



Gatha with Commentary

Tasawwuf: Metaphysics

Series III

of

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

by

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis
(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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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,
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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 1

Attitude

GATHA: Attitude is the principal thing in life. It is not the conditions in life which change life for us, but mostly it is our attitude toward life and its conditions upon which depends our happiness and unhappiness.

TASAWWUF: The third year of Sufic training is concerned with the heart and its various aspects. From the Upanishads and other scriptures of the Hindus and some of other faiths, there is a stress on bliss (ananda), that the spiritual life is one of continued growth in the life of heart—its increasing accommodations and its expression.

But there is also another factor which cannot be so explained, and that is that the heart-vibrations affect the subtle and material vibrations which emanate from man and these in turn affect the atmospheres. As these atmospheres change they alter the outside influences. There may not be change in the weather or the environment, but there will be a change in one's reactions. As *Gayan* teaches, we cannot change the world but we can change ourselves.

GATHA: With a sympathetic attitude one is able to sympathize with those who deserve sympathy and even with those who do not deserve sympathy; it is not the deserving or undeserving persons, but mostly it is the attitude with which they are seen.

TASAWWUF: The adept or Bodhisattva is the spiritual devotee who becomes more like the sun. He does not look at the character of the people he meets with the attitude of judging. He shines because it is his wont to shine. As his heart-expression grows so does he, and when he tries to strengthen his own capacities for bliss, he also broadens the scope of his personality. He may not do this for gain, but the gain will follow. And as he grows he makes it possible for others to grow. That is why the Bodhisattva is concerned with all sentient beings, only he is not concerned with their short-comings. He is concerned with his own long-comings, so to speak, and by his own growth and development he helps everybody else.

The sympathetic heart naturally radiates warmth and good-will. They come together, they grow together.

GATHA: A person who is impressed by wrong, to him there is much wrong in the world and less right. The more he looks at life with this attitude the more wrong he sees; in the end to him everything becomes wrong. It is a kind of mental agitation against one thing a person met with in life which was wrong, which makes him see wrong in everything. A person who has once burnt his lips drinking hot milk blows the buttermilk to cool it before he drinks. The human mind is like a compass; if it is once made to point out wrong, whatever way you may take it, it will seek its own point all the time.

TASAWWUF: There is a teaching found in several scriptures and especially those of Buddhism that the affairs of the world are mind-made. Still many people leave things to chance and think they are beneficial and benefited. This is an erroneous view. It is man for whom all things are made and man may be positive and think or negative and be impressed. Whether he thinks or is impressed he sends out streams of vibrations which belong to samskara.

Some Sufis call nufs which is the ego, the spirit of agitation. This is particularly true of nufs in the ammara stage. Then one magnifies the wrongs done to him and sees wrong all around him. This was the attitude of the Kurvas mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On occasion the previous sentences of Hazrat Inayat Khan are repeated by Murshid SAM in his works. As additional commentary is given in these instances, we have included all these repeated words along with the new commentary.

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TASAWWUF: That is why the Sufi battles against the ego all the time. But it is a terrible mistake to assume that if one has a philosophy of battling the ego, one is doing so. The ancient scriptures of India relate of the wars between the devas and asuras, but in any given situation one is apt to assume the opposition side is asuric. This may be correct but it does not mean automatically that one is with the devas, or is a deva. Light does not battle darkness dualistically; when the light enters the darkness is no more.

GATHA: So it is with the doubting person. A person who begins to doubt his enemy next doubts his friend, then he comes to doubt his nearest and dearest friends in life, he cannot make his mind trust anybody in the world. With the best motive one may approach him, in every way one may show him sympathy, he will still think, "Perhaps in this sympathy there is hidden an enmity."

TASAWWUF: The mind that thinks enmity is in shadow. The mind that is in shadow is in an asuric state. One can argue about it either way. That changes nothing. Doubt is always throwing shadows in the path of light. Therefore in the first series of Gathas on Tasawwuf this subject is dealt with positively, how to grow in faith, in sincerity, in trust, in all the positive aspects.

Then there comes the question of how to progress in trust. On the spiritual path there is a teacher and the teacher tries to show trust in the pupil. Though the pupil fail a thousand times, still the teacher will continue to trust. For the teacher knows from his inner knowledge that the soul is divine and he keeps concentrating on this divinity, this light, and this will at long last bring about a change, just as a diamond can ultimately erode through all things.

This constant search for good in the disciples and ultimately in all mankind is one of the prerequisites in the higher grades of Sufic discipline.

GATHA: It is generally the case with human beings that their attitude becomes fixed; it is not a rare thing, seldom met with. But the one who trusts will trust everyone and under all conditions, and who idealizes and sees good will see good in, and will idealize, even undeserving ones.

TASAWWUF: There is always danger in being fixed. The *Gayan* mentions people who are like rocks, and points out ways to change. The mystic is always trying to break his own ego. And in modern times there are philosophies which call for colloidal* behavior patterns. Unfortunately the very term, “colloidal behavior” often becomes a fixed thought in certain minds. They really do not understand it; they are caught in the confusion of words.

The character Yudhisthira is the real hero of the *Mahabharata*. He used to see the good in everybody. And it is not surprising that in the end he is the one who climbed the Himalayas symbolically (and perhaps otherwise) and experiences the highest attainment. But it is not enough to admire; the mystic learns to become that way himself. Then he can understand “The Sermon on the Mount” but hardly otherwise.

GATHA: No doubt a better attitude fixed is preferable to the bad one, but the most desirable thing is to have the attitude unfixed, moveable.

TASAWWUF: It is a strange thing that so many scholastic people, learning about colloidal behavior, try to become that way; while many metaphysical people who verbalize against crystalline fixity are themselves the victims of this fixity. No doubt they have risen above a certain stage of development and may be good in many respects or all respects, but still they are fixed. They do not progress. And this is one of the reasons for the revolt of youth, for youth cannot tolerate fixity. That is its virtue and its weakness, but in the spiritual life there must be some pliability or there will be no progress at all.

GATHA: One must be free to form an opinion about a person and to adopt a method of working under certain conditions, without having to subject one’s attitude to some preconceived ideas one has in the subconscious mind; to be able to approve or disapprove, to be able to like or dislike, to be able to choose or give up.

TASAWWUF: Thus Buddha taught that all things are subject to change and we must beware of merely adopting these words without applying them in life. Some modern philosophies have already discovered the truth of it. And if they uncover what are cosmic truths while the social and metaphysical people merely talk about “truths and become fixed, then the former types are preferable.

GATHA: Goodness is better than wickedness, but freedom is higher than goodness. By freedom is meant not only freedom from outer influences but freedom from certain inner influences which obsess one’s life, often making it wretched and miserable through all conditions.

TASAWWUF: The exercises in purification not only remove all the evil and unwanted factors but en-

* “Colloidal:” *homogeneous mixture held in suspension*

able the soul from within to express itself fully. Jesus Christ has said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” This state of being at one with the truth (haqq) is called hakikat by Sufis. Those who repeat sacred phrases including “Ya Haqq” find both joy and freedom which can be experienced but not analyzed. Truth cannot be analyzed. Joy cannot be analyzed.

The experience of freedom brings with it the joy. The experience of joy removes the wretchedness in life. It takes one beyond wretchedness, and as soon as one rises above wretchedness he becomes an instrument for removing pains and sufferings and shortcomings in others. This is the way of the Bodhisattva, the Spirit of Guidance. When one reaches that stage he may have no sense of doing good; he becomes an instrument of and for the universe. Then he knows what Jesus Christ said: “Only God is good.” People who set about doing what They call goodness are still under karma and samsara.

GATHA: The attitude becomes high and broad when one looks at life from a higher point of view. When the point of view is not high the range of man’s sight becomes limited; man becomes narrow in his outlook on life, and in his feelings, thought, speech, and action the same is expressed.

TASAWWUF: Spiritual development is one of rising to higher points of view. No doubt there was something like this in the minds of the sages who gave us the game of chess (and also Parchesi). When the pawn reached the final state the pawn became a queen or perfect master.

In the study of the various religions one can see that the deeper one goes the broader one becomes. When one becomes broad one also becomes high; that is to say one expands in all directions simultaneously. The outlook becomes very magnificent. Then one can see from the point of view of another as well as one’s self.

GATHA: Why is God pointed out on high, toward the sky? Why not toward the earth, for God is everywhere? The reason is that within the range of God’s sight the whole universe stands as a little grain of corn, as to one who flies in the balloon and looks down from high the whole city comes within the range of his sight, when he stands on earth he sees no further than the four walls which keep the whole world covered from his sight.

TASAWWUF: The point of view of a mountain climber is greater than that of people nearer the sea level. The point of view of an aviator is still wider and greater. That of the astronaut transcends these. In a sense each is more spiritual than the other. Gayan suggests we should cultivate the wide view. Self-righteous people are often very narrow and are incapable of progressing beyond a certain point.

The growth in this sense—and it is a spiritual growth—comes when we widen our horizons. If a man were to become an astronaut or even an aviator or stewardess on an airplane, the chances are that they would grow more spiritually. As they would be seeing new vistas and meeting strangers, there are greater opportunities for the growth of sympathy in the heart and so greater possibilities for growth of heart.

GATHA: What does it mean to become spiritual, or godly? It means to have a higher view of life, to look at life from a higher point of view. It is the high point of view in life which ennobles the soul, it is by a broad outlook on life that spiritual aristocracy is realized.

TASAWWUF: No doubt there are many people on earth who are emotional and metaphysical and have written or spoken about hierarchy. But such a hierarchy does not exist. Hierarchy is not a thought within some person's consciousness. In *The Unity of Religious Ideals* and elsewhere it is taught that hierarchy may be more real than creation itself. Mrs. Roerich, the wife of the great artist Nicolas Roerich, wrote two books called *Heart and Hierarchy*. Unfortunately, the marked emotionalism and ego-centricities of her colleagues de-emphasized the importance of these books.

It should be borne in mind that she was basically correct in relating heart to hierarchy. People without expanded heart can never appreciate the true hierarchy, and those who form the embodiment of the master, the spirit of guidance, are most certainly not subservient to self-centered people. Hierarchy is based on heart. The grades in hierarchy are grades of ever-expanding and functioning heart. They ultimately come into the practices of the deep contemplation (mushahida).

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Series III: Number 2

Sympathy

GATHA: Sympathy is an awakening of the love element which comes on seeing another in the same situation in which one has been at some time in one's life. A person who has never experienced pain cannot sympathize with those suffering pain. In the same way a person sympathizes with someone whose honour or reputation has been harmed.

TASAWWUF: One of the sad things in the history of the world has been the corruption of the word love. It is still used by many people and not only by the press and literati to mean certain aspects of life connected in some way with sex. True love is a heart function and always was meant to be a heart function. Heart feels heart often automatically. It is a matter of function and also of attunement. It is this which avails the spiritual teacher in helping the disciple to higher attainment. But it is also this which functions in a loving mother, kind father, innocent child and helpful friend.

Thus in the third year of spiritual training, as has been said, the whole concern is with the purification and awakening of heart.

GATHA: The one who has no honour or reputation himself would not mind, for he does not know what it is and what it is to lose it. A rich person who has lost his money may be laughed at by someone who has never had it. He can sympathize with him who has wealth, and still more can he sympathize with him who had wealth and lost it.

TASAWWUF: There is wealth of the world, there is wealth in the inner life. The wealth of the world can easily be lost. The wealth of the inner life may be retained through the aeons. Still, constant watchfulness is needed. Certain schools of profundity but not of wisdom advise that one should constantly watch over heart. There is no sign that this leads to enlightenment. The now very famous Ch'an monk Hui Neng, known as the sixth Patriarch, horrified many of his seniors in the monastery when he challenged this heart watchfulness.

From the Sufi point of view, this is an assumption that the ego by the ego can purify and perfect the ego. It probably never happens or happens so rarely as to be exceptional. Riza is a Sufic term meaning God-reliance, and many Sufi philosophers have challenged, even regarded as impertinent, any supposition that man as such has any capability of heart purification. Besides this attitude precludes any operation of divine grace.

Sympathy often precedes knowledge. We can see it in the primary schools where little children learn so much more rapidly from a sympathetic teacher. Many psychologists have discovered this and very gradually this element of heart enters the educational system and probably will even more as life goes on.

GATHA: Very often the young imagine they love their mother and think they sympathize with their parents, but they cannot come to the full realization of their love until they reach that situation.

TASAWWUF: The young only know responsive love until sympathy is awakened in them. The parent, especially the mother, may be an adept at self-sacrifice. The young seldom cultivate this until they have to share responsibilities or burdens. Nor is it wise to overload them at a tender age. Very often this warps their personalities.

At the same time there is an education in love, there is a training of heart. Some elements of this are included in the instructions for the young in the book "Education". Each of the first years of life is like a step forward and either to hasten or delay may not always be most beneficial. At the same time the adult must not expect over much.

The same is true in the spiritual life. The teacher, the Murshid, does not expect from the pupil, the mureed, any balancing of accounts. It is natural for the superior in spirituality to emanate more love, more compassion, more self-sacrifice. But it is also true that when they behave in this manner they become examples for their pupils to emulate.

GATHA: Very often people think it cruel and unkind of their friends when they do not receive sympathy from them, but they do not know that to have sympathy does not mean having a warm heart only, but it means having that experience which reminds them of it, making them sympathetic.

TASAWWUF: As is taught in *Gayan*, there should be no commerce in love and kindness. Nor does sympathy mean that others should be negatively doting. There must be positive elements in sympathy, and as the Sufi thoughts teach, love should flow from the heart and flow naturally. A mere acquaintance is not always a friend though they have been known for a long time. Friendship grows out of heart understanding. As Emerson, the American philosopher said, "To win a friend, be a friend."

GATHA: Sympathy is something more than love and affection, for it is the knowledge of a certain suffering which moves the living heart to sympathy.

TASAWWUF: What is called Rahmat in Arabic was a prime characteristic of the Messenger Prophet Mohammed. The Bismillah is based on it. It might be called the affluent and effluent aspects of heart life, the giving, the taking, the sharing, and all else that comes from and even to the awakened heart.

GATHA: That person is living whose heart is living, and that heart is living which has wakened to sympathy. The heart void of sympathy is worse than a rock, for the rock is useful, but the heart void of sympathy produces antipathy.

TASAWWUF: As one grows in the spiritual life, the heart seems wider, more tender and yet more capable of withstanding pain. If one is under an influence or ideal like that of the Bodhisattva, he will more readily respond to the pain of others. Of course there are two aspects here, A. sentiment, B. understanding. In Sufism both are advocated. In the literature and first year Gathas the positive aspects of sentiment are presented. When the heart awakens, the positive aspects of wisdom and sympathy manifest naturally.

GATHA: Man is most active physically and mentally, and when his heart is not tuned to sympathy his mental and physical activity take quite a contrary direction, which leads to inharmony and destruction.

TASAWWUF: The disciple may bear in mind that by the assiduous practice of esoteric disciplines the personality is purified and the scope for heart activity along with that. We cannot compel sympathy, but life often impels it through the suffering of ourselves or others.

GATHA: No doubt love, affection, or sympathy without wisdom may seem profitless, as for instance, if a person was crying with pain and his sympathetic friend, on hearing his cry, began to weep with him, doubling his pain. Sympathy can only be useful when man does not make the condition of the person with whom he sympathizes worse, but makes things better.

TASAWWUF: This distinguishes true sympathy from sentimentality. Sentimentality may be filled with goodness but is not often accompanied by action. The sympathetic heart not only feels but does. It brings more than response to another. It brings about that which alleviates the suffering of another.

GATHA: The feeling of sympathy must be within, it need not manifest purely as sympathy but as an action to better the condition of the one with whom one has sympathy.

TASAWWUF: This has already been presented. Many people imagine they are sympathetic but take no action. This is superficial sympathy. Yet one need not stab himself in order to appreciate the pain of another. Besides, one must not forget two things here: that heart awakening alone produces merits; and that esotericism so enlarges and awakens heart that many beautiful aspects of character automatically come to the surface.

Here one may be aware that sermons and exhortations given by others and not put into practice will in the end lead to detriment. There has been a rise against religion and to some extent against morality because the preaching elements of society do not show by example and so do not lead. It is the duty of every Sufi to show by example and not by precept.

GATHA: There are many attributes found in the human heart which are called divine. But among them there is no greater or better attribute than sympathy, by which man shows in human form God manifested.

TASAWWUF: That is why in the instructions of the day we begin and often continue with the Bismillah. Actually the Bismillah opens the door to all the Divine attributes of which the Rahmat, as has been explained, is the most fundamental, and so, important. Exhortations never produce this; fear cannot. Love arises by itself, or from common suffering and sharing of the burdens of life.

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Series III: Number 3

The Word “Sin”

GATHA: Many wonder if sin is an attitude or an action or a situation or a result, and the answer is that all these combined together make either a virtue or a sin. The absence of one from it makes it incomplete, but all these together make it a complete virtue or sin.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, there must be a definite malicious intention, but also heedlessness to produce sin. An action due to carelessness is no doubt a sin from a certain point of view. But in general the Sufi point is that all sin arises from nufs, the ego. If not from the ego, then otherwise, such acts produce karma.

From the dualistic point of view there is sin which produces evil and there is virtue which produces good. But from the monistic point of view, karma arises in either case. And the ideal is to rise to a perfection which is beyond both. This is only possible when the ego is so subdued that action can take place through the person rather than by the person.

GATHA: Now the question is where it is originated, what is the source of it, and the answer is that its origin is in wrong thinking. Wrongdoing comes from wrong thinking and wrong thinking comes from wrong feeling. And yet it is difficult to distinguish between feeling right and wrong.

TASAWWUF: From the dualistic views, certain fruits of the spirit are indicated, dominant among which are peace and joy. But there is some question as to whether man alone can produce the peace and joy. These things are not ego-made nor yet mind-made. So there are the spiritual sciences which both develop heart and are developed by heart. And as heart becomes keen, so also the intuitive faculty, the insight, is more operative and the more it operates, the more one rises above the spheres where sin prevails, or even operates.

For example when one becomes adept with Fikr a certain rhythm is established, a certain feeling also. What is right is that which maintains the rhythm and feeling and what is wrong is that which alters the rhythm and feeling. In other words, God-control can replace ego-control.

GATHA: In short, as a definition of the word I would give this: Every attitude, word, or action that deprives one of the expected result, the result which is expected not only by the mind but by the soul, may be called sin.

TASAWWUF: The words found in the Bible, in Greek and Hebrew, translated or mistranslated as “sin” or its equivalent in the languages of Western Europe, mean to miss the mark, to fall short. This is not the same as evil. In evil there is intent, in sin there may be no intent, or rather one has not yet reached perfection.

If we go deeply into the religions and philosophies of India and compare them with the Bible also we see the contrast between short-comings and perfections and both teach that man should seek the

perfections. But it seems in the Western traditions the more or less scientific methodologies were lost or discarded. Therefore Sufism has served as a bridge between East and West as it has emphasized methodologies, which is to say, ryazat which can restore the soul to its path. Ryazat need not have become occult, that is hidden. There may be a time and there have been times when many methods now regarded as esoteric were taught more fully to larger sections of the generality.

In this sense right-feeling is God-feeling. The ancient Persian word **vohu** which has been translated as “right” means to act in accord with the universe, or with God or with Mazda.

GATHA: That which deprives one of peace, freedom, happiness, tranquility of mind, and ever-increasing power of will may be called sin, whatever be the action. It may be an action which all the orthodox call virtue, and yet it cannot be virtue.

TASAWWUF: Literally **virtue** means increase of power, of manhood, and means that an act is followed by increase of psychic power, at least. One can argue forever but this will not restore, much less elevate psychic power. In fact there is considerable discussion of magnetism in the literature and the commentaries thereon. And now we have added to ryazat and to the psychic and psychological sciences methods for maintaining and even increasing magnetism. And these come mostly by repeating sacred phrases and also such phrases with motions.

The restoration of the teachings of scriptures in practical ways often runs contrary to the directives of the clergy or the generality. But no one has proven that the loss of joy, peace, power, and kindness are in accord with the Divine Will. Indeed it is just the contrary.

GATHA: Why is a virtue called a virtue? Because it brings happiness. It is not because it is a particular kind of action, it is because it brings to one what one’s whole being is desiring. It brings freedom, it brings the air of happiness; it gives by its pressure upon one’s mind an increase of will-power; that is why it is called virtue.

TASAWWUF: In *The Inner Life* the changes in the life, in the consciousness, in the growth of those on the spiritual path are explained from certain aspects. In *The Soul, Whence and Whither* there is another picture. Both are correct as well as the teachings offered in the Upanishads and elsewhere. But as the Message is offered now, there is the life of body, the life of mind, and then the life of heart.

The first book offered was called *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty*. Too many either ignored the existence of Sufism or else presented it as a super-orthodoxy for which many preparations had to be made, making even salvation a matter of strict rules, leaving no scope for either Divine Grace or inner freedom. A glance at life will show it has never been that way. And all scriptures present grand pictures of the improved outlook on awakening. Indeed it might be said that tension is the only sin. When there is tension, there is no joy and no freedom.

GATHA: It is therefore that no person in the world can judge another person, whether superior to him in evolution or inferior; the person himself is the best judge of his action.

TASAWWUF: No doubt there are means of ascertaining the degree in cosmic evolution of anybody, but this does not indicate an understanding of the details of life nor the motives. No matter how advanced or how limited, each situation stands by itself. And so in the development of compassion there is also an extreme degree of tolerance.

There are other aspects to be considered here: If Atman is Brahman, then we are not different in the ultimate. Any criticism produces a shadow. It will be over the person or institution criticized, it will be over the space and also over the critic. This does not mean that one should not condemn evils in the sense that Jesus Christ did. Yet Hazrat Inayat Khan has said he neither criticized the wrong-doer nor condoned him. For he had his motive.

We may bear in mind the grade of nufs; or, from the Indian point of view, the cosmic evolution. The ammara person is as he is and the asuric person is as he is. There are many ways to help promote change but criticizing is not one of them. Many seem to delight in this and this only adds to sam-sara. But as the heart opens and compassion flourishes, it makes it possible for the light to awaken in what we may call the sinner.

GATHA: In the Messages of the past it was necessary that a kind of standard of virtue should be given to the world as a law given from the Prophets of God, but at this period it is not necessary. The Sufi Message does not bring to the world a law made so plain as to say which is which, but the principle of the Message is to waken in the spirit of those who receive this Message that spirit that they may recognize what is right and what is wrong, that they may become masters of their destiny.

TASAWWUF: If we study pathology, the science of diseases, we find that certain diseases are prevalent in certain people and others among other people; that in certain climates there may be different ailments from other climates. Also the virtues and aptitudes, the weakness and defects of different people are different. Just as the physician must apply different medicines and treatments for certain kinds of patients, so Allah, the All-Only Being has sent His Messengers to heal different peoples according to their needs.

While codes have been necessary they were offered to people according to their weaknesses and needs. To apply them haphazardly to others would be like treating all diseases with the same medicine. Some Christian missionaries were successful in East Africa and then they told their converts to take a bath a day. When the people wanted to know why, the answer was to keep clean. "But our custom now is to take two baths a day." And the same applies to efforts to enforce codes. Mohammed said, "There is no compulsion in Islam," but as traditional Islam has become so full of codes and customs, and above all with compulsions, it has been necessary to represent it without this compulsion, in the light of the defects of the day.

While the British may have made many mistakes in India, they never fell into any error of judging people by codes other than their own excepting when it was impossible to apply any code in a civil or criminal case. So it is not necessary to impel or compel some particular, but to try to raise the outlook. And as the Bodhisattva seeks enlightenment for all people without any vestige of compulsion, so the spirit of the Message of the day is to promote morality and freedom at the same time.

GATHA: And by their realization of this their progress on the spiritual path may become much higher as compared to those who during the period of the Prophets depended to be directed in their lives by the law made by the Prophets and carried out by the priests.

TASAWWUF: This has always been a contention. St. Paul seems to have broken away from the Law, which meant the Mosaic Code. No doubt this code had become solidified and was used to maintain a certain order; also to keep people in subjectivity. But if we look further, the Jewish people them-

selves, even the most orthodox, have never restored the full Mosaic Code, only such portions as support rituals and institutions. Yet they condemn others for making a change.

Muslims therefore accuse the Christians of being code-less. But it is an error to deduct therefrom that Christians are necessarily without morals. When we consider the whole earth with its numerous peoples, there is no standard for judgment. Yet as hearts awaken they come closer to each other.

We have today a United Nations which most of humanity respects. This indicates a growth of outlook, a tolerance, a hope. But if the medicine chest is full there is no need for more medicines but simply a wider and wiser application of those already accumulated. So also we go into the world of synthesis and integration and along with that, understanding.

GATHA: The Sufi Message does not bring this. It brings the spirit of freedom, the air of happiness, that which gives happiness with increased will-power, which opens up freedom for those who can recognize for themselves the difference between right and wrong, and in that the evolution of humanity is brought a step forward from what it was before.

TASAWWUF: When the Message was presented the words were accepted, but this did not mean there was deep realization. The Message was in the sphere and so all the modern counterparts of sages and prophets could perceive the cosmic evolution and the coming into manifestation of a higher type of entity with more moral outlooks. This was the natural result of the evolution.

Naturally in his time both the Jews and Romans accused St. Paul of being against law and order. And it is equally natural for older outlooks, though they be divided and anti-pathetic as were the Jews and Romans, to unite against those who are more evolved and wish to bring about a better world because of their already achieved state of consciousness.

If we look further we can see this is exactly what is happening—the appearance of those who belong to the worlds of freedom, happiness and joy and ever increasing will-power.

GATHA: After a certain time the same principle that the Sufi Message has brought to the world will culminate and will appear as a law among nations, because the Message is the throwing of the seed. Just now you do not see the fruit and leaves, just now you see the seed which is hidden under the dust and on the ground. But time will show the tree with its fruit and its leaves.

TASAWWUF: There are so many groups which pretend to be universal. They think they have a monopoly over words like “universal” and “world” and “cosmic.” This shows their childishness, and their childishness is reflected in their unwillingness to accept even the existence of each other. But there is also a danger in the commentary setting a fixed path which must be followed; if commentaries are so applied they are worse than useless. A compass may be needed to steer a ship but the compass does not make the ship move.

GATHA: When the nations will recognize the divine law as the law of the time then humanity will no longer be ruled by the laws made by a few intellectual people for their convenience and as they think right, but the law will recognize the divine indication which is constantly working through every soul, guiding it on the path, showing it the way of its destiny.

TASAWWUF: This subject also appears in several places in the literature as in *In an Eastern Rose Garden*, *Alchemy of Happiness*, etc. The difference between the true disciple and the crystallized devotee is that the true disciple may both see the growth and partake of it. As has been said, a described God is a dethroned God, so a described and fixated evolution is no evolution at all. Although India in particular has had some sages and seers, those who could perceive directly have often been the least capable of perceiving widely. Indeed, it may even be better to perceive widely. That is the nature of the heart.

If one really looks, most of the rising protests are efforts of the souls of men toward freedom, compassion and love.

GATHA: And when such a time will come there will not be a necessity for so many laws, and as many laws so many lawyers, and probably as many lawyers so many law courts, and no end of prisons and no limit to the prisoners! This will cease to exist. There will not be the necessity of strict laws and severe punishments for nothing.

TASAWWUF: It is both remarkable and amusing that persons who have reacted to the real or imaginary persecution of early Christians and later of witches, have made so many acts of men criminal which are not only not against the Mosaic Code, but not against any of the teachings of Jesus. On the contrary, many so-called “law-breakers” often believe both in the spirit and form of the Sermon on the Mount while the so called law “preservers” have no such outlook. This means in the end the “preservers” will be overthrown. While God cannot be said to be for or against any political party or outlook, he certainly deserves basic human freedom. Besides this, the Bible teaches that God brought forth trees and herbs for the good of human kind. From the spiritual point of view it is almost impossible to conceive that those who have discovered usages or pleasures from many trees and herbs have been condemned as criminals. This condition will not, cannot, last.

GATHA: If one could only see that among one hundred people who are sentenced by the courts there is hardly one to be blamed, to be held responsible for his fault. And if there is anyone to be held responsible, it is all we human beings. Why do we not all work, why do we not all help them to kindle the light in their soul that would show them their path plainly?

TASAWWUF: In the generations between the giving of the Message and this commentary, there has been a rising recognition of this. Much is blamed on “environment.” The meaning of this word is not clear. But it is better to blame environment than to blame individuals. This all belongs to samsara and will lead sooner or later to a deeper study of mystical and spiritual teachings.

GATHA: It is not necessary that the clergyman, the priest only should be responsible for the evolution of each individual. We must work in the capacity of brother and sister to everyone. In the realization of the brotherhood in the Fatherhood of God we must hold it as our duty, our sacred task, to waken in our brother, with love, with respect, with modesty, with humility, that power of understanding what is really for his best, what can really benefit him.

TASAWWUF: In the ensuing years there has been the rise of the science of sociology which strives to see life as a whole. We can almost call it the study of samsara from the materialistic side. This is a beginning. It will help because those involved who have to face so much misfortune, so much pain, so many short-comings in their clients, begin to awaken sympathy in their hearts. This is a grand step forward.

The other is in the evolution of humanity itself, as has been explained. This is invariably toward greater heart outlooks.

GATHA: It is not the mission of one person, it is the mission of every person. And if we each considered our share of work in the Message and showed it by our own example in the world we should be doing a great duty toward God and humanity.

TASAWWUF: When the Message was first given, the immediate hearers began to regard themselves as a privileged aristocracy. But the same was true in many other modern establishments who verbalized or thought or felt the broader outlooks. But in this first stage there was either competition or non-recognition. Too many world brotherhoods with big brothers. The modern Message of Sufism is that the Brotherhood will form of itself. This stressing of particular persons or movements or philosophies shows the absence of modesty and often the absence of evolved morality. But the high morality issues from the soul itself, and we will be seeing a greater and grander growth and mutual recognition until mankind will rise up and demand—**No More War**.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 4

Kaza and Kadr—The Will, Human and Divine

GATHA: The question of the will, human and divine, may be seen from two points of view, from the wisdom point of view and from the point of view of the ultimate truth. If words can explain something, it is from the former point of view; the latter point of view allows no word to be spoken in the matter, for in the absolute truth two do not exist, there is no such a thing as two, there is one alone.

TASAWWUF: This is an easy subject to explain; a difficult one to apply. The Christian people have for centuries been vowing: “Thy Will be done on earth,” but while saying, they have failed to listen. Perhaps devotees of all faiths fail to listen although all the prophets and messengers of God have proclaimed this above all else.

As the heart grows and expands it becomes more capable of entering into contemplation. Then one begins to realize what has been merely verbal before. This subject is presented in the literature and in other lessons. The generality may read and perceive. It is the initiate who should apply, and by applying this first to himself, he becomes more capable of leading others to the ultimate truth.

Contemplation so expands the heart that it perceives and then achieves cosmic unity.

GATHA: From the wisdom point of view one sees one weaker, one stronger, and one has to give in to the power of the other. This one sees in all aspects of the creation. The little fish is eaten by the larger fish, but the little fish lives upon smaller fishes.

TASAWWUF: This is the way of samsara. We can study it in many manners. The question is how to rise above it. This has also been proclaimed. The failures of the past have arisen out of the tendency in human nature to glorify the proclaimer and minimize the teaching. The Sufi learns to find the divine spirit in every one; the Bodhisattva sees that all sentient beings are essentially enlightenment itself.

The teaching is that unity does not mean uniformity. So there is variety and there are aspects of variety which subsist on other aspects. We need not follow the animals nor need we condemn them. Perhaps in the end we may agree that samsara is nothing but nirvana and nirvana nothing but samsara. But until we attain, until we have the experience of enlightenment it may be best to look upon them as different.

GATHA: So there is no one in this world so strong that there is not another person stronger still. And there is no one in this world so weak that there is not another that is weaker still.

TASAWWUF: It is like the story of King Canute who conquered man but could not still the waves. He was not master of himself. And the same has been even more true of Tamerlane and Hitler. Destruction itself must sooner or later be destroyed. Man is subject to the elements and ravages of time.

They are not overcome by any will power. It is only a Buddha, who was called Gana or conqueror, who by becoming one with all gained that prowess.

GATHA: The other thing one can think about is the opposing conditions and situations which stand before a willing mind and a striving person like a stone wall, so that with every wish of doing and accomplishing one does not find one's way.

TASAWWUF: The *Thousand and One Nights* aver: "There is no power nor might save in Allah" while devotees repeat "Allaho Akbar." Still the tendency is to seek for some earthly opponents and to strive to overcome them. In his last days Mohammed declared that the Lesser Jihad had been successful and that he would then devote his energies to the Greater Jihad, to overcome the weaknesses within himself. But he has not often been followed in this.

The Christian Book of Revelation also emphasizes the Conqueror. Nobody has been able to interpret this externally because it has nothing to do with externals. Now we have to find the heart-way, the love-way, the universal way.

GATHA: It is this experience which has made man say, "Man proposes, God disposes." The Hindu philosophers have called these two great powers, one of which is as an intention and the other the power of destruction, by the names Brahma, the Creator, and Shiva, the Destroyer. And the most wonderful part in this creation and destruction is that what Brahma creates in a thousand years, Shiva destroys in one moment.

TASAWWUF: Practically this has resulted in that Shiva is worshipped all over India and Brahma has a single temple near Ajmir. And as this power of destruction seems to be ever-present, Buddha taught **anicca**, that all things are subject to destruction, nothing persists.

GATHA: Since God is Almighty, the wise see the hand of God in the greater power, manifesting either through an individual or by a certain condition or situation, and instead of struggling too much against the difficulties in life, and instead of moaning over the losses which cannot be helped, they are resigned to the will of God.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, "Praise Allah in times of prosperity and resign to Him in times of adversity." Although this adjustment to adversity has remained a great teaching, as a teaching, it has become accepted less and less. It has wrongly been interpreted as abandonment to fate and so introduced that fatalism with which Islam has often been identified. This is one of the principal reasons for the political and cultural degradation of the Islamic world. God is verbally affirmed; actually conditions and important personalities are affirmed. There is nothing in the will of God to demand a certain language, a certain political or social system, or such worldly aims. They have nothing to do with Divine Islam.

As *Kashf* is developed—which follows as the heart-life is enhanced, one will know and follow the Divine Will. But this surrender, this insight increases, it does not diminish human freedom. Any surrender that limits human freedom is a surrender no doubt, but it is not the true Islam.

GATHA: In short, every plan that a person makes and his desire to accomplish that plan are often an outcome of his personal will, and when his will is helped by every other will that he comes in contact with in the path of the attainment of a certain object, then he is helped by God, as every will goes in the direction of his will and so his will becomes strengthened, ...

TASAWWUF: So we are finding more attunement, more concordance and more strength among the young whose hearts are more open, and who are finding the life itself behind life. This becomes easy for those on the spiritual path. Esotericism helps more than anything else in this accomplishment.

GATHA: ... and often a person accomplishes something which perhaps a thousand people would not have been able to accomplish.

TASAWWUF: During the war this person sometimes prayed and along with prayer practiced Kashf and Mushahida. And all the prayers were answered. So he asked Allah, "Why is it that my prayers are answered and when the Pope prays and fifty million people pray with him, nothing happens?" The spirit of the Universe replied: "**They pray to God, you pray with God.**" So the modern devotees pray: "In unison with the Will of God, we will to have peace." There must be the Will-of-God, the knowledge of this Will and then surrender to it. It does not come from human will and it is difficult for the generality to accept this despite the billions of prayers, "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." But now more and more people are learning the true surrender and sooner or later this may transform much of the surface of the earth.

GATHA: Then there is another person who has a plan or a desire, and finds opposition from every side; everything seems to go wrong, and yet he has the inner urge which prompts him to go on in the path of attainment.

TASAWWUF: There is the celebrated story of Robert Bruce who failed in six efforts to liberate Scotland from the English. Then in exile he saw a spider try six times to build a web and fail, but trying a seventh time he succeeded. So Bruce returned to Scotland and succeeded in his seventh effort.

This was even more true of Samuel Morse, the inventor of the electrical telegraph. He met with nothing but opposition and failures, yet in the end succeeded and overcame all his enemies. The Bible says, "The stone which is rejected is become the corner-stone." But this is not readily accepted. And now there is a wave of opposition that such rejections may be wisely or blindly accepted as virtue. It cannot be helped. It is the natural reaction against falsehood and falseness.

GATHA: There also is the hand of God behind his back, pushing him on, forward in his path, even though there might seem oppositions in the beginning of his strife—but all's well that ends well.

TASAWWUF: Though *Gayān* teaches that it is through the hand of man that God works out His intended purposes in Nature, the tendency to hold concepts and to limit life to those concepts has produced congealments. Therefore the Message has been stern against the congelation of mind. The New Age is not being based on any conventional virtues but on the practical acceptance of divine wisdom which follows naturally when the heart is opened.

GATHA: The saintly souls, who consider it as their religion to seek the pleasure of God and to be resigned to His will, are really blessed, for their manner is pleasing to everyone,

TASAWWUF: This is true of those known as **Saliks**, but there are also others who conceal their inner wisdom or who being on the path of the Master must war against evils in the world. This has also been true of devotees on certain Sufic paths as the Malamatiyas and Khalandarīs.

GATHA: For they are conscientious lest they should hurt the feeling of anyone, and if by mistake they happen to hurt someone's feelings they feel they have hurt God Whose pleasure they must constantly seek, for the happiness of their life is only in seeking the pleasure of God.

TASAWWUF: We can also here distinguish the false pretenders of Dajjals who self-proclaim but who do not seek Allah in all humanity. We cannot overstress the teaching of the Bible that God made mankind in His Image and Likeness. The priestcraft and the scribes have introduced all sorts of misinterpretations and prowess-hunters, all sorts of personalities who demand obeisance and allegiance. This very attitude reveals the falsehood. The true Messengers of God are like the sun and rain, offering blessings to all and expecting nothing from mankind, but appreciating anything offered.

GATHA: They watch every person and every situation and condition, and their heart becomes so trained by constantly observing life keenly, as a lover of music whose ears become trained in time, who distinguishes between the correct and the false note. So they begin to see in every desire that springs in their heart, if it is in accordance with the will of God.

TASAWWUF: The science of esotericism helps infinitely in this direction. It no doubt culminates in Fearful Contemplation or Mushahida (whence shahud) when man feels his divinity and even his all inclusiveness. Then every being, so to speak, is within himself. There is no more verbal nonsense about the kingdom of God being within; it becomes an actuality, it is experienced.

Then one becomes the master-mind but he is also, above all, the master-heart.

GATHA: Sometimes they know the moment the desire has sprung; sometimes they know when they have gone halfway in the path of its pursuit; and sometimes they know at the end of strife. But even then, at the end of it, their willingness to resign to the will of God becomes their consolation, even in the face of disappointment.

TASAWWUF: For this shows a rising above the pairs of opposites and the acceptance of God beyond any human will or desire.

GATHA: The secret of seeking the will of God is in cultivating the faculty of sensing harmony, for harmony is beauty and beauty is harmony. The lover of beauty in his further progress becomes the seeker of harmony, and by trying always to maintain harmony man will tune his heart to the will of God.

TASAWWUF: That is why more and more souls wish to dispense with war. They do not see justifiable excuses for murdering their fellow-beings. They seek, rather, to learn more about and from each other. And it is in this way brotherhood may arise of itself. It has not come and may not come from a doctrine about brotherhood. It will come when it is practiced and the evolution of mankind points in this direction.

Questions and Answers (July 18, 1923)

Q: Is there, in relation to Kaza and Kadr, a difference in the path of the saint and the master?

A: Certainly. The saint is resigned to Kaza, and the master has regard for Kadr.

Kaza is the will of God, and Kadr free will of an individual.

Q: What is free will? Can man in reality do a thing contrary to the will of God?

A: The answer is expressed in the first part of my lecture. From the point of view of the absolute truth all is the will of God. There is no such thing as free will. But from the wisdom point of view there is a greater will, a mightier will, and a smaller will. That shows one side perfection—of God; the other side limitation—the fate of man.

(July 19, 1923)

Q: Will you please explain what you said yesterday about the two paths, the one which leads to saintliness, and the one which leads to mastership?

A: There are two paths which lead to the goal, one of the saint and the other of the master. In one path the will is used in outward things, in the other path the will is mostly used to control oneself, in other words for the time being against oneself. This is the saintly path. It is wise, before one knows of the will of God, first to handle one's own will, and to use it knowing that it is given for some great purpose in life. The one is the path of renunciation, abnegation, resignation, self-denial, from the beginning to the end. And by doing this one arrives to that meeting ground where one touches that divine perfection. And then there is the path of the master. The path of firmness and obstinacy, breaking and penetrating through every difficult situation that comes before him. And so fighting all along from the beginning to the end. In this he has to fight with himself and with the life outside. Therefore the struggle is both sides. And there is all the time the work of the will-power, and all through there is a battle; and in this battle all the conditions that one has to go through are of the same character and nature as of the warfare. To be wounded and to cause wounds, and to be hurt and to hurt another also. And in this way it is a constant struggle. But still for the higher aim, and for the greater gain. In the end he strikes the same note which the saint has struck. Neither the path of the saint is easy, nor of the master. The place where they meet both become one. For the resignation brings the saint to the same realization of the harmony with the Infinite, as the struggle brings the master to the same conviction in the end.

There is a third temperament, and that is the middle temperament. In which temperament there is the saintly temperament and the temperament of the master; that is the prophetic temperament. Because the prophet begins his life with both, struggle and resignation. One moment struggle, and another moment resignation; gain and resignation, continually going on. And therefore in the prophet one sees the saint and the master, both in one.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 5

Opinion

GATHA: Opinion is an outcome of mind. It is an outburst of its reasoning and judging faculty. And so, according to the evolution of a particular mind, its opinion is.

TASAWWUF: This subject is introduced also in the first series of Gathas on Tasawwuf. And if we look into it closely we find several factors involved. The ancient Greeks used to say that knowledge is light, ignorance darkness and opinion a mixture of light and darkness. Yet very often opinions are used both to prove one's own thesis and also to contradict the affirmations of others. There is nothing of value in it; there is still darkness though mixed with light.

GATHA: Opinions clash when two people of different stages of evolution express themselves. Therefore the wise are more reluctant to express their opinion, whereas for the unwise it is easy.

TASAWWUF: A ray of light, passing through a prism, breaks up into various wave-lengths. So an idea, reaching human minds breaks up. This has been presented in the story of the blind man and the elephant but has not always been fully applied to other matters. The wise man was able to tell the blind, "You are all right and you are all wrong. You are right in what you see, you are wrong in denying the right of others." This same principle may be applied in all things.

GATHA: A simpleton is only too glad to express his opinion uninvited. In the ancient education of children that was the one thing that was taught from childhood in good families, that the child must not be too ready to express his opinion.

TASAWWUF: The idea of democracy may be extended beyond the realm of commonsense. It is also possible to go contrary to social customs which are based in part on human consideration. The confusions of the day often rise because of the importance or non-importance of personality. From that we go to opinions, so that the knowledge of an unimportant person is belittled before the opinions of the so-called important. Still when feeling is used, the right cause will always become more impressive.

GATHA: Very often in expressing one's opinion—rather in giving one's idea about another—one places himself before others for examination. As soon as a person has expressed his opinion all others know what note of life he strikes—that is, those who have the knowledge to know it.

TASAWWUF: Hazrat Inayat Khan has declared that the answer is already in the question. When a person asks a question of a Sufi and sometimes also when he expresses an opinion, the Sufi not only knows the question and answer but also the question behind the question. He is therefore able to help the other person, knowing the state of mind of the presumable inquirer. In this way he tries to avoid unnecessary debates and shallow discussions.

GATHA: This does not mean that one must not have an opinion. It would be like saying one must not have a mind. Where there is a mind there will be an opinion.

TASAWWUF: There have been some presentations of Zen Buddhism in the West which not only silence the exterior mind, but also the essence of mind. Then, instead of wisdom coming, there may be idiocy. Merely sitting in silence does not necessarily improve anything; however the majority may gain therefrom. Thus, there are two kinds of silence: the silence of the sage and the silence of the absolutely ignorant.

GATHA: Does it not very often happen to an intelligent person that immediately after having expressed his opinion he finds out how foolish he has been in expressing his opinion? Often through nervousness, through lack of control over oneself, or through lack of patience one expresses one's opinion.

TASAWWUF: The adept constantly watches his breath. He also finds his mind has become purified through the repetition of sacred phrases. This is the first part. The next comes as Kashf is developed and as one becomes more aware of the divine voice which is constantly coming from within. Then one will know when to keep silent, when to speak, and how to speak.

GATHA: That opinion is valuable which comes by invitation. When someone has asked, "Please tell me, what do you think of it?" then the opinion becomes the answer to a demand.

TASAWWUF: When the first oriental philosophers came to the West, they often said, "My opinion is for me, and your opinion is for you." They did not wish to impose anything. They either pretended or actually offered knowledge, not opinion. Thus they avoided needless discussions. They might not always have been successful in communication, but they did not cause disturbances.

GATHA: Sometimes the opinion is nothing but the voice of pride, and sometimes one's opinion is colored by one's favor or disfavor. Sometimes opinion lacks knowledge of the object on which it is formed. The wise therefore asks himself the question whether he has thorough knowledge on the subject upon which he expresses his opinion.

TASAWWUF: Even the wisest people find themselves in assemblies where opinions are considered important. And once opinions are considered more important than knowledge, then it often happens that opinions are valued because of the personality expressing them. Therefore, often the wise hide their knowledge. There is no value in useless discussion. Jesus has said: "Cast not your pearls before swine."

GATHA: If one took into consideration that very often one does not know what effect the expression of opinion may produce in the mind of the hearer, what reaction it will have, desirable or undesirable, one would certainly think much before expressing an opinion.

TASAWWUF: The commentator once had a series of odd social experiences. When anything was discussed about Asia he was not invited. When the discussions were on subjects of which he knew little or nothing, he kept quiet, and then was told he was no longer welcome because he appeared to be too ignorant. But if he had any knowledge, he was not invited.

It is this attitude which has made America and so much of the West quite ignorant of foreign cultures, particularly those of the Orient. Asians on the whole have been more astute and know how to behave cleverly under such circumstances. Still, it is better to keep quiet than to cause disturbances arising out of one's ignorance.

GATHA: In the terms of the Sufis there is a phrase, **dakhl dar makulat**, interference with the expert. For a nurse to attempt to direct the surgeon who is busy doing his work, for the clerk to advise the judge while he is taking a case, for a student of the violin to tell the composer what he must do in a certain composition, all these things are meant by that phrase.

TASAWWUF: In the West, unfortunately, there is a rise of a professional class of men called "experts" who are professional opinion directors. They do not have to have much knowledge; they must have prestige. They are often able to look things up in encyclopedias and to use this as a base to criticize and contradict new ideas and new personalities who may have true knowledge.

But Sufis in general try to agree with speakers or else if the speakers are self-centered, avoid their company altogether.

GATHA: If one considered, in order to acquire a thorough knowledge in any line of work, what study, what practice, and what experience is required, and if one would consider, by the time a person has reached a certain age, what he has had to pass through and what he has had to learn, one would certainly have consideration for the expert and for age before expressing an opinion.

TASAWWUF: The British philosopher Lord Snow has declared that there are two cultures, one of which he calls the **scientific**, and the other, **literary humanist**. From a certain point of view the scientists are those who have had contact with their subject matter and have had some experience. The literary humanists, on the other hand, are those who have wide views but not always direct contact. In extreme cases these are the same divisions as the Greeks called knowers (Gnostics) and believers.

There have been clashes between these groups of human beings. In general, religions have fallen into the hands of the believers. This has turned many educated and scientific people away from religion. But religions were not founded on beliefs, they were founded on knowledge.

Yes, in spiritual training there is a certain amount of trust expected from the pupil by the teacher. This trust enables the teacher in turn to have more confidence in the pupil and base his policies on this increasing confidence.

GATHA: No doubt there are minds which show from childhood that brilliance which another person may not acquire in the whole life, and there is a genius who might show from youth a capability which can hardly be found among the experts. But even such gifted souls need consideration just the same.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufic literature, in such places as *The Inner Life* but in many other places, it is affirmed that there are advanced souls, jinn-souls, etc., on earth. The wise learn to discern these personalities by careful observation. And if we accept the cosmic evolution and the growth of the race, we would be taking many young people, maybe all young people into serious consideration. True skillfulness may be independent of age and circumstance.

GATHA: I have seen those who promised to be really something in life, who promised to accomplish something worthwhile in their lives, in spite of all their energy, enthusiasm and knowledge taking gentle steps in the path of life and halting at every other step lest they should do a wrong thing instead of the right.

TASAWWUF: Yes, the skilled persons, the advanced souls, know more about these things than do others.

GATHA: What is Sufism? It is wisdom; to learn wisdom at every step in the path of life is the only work of the Sufi.

TASAWWUF: While this may not be explained verbally, it is Kashf mostly which leads to the acquirement of wisdom.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 6

Conscience

GATHA: Conscience is not only a record of one's experiences and impressions gained in life, but it is a living voice of the heart which makes all that is in the heart, so to speak, dance in the light of justice. Therefore conscience is a world in man, a world as living as the world in which we live; and even more living than this, for the world of conscience is durable, whereas the outer world is subject to destruction.

TASAWWUF: Conscience shows the state of evolution of man. It is not necessarily the voice of God for it has come from experience and has been called the "realm of experience." For the heart sifts and throws away everything which is not in accord with its life, its joy, its vitality, its love. Besides, this conscience shows itself in the face of man; it becomes like a light, and when a person follows his conscience he emanates a sort of light.

GATHA: The word "hiding" or "covering" of a certain thing is for our limited understanding. In point of fact nothing can be covered, nothing can be hidden, since the nature of life is action and reaction. Every outer experience has a reaction within, every inner experience has its reaction in the outside of the life.

TASAWWUF: Therefore much has been written on the interaction of the life within and without. Everything we do has its impressions or samskaras. The world within may neither gain nor lose therefrom but with man it is different. When he behaves according to the sattvic pattern, although he still does not transcend karma, he adds to joy, vitality and love. And these show in the brilliance of his personality and also affect his countenance. So in this sense nothing is ever hidden.

GATHA: In the Qur'an it is said: "Their hands and feet will give evidence of their action."

TASAWWUF: This can be proved from the science and art of palmistry, but there are comparative arts by which a certain type of seer can read from the feet, from the ears, from the eyes, and perhaps from all parts of the body. This science also was presented once by Hazrat Inayat Khan but those who have the papers have kept them from the public.

In other words, man can not of his self-will transcend karma, the law of cause and effect. He can work with it or against it, and either will effect his own life and surroundings.

GATHA: The idea, from the point of view of metaphysics, may be thus explained, that there is no action which has not a reaction; every outer action has a reaction inwardly and every inner action has a reaction outwardly.

TASAWWUF: Sir Isaac Newton, the scientist, has given us the same teaching in his third law of motion. The world does not know yet how much of Newton's wisdom was derived from his occult knowledge and how much from outer experience. His laws have certainly been applied to that

which was beyond his personal control. In this sense he was a metaphysician as well as a physician. And if we look from him to Albert Einstein we find also a form of rigorous thinking and the maintenance of laws of motion which affect all things and all beings.

GATHA: The finer the person the finer his conscience, and grossness makes the conscience gross. It is therefore that one person is more conscientious about his doings than the other person, one person repents more for his mistakes and failures than another person.

TASAWWUF: Fineness of personality can be affected even by fine breathing. This sets up finer vibrations in the universe. Sometimes this is also helped by eating sattvic foods.

Grossness of personality comes from gross breathing and also a person maintains his grossness by heavy surface breathing. Also by eating tamasic foods. There are people like those of Argentina that have become gross from eating too much heavy meat. This has affected all the elements of their lives and has resulted in unstable government. Although these people have not gone to war, there seems to be little inner satisfaction among them. If they change their diet or if they were taught finer breathing, they would benefit in all aspects of life.

Meditation, concentration and devotion also help in this.

GATHA: But the most interesting thing in the law of life which one might watch is that the scheme of nature is so made that a conscientious person is taken to task more seriously by the scheme of nature for his evil-doing than an ordinary person who never thinks what he says or does.

TASAWWUF: The ordinary person has built walls around himself. They are fine for protection. For instance, if one wants to get on the subway in New York or Tokyo and some other large cities, he will find himself in a throng that does much pushing and shoving. He may be sensitive to it and feel pain. But most of the people involved do not feel that way at all. They take it as part of life as it is.

There is also a teaching, and it is found in many parts of the world, that those whom the Lord loves he chastens.

GATHA: It might seem as if even God did not take notice of his wrong-doing. According to the metaphysical point of view in the soul of the conscientious God is more awake; in the soul of the other person God slumbers, He does not take serious notice of things.

TASAWWUF: In the first year's teachings mention is made of *kasif*, the coarse and *latif*, the fine. Also one finds differences in the behavior patterns of persons under such influences and contrasts in their modes of life. But it is all God. It is all God in various stages of consciousness. As man awakens so God in man awakens and so also in this sense God awakens.

GATHA: If one were to watch one's own conscience one would no longer have a thirst for phenomena, for there is no greater phenomenon than what is going on within oneself and the action and reaction of every experience in life which materializes and manifests to one's view in various ways and forms.

TASAWWUF: During his stay in Great Britain Hazrat Inayat Khan taught the occult science in this connection. These papers have either been suppressed or disappeared, and the knowledge in them, valuable though it be, has been kept from disciple and non-disciple alike.

Observation does not enhance the ego. On the contrary, the more one becomes an observer the more dispassionate he becomes. And as he grows in this direction he obtains a fineness in life which can be of value to himself and others. The more refined, the more sensitive one becomes, the more he learns about life and the more he knows.

GATHA: A clear conscience gives the strength of a lion, but the guilty conscience might turn a lion into a rabbit. But who is it in the conscience who judges? In the spheres of conscience the soul of man and the spirit of God both meet and become one. Therefore to a soul wide-awakened, Judgment Day does not come after death, for him every day is Judgment Day.

TASAWWUF: It is then that the human will and divine will merge. There is an easy way to determine this, that when the human will is attuned to or merged with the divine will there will be evidence of Grace or Glory or Wisdom or Joy or Peace or more than one of them. These are absolute signs and can not be imitated with success. Sooner or later the one that pretends will suffer by the very laws of karma. That is why it has been said that a clear conscience gives one the strength of lions.

Conversely the greater the capacity for joy and love, the finer the conscience will become. It is all part of the same process.

GATHA: No doubt the sense of right and wrong is different in every mind. The right of one may be wrong to another, and for another the wrong of one may be right.

TASAWWUF: For instance meat eating was not proper among some of the original Buddhists. At least they did not countenance the killing of animals just to provide them with food. But as the dharma spread northward into cold countries, it was impossible. Buddhism teaches compassion above all and to compel people who live in cold countries, where very few vegetables grow would be anything but compassion. So it is not surprising to find some Buddhist peoples in central Asia who subsist largely on meat and still preach and practice compassion.

The same applies to other affairs of life. In southern Arabia (Arabia Felix) where there is an overabundance of fig trees and their fruit, all the figs on the tree belong to the owner, but those which fall to the ground may be picked up and eaten by anybody. These people still practice what is taught in the Bible, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

So it is with many institutions—you cannot always call them right or wrong. Jesus was not blamed for trespassing but for picking grain on the Sabbath.

GATHA: The law of action is too complex to be put in words. For every step advanced gives a certain amount of freedom of action, and as one goes along further and further in the path of truth his freedom is greater and greater at every step.

TASAWWUF: This is very hard to understand. People have lived under written codes and they are often afraid to transgress them. It is not always goodness that keeps them in life but often fear of

retribution. This attitude has made the God of some people into a veritable monster who has no part in reality.

In one sense tension is the only sin. It is release from tension that gives us power and magnetism. This is true in the physical world, it is also true in the mental world, it is also true in the moral world. Tension arises from participating too much in *urouj*, inhalation, which tends to make one self-centered or as if self-sufficient. *Nasoul*, the exhalation, tends to broaden our observations and endeavors. With every release of tension, with every mastering of pain, there is increase in joy.

GATHA: And yet no individual lives a life between the four walls of his individual self, every person is related and connected with a thousand ties with the others, known and unknown even to himself.

TASAWWUF: We can most easily see this in the sorry case of epidemic which makes no distinctions. On the one hand the conscientious sun and rain may benefit everybody; on the other hand, fires, earthquakes, wars and calamities may bring sorrows to everybody. It is on this point Buddhism has sometimes known itself to be vastly superior to Christianity, especially those forms of Christianity which teach individual salvation. Individual salvation is itself contrary to the institution of Holy Communion.

GATHA: Therefore the souls do not need regard for themselves only, but for the whole being, since every soul is a part in the whole scheme of nature. And conscience is the test which can voice that inner harmony in everything one thinks, says or does, thus keeping the soul tuned to its proper note.

TASAWWUF: On the surface here Buddhism is vastly superior to Christianity. But its wisdom is not different from the wisdom of Christianity. St. Paul offered this same lesson over and over again. It has been de-emphasized. The Hebrew Bible does not teach about individual souls, it teaches about God and His Kingdom and His Righteousness. After his conversion to Jesus Christ — not to Christianity — Paul still taught the same mystical and profound wisdom which had been in the hands of the mystical Jews. Only he gave it to the non-Jews. He felt that the spirit of the Bible was best applied when it pertained to all mankind and not to just a particular race, especially when that was his own race.

It is the presentation of more humane and universal outlooks which make for an increase in love and compassion. This increase in love and compassion operates toward a more perfect conscience.

Questions and Answers

Q: Is not the disapproval of conscience due to the soul's knowledge of certain consequences in the past?

A: The whole life of the world is built on conventionality and accepted ideas, and conscience is made on this edifice; conscience is not necessarily truth. Of absolute Truth there is no word to be said; all else is **Maya**, illusion, and when one looks from that point of view there is nothing wrong, nothing right. If we accept right we must accept wrong. The modern German scientist Einstein's theory is what the Hindus have called *Maya*, illusion; illusion caused by relativity. The existence of everything is by our acceptance of it; we accept a certain thing to be right, good, beautiful, and once accepted that becomes part of our life, we have accepted it to be, so it becomes. A mistake cannot be a mistake unless we accept it as such. Our conscience tells us, but we have first told our conscience, and our conscience has accepted. Dervishes prove this by saying

that fire will not burn us. Hell-fire is created in the conscience, and if in the objective world we can prove there is no such thing as fire, certainly in the conscience it does not exist either. The dervish jumps into the fire, and so proves his case. The best way of testing life is to have conscience as a testing instrument, to test and see if there is harmony or disharmony.

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 7

Conventionality

GATHA: Conventionality is no doubt man-made, as art is man-made; but, as in art is the finishing of nature, so in conventionality there is the finishing of civilization.

TASAWWUF: This can be seen in two different directions, one toward refinement and the other toward decadence. Refinement itself need not imply nor produce decadence, but decadence itself often results in the over emphasis on refinement. Perhaps also the difference between civilization and culture is that civilization implies refinement.

There was a refinement in the Roman Empire with emphasis on all sorts of mannerisms. These emphases sapped the vitality of the peoples so that when the empire was invaded there was little resistance. But we see it even more clearly in what has been called rococo, which was the dominant mood of the 18th century in Europe. Everything depended upon refinement and mannerisms. There was no sense of justice and humanity. This led to a rapid downfall of that civilization called ancient regime. It had lasted a long time but everything began tapering off, there was over-emphasis on details and customs and manners and no attention to fundamentals. The same thing occurred in China a little later than in France and for many of the same reasons. India itself easily fell before the Islamic invaders because of similar attitudes and conventions.

GATHA: Conventionality is no doubt acquired, not inherited, but at the same time the love of conventionality is inherited also. Children born in families in which conventionality has existed for a long time are born with a tendency towards it and it becomes natural for them to learn it, also while learning they do not feel it to be foreign to their nature.

TASAWWUF: It may seem odd but even in revolutionary Russia the ballet and ALL its surrounding institutions have persisted. The ballet itself originated around the court and court customs, but its influence was so great it has remained. And while one would think that a revolutionary Russia would be building its art upon folk endeavor, while folk endeavor is encouraged there are certain conventions and conventionalities which persist.

This is also true in Japan. People like to bow, especially to those they reverence. And it is a peculiar thing after World War II was ended and the nation apparently humiliated, within a few years the Olympic games were celebrated there and then the whole world, the whole actual world, bowed before the emperor of Japan as it had never bowed before anybody before. So it seems in one sense that the Japanese accomplished by peaceful means what neither war nor commercial competition could obtain.

GATHA: No doubt the extreme of all good and bad things is to be avoided. Nature has helped as far as that the soul is born on earth, and then comes education, in which is the fulfillment of the purpose of life.

TASAWWUF: Education is more than culture or the dispensing of information. True education means to bring out that which is within the personality. Indeed the very word “education” means to bring out, to lead out. That is why there is flux, uncertainty, and an innate desire to find methods which will bring culture and refinement to the young and enable them to adjust themselves to life and also life to them.

GATHA: Conventionality is not the goal, and yet this, which makes civilization, is a bridge which is connected with the goal of life. Conventionality loses its virtue, as do all things, when they become void of sincerity, for sincerity is the soul of every virtue.

TASAWWUF: If we study the history of art in the 19th century and especially that of France, we shall have objective examples before us. For example, the impressionistic school not only had theories of art and methods by which to apply scientific knowledge in artistic creation, they were the most sincere and honest of all people. And other examples can be found elsewhere.

GATHA: Now coming to the question: what is conventionality? It is a law of manner which is used in life for the convenience and comfort of man. All that is man-made is as imperfect as man. Therefore if one would try to find out the mistakes of conventionality one could find them in every civilization existing at any period of history. Nevertheless the most civilized at any period have been the most conventional people of the time.

TASAWWUF: This subject is presented from another view in *Gathas III Saluk* or *Morals*. We also find it in the book called *Dabistan* which has been translated as “School for Manners.” This was actually writings and compilations of the Moghul court made mostly by Sufis. It is also the first real book on comparative religion.

It is noticeable that in most revolutionary China some of the firmest conventions have been adopted, with what effect we cannot tell for few Westerners have really looked deeply into the heart and soul of China and the Chinese people. But if we look back and examine such dynasties as T’ang and Sung, we find the highest refinement of the time. As Karl Marx has stated, “Every economic order has within it the germs of its own destruction.” But this is something that few Marxists accept. The French philosopher Henri Bergson also examined this subject with a very broad outlook, but not with as great an influence on the world as we might hope.

GATHA: During the age of aristocracy conventionality increased in every part of the world and became the main part of education for that time. And when revolt arose against the spirit of aristocracy every good and bad thing that aristocracy possessed was condemned.

TASAWWUF: There was once an age of chivalry and if we look more closely it was also the age of rapine and robbery. Later there was a zest for wealth and with it periods of law and order, not to achieve justice, but to preserve the wealth no matter how it was obtained. And yet there was a certain justice in it which had not been known before.

The aristocracy tried to bar the doors to all excepting those of so-called noble birth. Naturally there were protests. But when the aristocracy became involved in luxury and nicety, the whole structure collapsed. As the French King, Louis XV proclaimed, “After me, the deluge.” And it was so.

The finer points of chivalry are said to have come from North Africa. The Muslim invaders, no matter how inconsiderate they were in other respects, had a certain refinement originating from Mohammed. This refinement continued in Europe until the fall of the Alhambra and persisted a little in North Africa. But there they had slavery and this became very debilitating.

GATHA: Whatever line of reform the people in the world may adopt, they cannot be free from conventionality and yet progress. These two things cannot be separated. Only what can be done is to break one form of conventionality and build another form, call the first form conventionality and the next Bohemian life, it all comes to the same.

TASAWWUF: We can see it in the long history of China that each dynasty was displaced in part or entirely without the overthrow of conventions connected in some way or other with Confucianism. If we call Confucianism a religion then the Book of Rites may be regarded as a scripture. And even after this outlook was overthrown and displaced, it only led to new forms of conventionality.

Ancient Egypt held to the same customs longer than any other land. But when the moral underpinnings were removed, those in charge of religion became a special privileged class and this led gradually to the downfall of the whole civilization. Hardly any of it persists.

In recent times there have been notable revolts among the young. Many of them failed because the participants were merely trying to replace one set of conventions with another and often these had no conception of law, order, moderation or anything. So their very leaders and participants often deserted them.

GATHA: There is one thing that must be considered, that freedom is the soul's purpose, and if, without hindering the conventionalities, one can rise above them, so as to breathe the breath of freedom, that would be the true democracy. Democracy void of culture and refinement can very well be called anarchy.

TASAWWUF: This is presented from another view in the teachings on Morals (Saluk). There the positive aspect of refinement and goodness are discussed. This brings anything but anarchy. Sometimes quite the opposite as refinement and goodness were the source of strength in the Moghul Empire which persisted in India longer than any other dynasty.

GATHA: But there are two laws which, if one considers them deeply, will become useful in living the right life. It is one thing to strive to achieve beauty, comfort, happiness and peace in life for oneself; and it is another thing to share the above-said things with the others—that is where comes the necessity of conventionalities.

TASAWWUF: In the *Gayan* it is taught that it is not wrong to seek to achieve beauty, comfort, happiness and peace. That is one phase of the purpose of life. Anything that leads to them or to their increase may be called "good"; anything that detracts from them should be considered an evil.

There is another presentation of this subject in the Gathas on "Superstitions, Customs and Beliefs" and on their Commentaries. A superstition is a custom of any group which we may not understand or accept. But every institution, every ceremony, has some rationale for it and no rationale is necessarily acceptable to all peoples.

In connection therewith, principles of harmony and music may be considered most important in life. Many theoretical scientists, especially physicists, work under an impelling intuition that there are harmonies in the world of maya. If we depart from nature to society, there is also an impelling intuition that there should be or even must be harmonies. Laws not based on harmonies may not be maintained; laws based on harmonies may persist for a long time—by this we mean legalities.

There is another view and that is that of the Bodhisattva, in other words, that of the Spirit of Guidance. Hazrat Inayat Khan has said, “What I give to you, you should give to others.” There is an impulse in the living heart to share beauty, comfort, joy and peace. When this becomes a dominant in life, one can truly be said to be on the path of the Bodhisattva.

GATHA: The one who is a slave to conventionality is a captive, the one who is the master of conventionality is the possessor of that kingdom of which it is said in the Bible, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the kingdom of the Earths”

TASAWWUF: In the Hebrew Bible the first commandment reads: “Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has delivered us from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” This means that it is by the Divine Spirit one rises above the slough of samsara and finds freedom. It is curious that along with this freedom Moses gave a thorough going code of laws, customs and principles. Many of these are based on cosmic harmonies. It is by applying the law of harmony to the affairs of earth that one can, at the same time, complete his missions on earth and still fulfill the divine purpose.

When one reaches this stage one feels he is an operation of the universe itself and not a discrete separated personality. Therefore it becomes natural for him to work for others as it is said, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Questions and Answers (July 21, 1923)

Q: Will you tell us which has the most influence on the individual, heredity or environment?

A: The heredity is the foundation of the house, and the environment is the building. And from this you can understand what is more useful and what less, and what has greater influence and what has less.

Q: The most civilized have been the most conventional people. How does it come that the artist generally is not conventional at all?

A: The artist lives in his own world. The greater the artist, the more his own world he has. He does not live in the world. All those who live in their own world, they are out of the world, they have a civilization of their own. But when it comes to the question of the worldly life, life in the midst of the world, there comes the question of conventionality. He cannot ignore conventionality, and at the same time live in the midst of the world.

Paderewski did not have time enough to comb his hair. That is another thing. But I do not think that he could have come as a president without brushing his hair. As an artist it is all right, but as a man in the midst of the world, he has a world to face.

Q: Is not conventionality very often the result of personal taste and habits? How would it be possible to know what to change and what to keep, when the conventionality of each person depends upon his environment; there would surely always be people who disagreed in this?

A: Of course, this necessitates the exclusiveness of environments. Also this is the cause of divisions of humanity. And yet no civilization can avoid it very well, however greatly advanced in its thoughts. The progress will create necessities of such kind; they will not admit it, but they will live it just the same. But I should think that the best way of understanding conventionality is the spiritual. Once a person understands the spiritual moral, he does not need to learn man-made refinement. It will come by itself, as soon as man begins to regard the pleasure and displeasure of God in the feeling of every person he meets. Then he cannot be but most refined, whatever be the position of his life. He may live in a cottage, but his manner will surpass the manner of palaces.

Another thing, when man has begun to judge his own actions, the fairness will develop in his nature. And thereafter everything he will do will be just and fair. He does not need very much study of outer conventionalities; he naturally will become conventional. And the third thing is that Sufi conception of God as the Beloved. When this conception is practiced in everyday life, and one regards it in dealing with everyone, that in everyone there is the Divine Spirit, more or less, one would regard everyone with that devotion and respect, with that thought and consideration which one would give to the Beloved God. And in these three ways this spiritual life teaches man the very depth of conventionalities. And if a civilization was built, which no doubt will be built one day, on a spiritual basis, the conventionalities of the world will become genuine and worth having.

Q: Do you think that conventionalities are fundamentally based on common sense?

A: Sometimes based on common sense, sometimes on the super sense, and sometimes beneath it.

Q: How can one make people who are lacking in education see a thing that does not exist in their eyes, where they think there is no such a thing as what the aristocratic people feel as necessary for their happiness?

A: Civilization means progress. Those who are not educated, they must be educated to understand life better. There are only two things; either go forward, or go backward. Either begin to think as everybody else without education thinks, or take the one who is not educated with you, and go forward. One thing or the other. As the inner inclination is to go forward, and to take the one who cannot understand just now gently ... that the beautiful things are for the benefit of humanity.

I should think that an ordinary man in the street, he is neglected: man turns his back to him. If he was taken closer to oneself, if he was taught with simplicity and good will, not showing that he was ignorant of beauty or culture, but showing him that in this is his real benefit, I am sure that the conditions, as bad as they are now, will not be. And there will be a better understanding between the classes as they are just now.

I will tell you a little example. When traveling in India, I was staying in a place near a Hindu temple. And there were two porters who took care of that temple. They were of Afghanistan, proud and stiff, rough and rigid in their manner, and yet in their expression there was honesty and goodness. As I passed through that way I saw them ignoring, so to speak, my entering and going out, lest they may have the trouble of observing any conventionalities. One of them came to me with a message from his master. I got up from my seat, and I received him most cordially. And since that time, every time I passed, even if five times in a day, I was very well-received with smiles, and with very warm welcome, and there was no more ignoring, because education was given to that person without hurting his feeling. That gave him the pleasure; certainly he thought that he can give to another also.

To force a virtue upon a person is pride, but to let him see the beauty of a good manner, that is education. The condition today would become much better if we would take that to heart, and know as our sacred task to approach the people who need ripening, in such a gentle way, with such sympathy and love, and to develop in their spirit that culture and beauty which will then be shared between us and them.

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 8

Life

GATHA: The life which we know is from our own life, therefore the nature and character of that life which is eternal is beyond man's comprehension. By this it is not meant that man is incapable of knowing the deeper life, but only that what man knows of life is from the knowledge of his own life.

TASAWWUF: In the philosophies of Mahayana Buddhism especially, a distinction is made between the personal life and the universal life. Or again, between the personal life and the knowledge of names and forms of the world about us. That which is concerned with the ego is called "false knowledge"; that which is concerned with the world around us which might be called "scientific knowledge" is regarded as mixed. But that which takes us beyond both our ego self and the concern with names and forms is called "true knowledge." This is beyond maya.

This does not mean we should eschew the arts and sciences. It means that the arts and sciences are like shadows arising from truth, whereas true knowledge is a light coming from truth.

Strictly speaking Tasawwuf is concerned with this true knowledge which also may be called **gnosis** in the Greek terms and **irfan** or **arif** in Sufic terms.

GATHA: The difference between the life known to the generality and the life which is unknown is that of illusion and reality. Man mocks at the idea if he be told that all this is illusion, until he dives deep and finds out by comparison that this life which is subject to birth and death and subject to changes is a life and yet no life.

TASAWWUF: We are finding today through the Sufi teachings an amalgam from and with the deeper teachings of many and perhaps all religions. But we must not become deluded by these terms "many," "all" religions. These words by themselves convey nothing. Yet if we go into the various aspects of wisdom as preserved in the scriptures and traditions of any of the great religions of the world, we find remarkable resemblances with and arising from the Sufic teachings.

GATHA: This life is like a bubble in the sea. The bubble is existent and yet in reality non-existent when compared with the sea. And yet we cannot say that the bubble is non-existent, for it merges in the same sea in which it once appeared; so nothing takes it away but its own source and its original being.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed taught, "From Allah we come and to Him we return." St. Paul taught, "In God we live and move and have our being." This is the backdrop so to speak but it is also the milieu. The fact that the focus of our eyes and beyond that the focus of our consciousness is constantly changing to adjust to the phenomena of the moment should not deprive us of the grander vision of the divine presence at all times. When we become accustomed to this divine presence we may also be aware of the particularities.

This is also a teaching of Zen Buddhism. Unfortunately, it has fallen into the hands of verbalists and dialecticians who have made it appear as obtuse thought, apart from direct experience. In mysticism thought and experience must go together or they are utterly void.

GATHA: The nature of this life of ours can be better understood by knowing its secret; and the knowledge of its secret will certainly enable us to live it to its best advantage.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism there is a term **sirr**—secret—but any commentary or consideration removes its secrecy and makes it void. Still when one dives deep into the self and into the consciousness, one always feels one is getting into greater and grander realities. Therefore, when one has the secret he is unable to convey it verbally. When it is conveyed, it is no more secret and yet one always feels the cosmic impetus and that this cosmic impetus is one's real self.

GATHA: What happens is this: man, eager and anxious to get the best out of life, owing to his ignorance, becomes a loser in the end. In order to know the secret of life one must understand the law of creation, the law of sustenance and the law of destruction. We must understand that destruction awaits every created thing, and to save it from destruction there is one mystery to be solved and that is the mystery of sustenance.

TASAWWUF: In Hinduism these three principles have been deified: creation as Brahma; sustenance as Vishnu; destruction as Shiva. Each has such infinite potentiality that each in its own way has been identified with the one supreme God. But to the one who accepts them they can only be aspects of God, not the ultimate reality of finality.

Buddha taught anicca, that all things are subject to change. This is a Shiva aspect. His ultimate principles resemble the Vishnu aspects. If there is anything absent in some aspects of Buddhism it is the Brahma like principles.

The discarding of scriptures and the attendant teaching of the historical Buddha has introduced ignorance and delusion. Buddha himself taught humanity how to attain union with Brahma. The belittling of this teaching and this process have added to confusion. The Theravadin Buddhists belittle Brahma and so the process of union with him. The Mahayana Buddhists began their teaching after having experienced what is vouchsafed in the Pali scriptures. They seem to have transcended the Dharma in its early aspects. The Pali people reject the views of those who have completed the jhanas and other Upayas (skillful means); they have left no room for this transcendent life. On the other hand, many who think they are accepting Mahayana have thrown out the underpinnings of the jhanas and the marvelous moral teachings of the Dharmapada and other early scriptures. Both views are incomplete, but they can complete each other.

GATHA: What happens is that in every activity which is directed toward a certain result, owing to one's anxiety and eagerness, one draws that result closer before the time, and in this way very often man brings about that destruction which, if he knew that it can be warded off, he can put off to a later time.

TASAWWUF: This teaching has been presented in various aspects in the earlier Gathas and the literature. The term "pala" which means in a sense pulsation can be a unit both of time and activity. By man's control over his breath he can lengthen or shorten each pala, each unit of his activity.

The wise therefore often resort to long, deep and refined breathing. This gives them control over maya. This may also lead to a longer life. It also operates to success. And it gives a scope for the Brahma-life aspect of being.

GATHA: By this knowledge one develops patience, for very often it is the lack of patience which becomes the cause of destruction. An impatient person tries to reach too soon that culmination which causes destruction; and, by patience, the one who is able to control his activities in life will become the sustainer of life and will make the best of life. In the Hindu mythology Vishnu is the Sustainer, in other words the king of life.

TASAWWUF: The subject of patience is considered in earlier Gathas. There is a vast difference between having a philosophy about patience and being patient; or even between being patient and being patient with wisdom. Solomon has said there is a time for all things and this is presented variously in the literature. But when one comes to understand the laws of rhythm and timing then there is no longer any difference between patience and wisdom.

GATHA: The science of today, wakened to the same mystery, has been able to control matter to man's best advantage, more than we have ever known before in the history of the world. If the same mystery were used from a spiritual point of view in everything one does and one wishes to accomplish in life, success would surely be one's own.

TASAWWUF: We can see it in the science of forestry, how it is possible to plant trees so that there is an ever abundance of timber. Indeed many of the sciences and art connected with economic botany and based on this. So also some people have been able to do that with animal supplies as the Finns with their reindeer and the original inhabitants of the plains of America with the buffalo (Bison) which almost disappeared.

Now the sociologists and press have uncovered Ecology, which for a long time was considered only by natural scientists. Now it is become known and this may also lead to the application of patience in other fields. But when it comes to winning the affairs of life as is explained in the earlier Gathas and their commentaries, the mastery of patience produces mastery in all affairs of life.

GATHA: In every little thing one does in life this point of view must be understood. Even in such things as eating and drinking, if one does not sustain rhythm he cannot take the real benefit of the food he eats and the water he drinks.

TASAWWUF: The nervous system in man benefits from the rhythms of habits, and then also the organs and digestive tract. This matter is discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound* and elsewhere dealing with this subject. It is now also known by many not on the spiritual path.

GATHA: The person who reaches before the time that culmination of appetite in eating will always complain of lack of digestion. So in business, industry, professions, study, meditation, in all affairs of life, whether affairs of the heart or of the head, the consideration of controlling one's activity and guiding it and proceeding gradually toward a culmination is needed.

TASAWWUF: The science and art of Esotericism (Ryazat) enables the teacher to offer the disciple that medicine—in practices, etc., which ultimately will produce the desirable condition. This is also considered in the studies on the sattvic, rajasic and tamasic rhythms.

Questions and Answers (July 21, 1923)

Q: In regarding the activity in life of the Shiva side of the deity ...?

A: It is a subject which is very vast, and it is difficult to explain that subject in two words. But that aspect of destruction and knowing about destruction can be easier understood again by something which we see in the modern science, by the medium of what they call inoculation. By putting that destructive element in one's body one makes one's body disease-proof, that that particular disease is no longer a disease, but the nature of that person. That is the method of the mystic from a spiritual point of view. That death is a death so long as man is unacquainted with it. When man eats it up, then he has eaten death; death cannot eat him. Then he knows the life eternal. That is the mystery of the Message of Jesus Christ: to seek eternal life from the beginning to the end. The mystery of eternal life is past once a person has eaten death; then he is eternal. In little things of life, one person says: "I do not like to touch vinegar. It hurts my health;" one person says: "I cannot bear to eat cream, I cannot digest it;" another person says: "I cannot stand to have sugar in the tea, I do not like it." For him the sugar is a poison. If he took the poison once, the same would become sugar for him. All things that one thinks that they are foreign to his nature, by this he makes his nature exclusive. And by becoming exclusive he makes himself subject to them in a way. There comes a time when they rule him, a situation when he is under them. A person who says: "Bitter quinine, it is too bitter, I cannot stand it" —he is in a fever, the doctor says he must have it. He dreads having it; at the same time he cannot help it. Therefore the way of Shiva was always to work against one's weaknesses. He counted them as weaknesses, not as nature. "Nature, all is my nature, but what I cannot have, that I make foreign to my nature; if I have separated it, there comes a time perhaps that I become so weak that I cannot help having it." Would you believe that the snake charmers, I have found some of them who have gradually, by making the snakes bite them time after time, developed so that poison does not hurt them. So that when they go, they just catch the snake in their hand; if the snake bites them, it does not hurt them. Shiva is pictured with a cobra round his neck; out of death he has made a necklace; it is no more a death to him.

One can go to extremes. But still it is a law that must be studied and known. The only mystery it teaches is not to consider anything in nature as foreign to one's nature. If it was not in use one would not know it. By this one overcomes all the destruction which is the source of fear and pain and disappointment.

Q: Does it mean that if there is no poison there is no moral? There is no good and no bad, if there is no poison?

A: No. It does not mean that. Good is good, and bad is bad. But at the same time one can rise above bad, or one can submit to badness. One can become weak before the evil, or become strong. The idea is to become strong before the evil instead of weak.

Q: If one sees that a thing has begun with precipitance, what should one do?

A: One should be sorry for having begun it too quickly, and one should try to regulate the rhythm. As in the beginning there is a need of patience, so also in the end. Patience should be all along. Patience is the secret of the whole thing. There are many virtues, but no virtue can be compared with patience. For it is not only a virtue, it is a power within itself.

Q: Is it perhaps God's way of making us immune to sorrow, when He sends us troubles and difficulties?

A: Every way is God's way. When He sends us troubles and difficulties, that is God's way; neither there is the law of God to send only sorrow and trouble, nor to send us only joy and happiness.

But if we are thankful, and see the hand of God in all, we would certainly be grateful—and even after sorrow—and to see in both the way of God.

Very often there are people more impressed by the doctrine of Karma, who say that if illness has come, “Well, now it is our Karma, that we have to pay the due. Then we must take it patiently.” I think there is a virtue in it also, and to see that it is from Karma. But it is not sufficient. We must know that happiness is our birthright. In our happiness there is the happiness of God. In our sorrow there is the sorrow of God. Therefore we must do everything in our power to get out of that illness, instead of thinking that the Karma had thrown that illness, and we must lie patiently, with a rock over us, and not try to push it off because it is Karma.

Q: Is it bad to be too impatient, even for spiritual development?

A: “Too” is always bad. If a person asked me: “Is it right to be too good?” It is enough to be good. Impatience of every kind is to be avoided. One loses one’s equilibrium. There is no gain out of impatience.

Q: ...?

A: Patience does not necessarily mean sloth, negligence and laziness.

Q: Is in our sorrow not God’s sorrow reflected?

A: Certainly, as in our happiness God’s happiness is reflected, so in our sorrow God’s sorrow is reflected. If God would not sorrow man would be greater than God. For man is capable of two things, and God would only be capable of one.

Q: Why did you then say that God is not pleased in our sorrow?

A: I did not mean to say that in our sorrow there is not God’s sorrow, but I meant to say that God is not pleased, as man is sometimes—in causing sorrow to man. It is impossible to have no sorrow, but we want balance in sorrow and joy. When too much joy and no sorrow then life becomes monotonous.

Q: After all is it not a good plan for one to look for the cause of their sorrow or gladness in their own thought and action?

A: Sometimes it so happens that it is not conditions which make sorrow. We allow them to make us sorrow. It is not only on their part that it depends, it depends upon both: A part of the sorrow comes from life, and a part one makes oneself. Therefore, if there is a response, one helps life to give a little joy, then the life will give one a little joy also. But if one prevents the life to give a little joy then the life becomes helpless.

There may be out of a hundred things ninety-nine in everyday life that we take too seriously. We might take perhaps one thing seriously, and of the ninety-nine say, “It matters little.”

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 9

The Word “Shame”

GATHA: The word “shame” is used in all different languages, and, more or less, the meaning of the word as understood by different people is the same. But the question what, really, the word “shame” means could be answered by saying that shame means “want.”

TASAWWUF: That is to say, something in life has remained unfulfilled. Proud people do not readily submit to shame, and there are others who are overconscientious and often develop inferiority complexes.

GATHA: A feeling which one feels in oneself of wanting something to make up one’s ideal gives the feeling which one calls shame; or when one sees in another person something wanting, it is that which brings to one’s mind that sense of want, and one expresses that sense by the word shame. It is interesting to notice that in the Persian language there is a word Kham (which can also be pronounced as “shame”), the meaning of which is “foolish,” but the true meaning is “wanting.”

TASAWWUF: In the third series of Gathas we are dealing with the purification of heart; this means the acceptance of heart. Heart does not react the same as does the outer personality. There may even be a conflict between heart and nufs. We may be praying incessantly, “Open Thou our hearts that we may hear Thy Voice which constantly cometh from within.” But prayer does not always open the heart; even meditation does not always open the heart.

The truth is that the heart is open but veiled. Purification means to lift the veil. Purification means to lift the covers over the heart. Purification means to remove all obstacles of heart, or as Buddha has said, “I see now that all mankind has enlightenment and perfect wisdom.”

If we could take the temperature before and after every emotion; if we could notice the flushing and paling and darkening from under the skin, we would realize that the heart is accepting or protesting against every activity of outer personality in action, in thought and in feeling.

GATHA: The question arises whether the conception of shame is inherent or acquired. That is where the point of view of the mystic differs from the conception of modern psychology. While modern psychology says that all this is acquired, the Sufi will say it is inherent.

TASAWWUF: For example, we find in *The Soul, Whence and Whither* and especially toward the end the teaching (and it is illustrated) that man has three bodies; or we can even say that the three body structure has man. This means that the heart body, the heart life, is real. The body of flesh is studied by materialistic science. The body of mind operates through the various nervous systems. And the body of heart operates through the bloodstream. Thus there is constant action and interaction and this also is presented in the study of Sufi metaphysics as published in *the Sufi Message*.

GATHA: The springing of this sense in a child is worth noticing, and is of very great interest to a seer. But when one sees it from a metaphysical or from a spiritual point of view, it opens up a very vast field of thought.

TASAWWUF: The best way to understand this is through deep meditation and through the practice of shahud. This means to look within. This does not mean discussing looking within; it means looking within. Whether this is by Kashf, by meditation, or by the use of the inner eye so to speak, one will discover and uncover such a vast universe, its exploration could take more than lifetimes, excepting that God has given man for either immediate or mediate uncoverings.

GATHA: One learns, by thinking about this sense of wanting, that the human soul by nature is perfect and the life of limitation on earth is imperfection; therefore the soul continually sees wanting in itself and want in others, and becomes unhappy over it.

TASAWWUF: The positive side of this is seen in *The Purpose of Life* and the Commentary thereon. Imperfection is so obvious, but imperfection as an aspect of perfection is not so obvious. In the mystical religions we find many references to blooming orchards, but the blooming is only a stage in the process between growth and fruiting. And if we go more deeply we may see that all forms of imperfection are really perfection or perfectability in operation.

GATHA: The soul who sees the want in others becomes unhappy over others. Therefore there will be no end to the unhappiness of that soul, for there will always be the want in this life of limitation.

TASAWWUF: If we take a white light and send it through a prism the various colors appear. We may say the white light is perfect, and that the colors are imperfect. This is one view.

We can conceive the soul as a tremendous white light. It goes through a prism and each manifestation of that prism from the soul may be called heart. Then the heart life, individuating, goes through another prism and is covered by the mental universe and mental life. This is a stage toward densification. And then the mental life again goes through another prism and the physical world is manifested. But these are all operations of the soul-life itself, in and by processes of densification toward what we call outer manifestation. Still as we learn in the book *Metaphysics*, these are all operations of the soul itself.

GATHA: But the soul who sees the want in itself no doubt has a chance to gain all that which is wanting, although the more a soul will advance the more it will find itself wanting.

TASAWWUF: It is like an ever-widening circle, the larger the periphery the greater the extent of the unknown. Then the greater the shortcomings appear and growth in this manner may bring dissatisfaction. But this is only one aspect of life; this is the involutory aspect; the evolutionary aspect is toward greater love, greater joy, greater ecstasy.

GATHA: It is therefore that the nobler the soul is, the more sense of shame it has, for that sense is wakened in it; and the lack of nobleness of spirit is signified by the lack of that sense. There is one person who fights against that sense, which in time becomes blunted; and he might feel happier for the moment having that sense in him so blunted. However the limitation is there.

TASAWWUF: We call these people hard. There is a hardness in the sage; there may be a hardness in an executive; and there is still a third hardness in the criminal. We might call them the sattvic, rajasic and tamasic aspects of hardness. To have joy, even to have sympathy does not mean to become negative. It may produce indeed hardness but a positive hardness which is reflected in the magnetism emanating from that person.

Outer stimulants including what are known as drugs have the defect that they cannot produce continual and continuous joy. But the awakening of the heart to exaltation can and does.

GATHA: The sense of shame is a channel which leads to that goal which is called perfection. But no doubt the more it is wakened the more one is subject to unhappiness.

TASAWWUF: But this is true only of people not under spiritual guidance. This very unhappiness may lead to the search for joy and thus to awakening. We find this theme in many places in the Sufi literature and again in the writings of Swami Ramdas, and also in many of the teachings of the spiritual teachers of this age as well as of many other ages.

GATHA: And yet true happiness is in the realization of perfection, and therefore in the end he does not lose much, in spite of the apparent gains that come to the one who is shameless. In practical life in the midst of the world the shameless has apparently more ease of action and of movement likewise. The one who has the sense of shame awakened, for him life is difficult.

TASAWWUF: This is almost autobiographical of Hazrat Inayat Khan himself, who was a most sensitive man, but for the cause of God he lived in the largest and most materialistic of cities, to perform his holy missions. But it gave a program and encouragement for other sensitive people who were not always so strong or capable to meet exigencies.

GATHA: But the sense of shame living in the heart of man is like a pearl in the shell. And as long as it is in the shell it may not fetch its price, but there is a pearl just the same. Whatever price the pearl fetched, the market-place is not the place of the pearl; its real place is the crown of the king.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has referred to the Pearl of great price. It is to be found in the heart of man. It is mentioned often in the various scriptures usually as a symbol.

GATHA: So a person with real, living quality may not always be appreciated, may have troubles in life, and yet sometimes his qualities will fetch their proper price. And if they did not fetch the proper price still there is no loss, for beauty in all its aspects is beyond price.

TASAWWUF: The history of Mohammed shows the dilemma in the hearts of man. He was regarded as most trustworthy, he was Amin, the most honest man of the community. And it was very annoying when he received the revelation of Allah that was so disturbing to many of his fellow citizens. But his mystical development only enhanced his virtues until light shone from his very body, in the physical as well as in the psychical and symbolical senses.

GATHA: Where does man learn virtue? He learns it from that sense of shame.

TASAWWUF: In this sense shame is often connected with the intuitive faculty. Yet it is also unconscious, that the heart feels any wrong whether done to oneself or by oneself. Sufis consider Rahmat

the highest of virtues which appears as Rahman and Rahim, compassion and mercy, so to speak. These are connected with the living heart, they are the life of the heart and they so express themselves.

No doubt some day man will learn to measure the poisons and powers of the heart and bring together the relation between virtue (meaning vital strength) and health and life.

GATHA: And what develops virtue in man? It is again the same sense.

TASAWWUF: This has already been explained.

GATHA: Often this sense works as a sharp knife upon a feeling heart, but it only makes it a cut diamond. By this we come to a realization that what is most precious in life is feeling. And if the feeling sense loses its sharpness, it is as if man, who is the salt of the earth, has lost savor; and there is nothing else from where it can be gained.

TASAWWUF: When we can identify the heart with the throne of God (Allah), when we can feel the all-absorbing and all resurrecting life there though there may be even increased sensitivity, we can become the masters to the degree that we will not lose our balance, that we will not react to any external forces that produce what ordinarily would be considered harmful effects. When we rise above effects, when we rise above causation, when we identify the heart with the throne of God, then the brilliance of feeling will shine out, bringing courage, strength, compassion and mercy.

GATHA: In all times of the world's history whenever a civilization had touched its summits, this sense was developed in the generality. For the heights of every civilization show the fineness of human feeling, which is the highest of all aspects of culture.

TASAWWUF: This human feeling and consideration is considered the highest of morals among the Sufis and it is certain that when there have been great Sufi monarchs, beginning perhaps with the first Khalifs of Islam, there was every evidence of it.

This was particularly true with Emperor Akbar in India. The great historian Lane Poole and others have regarded Akbar as almost a Dharma-raja, meaning a king who was the very personification of purity and nobility.

This was also true of Asoka and Harsha who were Buddhists and the semi-mythological Vikram Rajah. We find this among many great rulers in Islam who were Sufis and occasionally among Christians, but not often; and among some great rulers of China and even more so among the long history of Egypt.

GATHA: The manner of the saints has been to approach God with this feeling. It is this feeling which made the Prophet Mohammed cover himself with a mantle every time when the thought of God came.

TASAWWUF: In modern Sufism there is much stress on Akhlak Allah which means both "the manner of Allah" and "to act as if in the presence of Allah."

GATHA: It is the same feeling which gives a person modesty. And all the different forms of prayer have come from this inner tendency of man in the presence of the God of perfection.

TASAWWUF: The Message of the day is to help spread this attitude among mankind and to continue it onward.

Questions and Answers (August 15, 1923)

Q: False accusation fills a child with a sense of shame, though there is no justification.

A: Anything wrongly suggested has always a wrong result. Sometimes a person carries a sense of shame too far, but it has its own value when it is used rightly.

Often people have done great things, beyond their ordinary power, taken hold of by their sense of shame. They get such a desire to amend that they are awakened from a sense of death, they make superhuman efforts and they live again.

Repentance is the outcome of shame.

When the sense becomes more living the person feels the lack in himself and so he respects the lack in others. So what he does is to cover the lack of another, instead of exposing it by criticism. When he develops further he sees other persons exposing their own lacking. So the pain of the wise and of the saintly souls is the pain they feel for others as if for themselves. They feel it like a knife; spiritual life means to feel the life of another man as one feels one's own life. It looks so cruel on the part of man to expose the lack of another. It may satisfy his vanity or bring him a moment's pleasure, but from the spiritual point of view it looks very cruel. One can overcome this by feeling the oneness of life, the same life in him and in me, so his pain, his sorrow, his pleasure I share, because his life is my life. So people cannot but be sympathetic to all in life, and have more or less love, but the difficulty is they do not know how to use it to their best advantage.

Q: Will you please explain from the lesson on "shame:" "The sense of shame is like a pearl in a shell?" And further: "The price cannot be given in the market-place. The place of that pearl is the crown of the king?"

A: That means that a virtue like this is appreciated and understood and rewarded fully in its right place. That is why it is said, "In the crown of the king." A person with this virtue is not appreciated by everybody. The person who has not got this virtue cannot appreciate it. Therefore for a greater person a greater place is required.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 10

Tolerance

GATHA: Tolerance is the sign of an evolved soul, for a soul shows the proof of its evolution in the degree of the tolerance it shows.

TASAWWUF: Actually the soul does not evolve. Only the veils that hide it become lifted and it shows more of its true nature through body, mind and heart. And as in a certain sense soul is all there is; it is also true as *Gayān* says that heart speaks to heart and soul to soul.

As the soul is the very emanation of God, it finds nothing extraneous, nothing foreign. Therefore in this sense it is always regarding itself and it must, by its very nature, be tolerant toward itself.

GATHA: The life in the lower creation shows the lack of tolerance. The tendency of fighting with one another which one sees among beasts and birds shows the reason at the back of it, that intolerance is born in their nature.

TASAWWUF: This subject is dealt with at great length in *The Mysticism of Sound*. When the soul is covered the light is covered. When the light is covered there are shadows. There may be grades of light and when these grades of light interfere with each other also there are shadows.

As the soul evolves it becomes more covered. Its light becomes obscured. It feels limitation, it feels separateness, it feels a sort of individuation. And out of this rivalry and enmity begin.

GATHA: By a psychological study of the nature and the tendencies of the lower creation one will find that the evolution that takes place among birds and beasts shows this tendency of intolerance becoming less and less.

TASAWWUF: Thus many birds live in groups: we may call them flocks, coveys, etc. Many non-flesh eating animals, especially, also live in herds. Lions, apes and elephants which are sometimes classified among the higher beasts show more and more family tendencies. Man has also noticed it among large sea animals such as whales and dolphins. The intolerance seems to diminish. The mutual respect seems to rise.

GATHA: It is the love element developing in their nature which brings them together to form flocks and herds. The same tendency of intolerance sometimes manifests in a more distinct and pronounced form in man. The reason is that man's responsibility in life is greater, his difficulties are many, and he lives in a crowd which is larger than a flock or a herd.

TASAWWUF: All the kingdoms of nature manifest in man. It can almost be said that every aspect of nature is in him. Not only are aspects of the external world in man but also of the internal world; thus also we find in man the deva which is very tolerant, the asura which is very intolerant, and the rakshasha which is most intolerant. They all appear in human form at some time or another, and this

was especially true in the German peoples as manifested in the Great War of 1939-1945. Here we find every aspect from the most tolerant to the most intolerant manifesting among a certain people and it cannot be most easily explained by such words as “environment” and “class” etc. We have these same phenomena but not this tremendous gap of heart expression.

GATHA: At the back of this tendency there is a most wonderful secret hidden, the depths of which are fathomed by the mystic. The mystic who sees God within and without, both, who recognizes God in unity and in variety both, the mystic realizes that it is the One Who has known Himself to be One, Who does not know of two, Who feels uncomfortable and agitated, and shows a revolt on knowing that “There exists another besides Me.”

TASAWWUF: Thus there is a feeling of pure light and also of shadow, and this feeling gives rise to the agitation of nufs, the ego. Innately, the soul knows that none else exists, but because of its coverings it falls into states of illusion and delusion. These give rise to eccentricity, selfishness and intolerance.

There have been on earth schools that teach “I am God,” and others also that teach the opposite. Generally, these are schools of affirmation borne of self-will and not of awakening; thus, they conflict and confuse. The Sufi rises above this difficulty by reciting sacred phrases and through such repetitions begins to rise above the distinctions and differences which divide men.

GATHA: And it is therefore that the birds have the tendency to fight with their own element, and so the same thing one finds among the beasts. Among men, man is the enemy of man, and woman of woman. The rivalry that exists between professions and between people of the same position and between nations shows the same thing, that one principle that the nature of the ego, through every name and form, revolts against another, especially of the same name and form, in some way or other. One may give a thousand reasons for intolerance. They exist too, but the inner reason is one and the same in all aspects of intolerance. The Sufis have called it **Kibria**, which means “vanity,” vanity of the One to Whom alone it belongs.

As one evolves spiritually so a person seems to rise above this natural tendency of intolerance, for the reason that he begins to see, besides himself and the second person, God; and he unites himself with the other person in God.

TASAWWUF: There is a tradition, “Ten dervishes on a single carpet but only one rooster in a barnyard.” Even most gentle animals sometimes enter into fierce rivalries, usually over sex but sometimes for other reasons such as food and living space.

It is noticed here that it is stated, “Man is the enemy of woman and woman of woman.” It is not very difficult to get a group association with men. It has long been done with armies and with the sailors of a single ship or with hunting exhibitions. And then in the building crafts which led to the rise of civilization.

Group endeavors, group dangers, group pioneerings, group enterprises, have tended to bring men closer to each other. Group meditations, group breathing practices and group concentrations can help establish inner attunement among mankind. And as love awakens and also as womankind participates with mankind, sooner or later women will also find ways to get along better with each other.

GATHA: It is the third person whose love or devotion makes two people unite. For instance, the children of the same parents love one another in realization of the idea that they are of the same parents; the people of one nation love one another in the thought that they belong to one nation.

TASAWWUF: The triangle has had some such significance since ancient times. We see it in the family and again we see it in the divine symbols and again we find it in the tremendous architecture of the pyramids. And this not only in the great pyramids of Egypt but in American pyramids and other structures. Also in the chords of thirds in music. It seems to be the basis for static harmony out of which dynamic harmonies grow.

There has to be a common bond to unite “two” in whatever effort the two are combined. It can be done by a third person, by a geographical or political uniting or by a common cause, on whatever level that be. And when it is based on love and devotion, it can become a lasting bond. And the same is true in tests of strength that a bond of this type, even a bundle of sticks may prove to be mighty.

GATHA: And when two people tolerate one another with the thought of God as their Creator and as their support, then they are more evolved, because they can tolerate anyone of any country or race, of whatever name or form.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi outlook is first to establish the love. The love has to be established to be real. The love is the bond and not some philosophy about it. It sends out real rays, real vibrations. We can begin with individuals, then families, then class or neighborhoods, and then nations and races until the whole of humanity is involved. But it must be real, it is of little value as an empty sentiment.

Love is the strength, the joy, the power. And when the forces of mutual loves are developed and enveloped in a single bond there is a power that comes from them that is miraculous. Therefore the Invocation of “Toward the One” and United with All” is used by disciples at all times until not only does it offer a living ideal but also it brings the very power, the very inspiration which every soul is seeking.

Now we introduce rituals, dances and efforts in everyday life, even collective undertakings. When they are based on love, when they are bound in divine love, they are sure to succeed.

GATHA: But when a soul has evolved still more, tolerance becomes the natural thing for him.

TASAWWUF: With all the turmoil going on we can see both the awakening of sympathy and a growing measurement of mutual respect. It is not always measurable but it is there. And if one asks a question whether it is the mechanical and scientific evolution that is bringing this about or whether it is the natural evolution in all aspects which brings this about, including also the spiritual evolution, the answer is that these things go together. They really cannot be separated although in name and form it may see to be so.

And when we see the efforts toward universal law, these are also efforts to universal respect and complete humanity.

GATHA: Because the highly evolved soul then begins to realize “Another person is not separate from me, but the other person is myself; the separation is on the surface of life, but in the depth of life I and the other person are one.”

TASAWWUF: One is often introduced into comparative or esoteric religion and told that as one goes more deeply one will find more unity, not separation. This is so. Then the question comes about how to go more deeply. It can be done even at the intellectual level, that one can go into Sufism, Mystical Christianity, Vedanta, Zen, and Avatamsaka Buddhism and find the Universal Oneness posited above all else.

Then the question comes of realization, experience and application into the everyday life. So it is necessary to work for Christ and his "love ye one another" on both the theoretical and practical levels. Only one can see it also from depths of any religion, from all religion and from the spiritual experiences which are the outcomes of devotion and esotericisms. Or as Walt Whitman has beautifully portrayed it, "In all men I see myself."

GATHA: Therefore tolerance is not learned fully by trying to follow it as a good principle. It is learned by having the love of God, by attaining the knowledge of self, and by understanding the truth of life. There is no need to ask further about a person who, you think, is spiritual; once he says, "I tolerate all," this is certainly the proof of his spirituality.

TASAWWUF: Thus we see Sufism and the Cause of God spreading as a blending, as a binding, as a catalyst to bring various peoples together, not demanding leadership but fellowship and brotherhood.

Questions and Answers (August 4, 1923)

Q: Does the law of attraction work on a scientific basis, according to the law of vibrations?

A: Yes, there is a law hidden under every activity; and therefore certainly there is a law of vibration in every activity. No movement is free from the law of vibration. Therefore in attraction and repulsion also.

Mastery comes from evolution of the soul. And the sign of mastery is to conquer everything that revolts one. And that is tolerance. And the souls who have attained to some degree that spiritual mastery, they will see with me, not only with people, but even with the food, that where a person will say, "This I do not like, that I will not eat," the soul who has gained the mastery, nothing it rejects; it may not approve of it, it may not be especially attracted to it. And then with the weather, the masterly soul will not say, "It is too hot," or "too damp," or "too dry." "We do not tolerate what is before us." It is hard to tolerate, but we cannot help to meet it; the difference is in tolerating it. The whole system of the Yogis, especially of the Shiva Bhaktis, is based on making oneself acquainted with something that the nature revolts against. In this way they could go too far in tormenting themselves. The extremity in all things is not right. At the same time that is the principle.

It is not the food but how the person accepts it, if he eats it. Thought works with simple food like medicine; if he says, "It will do me good," it can cure. There are Yogis just now who will drink poison and not die, or jump into the fire and not be burnt. It is a practice to see that even the element such as fire Because you will find the intolerating souls most unhappy; everything hurts them, food, water, air, the change of the weather, every person they see hurts them. Where should they be, uncomfortable in the house, and restless outside?

Q: What to say to such a one?

A: It is very difficult. Therefore that tendency of rejecting, dislikes, prejudices, it is that tendency which must be conquered. It gives such a mastery.

I remember my own experience once that in the school my teacher said that there was a tree, that the leaves of that tree are very good for a person. They purify the blood—that did not interest me. But, he said, it is so bitter that you cannot drink it, nor taste it, nor touch it. I thought, “I think I can!” I did not care for the medicine, only I thought, “Cannot? No one can?” I went home and gathered leaves, and everybody could not understand why I was gathering the leaves. It is more bitter than the water in the sea. I drank it, and my satisfaction was that I did not even make a face. I was not tired of it, I continued for five, six days.

It is a demand on the part of a person, if he wants to fight against all things. That gives the mastery. One does not fight mostly. One always fights against things that prevent getting what he wants. If one could fight with oneself, then one would fight against the tendency of rejecting; that leads in the end to mastery.

Q: I thought it was no use trying to force yourself.

A: As a general principle in life there is no use to force. But to train oneself is another thing. It is a method.

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