



Gatha with Commentary

Etekad, Rasm U Ravaj:  
Superstitions, Customs, and Beliefs

Series II

*of*

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

*by*

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 1

**“Eat My Flesh and Drink My Blood”**

GATHA: There is a remarkable phrase in the Bible, where it says, “Eat My flesh and drink My blood.” What does He mean by saying this? He means in the first place that what a living being loves most is his food, what he loves most he eats. It has been proven in ferocious and dreadful famines, by people eating their own children, that food is dearer than their own child.

TASAWWUF: There is a certain cell of the body, of the whole flesh and of each cell. How do we know that the cells do not live upon the body, or the body upon the cells? And in the teachings on the problems of vegetarianism it is brought out that life lives upon life.

When the body takes in the dead food we have the tamasic condition. There are degrees of vitalities in all creatures and in eating also, one partakes or does not partake of psychic and vital vibrations, each according to its kind.

We are also here concerned with the mysteries. There were many kinds of mysteries before the time of Jesus Christ and some even later. In the mysteries there was concern with eating, even with what some have called “god-eating” for the “god,” so to speak, would have higher psychic energies and vitalities and the consumer would benefit from them.

GATHA: The words of Christ therefore, “Find out, what it is in Me that you love, which may become your nourishment, which may become your food. It is not this, My flesh and blood; this will not be sufficient to satisfy your appetite.”

TASAWWUF: In fana-fi-sheikh the disciple keeps before himself the form of the teacher whom he loves, perhaps idealizes. He may wish to assimilate the qualities of the Murshid or absorb the teachings which the Murshid offers so that he may develop these qualities in himself. And then as he advances he learns to absorb the qualities of Saints, of Masters, of God himself. It is all processes of growth, of absorption.

But to absorb, even to eat from Jesus Christ would mean more than consuming the physical body. Indeed we do not consume any body—a bread or wafer is offered and this symbolically and superbolically represents the body of Jesus Christ.

In the Upanishads it is taught that the devas live on the odors and essences and do not eat the solid foods; their savors are sufficient. And it is also true in the same and also in another sense that love is the life itself. When one has the love, one has the life and one can demonstrate it and find it demonstrated.

GATHA: “There is another part of My being, which is in abundance and can nourish My numberless devotees. Therefore before trying to eat My flesh and blood, try to find out on what plane I really exist and what is My true being.”

TASAWWUF: In the Christian communion sometimes this is a ritual and many believe the ritual is sufficient. No doubt it is sufficient on the external plane. But Christ is on all planes and penetrates all parts of the universe. Therefore in the Catholic churches this is given along with meditation. Sometimes indeed the meditation becomes more important than the ritual, for it is through the meditation that the realization usually comes. Otherwise we should be seeing innumerable examples of spiritual awakening just by partaking of a ritual. But that is only the first step.

When there is the meditation one uses the mind and one also uses the heart. And the mind may awaken and the heart may awaken and when the life is consciously aroused on all planes, then the ritual is fulfilling itself, but not otherwise.

Besides this there is another aspect and that is connected with it, that Christ becomes the resurrection and the life actually to those who partake of him. When we really understand the meaning of the “blood of Christ” we are dealing with the blood of life and the blood of resurrection. Therefore in Sufism every effort is made to awaken the inner spirit. By the awakening of the inner spirit there is the true communion.

GATHA: The lives of all the great saints show that not only their adversaries and opponents but also their near and dear friends have proved to be among their worst enemies. There is a creature which loves its mate so much that it eats it.

TASAWWUF: We find this among the Arachnids and also the Mantis. Spiders and scorpions only love in a strange sense, or perhaps it is that appetite itself grows out of love. And so they have a strange, to us, form of communion in their marriage.

But this is also true among people, and especially those known as sadists and masochists, that they have to have a strange kind of satisfaction which does not come from equality, but from the desire to possess or be possessed by the beloved.

In *Gayan* it states that one’s greatest enemies are often those near and dear to one, but the greatest enemy of all is one’s own self. We find this, especially in times of problems, that those close at hand have their own problems and they expect help from the teacher and it is proper that they so expect. But at the same time this becomes a burden, and some teachers find the spiritual life one of continual crucifixion.

When we study the Scriptures we find that Peter who had been so close to Jesus Christ, in the time of trial was not so faithful. And Buddha’s own kin caused him much anguish. And Mohammed in his day had to stand against every kind of struggle in which some of his kin fought against him and some did not take sides.

It is of little value to look back and condemn those who did not prove true. If one does that he or she also will be tried by life and this often happens, perhaps always happens. It is not by finding any fault in the previous behaviors but how each one acts and operates in the times of their own trials, or in the trials of those near and dear, and most of all in their relations with their teacher.

GATHA: Now as to the question: what it is that Christ speaks of as His flesh and blood. His flesh is the knowledge of God and His blood is the love of God; because it is love that has a

tendency, so to speak, to excite the circulation, and it is knowledge which has the tendency to strengthen, making man firm, of which flesh is the symbol.

TASAWWUF: The Hebrew word which became known as “flesh” originally meant the universal vehicle of life, or we might say, plasm. In plasm, spirit manifests through form, the form being the result of the hardening of spirit. The knowledge man has is that of names and forms, and this comes mostly in a state of sobriety.

In ecstasy one finds the spirit of God and this is the drinking of blood. In sobriety one finds God in form, and thus the eating of flesh. It is both in the Purusha (personality) and Prakriti (form) that God manifests; He is the seen and unseen, the known and unknown, in all forms and behind all forms. This is offered as prayer and becomes therefrom meditation, and from this meditation the realization.

GATHA: One thing without the other would be abnormal. For instance flesh without blood, or blood without flesh, both are not normal conditions. What gives normal health to the body and to the soul is flesh and blood both.

TASAWWUF: Therefore both ecstasy and sobriety can be of value in the spiritual life. They meet in exaltation. Ecstasy without exaltation means that one is seeking a state of drunkenness for its own sake. But sobriety, while maintaining balance, does not of itself usually bring progress, excepting through pain and hardship.

There is a balance between ecstasy and sobriety which enables man to face life with all its hardships and all its glories and by that to see God in all things.

We pray to have sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls, and at the same time use the very techniques which make this possible. The breath is the channel to heaven from earth and also from earth to heaven as was symbolized in Jacob’s ladder. The path of spiritual development is a path also of breath development; breath development brings us closer to God and propinquity to God develops the breath. There is no end to this development.

GATHA: In the religious custom of the sacrament of bread and wine this secret is symbolically expressed.

TASAWWUF: It was a very ancient ritual to have forms of sacraments and communion. In some religions the devotees were said to have “eaten their god.” A sacrament itself indicates that there is a depository of Baraka, or blessings, either in the ritual or in the elements or both. And this custom brought people nearer to their god and also nearer to each other. It was much more satisfactory than the use of aphorisms or phrases which people are prone to repeat instead of transforming themselves or being transformed.

In some aspects of Christian ritual it is said that the elements are transformed, but the real value comes when the devotee is transformed, when he is reborn, when he experiences new life, new vitality, and when he can get rid of what some have said is the “old Adam.” Offered as a ritual it can nonetheless become a truth, when it is experienced.

Sir James Frazier, one of the fathers of modern Anthropology, has detailed this in “The spirits of Corn and Wine” and other sections of his monumental *The Golden Bough*. By this one can see that the basic symbology is very ancient and has been used by different peoples but always toward the same end of spiritual transformation and development.

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Gatha with Commentary Series II: Number 2

### **Customs of Courtesy (Formerly “The Glance”)**

GATHA: There was a custom in the old aristocratic times, which is observed even now in the East, and somewhat in the Western part of the world, of taking steps backward when leaving someone who was respected. It was not only a custom but it had a psychological point of view. When two people are talking to one another, facing each other, a current of sympathy is established which chiefly runs through the breath and through the glance, and, necessarily, one of the two is expressive, the other receptive. When their backs are turned that current is broken, and the idea of the people of old was to retain that current, which they thought was valuable, as long as possible.

TASAWWUF: We have to consider here many factors. According to all the Scriptures, but very seldom in the exoteric religions, man has three bodies, three vehicles. They may be called physical, subtle, and causal or spiritual. The names do not matter so much; the teachings do matter, but the substitution of ego-salvation for divine worship has degraded and even desecrated all faiths.

According to the Sufi teachings it is the soul that sees and it uses the various vehicles or bodies. Each of these has different ranges of magnetism and these magnetisms contain properties and qualities which cannot always be verbalized or even expressed in thought. But all can be felt.

Part of the work of the Message is to restore the Psychic Sciences which include various aspects of magnetisms, the properties involved, their effectiveness and importance. But the chief element here is not the psychic sciences per se, or the magnetisms, but the development and use of *Kashf*, insight, which makes them objectively effective and valuable in peoples' lives.

When people meet *au face*, to use the French term, there is not only thought and speech but feeling expressed and this can be noted by the eyes. And when there is an expressive and a responsive person, or expressive and responsive groups, all the different currents come into play. Therefore very often people sit down to tea together and perhaps several times before establishing either personal or business relationships. By that time their vibrations have been acquainted and once there is this vibrational exchange, then social, commercial or personal affairs can run more smoothly.

Once the commentator had been taken to the Royal Cemetery in Japan. He was told that no non-Asian had ever been brought there and only one Asian and that Asian was not very respectful. They went to the tomb of the former Emperor and made obeisance. Then all the Japanese disappeared.

The commentator was a disciple in Sufism. He had been trained by both Hazrat Inayat Khan and Ruth St. Denis to employ Insight to read from the ethers, so to speak. To many the terms “Ether” or Akash are transcendental, but non-conscious. But to the mystic, they are very conscious. And as is taught in “Cosmic Language” one learns to read effectively from the “space” and all vibrations.

So being alone, the commentator stood before the shrine of the Empress, bowed; meditated; walked forward until some 30 paces from the tomb; bowed, meditated, bowed again, and walked backward

facing the tomb until at the original place, bowed again, meditated, and gave a final bow and waited. Then the three Japanese came forward from their hiding places and told him they had been watching him and he had done what was absolutely correct. So he was taken in turn to the Stupa for Lord Buddha on the mountain; to an esoteric Shingi-Ghiongon temple; to the top of the mountain where some pictures were taken; and later was a guest of honor at the Imperial Gardens in Tokyo, an honor never before bestowed on a simple person, or on non-Asians excepting of the highest grades.

Actually the same thing had happened before when he met Roshi Sogen Asahina at the Engaku-ji in Kamakura, a most famous Zen temple. The two just glanced at each other and became one—or nothing or transcendent. This has happened many times to and with mystics, but is seldom an experience of metaphysical book-writers who may become famous and wealthy, but who do not bestow understanding on themselves or on the human race.

Darshan is an extension of this practiced by many spiritual teachers. It has been used effectively and not effectively since the time of Lord Buddha. It was fundamental to the life and work of the Buddha, but the secret has been lost. For with all the philosophical teachings of anatta, selflessness, the selfhood persists in fact, even when philosophically denied.

The Sufis have a practice of Tawajjeh wherein the teacher uses the glance very deliberately to help the disciple. This is less ritualistic and more personal than the Darshan. When Hazrat Inayat Khan applied it to the commentator, it had such a dramatic effect that no one would believe it. More than forty years have passed and there is the same vitality, the same magnetism which was imparted by the first Pir-o-Murshid in the West, which proves its effectiveness and also demonstrates the hollowness of ego claims to the contrary.

GATHA: There was another custom of courtesy of the ancients which still exists in certain places, that in order to show respect to someone they bent their knees.

TASAWWUF: The Hebrew prayer book still states that to God every head must bow and knee must bend. But when we go to various parts of the world either the practice is discontinued or it has become so ritualistic as to lose its effectiveness.

One of the most effective factors in the Islamic religion comes from the Islamic practice of Sajda, in which every head must bow and knee must bend. This is a most effective psychic way of promoting first humility and then selflessness. Holding the head down causes one to become humble whether one says it or not. And bending the knee and placing the forehead on the ground promotes selflessness by itself. And when effective words are added this helps the devotee to self-effacement.

GATHA: This had a psychological reason: that every influence of love, affection, or sympathy, benediction, or blessing, is poured through the glance, through the breath, and through words, and if the receiver was taller than the bestower, the influence would go into the ground instead of touching the person.

TASAWWUF: There in the Hindu rituals no one was permitted to sit but below the teacher. Once a Hindu musician came to San Francisco. A Sufi wished to see him, but he declared he was too busy. When the interview was granted, the Sufi said: "You have lost all your money and your prestige. So I am going to be your Guru and sit above you. You have no choice." The Hindu musician, the very famous Dilip Kumar-Roy not only assented but accepted all the suggestions. Within a short time he

recovered his prestige and more money than he had lost. He returned to India and became a saint. He is a great master of psychic influences through music and the atmosphere. Great intellectual people then came and sat at his feet. And later the Sufi also sat at his feet in India.

It is not enough to say that the eyes are the windows of the soul; anyone can say that. But the wise know how to use the eyes as the instruments of the soul itself to pour out all the energy and magnetism and thus actually communicate love, affection, sympathy, or blessing. These are all part of the Sufi's equipment, and not symbolically only, but actually and effectively. So if the teacher sees the need of the disciple or anyone, by this means he can communicate the answer for the needs. It is like a ritual and it is much more than a ritual.

GATHA: Especially the influence of the glance, which surrounds one with sympathy and good wishes, has, mostly, a downward direction, and it is naturally so with the breath also.

TASAWWUF: The water element, and especially the water element combined with the etheric element, moves downward but with the finer vibrations, and also with the finer emotions, especially when heart-concentration is practiced. The mystic who is full of heart naturally sends the divine light out to others according first to his own capacity to be positive and then according to the capacity of others to receive.

The Divine Light which pours from the soul has all the virtues of the Sifat-i-Allah. Thus the teacher by his kindly glance can awaken in the disciple any of the desired attributes and this is most effectively done with silent communion.

GATHA: In the salutation made by putting one knee on the ground, the knee resting on the ground expresses readiness to receive the command and the knee that is up is ready to go forward to carry it out.

TASAWWUF: This was also a part of heraldry and chivalry in the West. There is a tradition also that it was brought to the West by Arabs who were under Sufic influences. But there are natural psychic laws as well as physical laws. And when a feeling is uppermost also the body will act that way. It cannot be otherwise. Nevertheless, as mankind again studies the psychic laws, he may begin anew to act as some peoples of former times did. And the absence of such behavior, often in the name of democracy, simply lowers both psychic and moral standards.

GATHA: But besides their psychological influences, different manners of courtesy have been the outcome of human progress in the direction of refinement. And yet progress in every direction is like a wave in the sea—it rises and falls. So it is with manners.

TASAWWUF: This whole subject of manners is given considerable study in "Gathas III" on Saluk. This, in turn, has been based on Arabic and Sufic manners not too different from chivalry. But the main thing to learn is both human consideration on the one hand and the effectiveness of one's own insight on the other, when this heart is able to come to the surface and function on and from the surface.

There was an early novel by the British writer (who lived so long in India) Flora Annie Steel, called *King Errant*. It is about the Emperor Babar who established the Moghul dynasty. He was a highly

moral man and became a great devotee and a deep disciple in Sufism. His life exemplifies the relation between customs, sincerity, devotion, and success. They may all come together.

GATHA: This seems to be the time when the wave is coming back. However, doing a thing is one thing, and understanding it is another thing. Whether one does a certain thing or does not do it, that is another question, but in the understanding of all things lies the purpose of life.

TASAWWUF: One finds in the practices of many religions the bending of head and bowing of knee; also the use of the glance. And when the Soto School of Zen began to establish itself in the West it also felt it was necessary to rely on ceremonies, although we usually regard Zen as something quite different. And when the ceremonies were established they closely followed the psychic laws, and the movements might have brought about the same effectiveness had there also been the understanding.

It is not necessary to change anything. But it is important to awaken understanding. And it is the teacher by his effective glance, who also may awaken understanding in pupils and the generality.

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Series II: Number 3

### **Customs of the Marriage Ceremony**

GATHA: India, the land of mysticism and philosophy, has symbolism in all its customs. Even in the marriage ceremony everything that is done as a custom or rite is symbolical.

TASAWWUF: There is a certain truth in the Kabbalistic interpretations of Pardes, or four degrees: literal, analogic, symbolical, and esoteric or mystical. Since the middle of the nineteenth century with a revival of interest in esoteric and occult matters there has been much stress on symbolism and very often it is confused with the mystical. The difference is that the mystical is the direct experience of human kind, while the symbolical reflects this in the daily life, particularly of those who have not had the deep experience.

The rise of a deep interpretation, or the revival of an ancient method by Sri Aurobindo, has placed more stress on the psychic than on the deep mystical. This is helpful to a point; beyond that it is not helpful because it does not reach the highest grades of potential experience and interpretation.

GATHA: Both bride and bridegroom wear on their hand a pearl-embroidered heart.

TASAWWUF: Although other faiths look down on Hinduism or Dharma as it may be called, there are two important points here: (a) the equality of the souls of men and women; (b) the emphasis on heart rather than on property adjustments to establish marriage. The great mistake, not to say sin, of Western religions, is that while verbalizing that marriages are made in heaven, they are too often earthly contracts, presumably sanctified by a religious ceremony but they are earthly contracts nonetheless. The true marriage must be the binding of hearts, not of properties.

GATHA: They wear saffron-colored garments for the ten days that the wedding ceremony lasts.

TASAWWUF: The interpretation of saffron is given below. A ceremony of ten days must be more effective than a rapid religious or non-religious ceremony of a few short minutes or even a few hours. Besides there is too much gaiety which is not in the least connected with the place of the soul, or even of the spirit in marriage. So we are facing fundamental changes in this respect, changes which are bringing East and West closer together.

GATHA: They are anointed during the wedding ceremony on their heads, shoulders, elbows and chins, and on their knees and feet. The bridegroom has a sword in his hand during all those ten days.

TASAWWUF: The meaning of the sword is offered below. The importance of the anointing is given in other lessons. It has both a symbolical and actual meaning. Symbolically it stands for softening but actually it is used by masseurs and others of like profession to rid the body of tension and so it also affects the mind by assisting toward easiness.

GATHA: On the last day of the wedding both the bride and bridegroom are veiled with a low-flowing veil made of jasmine flowers and trimmed with roses, and after the conclusion of the marriage ceremony they are unveiled.

TASAWWUF: The subject of the veiling and Purdah is discussed elsewhere in the Gathas in Series I, and in other places. Besides, it is better that both bride and groom do not concern themselves with other persons or extraneous matters during the ceremony. This is an aid to concentration.

GATHA: Now the meaning of this veil of flowers is that a new phase of life begins for them. They are no more the same as before; new responsibilities, new hopes, and a new life they have to begin.

TASAWWUF: This is also explained as part of the ceremony and the atmosphere is such that often it becomes very binding, not by compulsion but because of the very atmosphere. And although no doubt it is highly emotional, it points in the direction where both bride and groom should go.

Flowers play a great part in the ceremonies of India, not only of the Hindus but of the Muslims and Sikhs.

GATHA: The meaning of the sword in the bridegroom's hand is that the bridegroom shall uphold the honour and dignity of his family, of his wife, that he shall stand in arms to defend the honour and dignity that the union of bride and bridegroom has completed. And the heart on the hand denotes that both of them shall let their action be directed by their heart.

TASAWWUF: This stress on inner rather than upon outer considerations, along with the Hindu idea that we live in an eternity, helps to bind bride and groom together. No doubt it is a test but also when we consider that there usually is a check to see compatibility through horoscope-casting and other devices, often two persons who have been complete strangers are drawn together by psychic and super-physical factors, as well as social and other signs of compatibility.

There may be a question, why is consideration given to Indian marriage customs and not to others. There can be consideration given to others and the studies in Anthropology are to be encouraged. For Allah has created all sorts of people and given them freedom to adopt many customs. And many of these customs are also based on conscious or unconscious adaptations of psychic law.

But it must be understood, especially when the marriage vows are either disregarded or have no ultimate sanctity, or are disregarded because they have no ultimate sanctity, that we must look for the best in all peoples. There are many rocks, many minerals and man adopts from each those things which are most valuable to him in one or more respects. And when the world becomes truly scientific, it will also adopt from the customs of various people those elements which are most valuable both for the social life and for the ongoing existence.

Marriage rites have been introduced also into the Universal Worship. It is possible that some day these may become more prevalent. But the establishment of another, and so divisive, institution is not necessarily helpful. Still there will also be a turn toward spirituality, and we can deeply study Rasa Shastra and other works to take life seriously.

So much attention has been paid to diet. Dietetics is gradually becoming a science, a true science. Efforts are being made in the same directions by psychologists. But the sex-life which involves the etheric element (akasha) is not so well known or studied. Although there are many references to it in the Tibetan literature, this part of their teachings has been largely overlooked. When man studies the Akasha and its relation both to the worldly and cosmical existence, there will be a turn in a right direction, the direction of the promotion of life itself.

The true battle is always against the perturbations of ego. It is easy to discern external enemies and it is right to discern external enemies. But the sword must be used against lust, malice and anger, as well as against external enemies.

As to heart, that is most important. Both before and after marriage mystics encourage joint meditations and concentrations on, with, and through heart. This can be on the heart alone or on the complete Sufi symbol. If there is any sign of confusion or uncertainty the devout concentrations will help—both the devotion and the symbol are most valuable in concentration.

GATHA: The anointing means that the hands and feet and head of either shall be ready to serve the other when occasion arises, that they shall not be stiff at any time when their service is called for.

TASAWWUF: In general the Asian peoples take these things more seriously than the western people. In the western marriage too often simply the bride and groom are concerned; in the East, the families, and the clans, much of society is concerned or chooses to be concerned. So the young people, often unacquainted with each other, are given long instructions—there is no rushing into marriage—and in this instruction they are expected to learn many customs, some social, others religious and spiritual, and often the social at least partly religious and spiritual.

The use of oil and unguents to keep the body soft is also being adopted in the West and by those concerned either with beauty or health. And consciously or unconsciously customs are being adopted. And some day the whole world will know more of the values of oils and unguents. This was introduced into the Gathas as a means of teaching Western people what they needed to know.

GATHA: Saffron color, in the East, is considered to be the color of all sorts of good luck. It is the imperial sign. Love letters are written in saffron color. The invitations for the wedding are written in this color, for this color represents light.

TASAWWUF: It is also, more or less, used for robes of holy men, and adapted for symbolical purposes in rituals. No doubt there have been slight changes from religion to religion and group to group. Some of these ideas are presented in the study of the Sun as symbol.

It is not necessary to go to extremes. There are those who talk about the purity of this color or that; all colors are pure, and each has some internal and external significance. But we must not be led away by this. Still there is the color adopted as for light and this is to be continued.

GATHA: Light in heaven and gold on earth, both are yellow. Therefore yellow is preferred to all other colours to become the omen on some good occasion in life.

TASAWWUF: Many clairvoyant people see this and have highly evaluated the golden or yellow auras above all else. This also appears in the name and word, Zardusht. There is no question but that this Messenger of God emitted that color so that people could both see and feel it.

There was once a remarkable clairvoyant who came to San Francisco to explain auras and their light and color, and the significance thereof. A number of socially prominent people came, all expectant. And not a single one had a brilliant color. When they remonstrated, the clairvoyant said, "Not only do I see what I see but I shall be telling you what you have been doing. You do not hide from me, you do not hide from God; You merely hide from those who have the incapacity to see."

It was very fortunate she did not tell about those who had the brilliant colors or the Yellow or Golden light. The audience would not have understood it. This audience is the type that has been running from one teacher to another incessantly and is never satisfied. They seek miracles, not awakening.

No doubt also yellow can be adopted as a background and wall coloring and covering for those needing mental help, especially in the way of encouragement. It is, in a sense, the Sattvic color.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 4

### **The Horse**

GATHA: The horse has been considered a lucky animal in all ages, for the horse represents energy, strength, activity, and life.

TASAWWUF: All the higher animals exemplify the movement toward the incarnation of one or more of the Divine Attributes (Sifat-i-Allah) in the material world (Sifat). We do not find many of such attributes in any particular beast. But we find one or more somewhere, exemplifying the truth (Haqq) of the universe. And we can study the animals to ascertain how these Attributes do function.

The Swedish mystic, Emanuel Swedenborgh wrote *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* in which some consideration is given for the purpose of each creature. Unfortunately here as elsewhere more concern has been given to the individual and less to his teachings so that whatever wisdom, be it human, be it divine, has come into the world, it becomes lost. And one can write endlessly about the perturbations of nufs, the ego, and this will not be clearly understood until we become aware that all movements toward individualization and making persons rather than teachings prominent, only keep the world back from progressing toward the light.

We can find in the studies of Astrology and Symbology the roles of animals in occult sciences. And in ancient India the most important ritual was the Horse Sacrifice. There is both an esoteric and exoteric evaluation of it.

GATHA: The horse was conspicuous in Greek art, as also in the art of the ancient Persians. In the courts of Eastern kings in the East there used to be **Chama**, fans made of horse hair; and the horse's head was used as a decorative emblem in the palaces, and before every entertainment something was spoken about the horse first. The comedians of India have that custom still existing: the first item of their program is an imitation of a horse.

TASAWWUF: We find the same thing in the West and the phrase, "My kingdom for a horse" from one of Shakespeare's immortal plays, has entered into the English language. The writer of Gulliver also used the horse to illustrate his wisest teachings.

The horse has become the most beloved of all animals, and in the desert dwellers, such as the Mongols and Arabs, the horse is both most beloved and also much used in their respective economies. Also there are many references to the horse in the teachings, to illustrate aspects of the divine wisdom.

GATHA: The story of a horse is always interesting. A sportsman and a thinker, who differ so much in their likes, unite in the admiration of the horse. The Prophet Mohammed admired the horse as one of the objects worth attaining in life.

TASAWWUF: The horse has been used as a symbol of fire, of spirit and of the Jelalic characteristics. In other respects it has some jinn-like qualities.

The horse has in many ways been regarded as man's best friend—not the merely verbal references to the dog—but there are many stories and historical references. There is that of Alexander and Bucephalus; of Rama; and in so many epics. And in China the horse has been depicted in sculpture and in pottery more than any other animal.

GATHA: The most interesting part of the Ramayana is where Lahu, the son of Rama, goes in pursuit of Kalanki, the ideal horse. In the sacred book of the Hindus, Mahabharata, it is Krishna who is the charioteer of Arjuna. Hasan and Husein, the great martyrs of Islam, whose day has been celebrated year after year for ages, are presented with their beautiful horses called Duldul.

TASAWWUF: The story of Lahu is presented in the literature also. Lahu failed to catch the horse from behind but he met it from the front and was successful. Indeed that is the way in which many problems in life are controlled, by meeting them face to face. Also in this way we control temper and many obstacles; also happiness is ours until we pursue it and then it seems to fade away.

The charioteer in many respects represents the person who has control of his own animal nature. He is called in the "Gita," master of great care. But it really means one who can control his impulses and lower nature.

GATHA: The horse is the symbol of the mind. When the mind is under control it is like a horse broken in, when it cannot be controlled it is like a restive horse, when the rein is not well in the rider's hand it is like a wild horse roaming in the wilderness.

TASAWWUF: We find among the Greeks the horse as a sacred symbol and there was some question whether it was under the control of Pallas Athene who represents mind, especially mind in its higher aspects, or Poseidon. Whatever his place in mythology and in mythological religion Poseidon means "lord of form" and also the Lord of the Universe. And in this respect the horse, as mind, must become subject to him.

The Greeks also used the horse in many of their legends. The steed Bellerophon—which means master of light and sound—rode upon Pegasus, the winged horse, to slay the Chimaera, a monster really symbolizing nufs, the ego. Jesus Christ is pictured riding an ass rather than a horse, but here again it means being master of the lower nature, the animal side of existence.

The story of "The Thief of Baghdad" by the Afghan, Achmed Abdullah, also used the horse, as a flying steed, to enable man to climb to the heavens. This is really a variation of Burrak who carried Mohammed into the higher realms.

GATHA: Then the horse is the symbol of life, representing its energy, activity and beauty.

TASAWWUF: These are three aspects of existence. Here it means that the symbol covers the Jelalic, Kemalic, and Jemalic aspects of existence.

GATHA: The horse, with its strength and activity, is harmless, useful, intelligent, has feeling, and is different than the donkey.

TASAWWUF: We can see the horse as symbol and we can also use it in concentration to awaken the similar qualities which may be embedded in human nature. But if the horse is so used, one may say will this not lead to idolatry? No, because the horse is not divinized, it is always pictured as representing the best in the lower creation, and even as the Centaur, it is not a creature of worship at all.

GATHA: The horse is the comrade in war, and is the dignity of great warriors.

TASAWWUF: The word “chivalry” as also the term “cavalier” meant one who rode on horseback. It was the source of many customs, and especially of courtesy and some forms of morality. The one who rode on a horse was not only accepted as a superior person, but he was expected to adopt the characteristics of a superior person. And we can see this from the first great Moghul Emperor Babar, and in customs extending to the west of Europe. And this behavior pattern became the basis for much that is in poetry, song and literature, all stemming from the same general source.

GATHA: The unity that is established sometimes between the soul of the rider and the spirit of the horse is most wonderful.

TASAWWUF: Anyone who has ridden much on horses can understand this. After a time it becomes possible to communicate and commune. Sometimes even the touch of a stirrup or reins may be more than necessary and after that one can come to a stage where a sort of telepathy is in operation and that suffices to direct the horse, if the rider will; or also to let the horse direct the rider if he is lost.

There have been stories such as that of the Elberfeld Horses who seem to have developed deep telepathy or logic, showing innate but unrecognized abilities. This is a subject for further scientific consideration.

GATHA: The horseshoe is considered lucky in all countries, for it reminds one of the horse, and conveys the impression of the horse’s vigor, activity, life, and beauty.

TASAWWUF: There are two magnetisms that get into such a shoe; one is the magnetism of the metal and the other the more vital living magnetism from the horse. They are both in the shoe.

When shod the horse does not touch the ground directly, his shoe touches the ground and also gets the magnetism of earth.

There are many stories about horseshoes also which are found in folk-lore; while interesting and entertaining they belong rather to the studies of myths and legends.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 5

### **Oracles Among the Ancient Greeks**

GATHA: In ancient Greece often questions were asked of an oracle, which were answered by a woman, who sometimes gave a plain answer and sometimes one the meaning of which was veiled. It was the same thing that today is called a spiritualistic séance, a mediumistic answer, the interest of which is alive in all ages though in different forms. Among all the occult and mystical interests the interest in the medium has a very great attraction for the average mind.

TASAWWUF: The oracle is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and also there is a Jewish prayer, rather ignored, praying for the return of the Oracle. The oracle has been mostly a woman because women are more receptive than men, and even in modern times a number of women have become famous as professional oracles although no doubt their proficiency is not great.

There are generally two unwholesome attitudes to be found. One is the skeptical type. These people refuse to believe and they are also hunting for fraud and anything they do not accept is called fraud. And yet there are scientists who have investigated, very proficient men in laboratory techniques and they believe there is some evidence for the spiritualistic phenomena.

And there is an opposite type that accepts because it wants to accept; or as it is said, "the wish is father of the thought." And while sometimes they do encounter phenomena there is the tendency to exaggerate, and also to ascribe more prowess to certain personalities with or without objective proofs.

If we pass to studies in Anthropology we find that there are all kinds of presumable mediums in different parts of the world. And no doubt they do see and hear what the average person does not see and hear. But what are the limits to sight and hearing? How much have they been measured? And what about different kinds of light of which science is becoming more and more aware? How much do these reach the sensorium of man?

There is no doubt that there is a state of trance in which both the consciousness and senses are lowered, but being lowered they can see what is not so evident to the ordinary man.

GATHA: A woman was often chosen for this work, on account of a woman's sensitiveness, which always exceeds that of man, and this is the secret of intuition in human nature.

TASAWWUF: Intuition, of course, goes much deeper than psychic perception, for it may come from the whole feeling and not from a partial sight. We speak of "speaking the word that is put into the mouth as the light filleth the crescent moon." Even among esotericists this has not always been taken literally and seriously. But there is no doubt man has many functions and also part of the work of the Sufi training and discipline is to reawaken these hidden functions.

The Oracle was retained in the Hebrew temples and the first holy women of Christianity were temple oracles, pure souls whose inner sight did not diminish. And some of the items in the Christian Protoevangelion, especially concerning Saint Mary, have a truth in them. But so long as mankind wishes to limit prowess to a few, faculties which could be developed and used remain dormant. So part of the work of the New Age is to reawaken these faculties and use them for the benefit of humanity.

Even in Japan an Oracle was used for a long time but as in ancient Greece, the political interventions and intrigues degraded it all into a ritual and often a base and useless ritual. The problem then becomes how can we restore the Oracle, as the Jewish prayer says, and this can be done.

GATHA: Especially a celibate woman was chosen for this purpose, as in her is to be found more susceptibility to intuition.

TASAWWUF: When there is any indulgence in sexual activity there is interference with the free flow of Akasha, the etheric element, out of which all the other elements come and which is also the vehicle for the universal light, however diffused. Functioning with this element takes one beyond some of the limitations of the time-space scope. But to preserve susceptibility and function one must also keep the etheric element, not use it at all.

The ether also facilitates fine breathing and fine breath stimulates finer sight, hearing and insight. And as womankind is more under the lunar influences, if there is sincerity and adherence then the sight and insight become practical and easy functions. And when such young women are trained, whenever a question is put to them they can answer easily even without going into a trance. But going into the trance protects them from the material influences.

The Frenchman, Fabre D'Olivet, made a deep study of this, particularly in his *Hermeneutic Interpretation of the Social State of Man*. He explained the metaphysical differences between man and woman, and also showed how this influenced society in its beginnings and in its later development.

The intuitive faculty is nature. If young children were to be trained in its use, it would open the door to higher development and to the blessings (Baraka) which God has bestowed on humankind.

GATHA: The question was supposed to be asked of a god, a god who was distinguished by a particular attribute, of poetry, of the sun, or any other attribute.

TASAWWUF: Among the ancient Greeks the God Apollo stood for all of these and it was the priestesses of Apollo especially who were trained to function in this manner. The priestesses were training to get into the trance and concentrate on the God. This was a most ancient custom and it was even more highly developed in earlier Egypt. Their gods were like realities to them which could be contacted in other states of consciousness, when the self did not dominate the mental operations.

Oracles were trained under tutelage. All people may become receptive to the Divine Light, and when they have spiritual teachers, they can be given the instructions and learn the esoteric sciences, and with them develop faculties dormant or latent because of prevailing culture.

Every human being may become responsive and especially responsive to the Divine Light. The Hebrew people knew that there was a positive and a negative way. The negative way was by trance and

devoid of devotion. The positive way was also by a sort of trance but in this trance the higher forces were contacted. So it would appear also that in the higher state predictions could be made, either in plain words or in poetic fashion, drawn by the oracles' responsiveness to higher light. This also is discussed in "Cosmic Language" and its commentaries, with the hope that man may regain faculties that were lost or covered by different cultures.

No doubt Christianity has made serious mistakes in blocking responsiveness to cosmic light and the accompanying functions. In his last days the celebrated British philosopher, Aldous Huxley, was recovering the history of those who had finer faculties, usually condemned in their times and sometimes perhaps even rightly condemned. But there is so much to man, and we can only recover all the lost faculties, or develop high ones, by more serious consideration to the omnipresence of the Divine Light and man's innate ability to attune to it.

Rituals also help, and there has been a revival of ritual by many groups, with the best of intentions. Sometimes these rites have been very valuable, but there is also a glamour that has been confusing. Sufis never separate the occult from the devotional, and this also purifies the use of rituals which can be used in both ignorant and selfish manners.

**GATHA:** The secret of all this is that the priests, by their hypnotic power and suggestion, awakened in the woman that particular attribute, of the Spirit within, Who is the possessor of all knowledge, especially that pertaining to the attribute with which He is identified.

**TASAWWUF:** The acceptance of the Unitary God should not blind us to the values in earlier polytheism. There was no harm in accepting each attribute of God as if a separate divine personality. And there are occult sciences like Astrology which grew out of men's experiences, that to them the gods and goddesses were very real and could be contacted. Even in Homer we find that. But before his time the occult sciences and arts were practiced and maintained in Egypt for a long time. And along with them moral codes, rituals, and a devotional spirit which kept the religion pure.

It is possible to restore the Ancient Wisdom by giving children a suitable guidance and teaching them in responsiveness and showing them how to use this responsiveness and impressions to beneficial effect. And if there are signs of clairvoyance or clairaudience or other faculties, by giving a suitable religious instruction, these faculties can be developed without any need for hypnosis, but with the proper use of suggestion.

Another will be needed, and that is the serious regard to the sexual life. It is not a question of restriction but of choice. One cannot both utilize the etheric magnetism and keep it reserved for functions on higher planes, at the same time. A choice has to be made. And when it is seen that the gain is much greater by achieving inner development, there will again be a manifestation of higher faculties.

**GATHA:** God is already in the heart of every person, only to wake Him and make Him rise, He should be called upon.

**TASAWWUF:** We have that in the prayer "Khatum." It cannot be taken too seriously. The subjects of impression and insight have been discussed many places in the literature as well as in the sacred teachings. This is necessary to impress devotees with man's grand possibilities.

But is it not enough to have words. Words by themselves only indicate. There are spiritual exercises, both active and passive, which help man become more awake to his infinite possibilities. We do not any longer have to pray to a god over a particular faculty; we are finding Allah with all the faculties. Or, as Jesus Christ has said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of the heavens and then all else will be found." Because that is the very meaning of the term "heavens," the universe of infinite light, life, and blessings.

GATHA: He then, so to speak, takes birth from the heart of a sensitive woman, whose innermost can easily be touched.

TASAWWUF: All parts of the human body may be responsive to the divine light. Kundalini Yoga gives some idea of it, but this Yoga—if it can be called that—seems more concerned with psychic and nervous centers and thus while responsive to the subtle light are not always so responsive to the spiritual light which is deeper and finer.

The heart and the bloodstream are the ocean within man and not only symbolically, but carry light and are responsive to light as no nervous center alone can be. And once the heart is responsive to the divine light, then the soul becomes awakened. This indeed is the explanation given to the Sufi Symbol. That the heart responsive to the light of God can illuminate the whole world.

Therefore it is possible to take a young virgin, and train her to heart responsiveness. This can be in two directions, inner and outer. In the inner direction, the oracle can be trained to refinement and sensitivity to record all visions and impressions. And under the spiritual guidance can become so responsive to the divine light as to function easily while in the flesh.

There is also another side in the development of the love nature. We have examples with young women in the Roman Catholic Church that sometimes they develop both love and purity and while in that state have the divine visions. But now how to make use of this to help the humanity? This will become the work of the oracles in future times.

GATHA: God has many attributes, He has many ears and many tongues to speak with, and through every form he answers whenever one reaches Him.

TASAWWUF: This has been expressed many times. We can see it among the ancients who had a separate god for anything and everything, and they were right in this. For by devotion and concentration inner faculties did then awaken which later became covered.

Then again we find in "Cosmic Language" and "The Bestowal of Blessing" that every form has a subtle side to it and one can learn that subtle language. The more one listens, so to speak, to impression and inner responses, the more one will find that truth in them which can lead to a greater comprehension of the Divine Wisdom both in the seen and unseen.

GATHA: Spiritualists call Him a spirit, but even through the spirit of an individual, dead or living, when God is called upon, God answers.

TASAWWUF: It becomes no more a matter of philosophy or belief, but of function. One can see the light in everything. There is a transcendental esoteric science called Mushahida and in that one trains oneself to respond to the divine light and wisdom in every aspect of being, within and without.

And in this sense God answers prayers. It is not that one prays or begs, it is that whenever one invokes anything on any plane in any direction, there is immediately a vibrational play and to this play there is a counterplay. It is in this counterplay that there is the answer, although not so easily observed. But it is there.

GATHA: Those who play with spiritualistic séances would give it all up in a moment if only they knew that God always answers whenever He is called upon.

TASAWWUF: In *Gayan* it is said that the question contains the answer. Any impression on the universe brings a counter-impression. This is not only evident in the study of Samskaras, it is part of the universal law. And by skillful practices of meditation and inner looking one will find that the universe is always answering, prayer or not prayer, petition or wish or not petition or wish. The answer is always in the question; then it becomes a matter of how to look. And by concentration upon the Divine Light and Wisdom and responsiveness to it, the doors of holiness are opened.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 6

### **The Greek Mysteries (1)**

GATHA: The little that is known of the Greek mysteries has been very variously interpreted. Some have supposed them to have been a course of agriculture, taught secretly, others a mummery carried on for centuries by the priests. What is known with certainty is the high esteem in which they were held and the strict secrecy which attended them. The word means silence; to be initiated was “to be made silent.”

TASAWWUF: The word “mystery” was derived from a Greek verb “muein” which meant, to be silent, or to close the mouth. The same root came from a more ancient hieroglyphic mu, which meant the mouth, or the closed lips. Our English mute came from the same source.

The lower mysteries were for the entire populace; the greater mysteries for the initiates. In each silence was required. The lower mysteries united all the people who otherwise were free to worship at the temple of any god, but in the mysteries all were united. And besides in the mysteries there were moral instructions which were not always part of popular or ritualistic religion.

In the higher mysteries there were special concentrations and also requirement to enter into trance or ecstatic states. To induce these there were not only magical rites, but also the partaking of certain vegetables which we might now call “psychedelics.” But also grains were used and evidently the ancients had some knowledge of the subtle as well as physical properties which belong to them.

Ancient sciences and arts were taught in a different fashion from those of recent times. People were not so intellectual. They were more impressionable. They were more impressionable, and response to impressions were respected. Sometimes the ritual, sometimes the architecture, sometimes the joining in partaking of foods or feasts effected the subtle side of a person’s consciousness. And often the use of light and darkness also effected the psychic condition of the devotees.

There was also a connection with agriculture. There is no doubt that much of the advance in agriculture may have come through the god-man appearing on earth to instruct in the arts and help in food supplies. No doubt the Egyptian Osiris was of this class.

In the Hebrew traditions mention is made of the Nabatean Agriculture. These people who lived to the south and east of Judea seem to have successfully tamed the desert for some centuries, then suddenly disappeared. It was said they had some inner secrets which made this possible. But in the Sufi mysteries called Ziraat it is the mind which is the “field” and also we find in other teachings the term “field” is used to allude to the whole mind world.

Mysteries have appeared among peoples in many parts of the world. They have in common the element of silence and also esotericism. Also processes like purgation and purification and also attainment or awakening. In the lower mysteries these might be symbolic but in the higher mysteries there had to be some experience, call it “trance,” call it “illumination.” It had to be real.

GATHA: Access to the lesser mysteries was easy. Tens of thousands were initiated. The temples in which the rites were practiced were under the protection of the state. In them were enacted the lives of the gods in whose name the mysteries were celebrated, and great use was made of music.

TASAWWUF: It was not only in Egypt but in other lands that there were such mysteries. Sometimes they seem to have been borrowed, sometimes inspired, and at other times the appearance of great persons led to their establishment. But it was not only in Egypt, it was in many lands, among many peoples, among many cultures all over the world that there have been such institutions and some of them are still extant.

While we may note that among the Greeks especially there have been monuments which attest to the mysteries, if we study closely various languages we can find words which definitely allude to hidden teachings or to the appearances of beings who have been called “gods” among them. And we can find in Sweden, in Ireland and in other lands references to a divine country and even to peoples like the Goths who in some respects correspond to the Brahmans in being especial conveyors of divine institutions.

Eleusis has been especially studied. Yet its mysteries remain mysteries. One reason is that esotericists ignore the simple facts that the word “Eleusis” itself means path or pilgrimage.

The Greeks had four subjects which they related each to the others: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy with Astrology, and Music. There were principles common to each and perhaps to all. Their music had some very sound bases. The mathematics were more logical than that of western contemporary music. And they saw psychological and devotional values, too. We are no doubt here compelled to rely on tradition but there are also aspects of ancient Hellenic music which passed to all Mediterranean and some other peoples too.

Music had charms to effect states and stages of consciousness. It could be used medically and psychologically. It also furnished backgrounds for aspirants and adepts.

GATHA: The mysteries were held to remove the fear of death and to give assurance of the survival of the departed. Those who had been initiated were believed to be happy after death, while others led a dismal life hereafter, clinging to their graves.

TASAWWUF: There may have been some truth in it. No doubt those initiated into the Mysteries and particularly into the Great Mysteries were tested by experience and these experiences enabled the devotees to see beyond the immediacy. When he saw beyond the immediacy of vibrations, of the physical sphere, he became aware of another accommodation and in that accommodation he also, relieved of the denseness of earth, had much greater joy.

We can get some glimpses of this in the traditions, in the literature, and also the great epic poems, such as the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, record the beliefs of the times. And in a sense they had some appreciation of karma, but not always in the full sense as it was known in India.

When we accept immortality, it tends to make us more aware of moral principles and to be also more considerate, one of others. A different attitude is taken concerning the body, and also for all of life, both of this world and of the unseen, which also might be the world to come.

In the Lesser Mysteries much was portrayed by allegory, by ritual and by drama. Some of this was connected with agriculture and also products of farm, field and garden were used, for various purposes. But all stressed immortality, and learned that there was a deeper side to life.

GATHA: The preparatory training for the greater mysteries was very severe. Fasting was undergone, abstinence of all sorts, extremes of heat and cold had to be endured; and the candidates swam through water for days and had to walk through fire.

TASAWWUF: There have been traditions and some records too. Thus, the Frenchman, Gustave Schure has written much, and he may have learned this through his training in occult schools. Unfortunately, the nineteenth century writers stressed such preeminence on the personality of Jesus Christ that much of the ritual and import were lost, being transferred from nature to personality.

Orpheus in his day, and Pythagoras in a later age, passed through the mysteries of Egypt. They strove to revivify and purify them so that they could be applied in the Grecian world (Hellas). Disciples of Pythagoras underwent long silences and kept quiet in the presence of their spiritual superiors. This custom was later revived in some of the Sufi schools. Devotees submitted to these disciplines in order that the mind be purified, becoming more receptive to impressions. Also, by these means, disciples learned to become masters of their lower natures.

Neophytes faced initiations of all the elements, ritually or symbolically. Sometimes in the rituals they had to face the elements themselves—earth, water, fire and air. In the Egyptian initiation the aspirant had to crawl on his hands and knees in the darkness; then he faced the tests of water, fire and air. And later his moral nature had to submit also.

Moses was an initiate of the Egyptian mysteries as well as an adept among the Hindus. His name, “water-born” is symbolic of the spirit. His whole life is really expressive of the trials and triumphs of the initiate. It can be said that on Mount Sinai, which means mount of the moon, he received the tablets of the outer law. And on Mount Nebo, he became the Nabi or Prophet. He reached the highest rank of prophethood.

The Beni Israel exemplify a whole nation of people who had to submit to initiatory tests. Egypt means land of darkness; in other words, samsara. And the movements of these people “Bar-Midbar,” through the desert, is also symbolic of the initiatory tests. Finally they crossed the sacred river, the Jordan, and entered into the Land of Promise.

All humanity consciously or unconsciously passes through such stages. The mysteries brought with them the lessons of the on-going life, to bring to human realization that we live in much more than the herenow, the physical, material life. This outlook has been covered—covered but not lost, and is again breaking out into the clear.

GATHA: The training often lasted many years.

TASAWWUF: There are many mentions of a forty-year cycle. The sojourn of the Beni Israel was for this length. But they moved in a circle, which is symbolic. They did not take a direct path from Egypt to Palestine, a path which might have been geographically easy. And their tests, in facing enemies such as the Amelikites, is also symbolic of the struggle between the lower and higher natures. Indeed Moses may have gotten these teachings from the Hindus who had the Mahabharata traditions,

“Therefore fight, O Arjuna.” Murder and warfare are not to be taken literally; they symbolize the struggles in the inner life of man, especially of the devotee.

The Pythagoreans, and much later the Mevlevis, required disciples to maintain silence for a certain number of nights and added servitude to that. In this way the neophyte could adjust to the atmospheres of the older disciples and also to the sanctuaries. This period of probation is not always fixed, but there are also cyclic principles taught in Esotericism (Ryazat).

GATHA: After initiation, in the beginning all was darkness, dread and dismay; then a marvelous light was seen and shining forms came to meet the initiate. The initiate experienced while on earth the state of the soul dissociated from the body.

TASAWWUF: This was particularly true of the rites of Egypt. In ancient times this land was divided into Khem, which means internal darkness with heat; and Khebt (from which the term “Egypt” is derived) which means white light. The former was the abode of the ignorant, samsara; the latter of the initiate. The Greek mysteries adopted the same general ideas. They were often celebrated in caves and underground passages. In this way the participants were properly impressed.

The Egyptian literature has preserved some of the knowledge but in the hands of non-initiates it is often quite confusing. What is called “The Book of the Dead” should more properly be called “The Book of Release.”

GATHA: A Greek writer says: “Here all instruction ceases, one beholds the nature of things.”

TASAWWUF: We can read some in Lucius and Plutarch. But *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius has really given some insight into transformations. It is not the instruction, the ritual, it is the methods that were used to give each aspirant an opportunity to enter into another state of consciousness and in that state experience joy or even contact what have been called “the immortal gods.”

We have something like that also in Sufism. The teacher may use Dawk (silent instruction) or Tawajjeh (the glance). And through attunement or Grace the pupil benefits even to entering deeper stages of enlightenment and thus having direct experience.

GATHA: Apuleius, who had received all the initiations of the mysteries, says, “I went to the boundary between life and death, I passed through the four elements.”

TASAWWUF: Yes, the tests of water and earth, fire and air still continue. Not only in the schools of magic and occultism, but in all mystical growth there are transformations, there are experiences. And one obtains mastery either deliberately or through Grace. Eliphas Levi (Bejaim/Constant) has left much literature from the standpoint of ceremonial magic. It has not been given much consideration. It does not lead to God-consciousness, but it can make man aware of the glories and wonders of the universe and of his own potentialities.

There were induced “trances” by which one passed into states of consciousness, above or below normal. There were also certain vegetative products used, symbolically or actually, to induce increased awareness. And thus discovering that there were unseen worlds, one lost the fear of death. Even the Greek term “Hades” means the unseen or unknown, as well as having other interpretations.

GATHA: "I stood on the threshold of Proserpina."

TASAWWUF: Proserpina, more properly Persephone, was the daughter of Zeus, the Sky-father, and Ceres or Demeter, the earth-mother or Prakriti. Her name indicates she was the vehicle of sound. Her life was divided between the worlds above and below. The search of Ceres-Demeter for Proserpine-Persephone is a reverse symbolism of the search of the soul for its true habitat.

In general the mysteries of the Mediterranean were those of one for life's renewal. This comes in Spring in the seasons, but the real quest is for the spiritual rebirth.

GATHA: "At the time of deepest midnight I saw the sun shine in the brightest splendour."

TASAWWUF: The mysteries were held at night. It was literally true that there was a representation of the sun or great light. This shines out in the midst of deep darkness. This symbolizes, no doubt, the indwelling light which is in all of us. But in the Greater Mysteries, one had to have the direct experience; one entered into a state of consciousness when the perception of light was facilitated, and often became an actuality. We all have this indwelling light.

GATHA: "I saw the greater and the lesser gods and revered them near at hand." The initiate was said to be received, while living on earth, among the immortal gods, and made as one of them.

TASAWWUF: We utilize symbolism. We can pass through symbolism to actuality. In the Christian mysteries it was taught, "The last enemy to be overcome is death." But it also might be said that the great enemy to be overcome is fear, and this takes on its most outstanding form in the fear-of-death. All the remonstrations against this will not avail. The direct facing of actuality enables man to surmount the shortcomings of his own being. Therefore in the Egyptian mysteries it was taught, "You have nothing to fear but yourself."

In the Ziraat, or Agricultural ceremonies, the Sufis have restored or preserved a form of the mysteries. These may be given to the world again in the proper time, so that man on the negative side will lose fear of death; and on the positive side have greater experiences into joy and exaltation.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 7

### **The Greek Mysteries (2)**

GATHA: This was really a Sufi institution, though not called by this name, for exactly the same thing is to be found today in the schools of Sufis in India and Persia.

TASAWWUF: The mysteries of God were introduced to the earth with Adam, for Allah has made man in His image and likeness, and in man is found the Divine Light. It is mostly hidden, but even among savage peoples (as they are known) there are signs of mysteries. These are found all over the world in peoples of all grades of evolution.

Sufism has also been called "The Inner School." It has existed in various ways at various times and in various places. The fiction writer, Talbot Mundy, has included a good deal of tradition in his stories, in particular of the Tros cycle, but in nearly all his works there are traces of something deep. But in ancient times there was no term "Sufi." There were references to mysteries and mystics and both of these words come from a symbol of the lips closed and sometimes a finger over them signifying silence.

This silence was of various kinds but always of such a nature that man became less conscious of his material surroundings and even of his thought. Then he might realize what is said in Khatum. "Open thou our hearts that we may hear Thy Voice which cometh constantly from within." This simple saying has been hard to actualize, so filled are we with traditions and customs which we take to be truths. And constant references to unlearning alone does not accomplish it.

Solomon has said, "There is nothing new under the sun" and Jesus Christ said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill." Unfortunately the intervention of the priest-craft did much to either compel the mysteries to go underground or to destroy them entirely. Thus the Christian Gnostics were persecuted by the orthodox. The term gnosis (and also the term sophia) appears many times in the Christian Bible, but it has been overlooked, smothered, when self-appraising and self-approving were substituted for divine surrender. As soon as there is an affirmation, the surrender disappears. That is why in the Sufi Zikr one begins with the negation La Illaha. This corresponds to purification in the mysteries.

The Message has come in two portions, exoteric and esoteric; in their simplest senses these mean that which is for the generality and that which is for the elect. On the surface every presentation of divine intervention seems different from every other. But it is not too fundamentally different than saying the seasons are different but they belong to the same year. There is only one Truth.

The Tigris-Euphrates Valley has in all times been the land of the mysteries. The Chaldeans (Kashdim or Kassites) settled there. They have been known as fire-worshippers but more properly were masters of fire. We can go back and forth in history and find traces of mysteries, even from the most ancient times (as, for instance, the times of Abraham). So it is not surprising that when at a much later age the Sufi Orders were instituted, they also had their headquarters in that region.

Jewish traditions refer to that part of the world as the land of magic, but more properly, the land of mysteries, even to this day. Where Abraham lived he established an atmosphere and that atmosphere has never been destroyed though kingdoms and civilizations have come and gone.

Mohammed later picked up threads of mystical traditions. As his inner eyes were opened by Grace, he was able to make use of the continuation of ancient wisdom and organized disciples therein, especially Abu Bakr and Hazrat Ali.

GATHA: The lesser mysteries were **Ilmi Rabbali**, the mystery of the gods, in other words the mystery of the different attributes of God. For when the proper name of God is repeated a certain number of times some particular effect is produced by it, resulting in a desirable object.

TASAWWUF: In ancient times and in most places there was a god as deification of both places and attributes of perfection. There were divisions among those who worshipped different gods, but the people were all brought together by the mysteries. There was a phrase of early Christian teachings that Christ had come to unite and to go from partial attitudes to complete attitudes and that through him all men might come to the worship of the One God.

True, the Jewish people had a worship of One God, but they had restricted it and almost introduced racial superiority. This is contrary to the Scriptures themselves which hold that there is one law for the Israelites and the sojourners or strangers in their midst; also that God created the whole of humanity in His image. So, subtly, Christianity brought in saint-worship, and then Mohammed brought in the emphasis on the divine attributes as representing God himself.

GATHA: Before Islam the different names of God were considered to be different gods known by different names and identified with different attributes and characteristics. By invoking the names of different gods a person accomplished his object in life, as now Wazifa is practiced by the Sufis.

TASAWWUF: There was a book called *Dabistan* which has been translated as *School of Manners* written and published during the Moghul reign in India and perhaps the first book on comparative religion ever produced. And in it there are references to kinds of “god-worship” prevalent at an earlier time. If we look into them we find they seem to be quite logical and scientific on their own level. And they are certainly reconcilable with the general occult traditions found in most parts of the world.

The days of the week, the planets and other forces were recognized, and attunement and self-surrender were part both of worship and daily living. This prepared the worship of the Creator and Sustainer of all. This made it possible to get rid of statues and form-worship, for the statues and form-worshipping were not helping man toward enlightenment and the worship of the One God was.

Both Sufism and other contemporary schools of enlightenment have come to stress unity verbally and even offered some methodology. But in Sufism the whole stress on this and the inner sciences connected with the use of the Wazifas are now helping mankind psychically, psychologically and morally. The next steps come in ritualizing them and in that way the Mysteries are restored, though actually they have never disappeared. It is only that some schools of Sufism that have preserved them have not emphasized the fact.

**GATHA:** The music which the ancient Greek knowers of mystery had as a means of their spiritual development, the same is used even now in the Chistia schools of Sufis, where the Qawwali meeting, which is called **Sama**, is held, in which music is played and sung for awakening the emotional nature, which is the secret of revelation.

**TASAWWUF:** In ancient times there were the mysteries of the silence consecrated to Demeter and Proserpina, and the mysteries of sound and music consecrated to Bacchus. The former were supposed to have come from Egypt, the latter from India, land of Mantra Yoga. The actual sacred words often show they had been used in Semitic lands by the Phoenicians and Beni Israel. The Orphic mysteries were also connected with each of these and later on were properly organized by Pythagoras.

Greek music was very different from later European developments. This was partly because Greek music was associated with geometry and astrology, while European music depended in a sense on certain forms of arithmetic. The Greeks as the Indians also did, studied the effects of different sounds and harmonies in different times and places. Also their psychological values were stressed. Music was not a mere pleasure, and only certain moods were used for entertainment. Indeed, just as jazz was almost unthinkable for sacred music or cantatas and chorales for popular dancing, so the Greeks had definite conventions almost like art and science, for the application of different types of phases and modes.

The Greeks also had their psalms. There were not just beautiful sentiments; they knew how to use words and sounds to elevate the consciousness of devotees. It is most unfortunate that the term “orgy” derived from a Greek word meaning “work” has come to mean terrible animal-like riotous behavior. No doubt this was an excuse on the part of the Christian clergy at a later time to terminate mythological influences.

Music was used in ancient times to elevate hearts. Thus the consciousness could be raised above the denseness of the earth. The gods Apollo and Pan revealed, so to speak, the magic of music. The harp, the lyre, the flute and perhaps all instruments, were sacred. It was only much later that the flute was used or misused in entertaining.

When Mohammed came with his complete consciousness he saw both the evil side and the beneficial side of music. Although he is said to have interdicted music, in actuality it has been used in Qur’anic recital and by many schools of Sufis whose methods have not been given to the Western world. Why do Qur’anic reciters chant rather than orate? In this is a great secret. Moin-ed-din Chisti, who made full use of this “secret,” also restored to the world in full what some have called “the ancient wisdom.” There is nothing particularly noble about the common use of this expression “ancient wisdom.” Anyone who has heard or participated in the Chisti ceremonies will find himself elevated to a noble state of consciousness far beyond the consideration of the word “consciousness” by materialistic or dialectic psychologists or by those who have had psychedelic experiences.

No doubt the use of mantras and wazifas will continue. Each may have a particular kind of music. The Sufi Message was brought to the West to elevate the consciousness of the generality and not to form restrictive corporations with special power to legally elected or selected individuals. The first book *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty* can only be appreciated when people have experienced the excitations of ecstasy. All the rest is not only not helpful, it becomes a useless hindrance and burden.

There is no substitute for exaltation. To make this a living experience is part of the message of the day. Therefore we are seeing mysteries restored both in ritualistic and non-ritualistic form.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 8

### **The Greek Mysteries (3)**

GATHA: The fasting and abstinence, and all these things, were taught in order to develop the will-power, which results in self-discipline and which is the secret of all mastery; and it is by this power that the kingdom within is attained. Once man has touched his self within, the illusion becomes dissolved.

TASAWWUF: Fasting and abstinence may also be done from self-will. This often helps the body but also can harm the body, for the mere abstinence from food can either weaken the flesh or strengthen the ego. The purpose of abstinence in the mysteries was to strengthen the will. The will cannot be strengthened much by any mental attitudes, even by finding deeper meanings as such in ceremonies and philosophies. To be effective it has to be done, but when it is done for selfish motives it does not necessarily lead to an awakening of higher consciousness.

Ancient peoples had mysteries in some form. We can tell this from literature, tradition, and myth. Actually we find mysteries in some form among many people, and many of these were introduced by some Messenger God has sent from times immemorial. In Egypt they were particularly important, and the Egyptians also had two forms of writing (at least), one for the mysteries and one for public purposes. The translations of sacred Scriptures so far has been under the assuming that it was chiefly a difference in code-writing whereas actually the hieroglyphics had deep meanings not ascertained by linguists and intellectuals.

Many of the mysteries were celebrated in caves or grottoes, or in secret or sacred places. Connected with these is "atmosphere," a subject discussed at various places in the literature. But atmosphere cannot be understood until one can feel the different kinds of atmosphere; a small amount of the difference is due to chemical causes, such as the presence of certain gases. But these gases are also formed during exhalation and unless purified there is the "Mystery-atmosphere" and many people seek such atmospheres. They are generally furthered by ceremonies and especially rituals which arise out of the understanding of psychic laws.

When Sufism arose (although it has actually existed in all times) the attributes of the One God replaced the various Gods, and so the mysteries, as they are now preserved, often are concerned with the attributes, or even a single attribute. Thus repetition of "Ishk Allah, Mahbood Lillah" with proper ritual, replaces the earlier worship of the God or Goddess of love.

We may learn intellectually which Wazifa or sacred phrase has replaced the worship of each god or goddess. But such concern is intellectual and would not help in that awakening or development which came from the mysteries themselves. The institution of Khilvat or seclusion used by Sufis, has often replaced the mystery-ceremonies which were for groups. But the aftermath, for those successful in Khilvat, or having similar inner awakenings, are definitely continuations of ancient customs.

GATHA: The fear of death is caused by the consciousness of mortality. As long as one is unaware of one's immortal self one has the fear of death. Once the immortality of the soul is realized and the realization is no longer in one's imagination but has become a conviction, then one rises above the fear of death.

TASAWWUF: The first obstacle to be overcome is the encouragement of mere intellectual conviction without some participation. As many do not have psychic or super-psychic experiences, there are still rituals and many of these rituals have most definite purposes. They do not always lead to actual enlightenment but they do lead from the attachment to ignorance and the denseness of earth.

The question then arises about the restoration of the mysteries and this also involves the question of purpose. There are many clubs, lodges, esoteric organizations which have rituals, and all of them, even [if] the participants do not fully realize it, have some psychic effects, at least. Many are satisfied therefrom, many feel that these are just introductory, and others again may see little in them but pleasure or beauty. In a sense, all are right from their own levels of understanding.

For any kind of mysteries there would be moral instruction. In the beginning this would be more important than moral requirements, for one aim of the mysteries is to raise the moral level of candidates, and by this we mean the increase of consideration for others. The mysteries are often group undertakings and the strength of a group depends on the relationship of the members of the group, one to another.

Ceremonies would be in accordance with psychic laws. There are many of these principles in the Gatha teachings and elsewhere either by implication or by direct consideration. Devotees learn the relation of sound and color and of the meanings especially of the latter; also of light which is often associated with color.

Now we are restoring many of the mysteries, either in form or purpose through music, poetry, dancing and chanting. And when these are combined with the proper use of color, light and shade, they may have a profound effect on participants and auditors and especially toward experiences in exaltation. It is not to mystify or stupefy but to raise the capacities of each for the assimilation of divine light, wonder and attributes in the consciousness of the daily life.

There has been a suggestion for Sufi Mysteries in the form of Ziraat, and in a sense this is closely connected with the putative stages of growth in the spiritual life. There can hardly be any objection to the performance of the plays of Hazrat Inayat Khan and perhaps of others of equal caliber; or even to the performance of aspects of drama sacred to each particular religion. But the mere element of presumable devotion which is restricted to a particular faith does not belong to universality, and does not always awaken the inner consciousness. The over-emphasis of restricted emotions has, on the contrary, often ended in an emphasis of ego and separativeness.

GATHA: This knowledge is gained fully when an adept is able to detach his soul from his body. It is this state which is called by Yogis **Samadhi**, and by Sufis **Nayat**.

TASAWWUF: Actually this may be called the Greater Mysteries. It is often developed, even required by those who take the paths of Mushahida and Mujahida. The former is positive and consists of growing identities of selfhood with Godhood; the latter is negative and works incen-

santly for the purification of self. But when self is purified the light automatically shines so that in the end both come to the same goal.

Actually these stages of training and purification are for the adepts, those more advanced in the spiritual life. And what is meant by advancement? This means that the divine light has manifested or been assimilated by the personality and also by prowess in kashf, insight.

GATHA: Every soul that treads the path of initiation takes his first steps through the darkness; as Ghazzali says, "The spiritual pursuit is like shooting an arrow through the darkness."

TASAWWUF: There have been, perhaps there will always be ceremonies associated with the passing from darkness into light. Some of these can be arranged by mechanical contraptions. Indeed these have been said to have been used in ancient Egypt. It does not matter, if the purpose be attained. But the emphasis must be on passing from darkness to light, and those who have progressed somewhat into the light will understand this more clearly. So there is a tradition, "Those who have been in the darkness have seen a great light."

The different religions have each separately offered this principle, of coming from darkness to light but each has ignored the teachings and possibilities of other faiths. Now we come into an age of universality. We can see that each religion, each Messenger, gave out this teaching and we have to bring them together. For this, seeing the shortcomings of others has been the greatest obstacle.

Many of the ancient mysteries were open to people of all faiths, they were not necessarily restricted to devotees. Besides, initiation is not confined to devotees, nor especially to the orthodox of each religion. Indeed orthodoxy has often become the greatest enemy and obstacle to divine awakening. The awakenings are for all. The Lesser Mysteries are for all and it is for God, not man, to determine both who are ready for the Greater Mysteries and who have become adepts thereof.

GATHA: No doubt as one approaches the goal the light comes; as the Qur'an says, "God is the light of the Heavens and of the Earth." Then, once the sight has become keen, there is no further instruction needed. One gets insight into the hidden laws of nature, all things seem to speak to the seer of their character, nature and secret. This realization removes the boundary between life and death. One rises above the elements which have formed this mortal abode—the body and mind—for the soul's experience, when one touches one's true being, the soul.

TASAWWUF: The Christians say: "They who have been in darkness, have seen a great light. The Hindus pray: "Lead us from darkness into light." Qur'an distinctly says: "Allah is the light of the heavens and of the earth." But by this, unfortunately, the devotees of each religion have become self-proud concerning their own affirmations and blind concerning the affirmations of others. And this produces obstacles before the realization of enlightenment. So the Gita says, what is true, that among many devotees few have the realizations.

Our work is to help toward the realizations. We have the literature which has many affirmations and may be called the "shadow of wisdom." It helps direct mind and ego but by itself it does not produce the wonder. And without some realization, outer as well as inner, the Mysteries are not satisfied. They are only satisfied or fulfilled when the devotee has some realization.

GATHA: It is the soul-realized man who stands above all matter, and in this way the spirit gets victory over matter.

TASAWWUF: This is also the theme of the Christian “Book of Revelation” which is also a book of self-realization. No doubt it is largely in symbolic language, but how else can one express the almost unfathomable? It does deal with victory over the self. This is the true victory. All religions have gone astray in stressing victory over others, and in seeing falsehood only in the wrong doctrines of others.

All doctrines are false in the sense that they must proceed from mind. This is not enough. Even when as true as they can be verbally and intellectually they are not enough to produce the illumination. And when the illumination comes it may express itself in an infinity of fashions and all the restricting groups are wrong. There is no restriction in Allah and there are no restrictions in the way human beings may approach Allah.

GATHA: Under all conditions of life which produce obscurity and confusion the soul-realized man sees the light, and to him all men, of lesser or greater degrees of evolution, are nothing but different forms of the Divine Immanence.

TASAWWUF: This indeed is a deep teaching of all faiths which exotericists, skimming over doctrines, fail to comprehend. The divine light is in all, and nothing has been created without it. Even nufs, which seems to be the essence of shadow and shadowing, is divinely created. And when one has illumination he will find the light coming from every direction; or as the Bible teaches, “In Him there is no darkness at all.”

The Sufi Najat, or deliverance, means that one has actually risen above the distinctions and differences which divide men. One can only know that God alone is when one has the divine attainment. Otherwise it is only doctrine and sometimes not very satisfactory doctrine for the outer and inner may not agree. Only in realization do they agree.

The mysteries inculcated brotherhood at a time nobody thought of brotherhood as a doctrine. Then we have had brotherhood as a doctrine but not as an actualization, and all the doctrines do not necessarily foment the proper treatment of each by each other.

GATHA: In this way the man who has probed the depths of the mystery of life becomes God-realized. When he no longer has his limited self before his view then only he experiences the state of which Christ has spoken: “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

TASAWWUF: Without the realization the words themselves are not perfect. They point, they refer, they indicate, but they do not fulfill. Besides, the mind becomes concerned with a doctrine of flawlessness which is often very far from any doctrine of perfection. For the flawless excludes the imperfect, and the perfect excludes nothing and no one.

Many have spoken of Christ-consciousness and mostly it is deep sacrilege. Christ did not speak of Christ-consciousness, but he did speak of perfection. The Praja-Paramita Sutras of Buddhism indicate that they are Scriptures of perfection. Certainly if one delves deep into them in any fashion their truth will become self evidence. But mere acceptance or verbal repetition can at best only point.

Therefore Sufism tends to bring about that experience to which others only point. Only by treading and attaining is the path accomplished.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 9

### **The Banshee**

GATHA: There is a very widespread belief that in certain families warning of an impending death of a member of the family is given always in the same way. In some families a certain bird is seen by some member of the family before death in others the church bell rings without being tolled, in another one or more flagstones of the pavement of the chapel are seen to be wet while the rest are dry, and the number of wet flagstones tallies with the number of deaths.

TASAWWUF: It is not only death but life that gives many signs. We can find a whole compendium of examples in the monumental *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer. It is not necessary for students on the spiritual path to study this or similar works. But in our efforts to understand and empathize with peoples of many cultures, such studies can be helpful.

Augury has been an art and has often occupied a great place in social institutions. A criticism has been made against historical Christianity in that any effort to retain any form of psychic science was looked down upon by the priests. Independence of thought was considered an evil. But the peasantry of all lands have retained elements of instinct and feeling that remain. Out of these folklore has come, and sometimes, while beneficial, folklore is not always so.

In so-called advanced societies there has been a growing interest in the early culture of the Chinese and there is no evidence that this was not a true culture. When we look deeply the soul of man always continues functioning regardless of the superficial layers of social endeavor. The rejection of the subtle by the intellectuals and the powerful do not affect the subtle, but they do affect the influence of the subtle upon the gross.

GATHA: In Ireland such warnings are particularly frequent, and often occur in the form of what is called the Banshee, a screech heard by members of the family, but inaudible to others.

TASAWWUF: There are evidences that the influences of the subtle have been stronger in Ireland than in many parts of the world. There are signs that priests and occultists, sages and mystics of earlier ages influenced the people and also held rituals. These have effected the atmosphere and no doubt of suppression can entirely wipe away such influences.

If we study the whole atmosphere of earth we shall find psychic differentiations above, just as we find physical differentiations below. Every exhalation that enters the atmosphere, not only from man but from birds, beasts, insects, all creatures, indeed all vegetation affects the atmosphere in some way. We can study the physical accommodations from the standpoint of the worldly sciences. Someday we may be able to study the psychic and subtle vibrations also. Then we shall understand about atmosphere.

And there are places outside of Ireland, such as in the West Indies and certain islands, where the sensitivity to vibrations is very great, greater than in the civilized (i.e. city-fied) countries.

GATHA: This explains the truth that life is a revelation in all forms and not restricted to any particular form. The death of an individual is apparently the death of one person having its effect to some extent upon that individual's surroundings and on those concerned with him, yet inwardly the influence of the death of one individual reaches the whole circumference of the universe.

TASAWWUF: We can study it from two circumstances and these circumstances also resemble in some way the two arms of the cross and the meanings thereof. There is a penetrating effect that wherever a person has lived, his vibrations enter the immediate sphere and also the finer spheres as if in the same place. And this is true for all creatures. But where man differs from the lower creatures is that man, made in the divine image, not only has operative finer bodies but every word, thought, and sphere enters the entire sphere.

We can read in the transcendental sacred literature and even in "Mind World" how every person affects and is affected by everything in the universe consciously or unconsciously. Man could hardly be made in the divine image if he operated separately from the creation. The whole creation as each individual knows it, is not separate from himself. No doubt people having mystical experiences react as if he or she were all that is. And we also have some instances where man, usually martyred, gave this out. But they could not feel or say otherwise for that is the condition—if such a word be properly used—of the mystical experience.

The death of the body does not terminate the effect of vibrations connected with the personality. They also continue. We read about this also in "Cosmic Language" and it is pertinent to all psychic studies.

GATHA: No object, no being, is left untouched by it; only this manifests to those who are subject to be more affected by the death of someone they are related to. To them the warning of death takes some form that might be perceptible to them, and, told by them to their relations and descendants, that particular form then becomes a special alarm clock of death for that particular family, and it continues for a considerable time, until someone is born in that family who ignores it absolutely by his disbelief.

TASAWWUF: Yes, there are vibrations, living vibrations which affect every particle of the universe. But they are not always received; not everyone is attuned to them. It is not only a matter of producing phenomena, but also the matter of responding to such events. There must be positive and negative both.

Adepts are often aware of coming events, and so the foreboding of death does not phase them much. Still it is proper to be aware of what is going to happen, to be prepared for eventualities. It is not that belief produces phenomena but it does help in awareness and response.

GATHA: One learns by this that life is revealing by nature; it is man who becomes blinded by nature.

TASAWWUF: We are taught from the very beginning of our interest in Sufism that the purpose of spiritual development is to find our purpose in life, and also to awaken and develop latent faculties. It is not only that there is a purpose in life, it is that God himself has a purpose in and for every one of us, and our awakening is His awakening in us.

All the sacred lessons, also the literature and much else in Sufic writing is for the purpose of bringing man to his fulfillment and perfection. No doubt there are some who have over-emphasized the importance of the phenomena of death. But actually change is going on all the time and we can see signs and from the signs be aware of what is behind them.

GATHA: There is no creature in this world so absorbed in the outer life in the world as man; so man, with great capability of knowing, knows least of all creatures. There are birds who give warning of death. Dogs, cats, and horses perceive the coming death of their friend or neighbor or of their master.

TASAWWUF: We are told that a natural life is the best one and instead of fulfilling that natural life, we think about it. We are so concerned with our thoughts and reflections and impressions that we do not fulfill our duties. If we permitted our instincts and impressions to guide us, they might not add much to intellect but they would help us every moment of our lives in the proper pursuit of the needed action every moment. That is why many Sufis have cultivated folk-arts. For in this they can be fulfilling their own inner and outer urges at the same time.

But it is also true that the fulfillment may come in the arts, in agriculture, in commerce and in all pursuits. Only mostly we are mixed up with either the samsara of the world, or our own egos and these both prevent the fulfillment of justice on the one side, and of our lives' purpose on the other. As soon as we are concerned with "others" and the pulls of society and the generality we are caught in artificialities.

There is no reason why man cannot be civilized, advance in education, invention and the control of nature without impairing his inner life. Animals may depend on their instincts. Man has even greater instincts, though covered, and has insight, which is still greater.

The teachings are that there is a spirit of Guidance in all beings and this includes an innate sense of awareness. It is only the ego that misleads us, that keeps us concerned with its own narrowness which prevents every person from leading a life based on wisdom and sagacity. If there were not this spirit of guidance, the weak and timid creatures would long have been stamped out by the powerful. But a deep study will show that even the prehistoric monsters and large predators have never been able to control the world.

GATHA: If man is open to the knowledge that life reveals continually, his body and mind with his intuitive centers and perceptive faculties can know the secret and meaning of life most.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this: one is that there is the spirit of guidance in all parts of our being. In the lower sense, so to speak, we have it as instinct, and instinct operates throughout the body and also through the autonomous nervous system. Many creatures are safe in sleep without there being any conscious effort at guarding.

Christ has said that men should be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. If we are destructive we only set up the seeds of destruction for ourselves. And if we are aware and sensitive we find we are protected though generally not much thought is given to it. For there was a time when no man seemed safe, when roving tribes thought nothing of utterly destroying those who stood in their way.

But we can also consciously cultivate awareness. One method comes through perfection in Kashf and the other from awakening and using the deeper centers of consciousness in the body. If we are attached emotionally and intellectually to the development of these centers and if we accept the egoistic interpretations of the existence and awakening of these centers we may not progress far into the awakening of the deep consciousness.

The mission of a teacher is to help the pupil awaken centers as he shows capacity there and then to use them following a set pattern or not following a set pattern according to capacities. We have this all in words, in the prayers, in the simple teaching and in the advanced teaching. But if we wish safety we should follow the path of devotion as indicated by, in, and with the prayers. And then by using the devotion along with the awakening and development of the centers, the same guidance which has been in us and unconscious, can become conscious and we can use it for our own protection and development on the spiritual path.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 10

### **The Psychology of the Shadow**

GATHA: Among the Hindus there has been an old belief, which is now taken to be a superstition even in India. Every Brahman avoided or in other words took great care to keep himself, his shrine of worship, his food, woman during maternity period and the newborn child away from the shadow of the Shudra or outcast.

TASAWWUF: No doubt beliefs are based on Scriptures, or the words of sages, written or unwritten. But often they degenerate into superstitions. The word “tabu” means both what is sacred and what is forbidden. While the word is derived from Polynesia, we find similar institutions in many lands. Sir James Frazier’s *The Golden Bough* laid down the first universal study.

India has long been a land where the wise have appeared. There had been great Gurus and Rishis in Vedic times, not that all the great Gurus and Rishis appeared in the long ago, but the impetus from early literature has been very great. There were also great law-givers, especially the one or many known as Manu. These were wise men who had some knowledge of agriculture, economics, physiology, and, in a word, of human art, science, and industry in all the then known forms. Besides this there was a better understanding of what today we might call “psychic law” and “hierarchal law.” The wise, or the legalists who followed them, presented their codes and teachings as if they were of a divine origin. Mostly they were not. But the impressions of them on the generality were almost the same, as if they were.

In the history of India we find at times very great differences in the interpretation of caste, its functions, its place in society and in the world. Naturally, the Brahmans were the most literate and used every opportunity to proclaim themselves with or without privileges based on divine or human sources.

GATHA: Now, the times being different, naturally that belief is seemingly meaningless; but in point of fact there was an occult meaning behind it. Shadow is caused by the wall of a person standing against the sun, the sun which is life-giving to plants and human beings, to animals and to all, and the direct rays of which give all things new life.

TASAWWUF: If we go back in history we can find for example in ancient Egypt, that the shadow was regarded as very important. Only then it had a different significance, perhaps connected with the immortality of the soul. Similar superstitions or beliefs could be found in Europe and other lands which did not have any caste system.

In India the people of earth became sudras; those of water disposition vaisyas; those of fire kshatrias; and the brahmans corresponded to the air element. Besides this, if we follow the Upanishads, all people of mature age became holy men of some sort or another, and these correspond to the etheric

element. Castes were not then hereditary, but psychological and mystical. Later they became fixed as always happens when the legal and priestly professions gain authority and power. Then democracy disappears and it would appear that only some and not all mankind were made in the Divine Image.

In Saum one says “Raise us from the denseness of the earth.” It would seem that in all the ancient mysteries it was assumed that the earth element caused defilement. Therefore it was natural to assume that the sudras also would cause some defilement to the twiceborn and especially to the brahmins, not even the glance should fall on them.

Once this division of castes began, and then when it was discovered there were other people, this also led to the establishment of the “outcasts.” These people, though they occupied human bodies, were regarded as sub-human. There was nothing in the most holy Scriptures to justify this. There is nothing in the most holy Scriptures to indicate that any creature other than man could reach the highest grades of exaltation.

No doubt the outcasts were regarded as examples of ego-incarnation. But instead of trying to purify oneself of inner pollutions the emphasis was more and more on trying to prevent outer pollutions. And it may be said that all religions have followed this same mistaken course.

GATHA: Places which are hidden from the sun, flat or mountainous, became the center of all diseases.

TASAWWUF: Thus it has been found that marshes are dangerous places. There mosquitoes and other noxious insects breed. Thence miasmas which contaminate the air. Likewise the dark places hold heavier vibrations and easily become the abodes of wicked people, of conspiracies, etc. People seldom have evil thoughts in the daylight, in the warm sun, in the parks, the meadows, or open high places.

GATHA: The personality that stands in the light of any person, causing thereby hindrance in the life of that person, is an example of this!

TASAWWUF: Many materialists have recognized this. The scientific teachings of the age hold that many noxious germs are destroyed by sunlight. In the sunlight they are destroyed, in the shadows they live and propagate. The sun alone, often prevents, or cures many diseases. People build solariums in which they find comfort. There are rays of the sun which have specific benefits for certain diseases.

It is true in India there are holy men who dwell in caves and perform tapas. By their personalities they are able to purify and elevate the atmosphere. Whenever and however the etheric element properly commingles with the earth, the result is beneficial. The ether is the vehicle of what might be called “pure light.”

Of course there are holy men who build fires and surround themselves with fires even under a bright hot sun. Then no shadow can fall on them and this appears to be very beneficial.

GATHA: The difference between the true teacher and the false—both of whom have always existed in the world—has been distinct. The false one stood in the light of his pupil; the true one showed him the way by standing on the side.

TASAWWUF: This has become even more true as there has been an invasion, so to speak, of the western world by persons from the Orient claiming to be teachers, and many are teachers also in every sense of the word. But the others are either confused or practice what has always been going on, to seek prowess by doubtful means. Still they get followings and that is due chiefly because the traditionalists have not been able to lead others to experiences of light and enlightenment.

The true teacher's only pride beside his pride or satisfaction in Allah comes when his pupils rise in what Sufis call *hal* and *makam*, or state and station. While the *hal*-experience comes from Divine Grace, the *makam* or station is the result of effort, and effort and patience often result in the grand development. Besides, one can see in the light of the eyes and countenance of the pupils of the true teachers that something is happening, has happened in the direction of transformation.

The false teacher emphasizes his own greatness. He either praises himself or hints such praise whenever any pupil has some success, but he is apt to blame the pupil for failures. It is not always easy to distinguish the false teacher but in time his prowess will wear out because he does not derive his sanctity from the divine awareness, he does not practice *Akhlak Allah*.

The statement will always be made, "Judge not," so it is not important to discuss these matters too much. Still the development of *Kashf* enables every one to distinguish the true from false and as Jesus Christ has said, "Let your light shine before men." When the light and love of the pupils is great you can be sure that the teacher is a true one. But if there is just emotionalism without other content or when the teacher relies upon the methods of the advertising profession, we can be sure something is amiss.

GATHA: The psychology of the shadow is very complex. The shadow of an unholy person falling upon food will certainly take away the living substance from it; if it fell upon a person in a negative state, a woman sitting aside, or a child, it would produce exhaustion and lifelessness, also in the souls who are going through a process of recuperation or growth.

TASAWWUF: It is as if everyone carried a magnetic field and this field would be affected by any contact with any other magnetic field from anybody whomsoever. Thus *Khilvat* or seclusion is often practiced, for this enables a person to be protected in a negative state, and also to build up positivity when exhausted, or when greater magnetism is needed for any purpose whatsoever.

We can find customs all over the world, and also we have considered the reasons for the Seclusion of Women in our studies. The same applies in other aspects to everybody at some time or other. For that reason also little infants should be protected against strangers even if the strangers have positive atmospheres, for it is a different vibration and it also could unsettle the infant.

Atmospheres of sacred rooms should be protected. The more they are used for prayer, meditation and holy purposes, the higher the type of vibration, and in turn this atmosphere can help others. The Mormons or Latter Day Saints have their special tabernacle in Salt Lake City which has been kept pure ever since it was constructed. But the Kaaba at Mecca has been kept most holy for thousands of years and thus persons going on the holy pilgrimage always have emotional if not spiritual experiences in that vicinity.

Food is also a conveyor of vital energy. The more love that goes into its preparation, the more beneficial it is. This is something that cannot be taught by dietetics alone, or by physical chemistry. A

subtle chemistry is also involved. Even the thoughts of those who prepare meals have a beneficial or harmful effect upon it.

Sometimes Black Magic has been practiced by evil persons who have knowledge of atmospheres and the misuse of words or sound. But by constantly chanting sacred phrases we can be protected against any sort of evil.

GATHA: Very often a tree standing above a plant, keeping from it the light, hinders the growth of the plant; so is the shadow of the unholy. It can for the moment darken the soul of those passive and receptive of spirit.

TASAWWUF: The life of most plants depends to a great extent upon sunlight. Sometimes artificial light can replace the sun to a certain extent but the vibrations are not always the same. We can see especially in tropical forests that often what is called the floor is quite clean and clear. Although the temperature range is favorable, and the rainfall sufficient, still without the beneficial rays of the sun even the light alone does not suffice for many plants.

Perhaps in a similar way also persons of assumed importance, by controlling the atmosphere through popular consent or through self-will smother the aspirations and thoughts of others, and so keep them also in a kind of darkness. Many social and political revolutions have started and succeeded because of such artificial smothering.

GATHA: No doubt the power of darkness and illusion itself, as shadow, has no existence in reality. However, it is evident; so is the influence of immature souls.

TASAWWUF: Notice the term “immature souls.” All those who smother, who exploit, who use ridicule are immature. Yes, they have an apparent faculty for throwing others into fear. People who may be of no social or public importance can nonetheless repeat the names of God for their own protection or for the benefit of others. Indeed, this may be the best way to benefit others. The seeming powers of tyrants, despots, political characters, and persons of prowess, is shadow-power. If it were real it would stand out in the light. No matter how important these people may seem they are nothing before the majesty of Allah.

In the mental spheres, apparent power arises in darkness due to the activities of nufs. The ego gives rise to thought-forms, and these thought-forms stand before the light of intelligence, producing illusion. Illusion in this sense may be different from ignorance which may be in total darkness. To combat both illusion and darkness in the mental plane it is necessary to produce a furthering capacity for light.

GATHA: The spiritual souls have a contrary influence to this. Their presence is a stimulus to intelligence; their influence is comfort-giving and inspiring. The phenomenon of a spiritual personality is that in his presence the memory becomes keen, the waves of inspiration rise, the clouds of depression clear away, hope springs from the depths of the heart, and the soul within begins to feel living, love manifests through thought and feeling, and all that was once dead lives again.

TASAWWUF: The Gayatri prayers in *Vadan*—Pir, Nabi, and Rassoul—show one may recognize a true guide and be benefited by a true guide. The spiritual teacher carries an atmosphere with him.

He does not have to resort to harsh words excepting in rare incidents. His very personality may be most effective and also he feels it his duty to increase the love and inspiration of all disciples, and also of the generality.

We suffer from our inner weaknesses. It has been said that others cannot help—it has been said, what does this prove? It proves nothing. Life and experience may produce proof; words, empty or not so empty, are elements of samsara. Adepts soothe the mental agitations of the disturbed. By so calming others and also the surrounding atmosphere they enable human beings to help themselves.

GATHA: This shows that personality is a mystery. It gives life and causes death; it raises one to heaven, and throws another back to the depths of earth. The influence of personality may change one's life, environment, and all affairs. Its influence can turn the wheel of life to the right or wrong side, turning thereby the trends of all the affairs of life.

TASAWWUF: We may see this from several aspects. First there is the influence of one's own personality upon one's self. To a great extent we become what we are thinking, or think we are thinking. We do not have to discuss self-will, but we cannot obliterate it.

Then there are effects of environments. This covers all the earthly and material things, and also the atmosphere wherein we breathe. For we breathe in not only the material gases but also vibrations which are carried by these material gases, vibrations which are physical, magnetic, and psychic.

We are also influenced by others. Especially when we are negative, receptive, responsive, we are changed by what seems to be outside of ourselves. We flow with the tides of life, with the currents predominant among the generality. It is not always necessary to stem such tides; it is important to know when we feel free to act, are free to act, in all circumstances.

Then there is the influence of ourselves upon others. There is no exact boundary to the ego-personality, to its substance, to its influence. Every change in personality affects the whole universe. Changes in thoughts, emotions, feelings, act and react in the boundless ocean of the vibrations in and around us.

In the work called "The Art of Personality And Character-Building" the spiritual principles are presented toward which and with which one may work. And as one's own personality so develops there is a strength in his atmosphere which will protect him against noxious forces and all evil influences and persons.

GATHA: Very often most innocent, good and pure-minded souls, owing to the lack of positiveness in their natures, become the victims of undesirable personalities—personalities that stand in their lives obscuring the light for which they crave; and this may continue for a long period of time. Once a person is accustomed to being in the shade, then he is then afraid to come out in the sunlight, though inwardly he may be drawn to it.

TASAWWUF: There are often negative and responsive people who either tend to go with the tides of life or who when harangued by an orator accept any kind of condemnation. These are the masochists of the world. They may even be rather angelic otherwise, but angels do not always possess power.

There have been children who are weak, dependent and well-meaning, and kept down by parents, teachers and guardians. The older people may have love but not wisdom. They see growing children as growing bodies not as saintly souls. Until we can recognize that all of us are on some form of spiritual development, education may not always attain its own ends.

The purpose of the Sufi Movement is not to combat the various conflicting schools of psychology and morality; not even to be overconcerned with sadists and presumable black magicians. Our work is to spread the knowledge and love and light of God. By stressing the positive, the affirmative, the true, we help ourselves and all humanity.

GATHA: The denser a person is, the grosser is his shadow. In other words, the more material a person is, the heavier is his influence.

TASAWWUF: No doubt this is connected with the manner of breathing. The subject of breath is very important and has been studied at great length by the adepts of Sufism. It is easily pointed out that persons with refined breath are refined, and with coarse breath are coarse. We can thus change something in others by becoming masters of breath ourselves. The first step no doubt is to protect ourselves, and then having learned how to protect ourselves to use this ability to protect the helpless, the young, the needy, the weak.

GATHA: The whole idea of life is to live freely; to look through space freely, having nothing to hide or conceal; the light of truth to shine from within and the light of the sun without; light all around, no shadow of any kind hindering the light, which is the soul of every being.

TASAWWUF: There is a book called *The Shadowless Prophet of Mecca*. No doubt everything that is said in this book is correct. But its implications are false. Mohammed definitely said that he was a human being like everybody else and that all his faculties and prowess, excepting his direct communion and communication with Allah, were common to all men. Buddha taught much the same; Christ also. One of the greatest illusions and delusions is to assume the ability to select some great personality as one's perfect ideal, and then to assume no one else was that ideal's equal; and then to assume quite falsely that good and evil result from the selection or rejection of that particular personality.

This teaching also appears at great length in the Indian Upanishads. Often as these Upanishads have been communicated to the generality, the presenters, trying to awe the audiences by conceptions of great heroes in the distant past, have obscured the simple truth of the Sun being the light without and the Atman being the light within. This is really a common teaching from all Masters and Adepts. No doubt the time will come when speakers on mysticism may be required to have had mystical experience in a way similar to the requirement of lecturers on the sciences to have had laboratory experience.

The permission being granted to orators to lecture on what they do not know directly has obscured the wisdom-teachings of the age. One of the purposes of Sufic instruction is to enable mureeds to cultivate that Light to its uttermost. As Jesus Christ has said, "Let thy Light shine before men so that they may see your good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven." This teaching is in common to all the great religions and perhaps to others. The obscuring of this universal truth will no doubt end with the downfall of the obscurers. When they are out of the way each of us can develop faith and hope and transcendent realization.

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