



Gatha with Commentary

Takua Taharat: Everyday Life

Series II

*of*

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*by*

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Series II: Number 1

### **The Purity of the Body**

GATHA: The purity of the body is more desirable than bodily strength. Purity of body consists of three things: pure blood, sound muscles, and skin in proper condition.

TASAWWUF: If bodily strength were most important man would no doubt have had a different form. Not even necessarily one like the elephant which is the strongest of beasts. For if we study engineering, we can determine which are the strongest materials, and they are mostly crystalline metals and their compounds, or gems or heavy stones. Man's body is not like that; it is colloidal and pliable. Colloids seem to provide the best materials for the kind of body needed by intelligence.

When we say that purity of body depends on pure blood, we mean that not only must the blood be able to absorb the substances and energies of the air, but also that it must be purified. All the lessons in Gathas I, especially on this subject, help to bring this about.

Sound muscles are also developed by care and exercise. It is not necessary to sit in quietude for spiritual development. This is a lop-sided development. All the great Messengers of God have been active and practical men. They did not necessarily teach any specific line of "Karma Yoga;" their work was part of their spiritual life. They did not neglect the body either as to its hygiene and gymnastic aspects; they used the body practically.

There are, it is true, esoteric forms of muscular development found in many lands. The Chinese had Tai Chi and both these people and the Japanese developed muscular arts and also some dances from the same general principles. In other lands, there were different bases, but in India it was usually breath which became the source of strength, that through proper breathing proper physical effort was enhanced.

Also in many lands they did not cover the body entirely when working. This was an introduction from colder climates and it has not always led to better health. Tight clothing is never recommended for the spiritual life.

GATHA: One might ask, how can one be strong without a pure body? But I should say, one can be. There are many strong and vigorous-looking people with something wrong in their flesh, blood or skin. Health, from a spiritual point of view, does not mean a strong muscular body, health means a body sound in all its aspects.

TASAWWUF: If health meant a strong body, then it would be the big people who lived the longest and accomplished the most; or at least those who indulged in gymnastics or athletics. But in gymnastics without wisdom, one can overstress or overstrain oneself; and in many forms of athletics, the spirit of competition is so great that balance is lost in fury or for some emotional purpose. Weight lifters are not necessarily immune to disease.

Many people admire athletes but don't care to discipline their own bodies in that way. Nor is it necessary. We can learn to walk properly, to have proper postures, and then to eat and breathe properly and all of these help to insure good health.

True, in the Orient, the wrestlers and athletes pay more attention to the breath, to the posture, to equilibria and to the husbanding or usage of strength. They take many things into consideration and do not separate their craft from life itself. Sometimes the athletes have to go through severe spiritual training and discipline. Athletes and dancers do not disdain meditation; they often learn to feel the presence of the Absolute in some form and to learn to rely upon it for their prowess. Western people have not yet learned to think in such terms and this is one of the purposes of the Message, to spiritualize the daily activities without changing the interests of the people otherwise.

GATHA: The standard of normal health is different for a mystic from what a scientist today thinks. To the scientist, the emotional side of man is not of interest; if the body is perfect according to his idea, he thinks the man is healthy. But from a mystical point of view if, bodily, man is strong, but his emotional nature is buried beneath, he is not healthy, there is something wrong with him.

TASAWWUF: Nor could he use his muscles properly. The emotional person does not maintain rhythm. He can easily be diverted from his purpose or his purpose is limited to the physical side. He has no reserve. His emotions also consume vital energy. He does not know that.

One of the great tragedies of modern life has been the increase of psychopathic cases. Not only that, but this has been followed by the psychedelic complex and this is due in turn to the laxity in which modern science, and culture generally, has accepted the existence of the psychic and subtle life.

It is not only that these aspects of life have not been accepted, it is that the number of mental cases keeps on increasing and there seems to be no way out. Division between the physician, psychiatrist and psychologist is artificial and comes from assumed social norms. The mystic does not so divide men and the gestalt school also does not divide men.

Every emotion involves some chemical reaction within the body and every such chemical reaction adds to fatigue. All the knowledge of dietary and nutritional processes has not helped, for there is a metachemistry of the emotions and also a metachemistry of mental processes. Just as the electric wire produces chemical changes, so do the nerve energies produce chemical changes. The study has yet to be made, but some day it will be made.

There is a slow recognition of it, in noting the various chemical, psychological, neural, and muscular behavior patterns under different conditions. Sometimes stimulants, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, produce changes and sometimes may even benefit for a time. But until man learns to observe himself as a whole and understand the breath functions in their every aspect, there will still be these problems.

GATHA: Therefore a physician will find many not in proper health, but still more a mystic will find not in proper health. The person who is healthy to a physician is not necessarily healthy to a mystic, but good health from the point of view of a mystic is also good health from the point of view of a physician.

TASAWWUF: We find from the mystical studies the viewpoint that man occupies three bodies (at least) and each of these vehicles involves different vibrations, different vitalities, different aspects of

life and being and ranges of consciousness. The physician can only measure the material side even when he recognizes there are other sides.

The science of emotions has been studied more in India, but even there only in a limited way. An emotion is not its analysis. If we study spiritual drama we can see that there are ranges and stages of emotions and these also have their effects on body and mind. We can also see that people who have disequilibrated emotions are liable both to illness and tragedies in their daily life. Balance is not something confined to a single plane.

Whenever there is abnormality in breath there will be some abnormality in personality. We can even determine what sort of persons are actually insane, which are suffering from obsessions and which have other types of disturbances by an examination of their breath. As Havelock Ellis wrote in "The Dance of Life," that by their dances you can know a people, so it is even easier to comprehend them by their walks and the walk itself is an outcome of breathing mostly.

GATHA: The illness that humanity has today is lack of that emotional nature which is productive of sentiment. In the East, though times are changed, still there is a recognition of that healthiness which is recognized by a mystic as good health.

TASAWWUF: This sentiment, whatever else be true of it, shows that the heart-body is alive. It may not be functioning perfectly, but it is alive. It can be awakened; and when there is little sentiment it is very hard to awaken it. It is by the rousing of the heart-body that the deepest recesses in the personality come to life, both in the physical and superphysical sense.

Today we have breakdowns in family life, in family relations and so in social institutions. There is not the cement to hold people together. If there is no sentiment, there will be no rousing of love. There will be the use of words, but they will be empty, without meaning, and without energy or magnetism.

We can also judge people by the light in their eyes and there can be no such light when the heart is dead. When the heart is awakened, the eyes light up.

GATHA: They name these qualities by beautiful names, as considerate, thoughtful, mild, gentle, sympathetic, harmonious, selfless. When these things are lacking in a person, the mystic considers it lack of health. Even an animal can be materially strong. If man were strong he would be no better than an animal.

TASAWWUF: The rise of semantics has called to public attention the self-delusion from the use of words which have no deep meaning. The celebrated Stuart Chase has written "The Tyranny of Words," but he himself was not able to break through to where there can be vivid communication without verbalization. Still this is a step forward.

One of the sources of misunderstanding between young and old is that senior people tend to regard the words as realities, that if they only use them enough, they are proving something. About all they can prove is their own self-delusion.

Jesus warned without avail of useless repetitions. It has gone on. In Mantra Yoga (or in Wazifa) we do not repeat words or sounds for self-justification. These sounds are such that they awaken magne-

tism and life at different levels. The attention is taken away from the ego-self, whereas in the common use of the ordinary beautiful names, there is so much self-delusion. People employ the word “compassion” without showing it; often they substitute the word for the reality. The same with “love,” “tenderness,” “gentleness,” and all the terms referred to, and others. They only add to delusion when the heart is not awakened.

Zikr and other practices awaken the heart and when this takes place, sentiment and tenderness are natural. One does not have to refer to them. They are alive. So the Teacher gives the repetition of the Names of God and with this awakens the divine qualities within the devotees. This is a great science and a great art and is for everyone.

GATHA: It is purity which is necessary, in the body first, in the mind afterwards; which produces in a person a state of health which alone can be truly called health.

TASAWWUF: For with obstacles removed the natural and also the divine energies use the body and mind and come into manifestation, and it was this kind of health which was a wholeness which has been meant by the word “salvation,” which means to be well, safe and joyful in all aspects of one’s being.

Jesus began with the Beatitudes; Buddha emphasized the happy man; the Upanishads teach that we can measure spirituality by joy and joy by spirituality. When we remove the ego-self, the roadblocks are gone and the divine light manifests.

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Series II: Number 2

### **Purification**

**GATHA:** The nature of the memory is to hold an impression, agreeable or disagreeable, and therefore a person holds a thought in mind, whether it is beneficial to him or not, without knowing the result which will come from it. It is like a child who holds a rattle in his hand and hits his head with the rattle and cries with the pain, and yet does not throw the rattle away.

**TASAWWUF: Nufsaniat.** This the general condition of the world. We may study the evolution of the human body and learn its connection with the animal world. But when we come to the study of mind, there seems to be transcendental factors which are not so clear. In both instances, we are still concerned with ego, with what has been called Karma and which is known as **samsara**, or the wheel of birth-and-death.

From the Sufi point of view, man is attached to this wheel so long as his thought, speech, and action are essentially egocentric. The Hindus stress the relation of the undeveloped soul to the universal conditions but the Sufi sees that man can rise above the turmoil and also teaches how he can do this. In Hinduism we do have the **Nishkama Karma**, which is to say, action not based on desire; and Sufism says that the wise have actions not based on the ego. It is the same thing.

The holding of impression is called “creating samskaras” in the Hindu teaching. It is the constant production of samskara that keeps mankind to the wheel, not only the individual but the generality. Therefore in Mahayana Buddhism, the idea is stressed that salvation is for the totality of mankind and not just for the individual, that in a sense there is no individual salvation, but there is total salvation.

All holdings of impressions or samskaras produce further skandas, as they are called in Sanskrit. Man, to be free, must become free both from the web of the skandas and from his own adding to them. This is done by the various means of practicing the presence of God. When man calls upon Allah, he is free from his own ego-activities.

**GATHA:** There are many who keep in their mind a thought of illness or a thought of unkindness done to them by someone and suffer from it, yet not knowing what it is that makes them suffer so, nor understanding the reason of their suffering. They go on suffering and yet hold on in memory the very source of their suffering.

**TASAWWUF:** The first year’s training of the elementary study circle is concerned with the purification of the body and the next year mureeds are trained in the purification of the mind. The mind is not purified by ceremonies or thoughts that it is pure, for every thought can add to the samskaric complex. One has to stop thinking. Although unlearning is presented in the literature and often it is stressed in the teachings, it is one of the most difficult of all lessons. When the mind is started in operation, it continues. It is just like a machine and one has also to learn how to stop it without endangering it.

There are meditation practices in some schools which stop the mind entirely. They paralyze it. This is very different from perfecting it. If one paralyzes the mind it can never become an instrument for God. And meditation without considering essence-of-mind is also egocentric. It does not free man.

We have first to learn to get rid of undesirable impressions. We can think all we wish of happiness or joy, and yet we hold the thorns of unfavorable impressions, and the joy or the exultation will not be experienced. There are practices of stopping, but the thought of stopping is also a thought, so it does not stop, it does not purify. It merely substitutes one kind of thought or impression from another. Still, it does no harm to hold on to favorable impressions.

But to become free entirely, one has to rid oneself of all impressions, favorable and unfavorable. This is partly accomplished through Murakkabah or Concentration. But it is easily done when one meditates on and with the breath in such a way that thoughts, as such, do not reach the mind or do not impress it. This can be done by purifying the breath, making it light, and also restraining the inhalations.

GATHA: Memory must be one's obedient servant; when it is a master then life becomes difficult. A person who cannot throw away from his memory what he does not desire to keep in mind is like a person who has a safe, but the key of that safe he has lost. He can put in money, but he cannot take it out.

TASAWWUF: A question may be asked, why is it that some people have poor memories, and it may not always be that they actually have poor memories. There are blockages in mental coordination. Meditation and right breathing help very much here. Some animals have lasting memories, however else their minds are limited. And under suggestion, hypnosis, trance and other conditions, all man's latent memories may come to the surface. When this is not so there is some blockage which needs to be removed.

The ancients had a different approach to psychology, and to several sciences. They studied the lives of the animals around them. If an animal had some virtue, some desirable quality, they would watch their ways of breathing and repose and then practice these. Or they would learn from their habits and by such means, the memories of the elephants, and the wisdom and patience of the serpent became incorporated into their religions and lives.

As favorable qualities were developed, one could learn to use them to remove the unfavorable and unwholesome. But if one wishes to get rid of all impressions, then one must go more deeply into the inner sciences.

GATHA: All faculties in man become invaluable when a person is able to use them at will, but when the faculties use the person, then he is no longer master of himself.

TASAWWUF: Impressions made upon the mind come to rule the mind. To be free, the mind must be able to use the impressions, even to be able to get rid of impressionability. Then one may receive what one wills and put it to use. As has been said in some schools, impressionability is removed entirely; there is no more room for it. This is also true of imbeciles and idiots. What man needs to learn is perfection of, not abolition of, mind.

The valuable adjuncts to suggestions and the whole field of impressionability is presented in the literature and can be studied to one's benefit. Jains become ill when told or shown that their filtered water is full of organisms. Their state of mind is more harmful than anything physical arising from the ingestion of what is unwholesome. A pure mind can overcome the defects or harm coming from physical sources. A pure mind has the faculty of transmutation.

GATHA: Concentration is taught by the mystics in order to exercise the will, making it capable of making use of all faculties. A person with will-power can remember what he wishes to remember and can forget what he wishes to forget.

TASAWWUF: Concentration (Murakkabah) is not taught independent of the whole sphere of esotericism (ryazat). Many people learn to concentrate, by many methods, for many purposes, but they do not always arrive at a stage when they can control the concentrations and the mind itself. That is why both breathing and devotion practices are needed. For man's body to become the temple of God, certain practices are needed, and for man's mind to become the shrine of God, also certain exercises are needed.

The ordinary person does not always properly separate, or conjoin word and deed. We lose magnetism when we think one way and do something else. This loss of magnetism impairs the memory and indeed all mental faculties. The will-power is developed when one can hold the subject of concentration a long time and in certain ways. It may seem like an empty discipline but in time it can become most valuable. To become one-pointed in anything is always helpful. To be decentralized, and to permit the mind to jump from one subject to the next is always devitalizing.

The teacher of esotericism therefore arranges the lessons in concentration so that the talib can proceed carefully and orderly from one stage to the next.

GATHA: All things that deprive one of one's freedom in life are undesirable. The mind must be free from all bad impressions of life, which take away the rest and peace of life.

TASAWWUF: Buddha objected to sex not because it was vicious or evil but because it took away rest and peace. But as people have become literate and civilized, so to speak, the channels of information and communication are used to arouse their minds constantly. Mental energy is consumed with concern of things, people, and events about which one can do nothing. One can do nothing and at the same time one can be roused. This wastes energy and magnetism on all planes and helps produce disease and age. By holding on to right breathing, one will know when it is profitable or not to be concerned with thoughts and event

Of course, one may follow the daily news or read magazines. That is unimportant. What is important is to protect oneself against useless samskaras which constantly tire one without producing any fruits. If one regards peace and tranquility as merely manifestations of monotony, one may still be able to show interest in the affairs of the world, but one should not permit these affairs to dominate over emotions and peace of mind.

GATHA: By concentration one is able to hold a certain thought one desires and to keep away all other thoughts, and when one is able to keep away all the thoughts one does not wish to think about, it becomes easy to throw away the impressions of years, if one wishes to forget them. Bad impres-

sions, however old and intimate, are like rubbish accumulated, which should be removed in order to make the house clean.

TASAWWUF: The practice of concentration (Murakkabah) is taken up seriously in the fourth year of Bayat when the Githas are studied. But the details of the practices, of the science and art, are long and varied and take many, many years to accomplish, unless, by the Grace of Allah, the veils are lifted. After the veils are lifted, one graduates, so to speak, into Mushahida, the fearful contemplation wherein man becomes the instrument or Khalif of God on earth.

The practices and exercises are so important and too much concern with commentary is not always helpful. At the same time, it is true that one learns to remove every obstacle, every hindrance in the inner and outer being until Pure Light becomes more and more man's experience and also the grade of conscious Light becomes more refined and higher and higher.

GATHA: The human heart is the home of the soul, and upon this home the comfort and peace of the soul depend.

TASAWWUF: That is why, sometimes early in discipleship, there is concentration on Heart and also on the Sufi symbol, which in different ways makes one conscious of the inner spirit. Peacefulness is beyond all thought, and all thought, all activity, can arise from peacefulness, which is to say, the soul itself becomes conscious of itself and its functions.

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Series II: Number 3

### **Purity of Mind (Part I)**

GATHA; Purity of mind requires the destroying of all bad impressions which are already collected there or which the mind receives instantly. One can destroy these impressions by five ways, and the way is adopted according to the impression one has to destroy.

TASAWWUF: This whole subject is discussed at some length in the literature on *Mental Purification* in the volumes of *The Sufi Message*. From another point of view it is not necessary to consider the term “bad” because when one can rise above the impressions, or *samskaras* as they are called in Sanskrit, one will neither have this or related problems. By the purification of mind one can get rid of evil influences. One can do this also with *Wazifas* and the practice of *Fikr*. But there is another way: a complete mental purification which leads one to Master by wiping out the effects of all externals, by learning as the Zen Master Shaku Soyen taught, to stand firm as a wall against all such influences.

GATHA: Some impressions want to be washed off from the mind.

TASAWWUF: One set of these are those which can be called “evil.” The Christian Lord’s prayer, if repeated, enables the devotee to stand firm. But there are other impressions which need not necessarily be called “immoral” but which are so strong, which cut such deep lines in the mind that they have an overpowering effect. Then concentration in ordinary affairs becomes difficult. However, one can resort to the spiritual methods of concentration and this also helps to purify the mind.

The difference between some types of Zen Buddhism and Sufism here is that these types of teaching tend to atrophy the mind, to control rather than train it, so the mind does not grow. According to the Sufi teachings, everything must be done to enable the mind to grow while thoroughly controlling it. So Sufic teachings can be applied accordingly with the deep educational systems of the day.

One way to wipe out such impressions, or to prevent them from affecting the mind much is to repeat *Fikr*, or practice the presence of God in some way. This washes away all surface impressions.

GATHA: Some require to be erased from the surface of the mind.

TASAWWUF: Many times people have heavy impressions—tragedies, horrors, obsessions or even compelling influences that impede sleep and proper rest. These impressions are not easily removed. The psychiatrist’s couch has not always been successful as a means of removing them. Hypnotism and forms of regression sometimes help a little. A counter-suggestion may be supported by a philosophy but this does not necessarily remove those impressions deep in the mind.

Meditation is a marvelous exercise for keeping the mind stable. It serves both to remove impressions and to protect the mind against being impressed by those of a similar nature. It is a great boon to health of both body and mind. And by instilling peacefulness, it promotes strength, for the greatest strength comes from peacefulness of mind.

GATHA: Some want to be shaken off like dust from the clothes.

TASAWWUF: This is particularly true for the habit of negative and impressionable people. They have no armor. They listen and are temporarily impressed but it does not mean much. They go from impression to impression. Many repeat the phrase, “Be negative to God and positive to man.” This is good phrase if practiced, but if retained as a subjective philosophy, it can only add to the disturbance of mind. For many repeat the phrase and still are constantly impressed and affected by all that goes on around them. In this way also they lose their magnetism as well as mental power.

All esoteric practices, and here also especially Zikr, are of value, but also the attention to breath, and to become able to cast off all thoughts and considerations which interfere with the steady rhythm of breath. For this practice, not subjective teaching, is most necessary.

GATHA: Some require burning like the wood in the fire, which, after its test through fire, turns into ashes.

TASAWWUF: We do not always realize this is constantly going on. The thoughts and experiences of childhood are wiped away in youth; the thought and experiences of youth are wiped away in maturity. What impresses us at one time is no longer of consideration afterwards. There may be a dim memory but these impressions are no longer important, at least to the constantly changing ego. This is fortunate because otherwise the mind would be overweighted.

GATHA: And some impressions must be drowned, so that they will never come up again. Bury certain impressions like a corpse.

TASAWWUF: If we ever consider them, we are not burying them. Initiation as said to be a step in a new direction. By practicing the Divine Presence, either in the extreme way of **Akhlak Allah** or by performing Fikr or retaining any sacred phrase in the mind, there can be no further recurrence. The old impressions are dead and buried because the consciousness has taken an entirely different direction.

GATHA: Find every way of annihilation which is suited for that particular impression, so that your mind may be clear.

TASAWWUF: it is the clarity of mind which is most important. In Ryazat, or Esotericism, we have many means such as Prayer, Kalama Wazifas, Zikr, Fikr, Concentration and many aspects of breathing, and all of them can annihilate the undesirable; or if necessary keep the mind clear and pure.

To have a philosophy of purity of mind does not purify the mind. It may only add another idea, a subtle idea, what may be called a “good idea,” but goodness is a weight to the mind just as badness is also a weight. It keeps the mind from being pure; it impedes the perfectibility which comes from God-consciousness.

GATHA: The mind is not only a means of thinking or reasoning, but it is the king of one’s being; and upon the condition of the mind one’s health, happiness and peace in life depend.

TASAWWUF: This subject is considered at length in *Mental Purification, The Mind World*, and in other places. Here we have examples of the Mind considering itself, but when the Mind considers itself, it

is not yet pure. It is connected with its own fabricated thought, free from external influences but not free from ego-activity.

Sufism also stresses the value of thinking and reasoning but holds they improve when the mind can hold itself against all other influences. Only thus is concentration. Only thus does man realize essence-of-mind (so important in Mahayana Buddhism). And when one comes to the depth of mind, also called “Heart” by Sufis, the latent blessings which are there begin to manifest.

GATHA: Now the question is what to destroy and what to keep in the mind. Collect and keep all that is beautiful, and destroy all that is void of beauty. Collect and keep all that is harmonious, and destroy all that creates inharmony in yourself. Collect and keep all that is restful, and destroy all that disturbs the peace of your life.

TASAWWUF: One way to determine this is to get the swing of the Breath in Fikr. When one is assured of the swing and rhythm, whatever thoughts can be maintained without any change in this swing and rhythm are welcome and all others are unwelcome. Indeed this might be called a semantic way to practice surrender to God, Who is the Breath-of-the-Breath and the Intelligence of Intelligence.

Another item is the reliance on the Insight, which is sure to guide one in the right direction. By this means the Heart would be elevated in the direction toward exaltation. It cannot be otherwise. No doubt every person may not have the same specific results, but each one may have his own guidance and in such cases the light of the soul will make its way to and through mind and body as in the teachings of *Metaphysics*.

GATHA: As some dust gets into the mechanism of a clock and stops it from going, so the effect produced by all impressions which are void of beauty and harmony and which disturb your peace keep you from progress. The mind cannot act properly when it is hindered by impressions which have a paralyzing effect upon it. Life is progress, and stopping from progress is death.

TASAWWUF: We must be careful here not to be caught in the tyranny of words, and to learn to be able to distinguish between thoughts which are in harmony with one’s divine purpose. Qur’an teaches that there is always Guidance on earth and the teachings on “The Spirit of Guidance” reinforce it. But the mind, left to itself, can bolster any stand. Only mind by itself cannot enter the sphere of nishkama karma. For that something more is needed.

Here every man is faced with two problems. Should he seek harmony and beauty, failing therein, withdraw; or should he persist nonetheless? Should he make every effort to progress, even at the expense of harmony and beauty?

There is no real progress at the expense of harmony and beauty. One can soon feel what is in accord with the Divine Will, for one will obtain the peace and tranquility when one operates in that way. One may not always have immediate external success. But external success at the expense of internal victory is of no value to the soul of man. Real progress always brings more magnetism on one or more planes; with this more strength and assurance on one or more planes.

It is of no avail to have intellectual knowledge of samskara or of Indian psychology unless one can use this knowledge toward self-control and victory in life.

GATHA: Failure does not matter in life for a progressive person, even a thousand failures do not matter. He has before his view success, and success is his even after a thousand failures.

TASAWWUF: The career of Robert Bruce is well known in the Western world, and the career of the Moghul Babar is known to many people in the East. Robert Bruce has made his imprint on history in one direction and Babar in the other. External defeat never dampened their spirits nor daunted their person.

On the spiritual path one may even attune or concentrate on a Master who may bring victory in certain lines. There have been too many examples of success. The Catholic practice of praying to saints or venerating them is in this general direction also.

GATHA: The greatest pity in life is to stand still when life does not move further. A sensible person prefers death to such a life. It is a paralysis of the soul, of the spirit, and is always caused by holding bad impressions in the mind.

TASAWWUF: There is no question that the progress of the Message was slowed because the mind of people grasps the words and even the thoughts, but does not know how to practice. When one holds on to the sense of "I am I," he does not progress. He may add to self-respect and self-veneration, but this is not progress. Progress comes by processes of unlearning and self-doffing, but never from thoughts about it. The ego-mind is a great obstacle toward the attainment of perfection.

The intuitive faculty develops only through trial and usage. We have within us our guiding star which can lighten our path when we permit this. Besides there is a feeling of release in heart and consciousness and these are marks on the path.

GATHA: No soul is deprived of happiness in reality. The soul's very being is happiness.

TASAWWUF: This was also a teaching of Walt Whitman. But people do not have soul-consciousness; they have mind or ego-consciousness. They can only understand the meaning when they can let go. And the letting go comes from the practices of Esotericism.

GATHA: Man brings unhappiness upon himself by holding in his hands the clouds of bad impressions, which fall as a shadow upon his soul. Once a person is able to clear from his mind, by whatever process, the undesirable impressions, a new power begins to spring from his heart, opening a way before him to accomplish all he wishes, attracting to him all he requires, clearing from his path all obstacles, and making his atmosphere clear, for him to live and move and accomplish all he wishes to accomplish.

TASAWWUF: While verbally this is taught in all religions and by many of the wise, the impression of it, which is a very great impression, does not necessarily follow. Talibs repeat, "To Thee we give willing surrender," but it is not always easy to give willing surrender. They repeat these words and do not really see God in the loving mother, kind father, innocent child, helpful friend, or inspiring teacher. In the end, although the prayers may be said a multitude of times, yet one does not see God in all these fashions.

No doubt this is characteristic of all faiths, especially on the exoteric side. When one does right before God, the heart feels free, there is a joyous ebullience and this, not any self-justification, is the sign of traveling on the “right path.”

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 4

### **Purity of Mind (Part II)**

GATHA: Purity of mind is the principal thing upon which the health of both body and mind depend.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the main subjects of the book *Health*. It takes a long time to impress upon minds that this is really so and that when the mind is in good health, it keeps the body well. Buddhism teaches verbally that mind and body are one, but this does not mean that this teaching is accepted verbally.

There are many schools of philosophy and healing and we find more or less the same teaching in Christian Science, Unity, even New Thought, in the new religions of Japan also as well as in the teachings of Swami Ram Das, that the purity of mind can lead to good health and sanity. We read about the importance of mind and then create a thought "importance of mind" which becomes lost in the ocean of thoughts.

Purity of mind means ability to shut on or off not only particular thoughts, but thinking itself.

GATHA: The process of purifying the mind is not much different from the process of cleaning or washing any object. Water poured upon any object washes it, and if there is a spot which cannot be washed away by the water, some substance which can take away that spot is applied, to wash it thoroughly.

TASAWWUF: We have so many examples of this today and in the wider use of soaps and detergents some of this has become common knowledge. But this common knowledge does not help much with the purification of mind unless there is application and not just useless thinking. Suppose, for existence, one were to concentrate entirely upon the water element to live and think and breathe that water element, it would produce a most wholesome effect. By concentrating upon any element one can produce a state of purification and purity, but we take the water element as an example. And holding it, breathing the water breath in and out, the nostrils would automatically keep away all sorts of thoughts, feelings, impressions, which would be contradictory to the water. The water would wash them all away as the ocean could wash everything but itself.

However actually it is only the ether which can wash away the effects of all the elements, including the water. Water used in washing is not necessarily pure in itself; to purify it, something more has to be used and that is the ether element.

GATHA: The water which washes the heart is the continually running of the love-stream. When that stream is stopped, when its way is blocked by some object which closes the heart, and when the love-stream is no longer running, then the mind cannot keep pure.

TASAWWUF: We may picture the love as a stream but we can also picture it as light. The Evangelist John washed people in rivers but said that one who would come after him would baptize with fire and the holy spirit. The fire has a different cleansing effect to burn out that which has already been explained. And the holy spirit which uses the etheric breath blankets out all thoughts.

This alone would be stifling if there were not livingness and this comes in the love-stream. All humanity lives in that love-stream but does not know it. This love-stream can be fed by human beings, each himself and others, but it does not arise from thought. Thought depends on it, not it upon thought. So it is that feeling is much more fundamental than thought.

Meditation is a process which both cleanses and purifies and at the same time real meditation adds. In some types of meditation there is only emptiness or fana, but the Sufis emphasize **baqa**, the eternal life and this eternal life is not separated from universal love. They are identical and this is what is meant by **ishk**.

GATHA: As water is the cleansing and purifying substance in the physical world, so love is on the higher plane. Sometimes when it is difficult for love to take away some impressions that are disagreeable, which block the way of the love-stream, they may be washed away by some element that can destroy them.

TASAWWUF: This has already been explained by the etheric or akashic cleansing. This is also the same as the relation of John to Jesus, that John could only do a certain amount of cleansing, and that the purest and deepest cleansing came by Christ and when he used fire and the holy spirit he also used this universal love; the heavenly Jordan is symbolically the universal love-stream.

The teacher plays the role of cupid between the disciple and God. He effects the awakenings of heart and these awakenings of heart purify the mind. This releases attention to the mind and thus stops the incessant pounding of thought. It does not destroy the mind; on the contrary, this is the way the mind is fed - from within.

GATHA: The whole life is a chemical process, and the knowledge of its chemistry helps man to make life happy. An unhappy person, being himself unhappy, cannot make others happy.

TASAWWUF: The obstacle to this is in thought. We take a thought and make it real while failing to see what we are looking at. It is like making a mirror real and ignoring the images reflected in it.

This subject is dealt with at length in *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Lord Buddha taught **anicca**, that all forms are subject to incessant change but there is always or often an unconscious assumption that the person looking at it is not changing himself. We are always changing. This does not mean we are evolving, but we must change to evolve. We are subject to the wheel of life-and-death and constant movement called *samsara*.

Joy is inherent in our persons but only those who have had the joy can evoke it in others. But once a single person has it he can bring it to life in others in whom it is buried, often buried deep.

GATHA: It is a wealthy person who can help the one who is hard up, not a poor person, however much desire of helping he may have. It is the same with happiness, which is a great wealth; and a happy person can take away the unhappiness of another, for he has enough for himself and for others.

TASAWWUF: As has been often explained, it is something like the law of entropy that heat travels from a warm body to a cold one. So love travels from the one who has more love and joy travels from the one who has all joy. But it is also true that the essence of the soul is happiness or we can repeat the Sanskrit term, Sat-Chit-Ananda. Only it is not enough to repeat the words, it is manifestation that is important.

Music and dancing are now used to awaken the hidden and stifled faculties in man, and in particular this joy or happiness. For once this is awakened, then one begins to realize his own hidden powers and faculties, he begins to express himself in creativity and beauty and in all the beneficial aspects of life.

GATHA: Earthly pleasures are the shadows of happiness, because of their transitory character.

TASAWWUF: There has been a rise of interest in the word “love.” It has so many aspects. Some are quite superficial. Some have to do with the animal side of being and some with the emotional side. Some are concerned with what is known as euphoria which is to say, temporary satisfaction. And most of these states are followed by ennui, or dissatisfaction. They go to show there is something in us which is longing but it knows not what it is longing for.

GATHA: True happiness is in love, which is the stream that springs from one’s soul; and he who will allow that stream to run continually in all conditions of life, in all situations, however difficult, will have a happiness which truly belongs to him, the source of which is not without, but within.

TASAWWUF: The mind of man is at times insidious. It takes a thought, magnifies it, extols it, but by its very nature limits it. It is heart which is the depth of mind, which fructifies, feeds it. The teachings expressed in the manuscript *Metaphysics*, published in *The Sufi Message* verbalize the truth of being but do not manifest it. Much more is necessary for the realization thereof.

The Scriptures, especially the Gita, extol the principle of being equiminded in pleasure and pain, but very few are. Here the very philosophy becomes a danger. Many say that they believe in being equiminded but are not, and by so holding on to thoughts which are not a part of their being, they become hypocrites quite unconsciously. In the Sufi training it is laid down that no man can succeed who is bound by his own principles. There is something more to life than that.

The Prophet Mohammed especially condemned hypocrites, but it is generally that hypocrites, reading Scriptures, attribute this behavior to others. They do not apply it to themselves. Any person who consciously or unconsciously quotes Scriptures but does not exemplify them is a hypocrite. It is better not to quote Scriptures. Nobody really holds Scriptures in veneration by adulating them and then not exemplifying them.

Qur’an says, “Verily with difficulty cometh ease.” The man who can bear the difficulties, who can stand firm through all trials, is on the way to Mastery. The one who holds some thoughts about this subject is bound by limitations.

GATHA: If there is a constant outpouring of love one becomes a divine fountain, for from the depth of the fountain rises the stream and, on its return, it pours upon the fountain, bathing it continually. It is a divine bath, the true bath in the Ganges, the sacred river. When once one has got the key of

this fountain one is always purified, every moment of one's life; nothing can stay in the mind causing man unhappiness.

TASAWWUF: One may begin with the words of Jesus, "By their fruits ye shall know them." And if one also accepts, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," then one can learn from the wise, and one really sets himself on the path of wisdom.

There are many who practice what they call "meditation." They sit from day to day. They have an idea that sitting would make them Buddhas. Once a great Zen Master was found rubbing two bricks together. "What are you doing?" "I am making a mirror." "How can you make a mirror by rubbing two bricks together?" "How can you become a Buddha by constant sitting in silence?"

Then the modern disciples repeat this instance and they keep on sitting in what they call meditation and there is no change. But sometimes they have a real master who sits with them. The ritual is apparently the same, the results totally different. For the atmosphere makes the Master and the Master makes the atmosphere. And those who breathe or sit in that atmosphere are really bathing. They may not think it to be a bath, but it is a bath, it is a baptism, it is going into a Ganges, into the "heavenly Jordan" so to speak.

Modern Sufis repeat, "united with all the illuminated souls." Being in the presence of even a single illuminated soul may help bring the enlightenment which is really an awakening, not a giving or taking. We all have it. All men were made in the Divine Image.

GATHA: For happiness alone is natural, and it is attained by knowing and by living naturally.

TASAWWUF: Having a philosophy of knowing or living naturally is not itself a natural thing. Children do not consider whether they live naturally or not. The thinker, caught in the web of manas, lives artificially and does not know it. There are people who learn from nature and especially poets, and there are those without scholastic education who find both knowledge and wisdom in nature. And so it is that only minds free from artificial thoughts live that way; and it is the minds free from artificial thoughts (even "good" thoughts) that alone experience happiness.

### **Questions and Answers**

Q What is the process of drowning impressions in the ocean of the consciousness of eternal now?

A The one who does not know the love of an individual does not know the universal love. But if one stands there, one stands there without going forward. The love of an individual in love's path is a doll's play, which is learned for the time to come. So the love of an individual is the first step. But when one progresses then one advances towards the love of a cause, a community, a nation; or even the whole universe. Man, as a human being, is capable of loving one; but his soul, as the light of God, is capable of loving not only the world, but even if there were a thousand worlds. For the heart of man is larger than the whole universe.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 5

### **Purification of the Mind**

GATHA: The principle thing to attain happiness, is to purify one's mind from all things that disturb it and create inharmony.

TASAWWUF: This is the principle subject of *Mental Purification* and disciples are benefited by studying it. The mystic does not necessarily recommend books as books. A great deal has been made of the sacred Scriptures as if reading them would bring one closer to salvation and to God. There are multitudes of people who have read Scriptures and they are not always good people and there are multitudes who have been illiterates and they have not always been bad people; indeed the ignorant are often very good.

Then there is the problem, of deciding what disturbs the mind and causes inharmony. The metaphysical people, the cultists, come up with many answers but **hardly the answer**. Just as one can practice the presence of God outwardly one can do this inwardly with Fikr, to keep the mind constantly concerned with God, if not concentrated entirely on God; or else to repeat sacred phrases at all times and then disharmony is impossible and disturbances seldom occur.

GATHA: There are not only bad impressions which disturb the tranquility of the mind, but there are many feelings of resentment and resistance against things which do not agree with one's own idea which disturb one's mind.

TASAWWUF: One can correct this by knowledge of Metaphysics. Also by feeling the part of the body which is affected; every emotion affects some part of the body. Then by right breathing, or feeling "Allah" as one breathes in and out and placing this breath and this thought upon the part affected, or sensitive, one will gradually alleviate the disturbance. This is part of the process of **Irfan** which means gnosis, and by it one can get rid of unfavorable impressions.

But there are also means of getting rid of all impressions, good and bad. By meditation or Divine awareness, one does not even have to determine what is "good" or "bad." What is "good" becomes good only in the sight of God, and thus one's mind is free and one's ego neither disturbs nor is disturbed.

GATHA: The person who has some business to carry out, some profession to attend to, requires a tranquil mind, but especially the one who journeys on the spiritual path needs tranquility of mind most. Prayers, concentrations, meditations make no effect when the mind is not purified from all disturbances. Therefore, for an adept, no cost and no sacrifice is great enough to keep harmony with himself.

TASAWWUF: If the prayers, devotions and meditations could help man reach the goal by the processes, there would be many enlightened people. The world would be full of seers and those of high moral development. And it is not the rituals which help entirely though they are of value.

In this respect esotericism may be said to be the science of correction by correcting oneself, not demanding from the world outside what one has not obtained or attained oneself. And again it is like a puzzle because prayer, concentration and meditation all help in this attainment. Only it is not the philosophy, certainly not the theology, that helps but the performance. The world is filled with words that have been called “words of wisdom but one can doubt if there is any such thing as “words of wisdom.” Wisdom is beyond words, but wisdom is not beyond attainment. We all have it.

There have been some questions about the different types of Zen meditation. And those who do not study the Scriptures but sit quietly seldom report attainment. They blame themselves, not the method. But Lord Buddha did not blame people, he blamed methods which did not bring success; and also in Sufism we are concerned with attainments, not with methods which do not always help achieve the attainment.

GATHA: A Sufi tries to keep harmony in his surroundings, the harmony which demands many sacrifices. It makes one endure what one is not willing to endure, it makes one overlook what one is not inclined to overlook, it makes one tolerate what one is not accustomed to tolerate, and it makes one forgive and forget what one would never have forgotten if it were not for the sake of harmony.

TASAWWUF: This was particularly true when the Sufi Message was introduced into the western world. The western world had philosophy, had culture, even had cleanliness; but the western world’s civilizations were all based on the ego, upon emphasizing the ego and anything else was actually unthinkable. True, there were all the words, the Scriptures, the commandments but these did not mean very much in the everyday life. It was necessary to find that which could be used in the everyday life.

It took some time to introduce a moral teaching that could affect every type of person and every walk of life. But even when the teachings were given verbally, it did not affect the psyche very much. It was a new way to many people and it took them a long time to get the views expressed variously under Reciprocity, Beneficence and Renunciation. But as time passed and younger people came into the teachings, sometimes even automatically, they understood the general principles and for them the ego was readily seen as the enemy.

GATHA: But at whatever cost harmony is attained, it is a good bargain. For harmony is the secret of happiness, and in absence of this a person living in palaces and rolling in gold can be most unhappy.

TASAWWUF: We see that there is unhappiness in the world and as wars continue and there seems no way out of it, there is a total loss. For harmony has not become a way of life. Only there are those who are influenced by music and dancing and for them harmony is most important. Therefore it is not surprising to see that many of those most opposed to war are also those most concerned with these and other arts. For they intuitively understand that harmony is needed in life and also they get along better with each other than their forbears who are not only competitive but most unhappy.

For this reason Sufis often say “yes” to prevent disturbances although they may as a person, or even from a moral standpoint, know better. But we should not awaken people before their time and we must treat children as children.

GATHA: Harmony is brought about by attuning oneself to all beings, to all things, to all conditions, to all situations. And he who cannot tune himself tries to tune others, and while trying to tune others he breaks the strings.

TASAWWUF: The adept is able by concentrating his breath, to get the general feeling of breathing of his immediate atmosphere, of those around him and even the atmosphere of the places about which he is thinking. We repeat Ya Kaffee, unaware that it means “all-pervader” and that the breath, in a sense, can attune to everything and anything in the space. Therefore, it is more important to watch the breath, to understand the breath and by that means, and **never by thought**, to get the general tone of persons, places and situations.

GATHA: It is like a person who has a violin in his hands wishing to tune the cello. If he wishes to be in tune with the cellist, he must tune his violin to the cellist’s pitch.

TASAWWUF: We have the same general teachings of the tuning of Indian instruments, that they also take the space, the akasha, into consideration. It is not merely the pitch of the instrument, but the feeling-pitch of the space as to how effective the music will be under different conditions.

True, there is a general system of tuning. In the western orchestra, the oboe is like a strong-willed person, a very obstinate person who cannot easily be changed. So the other instruments tune to the oboe. And in a similar way a spiritual person who can more easily change himself does this with others without always letting them know. Besides, it becomes more natural, and also more effective.

GATHA: Every soul, as is its nature, constantly seeks harmony, but rarely is there to be found a soul who really knows how to create it.

TASAWWUF: One can explain the Gathas: one can build up a way of life. But the question is, how can one create harmony unless one develops a strong pull on life itself. The adept, through his breath and his heart, knows how to adapt himself to various conditions and it is adaptation and adoption, and not a philosophy, which brings about this change. But the Master, having strength, is much more able to get the keynote of a situation and attune to that keynote.

GATHA: If one says, “This noise that goes on always next to my ears drives me mad,” he cannot stop the noise. He must know how to close himself to that noise; if he cannot, to accustom himself to that noise so as to be able to bear it and eventually to rise above it, that it may no more create inharmony. Very often, at the sight of inharmony, one tries to escape it. But inharmony has such a wonderful magic that if one avoids it in the East one meets it in the West. It never leaves a person; whom it loves it follows. And the best way to meet with inharmony is to try and harmonize with it. Knowing that the source and goal of all things is the perfection of harmony, and bearing that idea in mind, if one met with inharmony, which has no existence in reality, which is like a shadow, it must certainly disappear as the shadow disappears at the sight of the sun.

TASAWWUF: As *Gayan* teaches, “The world is what it is, you cannot change it. But you can change your self.” So the wise adjust and readjust and the more they adjust and readjust the easier they find it even to direct the tendencies of the time, that the world to which they have attuned themselves will begin to follow them, consciously or unconsciously.

GATHA: It is very difficult to evolve oneself and at the same time to keep in tune with the unevolved ones through life. It is like being drawn from above and at the same time being pulled from below. And if there is anything that can save man from being torn to pieces in life, there is only one way, and that is to resound, to respond to all that is asked of man.

TASAWWUF: It is a comparatively easy thing to write; it is a comparatively easy thing to read or study. But applying it is something else. The way of the Sufi is to break the ego, and if this is necessary to work with people and clarify situations, he does not always demand a standard from them. He tries to attune to their conditions, to their evolution. Once attuned, he can by breath and mastery begin to change the conditions and persons, but the attunement and adjustment must first come from him, not from others.

No doubt it is most difficult to respond to all of life's demands. But we can hear the divine voice as well as human voices, and also the divinity in human voices. When we are able to discern voices, we can more easily adjust and so help ourselves and others in whatever situation we find ourselves.

GATHA: It is this principle which is taught by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount may seem to teach a willing surrender to all, but that is not the way to look at it. The real lesson that one can learn from it is to harmonize oneself with all notes instead of with one note.

TASAWWUF: If one were a harp, with many strings, each of these strings has to harmonize. It is not easy. But once the strings are harmonized, then the harpist is more capable than other musicians to affect the atmosphere and the audience. This attuning is an art in itself.

One has to do this every time when one deals with children. They have not the same understanding and if one tried to enforce on children the disciplines or the methods one uses with older people, there would be no communication. One would fail. One has to attune to their level. And so it is with the more advanced person. As one advances spiritually he has the power to attune to others and they have not the power to attune to him or to each other. If they had that capacity there would be no inharmony.

Of course, common prayers, common concentrations and devotions help. But most disharmonies come in everyday life outside the spheres of devotion and that is the test for the sage, to be able to affect harmony then and there.

GATHA: Every note is fixed in its place, so is every man fixed in his ideas and ways. But the one who treads the spiritual path, he is all notes and he is no note in particular. Therefore he may rightly be called the key note, the note which makes a consonant chord with every note that is played with it.

TASAWWUF: One will then determine that a Master has no particular note or place and is very pliable. It is just the opposite. The one who is not fixed by particular notes and keynotes is greater and more capable than others. He is not limited by his ego, he can adjust to conditions. He does not endlessly create samskaras and then explain and justify himself, for there is no self to justify.

Once one knows the secret of breath, he can get the general imprint of an audience or place or circumstances and, knowing that, and behave accordingly not introducing dissonances except when it is necessary for the teaching.

GATHA: There is no beauty where there is no harmony; harmony is the fruit of love. Therefore by attaining harmony in life one reaches the perfection of all three: love, harmony and beauty.

TASAWWUF: We can see in the changes of the arts and beauty, the rise and fall, the fall and rise, of the place of harmony in each. And when harmony is lessened, the whole social order suffers, not only wars but all kinds of disturbances.

The wise, by working with harmony, in each of the arts can affect the whole social order, bring peace and blessing and unity and harmony. And if the artists do that they become the master-minds; and often the master-minds to do that, become artists.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 6

### **The Power of the Mind**

GATHA: Anything that weighs upon the mind, such as worry, or fear, or remorse, keeps the mind below the pitch at which it is meant to be. When the mind is weighed down by anything, however learned a man may be, however capable and efficient, he can work but very little.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi attitude is that one does not overlook the faults of another but does not impress himself with their importance. The terrifying effect of sin and sinfulness upon humanity is that it has interfered with joy which is the natural state and it also produces as much concern with the ego-self as does wrong-doing. Indeed it is sometimes easier to correct a wrong doer than a presumably good person hardened by piety.

The psychological methods of the mystic are based on bearing in mind the good points of others, emphasizing them and trying to work with them. This is not flattery, it is to find the key-note, which if used, can raise the level of consciousness of another person.

There are spiritual phrases which can be used in every condition. Their repetition helps both on the positive side to awaken latent possibilities of a person and on the negative side to protect against enemies within and without. And the wonderful thing about such protections is that as one tries to protect oneself outwardly, one is also building oneself up inwardly. All reliance upon God (Allah) is beneficial.

GATHA: Learning does not help the mind which is not in its right place. So it is seen to be with many learned people: most capable and efficient, and yet incapable of accomplishing anything important in life. This is often found in life, and rare is the case where it is not so.

TASAWWUF: If it were otherwise, the rise in the educational standards in the world would have lessened turmoil. Indeed it is often the other way around, that among the educated there is more turmoil, more dissatisfaction. This is because something deep within man has not found satisfaction and all the external correctives do not matter much.

No doubt the rise in educational standards helps man to get out of animality but this alone does not terminate selfishness. This alone does not stop power or prestige from becoming a goal of life, a false goal because people are not necessarily happy therefrom. They will become self-satisfied which also means that the ego remains in command.

There is a question as to what is important. The divine messengers have agreed that those things, those ideals, those goals which persist after life has left the body are important; that those attainments which can not be carried away with one into another life are unimportant.

GATHA: All the affairs of life are accomplished by the power of mind.

TASAWWUF: When Buddhism was first introduced into the West, this was the all important teaching but it has been covered over by sectarianism, by rituals, by priestcraft, and other elements of Nufsaniat. Even in the Sufi teachings which reiterate this it may be lost under cover of other factors. Therefore this subject has been taken out of the esoteric class lessons and become emphasized in the written literature so that humanity at large may benefit therefrom.

Even people who hanker after miracles do not always become convinced that the power of mind can attain many remarkable things. But besides being remarkable the real attainments are useful, even in a utilitarian sense. We cannot be successful in any line if the mind runs in a hundred directions. We cannot achieve our aims unless we become dedicated to them. Prayers which are mere wishes accomplish nothing; they even add to our confusion and to our vanity.

GATHA: External conditions are nothing but mechanisms with which the mind works as an engineer, producing from life all that is desired. Therefore, whatever be the condition in life, the principal thing is to shake off all things that weigh upon the mind, thus making the mind free to fulfill its task through life. Often people find themselves helpless before a difficult situation, but very few stop to think that it is not only the situation that is difficult, but there is some difficulty in one's own mind. One hardly gives a thought to this question, for every man's eyes are fixed upon the difficulty of the situation alone. It is like seeing a wall standing before one and yet not realizing if one has a hammer in one's hand.

TASAWWUF: It has become natural to be concerned with one's difficulties. Then one builds up a thought-form and this thought-form added to those already accumulated, makes the life harder. We need not overlook obstacles. We have the means to overcome them, not only mentally but spiritually and not only spiritually but mentally. There are many who say, "Thinking makes it so." Then they make another thought out of "thinking makes it so," and this thought: "**thinking makes it so,**" becomes just another thought to accumulate in the mind, even to confuse the mind.

This whole subject was presented first in *In an Eastern Rose Garden*. People thought the lessons simple; they did not apply them. Once this attitude of non-application is established, one is lost. And in this sense everything is important. The disciple should be taught to become his own lesson; there is no other lesson than that of self-unfoldment, self-becoming.

GATHA: If one realized the power that the mind has, not only the wall but even mountains, if they were standing before one, could be removed. Many seek for a power from without, ignorant of the fact that all power is hidden within.

TASAWWUF: All the external world belongs to nufsaniat, samsara. It is not a universe of accumulation of anything. It is like a flowing river and perhaps one can catch fish from the river, perhaps not. One is always taking chances. And in this one must consume power and magnetism and whatever one gains therefrom, at the same time one is losing something.

The practices in Concentration given to disciples serve many purposes. One is building up will-power and along with that power of mind. Also one benefits from whatever one keeps in mind, be it thing or thought. For whatever seems to be has a certain power and life, even a certain message for those who learn to see and hear.

Love is taught as being a process of union with others, and this can involve not only persons but the whole creation, if at the same time man remains aware of his manhood and purpose in life. It is a question as to whether man holds things or they hold him. Man can learn to hold anything. And that is why there is Fikr and other practices which enable man to become a master, not only of his destiny in a broad sense, but of every little difficulty and problem that he may encounter. And all of these can be removed by the power of mind.

GATHA: When, by freeing his own mind from all that weighs it down, man realizes the power he inherits from the source of all beings, he will realize in himself an enormous power. The mastermind is the master of life.

TASAWWUF: Disciples learn the wazifas early in their studies. **Allaho Akbar** is not only that “God alone is Great” or “God is Greatness”; it means as one reads in “The Arabian Nights,” “There is no power nor might save in Allah.” Whenever there is Allah, there is power, and whenever there is true power there is Allah. And when one relies on God one attains power, but those who seek power as such are subject to karma. They do not gain much, they do not learn much.

There is a way to gain power by reliance on God by recognizing Allah as the source of everything, and not only power. This is particularly true if one meditates on **Allaho Akbar** as **Peace is Power**. We do not generally think in that way. But in the far East where people are not so engrossed in dualism, where they have a greater appreciation of inner peacefulness, they know that from this peacefulness comes all power and blessing.

There is a section on The Silent Life in *The Mysticism of Sound*. Although it is offered as an introduction to this subject it can be used as an introduction to many subjects, and perhaps to all subjects. The purpose of meditation, concentration and other practices is often to get man to become aware of this tremendous ocean of stillness which is also the ocean of life, of light and of power. This cannot be imparted as a philosophy; it has to be realized. As Al-Ghazzali said, “Sufism is based on experiences and not on premises.”

Meditation as taught by Buddha (but not necessarily as practiced by most Buddhists) began with awareness of breath. Having become aware of breath, one finds the not-self which is nothing but this breath. Not-self as a thought of the ego is nonsense, but to become aware of breath and live in and with breath reveals the power of breath and the inner faculties which may be awakened when one breathes correctly.

In the Sufi discipline one adds the practice of the presence of God in some form. Then one can use concentration in such a way that the power of thought becomes great, that all thoughts become powerful and effective and there are no longer wasted efforts.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 7

### **Every Mind Has Its Own Standard of Good and Bad**

GATHA: Every mind has its particular standard of good and bad, and of right and wrong. This standard is made by what one has experienced through life, by what one has seen and heard; it also depends upon one's belief in a certain religion, one's birth in a certain nation and origin in a certain race.

TASAWWUF: By this we may consider there are no absolutes. Einstein first brought in a doctrine of relativity. It was applied to the phenomena of light, then to wave mechanics and all those subjects which belong to the science of Physics. Then he was working on a universal teaching of relativity until the time of his death.

Actually this was not new; it had been taught by certain schools of Buddhism for centuries. As the world becomes more enlightened intellectually, it may be recognized that there are no particularly superior races or cultures, but rise and fall, that everything with name and form is subject to karma, to birth, maturity and decay. But intellectually speaking the acceptance of such a view is not enough. One can pass examinations in the schools but that does not mean one accepts this teaching in real life.

Indeed this seeming acceptance as part of the education and part of the policies of the literati without any deep marks being made in the human heart has caused more confusion than the acceptance of differentiations as standards. There have been verbal declarations of universality. Actually the so-called pure sciences accept these universals, but most cultures, being based on individuality and thus egocentricity, have not, in practice, applied those principles which are verbally acclaimed. And this difference between theoretical philosophy and actual practice has, if anything, only increased the confusion in the world.

Thus it would seem that persons as persons and also as members of groups, have tended to judge, each from his own point of view and has neglected to apply this method to others, so that rising above the differences and distinctions which divide men has been a slow process. On the other hand, their very open recognition of this situation is, in turn, awakening man's eyes to his own injustices and this is a great step forward.

GATHA: But what can really be called good or bad, right or wrong, is what comforts the mind and what causes it discomfort. It is not true, although it appears so, that it is discomfort that causes wrong-doing. In reality it is wrong-doing that causes discomfort and it is right-doing that gives comfort. And for the very reason that a certain thing gives comfort it is right, and what causes discomfort is wrong.

TASAWWUF: It is for that reason that there have risen disputes over what are called "generation gaps" but really are misunderstandings between those who confuse comfort and joy and those who seek Joy as an aim in life, or as the very purpose of life itself. No doubt it has been the aim of mul-

titudes to seek comfort but the western world has proclaimed that the satisfaction of desires is the purpose of society if not the very purpose of life. And the soul of man, knowing this is untrue, that it, the soul, is not particularly moved by pleasure or pain has a spirit of adventure that cannot be stifled by outer comforts.

There are many legends in different parts of the world which illustrate this. Also the same is found in the symbols, both as such and as appear as themes in folk-lore and animal stories in many lands. These seem to have as a common aim, that there is a wisdom apart from human comfort and ego-satisfaction, and that the soul's Joy is in something else. And no amount of explaining this away has affected the soul of man.

According to the mystic it is egocentricity which produces the wrong-doing. Seeing life from a particular point of view without scope for the points of view of others makes one feel superior. When one feels this seeming superiority compassion disappears—not the word, the word “compassion” remains and can be falsely substituted for actual compassion.

GATHA: Very few in the world look at it in this way. If one who does good all his life is unhappy, I would rather he did not do good. His well-being is neither good for him nor for another.

TASAWWUF: There is self-satisfaction, that a person is satisfied with his one private life and tries to impose it on others. And there is another type of self-satisfaction that one is satisfied and does not impose his satisfaction on others and mostly it does not work. For everyone has his own evolution, his place in the cosmos and he is striving to work out his salvation from his particular place in the cosmic evolution.

No doubt there have been commandments, both positive and negative, which appear in different civilizations and they have been most valuable. Indeed there is some common ground among them. But the devotees have proclaimed their standards and are more apt to proclaim the verbal standard than to fulfill it with their own examples. Instead of being angry the mystic sees each situation of itself and sees in the whole manifestation the beloved ones of God. He therefore does not impose any standards excepting that when there are disciples he tries to provide standards for them but for them only.

There is another way of looking at things and this becomes normal when we realize that Joy is inherent in the human soul. It may well be as the Upanishads teach that one's spiritual evolution and capacity for Joy go together. They are not two, but one.

GATHA: The standard of right or wrong or good and bad, made rigidly on the action, is the artificial standard which seems outwardly a moral law, but causes degeneration in the end. The standard of action must be made natural, not artificial. The curse of the present day is the artificiality of life.

TASAWWUF: There is no doubt that this proved to be prophetic. The Moral Law of the Sufis with its proclamation of Reciprocity, Beneficence and Renunciation leaves room not only for each action and attitude but is in accord with Occult law. The difference between occult law and that of the generality is that there is no scope in it for personality and there appears to be laws or harmonies in the universe which operate regardless of persons involved, regardless even of circumstances and certainly regardless of mental attitudes.

Too many cultures, in particular religious cultures, assume a superiority of their own, often because they know the words of their culture or religion and do not know other Scriptures. It is assumed that one has a superior religion or culture and this tends one to disrespect the religion and cultures of others. And then the Occult law operates because it is based on universal standards. God cannot be limited to any time or place of person or standard or anything. And when the young recognize it, they revolt against the standards of their parents and forefathers. Then it is assumed they have no standards but really it is a seeking of the soul for something more than narrow limitations.

All the Messengers of God have proclaimed love and compassion and all say that any code must be interpreted in the light of love and compassion. But the priestcraft of each has held on to the words and to the formula and rituals and built them up artificially. So the time comes when the nature in man and of man revolts against this artificiality and seeks something universal and in accord with the brotherhood of man.

GATHA: Man must be taught to consult his own spirit, and from his own feeling to find out and make distinction between right and wrong and good and bad.

TASAWWUF: While this the basic teaching of Kashf, it also permeates the prayers and moral teachings. There is light in man and part of the work of the Sufi Order is to unveil that light and let it shine out in everybody. And as the capacity for Light increases, and as the Light-functioning increases so also does the love and morality innate in everybody come to the surface and manifest.

GATHA: When this natural principle will be adopted by humanity the greater part of the world-misery will come to an end. This wrong and artificial standard is taught today to children at home and to young people at school. They begin to learn that it is wrong which they have heard others call wrong, that is right which they have read in a book that it is right; something is good because their parents have it is good, something is bad because their friends have told them so. An artificial standard made in this way buries the spirit, which alone has the right to discern between right and wrong, good and bad. On the day when people will arrive at the freedom of making their own standard by their own feelings, a better condition will come.

TASAWWUF: We see this is exactly what has occurred. The old standard was to praise a standard and even more to offer glorification to the person who gave the standard. The glorification was substituted for the following and fulfilling of standards and a pseudo-devotion was used instead of morality. Sooner or later the very laws of the universe caught up with this state of affairs.

Mohammed declared that every child was born a Muslim and that his parents took him away from it. But the parents brought a code, heterodox or orthodox and would not change the codes. The codes were handed down from generation to generation and natural morality was covered with artificiality and legality.

Jesus constantly taught that only little children were assured of the kingdom of heaven but constant repetition did not impress either his immediate followers or those of later generations. And there instead of a legal and moral code, theologies were substituted. They failed to satisfy the heart and soul and resulted in the appearance of many sects and cults. And this always leads to divisions and differences.

When Syed Moudani said to Inayat Khan, “By the power of thy music unite East and West,” it indicated that there existed a universal harmony into which all souls could fit. At first as it was music that was given, the people heard it as art and sound, they did not recognize the depths behind it. Then the deep philosophy was given and those that studied and pursued the deep philosophy began to realize it was for all people, not some; that it was more than code or theology and that it established standards and norms into which all humankind could fit.

With the awakening of heart a new spirit began to manifest beyond the artificial standards which had persisted for centuries. The young began to see that these standards meeting each other, fomented misunderstandings and wars and they began to revolt against their inheritance of wars, miseries, and misunderstandings.

One thing is certain, that a group seated, in or out of meditation, seeking guidance that comes from within, sooner or later finds an internal and external harmony. As they recognize both the internal and external harmony, not only the music of the day changes but the standards and ideals change. It is all there within; it comes out when man becomes more conscious of it and applies it to everyday life.

GATHA: For those searching after truth, journeying through the spiritual path, this is the first thing to learn, to find out for themselves under all conditions in life what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, not from what they are taught or told, but from their own feeling, which can be perceived by a delicate sense of realizing through life what really gives comfort and what causes discomfort.

TASAWWUF: There are several ways in which this can be done but all are based on Kashf, Insight. We find this in the instincts and also in the reactions of the nervous system. The nervous system reacts to all the vicissitudes of life and creates the samskaras or impressions which remain as sore spots in the mind. Some clever person has even said, “God may forgive your sins but your nervous system will not.” This is not true. When one is God-conscious, or even has a high development in Kashf, he is able to control and direct the nervous system.

We may consider instinct, impression and intuition, all different grades of the natural unfoldment of what is within. External study does not help much in the controlling of nerves. Meditation, by whatever system one applies does. All systems of meditation control the samskaras and what are called in the western world, “semantic reactions.” This control may be conscious of itself or it may be developed. Whatever means are used are beneficial.

But there is also an internal science called “Gnosis” or **Irfan** by which one applies the very sound **Al-lah** as well as the thought and feelings to each situation and this leads to mastery.

GATHA: Life is not made to be good and unhappy, life is made to be happy and therefore one has to be good—no happiness is to be sacrificed to goodness, but that goodness must be considered the real goodness which in its result is happiness.

TASAWWUF: Here we come back to the basic Indian philosophy especially of Vedanta. The question may arise as to its attainment. The Indians declared it but they did not always experience it. The Sufis, perhaps with a more scientific spirit, felt it was for everybody and that it was even more important than the rules or customs proclaimed for its attainment.

Buddha revolted against traditional Hinduism because the rules and traditions did not make the people happy. He sought to give prescriptions for happiness and it is remarkable that these prescriptions still work. One might imagine there, that they would be applied. But here again custom and tradition have set in and codes of limitations placed around them. It is necessary to remove these artificial barriers that all mankind can attain and experience the happiness. And this is done when one also upholds the moral standards; dispensing with them often establishes temporary satisfaction but only temporarily so.

Goodness is not life and yet goodness is not apart from life. The full experience of life and happiness also brings the maximum of goodness.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 8

### **The Impression of Illness and Weakness on the Mind**

GATHA: The action of every illness or weakness is more manifest in its impression on the mind. There are many people who after an illness that has lasted some time become so much impressed by it that even after their cure the impression remains. Therefore to those who suffer for many years from an illness, their illness becomes natural, becomes a part of themselves, and the obstacle to their cure is not the illness but the impression engraved on their mind.

TASAWWUF: There are stories in the literature and also in the book *Health* which verify this. It should be clear to devotees that we may be as our mind has made us; that is to say our ego is not our reality but a creature of our own thinking.

We see many examples of this that people are very often very unlike their parents, neither heredity nor environment (whatever that means) can explain marked differences. Nor can we determine either the qualities of the mind nor its depth from ancestry alone.

Modern psychology has introduced many principles not known in the previous two centuries any more than the conclusions reached by scientists in other fields were foreseen. There are at least two things here which may be called power of thought and power of suggestion. Unless one has great will power impressions may be fixated on the mind, and thus much has been written on the “psychological cause of disease.”

From another point of view we can see that impressions made early in life are much more powerful, more evident in character formation and even in the philosophy that one will follow later on.

GATHA: So it is with weakness or a defect of any sort. Very often a person confesses, “This is my defect, but I cannot help it.” If there is any weakness or defect, it is merely in the impression.

TASAWWUF: Now we are hearing blame on “environment.” It is no longer anybody’s fault. Jesus did ask if a boy’s infirmities arose out of his sins or those of his parents. He answered that rather so that the mercy of God could manifest. But apparently the Mercy of God does not always manifest. What then?

When all blame is placed on “environment” we must understand that this means nothing but “samsara” in the ordinary language. The superficial people of the day who do not think deeply think they solve problems by finding some word to act as the “devil” and they become overconcerned. When this occurs, there is no longer self-reliance or even self-will. Man cannot build himself up. He is giving way not so much to thought but to the absence of thought.

GATHA: When a person says, “There are moments when I lose my temper,” or when a person says, “I would like to tolerate, but I cannot stand that person,” his weakness is nowhere but in the impression he has in his mind.

TASAWWUF: And this in turn is nothing but the activity of his own nufs, or ego. If he has learned to control his breath he can learn to control his emotions and his mind. Therefore calmness has to be practiced, not a philosophy about calmness. This can become very confusing; it may be of no value, it may even be harmful.

Temper arises from lack of control of the Fire element and lack of toleration comes when the will-power diminishes, when there is ego-centricity. Sufis overcome this by concentrating in and with Heart.

GATHA: Therefore the best cure for every illness and weakness is denial of the same. Affirmation deepens the impression, and contemplation of it makes it worse. There is no harm in denying one's illness or weakness, for that is not telling a lie, as it does not exist in reality, it is merely a shadow. Truthful confession of something which is unreal is worse than a lie. One must first deny that to oneself, and then to others.

TASAWWUF: For this is identification with the external and the superficial. Man does not identify himself with his clothes, and perhaps not even with his habits. Whatever he thinks, he is likely to change those thoughts at some time or other. This shows he is neither his body, nor his actions, nor his thoughts. And when he begins to realize this non-identity, then he is able to use his inner faculties to dissociate himself with or from all that is disagreeable.

It may seem illogical that one can cure oneself of headache by saying it does not exist. But is it true that one cannot cure himself by denying it? Has the person who makes such a statement ever tried? Sufis are able to feel and breathe the word **Allah** into and with any afflicted part and by identification with **Allah** and so with perfection, the ailment often disappears.

There are many ways of removing impressions but all of them are connected with finding reality elsewhere than in the ego-self. It is the ego-self (nufs) that entertains all the suggestions of illness and weakness. And there are these ways of removing impressions—not thoughts about them, but actual methodologies. And in this, mysticism is far from current philosophies, concerned with thoughts about persons, thoughts about events, thoughts about realities, all confined to the ego-mind.

GATHA: The Sufi, whose ideal through life is the realization of God and His perfection, after realizing his ideal cannot say, "I cannot tolerate"—or "endure" or "stand"—anybody; and he cannot say that he cannot think, act or feel as he thinks right.

TASAWWUF: *The Mind World* presents the mind as a palace of mirrors. Where did the light come from? This is the Light which really lightens everything in the world, all the time. And this Light is Perfect and manifesting; but the mind, being in the function of mirroring, catches Light but does not create it and thinks that its phenomena **from** light is Light itself.

Once this self-centered attitude is broken, then one cannot and does not refuse. A pure mirror reflects all that comes to it without any reaction to it. Bad pictures do not destroy a mirror.

GATHA: The idea of the Sufi is always to suggest to oneself that which one wishes to be, that which one would like to be; and when he finds he failed to think, speak, or act as he wishes to, he must think the condition of the process is to fall several times before one gets one's balance, instead of thinking, "It is my weakness, I cannot do otherwise."

TASAWWUF: *Spiritual suggestion is always positive by nature and without limitation to its scope of applicability.* We can measure light, its intensity, its duration and all characteristics connected with it. We do not have the resistance and interference with light in the same way as with electricity and magnetism yet there is the phenomenon of “interference” with light. And when we think about it, there is something quite similar with interference to thought. But thought itself is real only when it is positive.

When a group of persons repeats, “There is no matter,” the psychological subject is positive, the verbalisation and the philosophy may be negative. **The mind cannot think not-being.** Whatever it thinks about it is in a sense creating. The verbal negatives have no standing in the universe.

The habit of negation leads to inferiority complexes, to masochism, to self-abasement, to false humility and other defects. These are all on the negative side.

It is not hypocrisy to establish positive standards. Every positive stand may be creative. If it is against the moral law, it will bring destruction, no doubt, but it will produce living phenomena. Self-abasement is like death. Besides all other faults, it is ego-centric. It acts as if there were no God; weakness, defects, shadowy and seamy things are made to seem real and they are not.

GATHA: Those who walk toward the perfection of power and wisdom take every step forward with a new hope and new courage; and weakness, to them, was a story of the past.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the lessons on Walk. You cannot have negative walks. You can walk backwards, but that is still a positive. It takes a battery to start walking backwards as well as a battery to start walking forwards. A positive action is required. The physical direction may be negative but the psychological direction is positive. Therefore there must be hope and courage and trust in order to be able to walk at all. And when this lesson is learned one can put into the step every form of magnetism, of blessing, of vitality so that the Walk even on the physical plane becomes a Walk with God.

The same is true psychologically with hopes, with endeavors, with goals. By the positive attitude, by the courage, by the direction, by the esoteric disciplines, one walks “forward” whenever and however one walks. Even self-effacement is, in a certain sense, a form of moving forward and onward.

GATHA: It does not exist any more, they don’t recognize such a thing as existing. They can’t accept themselves being what they don’t wish to.

TASAWWUF: **La Illaha**, verbally and grammatically negative, proclaims, “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.” The image of Perfection is One, and there can be no imperfection. With this feeling, with this attitude, one gets the spirit of Gayatri and not only from Saum, Salat, and Khatum but also from Pir, Nabit, and Rassoul. And one may be finding all these within one.

In the Bodhisattvic training this is what happens, that one becomes the Bodhisattva oneself. And in the Walk this is exactly what one learns, and achieves.

The positive side is promoted in all the Aphorisms. We may take any subject from *Gayan* or *Vadan* or *Nirtan* for meditation and it can become our reality by merging into it, by realizing it. And when one realizes the Aphorisms of a Pir, one merges into the essence of the Pir. It has been taught that the

Sifat (Qualities) of Allah and His Essence (Zat) are one. So also the qualities and essence of the Pir and of all the spiritual teachers are one.

GATHA: They picture themselves as their ideal, what they would like to be. Some time or other in their lives—if not sooner, later—they certainly succeed in moulding their life to their ideal.

TASAWWUF: **El Il Allah:** This is the positive side, and the positive side really begins and ends in perfection. We do not have to think positively, we do not have to think at all. But we must not think negatively for this is destructive to ourselves and to others. And when we feel the All-Abiding Presence there can be only a positive attitude. For God is trying to express Himself in and through all of us.

At the Bayat the applicant accepts that God is the **Only Being**. It is by learning to identify oneself with the **Only Being** Who is Perfection and Perfect-ability that one overcomes one's own shortcomings. Thinking and living perfection is not self-deceit nor hypocrisy. It is bringing to the surface our own reality. And in this reality is the blossoming of all our latent powers which is one of the three purposes of the Sufi movement. It is only too often forgotten.

The work of the Teacher is to bring out the Perfection and Perfectibility in every disciple. And perhaps in everybody, disciple and non-disciple alike.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 9

### **Keeping the Mind in a Pure Condition**

GATHA: All that exists lives on its own element, springs from its own element, and returns to its own element. So earth to earth, water to water, fire to fire, and air to air.

TASAWWUF: This is a teaching we find behind all the religions. Even Buddhism which in one place affirms anicca, that all forms are subject to incessant change, does not face whether or not these elements are real. It proclaims that all bodies return to their original elements.

In Zen Buddhism, there is a koan that all things return to the One, but to where does the one return. The answer is that the person asking such a question is assuming that there is a One and that it is real, but how can the One, the real **return**: the very thought or word “return” suggests naively that there is other than the One. So there is confusion.

Rumi is much more clear on this subject for he proclaims that these five elements are subject to the creator, the One.

The next enigma is that in such a statement it remains only a statement until one finds the realities behind it. How do we know it is true? How do we know it is merely a grammatical utterance without any life of substance behind it? This is part of esoteric development to find the realities in these elements and also the Reality behind these elements.

GATHA: Purification means to make a certain object itself; nothing added, nothing foreign attached to it which does not belong to it. These two rules make one understand the process by which the mind could be nourished and purified.

TASAWWUF: The first stage is studying the verbal cover of the Message. Then to meditate upon it. But beyond that there is the uncovering, the experience, the realization.

This process of Purification is taught in the early stages of discipleship but it must go on. For what is learned first is the mental picture and not the reality beyond the picture. The Lesser Mysteries were ceremonies wherein anybody could be shown a picture; the Greater Mysteries were concerned with transformations, wherein one actually experienced a rebirth, a becoming into what one had not been, but perhaps becoming what one really is.

In the studies and particularly on Mysticism one learns about the nature and behavior of the Elementals and also their purification.

GATHA: The mind is nourished by thoughts and impressions that are harmonious and productive of beauty and which result in satisfaction. For harmony is the nature of the soul, beauty is its source and goal, and by harmony and beauty the mind is nourished, as it is made of harmony and beauty.

TASAWWUF: In the Tamasic stage there is no thinking going on at all, and the mind becomes negatively blank. There is no life. In the Rajasic stage, there is always action going on, good and ill. There are the impressions, samskaras which produce everything good and bad and keep the mind active, even in turmoil. Both the Tamas and Rajas belong to Samskara.

In the Sattvic stage, although one does not necessarily rise above the samskaras, one works with the harmony and beauty. One way to do this is simply watching the breath. One can by Fikr and other means establish a “pure breath.” And anything that alters that pure breath is productive of more samskaras and produces dissonances. But by watching the breath one can determine whether a thought or mental process is in “tune with infinity.”

The disciples are often asked to repeat mentally or even verbally, “Toward the One, etc ...” This establishes a foundation. This foundation leads to and maintains love and harmony and beauty. It is a process not a philosophy; it is a practice and experience, not a goal. It is one’s own reality.

There is also Mantra Yoga which performs what is done with Wazifas but also with chanting and melodies and this also helps to establish and retain harmony and beauty in the mind. And as the Names of God are repeated, this forms a ceiling of purification and perfection which is most important.

GATHA: And the same elements are needed to purify the mind of all undesirable thoughts and impressions, harmony as water and beauty as soap, purifying the mind of all things which are void of harmony and beauty.

TASAWWUF: The superficial processes merely present the words. It does not change anything. People read books, listen to lectures, even memorize and they do not change. You do not produce water by repeating the word “water” often and yet this has been true in all ages, that verbal repetitions have been substituted for acts of purification.

There is the extreme opposite that one takes the very essence of mind and stops all thinking. There is a pure Zen which permits this, even compels this which like the winding of the motor and then when the motor operates, it operates with efficacy. But there is also a false Zen which is the discarding of the motor and one becomes like an idiot, useless and without moral character.

The complete purification is also taught by Sufis but in a different way from the Zen Buddhists. The goals are the same but the processes different. What is important is the attainment of the goal, and thinking is not a process by which the mind can be purified, The mind cannot correct the mind by the mind, it must go deeper.

Harmony can be obtained by rhythm of breath and then refinement. The harmony is taught first, then the refinement. The refined breath comes from the etheric element and at the same time by refining the breath (Blessed are the poor in Spirit) the capacity for the akasha is increased. Whichever way one approaches it the goal and achievements are the same, or similar. And then Beauty comes also by the increase in the Jemalic capacity, by restraining Power, developing it but never using it.

GATHA: The first thing in purifying the mind is to be able to discern the foreign element there. As all that is foreign to the body does not agree with the body, making it ill, so all that is foreign to the mind disturbs the peace of the mind, and it is that which proves that it does not belong to the mind: ...

TASAWWUF: Safa, or purification may seem negative. We have to consider what is natural to the mind and what is foreign to the mind. What is natural to the mind exhilarates it; what is foreign debases and fatigues. The words “good” and “bad” are either relative or conceptual. For what some would call “good” will enervate mind. What is harmful to the generality, what is pleasing only to the ego will in the end weaken the mind, for it is not only that “God is good” but this is operative through the universe, quite apart from any thoughts or ethics or philosophies on man’s part.

Yes, there are processes of mind comparable to the cleansing of the body. What is not needed is discarded whether in time or by positive processes. And so Meditations and Concentrations are also practices of purification.

GATHA: ... such things as worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow, or any sort of disturbance that takes away the tranquility of the mind, preventing it from experiencing that joy and peace for which it longs and in which alone is its satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: We can cleanse the body of certain poisons by various processes of elimination. The same is true of the mind too, but the intellectual processes will not do it. They cannot get rid of their impediments by themselves. It is almost like asking a broom to clean itself.

It may be questioned whether there are any virulent diseases not accompanied by negative emotions; indeed they may so be caused. In the book, *Health*, the psychological cause of disease is discussed at some length. But still worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow, and disturbance continue because of the persistence of nufs, the ego. We are looking upon these evils apart from the ego, and so we do not get rid of them.

Esoteric exercises (Ryazat) disregard the ego and so discard the ego. The positing of God transcends any ego-operation. So in the end Health becomes a spiritual operation. But it is also true that the diseases arise from the negative aspect of the impurity of the elements, of their being contaminated by each other and also by the types of thoughts that the mind entertains and maintains.

The purification of the elements by the ether (akasha) and by the Divine Presence removes the privations and negations. As the capacity for Baraka and the Divine Light increases, the negations go. And as worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow and disturbances go, one obtains purity and health of mind and body.

GATHA: There are many who do not know the importance of keeping the mind in a pure and harmonious condition, and the few who know it find it difficult to bring about better conditions in practical life. In the first place it is difficult to accomplish outward duties, to answer the demands of life, and yet to keep the mind in perfect tranquility. It needs the knowledge of purifying the mind of all external influences. And the way one can manage it can be said in a few words: To throw away inharmony by the power of harmony and to wash away all that lacks beauty by preserving the great power of beauty within oneself.

TASAWWUF: This is now being done by Walk and Dance. We do not need any philosophical impressions which fail in their aims. Sufism is based on experiences and these experiences may be at all levels. We live and move and have our being in the Presence of God. We draw in the Divine Essence

with every breath, with every concentration and every repetition of the Divine Name or the facultatives thereof. Power and Beauty are awakened together in, with and from perfection.

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 10

### **Keeping the Mind Free From All Undesirable Impressions**

GATHA: The best way of keeping the mind free from all undesirable impressions is not to partake of them at the moment when they fall upon the mind.

TASAWWUF: Everybody is subject to impressions from the daily newspaper, the radio, the television, and passing vehicles, and all sorts of devices, including the efforts of groups of people to arouse public opinion. Whether the cause is good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, it sets up vibrations and all vibrations disturb the mind just as all waves and tides interfere with the absolute tranquility of the ocean.

Adepts keep their attention on God which does not make them unaware of what is going on, only then what is going on does not make any impression. It is no more important than the toys and paraphernalia of children's playgrounds are to serious adults.

GATHA: For instance, if someone is disagreeable, instantly his influence produces the same thing in another person with whom he is disagreeable. The best way to avoid it would be to stand on one's guard that one may not catch his infectious disagreeableness. All such things as pride, prejudice, jealousy, intolerance, coldness, have a great influence upon a person.

TASAWWUF: There is a symbol of the three monkeys with their hands over their ears, their eyes, their lips and the interpretation has been, "With my eyes I shall see no evil; with my ears I shall hear no evil; with my lips I shall speak no evil." And there has been such attachment to the slogan that no effort is made to follow it. People who repeat the words think they are good, or avoid the karma of ill.

And there is another interpretation that instead of avoiding some subjectivity called "evil" one avoids what is disagreeable, disturbing. And one can do that with will-power and esoteric development. It is not necessary to distinguish good and ill, only to know what is disturbing and what is pleasant.

We do not get rid of the harmful emotions by our own efforts; we have to watch over ourselves. Adepts practice watching the surface of the heart, to keep it free from all disturbances. But all devotees may watch the breath and be aware of breath and be on guard when the breath is disturbed.

In the previous lesson certain negative emotions were presented, which one may call of a lower order. Pride, prejudice, jealousy, intolerance, and coldness may be said to be of a higher order. They come with developed minds, even thinking people may have them and sometimes development of mind encourages them instead of otherwise. So mental development alone is quite apart from spirituality.

GATHA: When speaking, working, or walking with someone, one can easily partake one's companion's disagreeable impulses, because as a rule a person thinks there is justification for giving it back, a word for a word, a frown for a frown. A person feels satisfied in boasting, "He said two words to me, but I gave him back the same in four words." He feels very glad for the moment, thinking, "I have given back what I had received." But he does not know that if he had not given it back, the same that the other person had thrown upon him would have returned to that person a thousand-fold.

TASAWWUF: There is a story of Lord Buddha, when somebody asked him about anger. The Tathagata asked about gifts, when they were proffered and accepted them, who owned them; and when they were offered and refused, who owned them. And so it is with anger and ill-will, if they are accepted, they are accepted and if they are refused, they return to the donor.

The intellectual view of moral culture does not help much. It is like memorizing a cook-book and presuming one had food. All the words, all the rules mean nothing unless one partakes of them in actuality. And so there is the whole book of *Moral Culture* and the profound commentary on it. It can be like a book of fiction; it can be like a book of non-fiction with intellectual content; or it can become the norm of life.

GATHA: The psychological point of view therefore differs from the ordinary point of view, for in the psychological point of view there is a science; it teaches one not to take in one's mind what is disagreeable, inharmonious.

TASAWWUF: No doubt we have to experience the sun, the rain, the wind but only to a certain extent. We can stay in during thunderstorms, and we can also protect ourselves against heat and cold. This is also true in the mind world, we can protect or we can participate, and mostly the ego wishes to participate.

In the end what is important is neither avoidance nor participation, but the maximization of love, harmony and beauty. These stand not only as ideals but as potential experiences for everybody.

GATHA: By understanding this one can maintain the purity of mind, and it requires fortifying oneself with will-power, making the heart as a stone wall, for all that is thrown at it not to pierce through, but to fall down.

TASAWWUF: One teaching is that the mind should be like rubber to receive cuts without suffering and yet like a stone wall so that all that is thrown at it will not penetrate at all. But there is a warning always that such a belief without the transforming experience may be worse than useless. We become caught in the webs of thought.

At a certain time mureeds are given the Heart concentration. It is not only symbolic but also there is concentration on the actual physical heart. When one asks which is more real, which the more important, this is already making a division. When these divisions are made there is confusion. The two go together, the using a symbol outside for Murakkabah and the feeling of the body inside and also feeling the body within the body, which comes in the deep concentration. The deeper and stronger the feeling the greater the power of concentration.

GATHA: The psychological effect of every impression is such that each impression has a tendency to be held in the mind; all we see during the day has, consciously or unconsciously, an influence upon our life.

TASAWWUF: This has long been known to scientific psychologists, and every sense-impressions produces some samskara. So long as samskaras are produced there is activity and not peace within. The question arises, can we have activity and peace within? The answer is that when we feel the peace within, then we make a fortress of it, we become like giant precipices which are not disturbed by the waves (e.g. the Rock of Gibraltar). Then we can stand firm against all the affairs of life.

GATHA: All good or bad things, or things with beauty or ugliness, they remain with us and flourish in our minds. If it was an impression of beauty, that would flourish; if it was an impression of ugliness, that would flourish.

TASAWWUF: Alchemy is a science and an art. The adept can take the person involved and the facts and factors and work toward purification and harmony. This is called "transmutation." If we give in to disturbances we remain in the same grade or even regress a little. The Christian Bible in the Book of Revelations states what happens to "him that overcomes," but this is literature until one internalizes it. It may be asked what is to be overcome? The answer is those same negative emotions which have been presented in our lessons whether envy, or jealousy, or pride, or ill-will, or any negative emotions.

A great mistake has been made in the interpretation of the Christian Bible in the confusion because of evil and sin. Jesus has emphasized getting rid of evil and religion getting rid of sin. It is only the perfect who surmount sin, and it does not always matter. But evil is another thing. Only what is evil actually? The Sufi would say that all that disturbs the mind and the heart internally or externally could be called evil. It is something man really does not want, that does him no benefit.

We can have all the philosophies about impressions, we can have creeds, rituals, ceremonies but they do not lessen the effect of impressions on the mind until some discipline is established. The best discipline is the positive Love and this comes when one feels the Divine Presence. From the Divine Presence, all positive attributes come. Man has them, they are in him but not always awakened.

GATHA: This is the principle reason why dreams have effect upon our life. It is the impression that the dream has made upon us that works out its destiny in our waking state. Therefore, if by being on one's guard, instead of resisting evil one would only slide it over, it would run away by its force.

TASAWWUF: We easily learn how to avoid the impressions of dreams, we regard them as unreal. Sometimes we regard them as so unreal we do not avail ourselves of their lessons. But the waking state would not be different, only we accept the impressions from the waking state, we allow them to affect us. We may learn a lesson from them and may not. But all life is, in some respects, like a series of dreams. And as we let the tour-de-force of dreams go by, we can also let the tour-de-force of all waking impressions, especially evil or unfavorable ones, to slide by.

GATHA: However good a person, if he easily partakes impressions, he cannot be trustworthy. The one who has no will-power cannot even trust himself. There is no will-power in fighting with another, one shows will-power in fighting with self. The one who is strong enough to keep away from

his mind all undesirable impressions will in time radiate harmony and will create the atmosphere of peace; thus making himself happy, he will bring happiness to others.

TASAWWUF: This is the aim and goal of every spiritual Teacher. He cannot expect perfection from others, especially disciples. But in order to bring out the good side in them, he must work increasingly and unceasingly for love, peace and joy as operative elements, to dominate his life. He must regard all disciples as his charges, and his hope and aim is always in this direction of increment of love and peace and joy, and the disappearance of disharmony, pain, and disease.

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