

**Githa with Commentary**

**Ryazat: Esotericism**

**Series II**  
*of*

**Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan**  
*by*

**Murshid Samuel L. Lewis**

**(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)**

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

**Githa with Commentary**

**Series II: Number 1**

**Fikr**

GITHA: The breath is the current which is established between all planes of man's existence. Its current runs from the life unseen to the life on the surface, thus uniting spirit and matter both.

TASAWWUF: If one studies the words for breath in the ancient languages one will find they are mostly identical with soul. Thus atma in Sanskrit means both breath and soul, and nephesh which is usually translated from the Hebrew language as soul also means breath. The Greek word psyche has been translated as soul and as breath, really that portion of the breath associated with nufs. The Hebrew word ruach which is often called spirit or wind is the same as the Arabic ruh which we call soul.

Now there are various conceptions to soul and also to breath and today there is no tendency to identify them. Yet the Sufi would say that the breath is a current by which the soul gives the life to the body. This current travels along the air element and in its lowest aspect depends upon the gas oxygen, and every movement of breath is accompanied by a chemical process of some oxidation.

The study of breath reveals its relationship to thought, speech and action. All are dependent upon it. One can stop the breath also and lose consciousness; it is then that the consciousness ceases to function in the body and in the mind showing that the breath must pass through both of them. When one develops to a certain point he is able by means of the refined breath to reach a state of realization which frees him from dependence upon mind and body and then he can use them as his vehicles and tools.

GITHA: When the breath leaves the material being of man, then comes what man calls death, which shows that breath is the sign of life and life itself, and its contact with the body keeps the body alive and its contact with the mind keeps the mind alive.

TASAWWUF: St. Paul has said, "I die daily," and yet in a certain sense ones dies with every exhalation. If one expels all the breath from the body he will find it most difficult to speak or move or think. So soon as the breath is brought back these functions come naturally and simply. And yet it is possible through the exhalation to rid the body of poisons and the mind of unwholesome thoughts. When this process is properly carried out it is called Sufa, or purification, which is needed by all students of mysticism.

It is possible to overcome death while man lives upon earth by the proper study and control of the

breath-current. If one can let go of himself with each exhalation it becomes easier for him to receive the divine light with each inhalation.

GITHA: But neither body nor mind is life. If there is any sign of life we can trace on the surface, it is no other than the breath.

TASAWWUF: The proof that the life is not the body or that the life is not the mind can more easily be offered by direct experience and realization than by any logic. If one has had the experience one knows, and the purpose of esotericism is to train the talib to come to knowledge in this way. Yet in Paul Brunton's works one has an excellent opportunity to study the arguments which prove that the real life is not the body or in the body, is not the emotions or in the emotions, is not the mind or in the mind.

The average person does not make a study of breath and when he does he wants some fancy breathing. He supposes that if he does something strange with the breath that is spiritual, and if he does something ordinary or simple that cannot be of much value. Yet many of the exercises of the mystics are most simple. One has to learn to regulate the breath, keep it in rhythm and refine it. By such means the controlled consciousness penetrates deeper into the personality and awakens many latent powers which are asleep in the generality.

GITHA: Therefore the Sufi takes the breath as the means of getting what he wants from the life unseen to the life on the surface.

TASAWWUF: Although even Christ himself has referred to the use of breath in the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven, because of translations by the ignorant or the interference of the orthodox, this knowledge has been withdrawn from the western world and is only coming back after many centuries. However it is a very delicate and dangerous thing to experiment with breath; it is even worse than playing with high explosives. Many people who would not venture into the arts and sciences without a competent teacher have played with the breath without regard to the subsequent effects upon themselves and others. Then if something goes wrong the Yoga science is blamed, not the one who, thinking he was performing Yoga, has overlooked many stages of its practice and especially gone ahead undisciplined.

One can see a little of the part that breath plays in life by following the course of dreams. The light for dreams comes with and through the breath and sometimes an alert person can see the dreams and visions even on the surface of the breath. When there are impurities in the body due to putrefaction or other unwholesome causes the dreams also become unwholesome and when the body is purified the dreams often become cleared and filled with meaning.

GITHA: Also he makes it a means of sending what he wishes from the life external to the life within.

TASAWWUF: The breath is a highway which can bring anything to a person, not only health and strength, but even worldly wealth, if he have the concentration and does not merely wish or desire.

For the power of the desire nature is limited, while one who has mastery of breath has control over the forces of the lower planes and can exercise it without difficulty. Meditation, concentration and spiritual practices in general help to remove the obstacles from one's path. Not that thereby one should seek wealth but one should see that nothing outside blocks his path.

By the exhalation one can bestow blessings upon the world, one can draw down that which is in the worlds within, offering himself as a channel for manifestation. This is true of many people who do not know much about breath. Kindness and compassion depend upon the ability of man to give out, to surrender, and for this purpose one must be able to have a full exhalation, not being attached even to the breath.

GITHA: The breath may be considered as a lift that can take you to any floor up and any floor down. By the help of breath you can send your thought anywhere and to any plane and bring about desired results. In breath abides all the mystery there is.

TASAWWUF: In the literature and especially in *In an Eastern Rose Garden* this subject is discussed at length. Very few seem to realize its importance. The statement that the breath is a lift is not knowledge, it becomes one's knowledge only where there is practice and application. In the teaching many suggestions are made and especially in the studies of the Gathas on breath, that thereby the talib may be able to advance on the spiritual path and at the same time overcome all those obstacles which stand in his way in life.

When one practices concentration he develops both force and refinement, which may be called the Jelalic and Jemalic aspects of breath. By force one can draw power to himself, can attract, and at the same time can overcome opposition. But by refinement he can penetrate where otherwise he would not have been able to go, and thus exercise his wisdom.

Telepathy and telekinesis (use of power at a distance) both depend upon breath. As the breath can penetrate to the higher spheres it can reach the plane where its expanse is greater than the earth itself. Then, through thought and feeling it can touch any part of the earth. This makes the thought-communication possible. For this, however, there must be attunement between hearts, considerable power on the part of the sender and refinement and delicacy on the part of the receiver. The common practice of Fikr is one way by which these faculties can be obtained and utilized.

A further refinement makes it possible to receive and send messages to the worlds unseen. This is especially valuable in establishing rapport between teacher and pupil after the teacher has left the world. The chain (silsila) of Sufis has been maintained in this manner so that for practical purposes it is of little importance whether the teacher is miles away on the same plane or is withdrawn to a subtler plane. Neither time nor space nor vibration will stand between him and his mureed.

If one reads the miracles of the various scriptures and wants to know the reason for it, he may be surprised to learn that it is all in the breath. Breath can establish a rapport between oneself and

whatever is outside of oneself. One can, for instance, adjust his breath to take in a block of wood so that that block of wood becomes as a part of one's very being. Then, however heavy it be, he may be able to lift it, the block supplying the needed power. This is impossible when one looks upon the block or a weight as separate, as something outside of oneself.

The healing and miraculous power of Christ and of all prophets, the ability to perceive visions clearly, to control the phenomena around one, even to master the weather depend upon one's mastery over the breath. A well-developed breath is in tune with the whole earth, and as it becomes still more refined man begins to find the universe within himself and, although he may continue to look outward through his own eyes, he can feel within that which he perceives without.

GITHA: The Sufi's object being self-realization by the ideal of God, he works for its attainment by the means of the breath, which he calls Fikr, and an ideal so attained becomes his property, his kingdom, forever.

TASAWWUF: Through Fikr the breath becomes more and more refined and as it so changes it penetrates more deeply into the inner spheres. Its deep penetration brings to man refinement, delicacy and most of all wisdom. Then, whatever one becomes attuned to, that becomes his property. And one may even attract or attain to material wealth in that manner although mostly the spiritual students have chosen other objects to answer their satisfaction.

The phrase "Be ye wise as serpents" indicates that when one practices concentration and becomes heart-fixed upon God, on the one hand he will obtain the power of attraction which the serpents have, and on the other hand he will develop along the path of wisdom; so Christ has also said, "Be ye harmless as doves." For it is not necessary to force anything; whatever one thinks about with faith, perseverance and patience will be attracted.

If a question be asked, can one by Fikr learn to overcome his own problems and answer his needs, it may be said in reply that often this is true, and that also one can learn thereby to answer questions himself and receive impressions and inspirations from within.

---

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 II: Number 2**

### **Rhythm in Fikr**

GITHA: Rhythm is the nature of motion, and motion is the nature of life. Life is not possible without

motion, and motion is not possible without rhythm.

TASAWWUF: Life is a term which may not exactly be defined for it gives rise to forms and forces but itself is not made up of these forms and forces. It may be called the whole of which these are parts or aspects of manifestation. One definite characteristic of life is motion. We see little motion in the mineral kingdom and speak of it as “dead matter.” The vegetable kingdom is composed of species which grow and for growth movement is necessary, and the materials that make up the cells and bodies of plants, animals, and mankind we call “living matter” and it has the same general chemical composition.

In the universe there is the tendency toward uniformly accelerated motion in a straight line or steady velocity in a circle. It is this last kind of movement which gives rise to rhythm. Also, no force moves on forever ahead without some effect upon other forces and bodies, so that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. When there is accelerated movement it is called the rhythm of Urouj and when there is retarded movement it is called the rhythm of Zaval. Neither of these is uniformly even.

Urouj tends to propel force in a certain direction and Zaval tends to slow down force. Nevertheless their velocities have been spoken of as rhythms for they can be measured in time. The steady, uniform, mobile, rhythm is called Kemal by the Sufis and this characterizes all the even rhythms of every grade and type of vibration.

GITHA: It is rhythmic motion which keeps the whole universe going, and the same motion is the hidden secret of our lives, as we are a miniature universe within ourselves.

TASAWWUF: With regard to the universe, if this were not so the universe would be speeding up or slowing down. There are astronomers who hold to either view, their contradictory opinions cancelling each other. For many have asked if this universe has already passed through an eternity, then we should have felt the effect of acceleration or retardation. But it may happen that there are periods of Urouj and of Zaval in the universe itself and the Hindus speak of the day and night of Brahm, the former giving rise to the manifestation and the latter embracing its dissolution.

Man experiences an Urouj period in which his body grows, and a longer one in which his mind may grow (although this is not always true). There is also later in life the Zaval period. But it is possible through control of breath to continue the steady rhythm throughout life and maintain vigor until the very end. So that as one sees before oneself the universe for practical purposes eternal, one can maintain a steady life in the body to the end.

GITHA: Our breath is both the cause and effect of this rhythmic motion.

TASAWWUF: For this rhythm is established by the first breath which enters the body. Then and from that first breath all the body receives its energy and establishes its initial rhythm. There is an immediate reaction to the inhalation with an exhalation and during infancy and early childhood the

breath is not kept long within the body. Nor is it necessary to retain it; the gain which comes is derived from the refined breath which brings the light and life from the subtler planes. Afterwards, as the child becomes impressed with the material world, the breath becomes heavier, coarser, slower.

GITHA: Inhaling and exhaling is just like the pendulum of the clock. When it is regular the clock goes on regularly, when slow the clock goes slow, when quick the clock goes fast.

TASAWWUF: This would indicate that if we breathed rapidly all the time we would be losing our life force. We need that force to promote growth of mind and body, but as each inhalation is followed by exhalation and as the exhalation tends to return to the spheres from which it was borrowed, the rapid breath becomes intoxicating and does not enable one to hold anything together.

GITHA: So it is with us. When our breath is rhythmic, all things go well—the mechanism of our body, the working of our mind, and the work of our feelings, all are normal.

TASAWWUF: This knowledge has been preserved by the mystics and has been ignored by the world. Very few have observed the breath, noticed its rhythms, following its course into and out of the body, learned its significance in going in or out of either nostril or of both, paid much attention to the shape of the curve of its direction or the effect upon the emotions therefore. The Sufi considers rhythm as all-important for he learns the value of this rhythm to body and mind and especially when there is attunement to the will of God, any departure from the rhythm once established may mean a departure from that divine will and a loss of attunement.

There are many practices which may be used for self-protection or for success in one's work which depend upon the rhythm of breath. One changes the quality through the change of concentration or else through the use of some other sacred phrase, repeated audibly or visibly. This may change the quality or quantity of breath, making it more or less refined or permitting more or less air and prana to enter and leave the nostrils during a period (wakt) without in any way impairing the rhythm—that is to say, the number of breaths during a fixed period.

One will find that when the channels of the breath are clear and the rhythm is maintained there is health on all planes. When there is any lowness either of thought or feeling or physical condition one will discover that the breath is not flowing freely, easily and smoothly.

GITHA: Therefore, all we think, speak, and do is normal and right.

TASAWWUF: Many people wonder whether at any time they are performing the will of God or “right action.” Instead of being troubled in conscience or fearing or wondering about every little item, the Sufi merely watches his breath and if it is rhythmical he even does, says or thinks according to his own will. Then his nature is attuned to the wisdom of the cosmos. Yet often a person who is in that condition will move out of the way to avoid conflict with another, and then he will be attracting to himself the rhythm (or lack of rhythm) of the other and be led astray by so

doing. So it may be said that when the condition of the breath is right one should lead and when it is not right one should not try to lead or help another.

GITHA: When the rhythm of our breath is irregular, all illness comes, thoughts wander, feelings are upset, and our life becomes full of confusion. All we feel, speak and do has a bad effect, in other words, a wrong effect upon ourselves and others.

TASAWWUF: The question arises how to correct this and it is done by the observation and constant guarding of breath together with a Divine Thought. Silence is also valuable and then “one should agree with the adversary quickly” for there is a greater adversary at hand which is one’s own ego, which must be brought under control first.

In Sufism the disciple is instructed to surrender his will before the teacher for one secret and perhaps it is that **the secret** of the teacher is found in the refined and rhythmical breath. Meditation and rest also benefit and watchful control of rhythm is most important. And whenever there is any blockage of the channel of breath the wise refrain from advising others, even from dealing much with them except occasionally to follow them in order to restore their own healthfulness.

GITHA: Therefore, by Fikr the Sufi sets his breath to the proper rhythm; and when it becomes a habit, by a practice done every day, the Sufi’s whole life becomes orderly and regular ...

TASAWWUF: Very often Fikr is performed the first thing in the morning, upon awakening. This helps to establish a rhythm for the day, it provides a spiritual keynote and also cleanses the mind from any impurities that may have come with the dreams of the night. No doubt followers of other schools have been using other methods. The Sufis have found that Fikr accomplishes the same purpose as meditation, and in much less time.

If Fikr is practiced constantly it relates one day to another in a certain fashion. For although one can by Fikr purify the mind and make of each day a life or cycle by itself, as there are acts which require many days for their accomplishments and attainments which require many days for their fulfillment, the continued Fikr unites man to his purposes and aids him in the pursuit thereof.

GITHA: ... because the rhythm in time becomes a habit of the breath.

TASAWWUF: While this may mean a fixed period for the breath, so that to each day there may be a given number of breaths, it also means that these breaths become more and more refined. And the more refined the breath, the larger the inner capacity and growth. But it is also true that one can by this method gradually lengthen and deepen one’s breath without conscious effort and without strain and this improves the outer manner of expression and the character.

GITHA: And while awake or asleep, the breath goes on rhythmically, keeping all pulsations in rhythm, on which the health entirely depends.



TASAWWUF: This is much better than any concentration upon health. There is often a tendency to concentrate upon health when there is sickness and there is another tendency to concentrate upon health when there is weakness and fear of disease. Naturally a person should be sensible, naturally the condition of the body is most important. But it is still more important to know that real health is maintained without giving any thought to it. One may pray, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls," and one may repeat Nayaz. Outside of that one may follow Christ and "take no thought of the body" which does not mean to neglect it. It means that there may be a wiser method for keeping the body in the best condition than by thinking of it too much.

GITHA: The rhythm so produced by the breath keeps the thoughts in order ...

TASAWWUF: Once this rhythm is established all thoughts which are consonant to it will remain in the mind and those which are out of harmony with it can not be retained. Every kind of thought establishes a particular rhythm. One can learn that first through symbolism, that by concentrating upon a particular symbol one will notice that the breath takes a certain direction, time and degree of refinement and when one changes the symbol one is holding in concentration there may be a marked change in the period, direction and quality of breath.

This is even more so when one studies thought, for thought is related to Jelal, Jemal, Urouj, Nasoul and rhythm, as well as to the mystical elements. The ordinary person who is the slave of thought or who, worse, is obsessed, is unable to control his breath and his inability makes it impossible also for him to hold other thoughts. When Fikr becomes one's habit, only those thoughts will remain in the mind which are attuned to or are harmonious with the breath in Fikr.

GITHA: ... the will powerful ...

TASAWWUF: This is most important for concentration. While concentration helps in the development of the will, the willpower also helps in concentration and one will ask, what are the other ways of developing willpower. One of the best and easiest is through Fikr. For the words of Fikr are such that the talib's mind is fixed upon God, and so fixed that all else in time becomes excluded. Thus he attains the guidance first, and perhaps the wisdom later.

Fikr is also used by a Shifayat before many attempts at healing the sick. This prevents her from taking on the condition of the patient for then her will is too powerful and she is positive. Sometimes one has to repeat Fikr often, sometimes just a little, but the impression from Fikr is most important.

GITHA: ... the memory in order ...

TASAWWUF: Many people have some trouble in memorizing and this is because the channel of breath is not clear. Fikr both helps to clear the channel and to remove all thoughts. It not only removes the undesirable thoughts, it removes the desirable ones. Then the mind becomes as the empty crescent moon and through concentration and effort recollection is made possible and thus the memory improved.

GITHA: ... the feelings normal ...

TASAWWUF: This really means to awaken the intuitive faculty. The abnormal feelings are the emotions which pervade the personality whenever there is no control over breath or the willpower is lacking. When the channel of the breath becomes purified one gains in the faculty of insight and along with that one becomes more sensitive, responsive, and sympathetic. Thus is attained right feeling.

GITHA: ... and thereby all one's affairs in life come into perfect and proper order.

TASAWWUF: The importance of esotericism is therefore so great that man needs nothing more, although one hears on all sides that one has not the time. This is man's test. Every one is in some respect selfish. There is wise selfishness and foolish selfishness. The wisely selfish attempt to attain the satisfaction of their desires in an easy and quick manner. When they learn that this can best be accomplished by overcoming their own small weaknesses they follow this path.

The swing of the rhythm of breath is the very swing of life, and through that swing one creates one's heaven or hell. What one creates or establishes in the mind-world is reflected outwardly in the daily life. The keynote of the day can be established through Fikr and thereby all success or harmony attained.

---

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 II: Number 3**

#### **Purification of the Breath**

GITHA: Purification is the innate tendency of every soul, but it purifies only that part of its being of which it is conscious.

TASAWWUF: To speak of the purification of the body to a child will be to become understood. He may rebel against bathing and washing but he will appreciate them. Yet to speak to him of the purification of the mind may mean nothing. And to speak to an intellectual of the purification of mind may have a meaning to him while mentioning the purification of heart may seem all words. Yet it is by purification that one rids oneself of all that is foreign.

GITHA: There is a Parsi saying, "Purity is the first piety."

TASAWWUF: The religion of Zoroaster has been called that of purity and all through the scriptures left by this prophet and his followers there is this keynote of purity. It has had many ramifications and if the teachings had been followed through the ages there is some probability that there would have remained on earth more devotees of Parsiism. Purification of body, mind and heart were instilled upon the worshippers of this faith and accepted by the Sufis of a later time. The Sufi means the purified one.

GITHA: When striving to purify the body and mind, man often fails to find the real source of their purification. Really speaking, the breath is the source which keeps body and mind alive, and body and mind connected.

TASAWWUF: One can feel this a little through physical culture and athletics. Many of the Western peoples and especially in America have developed systems of getting-up exercises for the morning. These have been found beneficial primarily to the body and secondarily to the mind. The Sufi would say that what really happens then is a toning of the breath, and that if one exercised the breath alone there would be the same effect. The objection the Sufi would make to these systems is that while the body is being exercised or purified the mind is left to wander and that therefore the benefit is quite limited.

There is some benefit to the mind because these exercises require or enforce rhythm and incidentally draw more of the vital life-force of space into the lungs. This is beneficial to the blood and brain, so heart and mind benefit some. Besides, it is very hard to keep the mind on impure thoughts during such practices and many forms of athletic activity actually transmute the animal propensities in man.

GITHA: Impurity of breath turns body and mind impure, and purity of breath gives purity to both.

TASAWWUF: Even through Nayaz one brings power, health and efficiency to body and mind. One may repeat the sacred Healing phrase as Wazifa or Darood and this is beneficial to both vehicles of soul. It also produces a condition then that when the body is well it helps with thought and when the mind is well it promotes physical health. Any divine thought helps to purify the mind in some way and through the breath which also becomes refined thereby there is a beneficial reaction upon the body.

GITHA: The question how we should purify the breath may be answered thus, that breath is constituted of the five elements—of which both the body and the mind are composed—and it is the same elements which are used by the mystics to purify the breath.

TASAWWUF: There is a purification of earth, water, fire, air and ether, each of which works out some intended purpose. But all of the elements arise from and return to the etheric element. It is most difficult to obtain this element by ordinary means and if so, to benefit fully from its use. So while mysticism is in a sense a science by itself, if one loses sight of God during its practice there is only a limited knowledge or benefit, and without some superior thought or ideal it is most difficult to

attain to the purification by ether.

The body of man is the special vehicle for the etheric element and although it manifests naturally at certain periods following what is called the revolution of the tattvas by the Hindus, it is most difficult to maintain it. Keeping the thought of God before one makes this possible for that God Who is beyond Name and form does not manifest as such through those elements which are bound with name and form.

GITHA: After a Sufi has made his breath rhythmic by the practice of Fikr, and has acquired strength in the breath, then he may purify his breath with the different elements.

TASAWWUF: The practice of Fikr is needed most before one can study Mysticism to benefit therefrom. And those talibs who do study Mysticism as a rule do not benefit much thereby; they may gain a little intellectual knowledge of it but it will not mean much to them, there is little realization.

Fikr, with its concentration upon the Divine Name and the most sacred phrases, purifies the breath with its constant rhythm so that there is an increase in life and acquisition of the most refined vibrations which one has capacity to assimilate. It is this which indicates the real spiritual progress. Then, after one can obtain the etheric breath with light, one will be able to control all the elements. Until then it is not possible.

Besides the ordinary man has not mastery over his thought, and lacking that, thoughts constantly intrude upon him whether needed or not. Each thought carries along with it some of the element in the breath which is in accord with its nature. For every thought is related to one or more of the elements but not to all; only the Divine Being is related to all simultaneously. So it is only after there is the purification of the mind from thought that one can get the full benefit of each element, draw the magnetism and power therefrom and attract to himself those qualities associated with the elements.

When man can do that he can harmonize himself with the world outside. He has a series of push buttons, so to speak, which he can use to set in motion different vibrations and thoughts and so find a harmonious pathway through life ultimately attaining to mastery.

GITHA: By breathing on earth, he will give all his impurities to earth, and will attract purity from earth.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes people who work close to the ground early in springtime feel an invigoration and do not understand it. They gain a magnetism, power, inspiration even by handling the soil. At such times planting and weeding are not always irksome because there is a personal benefit.

The fact is that pure earth is always a tonic, and if one places his hands or his body on the ground

he will get something obtainable in no other ways. Some people try mud baths and they also receive a kind of magnetism and disease and weakness seems to leave them. That is because they are then rid of certain vibrations which have been harmful and there is some elimination of poison through the skin.

In his time Mohammed told his followers that when there was no water available they should use sand in their ablutions. This may not have given them the same cleansing but it did benefit them. Walking barefoot always offers some advantage. And while it may not always be comfortable or pleasant to lie nude flat on the ground, nevertheless relaxation upon the grass or earth has always been found to be pleasant. Those in Khilvat especially should try it.

GITHA: By breathing before water, he will purify his breath and will give out impurities to water.

TASAWWUF: That is one reason why some people benefit from an ocean voyage. Even the physician may advise it and he knows it does good without having any particular reason for it. The mystic would say that ocean, river and lake journeys, swimming, and even gazing upon the water may be a healing. When this is not possible because of illness one may breathe before a pan of water, which may or may not have been magnetized and gain thereby. Besides this, there is a whole series of benefits from the various uses of water according to the science of hydrotherapy.

GITHA: By breathing before fire, the Sufi purifies his breath by that element.

TASAWWUF: Many people also find delight in gazing upon a fire. They sit before the fireplace, even when it may be warm; they get a certain intoxication from it. And when there are fevers, one being in such a place or even breathing upon the flame of a small stove, can rid himself of the impurities of the fire element.

In India sometimes one sees holy men seated between many fires, and even on a hot day. This is for the sake of purification, not for warmth. There are internal changes and those men learn how to control their own fire breath.

GITHA: Therefore, incense is burnt in religious places, and the adepts in India keep fire before them when practicing meditation.

TASAWWUF: The use of incense has been widespread and with the introduction of the Sufi Message into the west it is also being used more, as in the sacred readings, Universal Worship, healing services and all gatherings. In the instructions about the healing service it is explained that the incense stands for the fire element and symbolically, at least, indicates purification through fire. Incense is also used in certain specific manners by Shifayat in the treatment of certain diseases.

Incense of various odors helps to give the atmosphere a refreshing or stimulating condition. It also seems beneficial to use during meditation and sacred practice; unwholesome thoughts do not seem to find a hold so much when it is burned.

GITHA: One must purify one's breath by breathing in the open air, which is the air of purification.

TASAWWUF: Mureeds practice Nayaz in the morning which brings the purification of fire (through the rays of the sun), air (through the waves of the air) and ether (through the all-pervading power in space). Many feel better if they do this when the windows are open. Although people in the East and West both have been afraid of fresh air and especially among the European and Latin Americans, this is an unfortunate mistake, for it is very easy for impurities to gather in any room, especially in corners, and out of doors there is little likelihood for it.

The modern uses of curves in rooms makes it more difficult for poisons to gather and easier to run purifying convection currents through the house. Just as running water in streams is purer than stagnant water, so are movements of air more purifying than the stationary gas. But all benefit by being out of doors some time, and people who are compelled to work in stores, factories and shops need more fresh air in order to balance their lives.

GITHA: And life in the open space enables one to purify one's breath by the ether, which pervades the whole space.

TASAWWUF: No doubt there is some purification by ether when one is out on the ocean or on the mountain top, but there is still more in the desert. Many people are learning to go out on the desert into the solitudes or even into the wide open spaces. They seem to lose their cares thereby. In ancient times the Christian devotees often did that, abandoning the worldly life and voluntarily accepting poverty because there are other advantages from it. It is very difficult to hold unwholesome thoughts in the midst of the desert or on the mountain heights.

GITHA: Purification of the breath not only gives sound health of mind and body, but gives perpetual youth and long life, until one has attained the life eternal.

TASAWWUF: There are thus two aspects of the purification of breath, one coming from the inner control of the breath through direct esoteric practices and the other coming from external activity as has been explained through breathing upon the various elements or in the arena of those elements. But it is also true that as one advances in mysticism he learns to control the elements of his own breath and to adopt any one at any time.

Fikr is a little different in this as it brings the light along with the refinement of the breath. This light makes it possible for the body to receive ever finer vibrations and as one advances along this line he actually accomplishes his spiritual progress. It is by this means that the life of the spheres unseen becomes his own. His breath may become slower, it will become more refined and this refined breath makes it possible to live longer in the body, to maintain health and vigor until one's time for departure has come.

One can read in the lives of many of the great prophets and holy men when they went through the different purifications of the elements. Thus when the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt and

also when Moses was working for his father-in-law, Jithro, there was the purification of earth. The purification of water came when they crossed the sea. The purification of ether came from the life in the desert. Moses received the purification of fire when God, so to speak, came to him through the burning bush. His purification of air came when he went upon Mount Sinai, the mount of the moon, indicating his mastery over the mind-world. His final initiation or parinirvana came when he went upon Mount Nebo (the mount of prophecy) when God took him.

One can also read about these purifications in the life of Jesus. Through John he had the purification of the water. John was known as the “baptizer” or lustrator who used the water. It was supposed that after him would come the one who would baptize with fire and the “Holy Spirit”—in other words with the etheric element through the breath. Then we read that the Holy Spirit descended as a dove, making the sound of the dove, so to speak, which is very much like the sacred, all-pervading “Hu.” And in the temptation of Jesus and other places in the Scripture one can read of these initiations. Mr. James Pryse has even gone to the extreme of reading into the scriptures the same principles in other places, and if people would realize their inner significance, they would have more respect for the sacred texts.

One can also read about Mohammed who went through the various stages of initiation beginning with that of the earth, when he was employed as shepherd. For the shepherd has to stay close to the ground and he gets the benefit of earth. From that point on he passed from grade to grade until the time of the Miraj when his consciousness penetrated through all planes.

In the lives of the holy men of India also one finds analogies and the ancient Mysteries were for the large part based upon these purifications. In Egypt they were turned into ceremonies and the neophyte had to crawl on the ground, walk through water, then through fire, and swing in the air before he passed his tests. But the initiation of ether was of a different nature for then one had to contact the gods or denizens of the worlds unseen, and the passing of this test constituted the true initiation.

---

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 II: Number 4**

### **The Attainment of External Objects by Fikr**

GITHA: The breath is a current which can be attached to any thing or being, near or distant, if one only knew how to attach it; and those who are masters of the breath can attract all things in life.

TASAWWUF: The difference between egoism and altruism may be relative. The moral instruction for the initiate is of such a nature that he learns to look upon life in another manner, and there is the talk of self-surrender until some people are even afraid to go on the path. Yet it is specifically stated in the literature that there are no restrictions in Sufism.

One finds many people in the world who want to study metaphysics and to learn occult practices to attract wealth or for some other selfish purposes. At the other extreme are those people who will not even use prayer or meditation lest incidentally they are wielding a power which another one has not. Yet there is nothing wrong in it. When one has the wisdom and morality he would be very foolish if he permitted himself to live in pain and permitted others to suffer whom he could help.

If one wishes to attract anything or any one he may concentrate by facing in the direction of the object (although this is not always so important) and then sending out his breath until he feels his breath, so to speak, contact the object or person. In the healing line it is necessary to do this to give out, and also in the bestowal of Baraka (blessing). But while it is said, "Give all you have," it is also said, "Take all that is given to you." And while the scriptures say it is more blessed to give than to receive they do not say not to receive.

Besides there is a way by which one can learn to overcome his own small weaknesses by attracting some object or desire. In the effort to gain in life one begins to face his own weaknesses. The Sufi says it is better first to try to gain and then surrender the object afterwards. There is no virtue in that poverty which is one's lot because of his inability to attract wealth, or in the discomforts of one who can not gain comfort.

GITHA: Mahadeva, the Lord of the Yogis, has said that there is nothing on the face of the earth that cannot be accomplished by the masters of the breath. But for him who does not know its mastery, even to live a healthy life is a difficult thing.

TASAWWUF: With the awakening in the West of interest in the breath there is also the supposition that it is a very complex science and that one has to learn many postures and open up certain "chakras" in the body. The simplicity of holy breathing is unattractive to these people who want something complex.

The principles of Fikr are quite simple, that one maintains an incessant rhythm, paying no particular attention to the gradual refinement of breath, or its increase of length and depth. One concentrates upon the sacred phrases and thereby obtains the holy purification which may even be equal to the baptism by the Holy Spirit of which the scripture speaks.

If one keeps the column of breath pure the health of the body will be sustained. For by it the blessings come through each of the elements and also from the worlds unseen. Thus ultimately the body does become the temple of the Holy Spirit. At the same time as one develops the capacity for the finer vibrations he overcomes time and space. Then though the object desired be afar, and though its attainment require time and patience, the pure breath will attract it. Through Fikr one can



draw a line toward oneself through the mental-world, so to speak, and through an inner mastery demonstrate control over his own affairs.

GITHA: Fikr is the first lesson and the last lesson in the breath. It is the first because by learning this one learns right breathing, and it is the last because not only the world but even Heaven is attained by the help of Fikr.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the purified column or channel of breath which is attained through the practice of Fikr draws to one whatever is in harmony with it, be it something worldly or something intellectual. Thus those who have difficulty in remembering will improve themselves through Fikr, also those who have trouble with concentration or with mental effort. There need be no loss of mental magnetism, there may even be incessant gain of mental magnetism through the practice of this form of esotericism.

And it is even more true that if one wishes to attract something, by concentrating upon it and keeping the breath in Fikr he is often successful whereas otherwise he may have failed. The Sufi Dervishes consider themselves kings of the world, claiming that by Fikr they may attract anything they desire or need. They only use it when there is some great need, but in the Western world not only wants but needs also are greater and success in life is often the result of divine attunement. This is attained through Fikr.

GITHA: It is Fikr which helps concentration, and at the same time it is concentration which helps the operation of Fikr. Without Fikr, no concentration or meditation or contemplation is possible.

TASAWWUF: The more one concentrates upon the holy phrases which are repeated mentally with each inhalation and exhalation of Fikr the more regular, purified and refined the breath movement will be. There are forms of Fikr in which various sacred phrases are used, and there are the higher forms in which the words of Kalama are adopted, this last being the true Fikr. The difference between Fikr and Darood is this, that in Fikr one either stays still or walks continually in a circle or straight line and must not be interrupted, while one may repeat Darood at any time, on any occasion, and it does not need a specific number of repetitions.

The concentration upon the words of Fikr also helps in meditation. Many find it most difficult to meditate because then, when one wants them least, his troop of thoughts enter his conscious mind and he has to battle continuously against them. The sacred phrases offer a safe means of holding the attention, like weapons or tools for defense or activity, and then, when no longer needed, may be laid aside—this indicating that when one gets into deep meditation there is no thought at all.

Any difficulty with concentration or any other mental effort can be overcome by constancy in applying Fikr. This practice may be called the vacuum cleaner of the mind. It tends to remove all thoughts, whatever be their nature. Then when one wishes to hold one thought or ideal by Fikr he keeps other thoughts away until he reaches a point when he does not have to use even Fikr.

Contemplation is achieved through Fikr when one feels the identity of himself and the sacred word.

GITHA: This truth can be seen by studying the life of the cobra, and especially the large cobras that live in the jungles, in mountains. One can learn from them, firstly, how reposefulness helps the breath to develop, for cobras lie in repose for weeks (and some for months) without the slightest movement.

TASAWWUF: Which is to say that continued Fikr produces repose and by it also the breath becomes longer, deeper, more refined. Those who have suspended their breath often do it through Fikr. The adept does not breathe so often as the ordinary man and this insures his longevity. Besides as the breath becomes longer and more refined it attracts all, willing or unwilling. For the divine will is not a force that overcomes any one through opposition, the divine will touches the heart of every man and makes people feel their unity even when they think in terms of duality and diversity.

Although people need not live as the cobras they can learn to relax the breath and especially when in seclusion. Then by Fikr one may rid himself of all thought, desirable or undesirable, and after that is accomplished, attract that which he wants or needs.

GITHA: The next thing to be learnt is that when the cobra is hungry, rabbits and fowls are drawn into its mouth.

TASAWWUF: For with the cobra there is a center of attraction drawn about itself which is magnetic, even hypnotic. While the cobra works through instinct, man, through his intelligence, may also build an attracting atmosphere of power around himself. This, however, is not done by ego-effort. It comes, on the contrary, when the sway of the ego is removed.

GITHA: Nobody but the mystic knows from where they happen to come and fall in its mouth; for its breath is so powerful, and its repose has given it such a power of concentration that it reaches whatever objects it concentrates itself upon ...

TASAWWUF: No doubt man has more power and intelligence than the cobra yet he is not so successful. Why is this? It is chiefly because man does not know how to relax. Therefore when he concentrates he uses up too much energy, and when he does that he weakens his atmosphere rather than strengthens it. In Sufic concentration one is taught to hold the thought by the feeling, and when one "feels" thought, so to speak, he begins to master thought.

If one concentrates upon some object of desire and keeps that object continually in the mind and repeats Fikr while concentrating he will feel the line of life and of breath running from himself to that object and from that object to himself and by a subtle gravitation will attract that. It is this training and application which makes the master-mind.

GITHA: ... and confuses that object so that it is blindly drawn to the mouth of the cobra.

TASAWWUF: In this form of concentration there is little external opposition. It all depends upon the power and control one has over oneself. The mystic practices indifference and it may be that while concentrating, as he supposes upon one object or personality, he may attract another object or personality, because of the condition of attunement. Besides through Fikr there is divine power and this is something the cobra does not have. Man can do much greater things than the cobra if only he knew it.

GITHA: The mystic learns this valuable secret from the cobra, and by the power of the breath and concentration of mind, he accomplishes all things in life.

TASAWWUF: Jesus Christ has said, "Be ye wise as the serpent," and in India there have been cults which engaged in serpent-worship. Among the early Christians there was also a group known as Ophites or Naasenes who observed this teaching. And the first lesson to be learned is that of patience, poise, power and single-mindedness. All of this can be learned from the cobra. And along with this there is the need for study and application of the teachings.

Of course if one asks should one learn from the other animals, it may be answered that especially in the Sohrawardi school of the Sufis this has been done. Solomon said we should observe the ant; he learned much wisdom from the ant. Most prophets have dwelt among the sheep. Krishna learned the wisdom from the cows and even today in India the cow is a sacred animal.

Yet all the sacredness that is in the cow or snake or ant or all animals, all that and more is found in man. For man can develop beyond the instincts of these animals and when he does that he can make his way through life against any and all opposition and accomplish great things regardless of circumstances.

---

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 II: Number 5**

### **The Attainment of the Inner Being by Fikr**

GITHA: Man's inner being is his soul, and man's outer being is his body. These two poles of his being are linked by the breath, and if there is any way of experiencing life distinctly through the physical body and experiencing life clearly through the existence of the soul, it is Fikr.

TASAWWUF: The nature of the soul is studied by Sufis in their metaphysics although more important than such study is the realization which comes through direct and indirect experience.

The soul is the eternal part of man which is clothed by vehicles, these vehicles being made of materials borrowed from the various planes where the soul has manifested.

According to the Bible, when man is born the breath of life enters his nostrils and the body becomes, so to speak, a living entity. Nevertheless man does not “live” in all of his body. Many of the functions are instinctive and involuntary like in the animals. Processes go on day and night of which he is not aware. Thus one eats his food but after it gets into the stomach he is not especially aware of it and unless there is some pain or disturbance man knows little of what goes on in the digestive tract between eating and elimination. And perhaps it is well that he is not so sensitive to it.

The senses in different people are developed in different ways, and much of our knowledge depends upon what we pick up through the senses, especially through sight. And if one asks how can one develop the senses the mystic would say through breath. If one can really draw in the breath of life into this vehicle of flesh he becomes truly alive. And generally there is something wrong or undeveloped with the breath when there is any defect or deficiency in the sensations.

The same is true of the glandular structure. Some of the Yoga schools of India lay great stress upon man’s ability to send breath and vital energy to the glands. They say that in such development lies the key to all of man’s existence. But the Sufi would say that the key is in the breath itself and not in any special part or organ of the body.

While the breath is the life and also the link between soul and body, unless the body can get the feeling of divinity, the all-pervading power of space can not enter it. Nor does one readily recognize that this power drawn from the all-pervading space is the All-Power and once man has begun to assimilate it, he obtains universal power. This achievement is the result of progress in Fikr.

GITHA: By Fikr one becomes conscious of one’s mind.

TASAWWUF: It has been stated that man is not aware even of all of his body. How much less is he ordinarily aware of his mind. Many people use the word “mind” loosely not knowing what it is. While the Sufi explains the meaning of mind in his metaphysics, more important than that is the experience of mind that one has. Until the mind is set at rest and until one realizes life without mind one can not tell what it is, for neither can one say always what it is not. When the rest and motion of mind are known, and its limitations are perceived, one really begins to know something about mind.

GITHA: Sometimes one becomes so absorbed in the mental plane that, for the moment, the physical body does not exist for one.

TASAWWUF: This is a usual occurrence in the lives of artists, musicians, thinkers, inventors and all intellectual people. When they become absorbed in their work they do not notice what is going on around them. All their senses, all their mental magnetism is concentrated upon their effort. They do not hear loud noises nearby and they may not notice people coming and going from their room.

This is especially noticeable in meditation. So soon as one gets the body relaxed and rested then troops of thought flood the mind. The repose of the body stimulates the mind. The repose of the body is most necessary for meditation but the mind also must be soothed. For this Fikr is the best practice.

GITHA: When a person rises above this plane and wishes to be conscious of his soul, then Fikr helps him to attain this, for the breath is the only current which runs through all planes of man's existence.

TASAWWUF: The mystery of breath is studied in detail by students of Sufism and is also the subject matter of many books, such as those of Yeats-Brown and Brunton. These books are having a profound effect upon the western mind. The people of the West are beginning to realize what they have been lacking in life and how they can satisfy their need. But the technique by which the breath can be properly developed and the way to satisfy life's needs are not so well known.

Until the column of breath is thoroughly purified and refined one can not come to the depths of his personality. There may be no end to the process of refinement of the body, at least not until it becomes a vehicle of light. When the breath becomes very fine it reaches the innermost plane and draws therefrom the vital force upon which all life on the surface depends.

GITHA: The breath may be considered as a lift which can take you to any floor of the house you desire. The planes of man's existence are like floors; through the power of the breath, one can reach any floor.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed at length in the Gathas on breath and also in some of the articles which appear in *In an Eastern Rose Garden*. There seem to be many extravagant statements about breath. All of these can be demonstrated and proved although time, patience and discipline are needed therefore. For just as one speaks about the all-pervading power of space in Nayaz, so normally the breath can bring to one any faculty, any capacity. If man needs it, it is there.

There is a Hebrew tradition about the manna, the bread that was received in the desert, that whatever taste one wished to experience through it, that taste was there. Although simple in appearance the manna has all potentialities. Such is really the nature of breath. God sends us His food through the breath and man takes in divine blessings with every inhalation although mostly he does not know it. If he has any need or desire, inner or outer, he can draw a line from himself to the object, whether it is in the worlds seen or unseen.

The experience of various planes depends largely upon the refinement of breath, and refinement of breath is accomplished through Fikr. Therefore Fikr is the best means of touching all aspects of life.

GITHA: One may ask what practical benefit it is to realize one's soul. The answer is that the soul is man's true being, and if man has not realized through life which his true being was and remained

all through life in the illusion of considering the vehicles of his life as his being, he is greatly mistaken.

TASAWWUF: Too often by practical is meant that which will bring man money or material satisfaction. Yet the accumulation of goods and wealth does not always produce happiness. What man seeks ordinarily is not his true search for as soon as he finds or gets it he has another longing, he wants something else. This shows that the yearning of the soul has remained unsatisfied, that there is still a greater need or deeper longing which is wanted.

Now inner attainment and development do not in any way detract from the daily life. At least they need not. Sufism offers a process to all people to combine the spiritual and practical. Self-understanding does not detract from a man's business or occupation. Self-understanding often helps a man to succeed in little tasks where otherwise he might have failed.

GITHA: Besides this, the reality of every plane of one's being gives that much more power and inspiration ...

TASAWWUF: It has been stated that man is not usually aware even of much of his physical body. If he wishes to control the body, have a more complete mastery over it, Fikr is the best means. For by Fikr the breath can be sent to any and all parts of the body and this means that more life reaches those parts. It is the life that furnishes the body with health, strength and youth. Therefore through Fikr one perfects his body, making it a divine temple.

The same is true of mind. Many people do not know much about their limits. They have limited memories and a false sense of logic. They do not know how to develop and apply the intuitive faculty, that great gift which God has given to man and which everyone could use to the highest purpose if only he knew it. Fikr enables the breath to reach every portion of the mind and as the breath becomes more refined, the areas of the mind become enlarged.

And the same is also true of heart. For there is a stage of development when the breath is most fine and one feels it and is very sensitive about it, yet there may be hardly any movement of nostril and lungs. The very fine breath touches the deepest part of man's being.

GITHA: ... and as much of his being he has realized, so great does man become in his power and inspiration.

TASAWWUF: When the ordinary man thinks of power he thinks of some force which he can develop within himself by his will. The Bible makes clear that it is not by such power or might that blessings come. On the contrary, the more refined the breath becomes the more power it has. It can become like a long stream or column of living light.

Fikr removes the thought of self from before the mind and this increases capacity for the inner light which then floods man's being. Power and inspiration are the result of it although if one practices

Fikr for their sake it is improbable that he will gain much. As man impresses upon his inner being that God alone exists, he can call upon God for all gifts of heaven and earth. When he removes the ego out of the way, he draws those things more easily, for there is then no resistance to their achievement, the only great obstacle being man's thought of self.

Therefore if there is any practice which helps man to realize the Kingdom of God upon earth, it is Fikr.

---

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 II: Number 7**

#### **Development and Purification of the Breath**

GITHA: Development of the breath means its development in two directions—in volume and in length—the symbol of which one may see in the Cross.

TASAWWUF: This development has impressed many persons who feel without knowing that there is mystery in breath, that there is a science of breath, that through right development of breath all the obstacles in one's path may be removed. However, they do not know how this can be done and they often seek strange devices, postures, experiments and feel pleased when some one gives them some supposedly secret and sacred method of breathing. In that way many fall before the charlatans and even if there is a physical gain there is a moral loss.

This subject is discussed in the Gathas and in the commentaries thereon. In the Gathas one also learns that the vertical line stands for Jelal or strength, and the horizon line of the cross for Jemal, beauty or wisdom. But in the St. Andrews cross one sees a circle also, and among the Egyptians there was the crux ansata in which a circle or ellipse was surmounted over a T-cross. This circle stands for the volume, whether it pertains to breath or one's wisdom, insight or range of consciousness. Thus it can be said that the person with a long breath develops strength—that is, he can hold the breath longer, retain it longer. While the wide or voluminous breath means that it penetrates deeper into the personality, reaching all parts of body, mind and soul.

GITHA: There are some people who have breadth of breath. Perhaps they have a loud voice, a strong, vigorous voice, but a short compass.

TASAWWUF: This reveals the usual Jelal person who is undeveloped. There is power in his voice, he can shout, but cannot hold his breath. And if he is an athlete he may be able to run fast or jump

high or even throw heavy weights but is not likely to be a long distance runner. And among singers we find basses, perhaps, that can sing a few deep notes but that is all, otherwise they seem not to be musical.

GITHA: In India a singer is considered to be of great quality and gift who has, besides volume of voice, a large compass, who can touch the very high note and can produce the very deep note and at the same time every note may have clearness, strength and vigor.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the most important factors of the mystery of sound. Every sound we can utter, every note we can sing has the key to a portion of our inner consciousness. When we find a person who has a narrow range of voice we can generally notice that he has a narrow range of consciousness and thought, he may be narrow-minded even when well-intentioned. And when there is a wide range of voice without quality, such a one is likely to be sentimental, kindly, well-meaning but lacking a certain balance.

It is through the science of breath that one learns more about the control of the voice. Often one wants to change his breathing exercise because he thinks through some complex method he will grow and that if he is not given something complex he is kept from some secret. There are mureeds who do not apply themselves even to the exercises which have been assigned to them whose curiosity is so great that they want something, they suppose. If they only knew that the secret of life lay in the ability to take in breath and have it penetrate throughout their personality. And every thought they have, especially the thought of self, keeps the breath and the life from penetrating deeper and giving them that which they most desire.

GITHA: This gives the idea of the breath, that it is not necessary that the breath should have volume, for even the most material man may have volume of breath. No doubt he will have great magnetism and power over others, but that is not the only sign of spirituality.

TASAWWUF: The real volume of breath comes with its penetrability. The mere increase of the column of air does not bring the finer vibrations, does not even offer sufficient capacity for the finer elements. A larger physical volume of air enters the body and strengthens the body, but it may be of such a coarse nature that the mind does not gain from it. But as one develops along the line of life he will find he can take in a long, deep, very refined breath; he may not even seem to be breathing. Yet it is during and after such breaths that one's faculties seem to be more alert.

The finer breathing brings in the finer magnetism. Besides that which touches and operates on the physical plane, there is that which operates on the mental and spiritual planes and there is moral magnetism. Each of these is of a different nature. For instance, mental magnetism is seen in man's abilities and moral magnetism in his character, while the spiritual magnetism is such that it seems to transform a person into something greater than an ordinary human being; it fulfills and perfects his humanity.

GITHA: If the compass of the breath is lengthy, a man can be conscious of all planes of his



existence; he can have clairvoyance, clairaudience, visions, experiences with unseen beings and unseen worlds.

TASAWWUF: There are two ways which this can come through Kasab and other practices of the breath. The one is through retention which can be gradually prolonged and should be, without any impairment of rhythm or strain upon the body. Right rhythm will always prevent strain. Besides, development and growth are gradual. And the other way comes through the refinement and this refinement is the natural result of many practices; prayer, meditation, zikr, Fikr and all forms of devotion help to refine the breath and carry man above the mind-mesh and domination of nufs.

Now as broad as is the column of the breath which man inhales and retains, so broad is the possible penetration he has into the spheres of the cosmos. There are some people who have a certain kind of clairvoyance and clairaudience and it is generally such that the breath brings them a kind of light and they can see in and through this light naturally and are regarded as “queer,” being unusual.

Besides with them the brain and mind are not so developed and if they lack will-power they become the prey of obsessing forces.

Many people who have some such psychic vision or clairaudience do not know that what they see is shadow and what they hear is echo. Before they can obtain direct vision and hearing they have to pass through a process of purification during which time they may cease to have visions or hearings.

They would prefer the phenomena to their development and often consider their faculties as “spiritual” because they are a little different from those of the average person. They delight in a sort of pride, even in their ignorance they delight.

Yet a continued process of refinement would bring back sight and hearing on a higher plane if they would only continue those practices which removed the phenomena before their eyes and ears temporarily. No faculty that man brings to earth or that man develops here need be useless. But there are wise and unwise, harmful and useful ways for all things. What is necessary in the spiritual life is to devote all faculties for a higher purpose that one be the master of phenomena, not its slave.

Although Sufis prefer to keep away from mediumship, psychic manifestations and ghosts, there is nothing in the metaphysics of Sufism which abhors occultism. In fact in some schools the talibs are offered every opportunity to develop occult faculties and powers. Only the God-ideal is placed first and foremost and nothing is learned or done which will impair the purpose of life.

Besides as the breath becomes still more refined, certain kinds of dreams and visions may become more natural although their occurrence may be rare. One may read about both the inner and outer lives of prophets in the Bible and other sacred literature. For the most part holy men have not

sought wonders and those who seek the delights of heaven while dwelling upon earth may be led further astray than if they had sought nothing. It is as easy, even easier, to be turned from God by the delights of heaven than those of earth.

GITHA: But if he has a lengthy compass and no volume, then perhaps he has great experiences and no power.

TASAWWUF: One will find that among many mureeds, perhaps more with women than with men and more among the weaker than the stronger, that the veil between the seen and unseen is not very tightly drawn. On the one hand they may become the prey of obsessing forces and on the other hand they will have delightful and even blessed dreams and visions. The only trouble is that the latter do not mean so much to them or to others in their daily life. The very attenuation of the current of breath often produces a weakness in its channels.

Often mureeds are asked to repeat the three wazifas, "Subhan Allah, Alhamdulillah, Allaho Akbar." The first of these is to direct life upward and away from self, the second produces balance, the third strength. A clairvoyant person who fails to take God into account becomes selfish and is thereby more liable to be turned into an instrument for undesirable forces. A medium who develops strength of character will ultimately become freed from all forces, beings, and powers below the rank of humanity. Strength, therefore, often works against receptivity, but if properly balanced by praise, adoration and the pursuit of the ideal, there will be no loss.

GITHA: It is just as an intelligent man with a thin, silky voice may be speaking of high ideas before an assembly, and a rough man with a loud strong voice may come and stop him from speaking, where the former has no power over the latter. So it is with half-developed breath.

TASAWWUF: This would be an example of a Jelal type dominating over a Jemal type. The Jemali might bring the message of love and wisdom but he could not convey it, he might be acting as if he did not have the strength of conviction. And this is true with regard to strength required from inner growth. If it dominates it may produce inharmony and if it is lacking it will produce no action. Then the psychic power will be lost, for to have the full benefit of it some action must result on the material plane.

By Kasab one develops both strength and penetration so that the inner growth is well rounded out. No one need fear of becoming so ethereal and unworldly that he will want to be anti-social. Nor need anyone fear, on the other hand, that he will gain in strength more rapidly than he himself provides the capacity for it. From the beginning the mureed is shown the foolishness of forcing the breath. Constancy in practice, especially constancy in rhythm, and the gradual increase in fullness and retention makes for the perfect breath, and from the perfection of breath the perfection of character and of all faculties ensues.

GITHA: Volume gives power, compass gives vision.

TASAWWUF: Thus, the more air that can be pulled into the lungs without any feeling of uneasiness, the more power is gained which can be used on all planes. Often people with will-power find less difficulty in this than others. But it is also true that there are people with weak wills and if they take long, deep, slow breaths they will gradually gain in power, and along with that gain they will be finding themselves overcoming various weaknesses.

But the fine breath is needed for perfection. If one can draw the finer breath into his body he can remove the defects in many of his faculties and characteristics. He can even correct his eyesight and senses generally. When they are weak or unhealthy, this is mostly due to some defect in breathing and the breath that touches the inner planes helps with both sensation and insight. Both of these faculties are drawn from the breath or depend upon breath.

GITHA: Both together make the development complete, and the balance of both is mastery.

TASAWWUF: That is why in Kasab one only gradually lengthens the breath taken into the lungs. There need be no change in count, only after a while one will notice the breath becoming longer and deeper. Neither need there be any change of count as to retention. But the more one can hold the breath without any feeling of difficulty, the deeper in time will that breath pervade the personality and then inner faculties, long dormant, may begin to express themselves. For all blessings may come to mankind through the breath.

---

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 II: Number 8**

### **Rhythm in Kasab**

GITHA: Rhythm is most important in Kasab, for there ought to be a balance in the breath.

TASAWWUF: Rhythm is important in all times and in all ways in our lives, only there ought to be a time when one can give special attention to it, just as clock mechanics, besides repairing the defective parts of instruments, also observe them for a while and see that their rhythms are proper. Especially the timekeepers in observatories have to do that, for the slightest disturbance in rhythm may cause great commotions.

The same thing goes on within man although mostly he may pay no attention to it, either regarding the subject as unimportant or knowing nothing about it. In Sufism the importance of rhythm is stressed from the very beginning and it covers all aspects of the daily life, whether one is engaged

in material or non-material pursuits.

GITHA: Inhaling and exhaling must be even in rhythm, but the holding of the breath should not necessarily be even with the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling. For it makes three bars of an even rhythm, but three bars make a phrase or sentence of music odd in rhythm; to make it even, four bars are required. Therefore, the holding should balance evenly with inhaling and exhaling both, in order to make it four bars.

TASAWWUF: The principle of rhythm is always stressed, for if the inhalation is greater than the exhalation there is a tendency toward selfishness, self-will, obesity or general activity of nufs. And if the tendency toward exhalation is greater, while one may feel free there will be a tendency toward weakness. The balanced rhythm of breath makes it possible to digest food and eliminate poison, to remember what the mind should retain but not be overburdened with useless thought.

When the talib is instructed in Nayaz attention is given to retention, the first purpose of retention being to refine the body. This process of refinement makes it possible to assimilate finer and finer vibrations through the breath. When there is not enough retention the assimilation is only upon the outer planes. But there is to be balance between the inner and outer life; the period of eights, used in Kasab, covers the time when there is more breath activity on the inner plane while the counts four, for both inhalation and exhalation covers the time when the activity is within the body. Thus for the whole movement of breath there is balance between the inner and outer aspects of it.

GITHA: But it is difficult for everybody to hold the breath for that length of time.

TASAWWUF: The talib is first instructed to hold the breath in the practice of Nayaz. Then the count is given and it is always best to begin with a fairly lively count and gradually lessen it. In this way one comes to hold the breath without any strain. Then if this is kept up continually for a number of years, the breath can be retained for a long time with little effort. In meditation also one finds it becomes easier to hold the breath, and while long slow breathing helps in meditation, meditation also helps with long slow breathing.

Likewise in the beginning of Kasab while the count of eight is kept, one need not be too slow, certainly not so slow that he cannot retain breath and then not be able to maintain rhythm. Forcing does nothing. There should be a relaxed feeling.

GITHA: Also, if a person can hold the breath, he cannot retain it in the proper place where it ought to be. Therefore, when breath is held it may sometimes enter into any function of the body, which may perhaps cause injury and may result in danger.

TASAWWUF: There is a normal passageway for the breath through the body. It enters the nose, passes the region of the sinuses, goes down to the throat, enters the glottis or wind-pipe, reaches the bronchial junction and passes thence through the bronchial tubes to the left and right lungs. If there is any obstruction the breath does not all reach the lungs. It is in the lungs where it contacts

the bloodstream and is dissolved in the blood.

As has been explained, there is a difference between aeration and oxidation. The breath held long produces oxidation on the physical plane which may mean the breaking down of tissues, although this helps remove waste. But any process, even one of cleansing, if continued too long becomes destructive. This destruction passes from the body to the mind. There is a natural retention of inhalation during certain processes of concentration, otherwise, if one wants to depend upon the breath, expecting some magical results, he will not benefit.

GITHA: Those who practice the breath by the help of books or by the advice of an inexperienced teacher call such breathing deep breathing, often not knowing how long the breath should be inhaled, how long it ought to be held, and how much longer it ought to take to exhale.

TASAWWUF: While in the instructions on Kasab there is a definite count given to inhalation, retention and exhalation, caution is requested for the body of every talib is in a certain way sensitive. When the body is strong enough to withstand the difficulties of worldly life, it does not thereby become able to receive attenuated vibrations. The longer the breath is held the more attenuated the vibrations which manifest in it. Wrongly used these are like the x-rays which have high penetrating power but which are destructive of most earthly matter, penetrating it with ease. But rightly used the breath becomes a channel for the light of the unseen which finds a home thereby in the body turning it into a temple of God.

It may even be that some books publish the same or similar esoteric practices that are given to the talib by the Sheikh. There are many books being written today on Yoga, some by devout scholars, some by interested dilettantes and some by casual observers who wish to exploit the public with their slight knowledge. Probably none of these groups, even of the best, have had those spiritual and cosmic results of the refinement of breath which would entitle them to the name of sage or adept. Nevertheless the growing curiosity and interest of the generality—born no doubt from some deep intuition—makes it possible for all these groups to flourish.

The real benefit from breathing comes through constant application and an understanding of what one is doing. Or, if there is lack of understanding, there should be a profound faith in the teacher that the teacher knows the laws of breath and is helping the disciple as he may toward his spiritual emancipation.

GITHA: The breath makes a difference in every direction in which it is sent, difference in mind and difference in the body; and when man thinks that simply deep breathing is beneficial, instead of doing good to himself he does a great deal of harm.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps very few practitioners know the significance of the earth, water, fire, air and ether elements, how they manifest, their degrees of refinement, the faculties which manifest through them, how they affect the physical body, and the mental body, what happens when they are encouraged and what occurs when they are blocked. Indeed without the mystical knowledge of

some competent teacher, any exercise by a student can become harmful. And nowhere is this truer than when there is conscious effort to block one nostril or another or send the breath in a direction selected at will.

The average man knows nothing of the movement of breath in either nostril. And there are students who regard it a marvel when they can change the course of breath from one nostril to another. They do not know or see that this changes the faculties, stimulating or inhibiting them. Besides it is not always easy to do it and any use of force can produce a reaction. Therefore mureeds in Kasab are also given instruction in mysticism that they may know the significance of every movement of breath, and its effect upon their lives. This knowledge is hidden from the generality.

GITHA: Often, insanity and nervousness are the consequences of wrong breathing exercises.

TASAWWUF: It is very likely that all insanity is either accompanied by or preceded by wrong breathing. If the breath-energy reaches the brain, either through the inhalation which touches the sinuses, or through the bloodstream which washes the brain, there is little likelihood of insanity. Insanity is to be distinguished from obsession. Obsession occurs when one is negative and allows other forces, powers or entities to prey upon his mind and brain. Insanity means that there is some definite break between body and mind, impairing coordination and often accompanied or followed by deterioration of brain or spinal cord tissue. This deficiency can only with difficulty be repaired through the breath, and by other means perhaps not at all.

More often instead of there being actual deterioration or impairment of tissue there is a blockage in the movement of the nerve currents. This can and often does result in obsession. It also produces neurasthenia—which is the sign of weakness—and psychopathia which is the sign of absence of balance. And it is true that spiritual healers can help these people return to normalcy through their own knowledge of rhythm and mysticism.

GITHA: At the same time, if it is right, it can cure one of any disease and weakness, since on the rhythm of the pulse and beats of the heart and head man's health depends. And doctors can sometimes realize by the change of rhythm the condition of a person's health.

TASAWWUF: The average person may assume that there is rhythm when each breath in a series is like the previous one and when there is the same time occupied in inhalation and exhalation. Yes, this is true that these are necessary factors in rhythmical breathing and health. But there is another aspect to it also and that is that the whole of one movement, inhalation or exhalation is even. We are not usually conscious of such small periods of time as those occupied in indrawing or expelling breath. But if we could get a figure of the movement like we today have figures of heart beats, we should quickly learn whether the breath flows evenly in and out, whether it, so to speak, "dances."

With most people there are jerks in the movement and these jerks indicate lack of rhythm. And along with that one can notice the ease with which breath is maintained in the body. Sometimes the

length of time for inhalation and exhalation may be the same but the inhalation may be forceful and the exhalation weak or vice versa. Sometimes the strong inhalation or exhalation may move through the wrong nostril (whether right or left) and then the intended benefit is lost and there may be more destruction than benefit.

GITHA: The rhythm has a great influence upon the state of man's mind and body, and the rhythm can be kept even by keeping the rhythm of the breath even.

TASAWWUF: One may wonder after the study of music and dancing on the one hand and of esotericism on the other, whether it is always necessary to regulate the movement of breath consciously. Yes there is much gained thereby, although if one has the trust in God any spiritual practice when the mind is not wandering and all energy is directed toward the ideal, will of itself produce the right result. Which is to say, when Darood is substituted for Fikr or Kasab, is there any likelihood of rhythm not being retained.

This is to overlook the nature of God. For any spiritual practice with the thought of God in the mind helps to produce some rhythm and the right usage of the ninety-nine sacred names of God always induces rhythm in breathing whether one is thoroughly aware of that or not. But there are many forms of music and dancing, which, depending upon some basic beat, also help a person to improve in his reactions to rhythm.

GITHA: For the breath is like the pendulum in the clock, on the movement and rhythm of which the regularity of the clock depends—so on the rhythm of the breath the order of the body and mind depends.

TASAWWUF: It is said that the universe itself is based upon the rhythmical breathing of God. And when an infant appears, if we watch it we can observe its rhythmical breathing. His sobs, cries, tears, howls and tantrums are all the result of some disturbance in rhythm. And one of the first lessons to be taught to little infants is this response to rhythm. It can even be shown them through rattles or other simple instruments.

People who delight in dancing do not always know the reason therefor. They do know that there is a change in feeling and there are several kinds of dancing which produce an ecstasy or joy and there is dancing which can free the mind from care. Whatever be the benefit from dancing or music if one seeks deeply he will find it comes in rhythm.

But the health of the body also depends upon the rhythm of the activity within, and when the organs are called upon to function very much on one day and little another time, the condition of the body will not be so good. And this subject of rhythm is in every aspect given considerable study by talibs.

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 II: Number 9**

**The Sign of Having Benefited by Kasab**

GITHA: When one feels, after practicing Kasab for a year at least, that the breath seems to have freedom in inhaling and exhaling, and one feels the breath light and pure, a feeling of happiness such as one feels when out in the country where the air is pure and bracing—that is the time when one may understand that Kasab has benefited him.

TASAWWUF: Kasab provides for all practical purposes the initiation by air. It has been explained how one may have the purification of earth by breathing over earth; the purification from water comes through breathing over water; for the purification of fire one may breathe over incense or a small flame or even use the fire therefor. But the air is all around us so we cannot select the air apart from itself.

Nevertheless in the body the air takes a certain course. While the earth, water and fire breaths enter and leave the body by the same nostril, the air breath does not necessarily do this. It may enter by one nostril and leave by another. The ordinary person does not know this and he cannot master the air element. Yet it is this element which produces joy in life and if there is any experience of ecstasy, whether from material or spiritual sources, it is the result of a purification of air.

One may by his knowledge of mysticism draw in that breath which is a combination of air and ether and receive any benefits that may be derived therefrom, or even cultivate joy so that he can extend happiness to another. But this may be a temporary state and if one does it often without any other practices and without the spirit of devotion, the joy that he has momentarily may become a drug upon him and he may seek that joy even more than he seeks God.

In Kasab there may not be any particular search. But it does happen that its practice provides the purification by the air element and one gets the same benefit as by a change of climate. Whereas the doctor may order his patient to go to the country or to the seashore or the mountains to obtain fresh air, without knowing exactly why, the mystic learns how to derive the same benefits from the atmosphere in the place where he stands. That is why for him Kasab is such an important practice.

GITHA: Also, the practice of Kasab develops the strength and energy which may be called the spirit of the breath or the real breath.



TASAWWUF: The Hebrew people have made a distinction between nephesh, the ordinary breath which comes into the body and which man shares with the animals, and ruach, the spirit. The Sufi may say, while it appears to be the same thing it is nephesh where there is no knowledge or control and it is ruach when there is knowledge or control or intelligence. And Kasab enables man to transmute nephesh into ruach, so to speak. For it becomes easy and simple for the devotee to draw strength and power—or any quality from the cosmos—calling upon the name of God, and practicing his breathing rightly. Then he draws into himself the real breath of life and becomes a living soul. Then he can better radiate life and blessings to all.

GITHA: That develops, and one feels that one's breath has become wide in its volume and long in its reach, and yet not heavy and depressing, since all depression mostly comes from lack of development of the breath.

TASAWWUF: If one uses the methods employed by the generality it is true that after long practice there is a longer and heavier breath. The effect of this is just like stretching a rubber bag—after it is stretched it cannot so easily return to its former size. One draws more breath into the lungs but one does not therefore refine it, it only means drawing more coarse vibrations along with the deeper breath. In so far as these vibrations and the atoms of the breath itself can be utilized in the body there may not be much harm. Thus an athlete or a laborer might even benefit up to a certain extent therefrom. But a singer who is also compelled to do such breathing is drawn under the emotions which manifest through each element and suffers from temperament.

The mystical training is different, for the refinement of the breath accompanies the progress one makes with regard to length and volume and even precedes it. In that way one gains access to the etheric current and then one need not suffer any longer from emotional disturbances. And besides that, the breath becomes more and more refined and the vibrations penetrate into the deeper recesses of the personality so that nothing need be lost. Light also accompanies these finer vibrations and in the presence of this light there can be no lasting depression.

GITHA: One sleeps well, and one feels hungry and thirsty and cheerful.

TASAWWUF: Ability to sleep better comes with refinement by ether and fire or as the Christian scripture states “fire and the holy spirit.” Hunger comes when there has been refinement or purification of earth; thirst when there has been purification of water; cheerfulness when there has been purification by air. The scientists say that in the presence of ozone cheerfulness is natural; ozone shows the purification of air by itself, when the oxygen which is coarser turns into ozone, a finer form of itself.

Nevertheless all these desirable states come naturally with the use of Kasab and if not all at the beginning then in time are they achieved. Thus by the practice of esotericism even the worldly life becomes better worthwhile.

GITHA: Besides that, it gives a feeling of lightness to the body and an ethereal development.

TASAWWUF: There has always been much interest and speculation over the possibility of man inhabiting a body of light while on earth. Among the Buddhists there are many who say that Buddha used the Nirmanakaya body or “no-mind” transformation-body while on earth. This was supposed to have been made of finer vibrations and atoms and only took on the appearance of a body of flesh. Christ is also said to have appeared in some such body after his resurrection, but there were those in early times, called Docetists, who denied even the historicity of Jesus Christ claiming that he was a cosmic personality who came to deliver special teachings.

There is no doubt that as one continues on the spiritual path the body becomes able to assimilate very fine vibrations. The cells are less opaque to light so that it can even be true as Christ taught that our light can shine before men. One often sees such light during meditation or while performing his sacred practice alone. In Zikr also there is a great increase of light. Whatever be the method or the exercise it is the refinement of breath which makes it possible for this light to be assimilated. That is also one reason why the eating of meat is not always looked upon with favor as meat-eating tends toward denseness, sometimes making it harder to obtain this development.

Of course one does not take up the spiritual training for the sake of having a body while on earth which is full of light and capable of performing miracles. It often happens that people who stress vegetarianism are quite selfish and that they are thinking too much of themselves ever attain to some high goal. Yet it is also true that at times the assimilation of coarse foods becomes a burden upon the mystic.

GITHA: One feels that he is becoming finer in every respect.

TASAWWUF: There is not only a refinement of the body, that one may feel younger or freer from disease, one also finds an increase in the assimilation of mental magnetism. One's intellectual development, one's faculty of memory, wit, ability to converse and discuss freely and all such faculties are developed. And at the same time one becomes more sensitive and considerate of others because there is also a fineness of feeling. This refinement increases on all planes and in every aspect of life.

GITHA: Besides that, one begins to feel the atmosphere of others more, and one becomes sensitive to the pleasure and displeasure and the likes and dislikes of others.

TASAWWUF: For the more refinement there is the less one is confined to the area of his own thoughts. When the breath is coarse one cannot see far beyond his own thoughts and inclinations. This shows generally the ammara or lauwama stage of nufs. But there is beyond them the mutmaina stage and beyond that the salima stage of development. One purpose of Kasab is to enable the talib to rise to this salima stage. This brings heart-development and makes of him a sahib-i-dil, of her a memsahib-i-dil. Thus awakens and manifests the living heart.

Then one even finds a pleasure in trying to delight others and another pleasure in seeking to avoid hurting them. One may even find a subtle satisfaction in reading the mind of another, not so much

for the sake of phenomena or miracle as for harmony. It is much easier to demonstrate harmony after this stage of growth has been accomplished.

GITHA: And if one is keen in his inner sight, he, by the help of Kasab, soon begins to see into the space.

TASAWWUF: This is a form of clairvoyance which can be overcome and generally should be overcome in its lower forms when one is not able to protect himself against intrusions. But after there is the capacity for the finer vibrations, one can see in and with the breath. The more refined the breath the further it extends outwardly, so to speak, the further away are vibrations drawn toward one and within all that area sight is possible. Then even a person dwelling upon another sphere may manifest to one.

This is perfect the safest and best way of occult development. Whatever one sees by help of one's own breath, that one can control, can do no harm. Even the prophets speak of being drawn into the spirit. The ancient Hebrew prophets practiced Kasab and there are some references to it if one carefully reads the Scriptures. This is especially manifest in the Hebrew books of the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah and also in the Book of Revelations of the Christian Scripture. Without Kasab such visions would not have been possible. The mystery of the chariot of Merkabah which is one of the foundation stones of Hebrew mysticism is also based upon this.

Yet it is not advisable to try to obtain this faculty. One should adhere to his exercise and accept all that is given to him from God as a secret and sacred trust. And if there is no apparent gain along the phenomenal line yet one may put his trust in God and be sure that he is under the protection of the divine wisdom.

GITHA: First colors and forms appear to him, then glimpses of what is called the aura. This appears at times and disappears at times, as the condition of the inner sense happens to be.

TASAWWUF: The colors and forms may appear to anyone and those who study mysticism are advised to watch out for them. Yet many cannot do it. Then they should be given a little help with Kasab and after they have practiced Kasab awhile they should be able to understand mysticism better from their own direct experience. For it is upon such experience that the greatest knowledge comes to man.

The observation of the aura is also most important to those who take up healing or psychological development. Then they can tell at once something of the type and temperament of every person and even know through direct sight the cause of his weaknesses and shortcomings. This makes for him diagnosis easy, and healing or correction of abuses also is facilitated.

Of course there have been a great many claims about the aura and a great mystery has been made about it. The fact is that all breath contains many energies although in Nayaz attention is paid to three: the waves of the air, the rays of the sun, the all-pervading power of space. Yet along

with these and between these there are vibrations and potencies which penetrate the sphere and can also be drawn into the body. The aura is a field of action and interaction of the various rays and vibrations which are brought by the breath to the physical body and themselves form what has been called "the body of breath," although it has various names among the followers of different schools of esotericism.

GITHA: It is of no use to a person who, seeing all this, cannot understand what is meant by it all.

TASAWWUF: That is why in Sufism a teacher is so necessary. Besides many have the visionary faculty without knowing anything about Kasab. It may have been natural or it may have been developed in one of a number of manners through one of a number of causes. It is not necessary to lay aside any faculty.

On the Sufi path all the faculties that one has brought to this world, or that come through the experience of life, or are given by grace of God, are developed. The waste places of the inner being are turned into gardens. Everything becomes useful and purposeful. So it is unwise to seek what does not belong to one and even more unwise to neglect what one has.

GITHA: Also, it is not necessary that one should indulge in the satisfaction of curiosity of phenomena. The whole journey on the spiritual path is full of phenomena, and every step increases this.

TASAWWUF: Among the uninitiated are many who identify miraculous experiences with spirituality and they even seek the spiritual life for the sake of those experiences. They are not entirely wrong, they are confused. With every step in the increase of breath capacity a way is opened so that the breath can penetrate more deeply into the subtle spheres. This penetration either perfects the faculties one has or gives rise to new faculties which may have been dormant or which are natural only to beings of higher evolution. These faculties and potentialities come without man's seeking as if by Grace of God. And with the uncovering of the true self they cannot be avoided.

But when one's mind is occupied with wonders, the heart is shut out from wonder itself. That is why so many go astray. They do not see the wonder of the whole of life and they do not know the wonder of the heart of man himself.

GITHA: Therefore, those who stop, interested in phenomena, at the first step may remain there, wondering about it; whereas those who see it on the way and yet are not attracted to it so that it may chain their feet, go along safely to the ideal destination of life.

TASAWWUF: There are many paths of development in Sufism. In the East this has led to the establishment of various schools so that persons of various temperaments could receive their best training by taking Bayat in that school whose system was most attuned to their needs. Yet this of itself did not exclude them from attending meetings or joining in the brotherhood of other Sufis. It was outwardly more than inwardly that they were separated.

Sufism has been brought to the West as one school, with all endowments, and mureeds may receive a general or specialized training. Generally speaking, those who stick to Sufism many years receive some specialized training which is in accordance to their purpose of life, and with regard to spiritual practices, from the very beginning each is helped most according to his needs. Besides, God reveals himself to humanity in many ways and the wise teacher is always guided by the inner experiences of the pupil. Those who have too many dreams or visions are given the strength to protect themselves against unwelcome intrusions and those who seem to lack vision are given another training, not so much for the sake of having dreams and visions but for the increase of capacity for light and life. Thus there are many ways toward the same goal, and in a brotherhood there are very various and diverse experiences among devotees who work together for a common ultimate purpose.

---

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 II: Number 10**

**The Attainment of Inner Being by Kasab**

GITHA: When we trace that the source that holds man's life is nothing but light, then we realize that the nature of light is to extend its rays and spread them around it. So it is with the light of the soul. The soul spreads its light, which is breath, and extends it to the right and left.

TASAWWUF: In the Christian Scripture one reads about the Logos which is called the light that illuminates every man that comes into the world and the world does not know it. This Logos has been identified with the Holy Spirit but aside from calling Logos "the word" one does not ordinarily notice that word depends upon breath and spirit also means breath.

The early Christians have been depicted with haloes or circles of light around their heads. While this halo is in a certain position, the Buddhists have their aureole in a slightly different position, although if all the Buddhist and Christian paintings and figures were placed side by side one could readily see that behind them were the same inspirations and similar degrees of revelation. For it seems to have been known more universally at one time that around the personality was this field of light sometimes called the aura, only not only was it easier to produce when people lived simple existences, it was still easier to see, for the vision was not dulled by an unnatural life and artificial adaptations.

There are various practices in Sufism and in all schools of mysticism by which the disciple becomes aware of the light which is within and without his being. Ultimately there comes a time

when he seems to inhale and exhale light and yet he also seems to dwell within the light. This light is the emanation of his very soul. It has been there all the time although as the scripture teaches, the darkness has comprehended it not.

From the very beginning the soul has sent out rays and these are nothing but rays of light as is explained in the metaphysics of Sufism and in the literature covering the subject of soul. These rays collect around themselves the properties of the different planes but always, basically, they are rays of light and they follow the same principles as the light-rays of the physical world which are studied by scientists although they possess properties which the materialistic scientists would hardly conceive.

GITHA: By that, all things external become lighted, that both eyes and mind may see.

TASAWWUF: The mystic says that the soul sees. Jesus Christ said, "The light of the body is the eye." The ancient seers and the Hebrew Kabbalists after them all taught that the light was really in the eye. While we say that the light comes from the sun or from the lamp this is only partly true. There are cameras which are sensitive to ordinary light rays and there are cameras which take photographs by the aid of infra-red vibrations and others which depend upon ultra-violet rays. Then there are x-ray machines which have still different sensitivities and obtain still different responses.

One can refer to all the different vibrations as "light" but to one who does not so see them they may not be light. Likewise there are persons who see no colors; others who are sensitive to blue and yellow showing the development of the earth and air breaths; others who see also red and green showing that they also assimilate knowledge through the water and fire breaths. There are also people who are very sensitive to color being able to distinguish between fine grades. And this shows a high development. But this is all in the eye and the eye itself is a great mystery which cannot be understood without the aid of the intuition.

GITHA: But when this light, instead of extending, is concentrated, so to speak—instead of spreading is thrown inward—then it lights up the inner planes and all that is there becomes clear.

TASAWWUF: In its original state the soul was unextended and totally distributed, so that one could not say it had any "where" or "when." It gathered some of its light together to form a lamp and this is the first stage in the manifestation of soul. This gathering of vibrations is called jami by Sufis from which comes the word Jamiat. It may be called "union" and it has some of the same meaning as the Sanskrit word "yoga." It is this concentration of light which forms the nexus of the individual. Yet the soul itself is not that concentration of light, the soul being all light.

There was a separation of areas between this dense light and the less dense light and out of this separation came all forms, all meanings, all dualism. It followed that when man came to earth he was under the spell of dualism and when in addition to that he became intoxicated by the denseness of earth he could no longer see the finer vibrations, they were to him non-existent.

The spiritual practices have for their prime purpose the restoration to man of his true faculties and inner vision. As this inner vision grows he becomes more sensitive to the finer vibrations of light. Not only that, he can again gather them as into a lamp and he develops the power of the glance.

In the glance there is not so much the observation of outer phenomena as an increased sensitivity through which the intuition or kashf operates. This makes the glance penetrating without being hypnotic; when there is love in it there will be no cause for fear.

This inner glance may have an outer covering which operates as sight on the physical and mental planes. It does not preclude clairvoyance and does not interfere with it. It generally enhances the faculty one possesses. But it also develops a living sympathy, for thereby the heart seems to develop its own way of looking at things which is a penetration together with feeling and this feeling brings one all the knowledge one has to know. Besides, when the breath is filled with light, the past, present and future of oneself or another becomes quite clear.

GITHA: This is done by Kasab, for in Kasab one masters both the powers of light, in extending and throwing them inward ...

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the extension of the breath which is done through inhalation and exhalation is gained through Kasab and the throwing of the light inward comes when there is retention and this also is an important part of Kasab. The balancing of these two balances the life within and without so that there is less danger of abuse of spiritual and psychic faculties on the one hand and less chance of running away from the world and its problems on the other hand.

No doubt there are other ways by which one can retain the breath within. The adepts of India and Egypt have specialized in this and they can hold the breath a long time or keep it in such a refined stage for a long time that they do not suffer from hunger or cold and have no need of anything material. That is why some of them live in the caves of the Himalaya mountains. They need no protection for in their state no creature will harm them, if indeed these creatures approach.

For this line of development celibacy is required and generally asceticism also. But unless one is elected or selected by the hierarchy for some special duties, it is useless if not foolish to seek such development.

On the other hand without this retention of breath, all the power and ability and skill one would obtain through the breath would be utilized on the outer plane. Instead of being conserved for spiritual development it may become the force behind psychic power and then one could become so interested in and confused with phenomena that there would be little onward progress. This does not mean that therefore one should try holding in the breath, it only means that that prevents needless loss or needless application of higher powers (or siddhis).

When the force is thrown inwardly and collected, so to speak, one receives from God Baraka, the blessings of spiritual magnetism, and this can be used for one's own benefit or bestowed upon the

world in right blessing.

GITHA: ... and thereby in time develops the light within him which guides him on his path toward the journey within.

TASAWWUF: One has to be patient for sometimes this light is very slow in manifesting and especially as one thinks about it it is less likely to appear for the thought of self constantly throws a shadow across its path. Yet neither can one otherwise hold it back for it is there—the soul is where it is—and it has only been that shadow of self thrown upon it which has concealed it.

The purpose of having a spiritual teacher is to learn from him how to develop and increase that light. If we use his light and depend upon it, we may have more wonders to witness, but when we find that light within ourselves and use it we become the source of our own wonders and this is the greatest of wonders.