

THE SUFI TEACHINGS OF HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Volume XIII The Gathas

PART I and II

PREFACE

IT WAS already announced earlier that as the world nowadays is more open for the understanding of mystical thought, many deeper lectures which Inayat Khan originally intended only for his disciples would be published in the near future. It is appropriate that this edition of *The Gathas* of Inayat Khan can now be brought out on the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

These Gathas are, with few exceptions, unpublished teachings given to his disciples in the early 1920's. In his understanding and consideration of the individual's needs and response Inayat Khan presented each of the seven subjects of *The Gathas* in three stages, each stage consisting of ten lessons. Whilst in the training courses of the Sufi Movement *The Gathas* have been offered in a slightly different order, the editors have chosen to publish them in accordance with the research made by Nekbakht Furnee and Sirdar van Tuyll van Serooskerken, whose records indicate Inayat Khan's own publication intentions, and who together with other pupils and close associates of Inayat Khan compiled and prepared this version.

No attempt has been made to change the order of words or what might appear to be repetition for the purpose of producing conventionally acceptable syntax. No conjecture has been made as to the few missing words in Questions and Answers. In some cases alternative spelling has been used to conform with the first twelve volumes of the Sufi Message.

PART I

ETKAD, RASM U RAVAJ Superstitions, Customs and Beliefs

GATHA I

Belief and Superstition

Every country seems to have certain beliefs which are called beliefs by the believers and superstitions by those who do not believe. There are beliefs which arise from some subtle experiences of life, and some which spring from intuition, and they are believed by some who are inclined to believe and they are mocked at by some who cannot understand their meaning, and often by those who do not wish to trouble themselves to investigate the truth in them. It is easy to laugh at things, and it takes patience to endure and tolerate things that cannot appeal to one's reason. And it is difficult to investigate the truth of such beliefs, for it requires something more than reason to probe the depths of life. Those from whom the beliefs come, naturally could not give the explanation of those beliefs to everybody; for the man who is capable of believing a thing is not necessarily capable of understanding it by an analytical explanation. There are natures which would be willing to believe a thing if it is for their good, if it comes from someone who they trust, but it is too much trouble for them to go deeply into the matter. For some among them it is better that they should not have an analytical knowledge of a belief, for to some the belief is helpful but its explanation confusing. It is a certain grade of evolution that enables man to understand a certain belief, and a man must not be told what he is incapable of understanding, for, instead of helping him, it puts him off.

There is a great deal of psychic law which can be traced in such beliefs, and in time such beliefs turn into customs. There is a vast field of knowledge in the beliefs of Indians. India has been a country where beliefs have existed for thousands of years unchanged, and some beliefs have become customs. At first sight an intellectual person who cannot look any further than the surface of things is apt to think that people in India are full of superstitions. Their

whole life seems based on them; not only in religion do they have beliefs, but even in their domestic affairs. In their everyday life every move they make, every word they say is in accordance with some underlying belief.

No doubt a tendency of taking interest in superstition should always be avoided; for the more thought one gives to superstitions, the more he seems to be drowned in the thought of superstitions. Wherever the superstitious man looks he gets an impression of some fear, some doubt, some suspicion, which generally leads to confusion. But for the wise a disregard of superstitions is not satisfactory, for by wisdom man becomes capable of understanding them, and understanding them is better than to mock at them or even than to believe in them. For the one who believes in superstitions is, so to speak, in the water, and knows that he is in the water; but he who mocks at them is in the water, but he does not know that he is in the water. By understanding them man is capable of swimming in the water, and by mastering them he walks on the water. The man who knows all things and acts according to his knowledge becomes the master of life.

Belief

The term 'belief' is used of an idea that one believes and for which one cannot give reason. When such ideas are of an ordinary nature they are termed superstitions, and when they are of a sacred nature they are called beliefs.

Often man confuses belief with truth. Many people, without understanding their own belief hold it not as a truth but as *the* truth, and thereby ignore every other belief which seems to them different from the truth they possess. In reality belief is not the truth nor is the truth a belief. When a person has risen to the understanding of the truth it is no more a belief for him, it is a conviction.

The beliefs of a sacred nature, which come in the realm of religion, are as steps towards the goal which is called truth, and when man stops at a belief the belief holds him and he holds the belief. Neither can the belief push him onward nor can he advance. In many cases belief, which should serve as wings on which to soar toward the height, becomes as nails fixing man onto the earth. Every belief in the beginning is a step in the dark, but as man draws nearer to the goal, he at every step becomes more and more illuminated. Therefore there is hope for the believer, but the case of the unbeliever is hopeless.

There are souls who are capable of believing, even capable of understanding their belief, who yet for some reason or other are not willing to believe and reject a belief before the understanding comes. The wise course in life would be to try to become a pupil, a pupil of one teacher as well as a pupil of all beings; it is then that one will become the pupil of God. Then the wise course would be to investigate the truth of belief instead of giving up one's belief, also to be patiently tolerant of the belief of another until one see from his point of view the truth of his belief. When man sees only from his own point of view, he sees with one eye and the other eye is close. The complete view is in seeing from both points of view, however contrary they may be. It is this tendency which will balance things and will give the right idea of things. In order to view a building one must stand in the street and view it, instead of standing inside it and wanting to see the outside.

In understanding beliefs one must be able to neutralize one's spirit, and to the extent to which it is neutralized man becomes capable of seeing the belief in its right sense. When man says, on hearing something from another, 'That is not what I believe', he shows his weakness, he shows his incapacity to view the belief of the other from the point of view of that other. Knowledge comes by readiness to learn, and when we refuse it in life it is by lack of readiness. No matter from what source knowledge may seem to come, it is from one source in reality, and when the mind becomes a free receptacle knowledge flows freely into the heart. There is some truth hidden in every religious belief, and often it is of greater value than it may seem to be. And believing in a thing without understanding is a first step forward to knowledge, and refusing to believe when a belief is presented means taking a step backward. When a person is content with his belief that is a comfortable state of being, but it is the understanding of the belief which is ideal.

Customs (1)

There are many customs that have existed in different countries for ages which have some psychological significance, and yet scarcely anybody knows about it. Customs in the form of greeting one another, and asking after one another's health, even such habits as that of talking about the weather, arise from a psychological basis. This shows that the ancient people, in the East or in the West, had more magic in their lives than the man of today. The world has lost the magical charm, so to speak, which was the inheritance of the human race, owing to the ever increasing

material life and the ignorance of things that are beyond matter.

It is of late that science is discovering some psychological truths in human life. The process that science follows in discovering these truths is contrary to that of the mystics. The scientist wishes to climb the mountain from the level ground. The mystic, by the way of meditation, tries to reach the summit of the mountain, and from there he sees the whole beauty of the mountain. Therefore, naturally, the horizon before the eyes of the mystic is incomparably wider than the horizon before the scientist. Yes, the scientist may see things clearly, distinctly, and in detail, whereas the mystic has a general ideal things. Often the vision of the mystic is vague in comparison with the analytical examination of a scientist. And yet, while the mystic sees through objects the scientist can reach as far as their surface.

Owing to the greater activity in Western life all things change more quickly in the West, while in the East changes come very slowly. Therefore, one finds many customs of ancient origin in the East which show the development of Eastern people in psychical things. Even ordinary customs, such as that of shaking hands, or rising from one's seat to receive someone, bowing, bending, waving the hands, or clapping the hands, have a psychical significance. When two people shake hands with one another magnetism is exchanged between them and a balance of life-force is made between them. The one who lacks strength, energy, or magnetic power gains, and through the one from who they overflow they are used for a better purpose. By rising to show respect to a person, and by walking a few steps to receive a person, a man makes himself ready to withstand the forces of the one who is coming. By standing up and walking a step or two he makes his pulsation regular and puts his circulation in order, thus making himself psychically and morally ready to defend himself if the one who is coming should happen to be a foe, and ready to meet him harmoniously and on the same level, physically, mentally, and morally, if he happens to be a friend. Bending the head in a bow quickens not only the circulation in the head but also the magnetic current in it, for the head is the chief moral and spiritual factor in man. You will always find that a person with a tendency to bow is thoughtful, and it often happens that the one who keeps his head erect and avoids bowing is foolish. Man's life depends upon rhythm, rhythm in his breath, in the pulsation, in the beats of the heart and head, and it is irregularity of the rhythm of his heart or of his pulse that shows disorder in his health. It is regularity of rhythm that keeps man in a fit stage to go on through life. And when people applaud a speaker, a singer, or a player, it is a suggestion for him to continue his rhythm, physical, mental, or moral. Even the waving of the hand in parting from a friend suggests the same meaning: continue to be in a fit state to live and enjoy life. There is a custom in the East that when a person is yawning a friend by his side claps his hands or snaps his fingers. Yawning naturally makes the rhythm slow, it is going down, so to speak, and the clapping of the hands or the snapping of the fingers on the part of the friend is suggestive of continuing the same rhythm as before. Different peoples have different customs, and customs that one is not in the habit of seeing seem not only strange and meaning-less but often also ridiculous. It is the work of the seer to see into things and it is this way of viewing that is called insight.

4 Customs (2)

There are different customs in greeting, and in every custom there is some suggestion that explains some psychical meaning behind it. The Hindus greet by joining the palms of the hands, which has the significance of perfection, since the right hand represents the positive power and the left hand the negative power, and when the positive and negative are joined together this sums up in perfection. The idol of Buddha, which is worshipped by millions of people in the world, signifies perfection – sitting crosslegged with the two palms joining, the eyes closed, all of which shows that the negative and positive powers are united and made into one. The greeting of the Chinese is the clasping of the hands, either touching the clasped hands of the other, which means that the perfection of power from both should meet. And for the same reason the Arabs shake hand with both hands, for giving one hand is like giving half of one's magnetism, but by giving both hands you show that you keep nothing back. The Persians touch the heart, which suggests the friendly feeling expressed from the bottom of the heart, that the greeting is not merely superficial, that it comes from the very depth of feeling. Among a great many people belonging to different parts of the world there is a custom; of greeting by embracing one another, and no doubt there is a great psychical meaning in this. The two arms are the two directions of magnetic power, positive and negative, and in the breast is the center of these two powers. And the custom is that they embrace twice, distinctly on the right and left sides. This is also the exchange of *Prana*, the very life, the center of which is in the breast. There is a custom in Persia and in India that when a younger person greets an older one he bows his head, bringing it closer to his breast, and the elder person, taking his arms, raises him up, as if the younger person wanted from the elder person, love, light and life, and the elder person gives it to him and raises him with it. It also suggests a sentiment of modesty and humility on the part of the one, and help and encouragement on the part of the other.

Customs have sometimes been much exaggerated, and yet, if the sentiment is a true one, no external expression can ever be an exaggeration. Among people of religion and culture in all periods of civilization there has been a custom of kissing the hand. The custom has originated from a natural instinct in life. What smells good the animal wants to bite first, and everything that interests the infant it puts in its mouth first. That shows that the lips are the most sensitive part in man and they are capable of giving and taking life, which may be called magnetism. Therefore the greatest fondness that one can show to another in greeting can be shown by kissing the hands. This custom can be seen all over the world, in the East and in the West.

If a skeleton plan of man's spirit be drawn one can draw it as a sun in the midst and five rays shooting out around, one straight upwards, two at the sides rising upwards, and two downwards, and it is this which make the five-pointed star. Man's head, two arms, and two legs are the outward expression of these rays. The idea of the Hindus in touching the holy feet of the saint is to reach first the rays that can first be reached, and when one reaches these first two rays, the three other rays naturally fall over his head, when the saint puts his arms over his head and bends his head while blessing, looking at the center of the head of the one who is blessed.

5 Hanuman

There is a custom in the East of offering oil to Hanuman, the idol that is pictured in the image of a monkey, and this idol is worshipped by pouring oil upon it. This custom can be seen also at Indian weddings; maidens anoint with oil the head, shoulders, arms and hands, and knees and feet of the bride and bridegroom. One sees this custom in some churches, for instance in the Catholic church. In Russia there was a custom of anointing the Tsar's forehead with oil on the day of his coronation.

Oil has the significance of softening. Leather, iron or steel is made softer or smoother by putting oil on it. Anointing, as is done in India, is a psychical suggestion to the bride and bridegroom that the hands and feet of each shall be ready to serve the other, and that they shall not show themselves stiff, one to the other, that if there were any hardness in their nature it should be softened, since harmony is the blessing of a home; it teaches that forgiveness is required for becoming friends and keeping friendship; as one's mate is not so flexible and docile as one's own imagination conceives.

The idol of Hanuman is suggestive of primitive nature in man, and in the pouring of oil in the service of Hanuman there is a lesson for the worshipper to learn. However great your evolution may be, regard and consideration for the primitive nature is necessary, for all adjusts itself in the wider scheme of nature. When man stands with his hands folded in humility before the image of a monkey, there is in this some lesson for him to learn: that life is such that with all your evolution you lack something if you have no regard to the primitive nature that is in man. Christ has taught, 'Resist not evil', and 'If one sue thee for thy coat, give him thy cloak also'. This teaches the same lesson, that life becomes difficult without regard and consideration for the primitive nature. By resentment one partakes of it, by rebelling against it one gives fuel to that fire. One would soften it in oneself and in another by wisdom, patience, and gentleness.

The anointing of the forehead of the king signifies that he should have an easy expression, not frowning brows and a puckered face, but a smiling forehead, as the Persian phrase is. Poor and rich, all must come to the king in their troubles and difficulties, and his glance must comfort them and bring them ease. The great lesson one can learn from this custom is that the great education in life is to soften one's feelings, one's thoughts, words and actions, that they may give ease to ourselves and that we may create an atmosphere of ease that may benefit all who come in contact with us.

Bells and Gongs

The secret of the religious custom of having gongs and bells in temples and churches lies in the great science of the Hindus, which is Mantra Yoga. In the first place, this custom unites several religions, since bells are rung in Christian churches, in the temples of the Hindus, and in Buddhist pagodas. Many think that it is a call to prayer, but from a mystical point of view it is something more than that. The idea of the mystic is to make his heart capable of resonance, that every voice that rises on earth or descends from heaven may have its re-echo in his heart. The Sufi prepares himself by his exercises of *Zikar* and *Fikar* to make his heart capable of producing that resonance that may be caused on earth or descend from heaven. When the centers of the body and faculties of the mind are prepared to produce that resonance, then they respond to every sound, and every time the bells is rung it has its re-echo in the heart of the mystic, and every center of his being begins to think of God and to feel God. Vibration is a greater

stimulant than wine. Wine gives intoxication to the brain, but vibration produces ecstasy in the heart. Therefore Sufis have called it wine.

The custom of having flowers in the house of prayer and the custom of burning incense in the place of worship also exists in almost all religions and has existed in almost all periods. Color and beauty also have a power, an influence upon the mind and body, and those who can enjoy the beauty of color and the delicacy of the flower receive help by the way of the eyes. Its effect opens the heart, which then responds to the blessing from above. This shows that the beauty of the earth can be best used to obtain the blessing from heaven. The perfume of flowers or incense has a deeper effect still, because color and beauty are only reflected upon the heart through the eyes, but perfume and incense, rising through the breath, touch the heart, making it capable of spiritual exaltation. But nothing has a greater influence on the human soul than sound. Therefore hymns are sung in all churches, prayers are offered, and chants are recited, all in order to wake the spirit within to life, which enables the soul to respond to the perfection of God.

7 The Custom of Drinking the Health of Friends

This custom has a psychological meaning. Wine has an influence that takes away the worries and anxieties of life and makes one unconscious of one's environment, and this only may be called the proper condition for concentration. Those who cannot concentrate will realize by studying the condition of their mind that they are either worried or anxious about something, or they are conscious of the environments of their life; it is that which keeps them back from concentration.

All those who have become great in the worldly, artistic or spiritual aspects of life have arrived at their destination by the power of concentration. It is by concentration that a person, from being poor becomes wealthy, it is by concentration that one invents things that the world has never known, it is by concentration that one arrives at a desired position in life, and it is by the power of concentration that man enters the world unseen.

The custom of drinking somebody's health therefore proves to be based on a psychological idea, the idea that one holds a wish in one's mind at a time when one's mind is in a state of concentration, so that during the time that the mind is in that state the thought of the friend's health will be predominant.

There is a custom of touching glasses, which is supposed to be a promise of friendship. It can be defined symbolically in this way that the cup is the symbol of the heart, for in the heart there is the capacity of holding the divine love, which is the sacred wine. So the cup touching the cup means heart united with heart. According to the mystical view it is two becoming one.

8 The Origin of the Custom of the Seclusion of Women

The custom of the seclusion of women has its source in mystical thought. There used to be the mystical orders of people in the East who contemplated in solitude and lived in seclusion. The magnetism and power of influence that they developed by seclusion was in itself a marvel. This gave power to their gaze, power in their word, and influence in their atmosphere. This custom of seclusion was then imitated by the kings and people of high rank.

They had two ways of veiling themselves when away from home. One was to put a covering over the back of the head, which was made to hang down in front, so that the eyes could be half-covered; and the other was to put a veil over the face. It was a sort of mantle that they put on their head. Every prophet of Beni Israel had this. In the ancient pictures of the prophets of the Semitic race one will always see the head covered with a mantle. In the Hindu race also many orders of Buddhists and Yogis wore a mantle over the head. The veil which the kings also used, which was called *Makna*, later became customary in the East, and ladies of high rank wore what is called in Turkish the *Yashmak*. For thousands of years it has been the custom among Parsis that during their religious services the priest covers his head with a turban together with a mantle, and the Parsi women have kept the custom of covering the head with a white cloth, though it is less observed at the present time. In India, among Hindus as well as among Mussulmans, there is a custom at weddings of veiling the faces of bride and bridegroom with a veil of jasmine flowers.

Under all these different customs of veiling the head and face one finds a mystical significance. Man's form is considered by Sufis as consisting of two parts, the head and the body, the body for action and the head for thought. Since the head is for thought its radiance is incomparably greater than that of the body, and the hairs are as rays of

that radiance in a physical form. It is a constant outpouring of light that one observes in man's life. Every action of looking, or breathing, or speaking, robs so much of the radiance out of man's life. By preserving this radiance the mystic develops within him that influence, power and magnetism which in the average person are wasted. For instance, closing the eyes, which is a custom among mystics, not only helps in concentration and repose of mind, but during the moment when the eyes are closed, it preserves the radiance from flowing out. These customs were helpful to the kings and commanders for developing their power and influence, and they were valued for ladies of rank for preserving their beauty and charm. We learn by this that a life but little exposed to the outer world, whether through seclusion, or silence, or a perfect state of repose with the closed eyes, clasped hands and crossed legs, has a great influence.

The custom of the seclusion of the mystics remains only in the mystical Orders, but one finds the seclusion of women prevalent in the East. When a custom takes root in a section of society certainly it can be used and abused as people may choose. No doubt jealousy, which is in human nature, is a proof of love, but jealousy can be the source of a great many crimes. Man has always guarded the treasures that he values most in all sorts of coverings, and since that which man can love most is woman he has often ignorantly tried to guard her in the same way as all things of value and importance. And the custom of seclusion has been in his hand a means that has enabled him to control his household in the manner he likes.

However, it is not true that this custom was the outcome of the teaching of the Prophet. There are only two places in the records where an utterance of the Prophet on the subject is to be found. In one place it is told that when some coarse dances were going on among the peasants of his land, he said that women must be clad properly. In the other place that when the ladies of the Prophet's household were returning home after taking care of the Prophet and his army during a battle, they were disinclined to look at the battle-field and to show themselves to their enemies, and the only thing that could be advised by the Prophet was that now that peace had been made if they did not like to show themselves they might veil their faces.

In India one sees the custom that an aged woman covers her face, a widow covers her face and a bride veils her face. There is some little psychological meaning in it. It is the nature of every soul to wish to hide its sorrow, and by veiling her face the widow veils her sorrow from others. And the veil that one sees on the face of an aged woman is there for the reason that in age the emotions become more visible and one has little control so as to hide them from; others, and when the heart has become softened at every little touch, however gentle, it is easily moved, and the covering is as a shield over it. On the face of a bride the veil is for the preservation of her charm, of the magnetism; at the same time the finest beauty in human nature is modesty, in whatever form it appears.

From the physical as well as the occult point of view, woman is more impressionable than man. The task of woman as a mother is of a greater importance than that of man on any position. Woman with her thought and feeling moulds the character of the child, and as she is susceptible to outward impressions, her impressions always have their influence on her child. During the period before motherhood very great care must be taken, for any word spoken to her reaches the depth of her being, and it re-echoes in the soul of the child. If a word made her bitter at the time or cross at a moment, it can create bitterness or crossness in the child. Especially during that period woman is more sensitive and susceptible to all impressions, beautiful or ugly. Anything striking impresses her soul deeply. A color, lightning, thunder, storm, all make impressions upon her. Conditions of life, misery or joy, all tell upon her more than on every person. Having this in consideration, the custom of seclusion has been kept in the East, and still exists among certain communities.

No doubt there is another side to consider: that home and state are not two separate things. Home is the miniature of the state; and if woman performs a part equally important at home, why must she not perform an equally important part in the outward life. No doubt these ancient customs, even with their psychological importance, often make an iron bar before the progress of the generality. In the East, for the maid and mistress both, there are days set apart for rest in every month, in all different religions, among Hindus, Parsis, and Mohammedans. The life in the world is a constant battle, and a hard battle one has to fight, if one has any fineness of feeling, any decency of manner. The position of woman in this battle is worse than that of man. It greatly robs her of her womanly fineness and delicacy of sentiment. Man is more dependent upon woman than woman on man. From the first moment any child, whether boy or girl, opens his eyes in the world, he seeks the protection of woman. Woman, as his mother, sister, daughter, friend, or wife, in every form, is the source of his happiness, comfort and peace. In whatever form man may express it --- in a crude custom like the seclusion in the East or in many different ways --- to guard her against the hard knocks which fall on every soul living in this world of selfishness is the first duty of a thoughtful man.

GATHA II

‘Eat My Flesh and Drink My Blood’

There is a remarkable phrase in the Bible, here it says, ‘Eat My flesh and drink My blood’, says Christ. What does He mean by saying this? He means in the first place that what a living being loves most is his food, what he loves most he eats. It has been proved in ferocious and dreadful famines, by people eating their own children, that food is dearer than their own child. The word of Christ, therefore, ‘Find out, what it is in Me that you love, which may become your nourishment, which may become your food. It is not this, My flesh and blood; this will not be sufficient to satisfy your appetite. There is another part of My being, which is in abundance and can nourish My numberless devotees. Therefore before trying to eat My flesh and blood, try to find out on what plane I really exist and what is My true being’. The lives of all the great saints show that not only their adversaries and opponents but also their near and dear friends have proved to be among their worst enemies. There is a creature which loves its mate so much that it eats it.

Now as to the question: what it is that Christ speaks of as his flesh and blood. His flesh is the knowledge of God and His blood is the love of God; because it is love that has a tendency, so to speak, to excite the circulation, and it is knowledge which has the tendency to strengthen, making man firm of which flesh is the symbol. One thing without the other would be abnormal. For instance flesh without blood, or blood without flesh, both are not normal conditions. What gives normal health to the body and to the soul is flesh and blood both. In the religious custom of the sacrament of bread and wine it is this secret which is symbolically expressed.

Customs of Courtesy

There was a custom in the old, aristocratic times, which is even now observed in the East and somewhat in the Western part of the world, of taking steps backward when leaving someone who was respected. It was not only a custom but it had a psychological point of view. When two people are talking to one another, facing each other, a current of sympathy is established which chiefly runs through the breath and through the glance, and necessarily, one of them is expressive, the other receptive. When their backs are turned that current is broken, and the idea of the people of old was to retain that current, which they thought was valuable, as long as possible.

There was another custom of courtesy of the ancients which still exists in certain places, that in order to show respect to someone they bent their knees. This had a psychological reason: that every influence of love, affection, or sympathy, benediction, or blessing, is poured through the glance, through the breath, and through words, and if the receiver was taller than the bestower, the influence would go into the ground instead of touching the person. Especially the influence of the glance, which surrounds on with sympathy and good wishes, has, mostly, a downward direction, and it is naturally so with the breath also.

In the salutation made by putting one knee on the ground, the knee resting on the ground expresses readiness to receive the command and the knee that is up is ready to go forward to carry it out.

But besides their psychological influences, different manners of courtesy have been the outcome of human progress in the direction of refinement. And yet progress in every direction is like a wave in the sea --- it rises and it falls. So it is with manners. This time seems to be the time when the wave is coming back. However, doing a thing is one thing, and understanding it is another thing. Whether one does a certain thing or does not do it, that is another question, but in the understanding of all things lies the purpose of life.

Customs of the Marriage Ceremony

India, the land of mysticism and philosophy, has symbolism in all its customs. Even in the marriage ceremony everything that is done as a custom or rite is symbolical. Both bride and bridegroom wear on their hand a pearl-embroidered hear; they wear saffron-coloured garments for the ten days that the wedding ceremony lasts; they are anointed during the wedding ceremony on their heads, shoulders, elbows, and chins, and on their knees and feet. The bridegroom has a sword in his hand during all those ten days. On the last day of the wedding both bride and bridegroom are veiled with a low-flowing veil made of jasmine flowers and trimmed with roses, and after the conclusion of the marriage ceremony they are unveiled.

Now, the meaning of this veil of flowers is that a new phase of life begins for them. They are no more the same as

before; new responsibilities, new hopes, and a new life they have to begin. The meaning of the sword in the bridegroom's hand is that the bridegroom shall uphold the honor and dignity of his family, of his wife, that he shall stand in arms to defend the honor and dignity that the union of bride and bridegroom has completed. And the heart on the hand denotes that both of them shall let their action be directed by their heart. The anointing means that the hands and feet and head of either shall be ready to serve the other when occasion arises, that they shall not be stiff at any time when their service is called for. Saffron color, in the East, is considered to be the color of all sorts of good luck. It is the imperial sign. Love-letters are written in saffron color. The invitations for the wedding are written in this color, for this color represents light. Light in heaven and gold on earth, both are yellow. Therefore yellow is preferred to all other colors to be the omen on some good occasion in life.

The Horse

The horse has been considered a lucky animal in all ages, for the horse represents energy, strength, activity, and life. The horse was conspicuous in Greek art, as also in the art of the ancient Persians. In the courts of the ancient kings in the East there used to be *Chama*, fans made of horse-hair; and the horse's head was used as a decorative emblem in the palaces, and before every entertainment something was spoken about the horse first. The comedians of India have that custom still existing: the first item of their program is an imitation of a horse. A story of a horse is always interesting. A sportsman and thinker, who differ so much in their likes, unite in admiration of the horse. The Prophet Mohammed admired the horse as one of the objects worth attaining in life. The most interesting part of the Ramayana is where Lahu, the son of Rama, goes in pursuit of Kalanki the ideal horse. In the sacred book of the Hindus, Mahabharata, it is Krishna who is the charioteer of Arjuna, Hassan and Hussein, the great martyrs of Islam, whose day has been celebrated year after year for ages, are represented with their beautiful horses called Duldul.

The horse is the symbol of the mind. When the mind is under control it is like a horse broken in, when it cannot be controlled it is like a restive horse, when its rein is not well in hand it is like a wild horse roaming about in the wilderness. Then the horse is the symbol of life, representing its energy, activity, and beauty. The horse, with its strength and activity, is harmless, useful, intelligent, has feeling, and is different to the donkey. The horse is the comrade in war, and is the dignity of great warriors. The unity that is established sometimes between the soul of the rider and the spirit of the horse is most wonderful. The horseshoe is considered lucky in all countries, for it reminds one of the horse and conveys the impression of the horse's vigour, activity, life, and beauty.

5 Oracles Among the Ancient Greeks

In ancient Greece often questions were asked of an oracle, which were answered by a woman, who sometimes gave a plain answer and sometimes one the meaning of which was veiled. It was the same thing that today is called a spiritualistic séance, a mediumistic answer, the interest of which is alive in all ages through in different forms. Among all the occult and mystical interests the interest in the medium has a very great attraction for the average mind. A woman was often chosen for this work, on account of woman's sensitiveness, which always exceeds that of man, and this is the secret of intuition in human nature. Especially a celibate woman was chosen for this purpose, as in her is to be found more susceptibility to intuition. The question was supposed to be asked of a god, a god who was distinguished by a particular attribute, of poetry, of the sun, or any other attribute.

The secret of all this is that the priests, by their hypnotic power and suggestion, wakened in the woman that particular attribute of the Spirit within, Who is the possessor of all knowledge, especially that pertaining to the attribute with which He is identified. God is already in the heart of every person, only, to wake Him and to make Him rise, He should be called upon. He then, so to speak, takes birth from the heart of a sensitive woman, whose innermost can easily be touched. God has many attributes, He has many ears and many tongues to speak with, and through every form He answers whenever one reaches Him. Spiritualists call Him a spirit, but even through the spirit of an individual, dead or living, when God is called upon, God answers. Those who play with spiritualistic seances would give it all up in a moment if they only know that God always answers whenever He is called upon.

6 The Greek Mysteries (1)

The little that is known of the Greek Mysteries has been very variously interpreted. Some have supposed them to have been a course of agriculture, taught secretly, others a mummerly carried on for centuries by the priests. What is known with certainty is the high esteem in which they were held and the strict secrecy which attended them. The word means silence; to be initiated was 'to be made silent.'

Access to the lesser mysteries was easy. Tens of thousands were initiated. The temples in which the rites were practiced were under the protection of the state. In them were enacted the lives of the gods in whose name the mysteries were celebrated, and great use was made of music. The mysteries were held to remove the fear of death and to give assurance of the survival of the departed. Those who had been initiated were believed to be happy after death, while others led a dismal life hereafter, clinging to their graves.

The preparatory training for the greater mysteries was very severe. Fasting was undergone, abstinence of all sorts, extremes of heat and cold had to be endured, and the candidates swam through water for days and had to walk through fire. The training often lasted many years. After initiation, in the beginning all was darkness, dread and dismay; then a marvelous light was seen and shining forms came to meet the initiate. The initiate experienced while on earth the state of the soul dissociated from the body. A Greek writer says, 'Here all instruction ceases, one beholds the nature of things.' Apuleius, who had received all the initiations of the mysteries, says, 'I went to the boundary between life and death, I passed through the four elements, I stood on the threshold of Proserpina, at the time of deepest midnight I saw the sun shine in brightest splendour, I saw the greater and the lesser gods and revered them near at hand. The initiate was said to be received, while living on earth, among the immortal gods, and made as one of them.'

7 The Greek Mysteries (2)

This was really a Sufi institution, though not called by this name, for exactly the same thing is to be found today in the schools, of Sufis in India and Persia.

The lesser mysteries were *Ilmi Rabbali*, the mystery of gods, in other words the mystery of the different attributes of God. For when the proper name of God is repeated a certain number of times some particular effect is produced by it, resulting in a desirable object. Before Islam the different names of God were considered to be different gods known by different names and identified with different attributes and characteristics. By invoking the names of different gods a person accomplished his object in life, as now Wazifa is practised by the Sufis. The music which the ancient Greek knowers of mystery had as a means of their spiritual development, the same is used even now in the Chishtia schools of Sufis, where the Qawwali meeting, which is call *Sama*, is held, in which music is played and sung for awakening the emotional nature, which is the secret revelation.

8 The Greek Mysteries (3)

The fasting and abstinence, and all these things, were taught in order to develop the will-power, which results in self discipline and which is the secret of all mastery; and it is by the power that the kingdom within is attained. Once man has touched his self within, the illusion becomes dissolved. The fear of death is caused by the consciousness of mortality. As long as one is unaware of one's immortal self one has the fear of death. Once the immortality of the soul is realized and the realization is no longer in one's imagination but has become a conviction, then one rises above the fear of death. His knowledge is gained fully when an adept is able to detach his soul from his body. It is this state which is called by Yogis *Samadhi* and by Sufis *Nayat*.

Every soul that treads the path of initiation takes his first steps through the darkness; as Ghazzali says, "The spiritual pursuit is like shooting an arrow through the darkness." No doubt as one approaches the goal the light comes; as the Koran says, 'God is the light of the heavens and of the earth.' Then, once the sight has become keen, there is no further instruction needed. One gets insight into the hidden laws of nature, all things seem to speak to the seer of their character, nature and secret. This realization removes the boundary between life and death. One rises above the elements which have formed this mortal abode---the body and mind---for the soul's experience, when one touches one's true being, the soul. It is the soul-realized man who stands above all matter, and in this way the spirit gets victory over matter. Under all conditions of life which produce obscurity and confusion the soul-realized man sees the light, and to him all men, of lesser or greater degrees of evolution, are nothing but different forms of the Divine Immanence. In this way the man who has probed the depths of the mystery of life becomes God realized. When he no longer has his limited self before his view then only he experiences the state of which Christ has spoken: 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.'

9 The Banshee

There is a very widespread belief that in certain families warning of the impending death of a member of the family is given always in the same way. In some families a certain bird is seen by some member of the family

before a death, in others the church bell rings without being tolled, in another one or more flagstones of the pavement of the chapel are seen to be wet while the rest are dry, and the number of wet flagstones tallies with the number of deaths. In Ireland such warnings are particularly frequent, and often occur in the form of what is called the Banshee, a screech heard by members of the family, but inaudible to others.

This explains the truth that life is a revelation in all forms and is not restricted to any particular form. The death of an individual is apparently the death of one person having its effect to some extent upon that individual's surroundings and on those concerned with him, yet inwardly the influence of the death of one individual reaches the whole circumference of the universe. No object, no being, is left untouched by it; only this manifests to those who are subject to be more affected by the death of someone they are related to. To them the warning of death takes some form that might be perceptible to them, and told by them to their relations and descendants, that particular form then becomes a special alarm clock of death for that particular family, and it continues for a considerable time, until someone is born in that family who ignores it absolutely by his disbelief.

One learns by this that life is revealing by nature; it is man who becomes blinded by nature. There is no creature in this world so absorbed in the outer life in the world as man; so man, with greater capability of knowing, knows least of all creatures. There are birds who give warning of death. Dogs, cats, and horses perceive the coming death of their friend or neighbor or of their master. If man is open to the knowledge that life reveals continually, his body and mind with his intuitive centers and perceptive faculties can know the secret and the meaning of life most.

The Psychology of the Shadow

Among the Hindus there has been an old belief, which is now taken to be a superstition, even in India. Every Brahman avoided or in other words took great care to keep himself, his shrine of worship, his food, woman during maternity period and the new-born child away from the shadow of a *Shudra* or outcast.

Now, the times being different, naturally that belief is seemingly meaningless; but in point of fact there was an occult meaning hidden behind it. Shadow is caused by the wall of a person standing against the sun, the sun which is life-giving to plants and human beings, to animals and to all, and the direct rays of which give all things new life. Places which are hidden from the sun, flat or mountainous, become the center all diseases. The personality that stands in the light of any person, causing thereby hindrance in the life of that person, is an example of this!

The difference between the true teacher and the false---both of whom have always existed in the world---had been distinct. The false one stood in the light of his pupil; the true one showed him the way standing on the side.

The psychology of the shadow is very complex. The shadow of an unholy person falling upon food will certainly take away the living substance from it; if it fell upon a person in a negative state, a woman sitting aside, or a child, it would produce exhaustion and lifelessness, also in the souls who are going through a process of recuperation or growth. Very often a tree standing above a plant, keeping from it the light, hinders the growth of the plant; so is the shadow of the unholy. It can for the moment darken the soul of those passive and receptive of spirit. No doubt the power of darkness and illusion itself, as shadow, has no existence in reality. However, it is evident; so is the influence of immature souls.

The spiritual souls have a contrary influence to this. Their presence is a stimulus to intelligence; their influence is comfort giving and inspiring. The phenomenon of a spiritual personality is that in his presence the memory becomes keen, the waves of inspiration rise, the clouds of depression clear away, hope springs from the depth of the heart and the soul within begins to feel living, love manifests through thought and feeling, and all that was once dead lives again.

This shows that personality is a mystery. It gives life and causes death; it raises one to heaven, and throws another back to the depths of earth. The influence of personality may change one's life, environment, and all affairs. Its influence can turn the wheel of life to the right or wrong side, turning thereby the trend of all the affairs of life.

Very often most innocent, good and pure-minded souls, owing to the lack of positiveness in their natures, become the victims of undesirable personalities, personalities that stand in their lives, obscuring the light for which they crave; and this may continue for a long period of time. Once a person is accustomed to being in the shade, then he is afraid to come out in the sunlight though inwardly he may be drawn to it.

The denser a person is, the grosser is his shadow. In other words, the more material a person is, the heavier is his

influence.

The whole idea of life is to live freely; to look through space freely, having nothing to hide or conceal; the light of truth to shine from within and the light of the sun without; light all around, no shadow of any kind hindering the light, which is the soul of every being.

GATHA III

1 Toasts

THERE IS a custom prevalent everywhere in the Western world of proposing toast, which is significant of a psychological truth behind it, which is to wish for a certain thing to happen at a time when one's own wish is being granted, in a smaller or greater form. This shows that the moment when one's wish is granted is that moment when one is satisfied. We should not, therefore, wonder why people go to spiritual souls for their blessing. Those who are spiritually blessed, their innermost wish has been satisfied, and a wish made by them acts as a quick blessing in the life of everyone.

But this also teaches one to catch the opportunity of getting the good wish of every person at the moment when his wish is being granted. Having known this psychological law, the people in the East look for such an opportunity of offering food to the hungry or a gift to the one who needed it, for the wish that naturally rises from the heart of a person while accepting it will certainly be granted.

Very few in the world know that great power is hidden in the wish of a person whose heart is in the state of dancing, so to speak---full of joy. We read in the legends of old of sages calling upon their friends, pupils or followers at a certain time and asking them to make a wish, for they knew the moment when the wish could be granted. There is a story of Hafiz, that near the home of the Shaikh there were eleven pupils whose name was Hafiz, but among them there was only one who used to engage himself in his night vigils, and the others used to rest all night. One evening the Shaikh called, 'Hafiz'! There was only one Hafiz awake, all others asleep. The Shaikh was holding the bowl with the thought of the wish to be granted. With his eyes closed he gave it to Hafiz. But then as he knew there were ten more, he again called 'Hafiz'! and as all others were asleep, the same Hafiz came again and received the bowl. Eleven times the teacher called, and the same Hafiz went again and again. In the morning ten were disappointed and that one Hafiz was found blessed with eleven-fold blessings.

It would not be an exaggeration if one said that even God has time when He grants wishes. And if one knows that time one certainly becomes benefited and blessed. Since Sufism teaches, look for God in the heart of man, the wise mureeds therefore see the pleasure and displeasure of God in everyone they meet, and they carefully regard the pleasure and displeasure of those they come in contact with, knowing that in doing so they regard the pleasure and displeasure of God.

Besides having one's wish granted, the joy of giving another happiness, that itself is greater than a wish granted, if one has risen to that plane of human evolution when one can enjoy pleasure with the pleasure of another, when one can feel satisfaction in the satisfaction of another, when one can be happy in bringing happiness to another. No one will give another happiness and will not have the same come to him a thousandfold. There comes a stage of evolution in the life of man when he feels more satisfied by seeing another person satisfied with food than by his having eaten it himself, when he feels comfortable in seeing another person comfortable, when he feels richly adorned by seeing another person clothed nicely; for this stage is a stepping-stone to the realization of God.

Questions and Answers (August 10th, 1923)

Q Would we receive the curses of people as well as the blessings?

A Yes. One should always think that life is an opportunity. Every moment is an opportunity. Sometimes one can do good by not troubling much oneself; it is just by seizing the opportunity. If one is attentive and brings some pleasure and happiness, it is not always that it costs. What it costs is attention. If one keeps one's attention fixed upon that idea, and is constantly seeking where one can do some little good to another. By giving one's place in a bus or tramcar; by just having a little consideration for the aged, a little consideration for someone who is perhaps

not honored or respected, if one can offer what a person is lacking in his life without him knowing, that is always a great To do good is the work of the sage. Sometimes people become over-enthusiastic, which does harm. It is a spell, a fit of goodness. That does no good. The real goodness is that which comes spontaneously. A thief is always on the look-out to rob something; so a good person is always looking for an opportunity to do good; he will always find it.

Q Can you tell something more of the time that God grants wishes?

A God grants wishes at two times. One time is when your heart is free from every thought, or feeling, or emotion; in the most peaceful and tranquil condition; at that time every wish that is sown is just like a seed sown in fertile soil. If one had the patience to wait in the great power of God, whatever be the wish, it will certainly be granted. The other time when the wish is granted is when somebody is satisfied, had been made happy by you, and naturally, out of his heart, springs a kind of fountain which pours upon you a kind of blessing. It will be just like rain from above, which in time will bring its fruits and flowers.

Q Has one the right to wish for oneself?

A Yes, as long as the conscience says that the wish is right. But there is another stage, when a person has so advanced spiritually that he thinks: 'God's wish is my wish God knows better than me. I may wish something wrong'. The one who gives his life in that way in the hands of God is greater still.

Q When a man is poor, but can just live with the means he has, is it then good when he gives away material things, and so makes himself dependent upon others?

A You see, the question what is good is a very difficult question to decide. Good is peculiar to a person. It all depends upon what that person thinks. When he thinks it is right, it is good. That is the only question.

The story of Saint Alias, he was an ascetic, and for his food only a loaf of bread was enough every day. He would not keep anything for tomorrow. If he was given four people's food in one day he would distribute it. If he had still more, he shared it all. Next day he was without. If one said, why did he make himself dependent upon people for the next day? he would say that: 'We live in this life interdependent. As long as I do not go to anybody, do not force upon anybody---only people brought it---what does it matter? It is from Him. It is not depending upon others. It all comes from God. It all goes to the creatures of God. What does it matter'? It all depends upon the person and how the person looks at it.

Q The great creative spirits, which at this moment are so necessary for working in the world, if they have in their soul a longing for spirituality, how can they keep balance between their busy life and the concentration which is a necessity for the spiritual path? What must they sacrifice?

A In the first place I should say that if one object is the seeking of one's soul, and the other object is life's necessity, and if one object is to be sacrificed, it is better the one which is necessary, but keep to the soul's seeking.

There is another point of view; in order to become spiritual, we should not become unworldly. We can just as well be in the world and yet not be of the world. We can be active in our everyday life, and yet be concentrative. A person who can concentrate well can manage the affairs of the world better. Those who have attained success in business, in worldly affairs, they had their concentration better. Therefore concentration is in no way a hindrance. A success gained through the power of spirituality is more secure and has a stronger foundation. Furthermore, there is one rule of life, which must be understood. That the success is gained by two ways; by the right way and by the wrong way. Wrong way means that which is against the spiritual idea. And when a person has started by one path, he must keep that path, in order to be successful. And if he finds that perhaps the other path will be better for the success, he will lose. A person who is going the wrong way, if he thinks that the right way will be better, he will lose. The person who is going the right way, he will not lose. His success will perhaps be slow, but it is secure, and he will all through be successful. The other had no danger, but his greatest danger is going into the right path; that is his loss.

2 Wedding Customs

There are superstitions and customs connected with the wedding observed in Europe, such as throwing an old shoe

after the newly married couple as they go away, and throwing rice. The rice signifies flourishing, multiplication, prosperity, and Providence, whereas old shoes are the old times passed in life and a new life begun. The rings that bridegroom and bride put on each other's finger is the sign of bond, which is the real meaning of marriage. The hands of the two joined by the priest is the possession of one another, suggesting that each holds the other.

The custom of the Greek church, where wreaths are put on the head of the bride and bridegroom is the exchange of thoughts and feelings and walking three times round the altar is suggestive of God between them, uniting them both in a divine link, the link which is everlasting as God Himself. And the custom of the bride's kissing the hand of the bridegroom, which is still continued at the time when the rhythm of the world is quite changed, only explains the response from the side of the bride, in which is the secret of nature's harmony, although what generally happens later is just the opposite, but that brings about the happy medium.

3 Funeral Customs

The human body represents the five elements, and nature's law is that every element returns to its own origin. Naturally therefore the being which is the air part turns into air, the heat is absorbed by the heat---the fire-element has left already. The body belongs either to earth or to water. But the body, which is born on earth, not in the water, and has sought its comfort on earth, not in water, and has also been afraid of the water, an element foreign to it, had better be saved from it and had better buried.

Another point of view is that every living being, whether man or animal, has a fear of fire. A powerful animal like the lion is afraid of the fire; the elephant with all its large body and strength runs away from fire. If that is the nature of all living beings, to be afraid of fire, then imagine for a person who is not yet dead to know that as soon as he is dead his body will be put in the fire. Although his mind is separate from the body, yet his mind will have a shock just the same.

The reason of mummies is to suggest that if the body which is dead can be kept along, then the life, which is real life, is eternal. Besides among the ancient Egyptians there was a custom (the same tendency exists in the East) that at every banquet or feast a mummy was brought in. It was brought for a moment and taken away, in order to waken man in the midst of his great joy and enthusiasm and pleasure to the consciousness that there is such a thing as death, that there is something awaiting him and that he must not keep ignorant of that truth, absorbed in all the pleasures of the world. But at the same time they put the mummies also in the grave.

4 The Swansong

They say the swan sings once, just before it dies. The meaning of this is that a fuller expression given to one's joy puts an end to life, for in the fullest expression lies life's purpose. In the life of an artist one finished work of art, and in life of a musician his best piece of music, brings to him the warning of his departure. Sa'adi says, 'Every soul is born with a purpose, and the light of that purpose is kindled in his heart'. It applies not only to the soul of every person but to every living creature, however small and insignificant; even to every object this rule can be applied.

There is a saying in the East that the elephant dies at the sight of fever. This explains that death robs one of that which one had made oneself. If this be explained in other words, one makes one's death while making oneself. The flesh that the elephant gathers around itself naturally gives power to the fever that becomes the cause of its death. The same is to be seen in the life of man. Every difficulty, even death, man makes with the making of himself. It is to suggest this idea that Christ has said, 'spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing'.

The soul was born to be immortal, but mortality it usually earns for itself. Here is nothing that man would have been afraid of if he did not possess something which he is afraid of being robbed of. When the hermit Manchandra said to Gaurakha on their journey through the wilderness. 'Gaurakha, I feel afraid'. Gaurakha answered. 'Throw away the fear', Manchandra answered, 'How can fear be thrown away? Gaurakha said, 'Throw away that which causes you fear'. Manchandra took out from his wallet two bricks of gold and said, 'These bricks of gold, must I throw them away'? 'Yes', said Gaurakha, 'What are they'? Manchandra threw them away, and as he went on his face turned pale. Gaurakha looked at him and said, 'Why are you sad'? Manchandra said, 'Now we have nothing'. Gaurakha said, 'We have everything. Look before you, what do you behold'? And he beheld mountains of gold. Gaurakha said, 'Take as much as you can, if that is your soul's striving'. Manchandra's soul awoke, and he said, 'Nothing will I take for I know the riches of possessing nothing'.

Customs at the Birth of a Child in India

For three days from the time that the child is born, and sometimes for six days, no friends are allowed to enter the room where the child is, only some relations who are most esteemed in the family. The meaning in this custom is that the mind of the newborn child is like a photographic plate and the first impression that it receives goes deeper in it and other impressions have less effect. Therefore the impressions of early childhood make the foundation for the whole life.

The mother does not appear before friends for the first six days, even some relations are kept away. The meaning of this custom is that in the negative state in which a mother is at that time. She is too sensitive to be exposed to inharmonious and coarse vibrations. In the case of the child it is not only that his mind is affected, but the first impression even influences the construction of his face and form.

At the birth of a son the occasion is celebrated by the beating of drums and gunfire. This custom no doubt comes from the ancient Rajputs, whose *Dharma* or sacred duty, was warfare. This first noise of drums and gunfire was meant as the child's first experience, or as a first lesson in warfare. An entertainment is given in celebration of the birth of a child, at which there is singing, playing and dancing. It is meant by this that a joyous atmosphere works as a push given to a swing in the life of a child on earth at its commencement.

The Superstitions of the Days Existing in the East

In the East the influence of the days of the week is considered by all, learned or illiterate. Every time has its peculiar influence and particular purpose. The mechanism of the cosmos has a certain action and again its reaction on the part of the planets, producing a certain effect in every hour of the day, in every day of the week, in every week of the month, in every month of the year, and in every year of a cycle.

The characteristic of Sunday is Godliness. Anything spiritual can alone be successful. Anything else, besides a spiritual thing, something of a worldly nature, begun on Sunday, or continued on that day, must come to naught.

Monday is a negative day, a day for things of a passive character. To receive teaching, to obtain information, to search for anything, this is the auspicious day.

Tuesday is a day of enjoyment, for amusement, joy and pleasure. For picnic, feast and wedding, for music and dancing, and for sports, this is a fitting day.

Wednesday is a day for business. It is a day for taking an initiative, and undertaking. All that is done on this day must bear fruit.

Thursday is a central day, to make a determination, to decide things, to settle in a new place. It is a day of inspiration, of revelation, because the influence of this day touches the summit.

Friday is a day of power and a day of aspiration. On this day prayer is granted and wishes are fulfilled, thoughts are materialized, and dreams become realized. However, this is not the day of sowing, it is the day of reaping. Friday is a day of exaltation.

Saturday is a winding day. If loss is wound it continues for days and days, if the mechanism of gain is wound it continues for weeks. It is a day of upliftment to those who raise their soul to a higher pitch, so that the machinery of the spirit may be wound and continued for a long, long time. Every planetary influence that begins on Saturday must always continue its effect upon one's life.

The influence of the day is unavoidable upon every mortal, except upon souls to whom day and night is the same, those who are beyond the laws of this mortal world.

Unlucky Numbers

According to the Orientals, 3, 13, 9, and 18 are numbers which must be avoided in beginning some profitable act. There are some psychological reasons which prove these numbers to be best avoided.

Three denotes all. All means everything, and everything means nothing in particular. Things of the world, which

are profitable, are something in particular. Three therefore annuls the distinction, for 3 resolves into 1. One is 3, and 3 is 1.

Thirteen destroys balance by unbalancing the rhythm, as it cannot be evenly divided. Besides, 12 hours of the day and 12 hours of the night complete the day and night. So the thirteenth has no place either in the day or in the night. Besides, after 12 o'clock comes 1, and it marks 13. Thirteen is a number which has no accommodation. Among Western people there is a superstition that the thirteenth person at table must die within the year. This also explains that the number 13 has no accommodation. That a person dies, means that the earth accommodates him no longer.

Nine falls short of perfection. Besides it is 3 times 3.

And so is 18 for 8 and 1 are 9. It has the same effect as 3.

All numbers besides 3, 13, 9, and 18 are considered in the East fit to be used.

The Mysteries of Omens

The secret of what we call omen is to be found in the law of impressions. For instance there is a belief that if you are going to do something, if a cat crosses your way you meet with ill-luck. It is easy to understand. In the first place the swift action of the cat makes a great impression upon a person; it forms a line before you, a line of action, and that line impressed upon you gives you the thought of a cross. You are intending to go straight, and your line is crossed by a horizontal action against your vertical action, which means in action one's hands nailed and feet tied. It gives the picture of the idea.

The whole mystery of omens, which used to be believed by the ancient people and are now considered to be superstitions, has behind it this mystery of impression. Naturally when a person is starting to accomplish a certain work and he happens to see beautiful flowers or fruits that gives a promise of his desire being fulfilled, of its bearing flowers for him---the sign of success. A person going forward with this impression will certainly meet with success. Whereas if a person sees burning wood, or a sack of coal, which all show destruction---fire which burns up---a person going to do something impressed by this certainly loses.

There used to be a custom that when someone in a family was going out to accomplish something, no one must say any word that would hinder his success. They did not even ask the person, 'Where are you going?', because even asking raises a question. The question stands before one, Why? Where? A person would become discouraged even in answering. The strength of will with which he is going may be exhausted in answering Why, and Where, and then he may not find the energy and power to accomplish what he is going to accomplish.

This is the inner psychology of mind, the knowledge of which makes things easy. One must not become impressed by holding different beliefs, but one must know the science, the mystery which is hidden behind all such things, which may seem small and little, but their result sometimes is most important.

The Influence of Time

It has been a custom among the people in the East to start every enterprise with the waxing of the moon, in order to follow the course of nature and to join forces with the increasing power and light of the moon. The sun represents divine light, the moon represents the human heart. To join forces with the waxing of the moon is like drawing divine light and power in one's own heart to accomplish a certain thing. It is also considered lucky to rise with the sunrise, and better still to begin an enterprise with the rising of the sun. This is again an indication to follow nature's tides. The sun represents divine power; therefore any spiritual action, a prayer-offering or a meditation, a devotional worship, it is more desirable to perform with the sunrise.

However, the night vigils are performed by the seers and the knowers of truth in the midst of the night, when the old day ends and the new day begins; for that is a time of Kemal which offers to the soul a perfect stillness. When the sun is at the zenith that is Kemal also, but it has not the quiet of midnight; and therefore it is considered by those who know things inauspicious for taking up any enterprise. As time has influence upon weather, upon the sea, upon the trees and plants, so it has a subtle influence upon living creatures. Man appears to be most independent of the influences and yet man is most under the influence of time; not only his body and mind, but with all affairs of life. Verily the one who knows the influence of time knows the secret of life.

Gatha 10 Planetary Influences

Belief in planetary influences has been maintained in all ages by man. However many times a person may have been disappointed in finding truth in the horoscope, yet no one can be thoughtful and deny the fact of the influence that the planets have upon people's lives. It is possible that every method is not a correct method of making a horoscope, every book on astrology is not the right book, and every astrologer is not a prophet; nevertheless there is as much truth in the influence of planets upon the lives of men as there is truth in the effects of drugs upon one's physical body. The whole cosmic system is based upon a certain rhythm, a rhythm which relates planets, multitudes, and individuals, and manifests as a hidden law governing the action of the whole creation and yet silent and covered.

There are two aspects that constitute an individual; spiritual and material. The spiritual aspect remains untouched, while the material aspect is moved and turned by conditions brought about by planetary influences. The spiritual aspect, which remains untouched in every man, is as a witness of his life, a soul from within who knows not what it itself is, who identifies itself with this other aspect and therefore takes as a reality that which it witnesses, that which goes on before it as a course of life. When once this real aspect of man's being is awakened then it begins to see that it has a voice in the matter too, and then it sees that it must fight for its rights, in order to gain liberty. It therefore fights with its own kingdom, which is the other aspect of man's being which it so long witnessed; and so it gains that strength which enables it in the long run to battle with outer conditions caused by planetary influences. It might take one a lifetime to combat, and yet it would be short to gain the mastery which belongs to the soul.

PART II

KASHF Insight

GATHA I

Safa

It is the faculty of the soul to see, and the eyes are its instruments. It is not the instrument that sees, but it is the soul that uses the instrument to see. The eyes I have given as an example, but really the whole body is the instrument of the soul, to get the experience of life. The seeing of the soul through the ears is called hearing, through the tongue, tasting. It is the knowing by the soul of the external life; the soul uses different instruments to obtain different experiences.

Between the body and the soul there is another instrument which is recognized by scientists and mystics as inexplicable. That is the mind. The scientists call it the brain, but the brain is but the instrument of the mind, and the mind goes beyond it. Plainly speaking, it may be said that the mind is the instrument of the soul and the body is the instrument of the mind, but both mind and body is the instruments of the soul. Although these instruments give the soul knowledge of things clearly, these instruments at the same time limit the power of the soul.

There are two aspects of sight: one is penetration and the other expansion, i.e., the length and width of the range of sight. Through the eyes of the body one can see a short or long distance, or have a wide or narrow horizon. But by using the mind as its instrument the soul sees through another mind in the same way as the eye sees across the length and breadth of its range of sight.

When the mind takes the body in order to experience life, it limits the experience. For the body is not sufficient. But if the mind were free, it would see further. But, as from childhood man has the habit of using the body as the instrument of the mind, hardly anyone knows how to make use of the mind without the body. And as the soul has always taken the mind as its instrument, it also limits its sight and experience. If the soul could see independently of mind and body, it would see infinitely more.

As it is difficult for the mind to see independently of the body, it is more difficult for the soul to see independently of the mind. Therefore, the Sufi tries to make his mind independent of the body and his soul independent of mind and body. In order to accomplish this different concentrations and practices are given. It is like effacing the

external form from the mind, and erasing from the soul the form of the mind. It is this experience which is called *Safa*.

2 Tat Tvam Asi

There are three aspects of life, and by seeing the oneness of these three one comes to divine knowledge. To the mystic, therefore, the idea of the Trinity suggests this philosophy. This idea also exists in the Hindu religion, and is known as Trimurti. They have a religious instrument with three points (a kind of fork with three points) as a symbol of this, the idea being that it is the three different aspects of the one life which confuse man and prevent him from realizing the one life beneath these three aspects.

The first aspect is the knower, the second is the known, and the third is the knowing. In other words they may be called the seer, the seen or that which appears, and the sight. These three are three turnings on the same road. Which hide it and divide it into three aspects. Therefore, in the spiritual path this puzzle must be solved as the first and last thing. If the barriers, which divide these three aspects, are removed then the mystic realizes one life and not three.

Occult power is the power of knowing or seeing, the faculty of knowing or seeing. The seer is the greatest of these aspects, the second is that which is seen (appears), the seeing power is the third. The reason of this is that the seer is the source and origin of what is seen and of the seeing power. Therefore, Jesus Christ called Him 'Father.' That which is seen has in it the light inherited from the seer. Whether flower or fruit, it has radiance in it which makes it appear. There is a verse of a Persian poet, which explains this: 'The nightingale has borrowed from Thee his beautiful song, and the rose has borrowed from Thee its color and fragrance.' But the means that the seer takes as his instrument is the mind, which is the instrument of the soul, and the body, the instrument of the mind.

Therefore, the first lesson the mystic has to learn is to know the relation between himself and the thing he sees. As soon as a mystic sees life from this point of view, that he connects himself with the thing he sees, he can understand it much better than the average person can. Sufism is not a religion, because it does not give any doctrine or principle, but it is a point of view. The ancient Vedantists adopted their point of view in teaching the sacred words *Tat Tvam Asi*: 'As Thou art, so I am.' With this point of view, when the sight becomes keen, even objects become clear to the seer and speak to him, and what is called psychometry, or such phenomena, become as a play to the seer. The whole of life is as an open book. But there is nothing so interesting for the seer to see or know as human nature, and it is the seer who can see and know another person.

Ordinarily there exist many barriers between one person and another, such as prejudice, hatred, reserve, remoteness, and all aspects of duality. A person considers another his greatest friend in the world if he realizes that the other understands him. There is nothing that brings two people closer together than understanding. And what is this comprehension? It is trinity with unity. Often one wonders, 'Why do I not understand this person?' But one does not realize that one creates oneself the barriers, which separate one person from another. If these barriers are not created, the soul has freedom to see and nothing can stand in its way. Do you think the sages and saints try to see the thoughts of other people? Not at all, that does not concern them. But the thoughts of another person manifest themselves to the saint. Why? Because there is no barrier. This barrier creates duality.

The idea of the Sufi is to uncover himself, and this he can accomplish by contemplation upon the idea of God, which is the Absolute Oneness. When one realizes this in its immensity, all such sciences as physiognomy or phrenology begin to become like play, because by these sciences one sees a part, but by the light of the soul one sees the whole.

3 The Glance of the Seer

The glance of the seer is penetrating, and in this it differs from the glance of an ordinary man. It has three characteristics (qualities). The first is that it penetrates through the body, mind, and soul. The second quality of this glance is that it opens, unlocks, and unfolds things; it also possesses the power of seeking and finding. The third characteristic of the glance of the seer is more wonderful. It is this: as it falls upon a thing, it makes that thing, as it wants to make it. This is not actually creating, but it is awakening that particular quality, which was perhaps asleep.

This is quite natural, as we see in the ordinary course of life that by fear we create in others dreadful qualities, and when we love, we create kindness. It is possible to turn a friend into an enemy by thinking that he is an enemy, and

also it is possible to change an enemy into a friend by expecting him to be a friend. Therefore, the tendency of the mystic is to turn everything into that which he wishes it to be. To turn what is ugly into beauty, and beauty into ugliness, this is what the vision can accomplish. This proves to a deep thinker that things are not what they appear to be, but we make them as they are. The whole life may be made into a thing of complete ugliness or it may be made into a sublime vision of perfect beauty. The lord of the yogis, Shiva, is pictured with a cobra on his neck, which means that death, which frightens everyone, is accepted by him as life. That shows that even death can be made into life, and it is only the difference of the point of view that makes life death.

The first characteristic of the glance of the seer, penetration, depends upon clearness of vision. The second characteristic, the uncovering of objects, depends upon the illumination of the soul. But the third, the greatest, comes from confidence in the self, called *Iman*.

Divine Evidence

The first thing in the study of human nature is observation of the external part of man. This has two aspects, one is the head of man, and the other is his form. And this can be seen from two points of view, the first is the analytical point of view, the second the synthetic. The former is understanding of the character of each organ and the meaning of its form, and the latter is the harmony of the different organs. And a person understands half if he considers one organ only and not its combination with other organs.

The study of physiognomy can help one as an interesting study, but one must have intuition also to help and guide him who wishes to judge. Nothing in life is so interesting as the study of human nature, and in attaining to knowledge of God, knowledge of human nature is the beginning. Therefore, in occult study one must begin by studying human beings, and the first lesson is to study their form.

The prominence of particular organs and muscles shows the vitality, which exists in these organs, and the lack of it is lack of energy in these organs. Therefore, the straightness of any organ suggests straightness in the nature, and curve, where it is natural, shows subtlety of nature, a point, wherever it is natural shows sharpness of nature, roundness makes for subtlety, and the oval form shows acute intelligence, proportion of head and body and of each part of the head and body shows balance, and lack of it shows lack of balance. Every organ represents a certain part of man's nature that may have no connection with that organ. A particular mode of standing or sitting denotes a certain nature. Crookedness where there should be straightness shows lack of straightness in the nature. Organs which should be symmetrical and are not show lack of balance.

In every face and form there is always some resemblance to the lower creation, and a person with keen insight can recognize it, and intuition helps us to understand it. Sometimes in face or form, sometimes in movements, we show a sign of one or the other of the lower creatures, and this signifies some resemblance with the nature of that particular creature.

The more one observes from this point of view the clearer the view becomes and it shows the marvel of the Creator. It makes one tolerant and forgiving to everyone, by reason of understanding that none can act against his nature. Also he who looks at this marvel begins to see the divine evidence in every face, as a person can see the painter in his painting. And it is only natural to wish to study this part of occultism in order to recognize the divine part in the creature and worship Him.

5 Openness

Every atom of man's body expresses his past, present, and future. The reason is that, in the first place, every impulse creates its vibrations and takes a particular direction of activity. This influences the heart, whence the blood is circulated through the whole body. In this way the thought is, so to speak, written on man's face. Man's continual agitation in regard to others, his satisfaction or dissatisfaction, his love or hatred, all shows in his appearance. Everyone can know it more or less, but he seer can read more correctly. It is difficult to tell definitely the marks of a person's thoughts and feelings that are shown in his appearance. Nevertheless, partly by intuition and partly by experience, man reads them. There are some in whom self-control is developed, who are capable of hiding their thoughts and emotions, and yet it is impossible to feel deeply and to hide one's feelings from the eyes of others.

No doubt form and movement speak aloud of one's condition, but the expression of a man's face speaks louder

still. There come distinct changes at every impulse, at every change of emotion, making distinct marks which are an open book to a seer. The word *Kashf* means ‘opening,’ and it is used by the Sufis with meaning that the heart is, as a rule, a closed book and the one to whom it becomes open can read it like an open book. No doubt reading man’s condition of mind from his appearance is not such a difficult thing. Even dogs and cats can know this and sometimes they know better than man does. What gives one insight into another is, in the first place, his sympathy. The seer first develops the quality of love. He whose heart is kindled with the love of God is capable of the love of humanity. The heart thus kindled with love becomes a lighted lantern, which throws its light on every person the seer meets, and, as this light falls upon the person he meets, all things about that person, his body, heart, and soul, become clear to him. Love is a torch that illuminates all that come within its light, but it is the knowledge of God, which is the key, which opens the hearts of men.

Movement (1)

Every movement that one makes suggests to the seer some meaning. A person is not always conscious of his movements, and not every movement is made intentionally, and many movements that man makes unconsciously and thinks nothing of, mean something to the seer.

The seer notices them from two points, the beginning and the end. No motion, to a seer, is without direction; in other words every movement is directed by a precedent cause. And no motion, to him, is without a certain result. The purpose seems to be in the cause, but in reality it is in the effect. It is born in the cause, but it is finished in the effect.

The first thing that the mystic understands by a movement that a person makes is the nature of the person, and the next thing that he understands is about the person’s affairs. And the law holds good about straightness suggesting straightness and crookedness suggesting crookedness, grace of movement suggesting beauty and lack of grace the lack of that element. Rhythm of movement suggests balance; lack of rhythm suggests lack of balance. The upward tendency of movement suggests rise, the downward tendency fall, and the horizontal spreading. The movement inward and outward are suggestive of within and without. Also the law of tendency of the five elements to different directions helps the seer to recognize the different elements working in man’s nature. The movement can be recognized in sitting, walking, lying, and in laughter or in crying.

The study of these laws of movement and direction is helpful only when the intuitive faculty is developed. If the study is intellectual it is limited and rigid, and one cannot probe the depths of human nature far enough by intellectual study alone.

Movement (2)

The condition of the mind is expressed not only in the countenance but also in the movements. Every movement denotes a certain change of thought and feeling. The more one understands the language of movements the more one comprehends this. In every thought and feeling the waves of the mind, so to speak, rise and fall, and as by seeing the waves one can notice whether the sea is rough or calm, so by noticing the movements of a person one can read the condition of his mind.

Upward movement suggests wrath, revenge, conceit, or pride; downward movement depression, helplessness, or meekness. Movements towards the left and right also have their significance. To the right show struggle and power, to the left art and skill. A contracting tendency suggests fear, indifference, and coldness. A stretching tendency shows desire for action, strength and power. A tendency to turn shows confusion. A tendency to pinch and press shows uneasiness and agony of mind. Expansion and ease of movement show joy and happiness, and stillness without stiffness is expressive of calm and peace.

The Study of the Whole

Man’s form can be divided into two parts, the head and the body. One part is for action, the other for thought. Therefore, the face can explain the attitude of mind and depict the nature and character more fully than the body and its movements. Every little movement of the eyes, the movements of the lips in smiling or in laughter, the movements of the eyebrows or of the head itself explain the condition of the mind.

The ends of the eyebrows turning upwards suggests egoism and shrewdness. The puckering of the lips suggests pleasure, as the twitching of the lips shows a tendency to humor or indicates pleasure. The rolling of the eyes

towards the outer corners denotes a clever brain. The puffing of the cheeks denotes joy, the drawing in, sorrow.

One can get a full conception of the character by studying the full countenance and not a part only. The study of a part always gives only partial knowledge. Complete knowledge is gained only by a study of the whole. Keen observation with the desire to understand helps a person to read the condition of man's mind, his nature and character, yet the view is often colored by the personality of the one who sees. His favor or disfavor, his liking or dislike, stands between the eyes of the one who sees and the one who is seen. Therefore, sometimes, innocent people have a better understanding of a person than clever people with deceitful minds do. There is a saying of Sa'di, 'O my subtle cleverness, Thou often becomest my greatest deceiver.'

The Mystery of Expression

Man's expression is more indicative of his nature and character than his form or features. In the Koran it is said that man's eyes and gestures will confess what he tries to hide in his heart. The strength, the weakness, the power, the fear, the happiness, the joy, the uneasiness, the praise or blame, the love or hatred, all these are shown by the expression. The more capable one becomes of reading the expression the more clearly one can read character.

This shows that there is a mystery that lies behind movement. There are certain vibrations, which take a particular direction under certain conditions, and the visible signs of all vibrations can be seen in man's movements or the expression of his countenance. It does not take one moment for the expression to change from pleasure to pain, from calm to horror, from love to hate. That shows that all the atoms of man's body, the veins, tubes and muscles, and the lines formed by their movements, are under the control of the heart. And every change that takes place in the heart shows on man's face, so that one who knows the language can read it. People who see each other often can read such changes from the expression, because each grows accustomed to know and to recognize the changes of facial expression in the others, but it is the development of intuition which gives the clearness of vision by which one can see more completely.

The eyes are more expressive of thought and feeling than anything else. A person who can read the language of the eyes, their appearance and their movement, has the key to character. The eyes can ask and answer questions, and it is in the grade of speed and direction of the glance that the mystery of expression lies.

Different Qualities of Mind

As there are different qualities of the sight, such as long and short sight, so there are different qualities of mind. There are minds, which can see a certain distance and no further, and others that can see a longer distance. And what are called foresight are not a supernatural, superhuman faculty but a long range of sight. When a person can see the action of another person, the seer can see the reason of the action too, and if the sight is keener still, he can see the reason of the reason. One cannot give one's sight to another. He can tell what he sees, but that is not sufficient, for in order to be sure every soul wants its own experience.

The faculty of seeing through life can be developed by observation, which is called study. And the focusing of the mind upon the object of study is called concentration. As by making a habit of lifting one thing, a person can learn to lift several weighty things, so by observing one object of study a man becomes capable of observing any object in the same way. Keeness of observation is a phenomenon in itself. In the first place, the sight penetrates, so to speak, the object one sees. And the next thing is that the light of the sun has the power to open the buds, so the power of keen observation commands the objects observed to unfold themselves and to reveal their secrets.

Every object has a soul in it, which may be called its spirit. In ancient times the seers recognized the spirit of all things, the spirit of mountains, trees, stars, and planets, of the rivers, lakes, pools and seas. And penetrating through objects means touching their spirit. No doubt it is easier to touch the spirit of man than to touch the spirit of the objects, for the very reason that man is more living than any other form of creation.

The person whose eyes are not steady cannot observe fully. So also, the mind that is not steady also cannot observe things well. Therefore, the mystics prescribe certain postures in order to make the body stable. And steadiness of body reacts on each other. So a self-mastered person who has control over his body and mind, has balance and wisdom. Wisdom comes from steadiness and insight follows wisdom.

GATHA II

The Reproduction of the Mental Record

Every line which is deeply engraved on the surface of the mind may be likened to a vein through which the blood runs, keeping it alive, and while the blood is running it is productive of offshoots of that deep-set line. There are moments when a kind of congestion comes in a line where the blood is not running, and there are no offshoots. This congestion can be broken by some outer influence; and when the congested line is touched by an outer influence related to that line, then this sets the blood running again and offshoots arising, expressing themselves in thoughts. It is just like a waking or sleeping state of the lines. As one note of music can be fully audible at a time so one lone offshoot can be intelligible at a time, and it is the warmth of interest that keeps the blood running in that particular line. There may be other lines where the blood is alive also. Still, if they are not kept warm by one's interest they become congested and thus paralyzed. And yet, the blood is there, the life is there, it awaits the moment to awaken. The sorrows of the past, the fears of the past, the joys of the past, can be brought to life after ages, and could give exactly the same sensation that one had experienced formerly.

The more one knows the mystery of this phenomenon, the more one learns to understand that there is a world in one's self, that in one's mind there is a source of happiness and unhappiness, the source of health and illness, the source of light and darkness, and that it can be awakened, either mechanically or at will, if only one knew how to do it. Then one does not blame his ill fortune nor complain of his fellow man. He becomes more tolerant, more joyful, and more loving toward his neighbor, because he knows the cause of every thought and action, and he sees it all as the effect of a certain cause. A physician would not revenge himself on a patient in an asylum, even if the patient hit him, for he knows the cause. Psychology is the higher alchemy, and one must not study it only without practicing it. Practice and study must go together, which opens the door to happiness for every soul.

Impression

The mind can be likened to a record of the talking-machine. But, as it is a living mechanism, it does not only reproduce what is impressed on it, but it creates as well as reproduces. There are five different actions of the mind, which can be distinguished:

1) Creating of thoughts; 2) the sense of discrimination; 3) memory; 4) the factor of feeling; 5) the principal faculty, the feeling of I-ness, or ego. Every thought which mind creates has some connection with some idea already recorded, not exactly similar, but akin to it. For instance, one deeply engraved line on the mind may have several small lines shooting out from it like branches from the trunk of a tree.

The Sufi, therefore, learns and practices to discern the more deeply engraved lines by the observation of their offshoots. Therefore, he is able to learn more from a person's thought than anybody else, just as by looking at a leaf of a tree one can find out what kind of tree it is. As a rule, every thought a person expresses has at bottom a connection with some deep feeling. The reading of the deep-set line is like reading the cause of the person's thought. The knowledge of the cause can give greater understanding than knowing only the thought. It is just like standing on the other side of the wall. Thought is like a wall; behind it – the cause. Often the difference between cause and effect is like that between sour and sweet. It is often confusing, yet simple, that the same fruit may be sour when unripe and sweet when ripe. When one begins to understand life from his point of view, the opinion one forms of thought becomes different. There is a great difference between reading a thought externally and reading it from the inside, the source. The one who forms an opinion of the shade has not seen the reality. The effect of a thought is but a shade, the reality is the cause, the source.

What are these deep lines from which offshoots come? These deep lines are the deep impressions which man gets in the first part of his life. In the East, considering this theory, they observe certain rules in the family concerning the expectant mother and the child to be, so that no undesirable impressions may touch their minds. This shows how important it is that this question must be studied. The word 'man' comes from the Sanskrit *Manas*, which means mind. This shows that man is principally his mind, rather than his body. And as mind is naturally impressionable, that means that man is naturally impressionable too. Most often his illness, health, prosperity, failure, all depends upon the impressions on his mind. They say 'Lines of fate and death are on the head and palm,' but I would say that it is the impressions man has on his mind, which decide his destiny. The lines on head and palm are but reimpersions of the mind, there is no need of the lines on hand or face.

Can this language be learned like shorthand? No, the method is different. The method is that, whereas to understand a person every man in his reasoning goes forward from the thought of another, the Sufi goes backward.

All impressions of joy, sorrow, fear, disappointment, become engraved on the mind. This means that they have become man's self. In other words, man is the record of man's actions will be reproduced on the Last Day, and that angels write down all the good and ill done by each one. What we learn from this allegorical expression is that all is impressed on the mind; although forgotten, it is always there and will one day show up.

The Balance of Life

Every habit makes a line in man's mind, and the continuation of that habit wakens that line from sleep; in other words it gives the line sensitiveness, which is the feeling of life; and in time man indulges in his habit. If a person takes a liking to a certain phrase of music its every repetition gives him a renewed joy. When someone enjoys certain poetry it cannot be repeated to him too often. If anyone likes a certain dish, in time he has a craving for it. Not only praise or flattery does man enjoy, but even insults, if they have made a deep line on his mind. He will try to tease others or offend somebody, in order to receive an insult. He may not outwardly seem to enjoy it, and yet he will revel in it. If a person becomes accustomed to sit on a certain rock in a garden he forms a habit of going and seeking the same rock every day. If someone has a liking for the scenery of a certain place he longs to see it every day. Of course it depends upon the depth of the line. The deeper the line, the more one lives in it. When talking, a businessman explains things in terms of his compass and tools. Every person has his own language and that language is made of his words, which come from the deeply engraved line of his mind.

Therefore, the work of the mystic is to be able to read the language of the mind. As the clerk in the telegraph office reads letters from the ticks, so the Sufi gets behind every word spoken to him and discovers what has prompted the word to come out. He therefore reads the line, which are behind man's thought, speech, and action. He also understands that every kind of longing and craving in life, good or bad, has its source in deep impression. By knowing this root of the disease he is easily able to find out its cure. No impression is such that it cannot be erased.

The mystics have two processes in dealing with these lines. One process is to renew this line by putting in some other color and therefore changing one impression into another impression. No doubt this needs great knowledge of mental chemistry. Another way that the mystic takes is to rub out the line from the surface. But often, when the line is deep, it takes the rubbing out of a great portion of the mind to destroy one line.

Naturally, the mystic becomes tolerant of every sort of dealing of others with him, as he sees not only the dealing as it appears, thoughtful or thoughtless, cold or warm, but the cause that is at the back of it.

By reading the human mind a mystic gets insight into human nature and to him the life of human beings begin to appear as a mechanism working. The mystic learns from this that life is give and take. It is not only that one receives what one gives but also one gives what one receives. In this way the mystic begins to see the balance of life. He realizes that life is a balance, and if the gain or loss, the joy or pain of one outweighs that of another, it is for the moment, but in time it all sums up in a balance, and without balance there is no existence possible.

The Language of the Mind

Everything one expresses in his art, painting, verse, music, is the reproduction of the mind. Not only that, but his choice, his likes and dislikes, his habits, all show what is the state of his mind. Everything man says or does shows the lines already traced in his mind. There is no exaggeration in the saying that man's face is the mirror of his heart. It seems as if the mind begins to speak through every particle of the body. Since the head is the more predominant factor, the expression of man tells most about the condition of his mind.

No doubt it is difficult to give a certain rule of reading this language expressed in the face, form, or movements but two things can help one to understand it: keen observation to study human nature, and developed intuition. Then one begins to have a sort of key to this language. But if you ask him, he cannot express it. From different compositions of composers one can imagine their character, their life and state of mind. As in the science of sound there is a tone and an overtone, so in the music of a certain composer there is a sense which stands together with the music. The one, who hears the notes, he only enjoys the music. The one, who understands the sense, he knows the mind of the composer. So the verse is the soul of the poet. For the poetry is not only poetry, it has its music behind. The one, who reads the verse, he only enjoys the poetry. But the one who comprehends the sense in it enjoys the music of this poetry. One who asks a question of himself on hearing a certain word, on seeing a certain movement, on observing a certain expression in a face, must receive an answer from his intuition, telling him the cause of this effect, which manifests outwardly. In this way the Sufi makes his way for his journey in the inner

world.

The Influence of Experience

Beneath the five senses there is one principal sense that works through the others. It is through this sense that one feels deeply, and distinguishes between the impressions which come from outside. Every impression and experience gained by this sense is recorded on the mind. This record is made up of deep lines, and the nature of these lines deeply set in the mind is to want the same thing that has already been recorded, according to the depth of the line. And it is according to the depth of the line that one needs the thing that one has once experienced. For instance, the liking for salt, sour, or pepper are acquired tastes, and the sign of this acquisition is the deep line that is on the mind. Each line so produced wishes to live upon its impression, and the lack of that experience is like death to that line. Unpleasant flavors such as fish, or vinegar, or cheese, become pleasant after the line is formed. Tastes even more unpalatable than these may become excessively agreeable once the line is well engraved on the mind.

The same rule is applicable to notes of music. A certain combination of notes, or a certain arrangement, when once impressed upon the mind, may become very agreeable to it. The more one hears the music, which has once been impressed on our mind, the more one wants to hear it. And one never becomes tired of it, unless another, deeper line is formed. Then the first line may be neglected and become a dead line. It is for that reason that the music that belongs to a certain people, whether evolved or unevolved, is their ideal music. Therefore, it is not the music written without; it is the music written within the mind that has influence. This is the reason why composers resemble each other in their music, for the lines that are impressed upon their minds have been created by what they have heard, and as the first lines are inherited from other composers, there is a resemblance in their music. In this way the music of every people form its own character.

The same law works in poetry. One enjoys poetry from one's previous impressions. If the poetry that one reads is not in harmony with the first impressions one will not enjoy it so much. The more one reads a certain poetry the more one enjoys it, because of the deep impression on the mind.

From this we learn that not only what is desirable but also what is undesirable may become a favorite thing. Even things that one would never like to have, such as pain, illness, worry or death, if they are deeply impressed on one's mind, one unconsciously long to experience again.

It is very interesting to find that if a man has formed an opinion about a certain thing or person and after a time there has been everything to disprove that opinion, he will still hold on to his impression and will not like to change his opinions. This is because of the

Deep lines impressed on his mind. How true is what the mystic says, that the true ego of man is his mind! And it is still more amusing to find that after spending his life under the influence of the deep impressions on his mind man still boasts of what he calls free will.

Intuition

The modern psychologist adopts a system of psychoanalysis in order to investigate the state of mind of his patient, and the barrister in the law court cross-examines in order to investigate the truth of the case. All these methods are more or less useful, when they are rightly practiced. But the chief thing for getting to the mind of a person is to see the person, in his form, in his expression, in his movements, in his words, in his imagination and in the way of his action. The principal thing, which helps in seeing the mind of another person, is the light of intuition. Nothing else, neither the rules, nor studies, nor standard of understanding can help, without the development of intuition. But one thing must be remembered that man shows the line engraved upon his mind in this form, expression, in his movements, words, in his imagination and action. And it is possible to detect a man from his word before his action, or from his movement before his action, or from his expression before his words, or from his form before even he had time to imagine. Therefore, the knowledge of this can save a great deal of trouble in life, if man only knows beforehand how to act with different people.

The person who acts in the same manner with every person, however good or kind he may be must always meet with disappointments. As the direction of the fire is upwards and that of the water is downwards so the direction of one person is different from that of the other. Therefore, if you expect a person who is going to the south to take

your message to the north, you will find yourself mistaken in the end. Generally a person dealing with others thinks of the affair more than of the person. Really the person must be the chief object of study, not the affair, for the affair depends upon the person. In the East there is a superstition of a dog or cat or horse being lucky or unlucky for the person who possesses it, but the reality of this idea can be most seen in every human being with whom one comes in contact through one's everyday life. He must surely bring something with him, pleasure, and displeasure, and happiness, good or bad influence. Every man in himself is a world. Every new contact is a New World opened before us.

Evidence of the Thought

When a person is thinking, you can see his thought in his eyes, in his expression, in his movements. Things such as: opening or closing the eyes, looking up or looking down, looking out the corners of the eyes, turning the head to the right or left, raising it or bowing it, scratching the fingers, rubbing the hands, turning the thumbs, a half-smile, puckering the face or the forehead, sitting stiffly or at ease, sitting upright or leaning back, or leaning to one side or to the other, all show to the seer the line of thought. Especially when a person is asked a question, before he answers the seer knows what will be his answer from his attitude.

The Hindus believe that the creation is Brahma's dream, which means the Creator's dream - in plain words, what the Creator has thought, He has made. So, in proportion to his might, man makes what he thinks. What materializes, we call happening, but what has not been materialized we don't know, and what we don't know still exists in the thought-world. In the Koran it is said, 'The organs of your body will give evidence of your action on the Last Day.' Really speaking, not of the action only but evidence even of the thought is given by every atom of the body immediately. The nature of the manifestation is such that there is nothing hidden except that which one cannot see, and what one cannot see is not hidden in itself, but from one's eyes.

The aim of the Sufi, therefore, is to see and yet not be interested. Suppose you were climbing Mount Everest, and were interested in a certain place, which you liked, to admire it, or in the part, which you disliked, to break it. In both cases you have allowed your feet to be chained to that place for more or less time, and by that, have lost time and opportunity. Whereas, you could have gone on forever and perhaps seen and learned more than by stopping there. Those who trouble about others' thoughts and interest themselves in others' actions most often lose their time and blunt their inner sight. Those who go farther, their moral is to overlook all they see on their way, as their mind is fixed on the goal. It is not a sin to know anybody's thought, but it is a fault no doubt if one professes to do so. To try to know the thought of another for one's own interest is neither just nor beneficial. At the same time to sit with closed eyes is not good either. The best thing is to see and rise above, never to halt on the way, and it is this attitude that, if constantly practiced, will lead men safely to his soul's desired goal.

The Activity of the Mind

The activity of mind can be recognized in three different aspects, mobile, rhythmic, and chaotic. And the activity of mind can be seen by the speech and action of a person. If, in speech and action a person shows a friendly attitude, love and kindness, the activity is mobile, and every impulse prompted by this activity will manifest in the form of gentleness, generosity, gratitude and goodwill. If the activity of mind is rhythmic it will make a person more reasoning. He will be exacting, weighing, measuring, loving and hating. Liking and dislike will be balanced. This is not an easygoing person. This person will be more businesslike. All that manifests from him in speech or action will be more substantial, reasonable, also progressive in a worldly sense. But the person the activity of whose mind is chaotic will be agitated, confused, suspicious, horrified, and all that will manifest in his speech and action will be anger, passion, intolerance, imprudence, and will be difficult for himself and for others.

No soul is by nature fixed to any of these three aspects of activity. It is what he allows himself to be or what the condition of his life makes him to be. Therefore, the principle of Sufi teaching is to regulate the rhythm of man's mind. Then the Sufi becomes his instrument. He can play on it any music of any rhythm and nothing will affect it, for he is no longer in the hand of his mind, his mind is in his hand.

Likes and Dislikes

What one dislikes in line, form, color, smell, taste, or sound, or in sense or idea, is not disliked because it deserves to be so, but because it is foreign to one's nature. Once a person becomes accustomed to anything he develops love for it in himself. Therefore, often some people have a liking for certain things, which many others dislike, or a

dislike of certain things, which many others like. Often when travelling in the train a person feels more comfortable if no one else comes into his compartment, but once someone has come and sat there, if they have spoken together and become acquainted, then they wish to travel together. All things have their beauty, and so has every person his goodness, and one's dislike of a person very often comes from lack of knowing that person or from lack of familiarity with him. What makes one-dislike things and despise men is a certain barrier, which very often the one who dislikes does not know and also the one who is disliked does not know.

The work of the Sufi is therefore, to investigate the truth about all the things or persons whom he likes or dislikes. By a keen observation of life he gets to that barrier and understands what it is that makes him disliked or makes him dislike others. All fear, doubt, suspicion, misunderstanding, bitterness, and spite become cleared as soon as one touches that barrier which keeps souls apart. It is true that one need not force one's nature. It is not necessary to dislike what one likes or to take a liking to something that by nature one dislikes. Only one must know why one likes if one likes a certain thing, and the reason why one dislikes if one takes a dislike to a certain thing. After observation one will come to understand. 'All I like in the world is what I have always liked, and all I dislike is what I have always disliked in life.' It can be said in other words, 'What I know to be loveable I have always loved and all that I don't know I cannot love at once.' This shows that ignorance becomes a cover over all that is beautiful and ugly, and knowledge uncovers it. Liking comes from knowledge and dislike from ignorance, although both are necessary. Also it is possible that through ignorance one may like a certain thing and by knowledge one may rise above that liking. However, the higher knowledge must always give liking for all things. And things that do not deserve liking, above them a soul will rise by the help of knowledge.

Viprit Karnai

In man's speech and in his action the seer sees designs: a straight line, a round, a crooked line, zigzag, oval square, a triangle. For instance there is a person who speaks straight to the face of all he feels. There is another person who proceeds in a roundabout way. There is a person who has a crooked way of mentioning a thing. There is a person who will touch two opposite angles before he will arrive at a desired point. There is another person who will go about in a zigzag way, you can't know whether he is going to the south or to the north until he has arrived at a certain point. These figures represent the lines on the mind of man. Man does not feel comfortable in acting differently from the lines already engraved upon his mind. Therefore, a crooked person enjoys his crookedness as much as a straightforward person enjoys his straightforwardness.

A most interesting study of this subject can be made by studying the art of different ages and of different nations. Every nation has its typical lines and typical forms. Every period shows the peculiarity of expression of the art of that period. So one finds in the imagery of poets and in the theme of musicians. If you study one musician and his lifelong work you will find that his whole work is developed on a certain line as the basis of his work. Also by studying the biography of great people you will find how one thing has led to another, different but of similar kind. Therefore, it is natural that a thief in time becomes a greater thief. So the righteous after some time may become a saint.

It is not difficult to slide on the line already made on one's mind, the difficulty is to act contrary to the line which is engraved there, especially in the case when it happens to be an undesirable line. Shiva, the great Lord of Yogis, has given a special teaching on the subject, which he calls *Viprit Karnai*, 'Acting contrary to one's nature,' and he gives great importance to this method of working with oneself, that by this method in the end one arrives at mastery.

KASHF Insight

GATHA III

Reason Is Earth-born

Mind is most capable of expressing itself in a fitting form. Very often man expresses his thought in any conversation that may be going on, which perhaps has nothing to do with his thought. And as his nature is, man looks for a scope for expression of his thought, and he easily gets it. In a serious conversation one can find scope

for a joke, even in tragedy one can find comedy. And in comedy one can find tragedy, if one's mind happens to dwell on sad thoughts. This shows that the mind always seeks for a scope for expression, and situations outside generously offer the scope.

The same thing one finds with the mind. In every situation, every condition, man easily finds out a reason for it from the mind. The one who does right and the one who does wrong both find the reason for their action. Two people disputing against each other both have reason at the back of their discussion. This shows that the mind provides reason, as the sun shines and the rain falls, for the sinner as well as for the virtuous. Not knowing this fact, man always reasons with another. But it is not a dispute between reason and no reason, it is a dispute between two reasons contrary to one another. This shows that reason has not sprung on the soil of heaven, reason is earth born, upon which man so confidently fixes his argument.

Therefore, every conversation is not always on a pre-designed plan. Most often it is an outcome of instantaneously arising impulses. It is most interesting when one can get to the back of a conversation and find out what it is founded upon. And it is still more interesting to find what a very obedient servant reason is, which is ready to respond to the call of its master, although the truth is coined by itself. It is when the seer begins to look behind reason that he begins to get a glimpse of truth upon which he can depend. Insight makes life interesting. One who drifts along with the waves of insight will not enjoy life so much as one who has insight into life and yet stands firm on his own feet.

The Word and the Idea

The word is a body of the idea and the idea is the soul of the word. As the body represents the soul so the word represents the idea. The idea can only be expressed in the word, so the soul can only be seen in the body. And those who deny the existence of the soul must also deny the existence of the idea. They must say that only the word exists, without an idea, which in reality is impossible. Behind every word there is an idea veiled in one or a thousand veils, or clearly represented by the word. However, the word is a key to the idea, not the idea itself. It is not the word, which is in itself an idea, but only an expression of it. The ears hear the word, the mind perceives the idea. If the idea were not there, the word would not convey anything to the listener. If one said to a child, 'Sarcasm is an abuse of the intellect,' what will the innocent child understand by it? The word 'sarcasm' will be known by the one who is capable of being sarcastic. This opens up another idea, that those who accuse others with authority of some fault must necessarily know the fault themselves. Man, however evolved, will now and then show childishness in expressing his opinion about another, prove thereby guilty of the same fault in some proportion. No one can tell another, 'You told a lie,' who did not tell a lie himself once at least in his life.

No doubt the idea is vaster than the word, as the soul is wider than the body. Every idea has its breadth, length, height, and depth. Therefore, as a world is hidden in a planet, so a world of idea is hidden in a word. Think, therefore, how interesting life must become for the one who can see behind every word that is spoken to him its length, breadth, height, and depth. He is an engineer of the human mind. He then does not know only what is spoken to him, but he knows what is meant by it. By knowing words you do not know the language. What you know is the outside language, the inner language is known by knowing the language of ideas. So the language of ideas cannot be heard by the ears alone, the hearing of the heart must be open for it. The seer must understand from a word spoken to him what even the one who speaks does not know, for every human being thinks, speaks, and acts mechanically, subject to the condition of his body, mind, and situation in life. Therefore, as a physician finds out more about a complaint than the patient himself, so the mystic must comprehend the idea behind every word that is spoken to him. One might think with the continual growth of such a perception the life of a Sufi must become very much troubled, for when the average person would be seeing a yard's distance a Sufi may be seeing the distance of a mile. Yes, there is no doubt it could be troublesome if the mystic did not develop all around. The elephant's strength is required to carry the load of an elephant. It is not enough to become a seer alone, but what is needed is to develop that strength which takes all things easily, the power that endures all things, and the might which enables one to surmount all difficulties in life.

The Expression and the Idea

Actions such as a smile, or staring, or frowning, or nodding, or moving the eyes or the head, have ideas behind them. Externally it is a light movement. Behind it there is a mountain of thought. No movement is possible without a thought at the back of it. Sometimes it is known to the person and sometimes the person himself does not know why he smiled. The eyes express more than anything else does, by their movements, the ideas behind them. Very

often intuitive people say, 'I perceived from that person's look pleasure,' or 'displeasure,' or 'his favorable' –or 'unfavorable - attitude.' And yet many do not know what movement, what expression, suggested to them what they perceived. Every expression of the eyes, the eyes, which change their expression so many times in one minute, suggests the idea behind. This shows that the mind is an engineer and the body is a mechanism, which it works. If the engineer becomes conscious of his working the engineer also becomes a mechanism.

There used to be courtiers in the ancient times in India who at every moment would know the state of mind and the attitude of the king, even to such an extent that very often everything was arranged as the king liked without him having uttered one word about it. There were nine courtiers attached to the court of Akbar. Every one of them knew the state of mind of the Emperor at every moment. The Sufi, whose duty in the world is to live in the presence of God and who recognizes His presence in all His creatures, His personality especially in man, he fulfills his duty of a courtier with every man. A person who lives as dead as a stone among his surroundings does not know whom he has pleased, whom he has displeased, who expects of him thought, consideration, who asks of him sympathy or service, who needs him in his trouble or difficulty. People think insight comes by psychic development. Yes, it does come, but it comes most by the development of the heart quality. A loving person is a living person. No doubt the more living one is, the more difficult it is to live, and yet no difficulty is too great a price for living a real life.

The method, which a mystic takes to perceive the mentality of another, is that he takes the movement of the person and his expression as a guide to arrive at his thought, and he takes his thought as a guide to his nature. By realizing the nature of man, he comes to know about the very depth of his being, and instead of having a part of the knowledge about a person he gets to know that one is wise or foolish is not sufficient. To have a complete knowledge of a person one must know if he does right why he does right, and if he does wrong, why he does wrong. If he is wise, what makes him wise, if he is foolish what is the reason of his being foolish. Not only this, but also if there were a possibility of making the best of what the person is and trying to improve the person without him knowing it. A foolish person cannot get along with his own friend whereas a wise person can get on even with his enemy. The difference is that one knows life, understands human nature and acts according to it, whereas the other, even if he wanted to act rightly, always fails and becomes disappointed in the end.

The Power of Words

There are two kinds of men, one who speaks subject to his impulse, the other who speaks just like hitting a target. This first one may strike a wrong note, and may work against his own interest, but the other one will become the master of his own destiny. The one who knows while speaking to whom he is speaking, the capacity of mind of his hearer, the lines on the mind of his hearer, he will speak the words which will pierce through the mind of the listener. It is just like looking for a track before running the cart in a given direction.

Many, content with their honesty, speak just as they like at the moment. They do not mind what effect it will produce as long as they are sure that what they say is true. The truth that strikes like a hammer on the head of the listener is not desirable, one would be better off without it. This shows that it is not only a thing to consider that what one says is true, there is another consideration, which is most necessary, and that is what effect it will make on the other. The seer sees the lines made on the mind of his listener he first takes the road which is already made there, and when once he has entered the mind of his listener then he will make another road, not before. It is just like the person is going to buy something in a shop and saying before entering, 'I have not got more than four pence,' instead of going into the shop and finding out what he can buy with four pennies. Action is one thing, and prudence is another thing. Even the animals are active, even they work for what they need in life. What one expects in man is prudence. Man must have forethought, before he utters one word about its effect upon another. Some say spiritually wise is not worldly-wise, some think that these two worlds are different. But it is not so. The worldly-wise is capable of being spiritually wise, but spiritually wise is already worldly-wise. He may not care for worldly things, therefore, he may be lacking in experience in worldly affairs. Yet for him, worldly wisdom is not a foreign thing, he has only to open his eyes and see. Those who know nothing of the world and those who are called spiritual, are known more for their goodness than for their balance. The complete spiritual life is not a dreamy one, but wide-awake, full of thought and consideration.

The word has magic in it, it can turn friends into your enemies, and it can make your enemies your friends. The mystery of all success in every direction of life is in the word. The word has power to turn the mind of the listener warm or cold. The word can produce the effect of earth, water, fire, air, or ether. The word can produce depression or joy. The one who knows the chemistry of the word does not need drugs or herbs. He has medicine for every

disease in the world, not only for bodily disease, but also for the disorders of the mind, which still remain unexplored by science. By a constant study of life, by special thought given to one's word, by careful watching of the effects of one's speech upon others, one arrives at a state of realization where one can heal hearts.

The Re-echo of the Past

One can easily trace the past of man from what he says and from how he expresses it. The past is ringing in the heart of man like a bell. The heart of man is a talking-machine record, which goes on by itself or, if it has stopped, one has only to wind the machine, then it goes on again. Man's present is the re-echo of his past. If he has been through suffering, even if he is better, he will vibrate the same. Outer conditions will not change his inner being. If he has been happy, even in troublous time his heart will vibrate the past. People, who have been against one another, if by chance they become friends, will still feel in themselves the beating of the pulse of hostility of the past. Great kings who have been dethroned, imprisoned –still one can feel their past vibrating in their atmosphere.

The past lives and one cannot easily destroy it, however greatly one may wish to close it. It gets hold of the human tongue to express itself. As every heart is eager to tell its story, so the past is most eager to sing its legend. It only seeks the way how it shall express itself. A Sufi, therefore, does not need spirit communication to learn the past, or astrological science to discover what has happened. To him every person explains his past without even one word spoken. But by the speech of a person about the past, the Sufi can tell what is hidden behind, what is being said and what remains unsaid. He need not trace the past in history or in traditions. He who can read has but to open his eyes and all is written before him.

Interest in All Things

As there is a shadow of every form and as there is a re-echo of every sound and as there is a reflection of every light so there is a re-impression of everything one sees, hears, or perceives. But as it wants the musician's ears to sense the overtone of a sound and an artist's eyes to recognize the form from its shadow, and as it requires a keen sight to distinguish the degree of the reflection of light, so it wants the soul of a seer to see thorough all things in life. The seer's eye is in the heart of every soul, but it is the attitude that keeps every man looking down to the earth instead of raising his eyes upwards. The average tendency is to see on the surface.

It is not true that the average person cannot see any further. But the average man does not think that there is anything further, so he does not give himself the trouble to see any further. There are many who are intelligent enough to perceive all that is behind things, but the first thing that makes their view limited is the narrow range of their interest. They are not enough interested to take trouble about things they neither know nor believe. They would be glad to have intuition if it came without them taking any trouble. There are many who can think, but they do not wish to take the trouble of thinking.

There are two things necessary in order to perceive: one thing is openness, the other thing is effort made in that direction. When contemplating upon anything the mind must be free from all else that stands in the way; that is called openness. Also some must arrive, by the help of concentration, at focusing one's mind on a certain object. The next thing is to be interested enough in all things that one comes in contact with and one cares to know about, that one may penetrate below the surface and find out what is hidden in all things.

Vairagya

The presence of man speaks of his past, present, and future. When a visitor comes to your house he brings to you either his joy or his sorrow. He brings you the effect of his good or bad deeds. He brings you the influence of his high or low mind. He tunes the vibration of the sphere of your home to his pitch. He charges the sphere with his own vibrations. If you can only perceive – he need not tell you one word about himself – you can know if he is experiencing heaven or hell. For one need not wait for heaven or hell in the hereafter. It is here also, only after death it will be more felt. Therefore the contact of a heavenly person can bring to you the air of heaven and the contact of the other can bring you the air of the other place.

This shows that every individual is a tone, a rhythm. And a tone which draws the tone of every other person to its own pitch, a rhythm which compels every other person to follow the same rhythm. That is where one feels the pull in life. That is what scares the sage from the life of the world and makes him feel inclined to run away from this world and take refuge in a forest or in a desert. Why the average person does not feel it is because, just like

children absorbed in play, the people in the world are pulling each other's rope. Therefore they do not feel much. For they are pulled, but they also pull the rope of another. But the one who is tuned to a different pitch altogether from the average person and whose rhythm in life is quite different from the other's naturally must feel the pull too much. And the only way how the sages manage to protect themselves from this is by the practice of *Vairagya* (the word *Vairagya* means independence and indifference both in one), which cannot be learned or taught, it comes by itself. It is not lack of love, or bitterness, it is only rising above love and hate both.

A Silent Music

Every soul radiates an influence with charges the atmosphere all around. The more powerful the influence the wider it spreads, forcing its way even through the walls. There is no barrier of water or space, which can keep that influence from spreading. The stronger the influence the longer it lasts. It is not difficult for a sensitive person to perceive, on coming into a room or in a house what influence it has, or to perceive, on sitting on a chair, who was sitting there before him. The character of this influence is just like light or heat, which silently spreads its warmth according to its power of radiance. It is not that man's influence is felt in his presence only, but even after he has left the place it remains. The influence of some persons can remain for hours, of some for days, of some for weeks or months or even years. Atmosphere is a silent music. It has its effect upon the listener, exciting or peaceful, whatever it may be. The atmosphere remains not only in the place but also in objects, such as a chair, or a sofa, or a cushion, or a carpet, or a mat. An influence can remain with the clothes that one has worn in one's life. It is something real, not tangible but perceptible. Music comes through the ears to the heart, but atmosphere comes direct. A walking stick can have the atmosphere of the person who held it. A rosary, a necklace, brooch, or a ring can have atmosphere. A pen or an inkstand can have an atmosphere of the person who has used it. Everybody perceives it, consciously or unconsciously, but the more sensitive a person, the more he can realize it.

It is not easy for everybody to break anybody's influence, although it is possible to rise above it. A person who is fine of nature and sensitive, pure and good, for him the influence from all around in this world can become so troublesome that he would always find himself in the midst of the battle going on constantly around him. Therefore, it will not do for a person to become fine and sensitive, and yet not learn how to combat all influences around him. The more one studies this question the more one comes to realize that life is not only a battle outwardly but also inwardly. And there are two things that can be done for self-defense, either to become a most well equipped fighter, to fight out all influenced attacking one with the power of one's own influence, or to rise above all influences; which means, to live and not live, to be and not be, to come down to act and to rise up to keep in security.

Three Ways to Develop Insight

There are three important things to be considered in the development of insight. The steady gaze of the eyes and of the mind, which helps one in penetration. Another thing is losing everything else from one's sight except the object through which one wishes to penetrate. And that comes by sufficient interest in penetration. But the third thing, which helps most is losing for the moment the thought of one's self. When one's body and mind are not before one, it is then that one has the proper insight into things one wishes to know and understand. Sufis therefore have different concentrations by which they are helped not only in keeping their gaze steady, but standing firm upon one thought. When a person cannot take interest in any object or being, then his mind is not steady, for there is nothing that it takes interest in. It is the interest which makes the mind steady. A certain thought which is inspiring or helpful in some way, or a certain form which is inspiring when once one has concentrated upon it then the mind becomes steady also, then it can easily hold an object before it without wavering.

The character of the mind is as the character of the eyes, the eyes which take in all that comes under their horizon. So the mind jumps from one thing to another, upon all thoughts which may be standing within its horizon. And as it is not always easy to keep the gaze steady so it is with the mind. To keep the mind firm upon one thought, form or image is not easy. But the third thing is the most difficult, and that is to lose oneself in the thought of the object that is before one. In this way the self, which stands in the way between the soul and its object of penetration, is lost from view for the time being. Thus the person is able to penetrate through all things, knowing thereby the nature, character and secret of all things.

There is no other cause of all depression and despair than the inability of seeing through life. There may be many reasons apparently seeming to be the different causes of unhappiness, but this one is the greatest reason, the reason of all reasons. Even animals in whose nature is the tendency of fighting is pronounced become friends when they

come to know one another by association. Many troubles in the life of individuals and of the multitude might be avoided if keen insight were developed, for all confusion is caused by misunderstanding. Not only human beings, but all things of this world which seem of use or of no use, which seem to be easy or difficult to obtain, all are for the use of man. Therefore, penetration into things is the secret of the success of science, art, philosophy and religion, all.

Questions and Answers

Q : Suppose a person had for years some interest very near to his heart, which has developed his power of concentration. And that interest ceases. Is that person more capable of strong concentration on a new interest, because of his previous experience?

A Yes, certainly. All our experiences are nothing but preparation for something else. Nothing that belongs to this world, however precious, must hinder one's path of progress. For every step in the direction to that spiritual gain must be the aim of every soul. And the concentration upon the object is just a step.

Q A feeling of deadness seems to come....?

A Here is the question of concentration, and not of its effect. The question of effect is quite a different subject again. Then the question comes: of what object? Something to steady the mind. It may be a tree, a flower, the sun or a star. Of course, according to the object a reaction is produced. And according to the reaction an object is produced. Every belief and every experience for a wise person is a step of a staircase. He has taken this step, there is another step for him to take. The steps of the staircase are not made for one to stand there. They are just made for one to pass, to go further. Because life is progress. Where there is no progress there is no life. One should go on. Death and disappointment; two things are one. And if there is a hereafter, then the death was a passing stage; and so is disappointment. Two things are one. And if there is a hereafter, then the death was a passing stage, and so is the disappointment. It only has made one more steady, more wise, more.....

Q Does the staircase never end?

A The end is not very desirable. The interest is in the staircase, in going on.

Qwhen a soul has reached perfection?

A After perfection there is no interest. If there is no self, there is no interest, there is perfection.

10 Tranquillity

The most important thing in life is the opening of that clear vision which is opened by the help of insight. The effect of every emotion covers the insight, just as clouds cover the sun. It is therefore that most clever and qualified people often do things, especially at the moment of passion or anger, which they would not have done otherwise. The reason is that the mind loses its rhythm under the strain of passion or emotion, and so it upsets the rhythm of the body, it makes man perplexed and unable to see any condition or situation clearly.

It is therefore that the seers, the sages, try to keep their tranquillity at every cost, for life in the world brings up many things everyday and hour to disturb that tranquillity which is the secret of insight. Every little noise or disturbance in oneself and outside can upset a person who keeps the rhythm of his whole being in the proper order. It is therefore that the sages have chosen solitude and a life away from the world. But the best way of keeping one's tranquillity is to keep his rhythm under the control of one's own will. By doing this one preserves one's tranquillity in the midst of life's greatest turmoil. In the terms of Vedanta life is likened to the sea, where there is a continual rising and falling of the waves. Every man by nature seeks peace and in peace alone is his satisfaction. But often he seeks it wrongly, therefore instead of producing peace he creates more struggle in life. The secret of peace is in the will power. Instead of resisting the forces, which jar and disturb one's life, if one would only stand firm against them, then one can attain to that tranquillity which is most necessary to have a greater insight into life.

Man is made of atoms gathered together around the intelligence, physical atoms and mental atoms which make his body and mind. The power which has gathered them and which controls them and which uses them for their best purpose is the will power. When this power is absent the body and mind both go to pieces, broken by every jarring effect coming from whatever direction. This is the reason hidden under most of the illnesses and weaknesses.

Every mistake, failure, and every disappointment in life has this reason behind it: the lack of control, the lack of steadiness and strength against the disturbing influences, which come from within, and without.

The great lesson which one learns, which helps one most in keeping that tranquillity in life which helps insight, is to be able to become like the ebb and flow. When the first is needed then to become the ebb, when the next thing is needed then to make oneself in that way. When it is necessary to express then to express, when it is necessary to respond, then to respond, at will. In this manner one will always manage to preserve tranquillity in life.

[\[Volume XIII Contents\]](#)

THE SUFI TEACHINGS

OF

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Volume XIII

The Gathas

PART III

NAKSHI BANDI SYMBOLOLOGY

GATHA I

An Ocean in a Drop

The wise have given lessons to the world in different forms suited to the evolution of the people at a particular time. And the first and most original form of education that the wise gave to the world has been symbolical. This method of teaching has been valued in all ages and will always have its importance. That is not beauty, which is not veiled. In the veiling and unveiling of beauty is the purpose of life. Beauty is that which is always out of reach. You see it and you do not see it, you touch it and you cannot touch it. It is seen and yet veiled, it is known and yet unknown. And therefore words are often inadequate to express the beauty of Truth. Therefore symbolism is adopted by the wise.

The religions of the old Egyptians, of the ancient Greeks, of the Hindus, and of the Parsis, all have symbols, which express the essential truth hidden under a religion. There is symbolism in Christianity and in all the ancient religions of the world. Man has often rebelled against symbolism. But it is natural, man has always revolted against things he cannot understand. There has been a wave of opposition to symbolism in both parts of the world, East and West. It came in the East in the period of Islam, and in the West re-echoed in the Reformation. No doubt when the sacred symbols are made as patents by the religious people who wish to monopolize the whole truth, then it gives rise to that tendency in human nature which is always ready to accept things or reject them. However, one can say without exaggeration that symbology has always served to keep the ancient wisdom intact for ages. It is symbology that can prove today the saying of Solomon, 'There is nothing new under the sun.'

There are many thoughts relating to human nature, to the nature of life, relating to God and His many attributes, and relating to the path toward the goal, that are expressed in symbolism. To a person who sees only the surface of life the symbols mean nothing. The secret of symbols is revealed to the souls who see through life. Whose glance penetrates through objects. Verily, before the seer the things of the world open themselves. And it is the uncovering of things in which are hidden beauty. There is a great joy in understanding, especially things that express nothing to everybody. It requires intuition, even something deeper than intuition – insight – to read symbols. To the one to whom the symbols speak of their nature and of their secret each symbol is a living manuscript in itself. Symbolism is the best way of learning the mysteries of life, and the best way of leaving ideas behind which will keep for ages after the teacher has passed. It is speaking without speaking, it is writing without writing. The symbol may be said to be an ocean in a drop.

The Symbol of the Sun

Light has the greatest attraction for the human soul. Man loves it in the fire and in things that are bright and shining, and that is why he considers gold and jewels as precious. The cosmos has a greater attraction for him than the earth, because of its light. As man evolves he naturally ceases to look down on the earth, but looks up to the heavens. The most attractive object that he sees is the sun in the heavens, the sun which is without any support and is more luminous than anything else surrenders himself to beauty, he bowed to the sun, as being the greatest beauty in heaven, and man took the sun as nature's symbol of God.

This symbol he pictured in different forms. In Persia, China, Japan, India, Egypt, whenever God was pictured it was in the form of the sun. In all ages man has pictured his Prophet, Master, Savior, with a sun around his head. In ancient Persia there used to be a gold disc behind the head of the king, picturing him as the sun, and they used to call this *Zardash*. The name Zarathustra has the same origin; the word simply meant the gold disc. In Hindu temples and Buddhist temples around the image of different Avatars there is this sign of the sun, and this symbol was used both in the East and in the West in turbans and hats. There are now people in India who put on their turbans a brass band symbolizing the sun.

A deeper study of the sun suggests the four directions of lines that are formed round the sun. It is this sign that is the origin of the symbol of the cross. The ancient traditions prove that the idea of the cross existed in the East long before the coming of Christ, especially among the Brahmins. It is from this sign that the two sacred arms were made, *Chakra* and *Trishul*. Islam, the religion which allows no symbolism, has in the building of the mosques the same symbolism of the sun. Whether the name of the sun be written in Persian or in Arabic, it makes the form of the mosque.

Man, as is his nature, has blamed the sun worshippers and mocked at them, but he has never been able to uproot the charm, the attraction for human souls held by the sun.

The Symbol of the Cross

The symbol of the cross has many significations. It is said in the Bible, first was the word and then came light and then the world was created. And as the light is expressed in the form of the cross, so every form shows in it the original sign. Every artist knows the value of the vertical line and the horizontal line, which form the skeleton of every form. This is proved by the teaching of the Koran, where it is said that God created the world from His own light. The cross is the figure that fits to every form everywhere.

Morally, the cross signifies pain or torture. That means that in every activity of life, which may be pictured as a perpendicular line, there comes obstruction, which the horizontal line represents. This shows the picture of life, and that, as it is said, man proposes and God disposes. Somebody asked the great Master Ali what made him believe in God, Who is beyond human comprehension. Ali said, 'I believe in God therefore that I see that when I alone wish, things are not accomplished.' According to the metaphysical point of view this shows the picture of limitation in life.

The symbol of the cross in its connection with the life of Christ not only relates to the crucifixion of the Master but signifies the crucifixion that one has to meet with by possessing the truth. The idea of the Hindu philosophy is that life in the world is an illusion and therefore every experience in this life and knowledge in this life are also illusions. The Sanskrit word for this illusion is *Maya*, it is also called *Mithya*, from which the word myth comes. When the soul begins to see the truth it is, so to say, born again, and to this soul all that appears as true to an average person is false, and what seems truth to this soul is nothing to the average person. All that seems to an average person important and precious in life has no value or importance for this soul, and what seems to this soul important and valuable has no importance nor value for an average person. Therefore such a one naturally hides himself in a crowd which lives in a world quite different from that in which he lives. Imagine living in a world where nobody uses your language! Yet to him life in the world is as unprofitable as to a grown-up person the world of children playing with their toys. A human being who has realized the truth is subject to all the pains and tortures in the same way as all other persons, except that he is capable of bearing them better than the others. But at the same time when, while in the crowd, everyone hits the other and also receives blows, the knower of truth has to stand alone and receive them only. This is in itself a great torture. The life in the world is difficult for every person, rich or poor, strong or weak, but for the knower of truth it is still more difficult than for others, and that in itself is a cross. Therefore, for the spiritual Messenger the cross is a natural emblem, to explain his moral condition.

But there is a still higher significance of the cross, which is understood by the mystic. This significance is what is called self-denial, and, in order to teach this moral, gentleness, humility, and modesty are taught as a first lesson. Self-denial is an effect of which self-effacement is the cause. This is self-denial that a man says: 'I am not, Thou art;' or that an artist looking at his picture, says, 'It is Thy work, not mine;' or that a musician, hearing his composition, says, 'It is Thy creation, I do not exist.' That soul then is in a way crucified, and through that crucifixion resurrection comes. There is not the slightest doubt that when man has had enough pain in his life he rises to this great consciousness. But it is not necessary that only pain should be the means. It is the readiness on the part of man to efface his part of consciousness and to efface his own personality, which lifts the veil that hides

the spirit of God from the view of man.

The Two Forces

The Egyptian symbolism is the most ancient, and for the most part the symbolism of other nations originates from the Egyptian. The Egyptian symbol of wings with a center of circular shape and at the sides two snakes looking left and right is known to many as *Karobi*. The word really means spirit or angel. This symbol represents the spirit and the power of spirit, which differs in the two directions, the right and the left. The heads of the two snakes show the direction of life and energy to either side, or the central circular sign represents the light itself, the spirit, and the wings on both sides represent three aspects of the power of spirit. One aspect of the spirit is sound, another is color, and the third is external action. This symbol suggests that the spirit is not only a light in the center, but a light directed to the right and to the left, and that it shines out according to the degree of illumination. The light of the spirit is in either direction a peculiar force. The symbol also suggests that in either direction the sound, color, and activity change, according to the direction. In the Hindu Vedas these two forces *Jelal* and *Jemal*. The great Yogis have experienced the mystery of life by the study of these forces. The central point is called by the Sufi *Kemal*, in the Vedas this is called *Shushumna*.

It is difficult to picture the finer forms of nature, and as it has been the custom to picture the light in the face of the sage as the aura, so these two forces are pictured as wings, and not as rays or otherwise. As the body has hands, so the hands of spirit can only be pictured as wings. Besides this, man who without illumination is an earthly creature, after illumination becomes a heavenly creature. The idea of the mystic about these two forces is expressed in calling one the sun force and the other the moon force. The mystic pictures them as seated in the two parts of the body, the right and the left. He names also the two nostrils by the same names. By some, the right direction of this force is male, the left as the female direction.

The serpent has been considered a sacred symbol because it is pictured as representing many secrets of mysticism. The Yogis have learned a great deal from the serpent, as there is a hint in the Bible, 'Be ye wise as the serpent and innocent as the dove.'

This sign shows that man is self-sufficient in his spirit, though incomplete in his body; that in every spirit there is both woman and man. It is the direction of the force of the spirit, which makes the male and female aspect. The central point represents the spirit, and the spirit represents God. As spirit is both male and female, so it is beyond both. It is limitation that turns one into two, but when man rises above limitation he finds that two become one.

So this symbol reminds man of the power of the spirit. That man may know that he is not only a material body, but that he is spirit himself, and that man may know that spirit not an inactive torch of life, but that spirit is full of activity, more than the body is. It also represents that man is not only an earthly creature, but that he also belongs to heaven. This symbol suggests that nothing earthly should frighten or worry man, for he may rise above the earth.

The Symbol of the Dove

The bird represents the wayfarer of the sky, and at the same time it represents a being who belongs to the earth and is capable of dwelling in the skies. The former explanation of the bird represents the idea of a soul, whose dwelling place is in heaven, and the latter that of the dweller on earth being capable of moving about in the higher spheres. And both these explanations give the idea that the spiritual man, dwelling on the earth, is from heaven. They explain also that the spiritual man is the inhabitant of the heavens and is dwelling on earth for awhile.

The pigeon was used as a messenger, to carry a message from one place to another, and therefore, the symbol of the dove is a natural one to represent the Messenger from above. Spiritual bliss is such an experience that if a bird or an animal were to have it, it would never return to its own kind. But it is a credit due to man that after touching that point of great happiness and bliss, he comes into the world of sorrows and disappointments and delivers his message. This quality can be seen in the pigeon also. When the pigeon is sent it goes, but it comes back faithfully to the master who sent it. The spiritual man performs this duty doubly. He reaches higher than the human plane, touches the divine plane, and brings the message from the divine to the human plane. In this way, instead of remaining on the divine plane, he arrives among his fellowmen, for their welfare, which is no small sacrifice. But then again he performs a duty to God, from Whom he brings His message that he delivers to the human beings. He lives as a human being, subject to love, hate, praise and blame, passes his life in the world of attachment and the life that binds with a thousand ties from all sides. Yet he does not forget the place from where he has come, and he

constantly and eagerly looks forward to reach the place for which he is bound. Therefore, in both journeys, from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth, the idea of the dove proves to be more appropriate than any other idea in the world.

The Symbol of the Sufi Order

The symbol of the Order is a heart with wings. It explains that the heart is between soul and body, a medium between spirit and matter. When the soul is covered by its love for matter it is naturally attracted to matter. This is the law of gravitation in abstract form, as it is said in the Bible, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' When man treasures the things of the earth his heart is drawn to the earth. But the heart is subject not only to gravitation, but also to attraction from on high, and as in the Egyptian symbology, wings are considered as the symbol of spiritual progress, the heart with wings expresses that the heart reaches upward towards heaven.

Then the crescent in the heart suggests the responsiveness of the heart. The crescent represents the responsiveness of the crescent to the light of the sun, for naturally it receives the light, which develops it until it becomes the full moon. The principal teaching of Sufism is that of learning to become a pupil. For it is the pupil who has a chance of becoming a teacher. Once a person considers that he is a teacher his responsiveness is gone. The greatest teachers of the world have been the greatest pupils. And it is this principle which is represented by the crescent. The crescent in the heart represents that the heart, responsive to the light of God, is illuminated.

The explanation of the five-pointed star is that it represents the divine light. For when the light comes, it has five points. When it returns, it has four: one form suggesting the creation, the other annihilation. The five-pointed star also represents the natural figure of man, whereas that with four points represents all forms of the world. But the form with five points is development of the four-pointed form. For instance if a man is standing with his legs joined and arms extended he makes a four-pointed form, but when man shows activity – dancing, jumping – or he moves one leg, he forms a five-pointed star, which represents the beginning of activity, in other words, a beginning of life.

It is the divine light, which is represented by the five-pointed star, and the star is reflected in the heart, which is responsive to the divine light. And the heart, which has by its response received the light of God is liberated, as the wings show. Therefore, this sentence will explain, in short, the meaning of the symbol: the heart, responsive to the light of God is liberated.

Symbology of the Dot and Circle

The dot is the most important of all figures, for every figure is an extension of the dot and the dot is the source of every figure. You cannot let a pen touch paper without making a dot first of all. It is simply the extension of the dot in two directions, which is called a horizontal or perpendicular line. And again, it is the dot, which determines sides. If it were not for the dot, the sides, as above, so below, or right, or left, could not be determined. The origin of all things and beings may be pictured as a dot. This dot is called in Sanskrit Bindu, the origin and source of the whole being. Since the dot is the source of the perpendicular and the horizontal lines it is the source of all figures and characters of all languages that exist and have existed, as doubtless it is the source of all forms of nature. The principal thing in man's figure is his eye, and in the eye, the iris, and in the iris, the pupil, which signifies the dot.

At the same time, the dot means zero, meaning nothing. It is nothing and it is everything, and the dot expresses the symbol of nothing, being everything, and everything being nothing. Amir, the Indian poet, expresses this idea in his well-known verse. He says, 'If thou wilt come to thy senses by becoming selfless, free from life's intoxication, thou wilt realize that what seems to thee non-existent is all-existing, and what seems to thee existent, what does not exist in reality, but only seems to exist. That alone we consider existent.

The dot develops into the circle, which shows the picture of this seemingly non-existent developing into all existing. The iris of the eye is the development of the dot, which is called the pupil. A dot added to one makes one ten, and with two dots, the one becomes a hundred, and this shows that man is small when he is unconscious of God. When the knowledge of God, Who is the source of the whole being, although non-existent to the ignorant eye, is added to man, he becomes ten, or a hundred, or a thousand. As the dot enriches the figure, so God enriches man. As all figures come from the dot, so all things and beings come from God. And as destruction must in time break all things into dots, so all things must in time break all things into dots so all things must return to God.

Symbolism of Lines

The Upright Line

The upright line suggests the One, therefore also the number one is represented by an upright line.

The upright line suggests heaven, or the world above, its extremity being upward.

The upright line is perfection.

Through all forms life has culminated in the end in the human form, which is upright.

The upright line also suggests straightforwardness, for it is straight upward.

The upright line also suggests firmness, for it is steady.

The upright line also suggests life, for it stands.

The upward line also suggests rising, for it goes upward.

The upward line also suggests unity, as it shows oneness and the oneness of the whole, all being one.

The upright line is the form of *Alif*, the Arabic A, and the name Allah in Arabic writing begins with Alif.

The upright line is the first line, and all forms and figures are nothing but the change of direction of that line, and as all is made by God and of God, so by the upright line and of the upright line all forms are formed.

The Vertical Line and the Horizontal Line

The messenger is pictured symbolically as a Cupid. He is meant to guide the longing soul toward its Divine Beloved, and that part of his work is symbolized as the vertical line. He is also used by Providence to bring two souls together in light who are seeking each other through darkness, some knowing, some not knowing what they are seeking after, which is represented by the horizontal line.

The horizontal line and the vertical line together make a complete cross, which is the sign of *Kemal*, perfection.

The vertical line represents heaven, the horizontal line earth.

The horizontal line represents this world, the vertical line that world, the next world.

The vertical line conveys the meaning Yes, the horizontal line the meaning No.

The vertical line denotes life, the horizontal line death.

The vertical line represents strength, the horizontal line powerlessness.

The vertical line spirit, the horizontal line matter.

The vertical line the masculine, the horizontal line the feminine.

The vertical line the sun, the horizontal line the moon.

The vertical line the day, the horizontal line the night.

The vertical line the positive, the horizontal line the negative.

The vertical line the power, the horizontal line beauty.

The vertical line God, the horizontal line man.

The Symbolism of the Triangle

The triangle represents the beginning, the continuation and the end. The triangle is the sign of life, which has appeared in three forms, of which the idea of the Trinity is symbolical. The idea of these three aspects of life has existed for a very long time among Hindus, who named it Trimurti. As in the Christian church the Trinity consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, so among Hindus the Trimurti consists of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer and Mahesh or Shiva the Destroyer. By the word Destroyer destruction is not meant, but change.

The triangle in all its forms is the basic outline of all form that exists in the world. The triangle has a horizontal line in it and a perpendicular line, and two triangles can very well form a square. The hand, the head, the leg, the palm, the foot all show in their form the triangle as the principal outline. In the leaf, fruit, tree or mountain, the triangle is the outline.

The triangle is the riddle, which has within it the secret of this life of variety. But for these three different aspects, which stand opposite each other, man would not be able to enjoy life. At the same time it is these three aspects again which are the cause of all illusion. And if the riddle of the idea of trinity has been solved and out of trinity unity has become manifest, then the purpose of this idea of trinity is fulfilled. One can understand this by realizing the truth that it is not three that are one, but one that is three. The beginning and end of all things is one, it is the repetition of one, which makes two and it is this division which produces three. In this riddle of the Trinity lies the secret of the whole life.

The three aspects in which life has manifested and of which the triangle is the symbol are the knower, the known, and the knowing faculty – the seer, the seen, the faculty of seeing.

Symbology of the Mushroom

The Chinese philosopher is symbolically depicted holding a mushroom stem in his hand. The mushroom represents the earth and what comes from it and what is close to it, and keeping it in the hand means spirit handling or controlling matter. At the same time, it suggests a moral, that the sign of the sage is to be tender, as refined, as meek, and as humble as a mushroom. It teaches the same moral that Christ taught, "If one smite you on one cheek, turn the other cheek." If one strikes on the rock one's own hand will be hurt, but one will not have the same experience by striking the mushroom. It also teaches the philosophy that all the produce of this earth, however precious, is in the spiritual sense no more than a mushroom, which is subject to destruction every moment. It also teaches the idea of being in life as free and independent as a mushroom, which needs no special care and demands no great attention from others. If anyone will use it, it is ready to be used. If anyone will throw it away, ready to be thrown away without causing great loss. It also suggests a mystical point: while all other plants and trees respond to wind and storm and make a noise, the mushroom stands still without uttering one sound. When the body and mind of the mystic are trained to the stillness of the mushroom through all storms are trained to the stillness of the mushroom through all storms and winds of life, then the mystic achieves perfection.

GATHA II

‘Die Before Death’

There is a symbolical picture known in the philosophical world of China that represents a sage with one shoe in his hand and one on his foot. It signifies the hereafter, that the change that death brings is to a wise man only the taking off of one shoe. The body of the philosopher in the picture represents his soul, or his person. The one shoe still on his foot represents his mind, which exists after death. And the withdrawal of the soul from the body is like taking one foot out of the shoe. For the mystic, therefore, the physical body is something he can easily dispense with, and to arrive at this realization is the object of wisdom. When by philosophical understanding of life, he begins to realize his soul, then he begins to stand, so to speak, on his own feet. He is then himself and the body is to him only a cover.

The teaching of the Prophet is to die before death, which means to realize in one's lifetime what death means. This realization takes away all the fear there is. By the symbol of the shoe is shown also the nothingness of the material existence, or the smallness of the physical being, in comparison with the soul, or the spirit. Hafiz says, in Persian

verse, 'Those who realize Thee are kings in life,' which means that the true kingdom of life is the realization of the soul. The idea that one must wait until one's turn will come after many incarnations keeps one far away from the desired goal. The man who is impatient to arrive at spiritual realization is to be envied. As Omar Khayyam says, 'Tomorrow? Why, tomorrow I may be myself with yesterday's seven thousand years.' He means by this, "Don't bother about the past, don't trouble about the future, but accomplish all you can just now.' Life has taken time enough to develop gradually from mineral to vegetable, from vegetable to animal, and from animal to man, and after becoming man, delay is not necessary. It is true that the whole lifetime is not sufficient for one to become what one wishes to be. Still nothing is impossible, since the soul of man is from the spirit of God; and if God can do all things why cannot man do something?

Fruitfulness

There is a Chinese symbol of philosophers carrying on their shoulders peaches, which means that the object of life is to be fruitful. However good or spiritual a person may be, yet, if his life is not fruit giving, he has not fulfilled the purpose of life. A person whose life becomes fruitful does not only bear fruit to others, but every aspect of life bears fruit to him as well. For him life becomes a fruit. If life were only for what people call goodness, life would be very uninteresting. For goodness is dependent for its beauty on badness. As a form cannot exist without a shadow, so goodness cannot be without badness. If life were for spirituality alone, the soul had better not have been born on earth, for the soul in its nature is spiritual. The whole creation is purposed for something greater than goodness or even spirituality, and that is fruitfulness. Goodness and spirituality are the means, not the goal. If there is any goal, it is fruitfulness. Therefore, it is the object of life, which the symbol of peaches represents.

Fruitfulness has three aspects. The first aspect is when man benefits from his own life. The next aspect is when man benefits from the life outside himself. And the third aspect is when man is a benefit to himself and to the life outside, and the life outside is a benefit to him. That is the moment of the fruitfulness of life. It takes all the patience one has to arrive at this realization, but it is for this realization that God created the world, that man may enjoy fruitfulness therein. It is the absence of faith and lack of patience which deprive man of this bliss. If not, every soul is purposed for this. For instance, when a musician begins to enjoy his own music, that is the first stage. When he enjoys the music of others, that is the second stage of realization. But when a man enjoys his own music and makes others happy too, then his life has become fruitful. There is a great treasure of blessing within oneself and there is a vast treasure of blessing outside oneself, and when one has become able to find the treasure one has within oneself, and when there is an exchange between his own treasure, and the treasure outside, then his life has borne the fruit for which his soul was born. There comes a time in the life of the fruitful souls when every moment of their life bears a new fruit, just like a plant which bears fruit at all times of the year.

The Symbol of the Dream

The best-known symbolical figure of China is the dragon. The dragon represents life and death both. Life in the sense of eternal life, death in the sense of a change from mortality to eternity. Very often a Chinese dragon has an appearance of a tiger, of a seal, its body that of a snake, together with wings of the birds and the paws of the carnivorous animals, also some appearance of man – which means that life is one but it is manifest in many forms, that life lives on life and so hungers for life. The dragon suggests mortality standing by one's side, awaiting its hour every moment of our life, and yet man is unaware of it, building castles in the air, depending upon the life of this mortal world. The dragon also suggests that there is an obstacle on the way to eternity and that obstacle is death, and that can be avoided by conquering the dragon. The dragon is also a picture of man's selfish ego, which is not only the enemy of others, but which makes man his own enemy. The dragon signifies the lower nature, and the conquering of the lower nature is the killing of the dragon, of which St. George also is the symbol. The dragon is a sign of material power, which has its transitory reign over things and beings. And often power can govern or cause difficulty even to spiritual beings, for the reason that even spiritual beings have matter which makes their being and which is dependent for its life and comfort on things of this earth. But all stories of dragons prove the dragon to be a failure in the end and the spirit alone conqueror of it. In Chinese art this symbol is kept to the fore, for this one symbol suggests and touches many things.

Water

In the old scriptures such as the Vedanta and the Old Testament, spirit is symbolized as water. One wonders why something which is near to the earth, as water is, should be considered symbolically as spirit. The nature of water is to give life to the earth, and so the nature of spirit is to give life to the body. Without water the earth is dead, so is

the body without soul. Water and earth both mix together, so the spirit mixes with matter and revivifies it, and yet spirit stands above matter, as water in time lets the earth sink to the bottom and stands itself above the earth. But one may ask, 'Is the spirit hidden under matter as the soul in the body?' I will answer, 'So the water stays beneath the earth.' There is no place where water does not exist, there are places where earth is not to be found. So there is nowhere in space where spirit is absent; only the absence of matter is possible.

The symbolic way of expressing high ideas does not come from the brain, it is an outcome of intuition. The beginning intuition is to understand the symbolical meaning of different things, and the next step is to express things symbolically. It is a divine art in itself, and the best proof of it is to be found in the symbol of water, which is so fitting to express the meaning of spirit.

Wine

Wine is considered sacred, not only in the Christian faith, but also in many other religions. In the ancient religion of the Zoroastrians, *Yima Jamshed*, the bowl of wine 'from which Jamshed drank deep,' is a historical event. Among Hindus, Shiva considered wine sacred. And in Islam, though wine is prohibited when on earth, yet in heaven it is allowed. *Hauzu 'l-Kausar*, the sacred fountain of heaven, about which there is so much spoken in Islam, is a fountain of wine. Although the bowl that was given to the Prophet in the Meraj, the authorities of Islam say, was filled with milk, yet I doubt it. I should not be surprised if it were not the invention of the authorities, to keep the faithful followers away from wine. For it is natural that the followers should like to begin drinking the wine on earth, which the Prophet drank in heaven.

Wine is symbolical of the soul's evolution. Wine comes from the annihilation of grapes, immortality comes from the annihilation of self. The bowl of poison, which is known in many mystical cults, suggests also the idea of wine, but not a sweet wine, a bitter wine. When the self turns into something different from what it was before, it is like the soul being born again. This is seen in the grape turning into wine. The grape, by turning into wine, lives; as a grape it would have vanished in time. Only by turning into wine, the grape loses its individuality and yet has not lost its life. The self-same grape lives as wine, and the longer it lives the better the wine becomes. For a Sufi, therefore, the true sacrament is the turning of one's own grape-like personality, which has a limited time to live, into wine that nothing of one's self may be lost but, on the contrary, amplified, even perfected. This is the essence of all philosophy and the secret of mysticism.

The Curl of the Beloved

In the Sufi literature, which is known to the world as the Persian literature, there is much talk about the curls of the Beloved, and many have often wondered what it means. The curl is a symbol of something, which is curved and round. The curve denotes the twist in the thought of wisdom. Very often a straight word of truth hits upon the head harder than a hammer. That shows that truth alone is not sufficient, the truth must be made into wisdom. And what is wisdom? Wisdom is the twisted truth. As raw food cannot be digested, and therefore it is cooked, although raw food is more natural than cooked food, so the straight truth is more natural, but is not digestible, it needs to be made into wisdom.

And why is it called the Beloved's curl? Because truth is of God, the Divine Beloved, and truth is God, and that twist given to His Own Being, which is truth, amplifies the divine beauty, as the curl is considered to be the sign of beauty. Then what is not straight is a puzzle. So wisdom is a puzzle to the ordinary mind. Besides, the curl hangs low down; so the heavenly beauty which is wisdom is manifest on earth. In other words, if someone wishes to see the beauty of the heavenly Beloved he may see it is in wisdom. Wisdom is traced not only in the human being, but even in the beasts and birds, in their affection, in their instinct. Very often it is most difficult for man to imitate fully the work which birds do in weaving their nests. Even the insects do wonderful work in preparing a little abode for themselves which is beyond man's art and skill. Besides this, if one studies nature, after keen observation and some contemplation upon it one will find that there is perfect wisdom behind it. Once man has thought on the subject, he can never, however materialistic he may be, deny the existence of God. Man's individuality is proved by his wisdom and distinguished by comparison. The wisdom of God, being perfect, is unintelligible to man. The glass of water cannot imagine how much water there is in the sea. If man would realize his limitation he would never dare question the existence of God.

The symbol of the curl also signifies something which is there, attractive, and yet a puzzle, a riddle. One loves it, admires it, and yet one cannot fathom its length and breadth. It is that which is wisdom. Its surface is human, but

its depth is divine. It could be hell or heaven, and the knowledge of it can enable man always to keep in touch with his heaven, instead of waiting for it till the hereafter.

The Glance

The Persian poets, in the Sufi literature, very often speak of the glance. And their symbolical expression for the glance is, very often, a sword, and it is called a sword for various reasons. In the first place, the glance has a projecting effect. An intelligent glance has a crossways movement, like that of a sword. But besides this, from a psychological point of view a keen glance sees through an object, as though a thing had been cut open by the sword and manifested to view. The glance is a power, very little is known about it. The power of the glance can hold lions at bay. Therefore, also it is symbolized as a sword. The glance of a brave person is very often more powerful than a sword, for the will-power works through the glance.

Besides its precious work, which makes the eye superior to every other organ of the body, it is the expression of the beauty of body, mind and soul. Sufis, therefore, symbolize the eye by a cup of wine. Through the eyes, the secret hidden in man's heart is reflected into the heart of another. However much a person may try to conceal his secret, yet the reader can read it in his eyes, and can read there his pleasure, his displeasure, his joy, and his sorrow. A seer can see still farther. The seer can see the actual condition of man's soul through his eyes, his grade of evolution, his attitude in life, his outlook on life, and his condition, both hidden and manifest. Besides, to the passive soul of a disciple, knowledge, ecstasy, spiritual joy, and divine peace, all are given through the glance. One sees in everyday life that a person who is laughing in his mind with his lips closed can express his laughter through his glance, and the one who receives the glance at once catches the infectious mirth. Often the same happens through looking in the eyes of the sorrowful, in a moment one becomes filled with depression. And those whose secret is God, whose contemplation is the perfection of beauty, whose joy is endless in the realization of everlasting life, and from whose heart the spring of love is ever flowing, it is most appropriate that their glance should be called, symbolically, the Bowl of Saki, the Bowl of the Wine-Giver.

The Myth of Balder

The Scandinavian myth tells that Balder, the god of youth, beauty, kindness and gentleness, was pursued by enemies who wanted to kill him. For his protection a spell had been cast upon all the trees of the forest and every plant that has a root in the ground and grows upward to heaven, that no weapon wrought from any of them should have power to harm him. But in this charm, the mistletoe had been forgotten, which has no root in the ground, and from its wood an arrow was made, with which Balder was hit and wounded to death.

Its interpretation is an answer to the question, which often arises, in an intelligent mind, 'Why were godlike people treated cruelly, continually, through all periods of the world's history? And how could any person in the world think of causing harm to those who attracted the sympathy of almost every soul they met on earth?' Their adherents spread their teachings and the beauty of their life and character among all, wise and foolish, kind and cruel. They all became more or less impressed by what they learned of the godly souls, even those whose soul had not yet risen to human evolution, who only live like trees and plants, living and yet dreaming, unaware of life, except their own activity. But the one who could not be impressed by this spell, whom, even had the spell been cast upon him, it could not have reached; and had it reached, only with great difficulty, is the godless, who is like the mistletoe, living without any root. The mourning for this is continued, in the memory of the death of that god. In reality it is celebrating the birth of what was born from him, it was divine knowledge.

The Tree of Wishes

There is an old Hindu belief, found in the ancient myths of India, that there is a tree, which they call *Kamana Kalpa Vriksha*. It is a tree that bears all the fruits that one can imagine, and if a person is under that tree he has but to wish for what he would like, and in the same moment all fruits, all flowers, everything he can imagine, he will find brought forth by the tree as its fruits. He has but to wish and it will fall into his hands. If it is within one's reach one has to raise one's hand to pluck the flower or fruit of that tree. If it is beyond one's reach one has only to wish and the branch will reach one's hand, that one may pick it without any effort.

And there is a story about that tree that a wanderer, while journeying in deserts, by chance happened to sleep under that tree. And when, after a good sleep, he opened his eyes and looked up at that tree, he thought, 'I suppose it must be a pear tree.' No sooner had he thought that, than two ripe pears dropped near him. While lying there he picked

them up. 'Oh,' he said, 'what a wonderful tree! If it were a grape tree, what a splendid thing it would be!' As soon as he said it, the tree seemed full of grapes, and before he raised his hands, the branches bent low and, without any effort, he was able to pick the grapes. But when he thought, 'What a wonderful tree!,' he wondered if the tree would yield some roses. And no sooner had he given a thought to it than the whole tree seemed to blossom into roses. This man became so surprised, so amazed and perplexed at this magical tree that he wondered if it was true or if it was only a dream. As soon as he thought of a dream and he looked up at the tree, the tree vanished in a moment.

There cannot be a better example to demonstrate the idea behind the symbolical tree than this story. For this tree is this whole universe, the miniature of which is one's own self, and there is nothing that you ask that this universe will not answer. For it is the nature of this universe to answer your soul's call. Only, if you ask for the pears, there are pears, if one asked for a cactus, there is a cactus, if you ask for the rose, there will be the rose and its thorns together. And it is the lack of knowledge of this great secret hidden in the heart of the universe, which is the only tragedy of life. When a person seeks for something in the universe and he cannot find it, it is not true that it is not there. The fact is that he does not see it. Besides, he sees something within his reach, he sees something, which he desires, and yet he thinks whether it is possible for him to get it or whether it is beyond the reach of his effort and power. And at the same time, the end of the story solves the whole question of life, and that is, it is all there and nothing is there. If we think it is everything, it is everything. But, if we realize that it is nothing, it is nothing. It is something of which you may say that it is and it is not. However, beyond all things of this universe, above all things that this life can offer, there is only one thing and that is God. And what is God? God is truth.

The Hindu Symbolical Form of Worship

Puja is the name of the Hindu form of worship, which is from the beginning to the end a symbolical expression of what the seeker has to perform in the path of spiritual attainment. After bathing in the running stream of water, which the Hindu calls the Ganges (whatever be the name of the river he, at that time, believes it is the Ganges, the sacred river), he proceeds with flowers to the shrine of the deity. He puts on to the deity the flowers, and repeats the *mantrams*, and stands greeting the deity with folded hands, and prostrates himself before the deity. Then he rings the bell and repeats the sacred word. Then he takes rice in his hands and puts it at the feet of the deity. Then the red powder, *Kumkum*, he touches with the tip of his finger and makes a mark with it on the shrine of the deity and then on his own forehead. Then he touches the ointment with the tip of his finger and, after touching the deity, he touches his forehead with the ointment. He then prostrates himself and makes three circles around the shrine. Then he rings the bell, and thus the service is finished. Afterwards he goes and stands before the sun and does his breathing exercises while adhering to the sun, and that completes the next stage of his worship.

However primitive this form of worship, at the back of it there seems to be great meaning. The meaning of the bath in the Ganges is to become purified before one makes any effort of journeying on the spiritual path. The purification of the body and of the mind both are necessary before one takes the first step toward the God-ideal. One must not approach the deity before such purification, for then alone, when once a person is pure, he will find it easy to attain the desired presence. The meaning of the flowers, which he takes, is that God is pleased with the offerings, which are delicate, beautiful and fragrant. Delicate means tenderness of heart, beautiful in color is fineness of character, fragrance is the virtue of the soul. This is the offering with which God is pleased. He stands with the thought that his self is devoted in perfect discipline to the supreme will of God. His hands folded express no action on the part of himself, but complete surrender. The meaning of prostration is self-denial in the right sense of the word, which means: 'I am not, Thou art;' whispering the words and ringing the bell is that the same word is rung in the bell of one's heart. His touching the red powder means touching the eternal life and when he touches the deity with that powder it means that from this source he is to gain eternal life. When he touches his forehead with it, it means that he has gained it for himself. And the ointment means wisdom, and the touching of the God with it and then to his forehead means true wisdom can be obtained from God alone, and touching his own head with it means that he has gained it. Then making three circles around the shrine is the sign that life is a journey and that every journey is made to attain this goal which is God, that 'Every step I take in my life,' the Brahmin thinks, 'will be in His service when he stands before the sun, by that he means that God is to be sought in the light. And by breathing exercises he welds that link of inner communication between God and himself.

Questions and Answers

Q: Do the Vaishnavas and Shiva followers and the worshipper of all the different deities worship in the same way?

A: It is almost the same. There may little differences; not much. Just some of the differences which will perhaps distinguish one from the other. But at the same time mostly this is the form.

Q: Have they all the same sacred words and breathing exercises?

A: No, perhaps the words of the Vaishnava (followers of Vishnu) differ from the words that the followers of Shiva use. Of course, the meaning is the same. And breathing exercises do not differ much. For the reason that the yoga is one yoga for all the Hindus. There are four different yogas, but one system.

Q: Who gives them the words and the breathing exercises? Are the priests Murshids?

A: First of all, a Brahman is a priest by birth. A Brahman is a born priest. Therefore, the first lesson he receives is in his own family, of the sacred word. But when he takes an esoteric path, at that time he needs the guidance of a Murshid. What the Brahman calls a Guru. And it may be the same word perhaps which he learned from his parents. Still, when that word is given by the Guru, that has a different value again. Perhaps he has repeated that word in his life, but when it is given by the Guru the value of the word is different.

Q: And for the non-Brahman?

A: The manner of their worship is the same. But the worship of the other persons is done by the mediumship of a Brahman, because only a Brahman was entitled to perform the service. Brahmans were the community of priests. And for Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, and Shudras, which are three different castes of the Hindus, the Brahmans had to perform services. The others had no power to perform the service anywhere.

Hindus are all those who live in India. They have to take Brahman as a medium. Through Brahman they are entitled to have a service. Brahman is the one who will perform the service. And they will have to stand there and partake in the service.

Q: Do they know the meaning of all the different actions they perform?

A: Not everybody. An advanced Brahman knows it.

Q: Has it not changed the customs of the other classes?

A: Yes, they do prostrate. But going near the deity, and putting the red powder and the ointment, that they do not do. Sometimes they bring, for the Brahman, the red powder and the oil, and leave it there. But that is Brahman's work to do.

They have many different marks of the caste. But the caste-mark denotes the third eye, the inner sense.

Q: The Catholic Church.....?

A: One thing is very admirable in the Hindu religion. It is so very vast in its ways of worship, and in its doctrines and ideal and forms and philosophy, that it gives a scope for a person of every grade of evolution. He has an answer in the religion of the Hindus, whatever grade of evolution he has reached. For every person Hinduism will give an answer, because it is very vast. If a person will try in the philosophical field, he will find an answer. In worship, in symbology. Therefore, it is something, which answers the demand of every individual's life. If one takes the whole religion of the Hindus, from the beginning to the end, so vast and deep, and yet so simple that it answers the need of every person. Hinduism is not one religion. Hinduism is many religions itself.

Q: Is that the reason that the Jains and Sikhs have so grown?

A: The religion of the Jains is Buddhistic, and of the Sikhs is a modern form of Hinduism.

Q: Does the ancient.....?

A: There is no direction of life that is not expressed.

Q:?

A: It is the spiritual effect of the word. At the same time, when the Guru gives it, at that time the Guru has charged this word with his own spiritual power. That is the same thing in Sufism.

Q: What is the meaning in the worship of the Brahmans of putting rice on the feet of the deity?

A: That all the love and light that they will gain from the deity, they will spread in the world, as the seeds thrown in the furrow.

The name of red powder symbolizes eternal life.

GATHA III

Leili and Majnun

The legend of Leili and Majnun is a story, which is known throughout the East, and the Sufi poets have used the characters of Leili and Majnun to express, in this symbolical legend, the philosophy of love.

Leili and Majnun, when young, were schoolmates, devoted to one another. Whenever the teacher looked at Majnun's slate there was the picture of Leili drawn upon it. And when the teacher asked Leili to read from the book she repeated the name of Majnun. So, disappointed with the school, the parents had to take them back home. When difficulties arose owing to the caste differences, so that they could not be married to one another according to the caste ideas, in order to make either forget the other, by changing direction of their minds, someone asked Majnun, 'What is there especial in Leili that you love her so much? There are many other maidens in the world.' Majnun answered, 'In order to see Leili you must borrow Majnun's eyes.'

With great difficulty Leili's people consented, on condition that Majnun did not show himself the odd in his love, but would have sensibly. On the first day for which the visit had been arranged, for Leili's people to meet Majnun, Majnun entered the room with his parents, who had told him to behave sensibly. It happened that Leili's dog, which Majnun had known for years, came into the room. Majnun could not for one moment hold to his dignity. He bowed at the face of the dog and kissed its paws, and the visit became a failure.

Disappointed at Majnun's action, his parents took him to be the Ka'aba, and told him to pray as they would pray. He said yes. The multitude followed, to see what prayer was going to take place. On hearing the name of Majnun, Majnun's parents first prayed: 'God take away the love of Leili from the heart of Majnun.' All the others listened. Then they asked Majnun to come and pray as they did. He said, 'Then shall I have Leili if I pray?' They urged him to come and pray. He said, 'God give me Leili.' And all present said, 'Amen.'

When the parents become hopeless, then they let Majnun roam about as he wished. Majnun in the end arrived near Leili's town and stayed outside the town in an old ruin where nobody lived. Being tired he was taking shelter there, under that worn-out roof. Leili, hearing that Majnun was near the town, sent some of her portion of food by a confidential maid, who was to carry it to Majnun. When the maid came and looked in that place for the beloved of Leili there were two persons there, one a person thin and drowsy, the other person rather good looking. The maid thought certainly this person must be the beloved of Leili. With the basket of food in her hand, she asked this man, 'Are you Majnun?' 'What is it you have brought?' he asked. She said, 'Some food for Majnun.' He said, 'I am Majnun, give it to me.' He was glad to partake of it, and said, 'I shall be glad to have it every day.' So Leili starved for days, sending her food, that food was given to this man, who for the time became Majnun. One day Leili asked, 'How is my Majnun?' The maid said, 'He is looking better every day.' Leili said, 'It cannot be.' The maid said, 'Certainly, be sure of it. He is looking better every day.' Leili said, 'Today you need not take the food. Take a knife and a saucer, and tell my Majnun that I need a drop of his blood.' When she came the man came with anxiety, with eagerness to have the dish, but there was a knife. He said, 'What is this?' She said, 'Leili wants a drop of your blood.' He first looked perplexed, then he said, 'I am not Majnun; that may be Majnun, he who is sitting over in that corner.' By that time Majnun had grown so thin; yet when she asked for a drop of his blood Majnun tried by striking the knife on different parts of his body, if he could get a drop of blood out to be sent to Leili. 'Ah,' he said, 'there cannot be anything more delightful for Majnun than to give a drop of his blood when it is asked for by Leili.'

Leili and Majnun

The end of the story of Majnun is that he sat a long time under the shade of a tree and he grew in time to be like the tree. Being near the tree, his body and the tree became one. And when a woodcutter came and instead of cutting the wood his axe struck Majnun, Majnun said 'Leili,' for that was the only thought there. Leili, on hearing this, when she had freedom for a moment, was drawn by some way to Majnun at his last moment on earth, and called him, 'Majnun!' He answered, 'Leili.' She said, 'I am Leili.' But he said 'I am Leili.' And so Majnun fell and died, and Leili followed him instantly.

The path of the Sufi is the path of devotion, and therefore, Leili and Majnun is the symbol that a Sufi takes for God and man. The soul who journeys in the path of God does not need much learning. What he writes on his slate is the name of God, what he reads in his book is His name. That is the only learning which is most essential in the path of God. And no one can distract the mind of the godly toward anything, however attractive; though he may find not one reason to give for his devotion to God, he can only say, 'In order to become the lover of God you must borrow my eyes.' While people think of the differences of their religions and creeds the godly bows before the humblest person, as Majnun to Leili's dog. And when the prayers of different people will be for themselves, the prayer of the godly is only to attain to the presence of God; and therefore, whatever is his religion, his prayer will be followed by every sincere soul. Besides, the path of God and of love both, if sincerely trodden, need sacrifice from beginning to end; and the one who is not ready for sacrifice is like that pretended lover of Leili who was ready for the food but was not willing to suffer. Verily, who pursueth the world will inherit the world, but the soul that pursueth God will attain in the end to the presence of God.

But to what does the love of God lead? It leads to that peace and stillness which can be seen in the life of the tree, which bears fruits and flowers for others and expects no returns, not even thanks in return. It serves, and cares for nothing else, not even for appreciation. That is the attribute of the godly. And the godly in the end of his attainment of God forgets himself, as Majnun said even to Leili, 'I am Leili.' And what happens then? Instead of man pursuing God, God follows man.

The Symbology of Religious Ideas

Christ Walking on the Water

The phenomenon of Christ's walking on the water, from a mystical point of view, is suggestive of a much greater philosophy than only a phenomenon. The whole universe in all its forms is one single vision of a continual activity. From beginning to end every aspect of life represents motion, and it is the perpetual motion of the whole universe which is called life. Therefore, the universe is, so to speak, an ocean of vibrations, and every movement represents a wave. Therefore, the wise have called it, in Sanskrit, *Bhava Sagara*, the Ocean of Life, and the great devotees have constantly prayed to be liberated, that they may not sink in this ocean but that they may be able to swim in it, which is called *Taran*. And it is the master-spirit that can rise above these waves of the enormous ocean of life, in which generally souls are drowned. To be in it and to be able to stand above it and to walk on it is the phenomenon of Christ's walking on the water.

The Symbology of Religious Ideas

Shaqqu's-Sadr, the Opening of the Breast of the Prophet

There exists a legend in the world of Islam, and some believe that it really did occur-some say once, and some say it happened more than once- that the angels from heaven descended on earth and cut open the breast of the Prophet; they took away something that was to be removed from there, and then the breast was made as before.

According to the Sufi point of view this is a symbolical legend. It explains what is necessary in the life of man, to allow the plant of divine love to grow in the heart. It is to remove that element which gives the bitter feeling. Just as there is a poison in the sting of the scorpion, and there is a poison in the teeth of the snake, so there is poison in the heart of man, which is made to be the shrine of God. But God cannot rise in the shrine, which is as dead by its own poison. It must be purified first and made real for God to arise. The soul who had to sympathize with the whole world was thus contempt, resentment and ill feeling against another, was destroyed first. So many talk about the purification of the heart, and so few really know what it is. Some say to be pure means to be free from all evil thought, but there is no evil thought. Call it evil or call it devil, if there is any such thought it is the thought of bitterness against another. No one with sense and understanding would like to keep a drop of poison in his body, and how ignorant it is on the part of man when he keeps and cherishes a bitter thought against another in his heart.

If a drop of poison can cause the death of the body, it is equal to a thousand deaths when the heart retains the smallest thought of bitterness.

In this legend cutting open the breast is the cutting open of the ego, which is a shell over the heart. And taking away that element is that: every kind of thought or feeling against anyone in the world was taken away, and the breast, which means the heart, was filled with love alone, which is the real life of God.

The Symbology of Religious Ideas

Meraj, the Dream of the Prophet

A story exists in Islam about the dream of the Prophet, a dream which was an initiation in the higher spheres. Many take it literally and discuss it, and afterwards go out by the same door by which they came in. It is by the point of view of a mystic that one can find out the mystery.

It is said that the Prophet was taken from Jerusalem to the inner city of peace. A Buraq was brought for the Prophet to ride on. Jibra'il accompanied the Prophet on the journey to guide him. Buraq is said to be an animal of heaven which has wings, the body of a horse and the face of a human being. It signifies the body together with the mind. The wings represent the mind, the head represents perfection. Also this is the picture of the breath. Breath is the Buraq which reaches from the outer world to the inner world in a moment's time. Jibra'il in this story represents reason.

It is said that the Prophet saw on his way, Adam, who smiled looking to one side and shed tears looking to the other side. This shows that the human soul when it develops in itself real human sentiment rejoices at the progress of humanity. The Buraq could not go beyond a certain point, which means that breath takes one a certain distance in the mystical realization, but there comes a stage when the breath cannot accompany one. When they arrived near the destination Jibra'il also retired, which means that reason cannot go any further than its limit. Then the Prophet arrived near that curtain which stands between the human and the divine, and called aloud the name of God, saying,

'None exists save Thou,' and the answer came, 'True, true.' That was the final initiation, from which dated the blooming of Mohammad's prophetic message.

6 The Symbology of Religious Ideas

The Flute of Krishna

Krishna is pictured in Hindu Symbology with a crown of peacock feathers, playing the flute. Krishna is the idea of divine love, the god of love. And the divine love expresses itself by entering in man and filling his whole being. Therefore, the flute is the human heart, and a heart which is made hollow, which becomes a flute for the god of love to play. When the heart is empty, in other words when there is no scope in the heart, there is no place for love. Rumi, the great poet of Persia, explains the idea more clearly. He says the pains and sorrows the soul experiences through life are holes made in a reed flute, and it is by making these holes that the player makes out of a reed a flute. Which means, the heart of man is first a reed, and the suffering and pain it goes through make it a flute, which can then be used by God as the instrument to produce the music that he constantly wishes to produce. But every reed is not a flute, and so every heart is not His instrument. As the reeds need to be made into flutes, so the human heart can be turned into an instrument and can be offered to the God of love. It is the human heart which becomes the harp of the angels, it is the human heart which is the lute of Orpheus. It is on the model of the heart of man that the first instrument was made, and no earthly instrument can produce that music which the heart produces, raising the mortal soul to immortality.

The crown of peacock's feathers leads to a further revelation, that it is the music of the heart which can be expressed through the head. It is the knowledge of the head and the love of the heart that expresses the divine message fully. Peacock's feathers have in all ages been considered as a sign of beauty, as a sign of knowledge because they are in the form of an eye. It is by keen observation that man acquires knowledge. Knowledge without love is lifeless. So with the flute the crown of peacock's feathers makes the symbol complete.

Q: What is the meaning of peacock feathers?

A: The peacock feathers are considered by the poets and mystics as a symbol (sign) of beauty, and a sign of vanity. And they are included in all the kingly grandeurs. And the peacock is the bird upon which rode the goddess of music and literature, Saraswati. Also the peacock feathers are used at the tombs of the Sufis, by the guardians of the tomb. Also by the healers, what by the pass of the peacock feathers, which is the pass of harmony and beauty, the bad influences may be taken away. Also in India they use peacock feathers in the necklace of a child, and that is a little psychological trick. A child who is susceptible to evil eye is saved from its severe influence, because it is natural that the first glance of a person, instead of falling upon the child, will fall upon the peacock feathers, because it attracts the curiosity of everyone. In that way the first severe glance is, so to speak, shielded by the peacock feathers. And the same thing is done by the lion's nails which are put in the necklace of a little child.

Q: Why can we only have knowledge of God through the heart? What part of the mind does the heart represent?

A: The heart is the principle center, not the heart in the body, but the heart which is the depth of the mind, for the mind is the surface of the heart. The heart and mind are as one tree: the root is the heart and the branches, fruits, flowers, and leaves represent the mind. The heart is at the bottom of thought, imagination, and all. Feelings always belong to the heart, thought to the mind. So what belongs to the mind can be expressed in words, what to the heart cannot. Everything in the mind is intelligible, but what is intelligible but not expressible, or beyond what is intelligible, that is the heart. Deeper feelings, mirth, kindness, sympathy, all fine feelings which cannot be expressed in words are all activities of the heart. The heart is like the sea, and the waves are its emotions. The brain is all over the body, this fact is admitted by modern science. The brain is that susceptibility which is sensitive, such as nerves which are the sensitive feelers of the brain.

7 The Symbolology of Religious Ideas

Tongues of Fire

The symbolic meaning of the legend - of the myth - is that there is a period when the soul of the earnest seeker is seeking; which means that it has not yet found the object it is seeking after. In the lifetime of Jesus Christ, the beauty of the Master's wonderful personality, the great intoxication of His presence, and the constant outpouring of the Message that He had to give, was so much for his disciples that it was beyond what may be called a joy or happiness or something which is explainable. All the blessing that they received and experienced during His presence was covered by the Master's personality. And the time of realization of that which they had constantly gained came in their lives, after that great change when the external person of the Master ascended and the capacity of realization became open.

But after the resurrection, when they had had sufficient time to recover from the feeling that had overtaken their hearts, the seeming separation from their beloved Lord prepared them, so to speak, in time and opened the doors of the heart, giving capacity for that illumination, which was constantly pouring out from the Spirit of Guidance, the Alpha and Omega, Who always was and is and will be.

The symbolic interpretation of the tongues of flame rising from their foreheads is the light of the Message, the rays of the Christ-spirit in the form of thoughts, which were expressed in words. There is a stage in the life of a seer when the tongue of flame becomes not only an interpretation of the reality but a reality, his own experience. The head is the center of knowledge and when the center opens, the light, which was covered, becomes manifest, not only in idea, but even in form.

And the phenomenon that was shown the next day, when the apostles spoke all different languages, can be rightly interpreted in this sense, that every soul hears its own language. For every soul has its own word, as every soul has its own language. For every soul has its own word, as every soul has its peculiar illusion. And it is, therefore, that one person cannot understand another person in this world, and it becomes more than a miracle when one friend, perhaps one person in the world, can understand one fully. Which means, in this world the language of each one is not understood by another, and if someone understands a little one feels at-one-ment with that one. It was the illumination of the Christ-spirit which brought exaltation in their lives, so that they began to see in every soul, inspired by sympathy and love of Christ. And they understood the souls as they saw them, and so they spoke with souls whose language was never understood. Plainly speaking, they heard the cry of every soul and they answered every soul's cry.

The Message means the answer to the cry of every soul. Every great prophet or teacher had in his life many followers attracted to his personality, to his kindness and love; but those who became as the instrument of his Message, whose hearts became as a flute for the Master to play his music, have always been some chosen few as the twelve apostles of Christ.

8 The Symbology of Religious Ideas

The Story of Lot's Wife

The ancient method of giving the mystery of life was to give it in the form of a legend. The legend of Lot's wife is that it was to Abraham that Lot was related, and it was by the love and help of Abraham that the two angels were sent to Lot, to warn him of the coming destruction of two cities and to advise him to go to the mountains. And Lot was willing to leave the cities, but in the end he agreed to. His sons-in-law failed him by not accompanying him, but his wife and two daughters accompanied him on the journey to the mountains. And they were told that his wife must not look back. And when she did, she was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot and his two daughters remained, and they reached the cave of the mountain, which was Lot's destination.

The two towns that were to be destroyed represent the North Pole and the South Pole, the two poles of the world. For all the treasures of the earth, all possessions and power and fame that belong to the earth are subject to destruction. And that was taught to Lot, the human soul, which is from Brahma, the Creator. The relationship of Lot with Abraham represents the relation of the human soul to the Creator. The two angels were the angels of light and of reason. When the light comes to man its first teaching is to warn the soul of the disaster that awaits all that is subject to death and destruction. It is this lesson that is called in Sanskrit the lesson of Vairagya - when man's eyes open to see all that he loves and likes and wishes to hold and possess is subject to destruction and death.

There are five bodies considered by the mystics of old to be the vehicles of the soul, which are called:

Anandamayakosh, body of Joy,
Vignanamayakosh, body of Wisdom,
Manamayakosh, body of Mind,
Pranamayakosh, body of Ether,
Annamayakosh, body of Earth.

This last is the receptacle of food. It lives on earthly food; and if it is starved of that, it dies, for it is made of earth, it lives on earth. Another is the receptacle of ether. That part of man's being lives by breath and by taking in the air. If it is starved of air it cannot live. These two bodies form the material part, the physical part, of man's being. And it is these two receptacles which are termed in the legend the sons-in-law.

Then there is Manamayakosh, which is mind, the mental body. And this body has its action and reaction on both sides; it acts and reacts on the earthly bodies, and it acts and reacts upon the soul. Therefore, when Lot left the two cities, which represent the physical plane, to journey toward the goal of immortality, his wife was still with him. For it is not necessary that the mental body should stay behind when the journey towards illumination is begun. It is capable of going with the soul towards eternity. And yet its attachment to earth and the physical plane is great, because it is made, it is built, of physical impressions, of all impressions that come from the physical world: and of necessity it wants to turn to see if the physical nature of mind is doubt, whether one is doing right or wrong. And doubt and faith are enemies. While faith leads to the destination, doubt pulls back. When the mind was so pulled back, attracted by all the impressions of earthly life, it could neither take hold of the earth nor journey with the spirit, and remained, neither earth nor water, but salt.

The only two bodies which are close to the soul followed the soul. Naturally, they would follow, for they are closely related to the soul, Vignanamayakosh, the body of Wisdom, and Anandamayakosh, the body of Joy. The soul bound towards the eternal goal - as it is called, the top of the mountains - then proceeded towards the mountains. And before they reached the top of the mountains there was the cave, which is called heaven - in metaphysics capacity, in Sanskrit Akasha - which has the power of holding the soul from going to the top and using the soul for some purpose. And the soul, which was bound for the eternal goal remained, so intoxicated by the ecstasy that it received from the plane of joy and the plane of wisdom. And as it ever happens, that ecstasy produces purpose, so this joy resulted in a great purpose, in the birth of the Messenger, which in Sanskrit is called Bodisattva. The Messenger was born of the soul's experience, the knowledge and the happiness, to bring good

tidings to the world.

A question may arise, why Manamayakosh should be the mother, and Anandamayakosh and Vignanamayakosh should be the daughters. And the answer is that they are born of mind, born and soul. If there were only the soul there would be neither joy nor wisdom. Mind and soul both produce joy and wisdom. Therefore, the latter are the daughters, because mind is the mother. The two lower planes are represented by the sons-in-law because they were not directly born of mind and soul. It was a separate substance mind and soul have taken into their life.

By this story the process is taught how the soul can journey from mortality to immortality and what experiences the soul has to have on its way. But when the Messenger so created then the father, the soul, rests in peace. It is, therefore, that the Messenger was called the Son and the original soul the Father.

9 The Symbolology of Religious Ideas

The idea that is meant in the Bible by the words of Christ, 'Eat my flesh and drink my blood,' is suggestive of the inner being of the Master. It is the eternal life, which he meant by his blood, and it is the omnipresent existence, which he meant by his flesh. The idea of the Master was to make his disciples know that his physical form that they were attracted to was not his being, his true being was the all-pervading, everlasting life of God. And this is the meaning that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one.

Christ said to the fishermen, 'I will make you fishers of men,' which meant, 'As you spread the net and the fishes come into it, so by spirituality your personality will spread in the atmosphere, and the hearts of men hungering for love will be attracted to you as fishes.' The love of Christ for the lamb symbolically expresses that to the Master that soul made a greater appeal, which was simple and harmless as a lamb. And the crown of thorns represents tolerance of the thorn-like personalities of which there are so many in the world, constantly picking their thorns, consciously or unconsciously, and it is this which makes the sensitive annoyed with life in the world. But the teacher, whose heart represents the divine mother and father both, cannot but be tolerant, and can take willingly all the thorns that would come to him, for that is his crown, the sign of his sovereignty in the kingdom of the soul.

Christ said to Peter, 'Thou wilt deny me three times before the cock crows.' It explains human nature. The faith of man is generally dependent upon the faith of the multitude. If the multitude calls the pebble a diamond, then man calls the pebble a diamond, everyone will begin to consider it and say it. And if the multitude thought that the diamond was a pebble then everyone would follow the belief of the multitude. The soul of the Messenger, that comes from above (which the dove represents), which is not made by the world nor known by the world, remains unrecognized till the cock crows and the sun rises. His words shine and spread the light to the world. And the souls privileged with some little recognition, but with a great deal of doubt, may believe for a moment, impressed by the power and grace of the Master's personality, and yet may deny a thousand times, and doubt and suspect, being impressed by the influence of the multitude. How true it is, the saying in Hindustani that, 'Generally a soul follows the multitude.' There are rare souls who believe in their conviction, and remain steady even if it were that the whole world was against their own inner conviction. Verily to the faithful belongs every blessing.

10 The Symbolology of Religious Ideas

The Ten Virgins

There is a story in the Bible about ten virgins, the five wise virgins and the five foolish. It was said that the bridegroom was to come and they were to light their lamps. And five were in time and brought the oil and lighted their lamps, and the other five waited until the bridegroom came, and when the bridegroom came then they went to the five who had lighted their lamps and asked of them oil and were refused. This story is a symbol of receiving the Message of God. By virgin is meant the soul, which is awaiting illumination, innocent and responsive to the light. And by five is meant the multitude. And there are two classes of people. One class is those who have prepared themselves and made ready to receive the Message of God, which is pictured in the bridegroom. And the five foolish are that class in mankind who wait and wait until the Message has come and gone. In all ages there have been these two kinds of souls, one kind who are called in the scriptures believers, the others who are known as unbelievers.

In every age the prophecy has been seen by the Messenger of the time as to the next advent. Sometimes it is said, 'I will come,' and sometimes, 'He will come.' 'I will come,' has been told to those who would recognize the same

Spirit of Guidance in every coming Messenger. 'He will come,' has been told to those to whom name and form make a difference, and who cannot recognize the same Spirit in another name and another form. For example, the coming of Jesus Christ was the coming of that Spirit, which was expressed in this myth as the bridegroom, and how few at that time recognized Him and how few received illumination. Only those whose lamps were ready to be lighted. Oil in this parable is love and the light is wisdom. And when their lamps were lighted, then, so many came afterwards. But that blessing and privilege, which had come with the personality of the Master, had then gone. They had to take the benefit of the light that came from the lamps of those whose lamps were lighted, but the chance of lighting their own lamps was lost.

The same is with all things in life. Every moment in our lives is an opportunity which brings a benefit and blessing. And the one who knows how to be benefited by it and how to be blessed by it receives the benefit and the blessing. Everyone seems living and awake, but few souls really are living and awake. There are opportunities of benefit and blessing on every plane of one's life, on the physical plane, on the mental plane, on the spiritual plane, and every opportunity is invaluable. But often one realizes the truth when it is too late. There is no greater and better opportunity than the moment that can give a spiritual illumination, a moment when one can receive the blessing of God. It is a priceless moment. Who knows it and understands it and tries to be benefited by it, is blessed.

PART IV

PASI ANFAS

BREATH

GATHA I

The Power of Breath

It is difficult to define breath in a few words. Breath is the very life in beings, and what holds all the particles of the body together is the power of the breath, and when this power becomes less then the will loses its control over the body. As the power of the sun holds all the planets so the power of the breath holds every organ. Besides this the breath purifies the body by taking in new and fresh life and by giving out all gases that should be put out. It nourishes the body by absorbing from the space the spirit and substance that are necessary, and more necessary than all that man eats and drinks. The whole mechanism of the body works by the power of the breath, and every disorder in the working of the mechanism is caused by some irregularity in the breath. Therefore physicians feel disorder in the health of a patient by feeling his pulse or the beats of his heart. The physician will say that it is the physical illness of the body, which has caused the change in the pulsation and in the beats of the heart, but the mystic knows that it is caused by the breath.

The breath in its different aspects acts differently; in every direction the breath does a special work. The breath has a special work with every organ of the body, and it has its particular influence upon every element of which the physical body consists. Every movement that one makes is directed by the power of breath at the same time the breath alone has the power to stop any motion. For instance, walking, running, sitting, and standing are actions done by the power of breath, and trembling, shivering, or waving the hands or feet without control show lack of power in the breath. Diseases, especially such diseases as nervousness, palpitation of the heart, and paralysis come from lack of power of the breath. All lung diseases are caused by uncleanness of the breath. Troubles in the brain and troubles in the intestines are also caused by lack of regularity of the breath. This shows that breath is the key to health, which is all happiness in life.

The Culture of the Breath

Breath has various works to do in the mechanism of the body. Hunger and thirst, the power of eating and drinking, is given by the breath; the closing and opening of the eyes, and the activity of all the organs is directed by the power of the breath; the expelling of all gases and excretements also is directed by the breath. Therefore every activity of the body, outward and inward, is directed by the breath. Therefore it is disorder of the breath, which causes illness, and its order regulates the health. Many physicians now point out reasons for diseases, where mystics think of the breath and point out reasons in breathing. According to the point of view of the mystic a

natural full breath gives perfect health, and to a mystic's view in a hundred people not one breathes rightly. Every Brahmin teaches his child a way of breathing when he is nine years old. As it is a common thing that everybody breathes incorrectly it rarely occurs to the mind that one's breath is incorrect.

The air taken in and sent out that one feels through the nostrils or lungs are what we ordinarily call breath. In reality, however, that is as the stem of a tree whose branches are many. According to the physician the lungs are the channel of the breath, but to the mystic the lungs are the branches of the tree, and other branches reach all parts of the body. This tree has a root in the body, and has centers where the branches meet the stem. There are five such centers in the body of man. The breath has its particular work in every center. By the study of mysticism one finds that man's life depends upon the working of the centers. Generally the centers are blocked up on the inner side of the body. Therefore they give but a dim light, if the breath be pictured as a gas and centers as lanterns. When the centers are not in a fit condition they are wasted; not only this, but man is deprived of the full experience of life.

Powers that are considered supernatural become natural when man leads a natural life. The first lesson of a natural life is right breathing. Many people breathe a half breath, many a quarter and many still less. Many diseases such as lung diseases, and nervous diseases, can be avoided by right breathing. It is a certain direction that the breath takes that brings about sleep, and it is the direction of the breath that brings vigor or fatigue. A man may, by the help of the breath, become stronger by doing physical exercises, and another by physical labor may become exhausted and worn out. The laborers in India who have to lift heavy weights have a certain way of breathing, and by understanding this they can lift a great deal and work a great deal and yet feel little fatigue. There are many reasons why people in general do not breathe rightly, but one among them is a lack of education in this. As health is more important than anything else on earth is, and as health depends entirely upon the breath, which is the very life, it is necessary that the culture of the breath should be considered as of the highest importance.

Prana

Breath in the Sufic term is called *Nafs*. The breath spreads through the whole body like a tree, and its stem is felt by man, and it is this stem which man in his everyday language calls breath. All the branches of this tree the mystic calls by different names. A mystic sees the whole body as a plant of the breath. Therefore in the Sanskrit language breath is called Prana, which means the very life. It spreads life and magnetism in all parts of the body, for breath in itself is life, and is magnetism. Deformity of form and feature is often caused by disorder of the breath. Lack of proportion of the body, in form and strength, is also caused by lack of order in the breath. By exercises for physical culture and exercises of voice production breath can be developed in different parts of the body. It can especially be noticed in the fingers of the violinist that by constant practice on the violin he puts a sort of magnetism, of life, into the strings his fingers touch. This example is a plain proof that it is not the fingers that play nor the violin that sounds, but that they are instruments of life.

The importance of breath is only now becoming known to the scientific world, and there is much of this mystical subject which is unexplored. But mysticism has been founded on the science of breath. There is no mystic, whether Buddhist, Vedantist, or Sufi, who makes use of another process than that of the breath. Breath is the first lesson and it is also the last.

A mystic becomes capable of sending breath to any part of his body; thus he is able to send life, radiance and magnetism to any particle of his body. The question, "Does he send the breath by his power of will?" can be simply answered by "Yes," and yet that is not enough. If there are no strings on the violin, you cannot play on it by will power. So long as the adept has not balanced his breath, and controlled it, and purified it, and mastered it, it cannot bring about the proper result. Therefore it is of no use to try to make use of breath for physical or occult attainments until one has caused the breath to be in such a condition that it can work properly in the body. Many therefore, are not successful in spiritual attainments because before making use of the breath in the body, they want to produce physical phenomena. You cannot play Beethoven perfectly on a piano, which is out of tune. The body is the instrument for every experience, worldly or spiritual, and it is not right to say that the body does not matter, only the spirit counts. It is just like saying that it does not matter whether the instrument is tuned, it is the music that counts. The mechanism of the body is so made that in each direction breath accomplishes a certain work, even to such an extent that the degree of its strength differs on the right and left. By a deep study of breath a seeker after truth will find that, as every particle of his body is formed and nourished by breath, so from that and according to that his character is formed.

Five Aspects of Breath

The mechanism of the body is dependent in its work upon five different aspects of breath, and these aspects are the five different directions of breath. In the Koran, and also in the Hebrew scriptures, these five breaths are known as the five angels. These aspects are thus pictured in their finer work in human life. Often their direction is spoken of by the prophets in symbolical terms, as it is said: One stands on the left side of man, one on the right, one before, one behind, one within him. When one aspect of these five is not working properly it brings disorder in the whole mechanism of the body. In eating and drinking, yawning and stretching and in all actions of everyday life these five aspects of breath have to take the lead.

Among these five aspects the first is the breath which is like the stem on the tree, and which one feels through the nostrils. By the purification, development and control of this breath all five aspects are developed. There are atoms in man's body which form a certain organ, which are more or less active in different rhythms according as the breath reaches them. The atoms, which do not receive the proper breath, remain undeveloped, and therefore are inactive. As the centers of the body are situated in the center of the whole mechanism, it is natural that in the average person the breath does not reach their innermost part, as it ought to. The question, "If it is natural that it should reach them, why does it not?" may be answered by saying that it is because man leads an artificial life. If man led a natural life it would not be necessary for him to develop by certain meditation processes the qualities that are latent in him. A horse, a dog, or a cat knows intuitively of death, disease or distress in the house in which it lives. The animals are considered by modern psychology to be without mind, and man, who is far superior to the lower creation and is the ideal of all beings, has not that intuitive power. The reason is that the animals lead a more natural life than man does, although even that is spoiled by contact with man. The cobra can attract its food from a mile's distance, but man must toil with his hands for his daily bread. In short, there are faculties in man which, by the artificiality of his life, are closed, and man lives an incomplete life. To live a fuller life the wise in all religions have taken the breath in hand and awakened atoms and centers, which are instruments for those faculties. As soon as breath touches those centers it makes them vibrate and then they do their work. Therefore breathing exercises given to a mureed are like the winding of a clock. Once in twenty-four hours the clock is wound and after that it goes on without effort.

The Channel of the Breath

Breath is a channel through which all the expression of the innermost life can be given. Breath is an electric current that runs between the everlasting life and the mortal frame.

Those who have attained any intuition or miraculous power or any power have achieved it by the help of the breath. But the first essential thing is a pure channel for the breath, and that channel is the human body. If the channel is blocked, there is not possibility for the breath to flow freely. Air in itself is not bad, but when it touches the earth, it partakes the influence of the earth, and therefore can become polluted. So it is with the breath; breath in itself is pure, but if the channel through which it works is not right, it becomes impure.

The breath makes a circuit through the body, and the channel through which it makes the circuit is the spine. The mystics give this channel great importance; they call it the serpent. They picture it as a serpent holding its tail in its mouth. In almost all symbols the serpent represents the channel of the breath. In the terms of the Yogis it is called *Kundalini*. When this channel is made clear by the method of breathing then this is not only a help to the physical health but it also opens up the faculties of intuition and the doors that are within, where lies the real happiness of man. In order to clear this channel of all that blocks the way one must follow the rules of mystical ablutions and of rhythmic breathing. People who cannot understand the subject and who hear and read things by halves say that some chakras, centers, are opened by breathing exercises and that many kinds of distress may be the consequence. But looking at it from another point of view, one might as well say that the eyes of a child should never be opened, because he will thereby be exposed to temptations of all sorts. All virtue is in self-control; there is no virtue in being dead. Life is worth while only when a person leads it fully. People look for phenomena, but there is no better phenomena than breath itself, because breath is life and light, and in the breath is the source of life and light. In the mastery of breath the secret of both worlds is hidden.

The Rhythm of Breath

Rhythm is the principal thing to be considered in breath, as it is on the rhythm of the breath that the working of the whole mechanism depends, and the chief reason of irregularity of the beats of the heart or head is lack of rhythm in the breath. As man generally neglects to think of his breath he overlooks the fact that his health entirely depends on rhythmic breath. Rhythm is the central theme of the whole creation. Therefore the infant moves his hands and legs

by turns, forming a rhythm. This shows that nobody teaches anyone rhythm, it is natural to all beings. It is the rhythmic movement, which enables the fish to swim, and the serpent to climb trees. If rhythm were not an instinct the animal would never have known how to walk or the bird how to fly. The life of man is so pulled from all sides, so divided, that he often forgets things that are most essential to his life, which the lower creatures seem to keep more correctly in their lives. Neatness in man's work and balance in man's actions show rhythm in him. When man shows lack of balance in his life and when his life is disturbed and all things seem to go wrong, it is most often that the rhythm of his breath has become wrong. Irregularity of activity and repose in the habits of life causes disorder of rhythm in the breath.

Very often the eastern mystical exercises are wrongly understood by many. When a teacher gives a breathing exercise to his pupil often he does not mean the breathing itself but rhythm. Thought given to the breath becomes a weight upon it and naturally holds it longer in its movement, altering it from what it would otherwise naturally be. It is the following of the rhythm of breath, and the keeping of the rhythm regular, which brings about the best results.

Kasif and Latif

Breath is termed by Sufis *Kasif* and *Latif* ; *Kasif* means dense and *Latif* means fine. Dense breath is that which is noisy and labored, which strains the nerves and the lungs. The exercises of dense breath are useful for developing the muscles and for gaining control over the nerves; they are helpful also to the lungs and useful to the physical health. But in spiritual development unless the breath is made fine it cannot penetrate through the important centers in the body and it cannot reach far enough into the innermost parts of one's life.

Breath, to a Sufi, is a bridge between himself and God; it is a rope for him, hanging down to earth, attached to the heavens. The Sufi climbs up by the help of this rope. In the Koranic language it is called *Burak*, a steed which was sent to the Prophet for his journey to the heavens. Hindus call it *Prana*, which means life, but they picture it symbolically as a bird which is named in Sanskrit, *Garuda*, on which rode *Narayana*, the godhead.

There is no mystical cult in which the breath is not given the greatest importance in spiritual progress. Once man has touched the depths of his own being by the help of the breath then it becomes easy for him to become at one with all that exists on earth and in heaven.

Breath – The Vehicle of the Self

Breath is the mystery; in it is hidden the secret of life. Breath proves the existence of the life unseen. Breath is audible, at the same time inaudible. Breath is visible and at the same time invisible. It is a certain degree of the activity of the breath and the capacity through which it is acting which makes the breath audible. This shows that there exists something of which we are conscious, the source of which no one knows, which is active every moment of the day, on the model of which the mechanism of nature and art is made.

No one can explain whence it came into this mortal body, and no one can say whither it goes when it leaves this body of clay. One can only say that something living came and kept this mortal body alive and then left it, proving that the same body, which once was thought to be alive, was not really alive, but itself was the life. This proves to the intellect, even to that which is void of faith, that there is some source whence life comes, and that it returns again to the same source. Man's true self is the part of his being which knows itself to exist, which is conscious of itself. When that self takes breath as its vehicle instead of the body then it soars upward toward the utmost heights, toward that goal which is the source and origin of all beings.

The Mysticism of Breath

Breath is audible and visible, and when a spiritual person, by spiritual exercises, strengthens and purifies the breath, it becomes more intelligible, as a light and a sound. Life and light, in truth, are one; the breath is the life, and it is the same breath which is light. Breath in fact is the light of all senses; the senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch perceive all things by the light of the breath. When the breath is absent from the body, the body with all its perfect mechanism becomes useless. It is natural, therefore, that every sense must become powerful and keen if the breath be developed and purified.

The reason why the ill and weak and people physically delicate generally see visions is that by the lack of flesh, fat and blood the veins and tubes of the body and the organs of all the senses are free and not blocked as they are in a

muscular person. Therefore, naturally, the senses become keen and man perceives more than what is within the ordinary range of perception. Also such a person, when asleep, perceives the impressions from the inner world, because during sleep the inner sense, which may be called the root of the senses, turns its back, so to speak, on the external world and so begins to see the world within.

The mystic, by the help of exercises, develops and purifies the breath. Therefore to him, after a certain time, all things become clear in the outer and inner world. There are some who see light before them, there are some who notice colors before their view, and also there are some who see forms before their sight. When they talk about it to others, who cannot observe the phenomena, they are considered imaginative; people often laugh at them. The Sufi, therefore, does not speak of any such experience to others; he thinks it is not their world and they will not be able to understand unless they also rise to that sphere. There is no motive for speaking about one's experiences to others except pride, and if someone does this out of vanity his next step will be exaggeration. If something makes anyone feel himself above others it is natural for him to feel inclined to make it still more impressive. Besides, it is in human nature to wish to interest one's friends in one's

pleasure, and if someone is pleased with something he sees he will surely try to make it more interesting by a little added exaggeration. Therefore there are these two dangers on the spiritual path, of which the adept must be aware before making the journey. It is for this reason that mysticism has been made a secret cult, that it may not be for everybody to play with.

Color and Sound

Breath in reality is light; but when it shoots forth its rays, according to the direction of the rays and the capacity which takes this light, the colors manifest. Form and color both depend upon the direction the light takes and upon the degree of light. Nothing on earth is meaningless; every occurrence has its meaning and every moment has its purpose. Even the colors that manifest in the light of the breath have their meaning, which coincides with the moment and the conditions then. There are attempts being made of taking photographs of thoughts and feelings, and some have even attempted to photograph the spirits. It is difficult to say how far this attempt can be successful. No doubt it gives a great scope to falsehood. If there is any means of seeing a spirit, a form from the inner world, it is only breath-that in the light of breath a form from the inner world can manifest as a picture from the magic lantern. The picture actually is in the lantern, and it is the reflection of that picture which we see. Those who can see the form of the dead, see the reflection before them manifested in the light of their own breath, the real form being still in the inner world. For it is the breath which connects the inner world with the outer world, just as the light thrown from the magic lantern falls upon the curtain.

There are many who believe that there is a color or a note which belongs to a particular person, and this question gives, no doubt, a great scope for confusion and puzzle. Many people are anxious to know what note really belongs to them or what color is their special color. In point of fact, this question can be looked at from two different points of view, one symbolic and the other metaphysical. From the symbolical point of view, every person is, so to speak, tuned to a certain pitch in his particular evolution, and he stands with another person just as C on the piano may stand with G, or E of the pianoforte with A. This shows the reason why a person can get on with a certain person harmoniously, and with another inharmoniously. It is not the fault of the F or G on the piano that they sound inharmonious together, it is the combination, which causes the inharmony. It is not always the note, which is inharmonious; it is a wrong combination, which makes it so. Spiritual perfection makes man the keynote, which is in harmony with all notes; and even that perfection shown to the world by Christ caused his crucifixion. Metaphysically, this question may be explained that there is a certain degree of life in a person, which can be distinguished by his breath, and that degree shows itself to the seer in color and sound. Those who have not reached the degree of that power, which perceives the tone and color of breath, can perceive it by the voice and expression of man.

GATHA II

1 *Fikar*

THE BREATH is like a swing, which has a constant motion, and whatever is put in the swing, swings also with the movement of the breath. Fikar, therefore, is not a breathing practice. In Fikar it is not necessary that one should breathe in a certain way, different from one's usual breathing. Fikar is to become conscious of the natural movement of the breath, and picturing breath as a swing, to put in that swing a certain thought, as a babe in the

cradle, to rock it. Only the difference in rocking is an intentional activity on the part of the person who rocks the cradle. In Fikar no effort must be made to change the rhythm of the breath; the breath must be left to its own usual rhythm. One need not try even to regulate the rhythm of the breath, for the whole mechanism of one's body is already working rhythmically. So the breath is rhythmical by nature and it is the very breath itself, which causes man to distinguish rhythm.

What is important in Fikar is not the rhythm but the concentration. Fikar is swinging the concentrated thought with the movement of breath, for breath is life and it gives life to the thought, which is repeated with the breath. On the rhythm of the breath the circulation of the blood and the pulsation of the heart and head depend; which means that the whole mechanism of the body, also of the mind, is directed by the rhythm of the breath. When a thought is attached to the breath by concentration, then the effect of that thought reaches every atom of one's mind and body. Plainly speaking, the thought held in Fikar runs with the circulation of the blood through every vein and tube of the body, and the influence of that thought is spread through every faculty of the mind. Therefore the reaction of the Fikar is the resonance of the same thought expressing itself through one's thought, speech and action. So in time the thought one holds in Fikar becomes the reality of one's self. So he who contemplates on God in time arrives at a state where his self turns into the being of God.

2 Regularity of Breath

As the mechanism of the body depends upon the breath for its subsistence as well as for its health, so the breath is important in sustaining the mind and keeping its work regular. Mostly confusion, depression, or any other disorder of the mind arises from the disorder of breathing. All such diseases as hallucinations and delusions are caused by wrong breathing. For instance, if a person comes running or is hurried for a moment, he loses the regularity of his breath for that moment, and at that moment he is incapable of thinking rightly. If science and the State knew this, they could surely cause some change to be made in the present law. Many who are put in prison for some crime caused by them during moments of irregular breathing, the State would send to be cured and taught how to breathe, instead of sending them to prison. For neither does the prison cure them nor does it benefit by their presence there. By this I mean to say that not only a disorder of mind that comes at a certain time is caused by irregular breathing, but also a disorder which comes and goes so often during the day, whenever breathing is not rightly done. People who become impulsive, or show irritability in nature, who become impatient at times, who get fits of anger, passion, or laughter, who get spells of tears, all have an irregularity of breathing as the cause of all this. The physician has no remedy for their ills, modern psychology has not found the link, but the mystics of old have for years believed it-not only believed it, but practiced it-and have found in the end that balance of mind entirely depends upon regularity of breathing.

3 The Life – Power

On breath depends the capability and efficiency with which one thoroughly does one's work. Shortness of breath gives man impatience, lack of endurance; and irregularity of the rhythm of the breath gives man confusion and makes him inclined to be easily upset. Breath, being the life-power, it is the same life-power which gives man strength to endure all things. One always will find that those who easily get cross, upset quickly, instantly annoyed, have something wrong with the breath. People, not knowing their difficulty, get annoyed with them; they are put aside, and are considered disagreeable people. What they need is the training of breathing. When their body and mind is so repaired, one will find no more disagreeableness in their nature. Then, the artist who gets tired of his work and feels a lack of enthusiasm to complete his work and feels a lack of interest and feels absence of inspiration it all is often caused by some disorder in the breath.

Regular and rhythmic breathing gives health to body and mind both. Inspiration comes from above, but as a light. It is the work of the mind to receive it. If the mind is not ready to receive it, the inspiration will come but will not be realized. It is just like the difference between the gong of metal and the gong of wood. The former will resound; the later will not resound. It is not the fault of the one who strikes the gong, it is the gong itself, which does not resound. So it is with the mind which is receptive to the inspiration and the mind which cannot conceive it. But to every mind inspiration comes; the only difference is that one receives it, the other rejects it. Right breathing makes the mind vibrate, and vibration is the sign of life. All that vibrates more is more living; what vibrates less is less living. So it is with trees and animals, they show their life in their vibration. India's greatest scientist, Jagadish Chandra Bose, had the other day spoken at a university in England on the subject of trees breathing. Among horses, the horse one chooses, as the best is the one whose nostrils are fully open and whose breath is fuller, which the horse shows in its expression in the eyes. A good horse shows vibrations by the quivering of its skin when its back

is patted. It is not like a stone-like horse, which takes one step after ten whips given on its back. In man in the same way that life can be seen which is termed in Hindustani *Pani*, which means water. They say that a horse, or a man, has 'a watery nature,' living, pliable; and this life breath gives to body and mind.

4 Full Breath

The importance of the breath in the body is like the influence if the weather in the world. As the body and mind act and react on one another, so the influence of the breath takes the chief place in directing mind and body both. Every emotion is caused by the breath flowing in a certain direction also the degree of the force of the breath. There are three different rhythms of breath, which have influence upon the mind. Slow breath gives tranquillity to the mind, and all the creative faculties of mind have scope of work given by this rhythm. Moderate breath helps the mind to continue its activities. If one wanted to make out a plan of work, or wished to accomplish a certain work, the slow activity of breath spoken of above would not be helpful. But quickness in the rhythm of breath produces confusion, although it gives a force to physical activities. One can run better or swim well when the breath is in fairly quick rhythm. When the rhythm of the breath is too quick, it brings confusion to the mind and exhaustion to the body.

One who does not breathe fully, in other words freely and deeply, can neither be well physically nor make use of his mental faculties. Very often one finds most learned and intelligent people unable to work as they wish and incapable of finishing a work which they have taken up. Sometimes a person thinks it a bodily weakness or mental weakness or lack of enthusiasm or loss of memory, not knowing that it is very often a matter of regularizing the breath. Most often people think that it is the external senses being tired or exhausted that prevents their thinking, but in reality it is the absence of right breathing, for right breathing can make the mental faculties clearer and the outer organs of the senses more capable of perceiving. This shows that the mind can live a fuller life by what I call full breath. For a Sufi, therefore, breath is a key to concentration. The Sufi, so to speak, covers his thought under the breath. This expression of Rumi's I would interpret that the Sufi lays his beloved ideal in the swing of the breath. I remember my Murshid's saying that every breath, which is inhaled with the consciousness of the Divine Beloved, is the only gain and every breath inhaled without this consciousness is the only loss there is.

5 The Rhythmic Breath

Thought is conveyed without speech through the breath. The true wireless telegraphy is the rightly established current of breath. It is difficult for every man to try it, without practice in concentration and in absence of the development of breath, though unconsciously thoughts are always exchanged through the agency of breath. The scientist is ready to believe that contagious diseases are spread by means of breath, but is the part of psychology to realize that thoughts and mental states-such as humor, depression, energy, or sloth-are conveyed by means of breath. In the presence of an angry person one feels excited and inclined to anger. The contact of a humorous person spreads around an atmosphere of humor, in the presence of a cold person one becomes cold, the contact of a warm-hearted person warms one; and all this is done by the medium of breath. If an angry person were to close his breath while angry, much less of his feeling would affect another. If a person who is subject to humor would close his breath in the presence of an expert comedian he could protect himself from being influenced by him.

Yogis, who rise about the thoughts and feelings of those around them, attain power by the control of the breath. So the method of the inner cult of Sufis also depends upon the science of breath. Knowledge of another person's pleasure or displeasure, the message of affection, the warning of hostility, all are received by the way of the breath. The one who is conscious of the rhythm of breath and whose breath is pure from grossness, begins to perceive a sense, which becomes in time a language to him. Thought reading is not necessarily intuition, although many confuse thought reading with intuition. There is not much difference between the working of these two faculties; the difference is like that between the telephone and the telegraph. Thought reading comes from without, intuition comes from within; yet for both rhythmic breath and a clear mind are necessary. The rhythmic breath helps the mind to be clear. Breath breaks the congestion, which in the head produces confusion, and in the heart depression, which covers the thoughts of others from one's perception, even from one's own intuition. A thought is better conveyed to another through breath than by speech, for a feeling put into words becomes half-dead. Feeling, in its own sphere, is fully living, and when conveyed from there through the breath, it reaches the mind to which it is sent. When a person has not developed his mind by concentration and tries to send his thought by breath he is not always successful. He is like a person trying to hit the target without ever having practiced in his life. It is practice, which makes man perfect.

Be Conscious of Every Breath

It is by the power of breath that the animals search for their food, through breath they perceive what they must eat, what they must not eat, through breath the carnivorous animals search for their prey. It is through breath that certain animals receive warning of dangers and again it is through the breath that some animals, when ill, find their remedy. If the lower creation can do so much by the power of breath, how much more can man do, if he only knows the right way of the development of breath! It is through the breath that birds receive warnings of the changes of the weather, and accordingly they migrate in flocks from one place to another. Through the breath the herds of deer perceive approaching storms or changes of weather or the approach of a lion or a tiger. Man, who is more capable of perceiving by breath still deeper things, warnings and calls from the earth and from heaven, which places are meant for him to dwell in or to settle in, of discriminating between friend and foe and discerning their pleasure and displeasure, owing to his interest in the superficial things of life cannot fully benefit by the power of breath.

Yogis and Sufis, therefore, and all students of the inner cult, believe that breath is the means of receiving all intuitive knowledge from every direction of life. Absorbed in a thousand things of daily life man gives very little thought to breath. Therefore he keeps his heart closed to all the revelation that can be received by the help of breath. Man as a rule is never conscious of his breath, of its rhythm, of its development, except at the time when he is so tired that he is breathless when he is so excited that he feels choked up, or when something keeps the breath from flowing. For a Sufi it is desirable to be conscious of every breath. In the schools of the Sufis in the East the members of a certain association take up as their duty to remind the whole assembly of the same. So one after another, in turn, takes it up as a duty. They call aloud '*Hosh ba dam*,' meaning 'Keep conscious of the breath,' '*Nazar ba kadam*'; this sentence is added when the Sufis are walking, and means, 'Look down and see whose feet are these that are walking.'

Direction of Breath

It is said that the cobras, enormous animals living in dense forests or in the mountains, attract animals or birds by the power of the breath. When the cobra is hungry, which is once in three months or six months, by inhaling the breath it draws its prey near. In its exhaling there is magnetism, power, and influence; in its inhaling there is attraction. The mystics of ancient times have learned much from cobras. Mahadeva, the Lord of Yogis, had the cobra as his necklace. The peace and stillness of this animal, the contentment with which it waits for its sustenance, are wonderful, and most instructive for an adept on the spiritual path.

One who masters breath becomes invigorated and strengthened in his mind, becomes quiet and peaceful and achieves self-control. In the cobra there is a far-reaching breath. So is the breath of the mystic. The mystic's breath is not what is called deep breathing. His is the breath reaching inmost, which touches every plane of his being. Every movement robs one of a great portion of breath; every excitement takes away a great deal of life force. Therefore those who master breathing first learn control, not only over every passion and emotion, but also over every movement. By trying first to make the body still one can practice the breath better. Therefore among Yogis different postures are taught. Every posture allows the breath to take a certain direction, for every direction the breath takes has a different result. It is posture and thought, both together that help to direct the breath in a certain direction. As breath is a life-power, whatever center it is directed to it brings to a new life.

Breath in the Development of Mind

Different conditions and the changes that take place in the world have their effect upon the mind, and the different conditions of the mind have their effect upon the body. As bodily illness makes man irritable, confused and exhausted in mind, so different conditions of the mind cause health or illness in the body. The link between the body and the mind is the breath, a link through which the influences of the body and the mind are exchanged and work upon one another. By the use of breath in physical culture the health and vigor of the breath is projected so to speak, upon the mind. By the use of concentration through the breath the light of the mind is thrown upon the body, which takes away from the body all heaviness and stiffness, making it light and exhilarated.

Breath in this way acts like a ball in tennis thrown from one side to the other, and the force of its movement comes from the side from which it is directed. Therefore when it is directed from the body to the mind the mind becomes subject to the influence of the body, but when from the side of the mind it is directed toward the body, in this case the body becomes subject to the mind. Very often dervishes and fakirs in the East, many of whom live upon alms

and go several days without food and spend many nights in sleepless vigil, do things which are difficult for a wrestler, a boxer, or any other muscular person. Some dervishes practice jumping into fire, standing for hours in the water, sitting or lying on iron pricks, thrashing their bare arms and legs, cutting themselves with knives and swords, and all such things beyond the power of a physically strong man. Often a physically strong man suffers in proportion to his strength when he is exposed to pain or torture. This explains that though the power of breath is the main source of physical development, yet breath is the principal thing in the development of mind, in which the influence of the breath is more valuable.

Contraction and Expansion

The breath has a great influence and entire control over two principles which work by the power of the breath: *Kabs*, or contraction, and *Bast*, or expansion. The former absorbs, attracts, and gathers energy from outside; the latter tendency expels energy from within. In this way body and mind are sustained, nourished, enriched, and made light, easy clear and pure by the power of breath. Inhaling is contraction and exhaling is expansion. It is upon these two principles and their regular working that the health and happiness of man depend.

A man who has not gained power over his breath is like a king who has no power over his domain. Once man has gained the power of contraction and expansion then what he needs in life is to know what to attract and what to repel, and this the master of breath intuitively understands. Even the birds and animals know what they must eat and drink and what they must not. By a close study of the lower creation students of nature have learned that animals and birds abstain from food and drink when it becomes necessary for health.

I am often asked the question, why there should be pain in childbirth. And the answer is that our life has been removed far from nature. Man today lives an artificial life to such an extent that he can hardly understand what real life may be. Man considers the accustomed the natural, he does not think how far the natural is removed from the present life we live. The domesticated animals are also beginning to show the birth-pain, through their association with human beings.

Fikar, practiced for some years, helps to regulate the rhythm of breathing, and it helps in all aspects of life to attract and repel all one wishes. By the help of Fikar not only the digestive faculty and the circulation of the blood and the pulsations of the body are made regular, but the concentration that is developed through the development of breath enables man to repel all disagreeable impressions which cause despair and depression. By the power of Fikar one helps the power of memory, also the power of retention of thought. At the same time one is enabled by the power of breath to forget any thought one wishes to put out of one's mind and to erase from one's heart any impression deeply engraved.

10 Communication Through The Breath

Breath is the medium between the outer life and the inner life. By the help of breath the elements necessary for the body can be attracted and by the help of breath thoughts and inspiration can be gained. By the help of breath all that is undesirable in the body and mind can be expelled. The secret of telepathy, of reading the thought, has the science of breath as its mystery. When one wishes to draw from within inspiration, breath is the key. Breath is a life-current; its value is known to so few! Breath in itself is a phenomenon, but the phenomenon becomes manifest when once the breath is fully mastered.

The law of transmutation is also the secret of breath. What we give, or gain from another, without seeing or hearing, which we only realize as a result of the contact of someone, that is the effect of breath. For by the medium of breath there is always something given and taken; yet so few are aware of it! In the presence of one person one feels an inclination to laugh, in the presence of another one has a desire to cry; contact with one makes a person feel cheerful, with another sorrowful. Sometimes without there being one word spoken between two people thoughts and feelings are transferred, without people knowing it, through the current of breath. Breath is a link through which one individual is connected with another individual, and space does not make a difference if once connection of breath is established. The communication will be sure and clear, if only the wire is tied to sympathetic hearts. There is much that is common to the science of electricity and the science of breath. The day is not very far off when science and mysticism both will meet on the same ground in the realization of the electricity, which is hidden in the breath.

GATHA III

1 The Length and Breadth of Breath

Mind is creative and thought is living, but out of what does mind create a thought? Out of the atoms of the mental sphere. But the current, which attracts the desired atoms to complete a thought, is the breath, not that breath which is outwardly manifest, but that part of breath the action of which is not felt by every man. The more length and breadth the breath has the more scope it gives for the creation of thought. It is therefore that the thoughts of the sages and mystics, who have gained mastery over breath, are more substantial and complete in themselves, and besides they prove to be more expressive and impressive.

The breadth of the breath is in its volume. This comes by the facility one has of breathing through wide nostrils and open lungs. The secret of the power of voice is also to be found in this. The voice of a commander of an army, which carries through the army and impresses the soldiers, thus encouraging them to fight, has breath as its secret behind it. Ali by his invocation of the sacred word, which he sometimes used to cry aloud on the battlefield, used to cause the enemies to tremble.

The length of the breath shows the length of life; lengthy breath is the sign of long life. This comes not only by wide nostrils and open lungs, but also by the accommodation that the body has for the breath, not only the nose and the chest but also the head and the abdomen.

There are some, whose breath has volume, or breadth, but not much length, and there are others who have length and no breadth. But it is the balance of the length and breadth of the breath, which gives balance to the mind.

Inspiration

Inspiration comes from the light thrown upon a certain idea. This comes from the radiance of the breath falling upon the mind. There are two shadows, one that is projected upon the sky, and another which falls upon the ground; the former known to the mystic and the latter to everyone. When the breath which is developed, is thrown outward its radiance produces light, and it is the different shades and grades of this light, which manifest in various colors, suggesting to the mystic the different elements, which the particular colors denote. The same breath has a different action when it is thrown within. It falls upon the mind like a searchlight and shows to the intelligence the object of its search as things seen in daylight. Thus man knows without any effort on the part of the brain all he wishes to know and expresses in the way each individual is qualified to express.

Inspiration, therefore, is one thing, qualification another thing. The inspiration is perfect when expressed by the qualified soul. Nevertheless inspiration is independent of qualification. The light that the breath throws upon the mind is in every case different in its radiance. When far-reaching it illuminates the deepest corners of the heart, where the light has never reached, and if breath reaches further the light is thrown upon the mind of God, the store of all the knowledge there is.

Thought Reading

It is the vibrations caused by the breath, which become thought-waves, which carry the thought from one mind to the other. It is therefore that thought-reading depends so much upon the position in which two people sit with regard to each other. For a certain position makes it easier for the breath to reach than another, although it is not always necessary that a person must be facing one in order to receive thought-waves through breath. If the thought power is strong and the breath is sound enough to carry the thought-waves, a person, whether facing or having his back turned must receive thought.

The mystics do not only project their own breath and see the condition of their being manifest before themselves, but they can also make themselves responsive to receive the thought waves of another carried by his breath. This receptivity does not only enable an adept to read other's thoughts, but also to a mystic the condition of another becomes revealed by the projection of another person's breath upon his heart.

Plainly speaking, souls are likened to mirrors, and two mirrors facing one another become projected on one another, one manifesting the reflection of the other. The mirror, which has not already a reflection, is capable of manifesting the reflection of the other mirror. In this way breath enables a Sufi not only to know and see his own condition of life but also to know and understand the condition of those he comes in contact with.

Nafsi Garm

The breath of one person may, so to speak, overpower the breath of another. It is as a little stream can be washed away by a large stream of water. In this is the secret of knowing the condition of another person. A Sufi, whose breath is lively, which is called in the Sufic terms *Nafsi Garm*, has the influence of scattering the thoughts, feelings, and the vibrations of the atmosphere of another. In this way he is able to convey his thought or feeling, and create his vibrations as the atmosphere for another who needs it for his own betterment. In this way a Sufi brings a life and health to another person, and he can have an influence on the character of another person.

There is a great difference between a developed breath and an undeveloped one. There is as vast a difference, or even a vaster, between the breath of two persons as in two voices. A specially produced singing voice is quite different from the uncultivated speaking voice. It is a psychological fact that the voice and word of a person whose voice is cultivated makes a greater impression than the voice and word of an ordinary person. How much more then must the influence of breath work silently. It is in this that the mystery of the mystic's magnetism lies, which is healing, harmonizing, exalting, at the same time invigorating.

The Unknown Dimension

Breath is a light in itself, and it becomes projected like the beam from a searchlight thrown upon an object. When the breath is coarse, undeveloped, it is full of material atoms which dim its light, but a developed breath is sometimes no different from the light of the sun but even brighter than that. Breath being a light from another dimension, which is unknown to science today, it cannot be visible to the ordinary physical eyes. The glands of the physical eyes must be cleansed and purified first by *Pasi Anfas* before the eyes can see the light of breath.

What people call the aura is the light of breath, but it is not everyone who sees it. A radiant countenance is a proof of an aura, which lightens it, and the lack of it is the lack of light in the breath. A seer sees the sign of a death more clearly and longer beforehand than a physician can. The reason is that the seer sees in the aura of a person whereas the physician sees only the condition of the body.

There is a belief in India that there are some cobras that have light in their head, the light by which they find their way through the dark. They make a hole in the earth miles long, and illuminate the hole by their own light, which is centered in their head. As two wires, positive and negative cause the electric light to manifest, so the two currents of breath, *Jelal* and *Jemal*, when connected in the head in the way they ought to be cause the light to manifest.

Many experience the phenomena of the light of breath, and yet doubt if it can be true, for they think it is perhaps an imagination. Others, who are incapable of seeing that light, confirm their doubt. The Sufi, by the development of breath, experiences this light, which becomes for him a proof of the existence of that dimension which is unknown to the ordinary world.

Breathing and Meditation

Why is breath called *Prana* by the Hindus? It is because it brings on the surface the essence from within. It is a current, which is running from the outer spheres to the inner spirit. What it brings from the outer spheres to the inner spirit is not nearly so great as that which it brings from the inner spheres of life.

This being the condition, breath is vitalizing. Naturally, therefore, the breath of a man in sound health must give health to another in his presence; the breath of a mastermind must vitalize the thought of another; and the breath of a spiritual person must illuminate those in his presence. By breath a spiritually developed person can impart his physical energy, his thought-power and his spiritual influence to the others with whom he may come in contact. It is natural; no doubt, that if the one who wishes to impart has not sufficient power to impart he becomes broken if there is a greater demand on his power and if there is little left with him. Sufis, therefore, consider breathing connected with meditation much more important than anything else in the world: their food, sleep, or comfort.

Breath Is Likened to Water

Breath is likened to water. The flowing of the breath is like the flowing of a stream. Inhalation and exhalation show ebb and flow. Parts of the earth which water does not touch remain barren; so the centers in the body, with all their

intuitive, innate capacities, remain unproductive if the breath does not reach them. Besides various diseases, in spite of all their apparent causes, often have one principal cause, and that is the lack of free flow of the breath. Many operations could be avoided and several diseases could be cured by the knowledge of the phenomena of breath.

The Hindu sacred rivers, Ganga and Jumna, are outward symbols of Jelal and Jemal, the two directions of the flow of the breath. And the place where they meet is called *Sangam*, the meeting or unity, which is considered most sacred by the Hindus. That Sangam is the meeting of these two opposite flows. It is like the meeting of the two directions in the center, which is called Kemal by the Sufis.

The water rises, passes, falls, and runs zigzag, and stands if held. So is breath. Every above-said action of breath has a meaning and has a peculiar effect, as even water varies in its power and magnetism while going through the above-said directions. Water is a tonic, and breath is life itself. No tonic can be greater and better than breath. A spiritually evolved person's presence, therefore, brings about a cure in cases where all remedies fail. Water is the necessity of life, and breath the only condition for living. Without it life is impossible. Water falls as a rain from above; so breath is from above also, though from another dimension. Water rises as vapors; so breath rises with gases, also with joys or depressions. Pure water is health-giving, pure breath gives life. Water partakes of all things mixing with it; so does breath.

Breath and Magnetism

The mechanism of the human body shows the nervous system as its principal battery in which magnetism is prepared by the action of breath. It is when the nervous system cannot function that this battery gets out of order and does not work properly. Many in order to make this battery of the nervous system work properly take drugs and other medicines, which stimulate the nervous system. But instead of giving power to it they take away power from it, and in the end the nervous system becomes accustomed to all such medicines one takes.

The nourishment of the nervous system is what breath attracts from the space. As far as science goes, it says one gets into one's system oxygen. The mystic goes further in saying, not only oxygen, but also that life and intelligence, that power and radiance which makes the nervous system in perfect order. The result of which is not only good health but ever-increasing magnetism, which comes forth from the person in his thought, speech, movement and action, charging his atmosphere with magnetism which surrounds him as a fortification and protection against all influences, physical and mental; thus making man live a fuller life.

The Subtle Waves of Breath

Inhaling shows the power of absorption, which is manifest in all living beings and in all objects. Little germs, worms, trees and plants all absorb, and in that way they breathe. Also in all living beings and in all things there is a tendency to put out an element which does not belong to them, in other words an element which their system will not assimilate. It is not only the inhaling and exhaling by the nostrils which accomplishes these two functions, absorption and rejection, but there are minute waves of the breath working in different directions of the body, which perform the above-said two acts in their own way and in their own rhythm of speed; for instance the tendency of stretching and contracting, the tendency of blinking the eyes, of expelling water and refuse from the body. When any of these subtle waves of the breath working in any direction of the body get out of order, then an illness originates in that particular part of the body, spreading its influence gradually to other parts.

Balance in man's life and being is maintained by the evenness of inhaling and exhaling. The compass of man's being is as large as the reaching point of his breath. One lives a fuller life, another does not live a fuller life; because the former breathes fuller, the latter does not breathe fuller. Very often the reason why a child is a dwarf is that his breathing capacity does not allow him to breathe fully; and often the reason why a youth does not develop fully is that he does not breathe properly. A person ages sooner, also, because his breathing is not right. Very often people who have no particular illness feel tired and lifeless, because their breathing is not as it ought to be.

The spirit produces this physical body out of itself; so the body in spite of all the physical nourishment, entirely depends upon the spirit to live. One can live for some time without food and water, but one cannot live without breathing. The reason is that as the physical body is made of the spirit, it needs to breathe spirit in, in order to exist. Breath therefore does not only nourish the physical body but it gives subsistence to all planes of man's existence.

The Mystery of Breath

Breath penetrates, breath permeates, breath strikes, breath absorbs, breath invigorates, and breath heals. It is therefore that souls with great powers make their thought and feeling penetrate into the mind and the hearts of others. As breath creates an atmosphere it permeates the bodies of others, also the sphere, charging the whole atmosphere with its particular magnetism.

The hearts of men are likened to gongs in the temple. Every spoken word strikes them, but by the power of breath one strikes them without a word. It is by the breath that one contracts illnesses, but also one absorbs defects and the depression of others, as well as joy and happiness. The breath of personalities healthy in mind and body is vitalizing. The breath of the spiritual beings, whose love and sympathy goes out to others, is naturally healing.

It is no exaggeration that the whole phenomenon of life has breath as its mystery, and once the knowledge of breath is attained and breath is mastered by practice, one beholds a most wonderful phenomenon within and without. There are many whom remain skeptical till they have fathomed the mystery of breath. Once they know it, they call it, as Hindus have called it for ages, Breath-Life.

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THE SUFI TEACHINGS OF HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Volume XIII The Gathas

PART V

SALUK

(MORALS)

GATHA I

1 The Development of Personality:

Sense of Beauty and Sincerity

Personality is the secret of the whole life, and in the development of personality it is not necessary that the psychic or occult sides should develop first, the beginning of development is natural.

There are two things needful in the development of personality: the sense of beauty and the preservation of sincerity.

The sense of beauty can be defined as the adoption of all that appears beautiful in thought, speech or action. For generally man appreciates all that is beautiful in another person, but he overlooks the lack of beauty in his own thought, speech and action. For instance a person would appreciate the respectful, humble gentle attitude of another towards himself, but he often overlooks his own lack of this attitude towards another.

There are two reasons for this. One reason is that man always looks outward, not inward, and he sees another person before he sees himself. The other reason is that man is selfish by nature; he wants all that is good for himself, and he hardly gives a thought to giving these things to another. Man is ignorant of the fact that life is naturally a re-echo: what one gives he must take back sooner or later, and it is ignorance of this fact that makes man inconsiderate. Therefore to a sensitive person life all around seems nothing but thorns. But he does not expect thorns, he expects roses. That shows that his soul is longing for what is good and beautiful. And man pities himself, but instead of pitying others, he blames them. If he only knew that others are just as much to be pitied as he! But not everyone thinks of the pain and suffering of another. As soon as man in his life begins trying to forget his troubles and think of the troubles of others, he has taken his first step in saintliness.

Rose and thorn are the outcome of the same plant and come from the same root. Saint and sinner both come from one source, God, the Father of the whole humanity. It is only that the beauty, fragrance and color in the root have expressed themselves in the rose, and have not expressed themselves in the thorn. The difference between the plant and the human being is free will. A human being cannot make the excuse, I was born a thorn, how can I become a rose? As a human being has his free will, he is responsible if he is a thorn, and it is to his credit if he is a rose. Man must know that as the color, fragrance and beauty are hidden in the root, so goodness and beauty both spring from the same source. The quality which shone in the life of the Master shines still and will ever shine. What attracts friends is not necessarily power, property, and beauty; what really can attract man is personality.

Now, the other question of personality — sincerity — that is necessary to be considered in the development of personality. There are many people who, in order to behave nicely, polish their manner and speech. But polish is not necessarily effective, or the effective thing in a person. Beauty is that which penetrates through and through; and the greater the beauty, the greater the penetration. What is called manner — which is only manner — is not a deep thing, it is almost a play. Every thought, speech, or action has in it a psychic power which makes an impression on another, and the psychic power comes from the true divine essence in man.

No doubt, in the name of sincerity, people often express their lack of the sense of beauty, saying, "I am a frank

person, I tell the truth and I don't mind how you take it." This shows that sincerity void of the sense of beauty is lack of balance, and beauty void of sincerity is lack of balance also. As music depends upon rhythm and tone, so personality depends on the sense of beauty and sincerity.

2 The Development of Personality:

The Jarring Effect of the Ego of Another

By a keen outlook on life we find that what disturbs us most in life is the ego of another person; it is the ego that has a jarring effect upon life. Those who know the right manner of developing personality know that the first lesson in life is to efface that ego as much as possible. Christ says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That poorness in spirit is the softening of the ego. When the ego is softened in a person then in the thought, speech, and action of that person there is a charm. Sometimes a person, after going through disillusionment, suffering, torture, shows in his personality some charm, and that charm has come from the softening of the ego. But any virtue that develops naturally, forced by life or circumstances, is not a virtue in the same sense as that which has been developed through one's own effort. Every beautiful action, thought or speech is derived from the effacing of self, or ego. For instance, every manner of courtesy comes from holding the reins of the ego. Beauty of speech always depends on the same effacement of the self, and so it is with thought. As soon as the ego expresses itself without control it hurts the ego of another person. The tendency in the lower creatures to fight is caused only by the ego, and man has this tendency no less than they, but rather more. It is this tendency which brings about disturbances in the life of individuals and in the multitude. The family feuds in ancient times, and now wars, all come from the same source, the ego. The idea of self-denial in Christianity, if rightly considered, expressed the idea of effacement rather than that of renunciation. Those whose contact brings us comfort, ease, peace, always have a softened ego. The greater the person the finer the ego. No example can be better than that of Christ washing the feet of his disciples.

What builds man's ego is every kind of gratification of the ego, and what breaks the ego is patience and renunciation. The question whether it would be advisable to so destroy the ego that others might take advantage of a refined person is answered by saying that is not necessary that one should work against the ego, but one must control it. It would not be exaggerated if I said that man's worst enemy is his ego, his own ego. And when it is not under his control man's thought, speech and action are bent towards the gratification of his ego, and the more he satisfies his ego the more his ego desires, and it is never satisfied. Nobody else has such power in life of enslaving a man as his own ego. Man is, in fact, from the divine essence, and being so, he has the right to be king of his own life, which is his own kingdom. By the gratification of the ego man falls from kingship into slavery, and in the end his own life becomes a burden to himself. And in order to gain his own kingdom he must destroy the illusion that in satisfying his ego he shows his power; he satisfies his enemy in satisfying his ego. A Persian poet says, "Each time that I make peace with my enemy he has the opportunity of preparing again for the struggle." The great battle that the Sufis and sages and *yogis* fight is the battle with the ego, but the sage battles with his own ego, the ordinary man with other people's egos. And the difference in the result of these two battles is that the victory and the failure of the ordinary man are momentary, but the victory of the sage is eternal. The former, when they have finished one battle, must begin another, but the latter, once he has succeeded, is victorious. All that the former gains, after all, is not his own, because his kingdom is not his own; all he gains does not belong to him, but the sage is king in his own kingdom.

3 The Development of Personality

What Is the Ego?

"Know thyself and thou wilt know God", said the great Sufi philosopher Ali. To know the self is the most difficult thing in the world, because what man can perceive first is a part only of the self, a limited part. When man asks himself, "What is it in me that is I?" he finds his body and his mind, and in both he finds himself limited and apart from others. And it is this conception of his being that makes man realize himself as an individual. If man dived deep enough within himself he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life. It is that realization which brings man to the real understanding of life, and as long as he has not realized his unlimited self he lives a life of limitation, a life of illusion. When man in this illusion, says "I", in reality it is a false claim. Therefore everyone has a false claim of "I" except some who have arrived at a real understanding of the truth. This false claim is called in Sufic terms *nafs*, and the annihilation of this false self is the aim of the sage. But no doubt to annihilate this false ego is more difficult than anything else in the world, and it is this path of annihilation that is the path of the saints and the sages. One may ask, "Why should one take the trouble to annihilate the ego? Since

life is full of pain and suffering why add to this suffering?" The answer is that even if an operation will cause one suffering, it is better to endure it in order to be cured.

The inborn nature of the ego is intolerance, that is its nature because there are other egos that jar it. It is therefore that when two cocks meet they want to fight. The reason is that the ego of one jars upon the other. Even a silent life, such as that of a rock, can jar upon another ego, for instance that of a bull, who wants to hurl himself upon it and break it with his horns. It is the nature of the ego to exist alone, and it cannot allow another to exist. No doubt the reason is still deeper, it belongs to the deep side of metaphysics, but the moral aspect can be understood.

The finer an ego becomes the less it jars upon others. In the different degrees of evolution of man one sees this gradual development of the ego. There are people who seem to have no thorns; and yet they have a thorn which makes itself felt in the presence of another — it is their ego. Others are like the rose with its softness, beauty and fragrance. No doubt not everyone is a rose, but everyone desires the rose and not the thorn. The best training is to try to turn this thorny ego into a rose. It is very hard. And the finer and the more evolved the ego the harder life becomes for man. The higher and the more refined you are the greater trials you will have to go through in life; the more sensitive you become the more you will have to suffer. The thorn cannot hurt another thorn, but the slightest thing can hurt a rose. It is not surprising if an ego that has become a flower does not wish to live among thorns, but that is its destiny, and in spite of all sufferings it is preferable to be a rose rather than a thorn.

To return to the question why one ego jars another, the answer is that one must understand the nature of the other egos. When one dog barks at another and the other wags his tail, it is to let the other understand him and not fight with him. It is this moral that Christ taught from beginning to end. If you wish to experience fully the beauty of life you must make your ego as fine as possible. This allows the grosser egos to come into contact. It is from that that good and evil have come. It is always from the grosser ego that what we call evil comes, and it is from the finer ego that that comes which we call good.

4 The Training of the Ego:

What the Ego Needs and What It Does Not Need

In order to train the ego it is necessary that one should distinguish what is the right of the ego and what is not its right. The ego has a tendency to want what it needs and also what it does not need. The first is its natural appetite and the second is greed. This is like the nature of the dog, that after eating the flesh off a bone still guards the bone against another dog. Besides this the ego has a tendency to want more and more of what it likes, regardless of right and justice, also regardless of the after-effect. For instance a person may eat and drink more and more until this makes him ill. Every kind of gratification of desires or appetite gives a tendency to want more and more. Then there is the desire for change of experience, and when a person gives in to it, it never ends. Excess of desire in appetites or passions always produces an intoxication in man. It increases to such an extent that the limited means that man has become insufficient to gratify his desires. Therefore, naturally, to satisfy his desires he wants more than what is his own, and he wants what belongs to other people. When this begins, naturally injustice begins. Then he cannot get what he wants, then there is pain and disappointment. When one person gratifies his desires more than other people, the others who see this want to take away the gratification he has. One naturally expects a thinker to understand this and to relieve his ego of all that is unnecessary.

The training of the ego is this, to eat to live and not to live to eat, and so with all things one desires. The nature of desire is such that nothing will satisfy it forever, and sometimes the pleasure of a moment costs more than it is worth. And when one's eyes are closed to this one takes the momentary pleasure regardless of what will come after. The training of the ego is not necessarily a sad life of renunciation, nor is it necessarily the life of a hermit. The training is to be wise in life, and to understand what we desire and why we desire it and what effect will follow, what we can afford and what we cannot afford. It is also to understand desire from the point of view of justice, to know whether it is right and just. If the ego is given way to in the very least in the excess of its desires, it becomes master of one's self. Therefore in training the ego even the slightest thing must be avoided which may in time master us. The ideal life is the life of balance, not necessarily the life of renunciation. Renunciation must not be practiced for the sake of renunciation, but it must be practiced if it is necessary for balance. Verily, balance is the ideal life.

5 The Training of the Ego:

Constant Battle With the Ego

For the person who walks in the path of God the only struggle is a constant battle with the ego. It is the ego which forms the cover on the light of the soul, and the light hidden under the ego is the "Light hidden under a bushel." Man's sense of justice, his logic, his reason, his intelligence, his affection, all is covered by the ego. If he judges anyone it is from the point of view of his own interest, if he reasons his selfish mind produces the result, in his affections he puts self first, his intelligence is darkened by self; and this is the condition of the average man. In proportion as man takes away the covering from the soul, so much more just, truer, more sincere, more loving does he become. Selfishness develops the sense of self-interest, and very often a person may gain earthly prosperity because of it. But as all things in the world are subject to change, death and decay, he remains in the end empty-handed; while the unselfish man, who has perhaps been debarred from earthly good by his lack of self-interest, at least remains possessed of his sense of reason and is rich in the qualities of love, justice, and intelligence.

The whole tragedy of life is in losing sight of one's natural self, and the greatest gain in life is coming into touch with one's real self. The real self is covered by many layers of ego; those which preponderate above all others are hunger and passion, beneath these are pride and vanity. One must learn to discriminate between what is natural and what is unnatural, what is necessary and what is not necessary, what brings happiness and what brings sorrow. No doubt it is difficult for many to discriminate between right and wrong; but by standing face to face with one's ego and recognizing it as someone who is ready to make war against us, and by keeping one's strength of will as an unsheathed sword, one protects oneself from one's greatest enemy, which is one's own ego. And a time comes in life when one can say, "My worst enemy has been within myself."

6 The Training of the Ego:

The Animal Side of Man's Ego

There is a side of man's ego which may be called the animal side; and yet it is worse than an animal side, for there are tame animals which have a tendency to love and to respond to love, and which are harmless. But there is a part of man's nature which may be likened to a thorn, or the horn of a rhinoceros, and this ego takes pleasure in hurting others and gets joy from giving pain. From a scientific point of view this is called mania or disease, but psychologically speaking all that is below the human ideal is a defect in man which he could overcome if he knew how.

Often a man is seen taking pleasure in whipping a horse or a dog, and the same thing may be seen in a more pronounced form when a man gets pleasure from hurting or paining another person. This defect is shown in its mental aspect when a person shows contempt or antipathy to another, even when he shows disrespect where respect or reverence is due. Man gives pain by irony, sarcasm, or harshness of expression; there are looks that wound and many slight changes of manner by which it is possible to hurt another and get joy from it. When this tendency is developed a man is naturally disliked by those around him; some show their dislike outwardly and others do not, and the man resents it only where it is expressed. Man often puts on others the blame for his own fault.

This kind of ego may develop into a monster; and the soul can see this process from within and admits it to itself, though the individual may be too proud to admit it openly. The soul, from within, is often frightened at this monster and dreads the sight of it; and when this monster-ego is so developed that it has created a world of pain and torture the soul finds itself in hell. This is the only hell that exists, either here or in the hereafter, in external conditions. Even after creating the ego man can be happy, if he can break it until it becomes his friend and servant.

7 The Training of the Ego:

Self-Consciousness

There is a tendency in man to think a great deal about what others think of him, and in some natures this tendency develops quickly. This develops in him self-consciousness, which is the root of several defects in man. It enfeebles man physically and mentally, and makes him dependent upon the opinion of others; so to speak, he lives on the good opinion of others, and he is as dead when they have a bad opinion about him.

This tendency makes a person sensitive, often hypersensitive. It often reaches such a point that at every word he speaks he looks around for approval and every movement he makes, in the same way, is calculated to produce an

effect. This makes his body and his mind both heavy and burdensome to his soul. It develops in nature that weakness which, in ordinary words, is called touchiness, taking offense at every little thing. And the nature of many people is such that they enjoy bringing out any weakness that may be in a person. It becomes a pastime or pleasure to such people, and the life of the one who is sensitive is made so difficult that he has no rest at home or abroad. Everyone seems to him to be wicked, everyone's presence seems to have a jarring effect upon him, and he seeks to be exclusive and to find a seclusion which life does not permit of his finding. If he happens to be in a position where he has to speak or sing or perform in any way, he fails to do his best, and when he meets people he cannot stand a criticism or reply to a jest. The presence of others has the effect of a weight upon the soul. The desire of the sensitive person is always to be hiding, keeping away from people, looking at others with nervousness, dislike, or fear. Such a person, however great his virtues or merits, is always incapable of free expression of his gift.

Stiffness in walking, also crookedness, is caused by self-consciousness, and sitting in a rigid position, without any flexibility, is caused by the same thing. Self-consciousness gives hardness to the expression of the lips, and it stiffens the tongue and makes the voice toneless, preventing a man from saying what he wishes to say. Self-consciousness is like a chain upon every feature and limb of the body, and in the self-conscious person there is nothing of the smoothness that should flow like a fluid through every expression of life. Its only remedy is forgetting self and putting the whole mind into work and each occupation undertaken.

8 The Training of the Ego:

Vanity

Man has the desire to do good and to refrain from doing evil because to do so feeds his vanity. Among one thousand good and virtuous people there is scarcely one who does good and refrains from evil because that is his natural inclination. The majority of those engaged in art, science, religion or politics are conscious all the time of the opinion of others and they can only work upon the lines they are following if appreciation comes from some quarter; the least antagonism or opposition discourages them and often kills their desire. Among thousands it is one great soul that can keep firm and strong in his purpose through life, unshaken and unweakened by opposition from any side. It is that person who wins in the end and accomplishes things that are worth while.

In the lives of all the great souls who have accomplished wonderful deeds in life you will surely find this mystery hidden. Those souls have not learned it, it happens to be their nature, and the thinker will see in this a philosophy which teaches that it is the ego that chains man's feet, keeping him from progress in all paths in life. The ego not only makes man self-conscious, but it makes of him a coward and renders him helpless. He is timid because he sees his own limitations and he is helpless because everything stronger overpowers him as he confines his being within a certain limit. Besides all the other disadvantages that self-consciousness brings with it, there is about all else one thing it does, it prevents man from realizing that the thought of self keeps him away from God. In the heart of man there is room for one only, either for himself or for God.

9 The Training of the Ego:

The Three Parts of the Ego

The ego is divided into three parts, the physical ego, the mental ego, and the spiritual ego. The mental ego covers the spiritual ego, and the physical ego is a cover over the mental ego. The ego indeed is one, but these are the three different aspects of the ego.

The physical ego is nourished by the gratification of the bodily appetites. One sees that after a meal or some refreshing drink a sort of feeling of stimulation arises, and no doubt it covers with an additional cover the "I" within. And therefore, there is a difference between sleep and meditation. Although both produce rest, yet one rest is caused by stimulation of the body and the other rest comes without it. There have been cases of meditative people sleeping only two or three hours out of the twenty-four without becoming ill. A person who can sleep well shows the sign of health, and yet is subject to any illness. The gratification of every appetite is a momentary stimulation and rest to the body, but this momentary satisfaction creates a further appetite, and every experience in the satisfaction of the appetites gives a desire for more satisfaction. Thus the ego, the cover over one's mental and spiritual being, becomes thicker and thicker, until it closes all light from within. There are some who eat in order to live, but there are many who live in order to eat. The body is an instrument for the soul to experience the external

world, but if the whole life be devoted to the instrument, then the person for whom the instrument exists is deprived of his experience in life.

The blindness that the physical ego causes can be clearly seen among the lower creatures — how the lion is inclined to fight with another lion, how the dog is inclined to watch the bone off which it has already eaten the flesh, yet it does not want another dog to touch it. This same physical ego gives man pride in his strength, in his beauty, in his power, in his possessions. If there is a spark of light in time it must expand to a shining star, and when there is the slightest darkness, that darkness must expand and put the whole life in a mist. In the intoxication of the physical ego man becomes so interested in the satisfaction of his appetites only that he can readily harm or injure or hurt, not only his enemy, but his dearest friend. As a drunken man does not know what he says or does, so a person blinded with his physical ego is intoxicated and can easily say or do things, regardless of the pleasure, comfort, happiness, harmony or peace of others.

10 The Training of the Ego:

Three Stages Through Which the Ego Develops

There are three different stages through which the ego develops and reaches the ideal state.

The first stage is called *ammara* by Sufis, and in this the ego is satisfied by the satisfaction of the passions and the appetites.

From this animal stage the ego may rise to a higher stage, which is man's ego, and that stage is the gratification of vanity. This ego is termed by the Sufi *lauwama*, and this stage in the beginning causes a person to act in every way that is likely to cause harm and to be hurtful and unjust to others. This continues until he learns to understand the true nature of vanity, since all good as well as all evil is born of vanity. When vanity ceases to cause man to do evil he has reached the human stage, *mutmaina*.

But when vanity causes man to do good the ego becomes humane, using this word in the oriental sense, in which it means more than human, as it is derived from the two words, *hu*, divine, and *manas*, mind.

The first lesson that the ego must learn in order to develop into the humane state is that of pride in the form of self-respect. As man has the inclination to have good clothes and good ornaments in order to appear in the eyes of others as what he considers beautiful, so he must feel the same inclination towards the building of personality by the ornamentation of every action and manner in the way that he considers good and beautiful.

GATHA II

1 The Training of the Ego:

Necessity and Avidity

In the satisfaction of bodily appetites there are two things: necessity and avidity. A satisfaction which is necessary for existence is one thing, and ever-increasing joy in the satisfaction of bodily appetites is another thing. When man acts regardless of this, in either way, in satisfying the appetites or in abstaining from satisfaction, he makes a mistake. In order to train the ego it is not necessary that cruelty be done to nature; discrimination is necessary, to understand how far one should satisfy the appetites and how far one should refrain from being addicted to such satisfactions.

Intense desire for bodily satisfaction has a bad influence on one's mentality, which acts, psychically, unfavorably on oneself and one's surroundings. It produces jealousy, envy, and greed in the nature, and if the thought-currents are strong, it produces psychically poisonous effects. There is a belief in the East which is known by the name *nazr*, a belief that any food or drink can have a poisonous effect upon the one who eats or drinks it if it has been exposed to an evil eye. This superstition is known in almost all parts of the East in some form or other, and the psychical idea behind it is that the intense feeling of envy produces a thought-current which must surely spread its poison, which causes harm to the one against whom the feeling works.

When we consider the whole unrest of the present time in the world, we find that it is caused by the physical ego. The wars and revolutions seem to have the desire for comfort and pleasure and for more earthly gain behind them. And, since the happiness of the world depends upon the moral standard of the majority, it is upon the education of the human being in the psychic law of happiness that the peace of the world depends.

2 The Training of the Ego:

Training by Abstinence

There is no better way of training the ego than denying it what it wants for the satisfaction of its vanity. It is painful sometimes, and it often seems hard, to deny the ego all it demands, but it always results in great satisfaction. Spirituality may be called a capacity; plainly explained, it may be called a depth. In some people naturally there is this capacity, this depth; and in some it may be made. In order to collect the rainwater people dig the ground and make a capacity for the water to collect. So in order to receive the spiritual life and light, one must open oneself a capacity. The egoistic has no capacity, for it is his ego which makes the heart, so to speak, solid, giving no accommodation to the essence of God. The more one denies the demands of the ego, which satisfy its vanity, the more capacity one makes to be filled by the life of God.

When the will is able to rule one's life, and not one's bodily appetites and mental fancies, then there is the reign of the Golden Age, as the Hindus say; there is no injustice and there is no reward. When man finds disturbance in his life, a lack of harmony in the external life, he must take refuge under the reign within, which is the kingdom of God. To a Sufi this body is the Temple of God and the heart His shrine; and as long as man keeps God away from His temple, from His shrine, his limited ego reigns, and that reign is called Iron Age by the Hindus. A person who has not opened his heart to God to abide in may yet be a good person, but as his life will be involved in the activities of the world, his ego will turn from bad to worse, culminating into the worst state of mind, and it is that condition of mind which is personified in the religious term "Satan."

In order to learn to realize "I am not, but God is", one must first deny oneself for his fellow men. Respecting another, enduring a person or an action which is uncongenial to oneself, tolerating all, overlooking the faults of others, covering the weaknesses that one finds in one's fellow men, willing to forgive, all these things are the first lessons in self-denial.

3 The Training of the Ego:

The Two Sides of the Human Ego

The human ego has two sides to its nature; one side is to strive for its nature's demands, and that side of the ego may be classed as the animal ego; but there is another side which manifests when the ego shows its agitations for no other reason than intolerance. This feeling is a kind of blindness, or intoxication, and it arises from an excess of energy coming out from the soul quite unrestrained; it covers, so to speak, the light of the soul as the smoke may cover the light that comes from a flame. In order to allow the Divine spirit to guide one's life one must clear the soul of its smoke part, leaving there only the flame to illuminate one's life. It is the nature of the ego during its period of ignorance that all that is very beautiful or powerful and all that is below the standard of its ideal agitates it. This sensitiveness may increase to such an extent that all that does not bring any comfort or joy or happiness to the ego may become repugnant to it. It is this ignorant stage of the ego which in the Sanskrit language is called by the wise *ahankar*, and the whole method that the wise have taught in any age and in any part of the world has been for recognizing and understanding this ignorance which is the primary nature of the ego, and then for purifying one's ego from this, by gentleness, humility, by self-control, by tolerance and by forgiveness.

Man can dissimulate this ignorance, but that is not enough; often, outward manner may become a mask over something ugly hidden behind. There is only one thing that can free the ego from this ignorance and that is the love of God, the contemplation of God and the knowledge of God. Love of God comes from belief in God. Belief is the first thing necessary, but belief needs support. It can be kept up by the belief of others around one or by learning or study which will strengthen it. But he to whom the love of humanity is unknown can never know the love of God; as you can see the painter in his picture, the poet in his poem, the musician in his music, so in humanity you can see God.

4 The Training of the Ego:

Training Is As Well a Science As an Art

It is a science and an art to understand the nature of the human ego and to train it. One can understand the nature of the human ego by a study of human nature; but one can learn the way of training it by training one's own ego. Man can train his ego by being patient with all around him that has a jarring effect upon him. For every jar upon the soul irritates the ego. When man expresses his irritation he develops a disagreeable nature; when he controls it and does not express it, then he becomes crushed inwardly. The idea is to rise above all such irritations.

Life has a jarring effect by its very nature which every sensitive soul can feel. If a person wishes to keep away from all jarring influences, he had better not try to live, for life is a constant jarring. Life is motion, and it is the nature of motion to strike against something. It does not require strength to stand against the jarring influences of life — there is no wall of stone or of iron that can always stand against the waves of the ocean — but a small piece of wood, little and light, can always rise and fall with the waves, yet always above them, uninjured and safe. The lighter and the littler man's ego becomes, the more power of endurance he has. It is two strong egos that strike against one another. The little ego, the light ego, just slips over when a powerful wave of a strong ego comes for it to knock over itself against a stronger wall that may throw it over.

The art of dealing with egos of different grades of evolution is to learn gentleness, tolerance, and forgiveness, which all come from charity of heart. When man stands on the same plane as the other, then he is subject to the influence of the other ego. But if he rises above it, then every effort of the other ego falls flat. There is a poem in Hindustani, the verse of Ghalib: "the world seems to me a playground of children. How constantly busy the infants seem with their toys!"

Verily the secret of peace is hidden under the cover of the ego.

5 The Training of the Ego:

Training by Refraining from Free Impulses

The wise, knowing the nature of the ego is to rise and to move and to disturb the atmosphere, practice in their lives to restrain the ego from its free impulses. The tendency of the ego to rise shows itself in the desire of standing when others are sitting, and running when others are walking, and dancing when others are standing. In the mental plane, the desire to be proud, the desire to be vain, to show conceit, to show one's superiority over others, all come from the ego. The wise, therefore, by learning the lesson of humility, of gentleness, and of mildness, make their spirit, as it is called in the Bible, "poor" — "Blessed are the poor in spirit." These manners are sometimes taught, but if one does not feel them within oneself they become forms and conventions without spirit or life or effect in them. It is only love which can teach these manners that keep the ego under control. If one does not learn them from love, then one learns them from suffering. Pain naturally crushes the ego, and if one has had much pain in one's life it has a softening influence on the ego. Wisdom is a great teacher, it shows man what he is when he lets the ego be free and uncontrolled and what one gains by control of the ego. Imagine a rider sitting on a horse without reins in his hand, letting the horse go free wherever it likes. He risks his life at every moment. The happiness is his who rides on the horse and controls it and has the reins in his hand, and he is the master of his journey.

6 The Training of the Ego:

The Ego Is Trained As a Horse

The ego is trained by a Sufi as a horse is trained by man. A bridle is put upon it and man holds the reins in his hand. This training is called by the Hindus *hatha yoga*, which means to gain the control of one's self by means of abstinence. Often, when man does wrong, it is not that he likes to do wrong, but that he is not able to prevent himself from acting in that way. In the first place wrongdoing is almost always the consequence of the appetites and passions, or for the gratification of vanity. Fasting and special postures are often practiced by the mystics for the same reason. The more man gives way to the appetites and passions the more he is enslaved by them, until he reaches a state where he speaks and acts against his own conscience. Such faults as treachery, flattery, falseness, and all others of the kind come from lack of willpower and from giving way to the passions.

For training the ego it is not absolutely necessary to abstain from all physical desires; the idea is to master the desire instead of allowing it to master one. The complaint of every soul and the remorse of every soul is always of

the same thing, the enslavement of man through yielding to his desires. One allows the desire to master one when one identifies oneself with the desire; and one pities oneself, which makes things worse. And the desire for the momentary joy becomes an excuse for having given way. For instance, a person who gets up late makes the cold an excuse; he had to, he says, because it was cold. Reason always supplies an excuse for everything. But one cannot escape the consequences, and the remorse that follows proves that a fault has been committed. And once a person has accustomed himself to his faults, the sense of his fault becomes less keen; then he no longer troubles about them. Then he becomes a slave to his faults, he is like a worm, and his faults become his life. That is why in the language of the Hindus the word for hell means a place full of worms. In other words, he feeds on his faults and his faults find their nourishment in him. To a keen sight such cases are not rare. There are some cases that everyone can see, others are hidden.

Those who know its value consider the training of the ego the most important thing in life. The first lesson in this training is to ask, "Why must I have a certain thing? Why must I not have it? If it is not good for me why should I have it? And if it is good for me why should I not have it?" When a person has acquired the habit of speaking with his ego in this way about every physical appetite, he will always be able to do what he ought to do.

7 The Training of the Ego:

Training by Not Gratifying Vanity

The first form of the ego is that which the body helps to form and the next is that which is formed by the mind. This aspect of the ego lives for vanity, which causes a person to do good and also to do evil. Its desire is always the satisfaction of its pride, and when this increases, in the end it results in tyranny and cruelty. A person expects others to see him as he thinks he is, and often his self-esteem is excessive and it is impossible for others to admire him as much as he wants. One wishes to be admired for his clothes, his jewels, his possessions, his greatness and position, and naturally when this desire increases it makes a person blind and he loses sight of right and justice. It is natural that the desire for things that gratify vanity should have no end; it increases continually. The tendency to look at others with hatred and prejudice, to consider them inferior to oneself, and all such tendencies come from this ego. There are even cases when people spend money in order to be able to insult another. To make someone bow before him, to make him give way, to put him in a position of inferiority, to make him appear contemptible, sometimes a person will spend money. The desire for the satisfaction of vanity reaches such a point, that a person would give his life for the satisfaction of his vanity. Often someone shows generosity, not for the sake of kindness, but to satisfy his vanity. The more vanity a person has the less sympathy he has for others, for all his attention is given to his own satisfaction, and he is as blind toward others. This ego, so to speak, restricts life, because it limits a person. Coldness, pride, jealousy, all come from this ego. There is nothing so displeasing to the surroundings as conceit in whatever form, and what is the use of an opinion that is pleasing to us and displeasing to all our surroundings? In reality a person's true satisfaction comes from the opinion that others have of him, not from his own opinion of himself. There is nothing more repellent than a thorny ego. The outward manner cannot hide an ego that is not soft, even if the manner is very humble. It shows itself suddenly, unconsciously, in a word or an action that jars upon another.

The training of this ego requires more care than the training of the other ego, for it is more difficult and a subtler matter to be aware of the desires of the mind and to weigh them than to be aware of and to weigh the desires of the body. No doubt vanity is natural to the ego and the ego is natural to every human being. But there are desires of the mind that are necessary and there are desires of the mind that are not necessary. And the more one controls the ego the more one allows the virtues and merits that are in one's heart to manifest. This ego gives a false idea of greatness, but the effacement of this ego results in the true greatness.

8 The Training of the Ego:

Humility

Humility is the principal thing that must be learnt in the path of training the ego. It is the constant effort of effacing the ego that prepares man for the greater journey. This principle of humility can be practiced by forgetting one's personality in every thought and action and in every dealing with another. No doubt it is difficult and may not seem very practicable in everyday life, though in the end it will prove to be the successful way, not only in one's spiritual life, but in one's everyday affairs. The general tendency is to bring one's personality forward, which builds a wall between two souls whose destiny and happiness lies in unity. In business, in profession, in all aspects

of life it is necessary that one should unite with the other in this unity, in which the purpose of life is fulfilled.

There are two forms of effacing the self, which in other words may be called giving in. One way is by weakness, the other is by willingness, the former being a defect, the latter a virtue. One comes by lack of will, the other by charity of the heart. Therefore in training the ego one must take care that one is not developing a weakness, presuming it to be a virtue. The best way of dealing with the question is to let life take its natural course, and at the same time to allow the conscience to keep before it the highest ideal. On one side life taking its natural course, on the other side the conscience holding its highest ideal, balancing it, will make the journey easy. The words of Christ, which teach man to walk with another two miles if the other wanted him to walk one, prove the great importance of harmony in life. And his words, "Resist not evil", show still more the importance of harmony in life, namely that if you can avoid evil, in other words keep it away, that is better than to want to fight it. And the idea of Christ's teaching of giving in is also expressive of harmonizing with the wishes of another person. No doubt in this discrimination is necessary. That harmony is advisable which develops into harmony and culminates in a greater harmony, not that which may seem in the beginning to be harmony and would result in greater in harmony. In training the ego balance must be taken as the most important principle.

9 The Training of the Ego:

Forgiveness

In order to learn forgiveness man must learn tolerance first. And there are people whom man cannot forgive. It is not that he must not forgive, but it is difficult, beyond his power to forgive, and in that case the first thing he can do is to forget. The first step towards forgiveness is to forget. It is true that the finer the man is the more he is subject to be hurt by the smallest disturbance that can produce irritation and inharmony in the atmosphere. A person who gives and takes hurts is capable of living an easy and comfortable life in the world. Life is difficult for the fine person, for he cannot give back what he receives in the way of hurt, and he can feel it more than the average person. Many seek protection from all hurting influences by building some wall around themselves. But the canopy over the earth is so high that a wall cannot be built high enough, and the only thing one can do is to live in the midst of all inharmonious influences, to strengthen his willpower and to bear all things, yet keeping the fineness of character and a nobleness of manner together with an ever-living heart. To become cold with the coldness of the world is weakness, and to become broken by the hardness of the world is feebleness, but to live in the world and yet to keep above the world is like walking on the water. There are two essential duties for the man of wisdom and love; that is to keep the love in our nature ever increasing and expanding and to strengthen the will so that the heart may not be easily broken. Balance is ideal in life; man must be fine and yet strong, man must be loving and yet powerful.

10 The Training of the Ego:

"Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit"

Jesus Christ says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Why is not the word "ego" used instead of "spirit"? Man's glance, expression, posture, etc., all speak of his ego, and tell to what extent it is hard and to what extent soft. People seek to disguise the true nature of the ego by diplomatic language and by good manners, but this does not really hide the ego, which is expressing itself in everything they say and do. Every particle of man's body and every atom of man's mind is controlled by this ego. If there is anything that is meant by the word "spirit", as used above, it is this. The least word spoken against it rouses man's anger; praise tickles his vanity and goes to the heart of the ego.

And now the question arises: "If this ego is the chief thing in man's development, why should we fight against it?" "Is it not the essence of man?" the answer is that there is the spirit of man and the spirit of God. These two are different and yet the same. Think of the sea and of the bubble, how vast the one, how small the other! How dare man claim that he is God! Only the emptiness in which the echo is noise is found in a heart that can claim such greatness as that. The true emptiness is filled by the divine light, and such a heart it is which in humility is turned to nothingness, so that that light shines out. Man's ego is a globe, and the spirit of God is the light. "Poor" is said in the sense of thin; and when the ego is poor, or thin, the spirit of God shines out. "Rich in spirit" would mean thick, or dense, in the ego-nature, which would stand as a wall against the diving light hidden in the heart.

GATHA III

1 The Manner of Friendliness

The manner of friendliness is considered as the main part in the study of Sufism, for the Sufi in all ages has given great importance to the art of personality. As Sufism is the religious philosophy of love, harmony and beauty, it is most necessary for a Sufi to express the same through his personality. No doubt in the East, manner is given great prominence in life. The courts in the East were schools of good manners, though a great deal of artificiality was combined with it, but in the path of Sufism the same manners which are used at court were learned with sincerity. According to the Sufi idea all beauty comes from God, so a beautiful manner is a divine expression. In these modern times people seem to be against manners because of their agitation against aristocracy, as there are many who are against religion because they are cross with the priests. When man agitates against beauty he cannot be on the right path, and the movement of today against all beauty that exists in the form of culture and manner is a battle with civilization.

The Sufi calls the manner that comes from the knowledge of unity, from the realization of truth, from the love of God, *akhlak Allah*, meaning the manner of God; in other words, God expressed in man shows in the action of that man the manner of God.

The following are the different aspects of the manner known by the Sufis as *Ilmi Adab*:

adab = respect

khathir = consideration

tawazeh = hospitality, or welcome

enkessar = humility, or selflessness

khulk = graciousness

matanat = seriousness

halim = tenderness of feeling

salim = harmoniousness

wafah = fidelity, loyalty, constancy

dilazari = sympathy

kotah kalam = moderation in speech

kam sukhun = sparing of words

motubah = self-respect, keeping one's word, proving trustworthy in dealings.

buzurgi = venerability

gheirat = honor, or pride

haya = modesty

Also bravery; experience; generosity; forgiveness; large-mindedness; tolerance; to take the side of the weak; to hide the faults of others, as one would one's own, out of sympathy and respect for another.

2 The Manner of Friendliness: Adab (Respect) (1)

There is no one in the world who does not deserve some respect, and he who respects another, by doing so respects himself, for respect creates respect, disrespect re-echoes in disrespect. The greatest education that can be given to a child is that of respect, not only for his friends, parents and relatives, but also for the servants in the house. Once the Prophet, hearing his grandson call a slave by his name, told him, "Call him uncle, for he is advanced in years." If one wishes to respect someone, one can surely find something to respect in him, and if there were nothing at all to be found, then the very fact that he is a human being quite entitles him to respect.

One form of respect is to consider another person better than oneself; even if one did not think him so. Another form of respect is to regard another person as better than oneself, by reason of humility, or out of graciousness. No person is respected who has no respect for another. There is another form of respect, which is to recognize another person's superiority in age, experience, learning, goodness, birth, rank, position, personality, morality, or spirituality. And if one was mistaken in recognizing another person's superiority it is no loss, for respect given to man in reality is respect given to God. He who deserves respect is entitled to it, but when one does not deserve it and yet you respect him it shows your graciousness. To a fine person it is a great disappointment to lose the opportunity of paying respect when there was an occasion; an unrefined person does not mind. There are many

who, out of cleverness, cover their disrespectful attitude in an ironic form of speech and make sarcastic but polite remarks, in order to insult someone. In that way, seemingly they have not shown any disrespect and yet they have satisfied their desire of being disrespectful. In some people there is a spirit of injury, which is fed by hurting another with a disrespectful attitude shown in thought, word or action. If man only knew that, in life, what he gives he receives, only sometimes the return does not come immediately, it takes time.

He is really respectful who gives respect, but he who looks for respect from another is greedy, he will always be disappointed. Even to give respect in order to get respect in return is a kind of business. Those who reach a spiritual realization will only give respect generously, without thinking for one moment of getting it in return. When one sincerely gives respect to anyone, not for show but from the feeling of one's heart, a happiness rises from it, which is the product only of the respectful attitude and which nothing else can give. There are many to whom one is indebted for their help, kindness, protection, support, for their service or assistance, and there is nothing material in the world, neither gold or silver, which can express the gratitude so fully as a real respect can. Remember, therefore, that for something that you cannot pay back in silver or gold you can only make return in one way, and that is by humbly offering respect.

3 The Manner of Friendliness: *Adab* (Respect) (2)

A respectful attitude is the first and principal thing in the development of personality, not only respect toward someone whom one considers superior but respect for everyone one meets in life, in proportion to what is due to him. It is through conceit that man gives less honor where more respect than what is due. Respecting someone does not only require a desire to respect but an art of respecting. One ignorant of this art may express respect wrongly. It is self-respect which makes one inclined to respect another. The one who has no respect for himself cares little if he respects another or if respect is at all necessary in life. To respect means to honor. It is not only bowing and bending, or external action, which expresses respect. A disrespectful person may bow his head before another and stride him on the face by his word. True respect is from the attitude which comes from the sincere feeling of respect. The outward expression of respect has no value without inner feeling. Inspired by a respectful attitude, man expresses his feeling in thought, speech, or action, which is the true expression of respect. A sincere feeling of respect needs no words, even the silence can speak of one's respectful attitude.

There are three different expressions of respect. One is that when the position or rank of a person commands one to respect, whether one is willing or unwilling, and under the situation one cannot help having respect, which is nothing but an outer expression of respect. The second expression of respect is when a person wishes to please another by his respectful manner, to let him feel how respectful he is and what a good manner he has. By this expression one has two objects in view: one, to please another, and the other to please oneself by one's way of pleasing. The third way is the true feeling of respect which rises from one's heart, and if one tried to express it one could not express it enough. If one were not able to express it fully it can always be felt, because it is a living spirit of respect.

The mark of people having tradition behind them, by birth, nation or race, shows in their respectful tendency. To them, disrespect either on their part or on the part of another means absence of beauty. Life has many beautiful things – flowers, jewels, beauty of nature, of form, of line, of color – but beauty of manner excels all, and all good manner is rooted in a respectful tendency. It is a great pity that this subject is not regarded as the most important one to be considered and to be developed — especially today, when the stream of the whole world is running in the direction of commercialism, which tends to the beauty of matter in gold and silver instead of beauty of character and personality.

4 Respect

The highest expression of love is respect. Respect is not only due to one's superior or elder, but even to a child; one should only know to what extent it should be given and in what form it should be expressed. In loving one's mate, one's friend or relative, one's parents, one's teacher, one's priest, the best expression of love that can be shown is a sincere respectful attitude. No love offering can be more precious than a word or an act of respect.

Very often conflicts between religions have arisen because people who respected their own religion looked with contempt at the religion of another. If one did not respect one's friend's religion, one could at least respect one's friend, and out of respect for the friend, regard his religion respectfully. Very often, with all love and devotion and sincerity, friendship breaks only owing to disregard on the part of the one or the other of the law of respect.

What is worship? Worship is not dancing before God, worship is an act of respect offered to God, to Whom all respect is due. The man who worships God and disrespects man worships in vain, his piety is his mania. A true worshipper of God sees His presence in all forms, and thus in respecting others he respects God. It may even develop to such an extent that the true worshipper of God, the Omnipresent, walks gently on the earth, bowing in his heart even to every tree and plant, and it is then that the worshipper forms a communion with the Divine. Beloved at all times, when he is awake and when he is asleep.

5 The Manner of Friendliness

***Khatir* (Consideration)**

Khatir means consideration for someone, which is shown in the form of respect, help or service. Very often it wants a sacrifice, it may even need self-denial. However, consideration is the highest quality that can be found in human nature. Consideration of age, of experience, of knowledge, of position, consideration of some good done by a person, also consideration of somebody's feebleness, weakness, it is all included in the word *khatir*. This spirit of consideration, when developed, extends not only to the person for whom one has consideration, but also, for that person's sake, to another who is related or connected with that person in some way or other. When a king is respected and not his ambassador, that means lack of consideration to the king.

For a Sufi this quality becomes his moral. The Sufi learns consideration beginning with his *murshid*, but this culminated in consideration for God. When one arrives at that tenderness of feeling one considers every person in the world. To the Sufi the missing of an opportunity of considering another is a great disappointment, for he does not consider it to be a fault toward a human being but to God. Verily, he is pious, who considers human feeling. No doubt it needs no end of endurance to consider everybody and to be considerate always, it wants no end of patience. However, by being considerate nothing is lost, if seemingly nothing is gained. The reward of this virtue is always in store. Consideration is the sign of the wise.

6 Tawazeh (Sharing with Others)

Tawazeh in Sufic terms means something more than hospitality. It is laying before one's friend willingly what one has, in other words sharing with one's friend all the good one has in life, and with it, enjoying life better. When this tendency to *tawazeh* is developed, things that give one joy and pleasure become more enjoyable by sharing with another. This tendency comes from the aristocracy of the heart. It is generosity and even more than generosity. For the limit of generosity is to see another pleased in his pleasure, but to share one's own pleasure with another is greater than generosity. It is a quality which is foreign to a selfish person, and the one who shows this quality is on the path of saintliness.

Tawazeh does not cost; it is the attitude of mind. If by nature man is not hospitable the hospitality he gives is of no use. The one who has experienced the joy of this quality feels a greater satisfaction in sharing his only piece of bread than in eating it by himself. Duality in nature keeps all such beautiful qualities of the soul away from man. The thought of unity is productive of all good qualities in man. It is not only in giving or sharing pleasures that one shows hospitality to another; even in word, manner or action one can show this feeling. A desire to welcome someone, to greet someone, to respect someone, to offer a seat to someone, to treat someone with courtesy, to see someone off with respect, all these show the sign of *tawazeh*.

7 Haya (Modesty)

Haya is the finest feeling in human nature, which is called modesty. Modesty is not necessarily meekness, or humility, or selflessness, or pride. Modesty is a beauty in itself, and its action is to veil itself; in that veiling it shows the vanity of its nature, and yet that vanity is a beauty itself. Modesty is the life of the artist, the theme of the poet, and the soul of the musician. In thought, speech, action, in one's manner, in one's movement, modesty stands as the central theme of grace. Without modesty beauty is dead, for modesty is the spirit of beauty. Silence in modesty speaks louder than bold words. The lack of modesty can destroy art, poetry, music, and all that is beautiful.

And if one asked, "what is modesty," it is difficult to explain in words. It is a feeling which rises from a living heart; a heart which is dead has not got the taste of it. The modest person compared to the immodest one is like a plant standing by the side of a rock. If the heart of the immodest is like the earth the heart of the modest one is like

a plant standing by the side of a rock. If the heart of the immodest is like the earth, the heart of the modest one is like the water. Modesty is life itself; a life which is conscious of its beauty yet inclined to veil it in all its forms is modesty. At the same time modesty is the proof of sincerity and of prudence. The immodest man cries aloud, "I am the light" and is finished in a moment. The diamond, shining in its light constantly, never says a word about its light.

8 Modesty

Modesty is not necessarily timidity or cowardice. The bravest can be modest, and it is modesty which completes bravery. Modesty is the veil over the face of the great; for the most modest is God Himself, Who is not seen by anyone except those intimate with Him. Beauty is all its forms and colors, in all its phases and spheres, doubles itself, enriches itself by modesty. Modesty is not something that is learnt. It is in nature, for it is natural. Modesty does not only cover what is beautiful but amplifies the beauty and covers all that is void of beauty, in this manner fitting it into all that which is beautiful. A noble heart can even rise to such a degree of modesty that he would plead for another person's fault, trying to make out of it no fault, even knowing that it is a fault.

Yes, a modest person very often will not raise his voice, out of dignity; or say things, out of consideration and respect; will not argue and pull his own way when dealing with someone who has no thought of modesty. In this case he may often lose his battle. However, one cannot hope always to ascend and descend at the same time. One should ascend, sacrificing all that those who descend will get, or else one must descend, sacrificing all that those who ascend will achieve. Life always demands sacrifices. In every walk of life there is a battle to be fought; and in that case the one who loves to ascend may just as well ascend rather than wanting to descend. The Prophet has said, "*Al haya wal iman*." "Verily, modesty is a great piety."

9 Gheirat (Honour)

Gheirat, protection, or defense of honor, is considered by the wise a great quality, a chivalry which is found as a rule in rare souls. Man regardless of this sense is no better than a domestic animal, a dog or a cat. When their master does not want them he can scold them, drive them away, and they can come again, wagging their tails, for there is no sense of pride to be hurt in them. They only feel the discomfort of having to move from a comfortable place and they could also feel their master's displeasure, but there is no soreness about it. In man the sense of honor is developed; with his evolution it develops more. It is not only necessary that man should be humble, but it is also necessary that man must be proud. Pride is the sign of evolution, honor comes out of pride. If there were no pride nor honor, virtue would not exist.

Very often people confuse *gheirat*, this sense of honor, with conceit, sometimes with jealousy; but even the spirit of jealousy, which stands to defend one's honor, can be no other than virtue. People call it conceit, but they do not know the meaning of honor, that in the sense of honor there is a divine spark hidden; for it is the perfection of honor which is the logos, the ego, whom the Sufis call *kibria*.

No doubt when this sense of honor is developed without wisdom a person might become foolishly sensitive, and not only defend his honor but die for nothing, in illusion, just as the story of Othello suggests. For a man whose sense is developed in *gheirat*, his honor is not only in his person, but in his friend, in his beloved, in his mother, sister, or wife, in someone whom he respects, or whom he loves, or with whom he connects himself. This sense of *gheirat* has its lights and shades in dealing with friends, in give and take, and very often people prefer death to dishonor, and from a finer point of view they have reason on their side. Those who are trying to their surroundings in life, who are a burden to their relatives, a trouble to their friends, an annoyance to their acquaintances, a disgust to strangers, are the ones who are lacking in this sense. This shows that the sense of *gheirat* when developed makes one's life more harmonious, for an honorable man minds his own business and keeps himself out of the way, troubles others less, even if he has to suffer more trouble for it.

There is a story which tells that four persons were arrested for the same crime and were taken before a wise king to be judges. He saw the first person and said, "Hang him." He saw the next person and sentenced him for the whole life. He saw the third person and said, "he must be sent out of the country." He saw the fourth person and said, "I could never have expected you to do such a crime." The first three underwent their punishments, but this last one went home and the next morning he was found dead; that one word of the king was worse than death to him.

Gheirat is a sign of noble birth, whatever condition man may be in. He may be in rags, yet this spirit of *gheirat*

will shine out through all conditions, proving him to be noble. Humility has its place, pride has its place in life. In the place of pride, humility cannot be fitted. Once the *nizam* of Hyderabad was walking in the country, and a knight happened to see a thorn stuck in his shoe. He rushed, before the attendant had seen it, and took out that thorn from the king's shoe. The king looked back and said, "Were there no attendants present? It was for them, not for you," said the king, "and since you have taken this work, you can no longer continue to be my knight. Please retire." It is the sense of honor expected by his surroundings that makes a king a true king.

For a Sufi the sense of honor is not for his personality, he does not give his person a greater place than dust and the central theme of his life is simplicity and his moral is humility. Yet remember that the Sufi breathes the breath of God, so he is conscious of the honor of God. His pride is greater, therefore, than the pride of every man. It is in the intoxication of this pride that he proves to be God-conscious.

10 Enkessar (Selflessness)

Enkessar, in the terms of the Sufis, means selflessness. The psychology of human nature is such that man feels inclined to hit every head that is raised. Not only man, but all living creatures have that tendency. To protect themselves from that, many intelligent creatures in the lower creation make holes in the earth, to live there, hiding themselves from the beats and birds of prey. No sooner do they raise their heads from their holes than they are caught by their enemies, who thirst for their blood. As humankind is evolved, man does not immediately hit the raised head, but he cannot keep from being agitated at the sight of it.

Understanding this mystery of human nature and studying the secret of the whole life, the Sufi has traced that spirit in its essence, belonging to the source of all things. He calls that spirit *kabir*, or *kibria*, the ego, or egoistic. It has taught the Sufi a moral, that not only man but even god is displeased by self-assertion. And the manner that he adopts in order not to arouse that agitating spirit he calls *enkessar*, meaning selflessness.

In theory it is a small thing, in practice it is a great art. It is an art which wants a great deal of study of human nature, it requires careful observation and constant practice. This art teaches to take precautions before every activity in speech or in actions so as to cause least disturbance to human feeling. It is the thorough study of human susceptibility and practice of delicate manner which teaches man *enkessar*. The further he progresses the more his sense becomes keen; therefore he finds more and more mistakes in his own life as he goes forward in this path. This subject is so delicate that one does not only commit a fault by showing pride or conceit but even in expressing modesty or humility. *Enkessar* wants a great delicacy of sense. One must be able to see the lights and shade produced by every action and word one does or says. And once a person has mastered this art he has mastered the same art which Christ promised to the fishermen, saying "Come hither, I will make you fishers of men."

The Sufi gives more importance to this subject than a *yogi*, for the way of the *yogi* is asceticism, the way of the Sufi is the development of humanity in nature. But according to the prophetic point of view the only way of pleasing God is *enkessar*, which is greater than so-called goodness. A good person proud of his goodness turns his pearls into pebbles. A bad person, full of remorse for his faults, may turn his pebbles into jewels. Selflessness is not only pleasing to man but it is pleasing to God. There is not one moment in life when God is unaware of man's word or action; and beyond his word or action god is aware of man's attitude, which very often man hides in his words or actions. Nothing is hidden before God, Who is a perfect Judge and Forgiver, and upon Whose pleasure or displeasure depends the happiness or unhappiness of man's life. Therefore man has not only the task of considering the pleasure or displeasure of his fellowman, but also a duty to God, of considering what is pleasant to God and what is unpleasant. To Him to Whom all the beauty and riches, glory and greatness belong, man can make no offering which is worth anything, except one thing and that is selflessness.

Life may be pictured as a building in which there are several doors that one has to go through and every door is smaller than one's size. And as man's natural inclination is to rise straight, at every attempt he makes to rise, his head is knocked against the frame of the door. And the only thing that can save him from knocking his head against the doors is to bend. It is this logical lesson which the wise turn into a good manner. Verily, all that leads to happiness is good.

TAQWA TAHARAT

Everyday Life

GATHA I

Everyday Life

It is a very necessary thing in the life of an adept for him to adapt his mind and body to the spiritual life, in other words, it is necessary for a man to become his natural self before he begins his journey in a spiritual path. It is this naturalness which is called by the orthodox purity. For pure water, or pure milk, means water or milk in its own essence; when another element is mixed with it then its purity is lost. To become spiritual means to purify one's spirit from the foreign elements which take away the natural feeling of the spirit. Concentration, meditation, all these help to make the spirit its natural self again, but the vehicles that the spirit uses in order to experience life must help the spirit to become natural. These vehicles are the mind and the body. However great the musician, if the instrument is out of tune he can do nothing with it. To say that only the spirit matters and the body does not count is not right. Therefore it is necessary that first both mind and body be fit vehicles for the spirit to use.

The difference between a pious person and a spiritual person is this, that the pious person makes his mind and body ready for his own spirit to use, and the spiritual person, after making them ready, gives them to God. Piety is the first step and spirituality the next. There is no exaggeration in the saying that cleanliness is next to godliness. The body must be considered as the temple of God, and this sacred house of God is reflected in it.

Beasts and birds all have a tendency to be clean and pure, and for man it is necessary that he should develop this tendency. It helps, not only on the spiritual path, but also in the development of mind. To the artist in his art, to the scientist in his science, in all aspects of life it gives happiness. When man neglects it, that does not mean that he does not like it, it is only out of negligence that he overlooks things that are of the first importance. One's body is of all things in the world the closest to oneself, and its influence has a great effect, and an immediate effect, upon one's mind and soul. A great many illnesses are caused by the lack of consideration of the necessary cleanliness of the body, which is a science and an art in itself. On the soul and mind one's own body makes the first impression, all other things come afterwards. Yes, there are souls who have arrived at such a plane of spirituality that the condition of the body does not matter to them. But they are not to be followed as examples. It is the normal path which is safe and is for all. The question, "Would this not give one too much the thought of self?" may be answered thus: the thought of oneself exists when the light of God is absent; in the presence of every beautiful thing man forgets himself.

The Instrument of Our Body

The body is an instrument for experiencing life; both the worlds, that within and without, are reflected in this instrument. Therefore purity of the body is the first essential thing, and the most essential, in the path of spiritual attainment. Every civilization has a peculiar method of cleanliness. But the mystic is not satisfied with the customary manner.

Mystics have two views: one view is that external cleanliness matters nothing to them, and the other is that it is most important. As the work of an astronomer depends upon a telescope, and as it is necessary for him to keep the telescope as clean as possible, so it is necessary in the life of the mystic to keep the body in a fit condition.

All the passages in the body are connected with the centers, which are most important in spiritual development, and it is upon the cleanliness and purity of these passages that spiritual development depends. Besides these nine passages it is also necessary to keep the skin in a proper condition for spiritual purposes. It is from the mystical conception that humanity first learned the idea of clothes. There have been times when certain races painted their skin, and by certain *yogis* the body was covered with ashes. In ancient times the body was covered with the bark of trees. But behind all this there was always an inclination to keep the skin in a proper condition. It is upon the cleanliness of the body that sensitiveness depends; therefore people who have no regard to the cleanliness of the body are less sensitive than those who have regard to it. Besides the cleanliness of the outer part of the body, it is equally important, perhaps more important, to consider the cleanliness of the inner part of the body. Mystics, therefore, take precaution about what they eat and drink, and have methods of cleansing the inner part of the body also. No mystic in the East guides a pupil who has not first prepared his body for spiritual purposes. Cleanliness of

the body, besides its importance for spiritual and moral development, also prevents serious disease.

The Breath

It is necessary for the breath to flow freely through the lungs, tubes, and veins of the body, and things that one eats and drinks often block the channels through which the breath passes, invigorating and vivifying every particle of the body. All skin diseases are caused by want of breath in the skin. The mystic feels not only the vibrations of music but even the vibrations of another person's breath. The skin of the mystic in time becomes sensitive and feels even the vibrations of the breath of another. Music, so to speak, touches every particle of his being.

Breathing exercises will not give proper results if the channels of the breath have not been cleared. The spine, the lungs, the tubes and the veins of the body, the intestines should be kept clear. When the channels of the breath are blocked man feels heavy, depressed, lazy, drowsy, and confused; the expression becomes dull and the voice harsh; then the movements lose grace and beauty when sitting, or standing, or walking, or moving; in every action one expresses a weakness, a lack of spirit. Feebleness is different from lack of spirit. A person may be strong bodily but may lack spirit, and the teaching of Christ is that it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.

4 Outer and Inner Ablutions

The vehicle which is made of earth can be cleansed with water and by air. Therefore besides external ablutions inner ablutions are necessary to make the body a proper vehicle for the working of the spirit. In many different religions different ways of ablution are taught. They are not only for the cleanliness of the body, but are also helpful in making the body a fitting instrument for the spirit to experience life.

The external organs of the body are used for external activities, but the inner ones are the instruments of the mind. The factors which are closer to the mind and which are more important for man than his physical organs are the centers which are located in the body, and the cleaner the channels of the breath are the more active the centers become. The breath is to these centers as the air is to the plant. Besides inner ablutions, the breathing practice itself cleanses the channels of the body.

5 Inner Ablutions

Besides making ablutions it is necessary that the channels of the breath be kept clean, and for this consideration is necessary about what one eats and drinks. Food that is raw and indigestible, stale food, old and decayed vegetables, rotten fruits, and meat that has been preserved for a long time, and all such-like things do not only block the channels of the breath, but their influence makes the breath impure. The air, which is always pure, becomes dense and impure by the contact with the impurities of the earth, and so is the nature of breath. Naturally, when a person cannot digest food or when his lungs are not open and free the breath is not pure. The Sufi takes great care in his life as to what he should eat and what he should drink. Alcoholic drinks and drinks made from decayed fruits naturally make the breath impure; even smoking tobacco has a bad effect on the breath. Those who observe the mystical rules carefully even refrain from all flesh food, even from eggs. No doubt white meat is preferable to red meat, for red meat has particles which block the channels of the breath. This was the reason why the eating of pork was prohibited by the prophets of Beni Israel. No doubt to the pure all things are pure, but in order to become pure it is necessary to observe the rules of purity.

One must not judge of another person's spiritual evolution by seeing what he eats or drinks, because this has nothing to do with a man's evolution, for Shiva, the great Lord of Yogis, had fish for his food, and wine was given in the church of Christ as a sacrament. Therefore no one has the power to estimate his fellow man from what he eats or drinks. But everyone who wishes to tread the spiritual path may observe the mystical law, which certainly enables one to progress speedily. It must be remembered that it is the spiritual ideal which is the first thing to be held fast; what to eat and drink, and what not to eat and drink is a secondary thing. Any dispute about this proves to be unnecessary.

Vegetarian Diet

The question of vegetarian diet is often discussed among seekers after philosophical truth. Some people give no importance to what they eat or drink, and there are some who give more importance to it than necessary.

There are two things which speak against flesh-eating; one thing is that meat, as a substance, hinders spiritual

progress, and the other is that the unkindness towards the animals is a breach of moral law. Speaking about the first question, it is no doubt true that meat causes two kinds of harm to an adept. One is that it produces in man to a certain extent the animal nature; also it has an influence on the character of man. The nature of the animal he eats certainly has an influence upon a man's character. It was therefore that the prophets of Beni Israel forbade their followers to eat the flesh of certain kinds of animals and birds. Mystically speaking, it clogs the channels of the breath, and the important psychical centers that work in man as the instruments of wireless telegraphy. Morally, there is no doubt that it has a hardening effect upon the heart of man, which is meant to sympathize, not only with his fellow man, but with every living creature. There is no doubt that if all the people in the world became vegetarian, there would be no more wars. A person who refrained from killing the lower creatures would surely not be inclined to kill his fellow man.

Of course, there is another side to the question: life exists in all aspects of the creation, even in plants; and if one does not see the harm done to the plants, it is because they cannot express themselves. And, looking from this point of view, one can observe that life lives on life. At the same time, the creation is a process by which the lower form of life evolves to a higher form, and the life used in this process of evolution is not really lost, on the contrary it is raised to a higher consciousness. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the animal which is used as the food of man has been transformed from the animal kingdom to the human, which is really a natural process of evolution, the human kingdom being the goal of the lower creation. However, this point of view does not help man, morally or physically, in his individual evolution; he has not gained by eating flesh, on the contrary, he has allowed himself to evolve more slowly than he could otherwise have evolved.

The impression on the consciousness of man of having done harm to another creature which can feel pain as he himself can is not a good one; it blunts the fine, tender, and sympathetic feeling towards all living beings. At the same time not every person who eats meat is capable of considering the subject philosophically, and therefore of giving an answer to his conscience or to another one, as an explanation of having caused harm to a living creature for his enjoyment.

For many thousands of years the human race has lived on flesh food, especially in the cold countries, and the bodies made with that essence for thousands of years are so dependent upon flesh food that they cannot abstain from it without causing some harm to their health. Man feeds on things of which he is made, and it is not, in every case, easy for a man to give up flesh food, even if he realized its disadvantages. There are countries where there are deserts – no trees to be found for miles – and the inhabitants could not live if they did not live on flesh food. For the evolution of humanity in general, uniformity is necessary. If some ate flesh and others lived on vegetables, it would be as if carnivorous and herbivorous animals were living in the same forest. Certainly people living different lives cannot live together harmoniously, and the strong must in every case have the upper hand. Tenderness of heart will not answer the same purpose as strength and power. Therefore it is a question how vegetarian diet can be introduced in the world. There is another side to this question: if the animals were left alone they would multiply and the herbivorous would become a prey to the carnivorous animals. The tigers and lions and bears and wolves would increase and would be in search of man; so the human kingdom would diminish and the animal's increase.

For those who strive in the spiritual path it is most essential to be thoughtful and considerate, and to be kind to the whole creation, and if they can manage to live a vegetarian life, it is no doubt very helpful to them. It is not right, however, for a vegetarian to look at the flesh-eater with contempt and regard his own harmless attitude with pride. There are many vegetarians who will prove selfish and unkind to their fellow man, whereas there are many non-vegetarians who will prove to be otherwise. Verily, charity of the heart must begin at home and then expand so that it may reach the very lowest of the creation.

The Five Elements of the Body

The body is made of five elements, according to the mystical view: earth, water, fire, air and ether. Yet these terms must not be compared with the scientific terms; these are mystical conceptions and they should be understood in a mystical sense. These five elements form the sustenance of the body, at the same time these elements purify the body.

For instance, no ablution with water only is sufficient; earth is required also. In the East Brahmans used pure earth, some used ashes; in the East gram flour is still used in place of soap. The scientist can never deny the fact that there is no better disinfectant than earth itself. The use of water for every kind of ablution has been taught by all religions in some form or other. That shows that it is not only used for cleanliness, but it helps in spiritual

development. The scientist today admits that there is no better tonic than pure water; this has always been considered to be so by the mystic, who called the rivers sacred rivers and gave water in healing.

As the use of earth and water cleanses and purifies the body externally, so it has a purifying influence on the internal part of the body. By eating wholesome food and drinking pure water not only does one receive nourishment, one also cleanses and purifies every particle of the body. It is therefore that an adept must avoid eating and drinking anything unwholesome. This does not mean an absolute restriction to certain food and drink but just that care in eating and drinking is necessary.

Once a person has advanced in spirituality, nothing matters to him — neither what he eats and drinks, for he lives in the spirit the most part of his life; for him the body is a coat and he does not care if it is full of holes or if it is patched. But for a persons who has yet to develop spiritually and who follows a process consideration is necessary; it is most necessary that the body should be kept pure, outwardly and inwardly, that it may become a suitable vehicle for the manifestation of the spirit.

Purification

Man's health and inspiration both depend upon purity of breath, and to preserve this purity the nostrils and all the tubes of the breath must be kept clear. They can be kept clear by proper breathing and by proper ablutions. If one cleanses the nostrils twice or oftener during twenty-four hours it is not too much, for a Moslem is taught to make this ablution five times, before each prayer. The cleansing, not only of the nostrils, but also of the ears is necessary; for part of the breath works through the ears, and if the ears are not protected and cleansed sometimes one hears a sound, which often is that of the breath which does not find its way smoothly through the regions of the ear.

The throat and palate are also important factors for the flow of the breath. The palate and throat are kept clean by the adept by gargling. The adepts drink water at fixed hours for the purpose of cleansing the veins and tubes in the chest, so that the breath may find pure channels for its passage. An adept drinks water before going to bed and after rising from sleep. It is necessary that these laws of ablutions should be practiced by the student of thought first, in order that others may follow. Hygienic consideration is the first principle which is necessary for the health and happiness of the generality.

Sobriety

Sobriety is most necessary in the path of spiritual evolution, especially in the first stage, when the body must be made pure for spiritual revelation. Everything intoxicating deadens the nerves more or less, and the centers, which are the factors for spiritual realization, become dead. Although at times they may seem more active, too abnormal an activity is always exhausting. The centers which show sensitiveness during the time of intoxication, after its influence become weary and lifeless. Fakirs or yogis who take intoxicants in order to excite the centers become dependent for their spiritual experience on material objects; in the end they find their seeming advancement fatal. Even hard smoking may block, not only the channels of the breath, but even the centers, and thereby intuition is confused. No doubt smoking gives a momentary comfort, because it brings a kind of repose to the smoker, but it is only a passing comfort. Smoking not only has an effect upon the throat or lungs but by it the two important centers, the heart and brain, upon which the whole spiritual progress depends, will become blocked.

The principal thing in spiritual attainment is to be self-sufficient, and the first step to self-sufficiency is to make one's body independent of all such things upon which its comforts and enjoyment depend. The sages of all times and the mystics of every cult have observed the value of continence and fasting, for the very reason that the body, upon which the experience of the whole life depends, must first be made fit by purity.

Fasting

The reason why fasting is practiced by those who live in retirement is to let the breath pass through every vein and tube of the body. This can be made possible only when there is no foreign substance, such as food or even drink, in the body to block the channels. When the breath has touched every particle of the body, the body naturally becomes more sensitive and the pores of the skin open, making the centers transparent, so as to feel, outwardly and inwardly, all that is to be felt. This can be understood by seeing the difference between the intelligence and the intuitive faculty of a fine person and a dense person.

Continence also helps, not only to keep the channels clear, but it conserves all the energy in every particle of the

body and especially in the centers where it is most needed. Another thing is that continence keeps every outer element away. By this the adept is better able to keep his body and centers free from every foreign element, becoming at the same time a reservoir of energy, which expresses itself as radiating magnetism. Professed celibacy is an assumption of chastity that must sooner or later break by nature, together with man's profession of the same. The true celibacy, therefore, can be practiced without profession and without any outward appearance or the attributing to it any religious rank, only for a certain time and for a certain purpose.

GATHA II

The Purity of the Body

The purity of the body is more desirable than bodily strength. Purity of body consists of three things: pure blood, sound muscles, and skin in proper condition. One might ask, how can one be strong without a pure body? But I should say, one can be. There are many strong and vigorous-looking people with something wrong in their flesh, blood or skin. Health, from a spiritual point of view, does not mean a strong muscular body, health means a body sound in all its aspects. The standard of normal health is different for a mystic from what a scientist today thinks. To the scientist the emotional side of a man is not of interest; if the body is perfect according to his idea, he thinks the man is healthy. But from a mystical point of view if, bodily, man is strong, but his emotional nature is buried beneath, he is not healthy, there is something wrong with him. Therefore a physician will find many not in proper health, but still more a mystic will find not in proper health. The person who is healthy to a physician is not necessarily healthy to a mystic, but good health from the point of view of a mystic is also good health from the point of view of a physician.

The illness that humanity has today is lack of that emotional nature which is productive of sentiment. In the East, though times are changed, still there is a recognition of that healthiness which is recognized by mystic as good health. They name these qualities by beautiful names, as considerate, thoughtful, mild, gentle, sympathetic, harmonious, selfless. When these things are lacking in a person, the mystic considers it lack of health. Even an animal can be materially strong. If man were strong he would be no better than an animal. It is purity which is necessary, in the body first, in the mind afterwards; which produces in a person a state of health which alone can be truly called good health.

Purification

The nature of the memory is to hold an impression, agreeable or disagreeable, and therefore a person holds a thought in mind, whether it is beneficial to him or not, without knowing the result which will come from it. It is like a child who holds a rattle in his hand and hits his head with the rattle, and cries with pain, and yet does not throw the rattle away. There are many who keep in their mind a thought of illness or a thought of unkindness done to them by someone and suffer from it, yet not knowing what it is that make them suffer so, nor understanding the reason of their suffering. They go on suffering and yet hold on in memory the very source of suffering. Memory must be one's obedient servant; when it is a master then life becomes difficult. A person who cannot throw away from his memory what he does not desire to keep in mind is like a person who has a safe, but the key of that safe he has lost. He can put in money, but he cannot take it out. All faculties in man become invaluable when a person is able to use them at will, but when the faculties use the person, then he is no longer master of himself.

Concentration is taught by the mystics in order to exercise the will, making it capable of making use of all faculties. A person with willpower can remember what he wishes to remember and can forget what he wishes to forget. All things that deprive one of one's freedom in life are undesirable. The mind must be free from all bad impressions of life, which take away the rest and peace of life. By concentration, one is able to hold a certain thought one desires and to keep away all other thoughts. When one is able to keep away all the thoughts one does not wish to think about, it becomes easy to throw away the impression of years, if one wishes to forget them. Bad impressions, however old and intimate, are like rubbish accumulated, which should be removed in order to make the house clean. The human heart is the home of the soul, and upon this home the comfort and peace of the soul depends.

3 Purity of Mind (1)

Purity of mind requires the destroying of all bad impressions which are already collected there or which the mind receives instantly. One can destroy these impressions by five ways, and the way is adopted according to the impression one has to destroy. Some impressions want to be washed off from the mind; some require to be erased

from the surface of the mind; some want to be shaken off like dust from the clothes; some require burning like the wood in the fire, which, after its test through fire, turns into ashes; and some impressions must be drowned, so that they will never come up again. Bury certain impressions like a corpse; find every way of annihilation which is suited for that particular impression, so that your mind may be clear. The mind is not only a means of thinking or reasoning, but it is the king of one's being; and upon the condition of mind one's health, happiness, and peace of life depend.

Now the question is what to destroy and what to keep in mind. Collect and keep all that is beautiful, and destroy all that is void of beauty. Collect and keep all that is agreeable, and destroy all that has a disagreeable effect upon you. Collect and keep all that is harmonious, and destroy all that creates inharmony in yourself. Collect and keep all that is restful, and destroy all that disturbs the peace of your life. As some dust gets into the mechanism of a clock and stops it from going, so the effects produced by all impressions which are void of beauty and harmony and which disturb your peace keep you from progress. The mind cannot act properly when it is hindered by impressions which have a paralyzing effect upon it. Life is progress, and stopping from progress is death. Failure does not matter in life for a progressive person, even a thousand failures do not matter. He has before him view success, and success is his even after a thousand failures. The greatest pity in life is the standstill when life does not move further. A sensible person prefers death to such a life. It is as a paralysis of the soul, of the spirit, and is always caused by holding bad impressions in mind. No soul is deprived of happiness in reality. The soul's very being is happiness. Man brings unhappiness upon himself by holding in his hands the clouds of bad impressions, which fall as a shadow upon his soul. Once a person is able to clear from his mind, by whatever process, the undesirable impressions, a new power begins to spring from his heart. This opens a way before him to accomplish all he wishes, attracting to him all he requires, clearing his path of all obstacles, and making his atmosphere clear, for him to live and move and to accomplish all he wishes to accomplish.

4 Purity of Mind (2)

Purity of mind is the principal thing upon which the health of both body and mind depend. The process of purifying the mind is not much different from the process of cleaning or washing any object. Water poured upon any object washes it, and if there is a spot which cannot be washed away by the water, some substance which can take that spot is applied, to wash it thoroughly. The water which washes the heart is the continual running of the love-stream. When that stream is stopped, when its way is blocked by some object which closes the heart, and when the love-stream is no longer running, then the mind cannot keep pure. As water is the cleansing and purifying substance in the physical world, so love is on the higher plane. Sometimes when it is difficult for love to take away some impressions that are disagreeable, which block the way of the love-stream, they may be washed away by some element that can destroy them. The whole life is a chemical process, and the knowledge of its chemistry helps man to make life happy. An unhappy person, being himself unhappy, cannot make others happy. It is a wealthy person who can help the one who is hard up, not a poor person, however much desire of helping he may have. So it is with happiness, which is a great wealth; and a happy person can take away the unhappiness of another, for he has enough for himself and for others.

Earthly pleasures are the shadows of happiness; because of their transitory character. True happiness is in love, which is the stream that springs from one's soul. He who will allow this stream to run continually in all conditions of life, in all situations, however difficult, will have a happiness which truly belongs to him, the source of which is not without, but within. If there is a constant outpouring of love one becomes a divine fountain, for from the depth of the fountain rises the stream and, on its return, it pours upon the fountain, bathing it continually. It is a divine bath, the true bath in the Ganges, the sacred river. When once one has got the key of this fountain, one is always purified, every moment of one's life; nothing can stay in the mind causing man unhappiness! For happiness alone is natural, and it is attained by knowing and by living naturally.

Questions and Answers

Q What is the process of drowning impressions in the ocean of the consciousness of eternal now?

A The one who does not know the love of an individual does not know universal love. But if one stands there, one stands there without going forward. The love of an individual in love's path is a doll's play, which is learned for the time to come. So the love of an individual is the first step. But when one progresses then one advances towards the love of a cause, a community, a nation; or even the whole universe. Man, as a human being, is capable of loving one; but his soul, as the light of God, is capable of loving not only the world, but even if there were a

thousand worlds. For the heart of man is larger than the whole universe.

5 Purification of the Mind

The principle thing in attaining happiness, is to purify one's mind from all things that disturb it and create inharmony. There are not only bad impressions which disturb the tranquillity of mind, but there are many feelings of resentment and resistance against things which do not agree with one's own idea which disturb one's mind. The person who has some business to carry out, some profession to attend to, requires a tranquil mind, but especially the one who journeys on the spiritual path needs tranquillity of mind most. Prayers, concentrations, meditations make no effect when the mind is not purified from all disturbances. Therefore, for an adept, no cost and no sacrifice is great enough to keep harmony within himself. A Sufi tries to keep harmony in his surroundings, the harmony which demands many sacrifices. It makes one endure what one is not willing to endure, it makes one overlook what one is not inclined to overlook, it makes one tolerate what one is not accustomed to tolerate, and it makes one forgive and forget what one would never have forgotten if it were not for the sake of harmony. But at whatever cost harmony is attained, it is a good bargain. For harmony is the secret of happiness, and in absence of this a person living in palaces and rolling in gold can be most unhappy.

Harmony is brought about by attuning oneself to all beings, to all things, to all conditions, to all situations. And he who cannot turn himself tries to tune others, and while trying to tune others he breaks the string. It is like a person who has a violin in his hands wishing to tune the cello. If he wishes to be in turn with the cellist, he must tune his violin to the cellist's pitch. Every soul, as its nature, seeks constantly for harmony, but rarely there is to be found a soul who really knows how to create it. If one says, "This noise which goes on always next to my ears makes me mad," he cannot stop the noise. He must know how to close himself from that noise; if he cannot, to accustom himself to that noise so as to be able to bear it and eventually to rise above it, that it may no more create inharmony. Very often, at the sight of inharmony, one tries to escape it. But inharmony has such a wonderful magic that if one avoids it in the East, one meets it in the West. It never leaves a person; who it loves it follows. And the best way to meet with inharmony is to try and harmonize with it. Knowing that the source and goal of all things is the perfection of harmony, and bearing that idea in mind, if one met with inharmony, which has no existence in reality, which is like a shadow, it must certainly disappear as the shadow disappears at the sight of the sun.

It is very difficult to evolve oneself and at the same time to keep in tune with the unevolved ones through life. It is like being drawn from above and at the same time being pulled from below. And if there is anything that can save man from being torn to pieces in life, there is only one way, and that is to resound, to respond to all that is asked of man. It is this principle which is taught by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount may seem to teach a willing surrender to all, but that is not the way to look at it. The real lesson that one can learn from it is to harmonize oneself with all notes instead of with one note. Every note is fixed in its place, so is every man fixed in his ideas and ways. But the one who treads the spiritual path, he is all notes and he is no note in particular. Therefore he may rightfully be called the keynote, the note which makes a consonant chord with every note that is played with it. There is no beauty where there is no harmony; harmony is the fruit of love. Therefore by attaining harmony in life one reaches the perfection of all three: love, harmony, and beauty.

6 The Power of Mind

Anything that weighs upon the mind, such as worry, or fear, or remorse, keeps the mind below the pitch at which it is meant to be. When the mind is weighted down by anything, however learned a man may be, however capable and efficient, he can work but very little. Learning does not help the mind which is not in its right place. So it is seen to be with many learned people: most capable and efficient, and yet incapable of accomplishing anything important in life. This is often found in life, and rare is the case where it is not so.

All the affairs of life are accomplished by the power of mind. External conditions are nothing but mechanisms with which the mind works as an engineer, producing from life all that is desired. Therefore, whatever be the condition in life, the principal thing is to shake off all things that weigh upon the mind, thus making the mind free to fulfill its task through life.

Often people find them selves helpless before a difficult situation, but very few stop to think that it is not only the situation that is difficult, but there is some difficulty in one's own mind. One hardly gives a thought to this question, for every man's eyes are fixed upon the difficulty of the situation alone. It is like seeing a wall standing

before one and yet not realizing if one has a hammer in one's hand. If one realized the power that the mind has, not only the wall but even mountains, if they were standing before one, could be removed. Many seek for a power from without, ignorant of the fact that all power is hidden within. When, by freeing his own mind from all that weighs it down, man realizes the power he inherits from the source of all beings, he will realize in himself and enormous power. The mastermind is the master of life.

7 Every Mind Has Its Own Standard of Good and Bad

Every mind has its particular standard of good and bad, and of right and wrong. This standard is made by what one has experienced through life, by what one has seen or heard; it also depends upon one's belief in a certain religion, one's birth in a certain nation and origin in a certain race. But what can really be called good or bad, right or wrong, is what comforts the mind and what causes it discomfort. It is not true, although it appears so, that it is discomfort that causes wrongdoing. In reality, it is wrongdoing which causes discomfort, and it is right-doing which gives comfort. And for the very reason that a certain thing gives comfort it is right, and what causes discomfort is wrong.

Very few in the world look at it in this way. If one who does good all his life is unhappy, I would rather he did no good. His well-doing is neither good for him nor for another. The standard of right and wrong or good and bad, made rigidly on the action, is the artificial standard which seems outwardly a moral law, but causes degeneration in the end. The standard of action must be made natural, not artificial. The curse of the present day is the artificiality of life. Man must be taught to consult his own spirit, and from his own feeling to find out and make a distinction between right and wrong and good and bad. When this natural principle will be adopted by humanity the greater part of the world-misery will come to an end. This wrong and artificial stand is taught today to children at home and to young people at school. They begin to learn that that is wrong which they have heard others call wrong, that is right which they have read in a book that it is right; something is good because their parents have said it is good, something is bad because their friends have told them so. An artificial standard made in this way buries the spirit, which alone has the right to discern between right and wrong, good and bad. On the day when people will arrive at the freedom of making their own standard by their own feelings, a better condition will come. For those searching after truth, journeying through the spiritual path, this is the first thing to learn, to find out for themselves under all conditions in life what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. Not from what they are taught or told, but from their own feeling, which can be perceived by a delicate sense of realizing through life what really gives comfort and what causes discomfort. Life is not made to be good and unhappy, life is made to be happy and therefore one has to be good — no happiness must be sacrificed to goodness, but that goodness must be considered the real goodness which in its result is happiness.

8 The Impression of Illness and Weakness on the Mind

The action of every illness or weakness is more manifest in its impression on the mind. There are many people who after an illness that has lasted some time become so impressed by it that even after their cure the impression remains. Therefore to those who suffer for many years from an illness, their illness becomes natural, becomes a part of themselves, and the obstacle to their cure is not the illness but the impression engraved on the mind.

So it is with weakness or a defect of any sort. Very often a person confesses, "This is my defect, but I cannot help it." If there is any weakness or defect, it is merely in the impression. When a person says, "There are moments when I lose my temper," or when a person says, "I would like to tolerate, but I cannot stand that person," his weakness is nowhere but in the impression he has in his mind. Therefore the best cure for every illness and weakness is denial of the same. Affirmation deepens the impression, and contemplation of it makes it worse. There is no harm in denying one's illness or weakness, for every illness and weakness is denial of the same. Affirmation deepens the impression, and contemplation of it makes it worse. There is no harm in denying one's illness or weakness, for that is not telling a lie, as it does not exist in reality; it is merely a shadow. Truthful confession of something which is unreal is worse than a lie. One must first deny that to oneself, and then to others.

The Sufi, whose ideal through life is the realization of God and His perfection, after realizing his ideal cannot say, "I cannot tolerate" — or "endure" or "stand" — "anybody;" and he cannot say that he cannot think, act or feel as he thinks right. The idea of the Sufi is always to suggest to oneself that which one wishes to be, that which one would like to be. And when he finds he failed to think, speak or act as he wishes to, he must think the condition of the process is to fall several times before one gets one's balance, instead of thinking, "It is my weakness, I cannot do otherwise." Those who walk toward the perfection of power and wisdom take every step forward with a new hope

and new courage; and weakness, to them, was a story of the past, it does not exist any more, they don't recognize such a thing as existing. They can't accept themselves being what they don't wish to. They picture themselves as their ideal, what they would like to be. Some time or other in their lives — if not sooner, later — they certainly succeed in molding their life to their ideal.

9 Keeping the Mind in a Pure Condition

All that exists lives on its own element, springs from its own element, and returns to its own element. So earth to earth, water to water, fire to fire, and air to air. Purification means to make a certain object itself; nothing added, nothing foreign attached to it which does not belong to it. These two rules make one understand the process by which the mind could be nourished and purified. The mind is nourished by thoughts and impressions that are harmonious and productive of beauty and which result in satisfaction. For harmony is the nature of the soul, beauty is its source and goal, and by harmony and beauty the mind is nourished, as it is made of harmony and beauty. And the same elements are needed to purify the mind of all undesirable thoughts and impressions, harmony as water and beauty as soap, purifying the mind of all thoughts which are void of harmony and beauty.

The first thing in purifying the mind is to be able to discern the foreign element there. As all that is foreign to the body does not agree with the body, making it ill, so all that is foreign to the mind disturbs the peace of the mind. It is that which proves that it does not belong to the mind, preventing it from experiencing that joy and peace for which it longs and in which alone is its satisfaction.

There are many who do not know the importance of keeping the mind in a pure and harmonious condition, and the few who know it find it difficult to bring about better conditions in practical life. In the first place it is difficult to accomplish outward duties, to answer the demands of life, and yet to keep the mind in perfect tranquillity. It needs the knowledge of purifying the mind of all external influences. And the way one can manage it can be said in a few words: to throw away inharmony by the power of harmony and to wash away all that lacks beauty by preserving the great power of beauty within oneself.

10 Keeping the Mind Free from All Undesirable Impressions

The best way of keeping the mind free from all undesirable impressions is not to partake them at the moment when they fall upon the mind. For instance, if someone is disagreeable, instantly his influence produces the same thing in another person with whom he is disagreeable. The best way to avoid it would be to stand on one's guard that one may not catch his infectious disagreeableness. All such things as pride, prejudice, jealousy, intolerance, coldness, have a great influence upon a person. When speaking, working or walking with someone, one can easily partake one's companion's disagreeable inputs, because as a rule a person thinks there is justification for giving it back, a word for a word, a frown for frown. A person feels satisfied in boasting, "He said two words to me, but I have him back the same in four words." He feels very glad for the moment, thinking, "I have given back what I had received." But he does not know that is he had not given it back, the same that the other person had thrown upon him would have returned to that person a thousandfold.

The psychological point of view therefore differs from the ordinary point of view, for in the psychological point of view there is a science, it teaches one not to take in one's mind what is disagreeable, inharmonious. By understanding this one can maintain the purity of mind, and it requires fortifying oneself with willpower, making the heart as a stone wall, for all that is thrown at it not to pierce through, but to fall down.

The psychological effect of every impression is such that each impression has a tendency to be held by the mind; all we see during the day has, consciously or unconsciously, an influence upon our life. All good or bad things, or things with beauty or ugliness, they remain with us and flourish in our minds. If it was an impression of beauty, that would flourish; if it was an impression of ugliness, that would flourish. This is the principal reason why dreams have effect upon our life. It is the impression that the dream has made upon us that works out its destiny in the waking state. Therefore, if by being on one's guard, instead of resisting evil one would only slide it over, it would run away by its own force.

However good a person, if he easily partakes impressions, he cannot be trustworthy. The one who has no willpower cannot even trust himself. There is no willpower in fighting with another; one shows willpower in fighting with self. The one who is strong enough to keep away from his mind all undesirable impressions will in time radiate harmony and will create the atmosphere of peace; thus making himself happy, he will bring happiness to others.

GATHA III

1 Purity of the Heart

The real purity is experienced not by means of the outer ablutions nor by keeping away evil thoughts, but by keeping the heart pure from feelings which disturb the rhythm of the mind and thus upset the whole spirit. Feelings have a greater power than thoughts. If evil thoughts are monsters evil feelings are as demons. Such feelings as the desire of robbing someone of his rights or his belongings have a very disturbing effect upon the spirit. Before such a feeling is put into action the effect is more, while it is being put into action it is less, but afterwards the effect is most. Life rightly and honestly lived has inner struggles, but by adding to it feelings that disturb life's tranquillity one only adds to one's troubles in life, which then become endless.

Purity of heart must not be considered a virtue but a necessity, a necessity not only to be considered for the good of others, but for one's own life. The feelings which produce that weakness in the heart, take away strength from the eyelid, the glance drops instead of the eyes firmly gazing straight. Nothing in the world, however valuable or rare, can make up for this loss. The main thing that must be remembered is that the soul is pure and the lack of purity it cannot bear without feeling restless. The spirit has a tune and a rhythm. When it is out of tune and out of rhythm, if the riches of the whole world are given to it, it is worth nothing. It is purity and peace which is the soul's constant seeking.

2 Keeping the Heart Pure

As the rust is natural to the iron, and as the milk turns sour, so the heart can become rusted, and its feeling, which by nature is as pure as milk, turns sour. Then nothing in the world is tasteful to that person, and life with all its beauty becomes worthless. It is this condition which must be avoided. An adept must keep his mind pure from rust.

The rust comes from allowing the heart to bear malice and spite against anyone, by having hatred and prejudice against anyone, by wanting to take revenge, by looking down upon another with contempt, and by the feeling of jealousy, rivalry, or envy. The heart wants a constant care to keep it from getting rusted. The nature of this life of illusion is such that some little unimportant things, which are not of the least value, coming from the outer life, can still affect the heart; and rust may be produced as the mere touch of water can produce rust upon iron. Once the feeling has become soured it is as difficult, if not impossible, to turn it sweet again as to make sour milk sweet.

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

3 The Radiance of the Face

As the cleansing of a metal object produces a shine in it so is the cleansing of the heart, especially from any feeling that produces humiliation. When a person thinks, "I have been wrong by acting in a certain way, by saying a certain thing, or by having thought something which should not have crossed my mind," he loses, so to speak, a radiance. This radiance even beams out through his countenance and is called in Persian *abi ruh*, meaning "The radiance of the face." Every person shows from his expression his condition of heart. Therefore the innocence of the expression is the sign of the purity of heart. Man may be clever, learned, qualified, most able, he may be strong physically or even mentally, he may be wealthy, of high rank, but none of these outside things help him to retain that glow of the countenance which depends only upon the purity of heart.

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

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

light, which lone illuminates the path of every achievement in life.

It might seem hard work to empty one's heart of all bad impressions and ill feelings, of all bitterness and evil thoughts, and yet it is not nearly so hard as the task of earning one's daily bread. The work in one's everyday life takes most part of the day, the emptying the heart of all undesirable things takes but a few moments silence. It is the desire of erasing from the heart every undesirable impression that enables one in time to purify one's heart.

4 Innocence

Innocence is the real purity according to the mystic, for innocence is the sign of purity of heart. The intuitive faculties play a greater part in the life of the innocent. People call them simple ones, nevertheless innocence proves often more beneficial in life than worldly cleverness. The innocent are oftener blessed by Providence than those worldly-wise, always trying to get the best of everyone and to seize every opportunity that may seem to be advantageous in any way.

It is not easy for a clever person to try and become innocent; it is something natural and manifests with the blooming of the heart. Innocence is the sign of the thriving of a spiritual personality. If one can develop anything it is only this, that one may abstain from trying to be clever, and know that a selfish and clever person, with all his qualification of getting the best of another, comes across, sooner or later, a person cleverer than he. Often a clever person finds his own chain tied around his legs.

No one has arrived at a higher degree of spirituality without innocence. Innocence does not mean not knowing; it only means knowing and yet not knowing. A stupid person must not be confused with an innocent person, for the former is blind, whereas the latter only closes his eyes when he wants to. It is the wise, really, who becomes innocent on arriving at a stage of perfection in wisdom. It is two kinds of persons who show childlike simplicity in their lives: the silly one who shows childish traits, and the wise one who shows innocence.

5 Reject the Impression of Errors and Shortcomings

There is generally a tendency seen in those treading the spiritual path to feel discouraged at having bad impressions upon their heart of their own faults and shortcomings. And they begin to feel that they are too unworthy to have anything to do with things of a sacred nature. But it is a great error, in spite of all the virtue humility has in it. When one acknowledges something wrong in oneself one gives that wrong a soul out of one's own spirit, and by withdrawing from all that is good and beautiful, spiritual and sacred, instead of developing the spirit of rejecting all errors, in time one becomes a receptacle of what is wrong. He goes on disapproving and yet collecting errors, so producing within himself a perpetual conflict that never ends. When man becomes helpless before his infirmities he becomes a slave to his errors, he feels within himself an obedient servant to his adversary.

The greater the purity developed in the heart the greater becomes the power of man. As great the power of man within himself so great becomes his power on others. A hair's breadth can divide power from weakness, which appear to have as wide a gulf between them as between land and sky.

6 Purity of the Heart

He alone is capable of removing from the heart of another doubt, deceit, fear, or malice whose heart is already pure from these things or who, at least, can empty his heart of these things. There is a weakness of the heart and there is a strength of the heart. The heart's weakness is caused by things it contains which enfeeble it, such as doubt, deceit, fear and malice. The absence of these things produces that purity of heart which in itself is a power. This power could be increased by faith, hope and righteousness.

Purity of the heart causes its expansion, and the lack of purity makes it narrow. The mystic poet of Hyderabad, Asif, says, "If the heart is large, it can be largest of all things." Besides it is purity alone which opens the doors of the heart. All that hinders that purity stands as a closed door of the heart.

The pure-hearted may seem to be thinking, saying or doing simple things. And yet there is a beauty and charm in all they do, for there is nothing more attractive than light itself. All that is besides light depends upon the light to show its beauty; light is beauty in itself. Purity of the heart is the only condition that allows the inner stream to rise. The pure-hearted see deeper, though they say little. There is no pretence about them. What they know, they know; what they don't know, they don't know. The pure ones make all pure, for to them all is pure. Their presence makes

everything pure. As the pure water is the best tonic so is the contract of the pure-hearted person. In the spiritual path when one is able to accomplish this thing there is not much then that remains to be accomplished.

7 Exaltation

Exaltation depends upon purity. The body cleansed gives an exaltation that is experienced by all living beings on the physical plane. The heart cleansed of all impurities give a much greater exaltation, which is experienced in the inner plane and is reflected on the outer plane.

Most people little realize the meaning of exaltation. In point of fact all things man seeks for and becomes occupied with are most often methods adopted to obtain exaltation, through food, perfume, music, or through the beauty of color and line. No method, however, succeeds in giving the experience of a fuller exaltation in the absence of purity of heart. In plain words, it is the pure-hearted who enjoy the beauty of music, color or perfume more fully than those without purity of heart; although the pure-hearted seem to need these things which bring about exaltation less, sometimes for the very reason that the very purity of the heart give them that exaltation which others strive to achieve by different methods.

Amir, the mystic poet, says, "Their eyes refused the wine, her generous offer, saying, "We do not need thee, we are intoxicated perpetually." "The reason behind the refusal of the pious, at times, of music, art, gaiety, or merriment was that they already had the exaltation which others try to gain by these things. It does not at all mean that the pious are always against things of beauty and pleasure. It only means that they are rich by the feeling of exaltation which comes from within, without adopting for it any other methods. Nevertheless the pious are the ones who are capable of enjoying beauty in all its aspects fully. As Hafiz says, "If the pious ones would hear the song I sing they would get up and dance unrestrainedly."

8 Purify the Mind from Fear

To purify the mind from fear is of great importance, and this can be best done by analyzing what causes one to fear. Fear is an outcome of long-collected problems unsolved. When once a person looks his own problem in the face he gets an insight into the cause of fear, and as in the sun many germs are destroyed so the germs of fear are destroyed by the light of intelligence. Fear comes from weakness to face the consequences of one's condition, attitude and deeds. Once a person has solved the problem how he will meet the consequences the fear is done with. The best way of getting over the fear of swallowing a bitter pill is to swallow the bitter pill and to experience by it that it is not more bitter than it is.

Fear comes also by being too cautious for one's health, morals and reputation; also by being too considerate of the feelings of those one loves, and too regardful of those under whose influence one is; also by taking too much to heart what other say. Fear very often remains in the heart of man in the guise of virtues, and very often a timid one is taken for a righteous one. But the timorous well-doer is worse than a fearless sinner.

The best practice one can make is to speak with oneself, with one's own fear; to dispute with it, and to root out the reasons on whose foundations it rests. What generally happens is that all things one fears, one fears even to think of them. But the solution of getting above fear lies in analyzing the cause of the fear and so making it non-existent. Man by nature possesses a tremendous power hidden in his heart, the power which waits constantly to become manifest. This power is hidden by fear. The day when fear disappears, this latent power will manifest to view.

9 Keep the Heart Free from Poison

Antipathy turns into malice, and malice culminates in bitterness. To possess it in one's heart is like possessing in one's heart a poison, a poison that clouds with and produces obscurity. If one keeps one's heart free from malice one has accomplished a great deal, for it is in the clear heart that the light from above is reflected. Often without an intention on one's part malice enters, of which man is unconscious. Often the man who possesses malice is quite innocent, for his heart is reflecting the malice which is projected from another heart. It is therefore that care must be taken to keep one's heart free from the impressions and influences coming from others. The question how can one avoid this is answered thus, that the heart will focus itself to a person or to an influence which is akin to its own quality; that is the nature of the heart.

Therefore even if the impression came from another, for the influence of another the man who reflects it is responsible. To make the heart reflect good qualities one must prepare it, one must rain it; for it is the good quality

of heart that will keep away undesirable impressions and thoughts, and will only reflect good impressions and desirable influences. As a practice of purifying one's heart is to repeat every morning and every evening; "My thoughtful self! Reproach no one, hold a grudge against no one; be wise, tolerate, considerate, polite and kind to all!"

10 The Real Purification of Mind

The real purification of mind is in purifying it from thoughts and impressions which live in it as a germ of disease. The best way of cleansing the mind from all this is to be able to empty the mind of any thought, feeling or impression. To be pure means to be natural. The spirit in man in its natural condition is not a thought but mind, not love but heart. For as the thought is the outcome of mind so is love the outcome of the heart. To attain to the purity which is the seeking of the mystic one must be able to purify one's spirit from every thought and feeling, however deeply impressed or engraved in one's heart. The mystic goes as far as purifying himself from his identity, by removing it for a certain time and by putting something else in its place. From beginning to end the whole process of spiritual development depends upon this.

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THE SUFI TEACHINGS

OF

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Volume XIII The Gathas

PART VII

TASAWWUF

METAPHYSICS

GATHA I

1 Belief

BELIEF is a natural tendency to accept knowledge without doubt. Every soul is born with this tendency to accept every knowledge that is given to it, in whatever way or form. Therefore no soul in the world is born an unbeliever. There is a saying of the Prophet, 'Every soul is born a believer, and it is others that make the soul an unbeliever.' This unbelief comes by the conflict of one's knowledge and belief.

Belief has two tendencies. One is the tendency of water that runs and the other is that of water that becomes frozen. Some people who have a belief like to keep that belief unchanged as a rock, and identify their ego with that belief. People of this temperament are steady in their belief, but often they lack progress. If they happen to have a right belief, there is no danger of their giving it up. But if it is not right, they are perplexed. Those, whose belief is like running water, perhaps go from one belief to another and they may not seem steady in their belief, yet their life is progressive. The progressive soul can never hold one belief, and must change and go on changing until it arrives at the ultimate truth. For a simple person steadiness of belief is more advantageous than change, for change may lead him astray. But for an intelligent person it is natural and necessary that he must go from belief to belief until he arrives at his final convictions.

Belief is of four kinds. The first kind is a belief accepted because it is believed by all. The second is a belief accepted because it is believed by someone in whom the believer trusts. The third belief is the belief that reason helps one to believe. The fourth belief is conviction of which one is as sure as if one were an eyewitness.

The four kinds of belief are held by souls of different grades of evolution in life and different temperaments. There is a knowledge, which one can perceive with the senses. There is a knowledge, which one can perceive with the mind alone, and a knowledge, which can be realized by the soul. And it is for this reason that when a person wishes to touch a thing, which can only be perceived, and when a person wishes to feel a thing, which can only be realized spiritually, he naturally becomes an unbeliever.

In point of fact one person's belief cannot be another person's belief. Every belief is peculiar to the person who holds it. Even if two persons held one belief, there would still be the difference of the point of view, even though it be as small as the difference between two roses. Therefore it is unjust, no doubt, on the part of one person to try to press his own belief on another. At the same time the person who refuses to try to understand the belief of another, from bigotry or pride, closes the door of his heart, that otherwise would have let that knowledge come in.

There are two tendencies that can be developed in a person, either constantly to try to believe whatever comes before him, or to try to disbelieve whatever is presented to him. And there is an advantage and a disadvantage in each of these tendencies. The advantage of the believing tendency is the taking of every chance of acquiring knowledge, the disadvantage is that one takes the chance of often and readily falling into error. But the advantage of the disbelieving tendency is only the protection from error, and its disadvantage is the prevention of every chance of further acquisition of knowledge.

Nature has very many covers. It's activity covers and uncovers it. At every covering and uncovering, it is natural that the belief of the individual should change. Therefore when a Sufi is asked, 'Do you believe in this, or that?' he

says, 'My belief is for me, yours is for you, there is no faith to which I give my unchanging belief, nor any belief that I reject without having investigated it.' If you are asked, "What belief does the Sufi teach?" you may say, 'No belief, but he helps the pupil to seek and find within himself his own belief.'

2 Faith

Faith can be defined by two words, 'self-confidence' and 'certainty in expectation.' Faith in no way signifies certainty without expectation, nor confidence with evidence. All things in life are appointed from eternity for a certain time. Every experience and every knowledge comes in its own time. No doubt in this free will plays a certain part, as destiny plays a great part. We make our road in life by our expectations. Things that we have not attained to we look forward to and hope to attain. Ideals that we wish to reach we expect to reach some day. And that which determines our success in attaining our ideal is faith. It is faith that uncovers things veiled with a thousand covers. It is faith that attracts things almost out of reach. The distance between heaven and earth, the difference between life and death can be bridged by faith.

There is blind faith, and there is faith, which is not blind. Faith is blind when its power is small and reason does not support it. Then faith may be called blind. But in fact the mind has all power. Every expectation that it has will certainly be fulfilled sooner or later. It may not be fulfilled in a certain limited time, but in eternity it will be fulfilled. Faith is the power of mind. Without faith the mind is powerless. When faith leads and reason follows, success is sure, but when reason leads and faith follows, success is doubtful. Faith causes the attitude of the mind. The influence of the attitude of the mind works psychically upon every affair. The belief, 'My friend is faithful to me and is helping me', by itself influences the helper. And when there is a doubting attitude - 'Perhaps my friend or my agent is faithful to me, perhaps not' - then the fact is made doubtful. Faith can bring a surer and speedier cure than medicine, and both success and failure in life depend very much upon faith. Man rides upon the elephant and controls tigers by the power of faith. The great people of world, the greatest people, are great more by their faith than by anything else, because mostly great people have been adventurous and the back of a venture is faith, nothing else.

Reason can strengthen faith, but things that are beyond reason are reached by faith alone. If faith is limited by reason it is held down so that it cannot rise, but when faith is independent of reason it is raised by the force of the ideal, and then reason has scope to advance and reach the ideal. Those who believe in an ideal and those who do not have both arrived at their conviction by faith. In the former it is positive, in the latter negative. An unbeliever asked a believer, 'If there were no God then would not all your prayers and expectations be in vain?' The believer answered, 'If there be no God, and if my prayers are in vain and all that I have done for God is lost, then I am in the same case as you, but if He exists, then I have the advantage.'" Faith is natural and it's negative unnatural.

As all things in this artificial world are made by faith so the whole creation is made by the faith of the divine mind. Therefore as the divine mind had been able to create all by faith, so man by this divine attribute can rise to the source of his being.

Thought, speech, and action without faith are as body without life. All things by faith are made alive, for faith is the life of all things. Think what joy trust brings, and what a feeling of suffocation doubt brings! When a person does not trust another that means he has no confidence in himself. He is not happy through this. It would be no exaggeration to say that material loss resulting from misplaced confidence is better than all profit resulting from justified suspicion.

3 Hope

Hope is a quality sometimes dependent on its object, sometimes independent of it, and these two different aspects of hope are the cause of two different natures, the optimistic and the pessimistic.

When the dependent nature is developed it makes man a pessimist, and when hope stands alone, without dependence, this develops optimism. The optimistic person compared to the pessimistic may seem blind, and no doubt, he is at times blind. But without doubt, as blind people develop a faculty of doing things without sight which people with seeing eyes cannot do, so the optimist can accomplish things without knowing how or why. Hope cannot be called sureness or certainty, but it is a feeling, which, almost by its own force, may bring sureness and certainty. Hope dependent upon reason is weak, and the more dependent the weaker it is. No doubt hope together with reason is strong, perhaps stronger than hope alone, but in proportion as reason supports hope, so hope

depends on reason, and as in many cases in life, when reason cannot reach the object of hope, hope then sinks.

In fact hope is more than a faculty or a quality, hope may be called the substance of life. Wise and foolish, rich and poor, all live in some hope. Hope can prolong life and lack of hope can shorten it. The joy that one gets from hope is greater than the joy that comes from the possession of the object hoped for. Therefore there is a Sanskrit saying that Brahma in the creation took honey from all the flowers and that this honey was hope. The interpretation is that out of all things that are beautiful and that give joy and happiness the essence is taken and that essence is hope.

Hope is strengthened by reason, but it stands on the foundation of patience, for it is possible that in spite of all reasons a person may completely give up hope, if patience is lacking. If I used the poetical expression that the rocks and trees are standing in the deserts and forests resting in hope, that would be no exaggeration, because to the eyes of the mystic every aspect of life shows that it is standing in hope. This can be better seen in the life of human beings, because every person seems to be waiting from day to day and from hour to hour for something to come that he is hoping for. The loss of hope is worse than the loss of life, and provided that hope stands by man's side, though no one else stands by him it does not matter.

4 Patience

Patience may also be called control, and one can say that patience is the will that controls the activity of the mind and holds it in check. To be patient is sometimes extremely difficult, for great energy is required to control the activity of the mind. We may picture patience as a wall against which the tides beat. The wall must be strong to resist the waves, and so it is with patience.

There are four different kinds of patience: patience in action, in thought, in word in the manner of feeling. There are two different acts of patience. The first is to stand firm against the activity of another person, the second is to stand firm against one's own activity. Not to resist the activity of another person is an act of patience of the former sort, and to control oneself when one wishes to do or say a certain thing is an act of patience of the latter sort. The most difficult test of patience is to have to wait for something, which one wants at once.

The symbol of patience is the cross. The vertical line indicates activity, the horizontal line control. Patience is, for the saint and the sage, the first lesson and the last. The more one learns to bear the more one has to bear, such is the nature of life. Yet in reality patience is never wasted, patience always wins something great, even when to all appearance it loses. Sometimes a patient person seems a vanquished one, but in reality the victory is his. In the path of mastery, as in the path of renunciation, patience plays the greatest part.

Every faculty has a tendency to act more and more quickly. Every activity starts from a rhythm that is productive, and when the activity is increased the rhythm becomes progressive, and if it is increased still more the rhythm becomes destructive. These three rhythms are called in Sanskrit Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. It is only by control that one can keep the productive and progressive nature. Lack of control allows destruction to set in. The will alone has the power to control each activity, either of the body or of the mind. When a person walks he wishes to walk faster, when he speaks to speak more quickly. It is the nature of activity to tend to increase its speed, and if this increase is permitted, very soon the destructive element comes about. The stronger this faculty of control becomes in a person the stronger the person becomes, and the more one loses the power of control the weaker one becomes.

There is no doubt that patience often seems a crucifixion, but one must remember that resurrection is always reached through crucifixion. Patience often seems like the effacement of self, and it is true that it is self-effacement, and yet nothing is lost, for by this practice of control a far greater power is attained. The Persian poets have called patience death. Doubtless it is to all appearance death, for it causes activity to cease, but in reality it is a greater life.

5 Fear

Fear is considered by the mystics to come from the action of the earth element, and its effect is to make the body stiff at the moment when a person is afraid. According to metaphysics fear is caused by the lack of light. Therefore the more light there is in the heart the more fearless the heart becomes. There is the Surah of the Koran, which supports this, where it is said, 'There is no fear in the mastermind.'

Fear arises from the strangeness of an object or from ignorance on the part of the person who fears. There is a

verse of a Marathi poet, who says that, 'It is the self that creates for itself the object of fear - one's fear comes from oneself.' Every attitude towards life has a re-echo, and the attitude is formed by expectation. When one expects one's fellow man to love one, his fellow man does love him, and when one expects harm from another, then harm comes. When a person is afraid of a dog, he gives the dog a tendency to bite him. This can be noticed so plainly in the lower creation, that every animal is afraid of another animal, and the expectation of harm makes it fear more than does the idea of the hugeness of the form or the bodily strength of another animal. Many things in life can be brought about, not only by wanting them and thinking about them, but also by fearing them, both objects and conditions. To clear one's mind of fear is like bringing light into a dark room, and as light is needed to illuminate a dark room so the light of the soul is necessary to clear away the thought of fear.

Man is more impressionable than any other living being, owing to the fineness and sensitiveness of his nature, but at the same time man alone is capable of rising above all fear, for in him there is a torch that can show him a way through the darkness. Man fears all that is hurtful and harmful in any form, and more than all, man fears what he calls death. As in the case of every object and condition that arouses fear, the fear is caused by ignorance, so even the fear of death is caused by ignorance. Man is afraid if he is in the water, where even so helpless a creature as a fish feels safe. It is not only the fact that man is incapable of remaining in the water that makes him afraid, but also the water is a strange world to him. He does not know what is in it. Many have died in the water of fright of the water before having actually sunk. This life of names and forms is therefore called by the mystics Maya, an illusion, which is apt to be made into that which one would like to make it. When one fears, this world frightens one, but when one clears one's heart of all fear, the whole world of illusion turns into one single vision of the sublime immanence of God.

6 Justice

Justice is a faculty of mind, which weighs things. There is also a faculty attached to it, which sees whether things are in their places and sees the fitness of things. This is also the power to view two sides of a subject or of a thing, the side where it is complete and the side where it is incomplete. This faculty is kindled by the light of intelligence. The more intelligence the greater justice. It is generally the lack of intelligence that produces injustice.

The development of the ego often obscures this faculty, in the same way that clouds eclipse the sun. Therefore a selfish person, however clever, lacks pure intelligence and is therefore deficient in the true sense of justice. It is often personal feeling, a personal like or dislike that disposes the weights in the scales of justice to suit the personal fancy. Therefore often a person who boasts of his sense of justice is really more unjust than one who makes no such claim. A just person is one who can decide against his own interest if necessary. Only when personal bias is absent can a decision be called just.

Into the scales of justice a person throws weights from his store of knowledge, and it is his own ideas about the values of things that weigh and balance them. But as opinions change at every step in evolution what may seem just or unjust today is not likely to seem so tomorrow. What a person calls wrong at one time will seem at another time in his life to be right, and it is the same with regard to what at one period of his evolution he considers right. No wonder that the prophets, reformers, and poets have so often contradicted themselves in their writings! One can find contradictions in all the scriptures of the world, and it needs a perfect development of the faculty to look at this idea with a perfect view.

7 Reason

Reason is a faculty that raises out of itself an answer to every question one asks. There is a store of knowledge of names, and forms, of principles, of feelings. From that store of knowledge an answer rises. It is that which is called reason.

This store of knowledge is different in every individual, and it is therefore that often two people may disagree and at the same time both may have reason for what they say. This shows that reason is not outside of oneself. It is within oneself, and at each stage towards evolution reason changes. The answer that a person may get from within to a certain question in one month may change in the next month. Every object and condition suggests a reason, but the more one penetrates through the object or condition the more one realizes that there is a reason under reason, and one condition may suggest numerous reasons, according to the depths one may touch. When there is a discourse about justice or injustice, right or wrong, one applies one's own reason, and when one cannot understand the reason of another, one's knowledge is incomplete.

The effect that different names and forms produce is an illusion, and so is reason, which is the creation of mind, when it is compared with the ultimate reality. Reality is above reason. When reason follows reality it is helpful, but when reality is covered under reason it is an illusion. The one who penetrates through the numerous covers of reason comes to the depth of knowledge, but the one who clings to the first reason he has touched remains there. For him there is no progress.

8 Logic

Logic is a support that reason takes to strengthen itself. It may be called a fortification of reason. The analytical faculty of the mind seeks for something substantial to make reason cut and dry. In other words logic may be called authorized reason, or reason supported by the reason of others.

Logic has a larger field than reason, because the scope of reason is only the mind of one individual. The scope of logic is vaster; it represents the minds of many individuals who have thought on the same subject. Logic is a degree higher in knowledge than reason. When one person gives a reason and another person says there is no logic in it that means that there is no support for this reason from other minds, which have thought about the subject.

In one sense logic may be said to be concrete and realistic knowledge, and yet in another sense it is most limited and poor knowledge. It is limited to names and forms that are forever changing. It is poor because it is founded on a substance that is subject to destruction. When logic helps to strengthen the knowledge of names and forms and of conditions it is a great help, but when it confines the progress of the soul, which is made on a different path, it is a great hindrance. In their words it may be said that the possessor of logic is a learned man, but he who is possessed by logic is lost.

9 Temptation

Temptation is a momentary illusion. The beauty of some object covers the eyes of reason and man is drawn back or pushed aside from the track, which he follows in order to arrive at his desired destination, whatever it be. Therefore, what is a temptation to one person is not necessarily a temptation to another. The same object which is a temptation to one may be a goal to another. One cannot wisely point out: 'This is a temptation, and that is not.' In reality all is temptation and nothing is. It is not the object or the action which forms the temptation but the situation. In order to be aware of the temptation one has to meet with, it is well to keep before one the goal one wishes to attain, and always to reason out before taking a step toward anything whether it will help or hinder the attainment of one's desired end.

There are three forms of temptation. The first is that which cries aloud what it is, which shows itself clearly. The second form is that in which the temptation disguises itself and hides the goal from the eyes of man, so that man may at once forget his destination. In the third form the temptation appears for the moment a greater gain than the desired object. In such a case reason no doubt helps, and yet it cannot help altogether, for as the temptation belongs to the external world so does reason also belong to the external world. There is only one thing that can counterbalance it and that is the faculty of intuition. If this faculty is really developed it comes to man's rescue in all his difficulties.

If one desires to reach the goal one must make a great fortification against temptation. One should keep before one the object to be attained and feel behind one the strength of intuition to push one forward. The further we go the greater will be our temptation. Even after the attainment of an object temptations still persist, ready to snatch away the object attained, which is very well explained in the myth of Orpheus. It is not necessary to be so careful as to become timid, nor should we be so bold as to commit ourselves to follies at every step we take. We must keep the balance and keep on the straight path with our gaze fixed on the desired goal.

10 Tolerance

Tolerance is the first lesson of morals, and the next is forgiveness. A person who tolerates another through fear, through pride, from a sense of honor, or by the force of circumstances does not know tolerance. Tolerance is the control of the impulse of resistance by will. There is no virtue in tolerance which one practices because one is compelled by circumstances to tolerate, but tolerance is a consideration by which one overlooks the fault of another and gives no way in oneself to the impulse of resistance. A thoughtless person is naturally intolerant, but if a thoughtful person is intolerant, it shows his weakness. He has thought, but has no self-control. In the case of the

thoughtless, he is not conscious of his fault, so it does not matter much to him, but a thoughtful person is to be pitied if he cannot control himself owing to the lack of will.

The activities in the worldly life cause many disturbances, and it is a constant jarring effect upon a sensitive soul. If one does not develop tolerance in nature, one is always subject to constant disturbances in life. To wish to live in the world and to be annoyed with its activities is like wanting to live in the sea and be constantly resisting its waves. This life of the world, full of different activities constantly working, has much in it to be despised, if one has a tendency to despise. But at the same time there is much to admire if one turns one's face from left to right. It is in our own power to choose the view of imperfection or the vision of perfection, and the difference is only looking down, or looking upwards. By a slight change of attitude in one's outlook on life one can make the world into heaven or hell. The more one tolerates, the stronger one becomes in this way. It is the tolerant who is thoughtful. And as thought becomes greater, one becomes more tolerant. The words of Christ, 'Resist not evil', teach tolerance.

GATHA II

1 Forgiveness

They say, 'Forgive and forget.', which is very expressive of the process of forgiveness. It is impossible to forgive unless you can forget. What keeps man from forgiving his fellow man is that he holds the fault of another constantly before his view. It is just like sticking a little thorn in one's own heart and keeping it there and suffering the pain. It may also be pictured as putting a drop of poison in one's own heart and retaining it until the whole heart becomes poisoned. Verily, blessed are the innocent, who do not notice anybody's fault, and the greater credit is to the mature souls, who, recognizing a fault, forget it and so forgive. How true are the words of Christ, 'Let those throw a stone who have not sinned.' The limitations of human life make man subject to faults. Some have more faults, some have less, but there is no soul without faults. As Christ says, 'Call me not good.'

Forgiveness is a stream of love, which washes away all impurities wherever it flows. By keeping this spring of love, which is in the heart of man, running, man is able to forgive, however great the fault of his fellow man may seem. One who cannot forgive closes his heart. The sign of spirituality is that there is nothing you cannot forgive, there is no fault you cannot forget. Do not think that he who has committed a fault yesterday must do the same today, for life is constantly teaching and it is possible in one moment a sinner may turn into a saint.

At times it is hard to forgive, as it is hard to take away the thorn that has gone deep into one's heart. But the pain that one feels in taking away the thorn deepest in the heart is preferable to keeping the thorn in the heart constantly. The greater pain of a moment is better than the mild pricking going on constantly. Ask him who forgives what relief there is in forgiveness. Words can never explain the feeling of the heart when one has cast out the bitter feeling from one's heart by forgiving and when love spreads all over within oneself, circulating like warm blood through one's whole being.

2 Endurance (1)

The human being is, physically and mentally, so constructed that he can endure only a certain degree of vibrations, audible or visible. Therefore noise distracts his mind and strong colors also make an uncomfortable effect. All that is called noise is beyond the range of his power of endurance. Generally soft colors appeal to him more, for the vibrations of soft colors are soothing and do not demand endurance on the part of man. But atmosphere demands the greatest strength of endurance. One can endure color or sound, but it is difficult to endure atmosphere, which is not congenial. Man prefers to endure a color or a sound, which is difficult to endure, rather than the personality of another person. Human activity has a more jarring effect than color or sound. Man does not need to speak or act in order to create a jarring effect upon another. If his mind is in that state, he has a jarring effect upon others without having to speak or act. If there is a thing most difficult to endure, it is man. And yet the soul most longs for the association of mankind. If a person were in a forest where he did not see a human being, after a few months, when his fancy were satisfied to some extent, he would long to see the face of a human being. Trees and plants and animals and birds are not sufficient. This shows that it is not only that like attracts like, but like needs like. The position of man is a strange position in life. Man is uncomfortable with his kind and unhappy without his kind, and he does not know what course is best to take. The Sufi, therefore, learns the lesson of endurance, to take the right

course. For if one does not endure a devil one cannot endure an angel, if man is not happy on earth he cannot be happy in heaven. A person who has no endurance, his need will not even be answered in paradise.

Although it is difficult, at times, to endure, yet if one will not make an effort to endure he will endure, then, at all times. The world is what it is, it cannot be changed. If we want it to be different, we must change ourselves. If we become susceptible to jarring effects, jarring influences, not only human activities around us but also even the moving of the leaves will make us uncomfortable. To a miserable person the midsummer day is worse than a dark night. All seems gloomy, everything seems wretched, and he himself melancholy. This tendency is developed by not making an effort to endure but by avoiding situations, which ask for one's endurance. In all walks of life success is assured for an enduring man, and with the lack of this quality, whatever be man's qualification, he is kept back from success. By endurance I do not mean loving and admiring all things and beings that one likes or dislikes. Endurance means to be able to stand, to tolerate, and to overlook all that is not in accordance with one's own way of thinking. All the troubles among friends, families, nations, are the result of lack of endurance. And if this spirit of endurance would spread from individuals, in time it would become the spirit of the multitude, and the conditions would become much better than they are at present.

3 Endurance (2)

It is endurance that makes things valuable and men great. Gold and Silver are not necessarily more beautiful than the delicate and fragrant flowers, which are much superior in their color, fragrance, and delicacy to gold and silver. Why are the flowers the slaves of gold and silver coins? Because gold and silver are durable and flowers have not that quality. In this ever-changing world, full of sensitiveness, endurance is very rarely to be found.

A person without endurance is night and day in torture. For life can be pictured as the waves of the sea, always slapping and knocking against what is standing firm. One who is susceptible of being moved by this continual motion of life has no rest for a single moment. It is said: 'There is no peace for the wicked' - it is really not 'for the wicked' but 'for the weak', because wickedness is the extension of weakness. Endurance is an exercise of strengthening the will power. The nature of life will always remain the same; it is man who can change himself. But generally people with life to become still, because they are disturbed. It is just like traveling on the sea: man wants the sea to stay calm instead of building his boat so that it may travel on the waves and stand all storms. All the great persons of the world, whatever their mission in life, proved their greatness by this one quality of endurance. The enduring personality is like a ship that can stand storms and winds under all conditions, and saves itself and others. Such blessed personalities, showing the strength of God, have been called the saviors of humanity.

4 Will Power

Will power is not mental power, but it appears in the form of a mental power: the mind, as a globe, gives out the light of the will. Will power, plainly speaking, is soul power. Therefore the more one realizes its source, the more one develops the power of will. No doubt the mind is an instrument, also the senses are instruments of the will power, and if these instruments are not sound and well developed, the will power cannot work properly. It is just like a blunted sword in the hand of a skillful warrior. It is therefore that in the Sufi cult practices are given to make the mind as well as the senses proper tools for the will power to use. As the plant is sprung from the earth, but is nourished by the rain falling from the sky, so the will power springs from within, but is developed by external activities. It must be remembered that the inner life reflects on the outer life and the outer life reflects on the inner life. Both parts of life are interdependent.

Will power is like a battery of life, and as difficult as it is to deal with a strong mechanism, and as dangerous as it is to work with a battery of enormous power, so difficult and dangerous it is to develop and to work with the will power. In the first place, power is blinding, beauty is revealing. Wrong and unjust and unreasonable tendencies may rise from power, and one may destroy oneself in its expression. Christ has given a hint on this subject where he says, 'He who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.' But by this it is not meant that one must not develop will power. It only means that one prepares, before developing will power, knowledge and strength to control it when it is once developed, and the knowledge and the clearness of vision to utilize it rightfully.

Will power in man is the secret of God, and in this secret the mighty power of God is hidden. Therefore in the East, where mystical ideas are generally known, people always say, we do not know, behind this limited human form what is hidden. This makes them respect and consider what is hidden in every person they meet. Hafiz says,

‘Do not let yourself be fooled by the patched sleeve of the dervish, you do not know if under this patched sleeve a mighty arm is not hidden.’ What we call miracle is the outcome of the same power, except that what is above human limitation cannot be called natural, it is supernatural. Therefore the miracles are not done by man, but by the superman, who in the religious term is called the divine man. Man is inferior in his selfishness. When he rises above self, he is superior. Therefore the right to develop will power is the right of the superior man. The difference between what they call white magic and black magic lies only in the use made by the inferior man or by the superior man of the same will power. It is just as by the strength of arm you can take man’s life or you can save man’s life. Both things are accomplished by the same power.

No better use of will power can be made than for self-control, for control of the body, and control of the mind. One who controls his body will control his mind. The one who controls his mind will control his body. The best use one can make of will power is to use this power for self-discipline, on passion, on anger, on all things, which abide in man’s nature as his great enemies. In other words, by will power one must build up a force to fight with oneself, with that part of oneself which offends us. It is rarely that a man lives on earth who things, speaks and acts as he wishes to. If any man does so, he is no doubt a Master. Doing a miracle apart, if one can make oneself obey one’s own will one will surely rise to a greater exaltation. In the spiritual path the development of will power is the college education. The moral education is the school education, which comes before. But after finishing the development of the will power, then there comes a work, a duty that one has to perform toward God and toward humanity, by expending the thus-developed power of will.

5 Keeping a Secret

The power of keeping a secret is the digestive power of the mind, and one who cannot keep a secret is like a person who cannot digest food. As indigestion is a malady of the body so giving out of a secret is a disease of mind. Mind is the fertile ground, and it is the product of the mind, all this that we see before us, created and produced. Therefore the mind, which conceives a secret, will prove to be a fertile land, and the mind, which cannot assimilate a secret, is like a barren desert. Those who have accomplished something in life have accomplished it by this power, the power of keeping a secret. Those who have wasted their lives have wasted them by the lack of this power. With all the intelligence, learning and goodness they might have, they have proved to be shallow. The more one knows the secret of the world the more one feels inclined to keep it secret. And the more one keeps secret what one knows the more life unfolds its secrets to one.

One naturally keeps secret all that is bad, ugly, and undesirable, and one feels naturally inclined to expose all that is good, valuable, and beautiful. Yet even that, if kept secret, will show in time the phenomenon of a seed hidden in the ground, which will spring up, when the hour comes, with its leaves, fruits and flowers. Therefore sometimes Sufis have taken a contrary way: to keep secret all the good one does and to let one’s faults be known. There exists in Persia a sect of Sufis who are called Rind, who still practice this principle. There is a saying of a Rind: be a lover from within and become indifferent outwardly. This is a becoming manner, rarely seen in the world. When a person arrives at a stage of spiritual advancement, when he regards the fault or weakness of another as his own fault, when he sees himself standing in the position of another, when he sees in another his own self, then he feels inclined to cover the fault of another as he would his own.

In all ages there has been talk about the sacred word, and it has always been considered a great secret: that secret is the tendency of keeping a secret. It is not in everybody’s power to keep a secret. For the secret is heavier than an elephant to lift, the weak-minded is weighed down by the heavy weight of a secret. The person who has not developed this power feels as if it were a congestion of the heart, from which relief can only come when he has given out the secret. Till then he is in pain. Also, it must be remembered that the power of the body is nothing in comparison with the power of the mind. And the power of the one who keeps a secret is greater than the power of the giant who lifts a mountain. All that one holds is preserved, all that one lets go is dispersed.

6 Mind

Mind develops to its fullness in man, although it exists in its primitive stage in all the different aspects of creation. Man, therefore, is so called from Manas, which in Sanskrit means mind. Many psychologists have thought that mind is the possession of man only, that the animal has no mind, but it is not so, even the plants have a mind. Where there is feeling there is mind.

There is no difference between heart and mind, although ‘heart’ expresses more than ‘mind’. The heart is the depth,

and the surface is called mind. Plainly speaking, the depth of mind is heart, and the surface of heart is mind. Mind is a receptacle of all to which it is exposed. It is like the photographic plate. Therefore all conditions, happy or unhappy, all actions, good or bad, all that is beautiful or void of beauty, become impressed upon the mind. Its first impression is on the surface, and as the impression is retained in the mind so it reaches the depth of the heart. It is like a photographic plate. Once it is developed, the impression becomes clear and deeply engraved. But the photographic plate is not creative and the heart is creative. Therefore every impression which once reaches the heart becomes as a seed in a fertile ground. The heart reproduces all it has received.

Therefore it is to the great disadvantage of the fault-finding man that he wishes to find fault with all he sees, for if he is not able to throw away immediately the undesirable impression received, which is not always so easy, he begins in due time to reproduce what he has received. Human nature is such that all the bad things man sees in another seem to him worse than they are, but when he himself does the same, he always has a reason to defend his fault. It is like partaking all that one dislikes in another only by the habit of faultfinding. For the wise, who have risen above the ordinary faults of human life, it matters little if they find fault, but they are the ones who do not criticize. They, as a rule, overlook all that seems undesirable, and that action of overlooking itself prevents all the undesirable impressions from penetrating through their hearts. There is a natural tendency in man as in the animal to protect his heart from all hurt or harm, but that is the external heart. If man only knew what harm is brought to one's being by letting any undesirable impression enter the heart, he also would adopt the above-mentioned policy of the wise, to overlook.

7 Thought

Thought is a wave of the mind. The difference between thought and imagination is that the former is an activity of the mind directed with intention, an imagination is an activity, which is not directed intentionally but rises mechanically, like the waves of the sea. Therefore imagination has less power than thought. No doubt the imagination of a man with a powerful mind will also have an influence and an outcome. But thought, intentionally directed, has strength of will with it, and therefore its power is great.

A clear mind can have a clear thought, and therefore clearness of thought depends upon the cleanliness and the awakening of the centers. When the organs of the body, and especially the centers, are not in a clean and normal condition, then one's own thought is unclear to oneself, and the thought of others still less clear. Man in reality is by nature a mind reader, and the state of body and mind is abnormal when he cannot read thought. To one to whom his own thought is clear, the thought of another person will be clear also. It is he who does not know himself, who does not know others. It is the knowledge of self, which enables man to know others. Man's thought may be likened to a rubber ball. It can be directed to any point one wishes to hit, but there is also a likelihood that the thought so directed would rebound and hit oneself. A thought of love sent to another must rebound and bring love to oneself, and likewise the thought of hate.

Thought depends upon mind, as the plants depend upon the soil in which they are sown. Fruits and flowers grown in one kind of soil are sweet and fragrant, in another kind of soil they may lack that sweetness and fragrance. Therefore the wise know the mentality of a person by his thought, they know from which soil that thought comes. As water is found in the depth of the earth so love is hidden beneath every heart, only the difference is that in one part of the earth the water is far down below the earth, in another part of the earth it can be found quite near. And it is that water that makes the earth flourish. And so it is the love element, which makes the ground which we call the mind a fertile ground. Every thought coming from a fertile and flourishing ground must bear some fruit. A loving person's life itself is a garden. But otherwise, if it is a barren soil, from there you expect nothing but volcanic eruptions, the volcano that destroys itself and its surroundings. Every element in the form of a thing or being, which is destructive, must of necessity destroy itself first.

In order to make thought fruitful mental culture is necessary. First the digging of the ground. The inner culture of the Sufis begins with the digging of this ground. What is meant by Zikar is this digging process. But it is not only the exercise; it is living the life. Digging the ground is what may be called consideration. It is constant consideration, which cultivates the mental ground. Then one must water this ground, and this water is the love element, to give and to receive love. Give more and take little is the principle. And when in a ground so cultivated and so watered the thought-plants will spring, they must necessarily bring forth sweet fruits and fragrant flowers.

8 Tawakul; Dependence Upon God

Dependence is nature and independence is the spirit. The independent spirit becomes dependent through manifestation. When One becomes many, then each part of the One, being limited, strives to be helped by the other part, for each part finds itself imperfect. Therefore we human beings, however rich with the treasures of heaven and earth, are poor in reality, because of our dependence upon others. The spiritual view makes one conscious of this, and the material view blinds man, who then shows independence and indifference to his fellow man. Pride, conceit and vanity are the outcome of this ignorance. There come moments when even the king has to depend upon a most insignificant person. Often one needs the help of someone before whom one has always been proud and upon whom one has always looked with contempt. As individuals depend upon individuals so the nations and races depend upon one another. As no individual can say, 'I can get on without another person', so no nation can say, 'We can be happy while another nation is unhappy.' But an individual or a multitude depends most upon God, in Whom we all unite. Those who depend upon the things of the earth certainly depend upon things that are transitory and they must some day or other lose them. Therefore there remains only one object of dependence, that is God, Who is not transitory, and Who always is and will be. Sa'di has said, 'He who depends upon Thee will never be disappointed.'

No doubt it is the most difficult thing to depend upon God. For an average person, who has not known or seen, who never had any idea of such a personality existing as God, but has only heard in church that there exists someone in the Heavens Who is called God and has believed it, it is difficult to depend entirely upon Him. A person can hope that there is a God, that by depending upon Him he will have his desire fulfilled, a person can imagine that there can be Someone Whom people call God, but for him also it is difficult to depend entirely on God. It is for them that the Prophet has said, 'Tie your camel and trust in God.' It was not said to Daniel, 'Take your sword and go among the lions.' One imagines God, another realizes God. There is a difference between these two persons. The one who imagines can hope, but he cannot be certain. The one who realizes God, he is face to face with his Lord, and it is he who depends upon God with certainty. It is a matter of struggling along on the surface of the water, or courageously diving deep, touching the bottom of the sea. There is no greater trial for a person than dependence upon god. What patience it needs, besides the amount of faith it requires, to be in the midst of the world of illusion and yet to be conscious of the existence of God! To do this man must be able to turn all what is called life into death, and to realize in what is generally called death - in that death, the true life. This solves the problem of false and real.

9 Piety

People very often mean by piety, orthodoxy, a religious appearance, or a great goodness. Really speaking piety means purity. Piety is the healthy state of mind; the person of healthy mind is really pious. That mind is pious which fears not, which is beyond life's anxieties and worries, which is above reproaches, which by its innermost joy makes even the body feel light. The pious feels exalted, for piety is purity from all things and conditions of earthly life which pull man down to the earth. When man feels light in his body and joyful in his heart his soul becomes exalted, and that is the sign of piety. If there is not this feeling in man, however much good there be in him, it is of no use, his learning is of no value, his religion, his prayer, all in vain.

Religion, prayer, or meditation, are all methods by which the joy, which is within man, which is man's divine heritage, may be brought to the surface. Sufis have used different words from those of the orthodox in expressing their spiritual ideas. Therefore instead of calling man pious they call him Khuanda Pishani, the smiling forehead. It means that if his lips do not smile, his forehead smiles. How true it is that before man cries or laughs his eyebrows give warning of what is coming. That is what is meant by the word 'expression' in the English language. There is an inner joy, a divine feeling, which rises up as water from a fountain and shows itself in many forms, in smiles, in tears, in words, in silence. Man expresses it in dancing, in singing. His voice, his word, his gesture, all expresses piety. Hafiz has said in sarcasm to the long-faced pious, who have become so out of orthodoxy and who look at singing or dancing with contempt, 'If the heads of the pious would hear my words sung, they would get up and begin to dance.' Then he goes on, saying, 'Hafiz says things sometimes through drunkenness which he ought not to have said. O pious one, I pray you will overlook it all.' The Sufi's piety is the divine joy which is the soul's real treasure, and it does not matter in what way it is achieved, religiously or irreligious, as long as it is achieved. It is the thing the Sufi values most.

10 Spirituality

It is amusing how many different meanings people attach to the word spiritual. Some call spirituality great goodness, some mean by it melancholy, some by it mean a miserable life, some think spirituality lies in communion

with spirits, some consider wonder-working and the art of the conjuror a kind of spirituality, every good or bad power, so long as it is a power, people often imagine to be a spiritual power, many connect the idea of spirituality with a religious authority. Whereas it is the simplest idea, if one cares to understand it by rising above complexity. Spirituality is contrary to materiality. One who is conscious of matter alone is material, one who becomes conscious of spirit also is spiritual. He who thinks, 'I am my body', and sees no further, is material. He may as well say, 'I am my coat', and when the coat is worn out he may say, 'I am dead.' The one who is conscious of the spirit, to him his body is a coat, and as by taking off one's coat one does not die, so even by the death of this body the spirit realized soul does not die.

It is the spiritual person who will attain in time immortality. He does not need to study much to prove to himself that he is spirit, for study will never convince him. It is the spirit itself, which must realize itself. The soul is its own evidence; nothing else will make the soul realize its own being. The whole work of the Sufi, which he calls inner cult, is towards soul-realization. It is realized by rising above matter, and yet the condition is that one can only realize it by getting through matter. As a fountain is necessary for the water to rise, so the material body is necessary for the soul to realize itself. The water, which remains still in the depth of the fountain, sees itself rising and falling within itself, and there lies its joy. The same picture illustrates the condition of spirit and soul. The spirit, which rises upward, is the soul, it falls again in its own being, and the realization of the spirit of this joy can alone be called spirituality.

GATHA III

1 Attitude

Attitude is the principle 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 or unhappiness. 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. 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 every thing 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. 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, and 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.' 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.

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

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. 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 that 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.

2 Sympathy

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 honor or reputation has been harmed. The one who has no honor 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. 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. 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. Sympathy is something more than love and affection, for it is the knowledge of a certain suffering which moves the living heart to sympathy.

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. Man is most active physically and mentally, and when his heart is not tuned to sympathy his mental and physical activity takes quite a contrary direction, which leads to inharmony and destruction. 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. 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. There are many attributes found in the human heart which are called divine, but among them there is no greater and better attribute than sympathy, by which man shows in human form God manifested.

3 The Word 'Sin'

Man wonders 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. 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. 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. That which deprives one of peace, freedom, happiness, tranquillity 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 a virtue. 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, and it gives by its pressure upon one's mind an increase of will power, that is why it is called virtue. 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.

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, 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 on being directed in their lives by the law made by the prophets and carried out by the priests. 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 evolution of humanity is brought a step forward from what it was before.

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 fruits 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. When the nations will recognize the divine law and 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. 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.

If one could only see that among one hundred people who are sentenced by the course 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? It is not necessary that the clergyman, the priest only should be responsible for the evolutions 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. 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.

4 Kaza and Kadr: The Will, Human and Divine

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. 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 larger fish eats the little fish, but the little fish lives upon smaller fishes. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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, and often a person accomplished something which perhaps a thousand people would not have been able to accomplish. 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. 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.

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, for they are conscientious lest they should hurt the feelings of anyone, and if by mistake they happen to hurt someone's feeling 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. 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. 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. 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.

Questions and Answers (July 18th 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, and 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. 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 air, 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.

5 Opinion

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. 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. 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.

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 other know what note of life he strikes - that is, those who have the knowledge to know it. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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. What is Sufism? It is wisdom. To learn wisdom at every step in the path of life is the only work of the Sufi.

6 Conscience

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. 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. In the Koran it is said, 'Their hands and feet will give evidence of their action.' 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.

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. 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. It might seem as if even God did not take notice of his wrongdoing. 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. 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 manifest to one's view in various ways and forms. 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 Judgement Day does not come after death, for him every day is Judgement Day.

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. 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. 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. 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.

Question and Answer

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.

7 Conventionality

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. 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 toward it and it becomes natural for them to learn it, also while learning they do not feel it to be foreign to their nature.

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. 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.

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.

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. 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. 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.

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 the necessity of conventionalities comes from. The one who is a slave to 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 Earth.'

Questions and Answers (July 21st 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 of 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, 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 therefore everything he will do will be just and fair. He does not need very much the 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 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 travelling 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 could 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.

8 Life

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. 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. 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.

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. 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. 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 could be warded off, he would put off to a later time. 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.

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. 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 the rhythm he cannot take the real benefit of the food he eats and the water that he drinks. The person who eats before the culmination of appetite 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.

Questions and Answers (July 21st 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 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 were 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 be submitted 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 pleasure 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 there is 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 sorrowful. 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.'

9 The Word 'Shame'

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.' 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.'

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. 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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

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 fetches, the market place is not the place of the pearl. Its real place is the crown of the king. 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.

Where does man learn virtue? He learns it from that sense of shame. And what develops virtue in man? It is again the same sense. 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 favor. And there is nothing else from where it can be gained. 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.

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. 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.

Questions and Answers (August 15th 1923)

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

A Anything wrongly suggested always has 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.' Everybody does not appreciate a person with this virtue. The person who has not got this virtue cannot appreciate it. Therefore for a greater person a greater place is required.

10 Tolerance

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. 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 natures. 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. 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.

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.' 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. 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. 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.

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

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.

Questions and Answers (August 4th 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 rejects nothing. 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 intolerant 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 one 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, I only thought, 'If I cannot, no one can!' I went home and gathered leaves, and everybody could not understand why I was gathering the leaves. It is bitterer 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.