

Gatha with Commentary

Pasi Anfas: Breath

Series I

*of*

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

**Gatha with Commentary      Series I: Number 1**

**The Power of the Breath**

GATHA: 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 breath, and when this power becomes less, then the will loses its power over the body. As the power of the sun holds all the planets, so the power of the breath holds every organ.

TASAWWUF: It is the most difficult lesson to bring to the mentally minded people that the breathing itself brings the knowledge of breath and any mental or verbal statements or ideas are themselves thoughts and not breathing. Besides they have an effect on the breath, often changing it.

Breath has lost its importance by the substitution of the word “spirit” which comes from the Latin word for “breath,” and then it is used so that we cannot always tell whether breath and spirit are the same or different. But we can by both observation and reflection notice what happens.

It is the will power that holds all organs and cells of the body together through the instrumentality of breath and the mind also is coordinated through the breath. Therefore many illnesses of mind and body are corrected by corrections in breathing. So breath remains an important subject.

RYAZAT: The disciples should watch first both the in-breathing and the out-breathing. Then hold certain thoughts and notice how these thoughts are affected by holding the breath in, holding it out, and controlling or not controlling the breath. And not only the thoughts but the bodily functions can be observed to change as there are changes in breathing by this simple type of exercise.

GATHA: Besides this, the breath purifies the body by taking in new and fresh life and 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 man eats and drinks.

TASAWWUF: This simple lesson is most important. Disciples are given the Purification breaths and Nayaz and they do not realize at first how important they are. Every breath brings the power of the space, part as pure power and also as healing power by which one can benefit oneself and others.

The prayer, Nayaz, is generally given to disciples after Bayat. But it is also a published prayer which can be recited by anybody. It generally takes a long time to realize that every inhalation may draw in the beneficence of the rays of the sun, the waves of the air, and the all-pervading power in

space, actually. When man can avail himself of this, it follows as the Sufi saint, Moula Bux, said, that there is no gain in life excepting the remembrance of Allah with each inhalation and no loss save the forgetfulness of God. When we keep the remembrance, we have the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, so to speak, and when we actualize we have more than the keys, we may have the mastery.

So it must be repeated, that every inhalation is an opportunity to draw in the divine effulgence; and every exhalation an opportunity to be raised over the denseness of the earth.

Many people have taken advantage of Heliotherapy. The wise who know about the Heliotherapy and the Spectro-chrome therapy, also know that the full advantage can only come when the breath is in the right condition. Causality brings this about, perhaps, once in every two hours. Practice of esotericism enables man to take advantage, full advantage, every moment of his life.

The waves of the air are also studied in Sufi mysticism, in many ways. Those who have the benefit of a true teacher can learn indirectly from him by his wise guidance, and directly from him by his atmosphere.

But the all-pervading power in space is most wonderful. It has been taught that man moves in it as the fish moves in the water and does not know it. Devotion is one of the best means toward God-attunement and this in turn brings about perfection of breath.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: The cells are held together by the breath; that is, the Prakritic or Shakti side of the body operates from the breath. But also the functions, the Purushic or Shiva aspect of life, the functioning and movement, also come from the breath. Both matter and spirit are from the breath. Breath is needed to hold the cells and organs together, and breath is also needed to carry on the physical and superphysical functions of the cells and organs.

We can see this in many diseases. In a sense, all diseases arise from the failure of the Shiva or Shakti functions in the body. They may be caused by wrong diet, wrong breathing, or what is being called now "psychosomatic" disorders which arise when the physical and subtle aspects of man's existence are not coordinated.

Some people have declared that jogging cures a number of disorders. There is no doubt that jogging does affect the breathing and this change of rhythm and correction in respiratory functioning is most beneficial. But having a belief in jogging is even of less benefit than having a theory of diet and not eating at all. This sort of thought without any applied action is detrimental and

increases the sphere of nufs, the ego.

There is a spiritual science called **Irfan**, which really means **Gnosis**. By applying oneself to it, one can call upon God (i.e. Allah) for help in every difficulty, not by a mere calling, not by a prayer, but by an applied function. This is most wonderful, too, in its beneficent effects.

Both teachers and healers have methods to correct any disorders in breath, sometimes by their atmospheres alone. Besides, there are many forms of applied meditation which are the best of cures.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: There is an aspect of Sufi Mysticism which is concerned with the Science of the Elements. In the Hindu teachings this is called **Tattva Vada**. Mostly people are so concerned with the theory, their mind learns a little, but it has no value. In the Sufi mysticism the teacher gives the instructions as to how to breathe and also explains the various operations of breathing, and the connections with the five elements and inhalation and exhalation.

It is, of course, of some benefit to know a little about anatomy and especially physiology. But to learn that there are energies that arise from the breath and to be able to direct them to every part of the body, to the cells and organs, and muscles and bones helps everybody, devotees and non-devotees alike.

GATHA: 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, trembling, shivering, or waving the hands or feet without control show lack of power in the breath. Disease, 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 unclearness of the breath. Troubles in the brain and troubles in the intestines are also caused by lack of regularity of breath. This shows that breath is the key to health, which is all happiness in life.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this: the teaching and the practice. In the science of **Irfan** and by other means the disciple learns to place his breath in any and every part of the physical organism, or to send the breath-energy to any and every part of the organism. Also in **Ryazat** the disciple learns the practice which benefits him most, and this comes chiefly from the use of the Divine Attributes, the Sifat-i-Allah which are sometimes called the "Names."

There is also the science of **Shifayat** which helps to take full advantage of the blessings of the rays of the sun, the waves of the air, the all-pervading power in space; and the ability of the adept to use these powers and also to build up the various forms of magnetism in himself and in others. The

secret of all of these is found in the breath, both in breathing itself and in many aspects of it not known to the generality.

As this knowledge becomes more universal it is probable that there will be less disease, and when the body so functions, the Light of which Jesus Christ has spoken will manifest.

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## **Gatha with Commentary      Series I: Number 2**

### **The Culture of the Breath**

GATHA: 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 excrements 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 is what we ordinarily call breath. In reality, however, that is as the stem of a tree whose branches are many. A mystic sees the whole body as the plant of the breath. 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.

TASAWWUF: The word **prana** is most valuable if one accepts it devotionally or scientifically. Many use the word as if it had mantric value. Prana means breath but not in the empty sense that is in the western tradition which sees mostly only the chemistry of it. There is much more.

This breath is the conductor of radiant magnetism that comes, in a sense, from the depths of the

universe. The Hebrew Bible says that the spirit of God was over the water, which is to say, the divine vibrations began with the universe, formed the universe and penetrated every aspect of it.

There is a whole evolution of the breathing apparatus of plants and animals. The animals that live in the water have different organs from those that live on the land and draw in the gaseous air directly. Each of these animals assimilates a different range of vibration of the outer and inner worlds.

In man even the skin is in a sense a breathing organ. It can be used to help the lungs and the kidneys but psychically it functions differently. The air, as a gas, is dissolved in the blood, and it conveys its magnetism to every cell in the body. The blood acts, so to speak, as if the Divine Mother, within the flesh. And so there is also an internal breath in both the physical and metaphysical sense. Yogis and adepts also use it for their wonderworkings, but always the breath is the conveyor of life itself. When we stop breathing the life in the flesh ceases.

There are many centers in the body, not always the same as the glands and they are used by Sufis as well as Yogis, both in breathing exercises and concentrations. Here it is not the mind alone that is agile, but a feeling sense which directs the breath with purpose.

GATHA: 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 is pictured as a gas and the center as lanterns.

TASAWWUF: These centers are found at the base of the spine; the navel; the center around the heart and lungs; the forehead with the pineal gland; the crown with the pituitary body. The center at the base of the spine is not opened until one is far advanced, and acts in coordination with the others, all the others. The navel center is used to help the physical functions such as giving one a good appetite, sleeping well and keeping the blood and breath in proper circulation. Often when one develops it the body also becomes stouter because of the keen appetite.

When the heart-center is used, it makes one breathe better, the feelings and kashf become keen, the impressions are clearer, the voice develops, the person feels more alive, loving and wise.

The concentration on the forehead center helps with memory, the imagination, will-power, intellect and all those functions that belong to the Mind-World, so to speak. When one is mentally deficient or inefficient the training of this center helps, but it should be under the guidance of a murshid.

The highest in both a physical and metaphysical sense is the center at the top of the head. This awakens ecstasy, spiritual consciousness, illumination. Then one's influence spreads; there is wider observation, keener understanding, and the growth of all faculties.

All this training comes under the higher aspects of RYAZAT, or esoteric science. Its real effectiveness is when one passes from mental consideration to actual performance as part of devotion and as part of concentration (Murakkabah).

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: One aspect of this is in observing deficiencies and shortcomings. No doubt this is a first step. It is not necessary to tell anybody. Analysis alone breaks down confidence and emphasizes shortcomings. No doubt psychologists and psychiatrists use such methods, suitable to their particular craft.

There are many descriptions of these centers given by different schools and some in print. They may be likened to the blueprint of a building or sometimes to the science of anatomy in contrast to physiology. They show us pictures but themselves are not the realities indicated. Many people get too excited by them and thus inhibit their own progress. Others confuse complexities with the depths of wisdom.

The way of the wise was to instruct disciples in their use and value when they may be of use and value. The prime methods of spiritual development are found in Heart, in Breath and in Glance. Hazrat Inayat Khan regarded the method of working on the centers as belonging chiefly to old and worn-out ages. That they are old is proven by the manuscript of Mr. Paul Reps in the concluding section of his *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. There, there are practices found in a book. If they are presented through a teacher they may result in rapid progress for some people and even illumination. For there is no end to the progress of which man is capable; but the empty statement that man is so capable has a limited value, in its encouragement and optimism. But this in itself is not the awakening.

There are no doubt manuscripts very ancient and not so ancient which convey the ways to enlightenment through the opening of centers. Modern man has made a philosophy of it, and there are interpretations of Scriptures. Only the Sufi is not limited by any interpretation of Scriptures apart from the awakening of man. If man is not awake, all the descriptions and interpretations are of limited value. When man progresses, he finds the truths of the Bible and all Scriptures in his own personality.

GATHA: 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, many a quarter and still less.

TASAWWUF: The body has been framed so that breath is supposed to go in through the nostrils, through tubes and sinuses, down to the throat and thence to the lungs. This breath is a carrier both of matter and of energy. The matter, mainly oxygen, is absorbed by the blood which acts as the sea does but within the human body, performing the same functions as the ocean in the external

world.

The energies which are carried along are of no benefit unless one is able to get the full breath through the organs and to the lungs. Then along with the gases, the life-energy is pulled into the body and reaches all the cells and particularly the centers which have the deep functions.

The breath of man is different from that of the animals, not so much in its physical constitution but in the energies it can carry. Thus the ether-element is only absorbed by man. It may not be noticed by the biochemists and material analysts; the energies are subtle and may be immeasurable from the physical point of view.

In this way finer vibrations may be absorbed by the body of man, so when the disciple is told to repeat "This is not my body, this is the temple of God," this has a profound meaning. And the more it is realized the more can be done through and with the body. Thus the desirable characteristics such as patience, endurance, simplicity or profundity and all that is in the teachings may become realized as man is more aware of the breath.

The breath can be used for healing the body, heart and mind, and all aspects of life. It carries all the blessings, which is to say, all the magnetisms. This is also a special study of the Advanced Circle.

GATHA: 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 about 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 work a great deal and yet feel little fatigue.

TASAWWUF: This subject is introduced in the literature which may be studied by mureeds and non-mureeds alike. But knowing a few words or even the thoughts behind these words is not of itself wisdom; it is not even knowledge. Therefore the disciples of mysticism are taught the meaning of breath, how to control it, even analyze it, but for the purpose of the fulfillment of life's purpose, not to garner more intellectual knowledge.

Some of these qualities come when man properly repeats the Divine Qualities through the Wazifas. There is an attribute of God which can bring man toward perfection in whatsoever line it is necessary for him. This does not mean we should substitute the breathing practices for the work of the world; they should go together, the pneumatic and the physical.

RYAZAT: Thus the repetition of **Ya Hayy! Ya Haqq!**, especially when carried along on the breath can correct fatigue and also prevent it. It can enable man to overcome sleep when sleep is the result of mere sloth, that is to say, the ego.



GATHA: 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, 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.

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### Gatha with Commentary

### Series I: Number 3

#### Prana

GATHA: Breath in the Sufic term is called Nufs. 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.

TASAWWUF: The term **Nufs** also means ego. There is an ocean of breath and it is the physical counterpart of the Divine Spirit. In this sense it is the manifestation of God in the outer world, the Shiva or Purusha, and from it every individual draws the essence and sustenance which makes him operate as an individual entity as if apart from other individual entities or persons. Yet all of us partake of the common life, of the ocean of breath in which we live and move and have our being; and which is the outermost manifestation of the God in Whom we live and move and have our being.

The term **Prana** while meaning “breath” also includes the magnetism. Some people say they are drawing in prana and they mean they are drawing in the magnetism. This is true but it is not enough, for it is in the identification of divinity with the breath that we inhale the attributes, virtues and magnetism which we need.

All ancient peoples held that the breath contains the life-force, and modern people have accepted this intellectually. Yet if we look more deeply, we can find the spiritual teachings of all the realized souls have emphasized the breath, how to use it as a vehicle, and not emphasize thought and use it as a vehicle. The breath penetrates far deeper than the thought and it brings us blessings which

cannot come through thought alone. Thus our every inhalation and exhalation has a meaning, a purpose and a work, and in understanding this man comes to understand himself more fully.

GATHA: 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 exercising for physical culture and exercises of voice production, breath can be developed in different parts of the body.

TASAWWUF: There are factors of heredity, no doubt, but every individual has his own karma, so to speak. Even when a child is born malformed it is possible to correct this. And one method is by right breathing, and with it right walking and right exercising.

Children by nature breathe correctly. This is part of the divine inheritance of man. Even the touch and influence of the parent tends to make the child more like the parent and it begins to breathe also like the parent. Prophet Mohammed has said that every child is born a Muslim but it is his parents and environment which change him. The breath, even the love of the parent, begins to mold the child in a certain manner, generally like that of the parent.

The wise therefore learn to hold a breath of divine remembrance and also to maintain a rhythm. It is this rhythm and divine remembrance which brings the child magnetisms of the Prana which are of the great benefit in life.

The Sufi teacher also does this with all disciples, treating them in a similar manner, without any need of explanation. For it is the influence of the breath and the breath-magnetisms which are of most benefit to everybody. And the Sufi is equipped to draw the magnetisms and blessings for the benefit of everybody. Also there are rhythms and tone-qualities which belong to esotericism and they can be imparted to disciples and sometimes to non-disciples.

GATHA: 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 the plain proof that it is not the fingers that play nor the violin that sounds, but that they are the instruments of life.

TASAWWUF: The teacher does the same thing with or without the physical touch, repeating the Names of God, or the Zikr and thus imparts the magnetism and blessing to disciples and non-disciples. For this the adept must be in constant remembrance of God (Zikr) in some way. And his body then operates as the temple of the divine spirit for the benefit of the whole world.

There are conscious practices which Sufis use to develop magnetisms and there are unconscious developments in magnetism through the esoteric practices and the spirit of devotion. Also by the building up of atmosphere.

When a spiritual person magnetizes and blesses an instrument he introduces vibrations which are

most beneficial and these in turn enable the player to feel from the heart and to unite in spirit with the instrument and thus affect the atmosphere. For nothing is dead and all musical instruments are, in a certain sense, alive.

Spiritual training through music is an application of training by breath. But musical tones can carry the magnetisms of the heart, and certain qualities affect the sphere only in this manner. Instruments thus act as condensers which carry influences, and the player, using them can reach the audience. But the voice of man is more wonderful, for it can become the direct instrument of divine communication.

GATHA: The importance of breath is 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 breath. Breath is the first lesson and it is also the last.

TASAWWUF: This is completely different from the metaphysics which is often mistaken for spiritual philosophy. The very word “spirit” means an association with the breath. Even people who are excited by the existence of adepts do not readily recognize that one becomes an adept by a prowess in certain types of breathing.

We can read in the Buddhist Scriptures how Lord Buddha’s first instructions in the meditation come by becoming aware of the breath. And in many Zen schools also attention is paid to the breath. As religion becomes more theological and institutional, emphasis on the inspirations of the Teacher become covered by many other things, and so the direct teachings are often regarded as secret though we find them in the written Scriptures.

What is the Holy Spirit? It is chiefly a translation of the Divine Breath. When man can surmount the **nufs**, which is the individual breath, he becomes aware of the Divine Breath. The first step is to learn to breathe lightly, for the light breath can become more penetrating just as the x-ray, which is very refined, is more penetrating than other vibrations.

When we combine the breathing with the esotericism we begin to develop morally, psychically and magnetically.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: There is a whole Sufi science called **Irfan**, which really means **Gnosis** which is nothing but the application of the principle that the human body is a vehicle for the Divine Breath and by use of the term **Allah**, in direct and indirect ways, the life-force can be directed at will, both inside and outside the body of flesh.

The exercises which the teacher gives enables the pupil to direct his breath, first as breath, then as

energy, then as magnetism to any part of the body. This is an excellent medicine for stimulation and regeneration. For as is taught in *The Soul Whence and Whither*, the soul is the divine breath and it can stimulate, energize and restore any and all its vehicles.

Then, by combining breath with the use of Wazifas and other practices, one spiritualizes his vehicles and makes them immune to diseases and pains of all kinds. Only it is a practice, not an intellectual philosophy.

GATHA: The question, "Does he send the breath by his power of will?" can be simply answered by "yes," and yet it is not enough. If there are no strings on the violin, you cannot play it by will power. So long as the adept has not balanced his breath and controlled it and mastered it, it cannot bring the proper result.

TASAWWUF: The power of will is a very important factor by itself and is also explained in the literature. It is this which sets man apart from the rest of creation, for the animals cannot direct the breath, leaving it to instinct to operate. Therefore it is necessary to practice the breathings, and not to be misled by subjective evaluations. For after a while the magnetism and the other powers in the breath will assert themselves. It is this which enables man to master himself and also the universe in the space outside his body.

Although we speak of diseases of the kidneys, liver, brain and all organs, the devotee can send the breath to these organs and also the magnetism of the divinity to them to heal them. Concentration is needed, both to develop the will-power and also to direct the breath and for this also the teacher is ready to help the disciples.

GATHA: Therefore it is of no use to try to make use of breath for psychical or occult attainment 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 psychical phenomena.

TASAWWUF: All efforts to produce psychical power before one has attained this mastery result in loss of magnetism. The person involved feels weak. In the extreme cases he then tries to replenish the magnetism by drawing it from another. This has been called "black magic." Actually one can never draw from anyone else but a modicum of what comes from the all-pervading power in space, or **Khafiyat**, which contains the full blessing and power if one is able to attune oneself to it. And the wonders may then come.

It is the combination of devotion and discipline which draws the power so that man may avail himself of it. There is no end to this attainment, although in one sense it can be measured when, as Jesus Christ said, "Thy body is full of light."

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: The Bible teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is to say, the Divine Breath. It has the unlimited potentiality of accommodation. Many people admire the Tibetans and those who are able to elevate the body. There is much more in life than that.

The purification of the breath is the first step. Then the strengthening of rhythm. Then the ability to make the breath heavy or light, noisy or silent. When these are mastered the voice will follow the same pattern to become heavy or light, noisy or soft. That gives man control over the atmosphere and then over other people also.

The mystics of the Hindus and Hebrews have names for the various passages where the breath may function. A mental picture does not help much, although its Anatomy so to speak, will help one understand its Physiology.

When the breath can be made peaceful and the peace maintained, all power and all other virtues will arise from it. It is not only the repetition of Wazifas, but the deep meditation and contemplation which both purify the breath and enable the breath to become purer. Then one enters into the higher stages and states of consciousness which accompany spiritual development.

With the refined breath the heart-qualities become evident. With the refined breath one becomes as wise as the serpent and harmless as the dove. With the refined breath one is blessed by the divine spirit.

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**Gatha with Commentary**

**Series I: Number 4**

### **Five Aspects of the Breath**

GATHA: The mechanism of the body is dependent in its work upon five different aspects of breath, and these aspects are the five directions of breath. In the Qur'an, 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.

TASAWWUF: These five aspects are known as the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether. This subject is studied under the subject of Mysticism. They were known, or believed in by many ancient peoples and the phrase, "Ancient Wisdom" has been derived in reference to this knowledge.

Many aspects of them are presented in Upanishads, both directly and symbolically and some philosophers have worked out the details of their operations and importance. The Hebrew aspects have been assimilated into Islamic teachings, and studied in the esoteric schools. The Greeks also had analogous teachings and all may have come from one original source, but this has been excluded from the technical knowledge of the western world.

GATHA: 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 side, one before, one behind and one with him.

TASAWWUF: There are long explanations of these in the Upanishads both in symbolical and actual senses. In one sense we can say that the fire is on the right side, the water on the left side, the air is before man, the earth behind and the ether with him.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: These are explained in the inner teachings about Mysticism and also in the literature on *The Mysticism of Sound* and *Metaphysics* and in other places. The mere analytical knowledge is not always helpful. Man may learn to control the breath in all the different aspects and as he accomplishes this he is also progressing on the spiritual path. Also when he is on the spiritual path the knowledge and also the control of breath become easier for him.

GATHA: Among these five aspects the first is the breath which is like the stem of 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.

TASAWWUF: What is called the etheric current is the source of all the elements. They come from it and return to it. But the etheric current is very subtle and is not usually perceived until man develops subtlety. But in it is the seed of life, and also the distinction between the human and animal sides of our being.

Sometimes there are people like the Hindus who have through generations obtained a refinement in breath, and again there are people whom we know as savages in whom the earth element is dominant and who seem not to have progressed much beyond the earth element although all mankind has the essence of all the elements because all mankind—different in this from the animals—has all the potentialities.

Then there are people whose condition can be ascertained by the wise merely by observing their respiration. It may take some skill and knowledge of the breath, together with intuition or insight. This is not a judgment of people, but an observation, and observation of the inner senses.

Breath has to be directed to any portion of the body for its movement. This is natural. But it is also true of the internal organs as well as of the arms, legs, jaws, etc. Many organs and their functions move by instinct, naturally. When, however, they are in poor health, do not operate with rhythm, or with difficulty, the condition can be corrected by directing the breath to them, by will-power and consciously and this not only helps in their function but promotes health of the whole body.

GATHA: 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 inner-most 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.

TASAWWUF: There is a biological evolution which has resulted in certain formations and certain protections to organs. The breathing apparatus of different animals is different—in many there are gills which take in water and breath therefrom. In others there is a pneumatic system, but in man the lungs are inside in such a way that breathing itself is an exercise, an exercise which the divine wisdom, operating as instinct, has brought about.

When man lives in nature, in the wide open spaces, in the desert or among the trees or near or on the sea, there is no pollution of the atmosphere. When he lives indoors, in the cave, in the house, in buildings, there are enclosures and these not only shut out the pure etheric currents, but promote the manufacture of certain gases having impurities. Breathing air with such impurities is one of the reasons for the appearances of various diseases in man.

To compensate there are breathing exercises, gymnastics, dancing and need to be out of doors at times. Without them one is always in places where noxious gases more readily accumulate along with dust and dirt. But even when man is not so exposed, the breath does not reach the inner parts of the body excepting by effort. Sleep and repose, if carried too far, cause the respiratory organs to relax, and although tension is often dangerous, there must be control of breath, even conscious control to direct the healing vibrations to where they are needed.

GATHA: 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 psychologists to be without mind, and man,

who is far superior to the lower creation and the ideal of all beings, has not that intuitive power. The reason is that the animals lead a more natural life than man, although even that is spoiled by contact with men. The cobra can attract its food from a mile's distance, but man must toil with his hands for his daily bread.

TASAWWUF: It is not true that animals are without mind. They may not have the full consciousness that man has. Many have described the mental counterparts of the animals. They often act and react psychically, and again instinctively. For animals retain what has been called "the wisdom of the body." Prakriti, the matter-stuff out of which all things are formed, is never entirely devoid of mentality after it reaches the stage where breathing is a function, not only in animals but in plants. That is why Rumi has said that God is sleeping in the vegetable world and dreaming in the animal world.

Those animals which man had adopted as pets are more exposed to poisonous atmospheres than those who live even in what may be considered unhygienic conditions. For years of evolution and adaptation have brought to each its own normal habitat.

Therefore in the spiritual life it is a task to restore the natural functions, to become aware of all the activities which are connected with the autonomic as well as with the cerebrospinal nervous systems and this is done by breathing and not by intellection. Many schools of thought have risen with many theories and sometimes they are partially successful, but not always. Changes of religions and philosophy do not seem to affect the death rate much; changes of breathing, learning how to breathe correctly promotes longevity and good health.

In practices of meditation and concentration the breath becomes more refined and as it becomes more refined it becomes more penetrating. Therefore meditation often helps restore health from many diseases, especially if there be patience. And carrying the thought by the breath helps one to direct energies to all necessary places within and without the body.

GATHA: 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 the atoms and centers which are the instruments for these faculties. As soon as breath touches these 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 without effort.

TASAWWUF: This is a simple teaching which the mentally minded do not always achieve. It is not having something in thought that is fully beneficial, it is having something functioning well that is beneficial. The Sufi Order and other groups as well refer to the latent powers in man. Powers are latent either because they have not been awakened, or because they have ceased to operate, or sometimes it is mere laziness. No argument is going to increase vitality.

The impact of the purpose of Nayaz is not always felt: that we inhale the benefic effects from the



sun itself, from the air, from the space. Each has its own sphere of divine qualities and energies and all of these enter the body with the breath. The sense of devotion with concentration in a few exercises is sufficient, for like the winding of a clock or the starting of a dynamo the functions go on automatically and do not have to be thought about. It is only when there is a blockage is this necessary.

The flesh of man is not only the organ for the physical activities but also for emotional and psychic functions. These are controlled from and through the breath.

In many esoteric schools the breath is directed up the backbone, and to centers related to the glandular system of the body. Such directions often awaken those hidden energies and faculties. It is proper to have a teacher here who can both direct the exercises and explain to the disciple the effects therefrom. Ignorant people either beware of such things or go in blindly without a teacher. A teacher is even more necessary in esoteric and occult development than elsewhere.

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### **Gatha with Commentary**

### **Series I: Number 5**

#### **The Channel of the Breath**

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

**TASAWWUF:** One of the first teachings is to unlearn; but holding to an idea of unlearning is not unlearning. Indeed it is adding another idea to our storage of personal knowledge. When we are asked to concentrate on breath this very concentration takes the mind away from its burdens and the more one gives consideration to the breath, the more one is unburdening himself.

In the Sufi disciplines the breath is used as a conveyor and carrier and when it swings with the divine thought one is able both to purify and to progress. Much progression is connected with refinement. Refinement comes when the mind is free from thought and in this sense, empty.

The breath has been likened to a lift. It carries the consciousness from one plane to another, up and down. This is illustrated in the symbology of Jacob's ladder in the Hebrew Testament and

elsewhere. But a knowledge of symbology is not of itself the direct experience. Often one has the direct experience in vision, and even more in the cosmic states which prevail in the life of the mystic.

Words like “soul” and “breath of life” carry with them the connotation of immortality. There are sacred phrases which enhance this. Breath plus electric current can be called **prana** which is more exact in its connotation. Now the question is how to feel it and as the mind is engaged in devotional practices the more this is possible.

The word “inspiration” would indicate a broadening intoxication of breath, through the breath. This comes when the light from the higher planes impress the outer consciousness. In Sura XXIV of Qur’an we read: “God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp—the lamp encased in glass, as it were a glistening star. From the blessed tree it is lighted, the olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well nigh shine out, even though fire touches it not. It is light upon light, God guideth whom He will to His light, and God setteth forth parables to men, for God knoweth all things.” And this is the experience of the final purification of breath itself.

The light which passes from plane to plane is carried by the breath. Usually the ordinary eye does not see it, but there are people both clairvoyants and devotees who do. For the breath is the purveyor of the eternal life and especially when the proper sacred phrases are repeated, one is being raised not only above the denseness of earth but from mortality to immortality without departing from the flesh.

GATHA: 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 no possibility for the breath to flow freely. Air in itself is not bad, but when it touches the earth, it partakes of 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.

TASAWWUF: Thus the mixture of air and earth is dust and this is a source of impurity. So keeping the body clean and the channels clear is a removal of dust within. And also dust prevents one from perceiving the light without, so it also impedes the clear vision of the light from within.

The channels of breath may be blocked for many reasons. One is wrong diet, either too much food or food of the wrong kinds. Indeed there has been far more danger from malnutrition than from starvation. And while scientific knowledge is growing in many directions, the preponderant materialistic culture has not lead to the consumption of proper foods in proper proportion at proper times. By “proper times” is meant the rhythm.

There are some people who lean to the view that one should eat whenever one is hungry. This does not take into consideration the wants or needs of the particular cells of the body, or their

functions, and the importance of rhythms and regular habits in life. Such peoples defend their activities and this attitude shows the ego at work.

Early Buddhists used to refrain from eating after the sun had reached the zenith, and many follow it even today. But Lord Buddha taught compassion above all else, and this is impossible in high altitudes or cold climates. Indeed there are Buddhist monasteries in desert lands where they eat much meat and still do not necessarily suffer in their spiritual development. No doubt this is extraordinary and should not be followed excepting in such conditions.

But too much thought on this subject is not always good either, for then a mental faculty interferes with the natural instincts. The body has its own wisdom. It may be an unconscious wisdom but it is very real and has been observed by some scientists.

Emotions here do not benefit much. They often add fear to the possibilities of partaking of wrong foods. The body, especially that of the adept who assimilates the ether element, will never suffer from this factor. And any emotion, whether beneficial or harmful, may interfere with the process of digestion. So the Sufi pays far more attention to breathing than to eating.

GATHA: 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 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**.

TASAWWUF: This subject has been widely discussed and has promoted emotion rather than wisdom. The books at their best are books of anatomics, architecture, not physiologies and operations. For this mostly a teacher is needed who has not only the book and theoretical knowledge but the wisdom of experience.

In the work *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, there is a section collected by a Sufi which presents the ancient methods in much more simple fashion. These are easily practiced, especially under guidance. The operations are not too different from those in the Sufic esotericism excepting that the Names of God are different and the subsidiary practices come from a different tradition with different names. But the human body has not changed and the spine-functions and breath-functions have not changed.

Under guidance disciples receive help in how and where to breathe. But, of course, they must do their own practices.

As the ability to breathe becomes more fully developed, the spine is used more efficiently and effectively. There are many practices which may be applied but there is one common principle. When the spine becomes fully awakened to the adaptation of breath-movements and breath-energies and becomes the full vehicle of transmitting this energy to the centers, then the centers function more and more, and man becomes unified, a single being, within and without, capable for

functioning fully on all planes and through many stages and states of consciousness.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: Breathing is both systemic and organic. Systemic breathing touches the whole body excepting when channels are blocked; organic breathing comes from directing the breath to a certain organ, a certain place. This is especially easy when one thinks "Allah" with the breath, and in so directing it the powers of God, so to speak, reach, magnetize and energize the organs or parts of the body to which the breath has been directed.

Our organs have faculties not always recognized by the material scientists. But as the sciences grow, the relations between physical, mental and emotional; between the worlds within and without will be more recognized. Then one can correct the ills of both mind and body more easily. All ills can be cured by "the power of God."

GATHA: In order to clear this channel of all that blocks the way one must follow the rules of mystical ablutions and of rhythmical 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.

TASAWWUF: Both the Hebrew and Zarathustrian religions have long systems of ablutions for various purposes. This is also true of the people of India, but perhaps to a lesser extent. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Prophet Mohammed introduced **Wazu**, a system of ablutions, based on drawing in the divine blessings through water, in a way perhaps comparable to the methods of the Modern Sufis with air and breathing. These may be called parts of the Purification by Water from which also the Christian Baptism was derived.

People who are half-learned do not appreciate that air is carried by the bloodstream to every cell of the body. It is analogous to the ocean water. The ocean water carries some air dissolved in it and many fish and shell fish and other animals and plants depend upon this dissolved air for breathing and the energies of life carried by breath (or oxygen). In fact some say that the bloodstream is the ocean inside of man and in many ways the blood in man resembles the ocean water.

Now the breath can in this dissolved fashion reach all the cells. And also its energy can be directed and by this directing the talib keeps both his physical and finer bodies in shape.

It is only a special breathing that directs the energy up the backbone. Some of the centers called **chakras** in Indian terminology no doubt correspond to the centers of the physical and subtle bodies. It is not the directed energy alone that purifies these centers; it is the purified energy when directed that does the work.

The purification comes through the sacred practices, or esotericism (Ryazat). The sacred names of God and the repetition of sacred phrases purifies and elevates the energy so that more of the divine essence is absorbed in the personality, both in the consciousness (which corresponds to Purusha) and the form (which corresponds to Prakriti). And as the adept advances and purifies his breath and personality, this energy rises both in the backbone channels and otherwise, to reach the deepest centers in the body. But it is the calling upon God to open the centers, not the calling upon the centers to open the way to God, wherein Sufism differs from some systems called Yoga which may become very mechanical, and neither successful nor noble. The teacher helps the disciple to open these centers as they show capacity and ability.

GATHA: But looking at it from another point of view, one might say as well that the eyes of a child should never be opened, because he will thereby be exposed to temptation of all sorts.

TASAWWUF: It is the metaphysical intellectuals who have not had proper teachers who hold to this. Also those who think they can learn the truth and awaken inner consciousness by their own self-will, by merely reading books. There is not a single case on record of this but there are folk-traditions in many parts of the world. And especially those who lean on the word "humility" but close their hearts and eyes, who do not find the light and therefore conclude that there are not ways by which man can advance. Indeed as the Sufi prays, we can draw God-Allah close to our waking consciousness every moment of our life.

No doubt as fore-runners, people have written books, and others have read them and tried out some experiments. Often these are nothing but imaginings of the reader, and they come to no particular end. They are baseless experiments. In the valid sciences one does not do it; how much less should it be tried in the occult sciences. But when one has a Murshid or a real teacher, he can by humility, find the way to perfection even by the awakening or with the awakening of the centers in the body.

GATHA: All virtue is in self-control; there is no virtue in being dead. Life is worthwhile only when a person leads it fully. People look for phenomena, but there is no better phenomenon than the 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.

TASAWWUF: Not in the thoughts on the subject, not in self-experimentation. There are valid inner sciences as well as valid outer sciences. In both a suitable teacher is needed. And on the spiritual path the wise carefully guide their disciples to see that the Light becomes more and more manifest and its hidden properties be put to use.

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**Gatha with Commentary      Series I: Number 6**

**The Rhythm of Breath**

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: A great deal of attention has been paid to numbers and their value. In the Western world, while music has developed in the direction of melodic and harmonic complexity, little attention has been paid to the rhythms. Many people value two, three, four, six, eight, as well as other numbers. In other cultures there has been a more complex use of these and other simple numbers developing effective emotional art. Many people feel this and respond to it. It has also resulted in some obstacles as to mutual understanding because there is not always a common basis for the application of rhythms, counter-rhythms and synthesized rhythms in music, art and life.

GATHA: As man generally neglects to think of his breath he overlooks the fact that his health entirely depends upon rhythmic breath. Rhythm is the central theme of the whole creation.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps it can be said that all the occult sciences and arts depend upon this. In various religious ceremonies found in all parts of the world at some time or other the simple numbers have been emphasized. We see this in the hours of the day, in the days of the week, and in other patterns. Both the ancient Romans and Greeks on the one hand, and the Indian peoples on the other, both knew it and applied it. It has been called “ancient wisdom” but the phrase “ancient wisdom” has no value without content. And one of the great obstacles to Western people studying Indian music is that they are faced with a world quite unknown to them.

The stories of Creation (myths) all indicate numbers and symbols which presuppose rhythm. The statement is made “By the Word of God were all things in heaven and earth made.” This also presumes the rhythms of God. The Indian people especially have a complex cosmology based on it, and the terms pralaya and manvantara all are associated with rhythmical breath as if of God Himself. It suggests that if God did not breathe rhythmically there would be chaos. And by analogy also if man, created in God’s image did not breathe rhythmically there would be chaos within him.

The central theme of rhythmical breath, very simple and elementary, because of its very nature has not always impressed complex people. People who love complexities fail to study the laws of nature, the rhythms of nature and the rhythms of life.

GATHA: Therefore the infant moves his hands and legs by turns, forming a rhythm. This shows that nobody teaches anybody rhythm, it is natural to all beings.

TASAWWUF: God's breath is associated with Divine rhythm. This subject is discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound*. There has been no culture which has not accepted the existence of rhythm and some form of laws of numbers. Astrology, numerology, etc. are based on the existence of these rhythms and the numbers involved. We also see this reflected in children's games to which there has not always been serious thought paid. This was also the beginning of all dance patterns throughout the world. These arise out of our very instincts.

GATHA: It is rhythmical 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 nor the bird how to fly.

TASAWWUF: There is a popular song, "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano." This is a demonstration of a natural rhythm in one form. The tides, the seasons, the various mating periods of different animals, etc. all demonstrate the existence of rhythms. Indeed, some of these matters are discussed in the Gathas on "Superstitions, Customs and Beliefs," and their commentaries. And, of course, in *The Mysticism of Sound*, etc.

GATHA: The life of man is so pulled from all sides, so divided, that he often neglects things that are most essential to his life, which the lower creatures seem to keep more correctly in their lives.

TASAWWUF: Besides the emphasis on breath being life, we can see that to bring the breath and the life into the body, heart and soul, it is necessary to establish and maintain rhythm. If one turned from the consideration of human bodies to various mechanisms, e.g. the bicycle or any pedaled instrument, one will readily realize the importance of rhythm. If this were not so one could never see demonstrated at the same time increased complexity in factories, and increased beauty in their construction.

We can see in the art and science of architecture which was highly developed since ancient times, that nearly all construction depended upon rhythm. Such simple mechanisms as the pulley and the lever depend on it. The laws of harmony demonstrate it. And if this is so for the world without, one may ask how about the world within? And an immediate example may be found in the treadmill where rhythm, both of the operator (which may be an animal) and the instrument itself are necessary.

Now we turn to the human body. Physiologists know that certain rhythms are necessary for health. The question arises whether such rhythms or other types of rhythms may not apply to the mind as well as to the body. Order is necessary for organization, and order is impossible without rhythm and balance.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: Many of the ancient and perhaps all of the original arts arose out of man's observations of nature. In one sense the birds taught him both music and architecture, and many animals taught him dance patterns.

Indeed, if man were to watch the construction of bird's nests he would find already examples of neatness. In the construction of the spider's web and other engineering achievements of the so-called lower forms of life we find all the principles demonstrated. In fact God's Sifat are found everywhere underlying all aspects of His creation.

If we accept astrology or the sciences of the Tattvas of the Hindus we find a Universe based on rhythmical activity. The very law of cause-and-effect leaves no alternative between rhythmical activities and chaos. It is not surprising that in the life of man most virulent diseases arise out of the abandonment of rhythm. Therefore Sufis interpose the counter-movement of the restoration of rhythmical patterns first, and then develop them afterwards to increase the potentialities of magnetism for body, mind and heart.

All esotericism is based on rhythm or Cyclic Law. The whole Universe seems to be based on it, both the universe without and the cosmos within. Sufis teach both how to develop the breath and how to respond to it to learn more of themselves and the worlds within and without.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: Sufism was first introduced by Hazrat Inayat Khan in connection with music. It is now being developed in the West by means of dancing. Both of these are based on applied rhythmic. The rhythms are used as a means to elevate the state of consciousness of the devotees, along with the use of proper sacred phrases mostly in outward expression, but sometimes in and with Fikr (Thought).

The more advanced rhythms are not necessarily more complex. The power may come by increased momentum due to assiduity in performance. It is also true as in Newton's Laws of motion that effects are felt and experienced, but also in and from the Unseen as well as the seen. All esoteric practices are based in some way on rhythms. It is not surprising however that rhythms as long as twenty-eight years and forty years may be effective, and others as short as a few refined breaths.

GATHA: 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.



TASAWWUF: It can easily be demonstrated that thought affects breath and breath affects thought. As Buddha taught it, pure meditation consists of breathing without carrying any thought excepting attention to the breath itself. The Zen method of trying not to think often fails because the very principle of trying not to think is itself a thought, itself involves neural and mental activities, and so impedes the pure state of Mind which is desired.

Sufis teach that all the esoteric schools make use of both breath and rhythm. This is often found in Scriptures. The abandonment of the study of some Scriptures has led to the abandonment of much knowledge. Calling it "Ancient Wisdom" is of no help. Wisdom is not ancient, it is Eternal. We must bear in mind that all literature and commentaries thereon are essentially intellectual. By themselves alone they correct nothing. What corrects is the application of esotericism in all its facets. Therefore we must pay more attention to practices which will free us and also help the external universe. Indeed from the Bodhisattvic point of view, by every esoteric practice and meditation the devotee assists not only himself, but the whole world.

Goodness as such is usually vanity. It always produces karma. Good karma may bring about more enjoyment and less illness, but it still leaves man attached to the Wheel of Life, subject to cause-and-effect. The breath is from Heaven. The breath is the hi-way to God. It is also the hi-way of God to man and through man. The mystics of all ages seem to have known and practiced this. As we realize that God is breath we can perform the devotional exercises easily, and so help elevate ourselves and all mankind.

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### **Gatha with Commentary**

### **Series I: Number 7**

#### **Kasif and Latif**

GATHA: Breath is termed by the Sufis Kasif and Latif; Kasif means dense and Latif fine. Dense breath is that which is noisy and labored, which strains the nerves and lungs. The exercises of dense breath are useful for developing the muscles and for gaining control over nerves; they are helpful also to the lungs and useful to physical health.

TASAWWUF: We can find in the Buddhist Scripture also that the Lord Buddha taught his first disciples to become aware of the breath, of the difference of the effects of long and short

breathings, and of heavy and light. To some extent this has remained as part of the monk's training but is no longer so important so we need not be surprised also that not so many people advance in their spiritual life because of departures from the purest teachings.

RYAZAT: The teacher encourages heavy breathing for those who are engaged in physical pursuits, at work or for exercise. In this one concentrates on the breath and uses the will-power also to move the lungs, and thus the muscles. This is especially valuable for those who have weaknesses in their respiratory functions, or diseases of the pulmonary tract or have trouble with their sinuses.

A heavy breath may be full or not, according to the ability of the disciple. Continued practice, especially after Nayaz, is very helpful in building the body and in maintaining proper physical health.

Sometimes it is advisable to join with this the repetition mentally or audibly some sacred phrases.

GATHA: But in spiritual development unless the breath be 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.

TASAWWUF: For the physical interior penetration also enables one to carry the magnetism of the breath to the finer bodies. By practice one can control a very fine breath even to the point where it is most refined. Also this is true as one learns to practice the Etheric breath, alone or in combination with other breaths. These are all refined and beneficial.

We also find in *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* methods for directing the breath. These should be done in a spirit of devotion as well as if they were exercises. For the spirit of devotion adds the heart-qualities and the heart-functions to the breathing. This enables one to direct the finest vibrations to and through the centers, to coordinate the functions of the various bodies and to use each and all to the utmost benefit.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: The Christian Bible definitely says God is Pneuma, which is to say, Breath. By calling it "spirit" (which originally meant breath also) a great deal of what has been known as "ancient wisdom" has been lost. Nothing has been lost but that the ego of man is used to translate or mistranslate Scriptures according to his private understanding and not according to his inner awakening. It is therefore necessary to retranslate and reinterpret the Scriptures from the standpoint of inner awakening and not from some theological or philosophical outlook, for these are usually very limited.

Much in spiritual training is connected with the refining of breath and with the directing of this breath to and through the various vehicles which form together the human constitution. While the

world has tended to regard breath-training as fundamental in Indian Yoga and Tibetan discipline, it is probable that the Sufis have gone much further in this direction.

GATHA: In the Qur'anic language it is called Burrak, 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.

TASAWWUF: The symbology of different peoples often show similarities, for the cosmic journey, in the end, is one and the same, though the highways may seem different. Spiritual development refines the breath and at the same time the refinement of the breath helps much in the spiritual unfoldment. This was also disclosed by Paul Brunton in his various books to help mankind to the ultimate attainment.

Thus we find the Eagle, or bird of the air, as a sacred animal in many parts of the world and it is also of concern to astrologers and other occult students. And perhaps this is even more true in the air-age which is upon us. This age illustrates outwardly much of what goes on in the inner life journey, though there it is a reality depicted symbolically while in the world the seeming realities are mere symbols of the eternal life.

The mystery of the Merkabah or Chariot was considered among the Hebrews to be next in importance to the mystery of Creation, Barashitha. But this teaching became lost or covered. The chariot really represents the breath with the eagle for air, the bull for earth, the lion for fire and man for water. We find similar symbols in many lands. These Hayooth or living creatures represent the livingness of breath, that breath is the very life of all, and that there is an aspect of breath needed for every aspect of life itself.

We also find the symbols among the Greeks as Pegasus, the winged steed. The very name, Bellerophon, who rode this steed, means "Lord of all Light and Sound." Thus we can find a depth of symbolism in many lands but invariably they are connected with breath as a whole, or with some aspect of it. Only it is one thing to know this intellectually and another thing to become master of breath. Therefore disciples in Sufism are also trained in concentration (Murakkabah).

GATHA: There is no mystical cult in which breath is not given the greatest importance in spiritual progress.

TASAWWUF: The complete work in Sufic Ryazat or Esotericism, is connected with this in some form. It is actually vast, and there are forms of esoteric practices which can be continued by man after he leaves the physical body and inhabits a more refined one. It is only when he attains to the universal breath that it is possible for him to reach the highest aspects of attainment.

Disciples are taught in the beginning to draw in the refinement of rays of the sun, the waves of the air and the all-pervading power in space. These are three refinements and each one has its own aspect and part to play in the unfoldment of the soul and also in the development of the latent

powers in man. It is not only the Sufis but many schools, esoteric and exoteric, which believe there are latent powers and faculties in man. But to posit this philosophically does not mean there is the attainment. In the esoteric school all emphasis is on the actual attainment.

It may be difficult to prove this philosophically for the philosophers deal with thoughts only and many do not know the relation between thinking and breathing. There are many practices by which one can find that given certain forms of breathing only certain types of thought are possible; also that by being given certain types of thought, this limits the breath to certain channels, so that intellectual prowess always ends in limitation which spiritual progress takes one beyond to the non-limited universe.

GATHA: Once man has touched the depths of his own being by the help of the breath then it becomes easy for him to become one with all that exists on earth and in heaven.

TASAWWUF: This statement needs much consideration. It is too often by-passed. People seek something they call "cosmic consciousness" and there is a real universal consciousness. But it is not a system of thinking and has nothing to do with limitations in this line.

What is called "The Holy Spirit" is nothing but the Divine Breath. It is this Divine Breath which created the universe, so to speak, and the very principle in the God Brahman, the Creator, is the making of formations. The same lesson is taught in another way in the Hebrew Bible.

As the talib advances on the path he travels, he realizes by assimilated consciousness, the steps in refinement and the various aspects of breathing and the interpretation of each. When he attains to this knowledge he can use it in both the inner and outer aspects of life. This is particularly true of Sufi Mysticism which is almost like a science in its subject matter, technique and the resultant experiences, only they cover all aspects of life and not just the outer world alone.

It may seem strange to affirm that by the breath one can penetrate the heavens. But the very words for "heavens" in the various ancient languages usually meant spheres of light and life and refinement and not necessarily the accommodation for the satisfaction of repressed desires. Indeed the more refined the scope for the spirit, the less the hold of the desire nature upon man.

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**Gatha with Commentary**

**Series I: Number 8**

**Breath—The Vehicle of the Self**

GATHA: Breath is the mystery; in it is hidden the secret of life. Breath proves the existence of the life unseen.

TASAWWUF: We can find this out by studying the various aspects of breath of which inhalation and exhalation, the using one or the other or both nostrils, are aspects.

In the study of *Health* the subject of atmosphere is introduced, and there is no question that as man perfects his atmosphere it is surcharged with beneficial magnetisms. And the way of surcharging also appears in exercises given to advanced disciples. Once a strong atmosphere is established it carries this strength along and proves to be stronger than both the inner and outer vitality of less advanced peoples. For they are still the subjects of breath, not its masters and so do not know how to benefit from the divine energies in which they live and move and have their beings.

Ability to retain breath in the body enables one to benefit from it. And when there is not enough breath there may be dizziness and nausea. Therefore heavy eating is usually to be avoided, for by that the channels of breath are blocked.

To the mystic, therefore, breath is the very life, the life of body, the life of mind and the innermost life. And as the disciple learns to purify and refine the breath so he becomes more and more aware of his own inner life and its endless scope.

GATHA: 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 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.

TASAWWUF: This is all made clear by the esoteric exercises which disciples on the path are given. As they persevere in these practices they become aware of the hidden values in breath and also of hidden values and faculties in their own personality. Therefore we should learn that the spiritual life means a life of full breath and from this comes the assimilation of the divine properties which often become man's possessions through right breathing, with devotion.

We have the existence of ferro-magnetism, that this sort of energy is carried by Iron and some other metals and some alloys. We can study the chemistry of these metals without considering ferro-magnetism and yet economically the physical properties are most important. Perhaps in a similar way we have to consider breath and breath-energies.

We can study the kinds of thought harmonious to each kind of breathing, and use the breath to

stimulate the corresponding type of thoughts. Often nature itself, or instinct, will guide and there is no doubt that Yogins have studied the breathing of animals for suggestions. But generally speaking the breath of man has qualities and properties far beyond that of any animal.

GATHA: No one can explain whence it came into this mortal body, and no one can say whither it goes when it leaves the body of clay. One can only say that something living came and kept this mortal body alive and left it, proving that the same body, which was once thought to be alive, was not really alive, but itself was the life. This proves to the intellect, even to that void of faith, that there is some source whence life comes and that it returns again to the same source.

TASAWWUF: There is a passage in the King James version of the Christian Bible which reads: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell where it cometh and wither it goeth; so is every one born of the spirit." (John III, 8)

A much better translation is found in the International Bible Students' version which reads, "The Spirit breathes where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but thou knowest not whence it comes, or where it goes; thus it is with every one who has been born of the spirit." The confusion between breath and wind and spirit arises when one does not have the spiritual knowledge and experience and does not know that spirit and breath are identical, and that they may have meant the same in certain languages. But a difference has been made and chiefly because man has lost the knowledge of the breath and its operations.

We live in the ocean of air. The oxygen is needed for certain chemical operations, and the nitrogen which offers the largest percentage of the air is also needed for the protein of bodies. This indicates that the ocean-of air may itself be alive and provide both the life-substance and the life-energy for the flesh of man.

It was only after science had progressed when it was discovered there was electricity in space. If there is electricity in space, then there is energy in space. As science has progressed many forms of energy have been so discovered and we also have many machines and instruments which are based on the principles of energies in the space. It should not be surprising then to find that all space is alive.

All mankind breathes together this living space and it is really an ocean of communion though most people are not aware of it.

GATHA: 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 up and toward the utmost heights, toward the goal which is the source and origin of all beings.

TASAWWUF: We have in the flesh the glottis which is an organ separating the respiratory and digestive organs. Some scientists say the digestive tract is but a tube in the body and the functions of the flesh are in many ways independent of this digestive tract. But these organs of flesh all

depend upon the breath. The body can go without food for many many hours but it cannot be without breath for even a few moments.

It is strange then that so much emphasis has been put upon diet and that there are so many opinions, and that man's body must stop eating most of the time. Not even gluttons can do that. But so little studying has been given to respiration, its immediate effects and its many after-effects. All of these are much more interesting to the adept.

There are adepts who can go without food for indefinite periods. It is possible that they draw their nitrogenous substance direct from the air they are breathing. Besides as one advances in mysticism, one can draw both substance and energy from the breath.

As the breath becomes more refined this means that the spirit becomes more refined. As the spirit becomes more refined, that means there is an advancement toward the Goal. Thus there is this emphasis upon the breath and the need to study it, and to advance in it.

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**Gatha with Commentary**

**Series I: Number 9**

### **The Mysticism of Breath**

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: This is part of the work on the spiritual path. Especially when the disciple is initiated into Mysticism and not only learns intellectually about these subjects, but by practices becomes keenly aware this is found to be true. Some of this teaching appears in *The Mysticism of Sound* and other places in the literature, but most of it is reserved by exercises and practices offered in the lessons or offered by the teacher.

Although it is mentioned many times that the teacher can learn about the pupil or about anyone by observation of the breath, together with insight, this is a mystery to those who depend merely upon the intellect. The intellect does not readily grasp the refined knowledge.

GATHA: 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; 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.

TASAWWUF: One begins with Nayaz. But there are other practices which refine both breath and personality and as one becomes refined, and therefore sensitive, he becomes aware of much that is lost to the average person. Therefore practices in Concentration are also added in the instructions, so that one can become aware of the self, the body and the life both within and without.

When the disciple is ready the teacher gives the practices to awaken both light and life in the centers, until the time comes when the body may be full of light, as Jesus Christ has taught. Only in the theology it is at best symbolic; with the mystic it is an actuality.

People who perform Zikr become more and more aware of the living light, and this is also the result of other practices. Also as the capacity for Joy increases there is more awareness of breath, and with it the living light which constitutes man.

We can see various phenomena in the lower nature, as the phosphorescence in certain stones and rocks. There are also some plants that emit light and still more insects. People known as clairvoyant are aware of many emanations from the bodies of people and can even interpret their meanings. For each one of us was made in the Divine Image and like the Divine, gives out the Light which is from our very soul.

Defects in physical senses do not impair the finer senses at all. There are even people who are deaf and blind who have psychic faculties. Each of these, the physical and psychic, may be independent of the other and yet they may be related and even form a continuum.

GATHA: 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 all 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.

TASAWWUF: This gives some suggestions for the increase of the finer faculties. But the development of the finer faculties is not necessarily a portion of spiritual unfoldment though no doubt a spiritual person may see or sense more than other people.



The earth element in particular dims the vision. As a person becomes more refined of breath so he becomes more refined of all faculties, those within and without. There are also practices which may be given to develop the so-called psychic faculties, but unless one is naturally a psychic it does not help too much to emphasize this line of progression. Besides, as the centers become open through breathing exercises and other disciplines, often there is the unfoldment of many finer forces and finer faculties in man.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: The value of dreams has been subject to dispute. It all depends upon one's goal in life. For the life of the dream-world, though exalted above materiality, still belongs to the *samsara*. Persons who dream much, and still more persons who are able to interpret the dreams belong often to the worlds of symbols and are not always cognizant of the realities from which these symbols are drawn.

The study of *The Mind World* is a subject in itself, and also the study of *Cosmic Language*. As these have been presented in the published literature it is not necessary to comment on them here.

GATHA: 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 inner and outer worlds.

TASAWWUF: The mystic, by the development of universal faculties, or even by becoming aware of what is known as the heart-body or *karana-sharira*, finds himself in possession of most refined faculties. These can become his permanent way of life, or again he may find himself using these faculties when he needs them. Man was placed in the physical body to develop it and use all its faculties. At the same time he has the finer bodies called subtle and causal, and by other names. They are very much alive. In some ways they are more alive than the body-of-flesh but man is mostly not aware of them. Or if he is, being called "peculiar" he does not rely on them so much.

No doubt as man becomes broader and more tolerant he discovers all sorts of subtle and super-subtle faculties just as the physicists have discovered radio-activity and many other formerly unusual patterns in the worlds of minerals and ores and rocks. They were always there. It is only that many had not discovered them. So it is with the finer forces; they are there and always operate in some people. But they may not belong to the generality. Still it has been the behavior of the unusual that has held the keys to the understanding of atomic knowledge and it may also be that the study of the unusual may uncover many of the mysterious aspects of man's existence and behavior.

GATHA: There are some who see light before them, there are some who notice colors before their views, 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.

TASAWWUF: Some strange phenomena have been found among illiterate people by the Anthropologists who may consider them normal; and when similar phenomena are found among the cultured people they have often been called abnormal by the psychologists. Yet often it is the same kind of phenomena.

As students advance in Mysticism, what was strange or abnormal before may become a continual phenomenon. It all depends on the application of one's mind and will and the increasing powers of observation and intuition. After a while there will come an age when what is unusual may become quite usual, as all steps in scientific progress begin with something unusual which finally becomes usual and even most normal.

Too much consideration of the subject of sleep and dreams often leads a person far afield from his purpose in life and the recognition of his own unity. Yet there is no doubt that as one advances in meditation, in the refinement of breath and in the cultivation of the intuitive faculty, that the boundaries between the world without and the universe within become dimmed. This is a natural outcome of spiritual evolution itself. At the same time there are persons who develop in such a way that particular lights of unfoldment become vivid and there are those who become seers in more than one sense.

Besides as the mind becomes pacified, the more it becomes like a clear lake, the more the reflections from both the worlds within and without will be impressed on the waking consciousness.

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

GATHA: 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 inner and outer world.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this: one is the refinement of personality without change in consciousness and the other is the development of the expansion of consciousness. Both of these vivify both the outer and inner world. One finds that the faculty of perception is enhanced. (We can read about this in some of Arthur Conan Doyle's works, both fiction and non-fiction.) With the expansion of consciousness there is greater awareness in all directions.

It is here that the psychedelic differs from the mystic. He has a certain development, often a marked one, but it is only in certain directions. It is not an all-around development. Often his perception of the outer world is increased at the expense of inner awareness and sometimes it is the other way, that he becomes more alive to the world within and becomes careless of outer affairs, often totally unaware of them. This is a lopsided growth which the mystic avoids. For the truth is in balance.

This also comes by breathing practices, that both nostrils are used and also under control of the

devotee. Non-mystics usually do not have this control or any knowledge of it. Besides the refinement brings the inner awareness, and this may lead to clearer psychic vision or clearer insight into all things. Growth without clarity remains incomplete growth.

GATHA: There are some who see light before them, there are some who notice colors before their view, 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.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this—the awareness of the unusual in oneself, and the reactions of the world to it. Mystics and devotees are all trained to become more aware of the light which constitutes their very nature. We are in the light all the time but do not know it. Therefore the teacher helps the disciples to become aware of the light which is their very nature although the light itself manifests in manifold forms.

It is also true that awareness to light and sensitivity awakens color sense. We can see this in the development of the eye both in animals and in little children, that there is awareness to light first and color afterwards. All animals are not cognizant of all colors and when this occurs in man he is called “color blind.” There are breathing exercises also which may be used to correct this condition. The animals are not capable of such breathing.

In the mystical training this awareness becomes more important and the seer avails himself therefore to interpret many phenomena. But just to be concerned with colors is of itself also a lopsided development. For many see all sorts of colors and do not know their meaning. This is not very beneficial.

As to the world’s reactions. It is very necessary to steel oneself against it. Every generation closes itself to some possibility which may become the knowledge or even the norm of succeeding generations. The very evolution of the human race may by itself disclose faculties which remain very rare or undeveloped.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: It was Jesus Christ who declared we should seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all its potentialities. And the Sufi is concerned with God and the pursuit of God. If this pursuit is lost, all the phenomena may become sources of confusion, not awakening.

Last, there are books like *The Mysticism of Sound* and *Cosmic Language* which unveil to the ignorant and learned alike some interpretations of the deeper facts of existence. If they are properly studied and meditated upon these can lead even to awakening. But this requires guidance by a qualified teacher; if it came of itself the whole human race would be in a higher evolution.

GATHA: There is no motive for speaking about one’s experience 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.

TASAWWUF: Even among disciples, when there is the opportunity for objective consideration, say in the manner of the scientists, there will be some who hold back. They will not accept the reports of their own brothers and sisters, and there will be divisions and differences. Therefore it is best to keep a notebook and make records, but not to discuss one's own faculties and partial awakenings, or the obtaining of gifts. The term **karamat** means both grace and ability to control certain phenomena.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: Discussions are proper when all are on the same level, when one can discuss impersonally and objectively. It may not be given to all people to develop all innate faculties, or at the same speed as with others. But all are helped to become more and more aware of the light within and without. Then as the sensitivity to and control over the faculties of light itself grows, there will be other faculties and other forms of awareness.

GATHA: Therefore there are 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.

TASAWWUF: At the same time there has been an evolution of the whole human race -- the international outlook, the conscious awareness of unlike people who often have different faculties, the knowledge among the scientific people of the phenomena of physical and psychological phenomena, so that much of what had been secret is no longer secret, nor need it remain secret.

As the world becomes more aware of the immensities in breath, much of what was kept secret through the ages will become part of human knowledge and so science and mysticism can safely join together.

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**Gatha with Commentary**

**Series I: Number 10**

**Color and Sound**

GATHA: Breath in reality is light, but when it shoots forth its rays, then according to the direction of the rays and the capacity that receives the light, colors manifest. Both form and color depend upon the direction that the light takes and upon the degree of light.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufic training there are concentrations on Light and also upon Breath, and by these practices one begins to realize what is presented in the teachings. But it is not any intellectual philosophy for such philosophies are apart from human experience and of very limited value.

In the lessons of Mysticism there are discrete teachings and discrete disciplines and when one learns the significance and behavior pattern of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether, their interrelations, their combinations, their being present and their being absent, all can become clear even from the mental point of view. Still the intuition is most needed for perception. Confusion arises when thoughts on the subject of philosophies replace direct experience.

GATHA: Nothing on earth is meaningless; every occurrence has its meaning and every event has its purpose. Even the colors that manifest in the light of the breath have their meaning, which pertains to the moment and the conditions then.

TASAWWUF: This is an integral part of the teachings on Mysticism, covering all aspects of the subject. Often one sees colors when the eyes are closed, and if one related these colors to the movements of the breath at that moment one would find a relationship and perhaps recurring relationships. It was on this subject that the Indian Rama Prasad wrote his books, but they are not studied much. Besides their contents are often contrary to the dialectics which has been substituted for spiritual wisdom or to certain systems promulgated by psychics who have been misled by their own phenomena. Personal experience alone, invalidated, can not be substituted for universal teachings.

We learn, for instance, that blue signifies air; red, fire; green or white, water; yellow or black, earth; etc. We can observe much in nature because of this and even more much within our own selves and in the emotional patterns of all people.

There are also references to this in the papers on *Metaphysics* in *The Sufi Message*. But to understand these teachings mostly an experienced guide is needed. Otherwise people by themselves would understand and apply and this is seldom done, if ever.

GATHA: There are attempts being made of taking photographs of thoughts and feelings, and some people have even attempted to photograph the spirits. It is difficult to say how far these attempts can be successful. No doubt it gives a great scope to falsehood.

TASAWWUF: Even after many years there are no valid conclusions. One might suppose that if experiments had been made, bringing results, the conclusions would have been more universally accepted, which is certainly not true. This does not mean that such efforts are invalid. The discovery of radium, X-rays, cathode rays, cosmic vibrations of all sorts show that what is considered as the known universe at one period may prove to be only a small portion of the known universe of another period.

Arbitrariness and lack of the open mind is always a barrier to progress be it in the affairs of the worlds within or the universe without. The intuitive faculty (Kashf) never misleads and in the development of it many problems may be solved.

GATHA: 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 is actually in the lantern and it is the reflection of that picture which we see. Those who see the form of the dead see the reflection before them, manifested in the light of their own breath, the real form being 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.

TASAWWUF: There is no substitute for breath but breath itself. It is remarkable despite so much mention of this in the various Scriptures of the world, that it has played so little a part in practical religion. At best it often appears only in the worlds of psychic phenomena so that there is a gap between the psychic and devotional sciences.

If we study closely the phenomena and miracles of various types of psychics and mystics, we can see how important the breath is. There is even in the Hindu teachings what is called **pranamayakosh**, a breath-accommodation which is for such phenomena, and when one is advanced and can see in the breath and through the brain, often the barriers between the worlds disappear. But this is in breathings, not in philosophies about them.

Breath enfolds several layers of vibrations. Especially when we consider what is Latif, this involves the vibrations of all planes from the seen to the unseen and the more refined a person is, the more refined the senses and faculties, the more is he sensitive to those vibrations which constitute the worlds unseen. So there are forms of clairvoyance which are nothing but the extension of seeing into the breath and with the breath; and there are forms of clairsaudience which are nothing but extensions of hearing into the breath and hearing with the breath.

This subject can be approached from other points of view when we study such literature as is contained in *The Mind World*, *Cosmic Language* and scattered essays on the subject.

Scriptures tell us how to distinguish between obsessions and thought-forms and this can also be done by using the breath together with suitable sacred phrases. By this man both protects and purifies the emanations of the worlds seen and unseen.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: This is an activity of the analytical mind, of the lowest portion of the mind, of that part of the mind concerned with personality and particularity. Sufis pray to be raised above the distinctions and differences which divide men, and the Upanishads and Gita teach against manas and ahankara. But such is the nature of man that mostly he ignores the world and tries to judge from a self-centered position. That keeps himself and the world in confusion. When man uses the breath for his chief functioning he cannot do this for he may regard the breath as objective, and certainly it is only the inhaled breath which constitutes the ego-aspect of it.

GATHA: 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 individual evolution, and he stands with another person just as C on the piano may stand with G, or E of the pianoforte with A. 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.

TASAWWUF: An explained confusion is still a confusion. It is only on the exterior that there are disharmonies and dissonances. With the angelic side of man this is not so. And so long as we analyze we can find causes for dissonance and disharmony. But this is a limitation upon man and all phenomena, seen from a very narrow view. It is the work of the spiritual teacher to help harmonize others, and this also is explained in *The Mysticism of Sound* and in the sections on **nufs**, the ego, which is connected with our inhalations.

GATHA: It is not always the note that is inharmonious; it is a wrong combination that 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.

TASAWWUF: The analytical progress of western music, involving the use of dissonances and inharmonies also produce a society full of dissonances and inharmonies. If the music were changed, there would be changes in the social pattern. Indeed that has occurred with the coming of the Beatles and their form of music which gradually infiltrates into the minds of the young. Their elders are still roused by the whole-tone scale and the use of dissonances and disharmonies and so they produce a world full of dissonances and inharmonies. It cannot be helped when this is done.

The music has to be changed and also one must remove the ego before a more evolved person if he wishes to obtain harmony and peace. It is a duty of the teacher, and sometimes it is very burdensome, to find the notes and the chords which will restore harmony on any and all levels.

The ritual of communion in Christianity and its analogues in other faiths; the common breathing in

group meditations, and other efforts on the part of man raise him to higher and more lasting harmony.

GATHA: 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.

TASAWWUF: The fundamentals of this are also presented in *The Mysticism of Sound*. Knowledge of mysticism involves a whole world of phenomena but even without this knowledge one can perceive the tones of everybody's voice and see therein not only the emotions but the very nature of the person speaking.

The wise use this so they alter their notes, their qualities and play upon the atmosphere in which they find themselves. By this they exert influences or even help to raise the degree of consciousness of the atmosphere and so all persons in their presence. Really it is a form of mastery.

When the seer sees the colors he knows which elements are present and absent. But when he masters the Etheric element he can purify and spiritualize all conditions, all atmospheres and so benefit all persons present. In this it is also necessary to use the intuition and intuitive perception is most important.

It is very necessary to get away from the purely intellectual or purely personal view. If a scientist has to be objective in his researches, the mystic must be even more impersonal to help himself and others to bring about a greater degree of God-realization.