



Gatha with Commentary

Tasawwuf: Metaphysics

Series I

*of*

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*by*

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 1

### **Belief**

GATHA: Belief is a natural tendency, the tendency to accept knowledge without doubt. Every soul is born with this tendency to accept every knowledge that is given to it, in whatever way or form.

TASAWWUF: The soul does not accept or reject. These are outcomes of mind and ego. The soul is pure and tends to regard all else as pure. If this were not so there could be neither education nor propaganda for these both depend upon the receptivity of others. Therefore also spiritual advancement may depend on safa, or purification, to remove everything that is not natural.

GATHA: Therefore no soul in this world is born an unbeliever. There is a saying of the Prophet, "Every soul is born a believer, and it is others that make the soul an unbeliever." This unbelief comes by the conflict of one's knowledge and belief.

TASAWWUF: The soul is pure light and it also sees the light from others. If it were not for that there could be neither education nor propaganda. Everyone would be a skeptic until it was proven otherwise, but instead everyone is a natural believer until it is proven otherwise.

A great mistake has been made in certain religions to regard children as damned or otherwise unfortunate. There is no precedent for this in Scriptures or in the teachings of any wise man. It has come through the intervention of the ego-outlook. Once the ego is given sway, then the light innate in the soul is covered; there is confusion and out of this confusion comes ignorance.

GATHA: Belief has two tendencies. One is the tendency of water that runs, and the other is that of water that becomes frozen. Some people who have a belief like to keep that belief unchanged as a rock, and identify their ego with that belief.

TASAWWUF: A great deal of harm has arisen from the identification of wisdom with age. No doubt there is a wisdom which is found mostly among the mature, but very rarely one may find it more among the less mature. That is because the natural wisdom and purity, found in children, had been debased by ego and society. It is necessary to help mankind return to what has been called "the natural state."

The pliant soul is the one who may succeed. As people grow older and become like rocks, whatever else may be their success, it is not spiritual success. And yet there is something rocklike in the faith which rises when man has had that type of experience which assures him of truth. We find both the pliable and the crystalline in life, and both are necessary. Even in the affairs of each of us, both attitudes may be necessary at one time or another.

GATHA: People of this temperament are steady in their belief, but often they lack progress. If they happen to have a right belief, there is the danger of their giving it up; but if it is not right they are perplexed.

TASAWWUF: There is a question as to what is a “right belief.” There are many standards for it, such as tradition, custom, the prevailing attitudes, and also one’s personal philosophy. Yet candidates are told that a Sufi must not be so fixed in principles that he cannot change to meet different circumstances. The way of heart is beyond that of codes.

GATHA: Those whose belief is like running water perhaps go from one belief to another, and they may not seem steady in their belief, yet their life is progressive. The progressive soul can never hold one belief, and must change and go on changing until it arrives at the ultimate truth.

TASAWWUF: There is a teaching that evolution applies to all things and not just to biological processes. Also Lord Buddha taught that everything is subject to change. And we also teach in Sufism that there are many grades of development and the aspirant is expected to progress from grade to higher grade.

Of course the practices given by the teacher are different to each of these types and the concentrations and disciplines are available for the benefit of everybody.

GATHA: For a simple person steadiness of belief is more advantageous than change, for change may lead him astray. But for an intelligent person it is natural and necessary that he must go from belief to belief until he arrives at his final convictions.

TASAWWUF: The whole course of spiritual development which we find connected with the different religions on their esoteric sides is based on the assumption of change, both in the sense of growth and of expansion. The symbol and similes found in the literatures also either assume or assert this.

We have two types of people presented here, the simple and intelligent, and both of these types are found among the devotees who experience ultimate reality. The simple people generally reach the goal before adding to their intelligence.

GATHA: Belief is of four kinds. The first kind is a belief accepted because it is believed by all.

TASAWWUF: There are several types of this belief and one comes from instinctive or scientific knowledge, mostly connected with physiological aspects of life.

But there are also those beliefs which are picked up because they are in the sphere. As a person breathes in a certain atmosphere, he also picks up the thought forms which are there. Breathing is not only a matter of body, but also of mind and we draw in mental vibrations. So that which is commonly accepted will impress one. And often there are ages when there is common agreement and the content of this common agreement may prove to be true or false at another age. But hardly anybody will dare to protest.

Very often this leads to persecution or intolerance. The ego does not discriminate and what is impressed in it is often accepted as if a great truth, but even if it be true there is no greatness behind it.

GATHA: The second is a belief accepted because it is believed by someone in whom the believer trusts.

TASAWWUF: In this lies the foundation of education, of every kind of education, from the first effort to bring child and teacher together to the highest echelons of instruction and investigation. The western educationalists have often taken this for granted and trouble has arisen.

In India they say the parents are the first teachers. By that means a certain relationship is set up. Then this relationship is transferred to teachers and gurus, but the foundation has been laid, and mostly this is based on trust. In the West it was based on authoritarianism even where authoritarianism has been derided.

GATHA: The third belief is the belief that reason helps one to believe.

TASAWWUF: This has given us both scientific knowledge and the scientific outlook. Many say science is against religion. It is not that science is against religion. It is that in science reason is called in to support one's beliefs. This sort of reason can also be brought in other matters. And even where it is not, one need not go contrary to reason—a subject to be taken up in a later study.

GATHA: The fourth belief is conviction of which one is as sure as if one were an eyewitness.

TASAWWUF: And very often this belief comes because one has been an eyewitness. But there is also involved here *Kashf*, or *Insight*, by which one knows, whether he can explain it or not, and in the end this always proves to be true. Indeed, without *Intuition* few scientific discoveries would be made and the difference between the way scientists tell their stories and others tell the stories of the scientists is often very great. For to be a scientist, one is not a trained skeptic: a trained skeptic would hardly be able to add to knowledge. One has to have the open consciousness.

GATHA: The four kinds of belief are held by souls of different grades of evolution in life and different temperaments. There is a knowledge which one can perceive with the senses, and there is a knowledge which one can perceive with the mind alone; and a knowledge which can be realized by the soul.

TASAWWUF: We find this especially as a theme in Mahayana Buddhism, that there have been schools which varied on the importance they put on the sense-life or also the unimportance they put on it. And it is difficult to say whether any one school is necessarily right or wrong. And later schools saw the different points of view and gave scope for all.

GATHA: And it is for this reason that when a person wishes to touch a thing which can only be perceived, and when a person wishes to feel a thing which can only be realized spiritually, he naturally becomes an unbeliever.

TASAWWUF: Or else he becomes a blind believer, which we call being credulous, to believe without any foundation. Both are states of ego. And when it comes to profound knowledge, it is not always possible for everybody to think clearly and thoroughly. So at some point trust comes in and even those who regard themselves as thorough unbelievers or skeptics, at some point in their lives, on certain subjects they operate almost entirely on trust and do not consider it.

GATHA: In point of fact one person's belief cannot be another person's belief; every belief is peculiar to the person who holds it. Even if two persons held one belief, there would still be the difference of the point of view, even though it be as small as the difference between two roses.

TASAWWUF: Nor is this necessary. In the tuning of the piano, if there is not a slight difference between the strings, one might get a metallic or unresonant sound, instead of a beautiful and harmonious one. Or as is taught elsewhere, “Unity is not uniformity.” So it is more important to have attunement of heart than intellectual agreement.

GATHA: Therefore it is unjust, no doubt, on the part of one person to try to press his own belief on another. At the same time the person who refuses to try to understand the belief of another, from bigotry or pride, closes the door of his heart, that otherwise would have let that knowledge come in.

TASAWWUF: It is declared that a Sufi is one who sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself. It does not easily follow. One has to have a point of view to become anchored. One can agree with everybody; this is not a point of view at all. It is like the Bible teaches, “A reed blown by the wind.” There is no substance in it. The Sufi has a strong point of view but not an exclusive one and tries to practice harmony with all people. If he has no point of view, there is no harmony, there is only the suppression of one’s own notes, and then there is no music at all.

GATHA: There are two tendencies that can be developed in a person, either constantly to try to believe whatever comes before him, or to try to disbelieve whatever is presented to him. And there is an advantage and a disadvantage in each of these tendencies.

TASAWWUF: We see this among the political people who are of the same party: whatever they say is defended and whatever they do is upheld; and as for those of other groups, whatever they do or say is not always acceptable. And this sort of belief and skepticism is nothing but an outcome of ego, it has no substance.

GATHA: The advantage of the believing tendency is the taking of every chance of acquiring knowledge, the disadvantage is that one takes the chance of often and readily falling into error.

TASAWWUF: For this reasons disciples are trained not only to discipline the mind but to awaken Insight (Kashf) in their own beings. Then the problem of knowledge or error never arises. One begins to feel what is true and false in every situation.

GATHA: But the advantage of the disbelieving tendency is only the protection from error, and its disadvantage is the prevention of every chance of further acquisition of knowledge.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed, chiefly, of all spiritual teachers, put the emphasis on knowledge. No doubt the devotees who followed have put the emphasis elsewhere. And when the emphasis was put elsewhere it led to the gradual downfall of Islamic culture. Persons of egocentric outlook can always find excuses for their attitudes and operations. And therefore many do not heed their own intuitions and remain as if fixed in life; they do not progress, they do not grow.

GATHA: Nature has very many covers; its activity covers and uncovers it. With every covering and uncovering it is natural that the belief of the individual should change. Therefore when a Sufi is asked, “Do you believe in this, or that?” he says, “My belief is for me, yours is for you, there is no faith to which I give my unchanging belief, nor any belief that I reject without having investigated it.” If you are asked, “What belief does the Sufi teach?” you may say, “No belief, but he helps the pupil to seek and find within himself his own belief.”

TASAWWUF: Actually we find this in life with most of us. Many may adhere to one form of religion or one political belief, and they may change their ideas about the arts or music or clothes or anything. For life is subject to change and those who do not change are not fully alive. Therefore it is foolish to impose ideas and opinions on others for one may change one's own ideas and opinions also.

The world of belief is a changing world, a temporary one. Thus one does go from belief to belief in many aspects of life.

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Series I: Number 2

### Faith

GATHA: Faith can be defined by two words, “self-confidence” and “certainty in expectation.” Faith in no way signifies certainty without expectation, nor confidence with evidence.

TASAWWUF: There is a certain amount of consideration of this subject in the sacred books of many religions, which also are sometimes called “faiths.” But in translations from one language to another, sometimes words are used which do not mean exactly the same and this causes a confusion and when there is not an exact relationship between words and psychological states, or experiences, sometimes a certain mood, which is not always a correct one, is substituted for the original one. That is why some religionists hold that their Scriptures cannot be translated.

For instance the Greek “pistis” and the Hebrew “amunah” indicate heart-states in which the mind is not involved; while the Latin “credo” is rather a blind mental and emotional states. The Greek-Hebrew terms may surpass the mind and be supermental, and the Latin and European words may be submental. The effect is that in some places faith means an awakening of consciousness to a higher level and in other places it means the stilling of the consciousness and what might even be called “brainwashing.”

GATHA: All things in life are appointed from eternity for a certain time; every experience and every knowledge comes in its own time. No doubt in this free will plays a certain part, as destiny plays a great part.

TASAWWUF: The sage, King Solomon, has said, “There is a time for all things.” And this would indicate that there is law in the universe, perhaps much like karma which establishes action and reaction, and destiny. If this were all there could hardly be progress, but rather it would mean deterioration and not rebuilding.

If we examine the Indian point of view, God is both creator-builder and destroyer. This means there is an essence of rebuilding at all times. And this is because there is a movement which may be called **Will**. Will in one sense is an interposition in the universe and it reaches its acme in man, who acts both in his own right and also as the intermediary for Providence, or God.

GATHA: We make our road in life by our expectations. Things that we have not attained to we look forward to, and hope to attain; ideals that we wish to reach we expect to reach some day. And that which determines our success in attaining our ideal is faith.

TASAWWUF: That is to say Faith is something implanted in the heart of man which urges him forward in directions both known and unknown. It is not always intelligible. It often gives man a “yes” or “no.” Optimist and pessimist alike feel some urge and this urge is deeper than the free-will. It makes possible all the patience, strength, and determination in life.



GATHA: It is faith that uncovers things veiled with a thousand covers; it is faith that attracts things almost out of reach. The distance between heaven and earth, the difference between life and death can be bridged by faith.

TASAWWUF: This is a subject which is also discussed in the literature. It was taught that there are three stages; (a) faith; (b) love; (c) knowledge. One does not build up “true” faith by destroying faith. Faith may be deepened; if it be destroyed it often leaves man in a state of doubt or confusion, and it is very difficult to build positive knowledge on that.

Thus faith is an accommodation in mind, which also helps the mind to grow. Without it there would be no adding to knowledge. It makes the mind capable of reception and this attitude is necessary no matter what it is the mind becomes capable of grasping.

GATHA: There is blind faith, and there is faith which is not blind. Faith is blind when its power is small and reason does not support it; then faith may be called blind.

TASAWWUF: There have been ages which are called “dark ages” and during them the mind of man was not active; the inventive genius was dead. One was expected to accept whatever was told him and to change anything was regarded as harmful. The result was stasis. Society became fixed; knowledge dormant. Yet there are many groups of religious people throughout the world that have maintained that attitude, and who say that that was what was meant when Jesus said we should become like little children. Little children accept but little children have the capacity for change and growth. Often the orthodox accept but have not the capacity for change and growth. This is the blind faith.

GATHA: But in fact the mind has all power. Every expectation that it has will certainly be fulfilled sooner or later; it may not be in a certain limited time, but in eternity it will be fulfilled.

TASAWWUF: There is a seed in man which contains his purpose. It may be a little seed, but as the Hindus teach us, it has the universal power in it. It is so easy to say that God is a circle whose center is everywhere, but when it comes to applied knowledge the sayers do not always believe their own words. Yet the words are correct. And whether it be something in the mind of God, so to speak, or in the mind of man—who has been created in the Divine Image, these seeds determine the evolution of the world, the fulfillment of the entire purpose and the fulfillment of everyone’s purpose.

GATHA: Faith is the power of the mind; without faith the mind is powerless.

TASAWWUF: The faith is there. It does not have to be imposed from without. When it is imposed it is like two faiths occupying the same accommodation and then there will be a conflict. Free-will means simply that man has his particular purpose and unconsciously he works to accomplish that purpose. And he lives on and on, so to speak, until that purpose is accomplished.

GATHA: When faith leads and reason follows success is sure; but when reason leads and faith follows success is doubtful. Faith causes the attitude of the mind, the influence of the attitude of mind works psychically upon every affair.

TASAWWUF: There is action and interaction between all things, all thoughts. The universe is not sterile even when it seems to be running down hill. Faith is the reflection of the eternal purpose in man and reason is only an operation of the temporal sphere, seeking a harmony to please the ego.

The great discoveries and inventions have made use of reason but they have not arisen from reason. If reason were so wonderful, it would follow that either all problems could be solved, or that there could arise no problems at all.

GATHA: The belief, “My friend is faithful to me and is helping me,” by itself influences the helper. And when there is a doubting attitude—“Perhaps my friend or my agent is faithful to me, perhaps not”—then the fact is made doubtful.

TASAWWUF: In other words one must hold oneself together. It is the unity of purpose and effort within and not dependence upon others. If one cannot trust another, he should not select him as friend or agent. These operations depend on trust.

GATHA: Faith can bring a surer and speedier cure than medicine, and both success and failure in life depend very much upon faith.

TASAWWUF: The mind has the capacity of operating as an instrument for the power-wisdom which is in the very space. Without faith there is the inability to bring this power into focus and use, to bring this wisdom into focus and use. And once the consciousness of man is unified, he can grow even to the grade of superman.

GATHA: Man rides upon the elephant and controls tigers by the power of faith. The great people of the world, the greatest people, are great more by their faith than by anything else, because mostly great people have been adventurous and at the back of a venture is faith, nothing else.

TASAWWUF: Faith is thus the outpouring of heart. This becomes increased when there is Faith in the existence of Divinity in Whom we live and move and have our being, who is in and out of us and around us and on all sides. Then there is nothing to fear, it is weakness which produces fear.

We can see this in strong rulers. Men regarded as bad, like Hitler and Mussolini, nevertheless had faith. Tyrants have faith. Despots have faith. But those who depend upon the will of the majority do not always have a strong central faith and so do not always accomplish so much.

GATHA: Reason can strengthen faith, but things that are beyond reason can be reached by faith alone. If faith is limited by reason it is held down so that it cannot rise, but when faith is independent of reason it is raised by the force of the ideal, and then reason has scope to advance and reach the ideal.

TASAWWUF: Reason of itself has sometimes been called **tautology**, that it can not add to knowledge but can systematize it. There is something else needed for growth. The reason is innate in the mind no doubt, but it does not bring power and zest. It may be symbolized by Epimetheus, the Greek hero who was held far inferior to his brother Prometheus, which means verbally, “forethought.” It was Prometheus who brought down the fire from heaven.

GATHA: Those who believe in an ideal and those who do not have both arrived at their conviction by faith; in the former it is positive, in the latter negative.

TASAWWUF: If conclusions were reached by reason, then people would be agreeing all the time. But they do not agree on the facts as being real, or accept the same facts, or utilize facts in the same way as in what they call “reason.” The result is that reason itself may be regarded as unreasonable, which is also the subject for study among the members of the Elementary Circle.

To work out one’s purpose in life there must be the positive attitude. Negation holds one in one’s place; it can protect against evils, but it is for man to change, for man to grow.

GATHA: An unbeliever asked a believer, “If there were no God then would not all your prayers and expectations be in vain?” The believer answered, “If there be no God, and if my prayers are vain and all that I have done for God is lost, then I am in the same case as you, but if He exists, then I have the advantage.” Faith is natural and its negative is unnatural.

TASAWWUF: We can see it in the attitudes of people. The believer is open to life and the unbeliever has closed out something. He leaves no scope for that which is beyond his intelligence. He is unconsciously assuming all knowledge to be his possession but he does not know it. So it is not surprising that many scientists are believers and many non-scientists, who think they are championing something they call “science” against something they call “religion,” are mostly very confused people.

GATHA: As all things in this artificial world are made by faith so the whole creation is made by the faith of the divine mind. Therefore, as the divine mind has been able to create all by faith, so man by this divine attribute can rise to the source of his being.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in good cooks, that after a while they do not need the recipes. It is not only that they have remembered, it is also they have a certain feeling. That feeling brings them into harmony both with the ingredients of their food and the processes of preparation whether raw or cooked, and in turn adds to the taste and appreciation.

Man is a minuscule replica of the divine. He has the potentialities. And as his faith moves in accord with harmony it follows laws of the unseen, not rules.

GATHA: Thought, speech and action without faith are as body without life. All things by faith are made alive, for faith is the life of all things.

Think what joy trust brings, and what a feeling of suffocation doubt brings! When a person does not trust another that means that he has no confidence in himself; he is not happy through this. It would be no exaggeration to say that material loss resulting from misplaced confidence is better than all profit resulting from unjustified suspicion.

TASAWWUF: Love is the greatest of positive forces. We cannot have it through negation, we cannot have it unless there is an outpouring to another, with another. And as we feel the heart-pulse of another and trust in him, so there is an increase of our own self-assurance.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 3

### **Hope**

GATHA: Hope is a quality sometimes dependent on its object, sometimes independent of it, and these two different aspects of hope are the cause of two different natures, the optimistic and the pessimistic.

TASAWWUF: St. Paul presented that Faith, Hope, and Love were the fundamentals of religion. But in history Faith, often blind faith, has taken over the reins entirely; love has been given a second place and hope is omitted. You can pass all kinds of theological tests without being hopeful, indeed the opposite.

If it were not for hope, man, from the age of early studying throughout life might become a living corpse. This is the attitude of Tamas, which is found in some places, and then people attribute everything to destiny or karma and do nothing about it. This is doubly defeating.

GATHA: When the dependent nature is developed it makes man a pessimist, and when hope stands alone, without dependence, this develops optimism. The optimistic person compared to the pessimistic may seem blind, and no doubt, he is at times blind. But without doubt, as blind people develop a faculty of doing things without sight which people with seeing cannot do, so the optimist can accomplish things without knowing how or why.

TASAWWUF: It is not enough to ascribe Love and Intelligence to a Supreme Being. How would such a Supreme Being act? How would a Loving God behave toward His offspring? Therefore the very being of God instills a power in the heart of man; this power operates independently of time and conditions. And so it has been that heroes like Robert Bruce or Babar, the Mogul invader of India, were instilled with a great innate power which brought all victory in the end.

In Sufism all the positive qualities are encouraged. It is not of much value to know the philosophy of it. It is to build up the faculty. Therefore meditation may be used to improve man's status at all times.

GATHA: Hope cannot be called sureness or certainty, but it is a feeling which, almost by its own force, may bring sureness and certainty.

TASAWWUF: There is one central power in the heart of man and that operates through Kashf or Insight. But Kashf is like the sun, radiating strength and light. But it is more than the sun in that it works with wisdom, and the one whose heart-faculties are operative progresses in and through wisdom.

GATHA: Hope dependent upon reason is weak, and the more dependent the weaker it is. No doubt hope together with reason is strong, perhaps stronger than hope alone, but in proportion as reason supports hope, so hope depends on reason, and as in many cases in life reason cannot reach the object of hope—hope then sinks.

TASAWWUF: The well-springs of heart-qualities bring them all to life as the heart functions. There is a basic attitude which is all important.

RYAZAT: Disciples are given certain practices from the very beginning of their training. Thus the Dove is for those whose hearts must be softened to function, the Heart is given to all who must learn to use the heart more than the self, the will, or mind, and then the Sufi symbol, which balances and progresses all of the inner life. In this way there is a connection between one's inner awakening and the subject-matter of the papers.

GATHA: In fact hope is more than a faculty or a quality; hope may be called the substance of life. Wise and foolish, rich and poor, all live in the same hope. Hope can prolong life and lack of hope can shorten it.

TASAWWUF: For the awakening of heart awakens all the heart-qualities. The life of heart is much greater than that of mind or body, it has much more innate vitality and it also has purity of qualities which can be brought to the surface but which cannot be studied dualistically. Therefore the Meditation on Hope helps to bring the Hope to life and the use of Hope helps bring the devotee to life.

GATHA: The joy that one gets from hope is greater than the joy that comes from the possession of the object hoped for. Therefore there is a Sanskrit saying that Brahma in the creation took honey from all the flowers and that this honey was hope. The interpretation is that out of all things that are beautiful and that give joy and happiness the essence is taken and that essence is hope.

TASAWWUF: This can be felt much more when the disciple progresses in his practice. Also when the Teacher shows by example, for the living example is itself the best of instructions. But the awakened Heart and the fullness of the Sufi symbol bring this to the surface in all disciples.

GATHA: Hope is strengthened by reason, but it stands on the foundation of patience, for it is possible that in spite of all reasons a person may completely give up hope, if patience is lacking. If I used the poetical expression that rocks and trees are standing in the deserts and forests resting in hope, that would be no exaggeration, because to the eyes of the mystic every aspect of life shows that it is standing in hope.

TASAWWUF: It has been said, where there is life, there is hope. Perhaps the two terms are aspects of the same thing. So when Sufism is presented as the religion of Heart it means to include all heart-qualities. These are separated by vocabulary and thought, but they are not necessarily separated. And as the feelings develop so the life-virtues come to the surface and with them all the good qualities manifest.

GATHA: This can be better seen in the life of human beings, because every person seems to be waiting from day to day and from hour to hour for something to come that he is hoping for. The loss of hope is worse than the loss of life, and provided that hope stands by man's side, though no one else stands by him it does not matter.

TASAWWUF: Every person is tested in life and this is particularly true of those who tread the path to God. It is as if life was testing us and sometimes in a sense one stands alone. If he has even the heart-qualities alive, if they are awake and he applies them, even the worst of situations can clear up. Indeed it is in this way that God works through man and thus with man. The phrase "Inshal-

lah” is often used by Sufis and other devotees. It proposes reliance on the Living God. The more the reliance, the more the trust, the surer the operation. And to bring this about the devotional attitude and the practice of self-discipline awakens Heart more and more and pours on man blessings and wisdom from within. And this Hope is the most important element.

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Series I: Number 4

### **Patience**

GATHA: Patience may also be called control, and one can say that patience is the will that controls the activities of the mind and holds it in check. To be patient is sometimes extremely difficult, for great energy is required to control the activity of the mind.

TASAWWUF: Now how does one get the control? There are esoteric practices given by teachers both to individual disciples and also to all which help this. The control of breath enables one to control the emotions and the control of the emotions helps one to check the mind.

This also involves increase in energy and for this all the esoteric practices and disciplines help particularly those in Concentration. Concentration in turn is helped by controlling the rhythm of the breath and elevating the consciousness through the repetition of sacred phrases.

GATHA: We may picture patience as a wall against which the tides beat; the wall must be strong to resist the waves, and so it is with patience.

TASAWWUF: Patience is, in a sense, the application of the virtues of Eternity into the processes of time. It is basically a holding back of temptation. There are several kinds of temptation but the ultimate thing is to learn how not to react, not to be moved by every wave that may disturb a person or atmosphere.

It is not sufficient to have a philosophy about this. It is important to develop each virtue. For instance if a person learns to draw in long breaths rather than short ones; and fine breaths rather than coarse ones, this helps to develop patience.

RYAZAT: There it is important to practice both the long breathing and the refined breaths in class as well as when one is alone.

GATHA: There are four different kinds of patience: patience in action, in thought, in word, in the manner of feeling.

TASAWWUF: One can stop action by will-power. But the same effort can be applied to thought, word and inner feeling. This is done by Zikr and other practices and attention on God (Allah) rather than on self (nufs).

RYAZAT: The practice of Fikr which keeps the attention of man on God enables man to assimilate the Divine Attributes. Along with this is a sense of living beyond immediacy into the eternal and we can say that patience is an application of this attitude.

GATHA: There are two different acts of patience. The first is to stand firm against the activity of another person, the second to stand firm against one's own activity.

TASAWWUF: The first is found in the teaching on skandas and samskaras in the Indian teachings. Even by strengthening the attention on breath this can be done. Also by more heart-concentration. If one reacts in any way to the efforts of others he adds to the storehouse of samskara, and to argue on this point increases the samskaric activity even more. The control of one's own activities comes through applying the lessons of esoteric practices.

GATHA: Not to resist the activity of another person is an act of patience of the former sort, and to control oneself when one wishes to do or say a certain thing is an act of patience of the latter sort. The most difficult test of patience is to have to wait for something which one wants at once.

TASAWWUF: No doubt we find more in Oriental literature about not reacting towards others and in Western literature about the value of controlling one's own desire nature, but this is a relative difference. In the lessons on the Cobra etc., one learns how to look to nature for examples.

The hardest and most valuable aspect of Patience is to work beyond time, to concentrate on a goal but pay no attention to the time-processes involved. This makes one truly live in Eternity and in Eternity is all strength, all virtue.

The practice of Meditation is the best means of changing from the temporal life—i.e., life in time to the everlasting.

GATHA: The symbol of Patience is the cross. The vertical line indicates activity, the horizontal line control. Patience is, for the saint and the sage, the first lesson and the last.

RYAZAT: Concentration on the cross must therefore be a practice for all disciples, but mostly for those who are nervous and who find it difficult to wait. And if when one pictures a cross the horizontal lines are not strong, one should use the balanced, not the traditional Christian cross.

TASAWWUF: In other words, Patience is a sign of selflessness, fana. The greater the advance on fana the more easily one can assimilate the Divine virtues. But for this an accommodation may be made, and each time there is accommodation there may be accompanying pain and hardship. It is not that God is testing us; it is that He is showing that all growth may be accompanied by sorrow.

GATHA: The more one learns to bear, the more one has to bear, such is the nature of life. Yet in reality patience is never wasted, patience always wins something great, even when to all appearances it loses.

TASAWWUF: Patience is the movement out of time—from here to eternity, from samskara to what might be called "nirvana." It is not true that samskara and nirvana are identical. If so, words lose all their meaning.

GATHA: Sometimes a patient person seems a vanquished one, but in reality the victory is his. In the path of mastery, as in the path of renunciation, patience plays the greatest part.

TASAWWUF: In the path of mastery Patience is needed so that one can exert one's greatest effort. We find the same law in physics of the application of force toward movement. It is in this way that friction and inertia are overcome.



On the path of renunciation one gradually merges into the attitude that God is the Actor. But God only becomes the Actor when the divine attributes participate in the deed.

GATHA: Every faculty has a tendency to act more and more quickly. Every activity starts from a rhythm that is productive, and when the activity is increased the rhythm becomes progressive, and if it is increased still more the rhythm becomes destructive.

TASAWWUF: This is not only a teaching of Sufic mysticism and metaphysics; it is also a law of nature: it is found in Newtonian physics. And even materialists are not aware that if they do not apply a Law to all things either it is not a Law or there is some mistake in their philosophy.

GATHA: These three rhythms are called in Sanskrit, **Sattva**, **Rajas** and **Tamas**. It is only by control that one can keep the productive and progressive nature; lack of control allows destruction to set in.

TASAWWUF: Much has been written on this subject, both in sacred literature and in the commentaries on sacred literature, and also sometimes in speculative writings. But these do not apply any teachings into the daily life and until the teachings are applied, their value is very limited.

We say the Sattvic faculty is productive and many people think they follow Sattva who produce nothing at all. We say the Rajasic faculty is productive. It certainly manifests wherever there is civilization, also technology, science and art, as well as music. But there are some people thinking that if they do nothing they are fulfilling life's purposes. This is nothing but Tamas. Laziness, ennui, and depending on others are signs of Tamas.

GATHA: Then will alone has the power to control each activity, either of the body or of the mind.

TASAWWUF: The Gita teaches that the wise are above all these gunas. The unwise praise one faculty and may decry the others but this very attitude shows that the person is still in ignorance. And the control of the gunas means control, not to be at the mercy of any of them. The servant of Sattva is not servant of Sattva, for this would be a negative attitude.

GATHA: When a person walks, he wishes to walk faster, when he speaks to speak more quickly. It is the nature of activity to tend to increase its speed, and if this increase is permitted, very soon the destructive element comes about.

The stronger this faculty of control becomes in a person, the stronger the person becomes, and the more one loses the power of control the weaker one becomes.

TASAWWUF: This also is an element in disease. Self-exoneration does not affect Nature. To become master, one may master through breath and will-power, but never through personality-justification. So it is necessary to observe and learn the laws of nature and of life.

This is also presented in Newtonian physics, that there is a tendency towards constant acceleration; not toward constant motion but toward constant acceleration. And it is this which brings on old age and death and all weaknesses. When one can control the acceleration which is also called "Urouj" by the Sufis, one becomes a true master.

GATHA: There is no doubt that patience often seems a crucifixion, but one must remember the resurrection is always reached through crucifixion. Patience often seems like the effacement of self, and it is true that it is self-effacement, and yet nothing is lost, for by this practice of control a far greater power is attained.

TASAWWUF: We have before us all the power and wisdom of the universe once the ego is subverted. Jesus has said, "To him that hath will be given and from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." This refers to all the ego-accumulations. They belong to time and samskara, not to reality. This does not mean that anything need be lost; it is only that the self, the ego, must be controlled and when the ego is controlled one becomes like the Dervishes who, in a sense, are the emperors of the world.

GATHA: The Persian poets have called patience death; doubtless it is to all appearances death, for it causes activity to cease, but in reality it is a greater life.

TASAWWUF: Spiritual activity is self-sustaining, self-renewing. There is what the Hindus call "niskama" karma, which is activity without ego-self, without desire. This kind of activity is actually more effective than ego-activity which depends upon the faculties of the limited personality.

The Gita also teaches that there are forms of activity which are really non-action and forms of non-activity which are really actions. But to accept this blindly and negatively as philosophy is useless. It can even be harmful as it increases delusion. It is only when one is aware of the loss of ego-self and dependence on God that this lesson is learned.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 5

### **Fear**

GATHA: Fear is considered by the mystics to come from the action of the earth element, and its effect is to make the body stiff at the moment when a person is afraid. According to metaphysics fear is caused by the lack of light.

TASAWWUF: The question is whether there is much to be gained by analyzing Fear and whether or not we should do everything possible to overcome fear. The earth element is the most shallow and densest of all elements and it is dominant in those people who serve others and also those who work in the earth, with the earth or who squat.

To learn to stand upright, walk upright and move accordingly will diminish fear. Also soldiers overcome it both by their stance and stride and also because of the Jelalic elements which are needed for their profession. Officers who have magnetism as well as authority can impart this to their subalterns and thus help them to overcome fear.

GATHA: Therefore the more light there is in the heart, the more fearless the heart becomes. There is a Sura of the Qur'an which supports this, where it is said, "There is no fear in the master mind."

RYAZAT: How then are we to overcome Fear? One is to balance the earth element. This is done by certain exercises in the breath to counterbalance the earth with other elements. In the case of soldiers as above, no doubt a good deal of the fire element is assimilated. Also as one breathes in the Jelali fashion many weaknesses are overcome.

There are several ways of increasing awareness of light. Sometimes this may be external, as being in the presence of a person who emanates much light and also in the glance of the Teacher, which is Light. Also in the manner of breathing and repeating by word or thought, **Allahu Akbar**. If this is continued one will gradually overcome fear, for there is no darkness in Allah.

GATHA: Fear arises from the strangeness of an object or from ignorance on the part of the person who fears. There is a verse of a Marathi poet, who says that, "It is the self that creates for itself the object of fear—one's fear comes from oneself."

TASAWWUF: That is to say, fear rises from nufs; no nufs, no fear. It is the ego which establishes for itself the state of strangeness. Actually, in one sense, everything is strange; but when we become more and more aware of the Divine Presence, then nothing is necessarily strange, although then everything may become an adventure. By keeping the heart on God and by breathing in the manner of the adept, no one need be subject to fear. Therefore the wise Teacher uses all the methods he has at his disposal to help everybody get out of the state of fear.

GATHA: Every attitude toward life has a re-echo, and the attitude is formed by expectation. When one expects his fellowman to love one, his fellowman does love him, and when one expects harm from another, then harm comes.

TASAWWUF: Upon whatever the mind is fixed, the thought-waves are picked up. Thus, thoughts prepare our way in life and by control of the thoughts, then control of the life follows. One can only become a Master by practicing, not be merely thinking about something. And knowing this, it is possible to get rid of all negative factors and to build up all positive factors. In this way man builds up a paradise for himself here and also in the hereafter.

GATHA: When a person is afraid of a dog, he gives the dog a tendency to bite him. This can be noticed so plainly in the lower creation, that every animal is afraid of another animal, and the expectation of harm makes it fear more than does the idea of the hugeness of the form or the bodily strength of another animal.

TASAWWUF: This subject is presented in “The Mysticism of Sound” and elsewhere where the nufs is discussed. Animals are sensitive to emanations from each other and from all strange beings, and they react to these sensitivities.

Whenever one feels in danger from a dog or any animal, by attending to the breath, by practicing the Zikr, the Presence of God, one will find that the danger will be avoided. The Divine emanations are everywhere and it is for man to determine whether he wishes to be a channel for divinity or for his own individuality.

GATHA: Many things in life can be brought about, not only by wanting them and thinking of them, but by fearing them, both objects and conditions.

TASAWWUF: The subject involved is the same, but the magnetism is different. One attracts positively by thinking positively, and negatively by fearing. The subject is the same; the concentration is really the same.

GATHA: To clear one’s mind of fear is like bringing light into a dark room, and as light is needed to illuminate a dark room so the light of the soul is necessary to clear away the thought of fear.

RYAZAT: One gives the disciples who are in fear practices that involve light. Sometimes even they are taught to keep the eyes open and to feel in a lighted room. But often they are given concentrations on Light, both in the pure form and in the concentration on the sun as symbol and as more than symbol. In the presence of such Light the fear will subside.

Prayers also help in this effort.

GATHA: Man is more impressionable than any other living being, owing to the fineness and sensitiveness of his nature, but at the same time man alone is capable of rising above all fear, for in him there is a torch that can show him a way through the darkness.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has said, “Let thy light shine before all men,” and Salat proposes, “Let the star of Divine Light shining in Thy heart be reflected in the hearts of Thy devotees.” The more one puts the

heart to this and considers the light, the more it will be, as the Christian Scripture says, “In him there is no darkness.” This subject is also presented in the Sura on *Nur* (Light) in the Qur’an.

GATHA: Man fears all that is hurtful and harmful in any form, and more than all, man fears what he calls death. As in the case of every object and condition that arouses fear, the fear is caused by ignorance, so even the fear of death is caused by ignorance.

TASAWWUF: The literature brings out the teachings that Sufis do not fear death, that they see the life in everything and everybody, and as the saying goes, “Where there is life, there is hope.” The shadows over affairs arise from one’s own ignorance. As we see more clearly the darkness must vanish.

There are some schools wherein the neophyte does concentrate on dying and death, but this is only to make him afraid not of dying and death, but of his attitude, so that he can change his attitude and outlook and thus rise above his former condition.

GATHA: Man is afraid if he is in the water, where even so helpless a creature as a fish feels safe. It is not only the fact that man is incapable of remaining in the water that makes him afraid, but the water is a strange world to him; he does not know what is in it. Many have died in the water of fright of the water before having actually sunk.

TASAWWUF: There is a famous poem in which a little child asks: “Isn’t God upon the water / Just the same as on the land?” This child had been taught that God is everywhere and in everything. Its purity kept it in touch with reality while the older people had been caught in the sway of nufs.

And if one were in danger of drowning one could surrender to God knowing that His Justice and Mercy are in all things, in all events.

GATHA: This life of names and forms is therefore called by the mystics **Maya**, an illusion, which is apt to being made into that which one would like to make it. When one fears, the world frightens one, but when one clears one’s heart of all fear, the whole world of illusion turns into one single vision of the sublime immanence of God.

TASAWWUF: In the condition of purification, or *Safa*, all shadows are removed from heart and then Light manifests as of itself. The Light is always there, the Divine Presence is always there, the Divine Faculties and Attributes are always there, though man is not always aware of it. That is why *Zikr*—which means “remembrance”—is so often practiced to bear in mind that under all circumstances one is in the presence of God; and why all disciples are taught “*Akhlak Allah*” at some stage in their training.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 6

### **Justice**

GATHA: Justice is a faculty of mind which weighs things; there is also a faculty attached to it which sees whether things are in their places and sees the fitness of things. This is also the power to view two sides of a subject or of a thing, the side where it is complete and the side where it is incomplete.

TASAWWUF: Justice has been pictured as a woman. It has even been identified with Truth in some religions. It is also true that Mercy is regarded as a feminine virtue. Human justice is based on apparent differences between people and the attempt to reconcile them.

In courts of law there is often dependence on facts and efforts are made to collect facts. It is obvious that both sides in a dispute may not have all the facts and perhaps neither side does. The Sufi is very careful to give scope to everyone who has some facts, and some reason on his side.

Human justice may be incomplete. It is not always based on spiritual principles. Often it is associated with local religion or tradition. This does not make it perfect or even satisfactory in the long run.

GATHA: This faculty is kindled by the light of the intelligence; the more intelligence, the greater justice; it is generally lack of intelligence that produces injustice.

TASAWWUF: Now how do we get the intelligence? We have it. It is called “buddhi” in Sanskrit from which the word “Buddha” comes. Lord Buddha said that everybody had buddhi. Unfortunately much of the world has substituted the religion called “Buddhism” for the teachings of Lord Buddha. In our work we accept the teachings and literature from Lord Buddha whether from the Pali or Sanskrit. The Pali texts often come from the Buddha himself; the Sanskrit texts come also from buddhi, the state of intelligence which makes Sutras possible.

By practicing some of the methods left by Lord Buddha and sometimes also by practicing some of the methods found in Buddhist texts and sometimes from the Masters, we also can awaken the buddhi, the intelligence which we all have. Then it is probably that the sense of awakened justice taught in the disciplinary teachings before and after Bayat will become realities.

GATHA: The development of the ego often obscures this faculty, in the same way that clouds eclipse the sun. Therefore a selfish person, however clever, lacks pure intelligence and therefore is deficient in the true sense of justice.

TASAWWUF: It is not always easy to grasp the ego. In the lower phase one is concerned with the bodily appetites and little else and so has little sense of justice. Overeating, partaking of rich foods and intoxicating beverages, luxurious living, too much ease, passion and the attractions of vice cause one to be concerned only with self.

In this state, called “Nufs Ammara,” there is little vision and foresight. They are covered. One is therefore more susceptible to pain and then takes drugs, and so the body loses its natural vitality, the mind loses its natural vitality and the sense of justice is impaired.

GATHA: It is often personal feeling, a personal like or dislike, that disposes the weights in the scales of justice to suit the personal fancy. Therefore often a person who boasts of his sense of justice is really more unjust than one who makes no such claim.

TASAWWUF: For this person, by his very boasting, proves his egocentricity. And when what may be called “good action” is done with a purpose of benefiting oneself, it is of no benefit. For the sense of awakening justice comes as the sphere of love is expanded. Many quote, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” and the quotation has become a substitute for the reality.

On the spiritual path is it necessary to practice what has been taught by the holy ones of the past. Words without practice have always been regarded as hypocrisy, especially by Sufis, and Shams-i-Tabriz held that hypocrisy was the only sin.

GATHA: A just person is one who can decide against his own interest if necessary. Only when personal bias is absent can a decision be called just.

TASAWWUF: In the stage of Nufs Mutmaina this becomes a natural condition. We can see even with the breath that mostly a person breathes in and out of one nostril more than the other, and this is not an exact balance.

It may be difficult to balance the breath while in the coarse stage (kasif) but it is not so in the refined stage (latif). The more the refinement, the more the sensitivity, and the more the sensitivity, the more the sense of justice is awakened.

GATHA: Into the scales of Justice a person throws weights from his store of knowledge, and it is his own ideas about the values of things that weigh and balance them. But as opinions change at every step in evolution what may seem just or unjust today is not likely to seem so tomorrow.

TASAWWUF: There is no question but that Justice has been hardened and made artificial by constantly looking to decisions of the past for precepts. We find this in all parts of the world. Social changes and the rise of education impair Justice when it is determined by past precedent. The legal codes of India have been compelling and exacting down to details, complicated by caste rules that have lost all sense of humanity. In Islam, Muslims are not only presumed to be more moral, but also they are excused on the presumed principle of Mercy, wherein non-Muslims, living among them, have been compelled to suffer.

And in all parts of the world there are social systems and class distinctions which have lost all vision of a humanity created in the divine image. Besides, as Lord Buddha taught, everything is subject to change and when institutions and human beings change and the legal codes are fixed, the sense of justice and the administration of justice are warped.

It is not necessary to restore earlier codes. But in practice while the property aspects of these codes have sometimes been invoked, the universal sense from the human point of view has been obscured. It is necessary to restore it.

GATHA: What a person called wrong at one time will seem at another time in his life to be right, and it is the same with regard to what at one period of his evolution he considers right.

TASAWWUF: If we look at succeeding law codes we find changes in them, to suit the considerations of the times. No code was presented as offering a norm forever. But the moral teachings attached to them were. However, in practice the moral teachings are often laid aside and the purely legal aspects of spiritual literature have been regarded as revelations which can not be changed, with most awkward results. The Lord Who is All Mercy and Compassion has been obscured by complicated interpretations of fine points of law.

The result has been that new codes have arisen, even been created to fit conditions. And if a Sage is called on to administer Justice he should do so from the dictates of his heart, and not from the pursuit of some traditional policy or code. The law has been made for man, not man for the law.

GATHA: No wonder that the prophets, reformers and poets have so often contradicted themselves in their writings! One can find contradictions in all the Scriptures of the world, and it needs a perfect development of the faculty to look at this idea with a perfect view.

TASAWWUF: We can read in history about the struggles that have gone on, especially between the mystics and the legalists. In Christianity theology has been the uppermost, but in Hinduism and Islam the legal codes have become all-important. And with excuses drawn from the decisions of other times, exact methods have been preserved and applied to persons and circumstances of totally different natures.

There is no question but that India has been held back by having so many legal codes. And Christianity is a strange case because the moral system is supposed to be based on Scriptures and legal systems from polytheists. This causes one kind of inconsistency.

The Egyptians regarded Justice as a divine attribute and had a Goddess of Justice (Maat). We can also read in their ancient literature how important the persons involved were, that humanity was of great consideration in reaching any decision and that they lived as if the law were made for man, not man for the law.

Although Jesus Christ repeated this attitude it has not been accepted, and as the Christian religion was dominant among the nations successful in war, the hypothetical justice, though fair in some respects, was not based on the innate spirituality in man. And while both Hinduism and Islam upheld the spirituality of man, this did not deter the strict enforcement of all kinds of laws, impairing the basic sense of justice.

We cannot atone for history but we can make ourselves, each one, a being with a growing, awakening sense of justice. And as we imbibe the Divine Qualities and especially the Bismillah with its emphasis on Mercy and Compassion, this will come true.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 7

### **Reason**

GATHA: Reason is a faculty that raises out of itself an answer to every question one asks. There is a store of knowledge of names, and forms, of principles, of feelings; from that store of knowledge an answer rises. It is that which is called reason.

TASAWWUF: Gayan tells us that the answer is in the question. The answer is often the karmic response to the question caused by the operation of the law of cause and effect. Every movement proposes a counter-movement, every word, thought and deed produces its own *samskara*. Vibrations set in motion involve other vibrations as if there were a perpetual effort to create equilibrium and harmony in the world.

At the same time when the ego is involved, the movements tend to center around that ego and it rises to its defense, not on any particular code, but by natural impulse.

GATHA: This store of knowledge is different in every individual, and it is therefore that often two people may disagree and at the same time both may have reason for what they say. This shows that reason is not outside oneself; it is within oneself, and at each stage towards evolution reason changes. The answer that a person may get from within to a certain question one month may change in the next month.

TASAWWUF: This is because the ego is involved and all the movements are around the ego though one does not know it. And if one studies impulses we can find it even in the operations of nerves and muscles, even in the factors involved in physical movements. For the laws are not different because the physical or mental worlds are involved, between the operations of mind and mental atoms and vibrations and those of the body and physical atoms and operations.

We do not always realize that impulse controls much of our action and often there are spontaneous responses which arise out of the ego. Whenever one is accused he has an answer and does not realize that what to him is a reason is to another merely an excuse, an excuse which has no validity.

GATHA: Every object and condition suggests a reason, but the more one penetrates through the object or condition, the more one realizes that there is reason under reason, and one condition may suggest numerous reasons, according to the depths one may touch. When there is discourse about justice or injustice, right or wrong, one applies one's own reason, and when one cannot understand the reason of another, one's knowledge is incomplete.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, reason is something suggested to mind, it is the natural operation of mind itself to find a justice or a harmony in everything that is pleasing and to find difficulty or fault in everything that is displeasing.

The operations of Mind are discussed in some detail in the book called *Mind World* but it is very difficult for the mind to study mind and to look at itself objectively. That is why Psychology is often a difficult science because of the absence of impartiality found in the more exact sciences. An **ex-act** science is one where the investigations are possible without involving the ego. When the ego is involved, when the self is part of the experiment or study, there is not so much justice and very often there is more disagreement and many problems are not easily solved.

As one goes deeper he finds that others also have their rationale which may be a different rationale. And it may be determined by environment or heritage. This has made agreements between large groups sometimes very difficult to reach, for the mind is not at its best when it has assumed a point of view because of heritage, tradition or immediate circumstances.

Lord Buddha taught against this fixation of a point of view but his influence has been very small, even among his own devotees.

GATHA: The effect that different names and forms produce is an illusion, and so is reason, which is the creation of mind, when it is compared with the ultimate reality. Reality is above reason.

TASAWWUF: Although many people believe they are reasonable, or at least have reason, their views are often colored by events and by the personalities involved. Mohammed has said that Allah loves his offspring more than a mother loves her children. But the impact of this is small. Man, centered around his ego, does not readily fully accept the Universal Being with a sense, to follow the American code, of "liberty and justice for all." These are just words and the substitution of words for realities has made life very hard, and complicated.

GATHA: When reason follows reality it is helpful, but when reality is covered under reason it is an illusion.

TASAWWUF: We find in all ages refusals on the part of those in authority to accept experiences of people, when such experiences seem to undermine their authority. We may regard reality as the result of the experience of human beings. Sometimes the words "common sense" are used to apply to experiences which are socially or personally acceptable. Even the affirmation of such common sense belongs to the world of maya.

The example of the Inquisition, objecting to Galileo's discoveries, has been made into a classic. But a single instance proves nothing. Many who object to the policy of the church objecting to Galileo often have similar objections to other discoveries and other discoverers. Perhaps no man or group has had all experiences. If the past is set up as a standard to object to anything new, the world could not be changed for the better.

Many of the discoveries of modern science are based on principles totally objectionable to the people of the past. For instance, it was determined in certain quarters that alchemical transformations were impossible. This was the conclusion of what was known as "reason." It was not the conclusion of the experience of either the people of the past, or of the time, or of later ages. Indeed it can be questioned whether reason alone has ever added anything to human knowledge. It can point out falsehoods, errors, and inconsistencies, so it has great negative value.

When the question arises, What is reality? It should be answered simply, “What man realizes to be true.”

GATHA: The one who penetrates through the numerous covers of reason comes to the depth of knowledge, but the one who clings to the first reason he has touched remains there, for him there is no progress.

TASAWWUF: It is not to be concluded that reason is to be laid aside. Perhaps everything that happens is “reasonable” in some sense. Besides the word “reason” has often been used for opinion, opinion which has come out of our ego. Often it is nothing but self-justification. Self-justification may be right, but it has many limitations; it is only right within circumscribed groups.

Pure knowledge enables man to employ right reason. This is impersonal. Truth is impersonal. The more the heart qualities are developed, the less one needs to depend upon mental activities. The more the heart qualities are developed, the more one can properly apply the intellect to the things of life.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 8

### Logic

GATHA: Logic is a support that reason takes to strengthen itself; it may be called a fortification of reason. The analytical faculty of the mind seeks for something substantial to make reason cut and dry. In other words logic may be called authorized reason, or reason supported by the reason of others.

TASAWWUF: The term “Reason” is used differently by various people. It usually refers to deduction, drawing conclusions, from accepted premises in a formal way. There is also induction which is used in the sciences and elsewhere wherein facts are collected before any conclusion is reached.

In the actual world, there are different systems of deductive reasoning. The fact that there are different systems questions the absolute validity of each and all. And the fact that the conclusions reached by the deductive methods are often found to be defective in the course of time would seem to confirm this. Besides, as man evolves, so does his reasoning.

GATHA: Logic has a larger field than reason, because the scope of reason is only the mind of one individual. The scope of logic is vaster, it represents the minds of many individuals who have thought on the same subject.

TASAWWUF: In presenting the Sufi Message to the West, Hazrat Inayat Khan used mostly the English language and reasoned as if his basic thinking was with this language. His teachings were then subjected to Western methods, and in the course of time, many difficulties arose. Perhaps all of them could be obviated and are obviated when the intuitive faculty is developed.

In India, each of the six great Schools of philosophy has, more or less, its own logistics. In America we find the methods of Aristotle, Hegel, Russell, Whitehead, and Spaulding, all differing in some respects. In general, the Western world accepts one or more of these approaches. The question arises by what Logic can we determine which of these men, and which of these methods, are suitable for each or all, or for only limited occasions?

In 1923 Hazrat Inayat Khan and Zenist Nyogen Sensaki met for the first time and both went into Samadhi together. This was a joint experience at a very high level. But when they conversed in common language before and with others, each found the other was using the nyaya system of reasoning. This helped bring a great Sufi and a great Zen Buddhist closer together. But it bewildered their immediate audience (those who were with them in 1923) even more than the joint mystical experience did. Apparently, the logic of the East was not identical with the logic of the West.

GATHA: Logic is a degree higher in knowledge than reason. When one person gives a reason and another person says there is no logic in it, that means that there is no support for this reason from other minds which have thought about the subject.

TASAWWUF: A question may arise, “Is logic logical?” It should appear evident that, with the outbreak of great disturbances ranging from local riots to a great world war, people do not have premises and methods of reaching conclusions in common. There is some question whether any system of analysis or dialectics can solve any problem. Yes, they can satisfy a few or many people. Such satisfaction only demonstrates the sway of the ego (nufsaniat).

In the study of Indian philosophy—also reflected in the story of Lot, presented in *The Unity of Religious Ideals*—the existence of levels of consciousness above that of the discursive mind (manas) presents possibilities of unlimited extent. There we have Vijnana, the universe of integrative intellect and Ananda, which is concerned with universality. Both by intellectual and spiritual means, man can become conscious of both these levels and operate accordingly.

GATHA: In one sense, logic may be said to be concrete and realistic knowledge, and yet in another sense it is most limited and poor knowledge. It is limited to names and forms that are forever changing; it is poor because it is founded on a substance that is subject to destruction.

TASAWWUF: It should be a matter of simple observation that if logic were so potent there would be more agreement. Even the conquest of space has not produced harmonious outlooks. Indeed, there is a question of whether there may not be two or more completely different cultures existing in a world which, using the word “logic,” has such varying outlooks.

Psychology is a science which studies the mind in action. It is only gradually that an accommodation has been made to observe the mind at rest, or in meditation. If there were a great validity in logic, there could not be so many schools of either philosophy or psychology. Something is evidently wrong.

Mystics of many schools practice meditation, i.e., utilizing the mind at rest. This seems to bring a greater efficiency, and sometimes, the faculty of penetrating into the hitherto unseen. Meditation is not practiced for such a purpose, but sometimes it leads to the awakening of latent faculties.

While it may be possible to find the unifying logic, the development of the faculty of Insight produces far more harmony and agreement. Insight is not either anti-logical or superlogical. It leads to a logic independent of ego.

GATHA: When logic helps to strengthen the knowledge of names and forms and of conditions it is a great help, but when it confines the progress of the soul, which is made on a different path, it is a great hindrance.

TASAWWUF: The descriptive sciences such as petrology, botany, and zoology, need the formal logic. It also dominated in the chemical sciences prior to the discovery of radioactivity and elemental transformation. Even such a great philosopher as Russell said, “These phenomena required a reevaluation of Aristotelian principles.”

Western logic proposed that, “a thing is a thing and nothing else.” Certain Indian logics such as those of Buddha and the Jains question the existence of things and thingness. This has left many problems not only unsolved, but sometimes unresolved. And as man has gone deeper into Oriental teachings, he finds logical premises and methods totally at variance with the traditions of the West.

No doubt a universal outlook is needed here. This has been done in mathematics. The great Polish mathematicians have shown us how to reconcile assumedly conflicting systems of geometry and algebra. Einstein depended a great deal on the work of Minkowski. But as the Polish savants introduced new methods, new approaches and new forms of reasoning, these did not become immediately parts of general education. The result is that Einstein has become something of a mystery, all the more so, because the literary profession has not been disciplined in any form of logistics at all.

To the Sufi the work of Minkowski and Einstein is valuable. Each has in his own way supplied a greater harmony to overcome lesser inharmonies and dissonances. It is this presentation of greater harmonization which is so valuable.

In rather similar ways, Sufis operate to produce harmonies among conflicting individuals and rival schools. As mankind becomes more conscious of the levels of Vijnanavada and Anandavada, he will be more capable of functioning in and with Universal Reason.

GATHA: In other words, it may be said that the possessor of logic is a learned man, but he who is possessed by logic is lost.

TASAWWUF: As man grows toward universality, he will be able to apply his own logistics. There is no question that the Germans lost in WWII because they adhered to traditional methods. They adhered to a strict logic. They left no scope for anything else. The Russians, harried in so many ways, were compelled to call on their innate resources and so applied instinct, insight and even psychic methods to meet their crises.

This gives us a key for future operations.

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,  
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Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 9

### **Temptation**

GATHA: Temptation is a momentary illusion; the beauty of some object covers the eyes of reason and man is drawn back or pushed aside from the track which he follows in order to arrive at his desired destination, whatever it may be.

TASAWWUF: The Greeks used to posit Reason as against Evil of any kind, but they also used to consider that that which is beautiful might be that which is good. Therefore when one was affected by the beautiful he might also be that his Reason was pushed aside. This is part of the desire nature and all efforts have been made by the wise of all ages to curb the desire nature.

What the desire nature does is to take us out of our universal purpose by some particular; and when we are drawn to or by the particular, whatever pattern we have is affected, and often we are drawn away from our ultimate goal. In other words, Temptation sets up a temporary goal in place of an ultimate one. The very word “temptation” indicates we are pulled from the sphere of spirituality by the sphere of time.

GATHA: Therefore what is a temptation to one person is not necessarily a temptation to another. The same object which is a temptation to one may be a goal to another. One cannot wisely point out: “This is a temptation, that is not.”

TASAWWUF: From the standpoint of unity, the ultimate goal may produce a harmony in life. But for reaching it each one has not only a purpose, but a way which is consonant with his very being. Therefore if there is doubt, the disciple repeats a sacred phrase. And there is no doubt but that the constant repetition of the sacred phrase not only protects one against Temptation, but with regard to what seems to attract, if one calls upon God, anything that is needed by a man will be drawn to him. It is as if God had had for each and all a harmonious path, a way to and with “love, harmony, and beauty” and each real step forward increases the capacity for love, harmony, and beauty; what tempts decreases these and the momentary satisfaction is followed by unhappiness.

GATHA: In reality, all is a temptation and nothing is. It is not the object or the action which forms the temptation, but the situation.

TASAWWUF: Sufis teach: “Nothing exists but God.” When attention is paid to anything in particular, the consciousness is drawn from the Universal. This can be called a “Temptation.” It is not necessarily an evil. The Christian Lord’s Prayer says: “Thou leadest us not into Temptation.” For when the attention is on God it is on nothing else; it is not on any thing, it is on allness and thus in a sense on the Kingdom over the Heavens. The attention is therefore on particularity or universality. And in this sense any attention to any **thing** with or without reason may be called a Temptation. Or in another sense it takes us out of the eternity into the **time**, the **temp-ting**. And when we turn from the spheres of time and samskara to universality we are above the karmic complex into nishkama karma.

GATHA: In order to be aware of the temptation one has to meet with, it is well to keep before one the goal one wishes to attain, and always to reason out before taking a step toward anything whether it will help or hinder the attainment of one's desired end.

RYAZAT: Sufis do not have to weigh in judgment or mentality. They may use the Zikr, or they go beyond the Fikr which is the universal thought. They may keep the name of God in the thought. This provokes a certain type of breath. Anything that detracts from that form of breath may be called a "Temptation."

Or one may perform a breathing exercise according to direction. One becomes aware of the breath in that condition. Anything that takes from that breath is a **Temptation** in this sense.

GATHA: There are three forms of temptation. The first is that which cries aloud what it is, which shows itself clearly.

TASAWWUF: When one is under the sway of nufs (nufsaniat) the desire nature is strong and the resistance weak. This does not mean that one should deny oneself everything. There is the Spirit of Guidance in the form of instinct which guides us aright. And there is the opposite which wants to hold on to everything one sees and there is no restraint.

As one develops in Kashf one rises normally above these states of being tempted and one will know how to act in every instance.

GATHA: The second form is that in which the temptation disguises itself and hides the goal from the eyes of the man, so that man may at once forget his destination.

TASAWWUF: When the ego-control is weak, reason will support every activity. It may be a desire, base or not base, but then reason will often come and support the desire. It is not always true as the Greeks claimed that reason stands in the way of desire. This uncontrolled desire is called **cupidity**.

GATHA: In the third form the temptation appears for the moment a greater gain than the desired object. In such a case reason no doubt helps, and yet it cannot help altogether, for as the temptation belongs to the external world so does reason also belong to the external world. There is only one thing that can counterbalance it and that is the faculty of intuition. If this faculty is really developed it comes to man's rescue in all his difficulties.

TASAWWUF: In one sense this is not a struggle between "good" and "evil," it is a struggle between the outer and the inner. And in one sense also Reason belongs to the external and Intuition (Kashf) to the internal and perhaps eternal. This is also the struggle between the sway of time which is sam-skara, and the ways of Providence.

This does not mean that man must forgo everything that is beautiful, that he must lead a life of privation. Although the middle path has been presented by the wise, they did not always declare what the middle path was. If they gave all the directions there would be no scope for Intuition. And indeed in the Pali texts we find external answers to all questions and this has made religion a matter of legality and tradition and gives no scope for struggle and freedom. Or it has no provision for the unusual and life often presents the unusual. For only in that way can man grow.



GATHA: If one desires to reach the goal one must make a great fortification against temptation. One should keep before one the object to be attained and feel behind one the strength of intuition to push one forward.

TASAWWUF: We see everywhere the Wise proclaim Intuition and almost everywhere the so-called followers bring in a form of egocentricity which they call "Reason" and which is not universal. Then people make the excuses. They do not always realize either the Moral Law or the strength of the universe itself. They set themselves up separately and provide a code which pleases, each one his own ego.

But life does not go that way. To make life strong Sufis practice Murakkabah. This is a means of unifying the mind and also coordinating breathing and thinking. In one sense this brings the ego into harmony with the universe itself. What is called "The Kingdom of the Heavens" is nothing but this harmony between the self and the cosmos. For thought by itself does not take any direction, it is energy, but it is not directed energy. It is the Will-power that directs the energy and the more the Will is attuned to the Intuition, the more it is attuned to the divinity. And it is in this way that it occurs: "Thy Will be done."

GATHA: The further we go the greater will be our temptations.

TASAWWUF: This same teaching appears in *Gayan*. And it is not only true that as we grow the temptations get stronger, even the burdens get stronger. Yet it is as Jesus says, "My burden is light," and as Mohammed said, "Verily with struggle cometh ease." This reaches a certain climax in the Christian Book of Revelation where there appears many times the phrase, "Him that overcometh." This means that as man overcomes the lower nature and all temptations, he has the unlimited attainment and by no other means.

GATHA: Even after the attainment of an object temptations still persist, ready to snatch away the object attained, which is very well explained in the myth of Orpheus.

TASAWWUF: Orpheus tried to bring Eurydice back to this world and failed, looking back. It is like trying to bring the blessing of heaven to earth. One must have absolute trust. And it was this absence of trust that compelled him to lose the object attained. But this is only true so long as we see Orpheus and Eurydice as separate. When one keeps true to the Goal and to the Heart, one does not lose anything; although, in another sense it is not necessary to attain or achieve, for these are all matters of separation from the Ultimate Goal.

Thus in the end everything must be surrendered.

GATHA: It is not necessary to be so careful as to become timid, nor should we be so bold as to commit ourselves to follies at every step we take.

TASAWWUF: This middle path is reached not only by following moral injunctions but even more by attention to breath. When the Urouj, or inhalation, is controlled either the desire nature will be tamed or the obstacles to attainment will be removed. And as the breath becomes more refined, we become more successful in attainments and at the same time care-less, and the spirit of temptation does not effect us so much.

GATHA: We must keep the balance and keep on the straight path with our gaze fixed on the desired goal.

RYAZAT: One form of balance is between inhalation and exhalation, to not permit either of them to dominate over the other. Also to not make the breath so weak that it cannot penetrate our whole being, nor so strong that it operates mostly on our plane only.

TASAWWUF: It is by means of Concentration that this is done, to keep the mind one-pointed, not to be attracted or distracted by other things. To obtain an goal one must be one-pointed and there is no substitute.

Too much energy is lost on self-excuse; but to win over temptation the self must be laid aside. And when one unites, so to speak, with the object or goal desired, it is already obtained and will manifest in and with time. This is true Mastery.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series I: Number 10

### **Tolerance**

Note: Pages one and two of the original Sangatha for Gatha #10, TASAWWUF, Series I, have been lost. The following commentaries (by Murshid SAM) are from pages three and four of an early copy.

GATHA: Tolerance is the first lesson of morals, and the next is forgiveness. A person who tolerates another through fear, through pride, from a sense of honour, or by the force of circumstances does not know tolerance.

Tolerance is the control of the impulse of resistance by the will. There is no virtue in tolerance which one practices because one is compelled by circumstances to tolerate, but tolerance is a consideration by which one overlooks the faults of another and gives no way in oneself to the impulse of resistance.

A thoughtless person is naturally intolerant, but if a thoughtful person is intolerant, it shows his weakness; he has thought, but has no self-control.

TASAWWUF: Disciples on the spiritual path are protected by their adherence to the devotions and esoteric practices given to them by their teacher.

GATHA: In case of the thoughtless, he is not conscious of his fault, so it does not matter much to him, but a thoughtful person is to be pitied if he cannot control himself owing to the lack of will.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi attitude is: "In Union with the Will of God, we will." But how does one achieve this union? It comes from the spiritual practices and disciplines. As one pursues the Path of Attainment, he is drawn into the right breathing and the right psychological state and from that the right moral behavior.

It is not necessary to condemn those not amenable to discipline. It is necessary that one should practice self-control. And as one restrains oneself and especially the tendencies connected with Urouj, this condition is obviated.

GATHA: The activities in the worldly life cause many disturbances, and it is a constant jarring effect upon a sensitive soul; if one does not develop tolerance in nature, one is always subject to constant disturbances in life.

TASAWWUF: Equally if one is able to overcome sensitivity the jarring effects will not appear. We are taught in various Scriptures how to be equal-minded in pleasant and pain (sic) and also how to resist the piling of samskaras. But this is a discipline and a way of life, it is not a philosophy about life. Life is not separate from each person and everyone has the life and the God Who is the essence of life itself. In Zen Buddhism one is taught to steel oneself against all outside influences. This is a good attitude for all disciples of the Path.

GATHA: To wish to live in the world and to be annoyed with its activities is like wanting to live in the sea and be constantly resisting its waves. This life of the world, full of different activities constantly working, has much in it to be despised, if one has a tendency to despise; but at the same time there is much to admire if one turns one's face from left to right.

TASAWWUF: There is a question whether one must hold oneself against the jarring influences because they jar; or if by holding oneself firm, outside activities jar. The way of the wise is that of indifference, which means cultivating an attitude not to be influenced by all the waves and activities of the life. And this is attained by holding onto the presence of God (Akhlak Allah) in some fashion.

It is easy to say to be in the world but not of it. And yet there is another attitude, to be in the world and of it because the world is God's and there is nothing that exists but God. If we make any differentiations we are depriving something from God and God from something. Therefore in some schools of Mahayana Buddhism it is declared that Nirvana and Samskara are identical. For otherwise it would be that something existed besides God, and perhaps "outside" of God.

GATHA: It is in our own power to choose the view of imperfection or the vision of perfection, and the difference is only in looking down, or looking upwards. By a slight change of attitude in one's outlook on life one can make the world into heaven or hell.

TASAWWUF: The optimistic attitude is not one that can be forced upon everybody. Indian metaphysics teaches that as we rise on the scale of evolution, on the ladder both the capacity and the experience of Ananda (bliss) increases. As bliss increases, so the optimistic outlook increases.

But when there is attachment to ego and limitation to and by ego, then one is subject to the rise and fall of circumstances, of attitudes, of outlooks, of all things. And the way to rise above this is to remain more and more conscious of God Himself Who is in our very midst, in all interpretations of this phrase.

GATHA: The more one tolerates, the stronger one becomes in this way. It is the tolerant who is thoughtful; and as thought becomes greater, one becomes more tolerant. The words of Christ, "Resist not evil" teach tolerance.

TASAWWUF: We may begin with words. We have to ingest these words into our innermost consciousness. Sometimes this is done by meditation. But it is also done by repeating the Divine Attributes. But Divine Attributes remain abstractions until we consciously develop the same principles in our own beings, when we become channels of God. We do not become channels of God by prayer or assertion, we become channels of God when we reach the state when these attributes are part of our being and manifest in everything we think, say or do.

As all people and indeed all forms are aspects of Divinity, the full acceptance of this promotes the Tolerance. When we talk about Tolerance without the full acceptance of Divinity in this sense, we are still in limitation. Finding God in all forms and beings takes us to the stage of understanding.

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