



Gatheka 6
The Intoxication of Life
of
Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

with Commentary
by
Murshid Samuel L. Lewis
(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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

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

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

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

Your receipt acknowledges our permission.

Editor's Note: The Gathekas as they are reprinted here are the ones Murshid SAM made the commentaries on, and are therefor not gender-inclusive. For the gender-inclusive Gathekas, see under the papers from Hazrat Inayat Khan

©1978 Sufi Ruhaniat International

SRI Secretariat
PO Box 51118
Eugene OR 97405
USA

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

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

GATHEKA: There are many different things in life which are intoxicating, but if one would consider the nature of life one would think that there is nothing more intoxicating than life itself.

TASAWWUF: Things intoxicate and life intoxicates but there is a difference between the forms of intoxication. The intoxication of things, in thing-ness, comes from the world of variety, that the soul which has been accustomed with unity and simplicity finds itself, so to speak, in the world of multiplicity and complexity and finding itself in such a world, is lost in wonder.

Actually it is not the soul that enters into such intoxication but nufs, the self. As self-consciousness increases more and more and as there is curiosity and wonder, instead of concentrating on a few ideals, or being attached to the life within, one becomes confused in variety, seeing no particular order, no particular aim in life, and this is the intoxication of variety, which arises from denseness by going from the fine to the coarse.

The opposite intoxication is the intoxication of life, life that increases as one rises above the denseness of earth in going from the coarse to the fine. Every step forward and especially every spiritual step, every step in the spiritual journey which enlarges the scope of consciousness also increases the possibility of intoxication. We see this first in the eyes of the infant and it comes whenever there is a journey toward the light, for the intoxication which comes from light is the intoxication of life itself.

The **thing** is called **Dhatu** in Sanskrit and **shay** in Sufic terms and is the result of a concentration. Things exist as separate formations in the mental world and on the earth plane. The thought holds the form and the destruction of thought leads to destruction of form so even the earth which appears to be eternal, is nevertheless held together by thought.

Man may be negative to thing or positive to thing. Man is negative when he draws from it, gets something from it, learns from observation of things; this leading to science. Man is positive to a thing when he gives something to it, molds it, beautifies it.

Man thinks he may draw life from the creation, from the plant, from the animal, even from another person. When we do that we attune ourselves to the psychic level. Sometimes this is necessary, as in the partaking of food, herbs and medicine. It is then that the magnetism of the body may be low and it is permissible, according to occult law to draw virtues, especially from the plants, to heal. For the breath of the plants and the atoms of the plants sometimes compensate for our weaknesses. Otherwise it is, as Jesus has said, that he who would save his life shall lose it, for no man can really benefit through the suffering of another.

For example, it is possible to enjoy the beauty of a flower and it is possible to draw magnetism from a flower, but it is also possible to give magnetism to the flower when one has it oneself. There are saints who have such sweetness that they can bestow it upon the flowers and they can have gardens which are fragrant and life-giving. Thus the practice of harmlessness is really a practice of selflessness. To try to be harmless may only tighten the garb of self; it is by loosening the garb of self that the heart's desire is obtained.

Those who take up the path of healing learn to draw the magnetism from the sphere for the sake of others. In doing this they pull some of the psychic vibrations of others toward themselves. We read in the story of Jesus that he could drive the disease from a person into pigs; then he sent the pigs into the water. In the story the pigs were cleansed and purified. This story also has another meaning, that in the healing of disease the disease is driven into the lower nature and the higher nature healed first, and then afterwards the body, the animal nature, symbolized by the pigs, is healed.

All of life can be viewed from the standpoint of essence and from the standpoint of things, thing-ness. In the Sufi training, through the practice of esotericism, one may draw the life and the magnetism from the sphere to the heart. This produces living magnetism. In the extreme degree, as in Zikr and in love, there is an intoxication which is an intoxication of life itself and this is such that it always increases the horizon of the devotee and the test of intoxication of life is that it comes with increase of horizon while the intoxication of thing-ness produces no such increase, arouses the psychic form and then brings one back into delusion, Samsara.

GATHEKA: In the first place, we can see the truth of this idea by thinking of what we were yesterday and comparing it with our condition of today. Our unhappiness or happiness or riches or poverty of yesterday is a dream to us, only our condition of today counts.

TAASSAWUF: What we are reflects in a certain sense our appreciation of what life is, of what God is. The heart is the mirror of the soul and the ego is the reflection of the absorption of our life's experiences in the mirror of self-consciousness. When we are attached to the past, we become identified with this mirror, the ego or nufs.

It may be asked, is it not true that we naturally remember our own experiences and think with our minds? Yes, this may be true; only the Sufi would say that we think through our minds and remember therewith. The mind is an accommodation for a faculty; just as the eye is an accommodation for sight which is greater than the eye of the body, so the mind is an accommodation for thought which is greater, perhaps than mind with all its greatness.

It is natural to remember one's past, and it is just as possible to remember the past of those near and dear to us. This shows that when there is heart-unification and attunement, the same faculties of mind which we regard as faculties of self can also become the faculties of not-self; that when the heart makes one, the mind also reflects the light of the heart of the beloved. When we consider that the life of the ego under the spell of what the Sufis call Nufsaniat and the Hindus call Samsara is a constant change, we are always moving in change, then by reflection we may come to feel that this constant change must be intoxication. When we become attached to memory we become too fixed and when we become attached to change we become too fluidic, whereas the proper life, according to the Sufis, is neither to be too rigid or too fluidic, to maintain a balance and to keep in rhythm so far as possible with the conditions.

The ordinary man who does not know the essence of mind speaks of "my mind." The sage is not so limited, recognizing both the universal akasha which is the mind-world, and the particular portion of it which is borrowed by nufs to become the personal mind. The personal mind when intoxicated is intoxicated by thing-ness while the mind of the sage, when it is intoxicated, is intoxicated by life.

Many faculties such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathic powers, psychic powers and occult powers come when one is able to glance a little outside the personal mind. Sufis do not attach much

importance to these in most instances, except that when man can see into the mind of not-self as well as into the mind of self, that is a great step forward. Then by harmonization of self and not-self, of the personal and impersonal, he rises above the intoxication.

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

TASAWWUF: What is ours? According to Sufi metaphysics we borrow our fine qualities from the sphere of heart, our mental qualities and ability from the sphere of mind and our physical body and all possessions from the earth plane. So in one sense nothing is ours, all belongs to God, as the scripture states, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." At the same time it is also true as the Bible says that the Lord has given the earth to man for man's pleasure and possession and as the Qur'an states, "We made thee out of Our light and out of thy light We made heaven and earth;" thus man is superior to creation. And from a still deeper view—that the soul of man being the soul of God—everything can belong to us; even our wealth may be unlimited.

If there is any wrong view it is that things constitute riches, we identify the things and the riches. The atoms and molecules of creation, the things that we call "ours" become attached to us by a psychic bond. Sometimes this bond becomes very tight, drawn to the personality and then when it is broken we feel the loss. And the loss we feel when a particular thing is taken from us, even when our loved ones appear to be taken from us, is mostly a psychic loss. Sometimes it happens that the attachment becomes so great, however, that we even lose power and magnetism also.

This loss is due to attachment—attachment growing out of the intoxication of things, of name and form. The wealth seeker, however, ceases to be intoxicated by a few things, he is unsatisfied, he wants more, he wants to possess more. He may build a huge park and have many flowers, and the sun may shine there and the birds come to sing and he is unaware of it, he does not enjoy it, it is not enough. His attachment, his longing is so great that he cannot even enjoy beauty. Before his very eyes his soul has created a paradise, a heaven and he cannot enjoy it.

This is a great pity. That is why the rich man does not enjoy the life in the hereafter. When he has all the conditions here, he does not enjoy, he longs for more wealth, greater power. The passing away of the physical body does not change his mental state or his psychic condition. That is why even in the midst of heaven he would not feel happy.

GATHEKA: If one can consider one's fancies through life one will find that at every stage of one's development in life one had a particular fancy; sometimes he longed for certain things and at other times he did not care for them.

TASAWWUF: This shows the instability of nufs, the ego. If what we consider our ego was the true self, it would reveal a constancy, a constancy that would not change through life. If there is no constancy, there cannot be any truth; for there to be a truth, that truth would have to be eternal or not be truth. Facts, which many people confuse with truth, are the shadows of truth; facts arise from things—truth (Haqq) from essence (Zat). This is the Sufi teaching based upon divine wisdom.

The nature of the senses is such that whenever they contact an object there is an attachment. This attachment begins only as a vibrational activity; if persisted in it produces an atomic or gravitational attraction, and it is from this attraction that the intoxication of fancy arises.

Fancy is a peculiarity of human nature, dependent upon the stage of nufs. There is the fancy of momentary delight which easily grows tired, and is inconstant; this is the state of childhood. And there is the opposite state of fancy when there is habit, that one becomes strongly attached to objects, even becoming, so to speak, the slave of the objects. This is true mostly of older persons and of those of fixed ideas.

The childish flitting fancy leads to the intoxication which arises from thing-ness; in the other state there is no intoxication, even the intoxication of life being defective, and the love-nature shows lack of development. The spiritual person avoids these two extremes by the practice of indifference, and by love and devotion to his ideal.

In pursuing the God-ideal to avoid intoxication and fixity, it is a mistake to consider God apart from life and thing-ness; the Orthodox have so conceived God that He may be regarded as separated from the world, from creation, from humanity. The Buddhists, taking the opposite course, have come close to atheism. According to the Sufis, the God of the Orthodox and the No-God of the Buddhists are conceptions only, opposites based upon a deeper Truth which can reconcile them. The reality of God is beyond conception; what we make, we also can mar.

GATHEKA: If one can look at one's own life as a spectator one will find that it was nothing but an intoxication. What once gives man a great satisfaction and pride at another time humiliates him; what at one time a person enjoys at another time troubles him; what at one time he values extremely at another time he does not value at all.

TASAWWUF: Man in this condition has not found himself. People of nufs lauwama are often inconstant, emotional, changeful. This spirit is natural for children and is also found in those who have been called "young souls." The change caused by satiety or pain is an indication that one has been deluded as to real happiness.

No one is to be blamed for seeking happiness. The sage does not blame: understanding the nature of lauwama, he knows that the nufs is what it is. With such people the sage does what he can to help them, else protects himself. This protection is neither wrong nor selfish if it is done in God's name by the use of the Divine Attributes. Nevertheless when it is possible to help, the Sufi should help.

Shifayat helps through healing. We may distinguish the diseases in the different grades of nufs and also he may distinguish the grades of nufs through the diseases. Thus physical diseases of over-satiety such as gout, obesity, fatty degeneration and alcoholism, and those of undernourishment or wrong nourishment such as anemia, pellagra, scurvy, malnutrition and rickets.

Diseases of nufs lauwama and nufs mutmaina come mostly from psychic and psychological causes. Those of lauwama are sometimes called emotional and there is no doubt that they arise from the breath in the same manner as the emotions, from the same combinations or absence of the elements in the rising breath. Cancer, diabetes, influenza and most fevers and diseases out of dualistic and individualistic tendencies come from this state.

Diseases of nufs mutmaina appear mostly in the intellectual persons and are generally called nervous diseases, although some come also from lack of breath. Lack of breath or improper breathing usually produces diseases of this type and tuberculosis, asthma, worry and nervous troubles often belong to this classification.

Lauwama persons are often talkative and talkative persons also show lauwama. Every word spoken deprives man of some magnetism and too much speech brings psychic loss. If carried too far this condition may end in obsession. Practice of meditation, repetition of phrases such as the use of the Sufic wazifas and Darood are always valuable to prevent or counteract such conditions.

The spiritual teacher protects himself in a different manner than the Shifayat. The Shifayat appears to heal as if one were ministering unto another, but the teacher heals as if a person were healing himself. The teacher who regards the seeker or pupil as other than himself is at that moment no longer teacher. The teacher is not a personality; the teacher is an accommodation for the Divine Spirit; the teacher puts on the mantle of God and avoids all dualistic tendencies. Therefore those who are to be teachers or become teachers should do everything possible to conceal any sign of pain, trouble, emotion or reaction; they, more than anybody else, should experience the intoxication of life, the divine intoxication.

Then there is another standpoint which is very different from the standpoint of the healer or the teacher, and that is the experience of man himself. We all undergo changes, changes which are not necessarily evil. It is not the change that is harmful, it is only that it should be in the direction of the widening horizon, toward a larger outlook, a more tolerant attitude. Thus we come to rise above the distinctions and differences which divide men.

Does this attitude stop pain? No, not necessarily, for even Christ suffered pain. Does this ease pain? No, it does not ease pain but what it can do is to bring about indifference to the small pains so that we may even cease to regard them as pains and they will not trouble us. Does this lead to happiness? Perhaps, but if happiness becomes only a higher form of intoxication in thing-ness, then there must be a still higher state that brings us the peace. It thus becomes a matter of choice on our part, which may be called the human will, which gives to man apparent freedom in selecting his values.

Therefore it is not necessary in one sense to seek God, if one uses the word "God" in the orthodox sense. Man's work is to rise above the intoxication which is momentary, binding, and to seek that which is not so momentary, which brings freedom. Therefore Sufis have traveled on the path of love, harmony and beauty, seeking the perfection thereof, and finding in Allah that perfection.

GATHEKA: If man can observe his actions in everyday life and if he has an awakened sense of justice and understanding, he will find himself doing something which he had not intended to do or saying something that he would not like to have said, or behaving, so that he says, "Why was I such a fool?"

TASAWWUF: The difference between the wise man and the ordinary man is that the ordinary man cannot see life apart from himself and the wise man can see life apart from himself. Knowing God to be all in all, the wise constantly strive to attain the divine point of view, and to look upon everybody with equanimity and compassion. It is this which brings the awakened sense of justice.

Many persons believe they are just and perhaps they are just in a limited sense, they are good people. For the generality that is all right; for the seeker of God, that is not enough. The one who circumscribes his sense of justice by his limited vision is seldom able to extend justice. The wise man judges himself first and by this he realizes his own shortcomings, his own faults first. When a person can perceive his own folly, he has arrived at the beginning of wisdom.

Now it is not necessary to be looking at oneself or to be judging oneself. This may produce a limited vision. When the sense of justice really awakens, every departure therefrom brings a certain loss, a certain feeling of loss of magnetism or loss of peace of mind. This reveals **Kham**, the sense of shame. When the Sufi possesses **Kham** he knows instantly when he has done something wrong and is thus able to correct himself accordingly.

GATHEKA: Sometimes he allows himself to love someone, to admire someone; it goes on for days, for weeks, for months, years (although years is very long); then he feels, "Oh, I was wrong." Or there comes something that is more attractive; then he is on another road, he does not know where he is or whom he loves.

TASAWWUF: It is the nature of the heart to love, it cannot help it. At the same time, the self, so to speak, is also drawn to the not-self in love. In the ammara stage, when there is little vision, the instincts predominate and when the instinct is satisfied the love may be ended. And this person is not so very different from the animal; when this kind of love makes its appearance, especially in the more advanced, it is known as tamasic love by the Hindus.

Then many persons, especially of nufs lauwama have what might be called rajasic love, which in its lowest form is really passion. Passion might be called the shadow of the fire of love, the reflection of love. Just as there is direct light and indirect light, there is direct love and indirect love, and the indirect love is passion. For in the indirect form we do not perceive the cause of the attraction, and when the fire of love comes it consumes the magnetism and after awhile there is repulsion and satiety. In true love there is no repulsion, no loss.

Other persons are not sure of their love. Whenever they are not sure, there is uncertainty, there may be doubt, and then there cannot be love. Sooner or later grief will come instead. Many persons learn to rise above this grief and inconstancy through prayer. The initiate, by his heart-contemplation, can always avoid this condition.

GATHEKA : In the action and reaction of his life sometimes man does things on impulse, not considering what he is doing, and at other times, so to speak, he gets a spell of goodness and he goes on doing what he thinks is good; at other times a reaction comes and all this goodness is gone.

TASAWWUF: Sufis recognize two states, **bast** and **kabz** which are opposites and between which the nufs is thrown in the movements of breath, controlled or uncontrolled by thought. In **bast** the horizon grows wider and it is then that the spell of goodness may come for one sees beyond the self. This comes also in springtime under the influence of solar magnetism, and it comes also under the influence of beauty. It is beauty which wakens the heart, leading to goodness; the goodness which is not close to beauty may be only a passing goodness. And, according to spiritual teachings, one who feels conscious of his own goodness is not really good at all. When he does what he considers a favor to another, the other one doesn't feel it, will not appreciate it, and then the doer of goodness is convinced of the ingratitude of humanity.

This shows that the goodness did not come from the heart, it arose from nufs. After that comes the reaction to **kabz**, the state of contraction. Then sometimes man becomes pious and dedicates his goodness to God, but often he becomes a cynic. While goodness devoted to God may be a step forward, when one at the same time ignores humanity, it may be questioned if what he calls goodness has any value, any life. According to the wise, it may be only another form of vanity; in other words, of egotism.

GATHEKA: Then in business and professions and commerce man gets an impulse, "I must do this, "I must do that," and he seems to have all strength and courage, and sometimes he goes on and sometimes it lasts only a day or two and then he forgets what he was doing and then he does something else.

TASAWWUF: The sway of goodness and strength and courage come under the sway or **wakt** of bast. It may come like the breath or the seasons in a natural manner. The ignorant man, in his ignorance, does not know that he is a changeful person, the victim of changing moods and conditions. This sway of bast brings what he desires and then after that comes kabz, and then everything seems to go wrong; he becomes self-conscious and may end in self-pity and then pass back to coolness without knowing why.

Sufis know how to control and take advantage of wakt. Only a few persons who are sometimes called kemalic are able to control them entirely, yet with each expansion of consciousness, with the growth of the horizon, man develops. While in the body there must be kabz to draw the atoms together, to hold them, and for the mind also there must be kabz and in concentration there must be kabz. If there were only bast or mostly bast man would not eat or drink, he would fast, become a celibate, an ascetic; then he might practice harmlessness even to the extent of becoming actionless, and then go to idleness, laziness and listlessness, showing the lack of life.

The spiritual person therefore maintains a balance between states, but not a static balance so that he cannot extend his vision. Murakkabah is not a science of concentration for the purpose of attraction alone, there has to be growth in it, there has to be life in it.

GATHEKA: This shows that man in his life in the activity of the world is just like a little piece of wood raised by the waves of the sea when the waves are rising and cast down when the waves are going down.

TASAWWUF: Just so long as man is subject to moods, he can be affected by his own experiences and the experiences of others; thus he suffers pain, has pleasure, shock, surprise and astonishment. This shows he is in Samsara, under the sway of Nufsaniat. No one can rise above Samsara while he is subject to such emotions. These emotional changes are the very characteristics of Nufsaniat. It is not goodness and badness, saintliness and wickedness which stand apart, for all belong to Samsara, binding a person to karma, and it is only when man rises above emotional changefulness that he can avoid these conflicting conditions.

GATHEKA: Therefore the Hindus have called the life of the world Bawasada, an ocean, an ever rising ocean. And the life of man is floating in this ocean of the activity of the world, not knowing what he is doing, not knowing where he is going.

TASAWWUF: There are two things to be overcome: emotional changefulness and fatalism. In the state of changefulness one rises and falls in the many moods, and this shows that the breath is not under control. Sufic esotericism has for one purpose this control of breath, and the essential principle of it is that by divine attunement man can rise above the rising and falling of the waves of conditions.

Fatalism comes to an end through self-realization. Some say that what has happened cannot be helped, that we are destined to receive what we receive; it is karma, kismet, we cannot avoid it or escape it. Yet man is the sower of his destiny; even when he is not a master of destiny. The Sufi practices enable man to act in harmony with the Divine Life, and by this he overcomes the terrors of fatalism.

GATHEKA: What seems to him of importance is only the moment which he calls the present; the past is a dream, the future is a mist, and the only thing clear to him is the present.

TASAWWUF: It is right to emphasize the present. If we live in the past we fall into a world of memory or dreams, and do not always use our faculties, faculties given to us by grace. If we live in the future and do not control the imagination, it may end by the imagination controlling us. And yet it is also true that if we live entirely in the present, only in and of and for the present, then each event of life may assume an exaggerated importance.

The cause of this confusion is the inability to see life as a whole, even to see our own lives fully. Is that which appears so important just now really so important? Would I have thought it important many years ago? Will it still be important tomorrow? Next year? Is it important to humanity? To God? Would God think it important?

In order to avoid the dilemma presented by such questions Sufis practice indifference and self-control. To regard even great events in our lives as of little importance, and to permit others to feel that even little things in their lives may be great—this is the characteristic of the sage. To regard little things in one's life as important and to consider great things in the lives of others as of small importance—this is the characteristic of the ignorant man.

GATHEKA: The attachment and love and the affection of man in the world's life is not very different from the attachment of birds and animals. There is a time when the sparrow looks after its young and brings grain in its beak and puts it into the beaks of its young ones, and they anxiously await the coming of the mother who puts grain in their beaks.

TASAWWUF: This shows there is a Spirit of Guidance, a spirit which exists even in the animal world and also appears in man. It is only that when we fall under the spell of egoism that we fail to feel this Spirit. We then say there is evolution, and that we are better than the animals and that what the animals do is instinct and that what we do is founded upon thought. Yes, that is true, only the instinct of the animals is a clear faculty while the thought which we consider important, under the sway of Nufsaniat, deprives us even of the wisdom which appears in the birds and animals.

From the standpoint that God exists and that man as well as the animals were created by Him, then that life is nothing but God even when we see it as instinct. When we see the divine life in all things we see much more. For the "I" that exists and thinks and speaks would then become the "I" of God, or as the Sufis express it: "Ani Haqq." Looking at it that way, then God is all in all and none exists save He. Through that we can recognize the universal Spirit of Guidance, and more in the loving mother and kind father than in the animals.

So the young soul has been compared to a fledgling and the same Spirit of Guidance which has appeared in the mother and father also appears in the spiritual teacher, only the teacher may be conscious of that spirit; that makes him the spiritual teacher. He puts the food into the mouth of the young mureeds, so to speak, really putting it into their hearts. He feeds them through the spirit with the spirit.

GATHEKA: And this goes on until their wings are grown, and once the young ones have known the branches of the trees and they have flown in the forests under the protection of the kind mother they never know who is the mother who was so kind to them.

TASAWWUF: And this method is used in spiritual development. The teacher helps them so that they can recognize the knowledge themselves, know the love and wisdom of God, experience it, and then they do not need the teacher as a personality any more for God becomes their Guide. If they confuse the Spirit of Guidance with the teacher, they do not know the teacher, they will always rely upon the teacher—then they are still the fledglings not able to fly, having to be fed. But if they do not recognize the spirit in the teacher, they are as dead things, still lost in Samsara.

Therefore the right attitude of the pupil is this: to learn to recognize the Spirit of Guidance first in the teacher, then in each other, then everywhere, without losing sight of the teacher. And the right attitude of the teacher is this: to realize the responsibility of awakening the Spirit of Guidance in the pupil so that the pupil can advance toward his own self-realization.

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

TASAWWUF: From the ordinary view we see that animals and people reach this stage, departing from their parents and seeking a mate. They do not always know what it is they seek or why they are seeking the mate. Only it is that the self is not complete and seeks completion, and follows the path of love which unites self and not-self. And no matter how great the love of the parents, nevertheless this love will be greater for it is a part of life itself.

Yet this love is not complete. For the wife, the husband, the sweetheart, the beloved can satisfy only in part; there is something still left, a longing still unsatisfied. And this brings the soul to search for the Source of Love itself, this brings humanity to the search for God, and this search constitutes the path of initiation.

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

TASAWWUF: This description fits nufs lauwama. Yet it may be said that although there are few distinct grades of nufs the difference is relative. We may divide the life of man into body, emotions, mind, heart and soul and say there is nufs ammara, nufs lauwama, mutmaina, salima, and alima. Yet even the person of nufs ammara has mind and heart and even a Buddha in the body may eat. By

the practice of celibacy, papas and other means nufs ammara may be overcome without destroying the body. The Sufi method, however, is to rise to a higher grade, not to fight constantly against the lower, which emphasizes the lower without always bringing light from the higher.

Now the characteristic of *lauwama* is this: that it does not stay satisfied, it is constantly subject to change and accepts dualism. So one is then experiencing pleasure and pain. The point of view of the sage is that anything can be a toy, an attraction, even friends, ideals, possessions, thoughts, habits and longings. In the search for God all things objective and thoughts subjective must at some time be sacrificed lest they become toys and from toys become idols and as idols destroy ideals.

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

TASAWWUF: This, as has been explained, is true in the passion of love and it is true in all passion that rises from life when the light of intelligence is dimmed. But it may be asked, why does the soul go through this illusion? Why is it necessary? It is not necessary and at the same time it becomes necessary. Every atom has its purpose and its destiny, and from atom to man and even beyond man there are innumerable stages and kingdoms in creation, all the members of which are seeking the ultimate goal, which brings salvation and deliverance.

When the soul is born on earth it is not yet bound to the senses, which develop afterwards. They attune him to this world. This attunement on *Nasut*, the earth plane, takes away in most instances the consciousness of the unseen, leaving only the faculties thereof which are called instinct, impression and intuition—faculties which are not always understood, yet which give evidence to the Spirit of Guidance which is omnipresent.

There are not two things, life and the spiritual life. Increased capacity for life and spiritual growth are one and the same. It is the larger point of view which is the measure thereof. Man, in his blindness often diminishes his horizon and his interests instead of increasing them, calling that concentration. It is a concentration, but it can become destructive and useless. According to Sufism ambition is beneficial in so far as it enlarges the point of view, and it is detrimental when it leads to success at the expense of another.

The difference between success resulting from ambition and success resulting from spiritual longing is this: that the first brings success as a victory over the not-self and the second brings success as a victory over the self. The first is usually intoxicating, the second sobering. The first carries one through the world of **things**, of thing-ness and variety, the second leads back toward unity and to God. Because the soul is really beyond things and apart from thing-ness, all the success of ambition does not bring happiness as it is not satisfying to the longing of the soul. But the successful man, from his habit, thinks that others are blocking his path, bringing him pain; he does not know that his troubles are self-imposed. Therefore spiritual training is offered to all the world which can bring success without pain, through the comprehension of unity.

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

TASAWWUF: Much of what has been called progress has been for the sake of pleasure, yet progress need not be called evil. Sometimes good has come of it, as in science and art and health, increased means of communications and broader outlook. However the spirit of progress has been associated with the spirit of change, and this reaches a stage where change is always demanded and there is no satisfaction. Man not only desires to escape monotony, but even the rhythm of life does not satisfy him, he wants to change that. This shows Urouj.

Now there are two sorts of changes: changes in speed or rhythm, and changes in direction. When man cannot change his speed or rhythm, he wants to change something else—his food, his pleasures, his residence, his amusements; he can become as inconstant as the butterfly. And often this leads to alcoholic intoxication.

While alcohol itself can be considered unfit for food or drink, yet the alcoholic intoxication is mostly the result, not the cause of a condition. First comes the intoxication of life, and this brings the pursuits of pleasure. The pleasure does not satisfy, and still greater intoxication is demanded, leading to alcoholism, drug slavery and many vices. Then there is either an increase of Urouj which uncontrolled can bring on such states as delirium tremens or else the will is destroyed under the influence of drugs and then the life-force ebbs.

GATHEKA: Anything that cover his eyes from reality, anything that makes him feel a kind of sensation of life, anything that he can indulge in and be conscious of some activity, it is that that he calls pleasure. The nature of man is such that whatever he becomes accustomed to, that is his pleasure, in eating, in drinking, in any activity. If he becomes accustomed to what is bitter, that bitter is his pleasure; if to what is sour, that sour is his pleasure; if he becomes accustomed to sweets, he likes sweets.

TASAWWUF: Many persons do not understand this. They find pleasure in their own activity and they do not see that they do any harm to another, and they do not realize they may be harming themselves most and come to regard their activities as harmless or as good. Those who become intoxicated with the bitter or the sour will see the evil influence of alcohol, and those who enjoy riotous living will avoid all bitterness; each sees the faults of the others.

The pious man is intoxicated by piety and the artist by his art; each takes a different course. So there is greater and greater diversity in life and the spirit of unity breaks down, leading to internal strife in nation, in class, in sect and in family.

The sage alone has been able to view all the phenomena of life without the intoxication. And there is some confusion about the difference between the pious and the wise, that the pious man seeks his own liberation, regards himself as good and he is a good man. But a good man is not wise and with all goodness he does not know the unity, he has not the knowledge of brotherhood, he sees everything as being outside of himself, different.

The object of Sufism is to avoid all extremes and to include all points of view, seeing them all as part of life, and uniting all these ideals which lead to weakness in a common ideal which brings the strength.

GATHEKA: One man gets into the habit of complaining about his life and if he has nothing to complain about then he is looking for something to complain of. Another wants the sympathy of others, to complain that he is badly treated by others, he looks for some treatment to complain of. It is an intoxication.

TASAWWUF: For the complaint, there is the physician and the psychologist. The Sufi regards many causes of pain as being psychological. When a man wants to complain he sets up the thought-vibrations of complaint; he makes thought-forms and after a while he does not control them, they may even control him and he is lost, he is their slave.

The cure for this comes in meditation. Meditation is the best medicine for all sorts of intoxication. Meditation and silence are excellent for the complainer. Do not tell him not to complain—that will not help him. Have him write down his complaints. Have him compare the list of one day with the complaints of another. Have him become interested in watching the rising and falling of his complaints. Ask him why there were less complaints at certain times, more at other times. He is interested in himself, let him so be interested and do not try to stop him. Then, after awhile he may grow tired of the complaining and even your interest in him will help him and lead to a degree of self-control which is very beneficial.

GATHEKA: Then there is a person in the habit of theft, he is pleased by it, he gets into a habit; if there is another source before him he is not pleased, he does not want to have it. In this way people become accustomed to certain things in life, they become a pleasure, an intoxication.

TASAWWUF: Yes, if there is success in stealing, some persons will try hard to steal, preferring stealing to working. But there are others who become intoxicated by it, quite willing to break the laws, enjoying illicit trade. They get pleasure out of it, it becomes a habit and they become intoxicated so much that they prefer their intoxication even along with punishment.

While many of these become criminals, the penologists have not yet made a study of intoxication. Such a person can be cured. He requires other interests—interest in music, art, dancing, athletics—whatever is healthy and wholesome that is not beyond his understanding. When he can cultivate such pleasures he may become interested in them as new forms of intoxication. It is not necessary that he become good in the ordinary sense, it is that he become constructive and this leads to a higher goal than empty goodness. And this line has been followed by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, in juvenile protective and rehabilitation work and in social service generally. Even without spiritual knowledge there is a great gain.

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

TASAWWUF: This can end even in obsession. The person who worries may be good and kind, apparently. He may be moral, pious. Yet he is selfish, he is assuming what does not belong to him. According to Sufism he is practicing Urouj when there is no need for Urouj.

This person shows by his nature a lack of understanding of love and life. Even with the God-Ideal before him, he does not have the love of God. He may benefit through prayer and devotion, that is one step. The next is to make him realize to some degree what God is, and to develop God-reliance along with relaxation. Of course his burdens are not real burdens, they are mostly illusion. Anything can burden someone with the wrong attitude of mind and with the right attitude of mind the burdens will be lightened.

The ideal way does not include carelessness, there should be responsibilities, but this person does not relax, there is too much Urouj of a certain kind, increasing **kabz**, and tightening the web of nufs. The God-ideal can bring him (or her) the freedom.

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

TASAWWUF: Right repetition produces health, wrong repetition produces illness. So Jesus taught that we should avoid vain repetitions. When we say, "I am sick," we repeat the thought which sustains the illness. When we say, "So-and-so is wicked," we repeat the thought that recreates the wickedness, and directs the spirit of evil. Therefore sages have counseled silence as cure to wickedness because by that process the thought-forms are deprived of breath and of life. And the best way to do that is to recite the names or attributes of God.

Sympathy is therefore much greater than pity, for it contains wisdom and understanding. The Hebrew mystics used to call wisdom Chokmah and understanding Binah and placed them side by side. The first leads to right expression, the latter to right silence, and both methods have been used by the sages and mystics to help the unfortunate.

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

