

Gatha with Commentary
Naqshibandi: Symbology
Series III
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 III: Number 1

Leili and Majnun

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

TASAWWUF: No doubt there are many stories which are derived from the sacred mysteries, and there are many folk-stories often called marchen which are based upon inspired occult foundations, which have allegorical interpretations. These allegories thus preserve the wisdom of the ages, wisdom not only given to the world by the wise but also by the innocent who have clear insight. The Sufi poets and teachers of all times have taken advantage of these stories and traditions to adopt them to their own use, that mankind might learn therefrom when he would not be able to study metaphysics directly.

While Jelal-ud-din Rumi stands out in the first rank of those who worked in this way, he was far from being alone. Nizami, Attar, Saadi, Hafiz, Shabestari and many others used the same method more or less. The last great Sufi poet, who was also a great Murshid, historian, writer and philosopher, was Jami and his poetry is now famous all over the world. The main theme of it was love, love in all its aspects, and he too, made much use of this theme of Leili and Majnun.

Actually the word Leili means night or moon, and it is of the same root as Delilah in the Book of Judges in the Bible. The word Majnun means the inspired one, or the jinn-possessed. Sometimes it is also applied to a madman, for the mad were supposed to be possessed by jinn—and very often those whom we regard as mad are merely possessed by obsessing forces. From another view Leili represents the not-self and Majnun the self; Leili the beloved and Majnun, the lover.

GATHA: Leili and Majnun, when young, were schoolmates, devoted to one another.

TASAWWUF: We may take this literally, and we may also suppose that it would indicate that there are soul-mates. However it can hardly be said this is true in the ultimate, for the essence of the soul is God, mating, and marriage persist through the physical and mental planes but not into eternity. Each person has his own destiny and purpose.

We can also state that regarding Leili and Majnun from another aspect, that originally all souls were in God and therefore “knew” each other when young, and on the heart-plane those who became

lovers on earth probably touched each other.

GATHA: Whenever the teacher looked at Majnun's slate there was the picture of Leili drawn upon it. And when the teacher asked Leili to read from the book she repeated the name of Majnun.

TASAWWUF: In the angelic world, or Djabrut, which is the state of heart by itself, the whole concern is with love. Love, not knowledge, is the all-compelling state. The real teacher brings out that love in everyone although at first there must be love in name and form, in order to understand the love, in order to make it intelligible.

GATHA: So, disappointed with the school, the parents had to take them back home. When difficulties arose owing to caste differences, so that they could not be married to one another according to the caste ideas, in order to make either forget the other, by changing the direction of their minds, someone asked Majnun, "What is there especial in Leili that you love her so much?"

TASAWWUF: The heart of itself is not concerned with questions—or answers. It is the mind that brings up these things. The souls in the realm of heart know no distinctions or differences. When the soul comes to the world of mind it takes on a cover and in this cover is the faculty of self-identity, which we call nufs, which is the conscious nufs in the ordinary state. There are all kinds of grades and differences and distinctions of ego and this makes it impossible for them all to associate one with the other. Egos of different classes do not or should not associate.

Upon this idea the caste distinction came into being. Perhaps originally it had a mystical basis. According to mysticism it is well for fire and air people to associate or get married and for earth and water people to associate and get married. But for the first types to mingle with the second types is liable to produce a condition of misunderstanding.

Now the mind does not understand heart or love, and many parents interfere in the affairs of their children because after passing through the intoxication of love, they come to a state of sobriety. This state becomes all the more fixed when they are intellectual or mental in outlook, and then the sense of feeling is lost and thought does not always understand feeling, or love.

GATHA: "There are many other maidens in the world." Majnun answered, "In order to see Leili you must borrow Majnun's eyes."

TASAWWUF: There are many sources of attraction and pleasure in the world, there are multitudes of things which interest the ego, but which have little effect upon the heart, which may find no response there. Only the heart-awakened understand heart. The others may substitute sex for love or presume that marriage itself will cure many evils, heal many pains. But the mind can only understand heart when it allows itself to be covered by heart, when thought is held with feeling.

GATHA: With great difficulty Leili's people consented, on condition that Majnun did not show himself odd in his love, but would behave sensibly. On the day for which the visit had been

arranged, for Leili's people to meet Majnun, Majnun entered the room with his parents, who had told him to behave sensibly. It happened that Leili's dog, which Majnun had known for years, came into the room. Majnun could not for one moment hold to his dignity; he bowed at the feet of the dog and kissed its paws, and the visit became a failure.

TASAWWUF: When heart-love dominates the personality it expresses itself in joyous ecstasy, becoming blind to the world and all therein. How true this is of love and lovers. They seem devoid of reason, they do not heed what is going on around, they have no sight, no sense, no thought for other than the beloved. It is a complete and all-compelling concentration, and indeed those who are not so successful in Murakkabah often reveal a certain lack of love-development, of heart-development. If they could have that without going on the path of pain and difficulty, it would be a blessing.

The mystic who enters into rapport with God has much the same experience, except that he sees the reflection of the Beloved in all. He does not thereby become exclusive or inconsiderate of others. The love broadens him, makes him more tolerant. The character of Majnun is therefore to be used by mureeds who have failed to progress because of lack of love, yet who have been successful in their concentrations of name and form. Thereby they begin to develop their faculty of conception, which opens the way for inspiration. Then they can become vehicles of transmission even without the ecstasy.

GATHA: Disappointed at Majnun's action, his parents took him to the Kaaba, and told him to pray as they would pray; he said yes. The multitude followed, to see what prayer was going to take place.

TASAWWUF: The mind does not understand the heart-condition, does not know ecstasy. Yet the esotericists have been very careful not to be too different from the people of the world. They therefore follow the established religion and local customs although they see their limitations and know the reason behind them which the multitude do not know. The multitude follows Majnun because in the first place spiritual attainment does not mean loss of anything—one retains the mind and all its faculties and possessions, the body and worldly goods. The multitude also means that the generality will follow the spiritual person, are often seeking a leader but do not know where to turn.

GATHA: On hearing the name of Majnun, Majnun's parents first prayed, "God, take away the love of Leili from the heart of Majnun." All the others listened. Then they asked Majnun to come and pray as they did. He said, "Then shall I have Leili if I pray?" They urged him to come and pray. He said, "God, give me Leili." And all present said, "Amen."

TASAWWUF: The name "Majnun," which means obsessed, was given to him when he got into this condition of intoxication. He was taken to the holy place, it being supposed that there he would be relieved of the obsession. People used to use prayer for that purpose. The parents assumed Majnun was afflicted and they prayed for his release. But instead of Majnun being afflicted he was

enlightened. It was after his prayers and not after the parents' prayers that the multitudes said "Amen." Indeed if the heart is right, prayer will strengthen it. If one is obsessed the prayer may release him, but if he is not obsessed, if he is inspired, the prayer will strengthen him.

GATHA: When the parents became hopeless, then they let Majnun roam about as he wished.

TASAWWUF: The common-sense of the parents was hopeless before the super-sense of Majnun, for it was evident that his state was in harmony with God's desire, and that they themselves were not attuned to Allah. The heart, being free, was no longer subject to the rules and disciplines—if they can be called such—of the samsaric state, of karma, fate. The one thus delivered becomes master of his destiny, he has realized the purpose of his life.

GATHA: Majnun in the end arrived near Leili's town and stayed outside the town in an old ruin where nobody lived. Being tired, he was taking shelter there, under that worn-out roof.

TASAWWUF: When one goes upon the spiritual path he is willing to undergo all tests and privations. The traveler may come close to the Goal, but of his own self he cannot and does not enter God's palace (the town), or cross the threshold; he waits until he is summoned.

GATHA: Leili, hearing that Majnun was near the town, sent some of her portion of food by a confidential maid, who was to carry it to Majnun. When the maid came and looked in that place for the beloved of Leili there were two persons there, one a person thin and drowsy, the other person rather good looking.

TASAWWUF: There was one person there who had abandoned the world and the other who had not abandoned the world. In this case the action of Leili represents also the Grace of God. The Grace of God is for all, saint and sinner alike. It comes before personality, which has two aspects, the true and the false. The false appears under the material guise, and many are beguiled by its beauty. The true may be hidden even when there is no beauty.

GATHA: The maid thought certainly this person must be the beloved of Leili. With the basket of food in her hand, she asked the man, "Are you Majnun?" "What is it you have brought?" he asked. She said, "Some food for Majnun." He said, "I am Majnun, give it to me." He was glad to partake of it, and said, "I shall be glad to have it every day." So Leili starved for days, sending her food, and that food was given to this man, who for the time became Majnun.

TASAWWUF: This man represents nufs, the false self, which takes on the guise of the true being, with which name and form are identified. So he took on the name of Majnun just as one ordinarily identifies his name and his form, and says of them, "This is I"—although really speaking it is not "I." This ego feeds upon the food of both planes and arrogates to itself what God has offered through the breath. Then the breath, instead of being assimilated for its life and Baraka, is drawn upon to feed and sustain the nufs, and this is the cause of all the suffering of humanity.

GATHA: One day Leili asked, "How is my Majnun?" The maid said, "He is looking better every day." Leili said, "It cannot be." The maid said, "Certainly, be sure of it. He is looking better every day." Leili said, "Today you need not take the food; take a knife and a saucer, and tell my Majnun that I need a drop of his blood."

TASAWWUF: True love is self-sacrifice, and the heart would willingly sacrifice. The false ego wants to receive, it would accept anything and call that love. Many people say they are in love, believe it is love when they receive from another. They do not know that true love consists mostly of giving, and of willingness to give.

GATHA: When she came the man came with anxiety, with eagerness to have the dish, but there was a knife. He said, "What is this?" She said, "Leili wants a drop of your blood." He first looked perplexed, then he said, "I am not Majnun; that may be Majnun, he who is sitting in that corner."

TASAWWUF: When the test comes one can always discern the spiritual person and distinguish him from the false one, who will not suffer, who will not sacrifice for a great cause. The world is full of false leaders, teachers, pretenders. They delight in honours, favours. When the time comes for their giving of their spirit to others, they disappear, they can stand no test because they lack that inner power which comes from God alone. The false ego will not give up its pleasure, the false ego strives in a certain way to avoid pain and discipline. The true self naturally accepts renunciation; it is part of the nature of the soul to renounce; only by renouncing can it gain its full freedom.

GATHA: By that time Majnun had grown so thin; yet when she asked for a drop of blood Majnun tried by striking the knife on different parts of his body, if he could get out a drop of blood to be sent to Leili. "Ah," he said, "there cannot be anything more delightful for Majnun than to give a drop of his blood when it is asked for by Leili."

TASAWWUF: True love delights in sacrifice, it is willing to give up the very self, and indeed ultimately the soul is called upon to give up all for the sake of God. This appears as a test before all, although in another sense it is not a test. It is only the fear of some loss that makes people hold on to what they have, what they know. If they only knew it, in giving up their limitation, they would attain to the Unlimited.

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Series III: Number 2

Leili and Majnun (Conclusion)

GATHA: The end of the story of Majnun is that he sat a long time under the shade of a tree and he grew in time like the tree; being near the tree his body and the tree became one.

TASAWWUF: Majnun became utterly devoid of ego. It is said that the chameleon takes its color from the environment and many plants and animals protect themselves or are protected because of simulation or what has been called protective colouration—that is, they cannot easily be distinguished from their surroundings because of their color, shape, form. Majnun also partook of the characteristics of his environment, he became part of the nature in which he sat, his consciousness became one with that of the tree.

There are stories and traditions of tree spirits in different parts of the world and in some of them these spirits are not jinns so much as spirits of human beings who have been turned into trees. Thus there is the very celebrated story of Apollo and Daphne in ancient Greece; Daphne was turned into a laurel tree by her father in order to avoid the embrace of the god. In another story Baucis and Philemon, two kindly people who had unknowingly served the gods were also turned into trees. Frasier in *The Golden Bough* has made a very complete study of tree-worship and tree-magic without giving any lucid explanation. Many of the stories and myths have mystical explanations.

GATHA: And when a woodcutter came and instead of cutting the wood his axe struck Majnun, Majnun said “Leili,” for that was the only thought there.

TASAWWUF: Majnun had become in form like his environment and in thought he had identified himself with his concentration. This is the consummation of Murakkabah. When there is unity of self and thought there surely is accomplishment. In this sense he may be said to have been in Samadhi; he was unaware of the distinction and difference. In another sense here the woodcutter represents Fate, or again Death.

GATHA: Leili, on hearing this, when she had freedom for a moment, was drawn by some way to Majnun at his last moment on the earth, and called him, “Majnun!” He answered, “Leili.” She said, “I am Leili.” But he said, “I am Leili.” And so Majnun fell and died, and Leili followed him instantly.

TASAWWUF: The power of true love is so great that nothing can overcome it. While we are veiled in limitation we cannot know this, but the very love may carry us beyond limitation. In the highest state the lover, love and the beloved become identical. When Mohammed was in hal and Khadija came to him and when he asked her who she was and she said “Khadija” he also said, “I am Khadija.” When she said she was the daughter of a certain man, the wife of a certain man, the sister of a certain man, he replied: “I am that man.” Because in Union there is only One Being.

Leili, who represents not-self, did not at first recognize the self when she came to Majnun. The self could recognize the not-self, but the not-self was not sure of its identity, it did not possess self-consciousness. In a corresponding way the spiritual teacher recognizes the unity of his spirit with that of the pupil but the pupil does not at first recognize his unity with the teacher. It becomes a duty of the teacher to help awaken the heart of pupils so that through identification they may come to learn the nature of their own beings within and without. This knowledge is veiled before them while they are in nufsaniat, under the cover of nufs.

When self becomes devoid of self and not-self rises out of its state of not-self, names and forms no longer have the same meaning. That is why when mureeds reach a certain stage of development in Murakkabah they are given concentration upon something which is not clear before them, for which they may have a word, but little else to guide them. Nevertheless as they persist in their concentration they come to find the latent life in it and this helps to awaken something in them which may not have been awakened before.

It is only by such means that an individual person can come to the recognition of hierarchy. Otherwise it is just a word. If there is constant and persistent effort in concentration soon that which may have appeared ethereal or imaginative takes on a new aspect and becomes even more real than that which had seemed so real beforehand.

GATHA: The path of the Sufi is the path of devotion, and therefore Leili and Majnun is the symbol that a Sufi takes for God and man.

TASAWWUF: The word "God" is not God, is not divinity. Nevertheless constant repetition of the Holy Name brings with it a realization. It may take a long time because the higher the goal the harder it is to reach, not so much because it is hard as because we have to change our natures, we must refine them, in order to obtain consciousness of the most fine. The attitude that is needed for that is devotion, for which prayer is the first step. Prayer helps to melt the heart, and that in turn softens the ego. As the ego becomes soft, the veils before one disappear, and as they disappear one by one man comes to the threshold of Allah.

GATHA: The soul who journeys in the path of God does not need much learning. What he writes on his slate is the name of God, what he reads in his book is His name. That is the only learning which is most essential in the path of God.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi says in his prayers, "The Only Being," "Thy Light is in All Forms," "Alpha and Omega." Nevertheless it requires constant repetition, constant attention to bring some realization as to the meaning of these words. As words they are helpful, as thoughts they are still more helpful, as feelings they are most valuable. So when we say "Path of God," that is an all-inclusive path, it does not exclude anything or anyone, for when there is exclusion, there is not God.

GATHA: And no one can distract the mind of the godly toward anything, however attractive; though

he may find not one reason to give for his devotion to God, he can only say, "In order to become the lover of God you must borrow my eyes."

TASAWWUF: All the earthly love we experience is really the shadow of that life, borrowed from that existence. Dante, in his most celebrated poem, "The Divine Comedy," based everything on that. According to his writings the whole universe and all its movements depended upon love, and love was much higher than anything else, incomparably greater than anything else. This included even the love of man and woman and any power or sign of attraction in the world.

According to the Sufi it is not wrong to behold the picture of God in another, to see human personality as the mirror of God. One may recognize this in a loving mother, in a kind father, in an innocent child, in a helpful friend, in an inspiring teacher. All love leads to the Goal. At the same time it is true that as man advances toward God, so God comes toward him. A Christian mystic has said, "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me." And in Qur'an we read: "Whoever walks one step toward the grace of Allah, the Divine mercy walks forward ten steps to receive him."

GATHA: While people think of the differences of their religions and creeds the godly bows before the humblest person, as Majnun did to Leili's dog.

TASAWWUF: Majnun bowed before the dog seeing in it the shadow of love, and Ramakrishna in his time bowed before the prostitutes seeing in them the shadows of love. When one enters such an attitude the mind does not hold forth its sway and then instead of disputing there is every effort to come to an agreement. Majnun in loving Leili loved all that pertained to her; the real lover of Allah loves all that pertains to Him.

GATHA: And when the prayers of different people will be for themselves, the prayer of the godly is only to attain to the presence of God; and therefore, whatever be his religion, his prayer will be followed by every sincere soul.

TASAWWUF: One can almost always distinguish between the exotericist and the esotericist in prayer. The former will be usually thinking of himself, of his personality, thoughts, ideals, those who he knows and recognizes and admires; the latter does not think in such terms—at least in prayer. The prayer of the esotericist is universal and with the heart fixed upon the Beloved. In this one finds the reason why the ordinary prayer does not bear much fruit, most prayers go unanswered. The prayer of the mystic does not receive an answer because it is not an attempt to get a direct wish-fulfillment. Heart knows neither question nor answer, heart is concerned with praise to God; heart wishes good to everyone. One can see how often a little infant would share even what little he has with another infant; this shows state of heart.

GATHA: Besides, the path of God and of love both, if sincerely trodden, need sacrifice from beginning to end; and the one who is not ready for sacrifice is like that pretended lover of Leili who was ready for the food but was not willing to suffer. Verily who pursueth the world will inherit the

world, but the soul that pursueth God will attain in the end to the presence of God.

TASAWWUF: The thought of sacrifice is not sacrifice, and sometimes stands as the greatest hindrance to sacrifice. The Christian Scripture teaches that no one can love God who does not love the neighbor and thousands of years of claims to love God, without this love for the neighbor, have not added much to the welfare of the world. The attempts to compromise and side-step have only led to disaster, even to world-disaster.

That love is a pretense which is connected with exchange, with gifts, with receiving. Much of the humor of the world today is based upon it, and behind this humor is the silent, almost unconscious intuition that there is a love which is not associated with such materialistic and commercial-like attitudes. There is a feeling, however dormant it be, that the true lover does not think of himself, does not have himself in view. The true lover thinks of the Beloved, lives in and for the beloved. This, which seems true in the case of human beings, is even more evident in the case of the mystic, especially of those who have lived in and for God, whatever be their religion.

GATHA: But to what does the love of God lead? It leads to that peace and stillness which can be seen in the life of the tree, which bears fruit and flowers for others and expects no returns, not even thanks in return. It serves, and cares for nothing else, not even for appreciation. That is the attribute of the godly.

TASAWWUF: The godly cannot be otherwise. Once there is the divine vision in the heart, there is a transmutation of personality. One becomes then what one has not been, one's outlook changes, and the whole of life seems different. For then the Divine Life is reflected in everything and in everyone. One sees God as the All in all—really. Then one cannot seek for anything especially because wherever one looks and wherever one turns, there and that is God.

GATHA: And the godly in the end of his attainment of God forgets himself, as Majnun said even to Leili, "I am Leili." And what happens then? Instead of man pursuing God, God follows man.

TASAWWUF: That is why Christ who called himself the "Son of Man"—Beni Adam—came to say later, "The Father and I are one," because in the divine union, there is no longer the feeling of distinction or difference. Of this the Sufis have said, "Ana Al-Haqq" which is to say, "The essence of Ego and Truth are One"—"There is nothing but God and therefore 'I' am God." Christ also declared that when the Kingdom of Heaven had arrived all things else would be added. Which means that one who has attained has attained power over all; realizing the Essence (Zat) of God, all the universe of things belongs to him, there is nothing then that need have power over him and there is nothing then over which he may not exercise his control. Verily the dervishes are the lords of all the earth, the monarchs of all they survey.

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Series III: Number 3

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
Christ Walking on the Water**

GATHA: The phenomenon of Christ's walking on the water, from a mystical point of view, is suggestive of a much greater philosophy than only a phenomenon.

TASAWWUF: This is described in several places in the Christian Bible of which the 14th Chapter of the Evangel of Matthew is offered as the basis for interpretation. Verse 22 reads: "And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away."

Jesus was anxious that his disciples proceed on their spiritual journey. He sent the multitudes away, meaning that he taught them to get rid of all worldly thoughts, which have to do with things of this world. He hoped that they would reach emancipation which is symbolically expressed in Buddhism as "the other shore." The ship or ark is the bark of salvation. The Egyptians always used the symbol of the ship; the Nile was their main highway so the spiritual path to them was a river rather than a road. In the Hebrew Bible one reads of Noah, who in principle represents the Saviour (or Vishnu) with the ark or ship of refuge or salvation, the Thebah. The boat in which Jonah journeyed had the same symbolism. There is a part of the Christian church stilled called the nave, which comes from the Latin word for ship. The original Christian churches were shaped like ships and the fish was the first great Christian symbol as was the wheel in Buddhism.

Verse 23 reads: "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray and when the evening was come, he was there alone."

The mountain always symbolizes a high state of spiritual attainment, hal in Sufic terms. In the allegory of the transfiguration and also at the temptation Jesus was taken up onto a mountain—there are no such high mountains in the Holy Land proper so it could only have a symbolic meaning. All the great Buddhist scriptures are supposed to have been revealed or inspirited to or by Gautama Buddha while he was on the top of Vulture's Peak or some other high mountain. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the mountain of the moon or receptive mind—which is known today not to be the Jebel Musa in the Southern Sinaic peninsula; Moses does not seem to have gone there physically, but to another mountain further north.

The sentence is repeated "And when he had sent the multitude away" because it means again

that Jesus himself entered the inner state, and rose above all the agitations of Samsara, the phenomenal universe. He entered Samadhi, or as it has been known by the Hebrews Jerusalem, the abode of universal peace. He had entered into the cosmic consciousness.

Verse 24 reads: “But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed by waves; for the wind was contrary.” The disciples did not have the knowledge of the breath or wind, and without this knowledge they were tossed about and were buffeted by all the affairs of Samsara, which disturb the average man and bring all sorrow.

Verse 25 reads: “And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.” Which means that he had now entered the fourth stage of meditation, which is called Turia by the Hindus. There it may be said that the initiate reaches perfection. He can control all the vibrations of Samsara, he has the perfect poise, is master over the three worlds.

Verse 26 reads: “And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.’” The disciples cannot realize the state of their teacher. They often misunderstand the teacher, trying to comprehend mysteries with their limited minds. They often seek phenomenal proof, which reveals their lack of faith. Yet when there is phenomenal evidence they are even more afraid, fearing magic, not realizing the unity of the teacher with the totality of manifestation.

Verse 27 continues: “But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid.’” The teacher is the representative of the One Universal Spirit. He can say, “It is I,” for he has attained to the consciousness of “An’il Haqq, I am the Truth.” In another place Jesus said, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life”—words that could only be spoken by a realized soul. The disciples here were not conscious of unity, but their teacher came offering peace and blessing.

Verse 28 reads: “And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, let me come unto thee on the water.” The disciple may be unsure but he is entitled to receive the teachings. These teachings, if followed, will enable him to control all his affairs; in other words, to walk upon the waters, to rise above the samsaric state.

Verse 29: “And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.” The ship was the place of training, where the disciples learned the teachings. After that state of learning is completed, then comes another state, to apply what one has learned and that is the time of a really great test. The disciple who passes this grade practices fana, self-effacement, through his surrender—in love and devotion before his teacher or Murshid.

Verse 30: “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.” Peter had not yet risen to the state of mastery of breath and he could not control the external conditions. He was still affected by them and so by karma. He wanted to hold onto the ego and yet he wanted to advance on the path. Seeing that he could not progress unaided, he called upon his spiritual preceptor.

Verse 31: “And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” The true teacher is always ready to help the pupil, yet the real help that comes to the pupil is that which enables him to stand on his own feet, to walk with his own feet. If there is lack of faith, there is lack of surrender and when there is no surrender, there is little progress on the path.

Verse 32: “And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.” When the teacher enters the sacred place of refuge, he brings his calmness with him and before that calmness all is still, all is peaceful. No more were the disciples agitated; their egos were calmed.

Verse 33 reads: “Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, ‘Of a truth thou art the Son of God.’” All the disciples that went through the stages of spiritual training and discipline could reach the stage of realization.

GATHA: The whole universe in all its forms is one single vision of a continual activity. From beginning to end every aspect of life represents motion, and it is the perpetual motion of the whole universe which is called life.

TASAWWUF: Life is therefore much more than form and cannot be limited to or circumscribed by the forms that we call living, such as vegetable and animal and man. Professor Jagadis Bose proved that even the mineral has a sort of life. According to the mystics wherever there is motion there may be life, even the universe and all therein is alive. Only that which is still may be considered as dead.

A careful study of all scriptures shows that all have the same general teachings. They reveal that God sent up a point of light at the beginning of creation, and from it the light radiated in all directions, coming to its culmination and returning to its Source. Then there was play and interplay between different grades and ranges of light (and life), and this has been going on continuously, establishing first the division between the worlds seen and unseen and then separating out the three planes of limitation. Light constantly goes forth and back, breath constantly goes forth and back, life constantly goes forth and back.

GATHA: Therefore the universe is, so to speak, an ocean of vibrations, and every movement represents a wave. Therefore the wise have called it, in Sanskrit, **Bhava Sagara**, the Ocean of Life.

TASAWWUF: We see practical examples of this in Hindu and Buddhist art. Always the gods, the Bodhisattvas, the sages, the illuminated and holy ones are seated on lotuses or arks, above the waves. The universe is divided between that portion above the waves and that below. Sufis call the former Tashbih, the latter Tanzih.

One mentions lower planes because they are formed out of the more refined planes of the universe, but they are in a certain sense all-pervading. Professor Einstein has said of physical

space that it is limited but unbounded. Each plane has certain rather well marked ranges of vibrations. The vibrations of the physical, manifested sphere have their ranges and limits. The vibrations of mind also have their ranges, qualities and characteristics, and so for the sphere of heart. But with respect to karma, one is concerned largely with the worlds of mind and matter.

All action in, round and about itself produces some reaction, and every tendency concerned with a self or thing or name or form causes an activity of attraction or repulsion or both. The universe or essence of this play and activity is known as Samsara by the Hindus and Buddhists and as nufsaniat by the Sufis. Hebrews and Christians refer to it rather as "this world." Within this universe or world is all self-activity resulting in pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, good, evil and what is generally known as duality. So long as man cannot raise his consciousness above it he is subject to illusion and delusion.

GATHA: And the great devotees have constantly prayed to be liberated, that they may not sink in this ocean but that they may be able to swim in it, which is called **Taran**.

TASAWWUF: There is a superstition that to rise out of Samsara one must rise out of form, or at least get away from physical limitation. Some, deluded, have tried to fly through space or rise into the air.

Others have learned to extend the consciousness out into space. They do not see that such phenomenal feats do not release them from their woes and do not add much to their general faculties and qualities. They are still within the web of the ego.

The spiritual path is one from selfhood toward selfless. In selflessness man stands above the vibrations and waves of Samsara. He does not thereby cease to exist or even lose his manhood. Therefore it has been that illuminated souls have remained in the body to teach and assist mankind. It does not stop them from experiencing peace and calm within, and to find the whole universe within their being.

John, the Christian seer, also said in the first verse of the 21st Chapter of the Apocalypse, "And the sea is no more." The 14th Chapter of the Book of Exodus is still more concerned with this teaching.

The 13th verse reads: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever." Which means, that one should maintain complete inner calm. By that, fear will depart, and all those forces and activities of Samsara, personified as the Egyptians, will be no more.

The 14th verse reads: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Which is a continuation of the same teaching. When man controls his personal will and feels the reliance (Yakin) upon God, then he is able to absorb into his personality all the powers of the universe. For

in maintaining peace he comes to the Ocean of Pure Being. All psychic power and all transcendental faculties arise therefrom.

The 16th verse reads: “But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” But make use of the psychic power which manifests through thy hands and personality, and then thou hast full power over Samsara. The Children of Pure Light, the Initiates, shall live in the midst of Samsara, or the sea, but it will be to them as dry land—that is to say, they will be entirely safe there.

This teaching is elaborated upon in the *Sepher ha-Zohar*, the *Book of Splendor*, which contains the majority of the Kabbalistic teachings and traditions and is a compendium of Hebrew mysticism. The teaching of all mysticism is essentially the same. Christ exemplified in a personal sense what the whole race of Initiates experienced in the Egyptian mysteries, which were rewritten by Moses and his associates in a semi-historical form and included in the sacred manuscripts of the Beni Israel.

GATHA: And it is the master-spirit that can rise above these waves of the enormous ocean of life, in which generally the souls are drowned.

TASAWWUF: The idea of a lost soul is not that a soul is damned; it is that the soul has lost the sense of its true nature and comes to regard itself as other than it really is. It then identifies itself with the plane of its temporary existence, and partakes only of the life of nufs, becoming deluded thereby. Thus we find that the people of the world are in a sense stupefied, and that it has been necessary to bring a Message to them from the Most High at various times in order that some of them at least may find their true purpose in life and walk steadily and steadfastly toward that goal.

The 22nd verse of the 14th Chapter of Exodus reads: “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” Which is to say that the initiates not only find salvation while in this world, but the very forces of this world become their servants and protectors. This can be explained further by the 21st verse.

This reads: “And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.” Moses used his powers over the manifestations of Samsara, maintaining complete attunement with God. Then the vibrations from the Primordium or Arsh, the Cosmic Breath, ruach ha-Kadam, rudely and vulgarly translated as East Wind by the ignorant, came down into this very world bringing all the blessings of the cosmos and making the world entirely safe for those on the path.

As the story goes the Egyptians were drowned, and it is quite possible that such an event did take place. Geographers who have made a study of the land immediately north of the Sinai Peninsula, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, have found such a place where there is a narrow belt of sand between the sea and an immense lake. Even today strong winds help to flood that belt. An adept would have no particular difficulty in accomplishing it—if called upon to do so.

Taken literally the story does not have much sense, and there are many mistakes in translation. For the Song of Moses which is given in the 15th Chapter of Exodus has not so much meaning unless one perceives the deeper, mystical sense—as the Kabbalists did. To quote only one verse, 8, it says, “And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.” The Hebrews refer to this sea as Suph which means reeds, and they speak of the Sea of Reeds, and not the Red Sea. The Sea of Reeds has the same meaning as Samsara, the Ocean of Life with its difficulties. The Divine Breath carries Baraka from the innermost to manifestation THROUGH THE MESSENGER OF GOD, in this instance Moses, in another instance Jesus.

GATHA: To be in it and to be able to stand above it and to walk on it is the phenomenon of Christ’s walking upon the water.

TASAWWUF: This same teaching is allegorized elsewhere, and to understand it fully one should have to study about the Flood and the allegory of Jonah in the Bible, the Vishnu-Purana of the Hindus and other scriptures with esoteric meanings such as those of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians. Everywhere they taught of this struggle in the world and the passing through water, or walking upon water, or traveling in an ark, a sacred boat, which was made to float upon the water; or upon a lotus, also floating upon the water.

Through esotericism and the practices of the initiates one learns to stand before the world, experience all, sustain all and not be controlled by the affairs of the world. It requires most of all that calmness and inner peace by which all agitation is stopped and man’s inner being becomes as a lake of pure light.

The concentration upon this helps one also to rise above his limitations and to attain that peace. It is not an easy concentration, and its success need not bring with it any allegorical understanding of Scriptures. What it will bring is a better understanding of oneself, and the true nature of oneself.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 4

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
Shaqqu’s-Sadr, The Opening of the Breast of the Prophet**

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

TASAWWUF: There are many stories of the lives of mystics which are substantially true, but being unusual, they would not be accepted realistically and so become the basis for legends. There are also legends which are fabrications and yet each may be founded upon truth, upon truth rather than upon fact, for truth is that which is beyond words and when placed into words it often takes on an allegorical form. Many books have been written upon this subject and the wise have learned to see beyond the literal interpretations of scripture and holy writings generally.

According to the Hebrew Kabbalah a scripture must be read from four points of view. The one is the literal version, taking it as true facts. The second is the analogical view, which means that one must study the meaning of every word and if a word is found elsewhere with a definite meaning or establishing a precedent or reference it should become the centre of the interpretation elsewhere, or may become so, offering a freedom in explanation. The third method is to explain figuratively, looking into the symbolical meaning of words and phrases; finally there is the esoteric explanation.

In a certain sense these four meanings may be applied to many sacred traditions. Thus we can say that it actually took place, that the angels did descend from heaven and cut open the actual breast of the Prophet. But if we want to know the meaning of angels, who are beings of Djabrut, who do not manifest in Hasut, then it was not that the angels actually came, it was a movement of Breath from Djabrut. When the breath of the Prophet, or of any one reached that degree of purification and refinement, it actually touched the breast and did something there. But if we take it symbolically, it was not the breast but the heart, the centre of man's body and of man's being.

Finally if we want to get to the esoteric meaning, it is that as the breath becomes more and more refined, the delicate vibrations of Ishk from Djabrut penetrate the personality of man and make a change in the heart. Yet the full esotericism is not complete until man experiences that through his own development for which the study of esotericism is most valuable, and the training of mysticism is also most helpful.

But if one asks can this attainment be reached through concentration and symbology? Was there such a method among the Naqshibandi Sufis, the answer is that it is so, and that if one concentrates upon the opening of the breast, and continues in that work, perhaps identifying the heart symbol with one's own heart, there will be a gradual change in feeling first and then in character afterwards so that the piercing and opening of the breast will be one's own experience. In this sense it can surely be said that it happened more than once to Mohammed.

GATHA: According to the Sufi point of view this is a symbolical legend. It explains what is necessary in the life of man, to allow the plant of divine love to grow in his heart. It is to remove that element which gives the bitter feeling.

TASAWWUF: The heart is the centre of feeling, and when it opens up, by whatever method it is opened, it receives the vibrations of Ishk, and this makes of it the temple of Love and the Shrine of God. Furthermore this brings with it a change in personality so that feelings of envy, bitterness and ill-will disappear as a result thereof.

GATHA: Just as there is a poison in the sting of a scorpion, and as there is a poison in the teeth of the snake, so there is poison in the heart of man which is made to be the shrine of God. But God cannot arise in the shrine which is as dead by its own poison; it must be purified first and made real for God to arise.

TASAWWUF: Man becomes deluded by his thought of self which sends its shadows over his whole inner being and closes the heart. The opening of the heart is an accomplishment toward which every talib of Sufism bends his efforts, and at the same time it may be through Grace that the heart is opened. There cannot be a breaking and freeing effect if man holds tight to the thought of self, and if he does and wants to feel freedom and be rid of ill-will and bitterness, he will not succeed because these arise naturally when the heart is hard and tight and one overcomes them when the heart is opened and expansive.

The purification of the heart is one of the most important things to be accomplished in Sufism and it comes during and after the third grade of study and development in Sufism. When one feels the love coming into the heart, the blood also is purified, it receives the highest vibrations. Such diseases as sarcoma, cancer, diabetes, Bright's disease will no longer be, they will not find any root in the body when the heart is so purified.

GATHA: The soul who had to sympathize with the whole world was thus prepared, that the drop of that poison which always produces contempt, resentment and ill-feeling against another, was destroyed first.

TASAWWUF: In order to fulfill his mission as Rassoul, Mohammed first had to obtain the world-point of view or universal sympathy. For this he required the complete purification and transformation of heart. When that occurs the heart becomes self-healing and also aids in the purification and healing of the vehicles of soul. This process makes for the perfect man and that was surely illustrated in the later life of Mohammed who openly forgave his worst enemies and turned them into friends.

This concentration is in a certain sense a form of fana-fi-Rassoul, for one to reach a similar state of growth and to perform a similar mission must also have the heart opened. If he release hold of his ego in his love for Rassoul it may be accomplished automatically. If not the concentration upon the opening of the heart, together with Fikr, may help to bring about that condition. For this the heart-concentration of itself is often a preparation and it is also true that some who have the heart-concentration pass from that stage when they feel or see a heart in front of them to a much higher stage or state when the heart that they see or feel is their own, and they identify seer, seen and sight.

The wide view is always encouraged, for no matter how wide it is it must still become wider if one is to attain to that degree which alone entitles one to be called "Sufi." The broader the scope of vision, the less the possibility that one will hold any narrow view. One recognizing humanity as the Beloved of God will gradually withdraw from contempt, resentment and all feelings of narrowness. It will be natural; no moral lectures or disciplines will be needed thereafter.

GATHA: So many talk about the purification of the heart, and so few really know what it is.

TASAWWUF: First one has to know the meaning of heart and for that there are not only papers and lectures of Sufi teachings, there is the concentration which is given to talibs, and this concentration, if rightfully performed, helps to bring about a clearer understanding than all words can bring. And purification must also be understood which includes among other things, the removal of any thought, emotion or feeling which interferes with the duty at hand. So to comprehend purification of heart, one has to know that it means removal from the heart of all that should not be there, and then learning what are the things that should not be there, and keeping the heart in an expansive state so that these things find no root there.

GATHA: Some say to be pure means to be free from all evil thought, but there is no evil thought. Call it evil or call it devil, if there is any such thought it is the thought of bitterness against another.

TASAWWUF: It is said that God makes and man mars, God makes and man breaks. Thought, like light, thought born of light, does not have to have any qualification such as good or evil. These are born of the dualistic conception which itself arises from ego and not-ego recognition, from the state and habit that "I am different and you are different." This differentiation keeps people apart from one another, stands before human brotherhood and destroys the possibility of that consideration, justice and compassion which alone are worthy of the initiate.

The narrow state of heart arises out of the shadow thrown over it. As the thought of self becomes fixed and confined the heart becomes narrowed and this shuts out light. Then it is that bitterness may come there. In Ziraat one learns that every thought may have to be thrown out of the heart to purify it, heart being the abode of love and light and life.

GATHA: No one with sense and understanding would like to keep a drop of poison in his body, and how ignorant it is on the part of man when he keeps and cherishes a bitter thought against another in his heart. If a drop of poison can cause the death of the body, it is equal to a thousand deaths when the heart retains the smallest thought of bitterness.

TASAWWUF: In *Nirtan* one learns that the heart is its own medicine. When the heart is pure it receives the light of soul which purifies, revivifies and heals the vehicles through which life functions. But a single drop of poison in the heart is communicated through the blood-stream to the organs and prevents man from being entirely well. That is why there is so much emphasis upon the psychological basis of disease. The initiates use every effort to get the heart clear and clean and keep it so.

The Hebrew Scripture says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." If the heart cherishes other than God, if the heart is kept closed, then there is not sufficient room for the moral and spiritual qualities which illumine the character and life of man. When he keeps before himself the thought of self, he cannot have at the same time the thought or feeling of the true God. To love the true God there must be no vestige of self-love.

GATHA: In this legend cutting open of the breast is the cutting open of the ego, which is as a shell over the heart.

TASAWWUF: The opening of the breast produces a feeling of expansion, and when there is that expansion there is no tension. Ego depends upon smallness, upon the narrow and narrowing view, and above all, upon the thought of self. There have been those who have compared human personality to a nut with its phases of fruit or cover, shell, cover, nut proper and oil of the nut, which is the essence of personality. To get at the depths of life the hard shell must be opened and removed.

GATHA: And taking away that element is that every kind of thought or feeling against anyone in the world was taken away, and the breast, which means the heart, was filled with love alone, which is the real life of God.

TASAWWUF: Man's life becomes complete when it is merged with Divine Life. In Divine Life there is no ill-will against anybody, because while people may as individuals have various thoughts and feelings about each other, with respect to God the relationship of each and all is the same, and it is to aspire to that Divine relationship that the disciples of Sufism make every effort.

The average person, even the devotee, often limits God to his thought of God; he calls that thought-form of his "Allah" and yet that thought-form may be devoid of the actual attributes of God. Then unfortunately we see people who deny that God is Love; or if calling God Love, nevertheless act as if it were not so, that God has other attributes to the end that it has been declared, "Your Maker like yourselves you make."

This teaching of the mystery of the heart has been brought out in *The Quest of the Overself* by Paul Brunton and is also found in a less precise form in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and many others who have had the cosmic intuition. According to Brunton this quest of the oversoul brings with it the highest form of happiness and all mystics and sages agree that the nature of the soul is happiness itself.

When one adheres to the heart-feeling, he will recognize and forgive the short-comings in others without following them in their weaknesses or indecisions. In the life of Rassoul this was clearly manifest, and if one studies the history of Mohammed he will learn much about how a person behaves at various stages of spiritual development.

As has been explained, one may have this concentration combining Fikr with it and it may be

performed in a prone position in bed just as one is retiring or one is able to arise; or in a posture position. One will also learn the truth of the self as explained in the Upanishads and other wisdom-teachings, that the self is truly as a barley-corn or the grain within a barley corn, yet larger than the universe itself.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 5

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
Meraj, The Dream of the Prophet**

GATHA: A story exists in Islam about the dream of the Prophet, a dream which was as an initiation in the higher spheres.

TASAWWUF: **Initiation In The Higher Spheres.** This is very difficult to understand intellectually because by “higher spheres” one refers to those planes, those aspects of the universe which are beyond the realm of intellectual and individual personality. The ordinary person uses the two words “individuality” and “personality,” and individuality refers to our separated existence and personality to that which is reflected to and through us.

Now in Sufism much attention is paid to personality and the mystic rejoices that modern psychology is also recognizing personality and has not been convinced of individuality. From one point of view individuality leads to the extreme dominance of nufs and establishes monarchy or even tyranny in place of hierarchy. For individuality is like a bare trunk with no leaves and branches while personality is like the tree with its trunk and branches and leaves and flowers, and all harmony and beauty.

The higher spheres bring with them a realization which makes the initiate know that he is not a completely separated being, and when he enters fana-fi-Sheikh, that part of his being which is beyond the heart-sphere and even his heart become one with the teacher. In fana-fi-Rassoul there is even a closer union within and yet this brings even greater freedom without, for the stronger the inner bond the greater the balancing latitude in manifestation. That is why and how the Messenger, one with God within, spreads his influence over a great area and ultimately reaches and influences the lives of many people.

Initiation Through Murakkabah. While concentration begins as an individualistic act and makes one feel his self, even his ego-self, that self gradually broadens through the stages of the science, until one can hardly hold himself together as a separated entity and must, from the very conditions, become as “the dew-drop sliding into the shiny sea.” One passes through visual, imaginative and conceptual concentration until it becomes as if the Spirit of God in man were performing the concentration and that Spirit of God was identical with one’s self, taking a certain aspect which develops the personality further even as the individualistic hold weakens. Then one comes to realize the brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God.

Initiation Through Dreams. This is explained in the lessons on Sufic occultism. There are all kinds and grades of dreams but they largely depend upon the condition, grade, and state of a person’s breath, and whether the dream is visual, symbolical, direct, astral or otherwise, its clarity and interpretation cannot be considered apart from the nature of one’s breath and general evolution.

GATHA: Many take it literally and discuss it, and afterwards go out by the same door by which they came in. It is by the point of view of a mystic that one can find out the mystery.

TASAWWUF: It has already been explained that scriptures and experiences of prophets may be interpreted in several ways, each throwing light upon a certain aspect of life. There are even today people interested in wonder-workings and who are attracted toward adepts because they expect from them marvels. According to the Sufi teachings these marvels come only through the Grace of Allah; otherwise they may be regarded as Satanic or delusive; in either case senseless and useless.

The point of view of the mystic is that which takes into consideration all the faculties of breath, the general nature of breath, and the fact that the breath is the lift which takes one to higher planes and gives one a different view of life—through direct experience.

GATHA: It is said that the Prophet was taken from Jerusalem to the temple of peace, which means from the outer temple of peace to the inner temple of peace.

TASAWWUF: A keen student of the Bible will find that many passages are obscure when taken too literally with respect to the temple. The psalmists and the prophets everywhere seem to indicate that the temple was a place for meditation and the psalm, like the Veda, especially Sama-Veda, could be used to raise the state of consciousness of the devotee until he found himself, so to speak, in the inner temple. Thus this experience of Mohammed, in this respect, was not unique.

Jerusalem is called Al-Quddus, the Holy City, by the Arabs; also Dar-es-Salaam, which means door or gate to peace. The idea of the spiritual Jerusalem was that it was a stronghold of peace, and the city described in the Christian Apocalypse was naught else. But peace is definitely a state where there is no agitation, and to reach that there must be calmness within and without. One may say that the inner peace is in no respect different from what the Hindus and Buddhists would call

Samadhi, only the Prophet like all wise men used the language of his times to express his spiritual states.

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

TASAWWUF: Jibra'il is the Arabic for the Hebrew Gabriel and signifies more properly the light of intelligence, or *akl*, which means reason in Arabic, but which has a broader significance (see Gatha on this subject). There are two aspects of reason, that which is personal, and that in which reason follows or is accompanied by faith, which is the true reason.

The idea of picturing the breath as an animal is ancient and really it comes out of the worlds of dreams and myths. For instance there is the winged horse Pegasus which was used by Bellerophon, the hero, and this name Bellerophon signifies one who is master of the inner sound and inner light, connected with the practice of Shagal, which practice is also responsible for the experience of the type of Meraj. The ancient Babylonians also used a figure with the face of a man, the legs of a bull, the body of a lion and the wings of the bird. The bull represented the earth element, the lion, fire, the wings, air, and the man, both water and ether.

The Merkabah or chariot mentioned in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel had the same significance, and the wheel of the chariot was symbolic of actual breath movement. The symbols also correspond to the signs Taurus, Scorpio, Aquarius and Leo of the Zodiac. The Hebrew Kabbalists considered this a great mystery, a mystery all the more great when the knowledge of breath disappeared from among them. Figures like the Centaurs of Greece, the Gandharvas of India and many others were drawn from the same source of mystery.

GATHA: It is said that the Prophet saw on his way Adam, who smiled looking to one side and shed tears looking to the other side. This shows that the human soul when it develops in itself real human sentiment rejoices at the progress of humanity and sorrows over the degeneration of humanity.

TASAWWUF: This same idea of a divine being looking on two sides with two faces was symbolized by the Roman god, Janus, the Opener of the Door, and one face represented war, the other peace; or one represented Samsara, the other Samadhi. The opener was deified at Ptah in Egypt, and the idea is that there is an opening of heart and breath which takes one to the divine threshold.

Fana-fi-Adam. This is a great mystery. During this experience or "Night Journey" the Prophet met many of the other Prophets, Noah, Moses, Solomon, Jacob, David, Jesus, and from each one he received a blessing, or the spirit of Baraka by which he was enabled to give blessings to the world.

He assimilated some of their development and psychic power, and also that inspiration which made his later mission possible. Without this aid and comfort it is doubtful whether he could have succeeded because the opposition which he had to face was tremendous.

As he passed through the planes he ultimately reached the state wherein he experienced the whole of humanity as a unit and found himself at one with the whole race, thus actualizing human brotherhood. In that state there is one single embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. One gives this the name Adam which to the mystic symbolizes the whole of the human race. In Lahut one passes from the state of love-individuality of the angel to this cosmic personality of Adam.

Burrak Murakkabah. The breath is the means by which one rises to higher states but the breath must be purified and carried through many stages, otherwise one having a complete concentration of breath, feeling breath as any other than Dar-es-Salaam, the door to peace, might have experiences which would take him to other goals, and lead him astray. That is why devotion must always dominate and the scientific spirit of concentration be balanced or restrained.

Adam Murakkabah. To try this concentration before one has accomplished concentration in name and form may mean to waste valuable time which could much better be used to practical effort. For there is no gain in achieving a mighty state of consciousness and so be drawn into ecstasy that one cannot keep the balance before the world, so that one may not give blessings to the world. For beyond all experiences on all planes there is the Divine Wisdom, which we call Sufism and which would indicate that one only is worthy of this experience who will afterwards convey to mankind the blessings of mercy and compassion **Because He Knows Them and Possesses Them.** Yet the door should be left open for at any time, by the Grace of God, a Burrak may be sent to one, which is none other than what the Christians call "Holy Spirit."

When we reach that grade and throw ourselves upon the Mercy of Allah, the words which are contained in the Sufi Invocation become a reality, being realizable. Then we find the same life in ourselves and in all creatures and the teachings which are contained in the higher lessons on Metaphysics and Occultism become as an open book. The planes which we read about in the literature we then find within ourselves and we also discover the correspondences between the universe within and without.

It is said in the Bible that all the rivers flow into the sea, meaning that all life has come from and returns to a common Base. The idea of Adam is that God created a complete Kingdom of Humanity out of which single persons emanate in an endless stream, ultimately finding their way back to their Source. Thus the mystics, while emphasizing Tanasukh or Return, consider it more in the nature of return to the Source, than return to the manifestation. The extreme reincarnationists make man the slave of the wheel and sight is lost of his true nature.

For that reason Mohammed constantly and continually pointed upward and emphasized Unity and Human Brotherhood. The psychological effect was tremendous and made of Islam a progressive

community. The universal apathy and attitude of Kismet which came later was not his teaching. He tried to turn the desert into a garden and to improve the surface of the world. He spoke of heaven as being filled with gardens and streams; he wished the earth to be the same and worked even through his individual personality to achieve that end for the benefit of all.

GATHA: The Burrak could not go beyond a certain point, which means that breath takes one a certain distance in the mystical realization, but there comes a stage when the breath cannot accompany one.

TASAWWUF: At that point one may be said to be united with the breath. We find such references in the Holy Scriptures generally, and the prophets speak of being in the breath or spirit. They then become the pulsations of the cosmos. And Yogis who practice suspended animation also depend upon this, that the breath flows into the heart beat and becomes stilled—yet life goes on.

It has been said that much of Dante's "The Divine Comedy" was based upon the Meraj, knowledge of which came to him partly indirectly from outside sources, and partly directly from his own development. In that work Virgil accompanies him to a certain plane and then can go no further. In "The Thief of Baghdad," a story based upon myths of initiation, the winged horse takes the hero to the moon, but cannot go up the mountains with him. Moses, Christ and all the prophets also went alone to the top of the mountain. Only the spirit of God can come to the threshold of God. And while there is self, there is not God.

GATHA: When they arrived near the destination Jibra'il also retired, which means that reason cannot go any further than its limit.

TASAWWUF: The ordinary reason cannot go beyond the light of intelligence. The higher reason cannot carry one into the cosmic state because there is there no name and form as we understand them and therefore there is no use for reason and no scope of it either.

GATHA: Then the Prophet arrived near that curtain which stands between the human and the divine, and called aloud the name of God, saying, "None exists save Thou," and the answer came, "True, true." That was the final initiation, from which dated the blooming of Mohammed's prophetic message.

TASAWWUF: One says, "La Illaha El Allahu," which ordinarily means "There is no deity but Allah," and mystically means, "There is no one save He." And the reflection is "Haqq, Haqq," which we translate as "True, true," and the practice for which is "Ana al Haqq," meaning that there is only One Being Who is identical with Truth and for which the Name of God is given in ordinary language, but which is beyond the thought of man and for which really speaking names are inadequate.

By final initiation means the completion of fana-fi-Lillah in which the spirit of the Prophet became absorbed in the Spirit of God and then came the realization or Baqa which corresponds to the

attainment of Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration and the Nirvana of Buddha. Then there is none else and the spirit of man and the Spirit of God are identified.

Sufis speak of this attainment as Risalat, the perfection of humanity, in which one verily becomes Rassoul whatever be his mission in life. Of it Christ has said, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." For this, however, no concentration will help. This comes through contemplation in which, from the very beginning the devotee must feel himself as an all-inclusive being, including all within his ken as himself and in his devotions becoming as a veritable god, yet praying as the most humble being to the All in All.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 6

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
The Flute of Krishna**

GATHA: Krishna is pictured in Hindu symbology with a crown of peacock's feathers, playing the flute.

TASAWWUF: **Fana-fi-Rassoul**. This belongs to the class of concentrations of name only when the form is indistinct and the idea is that one will draw to himself the power and attributes of the form and perhaps the picture also. Although the ancient Sufis used Mohammed in particular as Rassoul, it has been learned by the mystics that the lovers of all the Messengers of God can reach and do reach the same degree of spiritual development when their whole heart is enwrapped and enfolded in their ideal. Consequently the spiritual disciples of the future will have before them the ideals and personalities of Rama, Siva, Buddha, Abraham, Solomon, Zarathustra, Moses and Jesus as well as Krishna and Mohammed.

Nevertheless as these are all alternate forms of the same general degree it is not necessary and it may seldom happen that a disciple will be called upon to concentrate upon all of the Holy Ones, except that they be in the line of teachers, and must become acquainted with the several effects of these concentrations. It is only in fana-fi-Lillah that all unite and so long as man is still attached to name, no matter what name, he has not reached the highest. Yet these practices are so high, so noble, so abundant in blessings, that it is almost beyond the right of man to discuss them.

In addition to the pure form of fana-fi-Rassoul, there is a concentration which many mureeds, especially the devotional ones, may use to advantage and that is to take a picture or form and use that in concentration. Many have used a picture of Christ or a carving of Christ on the cross and who can say that they did not benefit greatly therefrom? The Sufi talib learns from all these methods the various ways of progressing toward the Goal.

GATHA: Krishna is the idea of divine love, the god of love. And the divine love expresses itself by entering in man and filling his whole being. Therefore the flute is the human heart, and a heart which is made hollow, which becomes a flute for the god of love to play.

TASAWWUF: Love, strictly speaking, may be experienced and yet not explained. For it is a heart-seizure and sometimes this seizure seems to come from within and sometimes from without and the general effect is liable to be intoxicating, so much so that the personality is transformed and even may become blind to the problems and affairs of the outer world.

Before his time people identified passion and love—and many since then also. There is the Kama Shastra, a mixture of science, occultism and law, which has formed the basis for love and marital relationships in India, but much of its contents lean toward ego-satisfaction, although in harmony with natural and occult law. But right action does not of itself elevate the inner spirit and what Krishna revealed was that aspect of love which is and will always be elevating.

One may say that the Message may take on two forms, spiritual and practical, that being called spiritual which raises the consciousness of the individual beyond the manifested sphere although strictly speaking that which is persistent in matter may also be called spiritual. The teaching in India took on two forms, one of which became perfected in Bhakti Yoga and the other in Jnana Yoga, the former being the path of love and ecstasy together, the latter that of knowledge and sobriety together. The idea in Bhakti Yoga, which Krishna taught was that by becoming empty of self, one became full. Thus it was that 16,000 Gopis are said to have danced with him on one night when the moon was full; which is to say, when the mind becomes illuminated one may be aware of the presence of the Lord.

Many of the teachings later repeated by Christ were given out by Krishna. As a result some have said that Christ was in India, learned the teachings there. This is an unfortunate idea because it tends to restrict the presence of God to one place and it ignores the fact that practically everything taught by Christ had been given out by others before him. He brought no new teachings; he did exemplify the perfection of humanity through the following of those teachings and by many he has been called the apostle of love, although in another sense Krishna also was the apostle of love.

What does woman really love in man? And what does man really love in woman? We love the sign of life which will bring fulfillment and completion in us. In Bhakti Yoga we find this completion by union with the god or goddess—in a certain stage of development—and with the All-Pervading at the highest stage of development. But in Kama Yoga, if such a phrase be used, the completion comes through union with the mate. So what woman really loves is the divine in man or the divine male;

and what a man fully loves is the divine in woman, or the goddess.

Unfortunately some who recognize the philosophy of this and adhere to the philosophy never attain in spirit. The result is that on the one hand there are tendencies to celibacy and on the other hand to perversion or lasciviousness, not warranted by any spiritual teachings, not given out by any Teacher. For the sign of love is the open heart. To prepare one for any concentration connected with Krishna—unless it is shown in hal, one must have the heart-development beforehand or the heart concentration as suggested by the first series of Gathas. This prepares for fana-fi-Rassoul through love.

GATHA: When the heart is not empty, in other words when there is no scope in the heart, there is no place for love.

TASAWWUF: That is why at the appearance of puberty there is a grand awakening in youth which manifests throughout the body. It is said that each person in a limited sense repeats the history of the race. Backward peoples, however, mate with little feeling, and advanced peoples become confused by the intoxication attendant upon love and upon sex-attraction.

Now there is another aspect of emptiness and this occurs in the developed person who is able to rise above any state of hard-heartedness, who is capable of expansion of feeling. If he has not developed in another way it can be obtained through love and devotion to Krishna.

GATHA: Rumi, the great poet of Persia, explains the idea more clearly. He says the pains and sorrows the soul experiences through life are holes made in a reed flute, and it is by making these holes that the player makes out of a reed a flute. Which means, the heart of man is first a reed, and the suffering and pain it goes through make it a flute, which can then be used by God as the instrument to produce the music that he constantly wishes to produce.

TASAWWUF: All growth is acquisition of something which formerly was not self, that then becoming self. Love is an emptying of self, an opening and emptying of heart. It is this which at all stages of development makes growth and learning possible, no matter what the kind of growth or type of learning. This is why true lovers learn so much from each other. They constantly exchange vibrations which take on the form of love and feeling and knowledge. Their mutual attunement brings life and ecstasy. This alone establishes the spiritual marriage whether between lovers or between teacher and pupil.

The practice of concentration becomes impossible if there are many feelings present, if there is hardness of heart. If there is more than one feeling there will either be many thoughts, or the thought will not be held firm, thus making concentration impossible. When there is love there is only one feeling which can readily hold a single thought, the highest and best being the thought of the beloved.

There is a music of the spheres which can be expressed through the body of one who has become

empty, and he can even imitate the sound of the reed or the music of the flute because he himself is empty. This music comes from a divine source and is perfected as the feeling becomes fixed upon Allah.

GATHA: But every reed is not a flute, and so every heart is not His instrument. As the reeds need to be made into flutes, so the human heart can be turned into an instrument and can be offered to the God of Love.

TASAWWUF: There is a great mistake made by many, who suppose that the average person or that any person, can by following the dictates of his heart, reach the goal. If this were so no spiritual training would be needed, there would be no reason for the Message. Strange to say there are ignorant people who believe that evolution is natural and that all evolve, and that evolution comes whether we like it or not. There are also many ignorant people who hold that karma has full sway and we cannot escape. But strange people are those who hold to both these views not recognizing their contrariness, that they both cannot be absolutely true.

To become empty one must surrender before name and form first and prove that surrender. Then it is easy to surrender to name alone and then it is easy to surrender and not be confused by the word "surrender" or the thought of surrendering, both of which are snares and delusions.

The ancient Greek devotees of the God of Love, Dionysus, used to drink wine and the intoxication of wine and that of love were regarded as symbols for each other. This symbolism was continued by the Christians who have the drinking of wine as a sacrament, there representing the blood of Christ, and divine love. Sufis have carried on the same principles in their teaching, their poetry and especially their music being used both to represent and to produce a finer form of intoxication than that which comes from wine.

GATHA: It is the human heart which becomes the harp of the angels; it is the human heart which is the lute of Orpheus.

TASAWWUF: Orpheus is said to mean the divine light in speech and sound, and this name was given to the man because of his special character and development. He had the complete knowledge of the mysticism of sound and instructed his disciples in it secretly, to the envy of the unworthy who ultimately martyred him. But the shape of the lute which he played is derived from that of the heart and its sounding board represents the empty heart.

When man has the knowledge of true music, he can use it to awaken the heart and to instill it with love and inspiration. The possibilities of the human heart are endless, if one could know the nature of the heart.

GATHA: It is on the model of the heart of man that the first instrument of music was made, and no earthly instrument can produce that music which the heart produces, raising the mortal soul to immortality.

TASAWWUF: There have been at least two classes of instruments based upon the heart, those which we call percussion instruments and the strings of such families as those of the viol, lute, tar and their many derivatives. The vina, which is one of the oldest of instruments, was based upon the human form and made a sound something like that of the human voice. It has two hollow sounding chambers, which may be equal in size or the lower one much larger than the upper. The lower chamber represents the heart, the upper the head and the instrument symbolizes the derivation of life from the heart and the supremacy of heart over head. For the life of the intellect is drawn ultimately from heart.

Ordinarily music has its physical, emotional and mental effects. Notes and words combine in various fashions to produce pleasing or intended effects. But however much man changes mode or style—and in the West there are constant and innumerable changes—he has not been able to penetrate to the depths of personality and rouse the ecstasy of heart. His music often has a pleasant, a calming, a psychological or beneficial effect, but there is music that arouses the passions also. When man learns the secret of mysticism and can reproduce fine and sweet tones through his personality, then he can draw the blessings of Djabrut and affect others. As deep the source of musical inspiration, so great is power of penetration and influence over others. Therefore it is used by the Sufis in the training of disciples and for their own benefit.

One can listen to the various birds and discern in them the notes of devas and angels, of gandharvas and peri, and even of the yakshas and rakshas—as in the crow and eagle. Birds have fine breath which brings them fine vibrations, according to their type and life of their species, and this is reproduced in their calls and songs. But whatever is found in the animal kingdom is also in man, if he will awaken himself to it.

The concentration upon Krishna and his flute is therefore beneficial to devotees and lovers, to those who should go on the path of Bhakti and also to those who seek spiritual development through music. In this sense the Sufism of the day departs from the older form which was linked with the Islamic religion and includes with it all the Vedic knowledge especially that of the mysticism of sound. For all comes from God and all returns to Him.

There is a marvelous benefit from the use of music whether in the form of Zikr or in any other form. For those who would compose or sing or dance, the performance of deep concentration until they feel unity with Krishna is of highest benefit.

GATHA: The crown of peacock's feathers leads to a further revelation, that it is the music of the heart which can be expressed through the head; it is the knowledge of the head and the love of the heart that express the divine message fully.

TASAWWUF: It is said of Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove. How does a dove descend? When we consider the Holy Spirit as the Divine Breath and realize that the sound of that breath which is heard by many mystics forms ultimately the universal "Hu," which the dove comes nearest to reproducing in an intelligible form, then we can say that the Holy Spirit

descended giving forth a sound like that of the dove. Infants also produce a similar sound, which we call “cooing.” That represents the angelic condition and the angelic music takes on such a form, and that can touch the heart of man when he is responsive.

Heart music appears in speech in a loving, gentle, sympathetic voice. One can notice it in an innocent person and in lovers and saints. The quality of voice always betrays the stage of evolution, and the emotional condition. In spiritual training the emotions are purified through music, but there is no reason why this knowledge cannot be given to many, if they would accept the discipline necessary for its appreciation.

GATHA: Peacock’s feathers have in all ages been considered as a sign of beauty, as a sign of knowledge; beauty because they are beautiful, knowledge because they are in the form of an eye.

TASAWWUF: The peacock feather contains or reflects all the colours and appears as one of the most scintillating and beautiful objects in nature. In addition to that it has a certain psychic and healing power which can be used to remove disease germs. Therefore instead of the possession of peacock feathers being unlucky, the mystic says they are decidedly beneficial.

The eye itself is an instrument for the absorption of knowledge and for radiating light and power. The eye may be used in the form of spiritual instruction called Tawajjeh.

Concentration upon the peacock feather, visually at first, may be used to awaken a sense of beauty, a response to color, and a feeling of immunity against disease.

GATHA: It is by keen observation that man acquires knowledge. Knowledge without love is lifeless. So with the flute the crown of peacock’s feathers makes the symbol complete.

TASAWWUF: In Jewish mysticism, Kether, the Crown, is placed in the first position, above the other Sephira or divine emanations. Tiphereth, beauty, is placed in their very centre, holding the others together. Thus they symbolise the position of heart and head in the human personality and in life generally. They also indicate that the heart is at the centre of life and beauty in the midst of human personality when that has reached perfection, for beauty has been placed at the very centre of the Divine Personality.

Many argue about the relative merits of heart and head. This question can never be settled by argument. But it can be settled by concentration, and any form of concentration which reveals the nature of heart and of head will bring this knowledge to the talib. However most people need heart development and the life of the heart continues even after that of mind, and precedes that of mind.

Although there are said to be different paths such as Bhakti Marga and Jnana Marga, the one is one and the same. If a person wants knowledge he obtains it through spiritual development; and if he seeks love, that search for love is the same as the spiritual search. But for most people love is foremost and essential, and for the life eternal it is not necessary to raise the intellect to the highest

degree while one is on earth. There may be no purpose in it and no advantage. Thought, attuned to and controlled by feeling, leads to wisdom.

Questions and Answers (July 20, 1923)

Q: What is the meaning of the peacock feathers?

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

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

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

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Gatha with Commentary

Series III: Number 7

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
Tongues of Fire**

GATHA: The symbolic meaning of the legend—of the myth—is that there is a period when the soul of the earnest seeker is seeking, which means that it has not yet found the object it is seeking after.

TASAWWUF: The Sufis have always stressed the symbolical meaning of myth and sacred texts, for the real sacred text is not that which is a mere historical record so much as a prophetic or inspired utterance which cannot always be limited to a verbal interpretation. Dreams, visions and mystical experiences especially are not vouchsafed as rewards and do not always mean the highest forms of progress and attainment. They come during certain stages of development and must be distinguished whether they are the result of natural conditions, or because of one's own state, or whether they have been sent by Divine Grace. Therefore the Teacher is needed for the pupil often errs when he judges himself.

Heart does not fully impress mind without the use of form, and therefore Sufis do not neglect the study of occultism which throws light upon inner experiences. They do not always delight in them, which they call the pleasures of heaven, for they come during the time of search. And when the Message was first brought to the Western world it was largely through the use of myths and allegories, and though it was explained that there was an inner meaning, it was also stated that for this insight was needed. But the world has wanted the inner meaning without the insight and therefore has often obtained neither.

GATHA: In the lifetime of Jesus Christ the beauty of the Master's wonderful personality and the great intoxication of His presence and the constant outpouring of the Message that He had to give was so much for his disciples that it was beyond what may be called a joy or a happiness or something which is explainable, and all the blessing that they received and experienced during His presence was covered by the Master's personality.

TASAWWUF: The effect of this was very great and the historicity of Jesus Christ can be proven by the psychic power that he left with his disciples and also from the mystical experiences of those who followed the path he laid out. Nevertheless it must be said that intoxication in the presence of the living teacher constitutes a certain grade of development and if one remains intoxicated with the presence and with the form he will have the utmost difficulty in attaining to fana-fi-Rassoul. For his thought of the teacher will ever remain as a veil over his clear vision of the teacher.

Jesus Christ could not hide his personality from his disciples and from the multitude. Nor could he prevent their falling into ecstasy by coming into his presence. Thus he brought before them the Way of the Heart, and by focusing his heart upon theirs he elevated them. Nevertheless this elevation was largely temporary. He accepted saints and sinners, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant. Some came from curiosity, some from grief, others were attracted by the presence of the

crowd, some had a deep longing and some were selfish. Yet all were welcome because whatever their grade of evolution, in the presence of the teacher they might be uplifted.

To understand the heart of the Vairagi one must repeat and meditate on the Gayatri, Pir and Nabi and Rassoul. Many repetitions may be needed and even that may not open the heart. It is difficult to convey this feeling intellectually. Therefore MURAKKABAH is offered through the use of a word or a phrase. Even after one has progressed to the degree that he only has a vague name or suggestion to use, then he must concentrate upon a thing with details, or an episode, and this for the purpose of furthering his inner awakening.

GATHA: And the time of realization of that which they had constantly gained came in their lives after that great change when the external person of the Master ascended and the capacity of realization became open.

TASAWWUF: For while the Teacher was on earth they had to listen to his words and might be blinded by his light as well as by their own ignorance. The withdrawal of a spiritual person always makes it possible for those on earth to advance farther and therefore it is a kindness on his part although his pupils will feel a loss. This loss, coming with great pain, is a boon to the heart and a source of damnation to nufs.

We can see the same thing, that after the departure of Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, there was a greater progress among the disciples and generality. The feeling of a loss, the sense that a great one has been in their midst, and the blessings that have been imparted consciously or unconsciously help in promoting evolution.

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

TASAWWUF: There are two types of mystical experiences, those which come in intoxication and those which come in sobriety. In the states of intoxication or wujud, one is, so to speak, drunk. It may be in grief or love or joy. A disciple may have been so won by the teacher's love that the grief of separation changes his whole nature. Or it may be that his natural evolution has progressed and he feels the opening of the door of his heart. Then he feels such a change that from the material point of view he is unbalanced. It is not so, for afterwards he reveals his progress, but during that time he is not always sensible.

Ecstasy and intoxication are of great value in enabling the consciousness to rise above materialism and the denseness of earth. They do not, however, help much in the development of will, nor can they easily be shared or communicated. Besides there are those who seek the intoxication and we find many of the lesser known Christian sects whose followers claim to have the gift of tongues and

other faculties, who from intoxication became slaves to psychic power.

Spiritual sobriety, however, is different from ordinary sobriety and until one has passed through wujud he cannot know this sobriety. For it is sobriety without ego and with wisdom. It is the source of morality and makes it possible to live a life of renunciation. There can be no renunciation until there is something to renounce, and when one has renounced the joy of heaven, verily has he renounced.

GATHA: The symbolic interpretation of the tongues of flame rising from their foreheads is the light of the Message, the rays of the Christ-spirit in the form of thoughts, which were expressed in words.

TASAWWUF: One may see the representation of this in sacred art, especially in that of Buddhism. There the rays are usually placed in the background, forming an aureole. To paint such pictures and to create such art well one must have had a certain amount of this experience oneself. The Sufi talib may be asked to use in concentration a picture of a teacher and if the concentration is performed well he will see this light rising from the forehead of the teacher. AE has written a book called, *The Candle in the Forehead*—and this phrase is also found in sacred scriptures. This light arises when the light of the heart is kindled. This also accounts for the appearance of the form of the message of the symbol on the forehead and for other phenomena.

What is important, however, on the spiritual path, is self-development and not the beholding of wonders, though they may come and come often. If the light can be kindled in oneself, that is well. The question then is how to develop the rays of the Christ Spirit, and this is a normal portion of that part of the journey called fana-fi-Rassoul, wherein one kindles the light of Rassoul in oneself. For this purpose it is best not to use any form of Jesus Christ but his name only, and to hold onto it a long time lest it become clothed with a form manufactured out of one's thoughts. Ultimately one will feel the light rising within his bosom and colouring his personality.

GATHA: There is a stage in the life of a seer when the tongue of flame becomes not only an interpretation of the reality but a reality, his own experience. The head is the centre of knowledge and when the centre opens, the light, which was covered, becomes manifest, not only in idea, but even in form.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, during spiritual development, the light which has been latent in man, which is also the Logos and which is the source of intelligence and speech, actually manifests as light. The Zakir experiences it to some extent and when there is a combination of Zikr and the higher forms of **Murakkabah** one discovers in himself that which he has only heard about in some tale or has attributed to some holy one of the distant past.

The vibrations of the inner planes can most easily touch the heart which is the most sensitive part of the body and which, through expansion in feeling, makes accommodation for them. After that they go into the head and all the processes of mental life unfold. Then there is life and beauty and

psychic power in thought, speech and action. The Sufi does not pay so much attention to the opening of any chakras or to any one-sided development of glands. When the whole mental body becomes aflame, so to speak, there one may speak of a certain attainment.

One may read in the Christian Scriptures about this episode of the tongues of flame, which is mentioned in the second chapter of the Book of Acts (or "Deeds"). This begins, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." This might also be translated, "And when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, the minds of all were attuned to the One Self."

Pentecost is the Feast of Weeks of the Hebrews, which was fulfilled after seven weeks and one day from the Passover, the word Pentecost meaning "Fiftieth." The Feast of Weeks was one of rejoicing over the first fruits that came forth from the ground after the planting season. The number fifty also represented the jubilee, or rejoicing because of spiritual emancipation in the Hebrew religious symbolism.

One may interpret it here to mean that the brethren, the disciples of Jesus Christ, were all attuned to one another because they had fulfilled their common attunement and had performed those practices which were assigned to them. The words translated "in the same place" might equally mean the same spiritual degree, the same psychological state, agreement of mind. When a group of persons so attunes themselves they become as one personality replete with psychic power. This principle has been used in the Healing Service, wherein is established a group unit forming an Integrated-Individual or I-I, which means that two or more persons act as one entity.

The second verse reads: "And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." This might be translated: "And suddenly there was an echo as of a rushing violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting in meditation." Those who have the practice of Shagal and all who have made any progress in the mysticism of sound will recognize this wind at once; it is one of the four aspects of the Universal Sound, described in "The Mysticism of Sound." It is always a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Other aspects of this sound are described elsewhere in the Bible in relation to the experiences of the prophets of the Old Testament and the seers of the New.

The third verse is usually translated: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." This also might be translated "And divided tongues like fire perched (or reposed) upon each one of them." This is also a mystical occurrence, and the Hebrew letter Yod, it has been said, was originally derived from such a tongue of flame in space.

The fourth verse in the Authorized Version reads: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This may be translated: "And they were all filled with the Divine Breath and began to speak with other tongues as the breath gave it to them to speak." In other words, they were under the inspiration of ecstasy and their personal minds no longer stood in the way, throwing any shadows over the light of

intelligence. The divine light filled their being and filled the crescent moon of their state of emptiness.

GATHA: And the phenomenon that was shown the next day, when the apostles spoke all different languages, can be rightly interpreted in this sense, that every soul hears its own language. For every soul has its own word, as every soul has its peculiar illusion.

TASAWWUF: Each soul interprets truth and each soul receives knowledge according to that attunement which it took originally in the sphere of the angels on the way toward manifestation. This establishes the key-note or the key-notes to its visible life and existence. This brings it the knowledge that it can assimilate and it also produces its illusion for it excludes that which it does not receive and regards it as irreality or illusion, while that which it comprehends it calls reality. But the reality for every man and woman may be different except when they are in the state of common attunement as were the disciples of Christ after his departure.

Music, Zikr and common meditations are used to bring disciples closer together in spirit, to enable them to harmonize and cooperate. The harmony between spiritual brethren becomes one of the most important factors in the spreading of the Message, and the words of the Sufi Invocation become more powerful as one includes the fellow initiates in the thought of them.

GATHA: And it is therefore that one person cannot understand another person in this world, and it becomes more than a miracle when one friend, perhaps one person in the world, can understand one fully.

TASAWWUF: Intellectual understanding and the common-sense view do not help much in this, and they may even hinder. In modern times we have the spectacle of Professor Einstein demonstrating that our scientific views have been based upon an egoistic and therefore erroneous basis of time and space. After him came Alfred Korzybski who has shown that words and conventions have different meanings to different people and that real understanding is not so easily attained. As a result the human race is beginning to study itself and seek a more serious basis for the solution of the problems of the day.

Now it happens that those on the spiritual path, which has been called the path of love and wisdom often find themselves in a lonely condition and much misunderstood. The higher they advance the more they may be misunderstood. Therefore the lesson of faith is given, and trust, that by them the spirit of human brotherhood may be engendered. Also such exercises are given to mureeds in their different stages to enable them to harmonize with others while they are unfolding themselves.

GATHA: Which means, in this world the language of each one is not understood by another, and if someone understands a little one feels at-one-ment with that one.

TASAWWUF: This also is becoming clear to the generality. After Korzybski, Stuart Chase has written a book called *The Tyranny of Words*, and people are beginning to realize that they have

been using words without much thought, meaning, or depth. Even sometimes the intellectuals who discover that do not find the solution, they only point out the dilemma. The mystic would agree with their analyzes but would ask, “Is that all there is of life? Is there no hope?”

Spiritual training is largely heart training and with the awakening of heart there comes a faculty by which the sahib-i-dil can touch the mind of another and sympathize to a certain extent. The heart can see into many minds and the teacher in Sufism is there to understand the disciple who may not be understood by others.

GATHA: It was the illumination of the Christ-spirit which brought exaltation in their lives, so that they began to see in every soul the Master and they became at one with every soul, inspired by sympathy and love of Christ.

TASAWWUF: This is the state of Risalat which is the fulfillment of the growth of human personality by which one comes to the awakening of the sense of humanity as a whole. It corresponds in a way to fana-fi-Adam. It also shows that just as the spirit of Mohammed and the spirit of Krishna may be before the devotee as a means to rise in fana-fi-Rassoul, so there is the path of Christ—although in another sense there are many paths of Christ, Mohammed, Krishna and all prophets according to the line of evolution of the disciple, and also there is One Path which leads to the annihilation of the false ego in the real and which unfolds the life’s purpose of every soul.

The 46th Verse of the Second Chapter of the Book of Acts (or Deeds) quoted above usually reads: “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” But this better reads: “And they continued every day to be of one mind in their sacred devotions, and at home they broke their bread and partook of food in gladness and singleness (or simplicity) of heart.” This shows that when they had reached this degree of development, there was unity and harmony on all three planes: that of the body, mind and heart. This came from their love of Christ, or the divine love in manifestation.

GATHA: And they understood the souls as they saw them, and so they spoke with souls whose language was never understood. Plainly speaking, they heard the cry of every soul and they answered every soul’s cry.

TASAWWUF: Therefore we read in the 47th verse of the above: “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

The opposite state to this is conveyed in the legend of the Tower of Babel. This shows that when the will of man is dominant and each seeks the satisfaction of his own desires, and when people [decided]/[decide] to take the affairs of the universe in their own hands, their ability to accomplish is limited. If they keep on daring, they will misunderstand for as they rise above earthly things the human intelligence is unequal to the task and each person will tend to interpret life in the light of his limited development. Thus misunderstandings arise and cooperation becomes impossible.

The Sufis endeavor to raise themselves and mankind out of the condition of Babel into that of all-harmony and all-cooperation, but not through sentiment or philosophy. It can only be done through the awakening of heart, and concentration itself serves as one means by which this may be accomplished.

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

TASAWWUF: This does not mean that any Messenger of God has played favorites, he cannot do so and deliver his Message. Only more people are attracted by his personality than by the lessons he brings. They may even be so intoxicated by the personality that they do not develop, and they may remain on the earth for many years, and even repeat in a formal way the practices that he has assigned, but the forthcoming development is limited. Why? Because through all and in all there is adherence to the limited self and no matter what happens, they interpret things in the view of that self and so never rise or reach to the interpretation of tongues and hearts.

The history of the Message of this day has not been different. Many were attracted to the personality of the Messenger, many were won by gentleness, kindness, good-will. Each saw the blessing that was given to him or to her—personally. Few recognized even in the most casual outer fashion the kindness that was given to another. Each wanted some honour, or considered it a great favour to receive the honour personally. Many put little valuation upon the honours or trusts given to others. Thus instead of bringing about brotherhood the differences which divide men were accentuated and the light of Rassoul disappeared in many parts of the world—and destruction threatened or actually followed.

Thus there is a word of warning and a word of comfort. The word of warning is to all those who want to carry their individuality along with them on the path of God—it cannot be done. They may have many visions and dreams and even obtain a degree of psychical power, but that is all. And the word of comfort is for those who can forego the self and feel the heart of another and whose attunement to and with their teacher enables them to sympathize more with others.

The future of the Message may depend largely upon the willingness of mureeds to cooperate with each other. Nevertheless as this willingness cannot be imposed from without, it depends largely upon the heart-awakening of each and of all. For this purpose the teacher assigns those exercises which will help to bring about a new condition so that in this sense there will be a “new heaven and a new earth,” meaning that the minds will change in view of the light of the awakened heart, and the outer behavior will also be modified in the light of the oncoming wisdom.

The spiritual teacher is called upon to play a role like that of cupid to bring the soul closer to God. Also he may help in harmonizing each disciple to another. It may be more valuable in this to be concerned with one’s virtues than with another’s faults. Looking upon faults is keeping the

consciousness in shadow whether those faults be seen in another's personality or in oneself. Love, Ishk, is an all-pervading, all-attracting force and when it is used in a practical manner it can bring wonders to pass. A few persons working together can generate a tremendous amount of psychic power; a few persons working together can produce a channel for the light of God to manifest upon earth.

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

Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 8

**The Symbology of Religious Ideas
The Story of Lot's Wife**

GATHA: The ancient method of giving the mystery of life was to give it in the form of a legend.

TASAWWUF: The Hebrew word ma'aseh has been applied to these tales and outstanding are ma'aseh berashith and ma'aseh merkabah, the mystery of the creation and the mystery of the chariot (or breath). In later times, however, the word ma'aseh has come to mean only a story. Yet if we study ancient literature, and particularly traditions most carefully preserved, we find in them some psychic or occult power which caused people to treasure them even when unaware of their meaning. In this way the scriptures and the secret and sacred trusts have been preserved through the ages.

If we study the various arts as well as literature we can clearly see this, and although the custom has largely disappeared, the Sufis long assisted in the preservation of ancient mysteries through their teachings, their symbols, their poetry and literature. With the rise of theosophy in the western world there came a movement to collect legends, myths, traditions, and folklore, feeling that there may be hidden values in them. Even scientists, otherwise regarded as materialists, have felt this.

It has also been explained that the words of the wise cannot be limited to any literal interpretation although the literal meaning must not be excluded. The Message may help in uncovering these hidden meanings especially if it is of value to the student.

GATHA: The legend of Lot's wife is that it was to Abraham that Lot was related, and it was by the love and help of Abraham that the two angels were sent to Lot, to warn him of the coming

destruction of the cities and to advise him to go to the mountains. And Lot was not willing to leave the cities, but in the end he agreed to.

TASAWWUF: As has been explained, the Sufi of the day may enter upon the path of Rassoul in such a way as it is said in Salat, "Let us know Thee as Abraham, Solomon, Zarathustra, etc." Many names are offered which can be used on the path of fana-fi-Rassoul and reference is made to other names and forms known and unknown to the world. So the path is often for all humanity, that all may progress in harmony.

As is explained later Abraham in a certain sense represents God and Lot the human soul. It is the divine love and grace (hari or inayat) which helps most in human unfoldment. The human soul or Lot lives in the cities, which represent Samsara, and the mountains represent spiritual elevation; the two doves are the two aspects of Divine Breath which help man. Man wishes to remain in ignorance but the heart within, touched by Divine Grace, urges him to rise from captivity.

The names of persons often contain the most symbolical ideas and in studying ancient myths and records one ought not to neglect them. Nearly all the names in Greek mythology and in the Hindu epics have deep significance. The same is true of most names in the Hebrew and Egyptian records. Sometimes they do not signify an individual so much as a state of consciousness or development.

Thus the name Abraham means in a limited sense, "Father of Mercy" but in a wider sense it means "Father of Righteousness." The ancient Hebrew mystics, if we can believe Philo, say that Abraham means "Father of a Multitude of Sounds," which means that out of Abraham, the universal father, all the sounds, or the tunings of the soul arise. Considered in this sense also Abraham is the same as Brahma in India and Barman or Bahman in Iran. Before the time of Abraham the creative Self was called Iswara in India and Asar in Egypt, which is to say, Osiris.

The word Lot means the concealed or hidden one. For the true self in man which is related to Abraham is kept concealed. That is to say, we identify ourselves with the inhabitants of the cities [Sodom and Gomorrah], the ignorant of Samsara, and are apt to forget our true relationship to God. Sooner or later we shall be called upon to leave the cities and undertake that journey which leads to emancipation.

GATHA: His sons-in-law failed him by not accompanying him, but his wife and his two daughters accompanied him on the journey to the mountain. And they were told that his wife must not look back; and when she did, she was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot and his two daughters remained, and they reached the cave of the mountain, which was Lot's destination.

TASAWWUF: This gives the idea of attachment and non-attachment. Man is called upon to leave Samsara and the only way this can be accomplished is to leave all behind, even in thought. If there is any holding on even in thought that can become a burden and with such burdens one cannot climb the mountain of salvation. For man is called to climb the mountain, enter the spiritual

condition, and to reach the cave.

In the Hebrew traditions the cave is regarded as a place of initiation and transformation of personality. One can read this in the Zohar, which comments upon the cave of Macphelah where Abraham is said to have retired after completing the earthly life. One can see that that cave included all the planes of the universe. The idea of the cave or place of seclusion was of utmost importance in ancient times and was used for initiatory and ceremonial rites in both the greater and lesser mysteries. This was true among the Hindus, Greeks, Egyptians, Druids, and all of whom we have any record, and even in modern times by Tibetans and some schools of Yoga.

GATHA: The two towns that were to be destroyed represent the North Pole and the South Pole, the two poles of the world.

TASAWWUF: Sodom represents the condition of the narrowed ego, which is covered by the denseness of earth, so that it has lost sight of everything other than self. Self-interest alone is its aim and gain. And Gomorrah represents the state of delusion by fancy, where people are attracted by everything, and have no purpose in life, and go from apparent delight to delight, only to find no happiness.

GATHA: For all the treasures of the earth, all possessions and power and fame that belong to the earth are subject to destruction. And that was taught to Lot, the human soul, who was the relation of Abraham—the human soul which is from Brahma, the Creator. The relationship of Lot with Abraham represents the relation of the human soul to the Creator.

TASAWWUF: If we regard Abraham as an Aryan instead of a Semitic word it would mean, “that which is related to, or comes from Brahm.” And Lot was the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother. This simply means the universal or divine light. For each soul is as a ray of light and this light in turn is an emanation or activity of the Creator. The human soul is at one with the Creator in this respect.

It interests certain people to know what was the relationship between the spiritual tradition or sacred doctrine given to the Beni Israel and to the Aryans who later became known as Hindus. According to the mystical traditions of the Israelites the wife of Moses and his father-in-law were Hindus and if we study deeply the book of Berashith-Genesis we may find elements or parallels of Hindu, Babylonian, and Egyptian teachings all commingled. Moses himself is said to have derived the literature background of his work from five books which are named.

The Bible says that Jithro, the guru and father-in-law of Moses was a Midian. Now the Hindus of those times who lived in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and in the Levant called themselves Mitanni, which is the same name. They used fire in their mystical ceremonies and at Baku there were remains of a most ancient fire temple until recent times where the Hindus visited and engaged themselves in devotion. The ancient mystics who used fire were called Cashdim or Chaldim, both of which words mean “people of the fire.” The Greeks called them Kassites and the same root is

found in the name of Kashmir. And while the Sufi does not like to become too entangled in controversial subjects, it is well to find the Common Source of all mystical tradition and the common teachings of all schools.

GATHA: The two angels were the angels of light and of reason. When the light comes to man its first teaching is to warn the soul of the disaster that awaits all that is subject to death and destruction. It is this lesson that is called in Sanskrit the lesson of Vairagya—when man's eyes open to see all that he loves and likes and wishes to hold and possess is subject to destruction and death.

TASAWWUF: The light of intelligence manifests in the heart of man, and when it is awakened he follows that light and no more makes decisions based upon their relation to his ego-personality. He discovers rise and fall, pleasure and pain, good and evil, and understanding the nature of duality, does not allow himself to be swayed by it. Thus he begins to rise out of Samsara, escape from the wicked cities. There are two of them to represent the state of duality.

The teaching concerning the Vairagi is to be found in *The Inner Life* and its commentary and also in the higher teachings of Sufism. Vairagi is master of himself, who is not swayed or moved by the affairs of the world around him. He truly is the dweller in the cave of the mountains.

GATHA: There are five bodies considered by the mystics of old to be the vehicles of the soul, which are called: **Anandamayakosh**, body of Joy; **Vijnanamayakosh**, body of Wisdom; **Manamayakosh**, body of Mind; **Pranamayakosh**, body of Ether; **Annamayakosh**, body of Earth.

TASAWWUF: There are many discussions as to whether man has one body or three or five or seven or some other number. It depends largely upon the point of view, the use of analysis and synthesis and reason. In Saum one prays, "In us be reflected Thy Grace, Thy Glory, Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace." This would seem to be a prayer for blessing or Baraka to manifest in five ways, as if through five different bodies or vehicles and such a view is often most helpful.

GATHA: This last is the receptacle of food. It lives on earthly food; and if it is starved of that it dies, for it is made of earth, it lives on earth.

TASAWWUF: Annamayakosh is the gross body, which has an essential atomic structure, formed of the grossness of prakriti or nature. It requires additional food, or materials from the earth-plane to sustain it and when it does not receive that nourishment or can no longer assimilate it, the time for its usefulness has passed.

GATHA: Another is the receptacle of ether. That part of man's being lives by breath and by taking in the air. If it is starved of air it cannot live. These two bodies form the material part, the physical part, of man's being. And it is these two receptacles which are termed in the legends the sons-in-law.

TASAWWUF: The theosophists also speak of this body which they call the etheric body and which forms the aura which surrounds the body. The elements of the breath manifest in this aura and can be seen by a seer. In fact it is possible to diagnose many diseases thereby, and many of the successes in healing by physical therapy have resulted from the improvement of the state of the etheric body which helps to convey the breath to and from the physical body.

GATHA: Then there is Manamayakosh, which is mind, the mental body, and this body has its action and reaction on both sides; it acts and reacts on the earthly bodies, and it acts and reacts upon the soul. Therefore when Lot left the two cities, which represent the physical plane, to journey toward the goal of immortality, his wife was still with him. For it is not necessary that the mental body should stay behind when the journey towards illumination is begun. It is capable of going with the soul towards eternity.

TASAWWUF: This subject of the mind is further explained in the Sufi Metaphysics and also in the literature, such as *The Soul, Whence and Whither* and *The Mind-World*, and in the commentaries thereupon. People speak much of the mind without knowing its true nature. To learn that, one must become free of mind, and without meditation and effacement; this is very difficult.

People talk about immortality and some believe in it and some do not. But when this subject is discussed it often occurs that those who dispute are not talking about the same thing. The immortality of the soul has one significance to the mystic and the immortality of the mind or of the ego have different meanings. Besides there are two aspects of mind, higher and lower, the one being like the moon turned toward the sun and the other like the moon turned toward the earth. Or one may speak of the waxing and waning moons.

The waxing moon wherein the light fills the crescent is that state of mind which benefits through spiritual unfoldment. Then it happens that as man grows his mind also grows. We find students who take Bayat who have not much intellectual capacity and perhaps they do not regard ordinary study as important, or perhaps they have little ability to learn in that way, their intelligence quotient, to use the accepted terminology, is low. Yet after years of devotion and meditation one will notice that these people have achieved a certain depth of mind and with it wisdom. This shows how mind can develop and in what manner it takes the journey toward eternity.

The ultimate end is, as the Christian scriptures put it, "to put on the mind of Jesus Christ," which is identical with the state of buddhi or Buddha-mind. But there cannot be ego-mind and Buddha-mind both, there is one, or the other.

GATHA: And yet its attachment to earth and the physical plane is great, because it is made, it is built, of physical impressions, of all impressions that come from the physical world; and of necessity it wants to turn to see if the physical being or the spiritual being is leading it aright.

TASAWWUF: That is why many people do not advance. They subject everything to personal judgment and as limited as that judgment is so limited are they. The mind is not the self and the

mind that is turned toward the earth is affected by the denseness of the earth and thus it is heavier than if one were free and followed always the impressions of heart.

The Sufi training in Murakkabah is so graded that step by step, stage by stage, one may advance and etherealize the mental energy. If one can concentrate upon that which is almost beyond conception and hold the vague concept tight with the power of will and so build impressions upon the mind, that which the mind receives will purify it and elevate it and then one may be building a Sambhogakaya body or glorified body with which one can function in the mental realm or be in that realm without being of it, just as the mystics can live in this world without being of it.

GATHA: The principal nature of mind is doubt, whether one is doing right or wrong. And doubt and faith are enemies. While faith leads to the destination, doubt pulls back. When the mind was so pulled back, attracted by all the impressions of earthly life, it could neither take hold of the earth nor journey with the spirit, and remained, neither earth nor water, but salt.

TASAWWUF: The mind has several faculties, among them that of self-identification and judgment and these faculties make of it a weigher of things, and then when it weighs, it stands still, it does not progress forward or backward. Water in symbology often means spirit and salt is the heaviness of water which is not exactly earth, and yet it is as the earth element in water. The mind in this condition is afflicted with dualism, and subject to the sway of what it considers at the moment right or wrong, which may and do change as life changes.

Students of Sufism are taught the importance of faith which makes progress possible, and yet although the orthodox religions have taught the same thing, the antagonism of much of orthodoxy to reason and to science has made the ignorant turn away from faith. They do not realize that the scientist has faith also, and that without this faith he could not endure hardships in his studies and investigation. For true faith is not antagonistic to reason, true faith leads where reason can only follow.

The awakening of the mind may come through pain, when a person is more sensitive and more responsive. Or it may result by his willingness to follow the teacher and the teachings. Following the teacher alone, as has been explained, does not help much. Following the teachings alone means nothing, for without the teacher one cannot discern what the teachings really are.

GATHA: The only two bodies which are close to the soul followed the soul. Naturally they would follow, for they are closely related to the soul, Vijnanamayakosh, the body of Wisdom, and Anandamayakosh, the body of Joy. The soul bound towards the eternal goal—as it is called, the top of the mountains—then proceeded towards the mountains.

TASAWWUF: This lesson is also introduced in the latter portion of “The Soul, Whence and Whither,” where it is explained that the soul must get rid of mind and all that is associated with it in order to become free in the angelic kingdoms. The soul exists with its cover in Djabrut and without its cover in Lahut, to use the Sufi terms. The body of Wisdom may be considered as the same as

the angelic body, and that of Joy or Bliss to be the soul itself.

The character Isaac, in Hebrew, has the same significance as Ananda or bliss. In the story of the Bible Abraham is called upon to sacrifice Isaac; that is to say, the soul is asked to surrender even its bliss to God. This is a test for when the test arrives it is unnecessary for the nature of bliss and the nature of soul are not different. But if there is any adherence to any thought or feeling of joy or for joy, that is a cover and that cover must be removed to attain the Divine Consciousness.

Vijnana stands for intuitive wisdom. When the heart is freed from the chalice of mind, this intuitive wisdom shines forth as a natural function. In the processes of safa this intuitive wisdom or kashf is developed in every mureed.

GATHA: And before they reached the top of the mountains there was the cave, which is called Heaven—in metaphysics capacity, in Sanskrit **Akasha**—which has the power of holding the soul from going to the top and using the soul for some purpose. And the soul which was bound for the eternal goal remained, so intoxicated by the ecstasy that it received from the plane of joy and the plane of wisdom. And as it ever happens that ecstasy produces purpose, so this joy resulted in a great purpose, in the birth of the Messenger, which in Sanskrit is called Bodhisattva. The Messenger was born of the soul's experience, the knowledge and the happiness, to bring good tidings to the world.

TASAWWUF: In the Bible Lot enters the cave with his two daughters and they dwell there. The Hebrew commentators, anxious to discredit certain peoples, have failed to realize that this cave which Lot entered was the same cave of Macphelah which Abraham later bought and in which Isaac and Israel were later interred also. Or if they have accepted this possibility they have not always realized its importance.

The birth of Ammon and Moab mentioned in the Bible must not be taken in too literal a fashion. Moab comes from the same root as Nabi and means an intoxicated servant of God. The word Ammon is said to mean “leader of the people” and we find it in the Grecian “Agamemnon” who led the hosts before Troy, it is the same word. But Ammon also is related to Amon, the name of God in the Egyptian tongue.

The ultimate purpose and destiny of the soul is to get beyond all states and stages of transformation no matter how wonderful or desirable they may seem. They are always cloaks and covers over it which prevent it from reaching its goal. Therefore while ecstasy is desirable to help one rise above any condition of denseness, if one adheres to it and its delights, one will not be able to continue one's journey to the uttermost.

GATHA: A question may arise, why Manamayakosh should be the mother, and Anandamayakosh and Vijnanamayakosh should be the daughters. And the answer is that they are born of mind, born of mind and soul. If there were only the soul there would be neither joy nor wisdom. Mind and soul both produce joy and wisdom. Therefore the latter are the daughters, because mind is the mother.

TASAWWUF: For except soul itself, everything to which we can give name has an element of mind in it. The Sufi says that the mind is the surface and the heart is the depth. In the picture the colours form an essential part but in the soap bubble one sees the colours only on the surface. Thus the life of heart shows on its surface that which is a constituent part of the life of mind. While wisdom may manifest in the mind, it has a world of its own which is beyond mind, which results when the light of intelligence is directed back toward the Centre of the Universe, so to speak.

This aspect of light is symbolized in the story of Joseph with his coat of many colours. Joseph is the beloved son of Israel, the man who sees God; Joseph is also in a sense the body of joy, and from it and upon it all beauty comes, beauty leading to joy and joy to beauty. But speculation upon the finer bodies without every effort at realization may even become a hindrance upon the path. Therefore Murakkabah and other exercises are used so the talib can actualize that which he studies.

Of this the Bhagavad Gita states: "To him ever attached to Me, worshipping Me in love, I give that union with knowledge by which he comes to Me."

GATHA: The two lower planes are represented by the sons-in-law because they were not directly born of mind and soul; it was a separate substance mind and soul have taken into their life.

TASAWWUF: For the higher planes may be said to be composed of the fine vibrations and the lower planes of the gross vibrations. What has been called the "mind-mesh" is said to lie between these structures. In the Bible one reads that the Sons of God looked upon the daughters of earth and desired them. This refers to the attraction of purusha and prakriti, for in the interplay of these forces, to use the Sanskrit terms, the manifest world was made and sustained.

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

TASAWWUF: Thus Lot appears as the nephew of Abraham, but Isaac is the son and in Isaac we have a prototype of Jesus Christ who it is said, was also called to sacrifice that the world might be saved. For the Messenger is that soul which manifests on all planes and lives in the dense bodies but is still aware of his finer bodies. He accomplishes the journey while on earth, he accomplishes his immortality without waiting to be lifted from this plane. By so doing he becomes a direct vehicle of Baraka, spiritual blessings, which he communicates to humankind both by his silence and his speech.

The sons of Lot are the sons of man, and Christ himself took the title of "Son of Man." So Ammon, the son of Lot, was a title of Messiah among many people of that age and Amun was a Divine Name in Egypt, and later throughout the Roman Empire, God was called Jupiter Ammon or Zeus Ammon, the saviour of the people.

With the birth of sons, the soul, Lot, has completed its purpose and remains in the cave, in the state of peace. When a Messenger appears or one becomes a Vairagi, there is then peace, for that one stands firm before all that occurs and attains to perfection in action, which alone constitutes peace.

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

Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 9

The Symbology of Religious Ideas

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

TASAWWUF: There is a discussion of this subject also in the second series of Gathas on "Superstitions, Customs and Beliefs" and the subject of blood is studied also in the same series on Symbology. Perhaps in ancient times more consideration was given to this subject than we realize although it has been much discussed by the Christians and especially during the early period of the Reformation there were countless discussions, public and private over it and the various interpretations have led in large part to the establishment of many of the Christian sects.

The same problem remains with us at all times that mureeds may be attracted more to the personality of the teacher and when that is so, they do not partake of his flesh and blood. They do not partake of his knowledge and wisdom, they do not know his real outer personality and still less do they know of his inner personality. For in Murakkabah, if one wishes to drink the blood there must be a heart concentration upon the heart of the Teacher or Rassoul. In this we see three stages in the development through love. In the first series there is the concentration upon the heart, as well as upon the dove. Then one has the concentration upon blood. Finally one reaches a grade in concentration where in inner process one partakes of the very blood of Christ.

The spiritual life does not exclude anything of the practical or everyday life. Jesus himself lived as a

carpenter, working at his trade and drew his disciples from other trades. Sufis have followed this example and have demonstrated that there can be spiritual development, even illumination, without withdrawal from the world and all its activities. Thus to eat the flesh of Christ is to follow him in the everyday life, to feel his presence in all things.

The drinking of blood is symbolic of eternality. Even the scientists are learning something about the heart of man and Dr. Carrel has been able to keep a heart beating indefinitely showing that it has an unusual faculty for the absorption of life. But blood is also symbolic of love and in the Qur'an this teaching has been presented.

In another sense the eating and drinking of flesh and blood together, which forms the communion, means to partake of all the things of life together. This lesson has been presented in the Gatha and Sangatha in explanation of the tongues of flame. And in the Pistis Sophia, which was accepted by the Gnostic Christians as the scripture of the risen Christ, this doctrine was also presented as a most important mystery.

GATHA: Christ said to the fishermen, "I will make you fishers of men," which meant, "As you spread the net and the fishes come into it, so by spirituality your personality will spread in the atmosphere, and the hearts of men hungering for love will be attracted to you as fishes."

TASAWWUF: This same idea was also given to his disciples by Buddha. The fish itself was used as a holy symbol by the early Christians just as the wheel was by the Buddhists. There is supposed to be the same ideas in it as in the symbol for the house of the Zodiac called "Pisces." There is the fish that dwells in the ocean of Samsara, and there is the fish that is lifted out of that condition and becomes "Aquarius," the man rescued out of the water, and so saved.

GATHA: The love of Christ for the lamb symbolically expresses that to the Master that soul made a greater appeal which was simple and harmless as a lamb.

TASAWWUF: Christ has put it another way, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." After the resurrection he appeared, it is said, to his disciples and said, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." At another time he called himself the Good Shepherd. This same phrase is supposed to have been used by Orpheus in most ancient times and more than one holy teacher has acted as a shepherd and actually taken care of sheep, and lambs.

GATHA: And the crown of thorns represents tolerance of the thorn-like personalities of which there are so many in the world, constantly pricking their thorns, consciously or unconsciously, and it is this which makes the sensitive annoyed with life in the world.

TASAWWUF: The doctrine of gentleness taught by Jesus is hard to understand, for it means gentleness with strength, only instead of hurting others, one uses his strength to endure the difficulties of life better. The thorns around the crown of the head show how much pain comes through thought and how one must guard one's thoughts to prevent them from hurting others, and

also to withstand the pain directed toward oneself. For the real holy man endures all things. This lesson is also presented in the teaching of *Vadan* and elsewhere. It is the same as the ahimsa of India, rightly understood.

GATHA: But the teacher, whose heart represents the divine mother and father both, cannot but be tolerant, and can take willingly all the thorns that would come to him, for that is his crown, the sign of his sovereignty in the kingdom of the soul.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual person is both responsive and expressive; he may always be responsive toward the heavens, and he may be either responsive or expressive toward man. The teacher who would help his disciples forbears to give them burdens and willingly shoulders the burdens they bring him in the hopes that some day they may find liberation.

A great opportunity has been lost by those who have not seen what might be called the Masculine and Feminine Aspects of Deity. Argumentation proves nothing and realization may bring that which confounds the generality. There has been much discussion of the androgyny and of the ancient Egyptian symbol, but what do the people that make such discussions mean? What light do they throw upon the inner being of man?

The Sufi says that the perfection of the heart is needed. This does not come through discussion, it comes through following certain duties, and perhaps most through the pursuance of that line of life set before the disciple by the teacher. When man comes to understand himself, perhaps to find both male and female in himself (Male and female created He them—says the Bible), then all becomes clear.

GATHA: Christ said to Peter, “Thou wilt deny me three times before the cock crows.” It explains human nature. The faith of man is generally dependent upon the faith of the multitude; if the multitude calls the pebble a diamond, then man calls the pebble a diamond, everyone will begin to consider it and say it. And if the multitude thought that the diamond was a pebble then everyone would follow the belief of the multitude.

TASAWWUF: Peter symbolizes the man of common sense, the ordinary person with average judgment. He is influenced more by the atmosphere in which he finds himself and finds it very difficult to think contrary to that atmosphere or to rise above it. Christ represents the liberated man and he called upon Peter as the sage calls upon the ignorant man. When Peter was alone with Christ or only the disciples were present, he was drawn into the aura of spirituality and was very faithful. But when he found himself in a place where the atmosphere was not controlled by his Master, he was still very responsive, he had not learned to be negative to God and positive to man; he remained responsive and so denied Christ.

Peter denounced Christ at night, which means during the period of spiritual darkness. He denounced him three times, meaning in body, mind and heart; but the heart could not hold fast against truth and then the cock crowed, which means that at a certain point the heart could stand it

no more and felt the cry calling it to taubah or repentance. This symbol of the cock stands out in Sufi poetry and is explained in the lessons on Omar Khayyam as well as in the mystical studies on the Christian religion.

GATHA: The soul of the Messenger, that comes from above (which the dove represents), which is not made by the world nor known by the world, remains unrecognized until the cock crows and the sun rises. His words shine and spread the light to the world.

TASAWWUF: To bring this to realization the talib may be asked by the teacher to take on certain concentrations. Whatever the religion is by which he wishes to advance or whose secrets he wishes to know, the deep concentration is most valuable, and then through that he may advance towards truth.

The lessons on Concentration show how it is possible to learn the secrets of the scriptures by self-unfoldment. Strictly speaking the sacred scriptures are records of the stages of growth of heart, covered over in many ways as history, ethics, poetry, metaphysics. All of these are covers and to uncover them deep meditation, concentration and contemplation are needed. Whether it is the flesh and blood of Christ, of becoming a fisher, or feeding the lamb or learning the mystery of the cock or dove, by becoming those things, one learns their secret. Then one may learn also a secret of nature, how to communicate with creatures for the life-force which is alert in them will also awaken in the heart of the devotee.

GATHA: And the souls privileged with some little recognition, but with a great deal of doubt, may believe for a moment, impressed by the power and grace of the Master's personality, and yet may deny a thousand times, and doubt and suspect, being impressed by the influence of the multitude.

TASAWWUF: This is true at every period of the world's history; at one age a martyr, at another time a saint. The very churches and institutions which regard themselves as the vehicles of Divine Will persecute and repent and canonize, and the multitude, which has not even the iota of spirituality, often goes further and destroys ruthlessly. Even in these so-called civilized times it is true.

Now the question is how to obtain the grace of the Master's personality and his power? It is still the question today. If one observes only the outer form he will always have a shadow before him, and not the light. But by the inner concentration on the teacher's heart, he may come to perceive that inner light which is in the teacher, which is in himself, and which is in all beings.

GATHA: How true it is, the saying in Hindustani that, "Generally a soul follows the multitude." There are rare souls who believe in their conviction, and remain steady even if it were that the whole world was against their inner conviction. Verily to the faithful belongs every blessing.

TASAWWUF: This unfortunate habit of human nature has stood out against the spiritual reformation of the world, and even now is leading toward political and economic destruction. One

solution or a thousand solutions, and people may choose to suffer in ignorance than to rise to an ideal which may deliver them. Christ, it has been said, was practically alone upon the cross. Few among his followers have been willing to stand alone. But when they have, what strength! what power! what majesty! Whether it be Savaronola or Luther or Servetus, when they stood alone they stood with strength and grace.

But it is also true that as one wills this, and will stand for truth regardless of the multitudes, regardless of the generality, he makes of himself a channel for Baraka and brings grace and power to the world though he be martyred, though he be universally lauded. Thus it is to awaken the human heart to Grace regardless of opinion or the opposition of all the world, knowing that in the end Truth will be victorious.

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

Gatha with Commentary Series III: Number 10

The Symbology of Religious Ideas The Ten Virgins

GATHA: There is a story in the Bible about ten virgins, the five wise and the five foolish. It was said that the bridegroom was to come and they were to light their lamps; and five were in time and brought the oil and lighted their lamps, and the other five waited until the bridegroom came, and when the bridegroom came then they went to the five who had lighted their lamps and asked of them oil and were refused.

TASAWWUF: This story appears in the 25th Chapter of the Gospel or Evangel of Matthew which begins, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." By "virgins" pure persons are meant who may be either men or women, for as we read in Revelation XIV, 4: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." As the lesson further shows, they represent those who go forth to receive light and blessing.

The next three lines read: "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." That is to say, they went forth, and their minds were empty, but the wise made capacity for

receiving and the foolish did not.

The fifth line reads: “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” That is to say, until the spiritual teacher came, they were in a state of ignorance and darkness.

The sixth verse: “And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.” This cry was the call of the soul from within and it came at midnight, in the midst of the darkness, for it is also said, “At the hour ye think least the Son of Man cometh.” “Like a thief in the night the Son of Man cometh.” For when dharma decays to its fullest, then the Messenger of God appears.

The text follows: “And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’” The wise had made preparations for the coming of the teacher, while the foolish had wasted their sustenance and were not ready. They wanted to take from the wise the little wisdom the others had, but the wise knew that it would be foolishness on their part to instruct the foolish.

The text continues, verses 10–13: “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.’”

The teacher is not compelled to take everyone as his disciple, but only those that are ready. It requires a certain preparation and a certain discipline for the spiritual path and this is set forth in the teachings of *The Inner Life*. Those who have not spent their time in meditation and devotion will not behold the bridegroom for they have no way by which they can come to inner realization. It is not so much that they have been shut out as that they have shut themselves out.

GATHA: This story is a symbol of receiving the Message of God. By virgin is meant the soul which is awaiting illumination, innocent and responsive to the light; and by five is meant the multitude. And there are two classes of people; one class are those who have prepared themselves and made ready to receive the Message of God, which is pictured as the bridegroom; and the five foolish are that class in mankind who wait and wait until the Message has come and gone. In all ages there have been these two kinds of souls, one kind who are called in the scriptures believers, the others who are known as unbelievers.

TASAWWUF: We find them even today. There are no doubt many who have accepted some personality of modern times as well as some one or more of ancient times as their prophets and guides. Then there are others who fix the time for the coming of the teacher. They know the day and the hour, they fix it and fix the conditions and deny the very teaching of scriptures that “Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.” They know all about the

conditions under which the Master is to appear yet they have not found happiness in their own lives, they are often burdened with personal problems.

GATHA: In every age the prophecy has been by the Messenger of the time as to the next advent. Sometimes it is said, "I will come," and sometimes, "He will come." "I will come" has been told to those who would recognize the same Spirit of Guidance in every coming of the Messenger; "He will come" has been told to those to whom name and form make a difference, and who cannot recognize the same Spirit in another name and another form. For example, the coming of Jesus Christ was the coming of that Spirit, which was expressed in this myth as the bridegroom, and how few at that time recognized Him and how few received illumination. Only those whose lamps were ready to be lighted.

TASAWWUF: We find the same teaching in "The Way of Illumination" but even among disciples there is often such an attachment to the personality of the teacher that they are blinded thereby and also blinded by their own ignorance. They are like the virgins who had no oil, and seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear. For they divide God from God and man from man and are unbelievers because at all times they follow the dictates of their own minds and wills.

Many schools of Sufis accept a teaching of tanasukh, which means descent and refers to the descent and re-ascent of the spirit of Guidance, which comes at all times in the world's history to elevate humankind when it has fallen to its lowest ebb. This is not fundamentally different from the Hindu teaching, "I come, I go, when dharma decays I come." Only some have taken it to mean metempsychosis or reincarnation and instead of seeing in God the Only Being, and the Spirit of Guidance as a movement of the Divine Spirit, they take an atomic view of the soul and have it immersed in matter, to re-ascend and descend again over and over making karma the all-powerful, and leaving a God of Mercy and Beneficence almost outside of His own universe.

In Salat the names of many of the Holy Ones are given—not all, but those best known to the world—and any one of them may be used by the devotee as his example of the Perfect Man. Only it may happen and to some mureeds it happens often that with a concentration upon one name of those connected with the Spirit of Guidance another personality may seem to manifest. This is one line of proof of the unity of masters. The proof is not through reason or any intellectual method; it comes through realization. The purpose of this lesson then is to explain this truth of the unity of masters, but the real lesson is learned through the disciple's progress in Murakkabah. Then he knows it in himself and of himself.

The Hebrew Scriptures refer many times to Messiah and several persons are mentioned in the texts of the anointed ones who came from time to time to elevate the masses. This was true even back in the times when the Book of Judges was transcribed. But this doctrine was forgotten both by the Hebrews and Christians. The Hebrews refused to recognize Jesus Christ and the Christians made him appear as a unique character. The result was unnecessary differences and inharmonies and many religious changes. Then Mohammed came and announced the teaching of the union of Masters, only to have those who came later declare that he was unique, making another Message

again necessary. There is always danger too that the followers of the one who comes and proclaims himself Messenger or who is proclaimed Messenger, will declare forth his uniqueness and then weaken the teachings that he gave forth.

Sufis have a definite technique by which one can prepare himself for the coming of the Master and also recognize him. Besides the methods of Murakkabah and Ryazat, there are those of self-effacement. One goes through the grades of fana-fi-Sheikh, fana-fi-Rassoul, fana-fi-Lillah as well as through certain subgrades. Western people find this way of development most difficult, and few among them reach that evolution which makes the keen perception possible. So they do not readily recognize.

Neither the multitude nor the individual can select the world-teacher. Teaching alone can prove that one is world-teacher, and until there is the complete spreading of the Message that he brought no one is world-teacher. Indeed the calling of titles in this manner is a form of egotism, very subtle and dangerous which does not raise the devotee above the differences and distinctions which divide men. Rather does it add to the differences and the common confusion.

GATHA: Oil in this parable is love and the light is wisdom. And when their lamps were lighted then so many came afterwards; but that blessing and privilege which had come with the personality of the Master had then gone. They had to take the benefit of the light that came from the lamps of those whose lamps were lighted, but the chance of lighting their own lamps was lost.

TASAWWUF: The appearance of the World Messenger results in the awakening of many hearts and the Messenger also comes when the cry of humanity has reached a certain stage. Then some few, perhaps, hear his real Message and that awakens their hearts. They find within themselves the pearl of great price. They are not slaves of his verbalisms; they feel and they find the great love and the great wisdom from his bosom and so become torchbearers of that love and wisdom. It may be that as few as five persons have really received.

When the Messenger departs he leaves his teaching in the hands of those who have really been awaiting him, whose hearts have been set aflame by his presence and who are able to keep their lights burning even after his departure. Those who have not really been won depart, leaving to the few to carry the burden of the Message.

GATHA: The same is with all things in life. Every moment in our lives is an opportunity which brings a benefit and a blessing. And the one who knows how to be benefited by it and how to be blessed by it receives the benefit and the blessing.

TASAWWUF: There is no moment in which it is not profitable to utter the praise of God verbally or silently. The Sufi says that with very breath given with the praise of God in the heart is the only gain, and every breath without that praise is our only loss. These gains and losses may be momentary or permanent in their character. But the one who seizes the opportunity and utters the praise and then prepares to make himself a channel of Baraka is verily the disciple of the

Messenger and of God.

GATHA: Everyone seems living and awake, but few souls are really living and awake. There are opportunities of benefit and blessing on every plane of one's life, on the physical plane, on the mental plane, on the spiritual plane, and every opportunity is invaluable.

TASAWWUF: The Christian Scripture says, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ will give thee light." Which is to say that when one reaches the stage of fana-fi-Rassoul and will bend with all their heart and mind and might in the direction of the Beloved, then the inner spirit will come to life and one will experience blessings upon all planes. And for this again, it must be said that the practice alone is important, that the words of themselves offer little of value.

GATHA: But often one realizes the truth when it is too late. There is no greater and better opportunity than the moment that can give a spiritual illumination, a moment when one can receive the blessing of God. It is a priceless moment. Who knows it and understands it and tries to be benefited by it, is blessed.

TASAWWUF: Verily there is a practice for every moment, for every opportunity. As the lesson teaches, one has to watch every moment, watch the breath, watch the heart, watch the life within and without. There is no time in which the teachings cannot be applied whether to help or to protect. And the more one watches himself the more he will find blessings and happiness. A smooth, calm breath, a heart in repose and a mind that can be used or set at rest as one will point to the real life on the path. When one follows them he will see his way clearly, for the light is there as soon as one puts oil in the lamp. God has never left humankind without the guidance. (Teaching of the Qur'an.)