

Githa with Commentary
Sadhana: The Path of Attainment
Series I
of
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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.

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 1

GITHA: We live by the hope of attainment—without this one cannot exist—be it spiritual or material, of a selfish or of an unselfish one.

TASAWWUF: Life or existence is something much greater than the individual, but in order that life be made manifest, in order that it become conscious of itself, the congealing power of the universe which the Sufis call **Kasb**, gave rise to the nufs, the nucleus or center of attraction. By this means bodies were formed out of the so-called individual soul in which and through which it was possible for the soul to express itself. Soul can exist without bodies, but it cannot express itself particularly—that is, it cannot particularize itself unless in and through a vehicle of which the three principal ones are heart, mind, and body.

The nature of life is such that it gives rise to the movements of expansion and contraction, materialization or condensing, and spiritualization or rarefaction, and so passes in waves from the rarest condition to the hardest and coarsest and then back again to its source. This is the path of every soul, which is nothing but a stream or ray of the universal life passing into form and then transcending form on its way home, so to speak.

What is meant by “we” is the human race or kingdom, for in humanity life may keep its contact with its source even when enveloped in form, and also there can be a stream of consciousness which is all pervading, which can grasp at the same time the most material possessions and the spiritual potentialities and realities.

Life may therefore be regarded as a movement which should go in a certain direction and then in an opposite direction, giving rise to what are called involution and evolution. As life is moving constantly, the form which it occupies tends to seek out things or conditions and this tendency forms the desire nature in man, which belongs to the nufs in a certain sense and which gives rise to good and evil but which is not itself necessarily either good or evil. For without something akin to the desire nature there would be stagnation—in other words death, the opposite of life.

GITHA: It is not necessary that all should have one and the same object for their attainment nor is it possible. It is, however, desirable that we should hold in our thought the best and highest attainment possible for us.

TASAWWUF: By object is meant a particular, whether one means a particular desire, a particular love, a particular material or non-material thing, whatever is a unification. That is, the way through

life can best be followed when it is “toward the one,” whatever that one be. At the same time, according to the object of our desire or longing, according to the thing hoped for, we not only draw to ourselves the good or evil inherent in it, we even acquire certain qualities and characteristics.

That is the reason for certain kinds of concentrations, whether the subject or object of concentration be a symbol, a material object, an idea, a concept, an imagining, or spiritual attainment. The concentration of effort collects the will-power so to speak, and by this means enables one to secure the object of longing.

GITHA: It is not necessary for us to force ourselves to have a much higher object of attainment, which we are incapable of holding.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, will-power is increased by collecting it rather than by forcing it. One can put every effort in the thought, but if the thought is not unified, if it strays, if it wanders from subject to subject, then there is waste, there is loss and mental fatigue will result without the attainment. On the other hand, very often relaxation and trust in the higher power will assist one greatly in winning the object of attainment, no matter what the plane of the object, nor the purpose of the desire.

GITHA: The object, however, must surely be high, but within the possibility of our reach.

TASAWWUF: Great caution is required by the talib lest he select some object of concentration in his everyday life of such a nature that he be unable to control all paths to it. By all paths means first, that he will not be satisfied with his mental effort alone, but will add to the inner endeavors some action in order to draw the object toward himself or himself toward the object. In the deeper knowledge which comes to one through the practice of spiritual concentration one discovers that the mental atoms and vibrations can be controlled and directed by the spiritual vibrations and that in their turn the mental movements control the physical world. Thus, as the will has been accomplished in heaven, so it will be upon earth; this is not only true with regards to God, it is also true of man who was created in God's image.

Now as there may be some question as to what is within one's reach, this can be determined partly by meditating before concentrating upon the object of attainment. If during both the meditation and concentration there is inner relaxation, there is no forced effort, one can be pretty sure that he will be able to gain his attainment. But if he feels pain or struggle within, his insight should tell him at once that he is not yet ready for that attainment, he has not yet secured all the doors and avenues of approach, he must first be able to secure something simpler.

GITHA: We must not select our object of attainment by noticing that others have the same aim and are in pursuit of the same object; but we must feel and realize that our heart yearns for it.

TASAWWUF: The key to success in Sadhana is in the realization that the heart yearns for it. If there is a selfish desire, it does not necessarily mean that the desire must be laid aside as such, for

the yearning of the heart may manifest as material desire to those who have not realized that essence of beauty and love but can appreciate beauty and love when veiled in matter, or in thought.

For practical purposes the number of objects is infinite, so our work does not have to depend upon any fact or condition such as competing with another, or cooperating with him or doing a similar task. None of these is fundamentally necessary, nor, on the other hand, need we avoid them.

These are conditions of the external world, and do not always have to be related to the true path of attainment.

Now if the heart really yearns for something it can be determined quickly in meditation, for then the inner being will feel relaxed. Not that one necessarily “meditates” upon things—one does not meditate – concerning things, one concentrates for them; but one may seek God’s will in meditation, one may ask a question and receive an answer, and if one feels the spirit of either peace or joy because of the meditation, then the concentration may be profitable. But if the devotee is in any way uneasy, that is the sign of an adverse intuition, that his insight is warning him not to seek that attainment.

GITHA: It is not necessary that we should kill our desire for lack of the presence of the object we desire, but it is wise always to realize the value of the object and its real nature.

TASAWWUF: The principle of Nirvana—if such a term can be used—is often explained as meaning the termination of desire. Rather does it mean the termination of self in desire. If you study Buddhism you will see that the Buddha denied the existence of the soul, and one interpretation of this is that he denied the eternity of nufs, or ego. This is an accommodation for certain purposes.

When the desire nature is restricted to certain operations, when it does not progress but is employed to increase the store of accumulations of a certain nature, whether it be gold or hoarded wealth of any kind, or possessions or property, or power or position or a certain type of knowledge or mental acquisition or personal peculiarities or even genius, then there is no progress from stage to stage, there is no evolution.

It is for this reason that the rich do not enter the kingdom of heaven. It is not that the doors of the kingdom are barred to the wealthy, that the rich cannot attain heaven or that God plays favorites – it is that their concentrations having reached a certain point, operating on a certain plane which is generally a branch of the material plane, their power being centered upon the earth, it cannot be focused upon heaven. And this is a principle in psychic law which is not very different from the principles in mechanics and the operation of forces such as gravitation.

Now spiritual poverty or **Fakr** consists, not in the abandonment of material possessions, but in the abandonment of **attachment** to those possessions. Where the heart remains, there the concentration will be, and there treasure will be accumulated, no matter what be its nature. But the spiritual person, the Sufi, does not set his heart forever upon particular acquirements, he does all

he can to progress here and now and so he endeavors to raise the plane of his efforts, to make the object of attainment something that will be of benefit to him, and in this his very choice will become a help to him in his life, instead of being a stumbling block.

GITHA: Things that pass from one hand to the other are but changing things, and be sure that when you gain a thing from another you may have to pass it on to another also when the time comes, willingly or unwillingly. Therefore be always in search of things that will endure, that will last long, and adopt ways of attaining them by right and just means.

TASAWWUF: As Jesus Christ has taught, it is wise to accumulate treasure in heaven where moth and dust and decay do not set in. At the same time one must explain voluntary poverty from the Sufi point of view: There are two kinds of poor people, those who have been unable to attain wealth, and those who have abandoned wealth either after attainment or who have abandoned the search in order to secure something higher. But it must not be supposed that the sage is unable to become rich; the sage whose heart is fixed upon God has command over a multitude of things, and he can acquire wealth if necessary. Akbar, the great Mogul Emperor, was both a great sage and a very wealthy man in the material sense. But he also treasured upon wealth in heaven, and as great as his earthly accumulations, they were as nothing compared to his store of goods in the unseen.

No one is a master who abandons what he is unable to control. This is nothing but weakness. It is wise to know how to attain wealth, but it is often unwise to use one's powers to do that. It is just as if, owning an automobile, a motor car, one would cease to walk; either the legs must be used or great suffering may follow, not only for the individual but for the race if mechanical evolution should produce biological deterioration. But if one leads a natural life in the midst of material advantages, he is truly a **fakr**. So the Sufi has to learn the law of accumulation, of the path of attainment or Sadhana before he can become a true fakr or a sage.

And for him the acquisition of spiritual virtues which are permanent is always regarded as more valuable than anything else because this wealth he can take with him always; it may become his possession and remain with him long after he has passed through the portals into the unseen.

GITHA: It is far better to renounce a thing which can only be procured through the sacrifice of right and justice than to go in pursuit of things which will bring in the end disappointment and disaster, as they are the natural results of the lack of right and justice.

TASAWWUF: In the path of attainment it is always true that a law of justice and compensation holds which one may call karma. In a certain sense there is no such thing as my **karma**, but rather, if one does not observe the principles of righteousness he becomes subject to karma in the same way that a criminal, breaking a law, is subject to punishment, but the exact form of the punishment does not always depend upon the enormity of the crime. Rather is this determined by the laws and customs of the land, so that in different places and in different eras the same crime may be punished (or left unpunished) according to the ideas of that time.

Now the sinner, if one may use that term, is different from the criminal who breaks man's laws in that the sinner does not observe universal laws. Nevertheless his punishment is not always the same so that we see in life a variety of experiences and the appearance that some persons are more or less lucky. This is an illusion.

However, the wise course is to avoid any kind of karmic retribution by not only maintaining the moral law, but by selecting an even higher standard, and it sometimes happens that even the noble moral standard one selects is helpful in the fulfillment of the purpose of life, especially in the path of attainment. Certainly when one has no cause to fear God, how much less any reason for fearing man!

GITHA: Your object of attainment should be decided and settled in your mind and there should be no change.

TASAWWUF: The first step is that one must feel and realize that the heart yearns for the object of attainment and then, this having been decided and settled there should be no change. This is the general technique for all forms of concentration, but with this exception, that in the path of Sadhana the final success depends upon some act or some acquisition upon the material plane, otherwise it cannot be an "object of attainment."

GITHA: Any difficulty in obtaining it must not frighten you.

TASAWWUF: Practice of Fikr during one's periods of silence, and repetition of Darood during the active hours are very helpful in this regard. This is a real form of self-surrender for one is performing as if God were the only being, and by identifying his victory with God's victory it becomes possible to overcome the weakness in oneself which is always the greatest obstacle to attainment.

GITHA: With patience, faith, and trust you must pursue your object.

TASAWWUF: By patience one becomes enabled to withstand those difficulties caused by time. Some time usually must elapse before the heart is settled with regard to the object of attainment, more time is needed for the mind and still more in order to accomplish what is necessary in action upon the earth plane. When there is tension, it is more difficult to draw the object toward one, while when the personality is relaxed, it becomes much easier to attain one's desire. One reason for this is that the tenseness is the sign of the ego, the nafs, which has no control over spiritual attainment. Relaxation shows a loosening of nafs and this is called patience, which enables one to master all things and all conditions.

Faith and trust prove to one that the universe is filled with intelligence and they convey one's desires to God and also bring light to one from Him, which can lighten the path to attainment. Along with this they bring the sense of assuredness which, by a kind of suggestion, sets the material plane into operation in such a way as to bring the desired object of attainment nearer to oneself.

The same holds true also in a somewhat similar manner on the mental plane. So these principles are of great value.

GITHA: Do not for one moment think how small you are before your object of attainment, or how incapable you are of achieving it, or how long it must take to reach it, or where or how the means can be provided to get it.

TASAWWUF: The greatest mistake in this is in paying attention to the self. So soon as this is done, the mind is divided in its attention, some of it being concentrated upon the thing to be attained, some energy being devoted toward the self and this division in the thought-world produces a chain of duality which thwarts material success. This holds true whether one is a boaster or consciously humble; either of these states is detrimental.

Neither should one consider the time required, for this also produces a division in the mind, and still less should one pay any attention as to the manner in which one may receive the object of attainment. For by identifying one's desires with God's desires, one opens up all roads and it often happens that one acquires what one wants in a quite different manner from what may have been presupposed. Besides, trusting in God does not mean only that one feels God will help one; it means that one feels sure that God has the Wisdom to bring one his satisfaction by the best and easiest manner, which knowledge is often hidden from men.

GITHA: Before you think of all these things, think of one thing: "The object is there and it belongs to me; it is my birthright, it is my natural right, it is my divine right that it should be mine."

TASAWWUF: The object is there because if it did not exist my mind could not think of it; else it is true that by my mind concentrating upon it, there is a creative power of mind which will produce the thing. Whichever one of these is true, by pursuing this line of reasoning and action, one helps draw the thing toward oneself.

When one says that a thing is one's birthright, he begins a chain of concentration which so identifies it with him that by a kind of attraction the thing is acquired. Most of this no doubt takes place upon the mental plane, but once an accommodation has been made there, it is often a simple matter to attain material success in this regard.

And when one holds that the thing is a natural right, a divine right, all the forces of the universe will come forth to aid in the attainment. For there is a form of spiritual suggestion which can so be applied, and transmitted on cosmic vibrations, that forms and forces in the material world become as one's servants. This is not only true of the experience of the sage, it is a principle used by the Sufi's in their methods of healing and in other matters.

GITHA: Then turn to other things; think of things which will help you to procure it. If the reins, or the rope of hope is let loose or loosened, then no effort will be of any use.

TASAWWUF: Hope does not mean abandonment of action, nor does pursuit of action always mean that one will through his particular action acquire his desire. Through hope one feels that God is satisfied with one's deed and that God will help. By action one proves his sincerity and it often follows that his particular work will result in the attainment. But from another point of view, it is like taking God into partnership and when God sees man pursuing his course on the material plane, He often helps him as much on the material plane as in the inner planes.

GITHA: If patience fail you, then there is no sustenance.

TASAWWUF: For this not only breaks the time-process, it interferes in the interaction between the mental and spiritual world. Patience and meditation prevent any sort of agitation which would sooner or later interfere with any process of life. By becoming calm, one pacifies the sea upon which the ship of hope is sailing and this brings the vessel into port sooner.

GITHA: If your mind changes, then your self is the cause of your failure. When you want a rose and after attaining the rose you wish you had chosen a jasmine, after attaining the jasmine you cry: "Oh, why did I choose this flower? Why not the other?" ... and when they are both before you, you have lost the power to choose either the one or the other.

TASAWWUF: Changing the mind is evidence of lack of unity within, and absence of surety of purpose. When that is so, any effort will be wasteful. It is better to do nothing than to take such false steps, because not only will failure result, but one will lose faith or condemn the process or place blame where blame does not belong and so put still a further obstacle in his path. For success leads to success while failure can only point to further failure. It is by maintaining right relationships to God, or putting it another way, making the without depend upon the within, that one can learn to avoid the pitfalls and snares of life.

GITHA: When your object is or seems to be in a mist, do not cover yourself with clouds because your object seems far off. If you do, everything will become dark before you; but if you keep your light clear, then the ray shooting from your own soul will in time clear the mist.

TASAWWUF: A mist is often due to a lack of clarity. When this is the condition of mind it is sometimes wise to discontinue concentration and to practice Fikr. Fikr is an exercise which purifies the mind and brings the spiritual light to it. When one is confused by the affairs of the world and most especially when one is drawn into the maelstrom of one's ill fortune and particularly when one has self-pity, there is assuredly mist in the mind. That is not the time for concentration, but it is good for Fikr and some meditation.

Not only Fikr but many spiritual practices bring light and power to the mind. Sometimes in the few moments after performing Zikr one is so filled with light and power that one can accomplish a great deal more than at other times, and besides that, one who performs Fikr regularly begins to acquire power over both mind and matter and this is very valuable in the spiritual life.

GITHA: But if you yourself are in confusion whether to have this object or that object or no object, then there is no hope for you.

TASAWWUF: Mystically this is a sign of the etheric element. The etheric element often comes as a mist. This does not mean that it interferes with one's spiritual evolution, but in so far as attainment is concerned, things themselves being mixtures of earth, air, fire, and water in a mystical sense, there must be light as well as shadow and without light there can be no form. So by setting oneself in the right relation to God and attaining the right attitude toward the universe one is then able to put into practice those principles and forces which result in the acquisition of what one longs for.

GITHA: For you must ever bear in mind that the light and life that goes out from you to the object are quite as important as that light that comes to you from the object.

TASAWWUF: If anything, they are even more important. Now, how to increase this light? This is done by two measures, one of which may be called purification which is acquired by prayer, meditation, Zikr, Fikr, and other practices; and the other is Murakkabah by which one becomes a spiritual unity and fixes his center of consciousness in the heart, seeing that every thought is in harmony with feeling and all action is dependent upon thought. This makes him, so to speak, a little universe and to that universe he can draw the object of attainment by a spiritual gravity.

Now as to the light which comes from the object, that is important in so far as it is divine light. But in this we have the light of Purusha, the divine energy which becomes the personality, and Prakriti, the divine energy in nature which gives rise to form; the light of the former is greater although they are mutually interdependent when all is considered.

GITHA: Therein lies the great mystery of the trinity in all things: the knower, the thing to be known, and the power or light or knowledge which connects them.

TASAWWUF: All these are aspects of God. God is the knower, God is the known, and God is the nexus between, the means of knowing. When one glimpses this, that nothing is apart from God, if it be God's Will, one can therefore acquire the object of attainment no matter what that be.

GITHA: If the way seems closed, it will be opened. If the means are lacking, they will be given, they will be attained. If the object is far off and beyond your reach, it will be drawn to you, if only you can hold fast to the rein, the rope of hope, with complete faith and trust in God, the Giver of all things, the possessor of all things.

TASAWWUF: The people known as Christian Scientists and New Thoughtists have made particular use of this principle, and therefore Sufis, who have within their reach greater spiritual faculties, should not be behind these folks in observing the manner of God. He does not wish anybody to be without his need. And in the Christian Prayer, Jesus asked for the daily bread, which means that he asked God to supply to man what God in His Wisdom considered best for man.

Now the Sufi in his prayer says: “Pour upon us Thy Love and Thy Light; give sustenance to our bodies, hearts, and souls.” Assuredly this does not mean that we should neglect ourselves and even less does it mean that God will neglect us. Therefore in the moment of our need we may always call upon God.

Now, what is the means by which one can attain what one considers his need? It is best to identify the need with God’s need, but this does not mean that God is going to refuse. If there is any doubt, one should practice meditation, and that will awaken the intuition so that one can determine whether or not the heart be right. If there is still a mist, Fikr will often clarify the mind and after that concentration can be tried.

And what is this concentration? Is it different from that given in the lessons? It is not different and it is different. It is not different in that thought should be dependent upon feeling and the breath should be regulated through Yoga. It is different because the concentration does not stop at the mental plane. One does not complete it by having a particular vision or dream or inner experience—one completes it only after a material event, sometimes after many acts and events.

Is it less important than concentration? No, it is not less important, but rather is it the consummation of concentration as well as of other practices. Metaphysically it has two purposes: to show that the Divine Power is upon earth as well as in the unseen; to enable man to live his life properly and to attain God-realization through successful outer effort. For in that manner he need not be disturbed by social or economic or personal problems; he has within himself the keys to all solutions and to all victories.

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

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 2

GITHA: Concentration is the chief means of attainment. Concentration does not mean sitting and thinking of a certain thing, it means holding a certain idea or object in the mind at all times.

TASAWWUF: The exercises in Murakkabah have the same relation to the practical application of concentration in everyday life as physical exercise has to physical work. We know that athletics and gymnastics give the body a training which enables it to perform its work better and they lessen the possibility of fatigue. In the same way there are exercises and practices for the mind and heart

which make it possible for them to experience the ordinary life and withstand the many demands and difficulties which it is necessary for most persons to face.

Jesus Christ has said: "If thine eye be single thy body shall be full of light." This is certainly true of the mind. If the thoughts can be centered around one ideal, one pattern, one purpose, the light of all the atoms and vibrations collects and inasmuch as these atoms and vibrations are intelligent, they bring, so to speak, that wisdom which is necessary to gain the desired result. So concentration can become prayer with purpose, and by means of it man can rise from the animal stage to a state much higher than the angelic condition.

GITHA: The result of concentration depends upon how much one loves the object of attainment.

TASAWWUF: This is to say, how much one will sacrifice oneself for it. This means, the heart feels the need for the attainment and its feeling is fixed upon it; then the mind directs the thoughts so that mental energy is directed toward the acquisition of the object. This is done by will-power which is spiritual power.

GITHA: However great a person may be in holding the thought firmly in mind, he cannot bring about as great results as a person who loves the object he holds in concentration. Love is all-powerful, and it naturally gives power in one's concentration, be it for a person, for wealth, for position, for knowledge, or for God.

TASAWWUF: If the love is great, one will feel union in the heart for the thing. This is sometimes called **Outer Samadhi**, which is a sort of outer union or unification, and this being one with the beloved is of exceedingly great importance.

First, to consider love for a person. From the spiritual point of view this means that the hearts are one. If a Sufi or a mureed on the spiritual path wishes to gain or hold love, it is necessary to be able to feel a union in the heart. Now, the question arises whether that love be right or wrong, and here is where wisdom is manifest. For there is no such thing as "wrong love," but if there is passion or desire or lust, it will either be impossible to attain that unification in the heart or else the very spiritual practices will transmute the passion or base desire or lust into a higher love. This is spiritual transmutation, which is a very wonderful process, and by this means it is possible to receive help from God. That is to say, by seeking in the heart, there will be either love or disgust, the one arising from union, the other from disunion, and even the so-called moral considerations will be swallowed up in the spiritual solution of the problem.

Next, to consider wealth, which here means the acquisition of material possessions. From the spiritual standpoint it is not wrong to own or acquire wealth, but it is certainly wrong to succumb to the temptations of wealth, for then one serves Mammon and not God. At the same time God gave the earth to man to possess and enjoy, and the question arises, is there any means by which a spiritual person, a good person, can gain a sufficiency or even an over-abundance of material wealth.

Now this point has been demonstrated to some extent by the Christian Scientists and others and it is well to observe their methods. The first important point is putting God first; if God is placed first there is the right orientation. The next is securing unification of heart and mind. But inasmuch as the material things belong to the non-self, that is, Prakriti, it does not always occur that there is an outer Samadhi. In this case confirmation of success may come in dream or vision, or it may result directly from one's devoted concentrations. However in these various manners one often finds it possible to control the material world through the mind, demonstrating the power of mind over matter.

If at this point it be asked, "Are such processes good?" it is to be answered by and for the Sufi rather, "Are such processes wise?" and while anything may be called "good," if there is a feeling of unity then the action is wise, for wisdom and unity are one.

Next comes the consideration of power or position. At first hand this looks selfish, but it is even more unwise to be satisfied with one's place in life if there is no room for increased scope of faculties. We either live for the self or we live for God. Yet it is also true that selfish ambition urges man on to grasp for power, often even by immoral means. The reply to this again is that if one's outer life becomes dependent upon one's insight, one will find guidance and direction from within which often urges one on to attain something better. This is especially true in the case of those who are the servants of God in any capacity. Through their surrender to God they learn what their duties are in daily life and by performing the same general spiritual exercises they can rise to higher and higher positions in the social, commercial, or artistic worlds.

Now coming to the question of the attainment of knowledge. This is of at least two kinds: that is to say, knowledge of the past and foresight. Knowledge of the past may come from books or it may be delved out of the memory, while in gazing into the future man cannot depend so much upon man, whether himself or another. The advantage of spiritual training in approaching books can be perceived in the actions of an intelligent Sufi. It is not true that he should not read, only he does not read for the sake of acquiring wisdom. If he wants knowledge of this world he can best acquire it in and from this world.

For instance, he wants to learn something about electricity from man's standpoint. In his wisdom he may already know more about the subject but it would be unwise for him to reveal his transcendental lore to everybody. So he may seek books and in this his psychic and intuitive faculties will be helpful in bringing him to the right books. Or he may be very advanced, able to read knowledge from somebody's mind, either directly or through listening to conversation and observing attitudes, and again, it is by first attaining that feeling of unity in the heart that this is possible.

Then comes the problem of seeking forgotten experiences from one's memory. All through the material life the mental body is being built in some fashion. It is unwise to be concentrating attention upon oneself, but if one needs to recall some experiences or to regain some information one has had, this is best done through meditation and concentration, and by removing the

outbursts of the nufs one can often have a memory which is not exactly a memory and yet is much better than a memory. This is mastery over the mental atoms, and by accomplishing this first in oneself, one can in time become a full master.

But if one wishes or needs to gaze into the future, then it is even more necessary to be able to enter into an inner hal or condition whereby one transcends time and space to some extent. If mental mastery is attained, and especially when the intuitive faculty has become alert, it is possible to sit quietly or become very quiet and feel the directions of the cosmic currents. By this means one can often tell what is going to happen, either to oneself or to another or to the world. It is not always advisable to practice this, to be caught in this state, but it is still more unwise to refuse to enter into it, for often that impedes further progress.

Finally, one comes to the attainment of God-consciousness, which includes all these other forms and styles of Sadhana and yet transcends them. The technique is not essentially different but the need of being one-pointed is still greater. In this instance it is sometimes requisite that one practice meditation and Yoga more in order to become absorbed, so to speak, in the inner state. While God is without as well as within, through the eyes we can only see the form of God, through the mind the thought of God, and through the heart the nature and personality of God. Consequently, it is this last step which is the most important in life, which is the goal for all the other goals.

GITHA: Whatever one loves one gets—small things or great things.

TASAWWUF: Here we have the basic principle, if so it can be called, of Sadhana. Love is the cause of attraction and repulsion, which operates through the will with its choices and its rejections. That is to say, love is the selective power and if we were considering the soul on its journey toward the earth, it would not be wrong to say that while in the angelic sphere, the sphere of love, everything is predetermined or determined by the activity of love. This appears as a tuning of the heart and it is sometimes called a tuning.

Man has been created higher than the angels, although lower than Elohim, which is to say that he is made to act in accordance with divine law. God, in all His works, began in love and then proceeded to thought and finally ended in action. If there is anything basic in Sadhana it is this same process of passing from love through thought to action. By it one can attract (a) whatever one loves, (b) small things, (c) great things. This means, through the spiritual application of love in life one can gain friends or ideas, inspirations or ideals, as well as the little or the great things of life.

GITHA: It is better to get a small thing than nothing, because it thus gives a mastery.

TASAWWUF: There are conditions to be overcome in the attainment of small things. First and foremost one must see that his own thoughts and particularly his own weaknesses do not interfere. The chief weakness is divided thought. A criminal desiring to open a safe or a band of robbers wishing to steal money from a bank often succeed because they are one-pointed; on the other

hand many times a good person fails, his thought is not directed with energy and love, he is a nice person with good intentions, but he stands in his own light.

Therefore a talib is first instructed how to attain little things through concentration or Fikr or Zikr or in other manners. The thought is very powerful after Fikr and the ability to transfer that thought into power is particularly potent after Zikr. Many people have experienced to some extent to stimulation of music, and this reaches its highest development in the spiritual music of Zikr, which often enables the Zakirs to perform what the world may regard as miracles, but which are nothing more or less than applications of the law.

It is not until one has assured himself of success that he should proceed to something greater for in all this it is the ego which offers the greatest hindrance. First it is wise to know exactly what one is doing. After he has learned to walk it is not so hard to run, or to traverse long distances.

GITHA: In every gain through life a person takes a step forward. Every object has a separate path for its achievement, but in the end all must come to the same goal.

TASAWWUF: The concentration upon any object or goal requires man to unify his processes and this becomes very important, especially in procuring health for the mind. Health for the mind means being one-pointed. But it may be objected that certain insane persons spend all their time and energy in discussing one subject. From the spiritual point of view this is not insanity but obsession, monomania, and most types of manias are obsessions, although they are often self-obsessions. There is not necessarily destruction of either physical or mental tissue and the body and the mind remain connected if not coordinated.

But the sage is able to maintain this unity of purpose, this clarity and coherence of mind and also to change his thoughts so that he is master of thought, whereas the obsessed person is the slave of thought. These thoughts can be like the ladder of Jacob reaching from earth to heaven. It is through the practical application of the unity principle that one can travel from stage to stage, "toward the One," and also see the fulfillment of his desires.

GITHA: Do not, therefore, look with contempt upon someone if he is in pursuit of something that you consider inferior to your ideal. Know rather that it is his path, though perhaps not yours.

TASAWWUF: In this, paying attention to another is distraction of mind. It is the type of thought which is always likely to become a hindrance. If one is enjoying the flowers in the garden it is not necessary for the senses to be attracted by the call of the fish peddler, but if the fish peddler in passing, notices the flowers and does not hear the responses to his cries, he will not make much of a success out of his trade. It is necessary for each to pay particular attention to his own goal in the path of Sadhana. This does not inhibit or prohibit the offering of advice, but it is the ability to concentrate and attract which gives strength and power to the mind, assisting it not only in the present life, but also preparing it for its work in the world to come.

GITHA: Mostly by the continual change of the object and by indecision in regard to an object, one produces weakness, which will produce inferior results.

TASAWWUF: One reason for the practice of meditation before advancing far in concentration is to learn a little of the nature of the heart. When the heart is fixed upon something, then it becomes man's duty to keep his thoughts concentrated upon it. It is this fixation of heart which forms an ideal in the mental world, which has sometimes been called a "Platonic idea" or "Platonic type"; by following this step by a strong concentration upon this mental accommodation, one gradually begins to attract the physical atoms, and so in time to draw to oneself the object of his desire. This process is used with many variations by occultists, magicians, masters, sages, and mystics.

GITHA: It is often better to accomplish a certain thing by external means, if it can be so accomplished, than by a forced mental effort, which should however be used when it is necessary.

TASAWWUF: On the one hand one should avoid mental or physical laziness. It is not right to pray to God when one can accomplish something of his own effort. Prayers are fulfilled through the agency of some instrumentality, often a human being, and if one can train himself to be that human being, that is a great advance in evolution. This does not mean to cease praying, but it means knowing when to pray, meditate, concentrate, or act, each at the proper occasion.

Of course when a thing is beyond one's powers or ability it is correct to pray, but the Sufi offers his prayer of thanks after his success and his prayer of humility before he begins his work. So repetition of Salat before starting an adventure and Saum after its accomplishment, or Khatum first and both Saum and Salat afterwards, are very advantageous.

These prayers are also valuable in keeping the balance between pride and humility, so that one will learn to avoid the two pitfalls of failing to pray for assistance, or of praying for every little material advantage in life, throwing the burden, so to speak, on God's shoulders instead of accomplishing one's own work.

Action with Darood should always be attempted when it is within the range of possibility. This is the world of action and there is no success like successful action.

GITHA: One should look at it with an economical point of view; and if the power of the battery is all exhausted, then one will feel the lack of it. Therefore a mental effort for the accomplishment of small things is an unnecessary outlay of force.

TASAWWUF: Some persons think that mastery consists of sitting in silence and attracting all things and influencing others to perform what one desires. No man has any such right. The Gita says that to man belongs the right of action and the Bible also teaches that the world was made in order that man can express individually what God does cosmically. No doubt there is great power of mind, and still greater power in silences, but what use the material body if it is not used? Man must not suppose that it has no purpose and the Sufis have seldom if ever gone to the far extreme of

ignoring the physical vehicle and its works.

GITHA: In other words, the mind must be allowed to work normally with every action.

TASAWWUF: This normality comes though keeping the breath in rhythm, particularly with a divine thought. The performance of Darood in daily action and of Fikr during one's periods of repose maintain that harmony and balance, which is the essence of true normality. By means of the spiritual practices one can release the necessary energy to accomplish success, and unity can best be demonstrated in the union of feeling, thought, and deed.

GITHA: When a person works mentally and does not act outwardly, this may produce a lack of balance, for action must balance thought and thought balance action. This danger always stands before the mental worker. An object in life, however, must be accomplished, sometimes, even at a cost greater than the value of the object itself when attained, because it is the effort and the success which make one capable and it is failure that drags one to a still greater fall.

TASAWWUF: What is important in life is the attainment of success. What is this success? From the spiritual point of view it is the accumulation of will-power. No messenger of God has ever valued material things because of themselves; there are, however, occasions when the effort exerted in the accumulation of the things of life adds something to the character and ability, and this acquisition is valuable in the life eternal.

Therefore it is proper to seek success. Failure of any kind should be charged up to experience, only there are those experiences which involve loss because of personal weaknesses, and there are experiences which bring losses for the moment, but in the long run these prove to be gains. There are losses because it has been impossible to overcome all the obstacles in one's path, and there are losses which are not losses, but are due either to the fact that man is not performing God's work at the moment, or because there are subtleties hidden in the experience which are not clear to him.

However, the very attitude of loss often leads to further loss while the cultivation of success often brings further success. For that reason it is not the size of the affair or of the object which is important, it is the victory which matters and a victory in small things sooner or later leads to a victory in something greater.

GITHA: Therefore the price one pays or the effort one makes is greater than the object because it opens a further way for future success; and a loss may be a small loss in itself and yet it may be a greater loss in reality. It is for this reason that people who are successful continually succeed, and with failure a person tends toward failure.

TASAWWUF: When this lesson is learned it will help the individual to avoid mistakes, especially those which matter in the spiritual life. It may be a small thing to one to lose a friend or to fail to turn an acquaintance into a friend, yet this may be the thing desired by God, perhaps the cementing of

a bond that sooner or later will help both parties. For that reason it is necessary to control the nufs which places a false value on things. By keeping the heart firmly fixed upon God this sort of difficulty can be avoided.

GITHA: In order to keep the concentration on the right path one must keep the object always before one.

TASAWWUF: If the mind wanders from subject to subject and from interest to interest, it is nearly impossible to set up an accommodation on the mental plane, which would ensure the fixation of the object of attainment there. This would be followed by dreams, visions, or other kinds of guidance which would either foretell success or else suggest methods of action. In order to ensure the unity of mind, it is necessary to have the thought depend upon feeling. If the heart is not in the deed, the chances for success are greatly weakened.

How, then, does one distinguish between the mere pandering to personal and egotistic wishes and passions and pure feeling? It is very easy. Keep the thought in the mind and practice Darood or Fikr—if the breath remains in rhythm, particularly if the breath is of a fine vibration and remains in rhythm, there will be a comfort and ease which will produce satisfaction; but if there is a passion contrary to spiritual endeavor, the repetition of these practices will cause uneasiness and finally bring considerable disturbance.

GITHA: Surroundings, environment, atmosphere, everything helps to bring about the desired attainment. One must not talk much, nor indiscriminately, about one's attainment, for it is a very great waste of power.

TASAWWUF: How do surroundings help? They often help one select the object to be attained. One should not look far away for his goal in life, but should try to succeed with something near at hand. And the same holds true for environment, that one's feeling can tell within a given environment what is proper there, and this helps one in one's efforts toward success.

And how does atmosphere help? Partly by one's atmosphere one draws to one or rejects or repels certain things and certain forces. Continual performance of concentration will sooner or later produce an atmosphere around one which will be like a magnet, drawing whatever the heart or thought desires. This often builds what the world calls a strong personality.

Finally, silence is important for the strength of the personal atmosphere is weakened by the energy lost in speech. Silence strengthens the atmosphere with every breath while speech utilizes some of this power. Silence of itself can become a powerful form of concentration.

GITHA: A person who tells all his friends and everyone whom he meets, "I am going to build up that business," has at the start already a lesser chance of success than the one who thinks and ponders upon the subject and keeps quiet, says nothing to anyone, or at least tells only those whom he thinks may be helpful to him.

TASAWWUF: This is an important psychic law. It has just been said that energy is lost through speech. The power of the concentration appears on the mental plane when the senses are held firm and the lips sealed. So soon as there is speech, there is sound and this transforms some of the energy from the mental plane to the physical plane. If the time is not ripe, there is loss of power because the forces on the material and mental planes are not attuned, which is a very common occurrence. For example, when one is out of breath, there is always a certain break in the connection between body and mind, just after and before sleep, and when one is very fatigued or hungry or just after a heavy meal and at other times, there is a little break.

By maintaining silence one not only strengthens the links between the planes, one finds it easier to receive internal guidance which is always a factor in success and never produces failure. Of all the things in the world that make for success, there is nothing to compare with the intuitive process.

GITHA: One must put aside a certain time of the day or night to devote entirely to the concentration of one's attainment, and by being faithful in this practice one gains his object in the end, and thus he learns the only way of mastery.

TASAWWUF: Through this conscious setting up of rhythm one gradually gains a certain power over oneself. It is thus that man has fixed his hours of sleep and of meals, of work and of pleasure. Many of the simplest social and instinctive customs have risen out of simple rhythms. But the principle is very similar in concentration, which is an effort of mind, and mind, after a time, will become famished for food and the process of concentration will feed it. Then, the mind becoming stronger and stronger, it will force its outer path through to the accomplishment of the desired end, and all this brings mastery and the attainment of the goal. This is true for all purposes of life, be they physical, material, mental, or spiritual, or even of the desire nature, or arising from wickedness. All follow the same general principles.

GITHA: One great moral point must be understood: one must never desire any attainment which blinds a person to what is right and just, and which destroys kindliness in the heart, which is the essence of God in man.

TASAWWUF: The attainment of desire in the wicked way, as of robbers and scoundrels and diabolical persons, will bring the phenomena of success just as well as the Sadhana of the goodly and godly, but each success for them will increase the darkness around the soul, while for other persons it will increase the light. That is to say, while the wicked man does pass from victory to victory, from success to success, he sets against him a karmic action against which his heart is powerless, because it is covered in darkness. And this is the cause of the Moral Law.

The Moral Law is simple—perform good deeds that thy light will shine before men and that they may glorify thy Father which is in heaven. This is the one moral law which matters, working for the cause of God behind all the other efforts of life, big or little. This produces in the end the greatest of successes.

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.

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 3

GITHA: The attitude of mind is the most important thing in attainment.

TASAWWUF: There is no attainment on earth or in heaven unless the mind be receptive. There is a psychic energy which pours out from man's personality and which can attract or repel. For instance speech, especially self-assertion, does not only offend others, or stand as a hindrance to winning friends, it also repels things. There is something in the magnetism of the voice, something in the action of self-assertion which drives forces and things away from one, while silence, and especially silent concentration can aid one to become the possessor of anything.

What is called heaven does not become heaven to man until he understands its laws. When he breaks them, he is not so much a sinner as a fool, just as a person putting his finger into the fire or leaping from a high balcony would injure himself, he is a fool, he does not know the laws of this plane; so every man is to a certain extent a fool when he does not know the laws of mind and one of his purposes in life both on this plane and on the next is to learn these laws. This knowledge is veritably a portion of Sufism.

GITHA: The person who attains success by injustice and oppression and by wronging others will meet with failure when he does right, and the one who achieves success by his goodness, mercy, and right-doing will fail when he changes his method and looks for success by doing wrong. This proves that success, as generally so termed, depends upon the fixed attitude; thus the change of attitude mars it.

TASAWWUF: Success results from harmony with the metaphysical law rather than what we consider the moral law. No doubt there is a moral law and it is sometimes easy to perceive who is obeying and who is disobeying such a law, but the sinners and criminals of this world, according to man's standards, are not always regarded as the worst persons in the unseen. What is known as karma or karmic law is something much broader than moral law, for it brings to each one that destiny which is the fruit of his actions, at least so long as he remains in Nufsaniat. By entering the spiritual path he can rise above even this law.

The success of the criminal, the success of the financier, the success of the inventor, the success

of the artist are no doubt based to some extent upon concentration and one reason for the increase in bank robberies and other high crimes has been the greater education and preparation on the part of the thieves. It is their singleness of mind which brings them their particular success although by so doing they run against both man's law and the moral law of the universe.

One reason why it is difficult for criminals to reform is that all their actions have been for the sake of the ego, which is often fixed in the nufs lawama stage and they cannot easily get out of it. But that is not all; for those in that stage of evolution are not easy to change, and alteration of habit is liable to produce psychic weakness, there being a change in the direction of the currents, making concentration and power of mind hard to attain. However, once the wicked person is able to practice self control he may become even a finer and stronger person than one who has been good all his life.

GITHA: If by thought success is brought to one, one must then continue his method of thinking. If by action it is brought, one must continue action. If both thought and action are used, both must be continued, for it is the attitude which is the most important part in attainment.

TASAWWUF: While attainment is largely the result of concentration, yet it is true that the currents flow toward one during success and one success will always lead to further achievement unless one passes into another sphere of endeavor. According to the Sufi teachings, abandonment of action because there is failure itself leads to further failure, but renunciation of what one has gained makes man the master of gain.

Thus the first step is to be able to be a master and only after that can one become a fakir, who renounces his earthly gains, and then still higher, one may abandon renunciation, in full surrender to God, but this stage, which is beyond the path of Sadhana, can only be reached by going through it. Until man has thoroughly learned the laws of attraction and attainment, until he knows how to achieve success, in other words, until he has taken certain steps toward mastery, he cannot possibly reach the higher stages, although in a certain sense all overlap.

But there is no need for the man of action to cease to be a man of action until his life clearly indicates such a change, and one who has made his mark through mental effort should continue along that line, using his spiritual forces to perfect his mind.

GITHA: Be obstinate in the path of success. Nothing should keep you back from your effort when your resolution is once taken.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual practices, especially Fikr, make it possible for one to achieve even what might seem to be a miracle. It is not necessary to win any certain goal or thing in life, but division between feeling, thought, and action is itself a form of failure. Therefore when the mind is made up, and there is surety, the action and thought should be continued until the end is attained.

GITHA: Renounce your object of attainment only when you have reached it and you have a better

one in view. But when you have attained the object and you cling to it, then you hinder your own progress, for the object is greater than yourself. You are greater than the object when you are able to renounce it after attaining it.

TASAWWUF: There can be no renunciation without attainment first. The Sufi does not necessarily shun the comforts and the beauties of life only he is not attached to them. To be a fakir one does not necessarily have to be a poor person or a wandering mendicant. The secret of the fakir as well as his success is based upon his attitude of mind. There are many stories of Sufis who gained wealth when they needed it and this is possible for every person who has mastered the law. The whole universe is within man, there is nothing which is not within man and by the proper attunement he can bring anything which is in heaven or earth or even in the heaven of heavens. No doubt this constitutes a great portion of the work of mastery, but this mastery is not only for those on the path of the master, it can be part of the spiritual evolution of every person.

There is no progress in negation, in refusing to accept, in being unwilling to accumulate, in making no effort, in repeating denials. The mind does not understand the verbal denial in the sense that we may suppose, and excepting Zikr and Fikr there are no phrases of denial in Sufism which have not attached to them an antithetic phrase of still greater affirmation and even Zikr and Fikr are balanced in their portions of affirmation and denial, and in the various Serbahs of Zikr one retains in the end only the affirmation.

This principle lies at the very roots of the whole process of creation from the divine standpoint. From a certain view God denied Himself, creating a not-self which is still God, but out of which matter was formed in part. Matter is not entirely not-being. There is no such thing as not-being. All thingness has life in it. All things have some life in them. That is why through concentration and endeavor man can attract and gain; even the things which arise out of the mineral kingdom have a certain amount of life and psychic energy in them, and the creations of man have still more, for in whatever he does, he imparts some psychic energy to his work, and a cut diamond therefore has more psychic substance than a rough stone, a chair than a simple hewn log, a hewn log than a tree, etc. Man imparts to everything some of his psychic energy and by concentration he can draw those things most easily which have been energized.

But when we come to the consideration of renunciation, not only is power demonstrated by ability to attract loftier things, to win higher goals, but power is strengthened by the concentration on some ideal or object which is more spiritual or greater in some respect than one's last achievement. So it is in passing from grade to grade that man makes it possible for himself to advance not only on the path of Sadhana but on all the paths of life.

GITHA: There are two kinds of renunciation: renunciation by mastery and renunciation by weakness. When you have picked an apple from the tree and, finding it sour and not best for you to eat, you say, "No, I will not eat it," this is mastery. And when you could not reach the apple and said, "Oh, I would not eat that apple. I am sure it is sour and it is no use bothering myself about it," then that renunciation is through weakness.

TASAWWUF: The Sufis have for the most part not followed the Christian ascetics. The latter thought the spiritual life to be something apart from the physical life, an antithesis, a form of existence in which one removed oneself from temptation and trial. But this was not the teaching of Jesus who said, concerning God, "(Thou) lead us not to temptation." He did not state that man should take it upon himself to flee temptation—this gives God no chance to help man and it gives men no opportunity to prove or test his faith in God. The Sufi, while living in the world, is not necessarily of the world, for he places his reliance upon God, but otherwise does not make his daily life and actions radically different from others.

The idea of unity being something quite different from uniformity, it is not necessary to follow either the ascetic or the common man. These two extremes the Sufi avoids, living in a sort of middle path. This middle path is different from that of the Buddha because the social order of ancient Bharata was of such a nature that the different years of man's existence were theoretically arranged to satisfy all his needs, spiritual, mental, and physical. But according to the Sufic customs, as well as according to the modern point of view, the spiritual and material are not two kinds of worlds far removed from each other. The material can become the spiritual when man makes it so and this is accomplished through mastery.

The renunciation through weakness is not part of Sufism. A talib should not try to gain that which is beyond his reach, and when he fails he should not add to his failure by making any personal comment. He may say, "God's will be done." He does not need to take anything upon himself. God is love and mercy and man may, although he does not always know it, charge his failure to the account of God or of experience and by detaching his nufs, making no kind of comment or renunciation, place himself immediately upon the path of success.

GITHA: But renunciation in the sense of right and justice is better than attainment. When you wish to pick the apple and you renounce that desire by thinking, "I have no right to eat this apple as it belongs to another person's garden, not mine," then you rise to a higher development than in accomplishing your object.

TASAWWUF: When the question is raised, "What is meant by 'right and justice' in the sense of renunciation?" this can be answered by taking the personalities involved in any particular experience. If there is a gain at the expense of another, then it is a true renunciation if the object is abandoned, but if the gain is at the expense of oneself then it is not a situation permitting renunciation; first the object must be obtained.

For instance, this is true in regard to work, one should perform some work in this world, but by work is meant mental or physical activity or both. One may adopt many means for employing mental and physical energy and it is not wrong to make use of machinery which is itself the product of man's ingenuity, in other words, of the genius aspect of man. All this is proper, but slavery is spiritually wrong when the slave-owner becomes dependent upon the slave, when he does not consider himself personally responsible, when he misuses his power for the sake of authority and confuses these, all this produces weakness.

So in every experience in life, if one can determine wherein the nufs is affected, both one's own nufs and the egos of other personalities, it becomes possible to gain spiritually and this is one of the most important functions man has. It is really one of his highest duties.

GITHA: Every step one takes in evolution changes one's ideal.

TASAWWUF: Every step in life is not necessarily a step in evolution, there are many steps which are not steps forward, which bring about changes to the mind or body, but do not substantially alter the ego. Evolution, or what some modern scientists and philosophers call "advolution" adds to the personality in some respects, perfects the body, brings better health to body and mind, enlarges the intellectual horizon and the spiritual outlook.

The world of manifestation is constantly subject to change and while this change takes a certain direction it belongs to cosmic evolution, not to human progress. To partake in the general evolution does not bring any advantage to man inwardly, but his inward development has profound and important reactions both upon himself and the world, because when man advances, there is an increase of Dharma, of spirituality in the world.

GITHA: In your stage if you love a jasmine today, it is possible that in your next step in evolution you may have grown above it and you love a rose. And it is not necessary that you keep to the jasmine when your evolution brings you to the love for the rose—thus one is kept back from progressing.

TASAWWUF: Any kind of attachment prevents evolution, but this does not mean that man must be constantly altering his affairs, moving from place to place, changing his occupation, habits, and friends. This is drift, which adds nothing to his outlook; it is by discovering the purpose of his being in a given situation and attaining to the highest degree possible those objects and ideals which appear before him in the course of life that he merits a change. And there is a Divine Spirit of Guidance, the nature of which is such that it brings to man even more than he seeks, so that as he makes a motion forward, instead of becoming able to take one step, he is often empowered to take a dozen.

So in the path of attainment, while we are apparently learning how each individual may rise from grade to grade, the work of God is more important than the work of the individual, and as he hastens toward God, much more rapidly does God approach him. And this is true in all undertaking, which is one reason why Fikr is assigned; this enables the devotee to achieve his success in whatsoever is nearest at hand.

GITHA: Contentment is a great virtue, but it is a virtue only when you have mastered the thing and risen above it. But if you are contented before you have mastered, then contentment, in that case, is a weakness.

TASAWWUF: This gives one the idea of progress. Contentment is a virtue in so far as it brings

peace to oneself and others; when a person is contented who is not a master, he may attain to a sort of peace, but he can not share it. He may be a tyrant or a wicked man, he may be a boaster or cruel or arbitrary, he may be very unsympathetic although sentimental, he may appear to be good, but it is usually for the sake of his pride, his nufs, wishing to gain the good opinion of others. This contentment is nothing but a state of ego.

But discontent can also be a condition of ego in which one does not bring peace either to oneself or to another, one can be so disruptive, so disharmonious, that his own thoughts will war one with another, his own body will not be happy or healthful, nothing will satisfy him, even the attainment of a desire. He may cry for something and when he attains it he will not be satisfied, he does not know how to be satisfied and he goes about blaming God or life or humanity or other persons, but never himself.

Now there is a reason for these points of view which in their highest aspects belong respectively to what are known as Vishnu and Siva. Vishnu is the preserving power of the universe, without which there could be no stable universe, no harmonies, no contentment or satisfaction or peace or health or happiness. There could be no rules, no laws, not even sanitation or order or well-laid streets and roads or social customs.

And the opposite condition is needed to produce the reformers, the moralists, the social prophets who prevent the world from falling into stagnation, who perceive injustice and tyranny, who have wider outlooks, who know how to remove the poisons from the earth. They also are necessary.

But to attain and renounce these degrees one has to experience both, and this is not always possible for those who do not take up their staffs on the spiritual path. For to be really contented one has to abandon even contentment, and to be a real reformer, a holy prophet, one has to abandon the desire for change in the surrender to God. And how is this surrender achieved? One way is to practice Fikr and whenever there is a thought which is not in harmony with Fikr, one must abandon the thought. And how does one tell if the thought is in harmony with Fikr or not? By watching the breath in Fikr and then watching the breath in the thought; if the breath does not change then the thought is satisfactory to God, but if the breath changes then it is wise to abandon the thought, at least, at that time.

GITHA: Things in themselves are not merits, neither are they faults, but they become by their proper or improper use. Thus merits may become faults and faults become merits. Therefore let the wise choose the path of wisdom, and by that torch they may journey through life.

TASAWWUF: What is this path of wisdom? It is practicing the presence of God. How does one learn to practice the presence of God? By performing Fikr or the other spiritual exercises given one by the teacher. Is it necessary to have a teacher? Yes, in the sense that one must practice surrender in a tangible and practical manner, in a manifested form which he himself can realize. Until that is done, there is no surrender, there is no abandonment, there is no renunciation. Of course, this is not the only reason for having a teacher, but on the path of Attainment it is one of

the most important reasons.

From this point of view the things of this world and the next lose their value and reattain it. They lose the values commonly given to them, called intrinsic values, but they become markers of one's journey for testing and judging oneself which is very important. So to reach the highest degrees of renunciation, one has to abandon all thought of it, and act for the sake of God.

By performing Fikr, especially as has been suggested, by relating all one's acts and thoughts and words to the Divine, one becomes a servant of God and it is in one's capacity as the servant of God that one can become most successful on the path of attainment.

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.

Githa with Commentary

Series I: Number 4

GITHA: There is a belief—and many have this belief—that external help can be had to further one's attainment—help from saints, sages, masters, spirits, or angels. No doubt there is a great deal of truth in all this, and help comes as you ask for it and need it, and all kinds of helpers will help you as you call upon them. But at the same time self-help must not be neglected nor ignored, for after all is said, self-help is the best of all help, and all will strive to help the one who tries to help himself.

TASAWWUF: This teaching merits considerable examination for self-help alone avails one to attain to the kingdom of Heaven, whence all else can be attracted to one. No doubt this may be regarded as mastery and master is he who is master of himself, ruler is he who is ruler of himself. At the same time it is not wrong to call upon God for assistance and to receive it in any form that it is presented for all creatures may be the servants of God, the means by which He may answer a prayer or call for help.

The saint is always helpful but the help that he gives is best when he helps one to help oneself. The help that the saint will give will be mostly mental although sometimes spiritual. That is, he will offer kindness and calmness so that one will feel at ease, one will feel himself stronger and better equipped to attain that which he seeks. It would not be help if the saint offered to obtain the object and give it to the one who has come to him yet even this is possible, only if this is repeated, it weakens the person who is in need. He will then rely upon another and in so far as he does this he is liable to lose self-reliance. For that reason Mohammed spoke against mediation, and asked his

followers to call upon God and only upon God, otherwise in seeking help from another man would lose his divine potency.

At the same time there is no doubt that occasions arise when man feels his own feebleness, that he is unable to do what is required of him and it is not wrong to consult a saint or a wise man. The difference between the sage and the saint in this would probably be that the sage might act quickly whereas the saint would be more interested in straightening the inner condition of the man. The saint might calm the man first and thus encourage him, but the sage who is a man of action might feel that after all the first thing is to secure the object of attainment and then bring calm to man, even showing him the greater value of renunciation after assisting him in the action of attaining.

Now by sage we commonly mean a wise man and the wise man may feel that it is wrong to assist the petitioner, but the saint has not this right, for to be a saint one cannot say "No" to one who comes for help, and yet no one is a saint who does not know completely when to say "No," only his "Yes" may mean "Yes" and it may mean "No." However, the saint would assent and encourage and explain afterward if the action were wrong, while the sage would not assist in any wrong action if he thought no good would come from it. So the response of the sage can be almost in any form and the response of the saint is easy to foresee, yet each in his own manner serves God and the Holy Law.

Now the path of the Master is different for he might refuse to help, he does not have to help anybody, that is not his work, and at the same time he does help. He may refuse to help and his refusal will have to be of such a nature that it is even of greater value than the apparent assent of the Saint.

The whole tradition of the Zen teachers has been according to the law of Mastery, that they may even insult one coming for assistance, they may cause great pain, yet this is only done when the pain leads to inspiration and success. So in going to a Master it does not matter what he says, it matters how one reads his answer and attains the help by going to him, and this thus becomes more helpful in many instances than consulting a Saint or Sage, although one must have a very good self-control lest he be insulted or pained by the apparent answer.

Yet not every master answers in this form, he may keep silent, or he may say: "Depart in peace." Or he may give another answer which says or tells much more than his words, and it is not always easy to find out. And if one goes to him and holds his peace, he will attain success and sometimes one will feel chagrin at the answer of the master and yet through his advice or assistance gain the object of attainment only to feel more chagrined at himself, and thus turn a victory into a defeat because of nufs.

Next comes the question of spirits which are of two kinds, what we call jinns and the souls of the departed. Direct consultation of jinns or disembodied entities of any kind is wrong because it destroys self-reliance and one obtains things at the cost of his ego. The extreme case is that of Faust, who, in the allegory, sold his soul to the devil. This is not possible but it is possible to hinder

one's evolution or go backwards by the use of mental crutches so that one never has to exercise his mind and when he leaves the world he has to start in again as if from a new infancy.

The question as to whether one should seek to communicate with the departed persons may be answered that this is wrong partly for the same reason and also because either one will not succeed in it, being fooled by phantasms, or else one will be hindering the evolution of those in the next world.

But the matter of receiving assistance from advanced persons has to be regarded differently. For instance among some Christians and Buddhists there is considerable attention paid to the saints, that by an appeal to them one will receive by their assistance what one needs. Sometimes this is good because it increases the faith of the devotee and sometimes it provides a channel of accommodation. There is no doubt that there have been many types of healing and miracles at the tombs of the saints in all parts of the world and in a certain sense this has been very beneficial.

On the other hand this may lead to superstition and error. By carrying the principle of mediation and intervention to an extreme one is always looking for outside help and there is no merit. Besides one can never come to God in this way, always being interested in name and form. Furthermore it does not always result in the highest type of prayer and has led many people to put their faith in miracles and phenomena instead of God. And this has brought about such reformatory movements as Wahabism in modern times, which is strongly opposed to all this.

At the same time it is true that it is possible to get help from one's spiritual teacher after he has passed out of form and from all the Sufi teachers. But this help comes more as they see the need you have than from any appeal on your part. Man's prayers should be directed to God and not to any one or any thing in name or form; such prayers are limited to the realms of name and form and so cannot bring the benefit of the prayer to God. But when you are in need, if you keep your heart upon God, sometimes your murshid or sheikh may come to you from the other side and sometimes you will get help without prayer when there is danger impending.

The bond between sheikh and mureed is not weakened by passage out of form any more than it is by time and space, and especially is it possible for the Murshids and Pirs to retain contact with the mureeds who have been initiated. But not every person seems to be able to receive this help. Sometimes the spiritual practices make it possible for them to keep in rapport and sometimes the one on earth has a fine mental sensitivity which has exceedingly great advantage. But if this contact is used to rely constantly upon the other, then the intuitive faculty cannot develop so what might appear to be a great advantage or virtue itself can become the greatest obstacle to self development.

Especially is this so when we come to consider the help from the angels, although by this a number of different conceptions can be considered. For if we mean by "angel" those ethereal beings who dwell in Djabrut, it may be asked whether they can help us much for their whole time and devotion is utilized towards the praise of God. If there is any way in which and by which they can help it is by

following their example rather than through consultation or conversation of any kind.

Then, by angel we may mean those beings of very high degree who have been the Divine Messengers who have appeared upon earth at various times or else the names of forms under which the Spirit of Guidance or Holy Spirit has been clothed, such as Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel. If there is an appeal to them, then they are to be regarded as outside of oneself, but if one either has the deep feeling which is more than reverence, which is almost union-in-love, or if the heart is attuned to God, either one may in dream, vision, or spiritual state enter into rapport with the Rassoul or else there may be what can be called an angelic visitation.

However even the highest and noblest of these, while strengthening the hal or spiritual state, does not benefit the makam or degree of evolution. None of these necessarily opens the heart, or having done so, keeps it open. This does not mean that one should not consult the wise, for it would be foolish to fail constantly especially when help is at hand, but it does mean that any help one can bring out from within oneself is far more beneficial in the end than all the assistance which comes from the outside.

GITHA: To what extent one should expect such external help can be best explained by the fact that to the extent of our wish and our will-power we attract help and power of accomplishment.

TASAWWUF: Help comes from within mostly in two ways, through the breath and through the heart-faculties, but one should hardly limit it to those two ways, for heart can communicate with heart or mind or body, and it is possible even for the soul to touch the surface as well as any of the vehicles which go to make up the human personality.

Again, it is not always possible to distinguish the without from the within and it is not wrong to say that having found Murshid within, having found Christ within, having effected union with Mohammed, having been blessed with the vision of Moses or the presence of the Angel Gabriel, that what has been thought to be without has been found within.

The question next comes, how does this affect the will-power, and the answer is that the closer the attunement to God or even to the illuminated souls, the more powerful the will because of the attunement. This attunement brings forth the latent light and power of the soul, which is of the greatest benefit to man and it is for this very reason that he has been granted manifestation upon earth. Through this he can by himself secure all objects on the path of Attainment.

GITHA: In our desire for the accomplishment of good and helpful things we attract good helpers, and in evil things one desires one attracts evil helpers. The Satanic side of life is ever ready to help man, as is God. As soon as a person has a determined evil thought all the means of help about one begin to manifest themselves.

TASAWWUF: The full explanation of this may be said to belong to the mysteries. One may translate the passage near the beginning of the Book of Genesis: "And the earth was without form

and void until God said: 'Let there be light.'" Without this divine light the earth showed its Satanic side. It seemed to be there naturally. Of course if we look at it, it is not so, for there is the rhythm of day and night and the annual rhythm of the movement of the earth around the sun. Yet there are periods of tenseness and darkness and these may be said to belong to the Satanic side of nature.

Man also has what may be called a Satanic side, which is manifest in Nufsaniat and so long as he remains in confusion and delusion this will continue. Such things as the great concentration of wealth and power are the result of this type of concentration, and yet the mere destruction of it is even worse for if the tendency toward power and concentration is broken and nothing done to replace them, chaos can result which is even more diabolic, so it is not enough to attack the Satanic side of man.

First it is to be observed that all concentration brings help, all effort may result in success and out of this we should see that action is a principle and self-help is a principle. Only one has to see whether the self-help is just a movement of aggrandizing the nufs, or if one, following the words of the sages, abandons the fruits of the action to God. This may be said, in the final analysis, to be the test. Thus, if a robber succeeds and abandons the fruits of his action he may advance more quickly than the average man who holds on to what he has gained.

But what we have to learn first is to know that the earth is dense and the spirit is fine and it takes more time and patience for the spirit to manifest itself on earth. If the heart is stilled this is possible, and if the ego is restrained it is easy. Otherwise the successful man will be the one who cultivates success, who is careless about the manner of success and this is the reason for the growth of crime and political machines and powerful commercial organizations. They take things as they are, they use their common sense and follow the easiest road and they attain success through concentration, and the only proper way to destroy them will be also to attain success through concentration which must be a concentration on a higher plane and this is very difficult, and the road is mentioned by Jesus who said of it, "Few there be that find it."

GITHA: The help in good thoughts comes more slowly upon the physical plane, where with a bad thing it comes more quickly because pebbles, like the line of least resistance, are found everywhere, but diamonds are so rare!

TASAWWUF: Evil is where shadow is, and where light is not. A conspiracy is generally hatched in a dark corner and crime is planned in the secrecy. In the broad daylight it is harder to think or do evil than in the midst of night.

But the fact of evil upon the earth is more evident than the why of it, and many have therefore associated matter and evil. Matter is not necessarily evil, only matter is dense, and for denseness there must be a stronger nufs, a tightening of spirit, and this can lead to evil. It requires effort to overcome the denseness of earth and therefore it is easier while on earth to follow the path of evil than the way of righteousness and goodness.

GITHA: Evil motives and deeds take much less time to accomplish their purpose and less trouble, while good things are accomplished with great patience and perseverance. And the difference can only be realized in their results.

TASAWWUF: There is the common saying, “easy come, easy go.” The real pleasure of life comes in lasting values. Although no doubt patience is required to attain the object of desire when it is good or noble or beneficial, the more time and the more effort used, the longer is it possible to keep what one has wished and the stronger the control over it. For in this instance, one has attained both in the mental world and in the physical world and that gives one power, whereas the evil attainment is not secure upon the mental plane and its karmic results may be disastrous.

GITHA: It is, in truth, in the end that man knows what he has striven after. Evil has even in the end a weakening power, while virtue is a strengthening power.

TASAWWUF: This is manifest in criminals, that after a while they are not always able or even desirous of performing their deeds without a strong stimulant which may be alcohol or dope or even poison. They can no longer depend upon their own wills, they have to depend upon something which is outside of their beings. So the hardened heart becomes its own worst enemy and the will of the moment is borrowed, so to speak, from the eternal will which is the nature of man, and man destroys his heaven to attain to a momentary success upon earth only to lose both heaven and earth, and by this automatically produce (produce, not create) his hell.

GITHA: A disappointment in the path of virtue will give more happiness in the end than success and accomplishment of desire in the path of evil. The loss which one has experienced along the path of virtue is far preferable to gain in the pathway of evil.

TASAWWUF: Because such losses are only momentary and all effort toward virtue gradually builds up an accommodation which carries along with it the means to ultimate success. If one lives for the moment, one can only be successful for the moment, and this is something that the wicked seldom think about, so that some who attain momentary success are unable to meet difficulties and end in suicide while the criminal is generally the least happy of personalities.

Therefore from one point of view one hardly needs any moral law. If the question be asked, what is the best way to happiness and one is thinking about happiness, it would not be wrong to say that true virtue is happiness and true happiness is virtue and when philosophers have divided in their discussions as to the merits of these principles it only signifies ignorance on their part; ultimately there is no difference.

GITHA: There are three stages in every wish: inclination, pursuit, attainment. It is after these three stages that the result of man's wish is manifest and not until then that man realizes his wish in its fullness.

TASAWWUF: One may ask whether it is right or necessary to wish, and this may be answered by

asking first, "Are you satisfied," and then "How are you satisfied," and "Why are you satisfied." The way the person answers these questions shows whether it is the ego which is satisfied or the spirit which is satisfied. The ego is satisfied outwardly, the spirit inwardly, and the ego will always have a reason but the spirit, which is to say, the heart of man, may not be able to give a reason, yet the satisfaction of heart is the only real satisfaction.

GITHA: In the first stage the wish is apt to be in confusion.

TASAWWUF: In order to clarify the mind there are two practices, of equal importance, and of almost infinite importance, and these are Fikr and Concentration (Murakkabah). By Fikr one establishes the rhythm which may be used in activity or passivity and so enable the real person to have control over the mind. After this control is established it is possible to use the mind as the instrument of the soul and by this not only is it possible to attain one's desires, it is also possible to have perfection of mind which becomes, so to speak, the fulfillment of the very purpose of man's existence. So it is very valuable to have some wish if that will lead through the confusion by advancement.

It is always possible to retreat and not wish and this is not wrong, only if one has taken this path and some day has a wish, he will not be able to fulfill his wish and he can become the slave of the smallest desire. Therefore Sufis have found it more advantageous to their spiritual evolution to advance from wish to wish to the highest state and not retreat; to face and experience life to the full and to make the outer life the very means of their advancement, realizing God is everywhere, in all things and behind all situations.

GITHA: In the second stage there is an absorption in the idea and action.

TASAWWUF: This is regarded as exceedingly important by the Sufis. For life is life and not death, activity and not stagnation. For its fulfillment one must perform his duties upon the mental plane and upon the physical plane, and silence of speech and of thought does not mean restraint of all outer effort. There are some who pray and leave the rest to God, but he is blessed who prays and then makes himself the instrument through whom God acts. For how can God manifest without an agent? Therefore one should always use some bodily or physical effort along with his spiritual desires, and in the prayers and practices of the Sufis, the body unites with mind and heart in prayer, the body is never to be neglected. So right action is of infinite value in the spiritual life.

GITHA: In the third stage there is the joy of fulfillment or a sorrow at the loss.

TASAWWUF: The less attention paid to this stage the better. One should, however, use the stream or current of success in order to go on to another success. The real value is to abandon the fruits of action in order to be able to use the favorable spiritual currents of the moment which would help to carry him along at least part way to another success. It is this principle which the wise use in abandoning the fruits of the action. The foolish man who remains attached to his glory is like the man who goes ashore while going downstream, losing the opportunity that the stream offers to

carry him to a further point; the wise man goes as far as he can when he is able and if he finds that the goal that he has sought is only the means to a higher goal then he seizes his opportunity to the full.

GITHA: But a result later may prove that one would even prefer the sorrow to the joy and its consequences, for even a joy may prove to be the cause of a greater sorrow.

TASAWWUF: For joy or elation carries one along and one can become the slave of joy, and the moment the joy subsides, having tasted it, one becomes sad when deprived of it, sadder than if he had never tasted any joy. This becomes, therefore, a great test, for it is very difficult, especially after ecstasy, to remain calm and peaceful. There is liable to be a very deep longing which is difficult to satisfy, and the heart may yearn and produce its own pain. This is the experience of lovers of all grades.

GITHA: It is so easy to wish for a thing! But it is difficult to know if it will prove good for one or not. For what one loves today he may hate tomorrow; and if the wish of today be fulfilled tomorrow, when the time of love has expired and the time of hatred approaches, then it would have been far better had one forgotten the wish as soon as it was born.

TASAWWUF: This difficulty is avoided in spiritual concentration where the thought is held by the feeling. If there is any doubt as to whether the thought can be held by feeling, then practice Fikr and hold the thought before one after Fikr and if there is any uneasiness it would be better to abandon the thought, for this is a test as to whether the thought can be actually controlled by feeling. But even if this is not so at first, continual practice of Fikr makes it possible for one to hold any good thought and also to determine what thoughts will never produce hatred, ill-will, or misfortune no matter how long or how strongly they are kept in the mind.

GITHA: To want a thing is an easy matter, but to want it continually is a difficult thing. And how much time man wastes on wanting things and then not wanting them!

TASAWWUF: Perhaps behind all wishes is the wish for fulfillment, and as the baby was first satisfied with milk when it cried, so man gets into the habit of looking without for the satisfaction of his soul and he does not know that his soul has been dissatisfied nor what will satisfy it. But the Sufi, through the practices of Zikr and Fikr solves this problem and also if Darood is practiced during the day one will find it possible to accomplish his ordinary affairs and also to avoid the difficulties which bring pain, sorrow, and failure.

GITHA: This wanting faculty works also in childhood.

TASAWWUF: It operates particularly in childhood because that is the period of growth and without at least physical and mental growth the child cannot attain to adulthood. But this does not produce spiritual attainment and if the body is satisfied and the mind and heart untouched, or if body and mind are satisfied and the heart still longs, this inner longing will manifest outwardly in the desire

nature.

GITHA: Therefore the great task in life is to watch our desires, to know, to understand, and to analyze what I want: “Why do I want, how can I get it, and what result will it be likely to bring about?”

TASAWWUF: There are several questions each with its answer, but the ultimate answer of all is God. When it is asked “what I want” it signifies that I must be lacking something, I want something to perfect myself, to complete my being; I may not know what it is, I do not know what it is, and I think some object or possibly wealth will satisfy it. And there is behind all these falsehoods a ray of truth because God is all in all and in everything there is God, and that is also the unexplained reason as to why I may want something.

The next question to be answered is “How can I get it?” and this may be answered in a few words, by Fikr, concentration, action and prayer; Fikr on the spiritual plane, concentration on the mental plane, action on the physical plane, and prayer on all planes. By the proper application of these practices it is possible to attain to all things.

Finally there remains the question, “What result will it be likely to bring about?” and if all these practices have been used the result will be beneficial. For Fikr prevents wrong endeavor, concentration brings mastery on the mental plane, and action helps on the physical plane, while prayer and meditation keep the soul attuned to God, whence all help comes.

GITHA: It is the part of wisdom, when once you have studied and understood this question, to continue going forward intelligently, courageously, and steadily along the path of attainment and to pursue until the end.

TASAWWUF: Therefore to man is given the right and duty to action, and asceticism and retirement are not encouraged except for the aged or invalid and even then only in a limited form. It is ability to attain success in acquisition which gives one the right to abandon this line. One who has not gone on the path of Sadhana cannot surrender to God, for what will he surrender? He can not surrender that which does not belong to him, he can only surrender that which belongs to him.

So he should try to own something, whether it be things or faculties or powers or anything that can have a name or form, and then bring these in loving self-sacrifice before God, and then not stop but go on and on, always active, whether inwardly or outwardly. By that he shows his love for God, a love which means nothing if it be but a word, a love which means everything if it is a way of life in this world or in the world to come.

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.

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 5

GITHA: The environment helps toward the accomplishment of the desired object.

TASAWWUF: The environment can also hinder the accomplishment as would be the case of the sower whose seeds fell upon thorns and in stony places. Nor would one succeed so easily who established a place for meditation near noisy traffic. But by this is meant that the wise are careful to select an environment which would be helpful, such as selecting fertile soil for a garden, a quiet place for meditation and tolerant persons for friends.

At the same time it is within the power of the initiate to mold his surroundings to a certain extent. He does this either by his personality or through the use of spiritual practices. Nevertheless there is no need to waste time in this effort if one can find a better place for his opportunity.

The environment is still more helpful if one regards it as the place of God's will. So if one is in a forest it is well to ask God's will what is the opportunity there, what is the duty there? If one be in a crowded city, that is the occasion for asking what is the opportunity there, what is the duty there. So likewise if one is in a strange place or a familiar place, in a peaceful abode or in an arena of noise, by asking of God one will find the purpose of his life in such a place. And in every instance, if one asks, the heart will carry forth the answer from within without failure.

GITHA: Things that are around you in the house, the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the people you meet, all these things have an effect upon your life.

TASAWWUF: There are effects from color, every color having its definite psychological value so the wise make use of this principle. There are in this two sets of values in colors, those of colors which come directly from light which have also a mystical significance, as red helping the fire nature, green the water nature, yellow the earth nature and so on. But pigments and shades as well as colors carry a psychological value which is always scientific, the difference between light and shade being that whereas light sometimes brings a mystical effect, it never has a psychic effect when it comes direct, whereas indirect lighting, and shadow and pigments carry psychic effects but very seldom if ever mystical effects.

Thus, candles, lamps, and sunlight are all beneficial as is burning incense. But colored electric lamps are more limited in their values, being confined to the particular hue of the glass. Moonlight, all shadow and reflected lights are of psychic importance. No doubt the indirect lighting is better for the eyes, but in this case one has to be careful of the patterns and pigments used on wall, ceiling,

and floor. Yet, for practical work the psychic light is often better for the active person, while for spiritual work the direct light is best.

Food also has its effect and the scientific biochemists are beginning to discover some of the laws. But there are occult values particularly in vegetables which have not yet been thoroughly studied. It is not always wise to rely upon the traditions of the past which are regarded as esoteric. This, first because some were written in symbolic language; then, there have been many mistakes in translations, and portions lost; next, the key to their meanings was often kept a secret; and finally the authors were not always wise. But a combination of the study of occult lore and modern science will lead sooner or later to recognition of occult values in food. The beginning of this, no doubt, came with the discovery of vitamins.

People one meets have still a more important effect upon one. Just as the sunlight and direct light have a mystical value and the moonlight and indirect lighting and shadow have a psychic effect so it can be stated that in meeting one of equal or higher evolution there is invariably a mystical and spiritual benefit even if not evident at the time, while in consorting with persons of lower degree there is a psychic result which may or may not be beneficial.

The spiritual practices of the Sufis prevent harm from resulting so there is no need to avoid the company of any man. The faculty of insight shows one how to gain rather than lose psychically through relations with everybody one meets and there is no need to experience defeat if the heart is keen. This is important, for by observation one can then know when anybody, person or creature, comes forward, that such a one may be the instrument of Allah at the moment to help toward the accomplishment of attaining to one's desires.

GITHA: Do not, even in jest, think, speak, or act against the object you have in view, because it will have a wrong and depreciating psychological effect.

TASAWWUF: The manner of speech indicates only the emotional state and not the mental or psychological condition. The emotions do not assist in attainment, but if they throw their shadows upon the intellectual light, this is as passing from sunlight to moonlight and the effect will be psychic and not spiritual. Therefore in Sadhana the cultivation of [an] indifferent state of heart is most important which makes God one's partner in every undertaking.

There is a wise use of negatives which can be beneficial, and there is a harmful use of negatives which can be very disturbing and detrimental. Naturally if one be on the path of the Master or Prophet and has come to save humanity or to help people or to bring a scourge it may be necessary to carry a negative thought for purgative reasons. In other words, this is to regard God, so to speak, as Siva, and even this negativity carries then a certain positive sense for a divine purpose.

In the laws of self-protection one is taught to avoid negatives and to trust in God. The word NOT actually produces a KNOT in the brain; in other words, it throws a shadow instead of a light.

Therefore it should not be used when light is needed, it should only be called into play where a shadow is necessary, and this is never true when one is trying to attain something for oneself. In all cases of attainment, light and light only and never shadow is to be called into play.

GITHA: One should think constantly of the object he desires with hope and trust, and even dream of it.

TASAWWUF: The laws of metaphysics as taught in the Gathas are based upon the principle of the attaining to God-consciousness, but the same laws hold in all forms of advancement and evolution. There is one supreme principle to be used in attainment and this is associated with concentration, contemplation, and Fikr. By keeping the mind constantly one-pointed, in always observing a "Toward the One," whatever be the nature of the "One," one builds an accommodation in the inner spheres which sooner or later comes to manifestation in the outer consciousness.

GITHA: And, truly, no dream will be lost if it is expressive of the desired object. Because it is, first of all, the desire that brings about the dream, and every desire, if held in the mind, must some day, somehow, be realized. Constancy in holding one object to its fulfillment is most necessary.

TASAWWUF: While Sadhana is here presented as the way for man, actually it is the Divine Way. In the creation of the universe and of life, God first sent forth the ray of love and it was the return of love to love which created the desire for objects and this gave rise to all the names and forms which grew out of the central love. To preserve the Universe God also in a certain sense dreams and holds the object in His dream.

Man, while made in God's image, has to grow to God-consciousness, so it is necessary to attain the virtues, for their practical as well as their moral benefit. Even selfishness is of no value if one cannot be consistently selfish and while desire may seem to be the shadow of love, yet by holding firm it magnetizes the atmosphere and attracts all things to it.

Yes, love is mystical and spiritual, no doubt, and desire psychic, but to draw the things of that world (heaven) to this (earth) the psychic plane has been erected as a bridge.

GITHA: But after the accomplishment, one must not cling to the habit thus formed. He must be able to turn from one object to another after his desire has been accomplished.

TASAWWUF: This is to enable man to avoid becoming the slave of his desire nature. It is habit which is liable to bring this about, for man mostly enjoys that which he has already experienced. In this there is no growth and except where necessity demands, as perhaps in the case of food, it is wise to avoid every sort of attachment.

Renunciation is only possible after success. Besides, it is always helpful to use one's faculties for something greater in order to grow, to continue along the psychic current of success while one finds himself in the current, to go with the tide and not to come ashore during the period of success.

Another reason for this state is because when desire calls forth concentration, that concentration will continue unless there is renunciation. This builds the nufs by centering the thought and feeling either around the objects of desire or around the desire nature; either of these exalts the nufs, depresses the spirit, and lowers the spiritual value in success, so that it becomes sometimes necessary to experience pain, failure, or difficulty in order to grow further. By renunciation this can be avoided, and at the same time the success retained.

GITHA: A person who desires an object is smaller than the object, but when he attains the object, he and the object are equal.

TASAWWUF: This is very true. No matter that the heart may seem to be yearning for, that very yearning, that longing is a sign of unfulfillment, of incompleteness, of imperfection. If it is possible to advance through the attainment of desire, it is not wrong to seek to advance to some goal. Therefore marriage has been regarded as important by the Sufis without being regarded as absolutely all-important. It is one step in a certain direction toward a fulfillment or completion.

GITHA: When he clings to the attained object he is beneath the object.

TASAWWUF: This comes about mostly through pride and vanity. One is often proud of one's successes, one talks about them, one often tells the world, and even when he does not seek the admiration of the world, the mere telling is often for the sake of vanity. Besides, there is a psychic weakness in it, and this often prevents further successes. Sometimes man can even make idols of his accomplishments and this is really a form of self-worship which is the worst thing possible for the ego and can be a greater hindrance in spiritual evolution than the performance of crime.

GITHA: But when he renounces the acquired object he rises above it. It is then that he can be called master of his object.

TASAWWUF: The subject of Fakir has been given very much attention by the Sufis. While a Fakir naturally means a poor person, there are naturally those who are poor because they have been unable to earn wealth and there are those who are poor because they have abandoned the world. The highest type are those of whom Jesus has said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Such persons have reached a stage where they have given up even abandoning, because so long as there is the thought, "I renounce,," "I abandon,," the highest stage has not been reached. Master of poverty is he who can live without consideration of wealth or poverty; he is also master of wealth.

On the path of Sadhana, there are many stages and it is possible to pass from physical control to mental control. The purpose of the lessons in Concentration is not merely to develop the mind in theory, they are also for the purpose of enabling man to live successfully whether in this world or in the world to come. He is successful who has reached a stage wherein his ego no longer contributes to his defeat.

GITHA: Common sense is necessary in the path of attainment, but not to such an extent that the

reason should dominate and lead the will. The will, in action, must lead the reason ...

TASAWWUF: By common sense in the path of attainment is meant that one should try for success in the ordinary affairs of life and not necessarily take up something new. To abandon any line of action without having achieved success there is a weakness, as has been explained. It is only after one has reached a certain degree of achievement that he has the spiritual right to change. If he is forced to change because of failure, that leaves him still at the commencement of the path of Sadhana. But sometimes this is necessary for moral reasons, and when there is a moral reason for a change and man changes, even when there has been outward failure, it is really a successful venture.

As to reason, it is of little value in Sadhana. Reason too often depends upon man's limited experience, while will is derived from the infinite life of the cosmos. In Sadhana, feeling and not reason is valuable; if reason could help, all persons would be able to prophecy to some extent and there could not possibly be the economic and social disasters and so many wars. They are evidence that man has depended upon reason or common sense and having limited himself, it is no wonder that he is often lead astray.

GITHA: ... whereas if the reason is allowed to lead the will, the will many times becomes paralyzed; but when in cooperation the will leads the reason, then the path of attainment becomes illuminated.

TASAWWUF: Reason is dependent upon past experience, and is therefore only sure in the future for such cases as may happen to repeat the condition of the past. This holds always in mathematics and in the sciences in so far as they are dependent upon mathematics. But even mathematics has an intuitive basis. And the idea in Sadhana is success, not reason. If reason brings success, it is right to use reason; if reason does not bring success it is hardly to be relied upon. Actually the Sufi does not depend upon reason; he listens to the divine voice and in the end finds it to be more logical than his own reason. This proves the cooperation of reason and will under spiritual guidance.

GITHA: The work of common sense in the way of attainment is really to make one understand and comprehend the real meaning and object of the desire. Am I really worthy to receive this? Do I in truth deserve it? Can I sustain the purpose of the object when I have acquired it? Can the object become worthy of my pursuit? Shall I prove worthy of the test which attainment of the object would require?

TASAWWUF: This means that there is no miracle in Sadhana, all is done in accordance with pure law. No doubt this law includes psychic, mental, moral, and spiritual law, but it is not lawless, there is nothing left to chance. That is what is meant when it says it is possible to understand and comprehend the real meaning.

When it comes to a question of worthiness, this has two aspects. One is worthy if one is morally worthy, if one has the right feeling about it. One is also worthy if in the pursuit of the desire his own

faculties benefit, so that there is growth in the achievement besides any acquisition that may be gained. And this also answers the question of deservedness.

When it comes to the matter of sustaining the gain some meditation is required. Persons often seek what they cannot hold. This means either failure in the effort or loss after the apparent success. The chief way to prevent this is to follow the intuition especially in regard to the object of attainment, not to seek that which the heart does not desire, especially when the ego wants it.

An object is worthy of pursuit if it expands the sphere of consciousness, enlarges one's horizon, or is in harmony with a divine purpose, and if these are true then one can prove worthy of the test. But all this requires self-examination. If one begins the quest with a spiritual motive, in answer to a spiritual response, only the self, the nufs, can stand in the way; no one else can thwart man, and yet he can thwart himself easily.

GITHA: In the path of attainment, many lose their way and go astray, especially those who are regardless of consideration.

TASAWWUF: Consideration for the Sufi means first consideration of God, which does include consideration for the spiritual teacher and for no one else in a certain sense. That is to say, if one depends upon another for advice and that advice is given by a man of lesser degree in evolution it will almost always interfere with the attainment except when one has prayed to God for enlightenment. In that case it is not always wrong to listen to the first person who comes along, and if it is not a more advanced soul, then one has to be especially cautious in regard to being silent after hearing the words from such a one.

Consideration also means that one does not harm another in the attainment nor use either the quest nor the object when attained for selfish purpose. Also it means to concentrate upon the object of attainment and not to try to obtain it in a certain manner. This last means dependence upon nufs and absence of faith in God. In such instances there can be no Sadhana even when there is much success; there is no spirituality in it, and such success may always be counterbalanced by losses.

GITHA: There are objects that cannot bring anything but harm, and there are many in this world who would never stop to think of the harm to another, as long as they think they are safe.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual method of thinking one is safe is very different from the material method. A spiritual person cannot pursue blindly a desire and expect success thereby. There are two ways to select an object for attainment—by meditation and by concentration. By meditation one seeks to learn what is his goal. He does not know it. He asks for divine guidance and follows his first impression.

By concentration upon a selection, one practices Fikr first and then concentrates upon what he thinks is the object worthy of attainment. If it is really worthy there will either be no change of breath

or some inspiration or vision or all of them. If one has the wrong object in mind, if it is not helpful, there will be change of breath after Fikr and no inspiration and no illuminating dreams or visions. This is very important to protect one against self-will, the greatest stumbling block to success in Sadhana.

If one concentrates and fails within a certain time, it signifies a wrong path or wrong object of attainment. Clinging stubbornly to it is a sign of the control by the desire-nature. This increases nufs, causes harm to oneself and never benefits anybody.

GITHA: But since the very nature of the world is give and take, and as every action has its reaction, and as every cause has its own similar effect, how can one really think that he can be safe by causing harm to another?

TASAWWUF: The law of action and reaction, or karma as it is usually called, is a very important factor in Sadhana. It is not to be supposed that one can acquire anything without labor and without effort. Who is this person who is entitled to riches, honor, glory, and satisfaction? Wherefrom does he expect these gifts and others? By what right will he obtain them? These questions must be answered for it is not only true that the Lord giveth, the Lord also taketh away and many persons who regard God as a sort of infinite storehouse for the satisfaction of desire and vanity do not always realize that they are neither owners nor stewards of these treasures, and that at best they [the treasures] are only borrowed articles.

So there are three sources of harm—harm to God, harm to another, harm to oneself. Harm to God is not an actuality but occurs in a certain sense as just explained—that man makes demands and instead of trying to rob another he insists upon God paying a pension. He uses a form of petition which he calls prayer and another form which he calls praise. If you analyze them closely, despite their covers the prayer is nothing but a demand, the praise a flattery, and therefore he is either appealing to the God who is without or the ego, which he calls God. In either case he invites spiritual ruin.

Then there is the harm to another which is practiced by so many people who do not understand the nature of brotherhood. If there are wars and revolutions it is chiefly due to this and it is not always true that the revolutionaries have learned this lesson. They all see the harm caused them, they do not see the harm they cause and all justify themselves and call it reason. This is perhaps the chief cause for the continuance of misery in the world.

Actually both these ways of living bring harm to the self. They harm the self physically because there is no assurance that what has been gained can be held and so more and more attention is paid to the physical side of life, for protection and for the conservation of the gains. They also harm one mentally for the attention is drawn to earthly possessions and not to culture. Besides this, they produce so much moral and spiritual harm, it is quite obvious and one certain proof of this can be seen in the increased number of suicides. And suicide is in most cases a pathway to hell for one escapes the body without escaping the problems of life and sooner or later a price must be paid.

GITHA: Often, in many attainments through life, there is found a benefit for one by the loss of another. And thus we see it go up and down, though life, like a scale. And this is a matter of time and experience, and often one finds that a momentary gain is more disastrous than the loss would have been.

TASAWWUF: According to the spiritual point of view, business or trade should be an enterprise by which both parties gain. This gain may not always be in a material sense, but there should be increase of satisfaction. In the Far East persons often come together and converse many times before concluding an arrangement. What does this do? First it acquaints the persons, they are friends and this friendliness makes for fair-mindedness and honesty. After having made such a bond it is comparatively easy to complete the arrangements to mutual satisfaction.

There are two ways to look at it and according to the point of view profit is justified or unjustified. Profit is unjustified if business is for the sake of gaining all the money and power possible. Such persons reckon without God. But profit is justifiable if one has gained something for the personality in the exchange, if one feels an inner satisfaction, if one has caused no moral harm. This insures a protection both in this world and in the world to come.

The idea of studying karma without carrying the principles into everyday life does not avail much. It can not even be called book knowledge. A child in school could not do well in his lessons if he did not have some sincere belief in them. There must be belief or faith to ensure the spiritual profit and in the business of the future there will have to be some psychic exchange as well as the passing of material goods from one hand to another. This will create a bond which can grow into a bond of universal brotherhood. Therefore it is wise to practice Meditation or Darood before and during every business transaction.

GITHA: Therefore the wise have a greater gain as their object through life than the objects of sense of the average man, who is ever in pursuit of transitory gain, and in success and in failure both he is at a loss because in the end both may get little.

TASAWWUF: Wisdom in gaining therefore consists in the attainment of that which can be taken from the earth. And yet it is not wrong to acquire earthly things. What is necessary in Sadhana is success and it is first natural and normal to concentrate on the things of earth. One cannot conquer heaven who is unfit to live the life of earth; this would be a retreat, not an advancement. At the same time one who remains attached to his earthly quests and conquests does not advance at all, he is the slave of his desires.

While it is proper to advance from grade to grade, it is also true that the appearance of God's grace becomes more and more manifest the more attuned the type of concentration. Through one's personal will one may attain some success upon earth; through one's personal will one can only attain in the more subtle planes when that will is attuned to the divine grace, only man, blinded by delusion, regards the success as the result of his own personal efforts.

GITHA: The wise, therefore, fix their eyes on that divine attainment, divine ideal, which is the best object possible; and by the attainment of that object they enjoy eternal bliss.

TASAWWUF: This is done in two ways: it is done in a permanent sense, that even one whose Sadhana has an earthly or mental form, even when one wants something or wishes to grow, he does not lose sight of God for an instant so that God becomes, so to speak, his co-worker and in the end he becomes the associate of God. And it is true that in the absolute sense, when one practices Contemplation, he has arrived at the end of Sadhana, that his heart no longer cares particularly for what is in the heavens or upon the earth. The Contemplation upon the reality of God is the highest stage and it can be begun at any time, but for practical purposes it is not wrong to advance from stage to stage. For it is necessary to cultivate success, self-control, and optimism, and if this cannot be done in the greatest things, then let it be done in the small things.

When one keeps in mind that all these things come from God, that God is immanent in everything, that God is all in all, then it is not wrong to draw the things in the spirit for one is drawing God closer. This is the proper spirit in Sadhana and for that reason Sufis may do what other persons do, only they are more practical than the practical while they are also more idealistic than the idealists, and this at the same time. The Inner Life is the completion and fulfillment of all aspects of life.

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

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 6

GITHA: The success of the motive depends entirely upon the concentration ...

TASAWWUF: If there is not the success expected, it may be due to faulty concentration. What is concentration? It is an activity of heart and mind, which may be regarded as an activity of will, which is dependent upon will-power and if the will-power is divided there cannot be success. Now to insure against the division of will-power, Fikr is practiced and if one concentrates who does not perform Fikr it may happen that there will not be success. This is especially true of those who are living the spiritual life.

Now what does Fikr do? Fikr helps to bring attunement to the divine will and Fikr is the best means of counter-acting the ego so that self-will and desire do not lead one astray, so that selfishness is not a motive. If one concentrates after performing Fikr and the object is desirable in a spiritual

sense, the impressions will be good and if the object is not right, the impressions will be unfavorable. This is a delicate process but very profitable if it can be followed out.

GITHA: ... for mind is productive and creative. It produces and creates all that it forms in itself first as a thought.

TASAWWUF: So it may be asserted that every thought becomes objectified, that is, it produces something, only one may wish to know whether its creations are confined to the heaven or mental world, or whether they reach earth. The object of Sadhana is to make them reach earth so that in every sense the divine will and the divine light touch earth and make it even as a heaven.

While thoughts become things in a certain sense, to hasten the process will-power is required and not everybody has will-power. This is different from wish or desire; the wish is a spark of the will and the desire may even be a shadow of the will. But by careful attention to all thoughts, by keeping the mind fixed firmly upon the object of attainment, this produces union of will and mind and is the greatest help toward producing upon earth that which the mind has been considering in its thought.

GITHA: This concentration must not necessarily be practiced for some time during the day or night, but the motive must cover all things of life and make the whole life as one single vision of the object of concentration.

TASAWWUF: For instance, if the object is one which requires the expenditure of money, at least two things are necessary: to aim toward the accumulation of more money, and to economize in regard to giving out money. Economy may not be desirable at all times, but in this form of concentration, one should not spend money except for the routine needs of life, for food and clothing and necessities. If one is having a concentration of this kind, he must endeavor with his whole personality to accomplish his will and this can only be done if there is single-mindedness.

Likewise, if one wishes to travel, all the thoughts must be in one direction; if one wishes to attain certain knowledge, he must study toward that end and not divide his time and energies; if one even wishes power, he must be especially one-pointed. It is almost like making the object of attainment an object of love or worship until it is secured.

GITHA: The object of concentration must cover, above all things in life, one's personality. In other words, it may be said that either the motive should live or the personality.

TASAWWUF: It is not wrong that the personality live, it is not wrong to express personality only if one seeks some object and the success is in God's hands, if one has trust, the trust is to be in God and not upon the personality. It is almost like being in love, that one is living for the beloved. That is why in the Sufic form of Sadhana the heart is so much more important than the head, one must efface the self, so to speak, and yet the self in another sense has to be active. The constant prayer of such a one is Khatum, which is a prayer to God and also is a prayer for all things.

GITHA: In order to make a motive successful, the personality should be covered entirely by the motive.

TASAWWUF: What is personality? Personality is the result of thought and generally this means the thought and experience of the past. It should be obvious that if one is seeking some new experience in the future, it is almost an initiation, it sometimes is an initiation, a step forward in an unknown direction. Consequently it is not the experience of the past, it is not reason which will help; it is self-effacement which will help by removing all harmful thought, speech, and action from one's path and by a spiritual magnetism draw to one the object of attainment.

GITHA: Life is one, singly and collectively, according to both these points of view. And you cannot live yourself separate from the motive; either the motive should live, or you; either the motive must become you or you become the motive, which means one thing should be sacrificed for the other: either personality sacrificed for the motive or motive sacrificed for personality.

TASAWWUF: When God called upon Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, it was, as it were, that Abraham was willing to give up his personality for the motive. Did he lose his personality? No, he only had to sacrifice the ram, symbol of the nafs or lower personality, his true self he did not surrender for his true self was the Divine Spirit within him. But this outer personality or ego was sacrificed to God on the top of the mountain, the place of achievement.

Abraham is regarded as the prototype of all the Moslems and Sufis whose motive was God and it was for the sake of this motive that he gave up everything. Now this is a hard condition to attain, implying as it does, willingness to depart from our way of life. And if you study the life of Abraham closely you will learn that often he had to depart from one place to go to another, often he had to change his life and habits, and in the end the highest attainment came to him: he was blessed by the presence of God, and so fulfilled the highest purpose of his life.

GITHA: It is the greatest truth in the world that it is one that lives and it is two that die.

TASAWWUF: This is illustrated in the life of Jesus who taught that man cannot serve both God and Mammon. By Mammon is meant that condition when the motive is sacrificed for the personality, and by God is meant that condition when the personality is sacrificed for the motive. So it is either that God dwells in one, or one dies the spiritual death. One is not really alive; one is bound to the wheel of fortune.

GITHA: And Rumi has said it beautifully in his verse where he says: "The Beloved is All in All, the lover only veils Him, The Beloved is all that lives, the lover is a dead thing."

TASAWWUF: One who calls himself a lover is not necessarily a lover. When man calls himself something he is thinking of himself; the lover does not think of himself, he considers only the beloved. So when one is willing to sacrifice the ego, one reaches the state of divine attainment, which begins by self-effacement or **fana**, and ends in **baqa**, the real spiritual life for which every

man was born. Abraham and Jesus and all the Sufis and prophets have reached this grade.

GITHA: Whatever your pursuit in life, whatever your aim, whatever be your motive, for a real success in a motive you must offer yourself first as a sacrifice for it.

TASAWWUF: From the moral point of view this is most necessary. It has been said, "Practice what you preach" and it is sad to think of all the good people who have been good in certain respects, that they have not always shown the way to others. To tell is how to show, for the tongue is the instrument of speech, it is not the instrument of action. Besides this from the tongue comes evil as well as good and if one can illustrate without speech, showing by example it is always better. He will surely be successful in fulfilling his own thoughts, he will unify his speech and action and thought which is a great step forward to the single-mindedness necessary for success on the path of Sadhana.

From the metaphysical point of view there is still a greater reason for self-sacrifice. It has been said "Nature abhors a vacuum." We know from the laws of physics that when a partial vacuum has been created naturally or artificially the gases rush in to fill up the space. The weather itself is largely influenced by this principle of the laws of pressure which is a cause of rain and drought, of abundance and scarcity. Now to create abundance, to bring rain and plenty, by voiding the self of the self, so to speak, a partial vacuum, an area of low pressure is created and all the universe rushes to fill that place.

While this may cause an attraction by means of magnetism, what really happens is that when the ego-pressure is reduced, the repelling power is reduced. Ego not only repels persons, it repels birds and animals and even plants and rocks. The saint or sage who is devoid of ego may draw to his doors the lambs and the doves, the lions and the jackals, even the snakes and the noxious creatures will love him. Why? Because when the ego is soft, when the spirit is poor, the divine light is manifest and while the lower creation may feel this psychically, they will love the saint, and will draw near if they are creatures of light and remain afar if they are creatures of darkness.

The next step is the movement of artificial things, things which have no will of themselves. Yet they too will be impelled to come to the seer. His very thought will attract. Why? Because greed is the very thing which repels, the greedy man makes a slave of himself and others, but chiefly he makes a slave of himself. The holy man makes a slave of no one, it is a pleasure to serve him and all things which are in the heavens and upon the earth will want to serve him.

Now the danger is that some persons, seeing this wonderful success of the holy person will either envy him or imitate him. But they do not know the reason for his ability; he probably thinks nothing of it, his heart is upon God and it is the divine light in him that is compelling and attractive. The less advanced then try a certain magnetism, a certain form of outer growth either by strength or weakness, either by a kind of polish or a kind of subserviency and some will try to attract by their artificial magnetism and others will become the slaves of birds and beasts by feeding them and then caressing them. This is a misfortune for in the former case it only strengthens the ego and in

the latter case the soul is covered by animal psychic magnetism and is prevented from enjoying its humanity. These paths are shunned by the wise.

By self-sacrifice is meant that willingness to lay down the ego to the extent of wishing for nothing, of desiring nothing, and yet at the same time not being attached to the state of wishing nothing or desiring nothing. For if man is attached to these state of nothingness, he cannot reach the state of all-thing-ness. The state of nothingness is good in order to crush the nufs; it becomes evil if there is pride in it, if one likes it, wishes to stay there. The state of concentration in God, which the Sufis call fana-fi-lillah, is the state which may bring all-thing-ness. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven" and all things else will serve you. This is the real completion of the attainment in Sadhana.

GITHA: The great ones and small ones, all who have accomplished something in their lives, whether an earthly gain or a heavenly bliss, they have sacrificed a part of themselves or their whole being.

TASAWWUF: When we look upon the word and see the success of persons, the rich and powerful, the tyrants and leaders, we find in most cases there has been some willingness for self-sacrifice. Many of the rich persons who have even become rich by unjust means have been willing in their endeavors to make great sacrifices, greater than those of the average man. By this they often build up will-power and even when they have been wicked, yet they have been so willing to discipline themselves that sometimes in the end they turn out to be much better persons than those who have inherited their wealth, who have done nothing for it, who have been good and kindly but who have never had to sacrifice, who do not know the meaning of pain and suffering. So after a disaster the ones who have won their wealth by self-sacrifice, whatever else their means and motives, will always be found stronger than those who have done nothing, who have gained through marriage or inheritance or gift. These rich cannot gain the kingdom of heaven, they know not self-sacrifice, they have never exerted any effort, their evolution is delayed.

There are many rulers who are called tyrants who are not descended from kings and who do not always have the qualities associated with kingliness, and yet they have obtained the power and prerogatives which used to belong to kings. If you look closely into the lives of the successful ones, it will be discovered that often they were willing to make great sacrifices, that they practiced self-restraint, that they exerted unusual self-control and this is often really part of the secret of their success.

Thus self-sacrifice is a law or principle which can be used by all persons, the wicked as well as the saintly, only when the spiritual people use it, and do not seek power or position or wealth, there is no end to their attainment. The wealthy and the strong devote all the energy to some particular ends and when they arrive at the goal, they usually remain there and so in time become the slaves of wealth and power. It is by renunciation, or by willingness to renunciate, that man becomes more powerful. When he selects a higher ideal, a more distant goal, when he remains detached from his victory and from his success, he opens up a capacity for greater victory and greater success. This continues until at last he comes to the doors of divine achievement and begins to pursue that ideal,

to achieve that attainment for which he was born.

GITHA: Even to such an extent that some have arrived at a point where they exist no more for themselves, but for the motive. It is they who know what success is, and it is they who can teach the path of accomplishment.

TASAWWUF: The successful ones who fail, those who have risen only to fall, know only part of the secret of success. It is the wise man who walks slowly up the mountain, reaching it only when he can go no farther. It is the ignorant person who continues on his journey, rising only to fall. So in the great economic difficulties of the day, in the losses which have come alike to rich and poor, we see that mankind in general was ignorant of something which would have been most useful to him.

All persons to some extent seek success and shun failure. But if they do not know the meaning of success, if they do not distinguish between personal success and general success and divine success, they cannot avoid failure whether it will come in this life or in another. Therefore one of the objects of Sufism is to enable man to live in the wisest manner even in the practical sense. If success does not open the door to a greater success, it is not a worthy achievement, and yet at the same time it is true that once one has entered into the psychic current of success, there is nothing that can stop him except his own ego.

Now as in singing one does not try to reach a note which is too high or too low or to sing songs which are not within one's range or power, so it is foolish in the path of attainment to seek that which is beyond one's means. Success is first necessary and until success is achieved one does not know the meaning of it. But after one has gained something, that gain brings with it an increased magnetism, it has set up the currents of the universe, psychic and occult and mystical and they start coming towards one, then is the time to seek a higher goal, to try a great achievement, to perform a task bigger than the last one, but still not too big.

By this method of gradual growth and gradual achievement, always keeping the balance and never losing self-control it becomes possible for God to draw closer to man every moment of his life and for God to use man as his instrument. But if man determines to seek his own goal, if he has not the spirit of surrender, and especially of self-surrender, it is no use. If he gains he loses, if he wins he pays, if he earns he is in debt, it is no use.

Therefore one may learn only from those who have learned. One may be foolish and seek what he wants or considers necessary; one may be wise and seek the will of God. And how is the will of God revealed in Sadhana? It is revealed either by actual achievement, by actual accomplishment. Or else it is seen in signs in the seen and unseen, in the seen by the reciprocity of gifts or assistance which will help one towards one's attainment or in the unseen by dreams and visions which are the signs of divine help. But after a while if there are no signs, then one is not performing the right concentration, there is either no control or no balance or there is selfish desire throwing a shadow over the divine light and keeping the forces of the universe from coming to one's aid. In that case it would be much better for the person to seek something simpler and achieve that going

ahead. It is only by attaining something that one has success on the path of attainment.

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.

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 7

GITHA: The secret of all attainment is centered in reserve. Spiritual or material, when a person has told his plan to others, he has let out the energy that he should have kept as a reservoir of power for the accomplishment of his object.

TASAWWUF: All the energy used up in speech is so much taken away from concentration. When one is given the example of the cobra, when one sees the wisdom of the cobra that it can draw to itself what it needs and can attract all its food, one should see that man, who may be much wiser than the cobra, ought to be able to employ some such power. And the truth is that man has such a power and if he knows who to use it, he can do much good in the world.

Those persons who are selected by Divine Grace to travel on the paths of the Master and Saint are all but required to keep their identity secret and to work in silence. If they talk generally, if they mingle with everybody, they lose magnetism. Every time an advanced person comes before one of lesser degree and speaks to him, he imparts some magnetism to the lesser one. It has even been that some people, sensing this, have tried to live near sages and holy persons and have drawn light out of them.

Thus in one story about Jesus, when he was healing, he felt somebody come and draw the magnetism from him. And the best means of self-protection in this regard is silence. But if one has to work in the world, say, as Jesus worked among the multitudes, one has to be very careful about sharing confidences.

Also when one comes to the mystic for assistance it can almost be affirmed that when the mystic keeps quiet his very silence will help the other, his calmness is the best means of enabling the lesser person to help himself. For in a certain sense when one speaks to another, one has to come to the same plane and when this is a lower plane then one usually dwells upon, one immediately loses magnetism. On the other hand, the silence keeps the mental atoms in place and aids in drawing the physical object of attainment toward one; and when there is a spiritual object of attainment, the silence maintains that state of egolessness which draws all things toward it.

GITHA: A thing unspoken is alive in the mind, and when spoken, it is as dead.

TASAWWUF: Every thought which is held in the mind is as a living entity on the mental plane. Such thoughts sometimes are called elementals and they have a life of their own. If there is a long and strong concentration, the beings who live upon the mental plane will come and help one.

Some have spoken about help being received from fairies and other-worldly creatures. There is no surer way to receive such help than to give all the life and attention to the world within. Not that any spiritual practices are done with such purpose, but the elementals are not only the servants of God, they serve those who serve God and who walk on the right path. Therefore when thought is held by the feeling it grows stronger and when it is given an outlet into the physical world as through speech it grows weaker.

This principle is not only applied in Sadhana, it is applied also in meditation, in the performance of Khilvat, and in many forms of silence and abstinence. Although they are often called disciplines, they are not really such. It is by these means that the ego is restrained and the spirit and heart come to life. Heart comes to life when thought and will are kept in harmony and when the light of intelligence is not lost. Therefore Jesus has said, "Cast not thy pearls before swine and give not that which is holy to the dogs." Reserve your spiritual powers and forces upon the planes where they can do the most to help you.

GITHA: The more valuable your object, the more it must be guarded, as all precious things need strong guarding.

TASAWWUF: Suppose one is seeking a material object, one need something in the physical world, and has otherwise maintained his practices. If it is spoken before the unworthy, the loss of magnetism will be the first loss and others will follow. For instance, when it is discovered that somebody wants to purchase a motor car, the news is discovered and many salesmen and merchants will come and talk and disturb the person so that much of his expected joy is lost. On the other hand, if he is quiet, if he is a spiritual person, he can trust his intuitions and invariably the first place where he will go will be the right place. So the idea is very practical, it can save much trouble and worry and work.

GITHA: When a person tells others of his plan, each one looks at it from his point of view. Some understand, some do not understand; some have a sympathetic point of view, and some take an unfavorable attitude toward it.

TASAWWUF: For instance, the plan may be told to gain approval. For the ordinary person it is not wrong to have approval; for the spiritual person the approval of his teacher is enough. If he knows he is using the right method he does not have to consult anybody. It is necessary to know about the method of concentration, to know one is fulfilling the divine law. If one fulfills these requirements and especially if one performs those practices prescribed in the Sufi teachings, then his plan may be any plan, his hope may be any hope, his wish may be any wish.

When it comes to the expenditure of money, no thought should be upon the money, all thoughts should be given to the plan. If one wants to build a temple and dedicate it to God, the concentration should be upon the temple and not upon the cost—these are really two separate concentrations, one on an object of attainment and the other on the cost of an object of attainment. Of course if one wishes to build the temple and have his name ascribed to it, to gain merit, he may consider the price, for in reality that is his gift not to God, but to himself. It is a monument to himself. But if it is for God, then all the concentration should be upon the object of attainment and not upon the price of the object.

There are many examples in history where Sufis have longed for things which seem to be beyond their reach, in order to devote them to spiritual purposes and always it would happen that unexpected help would come. And the question is, how to obtain unexpected help? This requires self-surrender, and there can be no self-surrender so long as there is attachment to any idea or ideal except the object one has in view; one should not be attached to the price or materials or the manner in which it will be obtained. It is only by leaving these things to God, having faith in God, that God can help one. If all the doors are closed so God cannot help, how is the divine aid expected? Then, whatever the object of attainment, it would have nothing to do with the path of Sadhana.

And the next thing to guard against is opinion. It might be said that if the object of attainment has been something suggested in meditation, if it is a spiritual undertaking, if it has come through a holy impression or it is an assignment given by the teacher, the more one is willing to exert his efforts to obtain it, the surer will be the success and with the success will come blessings. But if one is influenced by others to change his plan or take a certain course, especially when there has been no success, he should be very careful to ask his heart if he is doing what God wills. The one who performs God's will always succeed in the end.

GITHA: And every person's attitude has something to do with your life and with your affairs. And if you have wholeheartedly engaged yourself in the accomplishment of a plan, many outside influences can hinder it.

TASAWWUF: The conditions without and the conditions within are not so dissimilar. If one has an object of attainment in view and instead of concentrating fully upon it, instead of being devoted to it, he allows other thoughts to interfere, then his magnetism will be divided and besides, his inner personality will not be unified: he cannot be sure of success; a house divided against itself cannot stand. Therefore single-mindedness is suggested.

But if there is inner harmony and if one listens to many voices in the world without, even if they at first do not have direct influence upon him, sooner or later the weight of their suggestions may bring a doubt, or else disturb the thought in such a way that there cannot be continual concentration. And as soon as there is the slightest doubt about it, one cannot be sure of success. Faith is most necessary for success on the path of Sadhana.

GITHA: The teaching, "Be wise as a serpent," may be interpreted, "Be quiet as a serpent." It is quietude that gives wisdom and power.

TASAWWUF: The question whether one must be quiet at all times, whether one may speak upon other subjects while maintaining silence about his own quest may be answered that all speech requires thought and if one is quiet about the object of his attainment and speaks about other things, he will have to give thought to other subjects and the more thought he gives to other subjects the less he can give to his ideal. So in this respect generally restraint upon speech in all matters is helpful.

However, if in the daily course of affairs it is necessary to converse, if there has been a normal rhythm, no one need interfere with this rhythm, no one need change his life in order to make his attainment successful. In that case it might be wise to have special hours for deep concentration and also to give as much attention to the object of attainment outside of the hours of business or labor. Harmony between the principles of silence and single-mindedness may be maintained without any loss of effort.

GITHA: The thought held in mind speaks to the mind of another, but the thought spoken out most often only reaches the ears of a person.

TASAWWUF: To win the friendship of another some sympathy is necessary. Most persons do not listen to the logic in the words of another; they are often moved by sentiment, by feeling or even by emotion. After all, it is not necessary to gain the friendship of everybody. If one can gain the friendship of God, if one can win the ears of God, that may be most helpful. Therefore with the concentration necessary to help one, some friend can also help as well as Fikr, for Fikr brings inspiration and magnetism.

GITHA: Every plan has a period of development and if man has power over his impulse, by retaining the thought silently in mind, he allows the plan to develop and to make all necessary changes that it may take for its culmination.

TASAWWUF: Now there are several suggestions that it might be wise to follow in this. It is true that in the beginning of the Sufic practices in Concentration, one gazes at an object or holds one in mind. But after a certain stage is reached, what is necessary is to make an improvement in the mental image. By this process one not only increases in will-power, one even aids in the improvement of his character and the increase of mental and moral magnetism. For all things and all thoughts have life and it is possible to take advantage of this fact.

Suppose then, one has an object of attainment about which one is very secretive. There is nothing wrong in it. Then one should either talk to God about it, or ask the plan if it has anything to say and one should listen carefully for a sign of intuitive help. And surely as there is life in the hope and surely as there is God, one will get an answer, one will receive an inspiration, one will get intuitive help.

There is a spirit of guidance in the universe and this spirit is willing and ready to guide everybody who calls upon God, or who is performing the right Dharma. Therefore after the first step is taken of keeping silence before every man, the next step is to talk about it either in the plane of mind or in the plane of heart. By this means one draws the inner help and an answer will come. The universe is willing and ready to aid all who come to it. It is only those who keep their own minds closed who cannot draw either the universal or divine help.

One may ask, if this is so, if one has to change, why take an object of attainment to begin with? The answer is that any concentration is helpful, any ideal is helpful. If man is the slave of his ideal, he will stay by it, he will close his heart to the world within as he closed his mind to the world without. He does not always realize that one of the supreme purposes for maintaining the outer silence, by being stubborn before humanity, [is that] one does not gain so much the attainment as draw to himself spiritual and mental strength. Then the wisdom and love and intelligence of the universe come to his aid and sooner or later he is successful, praise be to God.

GITHA: But when the impulse expresses the thought it, so to speak, “puts out the flame,” thus hindering the development of the plan.

TASAWWUF: So by keeping one’s secret between oneself and God, or between oneself and the sphere of thought, one strengthens it; by sharing it before the world, one weakens it.

GITHA: The wise speak with their mind many times before they speak about it to anybody.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, there is this inner conversation. It is not wrong. It is advisable especially as it increases the attention upon the object to be attained. For it is true that when the lips are sealed, God speaks, and when man does not listen to every body, it is possible to listen to God.

From this point of view it is easy to see that even in the path of Sadhana, even in striving for material success, it is possible to make God a reality. God is not only a reality when one prays; the prayer says: “Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives.” To restrict God to the spiritual aspects of life is to restrict God, and to demand a super-God who will have some relation to the daily life, who can be the Guide in the ordinary duties as well as in the spiritual affairs.

Actually God is always there; it is man who has declared some acts holy and others not holy. In Sadhana it is possible to make all acts holy by calling upon God. If the practices are only to be used for protection, it is not wrong, but why limit God to this? God has never decreed it so. God is love, and He is Father and Mother. He will help everybody who calls upon him.

Therefore the wise take their affairs to God, they speak to God and listen and if they speak truly to God, then they will hear truly from God. Then the attainment of man becomes the attainment of God, and the quest of man the quest of God. Verily, all life is but the quest of God by God if man only knew it.

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.

Githa with Commentary

Series I: Number 8

GITHA: The greater the object of your pursuit, the greater patience it requires, and there is a side in human nature which keeps one impatient and which makes one feel that he should mount to the top immediately; and therefore when he rushes impatiently towards the accomplishment of his object, he often falls.

TASAWWUF: For successful achievement through concentration it is first necessary to make the mental capacity. In Sufism this is done through feeling, for it is only when the heart feels the need that one can be sure that the intellectual faculty will give enough thought to a subject. This is because thought is that portion of the mind through which the will naturally acts and if the heart is not in it, the will can not be expected to keep the mind occupied. There will not be enough interest and consequently there can not be enough concentration. Love and devotion help very much toward creating and preserving this interest.

The next stage is to keep the mind in rhythm. To do this one should either consciously watch the breath and control it, or should practice Fikr regularly and often which practice also helps regulate the mental rhythms. These rhythms help focus the mental atoms so that the thought is well formed. The thought must grow and the best way to make it grow is through rhythm. If there is too much intensity of feeling, then the thought will grow rapidly and if there is too little interest the thought will grow too slowly. In either case there will be difficulties and in some respects these troubles will resemble those, on one hand of a physically precocious child, and on the other hand those of one who is under-nourished. In neither case will there be balance and so in the application of this principle to the world of thought, one may be sure that according to the nourishment of his thought, so will the object of attainment manifest. The physical life of everyone is in many respects nothing but the reflection of his mental life, his inner life.

Thus it will be seen that the same balance is needed and the same moral qualities are needed to be successful on the path of attainment as in the spiritual life generally. Indeed it would not be wrong to say that Sadhana is one aspect of the spiritual life, the way to act when acquisition is beneficial.

GITHA: In climbing there are steps, and one should climb gradually.

TASAWWUF: This is very important. It is not so much the size of the attainment that matters. But once a habit of failure is formed it is not always easy to change it. It is inadvisable to concentrate efforts upon attainments which can not be won. Time is not given to man to waste, at least in the spiritual sense. No one would consider a person sane who tried to study the higher mathematics, the more advanced science, the complex music before he has succeeded in mastering the principles and learning the elements. This is also true of Sadhana, that there is no value in starting by trying to gain all the objects of life in a short time. It is always best to begin with what is simple and easy until one has learned, and after one has learned to pass on to the next stage.

GITHA: One must hold before one's mind the object, but one must at the same time see the steps that one has to climb. If patience will not help in climbing the steps and in journeying the necessary distance, there will come a fall.

TASAWWUF: Patience is nothing but the spiritual requisite for the right utilization of time. Although patience is a moral, it is more than a moral. It cultivates mental control and by keeping the mind quiet and passive, it sometimes can be receptive. And from the Sufic point of view no form of Sadhana is right unless there has been spiritual confirmation and this confirmation comes in the way of dreams, visions, deeper intuitions and impressions, or by gifts or offers or opportunities in the daily life.

If one has a distant object, a great goal, then more time is necessary. One is not to use concentration in order to avoid physical work. For according to the spiritual principles, if one does not or cannot work in the material manner, then one is obliged to labor mentally. There are no spiritual practices which encourage laziness although there is much in sacred instruction which is imparted to enable the traveler to avoid pain. There is much difference between these terms and it is a pity that some persons consider metaphysics as an art whereby they may accumulate objects of desire by requiring God to do their work. This is sin and sooner or later leads to failure or obsession or both.

GITHA: This shows that there are three chief things in the path of attainment: Steadiness of concentration in holding the object of concentration firmly before oneself; at the same time noticing with open eyes the many steps that one must climb to reach the object; and the third thing is patient perseverance.

TASAWWUF: This might be called the résumé of the principal teachings in Sadhana. The practice of Concentration is almost self-evident and there are methods by which Sufis may develop along this line, whether the teachings are applied in the path of attainment or for self development or for any other purpose. And if performed rightly, spiritual practices can bring one all the necessary help in every purpose of life.

The necessity for observation and for patience are first taught to the elementary students in Sufism. To accept these teachings as intellectual lessons only helps a little. For by this method one can know what is in a paper or can remember the words of the teacher, but one will not thereby

increase the capacity in the heart. Therefore many schools of Sufism begin with a period of discipline lasting from a few days to many years to enable the disciple to attune his heart to that of his Sheikh and chain of teachers and this is most helpful in the later development which is by love and not by intellect.

GITHA: Patience is the most difficult thing in life, and once this is mastered, man will become the master of all difficulties.

TASAWWUF: Because patience is a method by which the will controls all the vibrations, stopping the forces of instinct and passion and emotion, promoting peace. This is the sign of Nufs Salima, which is really a stage of mastery. By this means one brings peace to oneself. Besides that, it really places things in God's hands. The real prayer, "Thy will be done," comes when one is patient, for then the personal will cannot interfere with the divine will. When to this is added the prayer of satisfaction, or the prayer for daily needs, one opens up the capacity to receive help from everywhere.

This is a great blessing, for the divine light is there, was always there, and it is the self-will which has been hindering its direct manifestation.

GITHA: Patience, in other words, may be called the power of endurance during the absence of the desired things or conditions. They say death is the worst thing in life; but in point of fact, patience is worse than death. One would prefer death to patience, when patience is severely tried.

TASAWWUF: Patience may be severely tried under two states, one of which may be called the state of death and the other the state of insight. To the man of insight it is possible to stay in a state of perseverance either because of trust in God or optimism, which is really another form of trust. The blind person, the one with little faith, he can not see into the distance, he does not know the future and he does not feel the coming of a blessing. So he acts in his blindness and goes to extreme measures of suicide or crime.

GITHA: Patience is a life power; it is a spiritual power and the greatest virtue that one can have ...

TASAWWUF: This was the faculty of the Buddha and of all the Buddhas and sages. For patience shows control of all vibrations as well as mastery of time. Control of vibrations aids in the attainment of peace and this peace is so marvelous that it helps to attract whatever is needed. If one can keep perfectly quiet, stilling the heart and mind, then, when the will is directed toward something, it seems that an area of accommodation is made, so to speak, in this placid lake and whatever is desired is then drawn into this accommodation.

For this reason one practices meditation for long periods of one's life and by this means the body, mind, and heart are purified. This enables the will to act as it will and not to be influenced or controlled by any selfish desire, thought, or passion. The whole universe in a certain sense is within man and by this method he can learn to attract anything which is in the universe.

GITHA: ... for it is a cross, and on this the patient one is crucified. And as resurrection follows crucifixion, so all success and happiness must follow the trying moments of patience.

TASAWWUF: The trial is to avoid being intoxicated by the glamour of life. One of the main reasons for trying to overcome the attractions of the world is that when under their spell the magnetism of the personality is so divided, so much energy is spent in every direction, that never enough is collected. The person does not know what he wants, he thinks he wants something and the gaining of the object does not bring satisfaction.

The Sufi practices enable one to unify the personality. Besides stilling the mind and bringing peace, this enables the personal will of man to come to self-understanding. This is one of the most important processes in life. In the state of attaining patience one practices self-denial, and this finally brings self-understanding. It is even so as in Zikr; first denial: **La Illaha**, then affirmation and attainment: **Il Allahu**.

Even Zikr can be used in attainment for it helps to make the proper accommodation in the heart. It is the attunement of the heart to God which completes the work in Sadhana. Even from the standpoint of common sense, the spiritual practices are most valuable for they enable man to find his way through the battles of life and to gain success in his every endeavor. So the end of patience is success and happiness.

GITHA: Noticing the steps toward the goal is the work of the intelligence, and this helps to make the work of patience fruitful. But patience and intelligence both become wings to the power of concentration. This is a power to hold the desired thought firmly, so that it may not change.

TASAWWUF: Intelligence is increased by our observations of our own life, noting the successes as they come and counting the failures. By this method one will gradually learn that there is a constant factor in failure, and that is the ego. One will also discover that before each success there was a certain feeling and before each failure there was another feeling and through this experience develop that faculty of insight which will discover success and thus prepare one for it and also discover failure and enable one to avoid it. This surely is a sign of intelligence. It grows through insight and intuition.

Thus it may be said that patience is a faculty which is most valuable in preventing man from doing wrong, in keeping him from trying anything which will lead to failure or engage him in useless effort. It is the faculty of purification. While intelligence is that faculty which will show him how to accomplish the right thing, teach him the right action, lead him when he has to be led, and assist him when he is leading. In this respect they are the very two wings of the soul as in the Sufi symbol

And the heart with its star and crescent complete the symbol, for the heart is the center of the concentration of desire. The star is its expressive faculty which is the symbol of intelligence in the instance, and the moon is the symbol of reception and quietude which is related to patience along the line of Sadhana. And even as the light filleth the crescent moon, so will all things be drawn to

the heart of the patient and loving one who is willing to take a step forward into the unknown because of his trust in Allah.

GITHA: You must pity the man who cannot decide between two things. He lacks concentration. Single-mindedness is the chief secret of concentration.

TASAWWUF: This is really the cause of all failure. Therefore, the Sufis and Mussulmans [Muslims] regarded Dualism as the source and essence of all evil. It is certainly true in the practical sense, for a man divided against himself cannot stand. The person who looks in two directions at once will have eye trouble, and the person whose mind thinks in two directions will have mental trouble, and the person whose heart is divided will reach nowhere. Therefore by the practice of "Toward the One" the body or mind or heart will settle itself upon one goal in great things and in small things and when man is unable to decide by himself, by this practice God decides for him and in all questions where there is any doubt it is always the first impression which is to be followed. Whatever impresses itself upon the heart first is the proper course for the moment, and what comes after that or is suggested by another, thus dividing the heart, causes evil and difficulty. By practicing the unity-principle as well as the presence of God, man prepares himself for right-concentration.

GITHA: One must keep one's object steady in the mind, and must not allow anything to change the mind from the object.

TASAWWUF: It is better not to start than to change before the time of materialization. For instance, if one has a desire for a basket of peaches and then says, "No, I would prefer grapes," and then begins a concentration for the grapes, the peaches will come when one is concentrating most upon grapes and they will not then bring satisfaction, which is a great pity.

The same is true in larger things which may have to do with the ambition or with work or with a larger goal. Every thought-concentration builds up a thought-elemental on the mental plane, and this form lives on and on until it is materialized. If one wishes to make use of this entity favorably one must continue with one's work or concentration until complete. So it is wise to learn to control one's mind and this is done in two ways: to keep the mind fixed upon the object of desire and to not let one's own thoughts interfere; neither to let the thoughts or suggestions of another interfere until one has gone as far as possible over the route he has begun to traverse.

GITHA: Even things more useful, precious, and better must be considered as temptation. The object that once man has and once he has embarked upon its attainment, he must accomplish it to its very end, or else not have any object in life.

TASAWWUF: It is only in this way that one can keep in harmony with the universe and so with God. To talk of God as the perfection of love, harmony, and beauty, which is very true, and then to show disharmony within oneself by the constant changing of thought makes it impossible ever to surrender to God. For in that state, man is constantly giving way to the next thought, whether from

himself or another, and this makes surrender impossible. There is no freedom: man is the slave of thought and passion, and he arrives nowhere.

To overcome this state, Sufis practice Darood in daily life and Fikr in the silent life. These two practices, each in its own way, help him. In Darood man surrenders to God who guides him, helping him to accomplish what he desires, and in Fikr man becomes attuned to his innermost being, and this helps him to accomplish what God desires. Therefore Darood is most necessary for the daily practical life of the world and Fikr for the life of eternity. And if one relies upon these practices, the feeling will develop in the heart which awakens the faculty of insight, in other words, intelligence.

By this means, man arrives at unification and from unification he will attain to success, for by that means even God Himself won His own success.

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.

Githa with Commentary Series I: Number 9

GITHA: Progress in the path of attainment sometimes produces too much self-confidence, and if it comes untimely, it produces a sort of negligence and often it weakens enthusiasm.

TASAWWUF: There are several apparent forms of progress. The first comes when one has been concentrating on a subject and then changes the object of desire. That is to say, if one has been desiring peaches and then wants grapes and while pondering on the grapes the peaches come. This is a sort of success which may be called abortive. The change only brought the materialization sooner and one was not in a proper receptive mood. This leads to misunderstanding of the nature of success.

At another time one will receive an intuition and will think it is a concentration and while holding it in the heart and mind find that it comes to pass very quickly. For example, one feels the desire for a valise or a suit, and then begins to concentrate and shortly is given a suit or valise. The ease by which it came makes one think that the path of Sadhana is very easy and one may lose in putting the right effort forward. But in this case it was an intuition and it was not wrong to perform the concentration, only one should learn to distinguish between an intuition which comes suddenly in the heart and the selection of a choice in Sadhana which may arise from the exigencies of the daily

life.

To avoid any difficulty in this line it is always wise to praise God after every success, great or small, after every gift or blessing which comes to one, whatever be its nature, whether one has especially desired it or not. By praising God from whom all blessings flow, man protects himself in many ways.

GITHA: For instance, one may build a house very carefully and attentively, particular about every detail; and when it has come closer to the finish, one might think that as it came right so far, it must of necessity be finished rightly. He may neglect, and may lose some of the enthusiasm and attention to every detail, which may result in disappointment.

TASAWWUF: To avoid this, one should not, without the teacher's advice and consent, select another subject for concentration until one has accomplished all one can along the line he has been working. Especially in those matters of attainment which take a material form, while they are forming, while they are coming into manifestation, the greatest care and attention should be given until the hour would come, as in building a house, that one could hold a ceremony of dedication, or in other matters, that one could give the blessing and thanks to God.

In the practice of Murakkabah, one is trained first in the simple concentrations, then in concentration with detail, and finally in concentration with improvement. To make the most of success one is wise who perfects his exercise in Sadhana on this pattern. Then one holds a complete picture in the heart until the end of attainment and by this means perfects whatsoever is in the mind and, by this perfection of mind, helps in the formation of something which continues to bring inspiration and enthusiasm throughout the process and which is a source of continued inspiration and blessing thereafter. Sufis always do this in the erection of sacred edifices, or even of private dwellings; they continue this performance in private business or labor and by this means make the spiritual life most practical.

GITHA: Therefore, self-confidence and enthusiasm and attentiveness are forces which must be economically used, not with extravagance. The force which is given at the commencement of the work must last until it is finished; if it breaks in the middle, often the whole effort is broken.

TASAWWUF: One does not destroy self-confidence, one controls it. And how does one control it? This comes mostly through reliance upon God. If one keeps the heart fixed upon God one gradually gets a feeling in the heart which is even stronger than confidence, which is the purest faith. When there is this faith one can move forward to success by combining his action with God's desire. He must not refrain from action for it would mean either that God's desire would be accomplished through another, or else his failure to act or his action in another direction would be contrary to the will of God. Nor must he act without this faith; by performing his practices he will always continue on the right path.

Now as to enthusiasm, this can be controlled by silence or by constant praise of God within. And

attentiveness is continued mostly through Darood, and when this is lacking more Darood, and if that is not enough, cessation from work whenever it is possible to perform a silence, repeating a Darood without working until one can continue one's affairs in Darood. By these means man works in harmony with the law until he learns to rise above it.

GITHA: Pride is a great enemy of man. Sometimes man is proud of the great object he has before him to accomplish. The man who has finished a part of his work often becomes proud with the hope that he will be able to finish the whole.

TASAWWUF: Thus pride becomes the enemy of pride. If we are to regard pride as a virtue, something to be attained, then that very characteristic is to be attained by the path of Sadhana. And to do this one must continue in the state of single-mindedness until the end. For pride is a thought of oneself and if one holds oneself in the state of pride, the mind is divided between the object of attainment and the pride in oneself and by that means the concentration and hope of life is broken and can be destroyed.

GITHA: But pride in all its forms is blinding; a proud man cannot see his path clearly.

TASAWWUF: Because the proud man is always looking at himself, he is like a man looking in the mirror and seeing all things from their reflections in the mirror. He does not observe anything directly, he does not look at life, he is looking at himself, he is thinking of himself, he is admiring himself. Then he cannot draw anything close or if he draws anything he cannot hold it for he has made no accommodation and sooner or later even his successes will become failures. For that reason many wealthy persons, many most successful in life, cannot hold the wealth or position or power and go so far as to commit suicide. It is nothing but the result of the pride which dimmed the vision; the faculties were there, the ability was there, but the pride covered everything and made failure out of every achievement.

GITHA: Even after the attainment of a certain object in life, it is wise not to attribute the credit of it to oneself, but to see that power and wisdom is in the Almighty God.

TASAWWUF: For that reason Sufis perform Darood during action and praise to God therefore which prevents the ego from asserting itself. By that means both pride and humility are avoided, everything that turns attention to the ego is avoided, and of these people it is said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven;" "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." The poor in spirit, those devoid of ego, learn to control their concentrations, become masters of mind; and the meek go a step further and make it possible for all they have accomplished in Heaven to manifest upon earth. By avoiding all reference to the self, by keeping the heart fixed upon God, that accommodation is made upon earth whereby blessings come into materialization, for the benefit of oneself and one's fellows.

GITHA: After one has accomplished something in life, it often happens that one becomes a captive of his accomplishment, as a spider becomes captive in his web. As the nature of life is freedom, no

attainment is valuable, however great, if it masters the freedom of the soul.

TASAWWUF: The problem then becomes, how to secure the attainment without having the attainment secure oneself. How to master each situation so that the situation cannot master you. And this is not hard. For according to the Sufi path of Sadhana, everything is dedicated to God from the beginning to the end. Concentration is difficult, but if one performs Fikr, one can fix the mind so that it will respond to spiritual impressions, it will enter into harmony with the universe, so to speak, and in this state, it cannot go astray; it is on the right path and sooner or later will secure whatsoever it needs or requires.

The absolute freedom of the soul is achieved when one is beyond all desires. Nevertheless on earth this does not mean a life dedicated to poverty. The true dedication is to God whether one lives a life of poverty or opulence. Especially when we consider whether it is possible to become wealthy and also to attain to the kingdom of heaven, it is to be observed that this is possible when one overcomes that attachment to ego which spoils every motive and every activity of life. This really makes for death, while life is an expanding movement, one which requires greater freedom and it is to provide this freedom and assist one that the path of Sadhana is followed.

GITHA: And therefore, man must always take care that he stands above things he has attained instead of standing below. Master is he who controls things and affairs of life, and he becomes a slave who is controlled by the things of this earth.

TASAWWUF: There are three paths at least open to man. One is to fall beneath the sway of things and give heed to every passion and desire; the second is to flee temptation; the third is to be in the world but not of it. When Buddha was upon earth he saw that most persons were engaged either in pleasures or in asceticism and he gave out the doctrine of the middle path, which is to live a life avoiding these two extremes.

It is probable that, taken as a whole, the Sufis have also lived very closely to these ideals. Mohammed warned against the extreme path of monastic discipline, which really led to the devitalization of the humanity. If God provided man with organs and faculties, these were to be used for the glory of God; they were not to be avoided. It is the nufs, not the organs and faculties, which causes the evil. So the prophet considered it unfortunate that some men led an unnatural life.

At the same time he was born into a world where most people were very selfish and inconsiderate. Therefore the main part of his Message is directed against them. But it cannot be said that the spiritual principles of Mohammed were essentially different from those of the Buddha, no matter how divergent were the details of their teachings. Both sought to guide man away from these extremes of self-indulgence and unnatural asceticism, and the Message of the day is only a re-echo of their doctrines.

GITHA: Life's greatest secret is the continuity of progress.

TASAWWUF: This means both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. One is satisfied for the sake of peace, for the sake of tranquility, for the attainment of Nirvana. In that state one longs for nothing, one gives one's praise to God, one's heart is at rest, one's mind causes no disturbance. And this is all accomplished through meditation and praise. This is the state of sobriety and it takes on many forms.

Then there is the state of dissatisfaction which is very necessary. Nothing in form is perfect, and yet everything is tending toward perfection, toward beauty and harmony. It is the wise man who becomes the servant of God in this cosmic process. Therefore the moral reformers are not entirely wrong; they want to make the world better. The sage does not differ from them in ideal, but he often differs in method for he feels that the best way to improve the earth is to improve himself, and this he does in accordance with the principles of the spiritual sciences.

For there are spiritual sciences and a knowledge of them is most advantageous to the one who seeks them. By this method one comes to perfection, in other words, to God realization and it is then that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are one. This is the best sign of progress.

GITHA: When progress stops, it is as death, and as long as man is progressing mortality cannot touch him.

TASAWWUF: One will ask, perhaps, if man can continue progressing, is it possible to attain to physical immortality. Yes, theoretically it is possible. Yet in the lives of Moses and Elijah and others who reached this state as well as Jesus, they chose to dissolve the physical body voluntarily. Moses lived 120 years and it was of no advantage to him to remain in the body. Joshua had reached his spiritual majority and he could not function if Moses remained, so Moses withdrew. For the same reason Elijah withdrew in favor of Elisha. So most sages do not stay in the body longer than they have to.

After a certain point is reached, that one has control over earthly affairs, that one is master of earth, then it is time to rise and reach a higher state, to work in heaven. But if man stays forever on earth, he can accomplish much here, but he cannot accomplish so much for the hereafter. He must progress and yet he must be unselfish. What does he do?

He does as the Bodhisattva does, he remains away from earth and yet does not abide in Nirvana. He goes where he can be of most assistance to God and man. So if he has the ability of being immortal on earth, nevertheless in his wisdom he sees the value of withdrawing from earth, he goes to Malakut and there he accomplishes his work with more ease and is of most benefit to both God and man.

GITHA: Attainment or no attainment, pursuit after something man's soul cares to reach must be continued, and by single-mindedness one must build a path from earth to Heaven and from man to God.

TASAWWUF: So the path of Sadhana is really the path of immortality. There is so much misunderstanding in this word. So many who want to be immortal, yet they want to be physically immortal. If you ask them the meaning of progress, they will not object to the motor car, nor to the submarine, nor ocean liner, and even less to the lift or aeroplane. Ask such a man, why does he not use his legs, they are most natural, and he will tell you all about progress and waste and the benefits man gets from machinery.

Yes, there is great economy in machinery and God has placed all things on earth before man. It is right to develop the mind and to seek moral betterment, but it is also correct to seek the highest state possible spiritually. While it saves man much time and trouble to make use of a machine instead of always depending upon the arms and legs God gave him, so it is a thousand times more correct to leave this world when the body ceases to be the best vehicle for mind.

The immortal man may keep the body in perfect health, he may know exactly what to do here and now and accomplish his ends in Heaven and upon earth. This is certainly true of the sage and especially of the Rassoul, whosoever he may be. But is he barred from progress? May he not use the motor car and steamship and aeroplane? Even so he is entitled to apply his own wisdom, his own ingenuity. These instruments are the tools perfected by others, and it is not wrong that he make use of them, but it becomes even a greater sign of wisdom and progress to apply his own ingenuity, to perfect the tools over which he has control. Therefore he often leaves the earth unexpectedly while young, as was true of Jesus, or he may linger an unusually long time and wait until he has a successor, as did Moses, or he may live the average span and then withdraw, as did Mohammed. It does not matter.

What matters is that he apply his wisdom in his daily life. So even after accomplishing all that he needs to here and now, the spiritual persons must apply these lessons in the life of the world to come. They are eternally valuable, and in this, self-control and self-mastery are most important. And this is the true immortality, to come to the realization of one's place in the universe and live accordingly. By this means shortly but surely man comes to the threshold of God and the complete attainment of all his desires until he finds perfect rest in the bosom of the Almighty.

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.

GITHA: An important rule of psychology is that every motive that takes its root in the mind must be watered and reared until its full development.

TASAWWUF: How does an idea take its root in the mind? Whenever a thought is held and continued even through only one or two breaths it effects the mind; it produces its mark and it has to continue its existence. Therefore there are two courses, one being to avoid thought and the other to harmonize thought to the general life. Both courses have been followed by the wise and each has its advantage.

If the mind can be kept in a state of purity free from thought, there can be no devitalizing nerve energy. In other words, the nerves will not be exhausted, and consequently there can be no pain or even any disease. That is to say, the mind is held as a placid lake and this peace of mind is of such a nature that one lives in tranquility, a healer of himself and others.

In the other condition, which is followed by many Sufis, it is the heart which has to be purified first and then the state of mind is controlled by the heart. Then it is not so much a question of avoiding every kind of impression but of selecting those impressions which can be taken up and put to use. The end of this life is mastery, while the following stage of existence is adaptable to Khilvat which includes retirement from the world.

Khilvat is advantageous if performed at certain periods, but it is always good later in life when one is preparing for the next world. Khilvat always prepares for the next world, even if that is not the supreme intention of this institution. It has many other advantages and purposes. But in the daily life, when we use the senses, when the mind is so active, it is chiefly a question of keeping the mind pure and guarding against all sorts of unnecessary intrusions.

GITHA: And if one neglects this duty, one does not only harm the motive, but by this the will power becomes less and the working of the mind becomes disorderly.

TASAWWUF: The minds of most people are disorderly. To guard against this we find that the lower creation has many periods of silences, as we can observe in the life of the cats. Many persons of what are sometimes call the lower races also keep the mind free from thought, but this is not a mastery. No one can master thought who has not employed the mind. As Buddha stated, it is Right Mindfulness which is needed to attain to Nirvana.

Right Mindfulness includes the right use of mind as well as abstention from use. Meditation helps one to avoid needless thought-activity. Darood keeps the thoughts in harmony with the best within oneself and gives no opportunity for disharmonious ideas to enter the sphere of mind. Of course this does not give the mind rest, it does not win freedom, but it is most valuable in aiding the mind to cultivate only thoughts which will procure some advantage. Therefore the prayer, "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives," is followed by Darood which makes this possible in the most practical way.

GITHA: Even if the motive be small and unimportant, yet a steady pursuit after its attainment trains the mind, strengthens the will, and keeps the inner mechanism in order.

TASAWWUF: The mind is strengthened when, after an idea is allowed to take root, it is followed through to some culmination; and the best form of culmination is that the thought ends in action. It does not matter whether the act is performed by oneself or another. In fact the spiritual persons often spend much time in thought only to see another person perform the act desired.

What is sometimes called suggestion can result in economy of mind. This means that considering God as the only being and all persons His instruments as well as projections of His very being, the soul responds to the cry of the heart and mind, and the soul selects the instruments for success which best suit its own purpose. Or, as Krishna has stated, our right is only to action, which means first, that if we concentrate upon the thought, let us be thankful whatever be the way of the materialization of that thought; and if we have recourse to action, then we must surrender the fruits of that action back to God, for it is only because of God's Grace that we have been able to act successfully.

And the result of this economy is strength of will. Because when one learns this law, how we live in the universe and can be in harmony with the universal God, then we avoid such action and thought as will not bring desirable results. This reserves our energy and the more it is held in reserve, the more power can be brought forward every time it is necessary to take a step. So silence or a least restraint of speech is most helpful and this takes on two forms: not speaking at all, or speaking only under inspiration. When man can feel inspiration at all times, that is, when he is receptively intuitive, the will gains multi-fold in strength.

Finally, the inner mechanism will be put in order for the machinery will not be employed except for production. The minds of some persons are like machines that have the currents turned on, which are always running and never working. The principle of Sadhana is to make the mind work, that is, produce something, when it runs; in other words, to avoid waste and wasteful activities. It is then that the mind can draw closer and closer to God. And this is its proper function, even from the selfish point of view, that one learns to use it only to produce results.

GITHA: For instance, when a person tries to unravel a knot, and then he thinks, "No use giving time to it," he loses an opportunity of strengthening the will and attaining the object desired. However small a thing may appear to be, when once handled one must accomplish it, not for the thing itself, but for what benefit it gives.

TASAWWUF: It is through the practice of Darood, as well as the other spiritual practices and careful observation of the breath, that talibs are enabled to feel beforehand what actions should be attempted. Right concentration, in Sufic terms, consists in holding the thought with the feeling; the feeling should control the thought. When the thought acts without the feeling one is, so to speak, absent minded, which is a very good way of saying that the heart and mind are not together. There is no will-power, so there is no real thought, and this is the beginning of failure. If there is failure in

the action, it is chiefly a result of this state of mind which existed beforehand.

Therefore the talib should face every action with the feeling of success. It is this feeling of success which leads to some greater success. And until one has succeeded one does not know the meaning of success. So the effort should be put forward in every action, that one is acting for the sake of God, for the cause of God. Then he will gain his victories in all things of life, small or great, for he has called God into consultation.

From the psychological point of view, one must take the opposite course from the fox who thought the grapes were sour when he could not reach them. Man must first determine what is worth an effort, then he should bend the will toward accomplishing that effort. In this a hard defeat may even be better than an easy victory, for if the heart is right, sooner or later the soul will accomplish a greater victory than would have been possible without his defeat. And this places all action in the class of spiritual effort, which is always excellent for the devotee.

GITHA: Yes, thought must be given as to its importance and value in the beginning, when the motive begins to take root in the mind, and one must avoid an undesirable and unimportant motive taking place.

TASAWWUF: It is the motive which must be watched more than the action; the action of itself may be very unimportant. Pure motive comes naturally from the pure heart, but if there is any doubt as to purity of heart, the constant practice of Darood will prevent every man from going on the wrong path, from taking the wrong course in life. For Darood is a form of self-surrender and it is self-surrender which sooner or later helps one to master all things on the Path of Attainment.

GITHA: When the motive does not receive a direction, it does not necessarily die away. It takes its own path and culminates in some shape and form quite different from what you had desired.

TASAWWUF: The reason for this is that every action, thought, or speech not performed in accordance with the will of God produces karma, and this means that one not only has no control over the result of the action, but it may actually mean that the result is contrary to the hope. For the nature of God is love and kindness, and attunement to God is not any particular thought or even feeling or attitude; performance of thought, speech, or action in unison with the practice of Darood or after it, will always mean that the act was in harmony with the will of God. The mind, the thought, has nothing to do with it; it cannot be explained or calculated. But right prayer and right meditation always cause the personality to avoid those actions which are displeasing to the Deity and thus he escapes the evil of karma. And only in this manner can he find happiness.

For persons are often confused between the object of desire and the manner of attainment. Sometimes they are so filled with passion that they pay no attention to the form of attainment and thus fall into vice or crime, and this naturally creates evil karma. In the end they will find no satisfaction. For to be successful in the path of attainment, one must pay as much attention to the manner of behavior as to the selection of the right ideal. The two must be taken together; the end

neither justifies the means nor is the end separate from the means. They must be considered together.

GITHA: All ugliness, crookedness, and defect in nature and art are mostly caused by this.

TASAWWUF: For Darood brings unity, harmony, and beauty, and absence of these qualities brings diversity, disharmony, and lack of beauty. They cannot be avoided when the heart is not pure and the breath is not under control. No doubt this is the true state of many persons. Therefore the Message of God comes not only to bring light to every individual so he can find his way in the world, but it is also that every person may become a torch and beacon to bring love, harmony, and beauty to the earth-world.

So it is by the purification of self that all good things come, for by following the principles of Sadhana all things come as good. They are attained naturally according to a law which exerts its influence beyond the physical world and they are valuable to man both in his everyday practical life and in some aspects of that portion of his life which will continue long after he discards his physical envelope.

Verily, it is through God that all blessings come in whatever form they come.