



On the Control and Sublimation  
of  
Vital Force

by

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

## On the Control and Sublimation of Vital Force

### Lesson 1

The life force in man is like a fountain, it is like a spring and it is also like a river. It is like a fountain in that it rises and comes to the surface at periods, it ebbs and flows in this movement and it comes to the surface in two ways: through the sex-energy when man is under the etheric current and through the emotions or passions when man is under the influence of the elements earth, water, air or fire.

It is like a spring because it is a source of activity which can be inexhaustible although in some people suffering from paralysis and paresis the spring goes dry. This is due to psychic exhaustion which is often caused by weakness so that one cannot guard against deterioration of body structures or against obsessions. But generally speaking most people are alive at all times in some sense and in this one may compare the vital activity to a spring.

It is also like a river, a river which must struggle through stony and rugged ground, and when it gains in strength give of its substance to irrigate the plain, and finally when it seems to be falling into lethargy it enters the great sea of all life fulfilling its destiny in the end.

Sufis do not have to pay particular attention to the training and control of life-force, for that comes automatically with spiritual growth. When the ego is controlled the passions are mastered and the forces are transmuted, not destroyed. Every function, every activity, every part of man's life is basically good. There is nothing evil in the body and there is all evil in the body; this depends not upon the body but upon whether the will is subjugated or the ego is subjugated. Enslavement of will leads to all evil and symbolically places man in an Egyptian captivity. The emancipation of will power frees the body from this slavery in Egypt, so to speak, and finally makes out of it the Temple of Solomon, that is to say, the abode of Divine Peace, in the Promised Holy Land, the accomplishment of life's purpose in the temporal sphere.

Sufi's develop will-power consciously, semi-consciously and unconsciously. The unconscious method comes not from helping the will but through weakening the hold of the body and mind; this comes through Meditation. The conscious method is to control thought by feeling, as in Concentration. The semi-conscious method is surrender to God for which there are many practices called Kalama, Wazifa, Fikr, Zikr, Kasab, etc.

In Meditation body and mind lose their power over will; in Concentration, will gains control over body and mind; this is the second step, and both of these steps are possible for the Rajasic man, the scholar and the scientist. To assist in Sattvic development, surrender to God is also necessary and this is the work of the devotee. He is as an empty cup. Prayer and Yoga alone do not fill this cup, but when various methods are combined, the Divine Love can be experienced to the full. Yet this also is balanced and checked for otherwise the devotee would remain in ecstasy and be void of action. Action and ecstasy combined provide **right action**.

## Lesson 2

Meditation is the source of great good in life, but it is impossible to perform certain tasks while meditating. Nevertheless it is true that the Divine Spirit can help man every moment of his life in some way, if he only will. When the heart is fixed upon God, or in the performance of Dharma, his Right Action; he then can do no evil. And there is never a time or occasion where man cannot call upon the Name of God, whether he prays or utters mantrams or has other means at his disposal.

Meditation helps to bring balance and restores vitality to the heart, purifying the body, mind and heart. When one has gone through the process, accommodation is made for the increase of capacity, so that he can utilize more vital life force. The Sufis have a practice called Namaz for increasing accommodation in the body, one called Kasab which has a similar function for the mind, and one called Shagal for the spirit. No doubt other schools have similar practices with similar names, and these are generally combined in the Science of Yoga, prevalent in many parts of Asia. But besides this there must be application of force through will-power and this is possible through Concentration.

It is difficult to control passion without spiritual balance. A person who is not perturbed sexually may have a violent temper, and another instead of being lascivious is bitter; another becomes a pervert and another a glutton. This shows that man has mastered nothing. Temper shows him under control of fire, bitterness of water, gluttony and some malpractices of the earth element, and the pervert generally is confused through domination of the air element in his personality. Such people show change of their master, but they have not risen above the human condition.

The difference between the spiritual and puritanical attitude is this, that while the Puritan feels in his heart that certain acts are wrong, he opposes the acts without having any knowledge how to control them, without understanding their source. The Sufi may have the same feeling but he has the knowledge and he also believes in the words of the Bible that when God created the earth, He saw everything that it was good—nothing of itself is evil, nothing except the evil caused by the ego or nufs.

Not even nufs is fundamentally evil for it is the accommodation made by God to hold the vital force to the lower planes. Force being in essence spirit, it does not want to remain embedded to matter, it wants to escape, so nufs or ego was created and through that comes a pleasure in the grosser aspects of life. If there was no pleasure in eating, man might desire to escape to heaven, and if there was not still greater joy in the sex-life not only the individual but the whole race would strive to depart from this world.

It is said of Jesus in the traditions that come to us that he declared suffering would continue so long as women bare children. Today we find people who believe in race suicide or birth control, and in the past there were many and we still have some today who believe in asceticism as a means to happiness. Yet the very saints who have carried on the struggle against ignorance have suffered, and many pious monks who fled into deserts and out of the way places did not find much joy in life. Sufis have never accepted the traditions often held by followers of the same religion that celibacy is the way to heaven and that parenthood, particularly over a large family, that also was God's will.

It is a pity that God should appear so inconsistent, God Who is all-wise and Who has never made such intention. The body, mind and heart are what they are for the highest motives, else like the bodies of the mastodon and dinosaur man's form would have changed or disappeared ages ago.

There is a problem of life and it is not solved through sex, but the solutions of the problems of life and of the problem of sex is the same thing.

And what is this solution? It is the transmutation of all forces, purification of all elements. By this the fiery portion of man's nature is altered from anger to inspiration, the watery nature may change from bitterness to mercy, the airy person may transcend trivial types of intoxication to experiencing real joy, and the earthy man may overcome gluttony and or sloth and make himself useful and become most successful. The etheric nature which is deeply connected with the vital force, in the process of spiritualization witnesses the sublimation of passion and the refining of all movements of creation, preservation and destruction performed by man.

And these things bring life, life in the fullest sense, without waiting for any departure from the body, without having to put off anything until the morrow or the hereafter. Every moment of our lives we can be drawn closer to God.

### Lesson 3

Sufism, which is Wisdom, does not teach morality by a series of prohibitions and inhibitions. To refer to an undesirable thought or act produces an undesirable impression on the mind. Thus any reference to murder makes murder the subject-of-thought; if all thoughts about murder were effaced from the mind, very few people would commit such an act.

In other words, spiritual philosophy takes issue with the newspapers and publications which believe you can fight crime through rousing public attention and indignation. If that were so, crime would long since have been eradicated. So long as people are impressed with certain thoughts, even in the most unfavorable manner, the mind is not free from that type of thought, it is not free from sin or crime or misbehavior. So long as the mind is not freed from crime, there will be crime.

The same is true concerning every kind of vice and immorality. Instead of being given many injunctions at Bayat, the Sufi neophyte is taught the prayer Saum. And what does Saum do? It purifies body and mind. And how does Saum purify body and mind? It elevates the magnetism of body and mind.

Praise to God is the chief means of mental purification which, if it does not increase mental magnetism and inspiration, at least prevents any loss or leakage. Mind only loses power in so far as thought is concerned with worldly or psychic affairs. On its own plane or higher planes thought can continue indefinitely. Holding the thought of praise to God drives out thought of self (that is to say, nufs) and all material ideas. Surrender in praise takes one even to a higher state, for this frees the will from the mind and brings thereby spiritual liberation, that is to say, liberation from matter, form and limitation.

While this is going on in the higher spheres a very important action is taking place on the physical plane. The human body has been so constructed that the magnetic currents are strongest at the finger tips, toes and soles of feet, top of head, chin, tongue, breasts in woman, sex organs in both men and women, and also through the eyes and nose. It is at these parts that most magnetism can

be gathered and also where serious losses can occur. It is desirable to prevent such losses and at the same time direct the vital fluids to the best advantage.

Raising the hands upward in prayer helps direct the fluid upward instead of downward. Especially is this so in the moment of ecstasy or high thought when the brain is magnetized. This combination frees the energy from the lower centers. Generally speaking the movements in **Saum** are concomitant with the thoughts—that is to say, the movements are coordinate with or connected to the same psychic movements. That is why the hands are clasped as a high position near the heart and at the end of the prayer drawn toward oneself and cupped over the eyes. All these movements are valuable in raising the psychic forces from the denseness of the earth.

In Saum the thought, words, movement and ideal are connected. The ideal one holds can be of great value in overcoming any passionate influence. So the conclusion of Saum teaches that through a series of processes man can arrive at a state wherein he reflects all the beauty and glory of the Universe. That is to say, the same human body which has been termed dung-heap and has been used even worse than the way some lowly animals treat it—this same human body can be completely transmuted.

The principles of Saum hold true to a certain extent, no doubt, for all prayers. All help to raise the condition of magnetism and vitality. All forms of Nimaz and Kalama are therefore of some use and Sufis do not criticize the methods of worship of any people. In fact some of these same methods are used in part in various religions, and even in the schools of Yoga even though there is not always much movement, the purpose includes the transmutation and sublimation of the psychic force.

It is the raising of humanity to a higher degree which is all-important, and in this mysticism can always cooperate with the best in all human endeavors.

#### Lesson 4

Sufis as well as other mystics have long known that music and dancing have been most valuable in controlling the passions. This is especially true of Zikr which is a marvelous purifier. Emotions are generally stronger in the young and need to be transmuted, whereas in calmer, older people this is not always necessary. Zikr performance often bring the devotee into a state of ecstasy which some have regarded as artificial. No doubt it is a stimulus, but its benefits have never been fully explained.

Zikr affects the whole personality and Zakirs (the performers in Zikr) have made the most wonderful discoveries through this practice. It has been claimed that ecstasy is not always desirable and this is certainly true if one seeks ecstasy for its own sake. There are two important reasons for this practice which need to be thoroughly understood.

There is a negative reason that in the young where there may be many misdirected emotions and passions, a spiritual performance takes one into a very lofty state of consciousness wherein no psychic vibrations can enter the breath and when the Zakir returns to objectivity this portion of his personality is purified through a transmutation and sublimation of the vital force. But there is also a positive reason so that older persons who have long been on the path to God may practice Zikr also.

That is to say Zikr increases the bond connecting pupil and teacher; also it attunes one to the celestial hierarchy, and best of all it gives active expression to one's love for God. And while strictly speaking all gains in Zikr are due to God's Grace and not to man's effort, nevertheless it is in this condition that God's Grace is most manifest.

Among older persons who may be more reserved by nature or experience, some more violent forms of Zikr are not always necessary. The practice of spiritual concentration of itself is very helpful. So soon as one gazes at an object and holds the thought with feeling, this upraises the vital energy, this takes the blood and psychic energy from the pelvis and diaphragm to the heart. Therefore Murakkabah (spiritual concentration) is not performed immediately after a meal; but it may be affirmed that whenever one practices concentration in the manner of the Sufis, the vital force is being sublimated.

It is still more true that all exercises in Esotericism and Psychology and many lesser spiritual practices produce to some extent a transmutation of force. Sometimes this is suggested or explained in writing, at other times it has been inferred in a more or less vague way. But just as the Christian Testament says that if all the teachings of Jesus Christ after his resurrection were recorded, perhaps not all the books of this world could contain the teachings, so it can be equally stated that there is no end to explanations and commentaries upon the spiritual practices of the Sufis and other mystics.

We do not mention Kundalini; the force is there no doubt, but it is not the Sufi way to mention centers in the body which are to be avoided, or through which energy may pass. We are not primarily studying physiology. In Sufism a goal is selected and a road traversed until that goal is reached. This is the Sufi way and by it many evils of life are overcome and disturbances which sometimes arise through questionable practices are avoided.

Emphasis is to be placed not so much upon what has to be avoided as upon what may be done with surety. What is common to all men is not subject material for spiritual study. There are many sciences which impart knowledge thereon, and there is little doubt that this knowledge will grow. The science of the inner forces, of Nature's finer forces as they have been called, has to be learned another way.

The daily exercise of the Sufi can prevent him from falling downward and can assist him in rising upward. Yet there is a curiosity in man which demands satisfaction and in answer to this demand it is not wrong to impart knowledge which will be beneficial both in this world and in the world to come. Looking at Tasawwuf as a science both of the earth and Malakut, one will eventually reach the heights where a larger vision is possible and where it is possible to maintain this wisdom through the ages.

## Lesson 5

Marriage and morals are two things, marriage being the attempt of the personality to adjust itself to sex life; morals being the regulation of the means by which the personality can make the adjustment to the social life, to the generality. No doubt the two are connected, for out of marriage came the family and out of the family social life grew, including the relations between the various members of the family, and the relations between different families.

In making a general survey of the world it can almost be said that marriage conditions are often wrong, yet moral ideals are frequently instinctively right. Not only moralists but many people have strongly opposed social and personal immorality without having any deep knowledge. They knew neither the causes of the difficulties nor the remedies therefor. This has led to the regulation and legislation which has accomplished some good in some directions.

Many of the attempts to curb laxity have failed because the very men who strive to stop one evil forcefully, themselves condone some other vice. A gambler will want to stop the liquor traffic and a roué will be horrified at the conditions under which children work in factories. This comes from the human tendency to look without. The evils are there, no doubt, but man is always trying to eradicate evil in others.

It is this outward tendency which has continually fed the spirit of agitation and so preserved the sins of the world. Some people become specialists in evil and want to purge the world of all those wrongs which they do not condone. In other words, there have been and are reformers who can see only the wrongs others do and they never reach the altruistic humanitarian outlook which can survey the world in its entirety.

Yet this is also a fortunate condition. As Jesus Christ has said, when Satan fights Beelzebub righteousness is victorious, for a house divided against itself cannot stand. And it is true that evil fights evil, while good cooperates with good. In this is the opportunity for the truly moral man as well as for the sage and the devotee. By playing even various wicked groups one against the other much can be accomplished towards securing better conditions upon the earth.

But it is not a movement in the dark. The spiritual manner of improving the world is not through education, it is through enlightenment, which, however, does not preclude the former. Education is development of mind through outer understanding, enlightenment is perfection of mind through inner awakening.

To overcome this dilemma of morality we are going to discard morality. This will not be done by denying morality or opposing morality or ignoring morality. It will be done by rising above it, and for this purpose knowledge is necessary. Some knowledge is scientific add some is occult; that is to say, some knowledge is already accepted by the generality because of investigations man has made, and some is discovered in another manner. But so much of nature has not been investigated scientifically and perhaps cannot be studied in an outer manner. This other form of knowledge of truth is called Occult Knowledge.

But there is another and more important factor to be considered which is really the most important part of our philosophy, and that is that life-force is God, and the life in every man and woman is nothing but God. From this aspect there is no morality when there is understanding because instead of discussing man and woman, instead of looking at life from our own point of view and that of another, apart from consideration of God, God is kept in our hearts and minds at every moment.

If we can do this and remember this we shall be able to learn and understand much. But beyond our enlightenment there is the most essential duty of helping humanity. If we regard the laws of vital force apart from conditions that exist on earth, although our personal gains may be great, we shall not be doing the finest service for God, remembering that God alone exists and all belong to Him.

## Lesson 6

If we survey the world today we observe many strange complexities in man's habits, especially the sexual side of life. Instead of regarding self-abuse, homosexuality and perversion, prostitution, birth-control, abortion and polygamy wicked, we shall rather try to understand them. It is to be remembered that the spiritual teachers of the past have left us some injunctions which do not always harmonize with the ideas of the present, particularly in regard to marriage and polygamy. We may benefit greatly by studying such traditions but we shall learn even more by the proper utilization of the vital force within ourselves.

Feet, hands, head, and sex-organs radiate the life energy. Instinct adds its action to the psychic energy of the reproductive organs making the careful control or use of them very important. Yet it is wrong to speak of sex as evil. God has created this body and sex is no more evil than stomach is evil or brain is evil or spleen is evil. If sex is evil, God is evil. He has implanted the seed within man and the womb within woman. A garden may be covered with weeds or a garden may blossom with flowers. All of life is potentially good or bad and at the same time neither virtuous nor wicked. It depends upon the direction life takes.

Self-abuse as its very name indicates, reveals the presence of the nufs or ego in some process. There are two kinds of self-abuse, mental and physical, and often one of them leads to the other. Mental self-abuse is more common than physical, and although far more prevalent, few psychologists seem to have recognized it as so. Sadism, delight in torture of other personalities, and masochism, willingness to be tortured, are really forms of mental self-abuse. While they are regarded as sexual aberrations, a close examination of them will show that there is always some mental difficulty along with a lopsided physical and social life.

Self-abuse is common among single children, those who have few companions of their own age, those who have questionable associates, whether playmates or nurses or older people; it is also prevalent in children who are inclined to give too much thoughts to themselves. They think of themselves, look at themselves and center life about their personalities. In modern terminology this is called Narcissus complex; Sufis regard it as the extreme sway of nufs.

One chief cause for this condition is the absence of proper parental love and care. This is sometimes due to lack of love on the part of a parent or absence of a parent through death or other causes. Loving parents impart a magnetism to the child so that it seeks not other compensation. That is an important law which it is well to understand. The extremes of indulgence and neglect have to be avoided, and there are parents who are blindly devoted to their children or who absorb force from their children, hindering normal development and growth.

True love is never contrary to wisdom. Doting parents may draw some of the vital force from children to themselves and dominating parents certainly do; in the former case pubic development may be retarded, and in the latter case it may result either in too early awakening of the sexual function or its dormancy until adulthood, or even through life.

This is wrong when we consider all is God and that there should be self-expression on every plane. But there is a time for all things, and heedlessness or ignorance may cause endless psychic difficulties, especially when magnetism is smothered or aroused before the time is ripe.

The child may seek polar compensation through the hand or the mind, stimulating excitation. Often reaction follows, a reaction which is more likely to be mental than physical, yet the source of endless difficulties in latter life. To combat this abnormality more than intellectual education is necessary. Deep understanding of the processes of life is also essential.

### Lesson 7

The method of correcting self-abuse is not essentially different from the correction of many other difficulties. Although this is not always regarded as a vice or a fault, from the spiritual point of view it can become the nexus of many troubles. Self-love, while socially excusable, is not to be condoned spiritually. On the other hand some of the so-called vices are not always culpable sins. The basis of all evil is attention to the self and heedlessness of God and humanity, the incarnation of God-power.

Prayer is an excellent means of combating self-abuse. It is most beneficial when the instruction begins early in life. Prayer is a powerful prophylactic against both mental and physical egotism. Esoteric science shows how prayer can purify mind, removing thought of self and substituting either a dependence upon or a relation with the all-pervading Deity. The first step is an all-important step.

There are also benefits to be derived physically and psychically through prayer at an early age. Various postures such as kneeling, bowing, standing, raising hands, etc. direct the vital currents to the extremities and aids in physical growth besides preventing various forms of congestion. On the other hand mental or physical laziness increase the growth of the internal organs rather than the limbs and muscles. Then physical precocity may occur at the expense of a balanced growth. Besides all this, clasping the hands together, closing them on the breast or raising them vertically pull the vital force outward and upward during the period of growth. Many physical exercises bring the same results but when prayer is added there is a proper mental and spiritual culture at the same time.

No doubt it is more difficult to correct habits after adulthood is reached. Mystics have a certain knowledge which has been called metaphysical healing that can be applied, and sometimes it is most satisfactory when added to other forms of treatment. It is also true that during youth and again after maturity even the vices change, so that from the same soot-evil we seen at one time certain questionable habits, and another time quite different shortcomings.

The science of breath is a great science which it is necessary to preserve with a certain secrecy because of the great abuse that has resulted from unnecessary tampering with the human structure. Without some spiritual growth, without some broadening of view or expansion of consciousness, it is impossible to give complete instructions in this science. Therefore it is taught in steps as the individual perfects his practices and makes the proper accommodation for the more delicate types of Yoga.

Prayer and meditation are both very valuable when they take the thought away from self. There is a kind of centrifugal attitude which promotes both altruism and spirituality and progress in this direction is always right. If instruction in breathing is imparted prior to this centrifugal movement in consciousness, it may increase the attention to the self with its attendant emotions of pride,

arrogance, conceit and stupidity. But the selfless or kind person is certainly ready to know more about the vital forces which operate through his personality.

The period of puberty has been the time for many important religious conversions, but there is an enormous distance between emotional agitation and spiritual awakening. Emotional agitation is centripetal, drawing attention to the self. That is why with so much popular religion in the world there has not been eradication of vice and crime. Mohammed tried to present a religion without clergy, claiming that prayer was valuable but man did not need another to pray for him. In fact it can be questioned from some other points of view whether any ecclesiastic institution is needed to bring man closer to God.

For the child and for the elders who are children in heart, the way to God is always open. Some anthropologists claim that prayer arose out of taboo. Even if this were so it would not matter for if taboo is to be considered as a kind of communion with Divinity in Nature, it is very good. It certainly is centrifugal, making for selflessness. We do not have to decry the clergyman, but there is so much need for personal religion in its truest sense. A child can feel near to God, everybody can be near to God, and for this prayer and proper breathing are most important from the cradle to the grave and even beyond, if one understood it, into eternity.

### Lesson 8

Closely associated with instructions in breathing are speech and the musical arts, from which we can pass to the arts in general. The games of children such as skipping rope and hopping draw vital energy into the limbs, in other words, centrifugally. The same nerves which supply the pelvis also sustain the legs, and the more that energy is drawn outwardly the less apt is the child to pay attention to its privates. Dancing is the first art and with it goes mimicry which can become acting; these can be taught at an early age. In mimicry and acting automatically attention is drawn from the ego to the non-self, which is of very great value. Much in life can be called spiritual instruction which is very different from common religion but which is certainly the high road to wisdom and understanding. When one learns something of the point of view of another, even though in play, one is cultivating sympathy and altruism.

As we are here concerned not so much with the age of the person as with the solution of problems in general and particular, it can be affirmed that the science and art of music in all its branches is extremely valuable in correcting self-abuse, taking the thoughts away from the ego even to the point of abandon. This last can become an evil at the opposite extreme which can be checked through the proper choice of music.

Among the greatest evils of the day are no doubt the absence of any purpose or direction in the social order and in the arts. It becomes increasingly difficult to cope with any major problems of wealth and poverty, justice, disease, war and crime, as the mind is kept centered on itself. When the music of the nations is concerned with passions rather than with ideals it becomes almost impossible to free the mind from its state of bondage. And with the increase of gross emotional and decadent and revolting vices, a change become imperative if we do not wish to see civilization totally destroyed.

In a sense we are close to the lowest moral ebb, considering matter from a psychic point of view and therefore it is time for instruction. To learn we shall also have to unlearn, for if we remain attached to the past, hallowing its traditions, we may find ourselves inextricably caught in a web.

A single thought is best expressed in a single melody. This relationship between melody and thought has seldom been properly investigated, either in the East or in the West. Western nations have assimilated the idea of complexities in melody and harmony and at the same time have adhered to the most elementary rhythms. That is to say, they have advanced mentally, but instinctive knowledge, born of the earth, has decreased rather than increased and the life has become more and more artificial.

Now melody has the tendency to stretch the surface of mind and give room for the fuller self-expression. Limitation of melody scale and mood in music limit the expansibility of mind. At the same time limitation on rhythm inhibits depth and inner growth to the mind. The people of India, with their many rhythms, furnish many examples of spiritual individuals, but their lack of harmonies and their further neglect of the lower register in music is revealed in their lack of practical ability, their dull sense of progress, and until recently, the relative absence of altruism.

Strictly speaking progress is not so necessary as stability, but stability without progress rapidly degenerates into inertia. This is seen not only in the philosophy of the dance, it is part of dance itself. If there is no movement, there is no dance; but if there is no stability, the art should be called tumbling and not dancing.

All branches of music at almost every period of life have beneficent effects when properly and suitably taught. It is a pity that many persons, intuitively feeling the value of music, but not having studied its principles, have applied complex forms of the art without gaining the hoped for results and have concluded that the importance of this art has been over exaggerated. If we should return to principles, studying the meaning of melody, rhythm, harmony and movement, we should avoid any such mistakes.

The next step would be to select themes which are psychologically beneficial at least to the point of raising thought from self. Religion, heroism and nature all possess so many themes for singing, playing and dancing that this should not be difficult. Folk dances are always valuable from many points of view.

With spiritual growth more profound instruction maybe given, terminating in the repetition of sacred mantra or Zikr as well as other mystical arts. Even then it is essential to preserve balance. There is the period when the young sprig is best confined to the hot-house or nursery and there is the stage when it can stand by itself. So even with all the idealism, it is not wrong to introduce gradually the best themes and songs, selecting them with care as if education itself were a most delicate and tender spiritual process.