



Gathekas for Candidates

by

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

*The Sufi Ruhaniat International wishes to thank
the Sufi Order International for permission to distribute
these gender-inclusive Gathekas.*

© Sufi Order International

PO Box 480
New Lebanon, NY 12125
(518) 794-7834
secretariat@sufiorder.org

Table of Contents

1. Background on Sufism	5
2. Sufism: The Spirit of All Religions	7
3. Sufism: Beyond Religion	9
4. Sufism: Wisdom of All Faiths	10
5. Different Schools of Sufism	11
6 & 7. The Intoxication of Life	14
8. The Path of Initiation	18
9. Reincarnation	20
10. The Interdependence of Life Within and Without	21
11. The Truth and the Way	24
12. Sufi Mysticism I: The Mystic's Path in Life	27
13. Self-Realization: Awakening the Inner Senses	29
14. The Doctrine of Karma	31
15. The Law of Life: Inner Journey and Outer Action.....	33
16. Sufi Mysticism II: Use of the Mind To Gain Understanding	35
17. Sufi Mysticism III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love	38
18. Sufi Mysticism IV: Use of Repose to Communicate with the Self.....	41
19. Sufi Mysticism V: Realizing the Truth of Religion	43
20. Sufi Mysticism VI: The Way Reached by Harmonious Action	45
21. Sufi Mysticism VII: Human Actions Become Divine	47
22. The Ideals and Aim of the Sufi Order	49
23. Working for the Sufi Message	51
24. The Need of Humanity in Our Day	53
25. The Duties of a Mureed	55
26. The Path of Discipleship.....	56
27. Divine Manner	60
28. Divine Manner II	62
29. Our Sacred Task: The Message.....	63
30. Sufi Initiation	65
31. What Is Wanted in Life?	69

Gatheka 1

Background on Sufism

What is meant by the word Sufi?

The word Sufi is derived from the Arabic word Safa, or Saf, which means, literally, pure, i.e. pure from distinctions and differences. In Greek the word means wise.

Sufism cannot be called deism, for the Sufi does not consider God as an entity separate from oneself. Neither can it be called pantheism, because the Sufi not only sees the immanence of God in nature, but also realizes God's Essence in the infinite, naming God Allah, the Formless, the Colorless. The Sufi is neither a believer in the unrealized God nor an unbeliever in the idealized Deity, and thus one is distinguished from godly and ungodly alike. The Sufi is not an atheist, for the Sufi denies neither God nor God's Messengers.

To the question, "Are you a Christian?," "Are you a Muslim?," "Are you a Jew?," the Sufi's answer would be "yes" rather than "no," for the Sufi opposes no religion but sympathizes with all. In fact Sufism cannot be called a religion, for it does not impose either belief or principle upon anyone, considering that each individual soul has its own principles best suited for it, and a belief which changes with each grade of evolution.

Sufism is not an intellectual philosophy, because it does not depend merely upon cold reasoning, but develops a devotional tendency in one. Sufism cannot be called occultism, for the Sufi does not give any importance to the investigation of phenomena; seeing the brevity of life, a Sufi deems that a worthless pursuit: the Sufi's aim is God alone.

The Origin of Sufism

The germ of Sufism is said to have existed from the beginning of the human creation, for wisdom is the heritage of all; therefore no one person can be said to be its propounder. It has been revealed more clearly and spread more widely from time to time as the world has evolved.

Sufism as a brother/sisterhood may be traced back as far as the period of Daniel.

We find among the Zoroastrians, Hatim, the best known Sufi of his time. The chosen ones of God, the salt of the earth, who responded without hesitation to the call of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, were Sufis, and were not only simple followers of a religion but had insight into divine knowledge. They recognized God's every messenger and united with them all. Before the time of Mohammed they were called Ekuanul Safa, Brothers of Purity, but after his coming they were named by him Sahabi Safa, Knights of Purity. The world has called them Zoroastrian, Christian,

Jewish, or Islamic mystics, and the followers of each religion have claimed them as their own. For instance, a Christian would claim that Saint Paul was a Christian and a Muslim that Shams-i-Tabriz was a Muslim. In reality Christ was not a Christian nor was Mohammed a Muslim, they were Sufis.

Relation to Other Religions

Although Sufism is the essence of all religions and its influence is upon all, yet it can more justly be called the esoteric side of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But it is not a purely Zoroastrian esotericism devoid of Jewish influence, nor is it a solely Jewish mysticism free from the influence of Christianity, nor is it entirely Christian wisdom untouched by the morals of Islam. Therefore it is justifiable to call it the true spirit of all religions, even of those as foreign to it as Vedanta and Buddhism.

We see Zoroaster in the Sufi in one's purity, one's love for light and one's worship of God in the sublimity of nature. We see Moses in the Sufi in one's constant communion with God. We see Christ in the Sufi in one's charity and self-renunciation. The true meaning of the sacrament is seen in the daily life of the Sufi, who readily shares one's all with another. The life of a true Sufi is an open Bible for anyone to read. We see Mohammed in the humanity of the Sufi, in one's strength in facing the struggle of life and bearing with equanimity its responsibilities.

The Sufi Movement

Sufism was intellectually born in Arabia, devotionally reared in Persia, and spiritually completed in India. For the last forty years the direct and indirect influence of the East has prepared the ground in the West for the seed of the Sufi message. Every event has its time, and it has been ordained by the Supreme Will that East and West shall now unite in the bond of love and wisdom which neither politics nor commerce can bring about, but only the call of God, the Lord of both East and West.

Gatheka 2

Sufism – The Spirit of All Religions

The word Sufi, or Saf, implies purity, which contains two qualities. That is pure which is un-mixed with any element other than its own, or in other words, that is pure which existed in its own element unalloyed and unstained. And secondly, that is pure which is most adaptable. Pure water, for instance, is water without the mixture of anything else, and the test of its purity is that it can adapt itself to whatever is mixed with it. If it is mixed with a red powder it becomes red, if with a green powder, green.

Such is the nature of the Sufi. In the first place the Sufis purify themselves by keeping the vision of God always before them, not allowing the stains of earthly differences and distinctions to be mirrored upon their heart. Neither good nor bad society, nor intercourse with people of high or low class, nor faith or belief can ever interfere with one's purity.

The Sufi shows universal kinship in one's adaptability. Among Christians one is a Christian, among Jews one is a Jew, among Muslims, a Muslim, among Hindus, a Hindu, for a Sufi is with all and thus all are with the Sufi. Sufis allow everyone to join with them in the brother/sisterhood, and in the same way allow themselves to join in any other. The Sufi never questions, "What is your creed, nation, or religion?" Neither does a Sufi ask, "What are your teachings or principles?" If you call a Sufi brother or sister, one answers as brother or sister.

The Sufi has no fixed principles, because what is sweet may be beneficial to one and harmful to another, and it is thus with all principles, good or bad, kind or cruel. If you require of soldiers that they should be merciful during a battle they will at once be defeated. This shows that each person has one's own principles for each action and situation.

The Sufi is a true Christian in life, in charity, in kinship and in that one heals one's own soul as well as that of another. The Sufi may not be bigoted in adherence to a particular church or in forsaking the other masters who came before and after Christ, but the Sufi's attunement with Christ and appreciation and practice of truth are as keen as those of what a true Christian should be. In the lives of the dervishes one sees the real picture of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, especially in that they share their food and abode with others whether they be friend or foe. Even to the present day, they continue in their pure ways. The Sufi is a Catholic in producing the picture of the ideal of devotion in one's soul, and the Sufi is a Protestant in giving up the ceremonies of the cult.

The Sufi is a Brahmin, for the word Brahmin means knower of Brahma, of God, the Only Being. The Sufi's religion lies in believing in no other existence than that of God, which the Brahmin calls Advaita. The Sufi has as many grades of spiritual evolution to go through as the Yogi. There is even very little difference to be found in their practices, the difference being chiefly in the names. Of course, the Sufi chooses a normal life in preference to that of an ascetic, yet does not restrict him/herself either to the former or to the latter. The Sufi considers the teachings of the avatars as true manifestations of the divine wisdom and is in perfect sympathy with the subtle knowledge of the Vedanta.

The Sufi appreciates the Jain conception of harmlessness and considers that kindness is the only true path of purity and perfection. Shams-i-Tabriz, the Shiva of Persia, was flayed alive by

the people because he had been accused of declaring that the Godhead existed in his mortal body. From his decayed flesh small vermin grew and waxed larger and larger as they devoured it and he, when while walking saw any of them fall from him would pick them up and place them again upon his body saying, "Your food has been created in this." From past times until the present Sufis have shown great renunciation in their lives. Now most of them are as Jains or Brahmins, leading a most harmless life.

The Sufi is Muslim without any doubt, not only because many Muslims turn out to be Sufis or because of the use of Muslim phraseology, but because one proves in one's life what a true Muslim is and what the heart of the true Muslim ought to be. Muslims as a race have so much devotion that no matter how great a sinner or how cruel a person may be, the name of Allah or Mohammed at once reduces them to tears. Islam prepares one to become a Sufi. The practices of Sufism first develop the heart qualities which are often overlooked by other mystics. It is the purification of the heart which makes it fitted for the illumination from the soul. The Prophet Mohammed prophesied, "There will be seventy-two diverse classes of people among those who will walk in my light, but among them there will be only one kind who will surely find their way aright." This is applied to the Sufis because it is they who read the Qur'an from every experience in life, and see and recognize Mohammed's face in each atom of the manifestation.

The Sufi is a Buddhist for one reasons at every step one takes as one proceeds in one's spiritual journey. The teachings of the Sufis are much akin to those of the Buddhists. In fact it is the Sufi who unites the believers and the unbelievers in the idea of God, in the knowledge of unity.

The Sufi, as a Zoroastrian or a Parsi, looks toward the sun, and bows before the air, fire, water, and earth, recognizing the immanence of God in God's manifestation, taking the sun, moon, and stars as the signs of God. The Sufi interprets fire as the symbol of wisdom and the sun as the celestial light. The Sufi not only bows before them but also absorbs their quality. As a rule, in the presence of dervishes, a wood fire and incense burn continually.

The Sufi is an Israelite especially in the study of the different names of God and the mastery of them. At the same time the miraculous powers of Moses can be seen in the lives of Sufis past and present. The Sufi, in fact, is the master of Hebrew mysticism. The divine voice heard on Mount Sinai is audible to a Sufi today.

Sufism – Beyond Religion

Modern writers have often made mistakes by writing of Sufism as a Persian philosophy or the esoteric side of Islam. Some have erroneously believed it to be a borrowed influence of Vedanta or Buddhism upon Islam. Some Oriental writers have patriotically called it an outcome of Islam in order to secure the credit for their own religion, while some Occidental writers have attempted to win it for Christianity.

In fact, according to the sacred history which the Sufis have inherited from one another, it is clear that Sufism has never been owned by any race or religion for differences and distinctions are the very delusions from which Sufis purify themselves. It might appear that Sufism must have been formed of the different elements of various religions which are prominent today, but it is not so, for Sufism itself is the essence of all the religions as well as the spirit of Islam.

Sufism reveals all the shades and colors which represent the various religions of the world, having no particular color itself. All prophets, saints, sages, and mystics are practically owned by their followers, as Christ by the Christians and Moses by the Jews. Yet Christ was not a Christian nor Moses a Jew, all being Sufis, pure from earthly distinctions. The Beloved Ones of God are even as God, impervious to religious dogmas and principles.

Sufism is not a religion nor a philosophy, it is neither deism nor atheism, nor is it a moral, nor a special kind of mysticism, being free from the usual religious sectarianism. If ever it could be called a religion, it would only be as a religion of love, harmony, and beauty. If it be called a philosophy it is beyond that because a Sufi, through the study of metaphysics, escapes the selfishness produced by philosophy and kindles the fire of devotion with one's eyes open to reason and logic. The Sufi prays to Allah every moment in one's life, invoking God's Name and realizing at the same time that the self is no other than God. For to a Sufi God is not a personal being but a mighty healer to awaken the soul from its delusion of earthly individuality, and a guide to lead it to self-realization, the only aim in life.

The Sufi, by learning the greatest of all morals, which is love, arrives at the stage of self-denial, wherein one liberates oneself from all earthly morals. Mysticism has several aspects but the Sufi strives towards the path of truth, its ultimate goal. The truth of the Sufi is the one truth which is common to all religions and philosophies, and in the realization of which one finds one's salvation, or Najat. Sufism, being the first brother/ sisterhood of purity, has been known under different names, such as that of the Brothers of Purity, the Knights of Purity, the Brotherhood of the Cave, on which initiative several other institutions have established kinships under different names.

Gatheka 4

Sufism: Wisdom Of All Faiths

The word Sufi comes from a Persian word meaning wisdom. From the original root many derivations can be traced; among them the Greek word Sophia is one of the most interesting.

Wisdom is the ultimate power. In wisdom is rooted religion, which connotes law and inspiration. But the point of view of the wise differs from that of the simple followers of a religion. The wise, whatever their faith, have always been able to meet each other beyond those boundaries of external forms and conventions, which are natural and necessary to human life, but which none the less separate humanity.

People of the same thought and point of view are drawn to each other with a tendency to form an exclusive circle. A minority is apt to fence itself off from the crowd. So it has been with the mystics. Mystical ideas are unintelligible to the generality of people. The mystics have, therefore, usually imparted their ideas to a chosen few only, to those whom they could trust, who were ready for initiation and discipleship. Thus great Sufis have appeared at different times and have founded schools of thought. Their expression of wisdom has differed to suit their environments, but their understanding of life has been one and the same. The same herb planted in various atmospheric conditions will vary in form accordingly, but will retain its characteristics.

The European historian sometimes traces the history of Sufism by noticing the actual occurrence of this word and by referring only to those schools which have definitely wished to be known by this name. Some European scholars find the origin of this philosophy in the teaching Of Islam, others connect it with Buddhism. Others do not reject as incredible the Semitic tradition that Sufism's foundation is to be attributed to the teachings of Abraham. But the greater number consider that it arose contemporary to the teaching of Zoroaster. Every age of the world has seen awakened souls, and as it is impossible to limit wisdom to any one period or place, so it is impossible to date the origin of Sufism.

Not only have there been illuminated souls at all times, but there have been times when a wave of illumination has passed over humanity as a whole. We believe that such a period is at hand. The calamity through which the world has lately passed, and the problems of the present difficult situations are due to the existence of boundaries; this fact is already clear to many. Sufism takes away the boundaries which divide different faiths by bringing into full light the underlying wisdom in which they are all united.

Gatheka 5

Different Schools of Sufism

Sufism is the old school of quietism; the ancient school of wisdom which has been the origin of many cults of a mystical and philosophical nature. As the origin of all the occult and mystical schools has been the ancient school of Egypt, so Sufism has always represented that school, and has worked out its destiny in the realm of quietude.

From this school of Sufism came four schools. The first was the Naqshibandia, which worked with symbolism, ritualism and ceremony. The second was the Kadaria, which taught wisdom in the realm of the existing religion of the East. The third was the Soharvardia, which taught the mystery of life by the knowledge of metaphysics and the practice of self-control. The fourth was the Chistia, which represented the spiritual idea in the realm Of poetry, music, etc. From these schools many branches sprang forth in Arabia, Turkey, Tartary, Russia, Turkestan. Bokhara, Afghanistan, India, Siberia, and other parts of Asia.

With the different schools the ideal remained the same, but the method was different. The main ideal of the Sufi school has been to attain that perfection which Jesus Christ taught in the Bible: "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." The method of the Sufis has always been that of self-effacement, but the effacement of which self? Not of the real self, but of the false self (on which one depends, priding oneself on being something) I in order to allow that real self to manifest in the world of appearances. Thus the Sufi method works toward the unfoldment of the soul, the self which is eternal, to which all power and beauty belong.

The Sufi Order

The Sufi Order is a school which represents the embodiment of all the schools and is answering the need of the present day. The Sufi Order, therefore, is the body composed of those interested in spiritual attainment who have been initiated in the Sufi Order which was formed in 1910, when the Sufi message was brought to the Western world.

The Sufi Order has the three objects and ten thoughts which you know. The rights of membership in the Sufi Order are the same all over the world. The Sufi Order is constituted of an outer body as well as of an inner spirit. As an outer body it has its Khankah, its branches (Organizations), and its Lodges (Centers).

The inner working of the Order is regulated in this way: there are four circles of initiates: the study circle, the advanced circle, the inner circle, the higher circle. One passes gradually through these by initiations. There is one initiation called the Sufi, where the obligation to the Order is finished. Then if one wishes to continue to help humanity, one is authorized and initiated to work in that direction as a Khalif or a Murshid.

The condition of initiation is that every mureed is trusted with certain exercises or teachings. The mureed is expected to keep the vow of secrecy and to keep these not only from non-members but also from other initiates, because an exercise is a prescription meant for a particular person and that person cannot pass it on to another. Initiation is a trust that the Murshid gives to his mureeds;

he expects sincerity from them. Trust and confidence become a power in the mureed, which enables one to proceed in one's spiritual journey. The study of a certain philosophy alone is not enough, there must be sincerity in life behind it all. Sincerity must be the first thing in the path of spirituality. Jesus Christ termed this faith.

The Sufi Message

In all periods of the history of the world and in all ancient traditions one finds traces of a call from above being given to communities, nations, races and the world at large. In the Qur'an it is said, "We have sent our messengers to every part of the earth, that they may not say they were not warned in time." All traditions declare that a messenger is given to the world at the time of the world's need.

No doubt people have given an unnecessary and excessive importance to the personality of the messenger rather than to the message, and this is the very great error that humanity has made in every age. In taking the messenger instead of recognizing the message, they regarded the pen that wrote the letter instead of the contents of the letter. The letter and the writer are important; the pen is only the instrument. Thus differences came about in religion. The message has always been given at all periods; when it was more needed it was given with a loud voice, when it was less needed, gently.

Christ has said, "I am Alpha and Omega." This means that he is first and last and thus is ever there, not that he is absent between time. The prophesy of Mohammed was: "Now that all the world has received the message through a man who is subject to all limitations and conditions of human life, the message will in the future be given without the claim."

The Sufi message is destined to reawaken the world and to be a warning. The power of the inner force is constantly at work and this promises much for what is now formed as a nucleus composed of a few mureeds under the name of the Sufi Order to be the servant of the new era in the path of God and truth.

I wish that my mureeds who feel in their hearts this trust shall not only receive the sacred message for their own unfoldment but shall feel the privilege of being a nucleus for the coming spiritual reconstruction of the world. The more conscious they will be of this, the more they will feel the responsibility they have in their life and the duty they must perform. Mureeds can show their devotion to Murshid and to the cause by doing their very best and be devoting their thoughts and efforts in action to the rebuilding of the spiritual world.

A Sufi is one who guards one's knowledge and wisdom and power in humble guise. A Sufi does not dispute on spiritual subjects with everyone, for this reason: the spiritual evolution of each one differs from that of the other, the knowledge of one cannot be the knowledge of the other, nor is the understanding of one the understanding of the other. A Sufi does not discuss beliefs, for the Sufi knows that at every step in spiritual evolution a person's belief changes until one arrives at a final belief which words cannot explain.

The Sufi learns not only by the study of books but by the study of life. The whole of life is like an open book to a Sufi and every experience is a step forward in one's spiritual journey. A Sufi would

rather than teach. A Sufi begins one's life by discipline and resignation, realizing that the path that leads to the goal of freedom is the path of self-control, patience, resignation, and renunciation.

Freedom is the object of all esoteric schools, but one must not make the mistake of thinking that one can begin with that which is the end. To expect liberty in the beginning is to be like the seed thinking, "I must be a tree at once and bear fruit." The fruit is the outcome and object, the culmination of its existence; so is freedom the result of the journey. The path of freedom is an ideal, to understand the real meaning of which is not everyone's work.

The method of the Sufi consists in this: that the Sufi unites with one's innermost being; one's heart is the shrine of one's God and one's body is God's temple; the Sufi considers every person not only as one's brother and sister but as oneself. At the same time, the Sufi never claims spirituality or goodness, neither does the Sufi judge anyone, except oneself in one's own doings. The Sufi's constant attitude towards others is that of love and forgiveness. The Sufi's attitude towards God is that one's innermost being is the object of one's worship and the Beloved Whom one loves and admires. The Sufi's interest in life is art and beauty, and one's task the service of humanity in whatever form possible.

The Intoxication of Life

There are many different things in life which are intoxicating, but if one would consider the nature of life one would think that there is nothing more intoxicating than life itself. In the first place, we can see the truth of this idea by thinking of what we were yesterday and comparing it with our condition of today. Our unhappiness or happiness or riches or poverty of yesterday is a dream to us, only our condition of today counts.

This life of continual rise and fall and of continual changes is like running water, and with the running of this water one thinks, "I am this water." In reality one does not know what one is. For instance, if a person goes from poverty to riches, and if those riches are taken away from them, they lament; and one laments because one does not remember that before having those riches one was poor, and from that poverty one came to riches.

If one can consider one's fancies through life, one will find that at every stage of development in life one had a particular fancy. Sometimes one longed for certain things and at other times one did not care for them. If one can look at one's own life as a spectator one will find that it was nothing but an intoxication. What once gives a person a great satisfaction and pride at another time humiliates them; what at one time a person enjoys, at another time troubles them; what at one time one values extremely, at another time one does not value at all.

If a person can observe one's actions in everyday life and if one has an awakened sense of justice and understanding, one will find oneself doing something which one had not intended to do, or saying something that one would not like to have said, or behaving so that one asks, "Why was I such a fool"? Sometimes one allows oneself to love someone, to admire someone; it goes on for days for weeks, for months, or years. Then one feels, "Oh, I was wrong," or there comes something that is more attractive; then one is on another road, one does not know where one is nor whom one loves.

In the action and reaction of one's life sometimes a person does things on impulse not considering what one is doing, and at other times, so to speak, one gets a spell of goodness and one goes on doing what one thinks is good; at other times a reaction comes and all this goodness is gone. Then in business and in professions and commerce a person gets an impulse—"I must do this," "I must do that"—and one seems to have all strength and courage, and sometimes one goes on, and sometimes it lasts only a day or two and then one forgets what one was doing and then one does something else.

This shows that a person in one's life in the activity of the world is just like a little piece of wood, raised by the waves of the sea when the waves are rising and cast down when the waves are going down. Therefore the Hindus have called the life of the world *Bawasada*, an ocean, an ever-rising ocean. And the life of a person is floating in this ocean of the activity of the world, not knowing what he or she is doing, not knowing where he or she is going. What seems to one of importance is only the moment which one calls the present; the past is a dream, the future is in a mist, and the only thing clear to one is the present.

The attachment and love and the affection of a person in the world's life is not very different from the attachment of the birds and animals. There is a time when the sparrow looks after its young

and brings grains in its beak and puts them into the beaks of its young ones, and they anxiously await the coming of the mother who puts grain in their beaks. And this goes on until their wings are grown, and once the young ones have known the branches of the tree and they have flown in the forests under the protection of the kind mother, they never know who is the mother who was so kind to them.

There are moments of emotion, there are impulses of love, of attachment, of affection, but there comes a time when they pass, they become pale and they fade away. And there comes a time when a person thinks that there is something else he or she desires and something else he or she would like to love.

The more one thinks of a person's life in the world the more one comes to understand that it is not very different from the life of a child. The child takes a fancy to a doll and then gets tired of the doll and takes a fancy to another toy. And when the child takes a fancy to the doll or the toy, he or she thinks it the most valuable thing in the world, and then there comes a time when the child tears up the doll and destroys the toy.

And so it is with each person; one's scope is perhaps a little different, but one's action is the same. All that one considers important in life, such as the collection of wealth, the possession of property, the attainment of fame, and rising to a position that one thinks ideal-any of these objects before one have no other than an intoxicating effect; but after attaining the object one is not satisfied. The person thinks, "There is perhaps something else I want, it is not this I wanted." Whatever one wants one feels is the most important thing, but after attaining it, one thinks that it is not important at all, one wants something else.

In everything that pleases one and makes one happy-one's amusements, one's theater, one's moving pictures, golf, polo, and tennis-it seems that it amuses one to be in a puzzle and not to know where one is going. It seems that one only desires to fill up one's time and one does not know where one is going or what one is doing. And what a person calls pleasure is that moment when he or she is more intoxicated with the activity of life.

Anything that covers one's eyes from reality, anything that makes one feel a kind of sensation of life, anything that one can indulge in and be conscious of some activity, it is what one calls pleasure. The nature of a person is such that whatever one becomes accustomed to, that is one's pleasure, in eating, in drinking, in any activity. If one becomes accustomed to what is bitter, that bitter is one's pleasure; if to what is sour, then sour is one's pleasure; if one becomes accustomed to eat sweets, one likes sweets.

Once one gets into a habit of complaining about one's life and if one has nothing to complain about, then one looks for something to complain of. Another wants the sympathy of others, to complain that one is badly treated by others, one looks for some treatment to complain of. It is an intoxication.

Then there is the person who has a habit of stealing; one is pleased by it, one gets into a habit; if there is another course before one, one is not pleased, one does not want to have it. In this way people become accustomed to certain things in life which become a pleasure, an intoxication.

There are many with whom it becomes a habit to worry about things. The least little thing worries them very much. They can cherish the least little sorrow they have, it is a plant they water and nourish.

And so many, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, become accustomed to illness, and the illness is more an intoxication than a reality. And as long as one holds the thought of that illness, one so to speak, sustains it, and the illness settles in one's body and no doctor can take it away. And the sorrow and Illness are also an intoxication.

Then each person's condition in life, every individual's environment and condition of life, create before one an illusion and give one an intoxication so that one does not know the condition of the people around one, the people of the city in which one lives, and of the country in which one lives. And the intoxication not only remains with one in one's wakeful condition but it continues in one's dreams, as a drunken person will dream also of the things that have to do with one's drunkenness. If one has joy, if one has sorrow, if one has a worry, or if one has a pleasure, the same will be one's condition in one's dream. And day and night the dream continues to exist, and the continuation of the dream with some lasts the whole life, with some it lasts a certain time.

But people love this intoxication as much as the drunken person loves the intoxication of wine. When a person is seeking something interesting in their dream and somebody else tries to wake them, even on waking they feel for a moment that they should go to sleep and finish that interesting dream. Knowing that it was a dream and that someone is waking them, they wish to sleep and to finish that interesting dream. This intoxication can be seen in all different aspects of life, even in the religious, philosophical, and mystical aspects of life this manifests.

People seek subtlety, people wish to know something that they cannot understand, they are very pleased to be told something that their reason cannot understand. Give someone the simple truth, they will not like it, they want to find before them something that they cannot understand. When teachers like Jesus Christ came on earth and gave the message of truth in simple words, the people of that time said, "This is in our book, we know it already." But whenever there is an attempt made to mystify people, to tell them of the fairies and ghosts and spirits, they are pleased, they desire to understand what they cannot understand.

But always what one has called spiritual or religious truth has been the key to that ultimate truth which one cannot see because of one's intoxication. And this truth no one can give to another person. It is in every soul, for the human soul itself is this truth. And if anyone can give, they can only give the means by which the truth can be known. The religions, in different forms, have been methods. By these methods people have been taught by the inspired souls to know this truth, and to be benefited by this truth, which is in the soul of each person. But instead of being benefited by a religion in this way, people have taken only the external part of the religion to be their religion, and have fought with others, saying, "My religion is the only right one, your religion is false."

But there have always existed some wise ones, as it is said in the Bible that the wise of the East came when Jesus Christ was born to see the child. What does it mean? It means that at different times the wise have existed whose life's mission has been to keep themselves sober, in spite of this intoxication from all around them, and to help their fellow human beings to gain their soberness. Among those who have been wise by their soberness there have been some who had great inspira-

tion and great power and control over themselves and over life within and without. And it is such wise people who have been called by the name of saints or sages or prophets or masters.

People in the world, through their intoxication, even in following or accepting these wise men, have monopolized one of them as his prophet or teacher and have fought their intoxication and drunkenness. And as a drunken person would without any thought hit or hurt another person who may be different from them, who thought, or felt or did differently, so mostly the great people of the world who came to help humanity have been killed, crucified, hurt, or tortured. But they have not complained against it, they have taken it as a natural consequence. They have understood that they were in a world of intoxication or drunkenness, and that it is natural that a drunken person must hurt or harm. That has been the history of the world in whatever part of the world the message of God has been given.

In reality the message has been from one source and that is God. Whatever name the wise person gave that message it was not their message, it was the message of God. Those whose hearts had eyes to see and ears to hear have known and seen the same messenger, because they have received the message. And those whose hearts have no eyes or ears have taken the messenger as important and not the message. At whatever period that message came and in whatever form the message was garbed, it was only that one message, the message of wisdom.

And it seems that the drunkenness of the world has increased and increased to such an extent that great bloodshed and disaster have come about recently [World War I], the like of which cannot be found in the history of the world. That shows that the drunkenness of the world has reached its summit. And no one can deny that even now the world is not in its sober condition. Even now the traces of that drunkenness can be found in the unrest of the time, even if the great bloodshed, for the moment, is over.

The Sufi Movement originates from the word sophia, wisdom, the message of wisdom. And its aim is the same that was at all periods of the world's history the aim of the message-to bring about that soberness in humanity, to bring about that love for one's neighbor. No doubt, politics or education or business are the means of bringing people of different races or nations in contact with one another, but spiritual truth and the understanding of life is the only means of bringing about that kinship feeling in the world, which nothing else can bring.

This message does not work to form an exclusive community, since there are already so many communities fighting against one another. The object of the message is to bring about a better understanding between different communities in the knowledge of truth. It is not a new religion. How can this be a new religion when Jesus Christ has said, "I am not come to give a new law, I am come to fulfill the religion." This is the combination of the religions.

The chief aim of this movement is to revivify the religions of the world, in this way bringing together the followers of the different religions in friendly understanding and in tolerance. All are received with open arms in the Order of the Sufis; whatever be their religion, to whatever church they belong, whatever faith they have, there is no interference with it. There is personal help and guidance in the methods of meditation. There is a course of study to consider the problems of life. And the chief aim of every member of the Order is to do the best in his or her power to bring about that understanding, that the whole humanity may become one single family in the Parenthood of God.

The Path of Initiation

In the true sense of the word "initiation," the word itself is its meaning. Initiation means taking an initiative in the direction which is not generally understood by others. Therefore, initiation needs courage and the tendency to advance spiritually, although it may not seem to be the way of everyone in life. Therefore the first duty of a mureed is not to be shaken in faith by any opposing influence or anything said against the path one has taken. One must not allow oneself to be discouraged by anyone. The mureed must be so firm in their path, that if the whole world says "It is a wrong path," the mureed says, "It is the right path." If anyone says that it will take a thousand years or perhaps more, the mureed must be able to say, "If it takes a thousand years, I will have patience to go through it."

In the Persian language, it is called the work of the Baz, the wayfarer of the heavens. In this mystical path, courage, steadiness, and patience are the most necessary things, but besides this, trust in the teacher in whose hand initiation is taken and understanding of the idea of discipline. In the East, where for thousands of years the path of discipleship has been understood, these things are regarded as most important and as acceptable from the hand of the teacher; to that extent they understand discipline and trust in the teacher.

How few in the world know trust! What is necessary is not trusting another, even the teacher, but oneself. One is not capable of fully trusting oneself who has not experienced in their life how to trust another. There is a question, "If we trusted and if our trust were in vain, should we not be disappointed?" The answer is, "We must trust for the sake of the trust, and not for the sake of a return or to see what fruit it brings." It is utmost trust which is the greatest power in the world. Lack of trust is weakness. Even if you lose by trust, your power is greater than if you have perhaps gained without developing trust.

Patience is also necessary in the path. Perhaps it will surprise you if I say that after my initiation in the Order of the Sufis and six months continually in the presence of my Murshid, only then did he say a word on the subject of Sufism. It will amuse you still more that as soon as I took out my notebook, he went on to another subject; it was finished. One sentence after six months! A person would think, "What a long time. Six months sitting before one's teacher, nothing taught!" But, friends, it is not words, it is something else. If words were sufficient, there are libraries full of occult and mystical books. It is life itself, it is the living. Those who live the life of initiation live and make others who come in contact with them alive. Remember, therefore, that in the Sufi Order you are initiated, not especially for study, but to understand and follow what real discipleship means.

As to the subject of discipline, everyone without a sense of discipline is without the power of self-control. It is discipline which teaches the ideal, and the ideal is self-discipline. It is the soldier who can become a good captain. In ancient times, the kings used to send the princes as soldiers to learn what discipline means. The path of initiation is the training of the ego; it is self-discipline which is learned in the way of discipleship.

Now there is a question, "What may be thought of the path of initiation? What must be our goal, what must we expect from it?" Is it that we must expect to be good or healthy, or magnetic, or powerful, or developed physically, or clairvoyant?

Gathekas for Candidates

Nothing of this need you be, although you will cultivate all those things naturally. Do not strive for these things. Suppose you develop power and you do not know its use, the outcome will be disastrous. Suppose you develop magnetism, and by this power you attract all, good and bad; then it will be difficult to get rid of what you have attracted by your power. Or you are very good, so good that everyone is bad to you, too good to live in the world; you will become a burden to yourself. These things are not to be sought by initiation.

The aim is to find God within yourself: to dive deep within yourself, that you may be able to touch the unity of the Whole Being. By the power of initiation, towards this end you work, so that from within you may get all the inspiration and blessing in your life.

For that two things are necessary: one thing is to do the exercises that are given to you regularly and with heart and soul; the second is that the studies that are given should not be considered only a little reading, but every word should be pondered. The more you think on it, the more it will have the effect of opening the heart. Reading is one thing, contemplating is another. The Gathas must be contemplated. Do not take even the simplest word or sentence as simple. Think of the Hindus, Chinese, and Parsis, who for thousands of years, for generations, have always contemplated the readings which they considered sacred and have never tired of them.

Gatheka 9

Reincarnation

People have often asked me: What does the Sufi say about reincarnation? My silence at times and my “yes” and “no” at times have made it vague. Some perhaps thought that I did not believe in it and that if I did not believe, then the Sufis do not believe, naturally. This is not the case. Every Sufi is free to believe what he or she understands as right and what he or she can understand. One is not nailed to any particular belief. By believing in any doctrine the Sufi does not go out of their Sufism, just as by not believing one does not go out of the Order of Sufis. There is perfect freedom of belief.

For my “yes” there was a reason and for my “no” there was a reason, a reason not for myself, but for the person who asked me the question. People in the world wish to make things rigid, things which are of the finest nature which words cannot explain. When a person describes the hereafter, it is just like wanting to weigh the soul or photograph the spirit. I personally think that you must be able to realize yourself what the hereafter is. You must not depend upon my words. Self-realization is the aim. Beliefs in doctrines are pills given to ill people for their cure.

In fact all things are true to a certain point, but when compared with the ultimate truth, they fall short in proving themselves existent. Things appear different from every different plane from which you look at them, and when a person standing on flat earth asks a person standing on top of a mountain, “Do you also believe something?,” the person cannot tell much. The questioner must come to the top of the mountain and see. There can be no link of conversation between them until that time.

The method of the Sufi is quietude and silent progress, in order to arrive at the stage where you can see for yourself. You may say that patience is needed. Yes, but the spiritual path is for the patient; patience is the most difficult thing.

The Interdependence of Life Within and Without

This subject can be considered from three different points of view: in the first place, consider how our physical body expresses all of which it partakes, such as food, drink, and medicine. If a person has grosser food or finer food or purer food it is manifested outwardly. If a person does not consider this, it is also manifested outwardly. The body shows the same nature which it has inherited from the earth to which it belongs. For the nature of this earth is such that when it takes the seed of flowers it produces flowers and when of fruits, fruits, and when it takes the seed of poison it produces poison. All different things are produced, but it is what it has taken that is the result. There is nothing that one eats or drinks or that this body takes which will be so assimilated altogether that this body will not manifest it outside. This is the meaning of this subject in the consideration of our physical body.

And when we think still further, we shall find the action of the body on the mind and the action of the mind on the body. And that must be understood first by considering how intoxicants have a reaction on the mind. Something quite material and physical, when taken, affects the mind, which is not material. The mind in point of fact is much greater than what the scientists today consider it—the brain.

The word “mind” comes from the Sanskrit word Mana, and from this word the English word “man” comes. Therefore, really speaking, what is a human? What is one’s mind? In the words of Jesus Christ a person is as one thinks, a person is one’s thought, a person is one’s mind. Therefore it is not always the body, to which a person attributes so much, that is one’s identification; one’s true identification is one’s mind.

All that one partakes of even physically, in the form either of food or intoxicant, has not only effect upon the body but upon the mind. Not only what the body partakes of, but also what the mind partakes of through the senses, has its influence on the body. For instance, all that one sees is impressed upon the mind. One cannot help it, it is mechanically done, that impression is recorded. All that one hears, smells, tastes, or touches, has not only its effect upon the body, but also upon the mind. That means that one’s contact with the outer world is such that there is a continual mechanical interchange going on; every moment of one’s life one is partaking of all that one’s senses allow one to take in.

Therefore, very often, the person who is looking for the faults of others and who is looking at evil, though the person not be wicked, yet he or she is partaking, without knowing it, of all that is evil. For instance, a person is impressed by a deceitful person. Now the result of that impression is that even when the person casts his or her glance upon an honest person he or she will have the impression of deceit. And it is from this that all pessimistic attitude comes.

A person once deceived is always on the lookout; even with an honest person they look for deceit; the person holds that impression within. For instance, a hunter who has come from the forest with a slap given to him by the lion, when he comes home even the caress of his kind mother frightens him because he thinks the lion came.

Consider how many impressions, agreeable and disagreeable, without knowing the consequences, we partake of from morning till evening. In this way, without a person meaning to become wicked, he or she turns wicked. For, in point of fact, no one is born wicked. Although the body belongs to the earth, yet the soul belongs to God. And from above everyone has received nothing except goodness. With the wickedest person in the world, when you can touch the deepest depth of his or her being, it is nothing but goodness. Therefore if there is any such thing as wickedness or badness, it is only that someone has acquired it, and it is natural since every person is open to impressions.

No doubt the secret of what may be called a superstition of the omen, which exists in the East and sometimes also in the West, is in the impression. For instance, there have been beliefs that if you hear the sound of a certain bell there will be a death in your surroundings, or if you see such a person good luck or bad luck will come to your family. People have sometimes believed blindly, and gone on believing for many, many years. Intellectual ones thought there was nothing in those superstitions and have ignored them. But at the end of the study one will find that the secret of all those superstitions is nothing but impressions, that it is only that whatever the mind has taken through the senses has its effect, not upon the body alone, but also upon one's affairs.

There is the science of physiognomy or phrenology, which goes so far as saying that what one acquires helps to form the different muscles of the features and head, according to what one has taken into one's mind. And it is written in the Qur'an that every part of one's being will bear witness to one's action. I should say that it does not need to bear witness in the hereafter, it bears it every hour of the day. If one examines life, one will find that the mind and body are formed from what one takes from the outer world.

In the words of Christ, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." All that one values is that which one makes in oneself; one creates in oneself all that one values. No doubt when a person is an admirer of beauty he or she will always partake of all that he or she sees as beauty: beauty of form, of color, of line, and beyond that, beauty of manner and of attitude, which is a greater beauty still.

No doubt at this time in the condition of the world people ignore very much the beauty of culture and fineness. No doubt it gives warning that the world, instead of going forward, is going backward, because civilization is not only industrial development or material culture. If that is called civilization, it is not the right word for the right thing. And the explanation of civilization is not very difficult to give. It is progress toward harmony, beauty, and love. When one goes back from these three great principles of life, one may be very creative, but at the same time it is not civilization.

No doubt every race and every creed has its principles of right and wrong, but there is one fundamental principle of religion and one in which all creeds and all peoples can meet; that principle is to see beauty in action, in attitude, in thought, and in feeling. There is no action upon which there is a stamp this is "wrong" or "right." But what can be wrong or wicked is what our mind is accustomed to see as wrong or wicked because it is void of beauty.

Therefore, the one who seeks beauty in all its forms, in action, in feeling, and in manner, will impress their heart with beauty. All the great ones who have come into the world from time to time to waken humanity to a greater truth, what did they teach, what did they bring? They brought beauty. It is not what they taught, it is what they were themselves.

Gathekas for Candidates

The intellectual understanding of beauty, or talking about beauty, is not enough; one cannot talk, one cannot speak enough about it. Words are too inadequate to express either goodness or beauty. One can say a thousand words, and yet one will never be able to express it. For it is something which is beyond words, and the soul alone can understand it.

The one who always follows in one's life, in every little thing one does, the rule of beauty, will always succeed, and will always be able to discriminate between right and wrong and between good and bad.

The Truth and the Way

The point of religion, looking at the subject from the spiritual point of view, is illustrated by a story told in India of the magic lantern which Aladdin saw. What is this magic lantern? This magic lantern is hidden in the heart of every soul. For the time being its light becomes covered and the tragedy of life comes from this covering of light. Why does one seek for happiness? Because happiness is one's own being. It not because one loves happiness or would like to be happy, but one is happiness oneself. And why does one seek for it? One seeks for it because one is happiness, and yet when one finds the happiness closed one wants to look for it. The mistake one makes, and that perhaps every one makes, is that that happiness which could be found inside is sought outside.

The most powerful words that Christ has spoken are. "I am the truth and I am the way." Now consider this sentence: I am the truth and I am the way. There are two things: the truth and the way. When people confuse these two things they become perplexed and they cannot find the way. In the first place a person always makes wrong use of the word "truth." For one always calls fact "truth" but truth is something which altogether uproots the fact. But then, what is fact? Fact is the illusion of truth, but fact is not the truth.

Now you may ask me, "What is truth?" That is the one thing you cannot speak of in words. During my traveling very often I was asked, "But tell the Truth, tell us something about the Truth." When very much urged by people I sometimes wanted to have some bricks and write upon them "Truth" and say, "Now hold it fast, for this is the Truth." For if Truth were so small that our human words could speak about or could contain it, then it could not be Truth. Therefore the Sufis have always named Truth by the word Haqq, which means God Him/Herself. It is that truth which is the seeking of all of us. It is the most wonderful thing to see in the world that however false a person, he or she does not want another person to deceive them or be false to them. A person whose profession may involve lying from morning till evening still does not want their spouse to lie when they come home.

But we satisfy ourselves and are contented with facts, supposing that they are truth. By this contentment so many creeds, faiths, and beliefs exist in this world and fight with one another. But nothing can satisfy the craving of our soul, which is continually in search of the Truth which no words can speak.

"I am the way" is a great problem to consider. The one who wants to find it as the first step very often makes a mistake. One may find it, but not always. It is very strange how a person gives years and years to the study of grammar, music, or science, but when it comes to the Truth, they want from you a direct answer. If it were a lack of patience on his or her part, this would be excusable, but it is not often so. Rather it is because one considers the Truth so little.

If one were too eager or too impatient, one might possibly reach the Truth in one step; there is every reason to be hopeful. Though it is difficult to get gold, it is not so difficult if one really wants the Truth. Gold is something outside, but Truth is something within ourselves. How one wanders all one's life in search of something which can only be found within oneself.

There is one requirement: the way. Why is there a way? The reason is not because there is not already a way made between one and God. There was a way between each person and God, but everyone has gone astray from the way. Therefore each one is shown the way by their elder brother or sister. For instance, if there were not a way it would certainly be unjust to the birds and insects and all creatures if there was a bliss which was only given to humans. God is the perfection of justice, in Whom there is no injustice to be found, and God has not excluded any soul, however small, from this bliss.

As for people, it seems that even the birds and beasts have times when they concentrate. They meditate, in their own way, and they offer their prayer to God. There is no being on earth, however small, who does not contemplate for a moment. If one's sight were keen, one would also see, by sitting in the solitary woods or by sitting in caves in the mountains, that they all have their prayer and their at-one-ment with God. Why do the great ones, the souls who do not find rest and peace in the midst of the world, go to the wilderness? It is in order to breathe the breath of peace and calm that comes to them in the heart of the wilderness.

Humans, who are the most intelligent of all, are the most astray. In spite of all one's pride, the human being has created an artificial world as an improvement upon nature. But in creating this artificial world, they have lost their way. And in this artificial world that one has made as a paradise, is one happy? Does a person not cause more and more bloodshed every time and every time even worse than before? Is one not unjust to one's fellow being? How can a world which can give one that intoxication and absorb all one's mind, time, and effort in that intoxication give a person that happiness which is the craving of one's soul?

Therefore the way has, from time to time, been shown and will be shown to the one who for a time lifts his or her head up from this world and asks for the way to be shown. Although the way seems to be very far, the distances cannot be compared with the distances of this earth.

The way is so short, even shorter than an inch, yet it can be as long and as distant as thousands of such worlds as that where we are. This way contracts and stretches according to the attitude of the soul. However, there is one hope: that as God says in the scripture, "The one who comes to me one step, I go forward to him one hundred steps."

There are many different opinions how the condition of the world should be bettered: some think by religious reform, some think by educational reform, and some think by social reform. Every reform made with the idea of doing some good is worthwhile. But the reform most needed today is spiritual reform. Today the hour has come when narrowness should be abandoned, in order to arise above those differences and distinctions which divide human beings. This rising will raise our neighbors. For the

Lord is not pleased when some children of His are considered one's brothers and sisters, and other children of His are considered as separate. No father or mother is pleased at seeing some children favored and others neglected. What we need today is to train ourselves to tolerate one another.

By spiritual reform I do not mean looking for wonderworking or talking about metaphysical problems. The problem to be solved is solved by itself. We have only to wish and it is solved. The problem we have to solve today is the problem of reconciliation and reconstruction, which neither

the politicians nor the statesmen have been able to solve, because it can only be solved by a spiritual awakening.

The way to spirituality is the expansion and the widening of the heart. In order to accommodate the divine Truth the heart must be expanded. With the expansion of the heart the divine bliss is poured out.

The true spirituality is the raising of the consciousness to that plane which is the abode of the Divine Being.

Gatheka 12

Sufi Mysticism, I: The Mystic's Path in Life

There is one God and one Truth, one religion and one mysticism, call it Sufism, Christianity, Hinduism, or Buddhism. As God cannot be divided, so mysticism cannot be divided. It is an error for a person to say, "My religion is different from yours." One does not know what religion means. There cannot be many mysticisms, just as there cannot be many Wisdoms. There is one Wisdom. It is an error of mankind to say, "This is Eastern and that is Western." This only shows lack of wisdom. Everyone has the divine truth, no matter what part of the world they belong to. It is also an error to distinguish between occultism and mysticism. It is an error to say, "This is my eye and that is yours." The two eyes belong to one soul. When a person pictures mysticism as a branch of a tree which is truth, he or she is wrong, for mysticism is the stem which unites all branches.

What is mysticism really? Mysticism is the way by which to realize the truth. Jesus Christ said, "I am the Truth, I am the Way." He did not say, "I am the Truths and I am the Ways," for there is only one way. There is another way-the wrong way. Many religions there are, but not many wisdoms. Many houses of the Lord for worship, but one God. Many scriptures, but one Truth. So there are many methods, but one way. Thus it is either the right way or the wrong way.

The methods of gaining that way of realization are many, but there are mainly four: by the heart, by the head, by action, and by repose. A person must choose among these four different methods of developing him or herself and preparing to journey on the way, the only way, which is called mysticism. No religion can call it its own, but it is the way of all religions. No church can say that it belongs to it for it belongs to all churches. No person can say that the way which he or she has chosen is "the way." All others are getting there by the same way.

Often people have imagined that a mystic means an ascetic, and that a mystic is someone who dreams, dwells in the air, does not live here on earth, is not practical, and that a person who is an ascetic must be a hermit. Now this is not the case in reality. Very often people want to see the mystic as a peculiar sort of person, and if there is someone peculiar, then they say that is the mystic. Now this is a wrong conception and a one-sided exaggeration. A real mystic must show equilibrium and balance. Real mystics will have their head in the heavens and their feet on the earth.

The real mystic is as wide-awake in this world as in the other. A mystic is not someone who does not possess intellect; a mystic is not someone who dreams. A mystic is wide-awake, yet capable of dreaming when others are not and capable of keeping awake when the rest cannot keep awake. A mystic strikes the balance between two things, power and beauty. A mystic does not sacrifice power for beauty, nor beauty for power. A mystic possesses power and enjoys beauty.

As to the life of the mystic, there is no restriction: there is balance, reason, love, and harmony. The religion of the mystic is every religion and all religions, yet the mystic is above what people call their religion. In point of fact the mystic is religion, for it is not any religion, it is all religions. The moral of all religion is reciprocity: to reciprocate all the kindness we receive from others, to do an act of kindness to others without intending to have appreciation or a return for it, and to make every sacrifice, however great, for love, harmony and beauty.

The God of the mystic is to be found in one's own heart; the truth of the mystic is beyond words. People argue and debate about things of little importance, but mysticism is not to be discussed. People want to talk in order to know, and then they forget all. Very often it is not the one who knows who talks much, but the one who wants to know. The one who knows, but does not discuss, is the mystic. The mystic knows that happiness is in his or her own heart. Besides, to put it into words, is to put the ocean into a drop of water.

There is a wine the mystic drinks and that wine is ecstasy. This wine is so powerful that the presence of the mystic has become wine for everyone who comes into his or her presence. This wine is the wine of the real sacrament, the symbol of which is in the church. One might ask, "What is it, where does it come from, what is it made of?" You may call it a power, a life, or a strength, which comes through the mystic, through spheres everyone is attached to. The mystic by his or her attachment to these spheres drinks the wine which is the sustenance of the human soul; that wine is ecstasy, the mystic's intoxication. That intoxication is the love which manifests in the human heart. Once a mystic drinks that wine, what does it matter if he or her is sitting on the rocks in the wilderness or in a palace? It is all the same. Neither does the palace deprive him or her of the pleasures of the mystic, nor does the rock take it away. The mystic has found the kingdom of God on earth, about which Jesus Christ has said. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you."

People strive for many different things in this world and last of all seek the spiritual path. There are some indifferent ones who say, "There is a long life before us and when the time comes that I must awake I shall awake." But the mystic says, "That is the one thing I must attend to- all other things come after that." It is of the greatest importance in the mystic's life.

Should the mystic, by working for realization of God, neglect his or her duties in the world? It is not necessary. There is nothing that a mystic should renounce in order to have the realization of life. It is only necessary to give the greatest importance to what is of the greatest importance in life. Ordinary people give it the least importance. The mystic gives it the first importance.

One may ask, "Is the life of a mystic meditative?" Yes, but meditation for a mystic is like the winding of a clock. It is wound for a moment, and all day long it goes by itself. It does not mean that one must think about it all day long. The mystic does not trouble about it. A Shah of Persia used to sit up at night for his night vigils and prayers. A visitor wondered at his meditating after all the day's work. "It is too much," he said. "You do not need meditation." "Do not say so," was the answer. "You do not know. For at night I pursue God, and during the day God follows me." Your moments of meditation set the whole mechanism in running order, like a stream running into the ocean. It does not in the least take the mystic away from his or her duty; it only blesses every word he or she speaks with the thought of God.

In all the mystic thinks or does is a perfume of God which becomes a healing and a blessing. How does a mystic who becomes kind and helpful get on amidst the crowd in everyday life? The rough edges of everyday life rubbing against the mystic must necessarily make him or her heart-sore. Certainly they do. The heart of the mystic is more sore than that of anyone else. Where there is only kindness and patience, then it takes all the thorns. Like the diamond being cut, so the heart being cut becomes brilliant. The heart, being sufficiently cut, becomes a flame which illuminates the life of the mystic and also that of others.

Self-Realization: Awakening the Inner Senses

Why do we join the study classes? Is it for the acquisition of spiritual powers, for inspirations, phenomena, or curiosity? All this is wrong. Is it for the accomplishment of something material or for worldly success? That is not desirable. Self-realization, to know what we are, should be our aim.

Some people who admire piety and goodness want everyone to be an angel, and discovering that this is impossible, they are full of criticism. Everyone has in them a devil and an angel; everyone is at once human and animal. It is the devil in one that drives one to do harm without a motive, by instinct. The first step should be to leave this attitude. No one believes that one's own particular demon can be a manifestation of the devil. But who can say, "I am free from such an evil spirit"? We can be under the power of a spell, and we must overcome such a power. We must liberate ourselves from evil. Everyone can fight.

We must discover at which times we have manifested our devil or our animal spirit. We want a human spirit. Self-realization is the search for this human spirit. Everything must become human in us. But what should we do for that? Read the Bible and other holy scriptures? All these books say what we should do. But you must also find the store of goodness that is there in your heart. As you cultivate your heart it rises up. By asceticism you can develop your soul and reach ecstasy. But of what use is Samadhi if we are not first human? If we want to live in this world we must be human; the ascetic should live in a forest.

How should we cultivate the heart and the feeling? No doubt harmlessness, devotion, and kindness are necessary, but there is something besides these. The awakening of a certain center makes one sensitive not only externally, but also mentally. There are two kinds of people: one will be struck by the beauty of music or other manifestations of beauty; the other person is dull as a stone to all this.

Why? Because something in his or her heart and mind is not awakened. We have five senses, but we also have inner senses, and these can enjoy life much more keenly.

Some people will say, "I need no inner senses, the outer ones satisfy me completely." They would speak differently if, for instance, they lost an eye or another of their five senses. In order to be complete, a human being must develop one's inner senses also. But first of all one should develop one's inner feeling.

Intellectual study may last the whole life, there is no end to it. This is why the teacher does not encourage speculation. A doctrine means a separation from other doctrines. The Sufi belongs to every religion. The Sufi has no special beliefs or speculations. There can, for instance, be one Sufi who believes in reincarnation and another who realizes Heaven and Hell. The work of the Sufi is personal development. It is what you practice that is important rather than what the teacher says. The teacher can give you protection. The teacher can say, "Yes, it is so, it is my experience also."

Initiation contains several degrees. It is the trust that the teacher gives you, but the real initiation is the work of God. No teacher can nor will judge. The pupil is one whom the teacher likes to trust; all are welcome to the teacher. The teacher is spiritually Father and Mother to the pupil. The

life of the teacher is often a sacrifice; he or she is persecuted and has many sufferings. What little help the teacher can give, he or she will give.

There is no special qualification needed to become a pupil. The teacher gives, but the pupil can take it. The teaching is like a precious jewel hidden in a stone. It is for the pupil to break the stone and find the jewel.

In the East this inner teaching is part of religion. In the West it is often looked upon merely as an education. It ought to be a sacred education. In the East the Murshid gives the lesson and the pupil practices it for a month or a year. We cannot have a different practice every week. My grandfather practiced one meditation forty years: then a miracle happened to him. We must not be ambitious for other exercises before having had a result from the first one. And we must promise not to reveal these practices.

There is also the study of Sufism, one part of which is for initiates, the other for non-initiates. Only the Murshid can give initiation. But study classes can be given by someone else who knows how to conduct them, for a time. Notes cannot be taken, for that which is heard and seen is twice as profitable. Sometimes the depth of a teaching, not seen at once, is understood later. I sang a mantram fifteen years without understanding it, and then suddenly it was revealed within me. There is a teacher in every one of us, who teaches when the time comes.

We have a tendency to discuss things but it should never become a hobby. No one attains peace by fighting. In the lessons we must not discuss; the spirit in us must ponder over it. If there are mistakes, they come from the Murshid, not from the One who speaks through Murshid. The credit of all good and wisdom belongs to God, not to a human being. Do not dispute, take it or leave it. Make use of that which you are at one with and forget what does not appeal to you. My Message has been destined to humanity in general and not to particular people only. What I give to you, you must give to others.

The Doctrine of Karma

In Hindu theology the doctrine of karma is much more emphasized than in the religions of Beni Israel. By Hindu theology I do not mean only the Vedantist or the Brahman, but also the Bud-dhist; by the religion of Beni Israel I do not mean the Judaic only, but also the Christian and Moslem. The whole theory of the Hindu philosophy is based upon the doctrine of karma; the moral of Beni Israel is also based upon karma. The only difference is that on one side the moral is made on karma, on the other side the philosophy is based on karma.

What is the meaning of the word karma? The meaning is action. It is quite evident that what one sows one reaps; the present is the echo of the past and the future is the reflection of the present. Therefore it is logical that the past makes the present and the present makes the future.

Nevertheless, in the Sufi school there is little spoken on this subject. Very often people interested in the doctrine of karma begin to wonder, "Why does Sufism not speak on the subject? Is it opposed to it?" The answer is that it is not at all opposed to it, but in the way a Sufi looks at it, one cannot help but close one's lips.

In the first place, what a person calls right or wrong is according to his or her own knowledge. A person calls something right which one knows as right and which one has learned to call right; a person calls something wrong which one has learned to call wrong. In this way various nations, communities, and races differ in their conceptions of right and wrong. A person accuses another of wrong doing only on the grounds that one knows it as wrong. How does one know it to be wrong? It is because one has learned it, read it in a book, or been told so. People have looked with horror and prejudice at the doings of other individuals, communities, nations, and races. Yet there is no label, no stamp, or seat upon actions which point them out as right or wrong. This is one aspect of the thing.

Secondly, at every step of evolution one's conception of good and bad, of right and wrong, changes. You might ask me, "How does it change? Does one see more wrong or does one see less wrong as one evolves?" One might naturally think that by virtue of one's evolution one might see more wrongs. But that is not the case: the more one evolves the less wrong one sees. Then it is not always the action, it is the motive behind it. Sometimes an action, apparently right, may be made wrong by the motive behind it. Sometimes an action, apparently wrong, may be right on account of the motive at the back. The ignorant is ready to form an opinion of another person's action, but for the wise it is most difficult to form an opinion of the action of another.

Now coming to the religious idea: if a person evolves spiritually he or she sees less and less wrong at every stage of his or her evolution. How can God be counting the little faults of human beings, who know so little about life? We read in the Bible, "God is love." What does love mean? Love means forgiveness, love does not mean judging. When people make of God a cruel judge, sitting in the seat of judgment, getting hold of every person, asking them their faults, judging them for their actions, and sentencing them to be cast away from the Heavens, then where is the God of love?

Leaving the religious idea aside and coming to philosophy, is a person a machine or an engineer? If one is a machine, then one must go on for years and years and years under a kind of mechanical effect of one's evil actions; if one is a machine then one is not responsible for one's actions.

If one is an engineer then one is responsible for one's actions; if one is responsible for one's actions, then one is the master of one's actions and the master of one's destiny. If one is an engineer, then one makes one's destiny as one wishes.

Taking this point of view, the Sufi says, "It is true that if things are wrong with me, it is the effect of my actions. But that does not mean that I should submit to it or be resigned to it because it is from my past actions. I must make my destiny, because I am the engineer." That is the difference. I have myself heard a person say, "I have been ill for so many years, but I have been resigned to it. I took it easily because it is my karma I am paying back." By that he or she may prolong the paying, which was perhaps to last ten years, for the whole life. The Sufi in this case acts not only as patient but, at the same time, as doctor to him or herself. The Sufi says, "Is my condition bad? Is it the effect of the past? I am going to cure it. The past has brought the present, but this, my present, I will make the future." The Sufi does not allow the past influences to overpower his or her life; the Sufi wants to produce in the present the influence to make his or her life better.

Besides that, there is a still more essential subject. Before a person takes upon him or herself the responsibility of paying back the past, does he or she ask internally, "What was I in the past?" If one does not know of it, why must one hold oneself responsible for it? You can only be responsible for something with which your conscience is tinted.

That is quite a sufficient load to carry in life. Why add to it a load of the unknown past?

When you look at yourself philosophically, what do you find? The keener your sight becomes the less fragments you can find of yourself. The more conscious of reality you become the less conscious you are of your small self. All this burden of past actions is taken by one without one's being invited to take it up. A person could just as well have ignored it. It gives one no benefit, it only gives one a moment's satisfaction of thinking, "It is just that I am in this trouble," and this self-justification fortifies one's trouble. The pain that could have been finished continues because one has fortified the pain.

The main object of the esoteric work is to put away the thought of oneself-What was I? What am I? And what shall I beg-put it away for a moment. One can be very well occupied if one thinks about life as a whole: what it is, what it must have been, and what it will be. This idea produces a kind of synthetic point of view and unites instead of disperses. It is constructive, and the secret of spiritual liberation is to be found in this.

The Brahmins, the Vedantists, and the Buddhists, who hold the idea of karma as the foremost doctrine, once having touched the idea of the goal that is to be attained by spirituality, which they call mukti or nirvana, rise above the idea of karma. For unless a person has risen above that idea, he or she does not touch nirvana. The verbal meaning of nirvana is no (nir) color (vana)—no color, no label, no division.

It is in seeing the whole life as one and realizing it that is the secret of nirvana.

The Law of Life: Inner Journey and Outer Action

All that comes to a person in reality is arrived at. By this I do not mean to say that a person does not make it, create it, earn it, deserve it, or that it does not come to one by chance. All that comes may come to a person in the above five ways, but at the same time in reality a person arrives at it.

The above-said things are realms through which a certain thing comes. But what brings a thing about is the person him or herself. This subtle idea remains hidden until a person has an insight into the law of life and notices clearly its inner working. For instance, one could say that a person came to a certain position or rank or into possession of wealth or fame by working for it; yes, outwardly it is true, but many work and do not arrive at it. Besides, one might say that all blessings of Providence come to one if one deserves them, but one can see so much in life which is contrary to this principle. There are many in the world who do not deserve and yet they attain. With every appearance of free will there seems to be helplessness in every direction of life. As to what one calls chance, there is so much against it too. For deep insight into life will prove that what seems to be chance is not in reality chance. It seems to be chance, as illusion is the nature of life.

But now to explain more fully what I mean by arriving at a certain thing: every soul is, so to speak, continually making its way toward something, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. What a person does outwardly is an appearance of action, an action which may have no connection with one's inner working which is like a journey. Not everyone knows toward what one is making one's way, and yet everyone is making their way. Whether one is making one's way toward the goal one has desired or whether one is making one's way toward quite the contrary goal which one has never desired, one does not know.

But when the goal is realized on the physical plane then a person becomes conscious. "I have not worked for it. I have not created it. I have not deserved it. I have not earned it. How is it possible that it has come?" If it is a desired object, then perhaps one gives the credit to oneself and tries to believe, "I have in some way made it." If it is not desirable, then one wants to attribute it to someone else, or suppose that for some reason or other it has happened like that. But in reality it is a destination at which one has arrived at the end of one's journey: you cannot definitely say that one has created it, one has made it, one has deserved it, or that it has come by accident. What can be said is that one has journeyed toward it, either consciously or unconsciously, and has arrived at it. Therefore, in point of fact no one, in one's desirable or undesirable experiences, has departed from the destination at which one was meant to arrive.

Nevertheless, what is most necessary is to connect the outward action with the inward journey, the harmony of which certainly will prove to be a cause of ease and comfort. This is meant in saying that one must have harmony within oneself. And once this harmony is established, one begins to see the cause of all things more than one sees it in its absence.

One might ask in what way harmony could be established between the inner journey and outward action. What generally happens is that a person is so much absorbed in the outward action that his or her inner attitude becomes obscured to view. The first thing necessary is to remove that

screen that hides from one's sight the inner attitude. Everyone is conscious of what one does, but not conscious of one's inner attitude: in other words, everyone knows what one is doing, but everyone does not necessarily know towards what he or she is going.

No doubt, the more one is conscious of the inner attitude the less becomes one's action. For thought controls action, but it only gives a rhythm and a balance to life. Compared with a person who is capable of running, not knowing where one is going, another is better off who is walking slowly, but knows toward what one is going.

There are two distinct parts of one action. There is an action of our inner life and there is an action of our outer life, the inner being and the outer being. The outer being is a physical action and the inner being is our attitude.

Both may be actions of free will, but in a certain way they both prove to be mechanical or automatic actions. No doubt the inner action has a great power and influence upon the outer action. A person may be busy all day in doing a thing, but at the same time if the attitude is working against him or her, they can never have success in work.

A person by their outward action may deserve a great prize, but for their inner action may not be deserving. Therefore, if these two actions are contrary to one another, there is no construction and there is no attainment of the desired results. The true result, the desirable result, comes by the harmony of these two activities.

Sufi Mysticism, II: The Use of the Mind to Gain Understanding

I would like to speak of the knowledge a mystic attains mentally which prepares the mystic to find his or her way to the truth. Reasoning is a faculty which the mystic uses, and which may develop like common sense or practicality; the difference is only that the mystic does not stop at the first reason, but wishes to see the reason behind them all. Therefore in everything, whether right or wrong, the mystic inquires for the reason. But the immediate answer to that is a reason that is not satisfactory, for the mystic sees that behind that reason there is another. And so the mystic goes on, in the knowledge of all things, which is far greater than the knowledge gained by one thing.

Therefore neither right nor wrong, neither good nor evil, excites the mystic too much, nor does it give the mystic a great shock or surprise. For everything seems to have its nature, and it is understanding which makes the mystic feel at one with all existing things. What can one wish for more in life than understanding? Understanding gives one harmony in the home with those near and dear to one and peace outside the home with so many different natures and characters. If one lacks understanding, one is poor in spite of all that one possesses of the goods of this world; it is understanding which gives a person riches.

If life could be pictured, one would say that it reminds one of a sea in the storm with waves coming and going; such is life. This understanding gives one weight which can endure rain and storm and all vicissitudes. Without understanding a person is like a jolly boat which cannot get through the storm on the sea. By understanding a mystic learns. The mystic learns tact and is tactful under all circumstances. The mystic's tact is like a ship with a heavy load, which the wind cannot move and which stands still in the midst of the storm on the sea.

The nature of life is such that it easily excites the mind and makes one unhappy in a moment's time. It makes people so confused that they do not know where to take the next step. Contrary to this, the mystic stands still and inquires of life its secret, and from every experience, from every failure or success, the mystic learns a lesson. Therefore failure and success both are profitable to a mystic.

The ideal of a mystic is never to think of disagreeable things. What one does not want to happen one must not think of. All disagreeable things from the past a mystic erases from their mind. The mystic collects and keeps his or her happy experiences and makes out of them a paradise. Are there not many unhappy people, who keep a part of the past before them which causes them pain in their heart? Past is past, it is gone. There is eternity before you. If you want to make your life as you wish, do not think of disagreeable thoughts or of painful experiences and memories that make you unhappy.

Thus life becomes to some extent easy for a mystic to deal with. For the mystic knows every heart and every nature, whereas others, untouched by the mystic's secret, suffer from their difficulties at home and difficulties outside. They dread the presence of people they do not understand, they want to run away from them and, if they cannot escape, they feel as if they were in the mouth of a dragon.

Perhaps they are placed in a situation which cannot easily be changed. Consequently they heap confusion upon confusion. And how very often one sees that where two people do not understand one another, a third comes and helps them to understand each other, and the light thrown upon them causes greater harmony. The mystic says, "Whether it be agreeable or disagreeable, if you are in a certain situation, make the best of it; try to understand how to deal with such a situation." A life without such understanding is like a dark room which contains everything you wish-it is all there, but there is no light.

The world after all is a wonderful place, in spite of so many souls wishing to leave this world. For there is nothing which is not to be obtained in this world. It is all there: all things good and beautiful and all things precious and worthwhile are there, if one knows their nature, their character, and how to obtain them.

If you ask a person what is the nature of life, they will say, "The farther we go in the strife for happiness the farther we are removed from it." This is true. But one takes the wrong way who does not know that unhappiness does not exist. Besides, happiness is more natural than unhappiness, as good is more natural than evil, and health than illness. And yet people are so pessimistic. If you tell them the good of anyone, they cannot believe this to be true. But if you tell them the bad of a person, they say, "Yes, that is really true."

The work of the mystic therefore is to study life. For the mystic life is not a stage play or an amusement: for the mystic it is a school for learning in every moment of life. It is a continual study. Therefore the scripture of the mystic is human nature. Every morning the mystic turns a new page of this scripture. The great ones have brought the Message to the world from time to time and their books have become scriptures to the world for thousands of years. Generations of people have taken their spiritual food from this interpretation that they have given. Therefore the sacred scriptures always have the same sacred feeling behind them.

The mystic has respect for all religions and understands all the different and contrary ideas, for he or she understands everyone's language. The mystic can agree, without dispute, with the wise, the foolish, and the simple. For the mystic sees that the nature of facts is such that they are true in their place: the mystic understands every aspect of their nature. The mystic sees from every point of view. They see from the point of view of each person and that is why they are harmonious with all. A person comes to a mystic and says, "I cannot believe in a personal God, it means nothing to me." Then the mystic answers, "You are quite right." Another person says, "The only way of making God intelligible is in the form of the human." The mystic says, "You are right." And another person says, "How foolish of these people to make of this person a God: He/She is above comprehension." And the mystic says, "You are right." For a mystic understands the reason behind all the opposing arguments.

Once a missionary came to a Sufi in Persia, as he desired a discussion to prove his point of view right about the Sufi teachings. The Sufi, in his silent, quiet attitude of rest, was sitting, with his two or three pupils by his side. And the missionary asked some questions. The mystic answered: "You are right." But the man went on to dispute and the Sufi said only: "That is quite true." Then he took another turn and put his question in an eloquent manner. The man was very disappointed as there was no opportunity for argument. The Sufi saw the truth in all. The truth is like a piano. The notes may be high or low, you may strike a "C" or an "E," but they are all notes.

The difference between ideas is like that between notes. So in daily life with the right and the wrong attitude. If we have the wrong attitude all things are wrong; if we have the right, all things are right. The one who mistrusts him or herself, will mistrust even his or her best friend. The one who trusts him or herself, will trust everyone.

Things which seem to be apart, such as right and wrong, light and darkness, and form and shadow, before the mystic come so close that it is only a hair's breadth that divides right and wrong. Before the mystic there opens out an outlook on life, an outlook in which is the purpose of life.

The question which the mystic puts to him or herself is: "Which is my being? My body? No. This body is my possession. I cannot be that which I possess." The mystic asks him or herself: "Is it my mind?" The answer comes, "No. The mind is something I possess, it is something one witnesses. There must be a difference between the knower and the known." By this, in the end, the Sufi comes to an understanding of the illusory character of all the things one possesses. It is like a person who has a coat made: it is one's coat, it is not oneself.

Then the mystic begins to think: "It is not myself who thinks, it is the mind. It is the body which suffers, it is not myself." It is a kind of liberation for one to know, "I am not my mind." For one wonders: "One moment I have a good thought, another moment a bad thought, a right thought or a wrong, one moment an earthly thought, the other moment a thought of heaven. It is like a moving picture, and it is I who see, who am dancing there."

By seeing this the mystic liberates him or herself, which, owing to illusion, was buried under mind and body. What one calls a soul was lost; it was a soul not aware of the mystical truth that body and mind are the vehicles by which to experience life. In this way the mystic begins his or her journey towards immortality.

Sufi Mysticism, III: Preparing the Heart for the Path of Love

In the first place one asks, "What is the heart? Where is the heart?" One is accustomed to saying that the heart is in the breast. Yes, that is true. There is a nerve center in the breast of everyone which has so much to do with the feelings that the heart is always pictured in the breast, that center which is most sensitive to our feelings. When a person is feeling great joy, in that center one feels something light up, and by the lighting up of that center the whole person seems light. The person feels as if he or she flew, there is a great joy in his or her life. Likewise, if depression or despair comes into one's life, this has an effect upon the center. One feels one's throat choked and one's breath is heavy with a load; again it is that center that feels.

But it is not that only which is the heart. It is as if a mirror were standing before the heart, focused on the heart, and every feeling is reflected in this mirror in the physical being of each person. Since people are ignorant of their soul, they know not where their heart is, nor where the center is where their feelings are reflected. This fact is known by the scientists as well that it is the heart which is the beginning of the formation of a child.

In the mystic's conception, it is the heart, which is the beginning of form, which is also the beginning of the spirit which makes each one individual. The depth of that spirit is in reality what we call the heart. By this we understand that there is some such thing as a heart which is the deepest depth of one's being. One first knows something of it from the impression which one receives in this nerve center in the breast of one, and therefore one calls it the heart.

In these days people give less importance to sentiment; they rely more upon the intellect. The reason is that when they meet two sorts of people, the intellectual and the sentimental, they find in an intellectual person greater balance than in the one with sentiment. This is no doubt true, but the lack of balance is for the very reason that there is a greater power than the intellect, which is the sentiment. The earth is fruitful and creative, but not so living and powerful as the water. The intellect is creative, yet not so powerful as the heart and the sentiment. In reality, the intellectual person in the end will prove unbalanced too, if there is no sentimental side attached to it.

Are there not many people of whom their associates say: "I like him, love him, and admire him, but he closes his heart"? The ones who close their hearts neither fully love others, nor allow others to love them fully. Besides, the person who is only intellectual in time becomes skeptical, doubting, unbelieving, and destructive, as there is no power of the heart to balance it.

The Sufi considers devotion of the heart the best thing to cultivate for spiritual realization. It might seem quite different from what many think, but the ones who close their hearts to others, close their hearts to God. Jesus Christ did not say, "God is the intellect." He said, "God is love." If, therefore, there is a piece of God that can be found anywhere, it is not in any church on the earth, nor in Heaven above; it is in the heart of each person. The best place where you are sure to find God is in the loving heart of a kind person.

It may be that by the help of reason one will act according to a certain standard of morals, but that does not make a person good. If one is good or righteous, one is artificially made good. All the prisoners in the jail can be righteous. But if natural goodness and righteousness can be found any-

where, it is in the spring of the heart from which life rises, a spring of virtue, and every drop of this is a living virtue. That proves that goodness is not person-made, it is one's very being. If one lacks goodness, it is not the lack of training; it is because one has not yet found him or herself.

Goodness is natural. For a normal person it is necessary to be good. No one needs teaching to live a good or a righteous life. If love is the torch on one's path, it shows one what fairness means: the honor of the word, charity of the heart, and righteousness. Do we not sometimes see a young man who, with all his boisterous tendencies, finds a woman whom he begins to love, and if he really loves her, he begins to show a difference in his life. He becomes gentle for he must train for her sake; he leaves off things he was never before willing to leave off.

In the same way, forgiveness, where there is love, is not a very difficult thing. A child comes before his mother, having offended her a thousand times, and asks her forgiveness. There is no other to go to. It does not take a moment for the heart of the mother to forgive. Forgiveness was waiting there to be manifested. One cannot help being kind when there is feeling. A person whose feeling goes out to another strikes a note of sympathy in every person; the person finds the point of contact in every soul they meet, because they have love. There are people who say, "But is it not unwise to give oneself in outgoing tenderness to everyone, because people are not trustworthy?" I should say, "If a person is good and kind, this goodness ought to be manifested to everyone, the doors of the heart should not be closed."

A mystic like Jesus Christ said, "Love your friend," and he went so far as to say, "Love your enemy." The Sufi treads the same path. In charity of heart to one's neighbors, the Sufi considers it the love of God; and in showing love to everyone, the Sufi considers this as love to God. In this, the method of the Sufi and the Yogi differ. The Yogi is not unkind. The yogi says, "I love you all, but I had better keep away from you, for your souls are always groping in darkness, and my soul is in the light. With your friendship I shall spoil my soul, so I had better keep away and love you from a distance."

The Sufi says, "It is a trial, but it is to be tried. I shall take up my everyday duties as they come to me." Knowing how unimportant the things of the world are and not giving them too much value, still Sufis are attentive to their duties towards those who love them, like them, depend upon them, and follow them. Sufis try for the best way of meeting those who dislike and despise them. They live in the world and yet are not of the world. In this way the Sufis consider loving each person as the main principle in the fulfillment of the purpose of one's life.

How true it is that the life of those who love their enemies and yet lack patience is like a burning lantern with little oil. It cannot endure; in the end the flame becomes faded. The oil in love is patience. In addition to this, in the path of love, what is the oil? From beginning to end: unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Those who say "give and take" do not know love, they know business. One says, "I have loved dearly once, but I was disappointed," as if a man would say, "I dug in the earth, but when the mud came I was disappointed." It was true that mud came, but with patience one would have reached the water one day. Only patience can endure. Only endurance makes great. It is endurance which makes things valuable and people great.

The imitation of gold can be as beautiful as real gold; the imitation of the diamond as bright as a real diamond. The difference is that one fails in the test of endurance, and the other can stand it.

Yet one must not be compared to objects. People have something divine in themselves, and they can prove this by their endurance in the path of love.

Now whom should one love, how should one love? Whatever one loves—whether duty, human beings, art, friends, an ideal, or one's fellow-creatures—one has certainly opened that door through which to pass in order to reach that love which is God. The beginning of love is an excuse; it leads to that ideal of love which is God alone.

Many say, "I can love God, but not human beings." It would be the same if we said to God, "I love you, but not your image." Can one hate the human creatures in which God's image is to be found and yet claim love of God? If one is not tolerant and not willing to sacrifice, can one claim the love of the Lord? The first thing to teach is the broadness of the heart; the awakening of the heart is the inner feeling. If there is a sign of saintliness it is not the power of words, not high position, either spiritual or intellectual, and not magnetism. The proof of the saintly spirit is only expressed in the love of creatures. It is the continuous spring of love from that divine fountain situated in the heart of each person.

Once that fountain is open, it purifies the heart; it makes the heart transparent to see the outer and the inner world. The heart becomes the vehicle for the soul to see all within and without. One not only communicates with another person, but also with God.

Sufi Mysticism, IV: Use of Repose to Communicate with the Self

When the lips are closed, then the heart begins to speak; when the heart is silent, then the soul blazes up, raising its flame, which illuminates the whole life. This idea shows the mystic the great importance of silence, which is gained by repose. It is so little known what repose means, because every person who experiences repose feels that they need it after being tired. Other than this, one never sees the necessity of repose.

Repose has many aspects. There is repose when a person retires from the action of everyday life and finds oneself alone in one's room. The person breathes a breath of thankfulness, after all the interesting or uninteresting experiences, "I am just now alone by myself." It is not an ordinary feeling; there is a far deeper feeling behind it. The meaning is in the certainty that there is nothing to attract one's mind and nothing which demands one's action. At that moment one's soul has a glimpse of relief, the pleasure of which is inexpressible. But the intoxication of life from which everyone suffers is such that one cannot very well appreciate that moment of relief, because every person expects it in the time of retirement from the actions of daily life, rich or poor, tired or not. Does this not teach us that there is a great mystery in repose, a mystery of which a person is very often ignorant?

Besides this, we always find a thoughtful person reposeful by nature, and a reposeful one thoughtful by nature. It is repose which makes one more thoughtful, and it is continual action which takes away thoughtfulness even from a sensible person. People working in the telephone, telegraph, or post office, upon whose mind there is a continual demand, in time develop impertinence, insolence, and lack of patience. They do not become less sensible; lack of repose, which weakens their sense of control, makes them give in to such things.

Thus, repose is not only necessary for a person who walks the spiritual path, but for every soul living on earth, whatever one's grade of evolution and one's standard in life. This is the one thing which must be developed in human nature, not only in grown-up people, but also taught from childhood. Education nowadays thinks so much about the different intellectual things the child will want in life and so little about the repose which is the greatest necessity for the child.

Sometimes cats and dogs prove more intuitive than humankind. Are animals capable of more things than people? No, people are more capable. But people do not give themselves time to become more intuitive; they do not give themselves enough time to repose. It often amused me to see that in New York, where one easily becomes exhausted by the noises of trains, streetcars, elevators, and factories, when a person has a little time to sit in the train or subway, he or she looks at the newspapers; all that action is not enough. If not in the body, then there must be action in the brain.

What is it? It is nervousness, a common disease which has almost become normal health. If everyone suffers from the same disease then this disease may be called normal. What is called self-control and self-discipline only comes from the practice of repose, which is helpful not only in the spiritual path, but also in one's practical life, in being helpful and considerate.

The mystics, therefore, take this method of repose and try to prepare themselves to tread the spiritual path. The spiritual path is not an outward path; it is an inward path one has to tread. Therefore, the laws and journey through the spiritual path are quite contrary to the laws and journey

through the outer path. To explain in plain words what the spiritual path is I should say, "It begins by living in communication with oneself." It is in the innermost self of one which is found the life of God. This does not mean that the voice of the inner self does not come to everyone. It always comes, but every person does not hear it. Therefore, to begin one's effort in this path, the Sufi begins to communicate with and to address oneself within. When once one has addressed the soul, then from the soul comes a kind of reproduction, the way the singer could hear his or her song on a disc produced from his or her voice.

Having taken a first step in the direction within, one listens to what this process reproduces: the wakening of an echo in one's being, either peace or happiness, light or form, or whatever one has wished to produce. It is produced as soon as one has begun to communicate with oneself. Now you can compare the person who says, "I cannot help being active, being sad, or being worried, as it is the condition of my mind and soul," with the worker who communes with him or herself.

The Sufis have taught this for thousands of years. The path of the Sufi is not to commune with fairies and God, but to commune with one's deepest, innermost self, as if one blew one's inner spark to a divine fire. Sufis do not stop there, they go still further. They remain in a state of repose, brought about by a certain way of sitting and breathing and by a certain attitude of mind.

Then one begins to become conscious of some part of one's being which is not the physical body but which is above it. The more one becomes conscious of this, the more one begins to realize the truth, which is a sure truth, of the life hereafter. Then there is no longer imagination nor belief, but actual realization of that experience which is independent of physical life. In this state, one is capable of experiencing the phenomena of life.

The Sufi therefore does not dabble with different wonder-workings and phenomena. Once the Sufi realizes the life beyond the physical, then the whole of life is a phenomenon. Every moment and every experience brings to the Sufis a realization of that life which they have found in their meditations.

Sufi Mysticism, V: Realizing the Truth of Religion

The being of each person is a mechanism of body and mind. When this mechanism is in order, there is happiness and fullness of life; when anything is wrong with the mechanism, the body is ill and peace is gone. This mechanism depends upon winding, just as a clock is wound and then goes on for 24 hours, so also in meditation a person sits in a reposeful attitude, puts the mind in a condition of repose, and regulates the work of this mechanism by meditation. Like winding, the effect is felt all the time, because the mechanism is put in order.

Therefore the belief of a mystic is not an outward belief in a deity one has not seen; the mystic's worship is not an outer form, so that by saying prayers his or her worship is finished. The mystic makes the best use of the outer things, but at the same time the mystic's pursuit is logical and scientific. The mystic will, if possible, unite the outer form with the mystical conception. Mysticism is the scientific explanation and also the realization of things taught by religion, things which otherwise would have no meaning to an ordinary person.

An ordinary person reads about the kingdom of God and heaven, but does not know where heaven is; the ordinary person feels there is a God, but there is no evidence. Therefore, a large number of intellectual people who really are seeking the truth are going away from outer religion, because they cannot find the explanation; consequently they become materialistic.

The mystic says the explanation of the whole of religion is the investigation of the self. The more one explores oneself, the more one will understand all religions in the fullest light and all will become clear. Sufism is only a light thrown upon your own religion, like a light brought into a room containing all the things you want; the one thing needed was light.

Yet the mystic is not always ready to give his or her answer to every person. Can parents always answer every question of their infant children? No. There are questions which can be answered, and there are some which should wait until the person comes to a point of understanding. I used to be fond of a poem which I did not understand; I could not find a satisfactory explanation. After ten years, all of a sudden in one second's time, a light was thrown upon it and I understood. There was no end to my joy. Does it not show that everything has its time? When people become impatient and ask for an answer, something can be answered, but something cannot be answered; the answer will come in its time. One has to wait. Has anyone in the world been able to say fully what God is, all the scriptures and prophets notwithstanding? God is an ideal too high and great for words.

Can anyone explain such a word as love or say what truth is? Very often people ask what is truth. I often felt as if I should like to write the word truth on a brick in charcoal and put it into their hands and say, "There, hold this, then you can hold truth." If truth is to be attained, it is only when truth itself has begun to speak, which comes about in revelation. Truth reveals itself-, therefore the Persian word for truth is Khuda, which means self-revealing, for this word unites God with truth. So God is truth. One can explain neither the first nor the second word.

The only help the mystic can give is in how to arrive at this revelation. No one can teach this; one has to learn it oneself. The teacher is only there to guide one to this revelation. There is only

one teacher, who is God. The great masters of the world were the greatest pupils: they knew how to become pupils.

How is it all taught or brought to the consciousness of those who tread the path of truth? By Bayat: initiation. It is a trust from someone who guides to someone who is treading the path. The treader of the path must be willing to risk the difficulties of the path, to be sincere, faithful, truthful, and undoubting, not pessimistic or skeptical, else one's efforts will not reach one's aim. One must come whole-heartedly, or else not come. Half-heartedness has no value.

After that, what is necessary is some intellectual understanding of the metaphysical aspect of life, which some have, but not all. What is necessary besides are the qualities of the heart: love, which is known to be divine, as a first principle: then action, such action as will not hinder in the path of truth, such action as creates greater and greater harmony; and then repose, for that which is learned in the study of one year is also teamed by the silence of one day. If one only knew the real way of silence!

Sufi Mysticism, VI: The Way Reached by Harmonious Action

Very often one is apt to think that study, meditation, and prayer alone can bring one to the way leading to the goal. But it must be understood that there is a great deal to be done by action. Few indeed know what power every action has upon one's life: what power a right act can give and what effect a wrong act can have. People are only on the lookout for what others think of their actions, instead of what God thinks of them.

If one knew what effect an act produced upon oneself, one would understand that though a murderer escaped the hands of the police officer, the murderer has not escaped from the fault he or she has done. One cannot escape oneself, the greatest judge is sitting in one's own heart. One cannot hide one's acts from oneself. No doubt, it is difficult almost impossible for one to judge the acts of another person, for one does not know the condition of another. One can best judge oneself. People, however wicked, are not pleased with themselves with their wrong actions. If one is pleased for a moment, this pleasure will not continue.

One might ask: what is right and what is wrong? No one can stamp any deed as right or wrong. But there is a natural sense in one which distinguishes between right and wrong, just or unjust, a sense even in the child. One sees the line and color in art or decoration. One sees if the tablecloth is not laid straight on the table and when a line that should be straight is not straight. Even a child knows when things should be harmonious in line and color; a child normally loves harmony in line and color. There is a natural tendency in the heart of each person, the natural instrument that the masons use for building a house.

Different religions have taught different morals right for the multitude of that time. No doubt the law of the masses must be respected, but the real conception of right and wrong ties in one's deepest self. The soul is not pleased with that which is not right. The soul's satisfaction is always in something which gives it an entire happiness. The whole method is based on the practice not only of thought, but also of action. All religions have been based not only on the truth, but also on action. Things either material or spiritual have been accomplished by action.

For the mystic, therefore, action is a most important thing. During my travels from place to place, coming in contact with different people and having the opportunity of staying with them, I have met some who have perhaps never in their lives read a book of theology or studied mysticism. Their whole life has been spent in work, business, and industry, yet I have felt their spiritual advancement, which came naturally from their right action in life. They had come to a state of purity which another might find by study or meditation.

On the subject of action, one might ask what is the best road to take in everyday life leading to the ideal of life? The best way of action is to consider harmony as the first principle to be observed. In all circumstances, situations, and conditions try to harmonize with one's fellow-creatures. It is easy to say, but most difficult to live; it is not always easy to harmonize. If we question why it is so difficult, the answer is that it is not always that people are difficult and not pliable; it is we ourselves who cannot bend.

The palm tree that grows straight up and the stem of which is so straight and strong, with all its strength and goodness, still cannot harmonize with the other trees. There are many good people, but they are not harmonious. There are many true people, but their truth is not always comforting. They may tell the truth like a slap given to a person. They are just like the palm tree, straight and righteous, and at the same time inharmonious.

A harmonious person can bend and is pliable, and can meet another. No doubt, in order to harmonize, one has to sacrifice; one has to bend to people one does not want to bend to. One has to be more pliable than one is by nature, and one has to be more clever than one really is. All these efforts will not succeed unless one makes an effort and unless one realizes that harmony is the most essential thing in life.

Why does a mystic give such great importance to harmony? Because for a mystic his or her whole life is one continuous symphony of music, each soul contributing to the symphony by his or her particular part in the music. Success, therefore, depends upon the ideal of harmony the person has. Very few people in the world give attention to harmony. They do not know that without this, there is no chance of being happy. Only the harmonious ones can make happiness and partake of that happiness. Otherwise it is hard to find happiness in the world. The fighter has no peace; battle will be ever increasing. It is the peacemaker who is blessed. No doubt to make peace, one will have to fight with oneself in order to be able to make peace with others.

Whatever a person's education or position in life or the amount of one's possessions, if there is one thing lacking in one's life and heart, nothing can bring one peace. Think what value it would be if one knew what a thing it is to create harmony. This is the main thing in life, in everything one thinks and does.

Sufi Mysticism, VII: Human Actions Become Divine

There are certain actions, such as eating, drinking, sitting, and walking, which are not different from those of the animals. Therefore, if one, in one's actions, does not show something which is not to be found in animals, then one has not awakened to human nature. Who cannot show something of the characteristics of a human being? One might ask: what are these?

The very same actions, such as eating, drinking, sitting, and sleeping, have behind them a light to guide; the very same action can become characteristic of human nature. For instance, if one thinks one must not push another when walking or say "I am sorry" one shows a tendency different from an animal. Animals must rub against one another and people show they will not do so. Animals pass before one another and, instead of bowing, show their horns and give greetings with a howl. People will be different.

The special characteristics of a human being is consideration, refinement, patience, and thoughtfulness. Once one has practiced these, that leads to the practice of self-sacrifice, which leads to divine action. When one sacrifices one's time and one's advantage in life for the sake of another one loves, respects, and adores, this sacrifice raises one higher than the standard of ordinary human beings. This is the divine nature, which is not human, because the human being begins to think as God thinks and because his or her actions become more and more divine, until they become the actions of God. That person is greater than the person who merely believes in God, for his or her own actions have become the actions of God.

The awakened soul sees all the doings of grown-up people as the doings of children of one Father and Mother. The awakened soul looks upon them as the Father/Mother would look upon all human beings on the earth, without thinking that they are Germans or English or French. They are equally dear to him or her. The awakened soul looks at all, full of forgiveness, not only for those who deserve it, but also for others. The awakened soul understands not only the deserving, but also the undeserving, because he or she understands the reason behind everything.

By seeing good in everyone and everything, one begins to develop that divine light which expands itself, throwing itself upon life, making the whole of life a scene of the divine sublimity. What the mystic develops in life is a wider outlook, and this wider outlook changes one's action. One develops in oneself a point of view which may be called a divine point of view. You cannot help calling this the divine point of view. A person rises to a state when one feels that all that is done to one is from God. The person feels that when one does right or wrong, one does the wrong to God. Once arrived at, this is true religion. There can be no better religion than that, the religion of God on earth.

This is the point of view which makes a person like God: divine. One is resigned when badly treated. But one will take oneself to task if one happens to find a shortcoming in one's own action, for that action is to God.

The mystic's conception of the deity is not only of a king or a judge or a creator. The mystical conception of God is the Beloved, the only Beloved there is. To the mystic all the love of this world is like little children playing with their dolls and loving them. Thus they learn the lesson they have to realize later in life of taking care of the home. The mystic learns the same lesson by proving sincere

Gathekas for Candidates

and devoted to all sorts of creatures. This devotion wakens the mystic to the Beloved, the only Beloved there is and to whom all love is due.

The Ideals and Aim of the Sufi Movement

The word Sufi itself is significant since it comes from Sophos or Sophia which means wisdom-wisdom not in the sense everyone understands, for in everyday language we confuse intellect with wisdom. Wisdom is not only intellectuality, but also that knowledge which comes from within combined with intellectuality. Sufism, therefore, has never been in any period of history a religion with a certain creed; it has always been the essence of every religion and of all religions. When it was given to the world of Islam, it was presented by the great Sufis in Muslim terminology. Whenever the Sufi ideal is presented to a certain people, in order to make it intelligible to those people, it has been presented in the realm of their own understanding.

Sufism is not necessarily a dogma or a doctrine; it is neither a form nor a ceremony. This does not mean that a Sufi does not make use of a doctrine, dogma, ritual, or ceremony. Sufis make use of it but they are free from it. It is neither dogma, doctrine, ceremony, nor ritual that makes a Sufi a Sufi. It is wisdom alone which is the property of the Sufis; all other things Sufis use for their convenience and benefit. A Sufi is not against any creed, any doctrine, any dogma, any ritual, or any ceremony. Moreover, the Sufi is not even against the person who has no belief in God or spirit. For a Sufi has a great respect for each person.

The God of the Sufi is the God of all, his or her ideal and very being. The Christ of the Sufi is his or her ideal: therefore, no one's savior is foreign to a Sufi. The Sufi sees the beauty, greatness, and perfection of a human being in one's ideal. Therefore the Sufi does not mind if that ideal is called by one person, Buddha, by another person, Krishna, or by yet another, Mohammed. Names make little difference to the Sufi. The Sufi's ideal does not belong to history or tradition; the Sufi's ideal belongs to the sacred sentiment of his or her heart. So how can the Sufi dispute and compare the ideals of the different creeds? They dispute historical and traditional points of view in vain without making an impression upon one another.

The idea of the Lord, the Lord in the form of each person, is the outcome of the deepest sentiment of devotion of the heart. An ideal like this cannot be disputed, argued about, or compared. A Sufi, therefore, considers the less spoken on the subject the better because the Sufi respects that one ideal which is called by different people different names.

To a Sufi, life, human nature, and nature all around is a revelation; it is all a sacred scripture. Does that mean that a Sufi does not look upon the sacred scriptures held in esteem by humanity? No. On the contrary, the Sufi holds them as sacred as do the followers of those scriptures, only the Sufi says that all scriptures are different interpretations of that one scripture which is before us constantly, as an open book, if we could only read and understand it.

The object of worship of the Sufi is beauty. Not only beauty in form and color and line, but beauty in all its aspects, from gross to fine. The moral for the Sufi is the understanding of harmony: in what way one can harmonize with one's soul and how one can harmonize with one's fellow human being. Instead of labeling one action as a sin and another action as a virtue, instead of arguing on the subject of the right and wrong of certain actions, the Sufi trains him or herself, as a musician trains his or her ear, to see what is harmonious and what lacks harmony in oneself and in one's dealings with others.

This continual development of understanding of the law of harmony produces in the Sufi that goodness which he or she calls divine. Harmony is the sign of life. What is life? Life, in poetic words, may be called love. The loveless heart may have all the religion and all the knowledge, yet it is dead. As the Bible says, "God is love." God is in the heart of each person, and the heart of each person is the highest heaven. When that heart is closed by the absence of love, then God is closed. When this heart is open, God is open, and one is alive from that time.

In action, conscience is the guide for a Sufi, and the Sufi seeks justice continually. No doubt, the Sufi's way of looking for justice is different from the way that everyone else adopts. Everyone examines whether another person treated them justly or unjustly. This is the way justice is sought by every soul, though this keeps the soul far away from the true justice. The Sufi understands only one justice, that is if one has been just, if one can be just, and if one can satisfy oneself with one's action. With this sense of justice, the Sufi is pleased, and that is the Sufi's path.

What is the highest aim of the Sufi? The Sufi's highest aim is to probe the depth of life, that he or she might penetrate that veil which keeps one ignorant of one's life's secret. This attainment the Sufi considers his or her greatest happiness; this seeking is the Sufi's seeking for God; in this realization the Sufi realizes truth; and in this truth one finds the peace which is the yearning of every soul.

Now, to explain in a few words the mission and work of the Sufi movement in the world. Do we intend to do away with wars? Do we intend to disarm the whole world? Do we intend to make the whole world one nation? Do we intend to make the whole humanity followers of one religion? Do we intend to make all people spiritual? Do we try to make all people wise?

We would be the first to accuse ourselves for such a presumption. The world is as it is. All different institutions and movements are working in whatever way they think best for humanity. Our work is a humble service to God and humanity: to call our friends to a right attitude, an attitude which will bring all different results. But we are not working for any particular result; we are working for the cause which will produce results. If the attitude will not change, even if better results are brought about, they will not last.

Therefore, we do not force doctrines, dogmas, or principles upon people. Our work is only to present that attitude which is a natural attitude and that every soul from its depth is seeking because it is not new to human nature.

The Sufi movement is a group of friends, belonging to different religions, different nations, and different races, who have united in wisdom and in understanding, to serve at this juncture. The only source of protection from which we draw the energy and the courage, is that one Source, the Source in whose service we devote our lives.

Working for the Sufi Message

Sufism, in the meaning of the word, is wisdom; wisdom is a knowledge acquired from both within and without. Sufism is not only an intuitive knowledge, nor is it only knowledge acquired from life in the world outside. Sufism in itself is no religion, nor even a cult as a distinct or definite doctrine. No better explanation of Sufism can be given than by saying that any person who has a knowledge of life outside and within is a Sufi. Therefore there has not been, in any period of the world's history, a founder, or an exponent, of Sufism; yet Sufism has existed all the time.

As far as we can trace, we find that since the time of Abraham there have been esoteric schools; many of them were called Sufi schools. The Sufi schools of Arabia had a more metaphysical Arabic culture; the Sufi schools of Persia developed the literary aspect; the Sufi schools of India developed the meditative faculty. But the truth and the ideal have remained the same as the central theme of Sufism in all these schools. Different schools have been called by different names, but all are considered Sufi schools. These schools exist even now, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that there are millions of souls of the followers of different religions who benefit by the wisdom of these schools.

No doubt every school has its own method, and every method is colored by the personality of the leader. There are schools of dervishes and there are schools of fakirs; there are schools of salik, who teach moral culture with philosophical truth. But there the account of the ancient history of Sufism finishes.

Our movement is a movement of the members of different nations and different races united together in the ideal of wisdom. Wisdom does not belong to any particular religion or any particular race; wisdom belongs to the human race. It is a divine property, which everyone has inherited. In this realization we, in spite of different nationalities, races, beliefs, and faiths, still unite and work for humanity in the ideal of wisdom.

We have three aspects of our activity. One aspect of our activity is what we call the Sufi Order, in which a member is admitted by initiation. By this initiation to what school do we belong? We belong to the international school of the Sufi Order. What method is it? The Sufis of ancient times brought wisdom to the Muslim world and presented that wisdom in Muslim terminology. Our school today has a wider field of work, and we present it to the followers of all religions, as well as to those who perhaps have no religion, to both spiritual and material persons. Therefore the realm in which the esoteric school of the Sufi Order presents its method is necessarily different and distinct.

Thus, the representatives of this school and those who are initiated have a more general idea of Sufism than those belonging to special schools, who have an idea of that particular section. Therefore you should not be surprised if one of our initiated members of the Sufi Order proved wider in outlook compared with a member of another school of Sufis, which is only a sectional school of Sufis. However, you will find the central theme the same. This I have not said in order for us to be proud of our broadness; it is only said in order that we may try in our life to keep up this ideal, and not fall short of that broad outlook and that broad ideal. Life on earth has a tendency to drag us to narrowness, so we must know that we have a continual fight all along our progress on the spiritual path.

The second part of our work is the Universal Worship. No doubt religion is a subject most delicate to touch. The less spoken the better. Yet no one can live with food and without water, and so no one can live with only an esoteric ideal and without a religion. When someone says, "I will only live in the esoteric ideal and without the outer religion," that person may just as well say, "I will live in my soul and not be conscious of my body."

Besides providing that religion destined to be the religion of today, the great work of this activity is to bring about the possibility of people of different religions worshipping together, for all worship one God. However great the possibility of opposition (every good work has to meet with opposition), nevertheless everyone with clear sense and a just and clear conscience will certainly approve of the idea behind it.

Now the third idea is kinship. The need for this no one with any thought can deny, and the one who denies it does not know what he or she denies. The more one studies life in its deeper sense, the more one realizes that the whole of wisdom is summed up in the idea of kinship.

Beside all three special works that we are engaged in, our work is the Message. It is not a person-made scheme of work; it is destined by God. As mureeds advance, the one thing which will develop with their advancement is to be the real witness of the divine hand behind everything.

I engaged myself after having received the call, without anything before me or by my side to encourage me on this path. No words can explain how in this world of changes and difficulties I made my way. But at the same time I had within me that continual voice. That was all the consolation I had, without any encouragement that the outer world can offer.

Now you are beginning to see the evidences of it. If there are ninety-nine things to discourage you, there is still one thing now to encourage you. Think of your Murshid who made a way when there was nothing to encourage, nothing except discouragement. If you believe in the teaching and guidance and advice of your Murshid, you certainly will believe that it will not be even ten years before you will see the phenomenon becoming real.

It is not I that is speaking, it is the sphere! The sphere is continually speaking of the Message. It is the answer of God to humanity. If there were five or five thousand or five million souls standing by my side, or if I were standing alone, I would say the same and think the same hope. I value the devotion and the trust of my mureeds at such a time when we are so few, because it is more valuable when we are poor and without any goods of this world, yet striving to serve humanity together, hand in hand.

You will see that our sincere answer to the divine call will prove to be more successful than if we had all the means that the world can offer. I want my mureeds to realize their responsibility, not allow themselves to be discouraged by anything, and to feel stronger for the very reason that we are small in number. Remember that unity is strength, and working for the unity of the world is greater strength still.

The Need of Humanity in Our Day

The message of the Sufi movement is a call to humanity in general to unite in a world kinship beyond the boundaries of caste, creed, race, nation, or religion. The Sufi movement has no particular creed, dogma, or doctrine. Its philosophy teaches tolerance to all, understanding above all things, thereby awakening sympathy with one another, and the realization that the well-being of each depends upon the well-being of all.

The voice of God has always warned and guided humanity through the divine message given by the prophets and reformers of all ages, who came in answer to the need of humanity. Every religion, in whatever period it was given and accepted by the people, was an answer to the cry of humanity. As the rain falls from the clouds, drawn by the need of the plants and trees, so the divine message has ever responded to the longing of souls seeking guidance.

The battles that have been fought throughout the ages are chiefly caused by religious differences. The true religious ideal has as its principal aim the harmonizing of humanity in the unity of God. But it has always happened that the religious authorities have used religion for selfish purposes and thereby destroyed its purpose, turning the form of religion, which was a living spring of immortal life to souls, into a stagnant, dead form.

The increasing materialism and overpowering commercial influence which has veiled the heart of humanity from truth, has caused the greatest distress during the last few years. In spite of the great advancement of modern civilization, people are beginning to doubt today whether humanity is really progressing. In point of fact there is no doubt that humanity is progressing. The proof of progress is to be found in all the wonderful phenomena that have been created in the form of marvelous scientific inventions. But all these inventions have only helped to carry out the greatest disaster in the history of the world: a war that has swallowed up numberless lives, among them youths who had inherited the culture of many generations.

In spite of prosperity and the flourishing conditions one sees, there is a total absence of the ideal. The minds of most seem to be centered in one thing only: the struggle of life. Millions are busily occupied, physically and mentally, every moment of the day and night in collecting wealth or treasure, the very nature of which is to pass from hand to hand. As long as they have it in their possession, there is a kind of intoxication; when it is lost, there is nothing to hold on to. This has made people more avaricious in the strife of material life.

Today the one is considered most practical who is most capable of guarding one's own interests to best advantage. The same is true of nations: each is working for its own interest. In any nation the person of the day is not the one who feels for the welfare of humanity, but the one who exclusively stands by the interest of one's party, community, or nation. Patriotism can only be a virtue when used as a stepping stone toward universal kinship. It can be justifiable only if it is made a means to conserve forces in order to work for the welfare of all. But today patriotism has become a lock upon the heart, so that no alien-only those of one's own kind-may be admitted into a country.

What is missing in modern education, in art and science, and in social, political and commercial life, is the ideal. The ideal is the secret of heaven and earth, and the mystery hidden behind both

humanity and God. Humans, with all they possess in the objective world, are poor in the absence of the ideal; that poverty creates irritation, conflicts, and disagreements, thereby causing wars and disasters of all kinds.

Humanities greatest necessity today is the exploration of the human personality to find the latent inspiration and power, and upon this to build the whole structure of life. Life is not only to live, but also to ennoble oneself and reach that perfection which is the innate yearning of the soul.

The solution to the problem of the day is that the consciousness of humanity may be awakened to the divinity of the human being.

The undertone of all religions is the realization of the one life which culminates in the thought of unity. It is to raise humanity to this consciousness that the efforts of the Sufi movement are directed.

The Duties of a Mureed

What is this initiation? It is a sacred trust given by Murshid to mureed and a trust given by mureed to Murshid. There should exist no wall from the moment of this initiation. If there is a wall, then the initiation is no longer an initiation. When the wall is removed by the mureed and the Murshid, then the next step will be the removal of the wall between God and the worshipper.

Besides, the Sufi Order is a mystical order, and there are certain thoughts and considerations which should be observed. First, when once a certain secret is entrusted, it must be kept as one's most secret and sacred trust. Second, take all the teachings that will be given, whether a bitter medicine or a sweet medicine, to the patient. Everything including illumination has a time; real progress depends upon the patience of the pupil, together with his eagerness to go forward.

Ghazzali the great Sufi says, "To journey in the spiritual path is like shooting an arrow without knowing where it will go and what it will hit." The path of initiation is a path of tests: the test from the initiator, the test from God, the test from the self, and the test from the world. To go through these tests is the sign of real progress of the mureed; the one who will not observe these tests will be losing his or her time.

The Sufi Order and the world order itself imply certain ranks of initiators of the Pir-o-Murshid, and they must be regarded and respected as those who have gone further. This law is not any different from the law of nature and of life. A child who is disrespectful to his parents will find the same thing from his children. A soldier who does not observe discipline under the captain or colonel will have the same experience when he or she is a captain or a colonel. Will one ever arrive at that state, after not having considered and observed that which should be observed? Those who have gone furthest in any line—in music, in poetry, in thought, and in philosophy—have always gone in a humble way, greeting at every step those who have gone further.

There are three stages for the pupil, the mureed, to tread on the spiritual path. The first stage is receptivity: to take all that is given, without saying, "This I will take and this I will not take." The next stage is assimilation. The third stage is to put it in the mind and let the mind see the reason of things, but this after the assimilation. The one who goes consciously and securely through these three stages—receptivity, assimilation, and consideration—will be the successful mureed in the path.

Though a form of hierarchy might appear on the surface, the Sufi Message leads to true democracy. For it promises every soul that goal which is the yearning of every soul. The Sufi believes the divine spark to be in every soul. That itself is what makes democracy. With trust and confidence in God and the Murshid, and in that divine spark which is in one's own heart, if one steps forward, one is assured of success in life.

The Path of Discipleship

One wonders, especially in the western part of the world, what the path of discipleship really is. Discipleship has been the path of those who followed Christ and all other teachers, but the modern trend of thought has by its new influence taken away a great deal of the ideal that existed in the past. Not only the ideal of discipleship seems little known, but even the ideal towards motherhood and fatherhood and the ideal towards the aged seem to be less understood. The consequence of this change in the ideal of the world has worked unwittingly to such an extent that we now find a world in conflict. The troubles between nations, the troubles between classes, and the troubles in social and domestic life all come from one and the same reason. If a person asks me, "What is the cause of today's world unrest?," I will say the answer in one word, "the lack of ideal."

The path of discipleship in the ancient times was a lesson given to use in all directions of life. One is not only one's body but one is also one's soul. The soul is not born when a child is born on earth; the soul is born from the moment that consideration is born. One shows one's soul in one's consideration. Some become considerate as children; others, perhaps, in their whole life do not awaken to consideration.

People say that love is divine. Yes, love is divine, but love's divine expression is consideration. It would not be very wrong to say that love without consideration is not fully divine. Love that has no consideration loses its fragrance. Intelligence is not consideration. The balance of love and intelligence brings about consideration; the action and reaction of love and intelligence produces consideration. Children who are considerate are more precious than jewels to their parents. The one who is considerate, the friend who is considerate, and all those with whom we come in contact who are considerate are most valuable.

Therefore, it is the lesson of consideration given by spiritual teachers which is called the path of discipleship. The great teachers have not wanted the discipleship of the disciples for themselves, or the devotion for themselves, or the respect of the pupils for themselves. If any teacher expected that, he or she could not be a teacher. How can a spiritual teacher be dependent on the respect, devotion, or consideration of his or her pupil? The teacher must be above that to be above them. Rather it is taught for their own advantage, as an attribute that must be cultivated.

Until now in India there has been a custom which I myself experienced when young. When I went to school to learn the ABC's from a teacher, the first thing my parents taught me was respect, consideration, and a kindly inclination for the teacher. The modern child going to school thinks the professor is appointed to do a certain duty. The child does not know the professor, the professor does not know the child. When children come home they have the same tendency towards their parents as at school.

Mostly, children grow up thinking all the attention their parents give them is part of the duty of the parents. They think, "Perhaps if I am able, I shall pay it back." The ancient idea was different. For instance, the Prophet Mohammed taught his disciples that the greatest debt everyone has to pay was to his or her mother. If one wished one's sins to be forgiven, one must act in life so that before passing from this earth one's mother would say, "I have forgiven you the debt." There was nothing-money or service-that a person should say, "I have paid." No, one's mother must say, "I have forgiv-

en you that debt." What does it teach? It teaches the value of unselfish love which is above all earthly passion.

We inquire within for the purpose that we have come on earth. Why have we become human beings? Perhaps it would have been better to remain angels: why this human body? The answer certainly comes to the wise from their own heart: we are here to experience a fuller life and to become fully human. That human fullness is in consideration. Every action done with consideration is valuable; every word said with consideration is precious. The whole teaching of Christ. "Blessed are the meek and the poor in spirit," culminates in one thing: consideration. Although it seems simple, it is a hard lesson to learn. The more we wish to act according to this ideal, the more we realize that we fail. The further we go in the path of consideration, the more delicate the eyes of our perception become. We feel sorry for the slightest mistake.

Not every soul takes the trouble to tread this path. Not everyone is a plant: there are many rocks. They do not want to be considerate; they think it too much trouble. Of course the stone has no pain; the one who feels has pain. In feeling there is life. Life's joy is great. Even with pain one would like to be a living being rather than a rock, because there is a joy in living and in feeling which is not expressible in words. After how many thousands of years the life buried in stones and rocks has risen to the human being! If a person wishes to stay a rock, he or she had better stay one. But the natural inclination in every person must be to develop fully human qualities.

The first lesson that a pupil learns in the path of discipleship is called in Sufic terms yakin; yakin means confidence. First one gives this confidence to one's fellow human being, whom one considers one's teacher and one's spiritual guide.

There are three classes that can be distinguished. One gives partial confidence and cannot give complete confidence. One is wobbling, thinking, "Yes, I have confidence: perhaps I have, perhaps not." This sort of confidence is a very difficult position. A better position would be not to give it at all. It is lukewarm: not hot, not cold. This person does the same in all things-in business and in profession. This person trusts and doubts, and trusts and fears. This person is not walking in the sky, and is not walking on the earth, but is between the two.

There is a second kind who gives their confidence to the teacher but is not sure about themselves. They say, "Yes, I have given my confidence, but they are not sure if inwardly they have given it. These people have no confidence in themselves and are not sure of themselves: therefore this confidence is of no value. The third person gives confidence because he or she feels confident. This confidence can alone rightfully be called yakin.

People of all these categories were with Jesus Christ. Thousands of people of the first category came, surrounded the Master, and left Him. It took not one moment for them to be attracted, and not one moment for them to leave the Master. The second category goes on for some time, just as a drunken man goes on. When soberness comes it becomes clear to them. "Where am I going? Not in a good direction." Do not think that those of this category did not follow the prophets! Thousands and thousands followed the masters and prophets.

But those who stayed to the end of the test were those who, before giving their confidence to the teacher, had confidence in their hearts first. It is they who-if the earth turned to water and the water turned to earth, if the sky came down to earth and the earth rose up to the sky-would stay

the same, firm in the belief they first had. By discipleship one learns a moral: that whatever position one assumes in life-husband, wife, son, daughter, servant, or friend-a firm and steady confidence is needed.

After yakin comes a test: sacrifice-the ideal in the path of God. The most precious possession is not too valuable, in fact nothing is too great to sacrifice. No one among the disciples of the Prophet, the real disciples, thought life too great a sacrifice if needed. The story of Ali is very well known. One night enemies wanted to kill the Prophet; Ali knew about the plot. He did not tell the Prophet, but tried to get him to leave home. Ali himself stayed, for he knew that if he went also the assassins would find out where the Prophet was. He slept in the bed of the Prophet, so that the assassins might find him, but he was not ready to lose his life if he could fight them. The consequence was that the plot failed and the enemies could touch neither the Prophet nor Ali.

There are a thousand such examples. The friendship between the teacher and the disciple is formed in God and truth for always; nothing in the world can break it. If the spiritual link cannot hold, how can a material link hold? It will wear out, as it is a worldly link. If the spiritual thought cannot form a link between two souls, what else could be such a strong tie that it would last here and in the hereafter.

The third lesson in the path of discipleship is imitation: to imitate the teacher in his or her every attitude, with a friend, with an enemy, with the foolish, and with the wise. If the pupils act as they wish and the teacher acts as he or she wishes, then there is no benefit in spite of all the sacrifice and devotion. Remember, no teaching or meditation is so great or valuable as the imitation of the teacher in the path of truth. In the imitation of the teacher the whole secret of spiritual life is hidden: not only the imitation of her or his outward action, but also of his or her inward tendency.

The fourth lesson the disciple learns is still different. That lesson involves turning the inward thought of the teacher outward, until the disciple grows to see in the wise, in the foolish, and in all forms, one's teacher who teaches him or her. The fifth lesson for the disciple is to give all that one has so far given to one's teacher-devotion, sacrifice, service, and respect-to all people, because in all one sees one's teacher.

One person may perhaps not learn these lessons in their whole life; another will learn all five lessons in a short time. There is the story of a man who went to a teacher and said, "I would like to be your disciple." The teacher said, "Yes, I shall be very glad." This man, conscious of so many faults, was surprised that the teacher was so willing to accept him as a disciple. He said, "But I wonder if you know how many faults I have?" The teacher said, "Yes, I already know your faults, yet I accept you as my pupil."

"But I have very bad faults," the man said. "I am fond of gambling." The teacher said. "That does not matter much."

"I am inclined to drink sometimes and there are many other faults." The teacher said, "I do not mind." Then he said, "I have accepted all your faults; you must accept one condition from your teacher." "Yes, most willingly! What is it?" The teacher said, "You may have your faults, but not in my presence; you have to keep that much respect for your teacher."

The teacher knew that all five aspects of discipleship were natural to him. Afterwards he was made an initiate. As soon as he went out and had an inclination to gamble or drink, he saw the face of his Murshid before him. When he came to the teacher, the teacher smilingly asked, "Did you commit any fault?" He answered, "Oh no, the great difficulty is that whenever I want to commit any of my usual faults my Murshid pursues me."

Do not think that this spirit has to be cultivated; this spirit could be found in the innocent child. The other day I was most amused to hear a little child of four say when I asked, "Have you been naughty?," "I would like to be naughty, but my goodness will not let me." This shows us the spirit of discipleship in us.

Remember that the teacher is one who is oneself a disciple. In reality there is no such thing as a teacher. God alone is teacher, we all are disciples. The lesson we all have to learn is the lesson of discipleship; it is the first and the last.

Gatheka 27

Divine Manner, I

In the terms of the Sufis divine manner is called Akhlak Allah. One thinks, speaks, and acts according to the pitch to which one's soul is tuned. The highest note one could be tuned to is the divine note; once one has arrived at that pitch, one begins to express the manner of God in everything one does. What is the manner of God? It is a kingly manner, yet a manner which is not known even to kings. Only the king of heaven and earth knows that manner; the soul who is tuned to God expresses it. This manner is void of narrowness, free from pride and conceit, and not only beautiful but beauty itself, for God is beautiful and God loves beauty.

The soul tuned to God also becomes as beautiful as God and begins to express God through all one does, expressing in life the divine manner. Why is it a kingly manner? The word kingly signifies someone who possesses power and wealth in abundance. The soul tuned to God, before whom all things fade away and in whose eyes the importance of the little things of which every person thinks so much is lessened, begins to express divine manner in the form of contentment. It might seem to an ordinary person that nothing matters to this soul. No gain is exciting, no loss is alarming. If anyone praises, it is of no consequence; if anyone blames, it does not matter to him or her. Honor and insult is all a game to them. At the end of the game, neither is the gain a gain nor is the loss a loss; it was only a pastime.

One might think, what does such a person do for others, what good is the person to those around him or her? That person is healing to those around them; that person is an influence, uplifting souls suffering from narrowness and from the limitation of human nature. Human nature is not only narrow and limited but it is also foolish and tyrannical, because the nature of life is intoxicating. Intoxication makes people drunken. What do the drunken people want? They want their drink, and they do not think about others.

In this life there are so many liquors that one drinks: wealth, passion, anger, and possession. One is not satisfied only with possessing earthly properties, but one also wishes to possess those whom one pretends to love. In this way one proves to be tyrannical and foolish. All the things of this world that one possesses are not in reality possessed; one is possessed by them, whether wealth or property or a friend or position or rank.

The soul with divine manner is sober compared with the drunken person of the world. This soberness produces in one that purity called Sufism; through that purity God reflects in his or her mirror-like soul.

Nothing frightens the soul who reflects God, for they are above all fright. They possess nothing, and all fright is connected with one's possessions. Does it mean that one leaves the world and passes one's life in caves in the mountains? Not in the least. One may have the wealth of the whole world in one's possession and one may have the kingdom of the whole universe under one, but nothing binds one, nothing ties one, and nothing frightens one. For only that which is one's own belongs to one.

When your soul is your own, all is your own, and what belongs to you cannot be taken away. Only yourself could take it away. You are your own friend and your own foe. So there is no longer

Gathikas for Candidates

pain or suffering, complaint or grudge. You are at peace, for you are at home, whether you are on earth or you are in heaven.

Divine Manner, II

The difference between God and humankind is that God is omniscient and we only know of our own affairs. Because God is omniscient, God loves all and God's interest is in all; so it is with the godly soul. The divine personality expressed through the godly soul shows itself in interest for all, whether known or unknown to that soul. One's interest is not only for another because of one's kind nature or of one's sympathetic spirit. One does not take interest in another person's welfare and well-being because it is one's duty but because one sees oneself in another person. Therefore the life and interest of another person to the godly soul is as one's own. In the pain of another person, the godly soul sorrows; in the happiness of another person, the godly soul rejoices. Thus the godly soul, who has almost forgotten him or herself, forgets also the remaining part of the self in taking interest in others.

From one point of view it is natural for the godly soul to take interest in others. The one who has emptied him or herself of what is called "self" in the ordinary sense of the word is alone capable of knowing the condition of another. One sometimes knows more than the person him or herself, as a physician knows the case of the patient.

Divine manner, therefore, is not like that of parents to children, of friend toward beloved friend, of king to servant, or of servant to master. Divine manner consists of all manners; it is expressive of every form of love. If it has any peculiarity, that peculiarity is a divine one! In every other form of love and affection the self is somewhere hidden, asking for appreciation, for reciprocity, and for recognition.

Divine manner is above all this. It gives all and asks nothing in return-in any manner or form-thus proving the action of God through the human being.

Our Sacred Task: The Message

Our sacred task, not only as members of the Sufi Order but also as servers of the divine cause, is to waken in those around us and among those whom we can reach first, the spirit of tolerance for religion and scripture, and second, the ideal of devotion to one another. Our next task is to help people understand those of different nations, races, communities, and classes. By this we do not mean to say that all races and nations must become one, nor that all classes must become one. We say that whatever be our religion, nation, race, or class, our most sacred duty is to work for one another, in one another's interest, and to consider this as the service of God.

We must create a spirit of reciprocity among people of different races, nations, classes, and communities. The happiness, prosperity, and welfare of each depends upon the happiness, prosperity, and welfare of all. Besides that, the central theme of the Sufi message is one simple thing, and yet most difficult: to bring about in the world the realization of the divinity of the human soul, which hitherto has been overlooked because the time had not come. The principal thing that the message has to accomplish in this era is to create the realization of the divine spark in every soul, so that every soul, according to its progress, may begin to realize for itself the spark of divinity within. This is the task before us.

Now you may ask me: "What is the message?" The message is this: that the whole of humanity is one single body, and all nations, communities, and races are the different organs. The happiness and well-being of each of them is the happiness and well-being of the whole body. If there is one organ of the body in pain, the whole body has to sustain a share of its strain. By this message, humanity may begin to think that its welfare and well-being exist not only in looking after itself, but also in looking after others. When there is reciprocity, love, and goodness toward one another, a better time will come.

Now the question is, how are we to set to work? It is difficult to answer, because we all have our own way of working in the world, and one form of work cannot be adopted by all. It must be remembered that a great sacrifice on the part of the worker is necessary. Without sacrifice workers will not be able to fulfill their mission. You will have to stand opposition from your friends and acquaintances; there will be a monetary sacrifice to be made if the occasion arises. In addition to action, a great deal of time will have to be sacrificed. You will have to sacrifice the desire for appreciation. Work and the reward of the work is the satisfaction that "I have done it." You will be hindered by those who oppose and also by those who sympathize, by the bitterness of some and by the ignorance of some. It would be easy, if you were sensitive, to take up the work one day and give it up the next day. It will need a great deal of courage to go on with it against all sorts of opposition.

Besides this, a great amount of prudence is necessary and in absence of that, the work cannot be successful; on the contrary, it could suffer. One needs not only prudence before strangers and opponents, but even prudence with those near and dear to you and with your best friends. What is most wanted of the worker in the cause is prudence.

You will have to work quietly and unassumingly, for this task cannot be accomplished or be made known by the noise of drums; for that there are other movements. The less we are known the better; our profit is in not being known. By being known we make more enemies, and it is not our

aim in life to be known. Publicity is not our reward; our reward is if Providence only allows us to work quietly. If no one in the world knows of our work we do not mind. It is God's work and God's name to be glorified, and the glory of God's name is our satisfaction. It is for the benefit of humanity and for the well-being of the world. What does it matter if we work and others become known, or if we sow and others reap the harvest? It is our work and our mission to sow and to leave the harvest to others to gather.

Therefore, you will need forbearance with those who persecute you and the message and who say things against you. You will need a great deal of strength of will to tolerate instead of defend. We are not here for fighting, arguing, and defending. We are here to work quietly. If anyone says, "You are right," say, "Yes, thank you." If anyone says, "You are wrong," say, "Yes, thank you." If anyone says, "You do good," say, "Yes, thank you." If anyone says, "You do ill," say, "Yes, thank you." That is all: no defending. What is the use; against how many people will you defend? How many blames will you speak against? Against one person, against twenty people? If you answer those who blame, when will you do your work? It must be done quietly; no one must know that you are doing it, and the satisfaction must be only in the accomplishment of our sacred task.

I have told you this to make things clear and easy. If it were a human enterprise there could have been a doubt whether it would be accomplished or not. It must be accomplished and it will be accomplished. Those of us who are privileged to serve the cause may just as well find an easier way, a better way, rather than strike a way of difficulty. Greatness is in humility; wisdom is in modesty; success is in sacrifice; truth is in silence. Therefore the best way of doing the work is to do all we can, do it thoroughly, do it wholeheartedly, and do it quietly.

Sufi Initiation

Very often the word initiation is misunderstood. Many think it is initiation into a secret society, or that it is an experimental trial, or some phenomenon. As there is no other expression. I have, for the sake of convenience, used the word initiation. Initiation, in the Sufi terms, is called Bayat. No doubt the word initiation also explains some mystery, for the meaning of the word suggests taking an initiative, advancing, or going forward.

Is it desirable for every soul to take initiation? As the word initiation means “to go forward,” the answer is that progress is life and stillness is death. Whatever our grade of evolution, it is always advisable to try to go forward, in business or the professions, in society or political life, and in religion or spiritual advancement.

No doubt there is a danger of being too enthusiastic. That nature that is too enthusiastic may, instead of benefiting, harm itself in its worldly or spiritual work. For everything there is a time, and patience is necessary in every strife. A cook may burn food by giving more fire to it in order to cook it quicker; in all things this rule applies. With little children the parents are often anxious and enthusiastic. They think their children can learn and understand every good and interesting thing on earth. Too much enthusiasm is not right. We must give time to all things. The first and most important lesson in life is patience; we must begin all things with patience.

The Sufi Order is mainly an esoteric school. There are three esoteric schools most known in the East: the Buddhist School, the Vedantic School, and the Sufi School. Two of the schools, the Buddhist and the Vedantic, use asceticism as the principal means of spiritual advancement. The peculiarity of the Sufi School is that it uses humanity as the main path for spiritual advancement. The realization of truth in the Sufi School is not different from the Vedantic, or even from the Buddhist, but the Sufi presents truth in a different manner. It is the same frame in which Jesus Christ gave his teaching, and the same form which was adopted by the prophets of Israel.

Spiritual development by the help of contemplation and meditation is used in all three schools, the science of breath being the foundation of each. The Sufi thinks that a person was not created to live the life of an angel, nor was one created to live the life of an animal. For the life of an angel, angels are created, and for the life of an animal, there are animals. The Sufi thinks the first thing necessary in life is for one to prove to one's own conscience to what extent one can be human.

This is not only spiritual development, it is also the culture of humanity. What is one's relationship to one's neighbor or friend, to those who depend upon one, to those who look to one, and to strangers not known to one? How does one relate with those older or younger than oneself, with the ones who like one and with the ones who dislike one and criticize one? How does one feel and think and act through life, and still keep on progressing toward the goal that is the goal for every soul in the world? It is not necessary that the Sufi seek the wilderness for meditation; the Sufi can perform his or her work in the midst of the worldly life. The Sufi need not prove him or herself a Sufi by extraordinary power, by wonderworking, or by exceptional spiritual show or claim. A Sufi can prove oneself a Sufi to one's own conscience by watching one's life amidst the strife of this worldly life.

There are some who are content with the beliefs taught to them at home or in church. They can just as well rest in that place of realization where they are contented until another impulse is born in their hearts to go on higher. Sufis do not force upon such souls their beliefs or thoughts. In the east there is a custom of saying that it is a great sin to wake anyone who is fast asleep. This saying can be symbolically understood: there are many in this world who work and do things and yet they are asleep; they seem awake externally, but inwardly they are asleep. The Sufi considers it a crime to waken them. For some, sleep is good for the health. The work of the Sufi is to give a helping hand to those who have had sufficient sleep and who now begin to stir in their sleep and to change sides. That help given is the real initiation.

No doubt there are things which pass the ordinary comprehension: things one can not teach only by speaking or acting. Thus the way of teaching called Tawaijeh is without words; it is not external teaching, it is a teaching in silence. For instance, how can one explain the spirit of sincerity or the spirit of gratefulness; how can one explain the ultimate truth, the idea of God? Whenever attempted it has failed; it has made some confused and has made others give up their belief. It is not that the one who explains has not understood, but that words are inadequate to explain the idea of God.

In the East the great sages and saints sit quite still with lips closed for years. We call them muni, which means "one who takes the vow of silence." The person of today may think, "What a life: to be silent and do nothing." One does not know that some by their silence can do more than others talking for ten years could accomplish. A person may argue for months on a problem and not be able to explain it; another person with inner radiance may be able to answer the same thing in one moment.

Of course, no one can give spiritual knowledge to another person, because it is something which every heart has within it. By initiation, what the teacher can do is light with his or her light, the light which is hidden in the heart of their disciple. If the light is not there, it is not the fault of the teacher. There is a Persian verse of Hafiz: "However great the teacher, with the one whose heart is closed the teacher is helpless." Therefore, initiation means initiation on the part of the disciple and on the part of the teacher, a step forward on the path of both. On the path of the teacher a step forward with the disciple, that the pupil may be trusted and raised from his or her present condition; a step forward for the pupil because one opens one's heart, having no barrier and nothing to hinder the teacher in whatever form it comes: in silence, in words, or in seeing more deed or action on the part of the teacher.

In ancient times the disciples of the great teachers teamed by quite a different method, not an academic method or way of study. With open heart, perfect confidence, and trust, they watched every movement the teacher made towards friends and towards people who looked at them with contempt; they watched their teacher in times of trouble and pain to see how he or she stood it all. They saw how patient the teacher had been in arguing with those who did not understand and how wise the teacher had been to answer everyone gently in his or her own language. They observed the mother spirit, the father spirit, the brother spirit, the sister spirit, the child spirit, the friend spirit, the forgiving kindness, the ever tolerant nature, the respect for the aged, the compassion for all, and the thorough understanding of human nature. The disciples teamed that all disputes and books on metaphysics can never teach all the thoughts and philosophy that comes up in the heart of a person. A person may either study for a thousand years or may get to the source and see if he or she can touch the root of all wisdom and all knowledge. In the emblem of the Sufi Order there is a heart in

the center as a sign for the Sufi that from the heart the stream rises, the stream of divine knowledge and inspiration.

On the path of initiation two things are necessary: contemplation and living the life the Sufi ought to live. Both depend upon each other. Contemplation helps to live the life of a Sufi, and the life of a Sufi helps contemplation. The question, especially in the West where life is so busy and where there is no end to responsibilities, is if contemplation (even only for ten minutes in the evening) is not too much when we are tired. The answer is that for that very reason, in the West contemplation is required more than in the East where everything, even the surroundings, is helpful to contemplation.

Besides, a beginning must be made on the path. But if contemplation does not develop in such a form that everything one does in life becomes a contemplation, then contemplation does not do a person any good. It would be like going to church once a week, forgetting all about religion the other days. A person who gives ten or twenty minutes to contemplation every evening and forgets it all day will not derive any benefit. We take our food at certain times every day, yet all the time, even when we are sleeping, the food nourishes our body.

It is not the Sufi's idea to retire in seclusion or to sit silent all day: the idea is that by contemplation one must be so inspired in study and in aspiration that progress is attained in every aspect of life. In that way one proves one's contemplation to be a force helping one to withstand all difficulties that come to one.

The life the Sufi ought to live may be explained in a few words. There are many things in the life of a Sufi, but the greatest is to have a tendency to friendship which is expressed in the form of tolerance and forgiveness, and in the form of service and trust. In whatever form he may express that central theme, the constant desire is to prove one's love to humanity and to be the friend of all.

Now that I have explained in a few words the subject of initiation, I will explain the Sufi Movement. The Sufi Movement consists of three sections. The central section is the Esoteric School. In this school those who are seekers after truth and wish to follow the path with faith and confidence and trust are welcome.

Then there are two side sections. One is the kinship. Its object is to unite humankind-separated just now by boundaries of caste, creed, nation, and race in the understanding of wisdom. In awakening the conscience in humanity, one may be able to see that the happiness of each depends upon the happiness of all. In this section everyone is admitted and welcome. We can never have workers enough to work in this time of great need for human kinship. The Sufi Movement is the nucleus of human kinship, and this part represents this nucleus, formed, not with a view that all should become members of the Sufi Movement, but that all may become members of the human family in the Parenthood of God.

The other section is the devotional part of the Order. This is for people who have perhaps some belief, but are not satisfied with that belief, or for others who do not go to any particular church but at the same time have aside to their nature which needs religion and prayer. There are some who will not believe unless they are intellectually satisfied: for them this section works, to give them the elements of all religions, to give them tolerance for different religions and beliefs, so that they may learn to respect the religion of others, a religion which has perhaps inspired numberless souls but is

Gathekas for Candidates

not known to the followers of other religions. This unity of religion in prayer and thought is the real kinship of religion, nature's religion. It is taught in this section in the religious line. The central path is the path of initiation. To those entering this central path, the other two sections become open.

What is Wanted in Life?

If this question were asked of several people each would perhaps make out a list of not less than one thousand things that one wants in life. And after writing one thousand things that one wants in life, one rarely knows what one really wants. What one apparently wants in life is not what one really wants in life because the nature of the outer life is illusion. As soon as one feels, "I want this in life," then the world of illusion answers, "Yes, you want me in life; this is the particular thing you want in life." When a person finds a lack in life, they only find the outer lack; they do not find the lack which is within themselves.

Coming to the central theme I would say that if there is anything that we can all be in accord with, it is that what we lack in life is to be tuned with the Infinite and to be in rhythm with the finite. In simple words, to be in rhythm with the conditions of life and to be in tune with the source of our existence.

I should like to explain more plainly what I mean by being in rhythm with the conditions of life. Our perpetual complaint against all things in life comes from our not being in rhythm with the diverse conditions of life that we have to face. We think that if these conditions change into something that we wish, it would make life easier. But that is an inexperienced expectation. If we were placed in the same condition that we just now desired as best, we would not say we are quite satisfied; we would then find lacks in that condition also.

With all errors and mistakes and lacks which we find in our external life, we see a perfect hand working behind it all. And if we looked at life a little further than we look at it generally, we would certainly find that all the lacks and errors and mistakes and faults sum up into something, making life as complete as the wise hands which are working behind it wish it to be.

There is a Persian saying: "The gardener of this garden of the world knows best which plant to rear and which to remove." One might say that involves too much of what they call fatalism. No, I do not wish to take you further into fatalism. Now I want to bring you into the sphere of action. In this place what I wanted to do was touch the bounds of fatalism and now come to the sphere of action. There is a great deal in the hand of each person to improve his or her life's condition, if only one does not lose one's patience before a desirable condition is brought about and if one's courage and hope have not been exhausted.

Now the question is, how can one come into at-one-ment with the rhythm of life, in other words, with the conditions of life? A condition of life and one's own desire are two conflicting things; if not always conflicting, mostly they are conflicting. If desire gives in to the condition, then condition gets the upper hand, and if the condition is master then no doubt desire has the upper hand. But the condition is not always mastered by a conflict or by a struggle. There is always caution needed in fighting a condition in life.

If by peace a harmony can be established, it is better to avoid battling. If one can harmonize with a condition in life without struggling, it is better than to harmonize by struggling with it. Be not surprised if I say that those who complain most about life and those are very disappointed and very much troubled with life are the ones who struggle most with the conditions of life.

Therefore in coming into at-one-ment with the conditions of life one need not always use a weapon; one must first try to harmonize with a particular condition of life. The great heroes who have really fought through life and gained life's victory in the real sense of the word, have not been those who fought with conditions, but those who made peace with the conditions of life. The secret in the lives of great Sufis in whichever part of the world they have been has been that they met conditions-favorable or unfavorable with a view toward coming into at-one-ment with the rhythm of life.

The desire is sometimes our friend and sometimes our enemy. In unfavorable conditions desire becomes agitated and loses its patience, and desire wishes to break the condition. Instead of breaking conditions, it breaks itself. The great souls have given their hands first to their worst enemy, because the ones who make their enemy their friend will make their friend their own self. A condition as bitter as poison will be turned into nectar if you will get into rhythm with that condition, understand that condition, and sustain that condition with patience, courage, and hope.

When conditions are favorable, a person is very often afraid that this might pass, but when conditions are adverse, one does not generally say that it will pass: one thinks that it will last forever. What does it come from? It comes from fear of the condition; it comes from agitation and the desire to get out of it, so that one even loses hope, the only source that keeps us alive.

We see the nature of life: morning till evening everything in life changes. Why, therefore, should we not hope that an unfavorable condition will change and a favorable condition will come? A person gets into a habit of expecting the worst. A person who has some bad experiences through life always thinks that whatever comes cannot be good; "Nothing good will come to me because I have gone through bad circumstances." One thinks, "Anyone else can have a better time than me because I was born with that unfavorable star, and I have that unfortunate condition to go through in my life."

There are many imaginative and intelligent people who, day after day, read the newspapers and draw the conclusion that there must be a war. Every little struggle they read about gives them the idea that the world is going to pieces. Other people interested in astrology, who have gone further than ordinary astrology, expect the end of the world year after year, month after month. It gives people a topic to speak about at the dinner table, and at the same time it gives a shock to those who wish to live a little longer than the world's end. Many such dangers of world destruction have passed, but the prophecy and expectation still remain and it will continue. What I mean to say is that the best thing is to go through every condition that life presents with patience, understanding, open eyes, and to try to rise above it with every little effort one can make.

Now coming to the other side of the subject, how can one be in tune with the infinite? The nature of being in tune with the infinite can be seen by comparing one's soul to the string of an instrument. It is tied at both sides: one is the infinite and the other is the finite. When a person is conscious all the time of the finite then he or she is tuned with the finite, and the one who is conscious of the infinite is tuned with the infinite. Being in tune with one makes us limited, weak, hopeless, and powerless: by being in tune with the other we obtain the power and strength to pull through life under all adverse conditions.

The work that a Sufi considers his or her sacred work has nothing to do with any particular creed nor with any particular religion; it is only this simple thing which I have just said: to be in rhythm with life's conditions and to be in tune with the infinite.

How can you act in accord with life? Instead of being frightened by life's condition, meet it and observe it keenly and then try to harmonize for that time with that condition. The next effort is to rise above it, if it is adverse. For instance, a young Arab was sleeping in the field and a serpent happened to walk over his palm and he in his sleep unknowingly held the serpent with all his might. Therefore the serpent was helpless and could not bite. As soon as he awoke from his sleep he was frightened at the sight of the snake in his hand, and he at once let it go. As soon as the serpent was out of his hand, the first thing it did was sting.

One can manage a condition better when it is in one's hand than when the condition has been lost; then the situation is out of one's hand. For instance, if a person is cross or has lost his or her temper, the natural tendency is to give the person back the same as they gave. The outcome is a struggle; it culminates in disappointment. But when the person is cross and has lost his or her temper, he or she is the weak one at that time, and that is the time that you can manage the person. That is the time that the situation is in your hand. That person is weak, you are strong.

If one wishes to improve one's position in life, and everything depends upon others, does one not run the risk of creating by this same action a worse situation for those near one, particularly those for whom one has affection? For example, someone wishes to become very rich, and if he or she becomes extremely rich, everyone is in a sort of slavery towards him or her. This slavery will weigh very heavily upon one. Our life in this world is dependent upon one another, and wealth, however powerful it seems to be, in the end is not so powerful as it appears to be. Its power is limited and it does not always take away that dependence that a person has upon another.

The whole thing is to meet one's condition with understanding and with complete resignation that one shall not improve one's condition. No, the first thing is to meet the condition as it is, and the second thing is to better the condition. The less conflict one can use in it the better; the more one can avoid the conflict, the better it is. For instance, you are traveling through the wilderness and you meet a robber who says, "I am going to take your life unless you give me your purse." I say that in order to meet this situation the first thing you can do is reason with the person and get out of the danger without having to kill him or her. We cannot always avoid conflict and we must not turn our backs if it comes to conflict. After all, life is a struggle, and we must be ready to struggle, only struggle must not make us drunk so that we lose the way of peace which is the first consideration. We must not be like a boxer who is always looking for another person with whom to box. What is the other way? The way of tuning oneself to the infinite. That way is by the way of silence and meditation. It is by thinking something which is beyond and above all things of this mortal world and giving some moments of our life to that which is the source and goal of all of us, in the thought of getting in tune with that source. In that source alone is the secret of our happiness and peace.

