one should learn something from life of the instinctive romantic tendencies. While the sage does not stoop to such actions on his own part, he can readily forgive them or overlook them in less developed persons, who are ignorant of the deeper psychic laws.

Keeping in Darood, or concentration on Ishk Allah, Mahbood Lillah will quickly distinguish the idealistic romantic attitude of the young man or woman from the deliberate action of the one who weaves nets. This is especially easy for some widowed and divorced people. The talib will find that when sincerity is present, his breath will continue in rhythm, but where there is no trueness it will break sharply.

In many instances these persons will seize the hand and perhaps hold the clasp slightly longer or more firmly than is customary. Then they can assume a state in which they easily draw some magnetism from another, perhaps giving a little of their own in return, but always less than what they take. After a while it will disturb the vitality of the weaker person.

Protection against these people is of various types. Some Yogis shake hands with themselves instead of with others. As the Sufi does not wish to appear different, he always endeavors to adopt the customs of the country where he abides. When the hand clasp is double, whether the hands are crossed or not, practice of Darood is sufficient. This not only protects one but may actually give strength to another also, so that both persons in shaking or holding hands may preserve vitality, and there will be no harmful mixture of vital fluids.

Another method is to lay the left hand on the back of their right hand. This more or less demagnetizes it. Better still is to say or even think "God bless you." This will actually give strength to the other, and the repetition of these words constitutes a very valuable Wazifa, giving all the benefits of a sacred practice.

In Bayat the hands are held with the fingers outspread. This prevents another from collecting personal magnetism in the hand and throws the energy out from the palm. A spread hand is giving, not collecting. Besides it is in the middle of the palm and at the finger tips where energy is most

active. Customs of kissing the tips of the fingers or back of the hand convey impressions without causing magnetic injury and so are not harmful. Custom of kissing the forehead or both cheeks also prevents wrongful practices.

Lip kissing or kissing on one cheek only may cause loss of energy or intermingling of psychic fluids. When love is not intended these practices are undesirable. If one cannot escape them, or perhaps, if one desires this form of greeting, then by keeping the mind on a sacred phrase—something always desirable—the chance for harm is minimized.

Of course too much familiarity is not desirable on the part of mureeds; at the same time natural action is always best and forceful suppression of an emotion is not the method of the wise. Rather it is to transmute through the mind and breath one's attitude without effecting or altering external action more than necessary.

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Githeka Series II: Number 10

Protection by the Presence

Sometimes a person becomes so strong in spiritual or moral vigor that others like to be in their atmosphere. Their words or their silence, their glance or their action, all seem to be a well of strength from which another, so to speak, draws a renewed vitality. As speech, glance, breath and presence all send out vibrations, one can hardly prevent another from gathering some of them.

In fact this method is often used in spiritual instruction, for just being in the presence of the teacher will often assist more than anything else in bringing to one that spiritual knowledge he is seeking. This is especially true in the Sufic meditations where one is fed by these spiritual vibrations from the teacher, as well as drawing sustenance from the meditation hall where the atoms have been purified and bring healing and inspiration.

Self-protection in regard to the presence is therefore of two kinds: being negative in the company of more advanced souls, and being positive when with others. If there is any doubt as to the spiritual grade of others, or if they are of equal or nearly equal evolution, Darood is the prescribed practice. It is only where one is definitely more advanced or less advanced that the special direction is required.

In the presence of more advanced persons as well as in meditation, in spiritual experiences and ecstasies, it is well to keep in a negative state. This draws the magic prana into the system, bringing that magnetism, power, inspiration and joy that is the world's desire. As it is said in *Gayan*, what cannot be won by mastery can be gained by surrender.

When it is necessary to be alert, eyes and ears should be focused on the teacher's heart, voice or breath according to the occasion. When one must turn within, then one should concentrate on that feeling which links one's heart to the teacher's heart, and thus to Allah. This not only increases the harmony, it furnishes one with a protective armor against many of the trials and disturbances of life.

On the other hand, there are many occasions when one has to use the master-will. In leading mureeds Darood will suffice unless it is evident that the mureed is ill physically, emotionally or mentally, in which cases there are prescribed practices. In the healing instructions and elsewhere Shafayat is taught how to protect herself against disease vibrations.

To a certain extent all persons are diseased who have not found the path to God. Nevertheless it is not always necessary to use special practices or to take some unusual precaution. In most instances the ordinary instructions will suffice. In case it is evident that one is drawing vitality from you, especially through speech, or if one feels a snake-like or spider-like atmosphere around, then either transfer the conversation to spiritual subjects or keep silent and make every effort to end the meeting, using Allaho Akbar as Fikr, or Darood.

In interviews it is often a good plan to place a table between a stranger and yourself, and in parlor conversations to speak to a group rather than to one or two alone, unless it is evident that they are the only ones interested or attracted. In such a case speak as little as possible, trying to arrange interviews for more favorable circumstances instead of drawing the speech out too long. The rhythm of the breath, the feelings and one's personal atmosphere will always indicate when such a condition is undesirable.

Even more necessary is it to remove oneself from undesirable places. Then too much concentration must be put into one's practices. A person who is guileless must be especially careful, for the work of a teacher slowly accomplished through years can sometimes be torn down quickly by subtle forces and will require much patience in rebuilding. For this the development of the heart qualities which will forewarn one as well as protect one, are the greatest blessings.