

Gatha with Commentary

Kashf: Insight

Series III

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.

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Series III: Number 1

Reason is Earth-Born

GATHA: Mind is most capable of expressing itself in a fitting form. Very often man expresses his thought in any conversation that may be going on, which perhaps has nothing to do with his thought; and as his nature is, man looks for a scope for expression of his thought, and he easily gets it.

TASAWWUF: This subject is presented and discussed in the Volume called *The Mind World*, and also in the volume called *Mental Purification*. The processes of mental purification discipline the devotee so that his thinking, energy, breathing, and conversation; all are united. This produces magnetism and effectiveness in thought. When the magnetism and effectiveness become evident, one is on the way toward becoming a master-mind.

The practice of "Toward the One" is both a discipline and an aid. It keeps the mind from wandering. The mind may wander from one subject to another, or the mind may wander while presumably concerned with a single subject. Both of these result in a loss of magnetism and vital energy. When thought, speech and breath are divided the life processes deteriorate. When thought, speech and breath are united there is not only no loss of vitality, but there may even be gain. This may be called one of the secrets of age, but really there is no secret in it at all, though it may be called super-sense.

So much energy goes into speech. A moral man, without being a wise man, can create aphorisms. Literature is full of such aphorisms. Most defenders of religion propound the majesty of the aphorisms of the wise of their religions. They are not concerned with any action; they are concerned with the words. And so we find literature crammed with wonderful words, but despite a hymn that says, "Wonderful words of life," to speakers of other languages these words are just noises. No one has ever produced peace by chanting "Shantih."

The difference between a mystic and the literary-wise is that the mystic is concerned with action. This action also includes what Sri Krishna calls non-action. Among the madzubs one finds very little action, but when they act they act, and they very seldom talk. They never say what they do not do, and they often do without saying anything at all. This is the opposite of the ordinary people, of the people of manas.

GATHA: In a serious conversation one can find scope for a joke; even in tragedy one can find

comedy; and in comedy one can find tragedy, if one's mind happens to dwell on sad thoughts. This shows that the mind always seeks for a scope for expression, and situations outside generously offer the scope.

TASAWWUF: In a real serious conversation the mystic will go straight to the point, but if he sees others are not ready then he may add embellishments. For there is a Toward the One which is just one, and there is a Toward the One which is united with all; which means that the master-mind, holding on to a basic thought, may embellish it in innumerable ways. It is out of this that much literature and drama have been created, and even philosophies.

There are many ways by which mental magnetism can be increased, but they are all concerned with unification of mind, and concentration on subject matter. While everything cannot be explained in discussions on esoteric practices, the awakening of the disciple to various grades of understanding as the result of his endeavors can explain very much to the devotee.

Yes, the mind was made to express, and although it is possible to show philological and psychological relations between moon and mind, these are better understood by actual awakening, as is said in the prayer, "As the light filleth the crescent moon."

GATHA: The same thing one finds with the mind; in every situation, every condition, man easily finds out a reason for it from the mind. The one who does right and the one who does wrong both find the reason for their action.

TASAWWUF: In the first studies in TASAWWUF the disadvantages of reasoning, so-called, are presented. There is a rationale which springs from the ego, and there is a rationale beyond the ego. We can study harmonies in music and in the arts. We can study another type of harmony, associated with the laws of nature. We can study harmony from moral points of view, and in all this there is both logic and justification. But once one is concerned with logic and justification and does not examine the other facets of life, one is trapped.

For example, there is the term *akl*, which is translated as reason, and it does mean reason in a super-personal sense. It is not contrary to higher forms of knowledge. But it is contrary to self-justification. So many people have so many kinds of self-justification and this is called logic or reason; it is neither logic nor reason. Yes, logic always begins with assumptions, and when these assumptions are established on other than intuitive bases they can lead to confusion. Assumptions never validate truth, although both assumption and truth validate what has been called the "tyranny of words."

Lesser developed people often become so adept in self-justification that they are unable to benefit from life unless they experience pain and sorrow. It is not that the Universe of rahmat justifies pain and sorrow, but sometimes stringent means are necessary to produce an awakening in man.

GATHA: Two people disputing against each other both have reason at the back of their discussion.

This shows that the mind provides reason, as the sun shines and the rain falls, for the sinner as well as for the virtuous.

TASAWWUF: That is why in propounding akl, the mystics see a basic reason which is as the sun or rain for all, and not as some falsely claim, for their particular outlook. Religions which proclaim reason as fundamental may be attractive to some, but they hardly lead toward God-realization, and they can result in the diminution of devotion.

It is the egocentric and the ignorant that quote their scriptures against others. Scriptures were never given to the world to be against; they were revealed to help mankind on toward self-fulfillment. Christ failed when he declared, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Real religion has to be renovated. It is beyond codes or belief. It is putting into practice what the Prophets of God have given to the world both in their scriptures and personalities.

GATHA: Not knowing this fact, man always reasons with another; but it is not a dispute between reason and no reason, it is a dispute between two reasons contrary to one another. This shows that reason has not sprung on the soil of heaven, reason is earth-born, upon which man so confidently fixes his argument.

TASAWWUF: One explanation of the term Sufi is that the Sufi sees from the standpoint of another. If a number of persons use the same surveying instrument they might have the same results. But if a number of persons use the same model in an art class the very fact that they are sitting, have been sitting, in different positions would bring out different results. The psychological states of the artist, the variations of the light and shadow and even the varying effects of weather and conditions would all help produce different results. This is natural, but though it is natural, it has not affected philosophy much. So much in philosophy has ignored the simple fact that people in different positions would reach different conclusions.

For that reason, so to speak, even the term "reason" is not always rational. It may be opinion; it may mean point of view; it could even mean prejudice. Presumably it produces a consistency on the part of personalities involved, but even that is not always apparent.

To the wise when there are differences of opinion there are shortcomings, there are limitations. It is not wrong to have shortcomings and limitations. It may be wrong not to recognize them. Therefore in mysticism and especially in Sufism a goal may be to harmonize differences or even to find an integrative outlook into which various points of view may fit. Thus we come back to the story of the blind man and the elephant. And no matter how many times it is told, people may not only reach different conclusions, but even be blind to the rationale of others.

GATHA: Therefore every conversation is not always on a predesigned plan; most often it is an outcome of instantaneously arising impulses.

TASAWWUF: This is a common behaviorism of nervous people. The Sufi guards himself by

reciting a Darood—either “Toward the One” or some other practice. As he feels the drawing in of energies, he becomes more integrated in his own self, and when he becomes more integrated in his own self, he is able to control impulses.

At a certain stage of training, disciples are given Fikr practices. These help even more. In spiritual impression the magnetism of the blood is drawn to the heart and is used constructively; in impulse it is drawn away from the heart, and magnetism is lost. No amount of reasoning can add to magnetism. Egocentrism always loses it. When a person is weak he is weak; when he is tired he is tired; when he is energized he is energized.

When the Sufi Invocation calls God the perfection of love, harmony and beauty, it proposes that man, created in the Divine Image, also may be operating toward and with love, harmony and beauty. All of these are contrary to dualistic reasoning.

GATHA: It is most interesting when one can get to the back of a conversation and find out what it is founded upon; and it is still more interesting to find what a very obedient servant reason is, which is ready to respond to the call of its master, although the truth is coined by itself.

TASAWWUF: It is a comparatively easy thing to learn the Ten Sufi Thoughts. It is a most difficult process to assimilate them consciously, and put them into practice. That is one of the reasons why a spiritual teacher is needed. Very seldom does man of himself, by himself, absorb the points of view of others. Very seldom does man of himself, and by himself, learn to control his impulses. But once the devotee is interested in the spiritual practices such as wazifas and Fikrs it becomes a very simple thing.

From the Sufi point of view, anything that upsets love, or harmony, or beauty, cannot be called truth.

GATHA: It is when the seer begins to look behind reason that he begins to get glimpses of truth upon which he can depend. Insight makes life interesting. One who drifts along with the waves of insight will not enjoy life so much as one who has insight into life and yet stands firm on his own feet.

TASAWWUF: It is said “When the seer begins to look behind reason ...” It means that only when one can look behind reason does one become a seer. Seer-ship does not necessarily mean the acquisition of what are called miraculous powers. A real miraculous power is the ability to see from the point of view of another. This manifests earliest and easiest in a loving mother, but it can also come in a kind father and a helpful friend.

Insight is the direct and immediate appreciation of a situation. As one develops in and with insight, he sees into life. When he sees into life with direct heart-vision he finds the love and the harmony and the beauty. He finds them in himself and expresses them in himself. He finds them in others and appreciates them in others. Even in the midst of worldly tragedies he is not down-hearted.

Catastrophes do not upset him. And thus he becomes better able to help both himself and the world.

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Series III: Number 2

The Word and the Idea

GATHA: The word is a body of the idea and the idea is the soul of the word. As the body represents the soul so the word represents the idea.

TASAWWUF: Idea is, so to speak, mental creation. In the Sufi teachings it is affirmed that thoughts have birth, growth, maturity, and death, as if they were beings. And in a certain sense they are beings.

There are several philosophies in the world that affirm good thoughts, good words and good deeds. In one sense the word represents an externalization and the thought an internalization. This is parallel perhaps to the soul representing the personality inward and body representing personality outwardly. The Greek term “logos” indicates that there is a creative activity, both in thought and word, and the real word also has thought in it. The Hebraic dibbur and the Sanskrit vac have much the same meaning.

Lack of coordination between thought and speech reveals lack of intelligence. People who chatter deplete their psychic power. Mystics often maintain silence, which increases psychic power, and to them “right speech” means speaking when thought, speech and action are unified. Therefore the mystic interprets Buddha’s eightfold path somewhat differently than others. He does not see “right speech” as an opposition to “wrong speech.” Who determines what is right and what is wrong? To the mystic it is right speech when speech is unified with thought, and it becomes perfect speech when this is completed by action.

No one has ever lived who would confess his speech is wrong speech. It is an impossibility. Yet there have been philosophies and even religions based on this supposition. Usually such divisions between right and wrong keep humanity divided and keep people in ignorance.

GATHA: The idea can only be expressed in the word, so the soul can only be seen in the body; and those who deny the existence of the soul must also deny the existence of the idea. They must say that only the word exists, without an idea, which in reality is impossible.

TASAWWUF: We have here what might be called the Platonic point of view. When Rumi said of God “Thou art our Plato and our Galen” he meant that all pure ideas really originate with God and come from God, and perfect healing also originates in God and comes from God.

Words without ideas are noises. They may seem to convey intelligence. Often they are used to confirm emotions, nothing more. There are, of course, sounds which have depths behind them. These have been called mantrams. They indicate that sounds may have intelligence without necessarily having what we call thought, i.e., human creation.

There has been a great deal of confusion in the world over this, but suppositions that all utterances are based on thought. To the Sufi and to other adepts all utterances may be based on ego, unless they give evidence of vitality and magnetism.

GATHA: Behind every word there is an idea veiled in one or a thousand veils, or clearly represented by the word. However, the word is a key to the idea, not the idea itself. It is not the word which is in itself an idea, but only an expression of it.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi instructions on Murakkabah, or concentration, one is told to hold the thought with the feeling. This provides the power. Once the idea has power it can be conveyed to the word and give the word a vitality, whereas mere utterances arising from the ego deprive the personality of vitality and magnetism.

When it is said that the word itself is not an idea, this has to be understood. There is in the English language—with correspondences in other languages—what are called expletives. They are sounds, noises, or even words, but they do not necessarily have thought behind them.

GATHA: The ears hear the word, the mind perceives the idea. If the idea were not there the word would not convey anything to the listener. If one said to a child, “Sarcasm is an abuse of the intellect,” what will the innocent child understand by it? The word “sarcasm” will be known by the one who is capable of being sarcastic.

TASAWWUF: Chatter differs from speech in lacking in psychic power. The greater the thought behind speech, the greater the magnetism conveyed. Ignorant people are constantly consuming magnetism. It requires a great deal of thought to understand that all karmic endeavors are wasteful. But there are also activities of what is called “nishkama karma.” This means activity based on drawing from the finer forces of the universe. To put it in Sufic terms, there are activities of kasif and latif, gross and fine. But the thought of the gross is always gross, whereas the thought of the fine is not fine unless there is already refinement. The refinement comes when the thought is held by feeling.

GATHA: This opens up another idea, that those who accuse others with authority of some fault must necessarily know the fault themselves. Man, however evolved, will now and then show childishness in expressing his opinion about another, proving thereby guilty of the same fault in some proportion. No one can tell another, "You told a lie," who did not tell a lie himself once at least in his life.

TASAWWUF: People of the same level of consciousness know the faults and even perhaps the virtues of their own level. Although Jesus Christ said not to judge unless you want to be judged, this is one of his many teachings which has not particularly impressed the leaders of the religions that presumably pay him honors. The only way to pay Jesus honor is to follow as he said, "The things that I do will thee also do." Yes there is a discernment, and it is noticeably present in what we call seers, that they can tell the grade of evolution, and the state of consciousness of those below them, or even at the same level. But this type of discernment does not involve minute analysis and fault-finding.

A Sufi by definition is one who sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself. Merely to believe in this capacity is not helpful; it can even be deluding.

Yes, no doubt ideas arise in the depth of mind, but an idea to become perfect must be based on discernment, which is to say the functioning of intelligence through the mind. Meditation and esoteric disciplines help awaken this intelligence so that it can operate consciously while man is still in the physical body.

If we want to help others, we should try to discern their light and intelligence. We do not help others much by pointing out their particular faults. Every activity of man involves in some way emanations and vibrations of the basic elements.

The prayer says, "Thy light is in all forms, Thy love in all beings." The seer is able to ascertain the type of love and light and life in others. Even what we call wrong actions compel the use or misuse of elemental forces. Thus a person who loses his temper often may show an abundance of the fire element. While a person who is lazy may show an abundance of the earth element. The true alchemist utilizes the elementary forces which he sees in personality, and even though these may have manifested in an unworthy fashion, he is thus able to help a person manifest what he already has in a worthy fashion. Thus in this sense alchemy is very different from dualistic morality.

Therefore to help others the wise work with the forces, vibrations, and attributes of man, and try to raise them toward perfection with their own faculties.

GATHA: No doubt the idea is vaster than the word, as the soul is wider than the body. Every idea has its breadth, length, height and depth. Therefore, as a world is hidden in a planet, so a world of idea is hidden in a word.

TASAWWUF: In *The Soul, Whence and Whither* it is presented, no doubt symbolically, that the

mind and mental body are vastly superior to and larger than the physical body and also that the spiritual body, so to speak, is vastly larger than the mental body. Thus mental activities in the physical world are like derivatives or emanations from what is going on in the mental world.

Beyond this we can see as has been stated that every thought is like a living being. When one advances in Murakkabah he becomes aware of the law and how to take advantage of it and thus arrive in the world of wisdom beyond thought.

GATHA: Think, therefore, how interesting life must become for the one who can see behind every word that is spoken to him its length, breadth, height and depth. He is an engineer of the human mind. He then does not know only what is spoken to him, but he knows what is meant by it.

TASAWWUF: In *Mental Purification* and *The Mind World* the principles behind thought are elucidated. There is a faculty of understanding in the heart which can be awakened by Zikr, Fikr, meditation, and constant practice. This enables a mystic to understand life.

The more one tries to put Kashf into operation, the more one trusts his feelings; the greater the conscious awareness—then the more one will appreciate life which will become very interesting but no longer blindly mysterious.

GATHA: By knowing words you do not know the language; what you know is the outside language, the inner language is known by knowing the language of ideas. So the language of ideas cannot be heard by the ears alone, the hearing of the heart must be open for it.

TASAWWUF: When we know the inner language we can communicate telepathically. Lovers are often able to do this without having any other disciplines. Many mothers are aware of this, especially during the early stages of childhood.

If we look into the heart and begin to practice as if the heart were real and alive, the more we can become consciously aware of this. Then something like sight—really Insight—is impressed in the consciousness. As we feel and trust this and look, so to speak, the more we can understand past, present and future.

Mysticism is taught two ways in Sufism. One is presented in *The Sufi Message* volumes as if the philosophy of operations. The other is presented to advanced disciples to help awaken them to a consciousness of the realities within themselves.

GATHA: The seer must understand from a word spoken to him what even the one who speaks does not know, for every human being thinks, speaks, and acts mechanically, subject to the condition of his body, mind, and situation in life. Therefore as a physician finds out more about a complaint than the patient himself, so the mystic must comprehend the idea behind every word that is spoken to him.

TASAWWUF: The Seer operates at times as if he were non-being; that is to say, the Seer makes of himself a channel, and through this channel the universe can express itself. It may express itself as if man were merely a telescope or instrument through which the Universe can function or it may be also that man may be regarded as a reality experiencing the world and the more he is able to become, so to speak, an instrument of the cosmos, the more he can both experience and express.

No doubt there are several ways of ascertaining the meanings behind things. Paul Brunton has said that there is a way of Breath, of Heart, and of Light. Therefore the more one understands the Breath, the more one can perceive the Light, and the more one can respond to the impressions made upon the Heart, the more living he becomes.

The term Kashf means practically the same as Prajna in Sanskrit. It may be called pure intelligence although the term pure intelligence itself is not always too clear. It can become clear when it becomes functional and not merely subjective.

GATHA: One might think with the continual growth of such perception the life of a Sufi must become very much troubled, for when the average person would be seeing a yard's distance a Sufi may be seeing the distance of a mile. Yes, there is no doubt it could be troublesome if the mystic did not develop all around.

TASAWWUF: Growth means growth in every direction. If Seership meant merely better analysis no doubt one would be troubled. But Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani teaches that the less one is troubled the greater can be the Seer-ship. He takes tragedies, shortcomings, even evil, as normal activities of life itself, not to be condemned because that is the way Allah made the Universe.

If we look down into nature, we can easily see that life feeds upon life; that there is destruction and even what might be called murder without much compassion or insight. As we rise in the scale of evolution, we can observe more compassion and insight. When we really obtain compassion and insight, we can see as the Hebraic Targum of the Book of Genesis says, "With Wisdom the Ineffable Being created Heavens and Earth."

GATHA: The elephant's strength is required to carry the load of an elephant. It is not enough to become a seer alone, but what is needed is to develop that strength which takes all things easily, the power that endures all things, and the might which enables one to surmount all difficulties in life.

TASAWWUF: There is a transference of power and energy which is both personal and super-personal. We say "Toward the One" and "United with All." As the heart expands it not only sees more, feels more, functions more, but it becomes as if the Universe was seeing through one, feeling through one, and functioning through one. The esoteric sciences help the devotee more than anything else to reach this stage. But also his taking as a reality every feeling, every vibration, every function, which touches, manifests, or emanates from the Heart.

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Series III: Number 3

The Expression and the Idea

GATHA: Actions such as a smile, or staring, or frowning, or nodding, or moving the eyes or the head, have ideas behind them. Externally it is a slight movement; behind it there is a mountain of thought. No movement is possible without a thought at the back of it.

TASAWWUF: With the rise of what have been called semantics and General Semantics there is also what is called meta-language. Meta-language may become the science of expression and communication.

At one time Hazrat Inayat Khan gave to the world teachings in this field, but they were suppressed. It is certain that all movements are connected with breath and feeling. The actual expressions and thought depend on breath and feeling. So man by extending his knowledge of breath and controlling his feelings may become as a Master, so to speak.

Even from the physical point of view there is no movement of body without an activity of nerves, and there is no activity of nerves not based on thought.

GATHA: Sometimes it is known to the person and sometimes the person himself does not know why he smiled. The eyes express more than anything else, by their movements, the idea behind them. Very often intuitive people say, "I perceived from that person's look pleasure," or "displeasure," or "his favorable"—or "unfavorable"—"attitude." And yet many do not know what movement, what expression, suggested to them what they perceived.

TASAWWUF: As one rises in inner development, he begins to perceive rather than to see. He can perceive through the eyes of another. There have even been attempts to develop sciences (called iridology or otherwise) which come from an examination of the eyes. There may be an outer examination according to the expressions, their colors and formations. There may be a deeper examination, and some day this may be studied and known, of the energies; not only light and color but electromagnetic and other energies which are still to be made known scientifically.

Although man can thus gain a great deal of knowledge both of eyes and personality, far greater knowledge comes when the intuitions are put to work. A remarkable thing about intuition is that it is developed as it is used. In what is known as outer knowledge the muscles or organs are often developed before they are used. But with inner knowledge it is the use which produces the development.

We may thus see a valid metalanguage arising based on the intuitive faculty, but this intuitive faculty used along with, not separate from, other faculties.

GATHA: Every expression of the eyes, the eyes which change their expression so many times in one minute, suggests the idea behind. This shows that the mind is an engineer and the body is a mechanism which it works. If the engineer becomes conscious of his working he brings about desirable results, but by unconscious working the engineer also becomes a mechanism.

TASAWWUF: This whole subject is discussed in *The Mind World* and other studies with commentaries thereon. The mind operates according to very definite principles and processes.

The eyes are developed from nerve terminals on the surface. If there were more nerve terminals on the surface, there would be more eyes. All animals do not have just two sets of eyes. There are some animals which have exposed nerve terminals in different places, e.g. the starfish, at the end of every foot. And in general what we call lower animals have more diverse operations of sight.

At the opposite extreme as beings develop beyond the human state there are other operations which process different kinds of sight and insight. This is particularly true of the organs now known as the pineal gland and pituitary body, which also play very important roles in mystical development and inner unfoldment.

GATHA: There used to be courtiers in the ancient times in India who at every moment would know the state of mind and the attitude of the king, even to such an extent that very often everything was arranged as the king liked without him having uttered one word about it. There were nine courtiers attached to the court of Akbar; every one of them knew the state of mind of the Emperor at every moment.

TASAWWUF: Emperor Akbar was perhaps the greatest ruler India ever produced. Although it is said he was ummi, i.e., illiterate, his capacities and activities were enormous. This was due to his spiritual development and the awakening both of inner and outer faculties. There was hardly a line of endeavor in which he was not most efficient. Some of these records are found in "Akbarnama" and in "Ain-i-Akbari" (the institutes of Akbar).

Instead of being studied, Akbar has been thoroughly criticized by all kinds of prejudiced people, people who have not risen above the dominant usage of the discursive mind. Akbar was not only proficient in a multitude of outer activities, he was very far advanced in esoteric attainment. He did not have to sleep much, sometimes not at all. He could sit in meditation long hours. He was not as

the orthodox who repeat at great length their devotion to Allah; he actually devoted himself to Allah. He knew Allah had created all peoples, was responsible to and for all of them, and had through His Prophets and Messengers given them various religions according to their capacities and the needs of the time.

The English writer Flora Annie Steele has written a book, *The Prince of Dreamers* which tells much more about this magnificent emperor than the discursive views of various partisans. And even in modern times when people claim to be unifiers and integrators they have shamefully and shamelessly omitted references to him, the first man in history to have preached and exemplified toleration to all and from all. And it is from him also that practically all the arts of India have been preserved and developed, and for which bigots do not give him credit.

GATHA: The Sufi, whose duty in the world is to live in the presence of God and who recognizes His presence in all His creatures, His personality especially in man, he fulfills his duty of a courtier with every man.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, "Live as if in the presence of Allah, and remember if you do not see him, verily He seeth you." This is called Akhlak Allah. This subject is discussed at length in *The Unity of Religious Ideals* and in the commentaries thereon.

This is one of the main causes of division between Sufis and orthodox Muslims. Sufis see an infinite variety in Allah and orthodox people see Him as one phase. Yes there is unity, but it is not a unity of limitation. It need not be in a single direction; it may be in all directions. What is the use of contemplating on the sun if we do not see and recognize that it sends its rays in every direction? The sun is not limited to a ray, and Allah is not limited to one mode of behavior. Nor is He limited at all. It is the limited mind which does not comprehend the Divine Presence. But once man properly feels Allah then he feels love, compassion, mercy, power, forgiveness, and all attributes. He not only sees them, he begins to express them through himself. This may be because he feels the presence of God, but it also may be that Kashf, or Insight, is operating and one can even arrive in a state, as did Sri Ramakrishna, when he said to Swami Vivekananda, "I see God more than I see you."

GATHA: A person who lives as dead as a stone among his surroundings does not know whom he has pleased, whom he has displeased, who expects of him thought, consideration, who asks of him sympathy or service, who needs him in his trouble or difficulty.

TASAWWUF: There are many people, even after they become disciples in spiritual life, who remain self-centered. A teacher does not compel growth. In the state of nufs-ammara one is self-limited; he thinks only of himself, and while he may not harm others, this may be because he has not even enough vital energy to do that. For there is an aspect of nufs-ammara which is akin to the tamasic state.

In the sciences arising from the new presentations of Sufism, there is both moral and psychic

development through the repetition of the Divine Qualities. Attention is paid to them not only to promote devotion in and from the praise of Allah but also to awaken the latent faculties of man, and thus enhance growth and development.

GATHA: People think insight comes by psychical development. Yes, it does come, but it comes most by the development of the heart quality. A loving person is a living person.

TASAWWUF: It is not that Insight comes by psychic development, but it may often be that psychic development comes from Insight (Kashf). What has been called psychic development often comes through and with limited qualities in unusual directions. These may be likened to the rays of a lamp or flashlight or searchlight. But Kashf is more akin to sunlight, which to begin with shows light and radiance and heat, in all directions. It is not personal; it is not impersonal; it is super-personal.

GATHA: No doubt the more living one is, the more difficult it is to live, and yet no difficulty is too great a price for living a real life.

TASAWWUF: The Sun shines on the just and unjust. As one develops, and as the faculty of Kashf grows, one sees at the same time the Divine Life in everybody; that all are God's beloved, so to speak. And in becoming super-personal one feels more the Presence of Allah. One feels he is living according to Akhlak Allah.

But one is still occupying a human body. One is still on earth, and considered to be one among a multitude of human beings. And he does not wish it otherwise; if he wished it otherwise and began to function otherwise, he would have at the same time more fame, more prowess, more opposition, and more superficial friends who would see only the outside and would not understand him. So it is better to be as Mohammed taught, one among the multitude of human beings. And at the same time this very way of life enables man to express more fully the Will of Allah, Who loves all His creation, regardless.

GATHA: The method which a mystic takes to perceive the mentality of another is that he takes the movement of the person and his expression as a guide to arrive at his thought, and he takes his thought as a guide to his nature. By realizing the nature of man he comes to know about the very depth of his being, and instead of having a part of the knowledge about a person he gets to know all about him.

TASAWWUF: This general principle is taught in many places in the literature of the day (*The Sufi Message*) and in the writings of the great Masters. While reading literature may be of limited value in spiritual development, the sacred literature, not only of Prophets and Messengers but also of Saints and Masters and, of course, of Sufis, can be of great help. Studying with attunement is most beneficial.

Thus there is a Futuh-al-Ghaib of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the prince of the Saints, and he repeats the same teaching over and over. The tendency on the part of ignorant devotees is to give undue

obeisance to certain people and neglect to others. This is contrary to the prayer “Raise us above the distinctions and differences which divide men.” Almost equal considerations must be given to the bodies and souls of all; why not to the hearts and minds; to the subtle and psychic aspects of personality.

When one reaches a stage that he can exemplify the lines of the Gayatri, “Pir,” he will find himself in a Universe both of far greater difficulty and far greater expression and far greater joy.

Thus it becomes a function more than a duty of the Sufi to see other personalities as wholes and disregard their shortcomings, realizing that there is a tremendous awakening to be achieved and attained.

This teaching also suggests the way in which a spiritual teacher should act. Many verbalize a desire to become a spiritual teacher without always realizing responsibility and beyond responsibility, mercy, compassion, tenderness and insight.

GATHA: To know that one has done right or wrong, to know that one is wise or foolish is not sufficient. To have a complete knowledge of a person one must know if he does right why he does right, and if he does wrong why he does wrong.

TASAWWUF: There are many ways by which one can judge oneself or guide oneself. Practices such as Fikr and Darood definitely show one the right way. External prayers ask to be shown the right way, but how does one know the right way? Mostly externalists end up with innate self-praise and also critical attitudes towards others. But when the heart is opened and the Kashf operates, one may receive and even receive immediately the answer to prayer and the Divine Guidance.

GATHA: If he is wise what makes him wise, if he is foolish what is the reason of his being foolish; not only this, but also if there were a possibility of making the best of what the person is and trying to improve the person without him knowing it.

TASAWWUF: In *Nirtan* it says that the heart does not ask questions or answer. When the feeling is developed one rises above this. But there is also a state where there is no question or answer and one may be unconcerned, asleep. Many self-centered ignorant people justify their attitudes by this, but the mystic has compassion and mercy along with his seeming indifference, and in the unawakened there is strong indifference with almost total absence of mercy and compassion.

Kashf not only distinguishes between right and wrong. It tells one how to act. It is beyond just judgment, but it is not beyond activity. And one can make a decision as to what is right and wrong but if one does nothing about it, such “right” and “wrong” have no meaning. They are deluding and they are delusive. It is the response to the ever-present Divine Guidance that creates the right in the Universe.

GATHA: A foolish person cannot get on with his own friend whereas a wise person can get on even

with his enemy. The difference is that the one knows life, understands human nature and acts according to it, whereas the other, even if he wanted to act rightly, always fails and becomes disappointed in the end.

TASAWWUF: We also have in *Gayan*, “Good aids good but evil fights evil.” Foolish people and those proficient in perceiving the faults of others. It is the fault-finder who is most proficient in ascertaining weaknesses. But the mystic is interested in having weaknesses surmounted. The traditional method has been the preaching of some code or creed. Codes and creeds are furiously defended, but they have not wiped out sin, crime or war. Something is missing.

Lord Buddha sought that something, and it may be said, he found it. But ignorant people have often rejected him, or become attached to his person, or to his institutions. Yet such great scholars in modern times as the Zen Dr. Daisetz Suzuki and the Indian Dr. Radhakrishnan have proclaimed *Prajna* as superior to all else, which in the Sufi terms is known as *Kashf*.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 4

The Power of Words

GATHA: There are two kinds of men, one who speaks subject to his impulse, the other who speaks just like hitting a target. This first one may often strike a wrong note, and may work against his own interest, but the other one will become the master of his destiny.

TASAWWUF: Those who speak subject to impulse may be called *manushas*. This is the state of the ordinary man, if such a term is correct to be used. The center of activity may arise from the autonomic nervous system or from what is called the solar plexus. The tendency is to act with immediacy, and not to consider the karmic results of such behavior.

The thoughtful person, though he may not know it, often takes a full breath before he thinks. By doing so he may eliminate, physical side, some of the gas from the brain, and the aftermath of what he had been thinking of previously. One cannot have purity of mind if thoughts on different subjects are activated at the same time. It is by concentration, holding onto one subject, that purity can be established in the mind. No philosophy about this is of any help and thinking on one subject at a

time may be called, to adopt a phrase from Lord Buddha, “right thinking.” Right thinking has been erroneously interpreted by dualists as something in opposition to wrong thinking.

The Sufi would say that right thinking is pure thinking—keeping the mind on one subject at a time. In order to prevent the interposition of impulses the Sufi adopts esoteric practices which enable the mind to think thoroughly on one subject at a time. It is this which makes for purity.

GATHA: The one who knows while speaking to whom he is speaking, the capacity of the mind of his hearer, the lines on the mind of his hearer, he will speak the words which will pierce through the mind of the listener. It is just like looking for a track before running the cart in a given direction.

TASAWWUF: This pure thinking can be attained in two ways: one by attunement, and one by intuition. The two are not necessarily separate but attunement could mean something like telepathy. This comes from an empathy between personalities and also use of meditation or practices which prevent the mind from turning in other directions. However, as Kashf develops, it becomes more and more the habit of the sage to sense and feel the attitude, the impressionability, and the receptivity of the person (or persons) to whom he is addressing himself. It is very important for the sage to get the feeling of other persons, and if we define a Sufi as one who sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself, it comes out of such endeavors.

GATHA: Many, content with their honesty, speak just as they like at the moment; they do not mind what effect it will produce as long as they are sure that what they say is true. The truth that strikes like a hammer on the head of the listener is not desirable, one would be better off without it. This shows that it is not only the thing to consider that what one says is true, there is another consideration which is most necessary, and that is what effect it will make on the other.

TASAWWUF: It is very difficult to say what is Right Action. We are here cautioned to observe the attitude and receptivity of the audience. At the same time there may be a purpose in every endeavor.

Let us discuss revolution. There are many people who support ideas (or actions) toward one kind of revolution, social, political or otherwise. Their logic often seems to be very clear. But at some point or another a keen mind may discern egocentricities or shifting in meanings of words which makes clear understanding difficult.

Now we are told that acting like a hammer may be undesirable and at the same time when we look at prophetic literature and at parts of the Holy Qur'an we find that warnings are distinctly the subject matter. The attitude of warning is emphasized. Perhaps no scripture has ever been given to conform and confirm what has been the custom, what have been the habits of people. Indeed, if people behaved properly, there would be little occasion to send a warning. But merely to produce fear and anguish can be even worse than the absence of warning.

One of the greatest revolutions that ever took place in the history of the world came when Lord

Buddha delivered his teachings. He protested against the caste system. He inveighed against many of the customs of the time. He did not regard holy men as holy men unless they had proved their own experiences toward spiritual deliverance and beyond. In him, wisdom, knowledge and love were combined.

Therefore if a Sufi appeared as a revolutionary in that he may be bringing something strange, it is not that he wants to be strange, it is not that he wants to conform, it is that he wants to clear up difficulties whether these be in a person or in an institution, or in society as a whole.

GATHA: The seer sees the lines made on the mind of the one to whom he speaks and makes his words suitable to run over that line. If he likes to make another road in the mind of his listener he first takes the road which is already made there, and when once he has entered the mind of his listener then he will make another road, not before. It is just like one person going to buy something in a shop and saying before entering, "I have not got more than fourpence" instead of going into the shop and finding out what he can buy with his four pennies.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes the lines made on the mind appear on the forehead and again sometimes on other parts of the face. They all have meanings. Generally speaking, a horizontal line is derived from tensions and oppositions of the world around one, of oppositions from society, from institutions, from friends, from relatives, from circumstances, from all other people. Vertical lines often arise from the opposition and troubles one has established from one's own ego.

As one becomes more active in applying Kashf to the affairs of life he can remove hindrances both from himself and from others. There may be no formula of "Right Speech" or "Right Thinking" as such. But when the intuition is developed and used—and it can often be developed by really using it—one will tend more and more to be on the path of Right Speech and Right Action. Besides, as one comes to understand better universal brotherhood, he will avoid more and more harming another.

GATHA: Action is one thing, and prudence is another thing. Even the animals are active, even they work for what they need in life. What one expects in man is prudence. Man must have forethought, before he utters one word, about its effect upon another.

TASAWWUF: Prudence is not developed by lecturing to another on prudence, or by even demanding prudence from oneself. It comes when thought, speech and action are unified by right breathing and practices of meditation and concentration. Forethought is developed when one watches one's inner being carefully, or, if unable to do that, one watches one's breath. Zikr and Fikr both assist the disciple to unify his inner and outer being. The awareness of empathy in the heart enables one to go prudently without having to go slowly. As one develops he becomes more and more aware of the inner part of his personality, and also of the attunement of that inner part of the personality to the cosmos as a whole.

Man draws his strength, his wisdom, his nobility from within. It is also derived from his awareness

of the Divine Presence obtained no doubt by his devotions. In other words, the growth of man is a growth in, with, and toward Divine Awareness. Divine Awareness in turn develops the forethought as nothing else can.

GATHA: Some say spiritually-wise is not worldly-wise, some think that these two worlds are different. But it is not so. The worldly-wise is capable of being spiritually-wise, but the spiritually-wise is already worldly-wise. He may not care for worldly things, therefore he may be lacking in experience in worldly affairs; yet for him worldly wisdom is not a foreign thing, he has only to open his eyes and see.

TASAWWUF: Thus we have two types of human beings in a sense: those capable of evolving and those already evolved. We read all kinds of stories about the Jinn souls. They are often exceedingly capable and yet exceedingly nonchalant, not being particularly concerned on matters in which the worldly-wise are most interested. It is part of spiritual training to help all persons toward the recognition, use, and growth of inner faculties with which God has blessed them. They are there but often they are not recognized. Inner development is a balanced, well-rounded course of growth. It is not lopsided. We are told again and again that the spiritual life helps to balance a personality. It is just that. Words do not help. Philosophies and ideas do not always help. But inner dependence is of utmost value.

Therefore in the Sufi teachings, one is given esoteric practices which can be of infinite value toward prompting growth and well-being.

GATHA: Those who know nothing of the world and those who are called spiritual, are known more for their goodness than for their balance. The complete spiritual life is not a dreamy one, but wide awake, full of thought and consideration.

TASAWWUF: We find so many instances of this. There are angelic souls, so to speak, and those who seem to be under what are called "Neptunian influences," which are that way. Spiritual really means that connected with the Breath. A dreamy soul does not always have supreme control of his breath. Sometimes he is very much lost in the world. Sometimes he seems concerned with other planes of existence, even with other planets, and so falls and fails in fulfilling the purpose of his life.

The dreamy Neptunian-type of personality is not so concerned with others. These people often talk about spirituality, about better worlds, sometimes about reform and revolutions, but actually they are mostly in a haze from their own state of consciousness and fulfillment. The real spiritual thought, according to the Sufi, always has consideration of others.

GATHA: The word has a magic in it; it can turn friends into your enemies, and it can make your enemies your friends. The mystery of all success in every direction of life is in the word.

TASAWWUF: This subject is developed in the work called "The Power of the Word." Yes, the word has magic in it, but words, in the common language, are not always magical. The magic

arises from the thought, feeling, and endeavors of the master-mind. It is not always necessary to defeat another in debate or in actual life, to be successful. As the intuitive faculty develops one will feel the inner personality of another. This subject is also presented in the booklet called *Metaphysics* which appears in *The Sufi Message* volumes.

GATHA: The word has power to turn the mind of the listener warm or cold. The word can produce the effect of earth, water, fire, air, or ether.

TASAWWUF: We can learn from the teachings of *The Mysticism of Sound* how to use the elements, how to use the breath, how to use the voice, how to use the mind. The practice of employing Toward the One as a Darood has tremendous advantages. It enables the devotee to integrate his personality. Once having done that he can obtain the right attitude toward another whether the other is a friend or foe, or indifferent. Friendship, enmity, and indifference are attitudes of dualistic minds. But the integration that arises from unification enables man to learn how to act under all circumstances.

Disciples in the advanced grades in Sufism learn how to take full advantage of the elements with their bodies, with their breaths, with their minds, and with all aspects of personality.

GATHA: The word can produce depression or joy. The one who knows the chemistry of the word does not need drugs or herbs. He has medicine for every disease in the world, not only for bodily disease, but for the disorders of the mind, which still remain unexplored by science.

TASAWWUF: This is an important subject in Sufism. As one becomes master of the elements and of the breath he can produce magnetism in the voice and thus obtain the desired result. Our general work in Sufism has been to expand the capacities for joy and then to assist all peoples to come to the fulfillment of their capacities. Right breathing helps. Devotional breathing helps. But what are called mantras or sacred phrases may help most of all, especially when they are involved with the difficulties of people. Wazifas are given by the teacher to help them overcome depressions and disease. It is the repetition of sacred words, not one's beliefs about them, that is most helpful.

Sometime meditation is better than mysticism for it soothes the whole mind. The whole personality gains from the blending of silence and refined breathing.

GATHA: By a constant study of life, by special thought given to one's word, by careful watching of the effects of one's speech upon others, one arrives at a state of realization where one can heal hearts.

TASAWWUF: For all this, meditation is most valuable. As one progresses in meditation, he learns to utilize the mind within shorter and smaller periods of time until problems can solve instantly.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 5

The Re-echo of the Past

GATHA: One can easily trace the past of man from what he says and from how he expresses it. The past is ringing in the heart of man like a bell. The heart of man is a talking-machine record which goes on by itself or, if it has stopped, one has only to wind the machine, then it goes on again.

TASAWWUF: The first evidence of the influence of the past comes in the words one may be using. The words have been derived from the society, from the family, from the education, and from the environment. Sometimes an apparently new word is used and when one uses a different word, it indicates to a keen mind that the other person has had a certain experience or a certain influence.

There are anthropologists who can tell much from the way a person speaks. If he deviates a little bit from the common speech, the common expression, or accent, or use of idiom, the anthropologist can often pinpoint his place of birth or education or genealogy, or tell about his first teachers. For this Insight is not necessary; it can become a science. But at the same time, Insight is helpful and is also present in the mind, the education and influences which have determined what appears to be the scientific methodology of the anthropologist.

GATHA: Man's present is the re-echo of his past. If he has been through suffering, even if he is better, he will vibrate the same; outer conditions will not change his inner being.

TASAWWUF: Very often we can tell from the accent of a person whether he has been through sorrow or has as yet not had to face it. In *The Mysticism of Sound* this subject is also presented. One's emotions, one's experiences, one's depths or shallowness, will affect both the place in the mouth and palate from which the voice emanates and also accents and stresses.

Perhaps, even more important, has been the rise of what has been called "blues" music. Whatever be the nature of blues music, it can indicate very definitely the suffering or superficiality of the singer and also his reactions to the suffering or the absence of it in others. Empathy seems to be a common characteristic in what is called blues music. Naturally, there has been an extension or evolution of this and a reaction to it, but both the extension and reaction to it show the influence of surroundings.

GATHA: If he has been happy, even in a troublous time his heart will vibrate the past. People who have been against one another, if by chance they become friends, will still feel in themselves the beating of the pulse of hostility of the past. Great kings who have been dethroned, imprisoned—still one can feel their past vibrating in their atmosphere.

TASAWWUF: The one who can preserve the depths of Joy will, of course, vibrate his own past, and indicate perhaps that he suffered more than others. Suffering does awaken consciousness in the depths of personality. Sometimes this produces self-pity. Self-pity is impossible unless one has been thwarted. Selfish people who are weak let this thwarting dominate them, but those who are strong face life as if obstacles were ordinary and aids to one's growth.

Memory generally brings out what has been easily preserved from the past. It is not only an open storehouse of facts, it is even more an open book which relates the emotional involvements such as pleasure, displeasure, pain, frustration, or indifference. When there has been indifference there may be less marked tones. All of these emotional reactions to past events affect the ego and outer personality. By learning how to breathe properly, especially by using those breaths which belong to esotericism, one can learn to control the memory, the emotions, and the reactions. An emotion without a reaction is sometimes beneficial, but reactions themselves make one a slave of his ego and surroundings.

Kingliness may be almost like a Divine attribute. By the proper repetition of Wazifa one can promote kingliness in himself. It is further increased by kingly function, and it is noteworthy that William Hohenzollern who was blamed for World War I, retained something of this kingliness to his death. But this has not always been true. There have been kings without kingliness, and when they have been dethroned they often act quite childishly, showing lack of depth and lack of development.

GATHA: The past lives and one cannot easily destroy it, however greatly one may wish to close it. It gets hold of the human tongue to express itself.

TASAWWUF: One does not always wish to destroy it. It is marked in the lines of the hands, the soles of the feet, the marks on the face and forehead, in the ears and eyes, and in all parts of man's being. No doubt little children may more purely express the parts elements play in their breathing and character, but as soon as there are reactions to the outer life, whether this comes through agreement or disagreement with and from parents, relatives, friends or enemies, the outer personality becomes more fixed and tends to differ from others. Some say that a personality is one who shows marked differentiations and from one point of view this is true. But when there is strong character it can stand up against the vicissitudes of life.

Modern Western materialistic science has not yet taken into account karmic factors. The word "environment" does not seem to have any particular meaning at all. It is, to employ the language of the great scientist-philosopher Einstein, finite but unbounded.

GATHA: As every heart is eager to tell its story so the past is most eager to sing its legend. It only seeks the way how it shall express itself.

TASAWWUF: There are several ways in which the heart tells of the past. One is the direct method of reconnaissance, or of what French call *raconteuring*. Some people like to talk about their pasts and their habit sometimes helps them to recall more. But the mystic also believes that the way toward forgiveness and indeed toward hatred and all evil emotions is by forgetting. When one forgets lines are removed both from the physical body and the mind. As lines are removed, peacefulness may set in. As this sort of peacefulness comes in, it is like removing what the Hindus call *samskaras*. When *samskaras* are removed the mind becomes more easily purified. When mind becomes more easily purified one is protected or cured of the most vicious diseases.

GATHA: A Sufi, therefore, does not need spirit communication to learn the past, or astrological science to discover what has happened. To him every person explains his past without even one word spoken.

TASAWWUF: As the heart awakens it perceives. The Sufi metaphysics is explained in many places, but explanation does not mean realization, does not produce realization. Perhaps the Sufi acquires an

ability to explain the charts of the astrologers but by methods not learned or known in acquiring this science as outer knowledge. In Sufi mysticism one learns how to perceive past and present and future. In *In an Eastern Rose Garden* which may be studied and read by everybody, there are many affirmations of acquisition of knowledge, but they are seldom taken very seriously until one has been a devotee for a long, long time.

In the brochure called *Metaphysics* and also in *The Soul Whence and Whither* and elsewhere, certain fundamental teachings are presented. These have for years been in possession of esotericists, particularly the adepts of Sufism. Mere reading does not seem to help much; it seldom awakens. The words remain words.

The development of subtle awareness magnifies the consciousness and the faculties many times. The development of spirituality develops the same so many, many times it would appear to be infinite. In the very first year of Gathas it was taught that it is the soul that sees. It generally takes a long time, and perhaps even the deeper initiations, to make one aware of this.

GATHA: But by the speech of a person about his past the Sufi can see what is hidden behind, what is being said and what remains unsaid. He need not trace the past in history or in traditions. He who can read has but to open his eyes and all is written before him.

TASAWWUF: This whole subject is also presented in *Cosmic Language* and its commentary. Many speak about such subjects without much realization. Even in "The Morals and Dogma of Masonry" it relates that atoms record their history. This is much more formally developed in the Avatamsaka school of Buddhism, which has remained as a fundamental teaching in and to much of Mahayana.

But one does not have to analyze; one can perceive immediately. This is Kashf in Sufism and Prajna in all the teachings originating in India.

The master-mind can control his voice, and this can become a fundamental in the teachings and expressions of what may be known as spiritual drama. Spiritual drama differs from the direct art form in that the performers may be trained in the instigation and control of emotions, and this is reflected in the voice—its tone qualities, its placements in the mouth, the moods of expression and all else.

In listening one may use both eyes and ears. Nyogen Senzaki, who was long a teacher of Zen, first in San Francisco and then in Los Angeles, used to say that liberation came when one could see with the ear and hear with the eye. The Sufi would not differ on this point. Indeed, the mystic would say that the mystic does see with the ear and hear with the eye. And in turn that one who functions thus is the only true mystic.

Mysticism is not used to gain information. But it is used to perceive the depths of personality of another and also to help them to rise above pain and sorrow and frustration, and even more to develop towards and in true self-realization.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 7

Vairagya

GATHA: The presence of a man speaks of his past, present and future. When a visitor comes to your house he brings to you either his joy or his sorrow; he brings you the effect of his good or bad deeds; he brings you the influence of his high or low mind; he tunes the vibration of the sphere of your home to his pitch; he charges the sphere with his own vibrations.

TASAWWUF: To accept this philosophically is only a beginning. It does not tell you much until you can functionalize. This subject is introduced in *Cosmic Language* and is also considered in the commentaries thereon. But until the person consciously functions it can become a weight on the mind. To know “about” something is not always to know it in reality.

In the teachings on Sufi mysticism one also learns how to become conscious of this, especially to use the breath to perceive past, present or future, concerning oneself or anyone else, or anything else.

Thus we have two approaches here, that of the breath, and that, so to speak, of the heart. Both enhance feeling and perception. This also enables the Sufi to attune to every person that comes into his presence. The intuition helps one to measure the atmosphere and also the evolution of another. The breath also helps one in understanding and thus one knows how to behave. One does not criticize a fire person for having too much fire, nor an earth person for having too much earth. One knows that each Element has its own perfectibility and one therefore tries to use the vibrations which are present to produce ... love, harmony, beauty, tolerance and success.

GATHA: If you can only perceive—he need not tell you one word about himself—you can know if he is experiencing heaven or hell. For one need not wait for heaven or hell in the hereafter; it is here also, only after death it will be more felt.

TASAWWUF: The reason why heaven and hell are felt more in the afterlife is that certain resistances are removed. The heaviness of the earth plane slows down all vibrations. One cannot proceed as much in heaviness as in lightness. The principles of kasif and latif are introduced with the first Gathas. It may take a long time to understand them. But the sciences of breath and the practices thereof make one more conscious. A seer is able to tell at once by both perception and atmosphere, the state of those who come into his presence. By that means he is able to help them more. He is able to avoid confusion. He is sometimes able to bring solace and comfort. He can at least change his own breath voluntarily so as not to conflict with others. It is in this sense that the Sufi is one who sees from the point of view of another. He can breathe from the point of view of another and can do this without being hypocritical concerning his own ideas.

GATHA: Therefore the contact of a heavenly person can bring to you the air of heaven and the contact of the other can give you the taste of the other place.

TASAWWUF: The institution of counseling has been introduced into the Sufi Movement. The founder of the Sufi Movement in the West did not have time for all functions. He introduced ideas. He introduced principles. He introduced methods. He introduced esoteric sciences. He introduced Divine Wisdom. He introduced. It was for his successors and followers to continue to promote these operations.

The same idea is found in the prayer “Pir” and in the instructions called “Shuyukhyat” which is to say, on the methods appropriate for a spiritual teacher in dealing with others. No one can truly be a spiritual teacher whose breath is not so refined that it penetrates the subtle and spiritual planes and brings down the atmosphere, the vibrations, the feelings and the Baraka. When the disciple or suppliant becomes aware of these he becomes aware of the blessings of the Teacher.

These teachings are not necessarily the possessions of anybody. The one who seeks to remove

the self is actually giving over his personality and his vehicle for heaven to use.

GATHA: This shows that every individual is a tone, a rhythm; and a tone which draws the tone of every other person to its own pitch, a rhythm which compels every other person to follow the same rhythm. That is where one feels the pull in life; that is what scares the sage from the life of the world and makes him feel inclined to run away from this world and take refuge in a forest or in a desert.

TASAWWUF: There is a compelling power in the personality who does not seek to compel. The more he removes the ego the more the universe is using him. At the same time he feels a conflict between this universal will and the vibrations around him which may be called samsara.

Mohammed spoke against asceticism. He lived in the midst of men. But it is also true that at one time he did not live in the midst of men. In his early life he preferred to be a shepherd or remain in solitude. But after his God-realization it became his duty, even his want, to live with the rest of mankind. This is also the standard of the true Bodhisattva. This is above and beyond teachings ordinary and extraordinary.

It is beautiful to wish to run away but who is doing the running away? God can only give the best blessings to mankind through one living in the midst of humanity, even with all its terrors and disturbances.

The ways of solitude give little opportunity for the true expression of will. No doubt there is a certain amount of peace, a certain amount of satisfaction, and a greater development of angelic qualities, but the angelic qualities are not the divine qualities. If we wish to accept and follow the will of God we will not even choose remoteness and retirement. No doubt for certain purposes it is all right for a seeker or a devotee or even a sage to live in the solitude. But when that purpose is achieved he may be living among men.

Spiritual training strengthens the will so that one may attain his own pitch. It attunes that pitch to the Divinity which enables one to increase harmony in himself and also to be more harmonious with others.

GATHA: Why the average person does not feel it is because, just like children absorbed in play, the people in the world are pulling each other's rope. Therefore they do not feel much; for they are pulled, but they also pull the rope of another.

TASAWWUF: The average person becomes attuned to and controlled by his immediate environment. He thinks that is the natural way of life. Even when he has a contrary philosophy it is hard for him to exert that in the midst of so many conflicting forces. And indeed during such a stage of existence, which is either manushic or animal, he is not able to exert his will power with his breath and so cannot exert that will power so that it will be effective. Or, if it is effective, it may be due to his temporary attunement to the forces about him, both physical and subtle.

GATHA: But the one who is tuned to a different pitch altogether from the average person and whose rhythm in life is quite different from the other's naturally must feel the pull too much.

TASAWWUF: There are some people who feel subtle control or who are more able to control the subtle forces, who are so attuned they appear to be in opposition to the pitch of the day. Sensitive people tend to withdraw, but there has also been a change in the world that there are people who have both sensitivity and strength, and so when they have conflict with the world about them instead of withdrawing they remain where they are.

This has been one of the effects of the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. It has given rise to a number of movements which stress non-violence and often practice it. They may interpret non-violence different from the way Gandhi did and they certainly interpret it different from the way the Jains did.

In the West they are often under the influence of rajas and sattva together. When they are not tamasic they do not accept fatalism; they act. Thus in this way they may elevate both themselves and the world around them, freeing society from what they have considered painful influences. Thus they do not lower their attunements. They do not interpret the idea of God's Will being done on earth by their merely doing nothing. Doing nothing only gives more forcefulness to the samskaras.

GATHA: And the only way how the sages manage to protect themselves from this is by the practice of **Vairagya** (the word Vairagya means independence and indifference both in one), which cannot be learned or taught, it comes by itself. It is not lack of love, or bitterness, it is only rising above love and hate both.

TASAWWUF: The way of the Vairagyi is in a sense the way of the Bodhisattva. A really strong man need not retire from society. A really strong man will face all the forces in society and either stand up against them by his strength or his indifference. When one so stands up he not only becomes stronger, he becomes stronger both in his actions and in his strength. Either policy makes it possible for him to help the humanity.

For this heart-centration is needed more than anything else.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 8

A Silent Music

GATHA: Every soul radiates an influence which charges the atmosphere all around. The more powerful the influence the wider it spreads, forcing its way even through walls.

TASAWWUF: While this subject is presented at length in *The Sufi Message*, especially in the work on *Psychology*, it is also inferred in *Cosmic Language* and elsewhere. The subtle vibrations form what has been called an aura. Sometimes it is seen as light, sometimes with colors, and sometimes there is a radiance which can be felt, both with the sight and sometimes without sight. It is very much like magnetism, and indeed is a form of magnetism.

This subject is inferred in *The Rejected Avatar*. Various aspects of it appear in works both by Sufis and Vedantists, but without a corresponding experience, an intellectual knowledge or belief is not necessarily helpful.

Or, following the cosmic teachings inferred especially in the last part of *The Soul, Whence and Whither* where the teaching is offered that man has three bodies, one may infer, indeed one may experience, what have been called the spiritual vibrations, which are connected with the angelic body. Every person has this angelic or heart body.

GATHA: There is no barrier of water or space which can keep that influence from spreading. The stronger the influence the longer it lasts. It is not difficult for a sensitive person to perceive on coming into a room or in a house what influence it has, or to perceive, on sitting in a chair, who was sitting there before him.

TASAWWUF: We already know that x-rays and cosmic vibrations are not stopped by dense matter. Even so, dense matter cannot stop finer vibrations, subtle vibrations. But even subtle vibrations cannot stop the influences of heart.

Although this subject is presented in *Cosmic Language* it is not always easy to pass from supposition or belief to experience. Yet even in the Bible there are many inferences concerning the existence of finer bodies. In one instance, it is said that Jesus felt the loss of an emanation when a woman touched him. Mohammed was very uncertain of the finer vibrations of which he was aware. He could not at first conceive that they were Holy and noble. He was most fortunate in having a very spiritual wife who understood.

The khirkah is a mantle often thrown upon a disciple who has had spiritual realization, especially in ecstasy. Sometimes a Sheikh will throw his own mantle on his disciple; sometimes he will have a garment ready for such purposes. These garments carry vibrations, the blessings of Baraka, and these Baraka carry the merits of the Divine Attributes—magnetic, psychological, psychic, and moral.

As is explained in the commentary on *Cosmic Language* the collections of vibrations have led to the establishment of shrines. Very often clothes and personal possessions of Saints and Sages have been preserved under the presumption that they emanate beneficial vibrations. In some instances there have been pilgrimages for this purpose. This often offends the orthodox. The very fact that they react proves their own lack of development and understanding.

There are of course methods by which development in sensitivity can be enhanced. Generally the practice of refined breathing will help very much. But Divine Grace is a reality. All mankind may benefit from Grace. Therefore in Sufism devotees are encouraged to practice Akhlak Allah. This helps strengthen their own vibrations, and at the same time, their sensitivity in responding to other people and to vibrations and emanations generally.

GATHA: The character of this influence is just like light or heat, which silently spreads its warmth according to its power of radiance. It is not that man's influence is felt in his presence only, but even after he has left the place his influence remains.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism, attention is paid to the heart. There is a heart-membrane which is very delicate. It can become tender in both the physical and metaphysical senses. Both forms of tenderness lead to the development of Kashf, make it more real in life.

There have been forms of Hinduism, especially from the Brahmanic outlook, which divided mankind according to the vibrations which were emanated. No doubt this may have been needed in certain stages of human evolution. But although Brahmanism and Hinduism along with all religions, accept the Divine origin of man, they have carried analysis to an extreme, and emphasized divisions. But they also had the institution of the sanyassin, which is above all divisions.

Sufis practice meditation to develop heart-tenderness and heart-response. Khatum says, "Open Thou our hearts, that we may hear Thy Voice, which constantly comes from within." An outer prayer is not of much help; turning the prayer into a reality is of infinite potential. Once the door of the heart is opened, one can become aware of the finer forces of the Universe, both in the unseen, and as they affect the outer life. Therefore mureeds are encouraged to practice heart meditation.

GATHA: The influence of some persons can remain for hours, of some for days, of some for weeks or months or even years. Atmosphere is a silent music. It has its effect upon the listener, exciting or peaceful, whatever it may be.

TASAWWUF: The world is becoming interested in the psychic sciences. There are plenty of scattered books, but the phenomena and evidences have not always been taken seriously or collated as the phenomena of stone, plants, and animals. In the end, it will be discovered and made known that man has three bodies. The subtle body influences the physical, and the spiritual body affects both the subtle and physical.

The more psychically advanced a person is, the more the psychic vibrations will affect an atmosphere and the persons coming to it. The more spiritual a person is the more his vibrations will affect both the atmosphere and the personalities coming into his presence. But the psychic vibrations are much heavier so to speak, and it does not require such a high spiritual development to become aware of them. If everybody were sensitive to and responsive to spiritual vibrations there would be no doubt millions upon millions of disciples. Perhaps there are in parts of the world not controlled by the media of communication and advertising.

There are spiritual teachers who consciously use their vibrations, either by silence or sound, not only to magnetize the atmosphere and benefit the persons who come into such an atmosphere, but also to establish a center, so to speak, where anyone coming for meditation or solace could be helped.

GATHA: The atmosphere remains not only in the place but also in objects, such as a chair, or a sofa, or a cushion, or a carpet, or a mat. An influence can remain with the clothes that one has worn in one's life. It is something real, not tangible but perceptible.

TASAWWUF: The subtle vibrations (latif) are not always measurable. Therefore there are aspects of occultism and mysticism which cannot be measured from the traditional scientific point of view. Someday no doubt there may be instruments such as those which record various alpha waves (considered psychically). There is no doubt that intellectuals, even materialists, are becoming aware of types of mental vibrations unknown to previous generations.

In the Sufi traditions many objects were preserved, often to go to persons who were considered worthy of receiving them and could benefit from the Baraka with which they were endowed. The cloak and begging bowl of Buddha were preserved for centuries, handed to hierarchal successors in chain. There was even a real or fancied tooth which was supposed to emanate beneficial vibrations. When the tooth was destroyed physically by the Portuguese, another tooth was substituted and this also seems to have been beneficial.

Temples and shrines are often accommodations for special vibrations. If they are used by holy men or spiritually advanced teachers others can feel the atmosphere and benefit by praying or meditating. A shrine is not necessarily beneficial because it is hallowed by some institution. It is the vibrations which hallow the shrine, not the ceremonies.

GATHA: Music comes through the ears to the heart, but atmosphere comes direct. A walking-stick can have the atmosphere of the person who held it; a rosary, necklace, brooch, or a ring can have atmosphere; a pen or an inkstand can have an atmosphere of the person who has used it. Everybody perceives it, consciously or unconsciously, but the more sensitive a person, the more he can realize it.

TASAWWUF: When Hazrat Inayat Khan left this world he gave his walking stick to his chief associate, but the purpose and teaching were ignored. Ultimately the recipient withdrew from all

connection with the Sufi organization.

There is considerable literature about the use of garments or even pieces of cloth which have been hallowed. One great Sufi teacher, Abu Sa'id Ibn Abi'l Khair, even used his toothpick to help heal and soothe others. Unfortunately too often the personality has become accepted and the institution itself not always so. We must always bear in mind that God is the only teacher, and it is the God-ness in human beings which produces the holyness, not the institutions, not any ceremony. At the same time there are psychic sciences which are becoming better known which show how subtle vibrations can benefit humanity in both the seen and unseen.

GATHA: It is not easy for everybody to break anybody's influence, although it is possible to rise above it.

TASAWWUF: During World War II, the newspapers were saying that the tyrant Adolph Hitler was going to use psychic influences to promote his work. At that time, one had a shrine where one could go and speak to God, and when one asked God, following the teachings of the prayer Khatum, the answer came distinctly, "Go upstairs."

What is called the Sufi Hierarchy is too often taken as an imagination, not as a reality. One can contact the Sufi Hierarchy by going up, so to speak, or by the descent of the Holy Spirit. To the mystics, these are realities. The going upstairs gave a Vision which showed the limitation of all forces of evil, and the domination in eternity if not in time of the forces of goodness and compassion. This is what happened.

All true Prophets have access and abilities through such methods. The Western word Prophet comes from the Greek and does not always have the same meanings as the Hebrew and Arabic Nabi. So in this sense there are always prophets on earth.

GATHA: A person who is fine of nature and sensitive, pure and good, for him the influence from all around in this world can become so troublesome that he would always find himself in the midst of the battle going on constantly around him. Therefore it will not do for a person to become fine and sensitive, and yet not learn how to combat all influences around him.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi teachings one is taught to rise above all subtle influences. To master them as we master the physical; to be aware of them as we are aware of the physical, but not be overcome by them, for although very fine and refined, they still belong to the finite part of the universe.

The sciences which arise from the practice of the wazifa and the blessing of Allah enable mankind to surmount all obstacles and difficulties of finite being.

GATHA: The more one studies this question the more one comes to realize that life is not only a battle outwardly but also inwardly. And there are two things that can be done for self-defense,

either to become a most well-equipped fighter, to fight out all influences attacking one with the power of one's own influence, or to rise above all influences; which means, to live and not live, to be and not be, to come down to act and rise up to keep in security.

TASAWWUF: Although they appear at different times, Sri Krishna and Apostle Mohammed both gave this teaching. It is especially emphasized in the Bhagavad Gita, but that Gita was written for the few, while the Qur'an was written for all mankind.

If we study the Hadiths of Prophet Mohammed, we find he was most emphatic in his antipathy toward displays of temper. This was because temper was most prevalent from the people of the time, but by inference, and certainly if we read all the materials attributed to him carefully, we find he was in entire agreement with all other Messengers of God in his opposition to all temptations of the lower nature.

Mushahida or cosmic contemplation is only possible when one can rise above all lower and subtle influences. It requires great facility in overcoming all efforts of the ego-self. But in Sufism it is possible by the over-stretching of emphasis on God-reality to avoid too much emphasis on combating evil. The spiritual awakening and God-emphasis will accomplish this.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 9

Three Ways to Develop Insight

GATHA: There are three important things to be considered in the development of insight: the steady gaze of the eyes and of the mind, which helps one in penetration.

TASAWWUF: The steady gaze is also one of the first teachings in Murakkabah or concentration. It comes partly through an exercise of will power, and partly through regularities in breathing. Disciples in the advanced study classes are especially trained in these, and mostly by Fikr.

Purification is also helpful. In the first year of training there is purification of body, and later purification of mind. The Gathas called "Everyday Life" were offered to the Western world largely to help in this. Steady gaze of the eyes is often offered to disciples by teachers, even with their first

studies. This will help them in their growth. But both steady gaze of eyes and of mind are helped by feeling and by Darood practices.

GATHA: Another thing is losing everything else from one's sight except the object through which one wishes to penetrate; and that comes by sufficient interest in the object of penetration.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects at least. One is positive, which is the interest one shows in any subject or undertaking. The other is negative, to accept discipline from one's self or another if one's mind wanders or one becomes interested in something else.

The word perfection comes from two Latin roots meaning "making through." It does not necessarily mean faultlessness. It means unification of a person and one's endeavor. Life is become such that people regard themselves as real and things and deeds as not so real. At the same time it has been taught that good words, good deeds, and good thoughts, lead to perfection. This was especially the teaching the world received from the Prophet Zarathustra. These teachings have been wrongly interpreted as dualistic. They were not so. They were taught, and with perfectibility and perfection, to keep the mind on one track.

Modern Sufism teaches "Toward the One." The purest form of Zen is to retain oneness at all times and at all costs. This would indicate that a wandering mind is an evil one and a steady mind a good one; it is the steady mind which leads toward perfection.

GATHA: But the third thing, which helps the most, is losing for the moment the thought of one's self. When one's body and mind are not before one, it is then that one has the proper insight into things one wishes to know and understand.

TASAWWUF: It is the losing of one's self which is most important in every undertaking. It may seem strange to say that the undertaking is real and the person an accident, or rather a mode of God, a form which God has taken in order to work out His intended plan on earth. This makes action most important, or as scriptures teach, the action is important, the actor not so much so. As this seems strange it is not always readily accepted, but we should give a little consideration to the Sufi teachings that God alone exists. This may help us in everything we try to do in this world.

There is a definite training for advanced disciples in Sufism in various aspects of Fana, or self-effacement. But this can begin even earlier when one recognizes purity in a loving mother, kind father, innocent child, helpful friend or inspiring teacher. The words are there, the devotion is there, the opportunity is there. And when one is in love also the tendency is always towards self-effacement.

We also see something of this in creative artists and even in devoted scientists, and in all those who feel that the action in which they are involved fulfills the very purpose of their existence.

GATHA: Sufis therefore have different concentrations by which they are helped not only in keeping

their gaze steady, but standing firm upon one thought.

TASAWWUF: There are three years' training for the disciples in the advanced study circle. Actually, there are exercises, proposals, and disciplines which can keep the disciple busy and progressing throughout the entire life, until the very purpose of his existence is fulfilled. Concentration (Murakkabah) ultimately merges into Mushahida, or cosmic contemplation.

GATHA: When a person cannot take interest in any object or being, then his mind is not steady, for there is nothing that it takes interest in; it is the interest which makes the mind steady.

TASAWWUF: It is not necessary for persons on the Sufi path, and even less for teachers, to make it their business to help everyone. Yet by one's own progress an atmosphere is established which leads all people who come into one's direction toward a unity and integration. In the presence of a sage, for instance, an undeveloped person may not only feel something of which he was not aware, but may also discipline himself and not let his mind wander at such times.

GATHA: A certain thought which is inspiring or helpful in some way, or a certain form which is inspiring, when once one has concentrated upon it then the mind becomes steady also, then it can easily hold an object before it without wavering.

TASAWWUF: It is therefore to the advantage of both teacher and pupil to assign topics in which there may be some interest. At the same time, if one goes to art school one may be given at first very simple subjects. If one takes lessons in music at first they are quite easy, or at least, uncomplicated. As one advances there are what might be called complications, or developments. This is only natural.

It is assumed that Talibs in Sufism are interested in spiritual development and self-fulfillment. Therefore our lessons are arranged with these purposes in mind. The wise teacher is able to keep track of the disciple's development and also keep him interested, but it is also true, as life unfolds itself, so also interest will be increased. And this in turn helps the disciple in his journey toward God, whatever method may be used.

TASAWWUF: The wise teacher makes himself acquainted with the interests of each disciple, so that after he once starts to progress on the path of concentration, he will be assigned practices and disciplines which will be most beneficial. If one studies the science of Chemistry in grade school, he finds a new world, but if he continues research into this science as he goes on to the university or even makes a career of it, he will find endless wonders in it. The same is certainly true of Murakkabah, the Sufic system of concentration. It may not be exactly the same as what the Hindus call concentration, and in our methods we never lose sight of the dominating principle that God alone exists, and nothing is done to turn disciplines into mere mechanical undertakings as sometimes occurs in certain schools of what is called Yoga. Feeling is always more important than form.

All the disciplines and practices in this line are based on steadiness.

GATHA: The character of the mind is as the character of the eyes, the eyes which take in all that comes under their horizon; so the mind jumps from one thing to another, upon all thoughts which may be standing within its horizon. And as it is not always easy to keep the gaze steady so it is with the mind; to keep the mind firm upon one thought, form or image is not easy.

TASAWWUF: Concentration by the eyes is comparatively simple and comprehensible. Control of the mind, control of life by the mind, and control of the mind by life, can be a most important undertaking. It is often in this way that the purpose of life is attained.

Sufism is not philosophy. Its earliest presentation in the West resulted mostly in philosophical acceptance, but not transformation of nature. The phrase "Toward the One" can be learned by disciples and non-disciples alike. The rhythm of breathing and the steadiness of mind which comes thereby can be of great benefit in one's development, not only in spiritual undertakings, but in the practical life.

GATHA: But the third thing is the most difficult, and that is to lose oneself in the thought of the object that is before one. In this way the self, which stands in the way between the soul and its object of penetration, is lost from view for the time being.

TASAWWUF: The whole training in Sufism, indeed the basis of spiritual training in all schools, is toward this goal, this attainment. It seldom comes by thought, it always comes in feeling. As feeling is developed the sense of ego disappears, as the sense of ego disappears the divine light, which is in every one of us, comes to the surface.

There is an aspect of spiritual development that when one concentrates on a subject one becomes the subject. One does not recognize as existing anything foreign, and at the same time when there is nothing foreign there is no longer an ego self, for the ego self is that which separates, so to speak, personal consciousness from the rest of the Universe. Therefore, while there are exercises and developments in concentration, and exercises and developments in Kashf, they are really endeavors of the soul to rid itself of covers, which hinder its true recognition of itself and its being.

GATHA: Thus the person is able to penetrate through all things, knowing thereby the nature, character and secret of all things.

TASAWWUF: This is what is meant by Kashf. It had long been given to the Western world in a Kashf Al-Mahjub of the great Sufi saint Al-Hujwiri (Data Ganj Baksh), but this work assumes some understanding if not of Sufism, at least of Islamics. It was therefore not easily assimilated by persons to whom this teaching and outlook were strange.

There is some question, and even Western scholars do not dispute it, that man can ever be aware of anything which is not part of his essential self.

If there is any question about this, there are exercises in concentration and esotericism which can bring man to the realization thereof.

GATHA: There is no other cause of all depression and despair than the inability of seeing through life. There may be many reasons apparently seeming to be the different causes of unhappiness, but this one is the greatest reason, the reason of all reasons. Even animals in whose nature the tendency of fighting is pronounced become friends when they come to know one another by association.

TASAWWUF: In *The Sufi Message* it is stated that many problems can be solved by meditation. In meditation man comes to be at one with himself, there is nothing foreign.

No doubt there are breathing practices which lead first toward the enlightenment of breath. When the breath is light there can be no heaviness of spirit. When there is no heaviness of spirit, the undesirable emotions disappear. This also makes it possible, especially when one is under instruction of a teacher, to elevate the capacity for joy, and experiences therein.

GATHA: Many troubles in the life of individuals and of the multitude might be avoided if keen insight were developed, for all confusion is caused by misunderstanding.

TASAWWUF: This idea was presented to the public and also to those who were anxious to become disciples. Lectures were given and also lessons on the meanings of and advantages and disadvantages of impulses and impressions; also on the subconscious and conscious aspects of personality. The chief way to develop impressionability is to trust in it, or at least test it. Then one will find that one has a faculty which leads to appreciation of life, even to recognize that all experiences in life have some value.

GATHA: Not only human beings, but all things of this world which seem of use or no use, which seem to be easy or difficult to obtain, all are for the use of man. Therefore penetration into things is the secret of the success of science, art, philosophy and religion, all.

TASAWWUF: The intuitive faculty is found in animals. It is more present in human beings, but not used. In the Sufi training, not only the use is encouraged, but the exercises thereof, and the more one trusts in one's own heart and in the heart impressions the more one will benefit therefrom.

Questions and Answers

Q: Suppose a person has had for years some interest very near to his heart, which has developed his power of concentration. And that interest ceases. Is that person more capable of strong concentration on a new interest, because of his previous experience?

A: Yes, certainly. All our experiences are nothing but preparation for something else. Nothing that belongs to this world, however precious, must hinder one's path of progress. For every step in the

direction to that spiritual gain must be the aim of every soul. And the concentration upon the object is just a step.

Q: A feeling of deadness seems to come *[words missing]* ...?

A: Here is the question of concentration, and not of its effect. The question of effect is quite a different subject again. Then the question comes: Of what object? Something to steady the mind. It may be a tree, a flower, the sun or a star. Of course, according to the object a reaction is produced. And according to the reaction an object is produced. Every belief and every experience for a wise person is a step of a staircase; he has taken this step, there is another step for him to take. The steps of the staircase are not made for one to stand there. They are just made for one to pass, to go further. Because life is progress. Where there is no progress there is no life. One should go on. Death and disappointment; two things are one. And if there is a hereafter, then the death was a passing stage; and so is disappointment. It only has made one more steady, more wise, more *[words missing]*

Q: Does the staircase never end?

A: The end is not very desirable. The interest is in the staircase, in going on.

Q: *[words missing]* ... when a soul has reached perfection?

A: After perfection there is no interest. If there is no self, there is no interest, there is perfection.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 10

Tranquility

GATHA: The most important thing in life is the opening of that clear vision which is opened by the help of insight. The effect of every emotion covers the insight, just as clouds cover the sun.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed said that every child is born a Muslim—that is to say every child has been born with clear vision. And Jesus said that unless we re-become like little children ours would

not be the Divine Kingdom. Allah has endowed humanity with many wonders and the purpose of Divine Messengers coming to earth over and over again has been in part at least to re-awaken man to the station for which he was created.

It is very simple to say that the poor in spirit, which has been interpreted as the refined in ego, should be especially blessed. It is the ego which covers density. We can remove its power in part by learning to refine one's breath, and in part by active forms of willing surrender.

Every emotion arises when one or another of the elements is more dominant in the breath. When there is the refined breath, when we become poor in spirit, we also become clear in vision, and supreme over emotion. This subject is discussed variously in *The Mysticism of Sound*, the small brochure on *Metaphysics*, in the commentaries thereon and elsewhere. It is also learned as the devotee rises either through his own efforts or by Divine Grace.

GATHA: It is therefore that most clever and qualified people often do things, especially at the moment of passion or anger, which they would not have done otherwise. The reason is that the mind loses its rhythm under the strain of a passion or emotion, and so it upsets the rhythm of the body, it makes man perplexed and unable to see any condition or situation clearly.

TASAWWUF: Passion and anger were both especially condemned by Mohammed. Indeed, the Prophets and Messengers of God condemned for moral shortcomings and not for theological irregularities. Religion has departed therefrom, maintaining man in darkness.

Under anger, fire gets out of control. This can be destructive. A great many practices in Shagal (Pranayama) are for the control of this baneful tendency. In passion, also the etheric element gets out of control. Then the forces all move downward, and man actually becomes helpless.

All spiritual practices are based on rhythms. And rhythm is most necessary to maintain regularity or to carry man on toward his full fulfillment.

Clever people are those who succeed regardless of others; wise people succeed due to their regard for others.

GATHA: It is therefore that the seers, the sages, try to keep their tranquility at every cost, for life in the world brings up many things every day and hour to disturb that tranquility which is the secret of insight.

TASAWWUF: One interpretation of **Allaho Akbar** is **Peace Is Power**. Allah in this sense does not mean that peace which comes at the end of hostilities. It connotes that peace of non-movement from which all activity arose. When we become aware of this peace, and we all can, we also consciously or unconsciously become channels for Divine power. Often miracles are derived therefrom.

The peace of the sage or teacher is healing and the agitation may be destructive. This may be hard to understand. Tranquility is maintained by control over the breath and does not necessarily require long meditations. Sufis practice Akhlak Allah, that is the presence of God; that is[,] the presence of fundamental peace, the God beyond creation, the God behind activity is absolute peace and power together. The devotee who has surrendered to God, and who in some sense is merged with God expresses Divine faculties through his personality.

GATHA: Every little noise or disturbance in oneself and outside can upset a person who keeps the rhythm of his whole being in the proper order. It is therefore that the sages have chosen solitude and a life away from the world.

TASAWWUF: There is a dualistic interpretation of Indian cosmology and metaphysics which separates, so to speak, samsara and nirvana. In the end it may be found that these are both aspects of the same absolute reality. The difference between the sage and the ordinary person is when there is disturbance the sage looks within himself and the ordinary person looks outside. The more the sage retains his rhythm and the more refined his breath, the greater his power and influence both in maintaining his own composure and in helping others.

Sufis practice khilvat at certain periods, but they also learn to maintain their holiness and dignity at all times. In his condemnation of asceticism Mohammed was also concerned that the real representative of Allah and God-consciousness should not separate himself from the world, but work in the midst of society with mankind as he did. In effect, however, there is a balance between solitude and society and one can benefit from both and help others through each.

GATHA: But the best way of keeping one's tranquility is to keep this rhythm under the control of one's own will. By doing this one preserves one's tranquility in the midst of life's greatest turmoil.

TASAWWUF: Sufi mysticism is in one respect scientific. There is a certain order which is maintained both in the fulfillment of disciplines and practices and in sustaining the proper relation between all forms of esotericism and the spiritual growth of devotees. Sufis therefore encourage many kinds of meditation which is not necessarily part of their tradition but which has the same end in view—the fulfillment of man's purpose in life.

We can name practices such as Nimaz, Dowa, Darood, Fikr, and others which are established on what has been called cyclic law. This same cyclic law is also behind the harmonies of the Universe as is explained in *The Mysticism of Sound* and elsewhere. The first chapter of this work also explains in another manner the relation between ultimate silence and the worlds of manifestation.

GATHA: In the terms of Vedanta, life is likened to the sea, where there is a continual rising and falling of the waves. Every man by nature seeks peace and in peace alone is his satisfaction. But often he seeks it wrongly, therefore instead of producing peace he creates more struggle in life.

TASAWWUF: We again see from another point of view that the innermost life brings peace. It is

only as we come to the outer life that there is conflict. There are two kinds of conflict; one is due to the nufs bringing a false sense of differentiation; the other is due to a sort of struggle in each one of us as if between Joy and Peace.

According to the Dharmic teachings, every personal act brings a result which we may regard as good or bad. This is the way karma operates. In the ultimate sense, as the Bible teaches, and which is generally affirmed in all spiritual teachings, the ultimate is good. Evil can only arise when there are divisions either between personality and personality or because of a struggle going on within. When we understand the nature of struggle we have before us the means of overcoming; if we do not understand we cannot overcome.

GATHA: The secret of peace is in the will-power. Instead of resisting the forces which jar and disturb one's life, if one would only stand firm against them, then one can attain to that tranquility which is most necessary to have a greater insight into life.

TASAWWUF: In Zen Buddhism, especially as transmitted in the Linchi-Rinzai School, the will-power is to be used. The will-power can be trained to stand like a wall against all thought—teaching of Roshi Shaku Soyen. When the will-power is exerted to stand against all thought tranquility may be achieved.

Many people think they are striving for peace. This is illusory. The very struggle, the very sense of struggle, divides the personality. As we relax, as we refine the breath, as we keep the consciousness on spiritual practices, we go deeper and deeper toward that which is the source of both peace and power within. Thus, peace is not different from power and power is not different from peace. This perhaps is one of the reasons why sun worship has persisted because in and from the sun people have derived both peace and power. This of course is only the outer phase of it.

The devotee can find this out only if he persists in his devotions.

GATHA: Man is made of atoms gathered around the intelligence, physical atoms and mental atoms which make his body and mind.

TASAWWUF: This lesson is presented in the Gathas. It also appears in many different ways in the literature. It is also found to be true when the intelligence awakens. In this sense, Kashf comes from the awakened intelligence; the awakened intelligence is Kashf. It lifts the veils, it pierces the darkness, the darkness of ignorance, turmoil, greed, and dis-satisfaction.

GATHA: The power which has gathered them and which controls them and which uses them for their best purpose is the will-power. When this power is absent the body and mind both go to pieces, broken by every jarring effect coming from whatever direction.

TASAWWUF: Disciples are trained, even in their first year after Bayat, in the elements of esoteric

sciences (Ryazat, etc.). They are not necessarily shown how or why. If they are shown how and why it benefits the intellect; it does not awaken the spirit. The purpose of the spiritual life is to awaken the spirit. This can be done by certain methods. Thus the symbols which are offered can be used in concentration and therefrom one may learn to use and benefit from his inner abilities. He is not necessarily taught this; he learns this. By learning it his whole being is sometimes awakened. So it is not entirely beneficial to regard the early training as just elementary. It can be availed. The awakening experience may come at any time by the Divine Grace. Still man benefits most if he strives as if it were his own striving that brought the result.

Such practices as meditation, rhythmic breathing, concentration on points, and Darood (Toward the One), help semanticize—that is to say, bring into operation—that which is offered by words, words which themselves are not the operations. This is a delusion of humankind to take the words as realities, and all words not from a Divine source are mental, not spiritual, operations.

The term Buddhi in Sanskrit indicates that the mind may still operate after the inner faculties are aroused.

GATHA: This is the reason hidden under most of the illnesses and weaknesses; every mistake, failure, and every disappointment in life has this reason behind it: the lack of control, the lack of steadiness and strength against the disturbing influences which come from within and without.

TASAWWUF: We have many aspects of the Sufi teachings. Thus the search for the restoration of proper health. Jesus Christ did emphasize healing, but through the years it has been given a minor place. Even with the rise of sciences and civilization, virulent diseases persist. If they are controlled by certain methods, sometimes this leads only to the manifestation of other diseases. This will always be until man comes to at-one-ment with his inner being.

We can look beyond this into both the sciences and occultism, and find innumerable factors and innumerable difficulties. These may be controlled rationally, but the rational control itself can only become efficient when the will power is strong, and the will power can only become strong when man overcomes his own weaknesses, be it by esoteric or exoteric means.

There is no difference therefore in the building up of calmness and the building up of strength. The Japanese and especially the Chinese have many arts and sciences based on this principle. One of the best is tai chi. Tai chi has the advantage not only of being a science and art of calmness and strength, but of being a knowledge which has not arisen in the technological Western world. More and more western people are beginning to realize this. But the best realization will be that of uncovering the basic principle that wisdom is neither of the East or the West, as Qur'an teaches.

GATHA: The great lesson which one learns, which helps most in keeping that tranquility in life which helps insight, is to be able to become like ebb and flow: when the first is needed then to become ebb, when the next thing is needed then to make oneself in that way; when it is necessary to express then to express, when it is necessary to respond, then to respond, at will. In this manner

one will always manage to preserve tranquility in life.

TASAWWUF: The first thing to learn is this philosophy. But this philosophy cannot be perfected until it is practiced. And how does one practice philosophy? One practices philosophy by becoming the philosophy until it is no longer philosophy but practice.

In the Inner School, one learns to become what one does. One can become both a subject and object of concentration. One can become the ebb and flow most easily when one's full consciousness and will power unite with every inhalation and exhalation. The ebb and flow become the realities. One may assimilate the virtues, the Divine faculties, and even the Universal powers, along with every inhalation and exhalation, along with every prayer, with every devotion, with every activity in life.

Fikr is a marvelous practice which prepares one for self-mastery. Fikr emphasizes the God-reality, and by so emphasizing the God-reality, the nufs recedes. When the nufs recedes the obstacles to perfection are removed. When heart-impressions are used the mind takes a secondary place. This seeming subservience of the mind strengthens, it does not weaken it. Just like an army may become greater when it has a greater commander.

The difference between God as commander and an earthly General, is that all operations in and with God bring love and wisdom and so lead to perfection, to peace and power together.