

Gatha with Commentary

Kashf: Insight

Series I

of

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by

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 1

Safa

GATHA: It is the faculty of the soul to see and the eyes are its instruments. It is not the instrument that sees, but it is the soul that uses the instrument to see.

TASAWWUF: The soul, being the divine ray, has all the potentiality of divinity. The soul has all the facultatives of the universe and it operates through its various vehicles, as is explained in the teachings on metaphysics in the literature. But this is the surface explanation, and the depths are comprehended as one is aware of the faculties and uses them because of the awareness.

In one sense the soul is never asleep. According to the Indian teachings it is awake on the outer planes when we are fully conscious, and this awareness is withdrawn in dreams, and more withdrawn in deep sleep. But this is only one aspect of it.

The eyes are formed of nerves coming to the surface. The rest of the body is protected by skin and hair and they have in them also the etheric protection. Otherwise the whole organism would be constantly sensitive to all sorts of vibrations. The eyes have been called “the windows of the soul,” but sometimes there are people who can see through the skin and fingertips, though this is unusual.

GATHA: The eyes I have given as an example, but really the whole body is the instrument of the soul, to get the experience of life. The seeing of the soul through the ears is called hearing; through the tongue, tasting. It is the knowing of the soul of the external life; the soul uses different instruments to obtain different experiences.

TASAWWUF: This teaching is also explained in the literature in the sections on metaphysics and elsewhere. Actually, every portion of the anatomy is alive in a certain sense: every cell and organ depends upon breath and blood, which are the channels of life in the outer manifestation. But these cells and organs are tuned to be receptive to different vibrations.

According to the philosophies of India, both Hindu and Buddhist, there is a general organ behind all senses which is called the sensorium in the Western cultures. The tuning of this sensorium to and through different instruments gives rise to the senses and organs of the senses.

GATHA: Between the body and the soul there is another instrument which is recognized by

scientists and mystics as inexplicable, that is the mind. The scientists call it the brain, but the brain is but the instrument of the mind, and the mind goes beyond it.

TASAWWUF: Although the mind is inexplicable in one sense, mind is not understood or determined by mind. There is much that the mind does not comprehend or perceive. Yet its functions are very vast and if one studies the “Mind-World” it is a deep study, for without the corresponding experience, from sight and insight it remains as if unknown. This is not really so, for the awakened person can utilize mind on all levels.

GATHA: Plainly speaking, it may be said that the mind is the instrument of the soul, and the body is the instrument of the mind, but both mind and body are the instruments of the soul.

TASAWWUF: This is true in an analytical sense. It is also true that the devotee prays that God sustain the body, mind, and soul. But these are not equals, not in size, not in function, not in importance, not in the worldly sense nor in the cosmic sense.

It is certain that the body is subject to growth, and there has arisen a school which studies what are called psychosomatic factors, which is to say, that the mind so operates that mind and body are one. This is also a teaching of certain orthodox Buddhist schools. But this may be an empty statement, for we see the body as body, and the mind as mind, and we use the body as body and the mind as mind. It is the soul that uses each and both.

GATHA: Although these instruments give the soul knowledge of things clearly, these instruments at the same time limit the power of the soul. There are two aspects of sight: one is penetration, and the other extension (i.e., the length and width of the range of sight). Through the eyes of the body one can see a short or long distance, or have a wide or narrow horizon. But by using the mind as its instrument, the soul sees through another mind in the same way as the eye sees across the length and breadth of its own range of sight.

TASAWWUF: This is also presented in the published works on metaphysics, but so long as we think separateness and operate as separate beings, we do not see readily through the minds of others, and often do not even use our own instruments completely.

Penetration of sight is called depth, and extension shows the horizon of sight. Physical sight is subject to many short-comings. Though man may see from twenty to fifty miles with his eyes, it is the mental eye which can perceive for long distances, and when the inner sense is opened, still longer. Of course, man can also see very far by the use of instruments, such as the telescope.

GATHA: When the mind takes the body in order to experience life, it limits its experience, for the body is not sufficient; but if the mind were free, it would see further.

TASAWWUF: We have this also with the radio, telescope, television, ultra-microscope, and many instruments. The animal or physical eye has a limited range of function; the mind's eye has a

much larger range of function; and when the imagination is used, we cannot tell the limits of such functioning. Beyond this is the spiritual light, developed with Mushahida, which becomes contemplation.

GATHA: But as from childhood man has the habit of using the body as the instrument of the mind, scarcely anyone knows how to make use of the mind without the body.

TASAWWUF: This is part of the work in both occultism and mysticism. The former operating in particular aspects and the latter in all aspects of life. Actually, the faculty of Insight, the development of which is an essential part of Sufic study, frees man from the scope of the senses. Scriptures, like the Bhagavad Gita, speak against man limiting himself, but any belief as such does not by itself extend the conscious functions of man. It is by learning to rely upon impressions, and deepening this sense of reliance, and also by quickening sensitivity, that man gains the wisdom of Kashf, which in Sufism corresponds to Prajna in the Indian teachings.

GATHA: And as the soul has always taken the mind as its instrument, it also limits its sight and experience. If the soul could see independently of the mind and body, it would see infinitely more.

TASAWWUF: And as the disciple develops his heart-faculties, and practices the disciplines of concentration, he also sees infinitely more. For then he is freed from the limitation of the senses, not only in the spatial way, but also in the temporal sphere. This is also taught in the Sufi metaphysics.

GATHA: As it is difficult to see the mind independent of the body, it is more difficult to see the soul independent of the mind. Therefore, the Sufi tries to make his mind independent of the body, and his soul independent of the mind and body.

TASAWWUF: For this there are various practices, exercises, and purifications. The whole training of esotericism is toward purification so that one can use body, mind, and heart each to its own fullness without any confusion.

At the same time there is the need to cultivate the art of response to impressions. When the heart uses the ear and the ear is able to respond to the inner voice, then one works both with mind and at the same time one works as if independent, not limited to and by the mind.

GATHA: In order to accomplishment this different concentrations and practices are given. It is like effacing the external form from the mind and erasing from the soul the form of the mind. It is this experience which is called **Safa**.

TASAWWUF: The wise teacher who is also advanced in Insight is able to give to each disciple and to each class some practice useful for the grade of development. No doubt in Zen Buddhism there are special practices which operate so fully in this direction that they have never been improved upon. But there is still some confusion between Safa, which is to some extent a negative process,

and total becoming and perfection. Safa helps to free the consciousness from the ego, but the difference between Sufism and Zen, perhaps, is that the Sufi recognizes the Grace of God (Allah), and it is also that this Grace is operative. So it has been said that as man walks one step toward God, God walks ten steps toward him. It is the willingness to take these steps which helps open the doors to illumination.

Besides, the light is always there. All that is needed is to remove the veils of darkness and impurity. Thus the practice of Fikr is very valuable, freeing the mind from the body and the soul from the mind. But there are also other valuable disciplines on the path toward God.

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Series I: Number 2

Tat Tvam Asi

GATHA: There are three aspects of life, and by seeing the oneness of these three, one comes to divine knowledge.

TASAWWUF: This is a theme discussed at length in the Bhagavad Gita. The difficulty is that, while discussing a subject, the mind is involved, and when the mind is too involved one is not aware of the process, and separates processes from the active awakened consciousness.

GATHA: To the mystic, the idea of the Trinity suggests this philosophy. This idea exists in the Hindu religion and is known as Trimurti. They have a religious instrument with three points (a kind of fork with three points) as a symbol of this, the idea being that it is the three different aspects of the one life which confuses man and prevents him from realizing the one life beneath these three aspects.

TASAWWUF: The West better knows the Trimurti as the three aspects of the Godhead: Brahma the Creator; Vishnu the Preserver; and Siva, the Assimilator or Destroyer. Actually the same ideas appeared in the ancient Egyptian religion and have been preserved by the Sufis in their science of mysticism.

There are concentrative practices which help more than the verbal or mental knowledge of this.

Besides, the meditations on each of these symbols, and realities behind the symbols, help very much in the progress of disciples.

GATHA: The first aspect is the knower, the second is the known, the third is the knowing. In other words, they may be called the seer, the seen, and the sight.

TASAWWUF: To understand this some practices in concentration are needed, such as identifying the self with each of them, practicing the full art of becoming the knower and only the knower. Then, by effacement, to become only the known, acting as if the knower did not exist, then identifying oneself with one's faculties rather than with one's essence. This can be done in the classroom, or can be done also along with one's devotions at other times.

The obstacle to be overcome is the interposition of mind. Thus, although the Gita speaks against the mind, it has been mostly minds that have presented studies of the Gita. The result is that the processes have become separate and there is no real knower, known, or knowing until one is able to realize this with full consciousness.

GATHA: These three are three turnings on the same road, which hide it and divide it into three aspects. Therefore, in the spiritual path, this puzzle must be solved as the first thing and the last thing. If the barriers which divide these three aspects are removed then the mystic realizes one life and not three.

TASAWWUF: There the first thing is to separate ourselves from any mental or intellectual understanding of the teachings, for this sort of understanding is not the real understanding. Khatum says: "Open Thou our hearts that we may hear Thy Voice which cometh constantly from within." Therefore there must be a hearing as if from within. It can even be tried with the ears; it cannot be tried with the mind alone, which covers itself and prevents the deep penetration.

Therefore there is the training in meditation, in breath sciences, and in the awakening of the centers of consciousness within the body and beyond the body. Thus, not only Esotericism but all the inner sciences have to be cultivated. At the same time, if one grasps the knowledge of unity of the within and the without, it will be found that these sciences are often guides, not the Supreme Knowledge itself.

GATHA: Occult power is the power of knowing or seeing, the faculty of knowing or seeing. The seer is the greatest of these aspects. The second is that which is seen (appears), the seeing power is the third. The reason for this is that the seer is the source and origin of what is seen and of the seeing power. Therefore, Jesus Christ called Him "Father."

TASAWWUF: Each religion has its approach, its language, its symbolism. Is there any faculty which does not belong at the same time to the body as a whole and to each cell? We find in the single celled animals all sorts of faculties operating. Whether by instinct or wisdom it does not matter. Is it not contrary to evolution itself if the cell-power has not been more fully developed in the

higher animals, and most of all in man? Is man's physical body the result of the depression of the wisdom of the cell or the natural evolution? Do not the cells themselves drink from the nervous and circulatory systems of the body of flesh? And may not therefore each cell have returned a greater wisdom than the cell-bodies of the lowest animalcules?

Can we not therefore use all this wisdom, this accumulated wisdom both of flesh (which is Prakriti) and spirit (which is Purusha)? So are we made up of a multitude of little seers, little sights, little experiences of the seen, and altogether make a grand universe which is man, each being a universe made up of countless individuals working together.

We can therefore learn the Prakriti-wisdom by listening to each cell of our being, the physical cells and the mental cells. This form of divine wisdom may be called "instinct," but it is very real. And then we can learn the integrative way from the whole, which is the Purusha, and this may be called "Insight," or Kashf.

So we have the knowledge and experience of our parts, if only we would listen, and also of the whole, if only we could listen. Therefore the disciple is told to listen, and this listening is one of the bases of all the religions considered esoterically, and it is very, very real. "God is the only Teacher, we all learn from Him."

GATHA: That which is seen has in it the light inherited from the seer. Whether flower or fruit, it has radiance in it which makes it appear.

TASAWWUF: In the teachings on Concentration or Murakkabah, the disciple has to practice, and by this practice he becomes aware of the radiance in all objects. At the same time he has to develop or awaken the light within himself in order to see at all, for otherwise all objects might appear as black. (There is something like this in the difference between black-and-white and color TV.)

GATHA: There is a verse of a Persian poet which explains this: "The nightingale has borrowed from Thee his beautiful song, and the rose has borrowed from Thee its color and fragrance." But the means that the seer takes as his instrument is the mind, which is the instrument of the soul, and the body, which is the instrument of the mind.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, "Thy Light is in all forms, Thy love in all beings." That is to say, all the forms in the universe are forms derived from God as God, and all the properties are derived from the Sifat-i-Allah, the radiance and qualities of the Supreme. Thus the Sufi sees all objects as harbingers of Divinity. But what is in him that sees? As the Hindu Scriptures teach, that which sees is the very Brahman itself, which is identical with Atman, or rather that the real Self, while being as Self, is also the Lord of the Universe.

The question comes how to make this possible, and it comes in extending, not destroying, the senses.

GATHA: Therefore the first lesson the mystic has to learn is to know the relation between himself and the thing he sees. As soon as a mystic sees life from this point of view, that he connects himself with the thing he sees, he can understand it much better than the average person.

TASAWWUF: The intellectual aspect of what is called Advaita is often false and misleading. It assumes an identity between the small and the great. Yes, there is an identity when a small stream enters a river or a river enters the ocean. Then the small is absorbed, not lost, in the great. Absorption is not a destruction, and the only annihilation is that of the false in the real.

The practice of watching impressions, and even consulting the organs of the body and the glands and the nerves and even the cells themselves, promotes a humility that is impossible when one thinks of oneself as real. The Hebrew bible says: "In thy flesh thou shalt see God." Why not?

GATHA: Sufism is not a religion because it does not give any doctrine or principle, but it is a point of view. The ancient Vedantists adopted this point of view in teaching the sacred word **Tat Tvam Asi**: "As Thou art, so I am."

TASAWWUF: The ancient Hindus taught the universal identity. No doubt this came to its culmination in the great seer, Shankaracharya. To understand this seer fully one must read his poetry as well as his prose, and find that the depths of his being were in heart, and love, and inspiration, and not just in a logical philosophy. Besides, all this depended upon his illumination and the words were just the aftermath.

Sufism is very much the same although its line of descent is different and often Arabic terms are used instead of Sanskrit ones. This does not make it different. Many wise Hindu teachers still see their audiences as extensions or representatives of themselves. And it is certain that after one is able to function fully in one's own body and learns the wisdom of the physical self one may advance in two directions: (a) to learn the wisdom of all physical selves; (b) to learn the wisdom of the unseen portion of oneself.

Besides, in Sufism the teacher does not regard the disciple as other than his own self in an external form.

GATHA: With this point of view, when the sight becomes keen, even objects become clear to the seer and speak to him. What is called psychometry, or such phenomena, become as a play to the seer. The whole life begins to unfold before him like an open book.

TASAWWUF: It has been explained that we can listen to the cells of our body; we then can listen to our mind, and then to what is beyond the mind. This is outlined in the papers on metaphysics and more fully explained in the commentaries thereon, which brings all this knowledge into fuller consciousness.

GATHA: But there is nothing so interesting for the seer to see or know as human nature, and it is

the seer who can see and know another person.

TASAWWUF: Although the words seem clear they are befogged with thought, and the maintenance of a differentiation. The teacher does not have that, though the pupil may. But the teacher realizes that the pupil does not have his point of view and he does not expect that the pupil has. And as *Gayan* says: “there is a lot in man.”

Therefore the teacher can see every pupil as the reflection of God, as the beloved one of God, from whom he can learn. For it is not only the pupil that learns from the teacher but the teacher learns even more from the pupil, because his inner eyes and ears are open, so to speak, and his heart-sight is keen.

GATHA: Ordinarily there exist many barriers between one person and another, such as prejudice, hatred, reserve, remoteness, and all aspects of duality. A person considers another his greatest friend in the world if he realizes that the other understands him. There is nothing that brings two people closer together than understanding.

TASAWWUF: These barriers arise from the thought of self. We find among many cultured peoples that there is a thought of self, that each one is an individual separate from others. And yet there are people in the world; there have been whole races and cultures, that did not have this point of view. So there is confusion when it is presumed that all human nature is alike in this sense. All human nature is not alike in this sense and we find that the sense-of-self is constantly changing and is subject to the principles that Lord Buddha has called *anicca* and *anatta*.

These have been wrongly interpreted, for if there were no self, not even the top Buddhists can explain the Triratna or three jewels of their faith which use the first personal pronoun. Why do they use the first personal pronoun? Because in a certain sense there is a self, not necessarily an abiding self, but some sort of entity beyond all phenomena. And this is taught in the “*Udana*” which came directly from the lips of Lord Buddha himself.

GATHA: And what is this comprehension? It is a trinity with unity. Often one wonders, “Why do I not understand this person?” But one does not realize that one creates oneself the barriers which separate one person from another. If the barriers are not created, the soul has freedom to see and nothing can stand in its way.

TASAWWUF: How is this barrier made? Mohammed has said that every infant is born a Muslim but his parents change him. For the child is not born with the sense of separated self, and when an infant cries, other infants, hearing, will respond. Little children do not feel this sense of differentiation, and it is of such that Jesus has said the Kingdom of Heaven instrumentalizes. But older people, separating themselves and using the discursive mind, cannot so function and do not realize their ignorance, born out of the acting in differentiation.

The lessons in Sufic metaphysics help one to overcome all these shortcomings and work in

fullness and freedom.

GATHA: Do you think the sages and saints try to see the thoughts of other people? Not at all, that does not concern them; but the thoughts of another person manifest themselves to the saint. Why? Because there is no barrier. This barrier creates duality.

TASAWWUF: Many people who have not met saints have written about them, and often it has been commercially valuable. The same is true about the masters and sages. Or someone meets a few, and writes, and he is accepted as an authority for all. No scientist could work in this fashion. Without an over-all comprehension he would not be accepted, but in the literary world this is not so. And often saints and sages coming to cultured lands have been stymied by the prestige of authors on the subject.

When one functions from heart one does not regard differences as important. No doubt the lover requires the beloved, but the lover does not analyze the beloved. There, there is no barrier. Where there are no barriers one is near truth.

GATHA: The idea of the Sufi is to uncover himself, and this he can accomplish by contemplation upon the idea of God, which is the absolute oneself. When one realizes this, all such sciences as physiognomy or phrenology begin to become like play, because by these sciences one can see a part, but by the light of the soul one sees the whole.

TASAWWUF: Actually, this subject is discussed at length in *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, the monumental work of the great Sufi Teacher, Al-Hujwiri, who in his saintly function has been known as Data-Gang-Buksh, whose tomb at Lahore is visited by millions. It presents the science of direct apprehension, functioning as if there were no ego-self interposed between God and His creation.

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Series I: Number 3

The Glance of the Seer

GATHA: The glance of the seer is penetrating, and in this it differs from the glance of the average man. It has three qualities. The first is that it penetrates through body, mind and soul.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi uses Tawajjeh which is the glance for the purpose of raising the atmosphere and the deeper sense of the disciple. In this he puts all his magnetism and power or ability for the sole purpose of helping the pupil without analyzing anything. It is a practice of oneness.

Darshan is a corresponding practice derived from India. It has been used through the ages, and still is by the munis and at times by others. Sri Aurobindo called himself "The last of the Rishis," and he also used this method. But his followers do not seem to have comprehended it much.

From another point of view this is presented in the *Gayatri* "Pir" and "Nabi" which appear in *Gayan*. The true teacher will have this effect on pupils and the generality, that he can emanate both his light and magnetism by radiance for the benefit of all people. No doubt the Tawajjeh is reserved mostly for disciples and the Darshan for all people.

Those who pretend to continue the enlightenment-experience of Lord Buddha often omit all reference to Darshan. Then it all degenerates into a philosophy or cultism and cannot produce the same results.

GATHA: The second quality of this glance is that it opens, unlocks and unfolds things; it also possesses the power of seeking and finding.

TASAWWUF: The disciple who responds to the Glance of the sage begins to awaken. As his light becomes more vivid, he too can be of benefit to others. For the Divine Qualities are latent in this light and besides the magnetism, it brings the Divine blessing which is of benefit to all.

GATHA: The third characteristic of the glance of the seer is more wonderful. It is this: as it falls upon a thing, it makes that thing as it wants to make it. It is not actually creating, but it is awakening that particular quality, which was perhaps asleep.

TASAWWUF: The attainment may come by advancement in Esotericism and again by Grace. But mostly through attunement, the attunement which links a person first with his Teacher, then with all the Teachers in chain who are the representatives of the Spirit of Guidance on earth and beyond earth. Thus there is a certain power and magnetism, and this also is explained in the lessons on magnetism, though to most people it looks more like a philosophy of life than direct experience.

Behind all this is Nuri Mohammed, the Divine Light as it operates through human personality and works toward perfection. Besides, the glance can stimulate the power of glance in another by the process of attunement.

GATHA: This is quite natural, as we see in the ordinary course of life that by fear we create in others dreadful qualities, and when we love we create kindness. It is possible to turn a friend into an enemy by thinking that he is an enemy, and also it is possible to change an enemy into a friend by expecting him to be a friend.

TASAWWUF: There is the power which comes from natural development and also as one advances in Murakkabah or Concentration. Thus the Will-power can be used when we practice the "Toward the One" as actuality and not merely as invocation. For the body of man is actually the temple of the Divine Spirit and not just symbolically so.

Besides, all kinds of things come by attunement, and not only fear and friendliness. This enables the sage to build up the constructive emotions and qualities in the disciple, and especially love, self-assurance, compassion, fearlessness, and other positive faculties.

In this the power of breath can be put to use, and the breath of the Teacher is not only more powerful than that of others, but much more powerful. Also, it contains a light, visible or not visible, which confers favorable faculties on the willing disciple.

There is also a difference between Sufism and some other schools of attainment that, while they promote love for God, it is often too abstract, while with the Sufis it is always on the human level; if the love cannot be manifest to and with humanity, it is one-sided. This is also taught in the Christian Scriptures: that no one can really love God who does not love his fellow-man. The difference between exotericism and esotericism is that in the former there is a philosophy, a ritual, an indirect approach; in the latter the approach is direct and real.

GATHA: Therefore the tendency of the mystic is to turn everything into what he wishes. To turn what is ugly into beauty, or beauty into ugliness, this is what the vision can accomplish.

TASAWWUF: It is the practice in Concentration (Murakkabah) which brings this about mostly, but there is also the process of Alchemy. This was developed by Sufis and not always explained. Even when it was put into books it was not always explained. Then the non-initiates found the manuscripts and they did not always understand them. For Alchemy is the science of the control of change in both inner and outer processes.

We can make everything as real—plants, animals—as things. We must learn to realize that thy light is in all forms. When we come to appreciate the Divine light, man having in him more than things have, this alone gives him a power, usually innate, but real. Therefore, one starts the Murakkabah with the inanimate but treats them as real, and soon he begins to awaken the power within and can use it. And by this means he grows to be able to control the conditions around him, but only by learning to control himself first.

GATHA: This proves to a deep thinker that things are not what they appear to be, but we make them as they are. The whole life may be made into a thing of complete ugliness or it may be made into a sublime vision of perfect beauty.

TASAWWUF: It is taught in many places that thought has supreme power. Then most people are limited by the thought: "Thought has supreme power," and being limited by such a thought, they are not able to apply the thought-power. Lessons were first introduced in *In an Eastern Rose*

Garden, and then in the literature, which often failed of their objective, because the people listening, listened only with the mind, not with their whole mind and all senses and the deeper consciousness as well. For every word spoken by the sage may be containing divine power and divine wisdom.

The question is how to put it into practice. There are many schools of meditation which help man to control the ego, and stop there. They do not give any positive knowledge or wisdom. Mastery may be taught without calling it “mastery,” but devotional response often awakens tremendous power and wisdom in the devotee. Therefore, every situation that presents itself is a grand opportunity to apply the Divine Wisdom (i.e. Sufism) to the affairs of life.

GATHA: The Lord of the yogis, Shiva, is pictured with a cobra on his neck which means that death, which frightens everyone, is accepted by him as life. That shows that even death can be made into life, and it is only the difference of the point of view that makes life death.

TASAWWUF: It is necessary in the spiritual life to rise above thoughts and symbols to become a master. When disciples are given the practice of Fikr, this enables them in time to master the whole mental mechanism. This gives them the ability, but in Concentration this ability is applied, so Fikr helps the concentration and concentration helps the Fikr.

Death is not something just for the body as a whole. It is occurring every moment in the life of the cells, and sometimes organisms that form the body. There is a constant movement as if life and death were playing a game.

GATHA: The first characteristic of the glance of the seer, penetration, depends upon clearness of vision.

TASAWWUF: First, to become a seer one must be able to attune his personality to the masters of wisdom. Actually, there is no such thing as a seer: there is the accommodation for the Divine Light. Thus we pray: “Use us for the purpose that Thy Wisdom chooseth.” This is needed to bring the suggestion. But one does not stop there. The next thing is how to make that suggestion real.

As one masters the breath one removes the power of the ego, which is a false power, and the real begins to operate through the seer. This real is unlimited, though no doubt it operates differently through Tasawwuri Murshid and attunement to the chain of Sufis, and then to the whole Hierarchy which forms the embodiment of the Master. This gives the penetrating power, and it is not so much a power that belongs to man, but a power like a searchlight which operates through and from man.

GATHA: The second characteristic, the uncovering of objects, depends upon the illumination of the soul.

TASAWWUF: Not every person is capable of performing Tawajjeh or Darshan. There are those who make a ceremony or play, and then there is often an exchange of magnetism. A searchlight

does not seek anything from anybody. It throws out its power in the form of light, and this is true of the seer also. If he has not the illumined soul, then it is a game, and a very false game.

People talk about the Christ-consciousness and they neither have the power nor the wisdom nor the compassion nor the self-sacrifice (especially the last) which demonstrates this in actuality. For the Light is not merely light; it is Light carrying the Divine Rays, the Divine Wisdom, the Divine Qualities.

GATHA: But the third, the greatest, comes from confidence in the self, called **Iman**.

TASAWWUF: To perfect the Darshan one must make of oneself an instrument of higher powers, actually, not in thought. Indeed, to think this can increase illusion. The ordinary self must stand by and the light will then shine through the true self, as it is called, or the higher self.

TASAWWUF (Cont.): The seer has a certain faculty of discrimination and discernment through his ability to efface himself, and thus his own short-comings. In a sense we can say that the Light of Wisdom is shown through the Hindu sages, the Light of Compassion through the Lord Buddha, the Light of Purity through Zoroaster, etc. But there is also a close attunement to each one. Rama confers ability to rule or control, executive ability, fearlessness and justice. With Sri Krishna it is endless Love with Joy to the point of ecstasy. With Jesus Christ it is compassion, self-sacrificing tender love.

In Mohammed is the synthesis and balancing of all these perfections. The perfection of all qualities then blends as if in a single personality. Therefore, Mohammed has been called Khatima-Mursaleen, the Seal of the Divine Messengers. And by effacement (fana) the seer becomes the instrument for all those who form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 4

Divine Evidence

GATHA: The first thing in the study of human nature is observation of the external part of man. There are two aspects; one is the head of man, the other is his form. And this can be seen from

two points of view; the first is the analytical point of view, the second is the synthetic. The former is the understanding of the character of each organ and the meaning of its form, and the latter is the harmony of the different organs. And a person understands half if he considers one organ only and not its combination with other organs.

TASAWWUF: The whole world has been misled by its adherence to analysis, regarding it as all-important. It has been called by different names and yet it is still analysis. And it is this knowledge only of name and form which keeps man within limitations.

Still, it is very good to know the names of things, and also of all parts of the body. There is an Islamic tradition that God made mankind in His image and asked the angels to bow down before man. Knowing the faults that would be characteristic of humanity, the angels, led by Iblis, protested. They praised God but could do no more. And when Allah asked them to name the parts of creation all they could do was praise Allah and say that He knew everything. Then Allah summoned Adam and he was able to name the things of creation. This is analysis.

But if we study the evolution, the growth from cell to plant and animal, we see a different process, which is synthetic and integrative; in these processes there is growth and change. Living things are subject to change. And if we examine these processes, we can see how the life-force works in bodies which cannot be described, even less explained by mere analysis.

This teaching also appears in the First Epistle to the Corinthians in the Christian Bible. But the influence of this teaching has been lost in verbiage of analytical theology.

GATHA: The study of physiognomy can help one as an interesting study, but one must have intuition also to help and guide him who wishes to judge.

TASAWWUF: There are two considerations here. From the analytical point of view every cell and every pore of the skin is alive and is expressing itself and one with an awakened intuition can read that, although it also belongs to instinct. And from the synthetic point of view, every feature presents a picture which can be studied, as a picture is studied, as it is said in *Gayan* that God created the universe and the art of it appeared in the perfection of man.

We can read this synthesis through intuition, and at the same time every effort, every study, helps awaken this insight, or Kashf. If we make a process alive, it becomes more alive. Or, as is taught in *Cosmic Language*, everything speaks, although by merely saying that everything speaks, it does not mean anything until one hears it, or reads the signs.

GATHA: Nothing in life is so interesting as the study of human nature, and in attaining to knowledge of God, knowledge of human nature is the beginning. Therefore in occult study one must begin by studying human beings, and the first lesson is to study their form.

TASAWWUF: It is said in the occult sciences that there are three aspects of existence: God, man,

and the universe. These are also reflected in the various principles and activities which constitute the whole of life and all its undertakings. In the Islamic traditions which are found at the basis of Sufism, we find both: "Know God and thou shalt know thyself," and "Know thyself and thou shalt know God." This latter approach has been found both in Greece and in India, from most ancient times. But merely to say that, adds neither to one's knowledge or abilities. And there is some question whether one can do this without a teacher to guide one.

The study of human nature was a part of the early teachings but was deleted later because too much attention without the awakening of the heart has a limited value. Still, we can learn to see "Thy Light is in all forms, and it is not only in the auras which some people see, but in the radiance of every portion of the person, body and beyond, as well as in the whole picture presented to the outside world.

GATHA: The prominence of particular organs or muscles shows the vitality which exists in these organs, and a lack of it is a lack of energy in these organs. Therefore, the straightness of any organ suggests straightness in nature; and curve, where it is natural, shows sharpness of nature, roundness makes for subtlety, and the oval form shows acute intelligence, proportion of head and body and of each part of the head and body shows balance, and lack of it shows lack of balance.

TASAWWUF: There is an approach to knowledge which consists of learning names and forms, and it is often memorizing rather than achievement. Elements of psychic science are introduced in various Gathas, especially in Symbology (Naqshibandi). It is often necessary to practice concentration and other disciplines to internalize this knowledge and make it part of oneself, rather than remaining mere memory.

The next step is to apply it in life, and we can find the straight line in the backbone which may be like a rod, and can so be studied. And we find the curves in the torso, and all shapes and aspects follow the same principles for psychic science.

Then we may add the knowledge of breath, for there breath itself moves in different directions and in different forms. The basic principles of Jelal and Jemal are found here, and are also presented in the lessons on Symbology, and when one goes deeply into that he gains the true knowledge of the Being within and without. By this means also we develop both the Jemal and Jelal aspects of human nature, and also help that part of Kemal which is perfection and balance rather than destruction. In this, also, repetition of sacred phrases helps, for each tends to bring out in the Talib the divine qualities connoted by the sacred phrase.

GATHA: Every organ represents a certain part of man's nature, that may have no connection with that organ. A particular mode of standing or sitting denotes a certain nature. Crookedness where there should be straightness shows lack of straightness in the nature. Organs which should be symmetrical and are not, show lack of balance.

TASAWWUF: For this there should be the combination of knowledge of breath and of psychic

science. Either without the other is somewhat incomplete. Thus, the teacher can tell when a person (pupil or not a pupil) stands, by his straightness or absence, by any leaning toward some side or the other, by the head being fitted directly on top of the torso or forward or backward, that there is something right or wrong in the person. With that knowledge, one has facility in helping to correct another, without any need to point out any fault. In this, the mystical and esoteric sciences differ from those of the analysts.

By this means also, the breath can be used to correct undesirable conditions, and also then, the walk, the dance, and other exercises can be used without ever calling attention to the weak side of a person's nature. In that way also, confidence can be built up, and one can help others without any need to emphasize anything bad, negative or disturbing. People do not like to hear about their faults, and there is some question whether (and when) a fault is a fault. And most people would like to learn about the good and constructive sides of their nature, and promoting these is part of our work in TASAWWUF (Sufism).

GATHA: In every face and form there is always some resemblance to the lower creation, and a person with keen insight can recognize it, and intuition helps us to understand it. Sometimes in face or form, sometimes in movements, we show a sign of one or other of the lower creatures, and this signifies some resemblance with the nature of that particular creature.

TASAWWUF: Very often people become interested when one points out to them that they have developed into a human form by passing through animals in their evolution. Sometimes they like it so much. Yet nobody can say it is necessarily wrong for, as Rumi has pointed out, it is God that evolves to find God, and in so doing, He functioned through many animal forms until He fully realized Himself in man.

TASAWWUF (Cont.): And then there are occult factors, such as those uncovered in Astrology, and sometimes in Phrenology, and there are some keen-sighted people who know the birth-sign of others by noting their forms and features, which seem to follow definite patterns. And, according to them, it is not only the physical but also the psychic and moral factors that are involved.

All attributes were placed by God in His creation, and these attributes have worked toward perfection which is found in man. At the same time one can see these things, not only the form and light, but even in their function all parts of the body operate according to principles which are easily understood by the seer.

GATHA: The more one observes from this point of view, the clearer will the view become, and it shows the marvel of the Creator. It makes one tolerant and forgiving to everyone, by reason of understanding that none can act against his nature.

TASAWWUF: A person studying geometry might not have any views or preferences between such figures as a square, a triangle, and a circle; or about any figure. He studies them. It is a part of

nature. And so also the geologist and petrologist study the rock-forms, and they are interested in the study rather than in preferences or reactions. Yet not all people realize the analogues of these in man, that whatsoever is found in the lower creation, in the whole of the lower creation, may also be found in man, be represented in man.

This has been observed in some artists, and not only in the development of art, but in the departure from the normal evolution, as in the school called Cubism, that there have been found resemblances between geometric forms and the human body, only here, instead of finding the geometric forms in the human, the man has been treated as if belonging to geometrical forms.

Actually we find these principles in the entire world of nature, in the rocks and minerals, in herbs and plants, and in all animals. But these have been studied only from certain limited points of view. Thus, we have yet to examine what has been called “spiritual circulation through the veins of nature,” how the respiratory and circulatory systems operate, and their relation to the psychic and mental development of organisms.

GATHA: Also, he that looks on this marvel begins to see the Divine evidence in every face, as a person can see the painter in his painting. And it is only natural to wish to study this part of occultism in order to recognize the divine part in the creature and worship Him.

TASAWWUF: This was much more a study by Sufis than by others in our history. Such persons as Jelal-ud-din Rumi, Ibnu'l Arabi, and Ibn Khaldun, had what we call encyclopedic minds, minds perhaps much greater than those of the Greeks who preceded them. They have applied many of these principles in their studies, and today there is a revival of both Sufic and Islamic literature, both through translations and explanations. So the Message of the Day is needed to revive and continue such studies which accepted God (Allah) at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. In this the occult sciences have differed from what are called the natural sciences, and differed still more from the so-called social sciences.

Besides one can see the bodies of man, how they operate, what they reveal, each from its own forms and its own radiance.

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Openness

GATHA: Every atom of man's body expresses his past, present and future. The reason is that, in the first place, every impulse creates its vibrations and takes a particular direction of activity. This influences the heart, whence the blood is circulated through the whole body. In this way the thought is, so to speak, written on man's face.

TASAWWUF: We study that man has three bodies, and this is presented in the literature and also in several of the Scriptures of the great religions. But we do not always take this into account. The cell of the body is as if it were an organism by itself, and yet all are connected by the blood, and also by the nerves. So there is a connection and also a harmony. Without this the body would not be coordinated, and in the unseen neither would the finer bodies be coordinated, and there would be no concrete thought or unifying feeling.

Every impulse and every action touches the unseen part of personality, and the karma of it is deposited in every cell and organ. The forms are created out of light, and light itself has several forms, different ranges of vibrations and constituting impulses that are in the universe itself, drawing from the universe and reacting upon the universe.

Each cell has its own expression, each can be read. There are schools of medical diagnosis that can tell much about the whole by tests. It is even more certain that every cell is shouting, so to speak, what its nature is. Therefore, both by psychometry and by Insight one can get the message from the cell. This is easily perceived when there is pain; all sorts of pain are relays of messages which touch the awakened consciousness. But there are also messages at all times touching with the conscious and unconscious part of man's being. And once he is awakened to comprehending the impulses of himself, he learns to understand the impulses and vibrations of others.

GATHA: Man's continual agitation in regard to others, his satisfaction or dissatisfaction, his love or hatred, all show in his appearance. Everyone can know it more or less, but the seer can read more correctly.

TASAWWUF: We are taught in various schools of Oriental philosophy about the rise of samskaras, about impulses, about factors that cause agitation. In Sufism this spirit of agitation is called nufs, which is the ego. If we did not react, if we were able to control our reactions, we should become masters of life.

There is also the modern teaching of semantics, that people should avoid reactions. This is an intellectual presentation. It tells us that one should control the reactions and vibrations; it does not tell us how this can be done.

In Sufism one learns the connection between impulses, reactions and breathing, and by control of the breath, in particular the development of fine breathing, one can get into a state where he controls all the impulses and the emotions that arise from them.

In Chinese philosophy much is said on this subject. People then study this philosophy but do not attain calmness or satisfaction. It has remained in words, there are often no techniques. At the same time, because of the building of strong atmospheres over many centuries, many people of far eastern Asia are more calm than other people. It has become part of their nature and behavior pattern. But when this pattern is broken there is often no control over it, for there is no technique; there is discipline without technique.

The results of this agitation affect the whole personality, and the signs are there on the skin as well as in the eyes and in every movement and posture.

GATHA: It is difficult to tell definitely the marks that are shown in one's appearance of one's thoughts and feelings; nevertheless, partly by intuition and partly by experience, man reads them. There are some in whom self-control is developed, who are capable of hiding their thoughts and emotions, and yet it is impossible to feel deeply and to hide one's feeling from the eyes of others.

TASAWWUF: For every feeling not only has its overtones, it sheds light, it produces an aura. Those who have the keen sight sometimes even see the colors, not only the colors of the elements present, but the colors resulting from egotism, impurities, and all states of consciousness. It is there in the atmosphere.

If one keeps quiet in the presence of others, whether by meditation or otherwise, he will pick up the thoughts and feelings. They are there. If one says they are in the Akasha and can be read, this would not be a wrong judgment. The question is not so much how to read another, but how to help another; how to produce the calmness, how to give the help, how to quiet the personality and purify the state of being.

GATHA: No doubt form and movement speak aloud of one's condition, but the expression on man's face speaks louder still. There come distinct changes at every impulse, at every change of emotion, making distinct marks which are an open book to a seer.

TASAWWUF: The first thing one must do is observe. Then by keeping quiet one can pick up both the atmosphere of the whole personality at the moment and then the particular agitations. It has already been explained that the left and right sides of the body have their significance, even their functions. Much can be learned, even intellectually, but, the synthesis comes by Insight.

GATHA: The word **Kashf** means "opening," and it is used by the Sufis with the meaning that the human heart is as a rule a closed book and the one to whom it becomes open can read it like an open book.

TASAWWUF: In his celebrated Kashf "Al-Mahjub," Al-Hujwiri explains this term as "Unveiling." It removes the darkness, the confusion, it builds up the capacity for light and understanding in every aspect of existence.

It took many centuries for the intellectual aspect of life to be considered seriously by the multitudes. General education required a long time and many processes. And behind the training of the mind there is that of the heart. Yet both the training of mind and heart were known by Sufis; in all ages the Sufis were the one group who knew the various aspects of man's existence and tried to balance him by the exercising of functions on all levels.

GATHA: No doubt reading man's condition of mind from his appearance is not such a difficult thing. Even dogs and cats can know this and sometimes they know better than man.

TASAWWUF: The French philosopher, Henri Bergson, grasped the immediate functioning of part of man's consciousness. His critics hold that this does not distinguish instinct, and intuition. Both are functions of immediacy, but instinct operates at subconscious levels, impression at conscious levels, and insight and intuition at higher states. But all are functions of the immediate grasping, and when the soul uses the mind, or uses mind and body, they become quite natural and easy.

The animals lack self-consciousness and therefore they are not hindered by the intellectual. Advantageous as this is in many respects, it covers the direct functioning of light. It places the light of man, and also the will-power of man over the forces of nature (hence instinct) and of the higher aspects of existence (hence Kashf).

GATHA: What gives one insight into another is, in the first place, his sympathy. The seer first develops the quality of love.

TASAWWUF: Therefore disciples are encouraged and abetted in heart development. No doubt this teaching is given verbally in many places, but if this alone were to suffice there would be a different kind of world. Therefore there is the heart concentration, both symbolically and functionally, and there are many exercises in esotericism which help make the heart loving, tender and responsive. Also the breath is refined, and when the heart and breath change, and when one has the assistance of the Teacher, this aspect of life awakens, and this becomes the source of many wonders.

GATHA: He whose heart is kindled with the love of God is capable of the love of humanity. The heart thus kindled with love becomes a lighted lantern, which throws its light on every person the seer meets, and as this light falls upon the person he meets, all things about that person, his body, heart and soul, become clear to him.

TASAWWUF: The practice of Tasawwuri Murshid, which is given to some disciples, enables them to conform to the rhythms of the Teacher. But the Teacher also tries to conform to the rhythms of the disciple and to those of all people that he may be able to raise them in consciousness. Therefore, sitting quiet with the pupil, in meditation or not, enables the atmospheres to consolidate, and there is much immediate communication. Or, in Tawajjeh, the Teacher sees all aspects of the disciple's (or anybody's) personality and being. He uses the analysis only to help the other person rise above the difficulties and dangers which beset him.

Everyone realizes that the mother does this more or less unconsciously with little children, and sometimes she maintains this throughout life. The Prophet said, “Allah loves His offspring more than a mother loves her children,” and this shows that this love and tenderness and sympathy are part of the Divine Being and extend throughout the universe, although persons of limited consciousness are not aware of it.

GATHA: Love is a torch that illuminates all that comes within its light, but it is the knowledge of God which is the key which opens the hearts of men.

TASAWWUF: Therefore the work of the Murshid is to act as a cupid between the disciple and God. He tries to awaken responsiveness in disciples and in all people. Often this is done by awakening in them the divine faculties (Sifat-i-Allah) and as they develop they also bring a greater awareness of the One Only Supreme Being. Once this occurs then the benefits from all the Divine Faculties bless the devotee.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 6

Movement—Part 1

GATHA: Every movement that one makes suggests to the seer some meaning. A person is not always conscious of his movements, and not every movement is made intentionally; and many movements that man makes unconsciously, and thinks nothing of, mean something to the seer.

TASAWWUF: There is a song by an early Nineteenth century American composer, “Every little movement has a meaning all its own.” The anatomist and neurologist may know the nerves involved in such movements, but that does not always explain how the operation actually works. For behind these movements are thoughts, and the thoughts may act as if independent of the nerves, using the nerves.

Every thought we have affects the physical body in some way. And if we made a study of different kinds of thoughts, we should find they affect the body differently. Yet there is that unwritten and unseen language which is comprehended by the intuitive faculty, and that alone can help man in each instance, otherwise one would be fatigued by analysis.

GATHA: The seer notices them from two points, the beginning and the end. No motion, to a seer, is without a direction; in other words, every moment is directed by a precedent cause. And no motion, to him, is without a certain result. The purpose seems to be in the cause, but in reality it is in the effect. It is born in the cause, but it is finished in the effect.

TASAWWUF: If one studies the Buddhist psychologies, one can find many explanations, and they seem to have worked out in detail how karma works in the organism, and not only in the organism but in the mind itself. Lord Buddha laid down the Chain of Causation, and those who have given the subject deep attention find first an analytical picture. This is often very confused and complicated, even when it was right.

But Buddhism also teaches Prajna, which is the same as Kashf, the unconscious and superconscious immediate grasping of a situation, perhaps in detail, and perhaps in its entirety as a single motif.

When Buddhism was first introduced into the West, great emphasis was given to this subject, and to the importance of mind as an all-determining factor in life. Unfortunately this standard was not always maintained, and “schools” and persons were given more emphasis and attention than teachings.

GATHA: The first thing that a mystic understands by a movement that a person makes is the nature of the person, and the next thing he understands is about his affairs.

TASAWWUF: In the articles on *Metaphysics* the basic principles are presented. But if they affect only the memory, this does not enable a person to avail himself of the wisdom. For wisdom is self-operating. We all possess it but are not aware of it, only it does not manifest through self-thought. It may use self-thought, and it transcends self-thought.

Each person is of a fire, air, water, or earth type to some degree, and this is also uncovered by astrology and occult sciences. As the effect of Ether is stillness and non-movement, it is manifest during meditation and concentration, but not otherwise. But we must not limit these terms to some institutions; they are operative in all aspects of life.

Also, the rhythm or non-rhythm of movements, the tendencies toward rectilinear and curvilinear actions present a knowledge to the mystic.

GATHA: And the law holds good about straightness suggesting straightness and crookedness suggesting crookedness, grace of movement suggesting beauty, and lack of grace lack of that element.

TASAWWUF: This also has the two aspects—analytic and synthetic. In the analytic we may see a person as a work of art and judge him accordingly. But that does not help. There are many breathing exercises and esoteric disciplines which help a person to become straight, but mostly it is

by breath control and getting the back straight, which is also often the result of breath control also.

Many people do not have straight backs and they usually lack firmness in character. By the proper exercises the back may become straight, especially through proper breath control, and also by the lessons in *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. These are of great value in character building, the more so because never does one have to mention another's defects. Therefore, the Teacher gives the exercises to help the back to become straight and firm, to become the channel for the type of breath-energy needed by him for the fulfillment of his mission in life.

As for grace. In Saum there is a movement with "Open our hearts to Thy Beauty." This is a Jemal movement, and there are Jemal movements which, if followed, can change the character and grace of the person. For all faculties and factors are within man.

GATHA: Rhythm of movement suggests balance, lack of rhythm suggests lack of balance. The upward tendency of movement suggests rise, the downward tendency fall, the horizontal suggests spread; movement inward and outward is suggestive of within and without.

TASAWWUF: This must be grasped with an immediacy, and the development of immediacy is the basis of what is called Kashf and Prajna in the Indian wisdom. Our conclusions, drawn from logic, sentiment, personality likes and dislikes, are all secondary and have limited validity.

When one studies Mysticism (some elements of which are found in *The Mysticism of Sound* and in the articles on this subject) one can ascertain intellectually the significance of movements, rest, grace, rhythm, and a lack of them. The wise Teacher therefore gives to each disciple some exercise to develop or awaken in him that which he has in the depths of his nature, but which is not manifest on the surface. For this it is not necessary to dispense with muscular or athletic activities.

Some aspects of Yoga, especially as it has been introduced in the West, have some value here but not always as much as is claimed, for the physical teachings have been separated from devotion and spiritual realization. The disciple, on the other hand, can perform his devotions and disciplines even in the midst of gymnastics and athletic contests. An extreme example of this is given in a Zen story about a wrestler whose name meant "Great Waves" but he had not realized it. As soon as he did he became the champion. We all have elements of championship in us.

GATHA: Also the law of the tendency of the five elements to different directions helps the seer to recognize the different elements working in man's nature. The movement can be recognized in sitting, walking, lying, and in laughter or crying.

TASAWWUF: These are parts of the instructions in Mysticism, both in the printed articles and in the lessons for disciples. For example, sitting may arise out of water and ether; lying shows ether, and walking may come from any element according to the type of walk, but it shows that the ether is not then so dominant, for ether leans toward repose. Laughter is a sign of the air element, crying of water, and rising of fire.

GATHA: The study of these laws of movement and direction is helpful only when the intuitive faculty is developed. If the study is intellectual it is limited and rigid, and one cannot probe the depths of human nature far enough by intellectual study alone.

TASAWWUF: It is sometimes a good idea to keep a record of one's impressions, to learn to trust them, to observe them. This requires the development of the sense of immediacy. And we can call Insight immediate and Thought mediate, for Thought requires time and consideration.

Thus it is taught that the soul sees, and the more we can realize this, the more we can free ourselves from all other factors, the more we shall grasp this immediate function. It is never wrong.

The intuitive faculty is developed by use. When a person is in severe difficulty, as in a fire or disaster or even on the battlefield, the inner guidance often takes over and miracles, so to speak, occur. Miracles can always occur when the ego and the ego-mind do not interpose. This often repeated lesson on the Gita, after thousands of years, has not been effectual, for falling on the ego and the ego-mind, the wisdom is trapped.

Little children do not have this faculty, they have a sense of immediacy without thought. The great teachers have always recognized this in the children, and the priestcraft almost never. Instead they have often interposed the teaching of infant damnation, which is, perhaps, the most false of all teachings which have ever been permitted to interfere with pure religion.

We cannot always be meditating. Pure action is that without interposing of ego. And as the love element becomes more dominant, as wisdom becomes part of one's life, one is sure to advance on the path toward perfection. The perfection is there; it has to be re-awakened. This is called in Buddhism, Prajna Paramita.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 7

Movement—Part 2

GATHA: The condition of the mind is expressed not only in the countenance but also in the movements. Every movement denotes a certain change of thought and feeling.

TASAWWUF: While this can be observed and even evaluated, the time, energy and thought given to it builds up the store of samskaras, and the more influence of the samskaras, the less one can dig down into the peace and wisdom within. These are like waves on the surface of the ocean. They are important or not according as we consider them important or not. So *Gayan* says: "Everything matters, and yet nothing matters."

We have three ranges of activity and interpretation which may be called activity, thought, and feeling. When we delve deep into the self, we find the ocean of wisdom which understands all the perturbations of the surface and can evaluate them without taking an instant to think.

GATHA: The more one understands the language of movements the more one comprehends this. In every thought and feeling the waves, so to speak, of the mind rise and fall, and as by seeing the waves one can notice whether the sea is rough or calm, so by noticing the movements of a person one can read the condition of his mind.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this: observation and concentration. Observation means to use the senses both in the experiences and in helping to evaluate them, although this is an inner process. The intelligence is much more than the intellect. It is called "Buddhi" in Sanskrit, and it indicates an operation of consciousness as if independent of mind. Indeed, both the mind and the senses are dependent upon it, a teaching of the Gita absent from all analytical philosophies.

By the keen study of the psychic sciences, one gets a knowledge which can be added to the intuitive operations and which really depend on it. Only when one understands this everything becomes clear and rational.

GATHA: Upward movement suggests wrath, revenge, conceit or pride; downward movement indicates depression, helplessness, meekness.

TASAWWUF: These upward movements do show the Fire element at its worst, and also the absence of Earth and Ether, each of which has a soothing effect, though in a different manner. And the downward movements show also the water element at its worst.

When one is controlled by the element instead of controlling it, such things happen. For instance, every day we see the movements of the attvas or elements. This is a knowledge known in ancient times by both the Greeks and the Hindus, even the Romans had such knowledge. It was lost, then ignored, but if one is a careful observer he will find in himself and in others the effects of influences. Thus the astrologers say it is due to the psychic effects of the planets at certain hours and they are not wrong.

Things do not just happen, karma means the law of cause and effect, not the dominance of anarchy and confusion.

If one notices closely, also, such diseases as cancer and diabetes result not only from wrong living

as to food habits and lack of rhythm and order, but also due to the effects of the Sphere on everyone. Even epidemic diseases arise because of the influence of the Sphere, and at such times a master of breath can put his knowledge to good use. And if one be not a master of breath, he can be a devotee or use the intuitive faculty and be safe, for we must never forget, in God we live and move and have our being.

The absence of certain types of evil do not necessarily constitute that which is good. For we must also consider the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic aspects of life, only these are not in the Sphere, these are in man himself due to the state of his ego. When one observes all these things he will find an order in the cosmos and be able to protect himself and others, to help himself and others.

GATHA: Movements toward the left and right also have their significance. The right shows struggle and power, the left art and skill.

TASAWWUF: These are the Jelalic and Jemalic influences and they are discussed in so many places in the literature. But Tamas, which means torpor, is often present and when this is so one is master of nothing, he only gets the karmic results of conditions.

The seer can easily tell by these and other signs whether a person is by nature Jelalic or Jemalic. Also, to help one to accomplish the purpose of life, the Teacher gives both Wazifas and breathing practices to bring about the desirable result. Then there is no more torpor; one is no longer at the mercy of circumstances, one can control them. And this is a great difference between the mystic and the metaphysician, that the mystic is always concerned with action and correction and the metaphysician is often confused by the thinking connected or not connected with each aspect of life.

GATHA: A contracting tendency suggests fear, indifference, coldness; a stretching tendency shows desire for action, strength, power.

TASAWWUF: From one point of view these show the dominance of Rajas or Tamas. There are many people in the world and especially in India who are so afraid of Rajas that they lean toward Tamas, indeed are caught by Tamas and accomplish nothing. Then they crystallize the situation by vigorous self-affirmation and nothing more. And there are others, like Americans, who are so afraid of Tamas that they yield to action without thought. Yet, if we look closely, we find among each more mob violence than with many other people.

Fear is caused by the dominance of the earth element and with it a strong inhalation, the movement of Urouj, which results in action, but not necessarily favorable action, for there is no control.

Stretching is due to Nasoul, the exhalation. It shows desire, but we have to look deeper to see what it is. Animals stretch in order to relax more, or stretch after relaxing in order to act better.

The teacher overcomes these weaknesses by assigning the proper repetition of sacred phrases or the proper movements in the Dance which helps the disciple become master of his own self.

GATHA: A tendency to turn shows confusion. A tendency of pinching and pressing shows uneasiness or agony of mind.

TASAWWUF: In both of these instances, the Air element is out of control. It is Darood, or Invocation, which is needed here, or if one is especially caught in the web of ego, by Fikr, the thinking of the presence of God at all times, and the accommodation of Allah in one's life. When this accommodation is made, the breath will be self-corrected, and this will also improve the state of mind.

For such persons also meditations are beneficial and yet not easy. There is where the Sufi meditations differ from some, for they give the devotee a positive theme, not the stress on emptiness or nothingness. Emptiness and nothingness may lead to fana, which is to say, the annihilation of the ego, but this is only one part of life. The other is to accommodate God, so to speak, so that one can become His slave and His vehicle.

GATHA: Expansion and ease of movement show joy and happiness, and stillness without stiffness is expressive of calm and peace.

TASAWWUF: In both of these instances there is the presence of the Etheric element; in the former, air and ether, in the latter Ether alone, or with the slight remains of all the other elements. But these also arise from ether (Akash) and return to it.

Now every soul is seeking joy and happiness and also stillness, calm and peace. So we can recognize that expansion and ease of movement also produce joy, and when we have such movements, as in the spiritual dance, the desired objective is obtained. Also, in meditation, when we are able to relax, we get into a state of calm and peace. And with the ability to obtain and attain either the joy and happiness on the one hand—in movement—or the calm and peace in the non-movement, this is one facet of the attainment of the Inner Life.

These can be reached by the methods of Heart, Breath and Eye. The method of Heart requires spontaneous effort, to grasp the instant and tune-in with the ever-present Divine Wisdom. And the way of Breath enables man to use his own will, to attune the will to the Will of God, so to speak, making it an experience and a reality. And the way of the Eye, or Light, comes mostly with the cooperation of the Teacher or Murshid.

Thus there are the two aspects of becoming aware of both the Psychic and Mystical aspects of Life, and also using this very awareness to progress further on these lines.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 8

The Study of the Whole

GATHA: Man's form can be divided into two parts, the head and the body; the one is for action, the other for thought.

TASAWWUF: This can be seen in the structure of head and body, and not only the outer structure, but the inner form of the entire nervous system, that the nervous system is arranged in such a way that all the functions in man have their counterpart in it.

The body itself is dependent on the osseous (bony) and muscular systems which enable man to move, and to function. But there is a nerve connection between every type of movement and function, and some operation in the head. And while a study of anatomy may be helpful, it is equally true that a study of the esoteric sciences helps one to understand anatomy better.

GATHA: Therefore the face can explain the attitude of mind and depict the nature and character more fully than the body and its movements.

TASAWWUF: As one develops Insight the glance alone pictures up the meaning through the operation of Intelligence. We can study "Cosmic Language" intellectually but that does not always mean that we function well. The more deeply we look into ourselves and understand our own functions, the more easily we can look into others and comprehend them.

The front of the head is open, and the back is closed. Thus, each portion reveals the lower and upper parts of the mind. The face is where the light shines, and we can see both the reflection of light upon the face and also the radiance of the face. Also we can observe the movements of breath which produce their own light, and various colors according to the dominant operations.

No doubt phrenology has been a science, and it can easily become a science again and be very helpful. But all the effects of nervous activity find themselves in the face as a whole, and in parts such as the ears and eyes, as well as on the hands and the feet. Each reveals the condition of mind.

GATHA: Every little movement of the eyes, the movements of the lips in smiling or in laughter, the

movements of the eyebrows or of the head itself, explain the condition of the mind.

TASAWWUF: While it is prayed, "Thy Light is in all forms," it often takes a long time to appreciate it. Also, while the Christian Bible says, "In the Beginning was the Word," which is to say Intelligence, and also that Light manifests in diverse forms so that we pray, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls," it is not easily comprehended through experience that this is so.

Each form of Light affects its correspondence in the human consciousness. There is even an Occult science called, The Science of Correspondences, from which we may learn. But the operation of

Kashf is direct and immediate. Vibrations impress those forms which are sensitive to them and often the intellectual side of man is not sensitive at all. But the soul has all possibilities and the awakened consciousness responds to all facets of life to which it is sensitive.

The eyes, which have been called, "The windows of the soul," are most easily trained in sensitivity. No doubt this begins with the infant, in that he learns to respond to the physical world. But it is also true that the eyes can respond to the hidden as well as to the sensual world, and when they become sensitive, they can respond to all vibrations, dense and fine, and so impress the consciousness.

There is also what has been called, "The smiling forehead," which shows that a person has the real faculty of seeing (it is the soul that sees) and also one can read more easily the brow when there is the evidence of blessing or ananda.

GATHA: The ends of the eyebrows turning upwards denotes egoism or shrewdness.

TASAWWUF: Very often one sees a picture of a presumably religious man with these eyebrows turned upwards. It is supposed to connote devotion, but it is the devotion that is shouting, "I am devout," for the humble person may have the eyes partly closed and looking as if downward, but actually inward. And the sort of person who strives to impress upon others that he has some special place in the universe, reveals that he does have some special place in the universe, but not that which he presumes to have.

GATHA: The puckering of the lips suggests pleasure, as the twitching of the lips shows a tendency to humour or indicates pleasure.

TASAWWUF: We can readily appreciate it even through instinct. What is instinct? It is the operation of Divine Wisdom through the subconscious and man shares this with animals. Also if one observes animals one can see similar tendencies and the accompanying smiles.

GATHA: The rolling of the eyes, or a restless movement, suggests confusion. The movement of the eyes toward the outer corners denotes a clever brain.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this, and perhaps they are connected. One is that, as the psychic sciences are studied and there is more development in this aspect of life, one may be able to comprehend as if in an intellectual manner the meanings of movements. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle presented this in his early works, when he was functioning as a physician as well as a writer. But later on he became involved in the subconscious form of psychism and his thinking was not so clear. Still, there are many in the science and art of criminal detection that learn, consciously and subconsciously, such meanings and utilize it in their profession.

It is not important to memorize these correspondences although there is no harm in it. We repeat commandments and moral codes often without ingesting them into our personalities, still there is no harm in it. It is only the elementary stage of development.

It was only in the twentieth century that some attention was given to the eyes, how often they indicate the condition of the physical body. To the seer the eyes connote the conditions of all bodies, of all parts of personalities. But if one had to intellectualize it would take a long time and it would be the memory rather than the full consciousness which would function. By Kashf we mean the operation of the full consciousness in grasping synthetically, and yet immediately, any situation in life.

GATHA: The puffing of the cheeks denotes joy; the drawing in sorrow.

TASAWWUF: In puffing, more breath has been brought into the body, and in the drawing in, less breath. There is a connection between joyfulness and full breath, but this does not necessarily mean a strong breath. When we learn to breathe with the whole body, we find there is a sort of refinement at work. And also as we become aware of the effects of the elements (such as is proposed in *The Mysticism of Sound*) we also become more aware of the fullness of life in all its aspects.

GATHA: One can get a full conception of the character by studying the full countenance and not a part only. The study of a part always gives only a partial knowledge; complete knowledge is gained only by a study of the whole.

TASAWWUF: The practices of meditation and esoteric exercises also help man to become aware of himself as a whole, to function with the full body, the full mind, the entire heart, and then integrate them as if into a single personality. And when one can function in this way, he is on the road to being a grand man, a full hu-man, so to speak.

As one studies the countenance of another, he begins to become aware of the Light from all planes, that the human vehicle carries the mental light and the spiritual light. And these also bear impressions and they speak. It is this language which is the cosmic language in operation and it operates on all planes. Its facets of meaning are numerous, and the seer makes use of this to learn all about another person, but only for the purpose of helping another, not for analyzing him or describing him, which increases egotism instead of joy and wisdom.

GATHA: Keen observation with the desire to understand helps a person to read the condition of man's mind, his nature and character, yet the view is often colored by the personality of the one who sees.

TASAWWUF: Everyone who is sensitive receives impressions, and no doubt all these impressions are right from a certain point of view. But what is the value of them? Are we helping ourselves, or others? Psychology is not a form of analytical chemistry; spiritual psychology is Alchemy.

Darshan is the end of the keen observation, and also Darshan is the keen observation. When Lord Buddha presented "Samma Dhrishthi" he did not indicate that man should dispense with "wrong views" and adopt "right views." Ignorant people are confused by the language, and the language is often useless without the functions that go with it. Therefore, the Sufi teachers give disciplinary exercises to enable the disciples to become themselves unified, and function from this point of view. And from this one arrives at the desired state as it is said, "A Sufi is one who sees from two points of view, that of himself and that of another."

Purification (safa) also means that one frees himself from the bondage of only seeing from his point of view.

GATHA: His favour or disfavor, his liking or dislike, stands between the eyes of the one who sees and the one who is seen.

TASAWWUF: This knowledge is gained by practice. Mureeds are trained in Concentration (Murakkabah) and there they learn to see life from several points of view, as seer, seen and seeing, and to unite or separate these aspects of life as is necessary on each occasion.

The more one progresses in this attitude, the more one develops his own psychic sensitivity and responds to the finer vibrations. This is also accomplished as one becomes more sensitive to fine breathing (Latif).

GATHA: Therefore, sometimes innocent people have a better understanding of a person than clever people with deceitful minds. There is a saying of Saadi: "O my subtle cleverness, thou often becomest my greatest deceiver."

TASAWWUF: We find in all parts of the world among all people the tendency to analyze and find fault with others. Sometimes the fault is nothing but an inability to adapt to certain standards. And failure to hold to a standard simply means a certain lack on the physical and social planes. But there is no karma attached to such attitudes and very often what people call "sin" has no validity in the universe. Such "sinning" has to do with a person's failure or inability to fulfill man's standard.

The spiritual standard is one of Light, not of adjustment in a dualistic manner, and it is the same as Jesus Christ has said, "Let your Light shine that men may see your good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven." For the Light indicates sensitivity to the Divine Will and operates in

accordance with universal, rather than personal standards. Man cannot will that Light. Sometimes he may operate with more subtle light psychically, but this, while a development in one direction, is a limitation in another.

Pure Light does not deceive. The subtle psychic light may sometimes shine in great brilliance and so impress. But if one practices the Presence of God, he will not be deceived, nor will he deceive others.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 9

The Mystery of Expression

GATHA: Man's expression is more indicative of his nature and character than his form or features. In the Qur'an it is said that man's eyes and gestures will confess what he tries to hide in his heart.

TASAWWUF: No doubt man receives his physical form from ancestors. All infants are born as if with a clean slate and impressions are made on that slate. These impressions do affect form and feature and they are both affected by what goes on around them, and in their turn they affect the surroundings.

The light of the inner being shines through the eyes and the infant is born trusting and believing. But after a while the discriminating faculty manifests, he begins to feel himself as a separate entity and his actions and reactions are affected by everything around him as well as within him. This establishes a karma, and in the universe there is always an adjustment so that man receives a reward or merits a punishment, which helps to maintain universal harmony and balance.

GATHA: The strength, the weakness, the power, the fear, the happiness, the joy, the uneasiness, the praise or blame, the love or hatred, all these are shown by the expression. The more capable one becomes of reading the expression the more clearly one can read character.

TASAWWUF: We must always bear in mind that it is the soul that sees, not the ego, and the soul actually sees clearly but veils are thrown over it. And until these veils are removed there is an impediment in sight.

As it is said, “In the beginning was the Word,” the Logos, or Intelligence, so every infant is born with this innate intelligence. It is part of the work in the Sufic training to restore this innate intelligence, and therefore man is taught how to unlearn, to remove the effects of the external life so that he can function as a whole, and intelligently. Then, when one uses the eyes in this fashion, every atom of the cells of others begins to carry its message to him. And the Logos tells of each thing, for the Christian Bible also says that without it not a single thing has been made.

GATHA: This shows that there is a mystery that lies behind movement. There are certain vibrations that take a particular direction under certain conditions, and the visible sign of all vibrations can be seen in man’s movements or the expression of his countenance.

TASAWWUF: This subject is presented in the *Mysticism of Sound* and is developed variously throughout the literature. But the intellectual perusal is only the first step. We have to learn that the Light is divided into facets and operates on different planes and through direct bodies. In one sense all of these are within a single Akasha, or accommodation, which is like a space of itself, so that it has been said, “The Soul is where it is.”

The Akasha itself has no movement in the sense that there are distinctions. The manifestation of movement in and through Air, Fire, Water and Earth is one aspect of manifestation. The elements affect movements and the movements themselves also indicate the predominant element. In turn all of them affect and veil the operations of pure Light through the ego, and it is only by raising these veils (purification or safa) that the pure Light comes to the surface.

GATHA: It does not take one moment for the expression to change from pleasure to pain, from calm to horror, from love to hate. This shows that all the atoms of man’s body, the veins, tubes and muscles, and the lines formed by their movements, are under the control of the heart, and every change that takes place in the heart shows on man’s face, so that one who knows the language can read it.

TASAWWUF: The establishment of the ego outlook has veiled the existence and functions of heart. In *The Soul Whence and Whither*, there is the presentation of the three-body outlook of man, that this constitutes his being as a separate entity. And yet all the heart-beings—devas or angels—are in a certain attunement with each other, which constitutes the music and harmony and the universe.

These functions underlie everything else but do not remain as conscious functions. This is one of the explanations of Instinct. It cannot be destroyed entirely, yet it can be aroused and perfected.

The heart can understand all the functions of body and mind, but in its own language. The circulation of the blood to and through every cell and vein of the body shows that there is nothing in the human organism apart from this functioning fundamental heart-essence, and all the veins and tubes vibrate to and with it. So that when one reaches the experience of ecstasy, the whole organism is as if a musical instrument.

There are principles described in the published writings on metaphysics which present this subject analytically. This also enables one to understand the emotions of himself and others. It can be of tremendous value in such arts as Oratory and Drama. The sage avails himself of this knowledge to control the atmosphere. Sometimes he masks his real purpose by a subtle change of ego activity. It is all really play, but the ignorant do not know it.

GATHA: People who see each other often can read such changes from the expression, because each grows accustomed to know and recognize the changes of facial expression in the others, but it is the development of intuition which gives the clearness of vision by which one can see more completely.

TASAWWUF: There is a class of adepts known as Abduls. They often behave in a particular manner and sometimes are recognized only when they behave that way. Yet they are able to change the countenance at will. A spiritual teacher is able to attune himself to the whole audience, as well as to particular persons in it. He has the means of so controlling the atmosphere that everyone may benefit from it.

There are people who are called “pokerfaced.” Even this is an expression. It is not the true dispassion. The control of certain parts of the visage does not mean the control of the whole countenance. For instance, one may ask about the eyes: what is the kind of light shining? What is the kind of magnetism? Or, how about the forehead and the eyebrows? Even if there is considerable will-power, it is almost impossible to have this sort of mastery.

The importance of intuition cannot be overemphasized. This enables man to see as a whole.

GATHA: The eyes are more expressive of thought and feeling than anything else. A person who can read the language of the eyes, their appearance and their movement, has the key to character.

TASAWWUF: The Hebrew tradition is that the universe was built like an eye. The ignorant only took this symbolically, and for many centuries could not accept that the world was round, even when they had before them the words, “The universe is shaped like an eye.”

Many studies can be made of the eye, analytically and synthetically. Actually, the eye is where the nerve bundle touches the surface. If all the nerve bundles could touch the surface we might be entirely awake, for as is taught, it is the soul that sees; the organism is merely an instrument of seeing. The eye thus has physical, mental, and supermental functions and faculties.

GATHA: The eyes can ask and answer questions, and it is in the grade of speed and direction of the glance that the mystery of expression lies.

TASAWWUF: It is possible to arrange games as if telepathic communication were a play. It is possible to practice certain types of attunement thereby. No doubt everybody may receive more from others in forms of silent communication than by speech and gestures.

The word “meta-language” has been introduced into common speech. Sometimes it refers to gestures only; sometimes it refers to more than gestures. If we tried to perceive both the whole organism of another, and also what each part, each organ, even each cell was radiating, perhaps nothing could be hidden from the seer. This is especially true when one has a synthetic or integrative viewpoint, when one thinks, feels, or acts by what some psychologists call “the organism as a whole.” This would especially tell us what is at the moment in the conscious and sub-conscious mind. But it is the keen perception of speed and direction that reveals the deeper grades of activity. Or, as *Nirtan* teaches, “The heart has its own language and its own perception.” Mind may understand body much more than body can understand mind. Heart may understand mind much more than mind can possibly comprehend heart. Disciples may learn refinement through the breath, and the more refined the breath becomes, the more piercing; the more piercing, the more sensitive, and in this way wisdom becomes the natural property and function of the humanity.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 10

Different Qualities of Mind

GATHA: As there are different qualities of sight, such as long and short sight, so there are different qualities of mind. There are minds which see a certain distance and no further, and others that can see a longer distance; and what is called foresight is not a supernatural superhuman faculty, but a long range of sight.

TASAWWUF: There are many groups concerned with what they call “psychic phenomena.” So long as these groups adhere only to the word without a clear picture of the contents, there will be confusion. And this confusion will last until mankind, especially investigators, develop curiosity, if not humility, and look first into the sensorium of all peoples and then beyond the sensorium.

Not even the materialists have measured the eye-sight and heart-sound of different races and cultures. What has been done has been done spasmodically and irrationally. And until psychologists, physiologists and others adopt the impersonal, deep and universal methods of geologists and biologists, there will be confusion. So while we have the words “long-sight” and “short-sight” and oculists and optometrists have exact machines for measuring, there has not

been a full universal study of the sight, hearing, and all sense faculties of all peoples.

This is an example of short-mental-sightedness. And this has been very common that conclusions are reached without investigation. The views of the long-sighted come from the fact that they examine in all directions and do not make their final determination without looking all over.

In the *Gayan* and elsewhere it is taught that what is needed is the long view. But the traditionalists are so attached to the word “goodness” that they are looking for the “good” view, and it is difficult to say exactly what the “good” view is. From the heart standpoint that is good which is all-inclusive, and that is not so good which is more exclusive.

GATHA: When one person can see the action of another person, the seer can see the reason of the action too, and if the sight is keener still he can see the reason of the reason.

TASAWWUF: Oriental philosophies have been much more developed than those of the West. Because they were not attached to experimental sciences, they were not considered as equal except by rather emotional people, who consider whatever is exotic may be marvelous. But the strict, rigorous study of Asian philosophies is not only needed to establish rigor in our minds, but also to show that there have been centuries of thoughtful consideration to great problems.

Thus the Indian philosophies begin with the senses of man. They give them plenty of attention and then reach conclusions that there is much beyond the sense-world. Then they have investigated the mind. Some, like the material scientists, have done this apart from their own deep experiences. Others were not considered qualified until they had the deep experiences. And the essential difference between the “Wisdom of the East” and the “Wisdom of the West” is that in the East (however we define it) it has depended much on at least introspection if not more, and the “Wisdom of the West” upon machines and instruments.

The defect in the work of Eastern savants is that they have jumped often carelessly from one level to another, and evaluated these levels variously. The defect in the work of the Western savants is that they have not examined their own selves as instruments for the acquisition of knowledge.

When we go deeply, we find that there are many levels, several planes, and there are operations of the deeper parts of personalities which are not always describable in surface terms. And when we come to full Insight, Kashf or Prajna, we become united in our own being as a Self, and then with all beings.

GATHA: One cannot give one’s sight to another; one can tell what one sees, but that is not sufficient, for in order to be sure, every soul wants its own experience.

TASAWWUF: This was one of the basic tenets of Prophet Mohammed. He was not surrounded by wise or self-wise men as was Buddha, and yet he did everything possible to encourage the pursuit of knowledge within and without. But the Muslims have made the mistake of claiming glory for the

accomplishments of their ancestors, and no doubt this is even more true of followers of other faiths. Each soul has been created in the Divine Image, for the purpose of fulfilling God's objective to realize Himself through His creation.

GATHA: The faculty of seeing through life can be developed by observation; this is called study, and the focusing of the mind upon the object of one's study is called concentration.

TASAWWUF: Modern Sufism has provided techniques which correspond in many ways to those of science. There is no guess work, no speculation.

There is a teaching in the Bible (and it has been ignored), that the pursuit of wisdom comes by carefully studying little by little. In the Hebrew mysticism this is carried further by holding that the letters and words themselves often hold the key to wisdom. Much nonsense has arisen therefrom, for the Infinite is not under control, either from man nor nature. But man can learn by studying even words when they come from the wise, and also the phrases and sentences, and making them subjects for meditation. In the pure Zen Buddhism this is called "study" also.

In the concentration the subject matter is placed before the student so that he can establish a relationship between himself and what is to be learned. But this is not merely observation and it requires the operation of the inner sense.

GATHA: As by making a habit of lifting one thing, a person can learn to lift several different weighty things, so by observing one object of study a man becomes capable of observing any object in the same way.

TASAWWUF: This is actually the technique used by Sufis, in the individual instructions given to disciples; in the class work, especially as a group rises from grade to grade; and in the spiritual awakening of everyone.

A great many deluded people think they have spiritual experiences when they are no longer aware of the world about. This is a mistake. Spirituality and mysticism make one more observant, not less; more aware of the persons and things about them, and more cognizant of the inner and outer essences of things and beings.

Thus there are two courses of progress: one by observation in which one learns more and more about whatever he examines, the other by concentration by which he becomes more capable of grasping the purpose of many things, persons, or institutions and finding a harmony among the varieties.

GATHA: Keeness of observation is a marvel in itself. In the first place the sight penetrates, so to speak, the object one sees, and in the next place, as the light of the sun has the power to open the buds, so the power of keen observation commands the objects observed to unfold themselves and to reveal their secrets.

TASAWWUF: This is learned in the science of Murakkabah, which is translated into English as “concentration.” But it does not mean exactly the same. For the western tradition is based on the principle of ego-personality, that the personality is real and in some senses unchanging and that an individual, corresponding to the Indian pudgala, is a constant, and that the world is moving around him.

This is very much like the old traditional geocentric cosmos which was really an egocentric cosmos. The whole concept of the ego has to be broken down and even more functionally than hypothetically.

While we state, “Thy Light is in all forms,” and the ultra-microscope has revealed the truth of this, those who have not delved deep into nature cannot realize that whatever they encounter is, in a sense, part of the universe which is themselves.

What we see may, from one point of view, be regarded as an external existent, but from another point of view it is a part of the self, external to the physical body. And not only can one see it, and learn from it, but the sage differs from the generality in that he learns to listen as well as see, and by the keen sight, finds the secret of every object in existence.

This was the secret of much of what we call Oriental Art, especially that coming from the Far East. Now by making a reality of the thing observed, we can pass from the stage of idolatry, in which a few selected objects were set up as holding the Divine Wisdom, until we can find the Divine Wisdom in all persons, beings, and objects, and by silent concentration either learn from them, or by them. That is to say, every single thing in existence can become what some scientists call “condensers” and so become the intermediary between the world hitherto unknown and what is already known.

GATHA: Every object has a soul within it which may be called its spirit.

TASAWWUF: All things are accumulations of Light, be that in dense form (Kashf) or subtle form (Latif). When a man makes an object of art he not only puts his material skill into it, but also something of his mind and of his heart. All of them partake of creative art. Otherwise pictures would be nothing but poor photographs. And there are traditions of what are called “souls of objects” and the wise, attuning to them, pick up their story and history.

GATHA: In ancient times the seers recognized the spirit of all things: the spirit of mountains, trees, stars, and planets, of the rivers, lakes, pools, and seas.

TASAWWUF: This was the force behind much of ancient polytheism. Some ancients saw the Universal God in a multitude of forms behind a multitude of things. Others saw a different divinity in many things and many places. None of them were wrong; it was only that mankind had not grown to the state of appreciation of divinity.

People like to show an emotional interest in ancient Egypt, and to be concerned with the ceremonies. But the ceremonies were only symbolic representations to guide aspirants to the real disciplines, and these, in turn, required delving into the nature of things, not delving into opinions from the experiences of others about them. Each aspirant had to have his own direct experience and there was no substitution for it. And the more the student could find the universal light concealed in all things, and thus revealed, the greater his opportunities for rising in the scale of mystical development.

When the mind is purified so it can operate like a reflecting mirror, all things may flash before it.

GATHA: And penetrating through objects means touching their spirit. No doubt it is easier to touch the spirit of man than to touch the spirit of objects, for the very reason that man is more living than any other form of creation.

TASAWWUF: In the esoteric sciences all encouragement is given to attunement first within the inner personality of the Teacher and then to all Teachers-in-chain. Each of them has operated as a condenser on a much higher level than separated objects have functioned. For in man is the image of all things, and when man awakens it is as if the universe is awakening in him. Or as Rumi taught, "God realized Himself in man." Only in Sufism one treads the path wherein this becomes a reality, not a truism, not a verbal philosophy. The whole universe is reflected in man.

GATHA: The person whose eyes are not steady cannot observe fully: so also the mind that is not steady also cannot observe things well. Therefore the mystics prescribe certain postures in order to make the body stable. And steadiness of body reacts upon the mind, making it steady also. The mind and body react on each other.

TASAWWUF: There are ways in which the backbone is used, both as an organ of the physical body, and of its psychic and subtle counterpart. Sitting up straight is taught in all of the mystical schools, and the values of the straight backbone alone helps in the development of the Will-power and in the integration of the functions of the nervous system. When the backbone is not straight, when there are difficulties called subluxations, there is impairment both to the body and to the mind.

This basic posture has variations. It is not necessary for bony people to practice the Lotus Posture. If posture alone brought spiritual illumination, then the latter would be under control either of nature or of the Will of man. But it does not happen that way. Many people practice the Lotus Posture without any great benefit spiritually (everybody benefits physically from it); and many have developed spiritually without any use of asana.

The breath is most important, and now the scholars of the world are beginning to discover that. As the breath becomes more refined, the subtle energies are assimilated by the right postures. The postures alone do not bring the energies but enable these to pass through the various vehicles.

It is the breath which is the highway to all vibrations. As the breath becomes refined so steadiness becomes easier. So attention is given to the refined breathing rather than to the use of will-power in trying to develop itself. But of course concentration should be used with it.

GATHA: So a self-mastered person who has control over his body and mind has balance and wisdom. Wisdom comes from steadiness and insight follows wisdom.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, man has control over steadiness. The combination of self-control and right breathing brings this about. Man's will-power is limited, but by making himself a channel for cosmic energies, there is growth in the self-mastery.

If one lacks wisdom, which is to say Insight in this sense, first the refinement of breath brings it about, and sometimes it is necessary to breathe more in the left nostril, which is the channel for the aspect of the universe called "Wisdom," in contrast to the aspects of "Energy" and "Strength" which operate more when the breath is in the right nostril. But this is only one aspect of it.

There are many people who can breathe in the left nostril without steadiness or strength. However, the Jemali people—which means womankind to begin with—do not put up certain types of obstacles and so they know intuitively. But as society encourages egotism, they become lost, and very few accept the Insight which is already theirs.

It is very simple to accept steadiness, the advantages of steadiness. And there is also much strength in this, more than in exercises for the development of strength, for it increases potentiality, which is more desirable than all else.