

Path of Initiation and Discipleship

of

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

with Commentary

by

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis

(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

Table of Contents

[Chapter 1: The Path of Initiation](#)

[Chapter 2: The Meaning of Initiation](#)

[Chapter 3: What Is Needed on the Path](#)

[Chapter 4: The Different Steps on the Path](#)

[Chapter 5: Inner Study](#)

[Chapter 6: Three Aspects of Initiation](#)

[Chapter 7: Discipleship](#)

[Chapter 8: Four Kinds of Discipleship](#)

[Chapter 9: The Attitude of a Disciple](#)

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](#)

The Path of Initiation

GATHEKA: Very much has been written and very much has been said about the path of initiation, and people who have been in contact with various schools of occultism have understood it in different ways, and thus have different ideas as to what initiation means. But in point of fact initiation only means a step forward, a step which should be taken with hope and courage, for without courage and hope it would be most difficult to take any forward step.

TASAWWUF: No doubt there is some truth in the teaching of modern anthropologists that what is called **primitive religion** sways between the extremes of ritual and vision. Thus in the United States the Plain Indians who have communities and establishments have elaborate rituals. No doubt there are many instances wherein rituals do induce visions—there is no way to disprove it,

and sometimes these visions are experiences in higher stages of consciousness. We must not be dogmatic on this point. Besides, the Sufis especially and some other esoteric schools hold that there are many ways toward spiritual awakening and advancement.

Most religions have crystallized. They have sects which adhere strongly to ritual and credos and when they fail to achieve enlightenment by such means, instead of examining the methods, they decry themselves and consider themselves unworthy. This is a base form of egotism, for God has created man, not the rituals, and no ritual can be superior to methods by which man comes to recognize God and in finding God finds his true being.

In early Christianity and Buddhism especially we find great reliance on vision and awakening. As priestcraft grew the method became important, the results not important. Indeed achievement by other than fixed methods were regarded as temptations of the devil, and many faiths hold to that and do not recognize enlightenment. They only recognize their own methods, often narrow and unfruitful.

The Hebrew Bible (Proverbs XXXIX, 18) teaches that where there is no vision people perish. And there is no doubt that without vision there is no strong impetus to life, whether it be life in this world or in the hereafter. And we can read in many places about the lifting of veils. There is much evidence that it is true only because certain methods are used. Cause and effect do not determine enlightenment. The experiences of enlightenment are beyond cause and effect (karma).

GATHEKA: If I were asked to explain the meaning of initiation in plain words, I would say that it is like the experience of a person who has never learned to swim, and he steps into the river or into the sea for the first time, without knowing whether he will be able to float or whether he will be swept away and drowned.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* says: "Initiation is a step forward in an unknown direction." The great initiations of Egypt which have had so much emotional effect, consisted of ceremonies which involved steps forward in some unknown direction. This principle has been used, even abused by some popular organizations, and there is nothing wrong about it.

There are efforts made to restore the Egyptian mysteries; they had their time, they had their place, they had their purpose. As man advances, as society changes, it is also necessary to use such means as will effect those changes which lift the veils over man's darkness and ignorance. It is therefore not always advantageous to resort only to fixed rituals of by-gone days. The ways to God may be many; the Upayas as the Buddhist religion teaches, are multitudinous.

GATHEKA: Every person has had an initiation in the worldly sense in some form or other. When a businessman begins an entirely new enterprise, and there is nothing to support him at this moment except the thought, "No matter whether I lose or gain, I will take a step forward. I will go into this enterprise although I do not know what will happen later," he undergoes a worldly initiation. And the first attempt of a man who wants to learn to ride, if he has never been on horseback before nor

driven a horse, so that he does not know where the horse will take him—this also is an initiation.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism the word **hal** means that state of consciousness or ecstasy, or better yet, “becoming high.” The word **makam** means place or station and refers to spiritual evolution. We can have **hal** without **makam** and often do. But every new adventure, be it physical, psychic or otherwise is in one sense an initiation. The pupil may not know it, the teacher does. In other words, we may take seriously the title of one of Swami Ram Das’ books, *The World is God*. We do not necessarily need psychic or visionary experience to grow from one **makam** to the next higher. Growth may come in ordinary affairs every time we move in any new direction, voluntary, compulsory or karmic.

GATHEKA: But initiation in the real sense of the word, as it is used on the spiritual path, takes place when a person, in spite of having a religion and belief, an opinion and ideas about spiritual things, feels that he should take a step in a direction which he does not know; when he takes the first step, that is an initiation. Ghazali, a great Sufi writer of Persia, has said that entering the spiritual path is just like shooting an arrow at a point one cannot see, so that one does not know what the arrow is going to hit; one only knows one’s own action, and one does not see the point aimed at.

TASAWWUF: The founders of all the great religions and many other enlightened seers have pointed out their own awakening. This was also to help the humanity achieve the same results. But Buddha said, “work out thy salvation with diligence” and Mohammed said that success was due to one’s own efforts only. And this of itself is an enigma, for Buddha said there was no essential of ego-self and Mohammed indicated that God alone exists. So we can not take their teachings in a literal sense alone. Besides it does not seem to help much, it only indicates.

GATHEKA: This is why the path of initiation is difficult for a worldly man. Human nature is such that a man born into this world, who has become acquainted with the life of names and forms, wants to know everything by name and form; he wants to touch something to make sure that it exists. It must make an appeal to his physical senses before he thinks that it exists; without this he does not believe that anything can exist. Therefore it is difficult for him to undergo an initiation on a path which does not touch any of his senses. He does not know where he is going.

TASAWWUF: The great obstacle is the intellect, especially that part of the intellect which works with ego. The Gita says over and over again that man has to overcome **manas** (lower mind) and **ahankara** (ego, self). And it is this **manas**, this **ahankara** which is always offering some explanation of Gita to others under the assumption that it knows and others do not know. This is separation and all the acclaim against dualism does not change it. For the ether, for instance, penetrates and interpenetrates everything, and it is everywhere and yet trans-spatial. So also initiation is a process which is trans-temporal. As Jesus has said, “In the hour ye think least the Son of man cometh” but the ego and ahankara-manas do not cease thinking until mastered and this thinking delays the hour of awakening. We have to become like little children in stopping the pounding of the mind; yet we also have to become thoughtful in the consideration of others.

GATHEKA: Besides man has been taught from his childhood a certain faith or belief, and he feels himself so bound to that particular faith or belief that he trembles at every step he may have to take in a direction which perhaps for a moment seems different or even opposite to what he has been taught. Therefore to take the first step on the path of initiation is difficult for a thoughtful person.

TASAWWUF: By a thoughtful person here is meant one who uses the mind. No doubt the mind has to be developed; this is a part of the general evolution. But it is not enough and unless controlled the mind can easily become one's master and then progress stops.

GATHEKA: No doubt a person who is driven by curiosity may jump into anything, but it is all the same to him whether he has initiation or not. However, for the one who takes initiation seriously the first step is the most difficult.

TASAWWUF: In his public lectures Hazrat Inayat Khan often spoke on this curiosity. Yet people without it seldom venture forth. There is an influence called "false conscience" which arises from the influences of society and the milieu or environment, which sets up standards of values as if they had some permanence of deeper meaning and effect. Then man is tied down by all sorts of influences.

Conscience sets up standards and often protects one. It is like armor, but armor does not help one to proceed. We find in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* the character Fearing who is at vanity, and the point of view of Bunyan left no scope for the inner spirit of guidance and man's intuitive faculty.

GATHEKA: Initiations, according to the mystics, are twelve in number, divided into four stages; just like the semi-tones in the octave, or the twelve bones in the ear. The first three initiations are the first three steps, taken with the help of a guide who one calls in Sufi terms a Murshid, a teacher. In Vedantic terms he is called Guru. He will be someone who is walking this earth, a human being placed in the same conditions as anyone else, in the midst of active life, and subject to all trials and troubles and difficulties. The help of such a friend is the first and most important step in these first three stages of the path.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi orders have always held to these gradations. When Sufism was first introduced into America every effort was made to establish a legal organization based on the gradations of initiations. This became impossible, and later, when the Movement fell into the hands of those who had not experienced the higher initiations, they established a legal entity not based on these principles. But the principles are in the literature, and they are based on the mystical and spiritual path of all times which is beyond all legal operations, if one only knew it.

The Murshid is more than teacher. Poetically and perhaps actually he may be the link between man and God, the God of experience as distinguished between the God of devotion or creed or philosophy. There is nothing wrong in a concept of God or a God held in devotion, but the Murshid has to touch reality before he can function to help others contact that same reality which is the reality of each and every one of us.

GATHEKA: In the East one will rarely find people taking a spiritual path without the guidance of a teacher, for there it is an accepted fact that these first three steps at least must be taken with the help of someone living a human life on earth. We can trace in the tradition that all the prophets, masters, saints, and sages, however great, had an initiator. In the life of Jesus Christ one reads that he was baptized by John the Baptist; and in the lives of all the other prophets and seers there was always someone, however humble or modest or human, and very often not at all comparable in greatness to those prophets, who took these first three steps with them.

TASAWWUF: Ignorant people often proclaim that they can proceed without a guide. The same happened with pioneers, especially in western America; they soon learned they could not successfully cross the continent without proficient guides. And the same is even more true in the sciences. It is most difficult to proceed far into the sciences without teachers and guidance. And if this is true of worldly things, in the realm of the senses, how much more true must it be in the vast universe beyond the senses. Walt Whitman has written a beautiful poem, "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" He has indicated the value of those who lead because they know, they have advanced, they have the experience from first striking out in new and unknown directions. Thus they are able to lead and help the rest of humanity. Whatever else be true the Sufis have found mostly one benefits from having a Guide who has advanced in Makam. And the same is true in other schools of valid initiation.

GATHEKA: But the mother is really the first initiator of all the prophets and teachers in the world; no prophet or teacher, no saint, however great, was ever born who first walked alone without the help of the mother; she had to show him how to walk.

TASAWWUF: We said that we see God in a "loving mother." There are no doubt extreme cases like that of Mary, the mother of Jesus, herself a God-realized soul, who help on the first step. Mohammed also had a mother, Amina, who was a saint but he lost her early in life. Buddha's mother died in childbirth, but her sister, Buddha's aunt, guided him excellently in the first part of his life.

GATHEKA: Then there arises the question of how to find the real guru. Very often people are in doubt, they do not know whether the guru they see is a true or a false guru. Frequently a person comes into contact with a false guru in this world where there is so much falsehood. But at the same time a real seeker, one who is not false to himself, will always meet with the truth, with the real, because it is his own real faith, his own sincerity in earnest seeking that will become his torch.

TASAWWUF: There is a Sufi tradition that when man walks one step toward Allah, Allah walks ten steps toward him. And there is the occult tradition that when the pupil is ready the master appears. This happened to Hazrat Inayat Khan himself with respect to Syed Mohammed Moudani and with many disciples with respect to him. But one can read so many stories of so many people and their first meeting with their respective Masters or Gurus, it becomes obvious that God has his representatives in many lands, in many walks of life to help the sincere seekers.

GATHEKA: The real teacher is within, that lover of reality is one's own sincere self, and if one is really seeking truth sooner or later one will certainly find a true teacher. And supposing one came into contact with a false teacher, what then? Then the real One will turn the false teacher also into a real teacher, because reality is greater than falsehood.

TASAWWUF: The very attitude is helpful. There are many who call themselves "Muslims" and say they surrender to Allah, but what is this surrender? Until one can become devoid of self, he does not know the meaning of surrender. And there are many places in the world, even centers of false teachers, where one may find beautiful devotees, bhaktis and others and they are so imbued with Divine Love that they can see truth in all kinds of persons and so are helped to their realization even though their outer teacher is not always so worthy. Their inner self assuredly is most worthy.

The same has been true of many Teachers, that often they have advanced disciples and they are justified because their words and thoughts were echoes of Divine Wisdom and so helped other people. The very principle of teaching and the very practice of surrender is most valuable.

GATHEKA: There is a story of a dervish, a simple man, who was initiated by a teacher, and after that teacher had passed away this man came into contact with some clairvoyant who asked him if he had guidance on his path. The man replied, "Yes, my master, who passed from this earth. When he was alive I enjoyed his guidance for some time, so the only thing I would want now is just your blessing." But the clairvoyant said, "I see by my clairvoyant power that the teacher who has passed away was not a true teacher." When the simple man heard this he would not allow himself to be angry with the other, but he said gently, "This teacher of mine may be false, but my faith is not false, and that is sufficient."

TASAWWUF: For as *Gayan* says, "It is the mureeds who make the Murshid." An electrical cell does not operate with one pole. And if there is a proper positive and a proper negative pole it will be a strong cell and can also help build a strong battery of many cells. One might say here that the positive pole was able to make a strong negative pole and this was sufficient to establish a good electrical current and that was proper. If there is no current, if there is no magnetism, what value the claim? If there is, what purpose a denial?

GATHEKA: As there is water in the depths of the earth so there is truth at the bottom of all things, false or true. In some places one has to dig deep, in other places only a short distance, that is the only difference, but there is no place where there is no water. One may have to dig very, very deep in order to get it, but in the depths of the earth there is water, and in the depths of all this falsehood which is on the surface there is truth. If we are really seeking for the truth we shall always find it at some time or other.

TASAWWUF: We say, "Thy Light is in all forms." It is for everyone to find this Light not only in a loving mother, kind father, innocent child, helpful friend and inspiring teacher but in everybody. And if we look deep we shall so see. In "The Rejected Avatar" Sri Krishna awakens the depths of all the Gopis; it was there, the Light was there but had not come to the surface. Whosoever brings the

Light to the surface is a Teacher whether he may be known as such or not. It is the realization of Light and the awakening of oneself which is important, and not so important is the means or the personality which may have been of value in the process.

GATHEKA: The one who wants to protect himself from being misguided shows a certain tendency, a kind of weakness, which comes from thinking deep in himself that there is no right guidance. If he realized that right guidance is to be found in himself, he will always be rightly guided; and his power will become so great that if his guide is going wrong, the power of the pupil will help him to go right, because the real Teacher is in the heart of man. The outward teacher is only a sign.

TASAWWUF: The purpose of a Teacher is to awaken the hearts of disciples to the presence of God. How does one know that a certain method will not work? Those who have arrived, so to speak, have tread a certain path, walked a certain way. They may be sure of their arrival but how can they tell if there is no other way, especially when they have not tried those other ways? It is a false spirituality which relegates a monopoly. There is no end to the “ways of God” but one need not consider them. One needs only consider his own way or ways and be tolerant and grateful that there may be other ways, many other ways.

GATHEKA: A Persian poet has said that he who is a lost soul, even if he is in the presence of a Saviour, will be lost just the same, because his own clouds are surrounding him. It is not a question of a guide or teacher; the obscurity which his own mind creates surrounds him and keeps him blind. What then can a teacher do?

TASAWWUF: Bear in mind that when the pupil is ready the Teacher appears. Jesus has said, “Cast not your pearls before swine” and Inayat Khan said that the Message was a clarion call for those who were ready to awaken and a lullaby to put to sleep those who were not ready. Many people are not ready and will never admit it and they expect a teacher to follow a certain formula and will only then accept him. Anybody looking for a formula is far from wisdom. The perfection is for each of us, not something we should seek for in others. That is not man’s work. Man should work out his own salvation and find the Light within himself. If the Light is seen in the Teacher, that is not always helpful. There are some types who can emit great Light and it is not always spiritual Light for spiritual Light will help transform those who come in its presence.

The practice of Tawajjeh by Sufis and of Darshan by others can only be of help to those who are ready for it.

GATHEKA: According to a story about the Prophet Mohammed, there lived next door to him a man who was very much opposed to the Prophet and spoke against him; and this man saw that the people to whom he spoke had belief in the Prophet, while nobody believed in him. Ten years passed, and many believed and many gave their life for the message of the Prophet; and it so happened that eventually a great many people came from afar, thousands and thousands from different countries, to visit the Prophet.

TASAWWUF: This is true historically. It is a wonder even to those who are most critical of the Prophet and of Islam how this happened, that many former enemies were won over; by all sorts of means they were won over. It is a miracle of history.

GATHEKA: The same man still lived in the neighborhood, but he had never altered his opinion. And one day someone asked the Prophet, "Why does this man, who has known the day when nobody listened, when nobody followed you, but who now sees that thousands of people who come here are benefited and filled with bliss and joy and blessing, still continue to criticize you and to oppose you?" And the Prophet said, "His heart has become a fountain of obscurity; he produces from his own self the clouds which surround him; he cannot see." And he was sorry for him. The perception of the light shows the thinning of the veil that covers the heart, and the thinner the veil becomes, the greater is the power of the light within.

TASAWWUF: In preparing for Bayat the candidate is taught that there is a Light and to make full use of it while living in the physical body. We may also bear in mind that there are grades and gradients of light. Qur'an teaches, "Light upon light" which is also the meaning of MOUNT ARARAT. One is liable to conclude that there is a greater and blinding light which the eyes cannot tolerate and in the story of Jupiter (or Zeus) and Semele the woman was not able to tolerate the Nur which consumed her.

But the light beyond the physical is not just light in the sense of a brightness which affects the eyes. There is the mental light which touches the mind and makes possible all kinds of phenomena. Perhaps like telepathy. The mind can both attune to and select all aspects of the mental light, or shut them out. And beyond that is the spiritual or angelic light which brings the senses of love and tolerance, of mercy and compassion. This has been called Nur Mohammed, because it came to the surface in the light and personality of Prophet Mohammed. But this light is beyond all forms and beings, and the greater the light-potentiality of a body or being, the greater the life-potentiality.

GATHEKA: The next step, the second step in initiation, is to go through the tests that the teacher gives. In this initiation there is a great deal that is amusing, if one thinks about it. It is like looping the loop; sometimes the teacher gives the pupil such tests that he does not know where he is, or whether a thing is true or false.

TASAWWUF: And after being given this lesson the pupil will think he understands the teaching. But as soon as the teacher tries it, mostly the pupil will find some objection, some excuse and if this is not sufficient he will criticize the teacher. He will still love the teacher and he will criticize him, thinking he has found a fault, when the fault is in himself and is something the teacher is trying to remove by test and trial. This is the work of all teachers in their efforts to raise the mortal to immortality.

GATHEKA: There was a great Sufi teacher in India who had a thousand adherents who were most devoted pupils. One day he said to them, "I have changed my mind." And the words "changed my mind" surprised them greatly; they asked him, "What is the matter, how can it be that you have

changed your mind?" He said, "I have the feeling that I must go and bow before the Goddess Kali." And these people, among whom were doctors and professors, well qualified people, could not understand this whim, that their great teacher in whom they had such faith, wished to go into the temple of Kali and bow before the Goddess of the hideous face, he, a God-realized man in whom they had such confidence! And the thousand disciples left him at once, thinking, "What is this? It is against the religion of the formless God, against the teaching of this great Sufi himself, that he wants to worship the Goddess Kali!"

And there remained only one pupil, a youth who was very devoted to his teacher, and he followed him when he went to the temple of Kali. The teacher was very glad to get rid of these thousand pupils, who were full of knowledge, full of their learning, but who did not really know him; it was just as well that they should leave. And as they were going towards the temple, he spoke three times to this young man, saying, "Why do you not go away? Look at these thousand people, who had such faith and such admiration, and now I have said just one word, and they have left me. Why do you not go with them? The majority is right." The pupil, however, would not go, but continued to follow him. And through all this the teacher received great inspiration and a revelation of how strange human nature is, how soon people are attracted and how soon they can fly away. It was such an interesting phenomenon for him to see the play of human nature that his heart was full of feeling, and when they arrived at the temple of Kali he experienced such ecstasy that he fell down and bowed his head low. And the young man who had followed him did the same.

When he got up he asked this young man again, "Why do you not leave me when you have seen a thousand people go away? Why do you follow me?" The young man answered, "There is nothing in what you have done that is against my convictions, because the first lesson you have taught me is that nothing exists save God. If that is true, then that image is not Kali; it too is God. What does it matter whether you bow to the East or to the West or to the earth or to heaven? Since nothing exists except God, there is nobody else except God before whom to bow, even in bowing before Kali. It was the first lesson you taught me."

TASAWWUF: This is the first lesson taught and the hardest one to assimilate. And there are two aspects of it: one is the constant reminder that God alone exists and the other is that bowing is most helpful in restraining the ego. For the first, Zikr is constantly repeated or sung and thus it makes some impression not only on the physical body but on all aspects of the personality. There is not an atom of one's being within and without which is not moved by Zikr. The other is self-restraint, to control the ego and this is best accomplished by bowing, any kind of bowing. Those who do not bow cannot have humility no matter what their form of words and speech and other mannerisms. Without bowing, no humility, no self-effacement. This comes to perfection in Sajda.

GATHEKA: All these learned men were given the same lesson, they were students and very clever, but they could not conceive of that main thought which was the centre of all teaching. It was the same young man who later became the greatest Sufi teacher in India, Khwaja Moin-ed-din Chisti.

TASAWWUF: The commentator had a small but similar experience in being guided by a Muslim in the city of Calcutta. There is much worship of Kali and God is presented in the forms of idols and everywhere with one exception worshipped as name and form. The one exception is the human being and the human body which is not so worshipped, not so respected and with all claims to spirituality, we find more of this disrespect to the human body and human personality in India than almost everywhere else. Or as the poet-writer Kipling has so aptly put it, "only man is vile."

GATHEKA: Every year thousands of people of all religions make pilgrimages to his tomb at Ajmer—Hindus, Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians. To the Sufi all religions are one.

TASAWWUF: This pilgrimage is true and it has been of great concern to the Orthodox in Islam, especially among some Arabs. But the same persons will pay obedience to some powerful political leader and think that is all right and then object when there are pilgrimages to tombs of saints.

There is a celebrated picture of Moin-ed-din Chisti seated with a Yogi. To most Muslims this is shocking, they cannot stand such associations. But Mohammed declared that Allah loves His offspring more than a mother loves her children, and the Sufi accepts this and sees in all humanity aspects of the presence of Divine Love and Divine Light.

GATHEKA: There are tests of many kinds that the teacher may give to his pupil to test his faith, his sincerity, his patience.

TASAWWUF: This is often accepted verbally but in actuality it is not so easy. For the teacher may offer a discipline or a problem at any time and not just at certain moments. And the pupil will often self-justify himself but he cannot self-justify his lack of experience in the Divine Light. The object of the teacher is to awaken conscious receptiveness to this light which may be the reality within man, which may be the object of the soul's searching, and it is taught in all occult schools that this may come through pain and suffering. And one will shake one's head and agree and then when the test comes will disagree. Besides it is not necessary to have a multitude of followers; it is important to awaken the light within.

GATHEKA: Before a ship puts to sea the captain goes and makes sure that everything is in order for the voyage; and such is the duty of the Teacher. Of course it is a very interesting duty. Besides the path of the mystic is a very complex path.

TASAWWUF: We see a growing interest in spiritual matters. And as soon as the interest rises there are all sorts of claims to leaderships. Those who have never been disciples, who have never themselves submitted to disciplines, they go out and try to teach others. Sometimes it is words, sometimes it is something else. We always have such claims and after awhile they are forgotten. No deep impression is made on mankind because souls are not awakened, only emotions are deepened which is quite something else.

GATHEKA: What he says may perhaps have two meanings: the outer meaning is one and the

inner meaning is another. What he does may also have two meanings, an outer and an inner meaning, and a person who only sees things outwardly cannot perceive the inner meaning. Because he only sees their outer aspect, he cannot understand his own teacher's action, thought, speech, or movement. It is in this way that the pupil is tested.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, according to the Hadith, that Holy Qur'an was revealed in seven dialects and each dialect had an inner and outer meaning. If this had really been accepted there would be only one religion today, that which also might be called "Islam." But it is not accepted, and even those who have some real or fancied inner meaning, have so chiefly in limited senses only.

It is not a wise teacher who does not put tests around the pupil. The false teacher will use flattery and praise and all sorts of devices to attract and will often have a large following. But a following to what? The political leaders do that and it does not result in spiritual awakening, or the solution of problems, or the removal of pain and suffering.

GATHEKA: Thus to the pupil the teacher may often appear to be very unreasonable, very odd, very meaningless, very unkind and cold and unjust. And during these tests, if the faith and the trust of the pupil do not endure he will step back from this second initiation, but if he endures through all this then comes the third step, the third initiation.

TASAWWUF: It is said in the literature that the lover takes the cup of nectar and the cup of poison equally from the beloved. It is said. But in life itself this does not always happen. The mind interferes. The mind sees justification and unjustification, but not always does it behold wisdom. The teacher wants the pupil to grow. Then the words, "love, harmony, and beauty" are used, but egocentrically. So there is no growth, no increment of joy, just self-satisfaction. And this produces a stasis in the psyche, preventing growth.

The commentator was once accused by his living Pir-O-Murshid, Sufi Barkat Ali, of infidelity and all sorts of torts. The accusations were so terrific there was nothing else to do, so one wrote that the lover took the cups of nectar and poison equally. There was no recrimination. There were no more accusations. Instead came a strange growth, attracting persons from without and inspirations from within, constantly.

GATHEKA: The third initiation consists of three stages; receiving the knowledge attentively; meditating upon all one has received patiently; assimilating all the outcome of it intelligently. Thereby the mission of the teacher in this world is completed. Gratitude still remains, but the principle work is finished.

TASAWWUF: This is the general theory of Indian discipline. It is placed verbally to listen, to meditate and to assimilate. Then one has the thought to listen, to meditate, to assimilate. It is all in thought. It is absent in practice. And having such a thought, such a philosophy is very confusing because the ego assumes a knowledge of superiority and does not spend time in meditating and

even if some form of meditation is practiced it does not mean that the knowledge is assimilated, for mostly the knowledge is assimilated only by Divine Grace. One can memorize a cook-book and die of starvation.

GATHEKA: The fourth initiation the seeker gets from his ideal. And who is this ideal, who can give this initiation? No living creature on earth, however great, can prove to be the ideal of anyone else; he may for a certain time, but not forever.

TASAWWUF: In this sense the first three stages are those in fana-fi-Sheikh, the assimilation in the living teacher. And it has been said, it is not for the teacher that the pupil surrenders to him, it is for the sake of God that the pupil surrenders to the teacher. And there is some literature but much more the need to practice, for the true teacher leads his disciples God-ward and the false teacher toward the adulation of his ego. Yet even this is often helpful. It cannot be said that human beings are always harmed in following an unawakened teacher, for their attitude of following and receptiveness, is most advantageous in the spiritual life.

GATHEKA: The great ones like Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and Krishna, who have been the ideal of humanity for thousands of years, when did they become the ideal? During their lifetime? During their lifetime they gave a sense of being the ideal, they left impressions which afterwards proved them to be the ideal, but during their lifetime they could not prove it. Why is this?

TASAWWUF: If as Zeus with Semele, the light was too great, that is also true with the Perfect Ones. The light of Jesus was tremendous and he had to hide it. In fact the Roman soldiers could not find him although the week before he had walked through Jerusalem and everybody had seen him. Jesus was constantly talking about the light and telling his followers that their light should so shine that men would recognize their good works, which meant their spiritual development for only God is goodness. And later also it was said of Mohammed that his body cast no shadow in the noon-day sun for it radiated such tremendous vibrations that the physical light of the sun, striking places where he was, could not overcome this.

These are only outer signs. They are like miracles and there is no question but that many people were attracted by the miracles and did not get the full impact of the personality or the message.

GATHEKA: The reason is that even perfect man is limited in the imperfect garb of humanity. The human limitation covers perfection.

TASAWWUF: The Bodhisattva oath is to the effect that one will live in the midst of humanity and do everything possible to raise the mortals to immortality and perfection. The oath is far more important than the person taking the oath. For in truth if we accept that God alone exists, it is by taking the vow that God can more easily work through man, but man is not God, man becomes the Divine instrument thereby.

GATHEKA: However great, however deep, however spiritual a person is, with all his goodness,

with all his inspiration and power, he remains limited. His thought, speech, word, and action are all limited.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects and one may come from emotion or devotion, that one either sees perfection or blinds himself against imperfection. While in a certain sense this may not be regarded as a true picture still it is very helpful. Once a person recognizes the possibility of perfection he opens his whole life toward perfection. The other aspect comes from the use of the mind and this tends toward dualism and analysis. It often uncovers shames and is negatively helpful. But this is not enough. For the true teacher will recognize his own imperfections, he will know his imperfections more than he will know those of the disciples who are presumably less on the scale of evolution.

GATHEKA: A man cannot make himself as his pupil imagines him. Imagination goes further than the progress of man; the imagination of every person is his own, and therefore one can only make one's ideal oneself.

TASAWWUF: It is not that the ideals are wrong; perhaps they are never wrong. But one's ideal comes out of one's consciousness, whatever be his grade of evolution or outlook it comes from his limited self. It is therefore related to his limited self and it may be discarded or it may be used to rise above such limitations. But one's ideal is thus a projection of oneself and not of somebody else.

For instance one may be a carpenter or a farmer or a business man and his spiritual teacher may be a musician. His teacher will have qualities and virtues and limitations, at least in the sense that he will not have faculties to make him a perfect carpenter or farmer or business man. For the perfection of each is according to his own outlook and the perfection of each comes out of himself even though he recognizes the ability to bring out his perfections in another. The other, like a physician, may be able to heal and comfort and that is all that is wanted in life.

GATHEKA: No one has the power to make the ideal of another person, and therefore it is the impression of the great saviors of humanity, it is their goodness, it is whatever little grain of an ideal they have left behind them that becomes just like a seed, and that seed put into the soil of the devotee's heart develops into a plant and bears fruit and flowers as it is reared.

TASAWWUF: There was always an immediate impression on some persons, and it was very strong. Jesus touched a handful of simple persons, chiefly fishermen. Buddha touched a multitude of chiefly advanced souls. Mohammed touched a multitude of all kinds of people and Sri Krishna awakened the milkmaids and cowboys, almost the dregs of society. But the impressions were great; they left marks on the personalities involved. They changed the characters of people; there were transformations, awakenings, spiritual rebirths in the immediacy.

GATHEKA: So in this fourth initiation there is this ideal of man's imagination. He may call it Christ or Buddha, he may call it Mohammed or Moses or Zoroaster; it is his ideal; it is he who has made

it; it is his saviour, and certainly it will save him if he considers it to be his saviour. But he has to make it; if he does not make it, the saviour will not save him.

TASAWWUF: There are multitudes of ignorant people who will sing, "Leaning on Jesus" and it is not on Jesus that they lean but on a conception of theirs. And in the end they are subject to the same temptations, the same shortcomings as everybody else. And this is true also of the followers of the different religions. They have some concept, sometimes some imagination which they think helps them. It is often they are so helped but when they make a universal of it and judge the whole of humanity from their own limited standpoints it is of limited help.

Everyone who gets to the top of the mountain has used some path. But can he prove that this is the only path? For him it has sufficed and that is proper. So we have the different religions and we have examples of saints and awakened souls, perhaps, from all faiths. And the awakened ones will recognize each other but the unawakened ones may not even recognize those of their own faith.

GATHEKA: When once he has made his saviour, then he is face to face with the perfection which his heart has created; then this impression of Christ or Buddha with which he has impressed himself flowers and grows into a tree, and bears the flowers and fruit which he has desired.

TASAWWUF: In the fana-fi-Rassoul one effaces himself in the ideal. We have examples of it in every religion; even today it is so when one looks. The literature always points to the successful ideals of the past. But this is not true. God is always present. God always flowers in living persons; He has His representatives on earth at all times. If there were not perfect souls in incarnation it might even be that the world as we know it would be destroyed. But the perfect ones are the representatives of Allah, His Khalifs, and they protect the globe from destruction.

Very often devotion and effacement on the path of fana-fi-Rassoul completes the purpose of one's life. There have been multitudes of saints who have been immersed in their ideal, ideal of name and form. We celebrate the birthdays and holy days of these worthy people and they are not to be decried. Although a Sufi does everything possible to progress here and now, he also sees his God in all names and forms; he joins himself thereto or thereby. And the time is coming when a greater proportion of humanity will begin worshipping beyond not only narrow limits but beyond broad limits; beyond all limits. And this will help establish the Brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God.

GATHEKA: No doubt this initiation is a phenomenon in itself. Once this initiation is received man begins to radiate, to radiate his initiator who is within him as his ideal.

TASAWWUF: There is a claim and it is often a very false claim that those who have mystical experiences never tell. True it is not wise often to relate what one knows but it is also true that in the states of selflessness, one has no control. In the celebrated case of the martyred Mansur al-Hallaj he declared himself to be God in a certain sense. Then one has no control; he is spiritually drunk and those who have never tasted of the wine of the Divine Presence will eagerly and blindly

accept the statement that those who know never speak. If someone had not spoken how could one be able to say even that much. For it is expressed knowledge which has instilled mankind with lofty ideals and the negative statements of the ignorant have accomplished little good.

In the Sufi disciplines effacement in the various ideals are offered. For many centuries Christ has sufficed or Krishna or Moses. But now comes time when humanity may see the Divine Ideal in many. And it is true as Mohammed has proclaimed that Allah has sent a Messenger and a revelation to many, many peoples throughout the world's history. Only the orthodox have refused to accept the actualities and thus kept the world divided. Now the time has come when the world will not be so divided.

True, man may continue to see the ideal only in Christ or Krishna or Mohammed or Buddha or others. The one who sees truly will not so limit himself. For it is the radiance which will reveal the state a person is in. The radiance will communicate more than either silence or speech, and by their light and magnetism shall the advanced ones be known.

GATHEKA: Then there is the second stage which is the fifth initiation. And in the fifth initiation man does not imagine his ideal, but finds his ideal a living entity within himself, a friend who is always close to him, within him; he can just bow his head and see his friend—he is there. To the real devotees of Christ, Christ is near, as near as they are to themselves to their own self. In times of trouble, in difficulties, he is always there.

TASAWWUF: There are many books written of the experiences of saints and seers. Still many ignorant people will believe popular speakers who decry that possibility. And so they will not accept the advanced souls in their midst. Indeed some fakirs go the other way and think that popular acceptance means that they are not in Divine Favor and that if society rejects them, still it is possible that they will be closer to Allah.

Mohammed taught that Allah is closer than the neck vein. And modern Sufism tells about the ever-present Spirit of Guidance. Also in Khatum the principle is offered of God being within and speaking to us if we would only listen. Still it is not easy. And the mystic has to live a life, that while he himself fulfills the words of prayers and sacred texts, it is a slow process to have this taken seriously. Still every one is the Beloved of God, and it is wrong to downgrade mankind. Then one only limits oneself; one proves to be a stumbling block to himself.

GATHEKA: The third stage, which is the sixth initiation, is the one where Christ speaks, where Christ acts; the acts of the initiate become the actions of Christ. And when one has arrived at that initiation one need not declare before humanity how greatly one loves one's Lord or Saviour or Master; the initiate himself becomes a proof, his life, his word, his action, his feeling, his attitude, his outlook.

TASAWWUF: In other words it is then that the Spirit of Guidance speaks through one. In the early stages of the Message this was not fact. Leadership fell into the hands of those who did not pass

through the mystical experience, who did not evince and evidence the Spirit of Guidance and who were too concerned with their own positions.

Then there is the assumption that if Christ appears in someone else that person will become a veritable Santa Claus. Neither Santa Claus nor Galahad is the Christ ideal, and when we picture him, we limit him. We cannot explain how he fed the multitudes or whipped the money-changers. It does not fit in with man's concepts and so long as man is limited by these concepts he does not know the reality. But with this initiation he does know the reality and also he not only overcomes loneliness but becomes the mouthpiece, a mouthpiece for the universe.

Such a person cannot command respect, but it is always a test whether others accept or not. Mostly they have judged but it is also true that there will be more and more mutual love and respect.

GATHEKA: Life is such that no falsehood, no pretense can endure, nothing false can go far; it will only go a step and then it will tumble down; it is only the real which will go on.

TASAWWUF: All of life corroborates this. There have been so many claims to messiahship, to universal religion, to a special power from God and they even build up big followings and much wealth. But they ascribe without any serious standard prowess which does not exist in heaven. They prosper and fall and this goes on and on.

GATHEKA: And the more real something is, the less it expresses itself. It is lack of reality that makes a person say: he is so and so, he has such great love for God; or he is so spiritual or pious or clairvoyant, or he has such psychic power. When one sees one does not need to say that one sees, everything will notice that one is not blind.

TASAWWUF: We can see this all the time and especially in these days when there are so many claims. Many people actually believe that no one would dare to make a claim unless it were true and mostly it turns out not to be true. For the wise radiate and it is a measurement of trueness. And love is not a negative state when one does what others expect of him; rather it is a state of great consideration and compassion.

GATHEKA: But how different it is today, when so many people ask, "Are you clairvoyant, can you see?" And if they say they do, what do they see? They have perhaps seen some color or some light here and there, or something peculiar, which means nothing. Perhaps it is their imagination. And then there are others who encourage them and make them still more crazy; and people feed their pride by telling others how much they see. But when one begins to see one cannot speak about it, it is something which cannot be told. How could one? When one sees with the eyes of Christ one can only see, when one hears with the ears of Christ one can only hear; there is nothing to be said.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps this began with the consideration of many dimensions of space and even of

time. Claims began to be made. Often they had no basis in anything. For those who go into the higher dimensions in mathematics are amazed that there are what they might call “truths” and these are not verbal. Working in another dimension is not like speaking about it, and then there comes a time when the within and the without are transcended. So we have many things in mathematics that are so difficult to put into ordinary language.

How much more true is this of mystical experience which involves more than hypothetical or real dimensionality! Every mother feels her child is within; the baby’s body is outside and still the consciousness is overlapping. And as one grows into the dimensions of love and understanding it is most difficult to use ordinary language and perhaps quite unnecessary. For then one radiates thought and feeling and the vibrations of thought and feeling can be picked up by the sensitive. And besides this there is a change in personality because of the experience.

GATHEKA: The further initiation, which is the seventh, is the initiation in God. There is an account of the story of Rabia, a great Sufi. Once in her vision she saw the Prophet, and the Prophet asked her, “Rabia, to whom have you given your devotion?” and Rabia said, “To God.” And the Prophet said, “Not me?” and Rabia said, “Yes, Prophet, you include God, but it is God I gave my devotion to.”

TASAWWUF: This is the stage of fana-fi-lillah, when one rises above distinctions and differences and finds God in the elect. They are God and they are not God and whichever way it is expressed, it is a right way. For words, selections and thoughts belong to the finite part of being which is still the shadow of reality.

Rabia was a great woman saint of Basra and shows that it is possible for womankind to reach the highest states and stages of spiritual development. The name “Rabia” was also given to Hazrat Inayat Khan’s first disciple in the hopes she would pursue the same path and reach the same attainment. And when names are so given they are great stimulants to reach the same grade.

GATHEKA: There comes a stage where a person even rises above the ideal he has made. He rises to that perfect Ideal which is beyond the human personality, which is the perfect Being. In this initiation one rises to the spheres where one sees no other than God.

TASAWWUF: In his early days the man who became Swami Vivekananda asked Sri Ramakrishna if he could see God and the realized Saint said, “I see God more plainly than I see you.” The Bible has taught, “No one can see God and live.” It means that no one who sees God lives any longer as an ego-personality, he becomes what has been called **Insaan-i-Kemal**, or the Perfect Man. He lives as if he were man and he also lives as if he were God.

Then one also has a different outlook and in the path of Mushahida, or Perfect Contemplation, one looks upon the world as if he were a divine being. This is the state of fulfillment of the Bodhisattva.

GATHEKA: In the second stage, which is the eighth initiation, one communicates with God, so that

God becomes to the initiate a living entity; God is then no longer an ideal or an imagination, no longer one whom he has made; the One whom he once made has now become alive—a living God. Before this there was a belief in God, there was worship of Him; perhaps He was made in the imagination; but in this stage God becomes living.

TASAWWUF: The mystic is one who is God-realized. He finds God a being, or being itself. We cannot learn much about mysticism by reading the books of non-mystics, even those most sympathetic. But we can learn something by reading the books written by mystics, which are the outpourings of their hearts. This is very real and very vital. But it is also true as *Gayan* states: Heart speaks to heart and soul to soul. And some of this wisdom appears in the brochure on *Metaphysics* in the *Sufi Message*.

Still to the living mystic everything may be the outpouring of love and verbal and mental abstractions are only helpful when they lead to something deeper. It is by practicing the deep meditations and the contemplations that one realized this. Still for those who have not yet arrived, a respectful attitude toward the more advanced is helpful. And the best respect comes from listening rather than from adulation.

GATHEKA: And what a phenomenon this is! This stage is a miracle in itself. The God-realized person need not speak of or discuss the name of God; his presence will inspire the sense of God in every being, and charge the atmosphere with it. Everyone that meets him, whether he is spiritual or moral or religious or without religion, will feel God in some form or other.

TASAWWUF: This principle is found in the prayers called Gayatri in *Vadan*. It is the type of magnetism called Baraka which is the living magnetism which is the best evidence, and also the means that the mystic uses to share this Baraka with others. This may be done by silence or by effort but it will always include the transmission of magnetism and sometimes much more.

GATHEKA: The prophets and the holy ones who have come from time to time to give the world a religion, an ideal, have not brought any new ideas; they have not brought a new belief in God, because belief in God has always existed in some form or other. What they brought was a living God. When there remained no more than God's name in the scripture or in the people's imagination or on the lips of the followers of a certain religion, and when that name began to become a profane name, a vain repetition, then such souls were born on the earth and brought with them a living God. If they gave anything else to humanity, either law, ethics, or morals, these were secondary. The principal thing that they gave to the world was a living God.

TASAWWUF: The instructions from Hazrat Inayat Khan to his first Murshida, Mrs. Rabia Ada Martin was included in the phrase, "The Message of the Living God." All his instructions were to that point. And it is a pity that later all the attention was paid to his personality and not to the God who is within and without all of us. And the prayers and prostrations, the lessons and the silences are all to this point that man should know the Truth and the Truth will make him free; that man may find his God and God will make him free.

As soon as one feels this Divine Presence his whole attitude and way of life will be different. He will be reborn and sometimes the space between these rebirths will be less and less until finally with every new breath there will be a spiritual rebirth. This comes after long effort and devotion.

GATHEKA: The ninth initiation is what is called in Sufi terms **Akhlak-e-Allah**, which means the Manner of God. The one who touches that plane or that realization expresses in his manner the manner of God; his outlook on life is God's outlook; his action, his thought, and his word are God's action, thought, and word.

TASAWWUF: This subject was presented in the Religious Gathekas which became incorporated in *The Unity of Religious Ideals*. But as time passed, their importance was lost in the mass of writings and other aspects of the Message. Still there is nothing, in a sense, which is beyond the Manner of God.

Disciples are shown how to feel this presence and if they have not reached the stage where they can present out of themselves the Divine Manner, they can at least reflect it. And it brings with it a sense of freedom, and also a release from worry, care, pain and all burdens. It is in this respect that Allah is the veritable Savior and those who are unable to assimilate all the blessings of the Divine Being, are at least able to benefit from the blessings of the Divine Presence.

GATHEKA: Therefore what the prophets spoke was **Kalam-ullah**, the Word of God, as for instance the Bhagavad Gita which means the Song Celestial. Why? Because at this stage God Himself speaks. These holy ones became that perfect Spirit and were moved by it. They became actors, for their action was no longer their own action; it was the action of God. Their word was no longer a human word; it was the word of God.

TASAWWUF: There have been Sufis who have taught that nothing was anywhere near as beneficial as the ability to assimilate the Divine Presence, especially in the State Wujd which perhaps is the same as the Indian ananda or even premananda. But the Indian peoples have sought that stage while the Sufis have sought Allah and become indifferent whether they are in the state of intoxicating bliss or of the sobriety of wonderment.

GATHEKA: Very few arrive at the last three initiations in their lifetime, for after the first nine initiations begins what is called the phase of self-realization. When those who have not arrived at this stage begin to utter affirmations such as "I am God," they utter nothing but vain repetitions, and this obscures the God-ideal.

TASAWWUF: We find these vain repetitions often and they are muttered rather than uttered by those who are not God-realized. One can easily tell for the God-realized man includes others as being within himself while the ignorant person regards others both as ignorant and separate, and there is something in his tone which indicates his ignorance.

There is a great gap in meaning between words uttered by the awakened and those uttered by the

ignorant. One can tell this by tone of voice and the living magnetism which comes from a great soul. The pretender may have the right words but he can not produce either the light nor the magnetism, nor can he arouse either enthusiasm (in its true meaning, sensitivity to the Divine Presence) or exaltation, in others.

GATHEKA: They do not know what they are saying. If people only knew to what an extent they should be authorized before speaking about such things, they would be very careful about what they say.

TASAWWUF: For on the moral plane there is a vast difference and the words of ignorant people and pretenders produce malefic karma. Many have made great claims and pretended prophetic vision and it often does not come that way; it often comes just the opposite but those who believe in them will always find some argument to justify, whatsoever happens. But the true words of true seers do not need justifications.

In *Vadan* the Gayatri express various degrees of blessings which come from the perfect people, in different ways, according to their functions and the needs of the time.

GATHEKA: When after having gone through all the other stages of consciousness one arrives at this stage, one can speak very little; for it is beyond the stage of religion and even beyond the notion of God; it is the stage of self-expression.

TASAWWUF: We find this in the life of Ramana Maharshi that he seldom spoke outwardly. Still he could evoke thoughts and words among those who came to him. They always received some kind of guidance from him. And if nothing else, they experienced exaltation of the Presence. This set up an example which many pretended to have but there is little evidence of this in the pretenders. They obtain large followings and adulations, but because their work is based on falsehood, after a time they are forgotten, or if remembered, then as false prophets.

GATHEKA: This stage of self-expression is reached when a person has thoroughly dug his self out, so that nothing of the self is left but only that divine substance; and only then is he authorized to express himself. Thus the tenth initiation is the awakening of the real self, the real ego, and this awakening is brought about by meditation, the meditation which makes one forget one's false or limited self. The more one is able to forget it, the more the real self awakens.

TASAWWUF: Baqa is the awakening of the Divine expression in man, when the ego-control is gone. The ego is then the servant of the real self and the whole cosmos expresses itself through personality. Therefore *Gayani* teaches that it is through man that God works out His intended purpose in nature.

It is not only in the scriptures that we have examples of the lives and writings of perfect souls, but the divine words often appear in the utterances of the wise and in their inspired poems. For poetry is a much better vehicle than prose for the outpourings of the deeper consciousness.

GATHEKA: In the next stages one experiences a sensation of splendor, which in Persian is called **Hairat**. It is like when a child is born and begins to see everything new: this old world is seen by the child as a new world. As soon as the point of view is changed by the help of meditation, one sees the whole world, which is before everybody and which everybody is seeing, quite differently.

TASAWWUF: From the moral point of view this teaching is offered in the Gathas. As such it is not always appreciated at first for one is perceiving life apart from his own experience. But as the heart opens, as the intuitions function it is different.

What is called “meditation” here may be mushahida, which is the cosmic contemplation. Then one knows functions as an egoself. Either he sees universally or the universe sees through him and with him. One has then risen above the distinctions and differences which divide men. One sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself.

GATHEKA: One begins to see reason behind reason, cause behind cause, and one’s point of view also changes in regard to religion. It changes because where the average man would want to accuse or punish or blame a person for a certain action, the one who has risen to this stage can neither judge nor blame; he only sees; but he sees the cause behind the cause.

TASAWWUF: He knows that every one acts in accordance with his evolution. It is not always some undefinable, indefinite thing known as “environment” which causes him to adopt a line of behavior, in accord or not in accord with the norms of society, but there are always other factors, latent and overt, which operate in the life of every one. The mystic sees them all, feels them all. And he can look, so to speak, through the eyes of another and hear as if through the ears of another.

GATHEKA: Whom then shall he accuse? Whom shall he blame? How can he refrain from forgiving, whatever be the fault, when he sees all that is behind the fault, when he sees the reason behind it, perhaps a more valid reason than even the one who committed the fault can see himself?

TASAWWUF: There is a stage in the life of the Bodhisattva which cannot be different. He not only sees, he feels and he appreciates. For compassion is not some line of thought or morality in which a presumably powerful or advanced person can see and help another, it means that the other is part of himself, a part which has not yet awakened to its fullness.

Then one can function as Jesus Christ has said, “I am the Vine and ye are the branches thereof.” Spiritual brotherhood comes when we feel part of each other and see others as part of ourselves. True this is also the teaching of some of the advanced schools of Buddhism, but although it is taught as theory and may even be part of cosmic realization, it does not always come to full manifestation in the daily life. It is here where Sufism has predominated because it has never lost sight of human consideration and humanitarianism. These come together with the divine awakening.

GATHEKA: Therefore naturally the manner of continually sacrificing, the manner of spontaneous

love and sympathy, the manner of respect both for the wise and foolish, for the deserving and undeserving, arises and expresses itself as divine life. It is at this stage that the human soul touches perfection and becomes divine, and that it fulfills its real purpose in life.

TASAWWUF: As moral instruction this is offered in the Gathas of Series III. At first they are taken chiefly in an intellectual way. It is not so easy to put them into practice. But they may also be combined with meditation and when this is so they may have a marked effect upon a person's character and behavior. Indeed this teaching is offered in another fashion in *Moral Culture* and "Character Development." But we cannot always be reading books. As the teaching states, that is only the first step. It is necessary also to meditate and assimilate and as one meditates and assimilates one removes the obstacles to the divine light and wisdom which are in oneself though covered and hidden.

Those who are called upon to teach and lead in the Sufi Movement are often representatives of this line of behavior, and even if not, the wise devotee can see the hidden perfection, so that when it rises to the surface he will benefit. And the wise teacher will recognize that there is perfectibility in every soul that comes to the door of the teaching.

Therefore it has been taught that every little word should be given some consideration, some thought, and if this is done it will help arouse the characteristics hidden in the personality and by this means man can rise above the state of man to that of superman, and from that of superman to divine perfection.

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 Meaning of Initiation

GATHEKA: The meaning of the word "initiation" can be understood from its association with "initiative." It is a fact that every child which is born on earth is born with initiative; but then, as it grows, the spirit more or less dies away, because the knowledge it gathers in its lifetime makes it doubt. This doubt, increasing more and more, very often makes a man lose the power of initiative, and then he does not want to take another step until he is sure whether there is land or water in front of him, and very often water looks like land, and land looks like water.

TASAWWUF: There is an aspect of life called Urouj, and it comes mostly early in life and it can be called also impetus and its principles are very much like impetus as the term is used in the physical sciences. And this comes largely at first and again at the awakening of youth. But otherwise it does not come much without a great test and trial although sometimes it may also be the result of some great form of love. For love is the nexus of life though they are often looked upon differently.

Jesus has said that he functions in all children to the age of seven, and Mohammed has said that every child is born a believer. And there is some truth in it. And there is no doubt that one of the worst doctrines which ever got into religion was that of infant damnation which has no foundation anywhere excepting in the ego-mind of selfish persons.

GATHEKA: According to the mystics life is an illusion, and thus man bases his reason upon illusion. Nevertheless, the reasoning power which he acquires helps him in his life in the world, although it is very often just this reasoning which holds him back from taking what is called the initiative.

TASAWWUF: The subject of "Reason" is discussed both in the lessons of the study circles and also in *Cosmic Language* and elsewhere. By the use of Reason man is often able to control the forces of nature. He is also able to grow intellectually to a point although great scientists and inventors, in discussing their own states of mind, almost unanimously declare that other factors are at work chiefly in the line of imagination and intuition, also something like poetic fancy of inspiration. There is much more than Reason.

The ancient Greeks used to set up Reason against the Desire Nature and said that reason could control desire and the lower urges. But this is not entirely so. There is some truth in it, no doubt, but even physiologically, in order to overcome the urges of the lower part of the body there must be effort to center on the higher parts of the body. And in some circles, especially those actually or vaguely connected with Kundalini Yoga and also even in Hatha Yoga, there are exercises of tremendous help.

GATHEKA: It is through this spirit of initiative that anyone in the world who has accomplished something great, has been able to do so. At the beginning of his efforts people call such a person mad or fanatical, or crazy, or devoid of reason, but when they see the result they think that he is most wise.

TASAWWUF: This goes on all the time. In America most is made of the story of Columbus, but when we look further we find that this was the constant theme, the pattern is repeated over and over all the time. Sometimes the person succeeds and then he is adulated and especially adulated by the very ones who previously criticized him. And it is for that reason that the Prophets and Messengers of God have always condemned criticism and fault-finding as such until the point of view of the other is known. And mostly it remains unknown.

Ignorant people, successful in gaining control over religious instructions, have emphasized the

importance of personality and de-emphasized the importance of teachings. But this is useless and is one of the great causes of miseries in the world. And it is necessary to accept part of Buddhist teaching to de-emphasize personalities as such, to learn the lessons they gave and even to put them into practice. We do not adulate scientists and inventors especially now that there have been so many of them. But we avail ourselves of their contributions to mankind. In somewhat similar fashion we can learn to avail ourselves of the moral and spiritual teachings of the representatives of God.

GATHEKA: Great prophets, the builders of nations, famous inventors, and great discoverers have all proved this.

TASAWWUF: And it is remarkable how often one finds great moral characters among them. They may not even believe in a God; they are often disgusted with religion. They see so much hypocrisy. But they are very devotional even if in different directions and this is a great asset to the soul, to be devotional. They are also concentrated and one pointed and they perform a “toward the one,” though perhaps different from the way religious people and others see it, but nevertheless it is God Who inspired them though they are unaware.

GATHEKA: One may ask then if they do not see what is before them in the same way that a reasoning person does. They do, but with different eyes. Their point of view is different; it does not always agree with the point of view of the average person, and so it is natural that people should call them fanatical, although they see perhaps more than do all those around them.

TASAWWUF: With the rise of the democratic spirit, and the assumption that one knows as much as another, any step in a different direction will receive some opposition. The result is that problems remain. Problems arise out of certain conditions and until those conditions are changed the problems remain. Still every attempt to go in another direction will receive opposition and so any pioneer will not only have to cope with the lack of deep reason being used, he may also have to face popular clamor.

GATHEKA: Those who have helped themselves to achieve success after complete failure, or to get over an illness after great suffering, have only succeeded in this by the spirit of initiative.

TASAWWUF: The story of Robert Bruce is given as an example. He is known in the British Isles. The story of Babar, the Mongol Emperor who invaded India is the same sort of story only Babar was a great devotee, and he was also a disciple of Sufism. And he passed the state of tauba—which is equivalent to the “repentance” of the Christians but not in the same dualistic sense. His life was full of excitement, honor, gallantry, devotion and idealism, and he died also a great hero.

There are many other such examples in all walks of life. The biblical “the stone which is rejected is become the corner-stone” stands out at all times and should cause all devotees to be very careful in this life. For inside everyone is an urge to greatness which may, or may not be connected with

the highest spiritual urges.

GATHEKA: There are different kinds of initiation that souls experience. One is natural initiation. A kind of natural unfoldment for which the soul cannot give any cause or reason, comes to a soul, although no effort or attempt has been made by that soul to experience it. Sometimes this initiation comes after great illness, pain, or suffering.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes there are those known as “advanced souls” who come into the world. People are not all of equal evolution on any basis. And there are often very high types, and especially where some doctrine of reincarnation is known or assumed, this explanation is easy.

From another point of view that God is All-in-All, He may manifest in countless forms. We even see that in the mineral kingdom, where the psychic state of all things seems similar, that the chemistry and the physical properties also are very different. For harmony is not monotony, and though angels may seem to us similar, as we pass down the scale of forms we find more and more differentiation. And this just from the physical point of view.

So every soul that is born into the world is different. If one wants some scientific proof it can be seen from the study of thumb-prints. Also from a different view from the study of the lines of the palms, handwriting and other arts. This shows that all forms are subject to constant change and transformation as Buddha taught.

But this alone does not produce the inner evolution. *Gayan* teaches that pleasure blocks while pain raises the potential of inspiration. So all deep suffering causes man to go deep into himself and sometimes discover or recover the pearls that are there.

GATHEKA: It comes as an opening up of the horizon, it comes as a flash of light, and in a moment the world seems transformed.

TASAWWUF: With the increased custom, or habit, of resorting to what are called “drugs”—a misused term—the psychedelic experience has shown many people there are other states of consciousness, other bodies. This supports the inner feeling that there is more to the universe than philosophy or tradition holds. This is sometimes called a “breakthrough” but it is not a break-through in a mystical sense unless it brings with it a change in ego and in outlook. On return to the so called balanced consciousness there may be no change in personality or outlook, although with increased awareness there may be a more forceful ego, and sometimes, fortunately, an increase in empathy.

The mystical and spiritual experiences are different. They effect a change in personality and outlook. There is a real break-through. There is a real widening of outlook. And the light that comes is more than just a flash of something that affects the outer sight. It brings with it new and broader vision, a real expansion of personality, a deeper understanding of oneself and of life. And one does not return to one’s former ego-habits. There is growth, especially in sympathy and understanding.

GATHEKA: It is not that the world has changed; it is that the person has become tuned to a different pitch. He begins to think differently, feel differently, see and act differently; his whole condition begins to change.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* teaches that the world is what it is, that we cannot change it but that we can change ourselves. But it is also true that with change of outlook, the world seems different. One can look at a tree with an ordinary eye, with a microscope, from far, or with an ultramicroscope and one will get four different pictures, and they may be entirely different. But it is the same tree, only different vision.

There is a story of a little girl who went into a witch's hut while the witch was away. She found different ointments and put some on an eye and immediately the place seemed transformed. Actually it was not transformed, her vision was transformed. And so it is with life. Any transformatory experience transforms and the one who has had such experiences will not usually demand changes from others but he or she will show these changes in life, in new outlooks and change of habit.

Marie Corelli has given many novels illustrating this, from different views, but always the radical change which accompanies initiatory processes.

GATHEKA: One might say of him that from that moment he begins to live. It may come as a vision, as a dream, as a phenomenon—in any of these forms; one cannot determine the manner in which it will manifest.

TASAWWUF: Jesus Christ has said it would come in a twinkling of an eye, and in the hour one would think least. Zen proclaims sudden transformation which is called in some schools “enlightenment” but generally speaking it is known as **satori**. Satori is really initiation but cannot be known as such by those who have not had the experience. And as Mrs. Ruth Sasaki told one enterprising writer, a hundred such satoris may not prove enlightenment, that is, the acquisition of the conscious Buddha-nature. They bring glimpses.

So the initiation does transform, but as has been explained in the previous Chapter, there are many initiations. There are many grades, gradients and transformations, giving ever wider outlooks.

GATHEKA: Another initiation known to the mystics is the initiation that one receives from a person living on the earth. Every mystical school has its own initiation.

TASAWWUF: This has been given variously by different schools, yet when it comes to deepening of vision, to transformatory experiences, to internal revolutions, there is a similarity which pervades them all. The writer, Idries Shah, says that strictly speaking there are schools of Sufis, not any general thing called “Sufism.” This shows non-attainment on his part for initiation into Sufism constitutes admittance into all Orders, always from the inner point of view, sometimes outwardly also.

GATHEKA: In the Orient, where mystical ideas are prevalent and are regarded as most sacred, any person who wishes to tread the spiritual path considers initiation to be the most important thing. If such a soul as Jesus Christ had to be baptized by John the Baptist, no soul on earth can say, "I have risen above initiation."

TASAWWUF: Yet it is done. It is done more and more because of two different lines in the West. One which has affected older people more is that they break away from traditions and by breaking away from traditions they presume that this automatically makes them universal. They may remain selfish, callous, narrow but because they have become free from tradition or have freed themselves from tradition, they think they have accomplished something.

Another type is those who have had psychic or psychedelic experiences. They think they have tapped the resources of the universe. The difference is that while both touch the subtle plane, most psychic experiences are not very deep and require what is known as "trance." And while the psychedelic experience seems more transformatory, and is somewhat transformatory, it is unbalanced. Still sometimes it opens a way.

In the stories of King Arthur many knights had the vision of the Holy Grail. That was the first step. Then they went to seek it and very few advanced far. This teaching is found in many lands but until it is taken seriously, not many can advance, for each thinks he is one of the few that do advance and such thoughts are confusing and illusory.

Common to these, and also of a different type are those who self-proclaim no need for a teacher. There are many such persons all over the world. They keep humanity divided. They lead to the formation of countless cliques, sects, groups and assertions of self-leadership in a confused and divided world which remains confused and divided.

GATHEKA: Is that then impossible? Nothing is impossible. It may be possible for a person to jump into the water with the intention of swimming to the port of New York, but his life will be more secure if he books his passage with the normal shipping lines. And the difference between these two souls is the same, or even greater—between the one who wishes to journey on the spiritual path by taking initiation, and the other who refuses to do so.

TASAWWUF: From historical data alone we have much to corroborate this. But as few study the history—and it is not an adjunct to the spiritual life, such evidence would not affect those who do not wish to change their outlooks. Only if they do not wish to change their outlooks or be changed, then they will not get far on the path to God.

In the ten Sufi thoughts abandon of ego-self is proclaimed. But this does not come easily. And one also learns that it is not for the sake of the Murshid, but for the sake of God that the pupil surrenders to the teacher. The teacher does not depend on that. The dependence of the teacher is in another direction.

There is little evidence of persons arriving at supreme states who have not had teachers. In cases where this occurs it is due to the Grace of Allah and even in cases where it does not occur it is due to the Grace of Allah. Such men as Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter had some mystical experiences and then they agreed that one of them should seek a teacher, and Carpenter later wrote, "A Visit to a Gnani." But there are many people who are very proud, self-centered and think they can get along without a teacher. Of course they can get along without a teacher; anybody can get along without a teacher; anybody can remain immersed in ignorance. There is no compulsion on the spiritual path.

GATHEKA: Initiation by a spiritual teacher means both a trust given by the teacher to the pupil, and a trust given by the pupil to the teacher. And the progress of the one who is initiated depends upon how much he gives himself to the teacher's guidance.

TASAWWUF: While this looks very simple and has become natural to the people of many lands of Asia and Africa, it does not always follow in the western world where teachings of democracy and individualism have held sway. But whatever truth there is in such doctrines, they have no part in the spiritual life. The spiritual life is one of surrender of ego and the more capacity and more efficiency one has in this surrender, the more accommodation is made for the manifestation of the divine light which is in all of us.

In this sense self-surrender may be called **fana** or effacement. But knowing there is such a process does not mean that one thereby goes through the processes of self-surrender. Knowing about it is just another thought, one of a myriad thoughts. Unless it is put to practice it is always a useless thought, one which has hindered the development of many people.

In nearly all schools where there has been any achievement, where doctrines have been accompanied or followed by awakening, there is a valid teacher, one in a chain of many, many teachers who have held aloft the light of truth through the darkness of human ignorance.

GATHEKA: One might give only a finger, another even part of a finger, while a third would give his whole hand. This makes a great difference, for if a pupil says, "Well, I will give a certain amount of my time and thought to your guidance, will that be enough?" the teacher will say, "Yes, if you think it is enough;" but in reality it is never enough.

TASAWWUF: There can be no compulsion in Sufism. Each Bayat, each initiation is an opportunity for the disciple, the devotee. There are some who will even worship the teacher, but that is not what the teacher may want; this is not always self-surrender. Self-surrender is illustrated by obedience and fidelity whether it is saying a simple prayer, doing any esoteric practice, or performing those duties which the murshid needs. When there are acts which merely bring gratification to the pupil, these are not acts of selfless service.

GATHEKA: Then one might wonder if one would not be giving up one's own point of view in order to follow someone else's point of view; but actually if one has a point of view, one never loses it.

The point of view which one loses is not one's own.

TASAWWUF: Many are under the erroneous thought that the teacher demands subservience. It is nothing like that. A teacher, even a perfect teacher, is himself a seeker and he may be finding God or the Divine Wisdom, the Wisdom of God, in every seeker. He sees everyone as the beloved one of God and looks for their blossoming as of buds into full flowers. And once he has granted Bayat he considers himself under obligation to the pupil; and he is most fortunate if the pupil realizes the obligations to the teacher.

Besides, no matter how learned the teacher is, there are many fields of endeavor in which he may not be even a novice. So he encourages pupils to express themselves and offer their points of view on all extraneous subjects, or on all matters outside the direct spiritual teaching.

GATHEKA: And by looking at a thing from another person's point of view one only enlarges one's own; then one has two points of view instead of one.

TASAWWUF: Hazrat Inayat Khan has said, "I learn more from my mureeds than they learn from me." The wise teacher is always seeking knowledge and the wise pupil is always seeking wisdom and guidance. Besides there are so many subjects of which a teacher is ignorant so he listens and learns. And thus his disciples only learn to acquire the habit of listening and learning.

GATHEKA: If the thought of the pupil happens to be different from that of the teacher, by taking the teacher's thought his own is doubled; the pupil keeps his own point of view just the same, only now he has something for his vision from which to make his choice; the horizon of his thought is expanded. But the pupil who closes himself and says, "I will guard my point of view or it will escape me," will never derive any benefit from this attitude.

TASAWWUF: Often the teacher's outlook is of a higher dimension, with a broader base. It is therefore often quite inclusive so it does not refute the pupil's point of view but integrates it into a larger outlook. In "The Story of Lot" in *The Unity of Religious Ideals* the existence of the Vijnanamayakosh and Anandamayakosh is posited. But this does not tell us of their place in the universe, the functions and outlooks or what they really mean when man is consciously awakened to them.

The awakening is not a repudiation of what one has learned but its assimilation into a much larger outlook. As in the story of the six blind men and the elephant, all partial outlooks are at least partially right, right within their own dimensions. Then there is a larger dimension. And so what is called "abstracting" in philosophy is the ego assimilation of a point of view from something which may be called reality. What man calls "reality" is not the full reality but the ego-abstraction from it. It may be called right, it may be called wrong, it may be called both right and wrong; it may be called neither right nor wrong. And in the Mahayana psychology all of these are presented so many may attain a universal outlook which is all inclusive.

When one can understand this he will realize that his rightness is limited, but it is unwise to give it up. The real growth comes not in abandoning what one has collected but integrating it into a larger outlook until the whole cosmic point of view is attained.

GATHEKA: The mystical path is the most subtle path to tread. The relationship between teacher and pupil is too subtle for words to express.

TASAWWUF: Over and over is this stressed. It often takes a long time for this teaching to be assimilated. People often see in a teacher some ideal, or some fancy they have had come to objectification. They then demand a certain standard and if the standard evinced is not to their liking they see the short-comings of the teacher. They are right. Perhaps every teacher has some shortcomings in some things. But in the effort to awaken disciples and the generality, in this direction he may be regarded as perfect, and in the sight of God is he often perfect.

GATHEKA: Besides the language of a mystical teacher is always elusive; you cannot, so to speak, pin him down as to his words; you cannot ask him to say clearly that something is so and so, or such and such. And if a mystic does so he is not a mystic, for a mystic cannot do this.

TASAWWUF: The mystic is judged in heaven by the quality of the mureeds and not necessarily by the quantity. Of course there are cases where teachers have functioned before a multitude. Besides no one can say exactly what a spiritual teacher's duties are. But it is most important that he help awaken some people and the greater his facility in this the greater a teacher he is.

Nearly all schools have tests and trials. It is a peculiar thing, however, that some people who have a sort of emotional attraction toward esoteric schools which have the most severe tests themselves object to being tested. Thus the Pythagorean school was quite severe and the world is full of people who believe they are or should be Pythagoreans, but in actuality, they desire nothing of the kind. They have not the mathematical prowess, they do not like to be silent for long periods, and they are concerned with mystery-making, not with mysticism.

Still, awakening does not come by answering simple questions or solving problems. It comes in, with and through transformation and transmutation.

GATHEKA: The mystic may seem to be standing on the earth, but he is flying in the air. The air cannot be made into a rock, nor can the mystic be made a gross entity. His "yes" does not mean the same as the "yes" of another, nor does his "no" mean the same as the "no" of others. The language of the mystic is not the language of words; it is the language of meaning.

TASAWWUF: A great deal of confusion has been caused by this. It was the habit of Hazrat Inayat Khan to offer a "Yes" to almost every person and to almost every question. But it was also his habit to add counter-questions and conditions. The people who heard the "yes" assumed that mystics must be very harmonious people, a sort of super-magician or Santa Claus who not only granted requests, but helped one to attain their wishes.

It indicated that whatever a person's thoughts, wishes, desires or outlooks were there was some justification, for the People were not necessarily mad or evil, but that did not mean they were automatically spiritual. Besides, spiritual questions and problems are not answered by any simple "yes" or "no." These answers do not transform everybody and everything. But they often help to guide others in their first step toward perfection.

And so it was with the successors of Hazrat Inayat Khan. They were judged. No matter what they said or did they were judged. Only in this case they did not lead many persons to and through spiritual transformations and awakenings. Besides there are and have been all sorts of awakened teachers using all sorts of methods and many quite successful in them.

The rise of the semantic outlook came many years after the first presentation of the Message to the Western world. Now it has been discovered that the value of words in many instances is questionable. And this is certainly true of the mystic who actually uses another type of communication in which the languages play a lesser part.

GATHEKA: It is the greatest distress for a mystic to have to use the words of everyday language, which are not his words.

TASAWWUF: We can see an analogy in hypergeometry that new words had to be coined to fit human concepts or even human experiences of another and higher order. True, the Sanskrit language has many terms which fit in with transcendental experiences and it is always possible that there will be more suitable words than there are now. But it is also true as in Zen that ordinary words can not be used in ordinary fashion with ordinary meanings to indicate clearly super-experience.

GATHEKA: He cannot express himself in these words. And we find the same in the action of the mystic. His outward actions will not express to everybody the meaning which is behind them, and that meaning may be much more important inwardly than the action is outwardly.

TASAWWUF: We may accept the premise of Paul Brunton that the mystic uses breath and heart and the eyes. None of these communicates ordinarily with ordinary language. And even if we had some machine which could interpret what they do, it would require extraordinary finesse to make it clear; and still it should not be made clear because these clear interpretations are only for the discursive and analytical mind. We do not use poetry and music in this way; how much more evasive is the language of the mystic!

GATHEKA: The teacher therefore tests his pupil continually. He tells him and he does not tell him, for everything must come in its right time. Divine knowledge has never been taught in words, nor will it ever be so taught.

TASAWWUF: For words are the products of what may be called "mortal mind." They fit certain finite conditions and are meant to be so. And when attempts have been made to explain the

transfinite in traditional speech, there has been much controversy. Of course there is the transfinite; of course it cannot be explained in ordinary speech. It can only be clear on its own level but it can perceive the finite and understand the finite while the opposite is not true. The limited can never explain the unlimited; the unlimited can often explain the limited.

Once the commentator was with a Pir in the Himalayas and we were told there would be an examination for Khalifship. We were dismissed at ten o'clock after an hour's instruction to meet at noon. When we met the commentator said, "No examination." "Why not?" Because when I went to the room the Pir was there and he gave me full instructions.

No doubt such occurrences are very pleasing to certain types concerned with the occult. But actually God is everywhere and He manifests in many forms, and especially through inspiring teachers. And there are innumerable examples of cases of telepathy and beyond telepathy. For the teacher has full consideration for the disciple, and love is never limited by name and form, nor wisdom.

GATHEKA: The work of the a mystical teacher is not to teach but to tune, to tune the pupil so that he may become the instrument of God. For the mystical teacher is not the player of the instrument; he is the tuner. When he has tuned it, he gives it into the hands of the Player whose instrument it is to play. The duty of the mystical teacher is his service as a tuner.

TASAWWUF: Over and over again it is taught that one gains by attunement and not by goodness, kindness and charity. The effects, even the beneficent effects of these is limited. But by attunement one stretches into the illimitable. We have the phenomena of attunement and resonance in many types of sciences and they are all based on cosmic principles. In electricity in particular some form of attunement is used to step up the currents and so the magnetism. And in the spiritual life something of the sort is used, only there is infinite capacity. For the purpose of the attunement by the teacher is to bring the disciple into direct communion with God.

GATHEKA: Dispute with a spiritual teacher is never any good. For the pupil may be speaking one language while the teacher speaks another, and when there is no common language, how can the dispute be profitable? Therefore in the path of mysticism there is no dispute.

TASAWWUF: And yet there are disputes and sometimes the teacher will give way. He has before him the ideals of love and harmony and beauty and beyond them the Cause of God. The pupil has something else in mind which may be more limited, more personal. From the pupil's point of view he is right and from the standpoint of dualism also the pupil may be right. But it is not this kind of

"right" which is needed; what is needed is to bring about the attunement to God, for each and all. There are many ways to do this, and what is right for some may not always be right for others. So the work of the teacher is to upraise the disciple by attunement and as certain masters teach, "To argue is to lose the way."

GATHEKA: Also, there are no fixed rules to follow on this path. For every person there is a special rule. But there is one law which applies to everything in life; sincerity, which is the only thing that is asked by a teacher of a pupil, for truth is not the portion of the insincere.

TASAWWUF: There are certain general codes and we find them in *Moral Culture*. But this is based on relativity and not on absoluteness. Besides, every case must be determined by its own merits and heart does not decide without full consideration of mercy and compassion. There are the standards and ideals which may be ascribed to Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Buddha and all prophets and messengers of God. But all of them hold up human consideration. So every case is, in a certain sense, different.

GATHEKA: Several initiations may be given to the pupil whom the teacher has taken in hand, but the progress depends upon the pupil himself. Just as parents are anxious, so the spiritual teacher is naturally anxious to see the advancement of his pupil.

TASAWWUF: There are in a sense fixed standards and patterns and also there is the general outlook. The descent of the Holy Spirit and all forms of realization may be related to the progress in **fanā** or self-effacement. But this is not a blotting out of anything but the ego. All faculties, all purposes in life may be achieved, are to be achieved and for these the teacher may become a willing servant to the pupil and at the same time a guidance. It is the Spirit of Guidance which leads humanity to the Light, and in the Light.

GATHEKA: There is no reason for the teacher to keep any pupil back from success; for as the happiness of the parents lies in the happiness of the child, so the satisfaction of the teacher lies in the advancement of the pupil.

TASAWWUF: It is on this point that Sufism seems to be different from some other schools of spiritual advancement. For in Sufism the path is one wherein teacher and pupil journey together. The teacher does not compel or propel, but in a certain sense he accompanies the disciple and in other senses, he may be at the same time a stimulator and a follower.

The greatest joy that can come to the teacher is when the pupil arrives and the only reward that comes to the teacher is in and with the advancement of disciples.

GATHEKA: But then there is another kind of initiation which comes afterwards, and this initiation is also an unfoldment of the soul. It comes as an after-effect of the initiation that one had from the teacher. It comes as a kind of expansion of consciousness, and the greatness of this initiation depends upon the distance and width of the horizon of consciousness.

TASAWWUF: When Sufism was first presented the term "initiation" was used. And then **bayat** was substituted. But there are two forms of **bayat**, those which the teacher bestows upon the disciple and those in which he confirms the advancement of the disciple, from the experiences of the Grace of Allah.

When the teachings were first offered the importance of Grace was stressed above all else. It did not penetrate the minds of audiences, for the term “Grace” has taken on so many meanings, and when God is not regarded as actually Omnipresent, it loses its effect. The Grace that seems to come from a far away, transcendent Deity has not the same psychological effect as that which comes when the Divine Presence is felt.

Now there are people who sense some form of expansion of consciousness whenever and however they are raised from the denseness of earth. And perhaps all these forms, all these claims are in a sense correct. But the true expansion of consciousness comes with spiritual rebirths. Consciously or unconsciously the mathematician Dodson, writing under the name of “Lewis Carroll” has given some of this in the allegory called *Alice in the Looking Glass*.

GATHEKA: Many may claim it, but few realize it. Those who realize do not claim. As the more fruitful a tree is the more it bends, so the more divine his spiritual realization is the more humble a person becomes. It is the one who is less fruitful who becomes more pretentious.

TASAWWUF: In the confusion which has arisen because of the resort to artificial means to awaken the inner consciousness, the more claims there have been. Many of these claims totally lack any moral awakening and many have ego-claims which, because of the number making such claims, cannot all possibly be true. They may all be false when they claim to be messiahs, avatars and supermen. If there are any messiahs or avatars or supermen, they would bring illumination to many and perhaps in an instance. They would not have to make any claims at all. The awakening of those in their presence would be the claim and this is the highest of testimonials.

GATHEKA: The really initiated ones hardly ever mention the word **initiation**; they find no profit in convincing others that they are initiated. They possess their real inner gains so they do not want an outer gain; it is the one who has not got any who wants recognition from outside.

TASAWWUF: We may even use this as a standard of judgment. Still that would not necessarily always be fair. For there may be Madzubs who take advantage when the generality assumes that the arrived ones are silent, and babble and prate and talk and claim and thus chase others away, repel them. Which is what they want. They do not want the hypercritical and unworthy to come near them, so they may overclaim. But generally there is something about the light from the eyes and the atmosphere which a person carries which is the testimonial of advanced souls.

GATHEKA: And if we ask what profit we derive from initiation, the answer is that religion, mysticism, or philosophy—all that we gain—should help us to achieve one result, and that is to be best fitted for serving our fellow-men.

TASAWWUF: The same phrases are often used by false claimants, only they do not serve, they just use the words like “service” and often deceive, more often mislead. The actual Sufis and Vedanta Swamis whom one meets in the Orient do not speak much about “serving” but actually act as servants and perform servile duties without stressing it. Thus the great Pir-O-Murshid Hasan

Nizami acted as flunky in his own printing establishment.

Nor is it necessarily in the line of healing that the great ones work. They often serve as lackeys, as cooks, even as janitors. They may wash the feet of pilgrims and offer food or drink to anybody without any distinction of class or religion.

GATHEKA: It may be asked whether it is desirable for every soul to take initiation. The word “initiation” and the associated word “initiative” suggest going forward, so the answer is that progress is life and standing still is death. Whatever be our grade of evolution, it is always advisable to try to go forward, be it in business or in a profession, in society or in political life, in religion or in spiritual advancement.

TASAWWUF: This is not necessarily ambition. There is an urge in every soul, from every soul, to struggle ahead. And if one cannot struggle ahead he feels he is in the wrong place. It is not that one strives to dominate over his fellow-man; it is that one strives to dominate over his lower self. So life is a constant battle but not necessarily a battle against others.

GATHEKA: No doubt there is a danger in being too enthusiastic. The nature that is too enthusiastic may, instead of benefiting, perhaps harm itself in whatever line it may have taken up, worldly or spiritual.

TASAWWUF: For that reason some of the goals of the Sufi Movement have not been attained. There is emotional assent, but such assent may be uncontrolled; one who says “yes” himself presumes that his favoring a project may bring it success. But this is not always success. Wishing is not achieving. Wishing with dependence on God may help one to avoid failure but without this divine reliance one is always subject to the karma.

GATHEKA: For everything there is a time, and patience is necessary in all striving. A cook may burn food by applying more heat in order to cook more quickly, and this rule applies to all things.

TASAWWUF: The statement that the principle applies to all things is easily grasped by the intuitive, but with difficulty by those of hardened minds. Very often there are people with hardened minds who are convinced that they are either seeking spirituality or are already spiritual. But they do not see and they do not apply beyond their immediacy. They are trapped in a limited dimension and cannot let go. If all the people in the world who are self-convinced that they can surrender, could surrender, there would be a continual paradise of God upon earth.

The commentator once lived in a spiritual commune and whatever was proposed a certain man supported with enthusiasm. He always supported any idea, any suggestion of anybody with enthusiasm. And he would usually be the first one who had an excuse—and sometimes his excuses were most valid—not to go along with that proposal which he had verbally supported. This happens often and it always brings confusion. It is wise, therefore, to watch breath and heart and to feel properly before speaking. If one feels first one will make fewer mistakes in speaking.

GATHEKA: With little children the parents are often anxious and enthusiastic; they think their children should learn and understand every good and interesting thing on earth. Too much enthusiasm is not right. We must give time to all things; the first and most important lesson in life is patience; we must begin all things with patience.

TASAWWUF: No doubt the sprinter must start off rapidly and accurately, but for the rheostat, one gradually builds up speed and power. If one wants the full efficiency one must do that. And the same is true in spiritual matters, and matters concerned with breathing. We do not always know all the potentialities of breath and we can not predetermine or think such things out. There is a program, so to speak, for them.

It is therefore that rhythms are studied and put into practice. And also in the Sufi trainings which use music and dancing, a similar program is followed.

GATHEKA: The Sufi Order is mainly an esoteric school. There are three principal esoteric schools known in the East; the Buddhist school, the Vedantic school, and the Sufi school.

TASAWWUF: These terms are used here in their broadest sense. The Vedantic and Buddhist schools have what they call the transmission of Dharma. It is not exactly definable but it is characterized by some transmission of light, wisdom and spiritual realization. In Sufism there is a term **silsila**. A mistake was made in assuming it took on a particular material form. It is transmateral, without being anti-materialistic. It is based on the continuum of spiritual realization and the direct experience of spiritual awakening is the basis of all these schools.

GATHEKA: The two former use asceticism as their principle means of spiritual advancement; the peculiarity of the Sufi school is that it uses humanity as its chief means to the same end.

TASAWWUF: There are verbal teachings in the other schools. The Buddhists, in particular some members of Mahayana Schools, repeat that no matter how innumerable sentient beings are they vow to save them all. Then they think the vow justifies them. They do not always pursue the path of their vows. Then they say that Zen is everyday life but Zen is not usually everyday life and the people who go in for most pursuits called "Zen" do everything but follow the usual everyday life. Yet Master Senzaki did accomplish the everyday life and was a most profound and advanced sage.

The one thing most stressed in the Sufi teachings, besides the recognition that God Alone is, is consideration of one's fellow man. This stands out and is what distinguishes the true from the false. It is not knowing the profundities or some esoteric exercises which are for any few, but the heart-consideration to God's creatures, especially to man that characterizes the Sufi.

GATHEKA: In the realization of truth the Sufi school is no different from the Vedantic or the Buddhist, but the Sufi presents truth in a different manner. It is the same frame in which Jesus Christ has given his teaching.

TASAWWUF: The American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson declared that if one brought Pythagoras and Jesus Christ and Buddha and Mohammed together instead of there being any arguments there would be infinite peace and love demonstrated. The commentator took part in the introduction of the Zen Monk, Nyogen Senzaki, and the Sufi teacher, Hazrat Inayat Khan together. They went into a side chamber and both entered Samadhi by glance. The commentator many years later had the same experience with the Zen Roshi, Sogen Asahina and also with others. There was no difference in the experience, only in the backgrounds and they all brought the soul to its full realization.

Now Jesus Christ worked in the framework of Love and he kept on emphasizing love but it seems that doctrinarians and clergymen and philosophers do not want it that way. They say and pray for God's Will to be done on earth but they do not want it. Because in Love, in this sense, the distinctions and differences which divide men disappear. Jesus has given the example of the good Samaritan but that does not play any important part in traditional religion. It has not become an example. But to the Sufis it is a permanent example; that is the way they behave. They become, all of them, like the good Samaritan.

GATHEKA: No doubt the method of helping spiritual development by contemplation and meditation is used in all three schools, the science of breath being the foundation of each.

TASAWWUF: For that reason many think that Sufism was derived from the Orient. Yes, the Sufis have breathing disciplines; some schools of Buddhism have breathing disciplines, often quite different; and in India there are many such exercises, and some of the deepest are kept hidden from the public. They have been published, they are in the Lesser Upanishads, but leaders desiring to maintain their eminence, only lecture on them; they do not use them, they do not demonstrate them.

Yet the word "spiritual" means that which is connected with Breath. The ancient Egyptians knew this and it was the coordination of breathing as well as mechanical prowess which made possible the construction of the great pyramids and the marvelous wonders of the temples of Karnak and elsewhere. If they had not known about the Breath they would not have accomplished this.

Although this subject has been stressed more than any other in the literature, it takes many years to bring a few people to its realization. Complexities are too often taken for truth. A little child can learn to breathe; a little child would have difficulty in learning metaphysics.

GATHEKA: But the Sufi thinks that man was not created to live the life of an angel, neither was he created to live the life of an animal. For the life of an angel, angels are created, and for the life of an animal there are animals.

TASAWWUF: Yet the humanity includes both these aspects. There are organs in the body which are, in a sense, animal organs. There are also organs in the body which, if awakened, could enable man to accomplish what no animal could conceive. With all the advances in science and

technology, deep thinking does not appear among the animals. And a study of the nervous system would show profound differences in construction and function, still to be studied and explained. For man, as Count Korzybski explained, was a time binder; and as technology indicates, to some extent a space binder and that is only the first step in bringing out the wonders in man.

GATHEKA: The Sufi thinks that the first thing which is necessary for man in life is to prove to his own conscience to what extent he can be human. It is not only a spiritual development, it is the culture of humanity; in what relation man stands to his neighbor or friend, to those who depend upon him and those who look up to him, to strangers unknown to him.

TASAWWUF: Mostly people expect angelic behavior from Sufis, and then they read about Madzubs and say they are not Sufis. But the Madzubs may be more Sufi than anybody else for they may be seeing God in everything and everybody. And in order to awaken the light and fire within everyone they will either avoid or castigate. And this shocks in general those who are envisioning a cosmic Santa Claus. Or following the traditions, they expect a Galahad who was not a living man at all but a figment of imaginations and his presumable virtues have overshadowed the actual qualities not only of the average people, but over the saints.

GATHEKA: How he stands with those younger than himself and with older people, with those who like him and others who dislike him and criticize him; how he should feel and think and act through life, and yet keep on progressing toward the goal which is the goal for every soul in the world.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi is aware of this goal and he often sees where other people stand in this respect. It has been said that the Message is a clarion call for those who are ready to awaken, and like a lullaby for others to keep them in their sleeps and dreams in ignorance. But as the tendency is always to criticize and find fault many do not see. Besides the Sufi is not seeking acclaim. He does not want the unworthy to follow him, and he can see with his inner eye those who are ready; and he can also tell by the ear's perceptibility from the tone of voice those who are ready.

This is also presented in *The Inner Life* and its commentaries, for those who wish to perceive with the heart.

GATHEKA: It is not necessary for the Sufi to seek the wilderness for his meditation, since he can perform part of his work in the midst of worldly life.

TASAWWUF: The supremacy of Mohammed is that he maintained his rapport with God while living in the midst of humanity, in society, performing ordinary tasks to support his family and himself, and he did not go out of the way in this. It is most difficult and also most worthy when one can do this. Almost anybody can go into retirement and have some uplifting experience. But can he maintain that state in the midst of the world? That is the real test.

GATHEKA: The Sufi need not prove himself a Sufi by extraordinary power, by wonder-working, or by an exceptional spiritual manifestation or claim. A Sufi can prove to his own conscience that he is

a Sufi by watching his own life amidst the strife of this world.

TASAWWUF: It is usually the older people, those who have failed in life that look toward wonder-working. We have this at all times. But wonder-working is not part of the mystical life. For him everything is a wonder and therefore nothing especially is. And if he sees that the laws of nature, as they are called, are transcended, he also knows that everything can be transcended. But most of all he wants to see the ego transcended, not overly expressed.

GATHEKA: There are some who are content with a belief taught at home or in church. They are contented, and they may just as well rest in that stage of realization where they are contented until another impulse is born in their hearts to rise higher.

TASAWWUF: Although the Bodhisattvic vow is to try to save all people, and many of missionary bent also have some ideas about it, we do not awaken people by forced warnings. There are many who come and warn and nothing happens. There are many who believe that threats and fulminations are valuable. But it is still as with Jonah, that even a prophet did not succeed by such methods and God did not destroy Nineveh when the prophet said so. And it may have been that something happened. Besides, as Prophet Mohammed has said, "The Merciful leans toward the side of Mercy."

And no one is called upon to awaken everybody. There is a slow evolution for all the human race and everything and everyone has his time.

GATHEKA: The Sufi does not force his beliefs or his thoughts upon such souls.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has said not to cast pearls before swine and the ancient Greeks said that not all wood was fit to be used to make a statue of Hermes. Besides love does not operate that way. There is no dualism in true love, as in the sunshine and rain which are for everybody. But as Rumi has said,

God is asleep in the mineral kingdom, dreaming in the vegetable kingdom, awakening in the animal kingdom and comes to self-realization in man; there is a time and consideration for all creatures which really are God functioning at an infinite number of levels.

GATHEKA: In the East there is a saying that it is a great sin to awaken anyone who is fast asleep. This saying can be symbolically understood: that there are many in this world who work and do things and are yet asleep; they seem awake externally, but inwardly they are asleep. The Sufi considers it a crime to awaken them, for some sleep is good for their health.

TASAWWUF: Paul said, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ will give thee light." Of course this is true but many who claim to take the Bible literally take this symbolically; they do not think it can be literally true. Still there is a time for all things, and those who are awakened before their time may have a shock and relapse. When one is ready the master

will surely appear. For appeals are in the sphere and God hears all such cries in some way.

GATHEKA: The work of the Sufi is to give a helping hand to those who have had sufficient sleep and who now begin to stir in their sleep, to turn over. And it is that kind of help which is the real initiation.

TASAWWUF: Although the Bodhisattvic vow is to save all, still this does not mean it must come by stirring and still less by stirring immediately. No great Master has said that little children have to have esoteric discipline. It might shock them. Besides as they have not hardened one would have to work in a different way.

The way of wisdom and compassion is not a way of negation, nor is a spiritual teacher a Santa Claus.

GATHEKA: No doubt there are things which pass the ordinary comprehension of man. There are things one can teach only by speaking or by acting, but there is a way of teaching which is called **Tawajoh** and this way of teaching is without words. It is not external teaching; it is teaching in silence.

TASAWWUF: The immediate conclusion is that teachers use telepathy and sometimes they do. They may communicate in many ways. A Pir once sent for the commentator to test if he could function as a Khalif. He gave an hour instruction from nine till ten in the morning and said the group would meet at twelve. But when they met the commentator told the Pir that he had been with him those full two hours from ten till twelve and that he had all the requisite answers. It was something more than telepathy; it was a sort of teaching through immediate subtle communication of the mental body. But even these words do not explain fully enough.

Tawajjeh also includes teaching by example and by rhythm, to be with the teacher and help him, drawing in his rhythm by attuned breathing or attuned action. This can often be done with or without words.

Another form of Tawajjeh is like the Indian Darshan. One uses the glance but one may use it deeply or personally; one may try to reach a whole audience or one at a time or between. This is more than a subtle communication. It demonstrates that “heart speaks to heart and soul to soul”—although in heart there are differences and in soul one finds in the end no differentiation. For the teaching of Sufism is that the Path is a journey in which teacher and pupil walk as if one.

And there is another aspect which comes in fana-fi-Sheikh, that the consciousness of the pupil becomes so absorbed in that of the teacher it is almost as if mental instruction or even supermental instruction were like a communion of milk.

GATHEKA: For instance, how can man explain the spirit of sincerity, or the spirit of gratefulness? How can man explain the ultimate truth, the idea of God? Whenever it has been attempted it has

failed; it has made some confused, and it has made others give up their belief. It is not that the one who tried to explain did not understand, but that words are inadequate to explain the idea of God.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that to describe God is to dethrone God. There have been writers who have tried to explain and if one goes deeply into their work, it becomes mostly an emphasis on personality. It is a sort of deus ex machina, description is there but no attributes. The attributes are missing. And Allah without attributes is not Allah. Yes, in Indian teachings we have all sorts of representations of Deity and some seem very valid, are valid from certain outlooks. But then the Indian will say, "Neti, neti" Whatever is said, or described will also be refuted and both views are correct, showing that the ineffable is ineffable and never verbal.

GATHEKA: In the East there are great sages and saints who sit quite still, with lips closed, for years. They are called **Muni**, which means "he who takes the vow of silence." The man of today may think, "What a life, to be silent and do nothing." But he does not know that some by their silence can do more than others can accomplish by talking for ten years.

TASAWWUF: Buddha has been called **Sakya Muni** which is to say, the silent sage of the Sakya clan. And there is no doubt that much that appears in the Buddhist scriptures comes from impressions and visions and not necessarily verbal teaching. Besides, if there were telepathy, there would be the same impressions on a multitude; not a word need be spoken and yet a whole audience would receive it as if the words had been out loud.

Then it is taught in the Bhagavad Gita that action may prove to be inaction and inaction action. Many people study and they think they know it. And then when it comes to application they will see only action as action or inaction as inaction. Or they will accept the silence of many who live in the Himalayas and say their inaction is action. There is no proof for it. There were many who drew pictures or took photographs of Tibetan holy men, and these holy men were supposed to be casting inscriptions which were called "good thoughts." And many wondered and admired, yet there are no signs that anything happened at all; there were no signs that the world benefited.

When a sage sends out really good thoughts, thoughts of love, compassion, blessing, he is also aware of what he is doing. In the spiritual hierarchy which the Sufis recognize and which consists for the most part of Sufis, the work has to be done through and with silence but the one who does it is quite aware of the results. And if it does not come out right for him, he realizes that he has either not submitted to the Divine Will or that there is some imperfection in him which must be corrected. This correction of inner weaknesses is called **Mujahida**, or the "Greater Crusade" (or purification).

GATHEKA: A person may argue for months about a problem and not be able to explain it, while another, with inner radiance, may be able to answer the same thing in one moment.

TASAWWUF: This inner radiance is Kashf or Prajna. It is real. It is functional. All have access to it but all do not realize it. It is the awakened souls which realize and the sleeping souls which do not. This is beyond ordinary good and evil.

GATHEKA: But the answer that comes without words explains still more. That is initiation.

TASAWWUF: This may come with vision, and it will be cosmic vision, in light. It may also come with a sort of seizure. Mohammed, perhaps the most advanced of men, used to have seizures and they were wrongly understood. Superficially they may seem to have a resemblance to epilepsy or catalepsy. But they were always accompanied by light and brought an ever greater light, and love and sobriety to the consciousness of the people around him. It was something very real. Initiation is something very real.

GATHEKA: However, no one can give spiritual knowledge to another, for this is something which is within every heart. What the teacher can do is to kindle the light which is hidden in the heart of the disciple. If the light is not there, it is not the fault of the teacher.

TASAWWUF: There have been many false teachings given out by western scholars who did not have Sufi training, about the relation between teacher and pupil. They have falsely taught that an abject surrender is required. A mother does not compel abject surrender of the feeding child and a teacher does not compel abjectivity of any kind. It is all in love and consideration or it is not Sufism.

GATHEKA: There is a verse by Hafiz in which he says, "However great be the teacher, he is helpless with the one whose heart is closed." Therefore initiation means initiation on the part of the disciple and on the part of the teacher, a step forward on the path of both.

TASAWWUF: There is an incident in the life of Shibli, a great Sufi of Baghdad, that he went to his teacher, the grand Sheikh, Junaid and told him that Mohammed had manifested to him and blessed him and taught him. And Junaid remarked, "Yes, I know. Allah has told me." There are many such instances.

In the life of the commentator there were parallel experiences with both the Zen Nyogen Senzaki and the Sufi, Hazrat Inayat Khan. Unfortunately most of the disciples of the former accepted, though they knew little about him personally and the disciples of the latter refused to accept and so there has been much confusion in Sufism and clarity in Zen. The brotherhood of man cannot be based on rejections. Furthermore without such incidents there is no assurance that there is any such thing as the Sufi process. It lapses into personalism and conceptions and this is the downfall of any movements.

In pure Sufism transmissions go on continually and continuously whether mentioned or not, reported or not for every initiation is an example of God's success in seeking Himself.

GATHEKA: On the part of the teacher, a step forward with the disciple in order that the pupil may be trusted and raised from his present condition. A step forward for the pupil, because he opens his heart; he has no barrier any more, nothing to hinder the teaching in whatever form it comes, in silence or in words, or in the observation of some deed or action on the part of the teacher.

TASAWWUF: It is true that Hazrat Inayat Khan has left many teachings, in the literature, in the class instructions, in side-notes, and sometimes in articles that were repressed for some reason or no reason. Yet these are mostly the shadows of his efforts. The real efforts were hidden beyond these shadows. A God-realized disciple would be able to select the teachings whether they had been given in literary form or not. When the words are attached to the teacher only their relation with God is obscured. The real teaching is in the sphere and it is assimilated when it is received in and from the sphere and not only from the shadow-forms which constitute the literature and lessons. These are not of themselves realizations.

GATHEKA: In ancient times the disciples of the great teachers learned by a quite different method, not an academic method or way of study. The way was that with open heart, with perfect confidence and trust, they watched every attitude of the teacher both towards friends and towards people who look at him with contempt; they watched their teacher in times of trouble and pain, how he endured it all; they saw how patient and wise he had been in discussing with those who did not understand, answering everyone gently in his own language; he showed the mother-spirit, the father-spirit, the brother-spirit, the child-spirit, the friend-spirit, forgiving kindness, an ever tolerant nature, respect for the aged, compassion for all, the thorough understanding of human nature.

TASAWWUF: In the efforts to bring the Message of God to the West there were many disciples who said they understood and by their actions they showed they did not understand. They were really not ready but they were won, just the same, by some of the qualities and also the wisdom and knowledge of the Teacher.

If we use the standards here we shall find very few of those who come to the West manifest anything of the sort. Claims to be superior are not the claims of enlightened men. Besides it is not claim, it is effectiveness. The commentator would not be recognized as a spiritual teacher until at least one of his immediate disciples showed the attainment. When the disciple manifested the attainment it was positive proof that the teacher must have reached some suitable spiritual attainment. Otherwise it is all claim, words and illusion.

Not that many institutions brought to the West by Asians were not needed. They were often sorely needed. But we do not worship the scientists who brought to Asia the knowledge and wisdom needed by those people. The science was accepted and assimilated but there was no personality-worship. Besides only God is worthy of worship and those who are emotionally effected by claimants, or even by actual teachers, indicate by their very emotions shortcomings. Exaltation is received by a group, or if by an individual it is shared; emotional euphoria is not so shared, it is not transmitted.

On the other hand those who have accepted some teacher often judge others from that standpoint and require more virtues from others and are less likely to overlook his shortcoming than those of their own guru.

GATHEKA: This also the disciples learnt: that no discussion or books on metaphysics can ever

teach all the thoughts and philosophy that arise in the heart of man. A person may either study for a thousand years, or he may get to the source and see if he can touch the root of all wisdom and all knowledge.

TASAWWUF: The peoples of the far East are not prone to discuss. But also they will accept without question, they may not dare to question what is given them and so they are very obedient but not wise. The wise person has the direct faculty. If he receives philosophies and not faculties he is subject to short-comings.

The people of India are both credulous and argumentative. And when they think they have found a teacher they will accept everything from him and try to prove that everything he says and does is right and that what others say and do is not so right. The result is utter confusion, and crosscurrents where there is also great wisdom and understanding.

But the people of the west, smothered in analysis, have great difficulty, for they are always looking with ego-thoughts, and they want something for the mind to masticate, and this is not the way. Still by evolution sincere souls are appearing in the West as in the East.

GATHEKA: In the center of the emblem of the Sufis there is a heart; it is the sign that from the heart a stream rises, the stream of divine knowledge.

TASAWWUF: This also comes in the new Sufi prayers, Saum, Salat and Khatum. If one meditated constantly on them, the realization might follow and then one would recognize the active voice of God from within, the Guiding Light of all souls. It would no longer be a symbol, it would be reality.

GATHEKA: On the path of initiation two things are necessary: contemplation, and the living of a life such as a Sufi ought to live; and they depend on each other. Contemplation helps one to live the life of a Sufi, and the life of a Sufi helps contemplation.

TASAWWUF: Contemplation is called Mushahida, in the Sufic language and it comes from the same root as the word shahud, which means a direct witnessing and which also comes as ash-hadu, "I bear witness" always repeated in the Islamic prayers. But in Sufism the goal is reached when God manifests through man as the devotee to Himself, and when man is so assimilated in God that although he performs prayers and practices he has ceased to be aware of his own personality.

And when one is no longer aware of his own personality as separate from others, then surely he lives a proper life.

GATHEKA: In the West, where life is so busy and where there is no end to one's responsibilities, one wonders if to undertake contemplation, even for only ten minutes in the evening, it is not too much when one is tired. But for that very reason contemplation is required more in the West than in the East where everything, even the surroundings, is helpful to contemplation.

TASAWWUF: We can now see the result. Instead of resorting to repose the whole tenor has been immersed in excitement and this excitement in turn spurs on the desire nature. And instead of finding contentment, there is more and more violence. Once the ego is inflamed he cannot stop, it is just like the laws of motion, when there is a strong impetus there will be a strong, even a violent motion. In Sufism this is called Urouj which is not only impetus, it brings also the results of such impetus. The laws of motion and emotion are quite similar.

At the same time there is also a strong trend toward some practice of meditation among the young. Unfortunately it is complicated by so many conflicting theories of self, and they may not be borne out by man's experience. Buddha was opposed to any theories and strong on practices; science points in the same general direction, but those prone to leadership operate otherwise. And even the little meditation that is practiced may bring about stultification as well as repose. Balance is needed.

GATHEKA: Besides a beginning must be made on the path. If contemplation does not develop in such a form that everything one does in life becomes a contemplation, then the contemplation does not do a person any good.

TASAWWUF: We have in Sufism several forms of the practice of the Presence of God, which is called **Akhlak Allah**. It can be done with the sacred phrases known as kalama or zikr, it can be done by suitable breathing exercises and also by Fikr, thinking of God consciously or unconsciously at all times. Such thinking does not interfere with daily habits or work. There is no division between the sacred and profane in the complete spiritual life.

We also find the same in Mantra Yoga, that by repeating in form, word or thought a sacred phrase, especially one imparted by a guru, the whole of life becomes changed, and for the better.

GATHEKA: It would be like going to church once a week and forgetting all about religion on the other days. To a man who gives ten or twenty minutes every evening to contemplation and forgets it all the rest of the day, contemplation will not do any good. We take our food at certain times every day; yet all the time, even when we are sleeping, the food nourishes our body.

TASAWWUF: By a corresponding process there is life and action going on in the mind, especially the settling on when there should be activity, when there must be repose. If one can settle on a rhythm, this alone would foment better mental health and if the mental health is high, then the mind can help control the body and its functions. But if the mental efficiency is low, then the body is more uncontrolled, the will-power is not so active, and the autonomic nervous system takes over to our betterment or to our loss.

If the Sufi training rhythm is inculcated at all levels, the daily habits benefit when there are rhythms and when a teacher is asked whether people should be engaged in profitable employment he will often say "yes" not because he favors such a way of life as ideal, but because it produces rhythms and these rhythms are very helpful in promoting mental and physical health. Those who are not so

employed, who work when they wish and do not when they wish, losing the rhythms, lose health, lose vitality, lose self-control. And they become more deceived when they adopt what they think is a lofty philosophy—it is obtuse, it is complex but it is seldom really profound. It is no substitute for life itself. It is very wearing. It is very wearying.

GATHEKA: It is not the Sufi's idea to retire in seclusion or to sit silent all day. His idea is that by contemplation he becomes so inspired that in study, in every aspiration, in every aspect of life, progress is made. In this way he proves his contemplation to be a force helping him to withstand all difficulties that come to him.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed declared that there should be no monkery in Islam. He worked all the time. When he had to help people he helped people; when he had to work to support his family he worked to support his family; when he had to listen to Allah, he listened to Allah. His whole life was one of balanced activity and repose, between internals and externals and he became perfect in both and also in balance which comes from perfection in both. But the balance is even more needed than the perfection; in fact in some senses the balance is the perfection, not just rising above flaws. Flawlessness is no doubt needed for many things, but an absolute flawlessness is not necessarily perfection.

And one who has the strong inclination to and in contemplation becomes able to continue in contemplation through all the activities and vicissitudes of life.

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](#)

What Is Needed on the Path

GATHEKA: Initiation needs courage and the tendency to advance spiritually, although it may not seem to be the way of life for everyone.

TASAWWUF: There are people who believe they have accumulated good karma and therefore are ready for initiation. But to those who have accumulated good karma the good karma will come. This has nothing to do with initiation. Many have inherited, many others have deserved some sort of success, but this is quite apart from the life in God, with God. It has to do with the returns for one's own efforts but in another direction.

Then there are those who were charmed with “Lost Horizons” and believed there is on earth some sort of paradise and for this daring and adventure might be necessary. Yes, daring and adventure are perhaps necessary, but not requirements to visit any certain place. There are people who have gone to the Himalayan regions and met no Masters and never conceived that perhaps the very Masters who had been living there, feeling the call from some worthy ones on earth had gone to meet them. This often happens.

GATHEKA: Therefore the first duty of a mureed is not to be shaken in his faith by any opposing influence or by anything said against the path he has taken. He should not allow himself to be discouraged by anybody.

TASAWWUF: Those who adhere to the visible world; those who are convinced that they are good and perhaps others not so good, are not deeply rooted in spirituality. Self-assurance is no doubt needed for worldly success, but for the path it is important to develop assurance for the Teacher and the teaching. Even if the Teacher is not perfect, the faith that can be so developed is of great value to the seeker. For it is his capacity for faith and trust that is needed and this is also a teaching in the elementary study circle for mureeds.

GATHEKA: The mureed must be so firm in his path that if the whole world says it is a wrong path, he will say it is the right path.

TASAWWUF: For all of us are tested. There is, of course, the test of Saint Peter in the Christian Gospels, that when the world seemed to denounce Jesus he also joined in the clamor. It may have been the clamor of a small minority, but it was a group surrounding him, and he either wished to be popular or was afraid. But in the initiatory processes it is necessary to advance without regard to the generality and also become fearless. This is the way of the wise.

GATHEKA: And if anybody says that it will take a thousand years or perhaps more, the mureed must be able to say that even if it should take a thousand years, he will have the patience to go through with it. As it is said in Persian, it is the work of the **Baz**, the wayfarer of the heavens.

TASAWWUF: The same thing was presented also in ancient Egypt in a similar but parallel manner. These people saw the cycles through time and they worked with them. It was the attitude and direction and not the forcing of will on processes. For the forcing of will by itself cannot produce spiritual advancement, but the abandonment of will-power and the assumption that by fate or karma one must surely advance is also a delusion. One will not so advance, one will become more fixed and attached to the wheel of life.

GATHEKA: In this mystical path courage, steadfastness, and patience are what is most necessary, but also trust in the teacher at whose hand initiation is taken, and the understanding of the idea of discipline. In the East, where for thousands of years the path of discipleship has been understood, these things are regarded as most important and acceptable from the hand of the teacher.

TASAWWUF: Western people, self assured in so many things, have ideas. They have ideas, often excellent ideas. But having excellent and even inspired ideas does not of itself prove progress on the path of ultimate attainment. It comes otherwise. For there is always operative the Grace of God, sometimes comprehensible, sometimes incomprehensible but always.

Ideas, even the most valuable ideas do not come from self-surrender. And the idea of unlearning, not accompanied by the actual process of unlearning can be a terrible stumbling block. For it is only by inner awakening that one grows and when the ego is occupied by thinking and tension, whatever else may be true this is not spiritual advancement.

GATHEKA: How few in the world know trust! What is necessary is not trusting another, even the teacher, but oneself, and one is not capable of trusting oneself fully when one has not experienced in life how to trust another.

TASAWWUF: This is also a subject of the inner teaching. It is valuable as a first step, but the thought of trusting is not trust. Trust comes when one trusts, not when one is thinking of trusting. Then one is thinking, not trusting; one is tense, not relaxed, one is in the Urouj, not in the Nasoul.

GATHEKA: Some will ask, "But if we trusted and our trust was in vain, should we not be disappointed?" The answer is, that we must trust for the sake of trust, and not for the sake of a return and to see what fruit it brings. The utmost trust is the greatest power in the world. Lack of trust is weakness. Even if we have lost something by trusting, our power will be greater than if we had gained something without developing trust.

TASAWWUF: The development of the heart-faculties and the selfless attitude is taught in the Sufic metaphysics to neophyte disciples. It is most necessary. For as has been said—and it should never be forgotten—initiation is a step forward in a new direction where one has previously not moved. And the more self-assurance that one builds, the more the veils of understanding will be lifted and the more easily one can advance and at the same time awaken his own hidden faculties. For the awakening of faculties and advancement go together.

GATHEKA: Patience is very necessary on the path. After my initiation into the Order of the Sufis I was for six months continually in the presence of my Murshid before he said a word on the subject of Sufism; and as soon as I took out my notebook he went on to another subject; it was finished! One sentence after six months!

TASAWWUF: The commentator also was on the path of Sufism for a long time before there were the class studies and those who had the class studies thought that that was the proper way; they even began to think that that was the only way. They disregarded the experiences of their own teacher and they also set aside experience as the measuring stick on the path. They made it all too mechanical.

That has happened in so many presumable esoteric schools, to make it all mechanical. Thus they

depend on faith and self-effort, and not on Divine Grace. By such mechanical means the Kashf is not developed, no insight into another or into oneself. And the evidence is that lack of spiritual experience and the horrible myth that if one has such experiences they must keep quiet about them. In this way the mystical and occult orders of the world have often fallen into the hands of the unworthy, the undeveloped.

GATHEKA: A person would think that it is a long time, six months sitting before one's teacher without being taught anything; but it is not words, it is something else. If words were sufficient, there are libraries of occult and mystical books. It is life itself, it is living that is important. The one who lives the life of initiation not only lives himself, but also makes others who come in contact with him alive. Therefore one is initiated into the Sufi Order not especially for study, but to understand and follow what real discipleship means.

TASAWWUF: There were people who sat before the Messenger, and they saw him often and were in his classes and heard his lectures and papers or they read them or heard them from others. And they thought thereby they were advanced and others who were not before the physical presence of the Teacher were not advanced. There was no basis for this but in the human ego. There is no foundation for this and so those who accepted such mechanical approaches, getting in charge of the machinery of the Sufi Movement, made it a worldly thing. There was no scope for the Grace of God, or for the Presence of God. It all became mechanical.

This was necessary for a time. It developed exactly as Sri Krishna taught, that some few, perhaps, hearing his teachings, were able to assimilate them and come to his state of consciousness. Or as Jesus taught, many are called but few are chosen.

GATHEKA: With regard to the subject of discipline, anybody without a sense of discipline is without the power of self-control. It is discipline which teaches the ideal, and the ideal is self-discipline.

TASAWWUF: There are many who self-presume to be advanced spiritually. They do not even take the simplest moral teaching of the Great Ones, to overcome lust and greed and anger. They want to keep the lust and greed and anger and they do. But the veils do not lift. Sometimes they have some slight awakening on the subtle level and think that is cosmic consciousness. But either cosmic consciousness overcomes lust and greed and anger as well as other shortcomings, or by mastering one's short-comings there is a lifting of the veil before the soul.

GATHEKA: It is the disciplined soldier who can become a good captain. In ancient times the kings used to send the princes out as soldiers, to learn what discipline means. The path of initiation is the training of the ego, and it is self-discipline which is learned on the path of discipleship.

TASAWWUF: One can readily discern those organizations which lead toward God. For they will not cater to the desire nature, they will not promise fulfillment of wants, or even refer to wants. All religious founders agree on their efforts to control the desire-nature, and nearly all followers ignore this tendency while the heterodox even go further and promise more. But they cannot promise

more really. Only the master-mind controls the heavens and the true master does not cater to wants.

Then there is also the path of Mastery itself, which is called *Malikiyyat*. The one who treads it is in constant war with his own lower nature. Yet he finds, as it is said in *Gayan*: “Master is he who is master of himself; Ruler is he who is ruler of himself.”

GATHEKA: One may ask what one should think of the path of initiation: which must be our goal, what must we expect from it? Should we expect to be good, or healthy, or magnetic, or powerful, or developed psychically, or clairvoyant? None of these does one need to be, although in time one will cultivate them all naturally, but one should not strive for these things.

TASAWWUF: There is a path in India called **Siddhanta** and it is in contrast with Vedanta. In the Vedanta one strives for the kingdom of God and whatever else comes one accepts naturally. But in Siddhanta one strives consciously for unusual powers called **siddhis**. They may come but they do not mean spiritual advancement which alone satisfies and gratifies the soul.

GATHEKA: Suppose a person develops power, and he does not know how to use it, the outcome will be disastrous.

TASAWWUF: There is a well known piece of music called “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” by the French composer, Dukas. The apprentice uses a formula and asks a broom to fetch water, which it does. But he is unable to stop it. He has no such faculty and disaster would have followed had not the master returned. In our work we do not usually seek such powers—although there is also the fulfillment of each Sifat-i-Allah, the divine attributes, and in cultivating the divine attributes fully sometimes one acquires power. But it is really the God-power; he begins to be attuned to the All-Pervading God, and thus some of the faculties in God manifest through him. But it is really all Grace and not possession.

GATHEKA: Suppose he develops magnetism, and by his power he attracts all, both good and bad; then it will be difficult to get rid of what he has attracted by his power.

TASAWWUF: And the result has been that those who have exerted such power have been called even black magicians. They are not necessarily vicious, they have merely personalized the divine attributes; they have selected a path from self-will and they have not the power to get rid of it as they will, and it becomes an obstacle to their peace and happiness.

GATHEKA: Or perhaps a person is very good, so good that everyone seems bad to him; he is too good to live in the world, and in that way he will become a burden to himself. These things are not to be sought for through initiation.

TASAWWUF: The commentator once lived with such a man in a spiritual commune. He knew everybody’s faults and he was invariably correct. But he could not accept the slightest criticism, no

matter how justified. And he had to leave. He seems to have left every group with which he had been affiliated throughout his life.

GATHEKA: These things are not to be sought for through initiation. The aim is to find God within ourselves, to dive deep into ourselves, so that we may touch the unity of the whole Being. It is towards this end that we are working by the power of initiation, in order that we may get all the inspiration and blessing in our life from within.

TASAWWUF: We may keep in mind here the Sufi Invocation of “Toward the One ... United with All.” This is a result of the process of initiation. As the veils lift and as one passes through the different grades, the makamat or stations on the path, with each lifting of the veil there is an actual expansion of consciousness which is quite different from strong emotional impulses or reactions. For there is a widening of heart, an expansion of sympathy, a greater awareness. And then one is less and less concerned with the acquisitions by an ego-self. For it is this expanding, centrifugal “self”—which is not strictly an entity, which brings to conscious realization higher and broader powers and outlooks. And with it automatically comes increased blessing and inspiration.

GATHEKA: For this two things are necessary: one is to do the exercises that are given regularly and to do them with heart and soul; the second is to undertake the studies that are given, not considering them to be only for superficial reading but for every word to be pondered upon.

TASAWWUF: The science and art of Ryazat, also called “esotericism” is supreme. It includes methodologies wherein God, so to speak, uncovers the veils which He has laid over Himself in His creation and awakens Himself from the sleep which came from this covering. There are all sorts of such exercises but sometimes one alone will be sufficient.

It is not that by cause and effect one can rise above cause and effect. It is by the removal of ego one comes to realize his true being. In this sense there is always awakening and beyond the intelligence of every person is the Divine Light which is always there, which is shining, and of which one becomes aware when the veils constituting the ego are removed. It is both simple and complex, joyous and painful, timeless, instantaneous and covering aeons.

The studies also were given from a very high state of inspiration. From this state not only are thoughts given but the very words, and sometimes every word. So they are to be pondered on. And sometimes after many many years one does not come to the full realization of their meaning and uncover the truth which he finds in himself, which may be his very self.

GATHEKA: The more one thinks about it, the more it will have the effect of opening the heart. Reading is one thing, contemplating is another.

TASAWWUF: The earlier teachings and instructions of Hazrat Inayat Khan were no doubt lost in a mass of verbiage. All these words may have been necessary for certain purposes. Unfortunately the stresses on the realities of self and of others became more dominant than the stress on the

reality, much less on the Oneness of God. This could not be helped. Merely sitting before the Teacher does not always bring the awakening and with some it heightens the ego rather than otherwise. It produces mists and the emphases are in the wrong direction.

Buddha's "Work out thy salvation with diligence" does not easily operate and it is valuable to try. Even after years one finds the undertones and the overtones of every sentence in the whole Message, esoteric, exoteric, foot-notes or otherwise. All may be valuable. The one who knows will probably be more concerned with Praise of God and the stressing of the Omnipresent Deity than with any prowess of himself or other. "God is the only Being."

GATHEKA: The lessons must be meditated upon; one should not take even the simplest word or sentence for granted. Think of the Hindus, Chinese, Parsis, who for thousands of years have always meditated upon the readings which they held sacred and yet never tired of them.

TASAWWUF: This also brings up the subject of meditation which is certainly not stultifying the mind by sitting quietly and removing all thoughts. Much of what is now called "Zen" resembles far more the empty musings of semi-primitive peoples than the cosmic outlook of Lord Buddha. Besides it is not the formula which is valuable of itself but the actual operations and applications of the devotee. One who has not so meditated may argue forever, and certainly he is stressing his own point of view and never the points of others, which is most important in the Sufi line.

The hurry-hurry of western people is the result of natural law, of uncontrolled Urouj. Yet this is the opposite of torpor, of tamas and too many people regard the tamasic way of nonlife as "peacefulness" when really it is nothing but death and decay. It is the positive control over oneself and growing awareness that comes when the heart is awakening.

GATHEKA: Initiation is a sacred trust, a trust given by the murshid to his mureed and a trust given by the mureed to the murshid. There should no longer be a wall from the moment of this initiation; for if there is a wall, then the initiation is not an initiation any more. And when the wall between the mureed and the murshid has been removed, then the next step will be for the wall to be removed that stands between God and the worshipper. Besides, the Sufi Order is an order of mysticism, and there are certain thoughts and considerations which should be observed. One of these is that when once a secret has been entrusted to one, it must be kept as one's most sacred trust.

TASAWWUF: It is most fortunate when a teacher finds such a disciple, and still more fortunate when he finds several. The mutual love and trust is a stupendous power. And it is really the God working as Jesus Christ has said, "When two or three are working in My Name." But this is not an institution, it is beyond all instituting. It is an operation of Grace and Universal Brotherhood.

For just as the teacher gives a sacred and secret trust, so God also manifests as He considers worthy to each and all. All are within His Grace and He manifests, only the ignorant and unenlightened do not know this. That is why a teacher is needed.

GATHEKA: One must also accept all the teaching that may be given to one; whether it is bitter medicine or sweet, the patient takes it. There is time for everything, and so illumination has its time. But progress, the real progress, depends upon the patience of the pupil, together with his eagerness to go forward.

TASAWWUF: It is not that the teacher gives anything. The wise teacher is one who knows how to unlock the treasure-chest of the disciple. The kingdom of God is within every one of us, and never in the words that express it. It has to be experienced by awakening and this awakening does come by faithfully fulfilling the obligations of Bayat.

GATHEKA: The path of initiation is also a path of tests; tests from the initiator, tests from God, tests from the self, and tests from the world; and to go through these tests is the sign of real progress in the mureed, while the one who does not undertake these tests will be wasting his time.

TASAWWUF: There are some who have a blind trust in the Teacher, even when he does not want it. For example, a Murshid may know many steps on the path but he is not necessarily a good business man or mathematician or mechanic. It is only God Who is perfect, and He works out His perfections in all creation and not just through one or two. But the perfection required in the disciplines and teachings of various faiths is to bring about the spiritual realization. When Jesus said, "It is finished" he also referred to this spiritualizing perfection.

Every one goes through tests and pains all the time. It is a work of a true Sufi teacher to help soften these pains, but not to stop trials and temptations which are part of growth.

Once the commentator was charged by his Pir-O-Murshid of being immersed in politics. He was accused and there was no evidence. So he wrote that the lover accepts the cup of nectar and the cup of poison equally from the beloved. And suddenly the very harsh accusations were dropped. They were treated as non-existing. One could have defended himself, one could have exonerated himself, but knowing the "laws of the path" one took it as a sign that the Pir was much concerned with his disciple.

The same was true in the life of the Zen Monk, Nyogen Senzaki. Sometimes if a single instance of trouble-making occurred everybody was thrown out and even with harsh words. But the harshness was meant for one or two guilty ones. Besides, in true Buddhism the ego is not recognized as real. And most of those thrown out would reappear and not a word would be said. It was as if nothing happened, nothing at all.

GATHEKA: The Order, and this is apparent from the word "order" itself, means that there is a certain formal hierarchy of initiators and of the Pir-O-Murshid, and that they should be regarded and respected as those who have gone further in that chosen direction.

TASAWWUF: There is a difference between the spiritual movements of the East and West. There have always been lines of spiritual teachers and pupils in parts of Asia. We can read many of these

in the Upanishads. The Upanishads stresses these lines of descent and they are also important in the deep Zen which is concerned with spiritual awakening and not just with formal sitting.

But in Sufism the Hierarchy is especially important. Before the appearance of the class papers this was the main theme of the lessons. But it was overshadowed, and all kinds of things, and even persons were stressed. Still, we always repeat “United with all the Illuminated Souls.” The Hierarchy is composed of illuminated souls. And as Qur’an says: “We have our Khalif (representative) on earth.” This is always and has been always and it is the manifestation of the descent and operation of the Holy Spirit needed to keep the world alive. And so we can disregard all prophecies (so-called) of the end of the world. It is a different operation as can be studied in the sections on **Kayamat** in the early literature. God is not only Creator and Destroyer, He is also Preserver.

It is by Grace and realization one can know this. When the aspirant is ready, the veils are surely lifted and he sees directly as St. Paul has written.

GATHEKA: This law is in no way different from the law of nature and of life: when a child who has been disrespectful to its parents itself becomes a parent, it will find the same attitude in its own children.

TASAWWUF: The commentator was never respected by his parents. No matter what he did, they would not respect it—all honors were disregarded, all achievements were ignored and all shortcomings were stressed to no end. Then one night a psychic told him that these parents had been his children in a former life and they were giving back, were compelled to give back what he had given them previously. It may or may not have been true but it made him see the universal law of justice and compensation.

Some people have a superficial acceptance of this law. When it comes to direct experience they do not always recognize it. But this study appears in *Moral Culture* and its commentaries.

GATHEKA: A soldier who does not observe discipline under his captain or colonel will experience the same from his subordinates when later he holds that position. But the question is whether he will ever arrive at that rank, not having considered and observed that which should have been observed; for those who have advanced in any line, whether in music, poetry, in thought, or in philosophy, have always done so in a humble way, at every step greeting those who have gone further.

TASAWWUF: During World War II, the United States Government established a school for its colonels in the army. They had to go to school and perform all the duties incumbent on every rank from raw recruit up. Thus they learned the points of views of others as well as of themselves and this was undoubtedly one of the reasons for victory. It was not true in the armies of their enemies, wherein rank remained rank.

And the same is true in the Sufi Order that the teachers and leaders have to see from the standpoint of the disciples, not to overburden them and still lead and discipline.

It is this attitude which can help establish a better world. Many have ideals, visions but they do not take into consideration the humanity and in Sufism it is most important to take the humanity into consideration.

GATHEKA: Then there are three stages for the pupil, the mureed, who treads the spiritual path. The first stage is receptivity, taking all that is given without saying, "This teaching I will accept and that I will not accept."

TASAWWUF: Many aspirants, especially those of mature years, are so covered that despite all the stress on it, it is hard for them to unlearn. It is chiefly those who have suffered much in life that make the progress. Those who have not so suffered do not make such progress. By progress here is meant the lifting of the veils which hide so much of the universe and of the inner personality.

The teaching here is also from India and in India they are expected to follow such processes. But much confusion has been spread by public lecturers who talk about it and do not illustrate it. Mysticism resembles science in that it is based on human experience, the experience of oneself or another. It is not based on lectures no matter how profound or obtuse.

GATHEKA: The next stage is assimilating the teachings. And the third stage is fixing them in the mind and letting the mind see reason or things; but this comes after assimilation.

TASAWWUF: So sometimes pupils are put on silence. At least they are not expected to talk much. Still the methods of Wazifa in Sufism and Mantra in Hindu teachings are valuable because in this form of assimilation there is no attention to self, there is no establishment of an ego-centric nucleus to absorb what has been foreign. Oneself is not a river to assimilate tiny streams; one is a tiny stream which flows into a river and ultimately the Sea. The teacher is the river; God is the sea.

GATHEKA: Thus the one who considers these three stages and goes through them carefully, securely—the stage of receptivity, the stage of assimilation, and the stage of consideration—will be the successful mureed on the path.

TASAWWUF: It is not magic. It is Grace that one cannot compel. It is not the same as studying a book and remembering the words, the facts, the thoughts. It is very different. It is a growth on inner trust and of constantly waking into an unknown.

GATHEKA: Although the outer form might appear to be a hierarchy, yet the Sufi message leads to a true democracy, for it holds the promise of that goal which is the yearning of every soul. This, itself is the principal thing in democracy, because it is this which makes democracy; and the reason, according to the Sufi belief, is that the divine spark is in every soul.

TASAWWUF: There is a teaching and it is found mostly in Buddhism, especially the Avatamsaka school, that the divine light is reflected in and through everything, and that we really are all parts of each other. Whatever we think of is part of us and we part of it.

There is an amusing story told by Nyogen Senzaki of his last meeting with Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan. The Zen monk asked, "Do you think that the light of all these stars and sun and moon are one light?" The Sufi teacher answered, "Good night, Mr. Senzaki."

In this instant the Zen monk took the part of a Sufi and the Sufi teacher the part of a Buddhist Roshi. These two men, of assumedly totally different background, understood each other perfectly. And so it is with all the illuminated souls. They understand each other with a glance, with a breath, with a heartbeat.

GATHEKA: It is with trust and confidence in God, in the Murshid, and in that divine spark which is in one's own heart that one is assured of success in life if one will only step forward.

TASAWWUF: The hardest thing is to make that step, to jump, so to speak, into an unknown. This also was the process in the ancient Egyptian mysteries. They had perfect ceremonies to help the aspirant on the way, every step. People read about them and think they want them. This is illusion. People with such ideas, by their very attitudes show they are not ready. The one who is ready will divest himself of ideas; will unlearn.

Besides this it is not necessary to revive ancient institutions. These institutions were needed in their day for the humanity according to its evolution. Now we have a different evolution. We are more aware. There is a much greater mental development, there is more awareness of one another. And it is God Himself Who selects His Messengers and they institutionalize the means for leading humanity.

Those who wish to restore show they are not ready to walk in an unknown path. The already known is not the unknown, and going there does not mean stepping forward in an unknown direction. Besides, mystification is not mysticism. So in every age God has sent His representatives and His Messengers to lead the humanity of the time according to their needs.

Besides, today we are assimilating all the ancient and not so ancient methods. Sufism recognizes all of them and those who wish to limit and remain in limitations are not yet ready for the universal path which works toward One Single Brotherhood in 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 4](#)

The Different Steps on the Path

GATHEKA: The word initiation is interpreted by different people in different ways. By some it is considered to be a kind of attachment to a certain secret order, but what I mean by initiation is taking a step forward on a path unknown to oneself.

TASAWWUF: Even the secret orders have derived their ideas from ancient—or sometimes not so ancient customs and rituals. Often these were because of need for secrecy. But in ancient Egypt a ritual was derived from activities in a heretofore, for the neophyte, unknown direction. It was believed he could only grow by stepping out into the unknown. Thus he was tested only in the ancient Egyptian mysteries; it was both symbolic and actual at the same time. If the aspirant did not go through some sort of transformation it was believed that he had not passed his tests.

People have made mystifications of this. Besides whatever ritual is used, some kind of psychic activity goes on whether this is understood or not. But psychic activity of itself does not indicate transformation. A real initiatory experience is a transformatory experience.

GATHEKA: Initiations are of three different kinds. One initiation comes from within oneself, and this initiation is a person's intention to proceed on a path which is not generally taken by his fellow-creatures. If this does not come from within he will always be afraid to take a step further on a path which others around him do not take, for the conception of the generality is not that of an individual.

TASAWWUF: There is a character in the Christian *Pilgrim's Progress* who started out with Christian and then turned back. He seemingly had good intentions but was also considering public opinion. Public opinion is the worst deterrent to spiritual progress for the generality is composed of those not yet awakened. This is so in all ages and stages. It is only when one can go forward fearlessly without regard to the attitudes and opinions of others that one can really pass initiatory tests.

Therefore some Sufis have dared always to challenge public opinion, and others, while not so antagonistic, will not be swayed by it. One cannot listen to public opinion and the inner voice at the same time. Besides, no matter what one says on any subject, some one can quote somebody else, and this is nothing but ignorance. To quote, say, the Sufis, is the sign of the ignorant and to be original is the sign of the wise.

GATHEKA: The nature of most people is like that of sheep; wherever sheep are taken, there all the other sheep will follow. One should realize that although it is the nature of sheep to move in a flock

this is not the real nature of man. He will always deny that he has this tendency and he will disapprove of it, and yet he will do the very thing without knowing that he does it. If you want to see it, just stand in the street and look up with surprise, acting as if you were absorbed in what you see, and soon twenty persons will be standing by your side, not only foolish people but wise ones too!

TASAWWUF: This is a well known habit. Gustava Labon once wrote a book on the psychology of crowds. It shows that there is a group psychology as well as an individual psychology and it can be patterned. The notorious Hitler took advantage of it but the basic behavior pattern was not studied, merely the faults of the individuals involved. And it became a moot question during the Nuremberg trials how far individual guilt or innocence was involved and how far a group-behavior pattern was involved.

We are still up against road-blocks in culture. And now the word “environment” is used to cover all factors not directly traced to an individual, and some of these factors are actually due to social environment and some to group behaviorisms and some to geographic and other factors, and there are others and they are all linked together without distinction.

GATHEKA: Therefore he who is initiated, who walks on the path of initiation, is someone who has risen above the crowd, and goes his individual way forward, independent of those who are around him.

TASAWWUF: It can also happen in the inner life of a person and when something seemingly unusual occurs, he will be mostly misunderstood and he may not even understand himself. Therefore there are Teachers who understand such experiences and the persons involved and their understanding is the greatest kind of help. But the initiate still has to walk the path himself.

In the Sufi inner work therefore even the walk is used, and different kinds of walk, types of walking and steps not known to the generality. But each does his own walking, his own breathing, his own exercises and by so doing helps to advance himself in the spiritual life.

GATHEKA: When a man begins to feel that there is something behind the veil, when he begins to feel that there is something which he can attain by effort, then he takes the first step on the path which as yet he does not know.

TASAWWUF: There is something in the human soul which brings about this feeling and makes it strong and vivid. Thus it will occur as the occultists say, when the pupil is ready the Master appears. For God is aware of the conditions of all His creatures and never lets the worthy go without proper guidance be it from within, be it from without.

GATHEKA: One should not be surprised if one notices this initiation in a five-year-old child, neither need one be surprised if one does not see any sign of it in a man of sixty years; he has had no tendency towards it and all his life he has not thought about it. But the one who has received this initiation will go on; even in childhood he will show the tendency to take a step forward on a path

which others do not take.

TASAWWUF: In *The Soul Whence and Whither* it is mentioned that sometimes a person is prepared for the spiritual life, receiving instruction or inspiration before he enters the body and this instruction or inspiration will be so strong that it will effect the life in the body on earth. Sometimes these are called “old souls” and there is no question that there are persons at every stage and state of evolution occupying human forms.

At one extreme Jesus has said that he was to be sought in children to the age of seven years for then they are still under the angelic influence and this impetus, this state may be so strong it may carry on a long time, even through the whole of the physical life.

GATHEKA: One will find this initiation in all the different aspects of life. A child taking a slate and pencil and drawing a picture, while not being an artist yet has a tendency to draw something, perhaps an idea which is not a child’s idea but is very wonderful.

TASAWWUF: This subject of the child-prodigy is also discussed elsewhere. A seer can tell at a glance the evolution of the child, the influences from subtle sources and the direction in which he is moving. And if one watches children closely they will observe all kinds of tendencies and actions which would not ordinarily be predicated from their age, but nevertheless manifest.

GATHEKA: One will find a child humming or singing a piece of music which a composer will be surprised to hear. He is doing something which is not ordinary, something which comes spontaneously from his soul and which shows his initiation in that path.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes a child is born with a sort of cosmic memory. The poet Wordsworth is often given as an example and there are many others. There have been many child prodigies in music and at one time, especially in California, one was born after another and all were great for their time. This phenomena would not be explained in traditional terms but the facts stood out. Even the commentator was born with an ability to read music which neither he nor others could explain.

GATHEKA: One will also hear a child speak on certain subjects, and express ideas which are quite different from what one would expect from a child, ideas which are perhaps even beyond the comprehension of a grown man. Yet the child speaks about it; it is his initiation.

TASAWWUF: This also happened to the commentator, after his initiation at a time when only Hazrat Inayat Khan recognized it, that many children knew it and some almost automatically. And they would also discuss deep metaphysics in his presence but not when other adults were around. But this phenomena became more and more prevalent in California especially where it had been predicated that more evolved people would manifest.

The old Biblical prediction “and a little child shall lead them” may often prove itself but seldom

have elders accepted it; even the seemingly most devout seem unable to accept it.

GATHEKA: I have known a child to ask me, "Why must one kneel down, why must one prostrate oneself when they say that God is above?" and another to say, "Why must there be one direction in which a person should look in order to worship, why should not all directions be equally good for worship?"

TASAWWUF: Actually these questions have been asked many times. Guru Nanak was born among Sufis and when he saw the logic of it, he found that others were not accepting that logic, they wanted a certain ritual and the ritual became more important than truth or spiritual realization. He tried to establish a universal religion but his followers also made rituals and established another cult, dividing humankind which was not his goal.

We are now coming to a time when people will find God in all directions, and within and without, and above and below. And in all regions, they will recognize God, in every direction.

GATHEKA: Many grown-up people have the fixed idea that they must perform their worship in a certain direction and not in any other, and never once in their lives have they asked themselves why.

One will find grown-up people who have perhaps worshipped kneeling down all their life, and have never asked themselves why they should kneel down on the earth when they are supposed to worship God in the heavens.

TASAWWUF: As the world moves toward universality, so it also moves to the understanding of psychic sciences and also the meaning of all movements, every movement has a meaning and all can be understood. But most of all the attitude and spirit of devotion are important, and the greater the feeling and devotion the higher the prayer will go.

At the same time there is a great value in humility and the more one bows in humility, the more it is like a life-power which elevates the prayer. For what bows is the human ego and what rises is the human spirit.

GATHEKA: Therefore to believe, to worship, to be pious, to be good is quite different from the idea of being initiated. Initiation means emerging from the ordinary, it is rising above the conditions which are common; and this shows the maturity of the soul.

TASAWWUF: When the Message was first brought to the West, there were many people attracted and at the same time they held on to their traditions. And by holding on they put a stumbling block in the way of transformation. For initiation transformation and transmutation are necessary. And many recognized this and expected it of others, but themselves could not change. So it was only after a time that people began to find values even in the words themselves without any extension to higher meanings and deeper levels. For whatever is brought from the heavens has both inner and

outer meanings.

But once the new trend was started, even the general evolution was affected and more and more persons began to realize from deeper and more serious views.

GATHEKA: The second stage is the materialization of this initiation; and this materialization is possible with someone living on the earth. For the condition of being initiated completely is to become initiated on this plane of earth, on the physical plane where one is living and moving and through which one is experiencing life.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has been called **Khatimal Mursaleen** which means Seal of the Divine Messengers. We can see the perfect souls who have come from time to time, and they maintained a complete universal consciousness but they did not always manifest or operate on all planes and often they functioned on the higher or highest planes but did not function as ordinary men in the midst of the world. This was the work of Mohammed who carried this perfection and perfectibility down to the lowest level.

The hardest accomplishment is to be totally aware of the Presence of God in the midst of everyday life. Although it has been said—said but not proven—that Zen is everyday life, that spiritual accomplishment is in everyday life, even that Nirvana and Samsara are identical, this has remained mostly in words and doctrines and not in demonstrations or exemplifications. But Mohammed was successful in maintaining the presence of God, in the pursuit of Akhlak Allah in all his affairs and thus opened the door for all humanity to keep consciousness of God along with everything else and thus surmount dualism.

GATHEKA: People make a great many mysteries out of the name initiation, but the simple explanation of initiation is trust on the part of the pupil and confidence on the part of the initiator. I heard from my murshid, from my initiator, something which I shall never forget, “This friendship, this relationship which is brought about by initiation between two persons is something which cannot be broken, it is something which cannot be separated, it is something which cannot be compared with anything else in the world; it belongs to eternity.”

TASAWWUF: When this is fully understood the Kingdom of God will surely manifest on earth. Many are called and few are chosen said Jesus, but while millions know this phrase, not many actually become aware of it. It is most fortunate when a disciple takes the Bayat seriously, not something to be taken lightly, not a mere ceremony which can be terminated at will. For the very purpose of Bayat is to bring the disciple to recognize that spiritual development depends on his having his ego assimilated in the Divine Will. It is easy to say and may take years, or aeons to accomplish. But it is possible and it comes with the fulfillment of the purpose of life.

GATHEKA: When this initiation takes place it then becomes the responsibility of the initiator to think of the welfare and well-being of his pupil; and it becomes the responsibility of the initiated to be faithful and true and steady and unshaken through all tests and trials.

TASAWWUF: It is hard to take this seriously and especially when one, under the spell of a seemingly compelling emotion, takes a vow, one does not always understand that he will be tested by his own vow. Or as Jesus Christ has said, "For every idle word ye shall suffer on the Day of Judgment." For man is responsible for his every word. And it has been said that every word of the Teacher is, so to speak, something that comes as if from God and when these words are taken seriously as if from God, that is the best way for the disciple. He may not always realize it at the beginning but his serious attitude is the best help he can have on the path to God.

GATHEKA: There are some who will go to one person and be initiated, and then afterwards they go to another to be initiated, and then to a third. They might go to a hundred persons, but they will become a hundred times less instead of a hundred times more blessed. For the object of friendship is not the making of many friends, the object is to keep friendship steady, unchanged, whole. And of all kinds of friendship, the friendship that is established by initiation is the most sacred, a friendship which must be considered beyond all other relations in the world.

TASAWWUF: When one establishes a true friendship it lasts beyond the immediate life. If one really has a spiritual teacher, a Guru or Murshid, the disappearance of either teacher or pupil from the physical body and physical world will not impair the relationship. The Sufi Invocation is union with all the illuminated souls. It is not just a friendship between person and person that is established but a relation between God-in-person and God-in-person for God is Love and Love is Love and the union is the underside, so to speak of the love of God for God.

Besides, as one advances on the spiritual path, the whole of the Invocation comes to conscious realization and as one has more and higher inner experiences, one will come to understand better the whole of the Inner Life.

GATHEKA: There is a story of a peasant in India, a young peasant who used to take a great interest in spiritual things. And someone with a great name happened to come to his town, about whom it was said, as it was always said among simple peasants, that he was so great that by coming into his presence one would be sure to enter the heavens. The whole town went to see him and to get from him that guarantee of entering the heavens, except that peasant who had once been initiated.

TASAWWUF: We find this condition at all times. There are people who accept a certain religion or a certain teacher because by that they are presumed to be delivered from hell and to be assured of heaven. And perhaps they are, but that does not free them from karma, they are not liberated by this belief; they have not as Buddha has taught, worked out their own salvation with diligence; they are depending upon another.

No great religious teacher has ever taught such a thing. It is part of folk-lore and tradition. When one leans, when one depends, he is not standing on his own feet. When he does not stand on his own feet he cannot walk. And if he cannot walk he cannot complete the journey, be it physical, be it spiritual.

GATHEKA: The great man having heard about his refusal went to his house and asked him, "How is it that you who take such interest in holy subjects did not come, while everyone else came to see me?"

TASAWWUF: There is often a tendency to use public opinion, or mass movement to determine fate. Unless one's heart is opened there is no sign of spiritual progress. Even with Buddha and Mohammed not everybody came to accept them and they recognized this as a natural tendency. In the case of Jesus, excepting for the incident of Palm Sunday, most people did not accept him.

GATHEKA: He said, "There was no ill-feeling on my part, there was only one simple reason. My teacher who initiated me has passed from this earth, and since he was a man with limitations I do not know whether he has gone to heaven or to the other place. And if through the blessing of your presence I were sent to heaven, I might be most unhappy there; heaven would become another place for me if my teacher were not there."

TASAWWUF: This exemplifies the kind of love which may exist both between teacher and pupil, and pupil and teacher. The divine love is not something limited by time or space or place or anything. The type of love found in the Hebraic psalms may remain as verbal or as real. When it becomes real the devotee advances in all aspects. When it remains verbal, there is no progress.

Very often a presumably great teacher will come and he will want to test everybody. But spirituality consists of man's acceptance of God and God's acceptance of man. And if there is any meditation, it is only for a limited time and purpose. The mission of the true Teacher is to act as a cupid between the devotee and God.

GATHEKA: It is this oneness, this connection, it is this relationship between the initiator and the initiated which gives them the necessary strength, power, and wisdom to journey on this path. For it is the devotion of the initiated which supplies all that is lacking in the initiator, and it is the trust of the initiator which supplies all that is lacking in the initiated.

TASAWWUF: And it is this trust which transcends the immediate life. It is this trust which is of the greatest value to the disciple. And the trust that the teacher has for the disciple and the trust from the pupil to the teacher are of supreme value both for the teacher and for the pupil. For this trust establishes the unity, the union between pupil and teacher and the link from earth to heaven through all the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance, which is of greatest value both for the earth and for the heavens.

GATHEKA: There is no ceremony that a Sufi considers really necessary, but Sufis never regard ceremonies or dogmas as undesirable, so they are not prejudiced against ceremonies. They have adopted ceremonies for themselves at different times.

TASAWWUF: We can read in various books the types of ceremonies used by Sufis, and sometimes they are alike and sometimes very different. When the Sufi Movement was introduced

into the West, sometimes a simple pledge was all that was necessary, and sometimes the connecting of hands and sometimes a whole ritual. But even when a formal ritual was adopted it was not always used. For a Teacher who is awakened can often recognize another awakened soul anywhere, and a simple binding may be all that is required. There are even schools of Sufis who use little more than a simple binding plus the presenting to the pupil of some esoteric practices which should be done, but are not necessarily placed as a compulsory bond. It is the heart-love which is most important; the ceremony or ritual is often a secondary matter.

GATHEKA: Sufis have various paths of attainment, for instance the paths of Salik and Rind; and among those who tread the path of Salik, of righteousness, there are many whose method of spiritual attainment is devotion.

TASAWWUF: It has sometimes been said that Sufis are closer to the Bhaktis than to the Jnana Yogins. But Sufis do not even make such distinctions having elements in their work which correspond to elements of different Yoga paths. Still, without love and devotion the method can hardly be called a Sufi method. Yes, there have been schools practicing some esotericism without love and devotion. They have often attained much acclaim but there is little evidence that their methods lead to spiritual awakening and spiritual development.

GATHEKA: Devotion requires an ideal; and the ideal of the Sufis is the God-ideal. They attain to this ideal by a gradual process.

TASAWWUF: This subject was given considerable attention in the Religious Gathekas which later became the basis of the book called *The Unity of Religious Ideals*. Some of the lessons then became overlooked, being regarded as part of esoteric instructions. But this is a mistake; all love and devotion lead to esoteric development and complex disciplines without love and devotion lead to complexities but not to awakening. The essence of the soul is love itself; either love awakens the soul or the soul awakens love.

Here Sufism seems to differ from Zen which proclaims sudden awakening. But this proclamation is actually an illusion. Who can say what is sudden, what is gradual?

GATHEKA: They first take Bayat, initiation, from the hand of one whose presence gives them confidence that he will be a worthy counselor in life and a guide on the path as yet untrodden, and who at the same time shows them in life the image of the Rassoul personality, the personality of the ideal man. He is called Pir-O-Murshid.

TASAWWUF: There are many who have taken the title of Pir-O-Murshid but have shown no ability to reflect in any way the Rassoul-personality. A real Pir-O-Murshid, having himself had the divine experience, can certainly lead his disciples to, and even through, fana-fi-Rassoul.

The commentator was living in the woods, and Hazrat Inayat Khan appeared and said, "You will have one more test." "Haven't I had enough tests?" "You will have one more test." Then the

commentator was gnashing his teeth and a tooth fell out. And he was amazed that this Pir-O-Murshid whom he had known as such a loving teacher should be laughing. Then Hazrat Inayat Khan disappeared and Rassoul-Mohammed manifested. That was the sign of initiation into fana-fi-Rassoul. And after a little while one learned that Mohammed himself was lacking that very tooth which had fallen out of the commentator's mouth, very easily. And years later he learned that there had been a school of Sufis who included a ritual of Bayat to knock out that particular tooth, but he had already lost it. And then he came under the influence of Mohammed and after that of all the spiritual teachers which is reflected in the poem called "Saladin," after Salah-ed-din Ayub.

Many people have risen and either proclaimed themselves or permitted themselves to be proclaimed as Pir-O-Murshid without having the initiation or the ability to manifest in some way, "the personality of the ideal man" as it's mentioned here.

GATHEKA: There are several steps on the path. This is a vast subject, but condensing it I would say there are five principal steps.

TASAWWUF: Any comment is, of course, somewhat intellectual and there is in it the danger of being drawn from the intellectual side rather than having the opening of the internal consciousness. This subject is presented in *The Inner Life* and is also given great consideration in the commentary on that work.

GATHEKA: The first is responsiveness to beauty of all kinds, in music, in poetry, in color or line.

TASAWWUF: This is also considered in *The Inner Life* and we can find it in many places. There are the natural Jinn-types who have these faculties and there are others in whom they develop in accordance with spiritual growth. But they always appear as they are signs of sensitiveness and responsiveness so important in the spiritual life.

GATHEKA: The second is one's exaltation by beauty, the feeling of ecstasy.

TASAWWUF: While these are the characteristics of the angelic soul, they also come with the perfection of the responsiveness to beauty. Sufis have in times past, and again now made use of music and dancing to promote exaltation and to make this a conscious reality and not a theoretical metaphysics.

GATHEKA: The third step is tolerance and forgiveness, when these come naturally without striving for them.

TASAWWUF: Today while we are restoring the psychic sciences, we also develop the prowess in the finer things which can be known as **Latifiyyat**, the development of the Latif—or subtle qualities which come from the internal being. And as they develop, as the heart becomes more living, the tendencies toward tolerance and forgiveness come naturally. One does not have to tell anybody about them. And also as one applies the psychic virtues, there is an added ability to forgive, to

heal, to bless and to elevate.

GATHEKA: The fourth is that one accepts as if they were a pleasure things one dislikes and cannot stand; in the place of a bowl of wine, the bowl of poison.

TASAWWUF: We read so much about indifference and being equal-minded in pleasure and pain. It is not only in Bhagavad Gita but in other scriptures and sacred books. Yet hardly any one reading the words tries to get into that state. Even those who talk or proclaim “Krishna-consciousness” do not often exhibit any such a state.

When one is in love and especially when it becomes divine love, this state is attained, and one can even transmute poison into nectar by such a state.

GATHEKA: And the fifth step is taken when one feels the rein of one’s mind in one’s hand; for then one begins to feel tranquility and peace at will. This is just like riding on a very vigorous and lively horse, yet holding the reins firmly and making it walk at the speed one desires. When this step is taken the mureed becomes a master.

TASAWWUF: These five states are reflected also in the five basic conditions of nufs, the ego, but when we make too much of an intellectual or analytic process we do not understand. For it is the ego-mind which stands in the way of higher development and when one surrenders the ego-state one will pass through these conditions and qualifications and thereby attain the mastery.

GATHEKA: The time of initiation is meant to be a time for clearing away all the sins of the past. The cleansing of sins is like a bathe in the Ganges. It is the bath of the spirit in the light of knowledge. From this day the page is turned.

TASAWWUF: No doubt the bathing in the Ganges is symbolic but at the same time there is an inner process much like that. The Initiator is one who has gone through a cleansing and by his own experiences in cleansing he knows what must be done, how it can be done to cleanse the hearts and minds of others. Besides when there is surrendering love there is an automatic cleansing of the spirit, for then the ego is no more the dominant factor in life.

GATHEKA: The mureed makes his vow to the murshid that he will treasure the teachings of the masters in the past and keep them secret, that he will make good use of the teachings and of the powers gained by them, and that he will try to crush his Nufs, his ego.

TASAWWUF: This is a first and most important step. But it is often easy to take a vow against Nufs and it is not always easy to crush ego, for it is most subtle and one will decry ego and by so decrying, it is the ego itself that in this subtle fashion is exerting itself. Therefore there are movements in the prayers, not only in ancient and modern prayers, but in all prayers which help restrain the ego, and when the head is bowed and when the knees are bent, the ego is not so able to exert itself.

The vow to the Murshid has two purposes. One is that there is surrender to another. One has had this surrender consciously or unconsciously to mother and father and friend, and now one grows in surrender because it may be, unlike mother and father and friend, that the inspiring teacher has some prowess in the divine wisdom and from his master in wisdom is able to help the disciple outgrow his own weaknesses.

GATHEKA: He vows that he will respect all the masters of humanity as the one embodiment of the ideal man, and will consider himself the brother not only of all the Sufis in the Order to which he belongs, but also outside that order of all those who are Sufis in spirit although they may call themselves differently, and of all mankind, without distinction of caste, creed, race, nation or religion.

TASAWWUF: It is a comparatively easy thing to take this vow. It is not always so easy to apply it to the daily life. The person who is in front of one has weaknesses and the person who is far away has his perfections and thus many devotees vow and do not apply.

The Christian Bible has a lesson, a teaching that until man learns to love his fellow man, and especially his neighbor, there is little possibility that he will really love the God Whom he has not seen. And it is this misapplied love, which is not the real love, that has led many people astray. They are caught in a thought, not in a reality.

Taking a vow is the first step. Applying it in the daily life is a much higher step. And the Sufi teachings have always been in a direction to become brother to all the Sufis. That is not only a very important step, it is one which is found to be reciprocated that Sufis will be found to re-express this love and that one will not always find it among others, for the Sufis are the most diligent to express this love to their fellow-men.

It is only after this love has been anchored and so applied in life that one can really express and find love in humanity in general. And then one will find this same universal love among many people. For Sufis are not the only God-seekers or the only people with the God-realization although this is their anchor.

GATHEKA: Sufis engage in **Halka**, a circle of Sufis sitting and practicing **Zikr** and **Fikr** so that the power of the one helps the other.

TASAWWUF: When the commentator was living in the Arabic Republic (Egypt) where it was taught that there were not many living Sufis, he found himself suddenly in the midst of many people who performed the **Halka** and found the singing and chanting beautiful and joyful and the love between the participants very great. There was the demonstration of the universal spiritual brotherhood, long practiced in the East and also in the Islamic world, but only slowly penetrating the West. And it is important to attain some humility also, to be aware that less educated people in other parts of the world may really have more love, more wisdom.

GATHEKA: Furthermore they practice **Tawajoh**, a method of receiving knowledge and power from the teacher in silence. This way is considered by Sufis to be the most essential and desirable.

TASAWWUF: This is something like the **Darshan** of the Hindus but in Sufism although the Teacher as teacher gives the magnetism, the power, the wisdom; as part of spiritual brotherhood he is also brother before God (Allah) in worship and he worships with as well as leads the disciples and all people.

To practice the Tawajjeh one must be completely aware of God at all times, feel him within and be also a master in **Baraka**—the love-magnetism-blessing-power which links all the souls of the universe together.

GATHEKA: Sometimes a receptive mureed attains in a moment greater perfection than he might attain in many years by study or practice, because it is not only his own knowledge and power that the murshid imparts, but sometimes it is the knowledge and power of Rassoul; and sometimes even of God. It all depends upon the time and upon how the expressive and receptive souls are focused.

TASAWWUF: The commentator received the Tawajjeh from Hazrat Inayat Khan and was not believed. And later also the power of **Rassoul** which has been written in the poem “Saladin” and elsewhere. But those who take vows and remain under the ego (nufs) just the same, refused to admit it. It is not one’s prowess that is important, but one’s acceptance of the prowess of others which is a demonstrable proof of one’s own prowess. No one was more receptive and respective toward Jelal-ed-din Rumi than Shams-i-Tabriz; no one was more receptive and respective toward Shams-i-Tabriz than Jelal-ed-din Rumi. The best demonstration of responsiveness to the Divine Light and Wisdom is the ability to perceive this in others.

GATHEKA: The task of the Sufi teacher is not to force a belief on a mureed, but to train him so that he may become illuminated enough to receive revelations himself.

TASAWWUF: It was the ability to have (or train) disciples to illumination which gave the commentator the right to receive the highest Bayat from Sufi teachers. It is not any mark or praise of self that gives one prowess in tasawwuf, but the evidence that disciples have received the illuminations to some degree. The one who has awakened pupils alone has the right to be known as Teacher or Murshid.

There is no pressure of will-power here but rather the lifting of veils, the enlightening of burdens and with that the marked ability to see the worlds within and without. Then the elevated disciple in his turn can help others, and so on in an endless chain-process which constitutes the establishment of the Sufis in chain which has existed for all times.

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](#)

Inner Study

GATHEKA: Why do Sufis study esoteric subjects? Is it for the acquisition of spiritual powers or inspiration, to bring about phenomena, or out of curiosity? If this were so it would be wrong. Is it in order to accomplish something material or for worldly success? That is not desirable. Self-realization, to know what we are, should be the Sufi's aim.

TASAWWUF: It is not only the Sufi's aim, it is the aim of all souls. Every soul longs for Self-realization; that is its purpose. Without this fulfillment, there will always be a longing, a loneliness, a dissatisfaction. And this we find so beautifully expressed in the Lament of the Flute at the beginning of Rumi's *Masnavi*. This is the natural plight of the lonely soul.

GATHEKA: Some people who admire piety and goodness want everyone to be an angel, and discovering that this is impossible they are full of criticism.

TASAWWUF: This has been the cause of difficulty in spreading the Message, that the people who seemed to have been drawn most were totally attached to piety and goodness. They expected it somewhat from themselves; they expected it even more from others. And though it has been constantly repeated that Sufism is Divine Wisdom, they could not comprehend Divine Wisdom; they could understand human piety and goodness and unconsciously, although sometimes consciously, they wanted to impose these on others and call that "Sufism."

GATHEKA: Man has in him both a devil and an angel; he is at once human and animal. It is the devil in man that drives him to do harm without a motive, by instinct, and the first step should be to abandon this attitude. Although nowadays hardly anyone believes that this particular demon can be a manifestation of the devil, who can say that he is free from such an evil spirit? We can be under the power of a spell, but we must overcome such a power; we must liberate ourselves from evil. Everyone can fight.

TASAWWUF: In the Gita it is said, "Therefore fight, O Arjuna." The Hebrew Bible is filled with warfare and many have taken it literally but the wars of Rama and Krishna and Moses were mostly wars against the evil spirit in man. They were emphasizing the overcoming of lust and greed and anger and all vices. So they put them in an historical and symbolic form, but it always meant the

conquering of the evil in our own selves.

We can find these different levels in ourselves known as angel or devil, human or animal, and in the sacred teachings man is shown how to overcome the lower nature and so fulfill himself.

GATHEKA: We must discover at which times we have manifested our devil or our animal spirit. We want a human spirit, and self-realization is the search for this human spirit; everything must become human in us.

TASAWWUF: We have ways to overcome evil which in Paul Brunton have been called the way-of-heart, the way-of-breath, and the way-of-eye. The Tawajeh is the way-of-eye but it requires a skilled teacher to help in this. The way-of-breath is taught to everyone and in some way it is taught in all religions, but as the priestcraft were not usually taught in this way, they have substituted other methods. These methods have usually not worked; they have not brought man to illumination; they have not enabled him to overcome evil and rise in joy. But the ways of the breath are excellent to enable man to rise above his short-comings.

The way-of-heart is open to all. Love is greater than anything else and can be applied at all levels and to all people. Only it requires much patience and much power to overcome the animal in us and for the devil, this is a very hard road, for with love there must also be wisdom.

GATHEKA: But how should we accomplish this? Read the Bible and other holy scriptures? All these books tell us what we should do, but we must also find the store of goodness that is within us, in our heart. As we cultivate our heart it rises.

TASAWWUF: This has been most difficult to impress on mature people who are confounded with words. It is most easy to impress on young people who are more receptive to its essence. And so the way of love will become successful where all other ways fail. Sufism has been called the religion of love because it is more concerned with love than with any doctrine. For out of love comes a truth which is beyond doctrines and which also awakens the deep life in man and so brings him to self-realization.

GATHEKA: By asceticism one can develop one's soul and reach ecstasy, but what is the use of Samadhi if we are not first human? If we want to live in this world we must be human. The ascetic should live in the forest.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has declared there should be no asceticism in Islam. Before his time there had been many ways to self-realization but mostly it was not the ways of complete humanity. People could or would live in the deserts, in the out of the way places, in the forests, on the mountains. So consciously or unconsciously there was a separation between everyday life and spiritual fulfillment. And then a question arose could we have the spiritual life and everyday fulfillment together. This was the special teaching of Mohammed.

No doubt when spiritual training was first devised it was necessary to go into retirement. If we look into the life of Lord Shiva who lived in very ancient times, he is said to have dwelt much in the high Himalayas. And the Bible also speaks much about the desert. But as we look into the lives of the later Messengers of God, they dwelt more and more with humanity, in social surroundings. So when Mohammed came to seal the work of the Messengers, he ended dualism by giving the teachings while dwelling in the midst of humanity, in society.

No doubt it seems harder to attain to the highest mystical states while living in the midst of society. But once attained, they belong to one. This is also one of the meanings that “everyone can fight.” The Master is concerned always with fighting outer as well as inner influences. But to attain victory one may have to use unusual means. And these means are to be found within oneself.

EDITOR’S NOTE: *On occasion the previous sentences of Hazrat Inayat Khan are repeated by Murshid SAM in this work. As additional commentary is given in these instances, we have included all these repeated words along with the new commentary.*

GATHEKA: We must discover at which times we have manifested our devil or our animal spirit. We want a human spirit, and self-realization is the search for this human spirit; everything must become human within us. But how should we accomplish this? Read the Bible or other holy scriptures? All these books tell us what we should do, but we must also find the store of goodness that is within us, in our heart.

TASAWWUF: Many read holy books, often keep on reading them and never go through the transformation that is required. They can be caught in the words and even misled by the words. Islam, which is especially concerned with printed words, also alludes to Umm Khitab, the Mother of the Book, from whence Qur’an came. Actually all revelation, all guidance comes from that source. It is within us. Many read and study all their lives and do not understand. There can be no understanding without the awakening of heart. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” But after thousands of years it is only now beginning to be felt. People want dogmas, creeds, rituals, and externals. They are quite satisfied with them. And often when they fail or falter they blame themselves; the creeds, dogmas and rituals have become sacrosanct. They have even become more important than God Himself.

There is no vitality when one accepts an external view. Until we find the kingdom of heaven that is within us we are dealing with shadows. The Prajna-Paramita Sutras refer to them as forms of emptiness. We go from one form of emptiness to another and either blame ourselves or the forces that are around, outside. The key is to look within and within we can find the way from all complexities.

GATHEKA: As we cultivate our heart it rises. By asceticism one can develop one’s soul and reach ecstasy, but what is the use of Samadhi if we are not first human? If we want to live in this world we must be human. The ascetic should live in the forest.

TASAWWUF: The way of the ascetic may be a path of initiation but it is not necessarily one of discipleship. The teaching is that what is given to one should be shared with others. There was a great break in Buddhism because of those who acquired a sort of Samadhi and thought that was the goal, the finality. Whatever their theories they did not demonstrate the full acceptance of the oneness of life, much less the brotherhood of man. They became attached to words, and this limited their potentialities. Besides, they could not use the Darshan to help others. Such people do not know the Samma Dhrishthy of Lord Buddha. This does not mean “right views” as against anything wrong. There must be a selfless attitude, and so a cosmic viewpoint. Thus theology without mysticism can become an empty shell, full of words and dogmas and rituals and forms but without deep substance.

By living among mankind one demonstrates his attainment and the surest way of demonstration is to make others feel the inner life, the warmth of heart-love and thus the expansion of consciousness.

GATHEKA: How should we cultivate the heart, the feeling? There is no doubt that harmlessness, devotion and kindness are necessary; but there is something besides these. It is the awakening of certain centres which make one sensitive, not only externally but also mentally.

TASAWWUF: There is no doubt that Gandhism, with all its grandeur, did not always accomplish its end. For most of the followers of the Mahatma by-passed his satyagraha, the strength of God or Truth within us. There are many forms of harmlessness without kindness. This shows lack of balance and not only in theory but in manifestation.

The other aspect, the awakening of centers, belongs to esotericism in general. There are several ways by which this may be done. But in Sufism the opening of the centers is also combined with the dominance of heart so that human consideration, positive kindness and generosity, accompany the harmlessness. As one great Sufi has said, “Show harmlessness toward friends and forbearance toward enemies.” One does not necessarily dominate evil by any weak policy. But strength does not mean just showing power; it must be accompanied by wisdom also.

GATHEKA: There are two kinds of people: one will be struck by the beauty of music or other manifestations of beauty; another is as dull as a stone to all this. Why? Because something in his heart and mind is not awakened.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism it is taught that there are two kinds of vibrations, **Kasif** and **Latif**, or coarse and fine. The former come from the hardening or materialization of the Divine Spirit. It is a mistake not to see God in the most material; to see God but not to be enmeshed. Even the most materialistic sciences are beginning to find Light behind all forms of manifestation. It is only the egocentric who do not.

But when the Kasif vibrations are stronger, the senses become dull, the person becomes dull. We correct this by the refinement of breath and the practices in meditation. It is not only to pray, “Raise

us from the denseness of the earth,” but to do something about it. The whole world is full of words, the world must go through discipline to overcome turmoil.

GATHEKA: We have five senses, but we also have inner senses, and these can enjoy life much more keenly. Some people will say that they need no inner senses, that the outer senses satisfy them completely. They would speak differently if, for instance, they lost their eyesight or another of their five senses. In order to be complete a human being must also develop his inner senses; but first of all he should develop his inner feeling.

TASAWWUF: The Gita speaks against the mind and senses and then all the mental people speak against the senses. They do not perceive, indeed many will not perceive their relation to the Ahankara which the Sufis call **nufs**. This comes from breathing with the sense of “I am I,” and holding that others are different. Thus the false philosophers deal with the senses and attack the senses. And as they do this they must speak and must ask their audiences to use the senses of sound and hearing more keenly to be responsive to them. Then the audiences use their eyes and ears more keenly to hear a lecture attacking the senses and whether they agree or differ, this can only be illusion.

It is the same with the people of **nufs**; they will attack nufs, criticize nufs as people in another age attacked and criticized the devil. They never deal with the reality; they only deal with their own concepts concerning reality. So many who think they are studying Oriental philosophy, or for that matter any philosophy, are under delusions when they attack the senses. They are using the senses all the time, they may only be using the senses and nothing else, and they will not stop using the senses. They do not develop any inner sense.

It is illusion and delusion to attack the senses without substituting something constructive. There are the Inner Senses and beyond them Kashf or insight. And when Kashf is developed the soul becomes responsive to the Latif vibrations and one can become Master, not delineator of the senses.

GATHEKA: Intellectual study may last the whole of one's life; there is no end to it, and this is why the teacher does not encourage speculation. A doctrine means separation from other doctrines.

TASAWWUF: Here we find the great gap between popular metaphysics and mysticism. Like science, mysticism depends on human experience; only it is experience in different directions. Science uses words to codify and mentalize phenomena; metaphysics is an art whereby phenomena and persons are made to fit into certain matrices and classified and then judged. It is all analysis and synthesis and never gets beyond.

The Zen teachers who came to the West desired speculation and then many Western writers, submitting neither to meditation nor discipline wrote books and became famous. This has nothing to do with spiritual awakening. All the words of the mystics have been captured by speculators and thus they and their followers are led astray.

The experiences of scientists, although mostly without, are of such a nature they can be re-experienced by others. The experiences of mystics, mostly from within, are of such a nature they can, in principle, be re-experienced by others. But the speculations of metaphysicians, based on their own egos, can only be accepted by those who will abandon their own intellects, to accept opinions of others. Thus we have politics and thus also we have many forms of philosophy which resemble politics much more than they resemble any search for truth.

GATHEKA: The Sufi belongs to every religion, and thus he has no special beliefs and speculations. There can for instance be one Sufi who believes in reincarnation, and another who realizes heaven and hell. The work of the Sufi is personal development. It is what one practices that is important rather than what the teacher says, though the teacher can give protection.

TASAWWUF: Sufism is not based on blind obedience. The Sufi teacher endeavors to awaken the whole consciousness of the disciple so that he can experience what the teacher has experienced. It may be in another direction or it may be the same. And it always brings first greater accommodation for light and then greater experience of life; accommodations and experiences continue all through the spiritual development. So the mind is used to follow life, not lead it.

GATHEKA: Initiation contains several degrees. It is a trust given to one by the teacher, but the real initiation is the work of God. No teacher can or will judge.

TASAWWUF: The prayer is "Thy Light is in all forms; Thy Love in all beings." This has to become actualized. If a person does not believe that, he is no Teacher. That is only the beginning. The question is how to bring this Light, this Love into open application in the life itself. But once the accommodation is made each disciple will have his own experience, his own insight, his own development. Each soul has its own path to God. The Teacher may seem to lead or accompany, but the disciple must do his own walking.

GATHEKA: The real pupil is he whom the teacher knows he can trust, though all are welcome to him. Spiritually he is both father and mother to the pupil. The life of the teacher is often a sacrifice; he is often persecuted and suffers much, but what little help he can give, he will give.

TASAWWUF: The real pupil is the one in whom the Teacher sees the reflection of the One-Only Being in the process of awakening. Everything that is possible is done to promote that awakening, for it is through the awakened soul that God finds His way to outer manifestation and makes His Will known to and in the world.

To reach this goal the Teacher guides and protects and promotes. He expects disappointments, he expects inspirations, all kinds of things are possible. Or as the Sufi teachings say, the Path is one in which the Teacher and pupil journey together as if a single entity. The teacher knows this, the disciple learns it.

GATHEKA: No special qualification is needed in order to become a pupil. The teacher gives; the

pupil can take it or leave it. The teaching is like a precious jewel hidden in a stone; it is for the pupil to break the stone and find the jewel.

TASAWWUF: Anyone can become a pupil but the Teacher has the right to refuse the Bayat, especially after the first Bayat. It is then the mission of the disciple to learn and advance. There can be no compulsion. The divine light does not manifest from any compulsion. Compulsion is the enemy of Grace and it is the Grace that is needed. That also is the meaning of Inayat.

Awakening does not come from any cause and effect. It does not operate that way. Yet also as the pupil applies himself he removes, consciously or unconsciously, the barriers before the Divine Light. The Light is there, but “the darkness comprehends it not.” For this purpose and for this alone the Sufi brotherhoods are in existence.

GATHEKA: In the East this inner teaching is part of religion, whereas in the West it is often looked upon merely as a form of education. It ought to be a sacred education. In the East the murshid gives the lesson and the pupil practices it for a month or a year; he cannot have a different practice every week.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that the Sufi path is one on which teacher and pupil travel together. Therefore the teacher is most anxious for the disciple to succeed. Indeed his only success and merit comes with the awakening of mureeds. No one has the self merit and all praise is to Allah.

But it is also true that there is cyclic law and laws of rhythms. They operate in the inner as well as in the outer worlds. There is no chance, there is no anarchy. Grace may operate independently of all else but it is not destructive. It works with the laws of the universe, not against them. In this sense even the miraculous is not miraculous. And we are only too often not too cognizant of the part love plays in life both in the laic and spiritual parts of life.

Generally the teacher knows when a disciple is ready for more advanced practices. But there are so many and sometimes when a disciple is tired or bored he will go to the teacher and the teacher will give him a different practice or sets of practices. The pupil often is pleased with this and thinks he has advanced, but actually the advance can only come when there has been the experience of hal and makam, of the states and stages of the journey.

GATHEKA: My grandfather practiced one meditation for forty years, then a miracle happened to him. One should not be ambitious to do other exercises before having had a result from the first one.

TASAWWUF: This was particularly true when the Message was brought to the West. It was brought to Western peoples who were characterized by ambition and dualism and not always with devotion.

They had ideas, ideas obtained from their earlier lives, from their education and social environment

and they tried to fit the Message into these instead of fitting them into the spiritual life. Ultimately this meant a stasis; the organization continued but the Grace of God did not descend upon the ambitious aspirants.

Besides, it has always been as Jesus Christ has said, "In the hour ye think least the Son of man cometh." It is not by thinking, it is not by anticipating, it is by Grace; whatever else be true it comes from the Grace of the Living God.

GATHEKA: There are different degrees, but they are not to be discussed on this path. Because, after all, different stages are the conceptions, the speculations of some wise people.

TASAWWUF: If one studies Embryology, there are different stages. One cannot very well explain them in the terms of the lower degrees. There is a transcendence, there is a new dimension and it is only by an integrating process that one can ever express the higher in terms of the lower. But mostly what people want is analysis and an analysis of reality is not reality. It is only an analysis and anybody who would take an analysis for the reality is caught in the web of delusion.

True, as one advances one can tell the stage of people below him and the only way he might know that he has passed a certain point is that he can see a transcendental difference. But we do not add the transcendentals, they are not simply integers or groups. Besides it would do no good. It is by experience and understanding that one knows.

GATHEKA: It is just the same as with music: there are seven notes of music, because the musician has accepted that there are seven, but a scale can be made to contain more notes or less notes if the musician wishes to make it so. We distinguish stages, although in reality it is impossible to do so. It is a spontaneous development on the spiritual path which may be called treading the path of initiation.

TASAWWUF: We have accepted the traditions in music and then may presume to evaluate nature thereby. When the Fraunhofer lines, measuring light-rays were discovered, we learned to measure something like a music, but it was a different music. It was not for a long time when the so-called **k**, **I**, and **m** lines were measured by a scientist named Moseley, that he discovered the atomic numbers and brought a music and harmony into man's understanding of nature. Nature had not changed but man's understanding of it had changed. And it is probable that by similar circumstances we shall uncover all kinds of harmonies in the outer world.

Now this is also true of the inner worlds but for this if there is not Kashf, spiritual insight, it is no good. We can study the Buddhist arts of Japan, especially those influenced by the Zen schools, and find whether we use a mathematics or insight it will come out the same. There is a feeling-harmony there which can be appreciated, measurable or not measurable. And the same is true in many things in life.

GATHEKA: How can one explain spiritual progress? What is it? What is it like? Spiritual progress is

the changing of the point of view.

TASAWWUF: There is a sort of delusion of something which is called “expansion of consciousness,” but how can the consciousness expand? One might then conclude that astronomers and astrologers were the most advanced of people because they had more knowledge of space. But a piece of sulphur or carbon may be turned into a gas, and occupy more space, and then cooled and not be so different.

What can expand are the sympathies and these expansions, if one chooses to call them that, are not changes in spatial consciousness but in depth. One has to change somehow in order to increase in sympathy and insight. When one learns more points of view there is a growth; when one has greater understanding there is a growth; also when one has more sympathy, more mercy, more love. And for that it is necessary to grow from the standpoint of learning more points of view.

GATHEKA: There is only one way to recognize this progress, and that is to see the progress in one’s own outlook on life, to ask oneself the question, “How do I look at life?” This one can do by not judging others, but by being only concerned with one’s own outlook; as long as a person is concerned with the faults of others, as long as he criticizes others, he is not yet ready to make his sight clear enough to see if his outlook on life is right.

TASAWWUF: When Mohammed was victorious on the battlefield and in politics and all else, he returned to Mecca and declared that the lesser Jihad was over; it was won with victory, but now was the time for the Greater Jihad. This Greater Jihad is possible only for those who have cultivated the inner peace. It is not a particular of particularizing religion; it is the result of direct and conscious surrender to the Living God.

Mohammed declared that Allah was closer than the neck-vein. But this is hardly the view of religion. God has been placed somewhere else, even far, far away. We must return to the recognition that Allah is closer than the neck vein. We must return to the recognition that this closeness involves Rahman and Rahim—in other words, Rahmat, which is to say consciousness and effectiveness of heart-qualities. This is the true Islam and leads to the unfoldment of Nufs Salima.

GATHEKA: What in reality are the different initiations? Is one better than the other, or higher than the other? In what way are they to be distinguished? By knowing some more mysteries, or by knowing some secrets, or by studying something very wonderful, or by communicating with something unseen? Nothing whatever of this kind, not one of these things, can assure one of a higher initiation, of greater progress in the spiritual life.

TASAWWUF: There is much confusion between the deepening of consciousness and an expansion of ego (nufs). Expansion of ego has nothing to do with spiritual development; in fact it often works contrariwise. The first lessons are on how to un-learn and the Bayat suggests surrender to the teacher and to God, but instead of surrender being the dominant factor in life it is

often acquisition of some sort. One wants to learn more, have more, be acquainted with more people and even to dominate. All of these have nothing to do with spiritual attainment. In fact they often interfere grievously with it.

There are private organizations that have some ceremonies which they call also "initiations." These do not lead to the growth of inner being. These initiations are of totally different character. Real initiations come from Divine Grace and they come when they come. Not all of man's efforts can bring them but man's efforts can bring delusion and self-satisfaction.

GATHEKA: In the first place we need not strive for mystery, for life itself is a mystery. All that seems simple to us, all that presents no mystery, becomes mysterious as soon as the outlook is changed.

TASAWWUF: One may have some idea of beauty. The probability is at first he desires some geometrical harmonies or certain qualities and all that does not fulfill his view he might reject. Then when he looks closer with the outer eye he will find all kinds of things, harmonies that are not geometrical, color patterns and many things. And if he uses the ultra-microscope he will find even physical beauty that has escaped his eye. He has not changed anything but his point of view and yet he now has a different kind of appreciation of beauty.

But when he can look with the inner eye, as he develops the use of the inner eye, he will discover beauties beyond forms. The deeper he goes the more beauty he will find. And if he develops the keen sight, if the heart faculties unfold, he will find as the prayer says: "Thy Light is in all forms, Thy Love in all beings."

GATHEKA: Secrecy is to be found in simplicity; it is the simple life which is full of secrets. A person may study a whole library, may write fifty books and may read a thousand, yet all this leads him nowhere. If any study is required we need not go anywhere else; our life itself is study, if we will only study it.

TASAWWUF: You will hear teachers say, "You ought to study Zen." Then one goes to a Temple and they will do nothing but sit in silence, no words, no thoughts, no thing, nothing. What is it? Is it study? Or is it relapsing into nothingness? Yet there is a form of relapsing when one has a Guide which may lead to spiritual fulfillment.

Spiritual study is not always like intellectual study. It does not always tell us more of the life without; it must tell us more of the life within. We begin to examine the silence and find it is full of life. We begin to become aware of all sorts of vibrations, vibrations of many different kinds and characteristics, bringing to outer consciousness what the Sufis call the Sifat-i-Allah, the qualifications under which Allah is hidden in the outer world. It is the same God but he is appearing differently. And we can attune to each of these Sifat and grow in understanding and in all these qualifications themselves. It may not appear to be study in traditional sense but it can become much more study than any form of outer study.

GATHEKA: For one who studies, life offers every opportunity; from morning to evening, every moment of the day, in the home, outside, at work, in leisure, in all things there is something to study. No book can give the joy and the pleasure that human nature itself can give.

TASAWWUF: As we quiet the perturbations that arise from nufs we become more and more sensitive to multitudes of vibrations. There are even copious sounds of which we are not aware, to which we have become deadened because of the activities of civilization. But beyond this are inner senses and if we stop the outer senses and begin to use these inner senses we become aware of the fullness of life. Once the poets called Transcendentalists knew this, but as they passed away this knowledge became covered even in the western world where they functioned.

Besides there is the development of Kashf. This makes us aware of much of both the seen and unseen.

GATHEKA: The wise, the foolish, the good, the weak, whom we meet every day with their tendencies and their attitude, are all the greatest material for study. Besides, there is so much to study in success and failure, in sorrows and pleasures, and in all things in life whether unfavorable or favorable.

TASAWWUF: And one of the great lessons, as we become aware of the Divine Presence, as we are aware of the Divine Presence, is to look upon humanity and all life as if from a divine view. One of the greatest obstacles is not human wickedness, but the weakness which confuses words with realities. To find the realities we must grow beyond words. There are thoughts and super-thoughts not conveyed by words, or if one put them in words, they would require so many words.

Holy Qur'an taught this but it remains unlearned save by the few. Extensive writing does not constitute wisdom. Wisdom depends neither on quality nor quantity but perception, and appreciation.

GATHEKA: All that we do right, all that we do wrong, everything is a lesson, everything is a study if we take it as such. But the important thing is this, that the one who is life's student, the one who is really initiated, studies himself before studying others.

TASAWWUF: This is also part of MUJAHIDA, the Greater Jihad. If one cannot control himself he can neither control nor penetrate others. We have words, we have many formulae but until they are applied they can be obstacles on the path as well as aids. It is by making the words part of ourselves that they become valuable. Quoting is of no use; indeed quotations are signs of ignorance as many Sufis have said. They are not part of ourselves, they are borrowings from others. And if we are still unsure of our own self, how can we help another?

GATHEKA: Does an initiator teach the truth? No man has the power to teach another the truth; man must discover it himself. What the initiator can do from his side is to say, "This is the path, do not go astray." The initiator will put his pupil on that path where the further he goes the more he will

receive at every step; it is like a hand raising him upward.

TASAWWUF: The greater the attunement the more capable will the disciple become of reaching a level of attainment which he has not touched before. It is said that surrender to the Teacher is for the sake of God, not for the sake of the Teacher. The true Teacher is not concerned with the number of his followers, but of their attainments. Without such attainments there is no real evidence of his being a true teacher. With such evidence he can stand forth in fearlessness.

There are many means used by Teachers such as meditation, example, learning to breathe, the esoteric exercises (Ryazat) and others. These may be helps but the pupil must learn to do them himself.

GATHEKA: But the first step is the most difficult, and that step is taken by the help of an initiator on the earth.

TASAWWUF: Many think they want or will only accept help from the unseen. This leaves the door open to many kinds of deception and even obsession. God appears on earth, God is in everyone. If we limit God, whether we limit Him to the unseen or anything else, we are limiting God. When we so limit God we are limiting our own potentialities.

GATHEKA: What is it that the initiator teaches the initiated one? He tells the initiated one the truth of his own being. He does not tell him something new or something different. He tells him something which his soul already knows but which his mind has forgotten.

TASAWWUF: We may read the first lines of *Gayan* or indeed all of *Gayan*, *Vadan* and *Nirtan* and never escape this theme. It has been proclaimed that man's real and highest study is himself, but how to study one's self? To accept the words is nothing; to embark on the process is everything.

In *The Mind World* we learn about "the palace of mirrors" and in the deepest teachings of Mahayana Buddhism, in what is called the "Avatamsaka" or "Flower-Garden" School we find that everything in the universe may be reflected in everything else. Therefore, as is proclaimed in the poem, "Flower in the crannied wall" the deep penetration of a human being will reveal what have been called the "secrets of the universe."

We cannot proclaim too much and too often that God made man in His image. If man has been made in the divine image, the study of man by man may lead to a greater understanding of God. We cannot learn about God by making Him a Being separate from ourselves. We cannot look into infinity; we can only look into finite accommodations for infinity. And where do we find that? We find it in man, in the saint, in the sinner, the young, the old, the believer, the unbeliever, in all humanity.

GATHEKA: There is a fable which illustrates this. A lion walking through the desert found a little lion-cub playing with some sheep. It happened that the little lion had been reared with the sheep, and so it had never had a chance or an occasion to realize what it was. The lion was greatly

surprised to see a lion-cub running away and being just as afraid of a lion as sheep are. The lion jumped in among the flock of sheep and said, "Halt, halt!" But the sheep ran away and the little lion ran too. The lion only pursued the lion-cub, not the sheep, and when it caught up with it the lion said, "I wish to speak to you." The cub said, "I tremble, I am afraid, I cannot stand before you.???" The lion said, "Why are you running about with the sheep? You yourself are a little lion!" "No," said the little one. "I am a sheep; let me go, let me go with the sheep." "Come along," said the lion, "come with me and I will show you what you are before I let you go." Trembling and yet helpless, the cub followed the lion to a pool of water. Pointing at their reflections in the pool the lion said, "Look at me and look at yourself. Do we not resemble each other closely? You are not like the sheep, you are like me!"

This lion is symbolical of the souls who have become God-conscious, the souls who have realized the truth. And when they see the same divine spirit in another soul, their first thought is to take that soul by the hand and to show it that there is the same divine spark which they possess.

TASAWWUF: It becomes as Walt Whitman has beautifully expressed it, "In all men I see myself." The realized soul, finding the Light within himself is always on the look-out for the Light in everybody. It is really the same light. It is like a captive sun-light; or as Rumi has told us in "The Song of the Flute" there is the sound which becomes a cry of anguish when the soul is limited by form. But the soul is not changed. It is to recover the freedom, that is the purpose of the spiritual life and inner development.

GATHEKA: Therefore, although outwardly it is an aristocratic picture, inwardly it is leading to democracy. The command of the lion to that lion-cub is apparently aristocratic, but what is the intention of the lion? It is democracy, it wants to make the little lion conscious of the same grandeur that the lion has. And that is the path of spirituality. Its outward appearance may not seem so, but its inner intention and its culmination are democracy.

TASAWWUF: When one sees himself reflected in another, there can not but be the feeling of democracy. He will want to treat everybody as he treats himself. He will see no difference. For instance, suppose a man were conscious of every cell of his body, that he could feel the throb and the need and even the greed of the cells, he would have a different outlook. He might become even like a cosmic mother to all those tiny cells. He would see himself reflected in them and yet he would still be conscious of his whole being.

And when we look at God as Creator, as Loving Mother and Kind Father, we find that God may be looking at humanity in the same way. This gives us the idea of the initiator's outlook on life. He sees the people that way and he knows who are asleep and who are awake and even those who are already awake but may or may not know it.

GATHEKA: The initiations beyond those I have spoken of are greater still. Some people, although not all, will tell you of their experiences, and how at different times in their life a sudden change of outlook came to them. It is not our usual experience to wake up suddenly one day from sleep and

find that our point of view has changed; but it is no exaggeration to say that it takes but one moment to change one's outlook on life entirely. That is what an initiation is, an initiation which is above the initiations of the earth as we know them.

TASAWWUF: That is essentially what is called **satori** in Zen Buddhism. It is a sudden and even most revolutionary change. The whole being may be going through some transformations. The mystery-hunting people like to look for "initiations" but they want them without any great transformation. We cannot have initiation without transformation. And it is a mistake on the part of certain people calling themselves "Zen Buddhists" to presume there is a change without this transformation.

Mahayana Buddhism acclaims three cosmic bodies, the Nirmanakaya (meaning constantly changing mind without a self); the Sambhogakaya (the direct and constant experience of joy and bliss); and the Dharmakaya wherein one sees oneself in all things and all beings. The transformations are sudden and when we rise above the sectarianism we shall see that the satori is and always must be a Nirmanakaya and not an ego-experience.

GATHEKA: One thing leads to another, and so we go on in life from one initiation to the next; and each step on the ladder that seems to be standing before us, for us to climb, becomes an initiation. And each step on that ladder changes our point of view if only we hold on to the ladder and do not drop down; for there is always the possibility of going either forward or backward.

TASAWWUF: There is an obstacle and it is a deluding one, to have some philosophy, some thoughts about initiation. From the very beginning, and certainly in ancient Egypt, without a transforming experience, there could be no advancing initiation. Some people want the wisdom and do not change themselves, and do not permit themselves to be changed. There is no such wisdom. Wisdom, among other things, includes holding on to an ever-changing outlook and yet to constancy at the same time. This is what Buddha taught. But the philosophy of change, the holding that all things are subject to change and alteration, does not hold unless there is behind this change an absolute constancy. The absolute remains, the finite alters.

The French philosopher, Henri Bergson also presented a philosophy of change. He was attacked and it is curious that one of his greatest critics, Lord Russell, trying to hold on to a philosophy of things and absolutes, and also to relativity, was always changing his point of view throughout life. And the same is probably true of many people. It does not matter. They have to learn the wisdom of adapting to change and at the same time retain a sort of self-entity. It is something like the outlook of a river, the waters of which do not remain in the same place, even the channel may not be so fixed. It is given a name and has a sort of form.

So the human personality is subject to constant change. We may retain a kind of self-entity yet we are always changing. And these changes are not always progressions; they may be retrogressions.

For instance as a person becomes much older in body he may retrogress in physical strength and

in memory-retention and in some kinds of vitality. So it is with the life of man, he does not always advance and yet this does not always matter.

GATHEKA: Nevertheless, the one anxious to go forward will never go backward. Even if the whole world pulled him back by a chain attached to his feet, he would still go forward, because his desire to go forward is more powerful than all the forces of the world.

TASAWWUF: For this is the expression of the soul itself. The soul is beyond limitation and wishes this freedom. It wishes this freedom for it knows the real life is in God the Unlimited, yet the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Wise, the Perfect. It innately knows this. It wants what is its real being and nothing else can satisfy it. So there is a certain truth within the dissatisfaction of everybody and behind all these dissatisfactions is the longing to become and express one's true self, which is the Being 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 6](#)

Three Aspects of Initiation

GATHEKA: As birds gather in flocks and animals in herds, so there are human beings who move in groups in this or that direction drawn by the power of others; and yet if one asked a person if this is the case with him too, he would say, "No; not with me, but with all others."

TASAWWUF: Plotinus has given a teaching of the many-in-one, the one-in-one as in the hive of bees, the herd of cattle, the flocks of birds, the schools of fishes and many other examples. It also applies to the mob-action in man and perhaps to many who are in the moon-consciousness or even in states of receptivity.

The one-in-one is the individualist, and out of this comes the human will. The human will cannot operate in mob- or group-action. And perhaps this is one of the examples where man is above all the animals. No matter how far or high we go biologically we do not find this will and its accompaniment, speech. Real will and real speech belong to humanity.

And then there is the one-in-many and this comes out of the spiritual life as when Jesus said, "I am

the vine and ye are the branches thereof.” It also comes to fruition in the Sufi hierarchy and also in other hierarchies as they operate. Only it does not manifest in the metaphysical, verbal references to so-called “hierarchies” which may be products of human imagination. Human imagination can not create any hierarchy.

GATHEKA: It is difficult for anyone to realize to what extent he can unconsciously move with the crowd to the right or the left. And when a person takes a step in a different direction, dissatisfied with being held and swayed by the crowd, by his friends and relations, by those around him, then he shows initiative. So the real meaning of the word initiation, which is related to initiative, is that a man takes his own direction instead of that in which the crowd is pulling him.

TASAWWUF: The Bible says over and over, “The stone which is rejected is become the corner-stone.” But this seldom happens, and when it does the generality will criticize their forebears. But the generality will act that way too; finding fault with one’s forebears is easy; correcting one’s habit is difficult. So we need not be surprised that there are Sufi Orders into which one cannot go until he has shown society has rejected him or until he has braved the masses, or even deliberately been submitted to tests which will cause him to be mocked and derided.

There has been a lot of drama about the “lonely man” and some have attributed this to Jesus. But a god-man, so to speak, will not be a lonely man. He has risen above the one-in-many consciousness. We can see this in the poem, “The Rejected Avatar,” how Krishna laughed at being rejected, even joined his scorers in laughing at himself, but was always master of laughter. And by this he arrived at the highest stage and was able to influence the world by his laughter as well as by his love.

Mohammed had also to face rejection and scorn and accept the loneliness. Many Muslims look at Mohammed as a peculiar example. This is exactly the opposite from what he preached. He claimed to be a man among men and to be submitting to ordinary and extraordinary human experience. And he saw that all people go through such a path, indeed must go. So we need not be surprised if some Schools of Sufism either compel their disciples to submit to such tests, or readily receive those who have been forced to face the ignominy of the crowd.

This seems to be a perpetual behavior pattern. And those who really believe in brotherhood should take particular pains to emphasize those held in scorn or ridicule. The rejected are always open more to the Grace of Allah.

GATHEKA: Initiation has three different aspects: one is natural initiation, another is advanced initiation, and the third is higher initiation.

TASAWWUF: The ordinary human being can not know this; he must accept this on faith. The remarkable Zen teacher, Sokei-An Sasaki taught and showed how each man can tell the evolution of those below him and even know who is at the same grade. But those beyond he cannot know, he cannot judge, he cannot tell. And though this has been repeated over and over again, it is very

difficult to impress on human consciousness. There are too many factors which impel people to judge, mostly in ignorance.

GATHEKA: The natural initiation may come to a person at any time of his life. It does not come to everyone, but only to some. And for this initiation one need not go to a teacher; it comes when it is time for it to come. It comes in the form of a sudden change of outlook on life; a person feels that he has suddenly awakened to quite another world; although he remains in the same world it has become totally different to him.

TASAWWUF: We have examples of this at all times. The Grace of Allah is everywhere and for all. In Mohammed's time there was Uwais who seemed to be a lonely shepherd, far away from humanity and not particularly admired by his neighbors. But he showed every sign of cosmic consciousness, knew all about Mohammed and Mohammed knew all about him. Muslims never think about this that the full Divine Grace could fall on one who knew nothing of Shariat.

In modern times we have such men as Whitman and Edward Carpenter and even the woman poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay who may be examples of the natural initiation. For there are natural mystics at all times. This is also discussed in *The Inner Life* and its commentaries.

Of course there is more glamour concerning Indian people. And in Buddhism we read of the **Pratekya Buddha**, the solitary person who has reached initiation, often without having a particular earthly or even heavenly teacher and often without disciples. We cannot overlook hard facts and nearly all schools of spirituality choose to ignore those who have reached the heights by methods contrary to their own, or of which they have never heard.

GATHEKA: Things which seemed important become less important; colors pale and the brightness of things disappears. Things show themselves to have different values. The value of everything changes the moment the outlook is changed. It is a change like looking through a telescope; through a telescope one sees things quite differently.

TASAWWUF: There are many people who have had psychic and psychedelic experiences. From them they learn that things do not retain their size or shape or qualities, but are subject to seemingly constant change. They conclude that whatever values they have had are not only not permanent but even (their personal conclusions) valueless. They then go on to attack social values and norms. They find that there is nothing absolutely stable or true from the common-sense view.

But this sort of experience, though there is a gain of more insight into the nature of things (which are outside the self), there is not always a change of the personality. When such people become "sober," return to a state of sobriety, things seem to go on as before only with a new set of values from their own psyches. The values have changed, they themselves have not necessarily changed.

In the mystical experience there is also a revolutionary adjustment but here this comes as a result of a complete change of themselves. Things and values change because the ego has been

transformed in some way.

GATHEKA: A person may be young and have that experience; it may come at any time in one's life. To some it comes gradually, but then it is a long process, while to others something suddenly happens in their lives and in the twinkling of an eye the world has become different; everything suddenly has a different value. This is natural initiation.

TASAWWUF: The commentator had such experiences when young and the people around did not comprehend them. They had sets of values and even when they nodded about another experience or philosophy, themselves remaining in a state of constancy or of very slow evolution, they could not grasp the complete change which can be brought about suddenly.

The Christian scriptures may say about "the twinkling of an eye" and the Zen Buddhists may posit a "sudden experience" but unless one has such experiences, these views can even become obstacles to one's development. Indeed the tendency is to judge others by some such basis. The result is that many young mystics are compelled to face such opposition that they may not remain in the body; or else will lapse to a lower gradient so that they adjust to the (false) demands of society.

GATHEKA: How is this initiation brought about? What is its metaphysical process? The soul is veiled by covers, one cover over the other, and the rending of these covers allows the soul to emerge or to rise higher. Naturally with the next step the horizon of its outlook becomes wider, and the soul reaches further while life becomes more clear.

TASAWWUF: The *Gayan* proclaims the need for a wider view and the devotional and moral people all acclaim becoming "better," doing more good. But what is this "good?" How does one know it is a good and not an evil? This is really a difficult question. But it need neither be asked nor answered. Growth comes with broadening sympathies and outlooks.

Too many are willing to extend this, it would seem, to include angels but not one's fellow men. One sees so many faults in the humankind. But those who affirm love for God, or friendship with angels, are often deluded. The scriptures posit love for humankind and this is one of the bases of Sufism. Metaphysical knowledge without such an expanded heart is useless, has always been declared useless by the wise and yet been sought by the unwise in all times.

GATHEKA: A person may not be conscious of such a change; he may ignore it or not know about it, yet it is there, even though among a hundred people perhaps only one is really conscious of it.

TASAWWUF: This has been the life-history of the commentator. From the beginning he had the sense of divine Presence. Other people did not have that sense; they had some feeling, some doctrine but the lifting of the veils was not theirs. They could read about covers and they could have an intellectual appreciation but not the direct experience.

No matter how often it is said, yet the generality judges and continues to judge. Once a great Sufi came to San Francisco. His Pir-O-Murshid had become world famous and so he was welcomed. And when he pointed to the commentator as having the Grace, the whole audience turned against him. They wanted a fantasy, some manifestation of an imagination; or perhaps the appearance in human form of an adept skilled in miracles. But the miracles of perception and love they did not care for.

It was after this rejection that the commentator, having received the blessings (Baraka) from this holy man as well as from many others, began to succeed in his mission.

GATHEKA: At every step forward that the soul takes on the path it naturally comes closer to God, and coming closer to God means inheriting or drawing towards oneself the qualities of God. In other words the soul sees more, hears more, comprehends more, and enjoys more, because it lives a greater, higher life.

TASAWWUF: We become closer to God as we widen our spheres of activity and consciousness. This is extensive as well as intensive. Devotional people emphasize [extensity]. There are many who pray about a “closer walk with God” which may mean nothing. And there are others who talk about communications with the planets and they seem to be operating through a grand space. But even from the physical view this grand space is hardly a speck in the cosmos.

Both of these are quantitative, not qualitative changes. The heart is concerned with the qualitative changes. The heart is wider than the space but the real growth comes when it is attuned to more hearts until it finds all hearts within itself and recognizes all persons as the beloved ones of God, not symbolically, not verbally but in actual consciousness.

GATHEKA: The teachers and prophets who had to give a message to humanity, who had to render a service to humanity, had such initiations even in their childhood.

TASAWWUF: We can read this in the Hebrew Bible concerning Samuel and Jeremiah and others. But though we read it we may wonder why it does not happen any more. How can a God of absolute justice and humanity be confined so that His blessings do not reach the world any more? But it is untrue; God is ever at hand, ever closer than the neck-vein.

TASAWWUF: The great sin of the orthodox and heterodox is in keeping God far away. People want forgiveness for sins and they regard Allah as far away. Thus they can not have the forgiveness; it is there, it is from the God Who is at hand, not from the distant Deity. And when man will recognize the God who is ever near, he will have the forgiveness. Otherwise he will be praying forever for Mercy, he does not recognize the ever-present Mercy. It is not the God Who is far away who forgives the sin, but the Allah Who is closer than the neck-vein. Forgiveness comes with the recognition with the Ever-Present but All-Pervading Deity.

GATHEKA: There is a symbolical story that the heart of the Prophet Mohammed was opened and

some substance was taken out of it. People take this literally; but the real meaning is that a cover was torn away, and the soul was allowed to reach upward and go further on the path. There may be many such initiations, perhaps one or two or six or seven according to the state of evolution of the initiate.

TASAWWUF: This teaching appears in *The Unity of Religious Ideals* and is also considered in the esoteric teachings. In the future people may accept that Mohammed was one of the human evolution and not above the human evolution. The devotees proclaim that and do not achieve and all the proclamations without the realizations become useless. If what the devotees hold were correct they could control the world as well as themselves and they control neither. It does not come that way.

The Sufi seeks to progress wherever he is, whether on earth or in heaven; whether in a gross body or a subtle one. And as the Diamond Sutra also proclaims, the initiate is not concerned with the number of initiations he may have had, can have, but what is his duty this very minute.

GATHEKA: Life as we live it today is very difficult for a person whose outlook is thus suddenly changed, for the world lives nowadays at a certain pitch and it cannot tolerate someone whose pitch is below or above the ordinary pitch of life. People dislike such a one, they make difficulties for him, they disapprove of him and of his ideas; and if he does not have any friend or guide on the path, then he may linger on in the same plane of thought till nature helps him, for everything else pulls him backwards.

TASAWWUF: It is remarkable how the sages of all faiths agree on this point. But no matter how often they say it, the public shakes its head in agreement and goes on judging as it always has and ignorant people select and vote as if the Hierarchy were subject to democratic appeal. Therefore Sufis avoid judgment along this line and see the Divine Light in all forms and the Divine Love in all beings.

GATHEKA: Some people think that saints, masters, or sages have no need for initiation, but they forget that no soul can go further on the path without initiation.

TASAWWUF: There are many concepts, many speculations. The late Nyogen Senzaki used always to pay tribute to his Initiator, Shaku Soyen. People in the West acclaim Milarepa as the greatest of Tibetan initiates but they ignore his Master, Marpa. Marpa was very different, totally unlike the imaginary saint of the West. This has come to be pictured as Galahad who uncovered the Holy Grace. But Galahad is a concept and a concept of human weakness, while Marpa was a living man of great strength, a true Master.

Actually we can read about this in the lives of all saints and masters, both ancient and modern.

GATHEKA: What is the result of this natural initiation? Bewilderment, extreme bewilderment. But this bewilderment is not the same as confusion; there is a vast difference between the two. In

confusion there is an element of doubt, but when a person is bewildered he says, "How wonderful, how marvelous; words cannot explain it; it is a miracle!" It may appear quite simple to someone else, but to an advanced person it is a miracle. And there may be others who say, "How foolish, I do not see anything in what you have seen!" But what one has perceived is so marvelous that it cannot be explained.

TASAWWUF: It cannot be explained to the generality. They always want things explained in terms of what is already known. If mankind had to, and would explain all new things in terms of what was already known, there would either be no advancement or extreme confusion. We can see since the industrial revolution great advances in the outer sciences and also new vocabulary. But the metaphysical people want advances in the inner sciences explained in traditional terms; it can not be done, it has never been done. Even what is known as meta-language can not do it. It is something entirely different. But it is also possible to build up new vocabularies from it as new vocabularies have been built in the sciences and for mathematics.

GATHEKA: Such is life; it is a difference of outlook. One person sees a wonder, a splendor, and another says, "What of it? It is quite simple; it is nothing." And the one who says this thinks that he is superior because to his mind it is simple, while the one who wonders has the outlook of a child, for a child wonders at everything.

TASAWWUF: The English philosopher Spencer said that Love was something complicated which he thought he could explain and the English mystic, Carpenter said that Love was something simple which could not be explained. These show two quite different views.

What is necessary is to rise above the perfect philosophy, or any thoughts at all and ourselves submit or experience the transformations which make this possible. A transformed personality is not necessarily a grown or larger continuation of anything or anyone, but there is a complete change without any destruction. It is an integration, a transcendence into another dimension. But this does not mean there is any complexity; the wise are often most simple.

GATHEKA: No doubt it is childlike, but it is the child's soul that sees; it sees more than the soul of a grown-up which has become covered by a thousand veils. In infancy the child can see the angelic world, it can talk with unseen entities, it can see wonderful things belonging to the different planes.

TASAWWUF: This has been most clearly emphasized in the works of Jesus Christ, both those found in the Christian testament and otherwise. It also appears in the earlier Hebraic literature. It does not appear so much in the institutes of man. Man's soul is covered by a thousand veils and he may keep on repeating the words that the soul is so covered but he will not remove these veils; they remain. And so although it is the soul that sees, the outer impressions come from the veils and veiled and not from the clear sight.

We could learn much more wisdom if the keen sight of the infant were respected. As man grows in

wisdom this sight will be more respected. When it is so respected it will not always disappear so soon. And in this way those who retain it or are so blessed will again be consulted as founts of wisdom, to the benefit of all mankind.

GATHEKA: It is easy to say of something that it is childlike, innocent, or ignorant; yet it is the most wonderful thing to be childlike and to have the innocence of an infant. There is nothing better to wish for, as in this all happiness and beauty are to be found.

TASAWWUF: Now how to do that; how to accomplish it? It is not easy. So many things become important to us. There is both in Sufism and other mystery schools both the teaching and the methodologies of unlearning. And we grasp the words; and we do not grasp the processes. We should not be surprised therefore that some Zen Masters have taken sticks and beaten people and often severely, but with remarkable results. One could hardly think that—that methods seemingly bordering on cruelty and sadism have sometimes succeeded in awakening devotees and all the philosophies and kindnesses (masked as indulgences) have failed.

Besides, a child may cry if beaten and then forgive. He may not know why but he will not react. A grown-up reacts and every reaction ties one more firmly to the wheel-of-life.

In *The Inner Life* and its commentaries procedures are offered so that one can experience the stages of unlearning. Otherwise one may be confused by the word “unlearning” and make it an addition to learning. When one is instructed to take clothes off, he puts on more.

Meditation is not a method to lead to nothingness. It is a way to find one’s true being regardless of additions or changes or outer garb. What is it? Who is it that exists behind these covers? Therefore one removes the thinking, so to speak, from the region of the head. The mind becomes stilled but the consciousness continues.

Then there is always the question of the experience of joy and happiness. No pretense avails. Either one has it or not and each one may be his own judge here.

GATHEKA: This bewilderment produces a kind of pessimism in a person, but a pessimism which cannot be compared with what we ordinarily call pessimism. For we regard pessimism as a kind of wretchedness, but this is something different. A hint of this is to be found in Omar Khayyam’s verse, “O, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears today of past regret and future fears; tomorrow, why tomorrow I may be myself with yesterday’s sev’n thousand years!” This pessimism comes as an upliftment, it makes a person see life from a different angle. The very life which seemed before to be towering over his head suddenly appears to be beneath his feet.

TASAWWUF: This is a transformatory experience which occurs to the mystic. It may not occur to the intellectual, or to the pious or to those who are incapable of unlearning. They remain in their places. But this pessimism is also a regret, that others cannot see, that one seems to stand alone so far as the crowd is concerned and yet one is not standing alone. Each one of the crowd,

although many, seems to be standing alone and bereft and the one who has passed the gates, though seemingly alone, is not alone. He finds the company of heaven. He finds what he has been seeking and can not explain it.

GATHEKA: What is it then? Besides calling it pessimism one could also call it indifference, or independence, and yet it is none of these things. There is no word for it in English; in Sanskrit it is called **Vairagya**, an emotion, a feeling quite different from all other ways of looking at life, an outlook which brings one into an entirely different world of thought. The values of things and conditions seem to change completely.

TASAWWUF: And when this happens the aspirant may be finding himself alone. His close companions will not understand him; and the rest will understand him still less. He may be regarded as mad. The greater his understanding and awakening, the more likely he is to be deserted and ignored without being disliked.

This is a process which all initiates must go through. It is not a peculiar person but every one who may face the test, "He was scorned and rejected of men." Many Sufi aspirants even bravely face this but when it is so faced, when one is self-aware of it, the value is limited. It is not to challenge the crowd, the others, it is to challenge one's self, one's self must grow. Spiritual development is not concerned with the state of the generality and the Vairagya must of all persons attain an indifference, disregarding both favor and disfavor.

GATHEKA: One might think that it would be an uninteresting life to be indifferent, but that is not so; it is most interesting; it gives one a feeling as if the burden of life was lightened. What a wonderful feeling this is! Think what a little relaxation after a day's toil can do, when one can just rest for a moment; what upliftment comes, what soothing vibrations, and how the mind feels refreshed! If then the spirit has the same experience, feeling that the load it is continually carrying day and night is lifted, then it too feels widened for a moment. What a blessing this is! It cannot be spoken of in words, but the one who has had even a slight experience of it can comprehend its value.

TASAWWUF: We do have something like this in the remarkable poem of the American lady, Edna St. Vincent Millay. It well tells, if anything can tell, some aspects of this experience. This, and not the daily life of toil and care and worry, may be the norm of the soul. But for this one has to throw off, disregard, and it is not easy. Then one also can reach a stage where both the burden and the absence of burden disappear. This is not the indifference of the heartless, it is the indifference of the heart-awakened.

One of the strange factors in human behavior is that, with all the commandments about loving the neighbor as oneself, when it comes to transcendent development the tendency is to look almost everywhere else. So in America and other western lands many look upon Asians and other people from afar with a sort of awe; and in some Islamic lands they so look upon Arabs, and in India we find people looking at everybody but at their neighbors for some examples of higher evolution.

But we should probably find the people of higher evolution looking too, and looking even harder than others.

GATHEKA: No doubt there comes a time in a man's life when even if he were initiated a thousand times by nature he will seek for a guide walking on earth. Many will say, "Why is God not sufficient? Why must there be someone between God and man? Why must it be a man who is just as limited as we are? Why can we not reach the spirit of God directly?"

TASAWWUF: How will one know how to guide unless also he has been guided? How will one really know the points of view of others without the direct experience? Even the military know better; there have been times when colonels and other high officers have had to review all their work and return to functioning in all degrees from buck or low rank private up. After they have seen life from the points of view of others they are better able to lead. If the military know that and do that, does one expect the wise to skip it? Besides, what is humility? There is so much false humility in the world. Humility does not consist of bowing to a God Whom one has not seen and to the kings one has seen but not to the universe. This humility is nothing but a form of pride, and instead of obliterating the ego it increases it and also produces hypocrisy.

We can see it in all ages and in the chains of Sufis and in the Patriarchal transmission which produced Zen Buddhism. The Upanishads are full of chains of teachers and pupils for generations and also for many instances of the highest spiritual experiences. These did not come out of the individuals; they came from the chains, the transmissions which go on and on.

Besides, do we not obtain our water-power, our electricity and all sorts of things indirectly? Yes, there is God there, but it is like God filtered. The filtered God is the same real God Who has made the accommodation so that man can appreciate Him more fully, by recognizing Him in others. If one could only recognize God in oneself and not in others, whatever word be used, that would not indicate God in His fullness.

GATHEKA: But in a man who is your enemy and who has tortured you throughout your life, in another who is your greatest friend, and in your teacher who inspires and guides you, in all these is to be seen the hand of God.

TASAWWUF: If one can see the God in one's enemies one can surely gain a friend. What causes the enmity? What brings the friendship? It is the same God. We learn to see Him in friend and foe. If God were not there, what would bind the atoms and cells of the personality together? It is the God that makes a being a being whatever your attitude toward him or him toward you.

GATHEKA: They have all three guided you on the path of inspiration; they are all three needed in order that you may go further in life. The one who has disappointed you, who has harmed you, is also your initiator, for he has taught you something, he has put you on the road, even if not in the right way.

TASAWWUF: The commentator had a brother and the brother did everything in life, everything to stop him. Then there came a time when attorneys intervened and suggested friendship. "He will either betray me or be my best friend." And then the brother reversed himself and became the champion ... the same one who tried to destroy and harm. So in this former enmity one could see nothing but the divine wisdom operating. He brought out hidden faculties which otherwise would have remained dormant.

And then there were other enemies and some of them most terrible enemies. But as one looked back one could see it was these enemies that provoked the great inspirations. It was not love nor nature nor triumph, but these great enemies that evoked the great inspirations and stimulated all the work done on and for the Cause of God. So one's enemies are really one's friends before God.

GATHEKA: And he who is your friend is your initiator too, for he gives you evidence of truth, the sign of reality; only love can give you a proof that there is something living, something real.

TASAWWUF: The initiator had a disciple and every now and then she would ask for a new dance or inspiration and there would be no sign or anything. Then with the least meditation the veils would lift and out of the cosmos a new creation, often so rapid it was like a miracle. This shows the true friend.

GATHEKA: And then there is the inspiring teacher, be he a humble man, an illiterate person, or a meditative soul, a great teacher or a humble one, he is what you think him to be, as everyone is to us what we think them to be.

TASAWWUF: Here it is difficult to verbalize. Whatever be conveyed in words would suggest comparison rather than inspiration. The teacher inspires. Both his favorable and unfavorable comments inspire. He wants the disciple to face God in reality and all his actions toward the disciple are for that purpose and only for that purpose.

GATHEKA: If it were not necessary that man should guide his fellow-men, Jesus Christ would not have been placed among those fishermen who could not understand him; and yet he proved to be their guidance.

TASAWWUF: The guidance of Jesus has not been understood. The real church is a chain of Baraka, or blessings and establishes also lines of gurus and chelas as among the Hindus. Only in the Christian world this was forced underground and there are not many signs of continued lines of descent among the Christians. The Christians had an institutional church as the Hindus had not, so we find more lines of spiritual descent among the Hindus and more devotional and ritualist lines among the Christians. But when the eyes of the world are opened the real descent from Jesus will also be understood as those from the Auharyas in India.

GATHEKA: The presence on earth of personalities such as Buddha and all the other

teachers—many of them not even known to humanity though they have done so much, but who always are and always will be under whatever name and in whatever guise they may work—gives guidance to individuals and to humanity.

TASAWWUF: If we go back in history, and better if we go into the pre-history which so entices Anthropologists, we can see that there are many jumps in the growths of cultures. There are few signs of steady slow rises, but jumps, and these indicate that there must have been a master-mind among those people, just far enough ahead of the generality to produce what to them would be remarkable changes.

We do not necessarily know too much how the wheel came into existence or the cam; how grains came to be adopted; or the beginnings of pottery or even basket weaving and metal-work. If we look closely there are generally legends and all these legends have some truth in fact. And along with that when societies began to be formed some master would also bring a moral code to enable human-beings to live with their fellows. This has happened in all times and in all places and gradually the world will become aware of it.

GATHEKA: **God never reaches so directly and so fully as when He reaches through His teachers.** The best way for God to reach human beings is through a human being; not through an angel but through man who is subject to birth and death and to all the faults that everyone has.

TASAWWUF: This lesson was distinctly offered in Qur'an but there is a vanity that some people think it is most wonderful to be in communication with angels. No doubt this is wonderful, most wonderful, but what about the other wonders? One does not have the same love from and with angels as one can have from and with human-beings if one only looked.

No doubt communication with angels is a wonderful undertaking, but understanding of man is still more wonderful. It is like lifting; to lift a slight load requires a slight effort and to lift a heavy load much more effort. And if we can succeed with the heavy, we can proceed with the light but the reciprocal is not always true.

The teaching of the supremacy of man is found in all religions. It is by-passed by false esoteric cults who teach about super-beings and thus are allured into false paths. There is no God but God and He has created mankind in His image.

GATHEKA: The way of the teacher with his initiate is strange. The greater the teacher the stranger may be the way. The teacher may test and the teacher may give trials; and the attitude of the teacher can never be understood, for a real teacher never commits himself. Neither his yes nor his no can be understood, for their meaning will be symbolical and very subtle.

TASAWWUF: And yet with a hundred repetitions of this the pupils will expect some solid behavior-pattern from the teacher, some code, some principle by which they can judge him and his apparent goals. It is not that way. The path to God is not only full of subtleties, it is even beyond that.

Many people read books on Zen. The more subtle, even the more incomprehensible the stories, the more they are supposed to represent Zen. And then it would appear that fantasy is being substituted for enlightenment. But there is no sign that this is really so. He only is a true teacher who can lead his disciples to and through enlightenment. Otherwise he is not a perfect teacher. Being called “perfect teacher” does not make one perfect. Being qualified to lead disciples through the experience of completion proves the qualification.

While this may be so regarding the **thoughts** about Zen—not to be confused with the Zen-experience, when it comes to other methods people expect the teacher to be straightforward and criticize him when he is not; but a different kind of teacher they do not expect to be straightforward and criticize him when he is. This all causes confusion and only shows that the ignorant in the spiritual sense are not qualified to write or speak about that which they have not realized.

GATHEKA: Perhaps he will speak in parables, perhaps he will teach without teaching, perhaps he will teach more just by a glance than by speaking a hundred words. Perhaps the presence of the teacher is of greater blessing in the life of the pupil than a hundred books he has read.

TASAWWUF: Therefore the wise disciple will not be lead by his intellect or his judgment. If people only knew it, the atmosphere of the teacher brings more than his words and just to be in that atmosphere may be the greatest boon. But it takes a long time for this principle to penetrate the hearts and consciousness of even the most advanced disciples. They want complications, and if the teacher gives a complex practice they often love it and admire him for it.

GATHEKA: Neither the indifference nor the sympathy of the teacher may be taken for what they appear to be, for in both there is something else. The more one studies the personality of the teacher, the more puzzled one becomes. The teacher is the initiator of life, he is the example of the subtlety of the whole of life.

TASAWWUF: In the Orient the disciples sit quietly and accept anything that the teacher says. They may consult him on all sorts of matters and some Murshids even act as if authorities on many matters and seldom discuss metaphysics and spiritual philosophy at all. And there are others who do nothing else, who are very meticulous and they seem to be concerned only with God. And yet there is no proof that they are necessarily closer to God than those who use their atmospheres more than words. In the end the development of the disciple is the only measuring stick.

GATHEKA: Some people affirm that they have been initiated by a teacher on the other side. Well, perhaps they have; but are they not then in two worlds, the teacher in one and the initiate in the other? The initiate neither belongs to the teacher’s world, nor does the teacher belong to his.

TASAWWUF: This is particularly true of those who claim to have been initiated by Khujah Khizr and in this case it may be true. It is a very special case. Mostly it does not come that way. Beside, this is for peculiar forms of development and it is not necessarily binding for the fulfillment of life in the world.

GATHEKA: This surely gives one less trouble than having to regard the pleasure of a living being; it is easier to feel that one has someone at one's back who is always whispering in one's ear and who speaks to one in dream or vision. It is not wrong and in some cases it is even true; there are souls, there are teachers who have perhaps not given on earth what they had to give, what they had to impart to others. But that is not the normal process.

TASAWWUF: We have to distinguish here and distinguish sharply between what may be called "spiritual guides" and "spirit-guides." Either by Grace or at a certain stage of development the lines between this world and the next may become very dim. But the spiritual guide, even though he contacts the person on earth is concerned only with two things: (a) the awakening of the person to whom he manifests; or (b) the teaching for humanity through that person.

The spirit-guide, on the other hand, is concerned with particulars, with little details in the life of an individual. And when such a person manifests, he deprives the earthly person of the opportunity to grow not only spiritually but even mentally. We can always listen for voices and this subject is discussed both in the teachings on Spirit Phenomena and also in *Cosmic Language*, but this is apart from the processes of initiation and growth. Multiplicity of phenomena, even of miracles, does not always attest to the magnitude of heart or consciousness as a whole.

GATHEKA: If it were a normal process then all the teachings would have been sent from the other side, but neither Buddha nor Jesus Christ nor Mohammed gave their teachings from there.

TASAWWUF: We find in both Indian literature and in the Hebrew Kabbalah (not the intellectual literature mislabeled as such) that the Holy Spirit descends whenever the world is in need. It is not the manifestation nor communication from particular spirits or angels, but a whole complete process so that the will of God can be known to man, especially when man is in need.

Hardly anyone who claims to learn the physical sciences by having a teacher living in subtle planes. Once there was a Parsi scientist named Colonel Dinshaw who made such claims and we certainly cannot disprove it. Even scientist like Lodge and Crookes also claimed to have visitors from the unseen but these visitor from the unseen do not seem to have come in the guise of instructors. The fact that they inhabited subtle instead of physical bodies did not mean that they were automatically more advanced.

Besides, it is no kind of even subtle hearing and sight which is needed. These are only the surface facets of the opening of the deeper qualities which come from transformation and transmutation.

GATHEKA: Today the prevailing thought is that no man should guide his fellow-men and that there is no virtue in such guidance. This thought is so widespread that it is preventing people from seeking guidance from someone who is facing the same struggles, the same troubles, and who has the same experience as everyone else.

TASAWWUF: The commentator had to undergo all kinds of hardships and for many, many years. It

seemed totally unjust. It was all the more of a mystery and quandary that one was also under divine guidance. How could one have divine guidance, surrender to God, and yet have to face one hardship and hazard after another? And then a time came when it was like a New Age, perhaps it was a new age. The young people could no longer accept their traditions and they felt or found that there was life beyond the physical plane.

Then it dawned that all the hardships, all the sufferings, all the rejections and difficulties were preparations. And these preparations made it very easy to empathize if not outrightly sympathize with the new type of problems. The whole world seemed to be in a quandary but the commentator was not in a quandary. All his difficulties were preparations and as Holy Qur'an teaches, "Verily with difficulty cometh ease." Everybody wants the ease and also to avoid difficulties. But it is not in avoiding difficulties, it is in facing difficulties that the universe of Joy makes its manifestation on earth.

GATHEKA: They go on rejecting such a man, as Jesus Christ was rejected, and at the same time they are looking for someone on the other plane!

TASAWWUF: If God made the earth as well as the Heavens why shouldn't He be hidden on earth as in the Heavens; also why shouldn't He appear on earth as well as in the Heavens. The Bible says, "The Heavens declare the Glory of God;" but it also says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

Qur'an says that Allah always has His representatives on earth. Sufis give out the teachings of the Hierarchy. But it is only a few who accept that. They seek for perfect men far away, in mysterious places. While more of the world pictures the saints and sages to be in the Himalayas where perhaps a few live, one proclaimed representative of Sufism places them in a part of Afghanistan where nobody lives. No wonder the ideal that the holy men keep far away from society abounds. But Christ and Krishna and Mohammed did not keep far away from society. There was no Messenger of God who stayed long in retirement. Even when he did it was only for the purpose of coming back to mingle with humankind and bring teachings.

GATHEKA: Many societies and groups have puzzled their heads so much over this subject that they have deprived themselves of that living water which follows its natural course through the world of man.

TASAWWUF: Even Paul Brunton, who had such adventures, found his ideals living among men, each in his way. God dwells in the hearts of men, not in the jungles or mountains difficult to climb. How can we reconcile any God of Love and Mercy who behaved that way! Thus we have the Bodhisattva ideal also to work and live with the humankind.

GATHEKA: The work of the teacher is most subtle. It is like that of a jeweler who has to melt the gold first in order to make an ornament out of it. It has first to be melted, but once it is melted, once it is not hard metal any more but has become liquid, then it can be made into a crown or a ring or

an ornament; then one can make a beautiful thing out of it.

TASAWWUF: The same is true of character-building; the same is true of the transformations of spiritual development and the initiatory process. It is this which is that true Alchemy. It is this which is our inheritance from ancient Egypt. It has nothing to do with weird dreams and the geometry of other peoples. It is toward the sublime, not from the shadow side of things. That is why one speaks of "The Alchemy of Happiness."

GATHEKA: And after this there is a further step. When the pupil has received the initiations that the teacher has to give, then the teacher's task is over, and he sends him on. The teacher does not hold the pupil indefinitely; he has his part to perform during the journey on the path, but then comes the inner initiation.

TASAWWUF: When one works with the teacher, this may be called **fana-fi-Sheikh**. It may take one up several degrees, many degrees. There is no exact arithmetic to it. The grace of the teacher manifests only in the awakenings of the disciple and not in any personality prowess. The duty of the teacher is to act as a Cupid to bring the souls of men to God. Praise of the teacher may benefit the pupil, not the teacher. And proclamation of the worthiness of the teacher may benefit neither. We find all kinds of these proclamations coming from many directions; we do not find so many evidences of God-consciousness or what is called Christ-consciousness or Krishna-consciousness which are of lower degrees. The very proclaiming so shows limitations; even if it be true it shows limitation.

GATHEKA: This comes to the disciple who has become meditative, whose interest has become keen, whose outlook has widened, who sees life differently, whose conscience has acquired the habit of reasoning, of expanding.

TASAWWUF: This can never be true of the self-proclaimers of those who are satisfied to be proclaimed. The Sufis hold La Illaha El Il Allah and this is of infinite value to those who travel the Path which after all is to God, and also is with God and also is in God though one may not know this at first.

The pupil may recognize his transformations and many are thus announced as Khalifs which really means they have become the representatives of God on earth, although in another sense they have become representatives of the Murshid and also of the Sufi Order in its ultimate and proper sense.

GATHEKA: No doubt in this experience there is always help to be had. As help comes on earth so in the unseen world too that help then comes. It is as if we were in the street in some kind of difficulty; naturally others would come up to see if they could be of any assistance.

TASAWWUF: We cannot repeat too often the Sufi Invocations. It may take many years or it may take a shorter time for the realization that this is true, that there are many illuminated souls both in

the seen and unseen world, and that they work together, that they help one another. Besides, something happens to one's atmosphere and one's person which draws help when help is necessary whether for so-called material or so-called spiritual purposes.

This is both an inner and outer process. It comes consciously after a while in both one's inner life and one's outer life.

GATHEKA: So as one goes further one attracts the sympathy of beings who are always busy helping humanity from all planes of existence.

TASAWWUF: This is true actually and not symbolically. Symbolism has its values, its precious but still limited values. Realization has its values but they are unlimited; there is no end to them. Whether we accept the Sufi cosmology or that of the theosophists or Buddhists or anybody, this becomes the experience of man. And if there is any brotherhood between man and angels it does not come from man appealing to angels but from angels coming to the assistance of man.

But the help of angels and of saints and sages that have passed on comes to man through Divine Grace, not through any invocation or evocation. It is man's work to appeal to God and it is God's Grace to help man as He pleases.

GATHEKA: The sympathy of those who are close to the one who is traveling on the path is attracted, giving him a hand to go forward. It is that giving of a hand which is called initiation. There are so many different initiations: they are all steps by which to go upward.

TASAWWUF: Sufism has often been taught as passing through fana-fi-Sheikh; fana-fi-Rassoul; fana-fi-Lillah. In fana-fi-Sheikh it is usually one teacher at a time, perhaps one teacher for all of life or again after that teacher passes then another one. But when one comes to fana-fi-Rassoul, that also is of two types.

Usually it has been the initiation in and through one personality. We have a whole list in Salat and also the statement that this list is a limitation, that there have been others of the same degree not necessarily recorded in history or literature. And for ages those in fana-fi-Rassoul were separate as if each type of mystic belonged to a different line of evolution. And perhaps this was so.

But now we have come to the age of Brotherhood and it is possible that through fana-fi-Rassoul one also receives the initiations of many or all the Illuminated Souls Who form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. This is certainly the theme of the poem "Saladin" and it is evidenced in other poetry coming from the same source.

GATHEKA: In conclusion I shall mention what is attained through initiation. What one attains is that realization for which we are born, which is our life's purpose. Unless we approach life's purpose, nothing we do will help us sufficiently; it will only help us perhaps in a certain need of ours, but not any further.

TASAWWUF: We can read about this in *The Purpose of Life* and its commentary. We can read about this in Sufi literature and elsewhere, even in the class-room instructions. But these are only preparations for the attainment. It is the attainment alone which is valid. We do not know the sciences by literary reports and reviews. We know the outer sciences through direct effort and also the inner states through direct experience.

GATHEKA: There is only one thing which gives complete satisfaction, and that is to arrive at self-realization. It is not simple and it needs more than just meditation and concentration, although these are of great help in the attainment of self-realization.

TASAWWUF: If meditation and concentration alone brought self-realization there would be many self-realized people in the world. Many try these and are assiduous and nothing happens. Then they blame themselves and instead of becoming freed souls, they even become masochists. They inflict punishment on themselves and think that is the way to illumination. There is no precedent for it. And few accept what Buddha taught, that if the method does not bring satisfaction it is the method, not the person that is to blame.

But religionists do not follow their teacher or even their teachings. When the method, the ritual, the discipline fails, the person is blamed as not being worthy. Actually as Buddha also taught but not many Buddhists accept, that there may be as many ways to enlightenment as there are sentient beings. Then after proclaiming that they stick to few, sometimes to a single method and are very insistent about it. But nothing happens; people do not reach liberation.

GATHEKA: And those who believe that by reading a book on Yoga they can get to that realization are mistaken. They are mistaken because it is a phenomenon; and it is by this phenomenon that one proceeds further.

TASAWWUF: As the Gita teaches, of many that seek the Lord, some few have the attainment. And this will always be while man is attached to name and form. Even when man verbally proclaims himself free from name and form it is often only to further the attachment to, and the bondage of ego.

It is not necessary to argue with these people. It is not necessary even to enlighten them. They are asleep and they should be permitted to enjoy that sleep.

GATHEKA: Some people think that by straightforward study, by purely scientific study, they can come to realization, but in order to attain self-realization a certain way of life is necessary.

TASAWWUF: We are told that enlightenment comes through unlearning. And yet some think it comes from learning. If it came from learning we should be finding the universities full of enlightened people. And yet it is often around the university we find more trouble, more disturbances than elsewhere. This ought to demonstrate that spiritual attainment is something else. Book learning has its value, scientific training has its value, divine awakening has its value, but they

are all different values.

GATHEKA: Is it the life that religious people teach, that one should live in such and such a way? Is it a life according to certain principles, certain dogmas? No, nothing of that kind. It is the continual process of effacing the self; it is just like grinding something which is very hard; it is a continual grinding of the self.

TASAWWUF: We thus have the philosophy of what it is not and we also have the instructions of what it is and how to obtain it. The whole science and art of esotericism helps in this and this comes from practice and realization. Man knows of himself when he has arrived. There is an increased accommodation of light and a new outlook; even every minute there may be a new outlook.

GATHEKA: And the more that self is softened, the more highly a person evolves and the greater the personality becomes. No matter what power and inspiration a person may have acquired, if there is no self-effacement nothing is accomplished. The result brought about by initiation is self-effacement, and it is self-effacement which is needed in order to arrive at true wisdom.

TASAWWUF: Self-effacement is not self-debasement. Self-debasement is another form of the activity of nufs. In awakening the grand life comes to the surface; it operates through the personality. The personality becomes a channel for it. And the wider that channel is, the more love and light and life can pour through it. It is both light upon light and experience upon experience as Imam Al-Ghazali taught.

The Message of the day is not new. But it is like a codification, amalgamation and synthesis of all that is gone before. Only one does not have to think of it. By making accommodation for God and Truth every moment of one's life the self is effaced, and then not abolished but purified.

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](#)

Discipleship

GATHEKA: One wonders, especially in the Western part of the world, what the path of discipleship may really be. Although the path of discipleship was the path of those who followed Christ and all

the other teachers, the modern trend of thought has taken away much of the ideal that existed in the past.

TASAWWUF: We often find those who declare that there must be another method, another path for the people of the West. And also in the West we find those who accept traditions of Oriental peoples which the Orientals have discarded because they did not find them perfect. We find both trends in the West.

Actually there is no way for the people attached to nufs to determine who is the advanced one. There are many tales of spiritual teachers appearing in the guise of vagabonds and of madmen and in all kinds of ways. But no matter how many are these stories the generality either expect a certain kind of gentility or a certain kind of outlandishness and it is most difficult to inform a self-ignorant person; even with evidence he does not want to be moved. And that shows that he is still spiritually asleep. There is no need to awaken him.

GATHEKA: It is not only that the ideal of discipleship seems to be little known, but even the ideal attitude towards motherhood and fatherhood, as well as towards the aged, seems to be less understood.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes it is because of the revolt against tradition. Tradition has so firmly established motherhood and fatherhood, but separated them from the spiritual ideal, that naturally there is a revolt. One no longer sees God in the parent because the parent no longer manifests the God-qualities. Sometimes just the opposite. And the failure to impart love, wisdom and generosity to children, although indulging them in all sorts of material things, has provoked revolts and many of them within.

It is really the duty of the parent to examine both their responsibility to their offspring and also to unite their way of life to something more ideal. This is no longer done. The responsibility and authority come to reside in the parent and when there is nothing beyond, the souls of children feel that. But if the parents offer any modicum of spiritual ideal, this could not happen. And then it would be easy to encourage love and devotion to and for the parents.

GATHEKA: This change in the ideal of the world has worked unwittingly to such an extent that world-conflicts have been the result in our times. The troubles between nations and classes, in social and domestic life, all arise for one and the same reason. If someone were to ask me what is the cause of today's world unrest, I would answer that it is the lack of idealism.

TASAWWUF: And perhaps the strength in the young, despite all sorts of abuses and even mental disorder comes from this acceptance of idealism. However else they differ in whatever direction they are striving, many seem to accept idealism and their critics do not. And in accepting this idealism they are taking the first steps towards God-realization. Many intuitively feel that. This gives them continued strength.

This is not stopped by lectures, sermons, laws and campaigns. Laws and campaigns can not prevent the urges and surges which come from within. They have almost an infinite power in them, and so the more the efforts are made to stem the tide the more powerful the tide itself becomes.

GATHEKA: In ancient times the path of discipleship was a lesson to be applied in every direction of life. Man is not only his body; he is his soul. When a child is born on earth, that is not the time that the soul is born; the soul is born from the moment that consideration is born.

TASAWWUF: If people only knew that! Here by “soul” we mean the oncoming of an individual toward manifest consciousness, and the process of procreation should not be taken lightly. When it is taken lightly there is always the reciprocity and this works against man and woman who will not accept the responsibilities of adulthood.

If we read the Hebrew literature the responsibility is there and it has been codified legally. And it was not only among the Jews but among other peoples, that this being known, it became a restriction; laws had to be followed. And this freedom and joy a rarity. So what is necessary is to pursue righteousness freely, without restrictions. “To thee we give willing surrender.” “Freely give, freely receive.”

GATHEKA: This birth of consideration is in reality the birth of the soul; man shows his soul in his consideration. Some become considerate as children, others perhaps do not awaken to consideration throughout their whole life.

TASAWWUF: In his last Summer School, in his final addresses to mureeds and also to advanced disciples, Hazrat Inayat Khan emphasized this consideration above all else. His appeal was in vain. He knew it and left the mureeds never to return. It was only long after his passing that the teaching took any hold. Neither the speeches, the direct person or the words were effective for a long, long time.

But now the way is there for consideration. There is a new age with much purer outlooks and mankind is regarded as superior to all the things of earth, as it should be, for this was the very purpose of creation itself. God made man in His Image.

GATHEKA: Love is called a divine element, but love’s divine expression is nothing but consideration; and it would not be very wrong to say that love without consideration is not fully divine.

TASAWWUF: This was also the emphatic teaching of Jesus Christ. He also had to withdraw when he saw people were concerned with his personality, not with his teachings. No Messenger of God ever came to be worshipped; he came to teach and to hope that mankind would accept the teachings. Always the personality was accepted and the teachings fell into abeyance. Over and over again it has happened, but now there is a possibility that it will not happen. We reach an age when teachings will be considered and all personalities will be regarded as the beloved ones of

God.

GATHEKA: Love that has no consideration loses its fragrance.

TASAWWUF: In India there is Prema-Yoga. The soul is filled with ecstatic love. It is all directed to divinity. It is not directed to creation. Creation is called Maya and Maya is regarded as “illusion” yet in another sense Maya means Divine Mother. We cannot compel that. We can even direct our love to the God that is above all attributes and polarities. But until we love God’s creatures we really do not love God very much. We are still too concerned with ego-self. Even the highest of Bhaktis who becomes absorbed in Prema-Yoga may be suffering from illusion.

Therefore Papa Ram Das said Yoga should be two parts of Bhakti and one part of Jnana. But in Sufism it is not necessary to say that, for Sufism itself is two parts Bhakti and one part of Jnana—it is so inherent in the teachings

GATHEKA: Moreover intelligence is not consideration.

TASAWWUF: So neither is the path of Jnana a complete path. Yet we must be careful; Sankaracharya has left us his poetry. It is not read much. His essays are studied, his writings in prose. Certain conclusions are reached by the majority who judge, who have not fully attained. When they have fully attained they will find that Sankara had a very fine side. Besides one cannot discover God and not find love, mercy, compassion and all beautiful qualities.

GATHEKA: It is the balance of love and intelligence, it is the action and reaction of love and intelligence upon each other that produce consideration.

TASAWWUF: This confirms what has been said. And besides we do not find the perfection in all the claims that are made by so many people. Their claims, their wishes, their teachings are often unbalanced or incomplete. It is only by direct experience of mankind that fulfillment may come—never in words, seldom by rituals

GATHEKA: Children who are considerate are more precious than jewels to their parents. The man who is considerate, the friend who has consideration, all those with whom we come in contact who are considerate, we value most.

TASAWWUF: This is the meaning to love another as oneself, to treat another as one would treat oneself, to deal with another as if one were dealing with oneself.

GATHEKA: Thus it is the lesson of consideration given by the spiritual teachers which may be called the path of discipleship. This does not mean that the great teachers have wanted the discipleship, devotion, or respect of the pupils for themselves. If any teacher expects that, he cannot be a teacher.

TASAWWUF: And that is just what often happens. There has been a procession of personalities, mostly from Asia. They come to the West which does not know what initiation and discipleship and devotion are. Instead of leading the people toward God and toward their own enlightenment, they make of them followers and followers they often remain through the life. It takes a harder awakening to arouse them than to arouse the ignorant for they have been misled.

GATHEKA: How could he then be a spiritual teacher, as he must be above all this in order to be above them? But respect, devotion, and consideration are taught for the disciple's own advantage, as an attribute that must be cultivated.

TASAWWUF: It may take a multitude of repetitions, "Thy light is in all forms, Thy love in all beings" before this properly impresses the mind. There are a million factors which make it otherwise but these all boil down to one, the nufs, the ego. As long as that persists one tends to expect more from others than he gives.

Besides this the teacher and indeed all the great ones should be examples to be followed, not personalities to be revered. All the reverence given to saints has not transformed the generality. But as soon as a great soul is taken as an example to be emulated, then there is a transformation. It may be very simple, it is always very real. And it is the love for all humanity that characterizes a great soul, not the accumulation of love as if it were some kind of wealth or possession.

GATHEKA: Until now there has been a custom in India, which I myself experienced when young, that the first things the parents taught their children were respect for the teacher, consideration, and a kindly inclination.

TASAWWUF: This is the natural tendency of the child anyhow. The soul is born uncovered and it becomes covered with a thousand veils. The culture, the society, the environment, any heaviness on the part of anybody approaching it, all these produce veils which hide the pristine purity. This is the life of every soul; it always happens. But there is also a way to combat it and this is the first lesson that may now be taught to children, no matter where they are born.

GATHEKA: A modern child going to school has not the same idea. He thinks the teacher is appointed to perform a certain duty; he hardly knows the teacher nor does the teacher know him well. When he comes home he has the same tendency towards his parents as at school. Most children grow up thinking that all the attention their parents give them is only part of their duty; at most they will think, "Perhaps one day if I am able I shall repay it."

TASAWWUF: This is a sense of separation that pervades all western society. There is something called "individualism" and it usually means to be more considerate toward oneself than toward others. And even when there is a change in the social philosophy, it is not always in this direction. Once the sense of separateness and separation is inculcated, it is not so easy to remove it.

GATHEKA: The ancient idea was different. For instance the Prophet Mohammed taught his

disciples that the greatest debt every man had to pay was to his mother, and if he wished his sins to be forgiven he must so act through life that at the end his mother before passing from this earth would say, "I have forgiven you the debt." There was nothing a man could give or do, neither money nor service, which would enable him to say, "I have paid my debt;" no, his mother must say, "I have forgiven you that debt." What does this teach? It teaches the value of that unselfish love which is above all earthly passion.

TASAWWUF: We may see this throughout history in many cultures, in many lands. But with the rise of industrialism, with the appeals to cupidity and the desire nature, when the fulfillment of desires was considered the objective in life, there was a great change. Besides mothers were taken out of the home and put in business, in industry, in arts, in society, everywhere else. Then the cohesion diminished. There was no longer the manifestation of this selflessness and so a great social and spiritual revolution took place in protest.

And all the oldest people themselves protested against these protests. But they could do nothing, for the conditions against which the protests were made arose out of the turn of direction from God to ego-self. And when the parents and the powerful emphasize ego-self, then the soul must protest. It cannot be otherwise.

What is necessary is for the young to restore parenthood. To show love and consideration to their offspring. When this happens then the souls of the children will turn to their parents as the last words of the Prophet Malachi, which close the Hebrew testament say. These words have been skipped, religion by-passes so much of the scriptures which seem offensive to it. We must restore this teaching by example.

GATHEKA: If we inquire of our self within for what purpose we have come on earth and why we have become human beings, wondering whether it would perhaps have been better to remain angels, the answer will certainly come to the wise, from his own heart, that we are here to experience a fuller life, to become fully human. For it is through being considerate that we become fully human.

TASAWWUF: The same thing is clearly seen in the history of Buddhism. From an analytical point of view Buddha gave exercises and teachings and the paths to deliverance. But he also taught that all things were subject to change and his followers did not fully accept this. For the awakening soul is more subject to change than anybody else. And each change of outlook can change the philosophy and way of life.

It was through such changes that some became painfully aware of the travail of others just as Buddha himself must have at the beginning of his career. It was his sense of consideration that led him to break with his past and it was this same sense of consideration that brought forth his teachings. But when the priestcraft became satisfied with formalities and when the sense of consideration disappeared, there was a diminution in spiritual attainment. This was the very purpose of his original mission. This purpose had not only to be restored but adjusted to meet the

needs of the times and of humanity. And it is this that led to what is known as Mahayana Buddhism and the principles connected with Karuna and Mahakaruna, utmost compassion.

In Sufism today we also accept these principles as the aims of life though with different techniques.

GATHEKA: For it is through being considerate that we become fully human. Every action done with consideration is valuable, every word said with consideration is precious. The whole teaching of Christ—"Blessed are the meek ... the poor in spirit"—teaches one thing: consideration.

TASAWWUF: There is no reason why **Karuna** should be translated as "compassion" and not as "consideration." Too often compassion is regarded as a virtue in the treatment of others, but if we really want to regard others as ourselves, we must pass to consideration. Too often there is verbal "compassion" without substance. This word, words in general have no meaning without essence. And the essence of compassion put into operation is consideration.

GATHEKA: Although it seems simple, yet it is a hard lesson to learn. The more we wish to act according to this ideal, the more we realize that we fail. The further we go on the path of consideration, the more delicate do the eyes of our perception become; we feel and regret the slightest mistake.

TASAWWUF: Thus in Sufism consideration is mingled with **tauba** which is called "repentance," which means a turning, a change in the direction of life, a change from selfhood. It is this turning in life away from ego that brings the compassion and also brings about that which makes it possible to see from the standpoint of another as well as of oneself.

GATHEKA: It is not every soul that takes the trouble to tread this path. Everyone is not a plant; there are many who are rocks, and these do not want to be considerate, they think it is too much trouble.

TASAWWUF: We see this all the time. And there is no question that some of the greatest obstacles have been put in the path of the spiritual evolution by people who otherwise seem good but who are unable or unwilling to bend themselves. They want to remain as they are; they expect change from everybody else.

GATHEKA: Of course the stone has no pain, it is the one who feels who has pain. Still, it is in feeling that there is life; life's joy is so great that even with pain one would rather be a living being than a rock, for there is joy in living, in feeling alive, which cannot be expressed in words.

TASAWWUF: And this is also one of the reasons for what has been called "generation gap." It is not necessarily one of age; it is between those who want to feel alive, be alive, and those who are satisfied with themselves and do not want anything to happen to change this satisfaction. It may seem peaceful, but it is much like the peace of the cemetery, no life.

GATHEKA: After how many millions of years has the life buried in stones and rocks risen to the human being! Even so if a person wishes to stay a rock, he had better stay so, though the natural inclination in every person should be to develop the human qualities fully.

TASAWWUF: This teaching appears in Rumi in his glorious *Masnavi* and it is now recognized that principles of evolution were held by spiritual philosophers many centuries before scientists thought of any such thing (excepting those scientists who themselves were under the same influences). It is fairly clear now that there may be a cosmic evolution all the way from atom to God, so to speak. But the best work done in creation is by man who alone was made in the divine image.

GATHEKA: The first lesson that the pupil learns on the path of discipleship is what is called **Yaqin** in Sufi terms, which means confidence. This confidence he first gives to the one whom he considers his teacher, his spiritual guide.

TASAWWUF: This subject has been dealt with at length by many Sufis and especially in *Kashf Al-Mahjub* by Sheikh Hujwiri (Data Ganj Baksh). He also means certainty and reliance and the teaching is to seek and emphasize reliance on God and not on ego-self. This is the teaching. When the *Kashf* is awakened and used the *Yaqin* comes automatically. When there is awareness of self it is seldom there.

One purpose of having a spiritual guide is to remove attention from self to what looks like "otherness." But the teacher is the manifestation of self also, but not within the confines of nufs.

GATHEKA: In the giving of confidence, three kinds of people can be distinguished. One gives a part of his confidence and cannot give another part. He is wobbling and thinking, "Yes, I believe I have confidence; perhaps I have, perhaps I have not." And this sort of confidence puts him in a very difficult position. It would be better not to have it at all.

TASAWWUF: There are many instances of it and it is very difficult for the teacher. He cannot always refuse guidance to such people, knowing they will not take it. They are no doubt also the beloved ones of God, but they are not yet fully awake. And we have this sort of character in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* who is called **Pliable** and he is always influenced by crowds.

GATHEKA: It is like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold. In all things this person will do the same, in business, in his profession. He trusts and doubts, he trusts and fears. He is not walking in the sky, he is not walking on the earth; he is in between the two.

TASAWWUF: In the Christian book of Revelation this sort of person is especially castigated, and also elsewhere in the scriptures. But in life this has not been so. The wicked have been called wicked and the good called good and a deep abyss has been made between them as if people had to be one or the other. But in life many, even the majority are not so.

Mohammed especially had to deal with these people and for a long time. He did not know which

way they would turn. They did not know which way they would turn. They were called “hypocrites.” Many ayats were written against them. They played a peculiar role for a long time. Then seeing victory was on the side of the Prophet and his successors; that honors and wealth would be won on the battlefield, they joined. But they also turned from Islam when the opportunity came and turned the Empire from a spiritual democracy to a dictatorial monarch in the name of Allah and Islam which they were certainly not.

GATHEKA: Then there is another kind, the one who gives his confidence to the teacher, but he is not sure about himself, he is not inwardly sure if he has given it. This person has no confidence in himself, he is not sure of himself; therefore his confidence is of no value.

TASAWWUF: And this person will be constantly seeking interviews. He will want to discuss everything. He will rely on the teacher, he will not rely on himself. He seems loyal and perhaps will remain loyal in a limited sense. The teacher is like a psychiatrist to whom he can go often without paying the fees. And so without paying the fees he will not always accept the suggestion.

One must become very strict about such people. One must learn how to make them carry loads, even simple ones, as if they were little children. One must be very patient in this; otherwise they will wear the teacher out without gaining much themselves.

GATHEKA: And the third kind of person is the one who gives confidence because he feels confident. This confidence alone can rightfully be called Yaqin.

TASAWWUF: Fortunately we find more and more of these seekers. In the New Age the seekers are seekers and not just led by curiosity. They must be taught with patience and yet assurance. And the wise teacher will see their paths, and build up confidence in them by reassurance and helping them to trust themselves.

GATHEKA: Jesus Christ had people of all these categories around him. Thousands of people of the first category came, thronged round the Master, then left him. It did not take one moment for them to be attracted, nor one moment for them to leave the Master.

TASAWWUF: This teaching appears in many places. It is especially stressed in the Gita. And while the intellectuals expound the Gita they make it appear otherwise. But the life is not so. The life is exactly as Sri Krishna has explained. Yes, it changes at times for at times there are many sincere and serious seekers on earth. When this occurs the teacher is fortunate. It is not because of himself he is fortunate, it is because of the evolution of the times.

There have been real or false spiritual teachers who have attracted wide attention. But it has not always followed; perhaps it never follows. For unless the vitality of the soul comes to the surface, it is all like a theatrical drama.

GATHEKA: In the second category are those who go on for some time, just as a drunken man

goes on and on; but when they are sober again things become clear to them and they ask themselves, "Where am I going? Not in the right direction."

TASAWWUF: The slightest study of history and more particularly newspaper history which may be superficial, shows that this is a human tendency. It takes a very strong person to combat this tendency. And it is not at all necessary, for the same attention given to the seekers, to the pious, to the humble and intelligent will bear far more fruit. Although everyone is the beloved of God, there is a time for awakening for each one.

GATHEKA: Thousands and thousands in this category followed the masters and prophets, but those who stayed to the end of the test were those who before giving their confidence to the teacher first had confidence in their own heart.

TASAWWUF: Usually such people are called fanatics or braggarts. They are not always popular. They have to bear the brunt of ignominy and opposition. But the scriptures everywhere point to those who will stay with the Teacher and teachings "to the end." It is they who will get the reward.

Popular religions are full of doctrines of rewards and punishments. If we look closely everyone has plotted his self-reward. But if we study the teachings, the teachings in and of all religions, it is different. There are standards and it is these standards which operate, not the popular doctrines.

GATHEKA: It is they who, if the earth turned to water and the water turned to earth, if the sky came down and the earth rose up, would remain unshaken, firm in the belief they have once gained. It is by discipleship that a person learns the moral that in whatever position he is, as husband or wife, son or daughter, servant or friend, he will follow with confidence, firm and steady wherever he goes.

TASAWWUF: After Mohammed died, Khalif Abu Bekr proclaimed, "Let those who worshipped Mohammed know he is dead; and let those who worship Allah know that He is ever-living, ever present." And it was this Yaqin on the part of Siddiq that enabled Islam to persist in both its inner and outer aspects.

But the same thing often happens, that when a Master leaves the world, or is betrayed by society, many leave. They have not that Yaqin. And yet this shows the presence of the soul-light. It is neither thought nor emotion and if it manifests as thought or emotion, that is really not it. It is very deep inside and from it come all the confidence, all the perseverance, all the power and vitality a person may have. Really these are aspects of the soul itself.

And as a New Age appears with a different kind of person, so the spiritual principles will manifest more and more and cover the earth, not necessarily in power and authority, but there will be the spiritual sciences again. When they existed before there were not the material and psychic sciences. Now all can persist together.

GATHEKA: After acquiring Yaqin there comes a test, and that is sacrifice. That is the ideal on the path of God. The most precious possession there is, is not too valuable, nothing is too great to sacrifice. Not one of the disciples of the Prophet—the real disciples—thought even their life too great a sacrifice if it was needed.

TASAWWUF: This actually happened and this gave the initial strength to a suddenly rising empire. For it is said that if two or three people stand together in the Divine Makam, then the whole world will be at their feet. The power of uniting love, the power of the divine peace within man are like superhuman powers, but actually this is the human being. All the divine vitality and wisdom and life are there. And so the final lesson Hazrat Inayat Khan gave was to urge, even warn the disciples to stand by the teacher and teachings. They did not, but their short-comings establish guide-lines so that the same errors need not be repeated.

GATHEKA: The story of Ali is very well known: a plot was discovered, that one night some enemies wanted to kill the Prophet, and Ali learnt about it. He did not tell the Prophet. He did not tell the Prophet, but persuaded him to leave home. He himself stayed, for he knew that if he went too the assassins would follow him and find out where the Prophet was. He slept in the same bed in place of the Prophet, so that the assassins might find him, though at the same time he did not intend to lose his life if he could fight them off. The consequence was that the plot failed and the enemies could not touch either the Prophet or Ali.

TASAWWUF: There is another side to this. Ali was possessed both of Yaqin and Kashf. He had extremely keen sight and the blessings and wisdom of Allah were upon him. And besides this there is the strength of silence, by willing to make this sacrifice and keeping quiet he broke disturbance to the enemies, and what they had planned reacted upon themselves.

GATHEKA: This is only one instance, but there are thousands of instances which show that the friendship formed in God and truth between the teacher and the disciple is for always, and that nothing in the world is able to break it.

TASAWWUF: We are fortunate now in being able to obtain details about the first teachers in the Chisti chain, how they followed one another with the stream of descent and Baraka, and this persists to this day. This is also true of the Jilani (Ghailani) family. Once this strength is established through loyalty and devotion, nothing breaks it.

GATHEKA: If the spiritual link cannot hold, how can a material link keep intact? It will wear out, being only a worldly link. If spiritual thought cannot form a link between two souls, what else can constitute such a strong tie that it can last both here and in the hereafter?

TASAWWUF: The whole idea of commentaries may be challenged. Many have written commentaries to see them destroyed. Others have destroyed their own commentaries. But the link with Hazrat Inayat Khan enables us to restore a suitable science and art of commentaries to help people to under stand, especially those who go on the spiritual path. And more and more people

will need this and do this and all the help that can be given them should be given them.

GATHEKA: The third lesson on the path of discipleship is imitation; this means imitating the teacher in his every attitude, his attitude towards the friend, towards the enemy, towards the foolish, and towards the wise.

TASAWWUF: This is a long, arduous and beautiful path. Many schools of Sufis do nothing but imitate Rassoul Mohammed in everything they do. They follow even little details. This is excellent for the young but it does not awaken the spirit nor enable the kashf to operate. Indeed one Sufi has said that initiation was the sign of the wise and imitation of the ignorant.

There is another way and that is through attunement. It is obvious even to the most devout in tasawwuf, that their bodies have some differences. There are inner differences and outer differences. Even the astrological factors hold and man does not by his own will overcome these. And why should he? Each can become a path to perfection, a different path but still a real one.

In performing tasawwuf one attunes. The members of an orchestra also attune. That does not change them completely. It does not make mannequins or monkeys of them. So by attunement one learns to walk like the teacher, to obtain his rhythms and then to apply them otherwise. But this takes away neither freedom of mind or of spirit. On the contrary it adds to them. One becomes a living light, not a mere shadow. It may look like imitation but this is just the winding. And in that way the spirit of the teacher may work through the disciples.

This is also a teaching which appears in the brochure called *Metaphysics* which gives the outline for one's functions in a supermental capacity. Others have written about the supermind, discussed at some length, but in this small brochure are all the keys. They may be put into practice.

GATHEKA: If the pupil acts as he wishes and the teacher acts as he wishes, then there is no benefit, however great the sacrifice and devotion. No teaching or meditation is as great or valuable as the imitation of the teacher in the path of truth. In the imitation of the teacher the whole secret of the spiritual life is hidden. No doubt it is not only the imitation of his outward action, but also of his inner tendency.

TASAWWUF: It may begin outwardly. It may be in walk or mannerism, but then it will produce a harmonization and unification of breath. They that breathe together really become one in spirit. Yes, something is gained by meditating with the teacher and more is gained through obedience. But it is not only the tree that grows but the branches. There are some trees that grow but their branches do not grow. In the real spiritual movement it is both the trunk and branches that grow and thus they will produce magnificent fruits and flowers.

In the attunement with the teacher it is especially the inner faculties that will awake. One does not become of the same profession, have all the same likes and dislikes and abilities, but one's potentialities become greater and greater. The inner eyes open, the inner senses function and then

the heart comes to its proper place.

All this and more is laid down in *Metaphysics*. When man rises above his separativeness this happens. And although the literature states that the Sufi sees the Murshid in all living beings, it takes time and discipline to bring this out. But when man sees his fellows as the beloved ones of Allah, then also he begins to function in the divine manner (Akhlak Allah).

GATHEKA: The fourth lesson that the disciple learns is different again. This lesson is to turn the inward thought of the teacher outward, until he grows to see his teacher in everyone and everything, in the wise, in the foolish, and in all forms.

TASAWWUF: This is the true humility. Humility does not come by bowing to God as separate from His creation. Nor in the soft voice. It comes from listening, watching and appreciating others. The humble man is he with large heart and large ears.

As light and love are in all of us, the wise are very careful to keep this in view and also to encourage any increase of them. In other words, the Sufi acts as if he were a teacher of mankind even when he has not been ordained as teacher. He becomes elder brother. And he also teaches by listening, not by proclaiming.

GATHEKA: Finally, by the fifth lesson the disciple learns to give everything that he has so far given to his teacher—devotion, sacrifice, service, respect—to all, because he has learnt to see his teacher in all.

TASAWWUF: We can first see the false teachers and charlatans, that they do nothing of the sort. They expect devotion, sacrifice and service from others. They demand respect and if they do not get it, they become very haughty, but often this succeeds, many are won by such methods, many admire and they may even cluster around such people. But after a while it may wear off because there is no strong cohesion or gravitation.

Then in the attitude toward the humanity. We have many lessons. We even have the Moral Instructions in the literature. They show how one may live in the world for the greater glory of the Living God by manifestation of the divine attributes to the world. And when this is done the whole world benefits.

GATHEKA: One person will perhaps learn nothing all his life, whereas another will learn all five lessons in a short time. There is a story of a person who went to a teacher and said to him, “I would like to be your pupil, your disciple.” The teacher said, “Yes, I shall be very glad.”

TASAWWUF: There are Sufi teachers who turn down no one. They feel that their response builds up confidence in the other person and this may be of itself the first step, to have the self-confidence. And then they can make use of any virtue in the other. The other is not perfect, but by the establishment of friendship a first step is taken.

GATHEKA: This man, conscious of so many faults, was surprised that the teacher was willing to accept him as a disciple. He said, "But I wonder if you know how many faults I have?" The teacher said, "Yes, I already know your faults, yet I accept you as my pupil."

TASAWWUF: For in that way the person can be directed God-wards. We often forget that God in reality is the only teacher. The one regarded as a teacher on earth, the Murshid or Sheikh or Guru is only a stand-in, so to speak, for God. He has to act the part in order to help others.

GATHEKA: "But I have very bad faults," he said, "I am fond of gambling." The teacher said, "That does not matter much."—"I am inclined to drink sometimes," he said. The teacher said, "That does not matter much."—"Well," he said, "there are many other faults." The teacher said, "I do not mind. But now that I have accepted all your faults, you must accept one condition from your teacher."—"Yes, most willingly," he said. "What is it?" The teacher said, "You may indulge in your faults, but not in my presence; only that much respect you must reserve for your teacher."

TASAWWUF: It is the link between teacher and pupil that is most valuable. The teacher is not a teacher without pupils; and the pupil is not a pupil without a teacher. And it is the link which is valuable, which establishes brotherhood and chains of saints and all the marvelous evidence of spirituality. They come from these links.

GATHEKA: The teacher knew that all five attributes of discipleship were natural to him, and he made him an initiate. And as soon as he went out and had an inclination to gamble or to drink he saw the face of his murshid before him. When after some time he returned to the teacher, the teacher smilingly asked, "Did you commit any faults?" He answered, "O no, the great difficulty is that whenever I want to commit any of my usual faults my murshid pursues me."

TASAWWUF: And this is the true discipleship. One may have the teacher before him in vision or in heart. If he is sure of himself, and especially when his kashf operates it may not be necessary. But one should be willing to call on the murshid, and this without intruding on his presence. And the more one does that he is showing true faith.

GATHEKA: Do not think that this spirit is only cultivated; this spirit may be found in an innocent child. When I once asked a little child of four years, "Have you been naughty?" it answered, "I would like to be naughty, but my goodness will not let me." This shows us that the spirit of discipleship is in us. But we should always remember that he who is a teacher is a disciple himself.

TASAWWUF: No real teacher ever ceases to be a pupil. He will remain a pupil, a disciple, all his life. His teacher may have left the world, or he may be absorbed in higher mystical practices but he remains a pupil, a devotee. And this enables him to be a better teacher because he can also see from the standpoint of disciples.

GATHEKA: In reality there is no such thing as a teacher; God alone is Teacher, we are all disciples. The lesson we all have to learn is that of discipleship; it is the first and the last lesson.

TASAWWUF: This subject once appeared in literature written by a disciple called Nargis. But when it annoyed others the interest in it flagged. Too many wanted to lead without having gone through all the tests, the initiations, the growths, the lifting of the veils. They wanted to lead; they wanted power. In the end there was nothing but attrition, destruction. The spirit of God does not work that way. It is in all people and the wise know this, the foolish do not.

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 8](#)

Four Kinds of Discipleship

GATHEKA: There are four kinds of disciples, of whom only one can be described as a real disciple. One kind is the disciple of modern times who comes and says to his teacher, "We will study this book together," or "Have you read that book? It is most interesting," or "I have learnt from someone else before, and now I would like to learn what I can from you and then I will pass on to something which is still more interesting." Such a person may be called a student, but not yet a disciple.

TASAWWUF: This is intellectualism. It is hardly a high form of intellectualism because if one acted like that in the university he perhaps would not be able to graduate. He might pass examinations but would hardly gain the good-will of his professors.

We do not learn even worldly knowledge this way. There are certain disciplines needed for the worldly knowledge, especially in art and science. These are sometimes helpful also in the spiritual life. But the mere acquisition of knowledge of names and forms and of the opinions of other people does not help. It is confusing in the intellectual realm; how much more confusing must it be in spiritual and mystical matters?

GATHEKA: His spirit is not that of a disciple; it is the spirit of a student who goes from one university, from one college, to another; from one professor he passes into the hands of another. He may be well suited for such intellectual pursuits, but the spirit of the disciple is different.

TASAWWUF: And this spirit will not even get him far in the complex educational system of the day. There has to be some concentration, some goal. This is the type of person who would do well

working for an encyclopedia, to be a fact gatherer. But in all this there is not much strengthening even of thought.

GATHEKA: Then there is another type who thinks, "What I can get out of him I will get. And when I have collected it, then I shall use it in the way I think best." Well, his way is that of a thief who says, "I will take what I can from the purse of this person, and then I shall spend it for my own purpose." This is a wrong attitude, because spiritual inspiration and power cannot be stolen; a thief cannot take them; and if he has this attitude such a disciple may remain with a teacher for a hundred years and still leave empty-handed.

TASAWWUF: For, as has been explained God is the only Teacher. A person may be occupying a position of authority; a person may be acting as a communicator or transformer. But he does not have the wisdom. That must come from within and all outer activities do not lead to the awakening. They come mostly, perhaps entirely, from pain and sorrow and travail; or from love and self-sacrifice. Even the superficial knowledge of esoteric practices may not help much. They can become mechanical. Many have been written in books. But without the key which comes from the heart of Murshid it may be of no use. Until one feels the Presence of God, His Wisdom and His inspirations it is nothing.

GATHEKA: There are many in this world today who make intellectual theft their occupation; anything intellectual they find, they take it and use it. But they do not know what harm they do by this attitude. They paralyze their minds and they close their own spirit.

TASAWWUF: We do not seem to have any examples of awakening or God-consciousness from such people. We have words. We even have formulae. We have crowd-stirring speeches or crowd-enthusiastic repetitions of sacred formulae. But it all ends as Christ said, that we make the vain repetitions. People do not realize how many vain repetitions have been made. Otherwise by now the whole world would have been enlightened. It is not. This shows that something is missing. And what is missing can be supplied only by the heart of the guru, the Murshid.

GATHEKA: **There are many in this world today who make intellectual theft their occupation; anything intellectual they find, they take it and use it. But they do not know what harm they do by this attitude. They paralyze their minds and they close their own spirit.** Then there is a third wrong tendency of a disciple: to keep back something which is most essential, namely confidence. He will say, "Tell me all you can teach me, all I can learn, give me all that you have," but in his mind he says, "I will not give you my confidence, for I do not yet know if this road is right or wrong for me. When you have taught me I shall judge, then I shall see what it is. But until then I do not give you my confidence, though my ears are tuned to your words."

TASAWWUF: The transformation experience does not come this way. It is holding on to mind, to ego. It is not letting go. It most certainly is not the unlearning so badly needed on the spiritual path, and perhaps by everybody on the path or not.

GATHEKA: This is the third wrong tendency. As long as a disciple will not give his confidence to his spiritual guide, he will not get the full benefit of his teaching.

TASAWWUF: This is a way of self-delusion. The pupil does not realize that the teacher may have the divine wisdom. For such persons concentration on the Dove or Heart or even Sufi symbol will cause an impasse. They will either not have visions, or they will get warnings. If they perform the practices and their wills and minds are in some other directions, they will be facing psychic warfare in their own persons. They will have no power to stop it. Even the sacred phrases will be of little help if they have such attitudes.

Therefore it is not necessary to scold, to berate. The teacher merely has to be patient and to offer the right esotericism to help such people. They may not know it but their own selfwills will ultimately move them in right directions.

GATHEKA: The fourth kind is the right kind of discipleship. And this does not come by just thinking that one would like to go on the spiritual path, or that one would like to be a disciple, a mureed, a chela, but there comes a time in every person's life when circumstances have tried him so much that he begins to feel the wish to find a word of enlightenment, some counsel, some guidance, a direction on the path of truth.

TASAWWUF: There is a tendency to assume that truth can be taught to please some ego. Or there is a right philosophy which can be adopted and this can be done without uprooting one's ideas or one's person. Such an attitude will prevent spiritual awakening. But when the spiritual awakening comes then the soul consciously or unconsciously is drawn to the teacher and the teacher to the soul of the inquirer.

This also can be seen when one takes the words of Saum and Salat seriously, not just as repetitive prayers but as the compendium of devotions and mysticism.

GATHEKA: When the values of all things and beings are changing in his eyes, that is the time he begins to feel hungry for spiritual guidance. Bread is meant for the hungry, not for those who are quite satisfied. If a person like this goes in search of a teacher, he takes the right step; but there is a difficulty, and this is that if he wants to test the teacher first, then there is no end to the testing.

TASAWWUF: We have to look at this first from the view of the aspirant. Actually even if the aspirant is very selfish it is actually the call of the soul which has encouraged him. The first impetus is deep from within. It may be covered by a thousand veils but the impetus is real. And therefore no matter how selfish, the teacher takes advantage of the fact that there is a quest.

GATHEKA: He can go from one teacher to another, from the earthly being to the heavenly being, testing everyone, and in the end what will he find? Imperfection. He is looking for it, and he will find it. Man is an imperfect being, a human being, a limited being. If he wants to find perfection in a limited being, he will always end by being disappointed whoever he meets, whether it is an angel or

a human being. If he were simple enough to accept any teacher that came his way and said, "I will be your mureed," it would be easier, though this is perhaps not always practicable.

TASAWWUF: This seems to suggest even the acceptance of a false teacher. But it is the attitude of willingness to be a disciple that is helpful. Even in schools which do not have advanced teachers you will find devotees and disciples who are very wonderful. Sometimes they may be more advanced spiritually than those who seem to be guiding them. Neither will know this, neither the one who wants to be teacher nor the one who wants to accept. But both teaching and learning, giving and taking are part of the universal life. And it is the attitude of a mureed which is most helpful.

GATHEKA: Someone asked a Brahmin, "Why do you worship a god of rock, an idol of stone? Look, here I am, a worshipper of the God who is in heaven. This rock does not listen to you, it has no ears." And the Brahmin said, "If you have no faith, even the God in heaven will not hear you; and if you have faith this rock will have ears to hear."

TASAWWUF: For all things bear the Message of God. We say that, and then when it comes to application, we do not accept even what we have been saying. For "Thy Light is in all forms" and it is the spirit of humility, the willingness to listen and learn, and perhaps also to be devout that are most helpful.

GATHEKA: The middle way and the best way is to consult one's own intuition and inspiration. If one's intuition says, "I will seek guidance from this teacher, whether he is raised high by the whole of humanity, or whether he is looked at with contempt and prejudice by thousands, I do not care," then one follows the principle of constancy in adhering to that one teacher.

TASAWWUF: It is certain that after many, many years this has been done. The people have fallen away or died and yet there is something in the spirit of the Message which is like immortality, perhaps it is immortality. And so one can go on, faithful to Teacher and teaching and after many years it does not seem any different. It is not separate from life, it is life itself.

GATHEKA: But if a person is not constant on the spiritual path he will naturally have difficulty in the end. For what is constancy? Constancy is the reflection of eternity. And what is truth? Truth is eternity, and so in seeking for truth one must learn the principle of constancy.

TASAWWUF: And that is what has been learned and is being applied so that the Message of God can spread far and wide in time and space. It is not intensity, especially not emotional intensity which will help. The proper concentration, the proper attunement and the sticking to one theme, one objective is most helpful in all conditions.

GATHEKA: The disciple has to have full confidence in the teacher's guidance, in the direction that is given to him by the teacher.

TASAWWUF: If the teacher is a proper one, we cannot always tell how long it will be, but in the end it will be. For truth is eternity as has been explained. The phrase **Ya Hayy, Ya Qayyum** illustrates this and can be repeated and is one of the most helpful of all spiritual repetitions. Also we read in the Bible about staying “to the end” which means until there is perfection, until there is “the finish” which means, strictly speaking, the completion of initiation.

GATHEKA: The Buddhists who regard a spiritual teacher with great reverence say, “We do not care whether he is well-known or not; and even if he is we do not know if he will accept our reverence; and if he receives it we are not sure he needs it.”

TASAWWUF: Reverence is for the sake of the one who gives, not for the sake of the one who receives it. And one has to be most careful for the phrase, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” has been used for all kinds of selfish purposes, to exploit the ignorant, to build up wealth for the few. This is not the purpose, it is not even the teaching. It is the abuse of the teaching.

GATHEKA: Worship can only be given to those of whose presence we are conscious; and it is especially intended for the spiritual teacher, for he shows us the only path that frees us from all the pains of which this life is full.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* teaches that it is not for the sake of the teacher, but for the sake of the pupil, the devotee, that worship is given. There are gestures, such as accepting the obeisance of the pupil, then lifting him up and other ceremonies. And the object is always for the fulfillment of the life's purpose of the disciple, never for any worship or exploitation of any kind.

GATHEKA: That is why among all other obligations involving earthly gain and benefit the obligation to the spiritual teacher is the greatest, for it is concerned with the liberation of the soul on its journey towards Nirvana, which is the only desire of every soul.

TASAWWUF: This term should not disturb us. The aim in Sufism is to use the most exact word although there are many words for the same aim. We pass from selfhood into mergence into God-consciousness which at the same time is like all-ness and nothingness. It is nothingness in the sense that the egocentricity goes; it is all-ness in the sense that in the end we feel the all-being and the self are one; or atman is Brahman.

GATHEKA: The teacher does not always teach in plain words. The spiritual teacher has a thousand ways.

TASAWWUF: This is very difficult to fathom. No matter how often it is said plainness is expected. Excepting in the case of the Zen teachers where plainness is regarded as useless, and things have to be made unclear. This is not important. What is important is the development and awakening of the pupil, step by step or suddenly, to completion. The pupil cannot know; he has to trust the teacher. And this trust is more important even than all the wisdom of the teacher.

GATHEKA: It may be that by his prayers he can guide his disciple; it may be by his thought, his feeling, or his sympathy, so that even at a distance he may guide him.

TASAWWUF: That is the dharma of the teacher, to have full and high regard for all disciples, even for those first having Bayat. He pursues the path of Jesus that he is the vine and all disciples are the branches. He becomes like the trunk of a tree with boughs and branches. And then perhaps there will be flowers and fruit and most beautiful too. But they are all part of one life; it is thus that “united with all the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the master,” comes to manifestation.

GATHEKA: And therefore when a disciple thinks that he can be taught only by words or teachings, by practices or exercises, it is a great mistake.

TASAWWUF: Atmosphere, the glance, the presence and many other means are used. All may be effective. Also the higher outlooks which can be achieved only after there is the awakening from those practices which are found in the teachings, the writings. For Sufism has in one sense no end, and yet it can also be presented so that the world will understand. Or as Mohammed has plainly and yet beautifully taught, Qur'an was given in Arabic so that the masses might understand, not that Arabic as such was an especially holy tongue.

GATHEKA: In order to get the right disciples and the right people to come to him, a Sufi who lived in Hyderabad made a wonderful arrangement. He got a grumpy woman to sit just near his house; and to anyone who came to see the great teacher, she would say all kinds of things against the teacher, how unkind he was, how cruel, how neglectful, how lazy; there was nothing she would leave unsaid. And as a result out of a hundred, ninety-five would turn back; they would not dare to come near him. Perhaps only five would come, wanting to form their own opinion about him. And the teacher was very pleased that the ninety-five went away, for what they had come to find was not there; it was somewhere else.

TASAWWUF: This is not so necessary in the west. If there is a true spiritual teacher you will find that many will criticize him. They won't listen at all, they will just sit and judge. This has always been. But it is always a help because in this way the unworthy will not come, to steal his magnetism, to waste his time and to indulge in useless questions and arguments.

GATHEKA: There is another side to this question. The first thing the teacher does is to find out what is the pressing need of his disciple. Certainly, the disciple has come to seek after truth and to be guided to the path of God, but at the same time it is the psychological task of the teacher to give his thought first to the pressing need of his disciple, whether the disciple speaks of it or not.

TASAWWUF: It is not only a formula that the Sufi sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself, it is a necessity, a practice. What makes the teacher is that he can also see from the viewpoint of the pupil; what makes the pupil is that he will accept the interest and guidance of the teacher.

From one point of view the desires of all souls is the same and the themes of *In an Eastern Rose Garden* given to the generality, all point in the direction of the fulfillment of life's purpose and the ultimate attainment of spiritual liberation. And as the aim of all souls is the same, it is not always too difficult for a gifted teacher, one who has the faculty of insight.

GATHEKA: And the teacher's effort is directed toward removing that first difficulty, because he knows it to be an obstacle in the disciple's way.

TASAWWUF: Generally there will be some defect in breathing. And even if the difficulty be mental (which it often is) or physical (which it is occasionally) it is training toward right breathing which is needed by everybody. Therefore this has been made the first and most fundamental step and many or perhaps all other steps arise from it.

GATHEKA: It is easy for a soul to tread the spiritual path because it is the spiritual path that the soul is looking for. God is the seeking of every soul, and every soul will make its way naturally, providing there is nothing to obstruct it, and so the most pressing need is the removal of any obstruction.

TASAWWUF: This is something the teacher can see. The teacher will have developed the faculties vouchsafed in the brochure, *Metaphysics* as well as much of what has been written in the published literature. Also much more in what is called **Baraka** which is the housing of spiritual magnetism in the personality so that the personality carries this magnetism as if it were his own. Actually he is a channel for it which is most important. And being a channel for it others can share as if it were a communion and it is a communion.

GATHEKA: Thus a desire can be fulfilled, it can be conquered, or it can be removed. If it is fulfilled so much the better. If it is not right to fulfill it then it should be conquered or removed in order to clear the way.

TASAWWUF: This is done by the practice of esotericism. Although much in esotericism seems private and privileged, yet it is of great benefit even in the most external affairs. True, Jesus has taught not to cast pearls before swine. It is not necessary to discuss the methods used; it is important to apply them in and to the everyday life.

Such practices as Darood and Fikr easily determine what is right and wrong according to one's particular path of development. It might not be the same for all. But everybody has the inner guidance and every one by assiduous practice can find the right way for himself.

GATHEKA: The teacher never thinks that he is concerned with his disciple only in his spiritual progress, in his attainment of God, for if there is something blocking the way of the disciple it will not be easy for the teacher to help him.

TASAWWUF: If there is any superiority in Sufism it is that the teacher also regards himself as

father and mother, even as grandparent or patriarch to those who come to him. His success is in making others succeed. And their failures he regards as his own failure. He does not make differences, he practices identification with disciples. And as they journey together this makes it much easier for the devotee.

GATHEKA: There are three faculties which the teacher considers essential to develop in the disciple; deepening the sympathy, showing the way of harmony, and awakening the spirit of beauty.

TASAWWUF: This is now being done in the arts and especially by dancing and music. Dancing together, chanting together, even playing together inculcates sympathy and harmony. And the usual result is a grand development of the beautiful. It may not seem so at first, but when one looks at it from a broad view, it will be found to be so. So there is no effort at philosophical development for its own sake or any theology. One can have direct experience be it within, be it without.

GATHEKA: One often sees that without being taught any particular formula, or receiving any particular lesson on these three subjects, the soul of a sincere disciple will grow under the guidance of the right teacher like a plant which is carefully reared and watered every day and every month and every year.

TASAWWUF: This turns out that way. The teacher begins to feel he is parent and friend as well as guide. Then the pupil will respond for this is the natural inclination of heart and soul. No one has to give any lessons on this. It will turn out that way. And when the teacher becomes a fountain of love, the pupils also will appreciate and express that love more and will also find the deep inspiration they need to fulfill the purposes of their being on earth.

GATHEKA: And without knowing it himself he will begin to show these three qualities, the ever-growing sympathy, the harmonizing quality increasing every day more and more, and the expression and understanding and appreciation of beauty in all its forms.

TASAWWUF: Therefore in the Sufi teaching it is said that the universal brotherhood will form of itself. There can not be any separative group functioning as "universal brotherhood." There can only be true brotherhood when hearts overflow with love. The teacher having had access to the examples of the past either tries to act as an example or else to show the disciples through esotericism, meditation and concentration to reach their innermost depths. And there they too will find the examples, for the Spirit of Guidance is in all forms, both those on earth and those who have gone this way in previous generations.

GATHEKA: One may ask, is there no going backward? Well, sometimes there is a sensation of going backward; just as when one is at sea, the ship may move in such a way that one sometimes has the feeling that one is going backward although one is really going forward; one can have the same sensation when riding on an elephant or a camel.

TASAWWUF: And who is to say what is forward? What is backward? It is only backward in a sense when the sympathies are not deepened, when there is lack of harmony and beauty. And these things are hard to measure, and perhaps unimportant for the constant intervention of pain and trial urges the soul on at all times.

GATHEKA: When in the lives of some disciples this sensation is felt, it is nothing but a proof of life. Nevertheless a disciple will often feel that since he became a disciple he finds many more faults in himself than he had ever seen before. This may be so, but it does not mean that his faults have increased; it only means that now his eyes have become wider open so that everyday he sees many more faults than before.

TASAWWUF: It is only natural that as a person's eyes open he sees more. He will see more in himself and he will see more in others. And when he sees more he will be seeing the faults as well as the virtues but he may not always be seeing them as faults, as virtues. Only as he is concerned with the purification of self, he begins to see all the defects. He wants to get rid of the defects. He may not know that in purification the flooding of light from the inner personality may remove many defects rapidly. But he is still analytical, still concerned with self.

When by the practice of esotericism he rises above this self-concern many of these seeming defects will disappear. Also he will learn how to overcome them and by this means also will they disappear.

GATHEKA: There is always a great danger on the spiritual path that the disciple has to overcome: he may develop a feeling of being exalted, of knowing more than other people, of being better than other people. As soon as a person thinks, "I am more," the doors of knowledge are closed.

TASAWWUF: We find this particularly in the Diamond Sutra of the Mahayana Buddhists. There is warning, there is teaching that such attitudes are false and deluding. One does not think about himself at all, neither whether he is better nor worse, nor about himself at all. And when he accepts life as life and not in any relation to ego-consciousness he can go forward rapidly.

GATHEKA: He will no more be able to widen his knowledge, because automatically the doors of his heart are closed the moment he says, "I know."

TASAWWUF: This only intensifies the sense of self. And when this sense is intensified the doors of progress are closed. One does not think that way. **La Illaha El Il Allah** intensifies the Being of God, the reliance on God, the purpose of life. It is all away from selfhood, every moment is away from selfhood. The self that measures the self stops growing.

GATHEKA: Spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of life, is so intoxicating, so exalting, it gives such a great joy, that one begins to pour out one's knowledge before anyone who comes along as soon as this knowledge springs up.

TASAWWUF: The wise teacher therefore promotes all the divine repetitions. When the pupil by his own development and realizations finds that the exaltation and joy are related very closely to his repetition of divine names, he will realize that dependence on God and there are few chances that he will fall into that error. No doubt when the teachings were first given this was so. It was then hard to emphasize and demonstrate the Presence of God. But by the assiduous practice of Akhlak Allah it all becomes different. One does not even have to repeat, "I am not, Thou art."

GATHEKA: But if at that time the disciple could realize that he should conserve that kindling of the light, reserve it, keep it within himself, and let it deepen, then his words would not be necessary, his presence would enlighten people; but as soon as the spring rises, and he pours forth what comes out of that spring in words, although on the one side his vanity will be satisfied yet on the other his energy will be exhausted.

TASAWWUF: This is a very hard lesson. For Christ said that if we knew the truth we should shout it from the housetops. But he also said not to cast pearls before the swine and if there is any choice it is better to be on the side of silence. Besides that often gives strength to one's words.

Of course there are times when one can see the hungry people, that there are those who thirst and they want to hear something. But for that the intuitive faculty is needed, not the vanity. If one speaks from inner guidance that is wonderful, but if one speaks for the sake of speaking one should regard his energy and the uselessness of talking for the sake of talk.

GATHEKA: The little spring that had risen he has poured out before others, and he remains without power. This is why reserve is taught to the true disciple, the conserving of inspiration and power. The one who speaks is not always wise; it is the one who listens who is wise.

TASAWWUF: This is the tremendous lesson—to listen. The Hebrew religion says: "Shema, Yisroel," **listen**, devotees. The Islamic religion says, "Bi-sm-Allah" which means also in the sound of Allah, in listening to Allah. The Christian prayer says, "Our father in Heaven," i.e. shemayim, the place of sounds. We attain heavens according to our capacity to listen. All the religions advocate listening. The Buddhist scriptures often say: "Thus have I **heard**." And as man hears, as he deepens his attention to listening so he will find the wisdom within and without, but not otherwise.

GATHEKA: During discipleship the first period may be called the period of observation; in this the disciple with a respectful attitude observes everything good and bad and right and wrong, without expressing any opinion about them.

TASAWWUF: The sacred papers are often read without comment and only occasionally perhaps, questions permitted. And sometimes they are answered at another session. They should be used for meditation as well as for intellectual study and perhaps more for meditation. And in this way one comes to unfold the depth of meaning within his own self; he becomes one with the Gathas.

GATHEKA: And every day this reveals to the disciple a new idea on the subject. Today he thinks it

is wrong, but does not say so; tomorrow he wonders how it can be wrong. The day after tomorrow he thinks, "But can this really be wrong?" while on the fourth day he might think that it is not wrong, and on the fifth day that it is right.

TASAWWUF: There is no discussion because that lowers the level of consideration and consciousness. Besides many will say they have heard it all before and perhaps they have heard it before. At the same time it is true that this has not become embedded in the human consciousness. Many read scriptures over and over again. They read them as if external literature. They do not study them as if they were means to unfold the self. There is a gap between the book-knowledge and the self-knowledge. And it is necessary for the two to become one.

GATHEKA: And he may follow the same process with what is right, if only he does not express himself on the first day. It is the foolish who always readily express their opinion; the wise keep it back. By keeping their opinion back they become wiser every day; by expressing their opinion they continually become less wise.

TASAWWUF: We can not prove this. What we can prove is the gain and loss of magnetism. Gain and loss of magnetism involve gain and loss of wisdom. Wisdom is not the same as knowledge; it is an attunement, not an accumulation as many falsely believe. This does not mean one must be kept on silence but rather, by invoking the names of God one gradually quiets the ego and does not express himself. One wants to become a channel for God and God-power and God-wisdom.

GATHEKA: The second thing that is most important for the disciple is learning. And how is he to learn? Every word the disciple hears coming from the lips of the teacher is a whole sacred book. Instead of reading a sacred book of any religion from beginning to end, he has taken in one word of the teacher, and that is the same. By meditating upon it, by thinking about it, by pondering upon it, he makes that word a plant from which fruit and flowers come.

TASAWWUF: This has already been explained. It cannot be explained too much. We have to interiorize wisdom, whether from scriptures or teachers or any source. But it is much easier to interiorize from the living teacher. He touches the heart and then one can meditate, one can ponder. When the doors of heart-love are open, this is easy and natural.

GATHEKA: A book is one thing and a living word is another. Perhaps a whole book could be written by the inspiration of one living word of the teacher. Besides the disciple practices all the mediations given to him, and by these exercises he develops within him that inspiration, that power which is meant to be developed in the disciple.

TASAWWUF: This is a practice. Many have read scriptures, even memorized them. Has it always made them good? Generous? Kindly? Have they emitted more light? Do they draw others to them naturally? Or do they have to repeat continuously that they have some scriptural knowledge?

This is not the spiritual rebirth. Many have memorized the scriptures. In the higher Buddhism it is

said that as one becomes enlightened sutras will emanate from it. This is often said, seldom observed. It is no wonder that today many of the teachers of India begin to give out their own literature. It is living. It has their magnetism in it. It is verbal, no doubt, but there is a hidden treasure in those words and this is the very life of the teacher which can be shared with disciples and perhaps with the whole world.

GATHEKA: And the third step forward for the disciple lies in testing the inspiration, the power he has received. One might ask, how can one test it? Life can give a thousand examples of every idea that one has thought about. If one has learnt from within that a certain idea is wrong or right, then life itself is an example which shows why it is wrong or why it is right.

TASAWWUF: Yes, life will always show it. The teacher may give a practice to help the disciple determine for himself what is right or wrong. He should limit his suggestions. He should help the disciple to become free. For the freedom has an ever greater accommodation for wisdom.

This is particularly true of the adaptation of Fikr and Darood (as well as other practices). We pray, "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives;" we can also apply this outwardly.

GATHEKA: If a person does not become enlightened, one can find the explanation by watching the rain: it falls upon all trees, but it is according to the response of those trees that they grow and bear fruit. The sun shines upon all the trees; it makes no distinction between them, but it is according to the response that the trees give to the sun that they profit by its sunshine.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that many are called but few are chosen. It is generally those who are awake and ready that are able to benefit from the words of sages and masters. In one sense they impregnate the atmosphere. Their messages are for all but all do not receive them, do not benefit.

GATHEKA: At the same time a mureed is very often an inspiration to the murshid. It is not the murshid who teaches; it is God who teaches. The murshid is only a medium, and as high as the response of the mureed reaches, so strongly does it attract the message of God.

TASAWWUF: It is something like an electric cell. There must be two poles, a positive and a negative pole. The strength of the current depends upon the electro-motive force involved. And when the teacher has a very responsive disciple this rouses up a strong spiritual current which acts as if it were inspiration and in one sense is inspiration.

No matter how advanced a teacher is he can only deposit a heavy spiritual magnetism if there is receptivity. Otherwise all he will do is to consume or waste his own magnetism. But if there is even one person who has the capacity to receive according to the capacity of that responsive disciple, so the teacher is able to give without any loss, even with a great gain. Or as has been said, the journey is one in which teacher and pupil travel together.

GATHEKA: The mureed can inspire, but he can also cease to inspire. If there is no response on his side or if there is antagonism or lack of interest, then the inspiration of the murshid is shut off; just like the clouds which cannot produce a shower when they are above the desert. The desert affects them, but when the same clouds are above the forest the trees attract them and the rain falls.

TASAWWUF: There is nothing more encouraging to a teacher than a disciple who is awakened to, or responsive to higher consciousness. This may come in the forms of inspiration and these inspirations may be either creative or responsive. In either case it not only brings joy to the teacher but also increasing inspirations. For the doors of heaven open even more to a group or brotherhood than to an individual.

That is one of the original meanings of church and Sangha and the teaching that “whenever two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in their midst.” The Hebrew word, **shem** literally may mean name or sound or even light; it indicates the Divine Energy differentiated or undifferentiated. And a group working together can accomplish wonders. This was first introduced in the Healing Service but it applies to all processes and is indicative of the New Age when the group may act as an individual, or a greatly advanced individual may have the group-consciousness.

GATHEKA: The attributes of the disciple are reserve, thoughtfulness, consideration, balance, and sincerity. Special care should be taken that during the time of discipleship one does not become a teacher, for very often a growing soul is so eager to become a teacher that before he has finished the period of discipleship he becomes impatient.

TASAWWUF: This might even be called the Moon-consciousness. It is a time for accommodations, not fulfillments—to listen, to study, to meditation. Then one increases capacities so that when the Light comes in its fullness one may properly function. For it is important to maintain a balance and not be confused by the word “balance.”

No doubt there will be the rise and fall of emotions and especially in the young. But to increase the actual exaltations one must have the preparation, one must make the accommodations and one may receive and accept from the Teacher or from the Chain of Sufis or from God Himself without being upset. It is not only pleasure and pain that we have to learn to receive without being upset but also the divine effulgence in all its aspects.

When the pupil is ready to teach the Murshid will know it and sometimes even before that. Besides that there is the lifting of the veils and when the veils are lifted even the teacher will comply because in this sense God is the only Teacher.

GATHEKA: It should be remembered that all the great teachers of humanity such as Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, and Zarathustra, have been great pupils; they have learned from the innocent child, they have learned from everyone, from every person that came near them. They have learned from every situation and every condition of the world; they have understood and they have learned.

TASAWWUF: And we have them as examples. That is why now we institute different forms of attunement and self-effacement so that human beings may be drawn into God-consciousness by methods which may not upset their equilibrium. Now too often either adherence to a religion or change of religion is regarded as a requirement. But who makes this requirement? It cannot be Allah-God for His Grace is before all. And just as Paul had to change violently from Orthodox Judaism to a new faith, anyone may be called to change violently. Or as Papa Ram Das found out, it may not be necessary to change at all. So there are Sufis who have remained more orthodox and there are others who were heterodox but in the end they became universal. For the All-Embracing God embraces all and His highest devotees also embrace all.

Thus as to learning. This must be maintained. As soon as a person regards himself above learning his effectiveness in teaching will diminish. Infinity is always in all directions.

GATHEKA: It is the desire to learn continually that makes one a teacher, and not the desire to become a teacher. As soon as a person thinks, "I am something of a teacher," he has lost ground. For there is only one teacher: God alone is the Teacher, and all others are His pupils.

TASAWWUF: We need not then be disturbed by pseudo-teachers. Even if they have access to unknown spiritual practices, that is nothing. Even the highest practices are useless without the Grace. The Grace determines everything. There are people who have reached the cosmic consciousness without any traditional practices or disciplines. Their hearts were ready, their eyes and ears were keen. And they knew the God with or without knowing religion or anything else.

Besides there is the Baraka, the spiritual magnetism which is the greatest of signs even greater than Joy or Ananda for man can experience the Ananda but he cannot always transmit it. And when he has the Baraka sometimes he cannot help but transmit it. For it does not belong to him. It is an accommodation from God. And the teaching is, "What I give to you, you must give to others." There is nothing private or personal in the spiritual attainments.

GATHEKA: We all learn from life what life teaches us; and the day when a soul begins to think that he has learned all he had to learn, and that now he is a teacher, he is very much mistaken. The greatest teachers of humanity have learned from humanity more than they have taught.

TASAWWUF: This is in the teachings and it has been repeated over and over again. Those who have been proclaimed as teachers, those who have been elected or selected by corporations and private bodies never have the Baraka. Without the Baraka the Sufi transmission is nothing: there may be words, there may be thoughts, there may be instructions, papers, but the Divine Light is in none of these. And the Divine Light may be in everything and everybody if one only knew it.

The so-called Spiritual Teacher, be he called "guru," "swami," "rabbi," "roshi," by whatever name he is called, is ineffective until he is a channel for the Divine Light and cosmic magnetism. When he becomes the channel therefore people will appreciate it; something will happen. It may be magnetic, it may be inspirational, but more likely in the mode of exaltation which will continue on in

the absence of the teacher.

Therefore one need not be surprised if a so-called “teacher” keeps on being a pupil throughout his life. That is a sure sign of his teaching ability. But the one who has to talk, who has to instruct, who regards himself as leader and only as leader, he will pass away. It has always been so. It is only God Who can give man immortality and all the blessings of the heavens.

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](#)

The Attitude of a Disciple

GATHEKA: A mureed's attitude towards life must be hopeful; towards his motives courageous; towards his murshid faithful; towards the cause sincere; towards that object which he has to accomplish earnest without the slightest doubt. In every aspect of life it is our attitude which counts and which in the end proves to be creative of all kinds of phenomena. Both success and failure depend upon it, as in the Hindu saying, “If the attitude is right, all will come right.”

TASAWWUF: Hazrat Inayat Khan, well aware of the type of people whom he had to work with, often gave very trite teachings as if for disciples, even advanced ones. And he hid some of his greatest instructions in the literature. There it is, to be selected and used by the methods of meditation, attunement and application. And so with the help of much in the literature, perhaps with all in the literature excepting some actual practices, one can receive all the instructions for the understanding and fulfillment of life on all planes.

There is often too much attention to the objectification of moral instructions so they are applied elsewhere than to the ego-self. This is not wrong but it does not promote the wide view which is most necessary. And for one to become a teacher there must be the wide view.

GATHEKA: There is a natural tendency in the seeker on the spiritual path to wonder if he is really progressing. And very often he begins to wonder from the day he sets foot on the path. It is like asking, “Shall I be able to digest?” while one is still eating.

TASAWWUF: This is a natural situation. The teaching is toward refinement of breath and broadness of intellect as well as the opening and augmentation of heart-sympathy. Perhaps one can measure himself or others by these bases. But does it really matter? If one is concerned with the goal and not with the measuring-sticks then his progress will be faster.

GATHEKA: The spiritual path leads to selflessness. The more we worry about ourselves, the less progress we make, because our whole striving should be to forget the self; it is mostly the self that obstructs the path.

TASAWWUF: The development in **fana** must be through processes and experiences and not from any thought on it. We can not become effaced while considering either ourselves or the process of effacement. When one is thoroughly in love he is concerned with the beloved, not with himself. And therefore we should not be surprised to find the same on the Sufic path which is so concerned with love both from the standpoint of humanity and divinity. (Cp. *Love, Human and Divine*).

GATHEKA: The path is made for the soul, and it is natural and easy for the soul to find it. Therefore when a person is wondering about his progress he is wasting his time; it is like standing still on the path on which one must go forward.

TASAWWUF: Besides to the sincere person God will reveal Himself according to the capacity of the disciple, neither more, neither less. No one is tried beyond his capacity; no one is given light beyond his ability. So disciples are urged to keep their own records. And if they will watch they will note increase in accommodation of light, increase in broadening sympathy, and in the geography of their human consideration. Besides these are arts in which the teacher is adept or he would not be a teacher.

GATHEKA: Can anyone distinguish how his face and body change day by day? No, for one cannot point out distinct signs of change from one day to another; and if one cannot properly distinguish any change in the external self, then how can one expect to distinguish change in the inner process? It is not something that can be weighed on the scales as one weighs oneself on coming back from a holiday and sees that one has gained or lost several pounds. There is no such gain in spiritual progress.

TASAWWUF: And yet there is gain. Suddenly or gradually one will find a mastery in one of a multitude of aptitudes, things and directions. One may not be noticing these changes. It comes mostly when one is not noticing, "in the hour ye think least." Besides if one is concerned with God and attainment, one cannot be watching. If one is climbing a mountain and measuring all the time it would be a slow process to reach the top; and perhaps he might not even reach the top. But if he is dedicating himself every minute to his pursuit, he might suddenly find himself where he had hoped to be.

GATHEKA: Then there are some who imagine that they have progressed for a certain time but are then going backward. They are discouraged and say, "I thought I had arrived somewhere, but

surely it must have been an illusion.

TASAWWUF: The Upanishads proclaim that there is a direct relation between spiritual growth and the experiences of ecstasy or bliss. This is proclaimed over and over again. But the intellectuals have given confused interpretations and this confusion has spread. Besides it is not by the ego-self that any such measuring can be done. Every one may learn his own capacity to love and be considerate, and also the horizons of his abilities. That is one side. But the other side comes in the ever increasing area of bliss. Bliss and pain are the two sure measuring-sticks of spiritual progress, never the intellect, never the self-judgment.

GATHEKA: But life is like the sea, and the sea is not always calm. There are times when the sea is rough and then the boat naturally moves up and down, and to think while the boat is moving downward it will sink is a mistake. It is going down in order to go up; it is movement; it is natural.

TASAWWUF: When we say, "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives," we become concerned with the immediate instant. The same is true in Zen Buddhism. We accept poetically to see eternity in an hour; we do not always accept it consciously. It is taught that all can change in a twinkling of an eye; it is also shown that there is a forty-year cycle. If we are so concerned we are caught.

The scriptures explain pleasure and pain and we consider these subjects theoretically, apart from our experiences and the lives of others. Every moment, every incident is in a certain sense precious; or as *Gayan* teaches, everything matters and yet nothing matters. That is why a teacher is necessary as if he were an anchoring post as well as a wise guide.

GATHEKA: A mureed is subject to such experiences in the path of life. Life will take its own course. The one who sails will have many times to meet a rough sea; he has to be prepared for this and not be frightened or discouraged. He still has to go on through life. If life's journey were soft and smooth there would be no need for spiritual development. He has to have control of the rudder to be able to go through both calm seas and storms.

TASAWWUF: The rudder may be within or without. The rudder is really God. We may find Him within, we may find Him in another. The teacher should be one who has some control of the storms within himself. It is only by controlling his own storms he is able to help others.

How often has one in need gone to a preacher, a priest, a rabbi, a counselor and been told that he need not worry, that he is under some illusion as to his troubles, that other people have suffered worse and have lived on. Even if this be true, it is not for the moment comforting. One does not get rid of a headache by going to a hospital and seeing wounded soldiers. One's headache also may have come from psychological or social difficulties. One must be taken in hand as a parent takes a child with all love and sympathy. This is the work of the teacher as rudder; it is also the function of heart as rudder within oneself.

Then there are the practices such as meditation and breath control. As one advances in them both kashf (insight) and vision advance so the seeker may be finding his own way out.

GATHEKA: Sometimes the mureed wonders what others are saying and if they are displeased or pleased; if they are displeased he thinks he is not progressing. But this has nothing to do with progress. Those who are displeased would be displeased even with Jesus Christ, and at the same time they might be pleased with the worst person. The displeasure of others does not mean that one is not progressing.

TASAWWUF: The path of blame has been often explained but it can not be explained too much. The generality is totally unable to measure spiritual progress. Yes sometimes it is true that a great master may come and inspire a multitude. But this has nothing to do with the particular progress of individuals. And there are also ways of loneliness.

In Christian mysticism much has been said of “the dark night of the soul.” Intellectual people who have never had such experience make much of it. But Sufis who often have loving murshids may never go through any such experience. You do not read much about this in Sufi literature. And the ever present teaching that **God is Love** or **Ishk Allah Mahbood Lillah** may obviate such loneliness.

Although we cannot measure our own ecstasies all are signs of a favor from God. There are some who see together the Grace of God and the ill-will of masses but this is not right either. These two things are quite independent of each other; they may go together, they may be poles apart but they are as if independent.

GATHEKA: Then if conditions are adverse the mureed thinks he is not on the right path.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, “Praise Allah in times of prosperity and surrender to Him in times of adversity.” If one adheres to this standard he will not have to worry at all. Christians sometimes sing, “God will take care of you.” If they really believed that they would drop all their pessimisms and all their fears of hell which have been so dominant. But it is true just the same. And this is called **tawakkul** or trust. One should do no thinking here. Getting rid of thought is beneficial; overcoming self-pity is still more beneficial.

GATHEKA: But does it mean that the ship is not on its right course if a storm meets it? Neither the murshid nor God are responsible if the conditions are adverse, and the best thing is to meet them, to be more brave and courageous and to make one’s way through them.

TASAWWUF: This is really the Path of Initiation—to meet new conditions and tests and trials, be they adverse, be they favorable, and to take them as an inherent part of life. By meeting them bravely one grows. And initiation does not always consist of events in the unseen, of other planes, but often of meeting dire conditions on earth, of facing new types of enemies and adversities or overcoming former obstacles. For only pain and love help one to grow and if one does not fully

adhere to love—which is most difficult—then life will test by pain, by hazard.

Many want the initiation of ancient Egypt. It was presumed that the tests and trials were ceremonial, ritual. True, but they were also not apart from life. Until one can bravely set out in new directions, he can not always progress on the path to Truth and God.

GATHEKA: Ghazali, the great Sufi writer of Persia, says that spiritual progress is like shooting at a target in the dark. We do not know where the target is, we do not see it, but we shoot just the same.

TASAWWUF: This has been repeated over and over again. But often man is reluctant to move in a new direction. Therefore the adventurous are often able to progress much further and more rapidly than those who adhere to goodness, kindness and piety. For while these are signs of traditional moralities, they are not enough to become all-embracing, and they are concerned more with the preservation of self than the acceptance of life in its fullness.

GATHEKA: The true ideal of the spiritual person is not great power nor a great amount of knowledge.

TASAWWUF: When we say **Allaho Akbar**, it indicates that there is no power nor might save in Allah as we read in *The Arabian Nights*. Actually this phrase means much more. But the seeker does not seek power, and even the most Jelali masters know they have to have restraint, consideration and kindness—in other words, heart development.

Nor is worldly knowledge of avail. It is very peculiar that in the efforts to spread Indian philosophies much has been made of university culture. Yet Sri Ramakrishna, in many ways the ideal of his age, was almost illiterate. It will be wonderful when some intellectuals make a full study of this man, to see what is the true relation between worldly knowledge and spiritual development. (These do not necessarily conflict as we can see in the life and career of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan).

GATHEKA: His true ideal stands beyond power and knowledge; it is that which is limitless, incomprehensible, nameless and formless. There are no milestones to count; one cannot say, “I have gone so many miles and there are so many still before me.” This does not belong to a spiritual journey. The pursuit of the limitless is limitless; of the formless, formless; one cannot make it tangible.

TASAWWUF: There is almost a humorous touch to this when the intellectual people use the term **achintya** which means **inconceivable** and then make a concept of the inconceivable. This still leaves the consciousness in the mind which is not infinite in the truest sense. There is much beyond the mind and it cannot be reached by the mind.

All the philosophers in the world cannot explain Sri Krishna. Perhaps a simple lover can. The spiritual path is concerned with the increase of love, not with knowledge. The increase of love

brings expanded knowledge; the increase of knowledge may have no effect on love at all.

GATHEKA: But then what is it that assures progress, what evidence have we to go on? There is only one evidence and that is our belief; there is one assurance and that is our faith. If we believe we can go on, if we are convinced we will, we must, reach our goal.

TASAWWUF: This is the deep urge. In the story of King Arthur there was the appearance of the Holy Grail. Then all the knights wished to leave the court and seek it. The good and bad, the rich and poor, the selfish and unselfish, all then went on the search, moved by something deep within themselves. But of course the intellectuals and selfish did not know when they had found the Grail. The intellectuals were concerned with concepts and the selfish with miracles. And this seems to be the natural human tendency.

Many starting inner studies are chagrined at the apparent simple and elementary teachings which are first given. They seem so childish; everyone has heard them before. Everyone may have heard them but few have practiced them and it is on these bases that the search and journey begin and end. This is all explained in *The Inner Life* and its commentaries.

GATHEKA: There are innumerable outer signs of one's progress, but one need not think in the absence of these signs that one is not progressing. What are these signs of progress? The first is that one feels inspiration, and that things which one could not understand yesterday are easy today.

TASAWWUF: This happens often and especially with the young. When the young come to the path of initiation they are often inspired. And then their elders in years will not accept such inspirations. Their elders even accuse them of being tempted by Satan. But inspiration will demonstrate itself—in art, in poetry, in scientific impulses, and generally in many fields of creation, including parenthood. All of these are signs of divine favor. And the more seriously they are accepted the greater the scopes for inspiration for any and all.

Therefore it has been a great mistake on the part of older people to dampen the spirit of inspiration. Only elders who themselves have been inspired and more than inspired have any right to dampen such spirit. It is they, not the young, who stand in the way of spiritual progress.

GATHEKA: Yet if there are things which one is not ready to understand one should have patience till tomorrow. Agitating against lack of inspiration means closing the doors to inspiration.

TASAWWUF: Patience is found mostly among the older people as inspiration among the young. Any sort of agitation, any urge can be harmful. All things develop naturally and we should permit them to come naturally.

The Message is for the old and for the young. Generally the old benefit from sobriety and the young from intoxication. Each has its place. There have been long disputes over it but disputation proves

a certain lack of wisdom. One could hardly expect a Just and All-knowing God to accept infants on the same basis as mature people. The great ones, but hardly the clergy, have announced the preeminence of the young and some day, no doubt, there will be much greater respect for the teachings and less concern for personalities. When this is done this will of itself evince great progress in the world.

That is to say, as people progress they actually have reverence and respect for teachers and teachings more than they had before. This is surely one sign of progress.

GATHEKA: Agitation is not allowed on this path; agitation disturbs our rhythm and paralyses us, and then we prove in the end to be our own enemy. But people will generally not admit this and blame others instead; or if they have kind feelings towards others then they blame the circumstances, although very often it is their own lack of patience rather than other people or the conditions.

TASAWWUF: We cannot compel students to study the ancient Sufi philosophy. Intellectually much can be gained, and it can help the understanding. It also refers to processes and states which one naturally finds on the path, especially as new faculties seem to be awakened or old ones enhanced.

But instead of compelling a philosophy or morality one should attend to breath and devotion and as one becalms the breath so also will the emotions be calmed and the spirit of agitation lessened under all circumstances.

Strictly speaking blaming others is not permitted although one does not have to accept the conditions surrounding one. We can realize that there is always agitation in samsara. And the prevailing efforts toward excitation are one of the main causes for the trouble in the world. We cannot have peace and excitement, peace and agitation in the world. It will be one or the other.

GATHEKA: The next sign of progress is that one begins to feel power. To some extent it may manifest physically and also mentally; and later the power may manifest in one's affairs in life. As spiritual pursuit is endless, so power has no end.

TASAWWUF: This is the natural result of repeating **Allaho Akbar**, God is All-Power. When we have Allah we have Power, but the reverse is not true. We can work for power. Athletes and gymnasts are not necessarily nearer to God, nor necessarily further away.

Nevertheless we cannot avoid it. All the sacred phrases have their effects and if not sooner, then later. Yes, there is a science and art in esotericism. It is very effective. If it were not so we should not have the chains of Sufis and the continued existence on earth of the servants of God, known as **abdallahs**, and the ones who serve unconsciously known as **abdals**.

Here we find a continuation of the teachings of *The Inner Life* and its commentaries.

GATHEKA: The third sign of progress is that one begins to feel a joy, a happiness. But in spite of that feeling it is possible that clouds of depression and despair may come from without, and one might think at that moment that all the happiness and joy which one had gained spiritually was snatched away. But that is not so. If spiritual joy could be snatched away it would not be spiritual joy.

TASAWWUF: We can read about this particularly in the work of Papa Swami Ram Das. He was concerned with this, in his daily life, in his lessons and writings and all aspects of life. Besides this is nothing but the application of Upanishadic wisdom. People use the word “wisdom” without any content, and there is a feeling of awe which often is a sign of ignorance. It is only those who experience who know.

This is a very big subject; this is an overwhelming subject. Strictly speaking only those who have known the great joy have the right to comment on it. And if they comment it in prose as it is done here this is only a shadowy comment. It itself does not evince the joy. The joy is evinced in the smiling forehead, in the loving heart and in the sunshiny eyes; perhaps in other ways. It does not come in comments, less in lectures or sermons. It is electric, it is magnetic, it is catching, it moves in great sways and swirls. If it is true it will remain, if it is not true nevertheless there will be a memory of it and one will want it again. It belongs to reality.

GATHEKA: It is not like material comforts; when these are taken away from us we have lost them; but spiritual joy is ours, it is our property; no death nor decay can take it away from us.

TASAWWUF: Indian teachers repeat Sat-Chit-Ananda which may be interpreted as **being, consciousness, bliss**. Of themselves these are not mantric words. Their repetitions do not produce them, as “Allaho Akbar” produces strength. They are only properly used after one has attained them. If one lectures on them without having them these lectures are illusory; they confuse as well as help. There is no end result.

Jesus Christ has taught to seek the treasures of heaven. These are the treasures of heaven: Sat-Chit-Ananda. They cannot be taken away; they belong to those things or principles which the world can neither give nor take. Nor even prayer touches them, and useless repetitions do not effect them at all, one way or another.

GATHEKA: Changing clouds like those which surround the sun, might surround our joy, but when they are scattered we will find our property still there in our own heart. It is something we can depend upon, something nobody can take away from us.

TASAWWUF: Walt Whitman has said that the efflux of the soul is happiness. But there is heaviness and the heavy people can not take that. They surround all the spiritual teachings with words and with their own ideas and even behavior patterns. This does no good. It has led to the revolts of the young who intuitively know this is not true. They may not know what is right but their inner beings distinctly point out to them what is wrong and they will have no more kinship with what

is obviously wrong.

It is the presence of the teacher which is the best armor against the debilitating emotions, who can best help us to recover or preserve the joy. His methods may not include counter-irritants. The way is through transcending and not always counter-measures.

GATHEKA: There is another sign of progress, and that is that one becomes fearless. Whatever be the situation in life, nothing seems to frighten one any more, even death. Then one becomes fearless in all that might seem frightening, and a brave spirit develops, a spirit which gives one patience and strength to struggle against all adverse conditions however terrible they seem to be.

TASAWWUF: This is truly the sign of mastery and in the path of the Master all efforts are in this direction. But actually all of us are on all paths. It is only that the Grace of Allah manifests differently in different persons for different purposes.

Esotericism is a science and heart which contains all the protections, all the medicines, all the means both to help one positively and negatively. Esotericism is based on the conscious recognition of the Presence of God in all forms, seen and unseen, obvious and transcendent. And as one feels God, as one is conscious of His Spirit so there will be this fearlessness; it cannot be otherwise.

GATHEKA: It can even develop to such an extent that one would like to fight with death. To such a person nothing seems so horrible that he would feel helpless before it.

TASAWWUF: There have been mistaken philosophies of non-resistance. Krishna said, "Therefore fight, O Arjuna." The helpless people make symbols of it and end in doing nothing, they even give in to the selfishness and ignorance of the world. One must fight ignorance, one must fight selfishness. Perhaps in the end one cannot do otherwise. And when the heart exerts itself one does feel exactly this way.

GATHEKA: Still another sign of progress is that at times one begins to feel peaceful.

TASAWWUF: There is an interpretation of **Allaho Akbar**, that **peace is power**. Allah represents the primordial peace, and Akbar the exertions of any kind. As in the physical sciences kinetic energy arises from potential energy, so all movement comes out of the silence. This is also presented in the first part of *The Mysticism of Sound* and elsewhere. This is deep metaphysics not easily learned until one has actually progressed on the path of attainment. Then it will not be otherwise.

GATHEKA: This may increase so much that a restful feeling comes in the heart.

TASAWWUF: In *Vadan* we have the Gayatri; "Pir," "Nabi," and "Rassoul" which represent different degrees of this ultimate progress. Here they must be feeling, not words. Not even the word

“Shanti” is helpful. No words avail any more and no thoughts. Peace is beyond these.

In Sufism there is the grade of **nufs salima** where one is conscious of this peace. When one wants to share, to bless, one uses the tawajjeh or darshan, the glance, and other silent communications. Or else the atmosphere becomes peaceful in meditation and contemplation. This is one of the best ways to help mureeds and the generality.

GATHEKA: One might be in the solitude, but even if one is in a crowd one still feels restful. Life in the world is most exciting; it has a tiring effect upon a sensitive person. When one is restless the conditions in life can make one experience the greatest discomfort, for there is no greater pain than restlessness. And if there is any remedy for the lack of peace, it is spiritual progress.

TASAWWUF: The Bodhisattvic oath is that one should work for the good of the entire manifestation and do this even in the midst of the crowd. Therefore one aspect of the Mahayana teachings is that Nirvana can be found in the midst of Samsara. This is the verbal teachings, this is the intellectual philosophy. It is not the demonstration. It is only the wise who can demonstrate and they do. They gradually have such strong atmospheres that the vibrations and magnetism pervade the surrounding atmosphere. And the greater the vibrating power and magnetism the stronger the atmosphere, the purer and the more capable of giving the full sense of an all-pervading peacefulness.

GATHEKA: Once peace is developed in a soul, that soul feels such a great power and has such a great influence upon those who approach it and upon all upsetting conditions and jarring influences coming from all sides, that just as water makes the dust settle down, so all jarring influences settle down under the feet of the peaceful.

TASAWWUF: Those who have met such personalities know that it is so. No words, no arguments are needed. Once the commentator went into an ashram of a purported Indian saint—there is no assurance that she was not a saint—and he pointed out where she was in the meditation, and where in the lectures and where she held audience. The disciples all took this as a sign of her greatness, but they did not take it as a sign of the Sufi having any special faculties. How could he know?

He knew because there is a science of Peace. An Indian philosopher even wrote at length on it. There is no science that the book brought the peace but there is a sign, there may be a series of signs, showing the presence, the acquisition of peace. This is particularly true if one goes into certain temples and shrines and mosques. Generally the sense of peacefulness is greater than in Christian churches but it need not be. There are no signs of assurance here. Any shrine, any place where multitudes have prayed or meditated may have the power-of-peace.

The commentator felt this particularly at the Pearl Mosque in Agra but also in many of the older Mosques in the Near East. There is something wonderful about them.

GATHEKA: What do we learn from the story told in the Bible of Daniel who was thrown into the lions' den, what does this story suggest? Was it Daniel's hypnotism that calmed the lions? If it was hypnotism, let the hypnotists of today go to the lions and try the experience! No, it was his inner peace. The influence of that peace acts so powerfully upon all passions, that it even calms lions and makes them sleep.

TASAWWUF: There must be something more than that. The commentator has lived in many wildernesses, in forests inhabited by wild animals. In America he only encountered snakes and in India and Pakistan not even them. He does not know how or why but there was always a sense of divine protection.

When fearlessness goes, there is also a change in atmosphere and evidently one senses that. Also as one ceases to eat meat, one will find a closer kinship with beasts of all kinds.

The great Jihad, which is to combat one's own faults, small or great, also produces a change in atmosphere. As has been explained regarding **Allaho Akbar**, the peacefulness that rises is all powerful, and the person who controls his inner passions controls the atmosphere without and has power over all who come into it without knowing it consciously, or unconsciously.

GATHEKA: One may make the excuse that one's surroundings are worrying one, that one's friends are troublesome or that one's enemies are horrible; but nothing can withstand that peace which is awakened in the heart. All must calm down, all must settle down like dust after water has been sprinkled on it.

TASAWWUF: Jihadiyyat, or the pursuit of the Great Jihad, is one of the hardest and highest paths. One must keep watching over the surface of the heart, and steel oneself against all excesses. One can then not blame anybody.

Of course analytically the surroundings are always to be blamed. The word "environment" is now used as the term "devil" has been used to blame, blame outside considerations and conditions, blame everything and everyone but not blame one's own shortcomings. But it is as the *Gayan* says, that those near and dear are often one's greatest enemies, but the greatest of all enemies is one's self. Therefore the pursuit of peace, the augmentation of the atmosphere of peace and the sharing of that peace with others is one of the greatest of attainments.

GATHEKA: But if this power does not come immediately to a mureed, let him not be disappointed. Can one expect this whole journey to be made in a week? I would not be surprised if many mureeds do expect this, but it is a lifelong journey and those who have really accomplished it are the ones who have never doubted that they would progress.

TASAWWUF: When this attitude is held many consider such persons as vain and braggarts and accuse them of all sorts of things. This is natural. Many great souls have been persecuted for having revealed their inner states and by utterances which shock the ignorant.

There was a story called "The Thief of Bagdad" which had a subtitle, "Happiness Must be Earned." It was really a Sufi allegory. The author was an Afghan. But of many who saw it few had any inkling of its inner meaning, not even among disciples. They expect happiness comes by some other way. One cannot combat their ideas, only happiness does not come and since the happiness does not come their views cannot be substantiated.

GATHEKA: They have never allowed this doubt to enter their minds to hinder them. They do not even concern themselves with this question.

TASAWWUF: We have been expecting some of this behavior from Asia. But it is also possible for a western disciple to stay on for years and years, never doubting the teacher or the teaching and in fulfillment of the instructions of his Murshid produce this commentary.

GATHEKA: They only know that they must reach the goal, that they will reach it, and that if they do not reach it today they will reach it tomorrow.

TASAWWUF: It is this attitude which had been hoped for and appears also in the class lessons. This is the end of the studies and meditations, that oneself will experience the awakenings which come from and with initiations.

GATHEKA: The right attitude is never to let one's mind feel, after one has taken some steps, that one must go to the right or to the left. If a man has that one strength which is faith, that is all the power he needs on the path. He can go forward and nothing will hinder him, and in the end he will accomplish his purpose.

TASAWWUF: That has been the experience of the commentator. Maligned, cheated and robbed, he continued to pursue the path laid down by Hazrat Inayat Khan and especially fulfill the science of commentaries. And after all the Western world ignored and denounced him, the Asian world did not ignore, did not denounce, in fact accepted him. And in this way the doors were open more fully for a union between East and West, a harmonization and an understanding.

But now it is for every disciple, for all who take Bayat to try to follow in the same general way which opens the doors to humanity on earth, to hierarchy in heaven and to Allah in all aspects and planes of existence.