



Gatha with Commentary

Takua Taharat: Everyday Life

Series III

of

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

by

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis
(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

This paper is not to be transferred or duplicated without the expressed written permission of the Sufi Ruhaniat International.

It is intended only for private circulation among initiated Sufi mureeds, and this printing does not constitute publication.

Our goal is to support the work of the Ruhaniat Living Stream Project.

If you wish to print a copy for yourself or a friend, please make a donation to the Sufi Ruhaniat International.

Your receipt acknowledges our permission.

©1978 Sufi Ruhaniat International

SRI Secretariat
PO Box 51118
Eugene OR 97405
USA

telephone: (541) 345-5223
e-mail: ruhaniat@mail.com

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 1

Purity of the Heart

GATHA: The real purity is experienced not by means of the outer ablutions nor by keeping away evil thoughts, but by keeping the heart pure from feelings which disturb the rhythm of the mind and thus upset the whole spirit.

TASAWWUF: The third year studies are concerned with purity of heart. The first year with purity of mind, the second year with purity of body. But there is a difference. Body and mind both are cleansed by outer ablutions, but as *Nirtan* says, “the Heart can heal the Heart.” This is done not only by meditation and concentration but by contemplation or Mushahida.

Purity is not merely negation. From the very beginning it is taught that purity means freedom from mixtures. But even the thought “freedom from mixtures” itself may have an implication. In Fana, or self-effacement, purification is most necessary to remove all perturbations arising from Nufs, the ego. This is negative. The removal of Nufs, and the progress in Fana itself means the manifestation of baqa’, or illumination. The Bible tells about urim and thummin. These words mean light and illumination. They correspond to terms found especially in Sufism and Buddhism. The Buddhistic words are “bhumis” and “paramis,” or “paramitas,” sometimes translated as “perfections.” When Jesus taught, “Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect” he also meant: become manifestations of light, as God is Light.

There is a whole volume in *the Sufi Message* called *Mental Purification*. This is a most important work, and in its commentary in particular we find the depths of awakening processes presented. These become possible when the devotee ceases to think about any dualism between Fana and baqa’. In the *Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra* there is an absolute protest against such dualism. When man not only accepts this teaching intellectually, but merges himself into it, he will be in the process of illumination.

Thus Sufism is ultimately concerned with the purification of heart. Then the devotee becomes a light and a lamp. It is not enough to read, as in the Zarathustrian scripture about “good words,” “good thoughts,” and “good actions”. When man has developed according to Fikr, then the Divinity speaks through him, and the light shines through and from him. This is the only true goodness.

It is not enough to adhere to the Sattvic guna. No doubt this is very high and fine, but it does not always lead to man becoming the instrument of God. The Sattvic people may be like angels, excellent, but ineffective. The divine wisdom calls for action as well as contemplation. The highest form of contemplation involves, does not exclude, action.

Mushahida, or contemplation, is a practice of advanced devotees. Therein it is necessary to feel the world as heart, and heart as the world. One learns by processes of purification to stop disturbances within. Then it often happens that there is a change in the atmosphere, and this in turn abates disturbances without.

The practice of looking into the heart is most valuable. For the heart is really grander than the universe we see or seem to see. When the heart is full of life and light, it also has a great power, power to control, even to pacify the affairs of life. Indeed, the purification of the heart is of advantage, not only to the devotee, but to the whole world. It is this which fulfills the Bodhisattvic role.

GATHA: Feelings have a greater power than thoughts.

TASAWWUF: This is very simple yet very difficult, especially in the Western world where there has been so much stress on thought and logic. Yet, it is in this part of the world also, where there have been so many disturbances. The disturbances arise when the center of consciousness is affected. If we accept Newton's Laws of Motion, there is either rest or acceleration. You cannot, you do not, have both. So when the thoughts are uncontrolled by feeling, they are uncontrolled and the life is uncontrolled, both the life within and without.

In the teachings of Murakkabah it is stated one should hold the thought with the feelings. When this is done concentration is easy. When it is not done, we do not have concentration; we have decentration.

GATHA: If evil thoughts are monsters evil feelings are as demons. Such feelings as the desire of robbing someone of his rights or his belongings have a very disturbing effect upon the spirit.

TASAWWUF: In the Indian writings one reads of warfare between the asuras and devas, and everybody assumes that he is with the devas and against the asuras. But it does not mean that in that sense. It means the struggling with the feelings of helping or harming others. And this in turn is due to the status of nufs, the ego.

The third year of study is particularly concerned with the purification of feelings. In the first year, the purification of body; in the second year, of mind; in the third year, of feelings. But here philosophy is of no help. One must look deep into himself, and thus the feelings are awakened. But it is the nature of feelings to be spiritual, to accept the Sattvic guna. This lets in a flood of light. This light also contains the qualities known as sattvic.

We have the Egyptian tradition of the battle between Horus and Sut-Typhon representing the devas and asuras. When Sut-Typhon was overcome, a host of little creatures called the Sebau, meaning germs or insects, arose from his body. These are like the myriad of thoughts which constantly arise when the mind is disturbed and keep one in confusion.

To harbor hatred or malice or ill-will is to harbor the demons. It is not any philosophy; it is the way of human behavior or rather misbehavior. When the heart acts as if in darkness, then the evils arise both from oneself and to oneself. The way to correct this is to increase the capacity for love and compassion and then to put them into operation.

There are several ways to stop the unwholesome forces. Some of these are presented in the Gathas on Morals and others in *Moral Culture* and the commentary thereon. When one practices the renunciation, then the ego is under control. When the ego is under control there can be no malice, nor temper, nor ill-will.

GATHA: Before such a feeling is put into action the effect is more, while it is being put into action it is less, but afterward the effect is most.

TASAWWUF: This brings up the problem of the control of feeling. We must awaken the feelings; that is part of the spiritual development. But we must awaken the feelings without the ego-self controlling the operations. And if we try to battle the ego, we can involve it. It is not by battling the ego that the ego is overcome; it is by soothing it, pacifying it, putting it to sleep, so to speak. And finally we come to the nishkama karma, where action continues without desire, without self.

Every impulse on our part has its momentum. The control of impulse is also part of the disciplinary training. And if we repeat the Sufi Invocation or any practice called "Darood," we find we shall be rising above impulse but not above action.

GATHA: Life rightly and honestly lived has inner struggles, but by adding to it feelings that disturb life's tranquility one only adds to one's troubles in life, which then become endless.

TASAWWUF: It is taught over and over that the real struggle is against one's small self. By the practice of meditation, by all methods of calming, we gradually develop in the self-control. This self-control builds up a peaceful atmosphere. This atmosphere becomes an armor which wards off disturbances. If one practices the calmness of heart, he will have an atmosphere which even the most troublesome persons will respect. For while there is life there is always feeling, good or bad, but it is there.

Therefore it may be taught that "Peace is power." The deep devotional repetition of "Allaho Akbar," meaning "Peace is power" gives one control not only over one's ego and one's atmosphere, but gradually over all the affairs of life with which one is concerned. It is remarkable and it is most wonderful.

The way this operates is by practices such as those given by Lord Buddha, in which first the breath is refined and then, being very refined, feeling can almost automatically control thought. Thought acts as a weight upon breath; feeling, pure feeling, acts as a buoyant force, and then it is possible to bring forth heart-essence in all its purity and function.

GATHA: Purity of heart must not be considered a virtue but a necessity, a necessity not only to be considered for the good of others, but for one's own life.

TASAWWUF: There are various stages and processes in esotericism which make this possible. In the end the esoteric processes will prove to be superior to all else. No doubt psychoanalysis has its place. Psychoanalysis presumes a high degree of proficiency in the practitioner, but esotericism assumes the perfection of God. When one works with perfection and perfectibility, the possibilities are infinitely greater than when one operates in spheres of human proficiency, which in the end do not always prove to be so wonderful.

Thus disciples are often given the Heart for concentration, and later the Sufi Symbol. When Murakabah is practiced the disciple is told to hold the thought with feeling. But at first he may be self-limited by a thought, "Hold the thought by feeling." Such a thought is a thought and is a barrier, a jailhouse, to pure feeling. Pure feeling comes from liberty and brings liberty.

The prayer is that we should rise above the distinctions and differences which divide men. Therefore all of the spiritual life is really the Bodhisattvic life, where consideration for the self, for humanity, and for all sentient beings becomes fused, fused but not confused. This terminates in Mushahida, transcendental contemplation.

GATHA: The feelings which produce that weakness in the heart take away strength from the eyelids; the glance drops instead of the eyes firmly gazing straight. Nothing in the world, however valuable or rare, can make up for this loss.

TASAWWUF: Until Mr. Paul Brunton wrote on the mystery of the eye, few seemed to have thought about it, that is few in the Western culture. Yes, the Hebrew Kabbalists and Sufis have stressed the eye, the eye as an organ, the eye as a sphere or miniature universe, the eye as an operative machine for light. And we can see some of this light in the little children and also in saintly characters.

Today disciples in Sufism repeat: “Toward the One....” Muslims declare that their religion alone emphasizes tauhid, but this very emphasis is itself a divisive factor that prevents the full function of tauhid, or unity. Also, by meditation and stress on esoteric disciplines, one becomes more firm, and this firmness also is reflected in the straightness of the gaze. When the gaze is straightened, when the gaze is emphasized, when the heart is purified, then practices such as tawajjuh and darshan are possible. Then it is that the Murshid, having awakened his own Baraka, is able to benefit others by methods which are also explained in the teachings on Psychology both in the sacred studies and in the literature.

GATHA: The main thing that must be remembered is that the soul is pure and the lack of purity it cannot bear without feeling restless. The spirit has a tune and a rhythm. When it is out of tune and out of rhythm, if the riches of the whole world be given to it, it is worth nothing.

TASAWWUF: Functionally, the word “soul” presents difficulties, for the soul, in a certain sense, is all that is. In other words Atman is Brahman, and God made man in His own image and likeness. In practice, religion affirms the theory of this, and in practice religion also denies this, and this is what has caused all the confusion. Nevertheless, what might be called a soul in contradiction to the term soul without any restriction, is itself a tuning and this tuning with its rhythm is behind the existence of personality.

This subject is presented, of course, in *The Soul, Whence and Whither* and in other places in the literature. But the literature alone has a limitation unless there is a corresponding function. It is like science. Science is not a laboratory notebook, but the experiences and the experiments of persons. It is like cooking. Cooking is not a book on recipes, it is putting into practice what one may be reading in books on recipes. So until one has a realization he does not have the Sophia nor the Gnosis which are behind every religion.

There are many ways to put this into practice. Walt Whitman said: “In all men I see myself.” When you meet a sage he may address you as another self; he may emphasize samenesses or even identities. Sometimes infants see each other as merely varieties or as duplications of their own beings. That is why Mohammed taught that all children are born Muslims. When one sees himself as a separated entity or individual he passes out of tauhid into variety.

GATHA: It is purity and peace which is the soul's constant seeking.

TASAWWUF: We have this in our prayers. We have this in our longings. We have this in our teachings. Others have it in their teachings also, but it does not come in ordinary experiences. It would seem that no religion, no philosophy, no metaphysics, no teaching avails, unless it is bolstered by the experience.

Sufis, Vedantists, and some others say this comes through chains of operation of magnetisms, of blessings, passed by lines of awakened personalities. Sometimes it comes directly by God's grace, but a theory about this is to assume a division between God and His creation. Every thought, no matter how noble, takes one from purity and peace. Emptiness alone, or Fana, is a counterpoise very necessary in purification. And this ends finally in realization or self-fulfillment, which in Sufic terms is called *baqa'*.

Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978

*These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 2

Keeping the Heart Pure

GATHA: As the rust is natural to the iron, and as the milk turns sour, so the heart can become rusted, and its feeling, which by nature is as pure as milk, turns sour. Then nothing in the world is tasteful to that person, and life with all its beauty becomes worthless.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that every child has been born pure, but that its parents deprive it of that purity. It is also more evident that every child is born with a sense of joy, of happiness, and afterwards there are shocks and pains which take that joy and happiness away.

As one grows older, as one meets with more trials and disappointments, there is something like rust that sets in, and then one loses one's deeper sense and feels that the rusting and the impurity and the sourness are realities. Although alchemy is definitely concerned with purifications there are often counter-movements. We may purify metals, we may purify glass, but when they are used and subject to all physical and chemical forces, there can be erosion and tarnishing, and then the question arises how can there be purification.

There are processes of purification in chemistry and even in household science with which we are not particularly concerned excepting for purposes of analogy. But in the Alchemy it is different. Alchemy is concerned with all sorts of manners of purification. Also in Sufism we are taught that the purpose of life is to become free from mixtures. There are all sorts of ways in which this may be done or can be done.

We may speak of fire, water, air, earth, ether, and of processes of purification, sublimation, dissolution, coagulation, etc. These subjects are taught within the realms of occultism and also in certain sciences and arts. They have also become part of movements like that of the Freemasons in which character-building is involved.

Thus the Hebrew peoples had to endure tests and trials when they left the land of Egypt, which, in a certain sense, signified samsara. They had to go through the Sea of Reeds, purification by water. They had to go through the desert, purification by fire. In Egypt they endured slavery, purification by earth. Then they passed over the mountain, led by Moses, purification by air. Finally they crossed the Jordan and entered the Holy Land, purification by ether. In this sense the whole history of the Beni Israel in the Bible reflects the initiatory processes through which every soul ultimately goes.

What is this land of milk and honey? It means that the purified heart brings us sweetness and also life. The life is symbolized by the milk, and the sweetness by honey. But the same symbology also holds for the Hindu scriptures, especially as presented in the life of Sri Krishna.

GATHA: It is this condition which must be avoided. An adept must keep his mind pure from rust.

TASAWWUF: The very word “Sufism” and in this sense also “Tasawwuf” means the maintenance of purity. The sciences and arts of outer purity are readily understood. Inner purity is more subtle. This subject is dealt with in the **Ziraat** ritual established by Hazrat Inayat Khan, but never entirely completed. The treatment of the mind as if it were a piece of ground is a very ancient institution in the mysteries. In Zen Buddhism it is approached radically—that is, there is a sharp differentiation between essence of mind and personal mind in activity.

This differentiation is caused by nufs, the ego, and while this subject is approached from many different points of view, it is the most subtle and difficult of all subjects. It is also one which is presented in the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch; the proposed solution offered by the illiterate cook, Hui Neng, has become standard, at least in theory. The story is of limited value, however, unless it is properly applied.

The practice of Fikr is that of the purification of mind by intelligence. This intelligence is the direct activity of Allah through the personality. When the ego is effaced, when the ego stands aside so that the pure light functions, we have both intelligence and purity.

GATHA: The rust comes from allowing the heart to bear malice and spite against anyone, by having hatred and prejudice against anyone, by wanting to take revenge, by looking down upon another with contempt, and by the feeling of jealousy, rivalry or envy.

TASAWWUF: These negative emotions: malice, hatred, prejudice, contempt, rivalry, envy, jealousy, desire for revenge, are actually causes for many malignant diseases. Modern science has introduced the principle of vitamin, but there is a counter-principle of de-vitaminization. When blood tests are made and a person in good or ill health is given vitamins we can often measure the improvement. In the case of de-vitaminization, we can also measure the de-vitalization. There have been some tests made but not enough to show the chemical ill-effects and the bio-chemical ill effects caused by the unfavorable emotions.

In the study of mysticism we may observe the activities of the elements earth, air, fire, water, and ether. The ancient medical systems were based on these, and they came to a synthetic climax in the works of the Persian Avicenna. But this study of the four humors, etc., was gradually abandoned excepting in what is known as junani medicine and herbology.

Along with that has been the separation of sound chemical, bio-chemical and physiological chemical investigations, or rather we might say, pathology, which takes into consideration the toxicological effects of negative emotional states. Every emotion of whatsoever nature may upset an equilibrium. Some of these are to man’s benefit, some to his undoing.

All evil is due to a centration, a centripetal centration. This was symbolized in the Hebrew Bible by such characters as Cain and Canaan, both of which mean the dominance of nufs over spirit. This is destructive of health and purity in all aspects of man’s being.

The use of sacred mantrams, wazifas, and above all Fikr practice, enables the devotee to rise above these deleterious conditions; produces in him an upliftment because the removals of the shadows of nufs automatically permits the Divine Light and Intelligence to operate through personality.

GATHA: The heart wants a constant care to keep it from getting rusted, for the nature of this life of illusion is such that some unimportant little things, which are not of the least value, coming from the outer life, the heart may be affected by, and the rust may be produced as the mere touch of water can produce rust upon the iron.

TASAWWUF: In the deepest studies of traditional Sufism, one is warned to be on guard against any form of contraction (*kasb*). It is these intense states, emotional and spiritual, which keep man within the domain of limitations, and so prevent him from full sense of ecstasy and bliss.

Modern Sufism also is introducing methods and devices which enable the devotee to uncover and utilize latent powers. Indeed, this is one of the purposes of the Sufi Movement and Sufi Order. It is not just performing spiritual practices, repeating prayers and devotions, or keeping oneself away from life and its problems. The uncovering and practicing of the spiritual functions benefit not only the individual but all mankind, just as a single lamp, turned on to help an individual or a room or an atmosphere, is beneficial to all that take advantage of it.

There is a teaching of indifference and also one of equal-mindedness which is presented in certain scriptures. It is unfortunate that the common elements of scriptures and religions are too often overlooked, and the differences are exaggerated. Compassion and anger cannot come together. The compassionate person is never angry, even though he may use the fire element. Thus in Japanese Buddhism there is the archetypal Bodhisattva *fudo* who seems to be in a state of anger, but this is only to block ignorance, vice and evil. In other words, the compassionate person does not dualistically oppose. He seeks a condition wherein the compassion will produce a maximum benefit, even though its operation may cause some sort of pain to occur to some sort of people.

Some types of metaphysical healing are not successful. To say all is good and leave no scope for its opposite deprives the word "good" of any value or meaning. Sometimes terms are only understood by their opposites. Spiritual healing is effective through heart and atmosphere, and not from or by any intellectual psychology or methodology.

GATHA: Once the feeling has become soured it is as difficult, if not impossible, to turn it sweet again as to make sour milk sweet.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, so long as man lives within the realms of karma or *nufsaniat*, reversed processes are practically impossible. The function of the superman, indeed of the Sufi, indeed, of the true alchemist, comes in an ability to restore purity. It is this restoration of purity which is often much more effective than some counter-irritant. Therefore the devotee seeks to purify both his mind and atmosphere. By this purification he builds up a living force. When this living force becomes operative all may benefit therefrom.

Meditation is a wonderful process. But there are forms of meditation which have become mechanical. It is not right to say that Sufism is superior to Zen or any Indian methodology. But it is right to observe and determine when those who are skilled in meditation are able to help others by their action or inaction. We have no way of making comparative measurements and should not, but Bliss may be a common goal, and in Bliss the sour again returns to sweetness.

In times of world turmoil or even of disturbances in one's family or social milieu, the best practice is to maintain calmness and peace of mind, and in Sufism this is done through the practice of the divine presence (Akhlaq Allah).

GATHA: A soul has brought from heaven its love for sweet. It may after coming on earth develop a taste for salt, sour, or bitter, but its innate longing is always for the sweet and what its life needs most is not sugar, which is required in some degree for physical health, but the sweet which is the original property of his heart and which is needed most for his true happiness and real well-being.

TASAWWUF: We read in the writings of Jesus Christ that we must be like little children to obtain the kingdom of heaven. We read in the writings of Mohammed that every child is born a Muslim. When these words are taken too literally, when they are applied to dualistic conditions, they lose both effectiveness and meaning.

It is the shadows caused by nufs which displace this absolute. Those who study chemistry know that there are many substances which are changed radically through even a slight impurity. A very high degree of purity is demanded. You cannot have infinity tarnished by finiteness; you cannot have the soul function in all purity and perfection with even the slightest interference.

We see this also illustrated in Zen art, especially in what is known as the southern Sung School of China. There every line, every aspect of interference, is considered not as an imperfection, but as a subtle quasi-perfection interfering with absolute purity. Then every line, every point, every movement is recognized both as an interference to absolute perfection and also as the efforts of the absolute perfection to make itself comprehensible in the finite spheres. And when we look at art from this point of view we begin to find wonder in all things.

In Buddhism much is made of the paramitas or perfections. The truth is that everything may be perfect according to some aspect, but there are different levels, there are different gradients of light, there are different stages in the evolutions, mineral, biological, psychological, etc., and viewed from the standpoint of any one of them, the others may appear to be imperfect. That is why in some schools of Mahayana it is stated that there really is no difference between samsara and nirvana. It is, so to speak, as if the infinity were constantly seeking finiteness and the finite constantly seeking perfection.

When once this aspect is apprehended along with the proper practice of meditation and Fikr, a whole new, perhaps a perfect, view of life and personality comes to conscious function in man.

*Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978
These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 3

The Radiance of the Face

GATHA: As the cleansing of a metal object produces a shine in it so is the cleansing of the heart, especially from any feeling that produces humiliation.

TASAWWUF: The prayers of modern Sufism, the Gayatri as they are called—Saum and Salat—epitomize the divine teachings. In the Hebrew Psalms there is a teaching that one may learn little by little, line by line. It is unfortunate, most unfortunate, that, like everything else in the original teachings, this has been set aside as if unimportant. In the modern presentation of Sufism, it is stated that every word may be important. Every word that may be coming out of the mouth of an inspired soul, like “the light filleth the crescent moon.”

False atonement produces humiliation. Real atonement means a change of direction. If humiliation persists that indicates that there has been no change of direction. In reciting Saum, in uttering the praise of God, the head is held upward as if facing the Light. When the head is so held, it does not have to look for a light from elsewhere; it is then that its own light is able to shine forth. This means that in the praise there can be no humiliation. On the contrary, there should be, and often is, an increase in exaltation.

Therefore, praise to God becomes one of the best means by which humiliation is avoided. The uplifting of head and heart means an increase in exaltation and so in the shine, a shining which can emanate from the devotees similar to the sheen from polished metal.

GATHA: When a person thinks, “I have been wrong by acting in a certain way,” “By saying a certain thing,” or “By having thought something which should not have crossed my mind,” he loses, so to speak, a radiance which even beams out through his countenance and which is called in Persian **Abi Ruh**, meaning the “The radiance of the face.”

TASAWWUF: Radiance is a measurement of one’s spiritual state. One often sees an actor on a stage, or more likely a performer in television, pretending radiance and joy. If one looks closely, one will see that the lines of the cheeks are taut. One can see that this tenseness is even more marked when there is a false smile. There is no real glow. On the contrary, when the heart is full of love the brilliance is natural. Furthermore, in practice, one can see when devotees say or sing praise to God, especially when they repeat holy words like “Alhamdulillah” or “Hallelujah,” the radiance becomes more intense naturally. It shines out and thus fulfills the words of Jesus Christ, “Let thy light shine forth so that men can see thy good works and glorify the Father, which is in Heaven.” This is part of true religion.

Repentance should be with a full heart. There should be no fear. Fear comes from the shadow and produces shadow. Besides, practice of Fikr or Akhlak Allah raises the disciple above mortality and egoicity.

GATHA: Every person shows from his expression his condition of heart. Therefore the innocence of the expression is the sign of the purity of heart.

TASAWWUF: The teaching, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” has often been misinterpreted. When we place a finger in the water to determine whether it is hot or cold this is an observation, not a judging. It is easy and automatic to observe the presence or absence of fire or light or shadow in and from the eyes. Anyone may so function. As the intuitive faculty increases we may be receptive to, and then understand, the different types of vibrations.

It is a matter of common observance that many scientists, and often other geniuses, have childlike expressions. Real humility is often accompanied by such childlike expressions. They can never be simulated.

GATHA: Man may be clever, learned, qualified, most able, he may be strong physically or even mentally, he may be wealthy, of high rank, but none of these outside things help him to retain that glow of the countenance which depends only upon the purity of heart.

TASAWWUF: It has been presented that the disciple in his third year of study and discipline is concerned largely with this purification of Heart. The main obstacle here is the shadow formation arising out of self-thought. We can avoid this self-thought by spiritual practices. But there is also another aspect of life wherein [the] human being becomes an instrument for universal expression through the particular. If this were not so there would be no place in the Universe for individual personality.

So in character-building and also in the book called *The Art of Personality* we learn how to develop in such a way that self-expression and divine rectitude become harmonized, coordinated, and integrated. The spiritual devotee therefore does not waste time by saying “Not I” or “Not this,” but rather in divine affirmation. The heart becomes as a Sun, radiating light and life and joy. And in the Sufi teachings this comes mostly with attunement or union with and from the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance, and in particular with the Teacher in whose presence talibs sit and study and meditate.

GATHA: Many know and some say that the eyes can tell everything that is in the heart of man, but fewer there are who know the cause behind it. The eyes are like the thermometer of the centre in the head, which is focused to the centre of the heart. Every impression that the heart bears, beautiful or ugly, is mirrored upon the centre of the head, and so it is reflected accordingly in man’s visage, especially in his eyes, which express the most.

TASAWWUF: This teaching is also presented in the lessons on “the glance” (tawajjeh) and in what is called Darshan. Paul Brunton has written at some length on the use of the glance and has also given us photographs of the eyes of an adept whose piercing glance helped him so much in his spiritual development. The same is true in all spiritual communications.

In the lessons on Walk and Dance the talib learns how to focus on the centers in heart and head. These must become functional for both development and understanding, and without such functions no amount of metaphysical interpretation or philosophic discipline is of much value.

No doubt we are coming to a time when the spiritual methods of several traditions will be assimilated into one grand School. This has also been called “The Inner School.” Its importance can never be overexaggerated. Its place in spiritual development has often been de-emphasized in favor of ritual. This is like passing from infinity to limitation. It is being found ineffective. Joy and radiance are not the result of ritual, but of actual experience.

No doubt in spiritual development we have to make use of the mind, perhaps in ways that in the beginning seem rather strange. There are many practices in Sufism for the awakening and development of the heart, and there are no substitutes for these practices. The heart’s longing is not satisfied by anything else.

Love radiates through the eyes, and in turn the eyes can become attuned to this radiance quite readily. This is a teaching of many scriptures and particularly of Qur’an, that light reflects light, and foments light. Once the brilliance of the teacher is absorbed by the disciple, he in turn radiates this brilliance, and in turn passes it on. This is like a series of transformers, only these transformers are instruments of cosmic light and cosmic light includes in it and with it love and compassion and mercy, all divine qualities.

GATHA: There are many clever people but so few there are who may be called wise. The clever ones plot and plan one against the other and exchange evil thoughts between themselves. So those deceitful and treacherous, intoxicated by their interest in life, cover their eyes with the cover of selfishness, thus keeping the heart from showing out its light, which alone illuminates the path of every achievement in life.

TASAWWUF: The great changes going on in society, the revolt of the young against their elders, has as its foundation this very teaching. Generations have enjoyed being deceived, but the depth of personality never relishes deception. The soul is not covered with so much materiality when the body is young. People mature by age but not otherwise are also self-deceived in their superficial efforts to interpret, or rather misinterpret, the clamor against deceit, treachery, and falsehood in the world. Although for many generations the prayer has been “Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” still a considerable number of self-presuming devotees remain beggars rather than humble before God. And the young have become outraged.

Some schools of Sufism teach that there is no sin other than hypocrisy. If we look deeply we might agree on this. Performing ritually some lip service to atonement seldom changes the human heart. The rituals were usually intended for this purpose in the beginning. They became formalized. A student going into a chemical laboratory given instruments and directions and reagents, but not producing the desired products, would be subject to correction. But often in religion a seeming devotee performs a ritual with no change whatever in his personality.

One reason why, in the midst of a rapidly changing world, the Roman Catholic Church has persisted is because of their doctrines on transubstantiation. Whether it be true or not that there is such a change, the very doctrine gives hope and from that hope strength. From this strength there may arise that light which is the seeking of every soul.

GATHA: It might seem hard work to empty one’s heart of all bad impressions and ill feelings, of all bitterness and evil thoughts, and yet it is not nearly so hard as the task of earning one’s daily bread. The work in one’s everyday life takes most part of the day, the emptying of the heart of all undesir-

able things takes but a few moments' silence. It is the desire of erasing from the heart every undesirable impression that enables one in time to purify one's heart.

TASAWWUF: The Zen method as usually presented consists in a revolutionary effort to rid oneself of ego-centricity, and by this means let the essence of mind operate through personality. This has sometimes been called the Sudden School. It is like dynamiting a tree rather than pruning it and gradually cutting it down. In the end no doubt the same result may be obtained.

It is certain that if we seek to stop all impressions, all vibrations, we do not have to consider what is good and what is evil. The Sufi methods of Fikr and Akhlak Allah, by repressing the ego and setting the divine spirit into operation make it quite unnecessary to consider what is good or what is evil from any dualistic basis. Besides this there is the huge universe of right vibrations, right impressions, right inspirations, which operates interminably, and of which man can become conscious where no other creature can.

It has been a mistake to emphasize non-violence toward the lower creation when man has not learned this of himself and for himself and put it into operation. Man alone can become the divine transformer. Man alone has the capacity for what has been called "primal light." This is for man alone.

We may adopt meditatives from other schools. Mohammed taught, "Seek wisdom, even as far as China." One Sufi has said, "Adventure is the sign of the wise and quotation of the ignorant."

The message of the day leaves scope for all teachings even more in practice than in any theory. The prayers we use presumably drawing on all sources and from all Masters, suggest also that we may draw upon every form of wisdom and inspiration from all sources, from all Masters. And it is by each one of us becoming a center of operation for and of the divine light that the world is helped. This is the operation of the Bodhisattva.

*Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978
These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 4

Innocence

GATHA: Innocence is the real purity according to the mystic, for innocence is the sign of purity of heart.

TASAWWUF: We see it in two states: in the infant before this purity is removed by the parents or life; and again, in the advanced sage who has passed through the stages of purification. In the first instance there are not yet the marks of *samskaras*, or impressions, coming from without which mar the seeming perfection. It is not always easy to protect the infant against such impressions although one can find suggestion for it in the lessons on “The Education of the Infant” and elsewhere. But to be valuable, these lessons have to be practiced. Consideration and speculation are of no value.

In the case of disciples—and this comes to perfection in the adept—all sorts of methods may be used to and toward purification, and thus to remove the marks and mars which everybody experiences. Yes, there are all sorts of suggestions, and we can find among these the Beatitudes of Jesus Christ. But when the Beatitudes are glorified and worshipped and not practiced they may become even impediments to perfection. The true devotee takes each lesson and each exercise seriously. He applies them to himself; and he does this before he tries to correct others; and, again, he may even conclude that his work in life is to purify and perfect himself, and this very attitude will benefit others. There must be no ego in this.

Jesus Christ taught over and over that we must become like little children to attain (and obtain) the Kingdom of Heaven. It is so easy to delude oneself, and these delusions are also great hindrances, not easily removed. In Sufism the stress upon God (Allah) can become so great that there is no time to devote to battling one’s own shortcomings, the zeal for God being presumed to be sufficient. But if this were all there would be, no doubt, many pious persons obtaining and then manifesting perfection. But it is not always the pious who can demonstrate this.

There are many exercises toward perfection. There is also the concentration on Heart, and if this is successfully pursued, one can come to a state wherein he manifests the heart qualities above all.

GATHA: The intuitive faculties play a greater part in the life of the innocent. People call them simple ones, nevertheless innocence proves often more beneficial in life than worldly cleverness.

TASAWWUF: It is by the development and use of the intuitive faculty that man reaches the stage wherein what is called “*nishkama karma*” manifests. That is to say, action continues but no desire-nature, no *nufs*, is evident. Man becomes the vehicle of God, as *Gayan* teaches, that it is through the hand of man that God works out His intended purpose in nature.

Even a thought of *nishkama karma* can be a hindrance. And what egolessness certainly is not, is any thought about it. The Buddhists have a term “stream enterer” (*srottapana*). Then man continues to live but he is no longer bound by karma. As the Zen philosophers tell us, he then becomes one with

the law of causation. There are no longer samskaras. One ceases to add to turmoil and pain and suffering in the world. This is what is meant that the holy man is in the world but not of it. He partakes of all activities but does not add to samsara. He does not add his thoughts to subjects which are disturbing. Instead, he tries to develop and manifest an atmosphere of calmness and peace, a living calmness, a vibrant peace.

GATHA: The innocent are oftener blessed by Providence than those worldly-wise, always trying to get the best of everyone and to seize every opportunity that may seem to be advantageous in any way.

TASAWWUF: The worldly wise are accumulators. They do not always understand. When they accumulate the things of this world they are also building samskaras and adding to the storehouse of karma both for themselves and others.

There is no blessing in accumulation. In blessing one becomes an instrument of cosmic magnetism which then flows through his person. He is a channel, not a storehouse. When one gathers things he does not gather magnetisms. When he becomes an owner he ceases to be an instrument, a channel. It is this emptiness that shows man's perfectibility.

When man obtains the better of another, he establishes a karmic movement, and, as the Bible teaches, every debt must be paid or repaid. Therefore, the worldly-wise in the end prove to be foolish while the innocent prove to be masters.

GATHA: It is not easy for a clever person to try and become innocent; it is something natural and manifests with the blooming of the heart. Innocence is the sign of the thriving of a spiritual personality.

TASAWWUF: We can see this more and more in the young. The intuitive faculty is not yet so dead in the young. They do not always accept forced persuasion. They naturally have a sense of honor and honesty. And this is becoming so evident there is a marked trend toward spirituality and integrity which is becoming world-wide. For, as all religions teach, the soul is of God, is spiritual.

GATHA: If one can develop anything it is only this, that one may abstain from trying to be clever, and know that a selfish and clever person, with all his qualification of getting the best of another, comes across, sooner or later, a person cleverer than he. Often a clever person finds his own chain tied around his legs.

TASAWWUF: First, we may examine this from the standpoint of the moral law. Unfortunately moral laws have been studied and sometimes assiduously as theory. When it comes to practice it is something else again. Besides, there is a subtle aspect to it: if one establishes for himself a code he may be judged by that code. He will not be judged by the codes of others; he will be judged by his own code.

This happened in the British Empire. While they used their rather universal code derived from Europe and all the way back to Julius Caesar, they came into India, which had almost all been conquered by the Moghuls, and the Moghuls had established a modified form of Islamic laws but both the Muslims and the British realized also there were local codes and laws and customs, so there grew up side by side a number of different systems; and when a legal suit took place it was first necessary to determine a code which might offer a fair hearing to both (or all) sides.

Many people react strongly because others do not behave according to their system, so they fall under the dictum of Jesus Christ, "Judge not," which does not and has never meant that we must not have justice, but rather, that we must consider the code as well as the case. This was also in the teachings of Mohammed. And, in theory at least, exoterically there was a difference established between a Rassoul who brought a code and a Nabi who brought a warning or blessing.

Then, considering one's own system: although many followers of different religions have some version of what is known as "The Golden Rule," in practice this has seldom been applied. Perhaps it cannot be applied. And the result has been a complex operation of karma which considers the person's code, his standards, the general legal system, and then what may be justice. And by this many are caught.

The wise, therefore, do not try to take advantage of others, realizing that there may be no standard and also that justice is inherent in God and the universe. And as we behave toward others objectively or subjectively, we must face both our own karma and that of the world.

GATHA: No one has arrived at a higher degree of spirituality without innocence.

TASAWWUF: The high degree of spirituality means the low degree of nufs, or, as is stated in the Beatitudes of Jesus Christ: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," meaning those who are refined from personality-centration; also, that their breathing is very pure and refined. Either of these involves the other; the mild in ego means the mild in breath, and the mild breathing, the soft breathing, also means the softness or purification of ego.

We can see this in the lives of Krishna, Christ and all saviors. Mohammed, about whom we have so much information, was so innocent that he was regarded as naive, even as a fool. And we see the same qualities associated with the fictitious, or folk-lore hero, Parsifal or Percival. (The Galahad, who was later substituted as the guileless fool was actually a sort of "science-fiction" hero substituted to support the contention of the then dominant Christian Church, and he has never been established as an archetype for human behavior.)

Mohammed would feel the needs of the people around him and then he would comfort them. His insight was tremendous. His work was to establish his methodology as a model to be pursued, but instead his exact methods in particular cases were crystallized, and there has been left little scope for a similar behavior pattern, although he constantly declared that he was a man like the rest. His words have remained and become nullified.

GATHA: Innocence does not mean not knowing; it only means knowing and yet not knowing. A stupid person must not be confused with an innocent person, for the former is blind, whereas the latter only closes his eyes when he wants to. It is the wise, really, who become innocent on arriving at a stage of perfection in wisdom.

TASAWWUF: The wiser one becomes, the greater the area and arena of his vision, and with it an operative tour de force. This becomes harmlessness, for any harm done could then only be to one's self. And, as the spiritual light makes its presence known, so an all-embracing love and wisdom make their presence known. These are not different. And from this the higher practices become effective, that man, by contemplation, enlarges his scope for activity and purification of the surrounding world. Thus, the Bodhisattva.

GATHA: It is two kinds of persons who show childlike simplicity in their lives: the silly one who shows childish traits, and the wise one who shows innocence.

TASAWWUF: The silly people do not emanate light and magnetism. There is an absence of resistance which is also an absence of power; an absence of power which is also an absence of light and magnetism.

The wise show harmlessness, peacefulness, magnetism, strength, and compassion. Those with keen sight can readily recognize this and will not be fooled. No formula, no pretense, no amount of acting can replace the strong atmosphere surrounding seemingly helpless persons, who are more capable of helping others, sometimes most capable.

Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978

*These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 5

Reject the Impression of Errors and Shortcomings

GATHA: There is generally a tendency seen in those treading the spiritual path to feel discouraged at having bad impressions upon their heart of their own faults and shortcomings. And they begin to feel that they are too unworthy to have anything to do with things of a sacred nature. But it is a great error, in spite of all the virtue humility has in it.

TASAWWUF: There are two forms of humility which can be called true and false. There is one characteristic present in true humility and that is innocence. Many have pretended to be humble, many put on an act, so to speak; in the false humility there is seldom human consideration.

Whether one considers oneself a favorable or unfavorable mode, this self-centering is a sign of nufs. It belongs to a shadow-world. It is overcome by letting the divine light in. Therefore Sufis perform spiritual practices so they can be ever aware of the divine presence and the divine beauty.

So long as one is over-concerned with the ego there will be bad accretions. When one is concerned with the divine spirit, the heart may be kept free from all impressions and, being so free from all impressions, will not entertain any bad ones. Among early Christians there was considerable humility. Some of this arose from the fact that they were of low birth socially; some were even slaves. They had to guard against spiritual pride. This sort of pride often operates as a compensation for various shortcomings, be they personal, impersonal, social, or otherwise.

Hinduism suffered after the caste system became fixed. The original caste society was based partly on social law and partly on mystical law. The Messengers of God, the Paygambar, usually gave a code to their people. Their insight operated both inwardly and externally. There was provision for education at all levels, for all occupations, crafts, and duties.

We can, in a sense, contrast the Dharmashastras, the traditional codes of Hinduism, with the Ain-i-Akbari. The great Moghul Emperor tried to make provisions for all the people in the empire from other points of view. No doubt some form of feudalism persisted, but it was free from fixity, and there were elements of democracy in it far ahead of their time.

GATHA: When one acknowledges something wrong in oneself one gives that wrong a soul out of one's own spirit, and by withdrawing from all that is good and beautiful, spiritual and sacred, instead of developing the spirit of rejecting all errors, in time one becomes a receptacle of what is wrong.

TASAWWUF: There are two ways to approach having wrong in oneself; one is to battle against the wrong in oneself and one is to battle against the self entirely. It is not easy to do the latter.

Impressions of evil increase the capacity for evil. When the heart is concerned with evil it is not concerned with beauty and goodness. Therefore we find strong reactions against evangelical religions

which have stressed evil so much, which seem more concerned with avoiding evil than in attaining goodness.

There is a story that Mohammed found Abu Bakr saying his prayers in a soft Jemal manner and Omar saying them in a loud Jelal manner. He asked the reason. Abu Bakr Siddiq said, "He who hath an ear to hear, let him hear." Mohammed then turned to Omar who said, "I pray in a loud voice to chase the devils away." Rassoul said, "Pray neither in a loud voice nor in a soft voice, but follow a middle way."

If one uses only a very soft voice he cannot impregnate the atmosphere with Baraka. If he is too concerned with evil there is no scope for beauty. Besides this, when one is thoroughly imbued with the presence of Allah this difficulty may be automatically surmounted.

In Sufism the God-Ideal is kept to the foreground. God is not emptiness; God is even more than all the qualities we ascribe to Him. God is not the cosmic bookkeeper checking every sin or detective seeking to see that justice is done by meting out punishment for every small error. This, indeed, may be a way of beating the devil. The great poet ShahLetif of Sind used to say, "Allah is your lover, not your jailer."

When we think we are wrong we create the idea "we are wrong." No doubt man is right in seeking either to avoid sin or to repent for it. But that is not all of life. There is a stream of activity, of right activity, which is called Din in Islam and Dharma in the further Orient. This is positive in nature; many may come to feel this. The awakening of the intuitive faculty certainly brings it about. The full opening of the heart carries one even further, for in accepting and following the intuition, man is carried beyond the stages of good and evil. Then he can pursue what is called "the right path." He can put his full endeavor then into activities.

GATHA: He goes on disapproving and yet collecting errors, so producing within himself a perpetual conflict that never ends. When man becomes helpless before his infirmities he becomes a slave to his errors, he feels within himself an obedient servant to his adversary.

TASAWWUF: There are many people in this world who can go around collecting errors. Sometimes they are prone to consider their own shortcomings all the time and develop what is called inferiority complex. Then they expect others to find fault with them. They are surprised if they are ever approved. And, at the same time, there is one capability they often develop, the capability of ascertaining and even revealing the shortcomings of others.

This is a sort of slave psychology. And when a person is caught in the realm of fault-finding he cannot know joy, he cannot find goodness, he cannot appreciate beauty. His life becomes miserable. He loses resistance to disease. He has no strength, his will-power is gone. He does not know how to correct himself, or even protect himself. Extreme cases, he may commit suicide.

There are some cartoons about children. The title is called "Peanuts." The art is often excellent, the situations and humor remarkable. But the main character, who is known as Charlie Brown, has often become a travesty on human nature. Although the artist is a high idealist with a wonderful moral and religious view, he does not always realize what he is doing. Yet, sometimes he presents stories, particularly those shown on television, which present another side, perhaps the real side of life. But

it is too bad this side is not so well known, and this man, instead of being very helpful, has often opened doors for increased pessimism among the unfortunate.

If we look deeply into those who have become prey to alcohol and noxious drugs, we can often find situations like this in their lives. We need to have more constructive suggestions and programs.

GATHA: The greater the purity developed in the heart the greater becomes the power of man. As great the power of man within himself so great becomes his power on others.

TASAWWUF: There are references to the path of the Master in *The Unity of Religious Ideals* and elsewhere. Generally, the subject of purity is introduced first. Then the subject of power. No doubt purity, purification, involves negative processes, and the attainment of power, positive processes. When man learns to awaken and then rely on the heart qualities, he discovers the wonderful balance between purity and power. When this is possible there is no more fear concerning one's shortcomings and their results; or the shortcomings of the world and its aftermath.

The repetition of **Allaho Akbar** for self-protection, for self-assurance, and even for the acquisition of power, covers all these aspects. The devotee may emphasize a particular attribute of Allah, but when one becomes aware of Allah it involves all the sublime attributes. They can be developed either apart or together.

GATHA: A hair's breadth can divide power from weakness, which appear to have as wide a gulf between them as between land and sky.

TASAWWUF: There are stories in Sufi traditions about a hairline dividing the false and true. This is mostly from the outer aspect. The Bible, the Zen traditions and others, tell that everything may be changed as if in a twinkling of an eye. Actually these changes take place when man turns from mind to heart, and without giving any thought to it. This is done by an increase in love, devotion, and selflessness.

*Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978
These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 6

Purity of the Heart

GATHA: He alone is capable of removing from the heart of another doubt, deceit, fear, or malice whose heart is already pure from these things or who, at least, can empty his heart of these things.

TASAWWUF: There are many people who honestly believe they can be purified or purify themselves without outside assistance. In one sense it is true, in another it is not true. We can put all the electrical fixtures in a house and keep them in good working order, but until they are put into operation they are just empty fixtures. So man, with all his capacities, which are only capacities, is seldom able to utilize his assets without the touch or instruction of a capable person.

That is why in Sufism, as well as in some other schools of esotericism, a teacher is often required like a starter or generator. After that a person with wise instructions is often able to go ahead with assurance, even with speed. And in the third grade of instruction attention is paid to heart, both how to awaken its positive faculties and also how to keep it pure. And the latter is most important because the purified heart, with the obstacles removed, is often capable of shining forth, and then the inner life, which has been covered or frustrated, shines forth.

It is through purification also that Ishk, or Divine Love, is aroused to shine in a person, to function in and through him. Many people feel that, many people want it, and they should have it as it is natural to the soul. Indeed, in the earlier teachings of Sufism in the West, Ishk was emphasized but not yet understood. As disciples advance on the path of Esotericism, they can, through concentration and other practices, awaken this life of heart and become instruments for it.

The true Murshid is one who works incessantly for this awakening of disciples, and his chief reward is in finding that they go through the transformations which are natural to the awakened heart. Therefore it is very valuable that all disciples have some concentration on and with Heart. It is presented in Symbology, it is continued in the work in Murakkabah, Concentration, and also in those esoteric exercises dependent upon heart-centering whence and wherefrom the flow of life itself.

After the heart-awakening it may be only another step to feel the presence of God either through His Grace or by the practices of Akhlak Allah.

GATHA: There is a weakness of the heart and there is a strength of the heart. The heart's weakness is caused by things it contains which enfeeble it, such as doubt, deceit, fear and malice. The absence of these things produces that purity of heart which in itself is a power. This power could be increased by faith, hope and righteousness.

TASAWWUF: It is easy to analyze, it is easy to perceive the weaknesses of others, and sometimes also one's own weaknesses. The question is, how to overcome them. A person who has overcome the weaknesses in himself is better qualified than another to overcome external weaknesses. For instance, he who has overcome fear in himself is able to overcome fear in others; he who has been able

to overcome doubt in himself is better able to overcome doubt in others; the same is true in mastering jealousy, envy, malice and all faults.

These weaknesses may be overcome by right breathing and practicing the presence of God. Also, there is a positive prophylactic. We find this in the *Gathas*, “Tasawwuf Series I.” These seem to be dealing with elementary subjects, and they are elementary subjects, but faith does not consist in having an intellectual appreciation of faith, nor hope in having a philosophical approval of hope. Good qualities may be developed by piety, esotericism, and most of all, a living example.

To overcome doubt, there must be positivity. The Bible teaches that one should become either hot or cold; it is the lukewarm who are castigated. *Gayan* teaches, “Give me heaven or hell, O Lord, but no purgatory.” In the long run, indecision can become a horrible vice. If we wish to progress we must always get out of doubt. If we cannot do this by ourselves, we can do this by Divine aid. We are always in the Divine Presence whether we are aware of it or not. The breath, the heart meditation, and the practice of Zikr are most beneficial here.

Fear shows one is dominated by the earth element. True, we pray, “Raise us above the denseness of the earth.” And when we pray we lift our bodies. This is a true practice which would become a dharani in Buddhism. According to the teachings of esotericism we use the body and also we pray, “Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts, and souls.” When we do these things the dominance of the earth element subsides, and then fear subsides. All esotericism helps one to overcome fear. All positivity helps one to overcome fear.

According to the metaphysical view, fear of poverty may be worse than poverty itself; fear of disease is itself a disease which can paralyze the mind. In such instances, the mind must be cured first. The mind is most easily cured by and through the purification of heart. Doubt and fear are overcome by life itself.

Malice and the related envy, jealousy and ill-will are voided by the awakening of the positive heart qualities. The stronger and more positive the heart, the less the accommodation for the negative emotions.

The teachings are that this power can be increased by hope, faith, and righteousness. All these positive qualities are affirmed in the lessons on Tasawwuf.

GATHA: Purity of the heart causes its expansion, and the lack of purity makes it narrow.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism expansion is called Bast and contraction Kabz. Every expansion of heart broadens its scope, makes its radiance spread far and wide, brings elation, magnetism, and ability to influence the life around him and the radiance around him.

Kabz, or contraction of heart, makes it narrow, diminishes one’s influence. Also it is this contraction which keeps one in the sway of nufs, the ego. What is necessary on the spiritual path is to expand the scope of heart, the accommodation for feeling, and the radiance and radiation of love.

GATHA: The mystic poet of Hyderabad, Asif, says, “If the heart is large, it can be the largest of all things.” Besides it is purity alone which opens the doors of the heart. All that hinders that purity stands as a closed door of the heart.

TASAWWUF: One may read in the beautiful poem called “Renascence” by Edna St. Vincent Millay:

The world stands out on either side,
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

In the past there has been admiration for these poets. That, no doubt, is the first step toward realization. You have to be attracted, you have to admire. But these things alone do not awaken the heart or its understanding. They are the first steps, no doubt. The adept goes on from there until he has full radiation and full understanding of the import.

GATHA: The pure-hearted may seem to be thinking, saying or doing simple things. And yet there is a beauty and charm in all they do, for there is nothing more attractive than light itself. All that is besides light depends upon the light to show out its beauty; light is beauty in itself.

TASAWWUF: How are we going to determine who is pure-hearted? We can only know this by the removal of all evil in ourselves. It is just as has been told of Mohammed, that a drop of black blood was removed from his heart. When this occurs, the Light so manifests in a person that he will become radiant. Then it will be as Jesus Christ said, “Let your light shine before men that they may know your good works and glorify the Father Which is in Heaven.” Practicing religion has ignored this. In the New Age people will realize its truth more and more.

Seyd Mohammed Moudani, the blessed teacher of Hazrat Inayat Khan, used to say that there was no gain except to utter the praise of God with every breath, and there was no loss excepting not to so utter. So it is today that spiritual methods are being used to increase the capacity for elation and the experience thereof and therefrom.

GATHA: Purity of the heart is the only condition that allows the inner stream to rise. The pure-hearted see deeper, though they say little. There is no pretense about them. What they know they know; what they don't know they don't know.

TASAWWUF: The original word mystic meant one who kept silent. Sometimes this silence was the restraint on the ego. Sometimes it was that the radiance was so great that one became speechless. It does not matter. When radiance is great, speech can become an impediment. The commentator once visited a Zen Master. The Zen Master suddenly became very voluble. Their mutual friend said, “I have never heard him talk so much; he never talks.” The commentator said, “He had a good listener.” The problem is not speech or silence, but whether there is communication.

Nonetheless, the Baraka or radiating blessing, is increased by silence and is limited by speech. Besides that the radiance becomes more perceptible. If one watches television and there are outside influences the programs will not be so readily appreciated. The same is true of radiance of personality.

GATHA: The pure ones make all pure, for to them all is pure.

TASAWWUF: In the writings of Swami Ram Das, and especially in his commentaries on the Gita, he points out that the Pandarvas would find everything pure, and the Kuravas everything impure. This was like looking through clear glasses and stained glasses. It is the stain on the glasses that makes other things look impure.

Besides this, there is another factor, and that is the power of purity itself. If we take purity merely as negative, merely from its cleansing power, we get some benefit, but it is a limited benefit. In Sufism we say “**La Illaha El Il Allah,**” but it is true that emphasis on the negative aspects of Allah automatically bring the benefit of the positive aspects. It is here that God differs from man, from the finite cosmos.

GATHA: Their presence makes everything pure. As the pure water is the best tonic so is the contact of the pure-hearted person.

TASAWWUF: We find one aspect of this in the Gayatri: Pir, Nabi, and Rassoul. We find another aspect of it in the teachings of Ram Das, who constantly urges devotees to seek the company of Saints. A question may arise how does one determine who is a Saint and who is not. A saintly person may radiate love, may radiate light, may radiate tranquility, but in all instances one can find the purity. It is self-evident. One will feel it. Then one will know it. But also we can develop this purity in ourselves, and this becomes the greatest wonder. This purity comes of itself when one follows the teaching, the esoteric practices, and the self-effacement in the various aspects of Fana.

GATHA: In the spiritual path when one is able to accomplish this thing there is not much then that remains to be accomplished.

TASAWWUF: Accomplishment is not an intellectual practice. It is not simply additive though it may be quantitative, and at the same time qualitative. A spiritual experience is always transcendent, integral, and multi-dimensional. It has to be experienced; it cannot be properly explained or described, but it can be felt.

*Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978
These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 7

Exaltation

GATHA: Exaltation depends upon purity. The body cleansed gives an exaltation which is experienced by all living beings on the physical plane.

TASAWWUF: This subject is given considerable importance in various places in the literature and in the commentaries thereon. But we can see it all the time. We see it more in the children and again at the blossoming of youth; there is a manifestation of exaltation and this is also a magnetism. Like with electricity, the removal of obstacles, or resistances, makes it appear natural. George Bernard Shaw once said, "Youth is such a beautiful thing; what a shame that it is wasted on children." We do not know whether he was speaking in jest or earnest, but the fact is that all beings have the potentialities of purity and exaltation.

Some people practice fasting. There is no question that abstinence from food helps to purify the body, and when this happens one not only feels better but there is a glow. Really it has nothing to do with age, but the young set up no resistance while older people with likes and dislikes and habits establish patterns. Once this happens there is a crystallization of nufs.

But there are similar operations of heart and mind also. By the practice of Concentration, and above all Fikr, the mind can be purified. And by the deep meditation also the heart may be purified. And, in general, it may be said that as the paths of fana are pursued, so also one establishes greater accommodation for baqa', the subsistent life, and this brings out all the wonders of man's inner being, the true Self.

The purification of the body is given some consideration in Series I on this subject and in the commentaries thereon.

GATHA: The heart cleansed of all impurities gives a much greater exaltation, which is experienced in the inner plane and is reflected on the outer plane.

TASAWWUF: This is first presented as a philosophy. It is very valuable if one grasps the ideas, but it is still greater when one can have the experience. Hal leads to wujud ecstasy. It is very valuable with the young. It makes them realize that there are states of consciousness beyond the immediate, beyond the sense world. Traditions have fixated importance to the physical world with all its allurements. It is not easy to break this hold, but any type of experience which breaks the hold of materialism can bring joy to the soul. Thus the interest in and the participation in the so-called psychedelic experience.

Certain aspects of psychedelic experiences have been presented along with initiatory ceremonies of many peoples. The same people who so castigate the participation in the consumption of natural products often look with awe upon the use of herbs and potions in ceremonies. As they are looking

on and not participating they have little idea of what is going on. What the ancients do, what the so-called savages do is considered wonderful, and when youth goes through certain parallel experiences it is not only regarded as horrible, it is actually considered criminal.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Exaltation is the natural state of the soul. And it is remarkable and horrifying that the same people who regard psychedelic activities as criminal have often nothing to say about strong alcoholic potions which do act toward man's detriment and have been condemned by the wise of all ages.

When some one is bound to earth, when the soul is imbedded in matter, there may be many ways to break it loose. If prayer alone, if devotion alone, if piety alone operated, it would be simple. But the natural state of man before the rise of intellectual education left the soul much more free. Besides that, there is a natural education, though in some respects it is inherited from the animals, by which man knows innately the values of the products of nature, especially of the vegetable world. Even wine was first discovered in that way.

But the grape is only one of a multitude of natural products. There are all kinds of fruits, herbs, medicines and foods in nature, and all of them, we are taught in the first year Gathas, have narcotic properties. There is no absolute separation of the physical and superphysical or subtle properties in things.

It is only after centuries, with the coming of many messengers and prophets, that with the evolution of man it became possible to reach him and teach him various methods of experiencing exaltation of which music and dancing are foremost. And when one has the secret of music and dancing he is discovering and uncovering the kingdom which is within him and no longer has to depend so much on externals.

GATHA: Most people little realize the meaning of exaltation. In point of fact all things man seeks for and becomes occupied with are most often methods adopted to obtain an exaltation, through food, perfume, music, or through the beauty of color and line.

TASAWWUF: In modern Sufism, God is presented as being the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty. One modern philosophy finds that as ethics are valued, aesthetics are devalued, and when the search for beauty is great, less attention is paid to goodness. But he is astute enough to know that there is a state in which both of these attitudes are integrated, so that they are not necessarily exclusive though historically it has often been so.

Now it is becoming incumbent to study the subtle aspects of the sciences. At the dawn of laboratory research there were men like Fludd and Paracelsus, herbalists and astrologers, who still had access to the remains of ancient wisdom. They tried to continue research on all planes. They were not entirely successful, or rather their historical successors have purposely neglected what might be called the occult materials in Kepler and Newton. They only selected limited portions, and modern science, which has become so materialistic, is based on those limited aspects of the most profound research.

So there is a revival of herbology and, with this, the inclusion of traditions from most ancient times, especially from the Greeks and Hindus. There is no doubt that there are values, and sometimes most important values in these traditions, and sometimes cures are effected which the modern schools have failed to offer. While much of the world regards the Russians under the Soviet regimes as es-

pecially materialistic, they have tested many folk medicines and uncovered values. Very slowly also the medical sciences of the so-called progressive countries are doing the same thing.

If we study the cosmic metaphysics, we can find something about the existence of the subtle in the vegetable world and the super-subtle in the animal world. The influences paralleled by or related to planetary influences are there. No doubt there are chemical parallels but also biodynamic parallels.

When it comes to perfumes, these have values in the angelic planes. This is taught directly in the Upanishads and by inference in the work of Mohammed. We do find influences also through touch and smell and even in taste. The wise of the future will investigate dispassionately. They may find that the real superstitions persist not among the ignorant called “superstitious,” but in the self-centered learned. So we can take up again the relations of the five elements to things of the world; and of the planets, as well as the trace elements discovered by modern physical science. All of these belong.

Thus we shall find that man, whose consciousness operates in Nasut, Malakut, and Djabrut—on the physical, mental, and astral planes (in this sense)—is never beyond the operations of any of them.

GATHA: No method, however, succeeds in giving the experience of a fuller exaltation in the absence of purity of heart.

TASAWWUF: That is why so many daring but ignorant people have failed in their investigation of psychedelics. These operate not only according to physical and chemical laws, but also subtly and super-subtly. A person of questionable character, one who has never submitted to self-discipline, having an uncontrolled subtle body, will also suffer, be subject to hallucinations and obsessions and harmful experiences when he resorts to psychedelics. And one who is a seeker or devotee—as we can read in the works of Marie Corelli—may often benefit and benefit considerably.

Therefore in the Sufi training emphasis is made on the purification processes, especially of heart. The Bible teaches that it is not what goes into the mouth which defiles a man but that which comes out of the mouth. Entrenched privileged but ignorant people are trying to reverse a divine teaching and ultimately (or sooner) they will fail; they will be called to account.

GATHA: In plain words it is the pure-hearted who enjoy the beauty of music, color, or perfume more fully than those without purity of heart; although the pure-hearted seem to need these things which bring about exaltation less, sometimes for the very reason that the very purity of the heart gives them that exaltation which others strive to achieve by different methods.

TASAWWUF: That is why the Sufi standpoint is “Joy without drugs.” That is to say, the joy, the exaltation can be experienced by what might be known as esoteric or mystical methods. As the heart becomes more refined it reacts quickly and even deeply more to music and sacred words than to anything else. But it also reacts to ceremonies, rites, and to incense and color. And we cannot limit the free soul here. The conventions, the legal measure which the ignorant try to impose will be even less effective than the earlier efforts to stamp out witchcraft.

Witchcraft was stamped out because then the race had not yet evolved to a fuller psychic and subtle development. But the evolution has produced a humanity with a much more capacious and capable subtle body. So many have predicted “the coming race,” and when this “race” has manifested, even

those who were agog over the predictions held back and regarded with unnecessary foreboding the actual behavior patterns of the superior souls.

GATHA: Amir, the mystic poet, says: "Their eyes refused the wine, her generous offer, saying, 'We do not need thee, we are intoxicated perpetually.'" The reason behind the refusal of the pious, at times, of music, art, gaiety, or merriment was that they already had the exaltation which others try to gain by these things. It does not at all mean that the pious are always against things of beauty and pleasure. It only means that they are rich by the feeling of exaltation which comes from within, without adopting for it any other methods.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps it was for this reason that when a Sufi spoke on "Joy Without Drugs" the audience did not wish to listen. Those in authority seem to regard joy itself as a form of wickedness. In turn their critics say this is a holdover from Calvin, not from Jesus Christ, and in part they are right.

Mohammed seems to have spoken against music. At least many quotations can be quoted. But this is a narrow view. The quotations against music and poetry are quoted and the quotations for the arts are bypassed.

When we consider David and the psalms and his exaltation before the altar of God which caused him to dance, we find the actual behavior pattern of a Prophet of Hod. While Muslims regard Mohammed as the Seal of the Prophets they have only too often ignored the actual work, character, and mission of these various Prophets individually. The whole mission of David was concerned with exaltation—in his private life, in his public career, in his various professions, and finally to perfection in the Psalms.

GATHA: Nevertheless the pious are the ones who are capable of enjoying beauty in all its aspects fully.

TASAWWUF: The growth of interest in Oriental matters has brought with it often too much awe and not enough piety. Evil minds behold only the animal side of sex in the Kama Sutra. This work was inspired by those who were deeply pious, who regarded every act of the physical body as a devotion. When we say every act of the physical body, it must include much that is not covered by the small portion of the flesh concerned with sex. In other words, when we say, "This is not my body, this is the Temple of God," we are referring to the whole body, to all its acts, capabilities, functions. When these become devotional the whole of life is transformed.

There was a tradition in Mohammedanism that was anti-aesthetic. The same is also found in Buddhism and Christianity, but in the end it does not hold, cannot hold, for the soul of man is embedded in beauty and is concerned with the search for beauty, and thus exaltation. No efforts on the part of lawmakers can ever stifle this permanently. All persecutions are based on some form of ignorance.

Today we are trying to expand spirituality in the world by an ever-increasing appreciation of the arts in all their aspects.

GATHA: As Hafiz says: "If the pious ones would hear the song I sing they would get up and dance unrestrainedly."

TASAWWUF: Yes, and this even came true in the history of Islam after the time of Hafiz. The very pious persons who were against him while he was alive later became his champions. He saw God in all things and he found God in all things, and like Walt Whitman of a later generation, knew that “The efflux of the soul is happiness.”

Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978

*These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 8

Purify the Mind From Fear

GATHA: To purify the mind from fear is of great importance, and this can be done by analyzing what causes one fear.

TASAWWUF: This is also the profession of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. They have very many means for tracing the causes of fear and also some methods which enable their patients to overcome the weakness. But this is an external effort. It is usually based on the events of life and one's relations with others.

While this may be true the mystic always looks deeply into an individual. The breath relates what is right and wrong with his constitution; what element influences him, what controls him. Sometimes these influences are basic; sometimes temporary. But, while accepting both traditional and new methods in dealing with the mentally ill, the mystic also makes use of the Names of God, the Qualities of God which are most valuable, both in removing weaknesses and building up sound virtues.

GATHA: Fear is an outcome of long-collected problems unsolved. When once a person looks his own problem in the face he gets an insight into the cause of fear, and as in the sun many germs are destroyed so the germs of fear are destroyed by the light of intelligence.

TASAWWUF: No problems are solved by evasion. In the case of fear evasion even adds to the basic weakness. Karma is overcome best by facing it, and often the dire consequences one might have expected do not materialize. With all the words of scriptures and prayer books it is not always recognized and realized that God is essentially compassionate and merciful under all circumstances.

Allah is pure Being and from that Pure Being emanates the Nuri Mohammed, that aspect of light which is basic to all life itself and comes to its fullness in mankind, especially in the perfect man (Insaan-i-Kemal). We can attune to it, and when this is done the fear naturally disappears. Then one discovers all the Sifat, all the attributes which he ascribes to God also may manifest in and through himself.

Therefore the practice of tasawwuri, feeling the presence of the spiritual teacher; or beyond that, to attune to and feel the presence of, or the attributes of, saints takes one above and beyond fear. In the final efforts at Akhlak Allah, acting as if in the presence of God, one can have no fear.

Once the commentator was in the hands of communists. They were very kind to him. They wanted to win him over because he was making so many friends among the Asian peoples. The commentator did not know what to do so he repeated the name "Allah" unceasingly, and when just a slight opportunity was given he availed himself of it and escaped. But without feeling this divine presence, it probably would have been impossible.

GATHA: Fear comes from weakness to face the consequences of one's condition, attitude, and deeds. Once a person has solved the problem how he will meet the consequences the fear is done with. The best way of getting over the fear of swallowing a bitter pill is to swallow the bitter pill and to experience by it that it is not more bitter than it is.

TASAWWUF: As the Messenger has said: "Praise Allah in times of prosperity and surrender to Him in times of adversity." When this becomes a habit one will tolerate adversities; they may no longer seem to him as bitter tests. And the true sage learns to face adversity and prosperity with the same unconcern.

No man can trust God and fear. Besides that, when the intuition is developed, is active, he will be protected. He will know what to do even in the most harrowing circumstances. For man always has with him the Spirit of Guidance, as the Invocation says. He may not always recognize it, but it is there just the same.

As *Gayān* teaches, daring is better than fearing. There is a tendency to crawl within oneself, and this always narrows the margin of activity and the horizon. This puts one back into the state of contraction (*kabz*) and this hinders further development and joy. Many can always call on Allah no matter what the circumstances.

GATHA: Fear comes also by being too cautious for one's health, morals and reputation; also by being too considerate of the feelings of those one loves, and too regardful of those under whose influence one is; also by taking too much to heart what others say.

TASAWWUF: While sensitivity is not of itself evil, too much sensitivity throws one into the turmoil where *samskaras* are collected and thus stands in the way of peace of heart. One cannot maintain peacefulness and have concern; one must choose. No doubt there are times and conditions when this sensitivity and concern are valuable, but any concern, large or small, makes a mark and stands in the path of peaceful existence.

Although there has been ample progress in nutrition and diabetics, too often fear and phobia are used instead of sound logic. Besides this, when exact formulae are used instead of instinct and intuition, this takes away the natural tendencies. For all people are not alike; their psychological and physical types are not the same. And it is very important to return man to his natural being.

GATHA: Fear very often remains in the heart of man in the guise of virtues, and very often a timid one is taken for a righteous one. But the timorous well-doer is worse than a fearless sinner.

TASAWWUF: This is quite contrary to some forms of traditional ethics. These ethics, word-bound, restrict man to a sort of linguistic formula instead of permitting that marvelous freedom of the soul which offers both life and light. True, the Bible has a saying, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom." So long as God remains an abstraction or concept there is not much virtue in it. But if one learns to emulate the Sufis and practice the Presence of God as in *Akhlak Allah*, it becomes very valuable.

Then disciples are encouraged to repeat *wazifas* and other sacred phrases. These banish fear. These also bring to light the power within, to each his own kind, to fulfill his particular purpose.

Jesus Christ has said to take no thought of the morrow what you should eat or drink. This is very seldom practiced. If one develops that intuition it comes naturally; one will know what to do. When one is restrained by a formula one may never be free, and this loss of freedom is worse than any evil arising from bad diet and unwholesome thought.

GATHA: The best practice one can make is to speak with oneself, with one's own fear; to dispute with it, and to root out the reasons on whose foundations it rests.

TASAWWUF: This is not always easy. In some Western traditions it is as if man sinned against his fellows, and instead of apology and restitution they go to God for repentance. And there are others who repent far more for ritualistic shortcomings than for moral misbehavior. While in some parts of the world, if a person fails to pray or follow ritual or custom, he repents, not before God, but goes to another person and asks forgiveness from him.

Every impression from within is not noble. We have to test these impressions to determine which are intuitions and which are intrusions. It is not wrong to dispute with either impressions or intuitions. But the false impressions will always disappear when tested and the true intuitions, rising from Light, will persist because there is a much greater power behind them than man can operate.

One should always be encouraged to argue against any unfavorable impression. If we took thought on everything we ate or did, the whole life would be filled with misery. There would be no spontaneity, no joy.

GATHA: What generally happens is that all things one fears, one fears even to think of them. But the solution of getting above fear lies in analyzing the cause of the fear and so making it non-existent. Man by nature possesses a tremendous power hidden in his heart, the power which waits constantly to become manifest. This power is hidden by fear. The day when fear disappears this latent power manifests to view.

TASAWWUF: Fear may be overcome by mastery or love. The spiritual practices all help. That is why even with walking or dancing one learns to open the centers. As these centers are opened and activated the light pours in, as one learns in the study of *Gathas*, "Series I." But then one has to operate them dynamically, not just in posture, in meditation.

People repeat a phrase: "Zen is everyday life." They do not illustrate it. They may even be confused by it. The Sufi, by the practice of the Divine Presence, by keeping in mind, "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives," has devices which actualize otherwise empty words. The restraint of nufs opens the way to Divine Light in all its aspects.

*Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978
These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 9

Keep the Heart Free From Poison

GATHA: Antipathy turns into malice, and malice culminates in bitterness. To possess it in one's heart is like possessing in one's heart a poison, a poison that clouds wit and produces obscurity.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that thoughts are things, and in the same tenor, it might be said that feelings are realities. From the mystical point of view, the feelings establish attunements; they are like directives. In infancy one senses the reality of other infants, that they are parts of the same universal being. When we grow, we become more individualistic and then we often engage in rivalries and competitions. Then we begin to harbor feelings against others.

One could easily make experiments, to see the changes in bodily chemistry under various thoughts. One could go further and test the body under various feelings and soon one would discover the creation of poisons. These poisons are chemical, biochemical and psychic. All changes of diet could not correct this although sometimes, by fasting and purification through proper diet one is less prone to negative emotions.

All the maxims in the world do not promote good-will. But by concentration of Heart and feeling one learns what is beneficial. It is taught even in the first Gathas that it is unwholesome to harbor thorns and pains. One may consider oneself alone, what brings the most comfort, the most happiness, and if one is not considerate to oneself one can hardly be considerate to others. So, if it is necessary to cultivate joy and love, there is no accommodation for bitterness.

What is gained by bitterness? At most, a negative satisfaction. And when one is pleased with the downfall, the tragedies, the pains of others, one is also giving consideration to tragedy, to pain, to discomfort, and sooner or later these things will also come to oneself, by the karmic law.

GATHA: If one keeps one's heart free from malice one has accomplished a great deal, for it is in the clear heart that the light from above is reflected.

TASAWWUF: Many diseases which appear to be so prevalent at the time may be due to impure blood arising from impurity of heart. Every sort of ill-will, be it malice, envy, jealousy, rivalry, causes a contraction in heart—a state of kabz—and this deprives the blood from absorbing oxygen and beneficent vibrations which are derived from the air and all-pervading power of space.

The heart is an instrument capable of absorbing the finest vibrations of creation. Therefore purity of heart is stressed, stressed for its values on all planes. We can learn also about this in *Nirtan*, and the completion of this subject will be when the commentary *Nirtaniat* is written. But there is always a positive side. This positive side comes when love is expressed.

This same idea is found in Qur'an in the Sura on "Nur," one of the most famous revelatory passages ever given to mankind. It holds the key to health and sickness, salvation and damnation, and all

opposing conditions. Al-Ghazzali has given a splendid but incomplete commentary on it. In brief, ill-will brings contraction (*kabz*) and difficulty; the divine light brings us expansion (*bast*) and every sort of blessing.

GATHA: Often without an intention on one's part malice enters, of which man is unconscious. Often the man who possesses malice is quite innocent, for his heart is reflecting the malice which is projected from another heart. It is therefore that care must be taken to keep one's heart free from the impressions and influences coming from others.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of Self-Protection. One comes in the use of *Wazifas*, and the other in the *Gathekas* on this subject. It does not help very much to have any subjective philosophy here. Spirituality is valuable when it is operative. No one has ever thought of substituting his ideas about prayer for the operation of prayer. This would be a very incomplete way of life.

There is a great benefit from following a spiritual teacher. It is easy to presume that one is following God, when what is done is to accept some abstraction and attribute divinity to it. There may be a benefit, but usually it is a very limited benefit. The *Murshid* or *Guru* should present a living exemplification of what can be done on the path of purity and purification. Besides this, by having a human being before one whom one can extol and venerate helps very much toward the development of selflessness.

Sympathy is a noble quality which expands the heart. Sympathy is also a natural quality which emanates from the expanded or purified heart. We have the idea in many prayers and in the *Beatitudes* of Christianity and elsewhere. If it is possible to turn oneself into the example which one idealizes there is unending benefit. But to look elsewhere and see the shortcomings is of no benefit at all.

GATHA: The question how one can avoid this is answered thus, that the heart will focus itself to a person or to an influence which is akin to its own quality; that is the nature of the heart.

TASAWWUF: We can see this from early childhood, that the child benefits from attachment to the mother especially. We can build on such attachments. We can benefit from the naturalness of it, and there is no end to such benefit when we can pursue an actual natural course, not a subjective philosophy about presumable nature, but the actuality; it has endless benefit.

Like is attracted to like. The child seeks the mother's heart naturally. Heart always seeks heart. So we need not be surprised also if a person who has gone through much suffering also seeks heart instinctively or otherwise. And this continues also in the spiritual search until one finds that living personality Who is more capable than anybody else in removing sorrow and instilling love, patience, and all virtue.

Determination of this is in *Akhlak Allah*, when one feels the presence of God, and in feeling this presence also feels love and compassion for all of God's creation. In this Light no ill-will or malice can persist.

GATHA: Therefore even if the impression came from another, for the influence of another the man who reflects it is responsible. To make the heart reflect good qualities one must prepare it, one must train it; for it is the good quality of heart that will keep away undesirable impressions and thoughts, and will only reflect good impressions and desirable influences.

TASAWWUF: Naturally everyone is impressed by the atmosphere in which he lives. Consciously or unconsciously he picks up the vibrations. Picking up the vibrations he picks up magnetisms and impressions. If he is not a strong personality he will fall under influences which are not always wholesome.

The science and art of tasawwuri is to enable the devotee to follow a course of elevation and nobility established by the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. This refers alike to personalities on earth and to personalities who have left this sphere. The greater the evolution of a man, the greater his ability to impress the atmosphere and surroundings where he has lived.

This is one of the secrets of tombs. There is a kind of communication from Saints to all the vibrations connected with their earthly life. So it is with their former bodies; so it is with every vestige of every form of thought connected with their life in the flesh. The type of vibration that exuded from the living body will also persist in the others, so to speak, and from them and from that will come benefits to all the devotees who may visit their tombs, especially with devotion, and so there is a sort of immortality which persists in such places, an immortality of universal benefit.

While this may be extreme, no doubt there are other forms of benefits of which man can avail himself. No doubt the future will show more interest in the sciences of heart, be they occult or evident. Therefore there is much gained through all meditative practices which establish, retain, and maintain the vibrations connected with the rays of the Sun, the waves of the Air, and the all-pervading Power in Space.

Nayaz begins, so to speak, as an operation on the physical plane. But the devotee prays, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts, and souls." This means he not only makes of his physical body a Temple for the Living God, he is dedicating his finer bodies also to the all-pervading, all-embracing Deity. His whole personality then becomes dedicated to Holiness, so to speak, whether he is consciously aware of it or not. And when there is the sustenance to heart and soul, all blocks to purification and spirituality vanish.

GATHA: As a practice of purifying one's heart is to repeat every morning and every evening: "My thoughtful self! Reproach no one, hold a grudge against no one, bear malice against no one; be wise, tolerant, considerate, polite and kind to all!"

TASAWWUF: This practice is called Dowa. In Islam there is a difference between Nimaz, or prayers in praise of God, and Dowa, beseeching God either for self-protection or for some attribute or gift, physical or non-physical. There is no doubt that Mohammed, under Divine impetus, was trying to make prayer something more than a beseeching for forgiveness of sins or accumulation of worldly possessions. These have put a limitation on prayer so great that there have been reactions to it.

The ignorant and emotional people have taken away all the beauty of holiness. They have retained the words. Almost everyone can see there is a far cry from prayers and their answers and almost all activities in man where answers come more or less naturally. This means either that prayer and praying are of little value, or we are not praying properly.

Ignorant devotees do not conceive of "My thoughtful self." All Prophets and Messengers of God have emphasized him, but institutional prayer and the wont of the generality has been in placing the

ego-self first. When the ego-self is placed first it is rather difficult to become wise, and tolerant, and considerate, and polite. When God is placed first it is easy and natural.

The aim here is to purify the heart. In the end one comes to Mujahida, the great Jihad, or the purification of the heart from every form of selfishness. The last period of the life of Mohammed was almost entirely directed so. And when it is properly perceived that after vanquishing all his external enemies his efforts were directed toward overcoming his own weakness, the world will have both an ideal and exemplary which will be of universal benefit.

Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978

*These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 10

The Real Purification of Mind

GATHA: The real purification of mind is in purifying it from thoughts and impressions which live in it as a germ of disease.

TASAWWUF: There are many aspects of this, and the deeper we go into the greater religions of the world the more we find that there is agreement. In Zen Buddhism especially, in the deeper aspects of the Indian philosophies, and in Sufism, there is consideration of the complex problem arising out of the influence of thoughts and impressions on life itself. Whatever be their nature, they establish the *samskaras*; the *samskaras* may be good, they may be evil. But they add to the karmic activity and the karmic turmoil.

The discovery of germs has been considered as one of the most important in the history of medicine. There is no doubt as to the existence of germs, but whether they are causal is another problem. Logically it seems rather odd that tiny organisms should have such an influence over human behavior and human nature. If germs are so powerful, how weak must man be! If germs are so powerful, what about evolution, which declares that the higher and complex forms arose from the simpler ones.

In some instances it has been found that serum injections have stopped fevers and disorders supposedly produced by germs. The facts seem evident, the reasoning not so evident. The very physicians who hold to this view are also subject to contradiction in their evaluation as to the force of suggestion. It may sometimes be that the forcefulness of the thought of the physician has produced satisfactory results. We cannot be sure that the germs are so all-powerful.

From the metaphysical view the heart condition affects the biochemistry and the alchemy of the bloodstream. The condition of the heart always has an effect on the body; so does every thought. These both influence the vital magnetism and act directly on what is known as the vital body. In turn, this influences the various types of magnetism produced and sometimes wasted in the life of man.

From the mystical point of view, the injection of any foreign substance into the body may be harmful. Yes, there is a rationale for the smallpox anti-toxin. There are other rationales offered by the homeopathic school of medicine. But when it is asked, how can the same germ both cause and cure sickness, it is not very clear. It is like a current philosophy that we cannot have peace until we stop a war, so in order to stop a war we must first start one and stop it, and then we shall have peace. This same strange psychological attitude is found both in the political world and the medical world, and they seem both contrary to moral and rational outlooks.

The body has been made in a certain manner. If the survival of the fittest is a true doctrine, it demonstrates that animals that have persisted have lived because they have been able to take food and

medicine through the mouth. Of course, all animals do not feed in that way, nor do plants. But many species of animals that have a more simple structure have failed to survive through the ages.

One may ask, if germs cause disease, how can they be stopped? But all of this overlooks the mental and psychological factors. And if you want the pure breath, it is not obtained by the materialistic means of either change in diet or cleanliness alone.

There is a false logic that is known by all logicians from ancient times, arising from the confusion of particular and general. This has been investigated even further by Lord Russell in the twentieth century, but the wont of certain groups to continue the confusions to promote their causes keeps the world in turmoil. Therefore Sufis do not give too much attention to what is called “Logic” (See “Series I, Tasawwuf”), because it is usually some egocentric endeavor.

The purified heart may obliterate all malefic germs and promote the growth of beneficial germs. This subject has still to be studied by scientists.

GATHA: The best way of cleansing the mind from all this is to be able to empty the mind of any thought, feeling or impression.

TASAWWUF: This is the basis of true meditation. It is taught by many sages. Any philosophy about it has a limited value; any practice of it is most beneficial. No doubt the Zen Buddhists have emphasized this more than others. They do have some excellent means of purification, but this often leads only to an empty-emptiness. And empty-emptiness can also lead to idiocy; it is one-half of the true.

Sufis repeat: “Ya Allah! In love, reverence and humility I surrender to Thee and Thee alone, and Thou dost fill me spiritually.” The Sufis see the whole universe as teeming with every form of life. It is to remove the ego, and this brings in the universal life. Many other schools will remove the ego and bring nothing in. So the false view of Nirvana equates it with the Sufic “fana,” while the true Nirvana, the Nirvana of Lord Buddha, is the “Fana-fi-baqa” of the Sufis, the removal of the false ego, as it is said in the Sufi Thoughts, so that the True may function in and with and through the personality.

The Sufi **Ziraat** also is a chain of ceremonies, like those of the Ancient Mysteries, wherein one is encouraged to remove everything from the mind—which is compared to a plot of ground, so that the proper crops may grow. Only this is for inner processes. And when once practiced this has almost infinite possibilities. For from this arises all the creative potentialities of everyone.

GATHA: To be pure means to be natural. The spirit in man in its natural condition is not a thought but mind, not love but heart. For as the thought is the outcome of mind so is love the outcome of the heart.

TASAWWUF: Contemporary man has discovered that we are often confused by words, even more confused by words than by things. Such confusion shows the absence of naturalness.

Nearly all philosophies begin with assumptions. They do not challenge such assumptions, they do not even examine them, but they are assumptions just the same.

The most important, and also the most dangerous of these, is the assumption of the existence of the ego. According to Sufism, and also to similar teachings, this sense of ego-self is just one portion of the mind, that the mind in its fullness may be something much greater. But then the question comes up of what is much greater. Thus, there is an Indian teaching that knowledge arose from love and from heart. But after offering this teaching the mind keeps on operating, and so long as it keeps on operating it impedes purity and naturalness. When we get to the depths of personality we find heart and love. Heart and love may operate independently, so to speak, of both thoughts and words. The spiritual life emphasizes this awakening of heart. When the heart is awake all ill-will vanishes. This is also taught in Gayatri. With it is a manifestation of light which is supra-physical without excluding the physical.

GATHA: To attain to the purity which is the seeking of the mystic one must be able to purify one's spirit from every thought and feeling, however deeply impressed or engraved in one's heart.

TASAWWUF: As has been explained, this is the theme of the Sufic mysteries called Ziraat. In Zen Buddhism and similar disciplines there are parallel processes. In finality we should depend upon their pragmatic success, and indeed there are many examples of it. But Sufism seems to operate as if there were four accommodations of mind, body, heart, and universality. The universality cannot exist alongside the particular, but the universality fulfills rather than destroys. As Jesus Christ has said, "I came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it."

Of course, the opposite has happened. The ancient Law of Moses was set aside, and with it excuses for transgression of every sort. Christianity, which was first offered as an operation to perfect and fulfill the revelation of Moses, abrogated much of Moses. We can still feel the effects of it today. Of course, Mohammed came to try and restore and fulfill from another point of view, but here again this very point of view became a limitation when it should have been all-encompassing.

GATHA: The mystic goes as far as purifying oneself from one's identity, by removing it for a certain time and by putting something else in its place. From beginning to end the whole process of spiritual development depends upon this.

TASAWWUF: It has been said that a Sufi is one who sees from the point of view of another as well as of himself. When he can see from the point of view of another this means he has risen above the self-identification. When he has risen above this ego-self he also makes accommodation for the Divine Light. When he makes accommodation for the Divine Light, he also makes accommodation for all the noble qualities called the Sifat-i-Allah.

No doubt the first stage of such operations was seen when the ancient sages said "Know Thyself." But how is one going to learn to Know oneself? The words are so easy. It may seem ridiculous to say that one can only know the real self when the false self is obliterated, or rather, as it is said, annihilated. But this is a peculiar word. There is even a certain aspect of this ego which remains, be it as body, be it as mind, be it as personality. We still have before us the perfect examples of Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and others. We may take them as examples. We can follow in their footsteps. Also in the footsteps of Saints of all religions. This indeed fulfills the purpose of our life. We are to become perfect, but this perfection is not a mere thought in the mind of the still imperfect.

In all the mysteries of all faiths there is reference to processes of uncovering, of removing the sheaths of the soul, of ridding oneself of dross. Now we are to go through these disciplines and experiences which make this possible. So Sufis practice Fana, effacement, either in the living personality, or in the Ideal, or in the One Only Being. And, at the same time, as one advances in effacement (Fana), one will find that the Divine Light will shine forth because the impediments have been removed. So, ultimately Fana, self-effacement, becomes the best means for the manifested attainment, or “baqa.”

Copyright Sufi Ruhaniat International 1978

*These materials are given for individual study by mureeds
and are not intended to be shared outside the circle except by permission.*