

Spiritual Architecture

Chapters one, two, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen by

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[Chapter 1](#)

The Significance of Architecture

By Spiritual Architecture is meant that which is accomplished in accordance with sacred principles. We can read in the Christian Bible, that when John saw the city of the New Jerusalem, there were words inscribed upon it, "The Lord is there." That is to say, that the spirit of the Lord brought the revelation and also that when man feels the divine spirit in and around him he may truly experience that bliss which has been symbolized as life in the holy city, Jerusalem.

It is the spirit of God which makes any undertaking spiritual. That which is personal is not holy, unless the Lord be there. The other type of undertaking which can become sacred is that of a group, of which the Bible has said, "When two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in their midst." Such a group undertaking is very important in the spiritual life and blossoms forth in architecture.

Every symbol given to the students of mysticism contains a key to a great cosmic principle. In the esoteric training one learns the meaning of the symbol and its effectiveness in life, both in the manifest and unmanifest aspects. The symbols may be called the "Alphabet of the Universe." Masonry is an art and science based upon this alphabet; the two aspects of Masonry, speculative and practical or applied, are both based upon it.

The difference between art and architecture is dual, or duofold. Excepting in the plastic arts, work is done in two dimensions and forms are derived out of space instead of being depicted in space. In architecture, outside of planning and blue-printing the execution is spatial, although the geometry of it is not always the Euclidean, three-dimensional variety. Art, too, is chiefly the work of an individual; architecture, including landscaping and decorating, the work of a group operating as a unity. This last point is most important and, among other things, it points the way toward human brotherhood.

The psychological importance of line and curve and the psychic value of form and shape have not been given much consideration although from Plutarch to Spengler there have been philosophers who recognized the social significance of the arts and their effects upon mankind. Point, line, circle, square, triangle, cycloid, sphere, cube, pyramid and many other forms have meanings to the mystic so that one could almost say that there is an esoteric geometry, the study of which may be called geometric symbology. The difference between it and mathematics is important for it can be applied in life. Dynamic Symmetry has been derived from mathematics and applied to art and biology; the same would be true in even a larger sense of geometric symbology.

The great temple of Solomon has stood through the centuries as the ideal pattern for all great temples and sacred architecture. Even today Solomon is revered in many lands and there are multitudes who hope to see some day either the restoration of the temple or the erection of an edifice where all may come to worship and be healed. According to the esoteric traditions the temple of Solomon itself was based upon another temple in the unseen. This temple is described, in a sense, in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Many psalms were written in a sense that one may

wonder whether they refer to the temple on earth or that in the unseen. It has been supposed that these often elevated the consciousness so that one could become aware of that unseen temple.

The method by which Solomon directed the operations in the building of the temple has been a source of wonder. Tradition states that his methods were not different from those used in ancient Egypt and indeed the Egyptians of his day cooperated with him. Much of the work was accomplished in silence. Solomon stood at the head of a great hierarchy. He transmitted his commission (and it is said, silently) to the Grand Masters, they to the Masters of the various guilds and crafts, who in turn instructed the artists, workers and all hands. It was an application of cosmic and hierarchical law, a supreme brotherhood going to work to accomplish something useful and beautiful. Therefore it has been the source of countless inspirations through the ages.

To recapitulate, one may employ these definitions:

Art is the work of the creative spirit through the individual on two planes;

Sculpture is the work of the creative spirit through the individual on three planes;

Architecture is the work of the creative spirit through the collectivity on three planes, or in space;

Spiritual Architecture is that which is applied to buildings used for sacred purposes (in all senses);

Esoteric or **Occult Architecture** is that based upon a knowledge of symbolism, occultism and esotericism.

For our general purposes one may say that sacred architecture may take on three vital aspects: the group activity which is applied to the building of temples and other grand sacred edifices; the group activity which will be engaged in the construction of khankahs, or inhabitable places; the activity, individual in intent for the building of private homes and small places such as shrines, etc.

Of course there have been many magnificent homes built which impel admiration as marvels of beauty. They need not, however, be regarded as models, both from the standpoint of costs and because they are primarily the source of satisfaction to the few. They are regarded by spiritual students as belonging to Nufsaniat, the realm of the satisfaction of individuals. The architecture of the future may bring satisfaction not only to those who dwell in or make use of buildings, but to society as a whole.

The khankah, which is the type of building used by the Sufis of the Orient, offers on its philosophical side, the idea which can be used generally by cooperative groups. It is an alternative to family-home, apartment, hotel, and barracks. The khankah in a certain sense becomes a living entity; the persons who dwell there may come and go. So although on the one hand khankahs may be established first for and by spiritual students, there is no reason why the principles of them may

not be adopted universally. Nor is there any loss if they are not adopted, for no spiritual teachings are directly against human freedom or the individual's search for happiness.

In the khankah, even in the planning of a khankah, many join in an enterprise. They may complete the architecture and others may adorn the actual building; there can be no individual undertaking in this. Thus between the selection of the ground and the final moving of people into rooms, while there is **as if** one individual is working, different people may come and go at different stages, each performing his task or making his contribution. Thus the khankah is dynamic; it lives and grows.

Spirituality also tends toward a greater and ever greater degree of aesthetic expression and human freedom. If there are any restrictions upon the spirit of man, that reveals the predominance of the ego and the extension of Nufsaniat. Masonry, in proclaiming God as the Grand Architect of the Universe, has set into motion the opposite spirit, that man, made in the divine image, might reveal the holy spirit in him as he plans and works.

Chapter 2

The Value of Esoteric Instruction

By esoteric instruction is meant not only some secret instruction which is given to the pupil by a teacher, but more especially that which every individual receives by himself in the silence. There is a mistaken view that a spiritual teacher offers some fixed philosophy or ideas to a pupil which the pupil must accept. That has nothing to do with true spirituality, which leads to a type of liberty not experienced by the average man. For when the heart is free, the mind becomes as a tool or willing servant. One may use that tool to affect that which he desires or needs.

The most important practice for the understanding of spiritual architecture is concentration. In the beginning this concentration will not be of different nature from that required by other students, especially students of art. The purpose is to unfold the qualities secluded in the heart, the awakening of which will bring inspiration and a zest for life and work. Then, it is necessary to learn to concentrate with others who are connected with the same enterprise, for, as the Bible teaches, "Whenever two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in their midst."

What is Masonry? It may be regarded as a science and art, which leads to perfection. The ancients saw in nature or **prakriti**, the vast Universe which God gave to man to be moulded into beautiful and useful things. They also saw in **purusha** or spirit, the background of the human spirit which

was also to be moulded through character building. The utilization of the atomic materials of the world and the purification of the vibrations of spirit into nobleness and toward perfection, was regarded as one art, one science. And in Modern Masonry, especially as explained by Albert Pike, there is a definite effort to unite these two aspects: the perfection of the world, or not-self or nature; and the perfection of self, or character. And concerning these Jesus Christ has said: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

Therefore spiritual architecture includes not only the planning and construction of buildings, but a series of processes, applied in one's private life in order to do this work perfectly, which results incidentally in character-building and human perfection. One does not always emphasize the faults of human nature or the frailties of individuals. One finds through concentration and other esoteric exercises which lead one constantly toward the ideal, the framework for the betterment of nature and human nature together.

In India the **Silpa Sastra** was written as the basic law for the craftsmen engaged in the sacred undertakings. It was considered that no man had the right to build a temple or even an altar or to take part in these works unless he himself had a certain training, indeed belonged to a certain caste. The caste rules even from birth, were of such a nature that he was supposed to have come to a realization of the divine spirit in himself and behave accordingly.

Today we need not follow the Silpa Sastra although a study of it may throw some light upon the methods used in ancient times, which can always be elaborated upon. But we now have so many materials that can be used in construction: endless varieties of wood and wood products, stone, masonry, metals, glass, adobe, bricks and constantly new materials, the results of the technology of the day. Although living materials (e.g., woods) have more life and more magnetism, where beauty is concerned one should not be too restricted. The whole earth is there for man to use.

Again today direct handicraft is not so much in evidence. There was a time when the handworker was needed. Today the machine has taken his place. Yet the creative spirit can never be expressed satisfactorily through a machine. The artist will always be needed; there are things hands can do, especially under inspiration, which nothing else can do. Besides, a spiritual revival may help to revive old handicrafts and to introduce art-forms from one nation to another; e.g. flower and plant arrangement, landscape gardening, interior decorating, etc.

Today the knowledge of the world has been spread from country to country and advantage is being taken of it so that there is a departure from tradition and uniformity. Although in a certain sense this has been productive of anarchy, it also gives such scope for planning and methods that perhaps never before were there so many opportunities in this field, cost alone preventing wide-spread experimentation.

Therefore one may see the cube, pyramid, cross, circle, sphere, star and all the elements of symbolism and geometry employed in building. Adaptations have been made from Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Siamese, Burmese, Chinese, Hindu and other architectures. The distant past, the

less remote past and the preceding periods alike offer ideas which can be used, employing perhaps other materials from building as science offers them to man. Thus so far as form and material are concerned, there seems no end to freedom excepting the laws of nature and engineering.

What is needed, therefore, is an equal freedom of the spirit to counterbalance and dominate this material freedom. Only the people of the day have lost their ability to meditate and relax. And it is of little value to copy ancient external methods without also using their styles of self-discipline and preparation. Even now Japanese craftsmen practice meditation and concentration.

When we look at the architecture of the past we recognize at once that the most beautiful examples are connected with religion. In those days castles were built for military purposes, not for beauty, and even in times of peace the masses were otherwise excluded from opportunities for self-expression in aestheticism. Qur'an and Bible and Saddharma-Punkarika Sutra offer suggestions, which have inspired the devotees. Cathedral and temple and mosque and pagoda have been built. Those who undertook such works were inspired by the ideals of love, harmony and beauty, each in his own way. No wonder one learns: "Zen (spiritual meditation) **is** the everyday life."

The Sufis have especially devoted themselves to this field. The shrines of Islam have often been built by them, and the care of these shrines has been in their hands. Where religions have touched, as Christianity and Islam in Turkey, the Sufis protected the holy places of both. In India there are holy places of the Hindus which are guarded by Sufis.

There is a story of a young boy who wished **bayat** (investiture into Sufism, also called **initiation**). He was told by the murshid (director) that he was not ready and he should work for a certain smith for a year. He went to work and at the end of the year was summoned by the teacher. "What have you learned?" "Oh, I know how to handle the bellows and look after the fire and shape metals." "Is that all? Well, go back and come here at the end of next year." This the lad did and returned at the end of another year at the teacher's request.

"What did you learn this last year?" The boy answered, "I know how to shoe a horse and to make armor and do all that is required of the smith." "I am so sorry," said the teacher, "but there is still more to learn." The boy did not understand, but obeyed. He worked one year more and then he rushed to the teacher and said, "Thank you, dear Murshid, for the marvelous instructions." It seems that all the time he has been living close to the smith, breathing the same atmosphere, adopting the same rhythm, doing things in the same way. The smith was a master but like all true masters was hidden (**ghaib**). He was following the path known by Sufis as **rind**. The very attunement between instructor and apprentice awakened the heart of the latter and thus he learned that which cannot be found in books. He has discovered the "Way."

It may seem to be asking much of the architect of the future to follow this or any other method of the past. The spiritual training which would be most helpful to them would include that which is good for the artists and some of that which is good for the musicians. For in architecture people

must learn to attune themselves one to another. The attunement between the smith and the apprentice in the story above offers an example of the methods (in part) used by the ancients, especially among the Egyptians and by Solomon, which were included in the schools established by Solomon for that purpose. In his day there were three kinds of schools: the public schools for practical and religious education; the most sacred schools for the prophets; and in between those of occult and esoteric instruction necessary for all priests, Levites, artists and craftsmen.

By presenting the Message of Sufism to the western world, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan was not unaware of the great love of the Western people for the Taj Mahal or their delight in lesser known edifices such as the Tomb of Akbar and other works made under Sufi influence. But it was not so much for the sake of spreading Sufism as a cult, as to awaken humanity to its needs, so that every individual as well as the collectivity could come to discover the latent power within and then adopt this power, together with its wisdom and beauty, to make this world a happier place.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow is a work offered to the public, that all may read. The commentary thereon is offered principally to those who would tread the path and seek spiritual liberation through the arts, finding in one or more of these arts the way to God and the salvation of personality. The commentary then leads to the deepest phase, the study and practice of the esotericism connected therewith that each may become a channel for the divine inspiration and divine grace.

[Chapter 3](#)

Metaphysical Basis of Architecture

GATHEKA: Sculpture and painting complete architecture. The idea of building of a home did not develop only with the creation of the human race; it had already begun with the first manifestation.

TASAWWUF: Sculpture and painting are the arts of man. We do not find them among the animals whose arts are utilitarian, and primitive people do not give them the same attention as civilized people. It is true, however, that even the backward nations have some small plastic, which are either toys or religious or magical implements. Perhaps the influence of religion was one of the greatest forces that started mankind to develop the arts.

We do find some home-building among animals. Birds have their nests and foxes their dens. The social insects—ants, bees and wasps—have elaborate structures and spiders are often very skillful in their line. Beavers may be called the engineers of the animal world. Even among the fishes one

finds certain ones that have homes or nests. Apes sometimes build rude structures, but little more. It was man that added the element of beauty for its own sake.

GATHEKA: And if we look into life and its laws with keen insight, we shall see that the whole of creation is built on this one principle: that of making a home for every word, for every thought, for every sound, for every idea, and for every color.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, not only is there an idea of home on earth for the things of earth, but there is an idea of home for everything that belongs to the heaven-world, or mind-world. Perhaps the German **himmel** and other words for the mind-world contain the germ of this idea. Jesus Christ also said, "In my Father's House are many mansions; therefore I go to prepare a place for you." And according to the Sufis in Malakut (mind-world) there is an accommodation (akasha) for all things and all beings; all find their places there, and without that place they could not exist.

God has been called the Grand Architect of the Universe, which has indeed been likened to a seven story building. Each floor has, so to speak, its materials, creatures and wonders. Life is not the same as on earth, but the lower floors are connected with sounds and forms and colors. The universe is made up of the interplay of the forces between these planes. Much in architecture such as the pagoda structure, the Babylonian tower and certain types of pyramids are based upon this tradition concerning the nature of the Universe.

GATHEKA: No color, sound, or thought could be recognized, no feeling could be distinguished, if they did not have a home to live in.

TASAWWUF: On the physical plane atoms are united into forms. On the mental plane atoms and types of vibrations are united into ideas or thoughts which become objectified there as forms. And it is also said that in a certain state, **Wahdaniat**, God exists with all forms, thoughts, ideas, imaginations, intuitions, inspirations, everything potential or real, that was, is or will be. There is the accommodation for all, in eternity.

Man's faculties do not always extend into the unseen, but potentially he depends upon the unseen. Every form, every idea, is based upon some reality which is beyond his ken; he draws it into his consciousness and says it is real. It is no more real than before, it is only that he has realized it. All that man learns, whether he learns it from another or obtains it by inspiration has been there in the universe. It is his change of self that has enabled him to grasp it.

Likewise on the physical plane, the body of man is full of wonders; it houses many things, emotional and mental as well as physical although the scientists have not yet extended their study to these possibilities.

GATHEKA: For instance it is breath which manifests as the voice, and it is the voice which manifests as a word; but in order to manifest as the voice the breath must have the mouth as its home; and for the voice to manifest as a word, as a sound, all that the mouth contains is

necessary.

TASAWWUF: Therefore the human body as well as the mind is an accommodation and by use of the body and its parts we bring into manifestation what is there in the universe but has not been recognized by our consciousness before that. There have been many discussions over the question, did the organ produce the faculty or the faculty produce the organ. No doubt the faculty was there already, and it needed an instrument for expression. Ability to fly is a faculty; without wings it may be impossible. Ability to swim is a faculty, without limbs or a certain agility, it may be impossible.

Many animals have mouths but all do not speak. The functions of the mouth may be different in different animals and sometimes there may be no mouth as we understand it. The sounds of birds come from the region of the chest and those of man come from the throat while insects may sing by rubbing their wings together. Thus there is the same faculty with different modes of expression.

Even the breath does not take the same channel in all animals. Those in the sea may have gills and lower creatures on the land have trachea, and the vertebrates or higher animals have lungs—all from the same faculty of breathing.

GATHEKA: That again is a home; it is a home conveniently made for the voice to turn into a word. Then the voice, the word, needs a home in order to become audible; and that home is the ear. If something of what the ear should contain is missing, then the sound is not fully audible.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of every faculty which the Sufis call **Jelal** and **Jemal**. The Jelal aspect is an expression and the Jemal aspect responsiveness. For sound to be made there has to be an organ or instrument and there are definite laws regarding the formation or creation of sound. But neither is it sound unless it is heard; there are many vibrations, even vibrations that move through the air and sense matter. They are not called sound unless there is an accommodation for reception. Thus ears are required for sound.

It is true that there are insects which give out vibrations too fine for men to hear, which are sounds to the insects and not to man. There are also instruments which have been invented to test the range of man's auditory function and all people do not hear the same things or in the same way. Still there must be some organ to house the sound, to receive it, or it is not sound.

The first musical instruments of man were also homes for sounds. Thus the reed instruments and the flute. The making of those instruments was like building a home, it was a home for sound. When the organ was used more it had to have a much larger home, so the organ was placed in great temples and churches. Many buildings have marvellous acoustical properties. In St. Paul's Cathedral in London a pin dropped can be heard a long distance. And this knowledge of sound which has been overlooked by some architects and builders is again being considered as important. This is particularly true since the use of the radio has become wide-spread.

Different animals have various devices for hearing. Perhaps at one time the senses were not so separate, and all creatures do not respond to the same ranges of vibrations. When man has discovered his shortcomings he invents instruments, such as the stethoscope of the physician, used to listen to the heart-beat. Thus there are many instruments, natural or artificial, for the housing of sound—sound to be sent out and sound to be heard, or received.

GATHEKA: The breath must have lungs and tubes through which it can manifest; they are its home.

TASAWWUF: The body has been called the temple of God and the temple of the Holy Spirit. While the Scriptures all give forth this teaching, it has been overlooked by the Orthodox who decline to see in the building made by God a sacred edifice and call rather the works of their own hands holy. As a result of this the attitude of man toward man has never, or very seldom, been that which has been considered desirable by the Holy Ones.

It is possible to make a study of the body as an architectural development: study the bones, muscles, layers, veins and tubes, and learn more than might be expected. Until recent times physiologists have ignored the laws of mechanics and paid little attention to the mechanical properties of the body and its parts. With the rise of osteopathy and chiropractic a new view has come into vogue which is in many ways a healthful and helpful view and which will ultimately throw much light upon the laws of the body, and of nature.

Every house has to have its atmosphere. During a cyclone it is best to have the windows open; otherwise the difference between the outside and inner pressure may be so great that the house will not be able to withstand the wind. Man lives in an ocean of air and his health often depends upon the relationship of the air within and without. Although one does not always think of a house breathing, nevertheless a study of convection currents is most helpful. Now there are processes of air-conditioning and the mystic would say that man is recognizing the breathing of the house. Fetid atmospheres may be the source-spots of many diseases.

The movement of the air through the body is studied by esotericists. How the air enters the noses, passes through sinuses, throat, trachea, to the lungs; how it enters the bloodstream, how it reaches the organs, the work it does, its return. While the physiologist may see only one or two sides to these processes, the mystic studies them from every angle.

GATHEKA: The blood must have channels through which it can circulate for the same reason.

TASAWWUF: The air is the gaseous element and the body has provided accommodations for the gases. The blood is the liquid element. The laws of the movements of liquids are different from that of the movement of gases. The gases may pass through membranes more easily than the liquids, so the liquids have their tubes or piping and travel through the channels particularly suited for them.

The earth also has its ocean of breath, which is not so very high, and although one might not give

thought to it—because it may not be important—the earth in a sense has its breath. The water of the streams and of the sea is the blood of the earth and this blood, so to speak, appears in the rivers and underground streams; when it is stagnant it is of no value to life.

Water is also indispensable to modern buildings. There is the water needed through plumbing facilities and also that required for heating or cooling and other processes. Water is also necessary for gardens, pools, fountains and decoration.

GATHEKA: And in the same way the mind is the home of thought, the heart is the home of feeling, and the soul is the home of the divine light, the divine Spirit.

TASAWWUF: Each plane of the universe has been formed out of different but definite ranges of vibrations. Together they constitute the Universe, which is the complete temple of God, and if one wishes to so express it, the form of God. Thus we have the Universe as the Divine Temple, and the body of man also as the potential temple. (Ultimately one may discover, however, that the universe is also within man so there is no contradiction.) This will make it possible to apply spiritual principles to the architecture of the future.

Thus one starts with life and then adds feeling to it and then the thought comes and finally the action and the form. If life is moving in this direction harmony will result; if it takes some other form, such as that which occurs when there is action without thought and thought without feeling, then man will not find his way in the world so easily.

GATHEKA: From the moment that the soul begins its journey and passes through the different spheres, turning into an individual, the entire phenomenon of this process consists in making a home. First the soul makes a home of the body which is taken from the angelic spheres, and by taking that body it becomes an angel. A being, a life which had no name and no distinctive features, obtained them when it gathered around itself a cover and it took that cover as its home.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed at length in *The Soul, Whence and Whither* and elsewhere in the Sufi studies. Strictly speaking soul is all extension and the atoms and vibrations are found everywhere in it, but without form. There was a movement of contraction and this brought together a light, because of the intensity of contraction and around that light there was an accommodation of less light, so there was a separation of an intense light and a sphere around it. Then the whole thing was covered over, so to speak, and that is called the angelic body.

In one sense we see a reflection of that angelic body in the cell and the symbol of the dot and the circle also has been borrowed from it. But its distinction is one of tuning rather than of time and space as we know them.

So in this sense God is the Master Builder. God has covered Himself and formed all the planes of the Universe. He took the materials of Himself, and the soul after Him took the materials of itself and formed the angelic body with which it has become identified but which is not itself. The

vibrations of the soul are much finer than those we find in the sphere of the heart.

We give names to various angels thereby making distinctions which may not exist in reality. For it is discovered by the sages that all the illuminated ones form the embodiment of a single Master. This has led to the promulgation of **tanasukh**, or return, a doctrine which has been confused with reincarnation. According to tanasukh there is One Divine Spirit which constantly ascends and descends, although Jacob saw it in symbolic form in dream.

GATHEKA: In the same way in the sphere of the jinn the soul gathers round itself a home that gives it an accommodation; and that home is its being.

TASAWWUF: In the mental sphere distinctions stand out clearly, even in what appears to the inhabitants of that plane as objective-difference. Every individual appears there as a separated entity and functions so. Each builds his own life, and this distinction stands out as the soul descends toward earth. This subject is also discussed in *The Soul, Whence and Whither* and in the literature and studies. Much light is thrown upon it also by the practice of concentration, which enables the talib (spiritual disciple) to study the affairs of the next world as well as of this one.

GATHEKA: It is the same with the human body.

TASAWWUF: The human body is a further accommodation for the divine spirit. It is made of coarser atoms than the vehicles which the soul uses on the other spheres, but it is a mistake to suppose that coarseness of itself is a sign of absence of spirituality. God is everywhere, in all things, and wherever there is life there is God.

GATHEKA: The soul has gathered round itself another home, and it is of this home in which the soul lives that man says, "It is I."

TASAWWUF: Nufs, the ego, is the result of man's identification with his home. In the mind-world the soul has taken on a cover and through thought it gives thought to the cover and thus establishes the faculty of identification which also operates together with the faculty of analysis.

What makes a house a home? It is the personal atmosphere. **A house is space, a home is atmosphere.** The soul enters a house and endows that house with atmosphere so it becomes a home. Then it identifies itself with the home and this causes delusion because the soul in reality has no such limitations. In the cosmic state called "Samadhi" it would not recognize or understand the differences and distinctions which divide men.

GATHEKA: The Hindus have called this home an **Akasha**, which means accommodation. Thus accommodation is not only a need but it is indispensable; nothing can be born, composed, constructed, or moulded without its accommodation.

TASAWWUF: If we study the Universe we shall find that first within Allah there was a stirring and a

dream, then a plan and then action. All that God did came in the highest and finest first and then there was a contraction and solidification down through all the planes. So the grosser worlds were derived from the finer planes, and the study of metaphysics reveals the nature of the universe and of all planes. But the best way to study metaphysics is to study oneself.

This brings out the idea that every building has a life of its own and should be planned and built as if it were a living creature. The more feeling that is put into the planning the more apt one is to receive proper inspiration. The purer the thought given to it the more likely that a satisfactory work will be done thereafter. So by following the principles of rhythm and harmony one can build a better body or better house. And one can then feel as the poet (Holmes) wrote in his *Chambered Nautilus*, "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul."

Those who enter the path of perfection and fulfill their obligations—which are more to themselves than to their teachers or to anyone else—will notice that faculties buried deep within their personalities will rise to the surface and that there is a much greater feeling for life and sympathy as well as growing insight. Then they will see the need for planning before or during every act, and when the creative faculty is called forth, it will operate first on the inner planes. This will put more life into whatever is to appear upon earth, be it child or statue or building.

GATHEKA: The Sufis have called this accommodation the temple: there is a temple of breath, a temple of sound, a temple of hearing, a temple of seeing; and there is a temple of God's spirit which is the body. And each part of the body is again a temple which accommodates a thought, a feeling, a faculty, or a sense.

TASAWWUF: God said to the prophets of Beni Israel: "I will try the heart and the reins." This would mean that every organ of the body has its purpose. The stomach, the liver, the heart, the lungs, the brain, may be regarded as temples. Each is a unit or unity of itself in that it stands out from the mass of the body. Each has its special purpose, a purpose not entirely limited to this plane.

It receives or gives out certain vibrations; every organ has its special vibrations which are connected with the atoms or cell-material of which it is composed and every organ is attuned to vibrations, the vibrations of emotion, thought and feeling which radiate through the universe. So in this sense, although there is a physical body, it is not entirely distinguishable from the other bodies.

People have talked about the third eye and some have been influenced by tantric yogism to believe that the glands and other centers of the body have marvellous faculties. Perhaps this is so and perhaps there are marvels which even students of that school do not know. There may be a third eye in the head as they say and it may be that even the whole body is a receptacle of light, if one only knew it. Every portion of the body has its purpose and its wonders, discovered by the physiologists or not, known to occult students or not.

Spiritual students learn how to purify and refine this body through the sciences and methods taught

them. Zikr especially is a practice wherein musical sounds are used which vibrate in the cells and organs of the body in such a way as to cleanse, refine and elevate them. Thus each becomes more and more a receptacle of light. The body becomes more magnetic, it gives out more life and psychic power. It becomes a living torch. Thus the body of Moses shone and Mohammed is said to have cast no shadow, his physical vehicle being a house of living light.

GATHEKA: When we look at it in this light, we see that when man made a home for himself to live in, it was the second step. The first step was that he made himself, the next step was that he made a home to live in.

TASAWWUF: In the creation of self the soul took the materials of the sphere and wove them into its being. In the second step the soul breathed the atmosphere of his being into the materials of the sphere in which he dwelt. In the first step the soul depended upon **Urouj**, the inhalation, and in the second step which required action, it depended upon **Nasoul**, the exhalation. The combination of them produced rhythm.

According to the spiritual traditions of the Buddhists, Sufis and others the whole universe is within man and man has all the potentialities which are found anywhere. It is only when man seeks to own in a private individual way, possessions, fame or anything, that the seeds of disharmony and dissension are sown. There is balance in the spiritual life of accumulation and bestowal, of giving and getting. Christ said, "Freely give, freely receive." This must be followed rather than, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," which is always spoken by those who want to get, who are not always so willing to give.

GATHEKA: It is his second step because the four walls and the roof, all that is in front of him and around him, form his personality, his character.

TASAWWUF: And there is a great loss in the life of people who are deprived of homes, who have not even a hut to live in. There are two classes of persons who thus suffer: those who, because of unfortunate circumstances have no home; and those who live in hotels, in rooms which are at times occupied by others. They both lack the opportunity to make the accommodation of atmosphere. For the more one breathes in a certain place, the more one rests or sleeps or meditates in one spot the stronger one builds a personal atmosphere there. And each time he goes back to that atmosphere he is strengthened for through that he inhales the power of the universe, the all-pervading power of space called **Kafi**.

According to Sufism man was born into this world to beautify it, and at the same time perfect his own character. This, as has been explained, has always been the purpose of life, and whether one accepts Masonry or the traditions of India one will arrive at the same conclusion. Now God has made man in His own image and likeness and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. Therefore **the divine spirit can only enter this sphere in a perfect manner through the human breath**. The human breath can become a vehicle for the divine spirit accordingly as this body is treated as a holy temple and not as a bestial form.

The purification of the breath and the purification of the vehicles of the soul by the breath make it possible for man to receive and bestow blessings. Whenever he does this, whether it is giving or receiving he builds his personal atmosphere. This personal atmosphere can magnetize the physical and etheric bodies and through them the room in which one sleeps, the house in which one dwells. Therefore the body is the first temple, the home is the second temple.

It is hoped that the civilizations of the future will provide suitable accommodations for all. In this day when one sees so much tragedy in China it may be that great good will come out of it. For in China little attention has been paid to personal atmosphere. The family has been made into a reality and the members of it have not been given due consideration as human beings. Often there is little privacy, and many have no homes of any kind.

In a proper social order the greatest safeguard would be to give everyone past infancy his own room. When man or woman or child can retire to his own quarters he may enter a temple, a sanctuary, a place of revitalization. Even little children can feel this when they run to their rooms after having been punished by their parents or react sensitively against something that has been said or done. It is better to have a cell or hut which is as one's own than to have all the comforts and luxuries of life and know not where or how to rest.

The atmosphere thus established may constitute a **theba**, or ark of refuge. And if one has such a place to meditate and pray he will be building an accommodation as for God, a center of healing and blessing.

GATHEKA: Today, when there is so much hotel life everywhere and home life is much less known, when the home is so little appreciated, people cannot understand how sacred the idea of house-building really is.

TASAWWUF: And at the same time we see so much nervousness, discomfort, inharmonies and misunderstandings. If every person has his sanctuary, there would be much more happiness.

It may take more than a ceremony of purification to cleanse some places. The apartment which is inhabited by various people at various times contains "psychic shells" of what has been going on before. The thought-forces and thought-forms do not disappear just because the people go away. The mental atmosphere remains. And it is not always easy to prevent sounds, odors and thoughts from coming in from neighbors, thus disturbing one's privacy.

In some ways even the poor Hindus are better off when they have their own huts and even only a few possessions. If they do not have all the conveniences of life and do not benefit from proper hygiene and sanitation, at least the atmosphere of their dwelling is not corrupted.

When people move from place to place they lose their old atmospheres. The accommodations which they have constructed are gone and they must expend energy to build up a new

atmosphere. This becomes harder and harder as one grows older. It is a sorry world when people cannot build homes, when homes are outmoded and when the housing problem in general is in chaos.

GATHEKA: Besides, the uniformity of these times takes away a great deal of the beauty of the home. We change the world into a prison when we begin to lose our conception of a home: then we think in terms of pigeon-holes where a thousand or more pigeons can be put in and locked up in the evening.

TASAWWUF: This was an actual condition in ancient Babylon. There have been many social orders since and in most of them the human spirit has been deprived of its freedom. Whatever be the cause behind it or the excuse for it, the substitution of uniformity for unity deprives the world of beauty and restricts life. In some cities the houses are all alike, the habits alike and there is little scope for expression. And when people live in apartments—called tenements when they are poor—the loss of privacy makes a mark upon the character and the spirit of human freedom is lost, even the spirit of decency departs sometimes.

In a free society people would be allowed to have their homes or at least their atmospheres. When Moses gave the holy laws to the Beni Israel he provided for a social cleansing every fifty-years which made it possible to repair conditions and institutions, and keep these subjugated to man. When the jubilee year came there was rejoicing and a new beginning again. If we could recognize that the earth is living, the land is living, even houses are living, and if we could recognize the sacredness of man, many of the problems of the day would disappear.

GATHEKA: Even when man first began to build the accommodation for himself to live in, the sense of architecture was already advanced, for even the birds very often have greater skill in making nests than man has in what he does. A beautifully built nest is a miracle in itself.

TASAWWUF: This subject has already been discussed a little. One can find in this world the Spirit of Guidance and while we may call it “instinct” when animals seem to display intelligence without conscious effort, that does not tell us what instinct is. It is remarkable to note that those birds whichsing sweetly, which must breathe in a certain manner to produce their songs, also display rhythm and art in nest building, in flying and in all acts of life. Take the humming-bird for instance; every motion it makes displays rhythm and beauty. And no doubt as the breath of life penetrates their personalities in a certain way it makes possible the production of wonders.

The mystic finds elements of genius throughout the lower kingdoms, each of these elements working its way up to fruition and in man all the faculties that are found in nature may appear. Therefore man in a sense is the cream of creation.

GATHEKA: The skilful weaving, and the patience with which it is done, the perseverance and good sense that the bird shows, all these teach us that the spirit has developed the art of building a home even before man was created, and thus from his most primitive state he possessed the

inborn quality of being able to build proper accommodation for himself.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps one of the most manifest differences between lower man and the higher apes is that man has faculties which seem to be derived from other animals, other than the apes. Indeed intelligence has in it all instincts, for intelligence is like a steady stream of light in which each instinct is like a spark or a separated ray. Astrology seems to suppose that many influences appear in man which are similar to influences that appear in animals. Therefore animals have been used symbolically to denote the signs of the zodiac. Often one finds in those particular animals the qualities associated with the signs.

Now weaving is a high art and whether it is performed by insect or bird it requires great patience. There is a story that Robert Bruce, after he had tried many times to liberate the Scottish people, was hiding in a hut where he saw a spider try again and again to weave its web, succeeding only on the seventh attempt. Bruce did not wish to be inferior to such a small creature, and having failed six times himself he tried once more and on the seventh effort was successful and ultimately became ruler of his country.

If man wishes to learn weaving he also must learn patience. One way by which this can be done is by the practice of slow, gentle, rhythmical breathing, together with concentration. This practice and attitude will also help man in all his artistic endeavours. He can learn the methods from the animals; he can accept what Rassoul King Solomon said: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." He can find the Spirit of Guidance in all creatures.

[Chapter 4](#) **Earliest Principles**

GATHEKA: The art of architecture began with people digging holes in the ground, piling up stones, and making use of mountain caves as houses to dwell in.

TASAWWUF: The first motive was born of necessity. By instinctive impulse man protected himself against the rain and wind and inclement weather. Although some have claimed that primitive man lived in the trees, there is little evidence for it. The cave was a natural habitat, and man by imitation would try to cut away recesses in the stone in imitation of caves. He often lived on the side of the mountains or cliffs and in several parts of the world we can find the cliff dwellers even today. Thus one might say that the first architecture was imitative although rock carving and cave excavations

continued as civilizations grew until they blossomed into the marvellous work of the caves of Elaphanta and Arjunta in India.

Many homes were also built under ground. We have traditions of the Picts in the British Isles who are said to have lived underground. Many Russians also dwelt down under the soil before the Revolution of 1917. Some of the myths of gnomes arose from the fact that people lived that way. It was not healthful, it kept them close to the dense earth, and it also retarded mental development.

GATHEKA: And the first idea which inspired them to do this was not how it could be made more comfortable for them, more convenient, more beautiful; instead of this their first idea was how it could be made in such a way that they could think more of God. It is with this idea that the art of architecture began. Cutting stones and carving wood, the people made symbols or works of art, pictures or figures that would remind them of spiritual perfection. This was the first thought of primitive man.

TASAWWUF: This shows that there was another influence in human life besides necessity. We see that animals meditate and seek repose at various times. People who live close to nature do this also. They do not act contrary to impulse and instinct. They find it unhealthy. Besides, there was never a time when man did not have some religious feeling. However it was expressed it was with him from the earliest times and where we find people today who lack a religion we can generally determine from their language and institutions that they are in a stage of decadence.

We can find elements of the mysteries in many parts of the world and there are traditions which reveal that peoples have had occult knowledge from the most ancient times. This can be seen by a study of inhabitants of Southwestern United States, and many parts of Africa and the Indies. The people know how and when to rest and work, how and when to pray. They have a strong feeling for the rhythms of nature and the spirit of devotion is not lacking, however it be expressed.

GATHEKA: Afterwards came the thought of how their home could be made more comfortable, how it could be made so that it would protect them against the weather—storms, excessive heat, cold, and rain. And so the next idea which influenced the building of the house was consideration of the weather, and that influenced all kinds of construction.

TASAWWUF: It is said that there are three dominant influences in the life of man: Nature, Providence or God, and man's own desire-nature or will. He is moved first by necessity or nature. But there is also another impulse in him to the devotion and recognition of an All-Creator. Primitive man is not at first so self-conscious. That comes later. So the longing for comfort did not come in the beginning but it was an influence that led man to desire to improve himself and to strengthen and protect himself against the ravages of nature.

Animals have various ways in which they do it, as by flight or hibernation. Man could not move as quickly as the birds and his constitution is not the same as that of the animals which hibernate. Besides, he had within himself the creative faculty and began to use it. It is true that in the

ammara*-stage people are more concerned with food and sleep. Even hunting and gathering food-crops require effort and consume magnetism. Primitive people are apt to consume all their magnetism and not think much of the morrow; they show even less foresight than many animals. But when the desire nature and self-consciousness awakened then came also the impulse for improvement and so the first steps in progress were made.

*Ammara signifies a person of low evolution, interested only in his senses and immediate needs.

GATHEKA: But unconsciously the people felt that the house should not be too different from the picture of the world. Naturally, therefore, because the horizon is round, they dug holes which were also round. In ancient Persian poetry they speak of **Gardish-i Dunya**, which means the roundness of the world. And **Gardish** does not mean only roundness, but a round action, a circular movement.

TASAWWUF: The idea that the people of ancient times thought the world was square had been largely fostered by orthodoxy, by priestcraft and by a literal interpretation of Scriptures. In the mystical traditions we find everywhere the idea that the world was round or spherical. Besides, the Beni Israel of the Bible were hardly primitive; they were an advanced people in many ways. To understand the primitive people we have to study them, but we also have to study the mind of man. The mind instinctively is drawn to the straight line and the circle; it is not instinctively drawn to the square and some other figures; they are the products of reason, not of instinct.

In the Hebrew Bible we indeed read of the phrase, “the ends of the earth.” If one wishes to take this in a literal sense, or to take much of the Bible outside of the historical books in a literal sense the spiritual message may be lost. This phrase might better be interpreted as “The limitations (or limits) of materialization.” There is a limit to the process whereby spirit is turned into matter, and that means the beginning of the opposite process, the return of matter back toward spirit.

People remark that the temple of Jerusalem was square and they speak of the heavenly Jerusalem as the city, four-square. Yet the human body, which is the real divine temple, is full of curved forms; there are many cross sections, such as arms, legs, head, ribs, which show the tendency toward the circle. Everywhere in the vegetable kingdom and many places in the animal kingdom we find this shape. Therefore instinctively man would be drawn to it. Also it is seen in the sun and moon.

Whatever the explanations of the Bible are or the remarks of those who have not delved deeply, an examination of the more primitive architecture in all parts of the world will reveal this circular form. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, **beth**, which is **bait** in Arabic, meant a house. More originally it signified a dwelling, a tent, or tent-like structure, and this was always round. Many Arabs today live in houses which have this same formation.

GATHEKA: The houses were not always round, for sometimes there was an improvement, for instance when an oval opening was made.

TASAWWUF: The roundness was not always the same. The igloo of the Eskimo is dome-like, and

there is a low, round entrance to it, through which the people have to crawl on hands and knees. But when man made an oval entrance he did not have to stoop. Sometimes also this entrance was triangular, whence **Daleth**, the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet which means “door” or “entrance.”

GATHEKA: Even now one will find that among primitive people there are round dwellings; always their first idea is to build their house as they see the world, round, and then later they make it oval.

TASAWWUF: This oval formation might come in two directions. Perhaps the floor plan was made oval, which was a different shape, although we do not find that wide-spread. But the vertical view might be changed also from the dome-shape to a more oval form. People did not figure these things out, they simply copied the nature they knew or felt.

GATHEKA: This suggests that first they thought of the world around them, and only later did they think of themselves; for when we look at the form of the human being we see that it is not round but oval. When you make a line from the top of the head and the feet, it is not round, there is the oval.

TASAWWUF: It has already been explained that first man thought of the world, then of God as he understood Him, and then of himself. It requires a certain development to bring out this self-consciousness. After that there may be steady growth. Even today there are buildings patterned after man, and except for deep students of architecture few can explain why buildings are of certain shapes, the rooms of certain shapes, and why and how the different elements in housing were introduced.

GATHEKA: Then there came the tendency of building steps up to the house. Where did this tendency come from? It was an inherited faculty of the soul to feel that it had descended many steps, so that it had to climb up many steps again to reach the highest temple.

TASAWWUF: Of course this was impossible with the people who dwelt under the ground. But it was for many people who dwelt along side of cliffs used ladders. Then others elevated themselves above the earth. We find examples of this among the Malays and other dwellers in the Indies. And the ancient inhabitants of Switzerland are said also to have made their houses above the land or above the water.

This also led to the establishment of floors or stories. The idea came from the fact that man lives on different planes, the universe is made of several planes. So the house was built a little that way. And when temple architecture was begun this same principle was developed further until the towers and hanging gardens of Babylon were constructed.

GATHEKA: The house was the picture of the temple, and the steps were suggestive of going towards the temple, each step being a symbol of a different plane of existence.

TASAWWUF: The pyramids of Egypt are excellent examples of the derivation of sacred edifices

from the dwellings of the generality. People then lived in tents or clay houses of similar shape. The pyramids represented a combination of the fire and earth elements, the fire being symbolized by the upward apexed triangle and the earth by the horizontal square. But temples were only possible after the family had developed into the clan and the clan into the tribe.

There is another aspect of this, that when temples were built they also became the model for houses. If God made man in His image then it was thought fitting that the houses of men be modeled after the houses of worship. The Greek temples of that time had flat roofs and they were erected upon pillars. Private homes were built in the same way. But in ancient Egypt there were many schools of architecture because there were many civilizations in Egypt, each of which offered some contribution and various composite architectures arose there also.

The earliest Semites used to sacrifice in high places. They regarded the tops of mountains as sacred. They even gazed upward in prayer or looked to the mountain tops as the place of light. But when the priests obtained the upper hand they tried to uproot this form of worship and have everybody come to their temples.

GATHEKA: The most wonderful part of this is that from the most primitive times no house was made without a religious conception of some sort or other. Perhaps the religion was of the lowest type, a very primitive conception of God, yet the house was always at the same time a temple.

TASAWWUF: This we can see most clearly in Japan because with all the adaptation of new things in that country, the ancient fundamentals have been preserved. The people have always been lovers of art, and while they readily accepted what others offered, they only added them to what they had. The houses used to have niches in them for the gods, who were first worshipped in Japan. Later these niches were used for figures of the Buddha or for art objects. The Japanese have always prided themselves in their shrines. They did not need priests as intermediaries. Everyone, even the most humble, could worship by himself, and each family was a unit.

The ancient Romans and other Europeans had household gods and one of the first cares was to look after those gods. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, we read that when Aeneas fled from Troy his main concerns were his father and the household gods, and the concern of his father Anchises, was those gods. The people centered the house and the home both around worship. And many other ancient peoples placed religion first. Unfortunately those of a later age, using terms like "pagan" and "heathen" were blind to the spirit of devotion in people whose religion, perhaps, was less developed than theirs. But this same spirit is innate in man.

GATHEKA: Later when the people had built more houses they constructed a temple for the community, thinking it would be better to come together in one building for worship. But their first conception was to use their own house as a temple.

TASAWWUF: Public worship in ancient times was supplementary to private worship, and not a substitute for it. This is true in the Hindu religion even today and has also been true among the

Parsis. But as people congregated in villages and later in cities, there were many advantages in having temples for common worship and a study of the civilization of Iran and Egypt will reveal how the sages came from time to time to instruct the multitudes and what kind of instructions were left for them.

We can also learn from a study of many primitive races that are still on earth today. As the people moved out into the clan and the clan into the tribe, there were efforts at specialization. People, even families, were allotted certain tasks. Religion was a common bond, and those that could no longer all unite in hunting, fishing, fighting, could still pray together. Besides, their prayers facilitated their work. The prayer was a concentration and the prayer was magic, and the gods that they worshipped inspired them with the same attributes as they ascribed to those gods.

It is unfortunate that anthropologists and other scientists who have studied primitive religion a little have speculated as much as they have investigated. They are often prone to accept one another's conclusions without testing them properly. Man cannot be studied as are the pebbles and trees and butterflies. Man has an independent mind and there are various grades of evolution and types of people. The mechanical man may have a mind like a machine and the forest-dweller will in a certain sense resemble plant-growths. People are influenced by weather, by environment, by conditions. And besides that, to understand them you have to see life from their point of view. Goerer in his *Africa Dances*, has well pointed out that either the white race or black may be insane to each other; it depends upon the point of view of who is to be considered right and who wrong.

It is human to be swayed by an impulse toward life and all people do not see a vast chasm between the life on earth and the life on other planes. There are motives which effect behaviors such as kindness, wonder, praise or glorification. Primitive people are not led entirely by fear or want. Whatever their religion may appear to be to others, it is something very real to them and their gods and ghosts are, according to them, most certainly not figments of any imagination.

Whatever form the religion took one can see that the church became the center of social life, and people took their pleasure in religious festivals. One of the finest examples of this can still be seen today in Bali. The Balinese are filled with the zest for life; they rejoice and enjoy themselves and must be considered a highly advanced people.

[Chapter 5](#)

The Development of the Houses

GATHEKA: The next important thing was the kitchen. There was an ideal behind using one's house as a temple, but the kitchen was a necessity, because in the kitchen the offering was prepared.

TASAWWUF: It may seem amazing that the kitchen was a sacred place. Yet among the ancients there were many who considered fire to be divine, that fire was a gift of God or of the gods. There was often a god of fire and a goddess of the hearth. And both in Rome and in China there were two separate sets of gods, the household gods, who were associated with the ancestors and with ancestor worship, and the kitchen gods. (Thus **Lares** and **Penates**).

The ancient Teutons worshipped Hertha and the Greeks Hestia, who is said to have been Vesta in Latin, the goddess whom the vestal virgins served. Even today the kitchen gods are held in importance in China and if this influence is not so much felt in religion, it is in art. Besides, when one considers the church and the kitchen, in a certain sense they represent heaven and earth, but both may be regarded as sacred places.

Today in Java and Bali one can see the attention paid to food, more as a gift for the gods, as a sacrifice, than as an offering to the body. Yes, they have many feasts, but they do not think of themselves primarily in these feasts. There has been a sacred dwelling place for the fire, the fire was sacred and everything that depended upon the fire was sanctified. In many religions even now the eating of food is a sort of communion, or at least a religious duty.

GATHEKA: There again the people had the idea that what they needed was at the same time an offering to God. So in some houses there was worship, and in others there was the kitchen in which to cook food and to offer it to God; and then to eat the food they had prepared for God as it were a blessing, a sacrament.

TASAWWUF: This institution which is so evident in Java and Bali may have been derived from India. Today eating is still a sacred act but because of the complex caste system in India and the growth of sectarianism it does not stand out in such beauty. Still the people prepare the food and bring it to the temples. Only there many of the Brahmins have constituted a sort of priestcraft and the parasitic tendency is evident. In several Buddhist countries offerings are also brought to the temple, but the monks equally cook among the people, and there is a balance, sometimes the people bringing the offerings and sometimes the monks going out and collecting the foods.

The Christians have substituted the communion for these institutions although they do not eat much in the temples and churches. Many of the sacred traditions of early Christianity have been lost in the course of time. The sacred love-feast, which was once so important, disappeared with the introduction of dualism and has never been properly restored.

The Hebrews have their three great festivals: Passover which was originally of tremendous mystical importance, which is celebrated in their homes; **Shebuoth**, the feast of weeks and of the first fruits; and **Sucoeth**, the harvest festival which should be celebrated in special booths, erected

for that purpose and preferably close to the fields and orchards. The Hebrew religion was originally largely an agricultural cult which preserved many of the teachings of the Egyptians and others with respect to holiness. When the Beni Israel were scattered and forced to live in cities, many of the beauties of their religion were lost from view.

GATHEKA: That was the origin of the idea of sacrament, that no one should cook his meal thinking only of how to appease his hunger; and that man should realise, what he had already intuitively felt from the beginning, that there was someone else to offer his food to, who was better and higher and greater than himself and whom he should try to please.

TASAWWUF: The institution of **Shechet**, use of **Kosher** foods, has been in great vogue among the Hebrews and was adopted with few changes by the Muslims. When the Hebrews were agricultural they had an ample variety of foods. They did not need to eat certain animals and would not partake of sea-foods that were not properly protected by nature. Thus swimming fish were always safer than animals which burrowed in the sand or lived on wastes. As the followers of Mohammed were largely desert dwellers, and as they often had to depend upon the camel, the Prophet made some changes—but the idea of sacredness in eating, and of prayer and praise to God he maintained.

The earth has been placed before man and it has been strange that while the Orthodox have been very stringent about some matters—and often on points to which no reference is found in the teachings of the Master—they have been quite lax in the matter of food, both with regard to that which is forbidden and permitted and also in regard to praise and thanks to God, as praise to God and not because they received some special favor.

It is not necessary to restore an orthodoxy. Today Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews and Christians unite more or less with one another and with those who have no religion. Brotherhood cannot be restored by forcing people into grooves, and if that were done there would be no holiness about it. External compulsion will never restore holiness.

The ancient mysteries were also associated with agriculture and husbandry. Corn and oil and wine and the animals were utilized by those ancient cults. It is possible now, as it was then, to feel that God is all in all, and that His life and blessing extend to the earth, its fruits, and the animals which feed upon herbage. And what are vitamins? What are the life-forces which get into the foods and which benefit man? Behind all these vitamins is the One Source of Life. So eating can never be entirely dissociated from religion.

The blessing of foods and the proper handling of them also brings out something in them. Sufi mureeds learn how to develop magnetism in their hands and to transfer it to their foods. They also repeat **Nazar** before eating although there is no reason why Nazar or thanks of grace may not be repeated many times.

Then there comes the question about the atmosphere of the kitchen. Each room, in an ideal state, would be devoted to some particular purpose and obtain its particular atmosphere. Today, in the

Western world, the kitchen is chiefly a separate room in the house although in hotels and other community buildings there may be a large kitchen where many work. In either case it is possible to build a particular atmosphere and maintain it. One should think thoughts there that are associated with the tasks done. And also one may feel that at every moment magnetism and blessings are going into the food. Thus the kitchen could become a sacred room.

It is unfortunate that owing to poverty some people cannot have a kitchen, that they can use only a corner of a room. Then smoke and aromas penetrate the chamber, there is a mixture of atmospheres, and this is harmful. Primitive people who cook outside are better off.

Of course there is another extreme, and that we see in the restaurants where all may be methodical and mechanical, but without feeling. It is too business-like, and there is no spirituality in that. The food is not prepared for anybody in particular; there is no connection between the cook and the patrons. That is why spiritual people are discouraged from eating too much in the restaurants. Something is lost and although very often the food is nicer or tastier and there is a certain kind of enjoyment in eating it, it should not be done too often.

Then there is another kind of kitchen which is found in Scotland and Ireland and other European countries; there the kitchen is still the social center of the house, so it is often kitchen and living room in one. This has been because of the fire-place; the fire was the place of the hearth and the hearth was the social center. The fire was also needed for cooking. There is nothing wrong in this kind of kitchen and it is not necessary to change institutions. What can be done is to increase the feeling of devotion in each aspect of life.

In the Universal Worship there are services for the purification and blessing of houses, each room being treated as a separate unit. This gives the idea of it having its own atmosphere. The idea of blessing there is that each room be maintained thereafter for its own particular use. This of itself increases the psychic power that can be utilized there.

GATHEKA: And what was the origin of the idea of sacrifice? There were times when there were famines, when people could not obtain any food except animal food.

TASAWWUF: First, in the idea of sacrifice as an idea there was the sense of duty to the Creator or to the gods or spirits. It seems to be a natural feeling and it seems almost an instinct to want to give of that which one admires most, or needs most. It has been said that the human body is derived from the anthropoids, but the human mind is possessed of faculties which the apes do not possess. Animals, for instance, do not speculate and have no constructive imagination, only dreams.

Primitive people no doubt lived more in the warmer countries and ate fruits and vegetables. They did not need many clothes. The Bible says that God gave the fruits and seeds as food for man. There were times, however, when such food was not plentiful and it seems likely that sages appeared among the people and organized them into totem clans. This prevented intermarriage of relatives on the one hand and left it to the responsibility of each group of a community to see that

the wants of all were satisfied on the other hand.

GATHEKA: And the most cruel thing that man can do, to kill an animal, struck even the most primitive man as not being right. But in order to save himself life from starving, the only thing he could do was to go hunting, so what he brought home he placed before his Gods as a sacrifice.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the primitive people felt it was only right to eat fruit, nuts, grains and vegetables. If they ate any living things, it was the fish of the sea. So when it was found necessary to subsist upon meat, they would not go out to hunt for food, they went out to hunt to obtain the animals for a sacrifice to the gods. They sacrificed to the gods and had their burnt-offerings. Then, after the ceremony of sacrifice the devotees would be given the remains by the priest and thus they

obtained food. In that way also the meats were purified and blessed. This also gave the idea of sharing with one another, and becoming hospitable. People who worshipped before the same gods became part of the same brotherhood.

No doubt we may learn to live on less meat. It is possible to grow sufficient food crops of all sorts by means of modern methods. Also, it is not necessary to work long hours and with the increase of ease there will be less need and less desire for meat. This will help in the purification of the human body as a whole and assist in the evolution of the race.

GATHEKA: Naturally the necessity arose for a storeroom in the house.

TASAWWUF: This again brings up the subject of atmosphere and dedication, that each room should be used for a particular purpose. Among some peoples there is just one large room and in it are the beds and the kitchen, the granary and the shrine; even the animals are kept there (for instance, among the Mongols). Even cows, pigs and chickens live with the family. They help keep the place warm, but they introduce animal magnetism which impedes spiritual progress.

Indeed where there is overcrowding in a room or in a house we can be sure that there is little room for either personality or character development. Until one is trained in deep concentration and meditation he will have little privacy or what has been called "individuality."

The storehouse is found in many parts of the world. In the Orient one hears of the **godown**, which is derived from a Malay word for warehouse. The Malays have lived in fertile countries or have been industrious and so had an oversupply of foods. They built special places for them, and this institution has spread all over the Orient. We can also read about them in the Bible; the Egyptians kept storehouses for the surplus foods.

The idea has spread in some form or other all over the world. Houses are furnished with cupboards and "coolers." With the spread of refrigeration a great step forward has been taken even in the spiritual sense. However such places, conveniences, rooms, etc., should be cleansed and purified, and incense burned in them from time to time to remove fetid odors and gases.

GATHEKA: And also for a separate place in which to sleep.

TASAWWUF: This, as has been explained, is most important. A person thus establishes his atmosphere. In Japan and in the modern apartment houses, the same room might be used for several different purposes. The beds may be put down at night and hidden in the day time. While this arrangement is quite convenient, it is much better when there are separate bedrooms. Even husband and wife may benefit by having separate bedrooms, sharing each other's rooms upon occasions. This would assist each in building a personal atmosphere and bring more delight in the enjoyment of each other.

When one has even a cell to sleep in, or an alcove, and also uses that place for meditation, prayer and devotion, he builds up an atmosphere which becomes the center of **Baraka** or blessing. He always finds comfort in it, it is his place. And whenever he retires there he can be comforted.

GATHEKA: Later it was thought that those who came to visit should not be taken into the kitchen or into the room where one slept, because these were sacred; yet they had to be taken into the house and not left out in the rain or heat. Therefore a room was made and set apart for guests; and with these few essentials in mind they built their houses.

TASAWWUF: The difference between a house and a hut is that in the hut, which might even be quite large, there are usually no rooms, only partitions at the best made by blankets or mats. And if a question be asked, which came first, the atmosphere or the rooms, it was the idea of need that brought the rooms. In each room there was a kind of concentration as to the duties connected therewith. The kitchen had its atmosphere and its duties; the bedroom a different atmosphere and different purposes. Thus finally a living room was established.

One can see it through a study of ancient architecture of which the Roman offers some of the best examples although one can also learn from the study of Oriental architecture. The Greeks and Romans and Spaniards have spent much of their time outdoors. But they saw the need of a large hall where there could be feasting, dining, social pleasures, when the weather was inclement.

After all, this body of ours also has rooms, so to speak; the universe has its divisions. So the house also came to have many divisions.

[Chapter 6](#)

The Rise of Decoration

GATHEKA: When primitive people began to think that instead of living in holes in the ground or in caves, they should live on the ground...

TASAWWUF: This was a coming forth into light. People who live underground or in caves or in quarters carved out of stone do not get the full benefit of sunlight and daylight. Without such things both their physical and mental development will be retarded. People who live in dense forests or who do not see the sun all the year around (as the Eskimos and Sameyedes) are not as intelligent as the inhabitants of more open places.

GATHEKA: ...they attempted to make houses of dry leaves, of straw, of reeds, and then of bamboo; a still further development was that they began to cut wood and make boards to build their houses with. And so architecture developed more and more.

TASAWWUF: We cannot say whether man was led by necessity or by some intuitive genius within himself or was guided by wise men to try these things and to improve gradually the habitat in which he lived. Now the materials of the vegetable kingdom give out a certain kind of magnetism which man does not get from the stones and they also moderate the heat and cold. Stones are good conductors of heat and when one lives in a stone cave or house he will feel the heat more and the cold more, until he has some system of keeping the temperature even.

All vegetation breathes and plants and trees also consume carbon dioxide gas as food. Man and animal take up the oxygen and give out carbon dioxide. Thus there is a universal economy in which all living things take part. Man does not get the psychic benefit by living in a marble palace that he would obtain from a house of vegetable materials. He would have to give out some of his own magnetism. And the same is true of tile, glass and metal buildings, in them man would be giving out his magnetism. There is an electricity of space which the metals attract, and they also draw something from the vital electricity which appears in man and manifests in his body.

The primitive people gradually abandoned the use of stones and selected the materials of the vegetable kingdom, from the plant world, and they benefited thereby. It is only when necessity compelled that they continued to use the earth and stone. However, there is always a great advantage in using the materials which nature has provided. Those materials are used to the weather, to the conditions. So regardless of magnetism or other considerations, one should use adobe in the land of adobe and stone in the land of stone. Besides, it all shows common sense.

GATHEKA: The first thing that helped architecture to develop was the worship of God, the second was necessity, and the third love of beauty.

TASAWWUF: We find in this universe the three principles, one of which exemplifies Providence or the Grace of God (**Inayat**), the second Nemesis or Fate, Karma, or Kismet; the third, the personal will of man, which in a sense stands between the other two. So, the first impulse was toward the

worship, the second came from necessity, but the third movement came out of the heart of man, and in the heart is the love and longing for beauty.

The temple was usually the first building, the place for public worship. Many ancient cities grew around the temple and sometimes there was a dispute about the god or goddess to whom the ground was to be held sacred. We can read about that in the tales of the founding of the city of Athens. All the cities began with a temple and then came the market place which was close to the temple. The other institutions arose thereafter. Today it would seem that the market place is regarded as most important and the temple or church seems to be constantly receding in importance.

GATHEKA: Then people discovered the art of painting and the art of sculpture. The latter was dedicated to religion, to their belief, to God; the art of painting was principally dedicated to making pictures of the myths and legends of their race.

TASAWWUF: This can be verified in many parts of the world. The first people were no doubt like children and not as self-conscious or sophisticated as those of later times, especially those called "civilized." There were not so many motives in their lives and it was perhaps the deep calling of the heart which awakened the creative genius in them. That is why the earliest carvings and pictures were devoted to religion. They did not think about the other possibilities in art. Go to Persia, India, Egypt, it is the same. In India even today one may see many images carved on the outside of the older temples. The people did not enter these buildings for worship; they often contained fire altars and sacred statues but little more. The devotees could look at the buildings from the outside.

The paintings were inspired by religion also, or occasionally by the great poems such as those of Homer; or the poems and paintings were derived from the same source, by the same inspiration.

GATHEKA: Nearly all the ancient legends are connected with metaphysics and religion; they are symbolical. Even if they were primitive legends, coming from the earliest races that had not yet developed their symbology, they were symbolical just the same.

TASAWWUF: This subject of Symbolism is discussed in *Spiritual Art* and in the regular studies of Sufism, etc. When we come to the legends which have been best preserved, whether one finds them in the sacred Scriptures such as the Bible and Puranas, or in the traditional literature, or whether they are unrecorded and have passed down largely as folklore, it is much the same. There is invariably a deep lesson in them.

Several writers have specialized in uncovering their meanings. The outstanding example, perhaps, has been Colonel Churchward who studied all the available records he could find and felt he found a universal language. Others have had other findings but there is a general agreement that legends and myths cannot be taken seriously in their literal version, and when one seeks deeply, often great wisdom is discovered; at least then metaphysical teachings stand bare.

GATHEKA: Every religion contains symbology, and it belongs to metaphysics. That is why the ancient people painted their books of philosophy on their walls in the form of legends, and by their primitive sculpture they gave form to the objects of their belief and of their worship.

TASAWWUF: There has never been a time when spiritual aid has not been offered to mankind. We find many institutions among so-called backward people (as in Australia) which indicate that sometime, somehow, somewhere, sages or great men have appeared among them and helped them to live better. A study of taboo, totemism, endogamy and exogamy and other institutions would indicate it.

The oldest writings and oldest legends also reveal the hands of sages. They are mostly concerned with the creation and history of the world. One finds similar teachings, at least esoterically, among the Aztecs, Mayans, Peruvians, Cambodians, Iranians and all the African peoples. Truth is one though it has been broadcast in many, many manners. There is a universal consistency in the records. Sir James Frazier has made a study of them, but he has not explained the reason for agreement nor surmised an inner teaching. This inner teaching appears both in the books and in the open records. The ruins of temple walls in Yucatan, Cambodia, India, Iran and Egypt all tell more or less the same story.

GATHEKA: Color can be expressed in two ways. One expression of color is striking and the other is harmonious; one expression is soothing and the other is exciting.

TASAWWUF: One might call the striking colors or combinations **Jelal** colors, and in China they would be called **Yang**. The soothing, harmonious colors would be called **Jemal** by the Sufis and **Yin** by the Chinese. One generally finds red and yellow more stimulating, and blue and violet soothing while green is neutral, partaking a little of both characteristics. However, one has to consider the shades of the colors and their combinations and other factors. Stimulating colors and their combinations rouse one to action, soothing colors help one to relax, meditate, or be responsive.

GATHEKA: And it seems that the primitive people mostly used exciting colors. The more primitive the race, the more exciting colors they used.

TASAWWUF: It is now believed, as a result of the investigations of scientists, that the response to light comes before the response to color. They have even come to regard them as separate senses, so dividing the sense of sight. There are many animals and there are color-blind people who can distinguish blue and yellow but are unable to tell red and green. This shows that there is a response to the air and earth elements before there is response to fire and water. Evidently the assimilation of the fire and water elements comes later, and these enable us to see red and green hues. Certainly if the breath of infants was always in both nostrils, strong or weak, the tendency would be toward air and blue when strong, toward yellow and earth when weak. Yet infants soon respond to red, they are excited, stimulated and attracted by red in many instances. And that often indicates a vigorous, fiery or active nature.

There are evidently psychic reactions to color as well as physical reactions and those who study chrome-therapy can learn much thereon. The primitive peoples, like the infants, were attracted by red. They used ochre or red earth to decorate themselves; it became their war-paint. It excited them and also made them less sensitive to pain. They enjoyed noise and they enjoyed the music and dancing which were in harmony with excitation.

GATHEKA: This was because they wanted to feel that they existed, which is a hidden tendency in every soul. If a person sits quietly, thinking about something, imagining something, then generally after some time he begins to move one of his legs up and down, or he begins to scratch himself, or to drum on the table. He must be moving in order to give evidence to his consciousness that he is still alive; that is why he performs those actions. Inactivity gives him a thought of death, and action gives him a thought of life. The purpose of the use of striking colors by primitive races was this, that as soon as a man came home or somebody else came into the house, he should feel that there was a home.

TASAWWUF: We have the same feeling today. In colors of carpets, wall-paper, tinting, furniture, draperies and decorations there is often a preference for striking colors. They produce a stimulation and make one feel more alive. Only today we need a more soothing atmosphere. If we have only the exciting colors we shall become nervous, we will not know how to rest. Thus man takes to alcoholic stimulants, there is constant activity, and love ends in the divorce courts.

The use of soothing colors will help correct this. A higher state will be reached when man knows how to create his own colors, and when he can depend upon his knowledge of breath or heart-response rather than constantly react to externals. There is another way, however, and that is of beauty. When there is real love for beauty, when man becomes more devoted to the arts, he will find that life and repose go together. Excitement brings more of life, for a short while; then there is a reaction and what was easily gained is just as easily lost.

GATHEKA: In Japan the doors are still painted red, in order that before the host comes to meet a visitor with his warm heart, the red door may welcome him with its warmth.

TASAWWUF: For red is also the color of fire and fire, associated with the heart, long stood for hospitality. The Chinese also have made much use of red, where this was associated with Yang, the positive, active, expressive aspect of the universe.

We can see that cities which are full of gray houses and gray doors lack a certain warmth and charm. Life may be dull there; there will be less outstanding individual expression. There will be a certain lack of beauty. And when one contrasts that to the red of the fireplace or moon he will feel a difference.

GATHEKA: In all ages the striking effect of the colors has, naturally, been felt and appreciated most, while their more peaceful, healing, and harmonious effects were not generally understood as the people were mostly not evolved enough to enjoy them. This is why striking colors were mostly

used in the beginning of architecture.

TASAWWUF: Thus we find them in the Egyptian monuments and also in the remains of ancient America. War like people enjoyed them; peaceful people wanted the soothing colors. In Rome there was actually a temple to peace as well as to war, and a temple for the god of healing (Aescalapiud). With the coming of Islam a most marvellous green was given to the people which is symbolical of peace and yet is not lethargical. The meanings of the colors are learned by the mystic as well as by those interested in the science and art of color. And perhaps we can see these effects definitely. Every color of the spectrum has a definite psychological as well as physiological reaction.

No doubt in the homes of the future and in all decorations this knowledge will be applied. Meditation rooms will have soft colors and social halls will have more stimulating colors.

GATHEKA: As to the furniture and objects that were in use in the houses of the ancient people, they were made of anything that could be obtained from their surroundings: skins of animals, straw, clay for pots and vessels, and other materials.

TASAWWUF: This shows the appropriation of the materials of the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds and it is perhaps well to study each of these.

The human body is more like the animal bodies. The skins and furs of animals tend to keep the wearer warm, and yet also protect him from sharp sun rays. People who are nearer the beginning of evolution have a certain affinity for animals and enjoy the touch of these things. And no doubt when animals were killed for food the skins and furs were also used, but many of the beasts, such as tigers, leopards and other ferocious animals were killed either for protection or for their skins alone.

Vegetable materials are not so harmful in the occult sense and they give a certain stimulation to man also. They do not absorb from him, yet they do not always supply suitable materials. Although linen and cotton are vegetable fibres, even the Sufis among the spiritual people have preferred to dress in wool, and no teacher has ever declaimed against taking the fur and hides of animals for clothing.

It is one thing to build a whole house of mineral materials and it is another thing to use them as utensils. The utensils are required to face certain tests; they must be serviceable. And surely all things in this world are for man to use. Emanuel Swedenborg seems to have sensed this, and wrote at length on the subject. And when one studies the nature of things he generally learns that wisdom and practicality can be harmonized.

GATHEKA: They used pumpkins and animal guts for their musical instruments, bamboo and reed for flutes.

TASAWWUF: Gut strings come from the animals and have a vitality and “timbre” which is lacking in metallic strings. One seems to express more feeling through them. Besides, more magnetism is lost in stroking metals; the metals may draw from one and the vegetable and animal substances give vitality.

The same is true concerning hollow substances usable as sounding boards. Drums made from skins of animals also seem more endowed with life. And wind instruments made of wood or reed materials also seem to give more life to the sound that comes from them. The living instrument often offers living inspiration.

Of course occult knowledge does not mean that one dispenses with every little thing that may be weakening. When one has the knowledge he will know better how to make use of everything. When he is fatigued he will know the reason for it and be able to revitalize his body and mind. Self-protection is completed by self-knowledge.

GATHEKA: In this way a happy home was made which was a kingdom in itself. There they had their kingdom, their God, their temple, and they were as happy, perhaps more happy, than man can be today.

TASAWWUF: Happiness is natural and comes from a natural way of living. One does not have to strive for many possessions. In various allegories such as *The Blue Bird* and *Every Woman*, the lesson is offered that happiness may be found in one's home, in one's affairs, in the things closest to hand. We say that the kingdom of God is within us, and this is true whether one refers to the individual or to a group. For the individual by himself the kingdom of God is found within, and inner unfoldment brings it to him. For the group, it may be said that when several persons cooperate in love as an I-I ('integrated individual' or group-unit) they produce the kingdom of Heaven.

GATHEKA: One may ask why, if primitive people were happier than we are, do not the primitive races today show the qualities of the Golden Age, but rather of savages. It is because they are affected by the condition of the human race as a whole.

TASAWWUF: After the World War of 1914 to 1918 there was a great epidemic of influenza. It seems that all people suffered from it. The material scientists and physicians were not very successful in coping with it. One reason was that they did not recognize the psychic atmosphere. There is a psychic atmosphere around the earth and into it go all the effects of the thoughts of the thoughtful people. All people are affected by it but only the thoughtful people produce the conditions which permeate the psychic atmosphere. All thoughts of all people react upon the world and noticeably affect the affairs of the world. So the whole world may suffer from or gain by the efforts of a few.

GATHEKA: Children, animals, and the ignorant, all three, are more affected by the general condition of the world than others; therefore, if the general condition of the world is that it is full of conflict, they will reflect it more.

TASAWWUF: The thinkers are the positive people and they produce the atmosphere. The children and ignorant and primitives are responsive. Their minds have not been fully developed; they cannot send out the power into the akasha and perhaps have no interest in so doing. They have not reached the degree of much self-thought, may not even be self-conscious. But having a mind, the mind is influenced by all minds and all thoughts. And one has to be most careful in educating sensitive children to protect them against harmful karma.

Animals have little ability to do direct thinking, but the responsive side of their minds is well developed. They seem to respond to the Spirit of Guidance and by psychic reflection may know what is going on around them and they are affected accordingly; they may react even when there is no visible reason for it.

GATHEKA: In other words, when new wars are being plotted, the savage people will already be quarrelling and fighting among themselves. It is the condition of mind in the world that affects them, and then they act. Here there is only the planning, while there they are killing and dying.

TASAWWUF: If this were not so perhaps the world would be overrun by the savages. While the civilized and cultured people would be fighting and killing each other off, the others would wait and then master the world. This has not been. And during the world war many of the savage races played their part, even though the newspapers did not report it. But travelers and soldiers from Africa did report it. And one can see how all the tribes of Arabia were affected. They carried on their private conflicts with even more zest than ordinarily.

The British Empire has found it necessary to conquer or annex many countries. They have found the primitive people always anxious to fight; any excuse would do. But when the world was peaceful as a whole, then the aborigines were also peaceful.

The World War was hastened by encouraging the people of the Balkan regions to quarrel and fight. It was easier to stir them up than to stir up the more cultured peoples of Europe. And when we turn back in history to the wars of the Romans and Phoenicians, we find that they were started by mercenaries and subject-races or allies. It was easier to influence those groups and use them as an excuse for the larger nations to combat one another.

According to all sacred traditions there is a spiritual hierarchy and it has its representatives here on earth whose duty it is to protect places, ranging perhaps from a tomb to the whole world. Not that men are responsible for the wars, but they use their influence to counteract the nefarious efforts of those who would set the weaklings to fight first, and then send the strong against one another, until the world is on fire. In Tibet, wild horses are thrown out on the wind, the idea being that they afford blessing and protection to the peoples they reach. Indeed the Bodhisattva ideal is that man should give up all ideas of salvation or comfort in order to rescue humanity as a whole from the tribulation of Samsara.

[Chapter 7](#)

Backward Condition of the Day

GATHEKA: Will humanity ever return to simple living? Life is an intoxication; and the more intoxicating it is, the more it proceeds from simplicity to complexity. It is the nature of life's intoxication to lead man from simplicity to complexity, and man chooses complexity for himself. When he finds himself surrounded by complexity he thinks that he is caught in it, and then it is very difficult for him to get out of it.

TASAWWUF: The existence of this intoxication with things and with complexities is explained to all candidates for Bayat in the Sufi Order. Man has to learn to understand the nature of simplicity and complexity, of intoxication and sobriety. He is brought into this world of illusion and becomes veiled and does not know it. He is unhappy and cannot ascertain the reason for it. For mutual protection and for other reasons people have been drawn into large cities, they congregate together and lead artificial lives and are unhappy.

Cities are no longer as important as they used to be. Originally people congregated around a temple. They worked in the fields or at their crafts and came to worship at the temple or church. They brought some of the offerings of the harvest to it. So it was convenient to live nearby. Then they had certain market days, and they would trade—usually in an open space near the temple.

Then there came another stage when the castle was the center of activity. The village was often established close to the castle. Then life was different and people were held in subjection. There was not the same impetus for trade, there were restrictions in movement, there were social classes that were hindered from free expression. So trade took on another form and merchants would establish themselves in cities which became great marts of trade, and the cause for unity was materialistic and selfish rather than religious—even though there would be temples and churches. The religious hold waned, and idealism was covered by practicality.

When in turn the feudal system was outmoded, this kind of development continued even more. The need for cooperation seemed to disappear, the spirit of rivalry and competition predominated. And this continued until modern times when so much of the naturalness has gone from life. Man hardly has to use his arms and legs any more. He may seldom see the sun and except for occasional recreation does not look upon the trees or the ocean or river bank or see the birds or the clouds.

Yet such a great genius as Thomas Edison has pointed out that the city is no longer necessary. Hours of labor are being shortened and transportation is becoming more rapid. So it is hoped that

when man finds a way out from his social and economic problems it will not be to establish a new set of vices and a new artificiality for the old abuses. There can be a return to nature along with the many modern improvements.

GATHEKA: The sages of India give a very beautiful example of this. They say life is like a spider's web; the spider weaves a web, making it more and more complex, weaving and weaving until it is completed. But when the web is finished, then the spider itself is caught in the web and cannot free itself. Its motive was to live there and to catch all the insects that might stray into it. But in the end the spider does not see its desire fulfilled; the end is that the spider itself becomes captive in its own web. And so it is with the ideal of man on earth.

TASAWWUF: This is what has been called **Samsara**, the web or maze of life of which the maze was the symbol in ancient times. We come into the world and are caught in this web of complexity, we do not see our way clearly. We live in a universe full of the thoughts of everybody; we cannot heed the Spirit of Guidance. There are so many sounds around us; we do not know it until we get away to the desert or solitary place. Man has become used to it and does not know any different.

So there is a dispute between those who claim to follow religion and those who claim to follow science. There is no need to follow anything external. The habits of the day cause one to look upon the shortcomings of others and to overlook his own needs and faults. Therefore the development of insight is more necessary than anything else.

GATHEKA: He perseveres and tries to make it as complex as possible for himself, and he then enjoys that complexity, he sees it as an improvement, as something wonderful, and he becomes more and more interested in it. But what is the end? That one day he is checked by something, and then he begins to feel that if he had been without all this complexity it would have been a thousand times better.

TASAWWUF: Thus man suffers from pain, displeasure, and unhappiness. The cinema, the motor car, the facilities for travel and communication and comfort, the radio and air conditioning and all these do not bring happiness. There is still uneasiness. Those who have not these things become envious of those who have and those who have them are by no means happy. It is as if there were a struggle within man's being. The incompleteness of his state produces pain in body and mind. This pain seems to be a kind of warning, a sign of poison, revealing that something is radically wrong.

Then no moral justification is of any avail. People who are good or who claim to be good do not understand why they meet with so many failures and setbacks. They are tried constantly and are shamefully treated by others. They suffer nervousness, neuralgia, disease. They do not know when they are pursuing the right path or the wrong path; they think they do right and it comes out wrong.

So there is a call today to return to nature, to move away from the city or to beautify the city. And when attention is taken away from manufacturing and merchandising, no doubt it will be seen that

there is plenty of room for social and aesthetic improvement, millions of people interested, and work and employment for them at such tasks. This may mean a new day, the rising of the tide, and the destruction of destructive forces.

[Chapter 8](#)

Lessons from Egyptian Architecture

GATHEKA: If we look at the Egyptian pyramids with open hearts and illuminated souls, they speak to us of the past. They tell us that even if the architecture of that time was not so advanced theoretically, yet it had reached a highly spiritual stage. They stand there as a token of the intelligence of the ancient people, and not only of their inspiration but of the depth of their mind.

TASAWWUF: There have been a great many studies of the pyramids from many points of view and it is possible that the extreme views may discount one another. We find that there are people who look upon the Great Pyramid in particular as a bible in stone from which one may draw innumerable prophecies and derive marvellous occult teachings. Every little measurement is supposed to be tremendously significant. They say that the pyramids were built by initiates, with a high purpose.

The materialists—and so many of the archaeologists and other scientists are materialists—refuse to accept such fantastic ideas and are justified in that. But they are just as speculative. They look back at the Egyptians with the eyes of today and try to judge everything with the eyes of today. They may talk about the wisdom of the Egyptians but are not always lucid in their explanations. Very often they have ideas which are given forth with certainty, only to be refuted after some new discovery and the former theory refuted with great éclat. Yet they have failed to explain why the Egyptians were so successful in many ways and so accomplished.

The mystic would agree with those that accept the symbolism of the pyramid and also assent that the Great Pyramid was used in initiations. The symbolism of the pyramid has already been explained. But we have to examine the culture of that time as a whole. There was knowledge of astronomy and geometry and mechanics. But there was still greater knowledge of psychic law and how to apply it in the everyday life. This psychic knowledge helped the priests to direct the construction of massive buildings.

GATHEKA: And if today or in the future, people inquire about the site that was chosen for the

pyramids, they will find that it is exactly in the center of the solid part of the earth's surface. At that time communications were not as they are now, and the study of geography was hardly known to the world, yet the Egyptians were able to find the exact center and to construct something there which is unsurpassed in history.

TASAWWUF: We can look upon this doctrine of centricity from several views. For instance, there is the probability that if two lines were drawn, one passing through the pyramid and the poles, and the other making what is known as a "great circle" or circumferential circle around the world, and is also passed through the Great Pyramid, there would be equal areas of land in any of the divisions so made. So the pyramid would be the center of the world.

There is another sense of being central also, that the pyramid is near the crossroads of the world, where the continents touch and where the water and traffic routes unite. In most ancient times there was a rift known as the Great Rift Valley of Africa, which continues north and includes the Red Sea region and parts of Palestine; and there was another line crossing it and near their junction the Great Pyramid was built. And all admit that the lines of the pyramid are very straight, extending directly north, east, south and west.

The pyramid is also located near the tropic of Cancer, so, considering the tilting of the earth, it is near the center in another sense, during certain times of the year.

GATHEKA: What was the meaning of placing the pyramids in the exact center of the earth? The real heart is the solar plexus, and that is to be found in the center of the body which is the shrine of God, and that is why it was necessary for the sacred temple to be in the center of the earth.

TASAWWUF: The same claims have been made concerning Jerusalem, Mecca and other holy places, that they were in the center of the world. And that which is generally called "solar plexus" is not the real solar plexus or center for the sun-power in the body. The heart is the center, the heart which is close to the center of the body, the heart which the scientists (as Dr. Carrel) are learning more and more about. Indeed what we call the "solar plexus" might more rightfully be termed "lunar plexus" if one knew more about the solar and lunar forces in the body.

It would not be wrong to say that the earth is a living being, and that it has a heart. The heart may be located on the inside, but it comes to the surface at a certain place which is the most holy place. There mankind has placed the temple. The pyramid, which was a temple of initiation for neophytes, has chambers even as the heart of man has chambers. Ceremonies took place in them which may be called purification, awakening and illumination processes. The disciples were tested therefore, until they learned the correspondence between the pyramid, and heart and man himself.

GATHEKA: The ancient Egyptians had a symbolical point of view in their architecture, and their influence became the principal source of inspiration for the civilizations that followed. Very little is known about ancient Egyptian drawing or painting; nevertheless, in the examples that remain we always discover some mystery, some atmosphere, some magnetism, something very wonderful.

And the excavations which are being made today are proving that the Egyptians of that particular period had reached a stage where they were more advanced in art and architecture than any other peoples, and that they were also able to inspire later civilizations.

TASAWWUF: The civilization of Egypt was most ancient and perhaps more will be learned about its age and development when further expeditions are taken into the Sahara region and more monuments and ruins are uncovered. It has been said that the civilization of Egypt was derived from Atlantis and the priests preserved the older wisdom and knowledge of the symbols. When every form and color had its meaning it was not necessary to be complex.

GATHEKA: Egyptian architecture is expressive of mystery. It was a mystical age, and everything the Egyptians did was done without mechanical power; it was done with spiritual power; and that is the reason why what they have made will last after all that others have made has been destroyed, and when all other buildings have vanished from the earth.

TASAWWUF: In other words, they had the knowledge of the breath. This knowledge makes it possible for many to carry and lift great weights. Solomon noticed that the ant can carry a load four times or more its own weight, and much larger than its size. This is because the ant has tracheal tubes which run back and forth in all parts of its body. By regulating the breath and air pressure it can thus carry heavy loads and will not feel them as heavy.

When man can do the same thing, when man knows how to increase or decrease the air pressure in his body, when he knows how to draw the power of the universe into his being as we read in the prayer called *Nayaz*, printed in the *Gayan* of Inayat Khan, he also will have this power. This power of breath is enormous and one may read about it in *In an Eastern Rose Garden* and in the commentaries thereon. Talibs of Sufism also study the breath further and after that they study mysticism.

The use of concentration, especially concentration upon the heart of the teacher, combined with right breathing, makes it possible for man to carry much heavier physical and mental loads than is common. Even the Hindu coolies, with their slight knowledge of breath, can carry heavy weights for a long time with little fatigue.

GATHEKA: And it would not be surprising if on the last day, when everything else has been destroyed, the pyramids still remained standing.

TASAWWUF: When the mystical knowledge is applied, the breath of life which is in man's nostrils is communicated to his work and to the materials he handles. This principle is applied in spiritual art and sculpture and there is proper concentration before hand and if the undertaking is pursued in selfless cooperation, the life-force and magnetism of blessing (Baraka) will enter the materials themselves.

Then when a place is used for holy or sacred purposes, for meditations, for initiations, more life-

force is added and the place can give out powerful vibrations. When Paul Brunton spent a night within the pyramid he realized what great adepts and heroes must have taken part in its construction and used it afterwards. Even now, he says, they guard and watch it, and it is considered a shrine for spiritual brotherhood.

For example the shape of the buildings was significant. The color and design of the adornment was based upon mystical or psychic law. And the hieroglyphics had meaning which were hidden from the multitude and even though they are translated in a certain rude way, they do not tell much to the intellectual scholar. Insight will also be needed and another key to get to the depths of their knowledge.

King Solomon in his time drew upon the Egyptians for many of his ideas and methods and the Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples (e.g. the Phoenicians) were greatly indebted to them also. Indeed it is hard to say now just what our heritage has been.

[Editor's note: On occasion the previous sentences of Hazrat Inayat Khan are repeated by Murshid SAM in this work. As additional commentary is given in these instances, we have included all these repeated words along with the new commentary.]

GATHEKA: Very little is known about ancient Egyptian drawing or painting; nevertheless, in the examples that remain we always discover some mystery, some atmosphere, some magnetism, something very wonderful. And the excavations which are being made today are proving that the Egyptians of that particular period had reached a stage where they were more advanced in art and architecture than any other peoples, and that they were also able to inspire later civilizations.

TASAWWUF: If we study their literature even in the form in which it has been presented to these times we can see that they had much knowledge concerning the breath. It is this knowledge of the breath which told them about the elements and about the use of colors. The same knowledge enabled them to breathe so it was possible to lift heavy weights, with or without the aid of machines.

A study of the Tibetan and Hindu cultures will verify this. We find in Tibet especially the use of the crescent, zigzag, circle or sphere, triangle, straight line and other geometric elements which every mystic recognizes as tools of his science. The Egyptians had this knowledge. They also used the pillar as symbol of the breath in the right and in the left nostril. The Greeks adopted the pillar without knowing its significance; they did, however, learn the geometry and perspective of the Egyptians.

The mysteries in those days were performed through ceremonies in certain places. The architecture of such places was important, and the priests knew how to keep the atmosphere there pure. Incense and savors were used, but the chief means of purification was the personal breath of the initiate. Although the mysteries were not presented in their purest form in Greece, they helped elevate the people there. By the time of Plutarch, however, the decadent movement was so great

that he sought initiation into the rites of Isis, and even they were pretty badly degenerated in his time.

The Egyptians knew how to synchronize their efforts. Common devotion and common concentration enabled them to move great blocks of stone. Such work could never have been done by slaves. Even the machines we use now depend upon rhythm and when there is some hindrance to that rhythm their efficiency is impaired.

Besides, when there is right breathing and weights are carried it seems that the very force of intelligence serves to put those weights in the right place. And one who knows the secret can unify himself with anything in the world, and then carrying it is not a burden. And when man has this knowledge again and uses it, he may be able to build glorious temples that will stand the ravages of time.

This lesson is important for those who plan temples for Universal Worship. For unless one begins bringing a lesson from the moment of selecting and clearing the ground and placing the cornerstone, until the place is fit for service, unless the very tiles and columns express praise of God, that temple will not be so different from the other temples. They can only give out what has been put into them. And if great blessing is given to such work, then blessings will keep on flowing for the place will be truly holy.

[Chapter 9](#)

Lessons from Asiatic Architecture

GATHEKA: It is very interesting to notice that the architecture of the Mongolian races is distinct and peculiar to them, and that it has no resemblance whatever to any other architecture.

TASAWWUF: The yellow peoples have been under different influences, they had a different habitat and the climate and problems. If we study the Chinese language we can see that originally words were associated with things of the earth. When the sages appeared they had to use the ordinary, commonplace language to describe the processes of the universe. The Chinese learned their arts and crafts from great sages and even in pre-historic times they seem to have reached a high development.

GATHEKA: And what stands out as being most expressive of the people's character is Chinese

architecture, including that of Tibet, Assam, Burma, Siam, and Japan. There is a peculiar line, there is a peculiar curve, and there is a peculiar taste in color. This shows the exclusiveness of the Mongolian character, a character which is very distinct and remote.

TASAWWUF: The Chinese influence spread to all the surrounding countries, especially those peopled by Mongolians. And one may say that the geometry of their building and of their engineering was not the same as that found in Europe and elsewhere. For instance they have two or three kinds of bridges, all of them different from those found elsewhere. One is the semicircular bridge; instead of a slight arch they used the semicircle. Then they used another kind of bridge over raging torrents in the mountains; the bridges were mostly of rope and bamboo. They look very frail but are generally quite strong and serviceable. The Chinese have usually been a practical people.

One finds a certain line in their pagoda, temples, hats, buildings, which would be called non-Euclidean by some. Their conceptions of space were different. And their ideas of colors were based upon Yang for expression and Yin for responsiveness. The Chinese had a system of metaphysics which has been associated with the Taoist religion; even after this religion largely disappeared these other influences remained.

The Chinese people have stressed the family, but the family often became inclusive as well as exclusive. Even distant relatives were included in it. That is why the Chinese have not been able to withstand the more warlike Japanese, for the Japanese yield to the State which in a certain sense is without soul, but at the same time it made use of force and depended upon cohesion. This cohesion has been lacking in China. But the minds of the Chinese and Japanese alike have been incomprehensible to the Westerner. They do not always express their emotions and thoughts. They think it good manners to conceal them.

The religion of Persia was in a state of decadence also at the time of the Islamic conquest. There had been many religions and cults in the country but the scepter of orthodoxy had fallen into the hands of the Guebres or fire-worshippers, of whom the Parsis are the last remnants. These were a group of the followers of Zarathustra, also referred to as Mazdaznians (although some say the latter are a different sect of the followers of that prophet). Their temples were not for the people but for the mobeds and priests, and religion was used to further aristocracy and had become far removed from the populace. Thus when Islam came with its democratic keynote, it swept the country and attracted the masses. This led to a new renaissance of art and culture, although it was at Bagdad and Basra rather than in Iran proper that this new culture flourished best.

The Arabs, being largely desert people, did not always possess an elaborate architecture. Arabia had seen several civilizations come and go, culture rise and fall. The conditions were very poor when the Prophet was born; civilization was at its ebb. This made it possible for the new teachings to take root. Forbidden to use animals and human forms directly in art, the dome was copied from the top of man's head as he sat in prayer or meditation. The mehrab was copied in part from the shape of the eyes and other features, and in part was derived from geometry.

[Editor's note: While the entire Gatheka is included, some passages are presented in a different order here than in the Message Volumes.]

GATHEKA: The interpretation of this form was given by the mystics of Arabia, who called it **Qasab-e Kousein**, which means the meeting of the eyebrows. When a person looks upward, naturally his eyebrows come closer to each other. The idea is, that as the spirit soars upward the tendency of the soul is to rise from duality to unity, and by working with these two particular forms they have arrived at such perfection that if the same form were continued for a hundred thousand years one could never tire of it.

TASAWWUF: Orthodox Islam did not look kindly upon the art forms of the preceding cultures. The Semitic peoples in general have bitterly opposed polytheism or anything that looked like it, although the Arabs and even the Beni Israel have at times fallen under its sway. But the influence of the prophets was always in the opposite direction and after the revelation of Qur'an especially so. Desert dwellers are by nature best constituted to accept a religion of One, Universal God. And it was taught that true monotheism required dispensing with all human forms, with all idolatrous forms.

GATHEKA: They have followed their tradition to such an extent that every insignificant form that the Mongolians have made has that particular character. They are so attached to the form that belongs to them, that they have been able to retain the type, the character of their architecture for thousands of years. They have never abandoned that form, and they do not change it nor add to it from outside, but they develop it in its own character. In this way Mongolian architecture stands out as something different and distinct, peculiar to itself.

TASAWWUF: This attitude of conservation has been such that we find the same themes throughout Chinese art even from the most ancient days. Their plastics and sculpture, for instance, deal with horses and men and dragons. Their paintings generally include clouds and mountains and certain trees and flowers and fruits. All through history it has been the same.

No doubt there is a certain Hindu influence and a certain Buddhist influence but these have been modified to satisfy the Chinese temperament. Indeed Chinese Buddhism varied greatly from its original forms. As it took on a cosmic attitude this cannot be said to be a backward step. Even in Tibet, which was more influenced by India, the elements of architecture and art are very ancient, their origins being lost in time.

The Buddhist influence did not so much shape the form as to give impetus to new themes. There was some embellishment and some details were altered but the fundamentals did not change greatly. Buddhism did assist in spreading Chinese influence to Korea and the influence of both countries to Japan, but still the Chinese is Chinese and the Japanese is Japanese.

There are some fine influences from the ancient art which unfortunately in the stress of the times seem to be disappearing. The Chinese have lost interest in ancient religion and have not yet

become oriented to something new. So their art is in a state of decadence. The Japanese are not much better off because they idealize war, while the success of art depends upon peace. And with these retrogressions the world suffers.

GATHEKA: The architecture of Persia was influenced by Arabian architecture; and the peculiarity of Persian and Arabian architecture is the dome, which is called in Arabic the **Gunbad** and the **Mehrab**. Gunbad means dome, and Mehrab means an arch used in windows and doors which is not exactly round, but is formed of three or five parts; in other words, in five half-circles with the top made by two lines going upward and joining in the center.

TASAWWUF: Ancient Persia (or Iran) had a high development in architecture. The country was noted also for its engineers and their accomplishments—such as road and bridge building. Much of their culture was destroyed by the Greeks and Parthians, but the real destruction occurred when the Tartar Mongols overran the country and wiped out every element of civilization in many districts.

The first mosques seem to have been simple structures, largely enclosures for the devotees, and generally out in the open. As the Empire of Islam (the Kaliphata) extended, certain Christian churches and Hebrew synagogues were appropriated for public worship. This gave the followers of the Prophet the idea of the temple, and especially where there was too much rain for outdoor services they began to use or build mosques with roofs. Invariably they were topped with mighty domes, the dome supposed to represent the vault of heaven.

One of the greatest achievements was the rebuilding of Cairo (Fustat) in Egypt by Sultan Bhaibars in the 13th century (C.E.). The whole city was rebuilt as anew by this great ruler and every effort was used to introduce adornment and embellishment. It seems that after the destruction of Bagdad the Mongols had taken most of the draftsmen with them to glorify Samarkand and Bokhara. Bhaibars was the great enemy of the Mongols, the champion of Islam and of civilization, and he wished to glorify Islam through beauty and culture.

Since those days the dome has become a most important item in architecture. It has been used by the Christians, that of St. Peters in Rome being an outstanding example. It has spread through Europe and America. Even several synagogues have made use of it and become famous therefore.

The Moors carried the Arabic culture to Spain and beautified that country. They have been responsible for the spread of civilization although it seems that after they had accomplished that they themselves fell into a decadence from which they have never recovered. Yet their architecture is regarded as the finest, and their forms of houses and verandahs and gardens have become models for many experiments of later days.

GATHEKA: During the time of the Moghul emperors this architecture of Arabia and Persia was perfected in India. The Moghuls, who were worshippers of beauty and very fond of splendor and

grandeur, spent enormous wealth in building something which would remain as a token of beauty.

TASAWWUF: Besides their ability in engineering the Persians have always been an aesthetic people and they developed landscape gardening. They had a great love for birds and flowers and this is reflected in their poetry and even more in their weaving. Persian rugs are the most famous in the world. After the coming of Islam they adopted the Arabic principles adding their own embellishments. One might say that the Arabs provided the science and the Persians the art—although this was not exactly so.

Their combined influence was felt in India first through the Turks and Afghans and then later through the Moghuls who themselves were students of Sufism. This softened their attitude toward the Hindus and brought the followers of Arya Dharma and Islam closer together. All the great Moghuls were master-builders. One can see this tremendous influence in the works of Babar and Humayun. Then came Akbar, whose tomb marks a stage in the development of the composite Moghul school. With his son Selim (Jahangir), the Persian element was increased more, as we can see in the splendid gardens of Shalimar, in Kashmir. Then came Shah Jehan, under whose rule the Moghul art reached its highest development.

GATHEKA: In India today the most unique and beautiful signs of the past to be found are the Moghul buildings, for instance Moti Mahal, the Mosque in Delhi and, best of all, the Taj Mahal in Agra. It was because of the Emperor's great love for Nur-i Jehan that he wished this love to be remembered for ever afterwards, and also he wanted the people to know that he really loved beauty. He spared no effort, no money, no time, to make this building perfect; and when it was finished it became the tomb of Nur-i Jehan. When one looks at it, it not only inspires one with its greatness and richness, but it also tells one of love, of beauty, of patience, of endurance, of an ideal, of joy, and of peace; these are all there.

TASAWWUF: People have even said there is no second Taj, there can be no second Taj. This is a sign that at that time there was a higher spiritual development than now. There was the tremendous love and devotion of man such as seldom has been equaled, and this love is the foundation of inspiration and it brings with it the moral qualities and the metaphysical qualities needed in a great undertaking. Besides, it blossoms forth in the finest concentration, which means not only careful planning but careful execution of all that has been planned.

There is also a considerable Sufic influence in it, although it is hard to distinguish the Sufic from the Persian influence, the influence of love and harmony and beauty. Although Shah Jehan was not in all respects a Sufi, he was not so Orthodox, he was tolerant and he was open to all that was fine, from whatever part of the world it came. Christians have seen in his work European influence and Hindus have claimed that India had softened the harsh Islamic inheritance that was his, but what was really there was cosmic influence, the love that knows no boundaries, no limits, no such qualifications.

When we review the history of religions and study such books as the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra,

the book of the Prophet Ezekiel and the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation of the Christian Scripture, we can see how much architecture has benefited from unseen (although real) influences, what has been the great concentration of the great stirring in human hearts that has elevated art. It requires some tremendous influence in the art to make something of beauty and of grandeur. And when man has evolved further and is sensitive to such influences from the cosmos, from God, from the perfection of love and harmony and beauty, then architecture and art again will reach great heights.

GATHEKA: It speaks without a tongue, and it will go on speaking as long as it stands beneath the sun. Every little detail, the smallest piece of marble, was worked most carefully. There is not one inch in the Taj Mahal, of floor, or wall, or ceiling, which had not been made perfect. This shows a love of perfection, a love of finishing something, a love of creating something beautiful.

TASAWWUF: Thus the Taj Mahal will stand forth as a model in feeling whether it ever be imitated. This is not so important, what matters is that mankind be again aroused to great ideals, to do great things. With all the knowledge of engineering, of materials, of methods, that we have today it is more possible than ever to create something great. What is needed is spiritual cooperation, ability to lose oneself in one's work, to feel the spirit of brotherhood. There has to be the spirit of art, and the willingness to accept the idea of perfection in detail, even as in massif.

In medieval Europe there were guilds who were devoted to arts and crafts, and at first they were inspired by religion or by the work itself. Later the materialistic influence became too great and the work was done for the hope of reward, for compensation. And this led to the decadence of art. There is less joy when one works for money than when one works for love, for inspiration, for heart-feeling.

GATHEKA: Would it have been possible to make such a building if the workmen had been on strike ten times in a year? Not even in a century. And if the workmen had insisted on week-end entertainments? No, their pleasure was in what they were making. Each workman realized that what he was making would live for centuries, that it was the greatest blessing, the greatest privilege to be allowed to work at it. That was the spirit of every man who worked there.

TASAWWUF: It is this spirit that may make possible the construction of marvellous edifices in the future, whether they be temples of worship, or public buildings, or homes, or pleasure palaces. There have been many churches and cathedrals erected at great cost but one wonders whether the workers themselves were in deep devotion at their tasks? Did they pray as they labored? Did they sing? Did they feel the inspiration? When this is possible, where there is this atmosphere, then it brings the blessing or **Baraka**, and the magnetism and power of the universe is poured through the personalities so engaged, each of whom becomes an instrument of God, though he know it not.

The cult of Beauty is being fostered more and more on all sides, and this shows the real longing of man. It is an influence needed to counteract the spirit of war and aggression which has been sweeping the world. It is based, perhaps, upon the inner beauty whose center is in the heart of

man. When man feels that heart surge again every duty will become holy. And in the building of a temple, every task, from the movement of the first spade and pick to clear the land until the last stone is properly put in place and adorned, there can be the feeling of spiritual joy and elevation.

The construction of a temple should be a concentrative effort in which all take part. It cannot be something which is formulated by a single person or narrow group. There must be more than the God-Ideal; there must be the feeling of the presence of God. There must be a bond between hearts and minds and hands. And the building of such a temple will be of itself like the playing of a great symphony.

GATHEKA: It was built with joy. One can still find this in its atmosphere, for as soon as one comes near the Taj Mahal one begins to feel joy; it is something living. The builders have gone, but the work remains.

TASAWWUF: The question comes, how can we reestablish this joy in work? It is not something which can be imposed from above by a government or institution, it is something which has to come out freely from within. It is the surge of life itself. Man has within him the seeds of the jinn and angelic evolutions but mostly he knows it not. It is the genius in man that can produce the most beautiful buildings and surroundings. It is necessary to learn to breathe right, to concentrate right.

Today we have the machine age and there is the tendency to gear man to the machine instead of the machine to man. This throws him out of his natural rhythm. Wherefore the rush? There is so much rush and hurry, then there is unemployment because the work has been completed, and there is no more work. And it becomes most difficult for man to establish a rhythmical life. He has to work so hard, then he has to go out and look for employment.

In India, with the Radha-Saomi movement an attempt has been made to unite spiritual training (yoga) with industry. When man can work he is encouraged to work well at his craft. When the machine can do better the machine is used. But mechanic or laborer, he is given spiritual training and the breathing that he does in his esoteric exercises establishes his rhythm for the day, which he used at his occupation. Then there are no menial duties, there is joy in everything because all is for the Lord. This is the real application of the teachings of the Gita, of the religion of Krishna.

GATHEKA: And every artist who has a real sense of architecture will appreciate this. If not one penny was given to him, it did not matter. What is earthly gain compared with the thought that the work that one has done will live on and give joy for ages to come? This in itself is a great joy for the artist, because a real artist is not born for this earth; he is born in the sphere of beauty and he lives in that sphere. The things of earth do not count for him.

TASAWWUF: That is why many artists are willing to starve or to live on little fare. It is not that they have to starve, it is that they evaluate other things than money or material possessions. If they had all the wealth in the world and their creative genius was smothered, they would be most unhappy, and if they had full opportunity for aesthetic expression and lived in garrets, yet would they be

happy. Because the life would be there and the life would be expressing itself.

The spiritual training of the artist is therefore to bring out the “soul” within him. In *The Inner Life* (Inayat Khan) the key to his temperament is discussed and in the spiritual studies is he given the opportunity to receive that help which will awaken his latent powers. For those connected with architecture, however, there is still another training needed, that they learn to work with one another to harmonize with each other. The key to this is offered in the Sufic Healing Service which shows how a group of people can work as one, how there can be brotherhood in action.

[Chapter 10](#)

Lessons from Classical European Architecture

GATHEKA: In ancient Greek architecture, the Doric, which shows Jelal influence in its character, is expressive of power. And where there is Jelal there must be Jemal too; thus the Ionic architecture is expressive of Greek wisdom and beauty and fineness. And where one finds Jelal and Jemal, one will also find Kemal, and this influence is seen in the Corinthian architecture. No doubt when Jelal and Jemal clash, then there is something lacking on both sides; nevertheless these three aspects of Greek architecture are expressive of Jelal, Jemal and Kemal.

TASAWWUF: The Dorians are said to be the first Greeks that entered the peninsula and their chief city was Sparta. Spartans and Dorians generally lived simple lives. They did not allow much scope for individual expression. They were more devoted to the arts of war. Children of seven were taken from their mothers and placed in schools where they received a rigorous training in war, gymnastics and government. The aristocrats lived very sober, even sombre lives. Joy and sensuality were foreign to them, and their justice was severe and exact. Their architecture is massive and heavy. Their sculpture was based upon religion and history and was not particularly adorned.

The Ionians lived on both sides of the Aegean Sea which was also called the Ionian Sea. Athens became their chief city and it was there that art, philosophy and general culture flourished. Joy and beauty played a most important role in the lives of its citizens. Drama, sculpture, and architecture as well as poetry reached new heights. The people were democratic rather than aristocratic although they kept slaves. Beauty, duty and religion were one.

Perspective was highly developed in Ionian architecture. Lines were made to appear straight to the

eye which in point of fact were slightly curved. This gave them more life. Decorations were also employed. And Ionian music was more delicate also and regarded as “feminine” in contrast to Doric music and art.

The city of Corinth lay between Athens and Peloponnese, the part of Greece inhabited by the Dorians. It was influenced from both sides and also involved in the wars between the other peoples. It had something of the commercial spirit of Athens and also welcomed strangers as did that city. But its people were Dorians, so one can find evidence of cross-currents there.

The clearest examples of the conflict between Jelal and Jemal can be seen in the study of Greek history and politics. It seems as if the ways of life of neighboring peoples became quite diverse under the pull of conflicting influences. And today one sees that same Jelal spirit in Italy and Germany which have a strong Spartan atmosphere.

GATHEKA: When we compare the architecture of the Middle Ages with the Roman and the Greek, there again we find these influences. The Jelal influence of Roman architecture shows the ancient Roman characteristics: law and rule.

TASAWWUF: The Romans are supposed to have obtained their principles of law and architecture from the Etruscans. Their early architecture was of a distinct Jelal type, in many ways resembling the Dorian. In fact the early Romans greatly admired the Dorian ideals. They were severe, subject to self-discipline, modest, warlike and stern. Later, as they became more prosperous ease and luxury became ideals. Then there were Ionian and Corinthian influences not seen in the early times. Nevertheless, the Romans despised the Corinthians and destroyed their city.

GATHEKA: The Jemal influence in Greek architecture shows the Greek love of beauty and wisdom.

TASAWWUF: This is true of all Jemalic influences; it is always a sign of wisdom or beauty or both. Generally speaking the Hebrews have been regarded as Jelalis, and they have given to the western world much of its ethics, law and religion. This influence has been felt in Italy and the people of Italy have assimilated much Semitic blood from Hebrew, Syrian and Arabian sources.

The Jemali spirit was more in evidence among the Greeks who have influenced the artistic and philosophic trends in Europe at all times. Revolts against certain movements were made easy because no matter what one's point of view he could find in ancient Hellas some authority for it. In this the Greeks resembled the Indus to whom they were distantly related (Compare **Ionia** and **Yoni**). Both nations were philosophical, aesthetic and Jemali.

During the Renaissance and since then this Grecian influence has risen and fallen like the waves, and wherever there is a strong feeling for beauty, as in Morris and Ruskin, one finds a love for the Greeks.

GATHEKA: Gothic is the Kemal expression; however, Gothic architecture has taken its own peculiar form in every country. It seems as if the soil inspired the builders, both the architects and the workmen.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of Kemal, that which rose out of the conflict between Jemal and Jelal being one. This is the Kemal of destruction and the Kemalic influence of this nature is always destructive. It is destructive to Jemal and it is also destructive to Jelal. People who are under the Kemalic influence of breath are found by mystics to be under difficulty or stress or test. Yet there is another Kemalic influence which is that of perfection, which comes from the harmony and synthesis of Jemal and Jelal. This was found in Gothic art.

The word "Goth" is derived from the same root as "God" and the Goths originally seem to have been those who were most devoted to the early Aryan mysteries. In a sense they were the Brahmins of the Nordics. They always searched for the divine influence. And one can see it in the churches and Gothic arch. There was always a tendency to point upward. Lines disappeared in the vertical direction, showing the Kemalic influence. In Jemali art there are usually horizontal lines. In Jelalic art one finds the vertical line, vertical in the sense that it goes forward in the same direction as the observer. In Kemalic art the perpendicular line will be present; and the perspective in each type will follow accordingly. Thus the Jemalic columns of the Ionians were round and the lines were curved so that they appeared parallel to the eye. While in the Gothic, Kemalic art, the lines disappeared upward to meet, as if all met in God, all returned to God.

The guilds of masons and master-craftsmen were connected with the building of Gothic cathedrals and castles and seem to have preserved some of the occult and mathematical knowledge of the ancients. Reference to this may be found in several works on the subject and perhaps best in L'Archeometrie of the French occultist and savant, St-Yves Alveydre.

There is a certain joy in the construction of Gothic buildings. Workman, apprentice, journeyman and master were made to feel the holiness of their duties. When this spirit was lost, the world lost something which has not been recovered since but which it is hoped, through the spirit of the times, mankind will again recover. That is why spiritual training is offered to those interested in architecture as well as those interested in art generally.

GATHEKA: The Gothic churches in France are different from those in Germany, and even if there is some resemblance between French and Italian cathedrals, yet there is an individual feeling in every cathedral wherever it may be. Gothic architecture has reigned over the Western countries for a long time, and although by now its influence has disappeared, it has made itself felt in a hidden way during many centuries.

TASAWWUF: Whereas the Greeks and the Romans accepted polytheism, the Goths were Christians and many of them were Unitarians. They accepted the One God and their art was in honor of the One God. Oswald Spengler in particular has made a minute study of the influence of the Goths who were responsible for much of the civilization of the middle ages. According to him

the Gothic cathedral represents the Faustian tendency in man. That is, the aspiration for attainment, the eternal search for the beyond, the desire of man for union with divinity, for superhuman expression. One can feel that in the great cathedrals, in the lines and curves and feeling which goes upward.

This feeling is the important thing; the form does not matter so much. All people have different views of God and they are each influenced by tradition environment and culture. So the Gothic architecture was moulded in every country while preserving its own basic feeling and elements.

It is not necessary to return to the special geometry and stylization of the Goths. However we can make use of their idealism, their cooperative, Masonic activity, their feeling of incompleteness, their hope for perfection. Individually and collectively mankind can benefit from this spirit.

[Chapter 11](#)

Lessons from Contemporary Architecture

GATHEKA: It is very difficult to describe modern architecture. We hesitate to call it beautiful; but to say that it is not beautiful—no, we cannot say that! So instead of calling it beautiful we might call it wonderful.

TASAWWUF: This would indicate that the Jelalic temperament is predominating today and indeed we see it in the massive buildings of all kinds, where size is important and detail not always given the same consideration. And there is another aspect of Jelalic art too, that in it one sees more lines. Although each line has its significance, Jelalic or Jemalic or Kemalic, one may say that the line is Jelal and represents power, and the curve or curl is Jemal and represents beauty.

We see today a struggle for power and man seems to be learning more and more about natural forces. But he is not learning more about himself, at least not fast enough to prevent a number of catastrophes which seem to come close to hand. *[Editor's note: This was written in the winter of 1938—9 before the Second World War.]* Progress has been along certain lines and only in times of stress it is noticed that part of life has been left uncultivated. Thus there is a growing recognition of artistic as well as spiritual starvation.

GATHEKA: If there is any wonder it is in the immensity of the buildings. They are indeed enormous; the ancient people would never even have dreamed of such buildings. They would be

horrified if they saw them. *[Editor's note: The following text is not found in the Message Volumes]* In one building in New York four thousand people take lunch at the lunch hour. From that one can imagine how large the building must be, where even four thousand men have to take lunch.

TASAWWUF: Indeed this movement continued with the building of the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center. Only the world did not keep pace, the conditions did not warrant such immensity and a depression has followed. Besides, immensity tends toward regimentation. Instead of the land being used to serve humanity, people are squeezed into small areas, almost without reason. The world is quite large and much of it remains unsettled, and yet people are squeezed into small areas. It seems that in a time when the rhythm of man has become artificially adjusted to that of the machine, instead of the rhythm of the machine keyed to man, so also man is being crowded more and more.

Besides all the other baneful effects this tends toward narrow views. People have no space to look out upon, their bodies are shut in and their minds are also shut in. They do not obtain the etheric element which is needed for development and expression. Besides, when the auras of people constantly mix, there is no opportunity to build the personal atmosphere, personality is not improved. Then people smoke and drink to bring about nervous adjustments. If instead of attacking the alcohol and tobacco man would look for the reason for it, he would be able to diminish the consumption of these things. A natural life would be the way out.

In ancient times and even today in many parts of the Orient the artist and craftsmen did not have much space in which to work. Still it was their own space, it provided them with a personal atmosphere, it was not shared with another. So with all their cramping and other hazards of life they felt joy in their work, they accomplished things.

GATHEKA: They are also wonderful because in spite of the many floors they consist of, yet they stand so firmly; and then the way in which everything possible is pre-fabricated in order to build very quickly—all this is most wonderful.

TASAWWUF: This indicates that mankind can produce easily everything that is needed. It ought to give people time for relaxation and devotion. This has not happened. There has been such an individualistic and commercial spirit that there is little time for joy, for art. In earlier days, even when the hours of labor were longer, more people played the violin, piano, sketched, and sought some avenue of expression. Now even the art is canned, as they say. Life becomes more and more artificial.

GATHEKA: Yet it is a drawback that only vertical and horizontal lines are to be seen, and when a traveler passes through countries where he finds the same kind of architecture in the every city, it is just like looking at the same house over and over again; there is no difference. Instead of wandering through the city he might just as well look at one house and be contented with that.

TASAWWUF: The more use of the perpendicular line does not produce Kemal. In the Gothic

architecture there was a movement toward unity, God was seen above. In the modern buildings size is wanted for its own sake. And then there is uniformity. Many cities have such building restrictions that there is no scope or little scope for beauty and expression. In cities like New York, Chicago, Paris, however much they differ otherwise, there are standardizations which dampen one's ardor, there is loss of freedom, everything becomes fixed.

It is no wonder, then, that people are leaving Manhattan Island. They feel a crushing atmosphere. Although the Chrysler Building introduced some variations with its use of curved line and bright aluminum paint, the effect of the city as a whole may be deadening to a sensitive person.

No doubt when women play a larger role in life there will be more curves in architecture and art. Some women have become landscape gardeners, others are interested in decorating. The chief trouble has been that when women become free they are apt to ape or emulate men instead of following their deeper feeling. Social and political liberation are incomplete without spiritual liberty.

GATHEKA: Everyone must have the same kind of house built on the same plan, but we are not all made the same way. Every person is different and that is what makes life interesting.

TASAWWUF: One result of this uniformity is that the nufs of a city, so to speak, seems to swallow up its citizens. They become alike, so alike that it has been predicted that in the future everyone will be known in part by the name of the city from which he comes, or where he was born. One says of a Parisian, a Madridene, a Florentine, a San Franciscan, a Londoner, a Cantonese, that they cannot entirely hide their distinctions; their city may mark their personality even more than their family or racial inheritance.

When Hollywood was laid out in California, there was an opposite tendency, a tendency to break down this uniformity and this tendency went to such an extreme that in sections no two houses were permitted to be alike; and if similar in form then their colors, their painting had to be very different. This made it appear that the people were avoiding beauty as much as uniformity. And when one visited such sections he would say that there was a suffering from a mental disturbance, the people looked as if they had emotional breakdowns.

There was a reflection of that in all the arts of Hollywood. The people welcomed the great composers, Stravinsky and Schoenberg and Alan Berg who were opposed to the musical conventions, who were seeking freedom even at the expense of tradition and form. There were many similar movements in painting, art and all aesthetic endeavors, there was a complete revolt against tradition.

Yet there has also been a recognition that architecture is most important, that it provides silent music and a measuring stick for the trends of civilization. Lewis Mumford has given special attention to this subject and has founded the science of Technics, as it is called. It takes into consideration the combination of sciences and art in building, engineering and construction generally. In many ways it is a companion outlook to that of Havelock Ellis in his *The Dance of Life*.

GATHEKA: When every person is different, why should not every house and building be different? As the architecture of every country is expressive of the character of that country, so the architecture of every house should be expressive of the particular character of the owner of the house and of the man who built it. But when the law of uniformity is forced upon people then there remains no choice in the matter; the choice has been taken away from the architecture as well as from the owner of the house.

TASAWWUF: It is not possible for everyone to own his home today. President Roosevelt, however, has encouraged home owning, home building and household improvements. The government of the United States has been anxious to help the individual and also to help the communities, as in slum clearance projects. This ought to make it possible to rebuild many places and to add new notes. When people can build, they ought to plan first what they build. And this brings one to the subject of concentration again. If one is going to build a home or any building, he should give it mental consideration first, he should feel what is right and what is wrong, what is suitable and what will produce harmony and happiness. And once there is financial alleviation more attention should be paid to this aspect of life.

The spiritual teachings have always been a protest against uniformity. The tendency to make people alike only crushes the inner spirit. There has been so much repression and suppression and the human soul is bound to revolt against it. No one objects to patriotism, to loyalty to the state, but that is no reason why there must be overstandardization and mental slavery.

GATHEKA: No doubt one sees a continual effort on the part of modern architects to produce something new; and it seems that this effort is working as much in their minds as in the minds of painters and other artists, to produce, to create something new.

TASAWWUF: The architect stands between the artist and the engineer and is subject to both influences. He is influenced by the new schools of art on the one hand and he is influenced by the modern technology on the other hand. He has to work on a larger scale than the artist and he has many more materials to use; only he is checked by natural law. He cannot overlook the principles of mechanics and engineering.

The architect may make use of glass, steel, aluminum and many metallic alloys. Asbestos is now a building material and besides all kinds of wood there are numerous wood-products. There are coal-tar derivatives and other results of chemical synthesis. He can use countless paints and colors and systems of lighting. He has a greater knowledge of geometry and may use more kinds of curves, so he has endless scope for experimentation, and in this he finds a freedom. But the mere revolt against uniformity is not enough. There should be feeling, there should be circumspection and consideration to the psychological effects of his work.

GATHEKA: *[Editor's note: The following text is not found in the Message Volumes]* And yet what happens? Now there was an exhibition in Paris not long ago, and in that exhibition a special effort was made by the architects to build houses and different buildings in a kind of new style; and those

who have seen it will agree that either in trying to do so they imitated some old style—the Japanese style—or they made something quite meaningless, that you cannot find the head or the tail of the thing, you cannot find any expression or meaning, any revelation in the thing that was produced by the architect.

TASAWWUF: The same was true in part at the exhibition in Chicago in 1933. There was much experimentation, there was an intuition that something was wrong without any knowledge or inspiration as to what would be right. This shows that the ordinary ego and the intellectual person has not found the way to improvement. There is nothing wrong in adopting the Japanese style or making a composite of several old styles and of using modern materials. But there should be a meaning, there should be a feeling that each building is an entity in itself, of itself. When a house is planned it is almost as if a baby were to be born. One should meditate and concentrate carefully. The architect should either develop feeling or the prospective owners should learn how to concentrate to obtain what is best for them.

That is why heart-development is needed today. In planning a house one should practice concentration. There should be concentration on the house as a whole first. Then upon the house with rooms, that is the second kind of concentration. Then upon the house with rooms that are decorated and furnished. When one or two can do that together it is a sign that they know what they want; the universe will come to their help if they follow the principles of the universe.

GATHEKA: *[Editor's note: The following text is not found in the Message Volumes]* The more you can study it, the more you will find that it is a great effort on the part of an architect to make something new. And what he has made nobody could be satisfied with; because it is nothing but an effort, but no art. It is like hard thinking.

TASAWWUF: Hard thinking without feeling is lifeless. When there is no life there will be no delight. People should not be eager to leave everything to the architect unless that architect shows that he has feeling. No one should enter a house without considering that he must live in its atmosphere. If it will not provide the right atmosphere it can bring nothing but disease and disharmony. Husbands and wives do not get along and sometimes it is because of the atmosphere. If members of the family would meditate together first, then concentrate, then pursue their goal in a spirit of harmony, the world would be better for them.

Likewise architects should learn how to concentrate. There should be a concentration before any planning. They should learn to visualize before they draw their plans and then they should visualize more. And if they can build a house in their mind's eye and walk through it, see themselves walking through it, feel the atmosphere of each room, they would increase their capacity for inspiration. After a while inspiration would come to them even as to poets and musicians and artists.

This brings one to the consideration of applying spiritual principles to architecture that thereby right atmosphere may be provided for all and every dwelling become a temple to the Lord.

[Chapter 12](#)

True and False Paths to Spirituality in Architecture

GATHEKA: No matter what direction architecture takes, there will come a time before long when a better approach will be found. But what is necessary for this is the development of spirituality.

TASAWWUF: When we consider God as the Grand Architect of the Universe and when we learn from the sacred writings that at first God slept and then He dreamed and afterwards He planned and when everything was properly planned He created the Universe by His Own action out of His own Being, there is set before everyone the ideal method in which to work, the path which leads towards perfection.

In the same way the spiritual artist may work, and his initial step should be inward. And when two or three people can concentrate together and feel the spirit of harmony it will be better. If the home-builder and architect can see from each other's point of view and if the architect can take into consideration the work of the carpenter and plumber and plasterer and mason who will unite in the building, that will be a great step forward. Perhaps there may be a return to the old masonic spirit, to the spirit of brotherhood in building.

Sufism offers to the world the "I-I," the group-unit formed by the synthesis or integration of individuals, that several can concentrate together and unite and harmonize what they see in the spirit. There was a time when the great builders would sit down silently on the land where a structure was to go up. They would stay there, perhaps sleep and watch their dreams very carefully. They often had great inspirations in their dreams and they were very careful not to go contrary to their dreams. If there was any doubt they remained there until the doubt disappeared. And especially blessed were those to whom Elijah or the hidden ones appeared.

GATHEKA: The architect should not think that it is the study of different architectures that will make him capable of producing something new; it is the heart, it is the spirit, which must reveal to him what he should create.

TASAWWUF: The wonderful thing is that heart-unfoldment will help more than anything else to understand the different kinds of architecture. The intellect gives knowledge of form while insight tells one of the spirit in which things have been made. Before every form there is a thought-force, there is a nexus in the mind-world which is the base of the material thing. When one becomes

acquainted with the world of principles he can more easily understand the nature and significance of forms.

In spiritual concentration one learns to hold things in the mind's eye and to study with the living breath. This living breath brings great blessing, and it removes the shadows which cover the heart. Then, when the heart directs imagination and thought, one learns how to control impressions, to remove the inharmonious or harmful ones.

GATHEKA: The work of the architect is of the greatest importance; it comes through inspiration and its origin is spirit, not matter. A house is built with matter, but made with spirit. And as the spirit of the world evolves so architecture will evolve also.

TASAWWUF: The life of each house, of each building depends upon that spirit. One cannot always predetermine the life of a structure. When there is feeling and spirit in it there is more life in it. The breath and thought of man sustains the things he creates. If he regards these creations as apart from himself there will be less life in them and they will be subject to destruction without any apparent reason.

To make anything spiritual it is necessary to hold the thought with the feeling, to keep the breath in rhythm and to remain conscious of the God-Ideal at all times. Then the imagination has free play and yet does not act contrary to wisdom. One enters into his inner world and receives the knowledge he needs to accomplish the things he must do in the outer, everyday life.

GATHEKA: In the future one can foresee two improvements. One will be the giving of more scope to the personality of the individual to express itself.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual directions are not mental requirements. The spiritual principles leave full freedom for the mind, for thought, for imagination, for love and harmony and beauty. There is no restriction as to form. Only it is advisable for a spiritual person who would build a house or buy a house or even rent a place to enter into the silence and keep his concentration before him. There is one concentration when one wishes to build and otherwise one follows what is known as the path of Sadhana or attainment. The laws for Sadhana are studied carefully by Sufi students.

If one wishes to build he follows the laws of creative effort. If one person is to do the building he concentrates alone, but if husband and wife and family plans, they should concentrate together. Instead of children being excluded that is a good time to teach them concentration and introduce them to the spiritual life. And if a khankah is to be built then several persons should concentrate together. That concentration should be at the same time each day it is repeated. That establishes rhythm. And one should watch every dream, vision and impression whenever it comes and not superimpose any personal will upon that which comes from within. Thus is there response to the Spirit of Guidance.

Spiritual training frees man from his dependence upon past experiences. To receive inspiration the

ego must be moved out of the way; therefore dependence upon memory or personal knowledge does not always help. Yet it will be found that the Spirit of Guidance usually selects something from the past experience so that one can understand. Wisdom never operates contrary to understanding. Nor does it exclude any of the intellectual knowledge that one has.

When the architect sees that he is bringing into the world the divine spirit, though clothed with form, every house he plans or constructs will be as a temple. He can put his spirit into it, and when he so endows houses with life that will bring more joy to the owners and dwellers.

GATHEKA: And the other will be the evolution of an architecture which does not discard all that belongs to the past, but blends some of its best characteristics with the architectural conceptions of the present.

TASAWWUF: For it will be the assimilation and synthesis of all that is known in the world without and in the worlds within. There will be no separation. There will be a desire to study all the art-forms of the world, to gain from the past and to apply knowledge from distant lands, and also to be open to inspiration. This will be the dawn of a new day.

[Chapter 13](#)

The Building of Shrines

The building of shrines in the spiritual manner comes between the arts of sculpture and architecture, and in order to do this work properly, one has to know something of each. Like sculpture, the shrine may be the work of one individual, composed of one material such as marble, granite, alabaster, clay, sandstone—or it may be composed of several materials.

The smallest shrine may be a simple slab or a tombstone, or it may be quite a building. What is necessary first is the meditation on the land. A shrine should not be built except upon magnetized ground. Land may become hallowed because a saint or teacher has dwelt there or taught there or pointed out the place. That means it has received Baraka, emanations of spiritual and psychic magnetism which bring blessing, power and inspiration (blessing is Kemal, power Jelal and inspiration Jemal).

If the place has not been magnetized one should if possible, have a silence on the ground. If this is not possible there should be a silence at a distance, in which the ground is visualized, held in

concentration and furnished with Baraka. One invokes the blessing of God on the land, and should continue this in patience until there is a feeling that the place has received the Baraka. Sometimes one will know this intuitively, sometimes one can tell by the feeling he has in going over the ground.

Like in sculpture also the materials should be magnetized. They may be magnetized by hand although by sight would be more practical. And in laying a cornerstone one may place the hands on the cornerstone and bless it in that manner, impart Baraka in that way. Otherwise the blessing may be by the eyes, or by the feet. Blessing by the feet includes walking over the land, preferably in bare feet, performing the suitable esoteric exercise.

The shrine may be a tomb or a shrine may contain an image or inscription. It may include a larger vault for the ashes of holy persons. Or it may be a simple meditation nook where people can go to pray or meditate. It can be these things and also be or contain a chapel.

If a holy person be buried in a certain place, the merits of that person will cause Baraka to emanate therein. If other people come in reverence and devotion to such a spot there will be an increase of Baraka. And if the shrine is a labor of love rather than of duty, it will increase the holiness. If there is little money for such a purpose, let there be little money. One does not have to tax the living to support those who have passed on. This reverence for the dead readily can become a superstition and a drain upon the resources of those on earth.

The shrine may be dedicated by having a ceremony of Universal Worship or it may be dedicated by a simple blessing. During the construction of a shrine and even before that, during the period of planning, those involved should have no further concentration. If they do they will not be fit receptacles for Baraka. They will be the same as anybody else. There must be single-mindedness and deep devotion of heart to bring Baraka, to be a channel of the Lord. One cannot serve God and anyone or anything else at the same time.

Once a shrine is built does not mean that there may not be additions or embellishments afterwards. This is particularly true when it is necessary or advisable to construct one and the funds are not over-sufficient.

There are other shrines which may be likened to wayside shrines. These are places where one may stop and pray. It is not necessary to spend much money in this regard. No doubt when there are many spiritual sculptors they will want to make images and symbols, to carve niches and perform like services. It is better to wait until that day than to make demands upon the living. Besides, if there is to be built some great temple or khankah, one cannot do it if the mind is divided and many other things are in the mind.

It is possible to build a shrine first then attach a khankah or temple to it. It is possible to begin with a simple shrine and finally have an elaborate building. The building of shrines should be a cautious matter for the world may otherwise accuse the devotees of superstition. Until the spirit of religion is

restored and fulfilled, only occasionally should these be constructed.

The shrine may be a scene of pilgrimages and the center of gatherings on holy days and festive days. Therefore it is best to have a little space around it, a tiny park, perhaps have a little room connected therewith. But shrines may be constructed anywhere, in the cities or in out of the way places. It is more important to know the spiritual principles involved than to make rules about them. The shrines may even be for the living rather than the dead, they may be places of refuge, for meditation and healing. All these things should be taken into consideration therefore.

In the Oriental countries there are many shrines and they are centers of Baraka. In *The Bestowal of Blessing* the principles of Baraka, especially in connection with the shrines, is explained. In the West one does not have to work the same as in the East. Besides sometimes it requires centuries to accumulate sufficient Baraka. The shrine is explained here more because of the simplicity of construction than because of need for it. The need will be there when humanity is ready.

Chapter 14

The Khankah or Brotherhood Dwelling

In the Orient sometimes the Sufis live together in a common house on a cooperative or hierarchical brotherhood basis. Sometimes a Sheikh or teacher lives alone and the students come to his place for their lessons, also for their periods of Purdah or Khilvat (seclusion). Sometimes the House of the Sheikh is surrounded by the dwellings of the brethren. In these and in other instances the place may be called a Khankah. But for our purposes a Khankah may be any building in which one or more Sufis dwell, with or without their families, on an individual, cooperative or other basis. The rules and precedents must be set down by the teachers and by practicality. It is only that the principles of architecture involved may follow certain bases, so that spirituality may be increased on earth.

Rented and leased houses are not properly khankahs except when their owners are Sufis, and when there is a certain agreement that will take into consideration the objectives of the Sufi Movement and Sufi Order. In order to purchase a house for a Khankah there should be unanimous feeling that it is serviceable. If there is any objection to it, it should not be used. There must be harmony from the very beginning. If there is a keynote that is inharmonious, if there is even the slightest discord in the beginning; that means that thereafter the discord will increase. That would be a most unfortunate sign. And no one is compelled to live in a khankah and he should not unless

his heart is gladdened thereby.

Everyone invited to such an undertaking should speak rather than surrender in spirit to that with which he does not agree. There is no doubt a great virtue in self-surrender but it is also true that many times a person has intuition, even an inspiration, and it goes contrary to the thoughts of others. The others speak and the inspired one keeps silent. Then the will of God is not made known and there is no planting of Baraka. Man must be true to himself and also to the divine spirit within.

If a sheikh alone takes a house or a sheikh with one or more mureeds rents a place, or three or more mureeds with the permission of the sheikh occupy a building or apartment that place may be used as a khankah. And in the khankah there should be one vacant room which is reserved for travelers. Even if the place be a house filled with Sufis if there is not this vacant room the place is not properly a khankah. That may be regarded as the Lord's room or the room for Maitreya Buddha or the Messiah, or it may have no designation. Yet it is for the travelers and visitors.

So whoever is to live in such a house should see that there is one extra room serviceable as a bedroom. That room should be used only by travelers, visitors. Or under certain conditions it may be used for meditation, concentration, prayer, healing, but not as a bedroom. It must be used only for holy and sacred purposes. Or there may be two such rooms, the extra room and the sacred room, which is preferable whenever practical.

When there is harmony between the original occupants and the owner, and an agreement can be made that is satisfactory to all, that place may be used as a khankah. Then there should be some symbol set up, preferably but not necessarily the Sufi Symbol. That symbol would indicate a place of Baraka. Then there should be a ceremony of purification or dedication or both, following the rites of the Universal Worship. The whole place should be properly dedicated knowing it is going to be the center for Baraka. This makes the establishment spiritual and holy.

The next consideration comes when there may be an old house which can be modified to become a khankah. This is not usually desirable and should not be undertaken when it can be avoided. The chief exception will be houses adjacent to buildings already in use for sacred purposes, when it would be advantageous to rent or acquire them. In this case it would probably be best to have a ceremony of purification immediately and then if there are modifications and additions to have a ceremony of dedication afterwards. Thus evil influences would be removed before any alterations were attempted, and the old atmosphere would not exert any malefic affect. It is best to get rid of the old atmosphere, even to leave the windows and doors open for awhile.

Modifications may be along two lines. The first kind would include the setting up of symbols and the proper provision for special rooms for meditation and for guests. Along with this the material and practical purposes should not be overlooked. Nor should anybody be required to make needless sacrifices for a "traveler" who exists in some distant place and who may not come there for a long time. The holiness is lost when human consideration is forgotten. Besides, when there are a group

of buildings in a khankah, it is not necessary that everyone have a guest room; even one guest room for a group may suffice or there may be many such guest rooms. This can only be decided by the occupants.

A house of God should be a house of joy and of life. The khankah is not a convent in the old sense even though it be used in some instances for those in seclusion. In that case the rules for Khilvat (seclusion) apply. Yet any house may be embellished or altered because it proves to be desirable and in the remodeling there is also the opportunity to apply the principles of spiritual art.

From the point of view of architecture the khankah is a step beyond the shrine, being a more complex structure. Yet the general principles of it may be adopted by any family interested in spiritual matters, or even by any family at all. The method of building up a holy atmosphere and engendering psychic power is the same. The khankah, within limits, may be the example for all the world.

When it is desirable to build a structure, the first step may be the selection of the land. It is good even to have a concentration in that respect, for one or two or more to dwell upon the subject. The more that can unite in holy concentration the better, but persons who will not live in the khankah should not be concerned with such concentrations. For there are persons, more willing than far-sighted, who will want to make suggestions for others, and receive impressions for others. They will even go out of their way to see that other persons follow the right path. But this of itself is a departure from spiritual teachings and is not to be sanctioned.

The site for the khankah or the khankah itself may be selected by the sheikh alone, but properly speaking he is not a sheikh who considers himself apart from his disciples. And it may be that when a sheikh concentrates his faithful disciples will be inspired or impressed or even have dreams or visions that prove to be valuable.

An "I-I" is a group formed by the integrative endeavor of several individuals who thus form a group which acts as a unit, or as one personality. This was the original idea of church, of sangha, of brotherhood, at least in the spiritual sense. When brethren act in unity, says the psalmist, then blessings come to earth. But people have not always acted in brotherhood, which has remained mostly an ideal. The Healing Service of the Sufis shows how a group may act together as if a single personality of a higher order.

When several people concentrate as a group they should hold hands and repeat an invocation or sacred phrase at the beginning of their undertaking and should pray afterwards, invoking the Presence and the blessing of God.

Nakib is a title given to guardians of shrines and managers of khankahs who maintain the concentration started by a group and who continue it for the good of the places under their direction. They thus preserve the holiness. A Nakib sometimes presides over a khankah, usually being the senior disciple staying there. Sometimes he is a teacher, but he has the privilege of

conducting business and making contacts with the world of a different nature.

In concentration a thought-pattern is set up and should be regarded even as parents regard the soul coming toward earth to occupy an infant's body. Properly conducted it gives rise to living thought and as the khankah is also to be regarded as living, this vitalizes the building. But the same method may be used with respect to any home. Many people hang up a placard, "God bless our home." They do not always realise that they themselves can cooperate in increasing the blessing.

When this attitude is taken as if toward a living thing, an accommodation is made for growth. It is the light and life of man that sustains all things in this world though he knows it not. The physical body is the temple of God and the home is the temple of man, for God created the former and man the latter. And if man establishes and maintains the atmosphere of holiness, the whole of physical existence may change.

Every room in a house can have its suitable concentration: the bedroom, the meditation hall, the kitchen, sewing room and all parts of the house. A common concentration or a group meditation of the several people who live in a sacred dwelling, two or three or more, and even with others joining them, will create a marvellous atmosphere. Besides this, it will preserve harmony. And although concentration may be regarded as an exercise, more or less esoteric, it can have most practical implications.

After a while there may come that contagious inspiration which makes one feel that life is worthwhile. The question arises, "Who exists, God or man?" It is one thing to say that God alone is, and it is another thing to live and act as if this were true. It is one thing to think that God is the only Being and it is quite another to obtain impressions clearly, to strengthen one's faculty of intuition, to heed that Voice which comes constantly from within. Only one who respects dreams, visions, intuitions and inspirations of himself or another is resigned to the Divine Will. Otherwise, no matter how willing he may seem to be, he has not attained.

Therefore to be sure that there is a manifestation of the Will of God, there may be an impression which comes first to the heart and consciousness of the teacher and then the pupils until the pupils learn to recognize their own intuitions. And in the selection of a Khankah site and all things concerned with it, this heart response is most necessary. For if a sheikh tried to force his personal will upon the mureeds because of a beautiful house or for some other consideration, it would not establish the seed of blessing which is needed more than anything else. Therefore the true teacher will always encourage his disciples to follow their impressions and express their feelings. And in that way he receives corroboration to his own inspirations.

If one wishes to partake in the enterprise of the selection of khankah site, khankah, of temple site, of temple, he should be willing to cooperate in harmony, to expect that at least one person will be responsive and to accept in reverence the responsiveness and the actual response. Any personal will, no matter how seemingly justifiable, throws a shadow across the light which illuminates the inner and outer worlds. God is the Only Teacher, we all learn from Him. Therefore what is done

should be done in the full spirit of love, of harmony, of beauty. Then, after there is agreement as to site, building may commence. The ground may be dedicated by a ceremony or by a simple blessing, and there may be a blessing at the laying of a cornerstone.

Excepting for the cornerstone it is not necessary that any part of the building or building materials be personally magnetized. Yet, when it is possible, if the teacher or one or more disciples meditate on the site before or even during the construction, it will help bring the blessings. And if the workers themselves are spiritual students or initiates, that is still a greater blessing, for there will be holiness in all they do.

It has been suggested that materials of living substances be used for the khankah. This is often best but it is also to be remembered that there is a certain amount of life in everything. So if a khankah is to be established near a quarry one may draw from the stones therein. If it is on clay or adobe ground, it may safely be built of adobe or brick or tile. If it be on rocky land near the seashore, stones and shells may be used. For the materials there are from and in their own element and they preserve an atmosphere which is in harmony with their surroundings and which will be better able to withstand the exigencies of the weather and of time. One might say then that the very materials have been “initiated.” Some knowledge of psychic law does not mean that there is any compulsion about it. Beauty, serviceability and human choice must also be given consideration.

When it comes to the question of light, unless it is in a warm country and the light brings too much heat, there should be as much of it as possible, even that each room obtain direct light from the outside, facing the sun in some way. Bedrooms and individual quarters should receive preference in this, while a meditation hall does not need the direct rays of the sun, and should be neither too hot nor too cold.

In these days there are many systems for heating and cooling and for controlling air currents. It is to be remembered that just as a living person breathes, in his peculiar way, so a living dwelling should breathe in its own way. One should not be afraid of drafts. This very fear helps to produce disease. Far more colds result from the fear-impressions concerning drafts than from wind and air currents. Of course one does not expose his home to windstorm and dust; a house, after all, is a dwelling place for people.

There is no reason why students of mysticism may not be thoroughly practical. They may avail themselves of modern improvements, especially those that add to health and general comfort. The khankah does not have to be too different from other buildings but it should, at least, be abreast of the times, and its construction should follow the principles of Spiritual Architecture so far as permissible.

[Chapter 15](#)

The Khankah Further Considered

While there are no requisites or restrictions as to the number of rooms in a khankah, there should be at least one dedicated to the service of God. Also, if possible one other room for the initiate-members, where they may meet for social purposes without having to invite guests to their private quarters, and if possible, at least a room for the creative activities which arise out of inspiration, such as a studio or work-shop. In general, however, the associate-dwellers will know how to carry on.

Each room should have its corner dedicated to God. Sometimes there may be an altar or a shrine in that corner, built in or decorations or art-objects. Each person should, so far as possible, select the furnishings for his own room that his atmosphere may be built up easily and harmoniously. Many members, coming together for the first time, may supply their own things.

The principles of love, harmony and beauty should be followed.

It is the simple beginning which will lead ultimately to the new and beautiful and thus establish a trend which may be followed without any slavish imitation. Formality should never dominate spiritual expression. Likewise all questions relating to roof, walls, gardens, decorations and general detail may be decided by the group together. While it is well to have at least one Sufi Symbol around in the khankah, symbolism does not have to be carried to the point of being an encumbrance, nor must it dominate beauty. Fixed norms which can easily degenerate into superstitions, formal customs and idolatry should be avoided.

Of course there is nothing to hinder the establishment of different rooms for worship, teaching and meditation, or for brotherhood and social meetings if there is suitable accommodation. There may be places for healing and concentration groups, according to the size of the khankah, number of persons interested, amount of funds and available space. There may even be annexes where mureeds live and in which probationers may also stay who cannot remain in the khankah for various reasons. There is nothing to hinder spiritual students and other people from dwelling together; they already occupy space in the same apartment houses and hotels, but every Sufi house is not, nor need it become a khankah.

After the house is properly dedicated the rooms should be used as often as possible for the purposes for which they were originally intended even though individuals come and go; this policy will strengthen the atmosphere. Besides that, every khankah should have its extra room for the visiting Sufi, which may be occupied at any time by a teacher or disciple in seclusion. Many people who cannot otherwise practice seclusion will be able to report to a khankah and be properly

protected and otherwise helped.

In rural districts, or where there are a group of buildings forming a compound, it may be possible to have a general seclusion from time to time. Then one person should be left free to protect the others and act as mediator before the world. It is important to bear this in mind when planning. It may even be that a khankah is partially or largely vacant at times and there can be such a place preserved mostly for those who would use it for seclusion and sacred purposes generally.

The question of friends, relatives and children residing in the khankah is not a subject to be discussed in architecture. However, the various rooms should be sound-proof to some extent so that those in seclusion or devotion may have suitable privacy. As has been said the khankah is not a convent or monastery, except during times of seclusion. It is even possible that such an establishment may become the norm for others.

Khankahs may be built or acquired separately, or they may be part of a group of buildings used or occupied by spiritual students, or they may be connected with a temple. In the latter case the occupants would still have their independence unless the khankah was actually part of the temple-building, which matter requires extreme caution. Except for a guardian or **wali** it may be unwise for anybody to dwell in an actual temple.

The life in the khankah is not to be too restricted, and this should be taken into consideration from the very first planning. It may even be that the khankah will offer something to the generality, in spreading the arts and customs of all the people in the world. Thus may the spirit of brotherhood be spread, even without the use of lectures. Many spiritual teachings may be offered to the world through beauty and right example.

There may be gardens connected with any khankah and full sway is permitted here. One may have bird sanctuaries and pergolas and nooks and arbors for those who wish to meditate outside or to go outdoors and be protected even while in seclusion. There may be gymnasiums and swimming pools or roof gardens, where there is the means therefore. These gardens and other accessories will offer ample opportunities for artistic expression, and will stimulate such arts as flower arrangement, even bring new ideas to gardening and landscaping. The ideal therefore has been called "The Garden of Inayat" which purports to synthesize several arts, crafts and social ideals even as Spiritual Architecture is, in another sense, a synthesis. But here too, imitation, at least in form, is not required. Different climates suggest different methods and varying modes of living. It is the spirit alone which need be universal.

Again, it would be right to grow in one place the flowers that the teacher dwelling there enjoyed. One should always consider the living personalities more than those who have departed except in the matter of sacred retreat, which follows traditional patterns and holy records. Each one may worship in his own fashion, and love of beauty should also be regarded as one form of worship. Nor does every khankah have to have or become a Garden of Inayat.

A large khankah may contain workshops, studios, even offices, business rooms and other conveniences and accessories. There can be a craft-room where the principles learned in esoteric classes may be applied for the khankah, for the brethren generally or even for professional purposes. Disciples may actually have their studios and shops in or adjacent to such a place. But these workshops are not for visitors except those on business and should be as sound-proof as possible to build their own atmospheres, each after its kind. But after all the purpose of the khankah is to house humanity, not to force humanity to accept rules or norms which are too binding and restrictive.

We should bear in mind that anything built by man is essentially human, and only that which is created by God is properly speaking divine. There has been the mistake of the past that a certain church or convent is the house of God, and people even had to inconvenience themselves to go there to worship. Man himself is the noblest work of God. But man may erect edifices and endow them with Baraka, and thus through his own creation of a sacred atmosphere bring blessing to the world.

But this must be an active undertaking. And if there cannot be an increase of joy in the establishment of khankahs and in residing therein, it might even be better to devise some other plan for future home life for families and for the collectivity.

Chapter 16

The Building of the Temple

The Temple is the culmination of spiritual art and architecture and in a certain sense of all human endeavor. Here all the arts may be united and synthesized into one grand undertaking. All spiritual students and disciples can unite in common concentration and common effort, that all may receive from God and give to God. From every aspect it promotes the union of being and not-being, of self and not-self, of the substitution of the “I-I” for the “I.”

One cannot say beforehand there is an exact plan or model which must be slavishly followed. Yet it would be foolish to say that in heaven there is no basic plan, no ideal, nothing to start with. Everything in the teachings points toward the construction of temples, and also in the traditions of most religions. One may thus say that it is the culmination of all arts into one art, the Art of arts; the synthesis of all religions of the past into **The Religion**; the unity of all hearts in practical effort thus establishing the brotherhood of mankind—in action.

In the construction of the temple one may draw upon all the arts of the past and upon ideas and themes and elements taken from all different religions and sects. It has been stated that the temple should, if possible, be shaped like a man seated in meditation. This will no doubt provide for a dome and some elements taken from Islamic architecture. But it is to be remembered, too, that much in Islamic architecture was drawn from earlier styles. Many of the mosques are open, outdoor structures, the worship not being performed inside of any complete building.

If a question be asked, can an edifice which has been used by people following a particular religion be taken over and adopted to Universal Worship, the answer is that this may be done and the building may then be modified from time to time until it is properly a temple in a mystical and occult sense. But the real building of a temple is a work in which the congregation itself will partake, the many uniting with each other in the brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God. Thus will there come a new aspect of outer Samadhi.

The first steps such as the selection of land may not be different from that to be used for shrine or khankah except that this, being on a much grander scale, must dispense with meditation on the ground. The former edifices are more closely connected with the Sufi Order, or with some esoteric school using the same general principles. The temple is also for the multitudes. It may, of course, draw people toward spirituality and esotericism. Indeed all who accept the worship will be given the same opportunities to cooperate, even offered the same general concentrations.

No doubt the temple is first constructed in the unseen, in part by those dwelling therein and partly by the effluvia of thoughts and concentrations of devotees upon each. By this each encourages the others. A noted theosophist has written a book, *The Brotherhood of Men and Angels*; this suggests better cooperation between those in the manifest and unmanifest worlds. Indeed it would seem that some of the great temples of the past, such as those of the Beni Israel and Buddhists made use of such principles.

The common concentration is therefore the first step. Disciples of Sufism have often been entrusted with this ideal from the moment of their acceptance. Those who have ideals or visions of the temple are encouraged to report to the teachers, and records may thus be kept. But it is not proper to criticize such reports, nor has anyone the right to challenge the inner life of another. Discussions on this subject, therefore, should be for the purpose of clarification and arguments not allowed as they hinder the actual building, indicating the absence of harmony.

Chronic objectors can hardly cooperate in temple building, and must be guarded so that they do not contaminate the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation. Yet it is true that intuitions all come from the same source and a heart-endeavor produces harmonies little suspected by the intellectual and ignorant people.

It was originally planned that the main room in the temple be used, although not exclusively, for the Universal Worship which unites all the great religions of the past and accepts their Scriptures, even their particular modes of worship. Therefore the planning must bear in mind the worship and the

exterior, the spirit and the form, spirit and form being the two elements in every creative activity.

Whatever is received and accepted for the exterior and for the form should be in accordance with spiritual art and architecture. Besides there is much in tradition that has an occult value and can assist in the building and preservation of holy atmospheres. So the architecture for the “Church of All Churches” may draw from many sources and in this some intellectual study and research may be helpful.

What is planned for the inside should include altar and lights and proper places for the Cherags, the officiates in the Universal Worship. There must be suitable equipment, places for candles, tapers, sacred books, flowers, incense and furnishings. Of course in some lands people sit in chairs and elsewhere in posture, and the customs and habits of a country should be preserved in a spirit of harmony. There must be suitable acoustical provisions, either by the formation of halls and spaces or even through the use of loud speakers; the former is preferred but the choice is open. Tradition, experience and inspiration will no doubt go hand in hand.

There may be many rooms connected with the temple and it may be used mostly for worship and service or it may supply other needs, such as providing silent halls for meditations. A temple of Universal Worship may be controlled by the officials of that worship, but it may house all the branches of the Sufi Order and esoteric schools. The provisions for music need not follow any particular tradition. For music has not exactly the same meaning in different parts of the world, and it may be that the music of the future may be quite different, and the use of mantrams may be restored in some fashion.

It is possible that a temple may even be patterned in part after Al-Azhar in Cairo, which is a huge mosque and also a university in which there is instruction in all the known and collected esoteric and exoteric knowledge. Anything may be taught there. While one does not include academic education in the spiritual schools, some instruction in the great religions, in comparative religion, in the associated arts and in everything which may help to bring upon earth the spirit and the institutions of brotherhood will be in place. So there may be rooms for social gatherings, musicals, healing and other purposes, each room having its own suitable atmosphere.

There may always be some sort of headquarters and offices connected with the temple, either as part of the building or alongside. There may be an art museum, or some such counterpart, either to help the people who are interested in religious and spiritual art, or in the mystical and esoteric aspects of this part of life. Indeed one cannot omit anything which comes through inspiration and which will help inspire the people of the future. Just as one can see the evolution of the form of Christian Churches and Islamic Mosques, so it may be for the temples of the future.

The question as to the use of any part of such a structure by non-communicants must be in the hands of the directors. While it is valuable to follow psychic law in the building, we cannot fix rules which will deaden the spirit with which the undertaking was begun. This is even true from the occult and mystical standpoint. Too many principles and ideas drawn from these sources will in the

beginning make it hard for the public, or even for the disciples to accommodate themselves. Esotericism must be divulged slowly and gently lest it, like beauty, become a poison instead of a balm.

There may be regular visiting hours and there should be silent periods for those who know how to benefit therefrom. There may be hours when the temple will be shut, so that the whole building will have its "silence," and there must be periods for cleaning. Cleaning should be regarded as a sacred undertaking similar to the purification ceremonies which people partake of. Again, this is not set up as a rule so much as a factor which the planners should bear in mind from the beginning.

Every form of decoration may follow the teachings of spiritual art. The windows may be colors or not; art-glass may be material for use in the formation of symbols, sacred pictures or otherwise, or it may not be used. But in the beginning there must not be too much embellishment. The wise will always leave to the future generations the task of continuing their work, knowing that man of himself is imperfect and that when growth is completed, decay may be eminent.

The temple should be based upon heart, and also upon the principles of the constructions of the universe, which is God's own undertaking. Thus will man be following his divine Maker. The mind and the hand will each have its opportunities in sowing the seeds of Baraka so that there will be life and life abundant in the very stones of the temple itself. For unless the Lord buildeth the house they labor in vain who build. All that is in sacred traditions may be utilized without forcing a new orthodoxy. Too little tradition will prevent the establishment of a norm; too much will cramp the spirit of humanity. There is a middle way between these which is the pathway of love, harmony and beauty.

The ultimate purpose of the Message is to bring mankind to the praise of God. When this comes forth from the heart freely, when human beings feel the pulsation of spiritual blessing, then hearts will sing and no commentary will be needed. This aspect of spiritual architecture, in the building of the temple, will therefore complete a stage of evolution in the progress of humankind, and then it may be that the sons of man will sing together with the morning stars.

Subhan Allah! Alhumdu Lillah! Allaho Akbar!