

Moral Culture
of
Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan
with Commentary
by
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the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

[Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity](#)

Number 1: Reciprocity

GATHEKA: In dealing with another we ought first to consider in what relation we stand to him, and then to consider what manner of dealing would please us on the part of another who is related to us in the same way we are to him. In all favorable actions we ought to do more than we should expect another to do for us; and in unfavorable actions we ought to do less than what we should expect on the part of another.

TASAWWUF: It is very necessary to consider here the teachings and not ourselves. It is very difficult to fulfill moral teachings when we consider ourselves as the center of behavior. That is why after thousands of years, epithets like the "Golden Rule" and the teachings of Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha have not been very effective.

In the law-courts and on the battle-field it is generally necessary to consider the points of views of others without necessarily agreeing with them. When we act as if they were unimportant we often lose.

The teaching of Mohammed, the final Messenger of Allah, in this respect, has not been effective. The devotees are concerned with the personality, not the teachings. And those who accept teachings generally make it a matter of philosophy rather than behavior. If we examine the lives of Sufis, especially, we find that they accept that all people are the beloved ones of God; or as Mohammed stated: "God loves His creation better than a mother loves her offspring." But we must remember what another Sufi said: "Quotation is the sign of the ignorant; perception of the wise."

It is not necessary, it is even foolish to practice a blind "love ye one another," to become indulgent and permit others to cheat us. By **actions** above actions is meant, not some philosophy. We

cannot deal with others in the same way when there is no action. But we should follow Mohammed, at least, in trying to give more goodness in return for goodness, and not necessarily outwit others in returning evil for evil. This denies that God is the creator of all.

GATHEKA: Duty must be first borne in mind, to consider in what relation we stand with regard to our relatives, neighbors, fellow-citizens, the people of our nation and of our race, and with the people of the world at large.

TASAWWUF: In speaking to the young, Hazrat Inayat Khan made it clear that love and respect must first be given to the parents, then the relations, and then to those close to one physically and socially. Then to enlarge this circle of goodness, step by step in a normal way.

GATHEKA: For instance, favor shown to a neighbor and disregard to a relative in the home, sympathy shown to a foreigner, while we feel bitter towards our own nation, these dealings, however unselfish and broad-minded they may appear, are undesirable. It is just like trying to make a sketch of a human face before even having learned how to draw a straight or a parallel line.

TASAWWUF: This is a problem, that we become negative and are deceived by words. Love must begin with the parents, and in turn the parents' duty is to find a love and exhibit a love which is neither too much indulgence nor too much discipline. This gives the root. Without it one is in difficulty to find an anchor. So many indulge in a goodness which is nothing but vanity, to make the ego feel good.

Many people spend their time helping out neighbors without cleaning their own abodes. There is always some self-excuse which is called "reason" but there is nothing rational about it. Shakespeare has said, "To thine own self be true." This trueness begins in a household, or hut, and generally radiates.

RYAZAT: To those who are lacking in love, there is the heart-concentration, and by this and also by heart-centration not only is feeling increased but wisdom, for the heart is the center of both.

GATHEKA: Charity begins at home. We should first begin to practice our sympathy with those who are related to us, for we are in duty bound to look after them and their interests.

TASAWWUF: For there is not only the blood-tie—if we accept the materialist view, but also the karmic-tie, if we accept the universal point of view—which has brought us together. We may not understand the karma, but if we try to avoid it we can only reap unfavorable karma. Our ego-defenses do not protect us against the laws of immediate nature, but neither do they protect us against the tendencies of universal harmony.

GATHEKA: But instead of widening our sympathies, we keep within our own small circle; thus we may perhaps never progress in life or advance to the higher standard of humanity.

RYAZAT: There is also the concentration of the dot and circle which enables the disciple to understand both the focus for outlook and the ever-widening expanse of heart-action. The breath takes us in both directions, toward the simple One and toward the Infinite, Unlimited One.

TASAWWUF: We must first develop sympathy which is not sentiment. No doubt sentiment is needed, for that means softness, but also the wisdom is required. So the heart can become as soft as a sponge to absorb the difficulties of life and also hard as iron to protect oneself and others.

GATHEKA: This is one of the drawbacks of modern civilization, which confines itself to the thought of nationalism, and advances no further. Yet even this is better than the broadmindedness which makes one favor the outsider, and neglect and even disfavor those related to us.

TASAWWUF: Reciprocity has its own morals. This is for the generality. We must not make the mistake of the man, who, after listening to Sankaracharya that Brahmin was in all, was all, would not heed the cry of danger of the wild elephant. A neighbor warned him of the wild elephant and the elephant came and trampled on him. He then complained to Sankara who berated him for not listening to Brahmin in the neighbor. If we do not see God immediately at hand, we are not going to see him far off. And those who proclaim "love" and do not experience love, exhibit love, are only confused by their ego and their thoughts.

GATHEKA: The best way would be to gradually widen our sympathies, with a consideration of our duty and relationship with others, gradually expanding them from those who are nearest to us to those who are remote. A sense of generosity and willingness should go hand in hand with duty; if not, instead of a blessing it becomes a curse.

TASAWWUF: It is a great mistake to neglect duty. In the higher sense duty becomes **dharma**. We cannot neglect duty and fulfill dharma. Each has his own purpose in life, which is his duty, his dharma. We can only help others according to our own strength. We can build up our strength by consideration of the Invocation, to help us keep in balance and still perform duties in life.

Sufis are often found among the most humble, who stick to some duty, to some purpose. And the more they fulfill that immediate purpose, the more they are able to help others. Otherwise man is misled either by words combined as maxims or aphorisms. As words they are equal in noise-value to holy utterances. But they do not have behind them power and magnetism. The power and magnetism is derived from the power and magnetism of the person first uttering them. It cannot be repeated too often, that self-goodness is vanity, nothing but vanity.

GATHEKA: Duty is that which morally, socially, or spiritually makes us act toward another according to the situation and position we may have in life. Sympathy is sensitiveness, in other words, to be alive to the feeling of another, meaning to feel the same as the other does in his situation, whether in joy or sorrow. To feel this is sympathy.

TASAWWUF: It is a great mistake to extend equal sentiment to all beings. All are not equal. If we

treat the worm as we treat the dove we learn the lesson the hard way. When we treat the animal as we treat the man, we do not gain any reward, only ego-satisfaction. This is not even good karma. Man was made to sympathize with man, and only after he sympathizes with man has he earned the right to extend that sympathy toward the lower creation. Many problems have been enhanced rather than solved because of man's maudlin sentiment toward the lower creation. This is not taught in scriptures or by prophets. It has arisen from social customs and has often ended in endless harm. Sufis do not agree with the harmlessness as taught by the Jains.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 2: Our Dealings with our Friends

GATHEKA: In friendship we must realize that a friend inferior in position or poorer in life than we are should not for one moment be regarded as such. When he is a friend, in whatever condition he may be or whatever position he may occupy, he must be considered our equal; and the same spirit of equality should be borne in mind in dealing with a friend, however high his position may be.

TASAWWUF: The principle of the Brotherhood of Man should be foremost in our minds and hearts. Abdul Baha has said, "People of the world, you are as branches of the tree and leaves of the branch." It is first necessary to begin this practice with friends. Or as Emerson has said, "He is my friend in whose presence I may think aloud."

There are many tales of Sufis wherein they exhibit all sorts of tenderness to the less fortunate and dignity toward the more fortunate. Nevertheless when a friend is in a high position of any kind, one should show respect to him, whether he greets him as a superior as custom would compel, or as a more equal only if he requests it. Sometimes a more fortunate person himself feels relaxed when he can consider the less fortunate as equals. They are equals before and in God but it is of no advantage to ignore the customs of society.

GATHEKA: Convention should not be more than is necessary for his evolution. The sense of difference must be avoided in every aspect of dealing with a friend. There must be no secrets between true friends.

TASAWWUF: Respect, **Adab**, is a very important moral principle which no doubt came to its height in the life of the Prophet Mohammed. We find this still in many parts of the Islamic world and particularly where Sufism has been taught. Indeed one of the best ways to present Sufism to the

world is in our actions with our friends and “loving the neighbor as the self,” not only theologically but actually, in the everyday life. Words accepted as philosophies are limitations, but the applied practices help the world toward its liberation.

GATHEKA: The use of friendship for a selfish motive is like mixing bitter poison with sweet rose-syrup; and it is necessary to be ready, without the least hesitation, to serve a friend attentively, in every capacity of life, not expecting for one moment any thanks or return from him.

A friend, in the true sense of the word, is nearer and closer than our own family, relations, neighbors, nation, or race.

TASAWWUF: Abraham (Ibrahim) has been called “the friend of God.” This can only be when the heart and ear are open. To practice friendship means to keep the heart open—which is often easy; and the ears open—which is not so easy to practice.

In other words, friendship has to be established to be real. Sentiment has its values, but it is not enough. Friendship is exhibited by sharing one’s food, one’s time, and one’s sympathy for and with others. If one has a firm foundation of it in the early family life, this is a good start. But this is beyond the realm of Reciprocity. In Reciprocity we do not consider an ever progressive spiritual evolution.

GATHEKA: The secret of the friend should be kept as one’s own secret; the fault of the friend one should hide as one’s own fault; the honour of the friend must be considered as one’s own honour; an enemy of the friend should be regarded as our enemy.

TASAWWUF: This subject is also developed in various ways in the Gathas on Saluk, which are for disciples only. But the morals of disciples should include without displacing those shown to people who are not on the spiritual path. That is to say, the higher one rises on the spiritual evolution, one continues the same moral outlook and also includes what is not so evident in the behavior to the world at large.

It is only the firm establishment of love and consideration that makes possible its expansion socially, geographically and otherwise. Yet we find in many parts of the world, great concern for guests and visitors. They are often taken as if emissaries of God. This teaching is also found in the Christian scriptures though seldom practiced.

GATHEKA: A friend of the friend must be considered as our friend.

TASAWWUF: In the Dharma sastras it is taught that the friend of the friend is a friend, and also that the enemy of an enemy is a friend. Much of the history of India can be understood from this basis.

GATHEKA: One must not boast of friendship, but must practice it, for the claimants are so often false.

TASAWWUF: This applies to claimants in general. A friendship should be regarded as a delicate treasure in the heart and treated so.

GATHEKA: In the despair of the friend, consolation must be given; in the poverty of the friend, support is necessary; in the shortcomings of the friend, overlooking is necessary.

TASAWWUF: It is a great mistake to adopt some standard of theoretical justice; God alone is the Judge and Forgiver of shortcomings. And if the friend is in trouble because of weakness on his part, then one should try to make him strong first, then correct him. If a man break a limb and has other difficulties, it is necessary to fix the limb first. And if man is hungry, to satisfy his hunger before going into any subjective considerations. **“To love thy neighbor as the self”** means just that; a man does not blame a limb or organ for some weakness on his part; he seeks to correct the condition. So one does not blame the friend, but attempts remedial measures.

GATHEKA: In the trouble of the friend, help should be given; with the joy of the friend, rejoicing is right.

TASAWWUF: This is the extension of “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” We have long been concerned with the phrases, the words, not with their applications. We do not need any new code, we need to apply earlier codes. That is why Mohammed has been regarded as the Seal of all the Code-givers. We need to practice more; we do not need to preach.

GATHEKA: To be today friendly and tomorrow unfriendly cannot for one moment be called friendship; The value of friendship is in its constancy.

TASAWWUF: It is therefore most important for devotees to practice. If the devotee does not practice, who will? Where are we to look for goodness in the world? We are not to look, we are to exemplify.

GATHEKA: Forbearance, patience, and tolerance are the only conditions which keep two individual hearts united. There is a saying in Hindustani, by Seman, on friendship, “Stand by your friend in his time of need, like the reed on the bank of the river.” When a man is sinking in the water and catches hold of a reed, it will save him if it is strong; and if not, it will sink along with him.

TASAWWUF: It becomes the norm of the devotee to exemplify the morals of the world. By himself showing the way by his own daily life, he becomes the strong branch that will hold others. It is a mistake to discuss the weakness of others, and it is right to uphold one’s strength and the strength of others, for it is only out of strength that true goodness comes.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 3: Our Dealings with Our Enemies

GATHEKA: Our dealings with our enemy should be considered with more delicacy than our dealings with a friend. This fact is generally overlooked by man, and he deals in any way with an enemy, while he is considerate to a friend.

TASAWWUF: Farabi has taught: "Show fortitude toward enemies and harmlessness toward friends." This is the outlook of dualism and generally applies to the realm of Reciprocity. When one says "Christ taught us to love our enemies but not God's enemies," this is a great mistake. God does not have enemies in this sense, although there are people in the world whose habits are far from the codes given by the great moralists and law-givers.

GATHEKA: Sometimes one insults one's enemy, spoiling thereby one's own habit, and making the enemy still more insulting. Sometimes by constantly dwelling on the faults of the enemy one impresses one's own soul with the same faults, and focuses them upon the soul of the enemy; if he lacks these faults, they may by reflection develop in him and cause him to become a still more bitter enemy.

TASAWWUF: When Buddhism was introduced into America by Paul Carus he introduced principles from Lord Buddha that thought determined the future affairs and that mankind became what had been thought. So we could make this a better world by thinking well, even by following the principles of the three monkeys who hide from their eyes, their lips and their tongues, the evil of others. This may not change the behavior of others, but it weakens their influence. Whenever we think of another person we add psychic power to him, whether it is favorable or unfavorable thought. When we cease to think of another, we starve him psychically, so it is important to think good will of one's friends, and not to think at all of one's enemies and "leave the fruits of action to God."

GATHEKA: It is as unwise to underestimate the enemy's bitterness and power to do harm as it is to overestimate them. Very often a man, blinded by his ego, fails to estimate the power of the enemy and he says, "Oh, what can he do? What do I fear?" giving way to an impulse when driven to it by the enemy. This is a defeat; keeping steadfast and calm under such circumstances is a victory.

TASAWWUF: We can see it now in 1969 that a great nation like America, victorious in so many wars, has been underestimating the power of enemies. Man does not deprive another of intelligence even if he may obstruct him otherwise. Intelligence is beyond control. And in Judo one avails himself of the intelligence of others to bring their downfall but in dualistic politics it is

otherwise.

The practice of meditation both awakens the intuitive sense in man and also produces that calmness which clarifies the mind. Any sort of ill-will produces fog and confusion and so it is to be avoided.

GATHEKA: Complaining about the harm caused by the enemy is a weakness; avoiding it by taking precautions, facing it with strength and checking it with power are the things worth doing.

TASAWWUF: It has been most unfortunate that sentimental but ignorant people, presumably influenced by Ghandi's non-violence, ignored entirely his **Satyagraha** or the power of God in action. People who apply scattered phrases from holy scriptures often are confused and spread confusion. The Gita definitely says, "Therefore fight, O Arjuna." One cannot avoid this even in the most outward sense.

Many times the foe is benefitted by the intelligent use of power exhibited by the wise. The use of power is weakened by hatred and strengthened by firmness.

GATHEKA: It is wise to take advantage of the criticism made by an enemy, for it can help to correct us, and it is foolish when one laughs it off, considering oneself to be too good to be like that.

TASAWWUF: It must never be forgotten that Brahmin, so to speak, is in all of us, and all people derive their power from the One Infinite Source. And as this power is infinite, so is the absorption of power infinite. At the same time the wise man is always looking for his own faults and weaknesses to correct them. A mirror is made perfect by polishing, not by belittling defects as being small. And in this way also the wise learn not to repeat mistakes.

GATHEKA: In the case of revenge, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is right in such a case when one is sure that kindness and forgiveness will have no power whatever upon the hard heart of the enemy, but on the contrary will make him worse.

TASAWWUF: Rassoul Mohammed has given some rather stern laws, or rather, repeated and reinforced the principles handed down by Moses. But he also said: "The Merciful leans toward the side of Mercy." and in his own life he exemplified this at every opportunity. Only in the case of Abu Lahab and his family did he insist on firmness and in the end won the allegiance of the very enemies toward which this policy was pursued.

GATHEKA: But so long as there is a chance of meeting the enemy's revenge by kindness the above law must not be practiced.

TASAWWUF: We also find this in the career of Mohammed, and especially in the end, when he won the complete social victory, that he practiced forbearance and forgiveness. This is very evident, and his life offers a perfect example without any need to quote and quote to no end.

Of course as the heart awakens one will practice mercy and forbearance naturally, but this is beyond the Law of Reciprocity. Besides with children and the uneducated, one cannot do it that way.

GATHEKA: It is better to suppress the enemy before he can rise against us; and it is right to throw him down when he has risen against us.

TASAWWUF: It is on this point so many sentimental people fail. Wisdom is never gained at the sacrifice of power and intelligence. Nor are the criminal classes brought either to justice or to awakening excepting by stern though wise measures. "Be ye wise as the serpents," as well as "harmless as the doves."

GATHEKA: It is wise to be watchful of the movements of the enemy, and to safeguard oneself against them; and it is foolish to allow oneself to be watched, and to let the enemy safeguard himself against us.

TASAWWUF: In other words, in facing a foe who can only understand dualistic action it is necessary to overcome him first before being sentimental or tender, he would not understand it. One should treat people with firmness but also according to their understanding.

GATHEKA: It is right to decrease the power of the enemy in every way possible, and to increase one's power and make it much greater than the enemy's. It is right to know the secret of the enemy, and it is more than right to keep our secret from him.

TASAWWUF: This intelligence is often shown in warfare; and also by law-enforcement agencies. Many people, noting the tendencies of law-enforcing agencies toward tyranny, are apt to react against them and in this promote lawlessness. People who disregard the commandments of God cannot but help suffering and also decay. There is no intelligence merely in being against law-enforcing agencies. There are souls on earth at many grades of evolution and each must be dealt with accordingly.

GATHEKA: Precaution must be taken that nobody should become our enemy; and special care must be taken to keep a friend from turning into an enemy.

TASAWWUF: It is most unfortunate the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan have been belittled and even by-passed by his original disciples and many of their disciples. Excusing ourselves by action or thought contrary to the teaching does not harm the teachings; it does harm the one who thinks he is beyond the teachings.

GATHEKA: It is right by every means to forgive the enemy and to forget his enmity if he earnestly wishes it; and to take the first step in establishing friendship, instead of withdrawing from it and still holding in the mind the poison of the past, which is as bad as retaining an old disease in the system.

TASAWWUF: We must avoid on the one hand any sentimental negativity, and take away our own protections. The practices of repeating the Names of God or other methods of the wise help us to develop the intuitive faculty and warn us of dangers. And it is important to learn to listen to the Voice which comes constantly from within.

If we permit, as most people do, to let their sentiments or philosophies overcome the Voice, then it becomes most difficult to follow any moral standard. Or else one does so, as the subject, rather than as the Master.

Retaining ill-will means sowing karma. If we have any thoughts we sow karma. If we must sow karma we should be careful to establish karma that is good for ourselves. Self-excusing does not influence karma; does not prevent the enemy from exercising his own prowess.

There are many stories of Sufis who waited until the enemy was in difficulty or need; then and only then extended the hand of friendship. Otherwise it would not be understood. We do not buy friendship at the expense of wisdom.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 4: Distinction of Grades

GATHEKA: We find two tendencies working through different individuals: recognition of grades, and non-recognition of the same.

TASAWWUF: This is found in many parts of the world. Thus in India there is a marked caste system so ingrown that laws and new customs do not change it very rapidly. And then among people of mountains and in sparsely settled lands, like those of the Eskimos, there are few such distinctions made.

GATHEKA: The first may be seen when a person says, "He is my chief; he is my professor; she is my mother; he is my father's maternal uncle; therefore I have to consider him or her."

TASAWWUF: This is due to natural custom found in many parts of the world where there is consideration of age, and also of kinship. It has the effect of giving confidence, strength and reliance. It unites man with man at a certain level. It has many uses especially in the preservation of the family, tribe, nation and culture.

GATHEKA: And the other tendency we see when someone says, "What do I care if he is the head in my office? I do not care if he is older in age; I do not care if she is my aunt; what do I care if he is my mother's grandfather?" We see gentleness in one and spirit in the other, and prefer them according to our nature. If we are spirited we like the spirit of independence; and if we are gentle we prefer gentleness.

TASAWWUF: The first impression one gets of the independent type is there is too much ego, nufs. Yet if people lived according to custom and tradition only, there would be little advance in the world. Every soul has a relation to God and other relations should be related to that one. Generally nations and cultures which have strong family ties last longer but they do not necessarily produce more happiness.

GATHEKA: A Sufi does not believe in one-sided tendencies. He says spirit is needed and gentleness is needed; both are required on suitable occasions. The question arises of how we are to act: when we should show spirit and when we should consider gentleness.

TASAWWUF: If we read stories of Sufis, especially Dervishes, we find a great many examples of spirit. This was needed when custom gave power to the tyrannous. In the presence of tyrants a Sufi shows courage. And we can especially see this in the story of Jelal-ud-din Rumi and the Mevlevis, that toward the powerful spirit was shown and toward others great tenderness.

GATHEKA: Spirit should be shown when we are forced by circumstances, by a situation, to be in subordination; there spirit is needed to free oneself and be independent. But the use of spirit is not a simple matter. The flame of a match cannot stand up to the air; to stand up to the air you must have a torch. Therefore it is the foolish spirited ones who rebel against their life's conditions and fall because their spirit lacks strength and power. For them patience and gradual perseverance, with courage and thoughtfulness, are necessary.

TASAWWUF: A great mistake is made in these studies in regarding them as intellectual philosophy or rules. The soul of man is free and yet man seems bound by circumstances, by conditions and by ego. He has to find the independence and this is done by the use of his intuitive faculty, insight, and not by or through rules.

Generally Sufis have not been found to be conformists. Besides, to curry favor with the strong and powerful seems like hypocrisy and often is hypocrisy. Yet if we look for the rise of modern outlooks in the Islamic countries, it is mostly the Sufis that have brought them about. And the great reformers of Modern Islam have obtained many of their ideas and their courage and independence from following Sufic examples.

A Sufi is seldom a conformist but when non-conformism becomes a new form of conformity he will seldom agree. Freedom comes from within, and the more man feels his spirit the freer he will be. That is one part. But as he is led by the principle of love and harmony and beauty he also chooses to consider the fellowman rather than his self alone.

GATHEKA: But when we are morally won by someone's love and kindness, such as the care of a mother, the protection of a father, the advice of an aged friend, the sympathy of a neighbor, by the one who shows us the right path through life, by the one who may have guided humanity to light, it can never be subordination, but only generosity on our part to consider their greatness, to revere them, to respect and obey them.

TASAWWUF: The term "willing surrender" is not of much use unless surrender is practiced. All over the Islamic world the term "Islam" is used but it is not always identified to surrender or peacefulness. This takes away its value as a word. A word to be valuable must be connected with life, with action, with the pursuits which fulfill life's purpose.

The prayer Salat offers many suggestions. If they remain suggestions, there is not much wisdom in them. If we consider the mother, father, friend, and counselor above the self, then we are freeing ourselves from the nufs which is our greatest captor.

GATHEKA: However, all this may not be dealt with by the same words nor all treated in the same manner. The Qur'an says, "We have created among Jinns and men individuals of all grades." In this way we must distinguish to what extent gentleness may be shown to deserving souls.

TASAWWUF: This teaching is expanded in *The Unity of Religious Ideals* and in lessons on democracy. The Message was first brought to the West to people who have set great store on democracy, at least on the word "democracy." This does not mean that custom insisted on treating all alike. But when man found himself placed lower than somebody else he protested and when he was placed above somebody else he did not protest. He regarded that as justice.

No doubt great wrong has been done to souls simply because they were born in the religion or race against which prejudices and differentiation were shown. All this shows lack of appreciation of God. When God becomes merely one of man's many thoughts, there is no nobility in it.

Human consideration is regarded as the highest moral among the Sufis. They do not make distinctions and differences unless it is proper to show a certain deference or respect. Therefore there is not one particular standard of behavior. But in the end, human consideration is to be considered more than anything else.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity

Number 5: Our Dealings with God

GATHEKA: God to the Sufi is not only a heavenly King, or an ideal of worship, but a friend, a beloved, nearer and dearer than all others in the world, and our dealings with Him must be as the dealings of an earnest lover with his beloved.

TASAWWUF: People in the Western world who have so long lived in the arena of thought are not always awakened to the magnitude and magnificence of love. To the Sufi, heart is not different from mind, heart is depth of mind. Thought does not encompass infinitudes. Heart knows no limits in any direction. It is heart that makes the lover the devotee.

In Hinduism a philosophical distinction is made between Nirguna Brahma, beyond name and form; and Saguna Brahma, God in name and form. Man has not faculties to apprehend and comprehend the all-infinite. Discussions on the subject lead to confusion. The real devotee is the lover. The real devotee is the lover who loves at least someone whatever or whoever that someone be. We can see this perhaps best in Sufic poetry. This poetry is the end of philosophy and the beginning of God-realization.

GATHEKA: When it is the time of worship, we must worship Him as the soldier saluting his king, as his duty; but at the same time of communion we must commune with Him as a lover would with his beloved.

TASAWWUF: From this point of view, theologies become almost senseless. We live in a world which has discovered that words are not the things they represent.

How true this is of God, infinite love and compassion. Worship should be in joy, in delight, as a tryst with one's beloved. We can see today how churches, buildings filled with austerity and decor, have failed to answer the needs of the soul. Something is missing; that something has to be recovered rather than discovered.

GATHEKA: All things we do that are pure, ideal, and satisfactory to others, we must attribute to God; and for all things we do which are not our ideal, nor satisfactory to others, we must blame ourselves. Because all that comes from perfection is ideal and satisfactory, therefore its praise belongs to Him who alone is praiseworthy; that which is not ideal but unsatisfactory comes from imperfection, which our imperfect self represents.

TASAWWUF: Many prayers begin with praise to God. It is unfortunate that many so-called devotees praise themselves for praising God. It is not praise when the self (ego) is given any consideration. Love connotes self-forgetfulness. In love the heart-stream overwhelms all limitations.

God is the forgiver of our shortcomings. We do not need to excuse ourselves, but we should recognize that any failure of any sort is due to nufs. The purpose of spiritual training is to rise beyond nufs and find God.

GATHEKA: Every action of kindness we do to another, we must do for God; and then there will be no disappointment. For if we do it for a person whom we love or trust, but who after a time may prove unworthy of our love and undeserving of our trust, we become disappointed and are discouraged in doing kindness to another or in placing trust in another.

We must give our every day's account to God, our divine Ideal; lay before Him our shortcomings, humbly repentant, without missing a day, and ask for help from Him who is almighty, to give us strength and courage to do better tomorrow.

TASAWWUF: Yes, it is right to love others, it is right to have friends. If we see our loved ones and friends as representatives or reflections of God-Allah we will not meet with so many disappointments. If our friends prove disappointing we should charge it to the account of God or examine our own selves for shortcomings.

RYAZAT: Whenever we fall or falter in affairs of love it is wise to repeat **Ishk Allah, Mahbood Lillah** or else one should concentrate on a heart. Or one may picture one's friend or beloved as heart, but heart reflecting the light and love of the magnificent God-Allah.

TASAWWUF: It is not only to give admonitions but the Sufi offers disciplines and methods to increase the value of love in life, of heart in love, and God in heart.

GATHEKA: We should never pride ourselves on good deeds, for His goodness is greater than the greatest good we could ever do. It produces in us false vanity, the only veil which hides God from our sight.

TASAWWUF: We have lived centuries with admonitions to do good and to cease from doing evil. This has not changed humanity much. The Sufi does not say that. The Sufi repeats what is in the Bible: God is good. Goodness without God and God-ness has in the end not always proven to be Good. The famous Hollywood actress, Mary Pickford, once wrote a book, *Why Not Try God?* But actors and publicity agents do not try God, they try words, and the words do not suffice. Then they try other words with no different results. If we also accept the Biblical, "In the Beginning God ..." we shall not meet with such disappointments.

The Sufi sees God not only as the first but as the last. He sees God "In the Beginning," in the continuation (plenum or pleroma) and in the end. In other words, he tries to see God in everything and that is the only way to try to see God.

GATHEKA: We must begin to feel His presence in this manner; and surely after some time He will become a living entity before our sight, and all will seem dead save He alone, the living Being.

TASAWWUF: This is what should be called the Journey. It begins with God-Allah, continues with God-Allah, and ends with God-Allah. The more we feel the divine the more we become the divine.

And if we can see Him we can draw unto ourselves His many attributes, qualities and blessings. The difference between theology and mysticism is that theology uses words and thoughts, mysticism feelings, action and life itself.

GATHEKA: When this stage is reached, then begins divine communion.

TASAWWUF: Many religions have symbols, rites, and ceremonies. They are not wrong. They are reminders of God-truth. But beyond these rites and ceremonies is the life and fulfillment of man, man's fulfillment of his purpose.

Communion consists of two parts. Our union and communion with God; our union and communion with our fellows. They are really two aspects of the same thing. The Sufi as divine lover sees God as the beloved in everything and in everybody. When this becomes the habit of life man rises above the distinctions and differences which divide men.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity

Number 6: How to Take the Dealings of Others With Us

GATHEKA: By the constant study of life the Sufi realizes that mankind which claims to be the most just in all creation, is found in the end to be the most unjust.

TASAWWUF: The Great Sufi Grandmaster, Sohrawardi, said: "Consideration is to show consideration to others and not to expect consideration from others." It is a mistake to expect justice from people whose hearts have not been awakened. And it is unnecessary for if one protects himself with sacred phrases, mantrams or wazifas, generally it will be then that people feel something and act with more consideration.

GATHEKA: Man is generally just when he judges another, but he is unjust when the thing concerns himself, though he is not conscious of it. He calls it justice too. Therefore the lesson that the Sufi learns in the law of reciprocity is to consider it a natural thing when injustice is shown by others; but he tries in every dealing with others to be as just as he can.

TASAWWUF: For the Sufi must show by example. He does not show by giving a sermon; anybody can do that and mostly it will be of no effect. The wise people manifest to be examples to others, to be patterns whom others can follow. And the more one adheres to the proper moral behavior

pattern, the more by his example he is both helping others and leading others.

The practice of meditation helps one not to react against the wrong doing of others to himself. When he can control himself in that way often he gains respect from others and not only for himself, but they become more considerate and careful in their dealings with others.

GATHEKA: He tolerates the injustice of others as much as his state of evolution permits; but when he sees that more than this is intolerable, he resists it with explanations, with persuasion, even with threatening.

TASAWWUF: Sufism is not passivism; Sufism teaches to the contrary. Sufism does not tolerate weakness. Sufism teaches to be strong and the stronger one is the less harm will come to him from others; also they will be more careful; also can he help them by his own wisdom, so to speak.

Every event in life is an opportunity. It is hard for a person of saintly nature to be in opposition. He wants to love everybody but that does not mean countenancing all their faults and bad habits. The Master, no doubt, refuses to so countenance. But neither the Saint nor Master has to observe any teaching as if the teaching were composed of hard iron-clad rules which he had to obey, which others did not have to follow. And he should protect the weak whenever he can.

GATHEKA: But the tolerance with which he overlooks the injustice of others is for others only; when it comes to his dealings with others, he does not tolerate even the slightest injustice on his own part.

TASAWWUF: It is this which makes the life very hard, and yet the ability to stand firm gives strength, much greater strength than can come otherwise. Therefore for the disciple on the path it is wrong to return just good for good and evil for evil. Although this appears to be in the law as given by Moses, Jesus taught very different and then Mohammed came and integrated both views. But Mohammed required a much higher standard from himself than he required from others, even from the most advanced of his own followers.

We have many examples of most noble behavior in the sacred scriptures of the world. They are used mostly to quote against the believers in other faiths. They are not always, sometimes seldom, used for one's own standards. And the result is not only confusion but hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is regarded by some Sufis as the worst of all sins, the only one not readily pardonable.

GATHEKA: The sense of justice is not the same in everybody; it is according to a person's evolution and his ideal.

TASAWWUF: Sufism does not teach the democracy of equality. Sufis agree with the sacred scriptures of the Hindus (not necessarily with the Hindus themselves but with their scriptures) that there is a cosmic evolution and that there are people in different grades of that evolution as well as in different social and educational groups.

Modern psychologists and psychiatrists have found something of this sort. They do not, like the members of the legal profession, uphold any universal standard. They deal with every person separately according to his person and his problems. This is in accord with the spiritual traditions.

GATHEKA: Gracious conduct in others must be graciously received; harsh conduct in others we should take smilingly, pitying them in our mind that they are not evolved enough to be gentle in their dealings.

TASAWWUF: It is a great protection to be able to steel oneself so one does not react. The being impressed by every little event of life means to be subject to what Buddhists call "skandas." If one reacts he produces more karma. There has been too much acceptance of the word "karma" without any change in behavior pattern. It may even be worse to accept a word without content. At least recognition of the law of gravitation has enabled some people to protect themselves and others against accidents.

The only way to protect the world is not to react against the unfavorable deeds of others. It is more foolish to discuss samsara than to break the moral laws, for this causes also confusion and difficulty. It is not the mind that helps, it is the whole consciousness that must be involved.

The beautiful teaching of Jesus Christ should have led the way, and in another sense also those of Lord Buddha. Unfortunately the teachings of Buddha were reserved mostly for monks and nuns, although that was not the original intention. The Moral Law should be for everybody.

GATHEKA: When doing kindness to others the first thing that must be considered is that it should be unselfish, and not for the sake of appreciation or a reward. Who does good and waits for a reward is a labourer of good; but he who does good and disregards it is the master of good. He has engraved good upon the universal consciousness, and its echo will be no other than good.

TASAWWUF: There are many Sufis among the Orthodox Muslims. They may be more orthodox than the religious people but they never allow themselves to depart from the behavior pattern of Mohammed or even from the behavior pattern of Jesus. They do not demand or require this from others; they set up standards for themselves.

It is not of much advantage to verbalize that God is the Only Being then act as if everybody around us was very, very real. Nor is there any teaching anywhere to return in kind. The closest one finds this is in the Laws of Moses but they were to describe the Laws of Nature and the principles of Karma rather than to establish a standard, for Moses first taught, "Love thy neighbor as the self," and this is often repeated, seldom practiced.

Therefore the Sufi restrains his ego, striving to see himself as the American poet Walt Whitman has said, "In all men I see myself." When this becomes true there is no need to establish any particular law or pattern. This alone suffices.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity

Number 7: How to Take the Dealings of our Friends with Us

GATHEKA: It is always confusing to the thoughtful person to decide upon the right way of action when in contact with people of different temperaments and at different stages of evolution; and to the right-thinking man it is puzzling when in friendship he has to put up with ill dealings on the part of friends.

TASAWWUF: There are, of course, two types of ill-dealings: one is the ill-dealings of friends toward oneself, and the other is the ill-dealings towards others. It is very difficult in dealing with mureeds, to have to correct them in their dealings with strangers. And a Sufi is not a master judge of everybody. Indeed it is the duty of the teacher to give those practices and disciplines which lead toward right action.

GATHEKA: The first essential one must understand in friendship is to be slow in making friendship, and slower still in breaking it.

TASAWWUF: In preparing people for discipleship therefore, it is important not to be merely sentimental. There are those to whom God has revealed Himself, or Light, and lifted some veil. But there are others who can best be taught patience and other virtues and there is no haste in welcoming them into the brotherhood. And the more care one shows in this the more wisdom will there be.

Once there is Bayat there is a bond and the bond also takes God into consideration for every person has a relationship to God, with God. And when one becomes a mureed he becomes a part of the Murshid. But this is also true that every disciple must consider the relationship of others toward the spiritual as well as to the world at large. He is therefore instructed in Moral Law (Saluk) as part of the general training and the more the teachings impress the heart the better it is all around.

GATHEKA: Children become friends a thousand times in a day; and a thousand times they fight over little things and become unfriendly. If grown-up people do the same, it shows at once to the seer the grade of their evolution.

TASAWWUF: People who have not yet been submitted to spiritual disciplines cannot understand

how the light of their soul, so to speak, shines out, or does not shine out, revealing their state of evolution. This can be determined by seeing and feeling.

GATHEKA: The consideration of the dealings of others dealings with us must not be weighed against our dealings with them; for the self is always dearer to everyone, and when weighing our dealings with others we naturally give them more weight, and do not give the dealings of others with us the same weight.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi teaching is that what others do to us is not nearly so important as what we do to them. We can control our karma by showing consideration to others, and refusing to react against any harm or provocation. In other words, we can eliminate what are called **samskaras** in Indian teachings.

Grand Sheikh Sohrawardi taught, "Consideration consists of showing consideration to others, and in not expecting consideration **from** others."

GATHEKA: Therefore, in order to make a balance, we must always consider that a kind action, a good thought, a little help, some respect shown to us by another, are more than if we did the same to our friend.

TASAWWUF: One can always tell the true teacher from the false. The false expect, even demand, superior moral conduct from other people. Demanded respect is not respect at all. Unless it flows freely from the heart it is not respect at all. Or, following the precepts of Messenger Mohammed, "Act as if in the presence of Allah, and remember, though we do not see Him, verily He sees us."

The teachings of Mohammed in particular, and of all great sages and holy men, direct us not to keep account of our own small good deeds. Or, as Jesus Christ taught: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." It is on this point that all the great religions have departed from the teachings of their founders, emphasizing small unimportant details, ignoring the grand teachings.

The Sufis especially have followed Jesus Christ (and other prophets and messengers of God) in the emphasis on "Love ye one another." This is indeed the basis of all moral culture.

GATHEKA: But an insult, a harm done to us, a disappointment caused to us by a friend, a broken promise, deceit or anything we do not like on the part of a friend, should be taken as less blameworthy than if we did the same.

TASAWWUF: We pray and say, "God is the forgiver of our shortcomings." Muslims pray or say, "Allah is the judge of the Universe;" but in practical life, almost every person tends to judge and give weight to any small wrong done to him. On the spiritual path we must not expect perfection from others. Only God-Allah is perfect. Friendship consists in overlooking the faults of those close to us. We do not have to justify their wrongdoing; we may even take on the pain into our heart. Meditation is always superior to condemnation.

GATHEKA: Every good and kind action of a friend we ought to appreciate very much; and the same done by us to a friend we should think is not enough. We should blame a friend less for his dealings that are blameworthy; but for the same ourselves we ought to blame ourselves more.

This makes the balance; and this is true reciprocity.

TASAWWUF: Every mother knows this instinctively. What the world needs is not the overpraise of motherhood but the extension of the spirit of motherhood, and fatherhood far and wide. The hypocrisy of “Do unto others as ye would be done by them” has produced endless confusion. Words by themselves have no value. Actions and attitudes give them value. Practicing the Presence of God helps man to be more God-like in his behavior to and with others. True kindness comes out of this divine attitude.

GATHEKA: A person who goes on making friends every day and breaking friendship every other day, remains friendless all through life; but the one who is charitable to a friend and strict with himself in his dealings will prove to be the true and good friend worth having in life.

TASAWWUF: A Sufi has said, “Perception is the sign of the wise, and quotation of the ignorant.” We should see that endless words of themselves do not change human character. It is heart consideration that produces this change. We are held to account for **saying**: “Love thy neighbor as thy self.” The practice of this precept will determine worthiness in cosmic evolution.

Lord Buddha taught against self-consideration as being the basis of merit. He taught, there is no self to accumulate merit (punya). In other words, the goodness or evil that man does affects the whole universe, and this is the real nature of karma. Jesus taught, “Only God is good.” It is time that mankind became consciously aware of the simple but beautiful teachings of Jesus, Buddha and all the divine messengers. The New Age will manifest persons who will not separate their words from their acts. This is a Sufi ideal.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 8: How to Take the Dealings of Our Enemies

GATHEKA: When dealing with enemies one must bear in mind that there is a possibility of exaggerated imagination; for the least little wrong done by an enemy seems to be a mountain of wrong, while the least little right done by the friend seems to be a mountain of right. It is timid to

estimate the enemy above what he is; and it is stupid to estimate him at less than his real power.

TASAWWUF: In the ultimate there is no such thing as an enemy. There are obstacles in life, facing which enables us to grow. But there are also in human form personalities of many degrees of psychic and moral evolution. Therefore, “being right” is not always being right. It depends on evolution, standards and all factors.

Talking about enemies gives them psychic power. Emphasizing the importance of obstacles makes it more difficult to overcome them. God alone is great.

GATHEKA: According to the law of reciprocity, to allow the enemy to insult or harm is a fault; paying back insult for insult and harm for harm is the only thing that balances.

TASAWWUF: There have been many false interpretations of Ghandian philosophy. He was not a Jain; he believed in God. He considered **Satyagraha** even superior to non-resistance. Satyagraha means reliance on God-Power. It is a Hindu variant of **Allaho Akbar**. As we live and move and have our being in God-Allah, this power is all around and in and with all of us, including all enemies. Unless one understands this, there can be no such thing as a master.

GATHEKA: In dealing with the enemy one must first compare him with one’s own self in intelligence and power; and consider whether it is possible to stand against him and his enmity or not. In the case where there is possible, with strength and courage and intelligence we should bend him down before he does so to us, for in enmity the first blow is to the advantage of the giver.

TASAWWUF: Zen Buddhism is in its pure form very spiritual. It has given rise to a multitude of sciences and arts. In such arts as wrestling, fencing, etc., one must apply “might and courage and intelligence.” It is extremely advantageous to be able to deliver the first blow. This requires skill and knowledge, both of the breath and muscular activity. This is not philosophy; that which does is far superior to any theoretical philosophy. To remember words and thoughts and fail in action is to make words and thought useless. It also encourages hypocrisy, which is to be avoided at all costs.

GATHEKA: Where we find ourselves weaker or less than the enemy, the best thing would be not to show enmity until we have developed to the power of withstanding him; to wait with patience and trust until that time comes and until then to keep peace and harmony. This is not deceit in the sense of reciprocity.

TASAWWUF: It is not enough to bear in mind that God alone is perfect. We must realize that everybody, ourselves, our friends, our enemies, and all unknown to us are full of imperfections. This can be ascertained easily by a master of breath, or what is called in the Mahabharata, “master of the great car.”

RYAZAT: There are many spiritual practices which are of value in such cases:

- 1) Allaho Akbar
- 2) meditation on the heart
- 3) concentration with heart
- 4) tasawwuri or attunement to a teacher or master
- 5) breathing using the backbone

These and others. These will all build up self-assurance, most needed when one has enemies, either in persons or obstacles of life, e.g. fire, flood, earthquake, etc.

GATHEKA: It is against wisdom to allow anybody to become our enemy if we can possibly help it. We should always refrain from this, and be cautious in all affairs of life lest we cause anybody to become our enemy; for the enemies we have in life are enough.

TASAWWUF: We should not expect high morality from police and officials. It is foolish to antagonize them for the sake of vanity. Vanity itself is a weakness, a very subtle weakness hard to overcome. It may be called the mask of Iblis (the Devil). It is folly to pray "Lead us not into temptation," and then let vanity lead us astray. If we have to face enemies, to overcome them we should have as few as possible, even divide and conquer rather than let enemies unite against us. Remember: "Good aids good and evil fights evil."

GATHEKA: But weakness should never be shown to the enemy; always show him your strong side. Never give him a chance to prepare a blow and we should see that he gets it from us before he prepares.

TASAWWUF: The Jain teachings are not part of the message; the Zen teachings are. Jainism has contributed little to history; Zen Buddhism, its offshoots and derivatives are even now offering much to civilization.

What is called **Kashf** in Sufism is very similar to Prajna in Sanskrit; the Sufi term has been called "insight" in English, a word which has meaning. The Sanskrit "Prajna" and the Pali "Panna" have been translated "wisdom," a word which has no meaning. Prajna means that beyond mentation, therefore direct insight into the nature of things, and therefore almost the same as Kashf.

Guidance comes to man subconsciously as instinct which he shares with animals. Wise, spontaneous guidance is a blessing of mankind which enables him to act spontaneously, without mind or ego. This action, without mind or ego, is preached throughout the Gita, but commentators using mind and ego have beclouded the picture.

Sufis teach there is a universal Spirit of Guidance, which is identical with Bodhisattva. Pure Zen

teaches universal Bodhisattvahood. Therefore, it is always possible to deliver a blow before the enemy can. If it comes with humor, an unexpected gift, so much the better.

GATHEKA: But equally there must not be a moment's delay on our part in the effort to harmonize and to be friendly should the enemy desire it; nor must we lose one moment in becoming friends with him if it is in our power. A man must always be ready to become a friend to the enemy, and try his best to do it, unless by doing so he adds to the vanity of the enemy.

TASAWWUF: Jesus has said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly." This beautiful teaching is also ignored by traditional religion. The words for "heavens" found in the different religions mean "places of harmony." So long as we desecrate the Lord's Prayer and do not try to establish heavens on earth, wars and tribulation will continue.

Inner guidance includes spontaneity. Spontaneity means egoless activity. As we live and move and have our being in God, so does every person live and move and have his being in God. The soul is the divine breath (*vide The Soul Whence and Whither*). Therefore breathing together takes people beyond dualism, friendship and enmity, therefore meditation is often used to produce harmony. Silence, too, is very often helpful.

GATHEKA: It is most undesirable to be the first to start an enmity. The one who does so is the more blameworthy, and from his side the effort of harmonizing should come.

TASAWWUF: Yet it is usual that such persons are most unwilling to work for peace. In all religions, and in Sufism particularly, repentance (tauba) is the first and most necessary step. Tauba does not mean contrition so much as changing the direction in life. It is only by such change of direction that the ego can be curtailed. It is the ego (nufs) that is the locus of all enmity.

GATHEKA: Sometimes by thinking bitterly of someone we produce enmity in his heart that may not have been there before; it only sprang from our imagination.

TASAWWUF: Every word, thought, and action that comes from us produces samskaras and adds to the storehouse of samsara. When Buddhism was first taught in the United States by Paul Carus, much emphasis was given to the useless activity of mind and the confusion that followed. It is not easy for western man to control his mind; until this is done, there cannot be harmonization and peace. It is not a question of "good thoughts" and "bad thoughts"—it is a problem of useless, uncontrolled mental activity and it is worse when we tinge this useless, uncontrolled mental activity with anything negative.

Meditation in most forms, and other disciplines, are for the purpose of controlling useless mental activity. This is the myth of the Hydra in the saga of Hercules. He could not control the Hydra by lopping off heads (excepting the central one); we do not control the mind by any consideration of it, only by ceasing to think at all in the egoistic sense.

GATHEKA: The same rule applies to friendship. If we strongly think with love of someone, even of an enemy, our power of mind will turn the enemy into friend.

TASAWWUF: This also accords with Paul Carus' interpretations of Buddhism. This is also in accord with Sufic psychology. Sufic psychology is called **Amaliyyat**, which really means the art and science of perfecting human nature. We thus have it in our power to build up enmity or friendship, but enmity involves the use of the ego (**nufs**), while friendship may involve the heart, all its faculties, and inconceivable outlooks. In other words, enmity must begin and end in time, friendship may begin in time and may be carried on through eternity.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 9: Dealings According to Grade

GATHEKA: The dealings of others differ in their nature according to our relation with them. For instance, when a close companion has said something to tease us, we should take it as a jest; whereas the same words spoken by our servant, or by a person who is not so intimate as to joke with us, we should take as an insult. This shows that it is not the dealing that makes the effect, but the relationship with another that changes the effect.

TASAWWUF: There is ego consciousness and there is group consciousness. There is only one form of group consciousness where "I am I" stands out. We must consider here both love relations and social relations. When we practice "love thy neighbor as thy self," one considers the neighbor or friend as one's self. Other persons can hardly be considered in the same way. There are many forms of group consciousness, all sorts of divisions and distinctions. In the communion, and especially in the Christian communion, an ideal and ideals is not only that we become, or are, involved in God, but that we become or are parts of one another.

No doubt this group activity will become more and more an element of social unity in the future. We find this sometimes in living creatures and also in the cells of bodies of living creatures.

GATHEKA: Dictating on the part of parents, teachers, elderly people, or a superior in office, business, wealth, position or sense, is not so hard as when it comes from a younger person, inferior in position, or devoid of sense.

TASAWWUF: We can sense this often in the magnetism involved. Dictation from a superior

person, while remaining dictation often gives out psychic power. It is easy to understand this by experience, but not otherwise. A tyrant is one who not only dominates others but deprives them of psychic vitality. A real superior person often, and sometimes always, gives psychic power to those who he commands.

GATHEKA: It is always wise to associate with one's equals in thought, position, and power, trying always to progress and enter a still higher circle, not merely through ambition, but because we are fitted for it.

TASAWWUF: It is said in *Gayan*, "Movement is life, stillness is death." It is also said, "Daring is better than fearing." Students of Asian philosophies notice the lack of progress in India, among Hindus, after thousands of years. They have all the intellectual equipment, but often fall into the torpor of the tamasic guna. This is a sort of non-action that leads downward, if it leads at all.

Man was made in God's image, and the words for man in many languages mean "endowed with thought," or "endowed with will-power." It is this will-power that distinguishes man from animals. After millions of years, we do not always see change in animal forms; after thousands of years, we do see changes in human forms and in human institutions.

GATHEKA: In every capacity of life self-respect must be preserved; and by thought, speech, and action we must guard ourselves against humiliation.

TASAWWUF: What is called "masochism" is not virtue. This was also one of the discoveries of Lord Buddha. Austerities may bring satisfaction to the ego; they do not satisfy the atoms of the body, mind and heart. Humility is self-bowing; humiliation is compulsory bowing to the acquiescence of the wills of others. It is most unfortunate if it becomes a negative pleasure. Indeed, humiliation is a sin before that God who created all mankind in his image.

GATHEKA: If another person treats us badly without reason or justice, we must fight against it, and prove by so doing that the dealing was unjust.

TASAWWUF: In the Gita we read "Therefore fight O Arjuna!" Some people wish to interpret this inwardly. The falseness of their position is obvious. Such people do not strive to eradicate self-will, envy, malice, hauteur, hypocrisy, and other faults in their own nature. The man who has purged himself will also become the protector of the innocent. He will consider it his duty to fight in such cases. He will fight.

Therefore, we need not be surprised that many of the messengers of God actually engaged on battlefields. In the cases of Rama, Krishna, and Mohammed, such activities became part of human history. In the cases of Jesus and Buddha, other behavior patterns were followed, far more often praised by devotees, who have found it most difficult to walk in the actual footsteps of Jesus and Buddha. There are even passages in the Christian testament wherein Jesus encouraged forms of fighting. Even Lord Buddha ordered a man's eyes to be put out for complaining of what he saw.

Coming from the Great Compassionate One, this shocked the ignorant person back to sanity and sensitivity.

GATHEKA: But if we ourselves are at fault, we should blame ourselves before resenting bad treatment on the part of the other.

TASAWWUF: This subject is also considered in the gathas on Saluk and in the discussions of "Character Building." A person helps overcome his faults by accepting the disciplines in **ryazat** and in learning how to breathe in a spiritual manner. If this be done, he will learn how to avoid bad dealings with others and to repent more rapidly when he has been unjust.

GATHEKA: If someone deals with us much better than we deserve, we should not become oblivious of the fact that we do not deserve his good treatment; we should count it as a kindness on his part.

TASAWWUF: True humility does not consist of any pretense to humility in public. True humility consists of gracious praise and thanks to others. The adept, while choosing to ignore external praise, should not limit his own favorable remarks to and about others. Both self praise and self condemnation should be avoided. They belong to nufs and not to the spirit. But open-heartedness to others should never be avoided.

GATHEKA: If we find that we have deserved the good treatment given us by another we should not take it as something on which to pride ourselves or something to be vain about; but we should take it as a strengthening of the hope to become still better, so that the goodness of God may manifest through us.

TASAWWUF: This needs no comment.

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Series 1: The Law of Reciprocity
Number 10: God's Dealings with Us

GATHEKA: It is generally the case that a man attributes his pleasant experiences in life to his own worthiness, and unpleasant experiences he considers to be the wrath of God.

TASAWWUF: This is contrary to the dictum that as ye sow so ye shall reap. This sowing and

reaping belongs to the part of life wherein Reciprocity reigns. It is not the whole of life.

GATHEKA: The right way to consider this matter is that every pleasant experience should be counted as His great mercy for one's very small goodness, which cannot be compared with God's mercy, and as an encouragement to increase the goodness in oneself; and every unpleasant experience should be considered as God's small wrath for our great evil, to teach us the lesson to refrain from it; and one should see His mercy in both; in the former evident, in the latter hidden.

TASAWWUF: In the Hebrew rituals, we find the phrase, **ki leclom chasdo**, which means that the Divine Mercy persists on all levels and at all times. Though so worded this also has not become a fundamental part of religion.

A considerable portion of Christian ritual operates contrary to the above mentioned Jewish ritual, for it considers man as being outside Divine Mercy. This is a great tragedy and has led to still greater tragedies throughout history. God cannot be considered as separate from His Mercy. All the Suras of the Qur'an begin with the Bismillah, which emphasizes this teaching above all else. Mohammed himself said, "The Merciful leans toward the side of Mercy." Would that his followers had accepted this—one of the great misfortunes of traditional religions is their very common by-passing of their own sacred teachings.

GATHEKA: A wise man is he who keeps an even balance between faith and fear: such faith in God's mercy that he says, "If the whole virtuous world were drowned, I with my faith in His mercy should be saved, like Noah in his ark;" and such fear that he says, "If the whole wicked world were saved, I might be taken to task by the wrath of God."

TASAWWUF: There have been many dire predictions, and as literacy has spread around the world, even more so than in the days of ignorance. It is remarkable how much these dire predictions are believed, and it may be questioned as to whether even one or two have come to pass. This does not mean that predictions have not been made, will be made. The true seer differs from the emotional malpredictor in his efficiency in augury.

Those equipped with psychic powers and nothing more are often deficient in Kashf. The true seer is endowed with the peace of God. In the states of Mushahida sight and seen and seer tend to become one. Not being separate from the Universe, few mistakes are made in augury. The true seer is full of tenderness; the false seer full of self-wrath. He tries to predict without recognizing God, and so often is most mistaken. Therefore, there are few instances of predicted great calamities coming to pass.

GATHEKA: Those who do not understand this moral are apt to go astray by seeing the wicked enjoying themselves, and by looking at the suffering of the virtuous.

The world and its life is an illusion to the untrained eye. It deludes, puzzles, and creates confusion in man's sight; and the first step in the right direction is to watch the pleasure and displeasure of

God by closely watching life; and constantly to endeavour to walk in the path of His pleasure, and to refrain from taking the path of those who act to His displeasure.

TASAWWUF: This phrase is like a commentary on Fateha, Sura 1 of the Holy Qur'an, which is repeated constantly by Muslim devotees. Many books have been written to comment on this Sura. Still after centuries, it does not seem to be very effective, because man has substituted his thoughts about Allah for his awareness of Him. We can become aware of God-Allah through the breath, through the heart, and through increased capacity for Light. All are practical and effective. All make us aware of the divine presence and thus of His pleasure and displeasure.

We repeat practices called Daroods (our use of "Toward the One" is one) to become better attuned to the divine pleasure. Heart concentration always helps. Love is a means. These and other ways must be used if man is to walk in the divine footsteps.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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[Series 2](#): The Law of Beneficence

Number 1: Our Dealings with Our Friends

GATHEKA: Friendship as the average person understands it is perhaps little more than acquaintance; but in reality it is more sacred than any other connection in the world. To a sincere person, entering into friendship is like entering into the gates of heaven; and a visit to his friend is a pilgrimage to a true loving friend.

TASAWWUF: In Saum we pray, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls." So there are three levels of Moral Culture: The Law of Reciprocity, the Law of Beneficence for the Heart, and the Law of Renunciation (if it can be so called) for the Soul. For in Beneficence the angelic qualities, the heart qualities are alive and control our affairs in life. It is no longer that the ego and mind control one's affairs, it is that there is sentiment and an innocence which can become very, very strong.

GATHEKA: When in friendship, a thought arises, "I will love you as you love me," or, "I will do to you as you do to me," this takes away all the virtue of friendship, because it is a commercial attitude, prevalent everywhere in the commercial world: everything is done for a return, and measure is given for measure.

TASAWWUF: No doubt this is proper under reciprocity and also under the laws and customs of

man. But the very idea of having idea is itself a detriment both to moral culture and heart expression. Heart does not think in terms of “measure for measure.”

GATHEKA: Friendship should be the contrary pole to the practical side of life; for when a person is tried by the selfish surroundings of the world he feels inclined to take refuge in the love and kindness of a sympathetic friend. But if there is a question of selfishness in friendship, where can a soul go who is tired and annoyed with the selfish surroundings of the world?

TASAWWUF: The American philosopher Emerson said, “He is my friend in whose presence I may think aloud.” And there is the story of his that when he visited the English Carlyle, late in their lives, he entered the other’s living room and they spent their entire time together smoking without a word being spoken and both said it was one of the greatest days of their respective lives. Hearts always feel comfortable in the presence of loving hearts.

GATHEKA: Friendship is just like recreation after the toil of the day. One can speak or be with someone who is different from all others in life.

TASAWWUF: No doubt in most parts of the world and at all times the mother becomes the first friend. The mother offers the solace. The mother is not considerate of herself, she sacrifices herself for her off-spring. And after that sometimes the child finds the same with a kind father or other relatives. In all parts of the world this has been found to be so.

Therefore being literate does not always mean that there is some spiritual growth. Spiritual growth comes with heart and heart does not depend on books or papers. And it has been a great difficulty, that although God has sent many Messengers and with almost the same Message every time, instead of getting the spirit of the Message or the Messenger, certain words that have been said that were different from the words of other Messengers have been emphasized and exaggerated. And in this way the consideration of God and the blessings of God have been lost. Therefore while God is in our midst, both as persons and as groups, mankind has not always benefited from the scriptures of the different races and faiths.

Therefore the lesson of unlearning has been taught. If one bows the head, or the body in sajda, all the accumulations of mind and ego are emptied out and then the heart must depend on sustenance.

GATHEKA: But difficulty arises because everyone thinks that his friend ought to prove worthy of his ideal, and this in the end disappoints him. For the law of beneficence teaches this: that goodness is worth while which can withstand even badness; that kindness is valuable which can withstand tyranny.

TASAWWUF: The difficulty comes with thinking at all in this sense. For this establishes a differentiation, and the unity and harmony come with the feeling. Feeling is never dualistic. Feeling is or is not and is not concerned with qualifications or modifications. And when there is the

attunement of the heart feeling, such difficulties do not arise. For the true friend takes us also to timelessness, beyond the spheres of such differentiation.

GATHEKA: Every soul is not ready to follow this ideal, and it depends to what extent one is strong enough to withstand. By having an ideal and keeping it before him, a person develops sooner or later into that ideal.

TASAWWUF: On the path of devotion, and still more on the path of spirituality, one does not look for greater virtues in others, excepting perhaps in the teacher. Still Salat says we find solace in a loving mother, kind father, innocent child, helpful friend or inspiring teacher.

GATHEKA: A friendship used to carry out one's aims and objects in life through the love and kindness of a friend is only business. The unselfish friend is the pure one, and it is such a friendship that will last; but a selfish friendship will vanish. For the selfish friend will create selfishness in the heart of his friend, and the unselfish friend will create unselfishness in the heart of his friend.

RYAZAT: There is a saying, "The family that prays together stays together." This is only the introductory note. If people pray together, meditate together, commune together, the Law of Beneficence will make itself felt in their hearts. They become attuned to the same atmosphere, the same spiritual surroundings, the same Teacher.

Then also the concentration on Heart is most beneficial for it helps to awaken Heart and heart-qualities.

GATHEKA: Everyone gets, sooner or later, what he gives, for the heart knows the condition of the heart. Therefore there is no better principle than wishing good to the friend, speaking good of the friend, doing good to the friend, with all kindness and love; having no thought for one moment of the friend's deserving our goodness, kindness, or love.

TASAWWUF: We may read a thousand times in books about the gandharva or upsara, about the angel or deva, but until the transformation takes place in the heart, until the heart becomes more living it will not become more loving. And when it reaches these stages of consciousness, it will come naturally.

Sri Aurobindo has written voluminously about the Oversoul and Supermind, but unless there is the natural flow of love from the heart there cannot be any Oversoul or Supermind. Perhaps we shall see it in the natural evolution; perhaps there will be the manifestation of what Jesus Christ and many Masters have said: "As above, so below, as within, so without." But these words of themselves often act as blinds, as shadows. The one whose heart is alive does not need to resort to any words. His life indicates his stage of evolution.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 2: Our Dealings with Our Relations

GATHEKA: Our love, kindness, service, and sympathy are due to people in the world, and especially to those around us, according to their expectation. A stranger naturally expects less than an acquaintance; an acquaintance expects less than a friend; and a friend, less than relations.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes this is reversed and causes more confusion. No doubt in many parts of the world full consideration is given to the stranger but when this is done and disrespect is shown to one's friends and relations, then even the stranger will notice and not feel at ease. It is the creation of the atmosphere of ease, of composure and good-will that enables one to show kindness to the strangers.

GATHEKA: Therefore these have more right to ask for our love and service, and it is our first duty to give it to them. It does not matter if they do not give us the same, or if they do not prove worthy of our ideal.

TASAWWUF: There is nearly always in the hearts of kinfolk a sentiment which can be more easily aroused, or awakened in response. By making the hearth the center of heart-love one can radiate it. But if one does not start out with one's kinfolk, it is not always easy to build-up love in life.

True, in many parts of the world family love and affection is more kindled than in other places. Sometimes it becomes the end-all of itself and this is a limitation. It is by making the family love and affection strong that it is easier to radiate human love and affection.

GATHEKA: It is a mistake for wise people to expect the same from them or to expect everyone to prove worthy of their ideal, when it is so difficult even for ourselves to prove worthy of our own ideal. However highly we may think of ourselves, in the end at the examination we fail.

TASAWWUF: Thinking of oneself is a barrier to the promotion of heart-outlooks. It is by thinking or feeling outwardly that there can be the growth. If one kindles one's own heart-radiation and regards it as a hearth-fire after awhile it will increase in vigor and outlook. It will become more real than anything else and also more natural than anything else.

GATHEKA: Therefore the wise thing would be to do all the good we can to those who expect it from us, and especially to those who consider it their right to expect it from us, without even thinking whether they will return it or whether they deserve it.

TASAWWUF: This is the selfless outlook. The selfless outlook is not to deride the self, not to ignore the self, but to activate the self wisely. Thus the Upanishads teach that we do not do good for the sake of the ego or for the sake of others, but for the sake of Atman, which is to say in this respect God. But we cannot begin with the God. As Jesus taught, how can man love the God whom he has not seen when he does not love the man whom he has seen.

It is most beneficial when one learns to stand by himself and can be a tower of reliance to others without having to depend on them. It is for this purpose that certain exercises are given by the spiritual teacher, and certain practices are found today even in books which can be most beneficial, especially when presented and explained by the teacher. It is the weaker who can rely on the stronger.

GATHEKA: There are some who stand by their relations with pride. Taking the part of the relation and standing by the relation with pride is right, for this is the first step towards human brotherhood.

TASAWWUF: We often find people proclaiming human brotherhood. They proclaim the human brotherhood but do not exemplify it in their lives. There cannot be a focus of radiation unless it becomes self-established. That is why there is so much confusion: **thoughts** of some ideal, some ethic, some standard have taken the place of the actual idea, ethic or standard in life. Here the action is far superior from the sentiment. For the action will sooner or later act and react on the doer and even in self-justification he will become wise along the line of brotherhood. Once having shown the affection to the relations, he can better express affection to all the world.

GATHEKA: A person cannot jump at once to universalism.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the greatest sources of confusion in the world. Some words are used, sometimes some thoughts are used. They have no magnetism nor power. They come sometimes as a justification for failure to behave properly to those in one's immediacy. One has to learn to behave properly before one can behave properly toward strangers and those afar.

GATHEKA: There are some who have a sort of natural hatred of their relations, and they love those who have no connection with them. But they are mistaken, for a person who cannot love his own brother will never be able to consider another person as brother, because he has neglected learning his lesson at home.

TASAWWUF: This has been the subject of much ridicule and still it takes a long time to become clear in the hearts of men. One can see it in the political field also that those who propose peace programs, who are very insistent on their peace programs, become very inconsiderate of their friends and neighbors. And this lack of consideration impresses people far away so they do not trust them. Trust must begin at home. It has to be real, not imaginary.

GATHEKA: Far from hating his relations, a wise man will not even hate his enemy. By hating relations for their unworthiness you make them more unworthy; whereas by loving them, some day

you will be able to draw out the worthiness that you seek in them.

TASAWWUF: It should never be forgotten that God made all mankind in His own image. It becomes hypocrisy to quote scriptures and not put them into practice, besides becoming a mask of delusion. The word “avidya” is often used and now is coming into the western culture. But there is no wisdom in using a foreign word. Such words can even increase the ignorance and fail in their purpose.

There are many diseases that arise from such attitudes. If a person hates those close to himself, there will be a reflection, even a reaction within his own organism. Lord Buddha taught that we become what we have been thinking. Instead of adopting this wisdom, man has come to worship him and ignore his wisdom. The wisdom comes in the way we live. If we took the same care of our thoughts as we wish to care about our body, we should all become more healthy and happy. If we can establish centers of love in our own beings, we should become not only more healthy and happy; we should also be helping others toward health and happiness.

GATHEKA: Harmony at home spreads out, and makes the world harmonious for us; and inharmony at home spreads out throughout the world, and builds an inharmonious world for us. For instance, a person who has quarreled at home and gone to China, and settled there to have peace, has taken the disharmony with him to China, and can never be at peace all his life.

TASAWWUF: Trying to build peace and good-will in the world has not been very successful in the absence of a spiritual foundation. It is the spiritual foundation that builds heart. Once heart is built it radiates the heart-qualities. You cannot radiate these qualities without first establishing a focus, a place for them. Otherwise they will be like flashlights or candles or the light of the firefly; they do not persist.

If one regarded his body as a universe, that there had to be love and peace between its members (which has been taught over and over again by the wise) he would establish a real center which would have merit and value. Tell your own members to love each other and then that love will spread first to those close to oneself and then to others.

Peace is only possible through one’s own atmosphere of peace. Peace is not a thought or a philosophy. All efforts to establish peace by such thoughts and philosophies have failed. But once peace becomes established then one can have right thoughts and right philosophies.

GATHEKA: However badly situated we may be in life, if we try our best to master the situation, it is far better and greater than wishing to change the situation, for this is nothing but a weakness.

TASAWWUF: In *Gayan* it is said, “The world is what it is. You cannot change it, but you can change yourself.” But if we only knew it, the person who has the power to change himself often is able to change the world much more than one who is not. There have been mighty rulers, cruel or kind, and they have extended their empires far and wide. Then the empire disappears and

whatever they have done, it has not affected the world much.

Every inventor who has made something which has changed the world must beforehand have some discipline, some mastery over himself. Therefore science has accomplished what politics could not.

GATHEKA: Among relations it is so wonderful when there is harmony between brothers and sisters, a link of love and harmony between husband and wife, and especially love and devotion between parents and children. Verily, there is no greater light than love.

TASAWWUF: We can see in history that people who have emphasized this have continued on, whether they be small people like the descendants of the children of Israel, or great people like the Chinese. Both have emphasized the family. Whatever else be true, whether otherwise they have been good or bad, kind or cruel, they have persisted because they have the cornerstone of persistence.

The teaching of individualism (which is not found in any scriptures) has emphasized the importance of the individual and when this is the habit, attachments between persons lag and whatever benefits have been gained, there have been also great losses. Love and devotion are feelings, not philosophies, and quotations are not only of no value, they are actually detrimental. To love, one must love and not talk about loving; to be kind one must be kind; to be considerate one must show by example.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 3: Our Dealings with Servants

GATHEKA: We are so situated in life that whatever position we occupy in life we are never independent, we are never self-sufficient. Therefore every individual depends upon others for help, and others depend upon him for help; only the position of him who is one among many who receive help becomes lower in the eyes of those who count themselves among the few who can help. This makes every person a master as well as a servant. Yet everyone, in the intoxication of his mastership, forgets his place as a servant, and looks upon the one who helps him as his servant.

TASAWWUF: The correct way for any confusion comes when man can look upon God as the Only Being. So long as we hold to "I am," we see differences and distinctions. When we see such

differences and distinctions harmony between us becomes harder to achieve.

We see mostly in the lives of Christ and Mohammed that great as they were they always emphasized the position of the servant. Christ has said that those who would be greatest among mankind should become the servants of the rest; Mohammed said he was the servant of God and that man should only call him Messenger and servant. But among the religious devotees, excepting among the Sufis and some devout monks and nuns, we do not see much of this. The words may be used, but there is pride and arrogance and this pride and arrogance becomes worse because only too often they are in the name of one who has taught the opposite.

RYAZAT: To increase pride where it is absent one learns to lift the head. To diminish pride and increase humility one learns to lower the head and even prostrate oneself on the ground. But there is little learned unless the same attitudes as one has in the prayers and devotions are used elsewhere in life. The one who does not see the God in the manifestation does not see the God at all.

GATHEKA: The wise, whose feelings are awakened, think on this question deeply, and do their best to avoid every possibility of even giving even an idea to a servant of his servanthship, far less insulting him in any way or hurting his feelings.

TASAWWUF: It is said of Mohammed, the Messenger of God, that never once did he scold his servant (or servants). He considered them as worthy in the sight of Allah. Servants, being human beings, are also created in the image of Allah. "Whatsoever ye do to the least of these, my servants, ye do it unto me."

GATHEKA: We are all equal, and if we have helpers to serve us in life we ought to feel humble and most thankful for the privilege, instead of making the position of the servant humble.

TASAWWUF: There has no doubt been much degradation in India, because with all the wisdom teachings and discussions about "karma," human consideration has been notably lacking. It is not very different from hypocrisy to have a sort of noble philosophy without giving due consideration to mankind. And in presenting a purer dharma to the world, Sri Ramakrishna inculcated the principle that every swami also had to be a servant and not symbolically but actually. So we find in India alongside the absence of human consideration, also many of the wise acting as servants.

Sufis especially consider their servants as worthy. They regard them also as companions. And the principle in the life of Pir-o-Murshid Hasan Nizami, that he made himself the most humble worker in his own printshop, is neither new nor original. To understand life as a whole we must understand the high and the low, and if we can exemplify both high and low, we are coming closer to the point of view of the wise.

Western people who have been fortunate enough to be guests in Sufi homes have found that servants are never treated as servants in the West, and are given a consideration not to be found

in the caste-ridden lands.

GATHEKA: It is wise to avoid putting one's own burden on another, however exalted we may be in our position in life.

TASAWWUF: Besides as one becomes exalted, what he considers as easy tasks may be difficult for another. And his more serious endeavours may be far beyond the capacity of others. We can always call upon God for help; He is near and He also manifests within us as the Spirit of Guidance, as the Doer, the Helper even though some of this help comes from without.

GATHEKA: It is right to share the work with the servant, however humble it may seem; for there is nothing in life too humble to do. If a man can do a certain thing, he need not leave it to a poor man to do because he is higher in position. It is necessary to take help; but it is right to do everything that comes in life, regardless of one's riches, power, or position.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism it is taught that the journey is for the teacher and the pupil together. But if we separate the journey from the everyday life, we make a great mistake. Many people quote that a spiritual path is everyday life, and these quotations often form shadows and add to the veils. It is the duty of the adept to show by example, and it is the custom of the ignorant to repeat verbal precepts.

GATHEKA: The moral of the ancients was that a servant was considered as a child of the family, and he was never allowed to feel that he was lower in any way than the members of the family.

TASAWWUF: In modern times there have been discussions of "ancient wisdom" and it is always presumed to apply to something esoteric, something vaguely occult. If we read the Egyptian literature, we find that a very high moral attitude was expected and that they held a view something like that of Mohammed in later times, that the "gods" were always present and that their actions and attitudes would be weighed on the day of judgment.

There is no question that the Egyptians had a very high morality and that they drew a strength from it that enabled their culture to persist for many, many centuries, much longer than other cultures, even the Chinese. The Chinese did not have the same attitude toward servants, nor did the people of other cultures, which lasted less in the point of time.

GATHEKA: One cannot commit a greater sin than hurting the feelings of the one who serves us and depends upon our help. Once the Prophet heard his grandson call a servant by his name. On hearing this he at once said to his grandson, "No, child, that is not the right way of addressing elders. You ought to call him "uncle." It does not matter if he serves us, we are all servants of one another, and we are equal in the sight of God."

TASAWWUF: This spiritual democracy taught by the Messenger of God has not remained. Those who follow in the way of theology or even of devotion, have missed a great opportunity.

Mohammed said he was like other people and therefore other people could benefit from his example. But though the great ones have come to be examples to humanity, people persist in worshipping them and not on following their examples.

To make it worse, this has often been mislabeled “humility,” that one is not worthy. Who says anybody is worthy? Unworthy? This is nothing but nufs, ego.

GATHEKA: There is a verse of Mahmud-e Ghasnavi:

“The Emperor Mahmud, who had thousands of slaves to wait on his call,
Became the slave of his slaves when love gushed forth from his heart.”

Nobody appears inferior to us when our heart is kindled with kindness and our eyes are open to the vision of God.

TASAWWUF: When the heart is filled with love, it comes naturally that one loves the neighbor as the self. It should be evident that after thousands of years, words alone are not effective if they touch only the mind and ego. When the love springs forth from the heart it blooms in deeds of beneficence. Therefore Sufism is mostly concerned with heart-culture. And especially now we see we must come to the end of empty words which are not a culture but a confusion.

No doubt those who have gone in the direction of what they call “love” may not be taking the highest path. But they are moving in new directions and this is of itself an initiatory step. Sooner or later the value of such steps will make their impression on multitudes and cultures. It is a step in the right direction to move from mind to heart; it is still a greater step to move from heart to God.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 4: Our Dealings with Masters

GATHEKA: It is natural for every person to have a master, from a beggar to a king. There is no soul on earth who has not someone under whose control and command he is expected to act: in school under the teacher, in the army under the commanding officer, in the workshop under the foreman, in a nation under the king or president. There is no aspect of life that exempts man from this.

TASAWWUF: The whole idea of spiritual transmission, which we can find first in the early Upanishads, is that there is a change of control passed on through the ages and that always one must be a servant or inferior before one achieves the superior position. And in all things there is a positive and negative pole and actually even the Murshid or Guru is only superior in acting as the Vice-gerent of God, so to speak, with the aspirant.

It cannot be repeated too often, as Jesus Christ has said, that one who aspires to be leader, let him be servant of all the rest. The failures through history have arisen out of the ignoring of the words of the great teachers. The Bible also teaches that “every valley shall be exalted and every hill laid low.” This has been retained only by spiritual people. The ecclesiasts as well as all worldly people are never satisfied. The leadership they seek belongs only to this world.

GATHEKA: Thus it is wise to act toward one’s superior with the consideration one would expect from one’s inferior. Faithfulness, respect, good manners, sincerity, and attention should always be shown in our dealings with our superiors in life.

TASAWWUF: In showing this respect one is also showing it to God. If we do not demonstrate to our fellow-man we cannot demonstrate it to God. God remains a thought, not Being. And when we come to recognize all people as the beloved ones of God, we cannot very well err. We are behaving as if everybody was a manifestation of God.

GATHEKA: And he who lacks them will find that they are also lacking in those from whom he expects them.

TASAWWUF: When we consider the Beatitudes of Jesus Christ we read that the merciful shall receive mercy. But this is true of every aspect of receiving, not only blessings but of the things of the mental and material world. And not only that but in giving the principle of Nasoul is involved, or as it has been said: “Give all you have and accept all that is given to you.” This is true on all planes of life.

GATHEKA: A child who is insolent to his parents will always see insolence in his own children; a person who has been abrupt to his chief will always meet with abruptness in his servants.

TASAWWUF: This is not only a universal law, which belongs to karma, but it is true in all aspects of life. We receive as we give and if not now, at some time this compensation will be effective.

There are several ways of overcoming it. One is by changing ourselves. Even in play this will work and if one plays his role correctly sooner or later his own character will change. But it is also true that by studying one’s breath one can notice the relation of breathing to activities and by being careful both of what one gives and receives, one will avoid misfortune to himself and others.

GATHEKA: It is the law of nature. Therefore a respectful manner and goodwill to one’s master in any aspect of life are always worthwhile.

TASAWWUF: On the spiritual path the respectful attitude toward the teacher is really for the pupil. The teacher may have no need of it. But one can, by some practice, cultivate respect and as one cultivates the respectful attitude, one will soon be receiving the respect of others. It is not for oneself that this is done. But it is the teaching of the Upanishads, that for the sake of the atman all efforts should be made toward showing respect to others, and then to all of God's creatures.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 5: Our Dealings with Acquaintances

GATHEKA: A man should always try to develop his acquaintances into friendship, at least where it is possible; but where it is impossible he should try at least to continue acquaintance, instead of going from acquaintance to estrangement.

TASAWWUF: The idea in Beneficence is to awaken more and more heart-life, the heart tendencies. If this is pursued rightly one becomes what has been called the deva-man, the angelic man.

One sees this also in the works of Sri Aurobindo that there is constant mention of higher evolution up to and including Superman. But this "superman" remains an idea, a standard, and not a reality until the heart becomes alive. New philosophies are not new truths; they are simply restatements of ancient wisdom, of eternal wisdom. The sages have from times immemorial tried to inculcate the human consciousness with this idea and then exemplify it with practice.

GATHEKA: A man always wonders how he can make friends with everybody, for friendship is such a rare thing; and so he waits with his high ideal perhaps all his life, and does not meet his ideal friend. And as he passes by all those with whom he becomes acquainted, in a way he avoids the chance of friendship with them, thinking they are not worth it.

TASAWWUF: This is the egocentric tendency which is so common. We may see a different behavior pattern in a loving mother, a kind father or a faithful friend. Where does this come from? It comes from heart. And it is necessary in the course of spiritual evolution to expand this quality, to utilize it and not expect from others what is one's own ideal.

The reason one does not succeed is that he is expecting something from the outside. Man, made in God's image, has all the perfections within himself. All that is necessary is to bring them out, to

show others by showing himself and to show himself by showing others.

GATHEKA: It is easy for anyone to say about another that he is not worth making friends with; but he does not know how much he is worth himself.

TASAWWUF: The American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson has said, "If you want to make a friend, be a friend." Everywhere we go we find people who are lonely. They are lonely and they think others are not lonely, just themselves. Whether they are extroverts or introverts we find this, and the one type tries to compensate by expressing the outside of his personality while the other retreats within himself and does not seem to care about others. But everywhere there is that loneliness, in individuals, in families, in groups, even in nations. And the main reason why there is not peace in the world also comes that nations do not realize other nations are lonely. Whether it is the individual or the whole world, it is not realized that by becoming friends one overcomes the loneliness in others and also in oneself. Friendship toward others is the surest way of overcoming loneliness in oneself.

GATHEKA: Therefore the wise are thankful when they see anybody with a more or less friendly inclination towards them, and make the best of the opportunity by gaining three benefits from it: the first, that by being friends with someone a person develops in himself the spirit of friendliness; the second, that one adds one more to the circle of one's friends; and the third, the joy of exchanging love and kindly feelings, which is greater and better than anything in the world.

TASAWWUF: For this is heart-operation. The heart has its own sphere of activity and this is beyond thought. The heart has sentiment and feeling and the heart can perceive in others what the mind fails to take into account. Besides, by looking at others and striving to see from their point of view, one not only spreads the attitude of friendship, one finds a joy which is hidden deep in the heart.

This principle has been found in the myth of Jonah, that when he was in the body of the beast (meaning while the soul was in the flesh) it found all kinds of jewels and gems and valuable materials which one had not noticed. Therefore it is said that the Sufi does all he can to evolve now without waiting for any hereafter.

There are two ways to operate: one is to enlarge the circle of friendship; the other is to enlarge the depth of friendship. Though the one may seem to be extroverted and the other introverted, both are most valuable in the heart evolution.

GATHEKA: There is nothing but benefit in widening one's circle of friends, and there is nothing but loss when one loses a friend from one's circle.

TASAWWUF: There is the story of Jesus and the ninety and nine, that one considers even the least in one's circle and does not think it unimportant to care for everybody in one's circle. And in the path of spiritual activity, it is important to establish the habit first and then after establishing it

and only after establishing it, to expand one's operations in this line.

GATHEKA: One ought to look upon acquaintances as the sowing of the seed of friendship, not as a situation forced upon one; for those who turn their backs on man and look at him with contempt do that to God.

TASAWWUF: After thousands of years the western world has not been able to practice "Love thy neighbor as thyself." True, the missionaries, finding that the Asian and other peoples did not know this teaching, or not in the form in which it appears in the Scriptures, felt it necessary to preach. But after centuries the preaching does not seem to have affected mankind much. The spiritual evolution does not always become clear. This is no doubt because it is so easy to say, so hard to do.

And another teaching which has failed has been in the Christian scriptures where it is taught that it is difficult to love God Who is not seen when one does not love man who is seen. Yet the scriptures also teach (but religion does not follow) that God created all mankind in His image. This is also reflected in the Buddha's teaching that all mankind has perfect enlightenment; and this again is found in the words of Jesus, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

But because mankind is concerned with himself; because there is no standard for awakening heart and pursuing the heart-life, it has been necessary to re-present the Message of God, to encourage man to practice human consideration. And it is in so practicing that one lays down the cornerstone for a better world. This does not come from the preaching and harangues, it comes from the example each one gives to the world himself.

GATHEKA: To think, "That person is perhaps of no value; that person is of no importance," is unpractical, besides being unkind. As all things have their use, both flowers and thorns, both sweet and bitter, so all men are of some use; what position, what class, what race, what caste they belong to makes no difference.

TASAWWUF: It is only so that we exemplify "God made mankind in His image and likeness." We cannot accept this by thinking otherwise and mostly mankind has thought otherwise. So there is a vast gap between the teachings and behavior.

The way of the adept is to show by example. He illustrates to others beginning with disciples. He encourages the disciples to follow in his footsteps. He leads the way by showing the way. And thus the seeds of heart-behavior come to the world.

And as the Prophet has said, "God loves His creation more than a mother loves her offspring." We ought to realize that this is true. We can know more about God by following in the way of God; we can show our love of God and for God by practicing the ways of God—Akhlak Allah.

GATHEKA: Friendship with good and bad, with wise and foolish, with high and low, is equally

beneficial, whether to yourself or to the other. What does it matter if another be benefited by your friendship, since you would like to be benefited by someone else's friendship?

TASAWWUF: There is a point where it does not make much difference between practicality and idealism. People talk about karma, of receiving the fruits of actions, but though they talk about it, it does not always mean that they become more circumspect, more careful in their dealings with others.

Although friendship is not a matter of business, still the wise do not disdain to use methods which give them satisfaction in the ways of heart, or even in the ways of human comfort. As we reap what we sow, we can be careful in our dealings with others, knowing that we shall obtain exactly what we have laid the foundation for; we shall reap in accord to what we have sown.

It is very difficult to live in the world and seek to benefit oneself without also benefiting others. Equally it is very difficult to live in the world and seek good for others without one gaining some benefit thereby. Even if it be simple friendship there is some gain in it.

Of course the wise do not think in those terms. We can see this in its highest form in the Buddhist "Diamond Sutra," that one who seeks good in the world, whether it be for everybody or not for everybody, does not think in terms of himself. Or if we accept the teaching of Vedanta, it is all for the sake of the Atman that we sow and reap and there is no such thing as obtaining goodness or reward for the ego-self alone. Whatever is gained for the ego-self is borrowed from the universe and sooner or later has to be abandoned. It does not really belong to one.

GATHEKA: He is wise who treats an acquaintance as a friend, and he is foolish who treats a friend as an acquaintance, and he is impossible who treats friends and acquaintances as strangers; you cannot help him.

TASAWWUF: This teaching also appears in *Gayan* although *Gayan* was not given as teaching for any particular group. It came from the outbursts of heart. The perfect heart sees everyone as the beloved of God. The perfect heart does not make any distinctions and differences between men. The perfect heart readily attunes to the hearts of others, perfect or imperfect. And this attunement brings out the perfection in others. It cannot be otherwise. It is only the ego-mind which makes the differentiation and sees one as a single, separated self. But as we live and move and have our being in God, we are all thus attuned both to God and to each other.

In formulating the brotherhood of man, this is but the first step. We have to go further. We have to become considerate of others. We have to see in each and all the beloved of God. It is only by seeing in each and all the beloved ones of God that we are truly awake to Divine Love. Otherwise it is just words and this is of no value in the eternal life to which all belong.

It is not necessary to show kindness to every stranger. We must learn the kindness first to those around us, and then to increase, making everybody possible into an acquaintance; then gradually

bring acquaintances into friendship. And if we wish then to introduce the spiritual teachings, we must build this friendship, and then heart can appeal to heart; or as *Gayan* teaches, “Heart speaks to Heart and Soul to Soul.”

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 6: Our Dealings with Our Neighbors

GATHEKA: The word “neighbor” is used in traditions for those who are around us at home, or at the office, or in the workshop.

TASAWWUF: Jesus Christ, it is true, has given us another interpretation, that wherever friendship and kindness are employed, that proves neighborliness. From the spiritual point of view this is quite correct. The heart-neighbor is the one close to the heart which is different from mere propinquity.

GATHEKA: Tulsidas, the Hindu poet, says that the essence of religion is kindness. Those who are inclined to do kindness in life must not discriminate among the people around them, between those to whom they must be kind and those to whom they need not be kind.

TASAWWUF: Nevertheless, it has been a mark against the people of the Hindu religion that they have made marked distinctions and sometimes detailed distinctions. This shows the great barrier between the legal approach and the heart approach in religion.

The orthodox of all faiths seem to adhere to the legalistic approach and often to go into details. This means that the mind and emotions of man are involved and it is this attitude, so described in the Gita, that has persisted through the ages and kept humanity divided.

GATHEKA: However kind and good a person may be to those he likes, to those he wishes to be kind to, he cannot for this be called kind by nature; real kindness is that which gushes out from the heart to the worthy and to the unworthy.

TASAWWUF: That is the essence of the Message, to extend the activity of human consideration. No special code, no credo is needed, no set of beliefs, just the full and free heart action, the action which comes naturally and spontaneously.

And now we see among the young an extended stress on this outlook which older people,

accustomed to mental and emotional outlook, do not always comprehend, do not always agree with. Yet there is no question that the heart-outlook is nearer to God and real religion.

GATHEKA: There are some people who are kind by nature and yet do not know how to express it; and therefore with all their kindness they prove in life to be unkind. There are different ways of expressing kindness, such as by being harmless, by being undisturbing, and by being considerate to those around us. These three are the first principles of kindness.

TASAWWUF: There has been a great increase in beliefs in non-violence, especially in reaction to the wars that have increased in number. The wars have increased in number after there have been so many campaigns to end war. These campaigns have not touched the depth of the hearts of the powerful or power-seeking. And it is in reaction to this that many hearts, conscious or unconscious, wish to go in the opposite direction.

Often they do not succeed. There is talk about non-violence and harmlessness. Often it begins with kindness to animals but lack of consideration to mankind. Until there is consideration for mankind, such forms of kindness are mainly vanity. We must begin by being kind to our fellows, those around us.

Little things, like turning the radio on and off, not making too much noise for our own amusement, not to be disturbed if others are careless, and never to expect better treatment from others than we offer them are most important considerations in life.

GATHEKA: By harmlessness is meant that though man does not seem to harm man in the way the animals of the forest harm one another, yet by keen study one sees that man can harm man more than the wild animals harm one another. For man is the outcome of the development of the whole of creation; therefore the ego, which makes one selfish, is developed in him more than in any other creature. Selfishness keeps man blind through life, and he scarcely knows when he has caused harm to another.

TASAWWUF: It is in man that the thought of "I am I" has crystallized and thus solidifying makes one feel a difference between self and self. Although this assumption is contrary to what every spiritual teacher and Messenger of God has said, nevertheless it is deeply rooted in the human race and is characteristic of that stage of development called **manasic** in Indian terminology.

And we need not be surprised that with all the grandeur and glamour of Indian teaching, the analytical interpretations of karma have led to an extreme individualism compounded by caste and brought about such tremendous separations, even in a land characterized by the highest monistic and non-dualistic teachings. But "teachings" are not actualities. The very principles of separation of guru and chela may cause an impediment in divine union; whereas in Sufism the union of teacher and disciple is a foremost principle and takes full advantage of the actuality of Love. Words as bhakti, prema, karuna, mehta, which are so delightful are not themselves guides to spiritual awakening. You seldom find them in the mantrams and spiritual phrases used by devotees. They

are the outpourings of heart; used by mind they become veils over the personality.

GATHEKA: By not disturbing is meant that even a little crudeness of thought, speech, or action can disturb another, and this man easily does in life without considering. And the sense of man has the delicacy of God. Crudeness on our part may disturb another very much although we do not even notice it.

TASAWWUF: Every thought, speech and action causes a disturbance in the cosmic ether. Peacefulness is broken even by goodness. One finds in the Hindu philosophy that the enlightened man rises above not only *tamas* and *rajas*, but also above *sattva*. If one could bear in mind that any and every ego activity affects not only man but God himself, one would be very careful before taking any steps whatsoever. However, the mystic, by mastering the breath and awakening the intuitions becomes a heart-person. When he becomes a heart-person he naturally and automatically becomes considerate of others.

It is not always easy to avoid disturbance. As one develops spiritually, he increases capacity for peacefulness in himself. As he increases this capacity, he is able to extend the atmosphere of peacefulness to others. This is more important than the right and wrong of the world.

ALLAHO AKBAR may also be interpreted “Peace is Power.” Man does not always realize this. This means also that as one avoids disturbing others he also builds more power in himself. Thus both gain; nobody loses. In this we may bear in mind that God is the reality in all of us; disturbance is disturbance, *samsara* is *samsara*—we either have *samsara* or *nirvana*, ego or God.

RYAZAT: Mystics develop keenness and sensitivity in their breath. Any disturbance from oneself or to oneself will break the rhythm of breath. By constantly thinking the name of God or behaving as if in God’s presence, one protects oneself and another.

GATHEKA: By consideration is meant that man’s life in the world is a life of poverty, poverty in some way or other even if he lives in a palace. In the Qur’an it is said, “God alone is rich, and everyone on earth is poor.” Man is poor with his myriad needs, his life’s demands, the wants of his nature; and when one keenly observes life, it seems that the whole world is poverty-stricken, everyone struggling for the self.

TASAWWUF: The easiest way to observe this is in loneliness. Loneliness is especially present among those people and societies which hold to individualism. No doubt individualism is right in man’s efforts to understand and express himself. But man’s individualism becomes futile if it does not find peace, love, and happiness.

Disciples repeat “Toward the One,” etc. When this is realized one feels the presence of sympathetic souls both in the seen and unseen. Of course, when the divine presence is felt one is not lonely at all. Indeed then one feels he can comfort others. This shows spiritual wealth. It fountains from the heart. Everyone has it; it is there; all that is needed is to cultivate it, to manifest

it.

The main moral of the Message of the day is to promote human consideration. Before this all other moral qualities and patterns seem small. Consideration alone is morality without pride.

GATHEKA: In this struggle of life, if a man can be considerate enough to keep his eyes open to all around him and see in what way he can be of help to them, he becomes rich; he inherits the kingdom of God.

TASAWWUF: The holy and wise ones realize their dependence on God. This is reality. This is manifestable. This is included in the prayer Khatum. The more we realize this the less it is necessary to rely on words or anything.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 7: Our Dealings with Our Fellowman

GATHEKA: To be just and fair to our fellow man is not only a virtue but a benefit to ourselves, even from the practical point of view.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in business matters, in buying and selling, in building up trust and credit. Beyond this is merit which the Buddhists call **punya**. Merit applies to all worlds seen and unseen. Jesus has said, "Collect your treasures in heaven." This can mean for the future, it can mean for the worlds beyond, it can mean for the hearts here.

GATHEKA: Sometimes a man thinks, "I have got the better of another, and thereby I have profited; so, at the loss of virtue, I have been benefited."

TASAWWUF: One benefits only on the account books of man. In the moral account books one does not so benefit. We cannot love the neighbor as the self, we cannot love anybody as the self and do this to advantage. No doubt there are sound business principles and the soundness need not interfere with ethics. After all the merchant does some work and is entitled to a profit or a benefit for his work. There is a difference between profit taking and cheating. Honesty need not interfere with the accumulation of things of this world.

GATHEKA: But the secret is that our benefit in life depends upon the benefit of others. We are

dependent upon each other. The inner scheme of working is such that it gives to all a share of the mutual loss and benefit, though outwardly it does not seem to do this.

TASAWWUF: We might see in the human body that a material profit from the ingesting of food goes into the bloodstream and may be shared by all the cells and organs of the body. When the sharing is not fair, when certain tubes and organs accumulate much and others are deprived, disease follows. We cannot argue about it—the disease is there. Therefore the body gains when all the parts of it share in the distribution of accumulations: all falter when there is not enough to be distributed or when the distribution is unequal.

The same is true in another manner in the sharing of breath-energies. A really healthful person can send the breath-energies to every part of the body, to the deep centers within, and to the extremities without.

GATHEKA: Man is deluded and kept from realizing this fact, because he sees that one in pain while another has pleasure, and he sees that one appears to be benefited by another's loss.

TASAWWUF: This is the short view. On the spiritual path we learn about the operation of Reciprocity and that we must view the life as a whole, that whenever there is anything done, there is some fruit to the action, that this does not always come out as if in each individual, but comes out in life as a whole. Besides there is growth and as is said, "Pain promotes and pleasure blocks the way to inspiration."

So long as we see each individual as an individual there will appear to be vast injustice. When we look more deeply into the life of each one and when we look deeply into the generality, we shall find a divine wisdom operating everywhere. No one ever really benefits at the loss of another; it may appear so momentarily but in the long run it is surely not so.

GATHEKA: It is true that this is so on the outer plane, but it is not so in the inner workings. The robber, after having robbed, is as restless during the night as the one who is robbed.

TASAWWUF: If this were not so, success of itself would bring happiness. Success does not always bring satisfaction, or ability to sleep well or rest well. Every disturbance causes a reaction and the one who produces any disturbances to himself or to another, will not find peace. So it is not only to promote "goodness" in the world, it is to promote wisdom that people are advised to adhere to some form of moral law according to their evolution and understanding.

GATHEKA: Christ's teaching that man should be kind and charitable, and that of all other teachers who showed humanity the right path, seems to differ from what one sees from the practical point of view which is called common sense; yet, according to uncommon sense, in other words super-sense, it is perfectly practical.

TASAWWUF: If one were to practice beneficence with everybody he would be surprised with what

good-will he is accepted everywhere. After awhile not only those to whom he has shown the good-will will return it, but everybody will then become good and kind to him. It is the natural operation of the Moral Law itself. Therefore the Sufi teaches: “It is not how others behave toward you, it is how you behave toward others.”

It has been a great mistake to identify a particular personality with Morality and Purity and Goodness and then restrict these to that personality. All the Prophets and Messengers of God have more or less the same heart outlook—have taught the same outlook—and it has been most unfortunate that followers have remained followers and not practitioners.

GATHEKA: If you wish to be charitable, think of the comfort of another; if you wish to be happy, think of the happiness of your fellow-men.

TASAWWUF: On the mental side the only way to feel ease is to make ease more general. One cannot establish a comfortable room with furniture for himself alone nor can one establish comfort in life unless it becomes inclusive. Indeed in many parts of the world we find hospitality and it has become natural. It is not always dependent upon a code, it is natural when the heart-workings are natural.

And in the case of happiness this is even more so, for happiness depends on the atmosphere one creates, and when others enter that atmosphere they feel the presence. And when others feel the presence and the bliss that emanates from it they in turn are able to bring forth their own bliss which is inherent in all living creatures. Man is so attached to words he does not often realize that all human beings were created in the Divine Image and have within themselves all the attributes we ascribe to God.

GATHEKA: If you wish to be treated well, treat others well.

TASAWWUF: That is one way of putting it. Another way is to see in all living beings the Beloved Ones of God, or as Mohammed has so beautifully put it, “Allah loves His Creation more than a mother loves her children.” When the heart becomes a fountain of love, one will both offer and receive kindness on all sides.

GATHEKA: If you wish that people should be just and fair to you, first be so yourself to set an example.

TASAWWUF: Sufis have always done that. They have been examples to others: saints have been even more as examples to the world. Now we must stop relying on phrases of goodness or codes; we must begin to feel our hearts within and attune to the hearts without. This is what brings out the goodness in ourselves and others, the joy in ourselves and others, the happiness and all good qualities in ourselves and others.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 8: Our Dealing with Wrongdoers

GATHEKA: A man is always ready to accuse another for having done something which he himself would not mind doing. There is another man who would perhaps not commit the same fault of which he accuses another, but he has committed it in the past.

TASAWWUF: Despite the dictum of Jesus Christ, "Judge not that ye be not judged," it is a common habit of people, and most unfortunately more of the religious people than others, to find fault with those with whom they do not agree both in spiritual and secular matters. Although the Holy Qur'an definitely says that Allah is Master of the Day of Judgment, the advent of the religion of Islam, instead of reinforcing what Jesus taught, has gone ahead on the same path of condemnation that we find in the followers of earlier religions and cultures of the Far East. Condemnation seems to have become a part of human nature. It does not belong there.

We find the pictures of the three monkeys. They are often kept as ornaments. But their teaching, "See no evil, say no evil, hear no evil," this is not kept. And the sad part is that this increases the evil karma in the world. When man thinks one way, says another thing and acts independently of both he is increasing the confusion both in himself and in others.

GATHEKA: There is a third person who accuses another of doing something wrong, which, owing to circumstances, he himself is incapable of doing. This is pictured by Hafiz in his poetry; he says, "O pious one, I would listen to you if you were young, and if it were spring, and there were a garden and a fair one offering you a bowl of wine, and you refused it at that time."

TASAWWUF: Although we have many codes, codes in scriptures, codes in traditions, and codes arising wherever there has been a legal profession, yet too many people establish their own private codes and they apply them in such a way as to justify their own acts and criticize others. No doubt people in general are more justified than it might seem in supporting their own deeds, but they are not justified in condemning others. To praise oneself for actions means that one establishes a moral of self-praise. It must either be applied to everybody or it has no foundation.

GATHEKA: It is easy to blame another for his wrongdoings, just as it is easy to examine and difficult to be examined. The words of the Bible, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," refer to this.

TASAWWUF: The original idea of sin was that man is incomplete by himself, he is not perfect.

Jesus has said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." And the Book of Genesis also says, "Jacob was a perfect man." This is the ideal.

There are two ways in which to justify this: one is to be above the committing of shortcomings and the other is the non-recognition of the short-comings. That is why Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee." But condemnation has become woven into all religions and from this basis has spread into all affairs of life, establishing barriers and divisions which should not exist.

GATHEKA: Often a man attaches great importance to an action done by another which is only wrong by the standard of his own understanding; whereas the right and wrong of every person is according to his stage of evolution and according to his understanding.

TASAWWUF: From the very beginning of discipleship it is taught that there are no absolute standards and yet there are standards. A Sufi learns to look at life from the standpoint of another and the more he is capable of doing this, the easier he can justify another and establish friendships by the spontaneity of heart.

Those who become teachers develop sympathy and forgiveness. Not that they overlook the shortcomings of others, but they see their importance or not importance. As the heart awakens and the person becomes confident, this enables the light of soul to shine forth. When the light of soul shines forth, this being the light-of-truth, there is a diminution of shortcomings and a broadening of heart-virtue.

GATHEKA: Often a man accuses another of having committed some fault without considering what has prompted him to commit that fault, what is the real condition of his life, whether he did it willingly or unwillingly, whether he was compelled to do it by his own self, or by someone else, or by some unforeseen circumstance.

TASAWWUF: This is even true in the courts of law. Now it is becoming evident by the principles of the general science of psychology. Some have gone to the extreme in finding justification in the lives of everybody. There is a certain basis for this, too. Only it is because man's ego has been encouraged that everybody wishes to assert his ego; it is the custom. And it is from this that faults are committed.

Sometimes these are real faults and sometimes they are merely annoyances to others. But whenever there is any pain produced, whenever there is lack of consideration, man will perform acts which will be condemned by others.

GATHEKA: When a man accuses another person without even having seen his wrongdoing, but because he has been told of it by someone else, it is a still greater mistake; it is not even a fact known at first hand.

TASAWWUF: The law-courts here are often ahead of the generality, even of the religious people.

This has been called “hearsay” but unfortunately, people who have accepted religion or metaphysics are often so concerned with their own outlooks, they cannot readily accept the points of view of others.

It is not surprising that Pir-o-Murshid accepted the repentant sinner over the self-satisfied saint; that he asked for wide views rather than goodness; that tolerance was one of the best of virtues. This enhances the heart of man where alone one finds the temple of God.

GATHEKA: When we see with the brain we see so many faults in others; but when we see through feeling, we can only try to reason out how we can justify their having done as they did, or at least tolerate their having done so, through weakness or by mistake, which is natural to every man since Adam, the father of humanity, was liable to faults.

TASAWWUF: Mind sees faults. It is a faculty of discrimination which belongs to mind; it is the analyzing function and in the end the short-coming rather than the perfection is emphasized. This is so different from the heart-outlook which stresses integration, harmony and synthesis.

Despite the emphasis of prophets and scriptures, man as man is a being with analyzing thought. As we look outwardly we naturally see the faults of others; often it is the outer reflection of our own ego. For it is certain that God is in everybody. When we accept this merely as philosophy, we do not put it into practice. When it is practiced there is less need to resort to philosophy. And the sad feature is that the more the principle of karma becomes known, often the less attention is paid to the moral action. Merely knowing about something does not make anybody good.

GATHEKA: The more feeling develops in the heart of man, the more forgiving he becomes. For to him the world's inhabitants appear as little children, just as small as they appear to him who flies in an aeroplane; and as one is ready to forget the faults of children, so the wise are ready to forgive the faults of men.

TASAWWUF: Forgiveness is a cleansing of heart. Heart does not look down on anybody. The Hadith teach that Allah loves His offspring more than a mother loves her children. To the seer this is absolutely so. Besides those beautiful qualities which we find in the Names of God are the ideals which the wise put into practice. It is not merely to say or do, it is to be.

The kind heart does not want to condemn anybody. The danger here is lack of solid discrimination. We should become harmless as children, but at the same time, wise as serpents. It is a state of being.

RYAZAT: Concentration on the heart-symbol with feeling controlling thought enables the devotee to enter into the suitable state of consciousness, so that this pattern becomes natural. As one feels oneself falling into Heart, becoming Heart, no further instruction is needed on this point.

TASAWWUF: The heart outlook produces inner ease. It is even more a condition of not-

condemning than forgiving. The Sufi tries to see always from the point of view of another as well as of himself. This makes sympathy and kindness natural; also the desire to express sympathy, kindness and consideration to everybody.

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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence

Number 9: Our Dealings with Enemies

GATHEKA: The difference between the law of reciprocity and the law of beneficence is that in the former a person is justified in giving measure for measure, and in the latter one is supposed to tolerate and to forgive and to show kindness, so that the enemy may grow to be a friend.

TASAWWUF: There is a great deal of literature about **Nishkama Karma**, that one acts in such a way as to produce no karma. And sometimes the effect is that one becomes a believer in some subjectivity called “Nishkama Karma” and such a belief, such an attitude only adds to the storehouse of samsara and does not diminish, it may even add to, the karma.

A great example can be seen in the life of Mohammed, that he went out and fought the Arabs at Badr and was very victorious. He saw the enemy as God’s enemies, not as his own. Then he had to learn that God (Allah) was in everybody and the result was the defeat of the Muslims at Ohad. But once this lesson was learned the Messenger of God embarked on a new policy in which he was always victorious. He saw friend and foe as the beloved ones of God and in the end he turned nearly all of his enemies into friends. This has seldom been repeated.

GATHEKA: There are cases where one cannot show kindness; but yet one can be tolerant. There are cases where one cannot forgive; and yet revenge, for a humane person, is an unnatural thing.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in the life of Humayun, the oldest son of the great Mogul Babar. His brothers constantly revolted against him; they ignored their father’s injunctions. They went contrary to the principles of Islam, not only that a brother should never turn against a brother but that a Muslim should never harm another Muslim. They did not pursue any such pattern and in the end their elder brother was compelled to resort to very stringent measures. Every time he forgave them, they turned on him. They took it for weakness.

In the heart-attitude tolerance is natural; there seems to be no alternative. But tolerance does not mean weakness and forgiving is a positive, not a negative outlook.

GATHEKA: One can overlook the faults of another; and by that one will give less occasion for disagreement and still less occasion for enmity.

TASAWWUF: Overlooking faults does not mean condoning wickedness. As the *Gayan* teaches, one need not condemn anybody but neither need one approve of wrong-doing. Besides every repetition of thought in a mind keeps the mental pictures alive; this is true whether it is of good or evil. Often wickedness abides because it has remained in man's thoughts. It is not a good thing to think of evil at all. Every reference, every repetition of wrong-doing on the part of another keeps the thought form alive. When the thought-form is maintained, the effects of it manifest in the outer world.

If one does not think evil of another, if one ceases to hold up a bad image, it will diminish the enmity of the enemy and it will also diminish the disturbances in the mental atmosphere.

GATHEKA: Then a person thinks, "By being kind to our enemy we encourage him in his tyranny." But so long as we have kindness in our heart, instead of hardening the nature of the enemy it will soften it, since we receive all that we give out.

TASAWWUF: This simple explanation of karma and also of reciprocity has to be transferred from the world of words and internal thought to outer reality. As Buddha taught, it is man's thoughts which determine the affairs of the world. If man would change his thoughts he could also change the world. It is not merely holding a thought about "good thoughts." It is holding actual good thoughts, trying to see the goodness in everyone.

Who is the enemy? A mother does not think her children are enemies to anybody. But often people make much of animosity against race or class or creed or some natural or artificial divisions among men. All these people belong to the creation of God; all are His children. It is therefore very wrong to hold that one is fighting God's enemies. Even Mohammed said that he had fought the lesser Jihad and was then going on the greater Jihad against his own small shortcomings which are often very difficult to overcome.

When kindness flows from the heart, it is like warmth. It is in the atmosphere, it penetrates and even dominates the breath and this alone is often sufficient to disarm the presumed enemy.

GATHEKA: A kind word in return for a harsh word, a kind action in return for a cruel one, a kind thought in return for an evil thought, make a much greater impression than measure for measure.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in the lives of many saints and especially among the Sufis, that they regarded every one as a child of Allah and treated everyone as belonging to Allah's creation and in His image. This is not the usual outlook, which is to verbalize that God (Allah) made man in His image and then immediately act as if otherwise.

There is also a brochure called "The Smiling Countenance." There is a great force, the force of

Love behind such a countenance and it can overcome the feelings of the enemy. And as one feels the Divine Life within, this becomes natural and normal.

GATHEKA: The iron which cannot be broken by hammers can be melted by fire. Love is fire; kindness is its chief expression; and if a person has developed this sufficiently in his heart, he can sooner or later change an enemy into a friend.

TASAWWUF: When one practices this the first thing he will notice is how readily strangers become friends. And when one is able to establish such friendships and build-up what might be called a reputation, the atmosphere can become so strong that it will disarm people in general. It is not a habit to cultivate unpopularity.

The teachings of rendering good for evil have been lost in the miasma of theology and dogmas hiding the simpler teachings of the Wise men of God. All holy men are creatures of God and some often have no theology at all.

It has been said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." But the saying has no value, can even become a detriment if it be substituted for practice and application. The new outlook will be that people will practice and only practice will make anything important.

GATHEKA: It is mostly unkindness on one's own part that causes enmity all around; and one blames enemies and becomes horrified at their number, then blames the world and its nature and its life.

TASAWWUF: There are many unhappy people one meets. Many are ready to blame the world, the social order, certain persons, anything and everything. At the opposite extreme are those who are blamed and often it is the most worthy who are blamed. *Gayan* says: "The world is as it is, we cannot change it, but we can change ourselves."

The happy man is not concerned with the faults of others. The happy man sees beyond the distinctions and differences which divide men. The happy man can maintain calmness under trying conditions, all this and more.

GATHEKA: And when the creation has been proved blameworthy in a person's mind, then how can the Creator be kept free from blame?

TASAWWUF: There is a story of a Shia who believed Ali supreme, and at least the successor of Mohammed or even his equal or superior. He was resting in a tree and a Bektashi came and sat beneath. The Bektashis were subjects of the Ottoman Turks who were supposed to be Orthodox Muslims and accept the four righteous Khalifs: Abu Bekr, Omar, Osman, and Ali, whereas the Shias reject the first three, especially Omar.

The Bektashi began complaining first about Muawiya and his family for removing Ali; then the other

three Khalifs for not giving him his proper place. This pleased the Shia very much. But he was amazed when the Bektashi began to blame the Prophet himself for not making the succession more clear and finally the Bektashi put the blame on Allah for permitting such disturbances. The Shia became so frightened he fell out of the tree and struck the Bektashi who himself became frightened and ran away.

This shows that the blamer cannot consistently be kept from blaming the Creator himself. And if we look deeply in the practical side of many religions, especially when they are immersed in politics we can see much of this—that the logic of their position is to blame the Creator for all short-comings.

GATHEKA: Then that man feels that he alone is blameless, and all else is blameworthy; and life becomes a torture to him; he thinks it is not worth living. He becomes self-righteous, and everybody seems to be against him.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the misanthrope. These people do not seem able to harmonize with others. Shakespeare has a play, “Timon of Athens,” which illustrates this although it is seldom performed. Such persons are hard to meet through the heart but otherwise they may not be reached at all. Much patience and tenderness is needed in dealing with them.

GATHEKA: It is always wise to avoid every possibility of causing enmity, and to make every effort to turn every enemy, even a person in least degree offended, even a person who has slightly misunderstood you, or perhaps has felt vexed with you, into a friend again.

TASAWWUF: The more one resorts to the heart-outlook, the more one feels the heart-life within, the more natural the tendency to overlook faults in everyone. This idea also appears in the discussion of “The Angel Man” in “The Inner Life.” There are two basic kinds of Angel-man, those who are naturally that way, and those who grow; in the former case the person has a natural tenderness but may be weak and negative. But when one develops the heart-quality he is in control of all affairs in life both of himself and of others.

GATHEKA: Not for the sake of your own happiness or even of his, but for the sake of the good principle, for material benefit. For however slight an enemy he may be, he can cause you very great pain or suffering, and however little friendship you have with a person, he may become most useful some day.

TASAWWUF: The Spirit of Guidance promotes the Bodhisattvic outlook which is to say, the Light of the Universe is in all persons, it is the essence of all persons. Our relations and reactions do not affect this Light. Therefore it is wise to seek this Light in others, and even the good in others. But we should not limit ourselves to thinking a word “good” with no content. This is very easily done and has led to the rise of some strange forms of religion, goodness without content, limitation to words.

GATHEKA: And apart from all material benefits, to feel, “That person is pleased with me, he is well-

disposed towards me, he is no longer my enemy,” is in itself such a great benefit.

TASAWWUF: For this awakens the heart-vitality if it has been asleep and increases it if it has already been aroused. This in turn produces an ever increased spiritual magnetism which is the source of all comfort.

It is this which marked the last days of Prophet Mohammed when his whole career was characterized by the changing of enemies into friends. And it is more important today to follow the living career of man than to overpraise him without putting his precepts into practice, or to fail to adopt his principles in the everyday life.

One meaning of “Islam” is peace, and peace is not a thought or thought-form. It is a fundamental abiding condition which is of the nature of the soul itself. The soul-life is characterized by nothing but this peace. We find it also in the folk-lore of many lands and often in animal stories which are allegories, patterns to be adopted for life.

The way of purgation is to remove all undesirable thoughts, anything that effects us unfavorably. And the way of life is to dwell beyond these and if necessary to hold before us the good example, the good-will, the love of others. Then life will become like a bud blooming into a beautiful flower.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Series 2: The Law of Beneficence
Number 10: Our Dealings with God

GATHEKA: God is the ideal that raises mankind to the utmost reach of perfection.

TASAWWUF: This can be a thought and this can also be a non-thought. It is a thought if it leads us on, but if it keeps us in one place, it is better to become a non-thought. For God, the real God, is not limited by man’s ideas, ideals or perceptions. And if man ever adopts a theology, this can keep him in a certain stage of evolution beyond which he cannot grow. Therefore the Hindus say “Neti! Neti!” They say it and then it also becomes a limitation because the true “Neti! Neti!” must also deny that it is a proper way. One must break it to arrive at perfection. Anything that limits man cannot be of the nature of perfection.

GATHEKA: As man considers and judges his dealings with man in his conscience, so the real worshipper of God considers his dealings with God. If he has helped anybody, if he has been kind

to anybody, if he has made sacrifices for anybody, he does not look for appreciation or return for his doing so to the people to whom he has done good; for he considers that he has done it for God, and therefore his account is with God, not with those with whom he has dealt.

TASAWWUF: This has been a supreme teaching of the Great Ones. It is a pity that it has been almost excluded from religion. Jesus has taught that we should not let the right hand know what the left hand does. Mohammed went even further and did not encourage man keeping any account of his goodness. But the interposition of nufs, the ego, has marked the lives of the generality and they not only keep accounts, they over-evaluate their own good efforts while devaluating the goodness of others.

Sacrifice means to do good and not keep an account of it; to be considerate and not expect consideration. For God is that which is both the totality and beyond the totality and when we see in each and every one a manifestation of God and His Kindness and Mercy, then it becomes natural to help the whole world and without any thought. Or as Jesus has said, "Take no thought."

To sacrifice means not only to give and do, but to keep no account, give no thought of any kind to one's actions.

GATHEKA: He does not care even if instead of praising they blame him; for in any case he has done it for God, who is the best judge and the knower of all things.

TASAWWUF: There is a school of Dervishes called "Malamatiya" wherein it is sometimes considered a virtue to be blamed by the world. Actually, the best attitude is utter indifference. The soul does not gain by goodness or lose by badness. One of the purposes of spiritual training is to attain indifference and to make this indifference a source of strength. And when we listen to the Divine Voice which is within us, it can become such a source of strength that when anybody turns against us, we can appeal to this God within and turn the blows into blessings.

The idea of establishing treasures in heaven is that we take account of goodness, kindness, forgiveness and all blessed things. But there is a still higher state wherein one takes no account of anything. As the Gita teaches, man's right is to action and he should leave to God the fruits of action. When this is done he will see and recognize all proper attitudes toward God by himself and others. And when this state of selflessness is obtained one can be of great use to the world.

GATHEKA: There is no ideal that can raise the moral standard higher than the God-Ideal, although love is the root of all and God is the fruit of this.

TASAWWUF: This is a subject considered at length in the religious gathekas which became the basis of *The Unity of Religious Ideals*. Talk and thought are of little value here; they can even become hindrances. Feeling which blossoms into Love is all valuable. Therefore the disciple concentrates on the heart and the heart-feeling and the heart-love and this is what blooms in deeds of Beneficence which can become normal and natural.

Esoteric exercises have as a purpose man's awareness of the Great Life beyond the individual consciousness which manifests both as the Illuminated Souls Who form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance; and as God, the Only Being.

GATHEKA: Love's expansion and love's culmination and love's progress all depend upon the God-ideal. How much a man fears his friend, his neighbor, when he does something that might offend him whom he loves, whom he respects; and yet how narrow is his goodness when it is only for one person or for certain people!

TASAWWUF: The heart life, to be real, must be expanded. If it remains in one place, in one stage, after awhile it becomes limited and cold. Then it is no longer love. The immediate purpose of Love no doubt is to have Love beginning with the Loving Mother, the Kind Father. But when man can see the Loving Mother and Kind Father in many; and when man acts toward others as if he himself were the Loving Mother and Kind Father, this is a great achievement; this is a progress. And when the heart can so progress it brings the Love and Happiness which itself has been seeking.

The more one relies on heart, the more one feels heart. It is like a warmth which heats everything and does not make distinctions and differences. If it sees a touch of goodness, if it observes even a glimpse of light, that is enough to begin with. And by concentrating, by emphasizing that touch of goodness, that glimpse of light, it begins like a thermostat, so to speak, to increase the radiation of it until it becomes more and more a part of the personality. And this is possible when one keeps the heart ever on the God-Ideal.

GATHEKA: Imagine if he had the same consideration for God, then he would be considerate everywhere and in all dealing with all people; as in a verse of a Sufi who says, "Everywhere I go I find Thy sacred dwelling-place; and whichever side I look I see Thy beautiful face, my Beloved."

TASAWWUF: For it is only a beginning to say that God is everywhere. The next step is to make this a reality. As the prayer says: "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives." When the devotee does that he finds a meaning in life and a closeness to everyone and so he also can help everybody else.

GATHEKA: Love for God is the expansion of the heart, and all actions that come from the lover of God are virtues; they cannot be otherwise.

TASAWWUF: No doubt the first step may be that of the theologian who says that God is love. But Jesus Christ gave mankind many higher steps. It is not easy. He appeared among a people who had all virtues but within only their narrow national and religious boundaries. This put a limitation on God, so to speak; not actually, but the Divine Effulgence did not have the outlets among mankind.

With the teaching: "A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another," a great start was made to bring all mankind together. But again we find this often limited to a ritual or to a group. The Love of God is everywhere and in everybody, as Salat says. We cannot divide God. We can

only confuse the mind of ourselves and others by such divisions. Now the time is that we must love beyond all national and religious boundaries, beyond all boundaries, even men and women together.

This may have little resemblance to certain traditional interpretations of the word “love,” limiting it even to the animal side. We must not crush the animal side; we must transcend it by finding the greater and higher love and this comes through the expansion of heart.

GATHEKA: There is a different outlook on life when the love of God has filled a man’s heart.

RYAZAT: When this is lacking the teacher often gives the Heart as the symbol of concentration. But the Heart also appears in the Sufi symbol and in other symbols. It always has the connotation of love.

TASAWWUF: Then the heart begins to glow and radiate. Then man feels the love all around, inside and outside, and thus becomes a saheb-e-dil, the gentleman of heart. This term has often been applied to Sufis.

GATHEKA: The lover of God will not hate anyone; for he knows that by doing so he will hate the Creator by hating His creation.

TASAWWUF: In the Christian scriptures we read that the rain falls on the just and unjust. In a similar fashion if a light is turned on it does not make any distinction or difference. There are two kinds of such distinctions and differences: one comes from the generality, among the people who have not lived to a higher standard, who have not attained it. They may be called ignorant and they can be helped easily.

Another comes among the half-learned, who adhere to words. They adhere to words, they are confused by words and they are so bound by words they limit their own goodness. Very often they are very difficult to deal with. Thus in *Gayān* it is said that it is better to deal with a sinner who has learned a lesson from sin than with a saint hardened by piety. There is no question that the great stumbling blocks in life are found mostly among the good people so hardened.

When the light is turned on it makes no distinctions; when the love is turned on, also it makes no distinctions and differences.

GATHEKA: He cannot be insincere, he cannot be unfaithful; for he will think that to be faithful and sincere to mankind is to be faithful and sincere to God.

TASAWWUF: There are some people in the world who see no sin excepting against mankind. They do not see sin against God, they see only their own shortcomings. And when the Light of God manifests they may be so concerned. Their vision will be keen and when one has the vision he will be considerate to everybody.

GATHEKA: You can always trust the lover of God, however unpractical or however lacking in cleverness he may appear to be, for simply to hold strongly in mind the thought of God purifies the soul of all bitterness, and gives man a virtue that he could obtain nowhere else and by no other means.

TASAWWUF: Therefore devotees practice **Akhlak Allah**, the feeling of the Divine Presence. This helps more than anything else.

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[Series 3](#): The Law of Renunciation
Number 1: Life in God

GATHEKA: “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” This teaching of the Bible describes the nature of God, that God is the ocean, the waves of which are all its activities, small or great. The Qur’an says in support of this that not a single atom moves, groups, or scatters without the command of God.

TASAWWUF: This teaching is very difficult for the mind to perceive. God as thought is a veil over God as being. There is a Mahayana Buddhist teaching that declares Nirvana and samsara are one. That is to say there is no difference between the manifest and unmanifest aspects of God. This in turn is in accord with the Hindu teachings of Nirguna and Saguna Brahman.

In the science of physics we have kinetic and potential energy, that all kinetic energy arises from potential energy. This is the same teaching, the same truth. This can be much better understood by meditation. People have much trouble in meditating. There is nothing wrong about it. Potential energy always gives rise to kinetic energy; the silence always gives rise to mental activity. Some schools of meditation say to stop all thought. There are few indications that this leads to anything like enlightenment.

Sufis and other devotees strive rather for surrender, that their bodies, minds and hearts become instruments of divinity; that God use them and they set up no obstacles to God using them.

GATHEKA: Rumi explains it still more plainly: “Air, earth, water and fire are God’s servants; to us they seem lifeless, but to God living.”

TASAWWUF: It is part of the spiritual life to give meaning to each of these terms. Air and earth and

water and fire are channels for the activities of God, either alone or in combination with one or more of the others and in various degrees. In both the inner and outer sciences connected with the **Sufi message** meanings are given to these terms and disciples are taught to realize the various aspects. Then there is nothing that has not some significance.

GATHEKA: In those who are conscious of this knowledge, and to the extent of their realization of this truth, there arises the spirit of renunciation which may be called the spirit of God.

TASAWWUF: The word for renunciation in Sufism is **fana**, self-effacement. There are various degrees in this effacement until one reaches fana-fi-Lillah, effacement in God. There are practical means to reach this state such as forms of prayer, meditation, zikr, esotericism in general, and **Akhlak Allah**, practicing the presence of God.

There are no substitutes for practices. The hardest obstacles to overcome are found in the minds of the half-learned who become emotionally aroused by the words involved. People who are aware of themselves are not in Fana. Fortunately when one practices the presence of God (Akhlak Allah) it is of no significance whether one is aware of oneself or not, so long as one is aware of the divine presence, the Universal Only Being.

This comes from and with the awakening and expansion of heart and heart qualities.

GATHEKA: He who wants anything becomes smaller than the thing he wants; he who gives away anything is greater than the thing he gives. Therefore to a mystic each act of renunciation becomes a step towards perfection.

TASAWWUF: It has been said in the Christian Scriptures, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In the hands of the ignorant this has become a tool whereby they have exploited others. It is first necessary to understand the nature of a blessing. What does not bring bliss is not a blessing and when there is bliss, there is blessing.

The very act of giving out is of the nature of the soul which is like the sun. The sun is constantly radiating. It does not depend on anyone or anything. It gives out because its nature is to give. We can learn from this that there is a relation between giving and perfecting. As long as we hold on to anything or anyone we cannot be said to be perfect.

GATHEKA: Forced renunciation, whether forced by morality, religion, law, convention, or formality, is not necessarily renunciation.

TASAWWUF: Everywhere we see this. There are persons who ask or demand of others that they give "selfless service." As soon as there is consciousness it cannot be selfless. And the great ones, the Messengers of God, have told us over and over that any awareness of giving, of doing good, has a most limited effect.

The wise do not demand. The Prophet Mohammed said there is no compulsion in Islam. Yet in practice Islam, like all formal religions, is full of compulsions which man excuses. God does not excuse. There can be no freedom with compulsion of any sort.

GATHEKA: The real spirit of renunciation is willingness; and willing renunciation comes when one has risen above the thing he renounces. The value of each thing in life, wealth, power, position, possession, is according to the evolution of man.

TASAWWUF: So many burial rituals and customs have the theme that man comes in naked and departs naked; that things do not belong. But the selfish people cannot operate that way. The self demands accumulations and acquisitions and the soul is not concerned because in reality all things belong to the soul, are of the soul. The soul itself needs nothing, wants nothing.

The prayer, "Bless all we receive in thankfulness," should be given serious consideration. For any acquiring can mean a diminution of blessing. Or as Lord Buddha taught, attachment to the unpleasant is suffering and separation from the pleasant is suffering. All attachments tend to provoke fear and all freedom from attachment promotes joy.

With the coming of culture and education man has become proud of his knowledge, his accomplishments, and it is this which often becomes a hindrance to spiritual development. These things are of the mind, not of the soul.

GATHEKA: There is a time in his life when toys are his treasures, and there is a time when he puts them aside; there is one time when copper coins are everything to him, and there is another time when he can give away gold coins; there is a time in his life when he values a cottage, and there is a time when he gives up a palace.

TASAWWUF: There is a folk story in Europe about a fisherman who caught a fish and for its life the fish promised anything and everything. The wife of the fisherman was never satisfied, not even to become king, emperor, and pope. There was still God above the Pope and in demanding that, the wife and thus the fisherman lost everything. Because in truth nothing can forever belong to the outer personality.

The desire nature may never be satisfied but the soul may be satisfied without the desire nature. True, the counsel has been given to follow a middle path between acquisition and renunciation and there are purposes in life to be fulfilled. Nor is it necessary to give up the social life when one is aware of the Divine Presence.

GATHEKA: Things have no value, their value is as man makes it, and at every step in his evolution he changes their value.

TASAWWUF: This is true of all people in every walk of life, at every stage of evolution. What is important at one time in life becomes very unimportant at some other stage. The possessions are

secondary and may even be accidental, so to speak, in the fulfillment of life's purpose.

To be possessed of the Kingdom of Heaven means to have, whether one owns or possesses many things or nothing at all.

GATHEKA: Certainly there is no gain in leaving home, friends, and all affairs of life, and going to the forest and living the life of an ascetic; and yet who has the right to blame those who do so? How can the worldly man judge and understand the point of view of the one who renounces? Perhaps that which seems of the greatest value to the worldly man is nothing to the one who has renounced.

TASAWWUF: It is remarkable through history that although the Wisdom has been given not to renounce everything, this path of the detachment from things has been tried over and over at all periods of time and in all cultures even to the present. And the answer always comes that the giving up of things is also a thought-pattern concerned with things, although in the negative way. The negative detachment can be as much a hindrance as the positive attachment although this generally brings no harm to other persons.

The acquisition of the great spiritual values, Love, Joy and Peace, are independent of the things of creation. As they belong to the depths of personality, they do not conflict with what goes on on the surface. We can have the Love or Joy or Peace independent of all else.

GATHEKA: The Sufi makes no restrictions and has no principles for renunciation, nor does he teach renunciation.

TASAWWUF: For renunciation as a thought, renunciation as a code, renunciation as a way of life may become a most subtle form of attachment. It is necessary for God to work out His intended purpose in Nature. He does this through man. Any set of principles that man may have becomes of itself a nexus of attachment. Therefore we find that the Messengers of God have no particular set pattern. Their outer lives do not necessarily resemble each other. It is their inner life, their deep attachment only to God, which is the only standard and this is not a standard according to man's way of thinking.

GATHEKA: He believes that to sacrifice anything in life which one does not wish to sacrifice is of no use, but that renunciation is a natural thing, and grows in one with one's evolution.

TASAWWUF: The great Sufi saint, Junaid, found in his last days that really nothing was of value but a few prayers. He had become deeply involved in religion, to perform all prayers, obligations and niceties and it seemed a path of perfection. But it was not a path of freedom, it was not of independence, it tied the soul down and even though it may have seemed to the religious people to be a perfect way, it was not necessarily perfect.

In *The Inner Life* we find several modes of behavior on the part of spiritual and angelic man. They

are not necessarily like one another. So too, there are many colors, there are many notes in music, there are many codes of behavior among the Beloved Ones of God and there are many ways of highest attainment, some quite different from others.

The Sufi teacher does not pressure disciples; he guides them which is another matter. He leads them gently so that they, each one, can walk the way which is best for him to attain the highest consciousness.

GATHEKA: A child who cries for his toy at one stage of his childhood, comes to an age when it is quite willing to give away the toy it once cried for.

TASAWWUF: So it is with life. There are many stages. There are many behavior patterns. There are grades of evolution. The wise guides each according to capacity and ability. There can not be one standard for all, and yet there may be one overwhelming harmony which sooner or later engulfs all. But in the harmony there are patterns as in the orchestra there are instruments, each with its own role to produce the synthetic harmony.

GATHEKA: There are three stages of morals. The first stage is the moral of reciprocity. This moral is natural to the one who sees the difference between himself and another, who recognizes every man as such and such.

TASAWWUF: We cannot obliterate this. It is natural to see persons as other than oneself. So there are codes and standards befitting all who see such standards, standards of differentiation. Besides we do not abolish karma by any attitude or thought we take. Karma is not effected by subjective patterns. And while living under karma, codes have been given by the wise to all peoples according to their evolution.

GATHEKA: The second stage is the law of beneficence, where man, recognizing himself as an entity separate from others and recognizing others as distinct entities themselves, yet sees a cord of connection running through himself and all, and finds himself as a dome in which rises an echo of good and evil; and in order to have a good echo he gives good for good and good for evil.

TASAWWUF: This at once raises man above karma. He sees and lives according to brotherhood. He follows the examples of the saints before him and in his times. His heart life expresses itself. He becomes a light and a guide to others, consciously or unconsciously.

GATHEKA: But the third stage is the moral of renunciation, where the difference of “mine” and “thine” and the distinction of “I” and “you” fade away in the realization of the one Life that is within and without, beneath and beyond; and that is the meaning of the verse in the Bible, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.”

TASAWWUF: And to make this plausible the Wise give the devotees examples and practices, examples by their own way of life, and practices derived from the saints and devotees before them

that the divine life may continue in the hearts, minds and bodies of the humanity.

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.

Series 3: The Law of Renunciation
Number 2: Renunciation

GATHEKA: Those in the East have renounced pleasure, comfort, riches, possessions, from a mystical point of view, have not renounced because they were too weak to hold them or because they did not desire them, but because they wished to renounce them before they passed from their hands.

TASAWWUF: There is the true renunciation and the false renunciation, There have been many who follow the life of the Sadhu because of laziness or inability. They really depend upon society, not upon God. They have the customs, they have excellent imitation but there is no strong power in them; they do not have as the Sufis say, the **Baraka**, or magnetism of blessing by which they can help others.

But it is also true that man may reach a stage when he is no longer dependent upon anything: possessions and friends and wealth bring no particular comfort, they are not needed any longer.

RYAZAT: The purpose of esoteric Exercises is to enable man to make use of the infinite power which passes through him, which is in him. It comes with the breath, the heart-beat and the light. By following the pathways of the breath and heart and light man finds that source of wonders within himself so it may be as Jesus Christ has said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of the heavens and then all else will be added unto you." When one has the spiritual powers, it is easy to obtain the material things but sometimes it is not necessary.

GATHEKA: All things one possesses in life one has attracted to oneself; and when one loses them, it shows that the power of attraction is lost; and that, if one can renounce them before that power of attraction is lost, one rises above them.

TASAWWUF: It may be that man obtains because of good karma, the results of activities in the past. Or it may be that the circumstances of life have brought him many possessions and comforts which he may not have gained from his efforts. Really these things are not owned and can be taken away. He has not the magnetism to hold them, and they can hold him. Legally they may be his; in the grand universe there is only a temporary connection.

In the Sufi teachings one also learns to increase magnetism, to increase magnetism on many levels. And as magnetism increases so the power of attraction increases. But as the power of attraction increases, there is less joy in obtaining the possessions of the world, there is no struggle, there is no effort and so the soul becomes more and more detached from such possessions.

GATHEKA: All things that are in a person's hold are not really his own, although for the moment he may think so; when he loses them he realizes that they were not his own.

TASAWWUF: We read in *The Inner Life* about the different stages of development. So long as we merely read, they are not part of our selves, of our evolution. When we experience them they become part of us. We are not limited by our thoughts, we may use the thoughts to control our affairs, but we cannot use the thoughts to rise above our affairs.

To increase the magnetism is part of the normal process of the increase of living potentiality which is involved in the spiritual life. As we pass from body to mind we have changes of values; as we pass from mind to heart different standards and ideals attract us and without them we are not satisfied. Then we are no longer concerned with what we regard as lesser things. But there may come a time when any sort of attraction or attachment is no longer needed. And yet things may be attracted to the person of overwhelming magnetism.

GATHEKA: Therefore the only possible way of everlasting happiness is to realize that what one possesses is not one's own, and to renounce in time, before all that one possesses renounces one.

TASAWWUF: This brings the freedom, the freedom which every soul seeks. But such freedom does not mean denuding of all things, and if one deliberately denuded he is still attached. It is only that man is no longer dependent upon certain possessions, clothes, food, books, or anything. They will come and they will be there, but no longer does he depend upon them. Then there is joy and strength and independence of surrounding and possessions.

GATHEKA: The law of renunciation is great; and it is the only way of happiness there is.

TASAWWUF: To begin with, one becomes free from worry. There are no bills to pay, there is no need to care whether one is robbed, there is nothing to defend against. And as one frees oneself from cares, or is freed by life, the joy of the whole being, of the soul itself, is like that of a light not encumbered by shadows, it finds no limitations, no blockages, it can shine out to its fullest.

Then there is the ecstasy sought by everyone until one arrives at the stage when even ecstasy may be surrendered.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation

Number 3: Renunciation (2)

GATHEKA: When one sees deeply into life one sees that there is no gain which is not a loss, and that there is no loss which is not a gain. Whatever man has gained, he has also lost something with it, which he often does not realize; and sometimes when he knows it he calls it the cost if he considers it a lesser loss.

TASAWWUF: We can read in “Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra” that there is neither gain nor loss in life, attachment or detachment, that all of these are parts of the natural phenomena, freed from the eternal essence. Therefore the experiences we have do not belong to our basic nature. They are not even like dust accumulated over a glass. The dust does not affect the glass and the glass does not affect the light within it.

No doubt under Karma and reciprocity there is a balancing of accounts but in Renunciation there are no accounts so to speak. There can be no loss nor gain. There will be no inflation nor deflation. Things thus are accidents whether we have them or whether we are deprived of them or whether we do not know about them at all. We find they are not realities.

GATHEKA: But when he does not know, the loss is great; for every gain is after all a mortal gain, and the time that is spent on its acquisition is a loss, and a greater loss in comparison with the gain.

TASAWWUF: For time and effort are also expenses used, wisely or unwisely. They are sacrifices and often useless sacrifices. Yet it is also true that struggling is of great advantage for it makes the devotee conscious of what he must do and it makes him place values on wise efforts and upon the search for blessings which belong to his inner being.

The work of a Teacher is to help each one to place the proper values on the experiences of life and to encourage him so that he may rise above pains and difficulties and hazards. Often without the teacher this becomes impossible. Many think they can find the way of God alone and they are caught in this very thought and they are so bound with their own thought on this and similar subjects, they do not arrive at Godhood; they remain attached to their egos.

GATHEKA: The loss of every mortal thing is a gain in the immortal spheres; for it wakens the heart which is asleep both in the pursuit and the pleasures of the gain.

TASAWWUF: It is said in *Gayan* that pleasure blocks but pain opens the way to inspiration. One of the hardest situations in life is the loss of possessions or the physical accidents that befall one or

severe illness. These often come apparently independent of one's moral nature and it is very difficult to recognize them and reconcile them with the Goodness of God. But in Sufism the Wisdom of God is superior to such "Goodness." And very often after severe trials the person learns to appreciate better all blessings in life and also to recognize the Presence of God which is more important even than the wisdom.

Therefore it is also said that when one loses something and cannot account for it otherwise, to charge it to the account of God. Do not blame oneself, do not blame others, but do as Mohammed has taught, "Praise Allah in the time of prosperity and surrender to Him in time of adversity." By such means one learns to find that God actually is all-in-all.

GATHEKA: When man closely watches his own life and his affairs he finds that there has been no loss that is to be regretted; that under the mantle of every loss a greater gain was concealed; and he also notices that with every gain there has been a loss, and when this gain is compared with the loss it has proved to be a greater loss.

TASAWWUF: Holy Qur'an teaches that Allah is Er-Rahman, Er-Rahim, Mercy and Compassion and Loving-Kindness, actually. We do not always see that and thus there is a division between devotion and conscious affairs. But this is only true on the surface. Every blow is an opportunity to seek the Divine Wisdom and the more one seeks the Divine Wisdom the more one will find it and the more one finds the Divine Wisdom the more one is able to bear consciously the trepidations of life.

RYAZAT: By the repetitions of the Qualities of God and by practicing the Presence of God one becomes fortified both to endure hardships and to ward off enemies whether in the form of man or in the form of natural disasters. There is a calmness in the depths of personality and in this calmness resides all strength.

GATHEKA: In the eyes of the world the people who renounce their pleasures, comforts, and happiness seem to be foolish; but there is nothing that man has renounced without receiving a greater gain.

TASAWWUF: One does not find joy in things. One finds pleasure in things, and one has the elation which comes and goes. This is very different from the inner joy. The more the experience in the inner joy, the more strength comes to the personality and the more one is caught in elation and infatuation, the weaker one may become. For all things have their prices.

GATHEKA: And yet renunciation for gain can be called nothing but greed.

TASAWWUF: We find it at all times and never more than when there is an urge to find a spiritual teacher. Then men appear who pretend to be homeless, pious, possessionless. They emphasize it; they draw people to them. They make promises and all the time instead of giving magnetism and blessings and love, they collect these things. They do not radiate the divine effulgence.

India has suffered during its long history from the false holy men who prey upon the poor and weak. They may even make them give up their few possessions with promises. The wise never make such promises and never make any demands upon anybody. Soon as a demand is made there is no longer a renunciation. Renunciation requires also the giving up of demands, the giving up of asking anything from anybody.

Papa Ram Das found that when he went on the path of the sannyasin wealth came to him. People either wished to feed and clothe and even comfort him, or were afraid not to. This was unfortunate. It brought him neither joy nor repose, and this is one way to distinguish the true from the false holy man; the true never makes any demands.

GATHEKA: Renunciation for the pleasure of renunciation is the only renunciation that is worth while.

TASAWWUF: That is to say there is no true renunciation so long as every thought and feeling for it is retained. Christ gave this lesson in "The Sermon on the Mount," but there is some question whether religion has ever recognized it. Nor does it matter for man is coming to distinguish the different paths, the different levels in life.

The Sufi, and many other wise men too, rely on God alone and yet thank the humanity for any contributions without any demands from themselves. When this occurs light and joy emanate from their persons and they are able to comfort others.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation
Number 4: Renunciation (3)

GATHEKA: When a person has in view an object he wants to attain, he is smaller than the object; but when a person has attained the object, he is greater than the object. And as he holds the object which he has attained, so he diminishes his strength, and the value of the object becomes augmented.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* says, "He who holds the world is greater than the world and he whom the world holds is smaller than the world." What is needed is to transmute the words or truism into truth by one's own realization. For it can be seen under the Law of Renunciation things of themselves have no value, perhaps no importance. Their values and importance come from what is

bestowed upon them by man.

For instance in times of wars the possession of weapons was considered important and now a time has come when the possession of such things has become a hindrance and illegal. The guns and weapons have still the same utilitarian value and intrinsic value too. They are not effected by the laws and values. But the laws and values and customs may regard them as mere baubles and then man becomes detached from them.

GATHEKA: But when he renounces the object he has once attained, he rises above the object, he takes a new step in life and a higher step. As with every step taken in climbing a mountain one goes higher and higher, so in life one progresses in attainment of any kind, be it spiritual or material.

TASAWWUF: The false view is that advancement means accumulation and even possessions of a higher order or the same order. Such seldom occurs. Life is not what man wishes to think it is. It has rules or laws.

If a person were to go around encased in armor and then found he could divest himself of the armor, he would find his steps easier and there would be much joy which had not been experienced before. Or again from the standpoint of breath, the more refined the breath the greater the joy. Indeed when one has a strong inhalation it is like possession and when one can take the refined breathing, one becomes freer and happier.

Besides this brings release from ego. All our heaviness comes from ego. It is not easy to overcome. The great joys and liberty achieved occur when one is no longer attached to ego. Then he performs what is called **nishkama karma**, desireless action.

GATHEKA: For instance when a person has a desire to have a hundred pounds he is smaller than the hundred pounds; when he has earned them he is greater than the sum he has earned. But when he holds them the value of a hundred pounds increases more and more in his eyes, and may increase to that of a million pounds; and he himself becomes smaller and smaller in his estimation as if he would never be able to earn those hundred pounds again.

TASAWWUF: No doubt thoughts have a tremendous bearing on life and according to our thinking and evaluation we make joy or sorrow. This was pointed out by Charles Dickens in his "David Copperfield." We often regard happiness or unhappiness as dependent on the amount of money we are holding in our mind.

GATHEKA: But when man has earned a hundred pounds and has spent them, he has risen above them; his next ideal will be a thousand pounds. So it is in every aspect of life.

TASAWWUF: Sufism teaches the importance of increasing, of widening our horizons. There is no real goodness without the broad outlook, be it in financial matters, be it in the number of friends we

may have, be it in the aspects of life to which we are attached or which seem to be associated with life's purposes.

There are many ways by which we may enlarge the horizons. This may come by positive effort or again it may come with self-surrender. In the science of Concentration, Murakkabah, the disciple is taught how to enlarge the horizon and also how to increase the things found within his purview so that he becomes more aware of all things with which he is concerned.

Although it is said that man cannot serve God and Mammon, the science and art of enlarging one's horizon holds whether it be in the spiritual or material matters, whether we are concerned with the ideal or the practical.

GATHEKA: The moral must be remembered that what we value we must attain, but once attained, instead of being crushed under it, we must freely rise above it and take a further step in life.

TASAWWUF: It is taught that withdrawal from a desire or goal is no victory. One can only surrender, only renounce, what one has already achieved. Achievements are not to be shunned. There is a story in India about a successful brigand being refused by a guru not because he was villainous but because he had not really achieved perfection in his profession. This came as a shock. The guru required him to be perfect in his profession in order to learn how to become perfect.

The practice of Fikr and other exercises frees the devotee from being dominated by all pertaining to nufs, and in a sense, from the whole realm of samsara. It is living consciously in, near, or with God that enables man to achieve mastery.

GATHEKA: Those who have made progress in life have made it with this view; and those who come to a standstill in life are the ones who hold fast to that which they have attained, never being inclined to renounce it; and in that way they have met with failure.

TASAWWUF: The metaphysical people are often caught in webs of words and thoughts. It is not a philosophy about anything that is helpful; it is not having any views apart from one's own life and actions.

Many people become self-hypnotised and call it "goodness." It is only a word. The Sufi sees renunciation as goodness while others see goodness as renunciation. Progress means to have grown, to have changed one's point of view, to have become more considerate of others.

GATHEKA: Therefore greed, however profitable it may seem, in the end is weakening, and generosity, though at times it may seem unprofitable, in reality is strengthening.

TASAWWUF: Instead until we give out we do not possess. There are many exercises which can be performed with an out-breath and in this way one is giving, bestowing, helping. It is not a thought,

certainly not a self-thought, that has any spiritual merit.

Every thought of self, every thought of one's being good, every idea with "my" in it, every attachment, throws a shadow over the consciousness and impedes one's progress. One could actually measure it if he were aware of the light emanating from his personality. By "light" is meant light itself and not any thought or evaluation of it. The whole principle in spiritual advancement is to make it possible for God Himself to express through the personality.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation

Number 5: The Necessity of Renunciation in Life

GATHEKA: The saying, "There is no gain without pain," when rightly interpreted would mean that everything costs something and has its price; and it is this law of nature that teaches one that for every kind of attainment in life, from the highest to the lowest, renunciation is necessary.

TASAWWUF: Far more important than any creed or philosophy is the study of saints and sages who have lived. If we examine their lives we find this to be true. But if we adhere to some system of philosophy or morals or metaphysics we often delude ourselves. Self-thoughts have limited values; examples drawn from the lives of others have unlimited values.

It is very easy to be convinced of values of different kinds of teachings. But until there is an exemplification of these teachings, one may ask what has been gained? what has been learned? And when one asks this question very often it raises suspicion or hostility. Though Buddha has said that we should work out our salvation with diligence, this too often becomes an empty phrase which does not affect our position in life.

Even with prayer we have to consider what is involved. There have been too many selfish petitions which have been regarded as prayers. Called "prayers," they lead to self-esteem or social esteem. But when one looks further one will not find they have much effect on life itself; they seldom bring what is sought and even less often bring about the inner satisfaction which makes such petitionary prayers unnecessary.

GATHEKA: It may be in the form of patience, in the form of service, in the form of modesty, it may be in the form of sacrifice; in whatever form it happens to be, it has to be for some purpose.

TASAWWUF: We have here the actualities. Thus patience is one of the best means toward attaining one's goal. This is a subject for the Elementary Study Circle of disciples. This is also true of service, of modesty, of sacrifice. In the inner studies we become aware of the seriousness and purpose of such values, of such virtues. We meditate on them and absorb them into our personality, into our moral culture. Then they really effect us. But to have some hazy dream that we are good, and to be aroused by empty speeches or vain talk, these are not only stumbling blocks toward self-realization, they can become hindrances. We do not find people become saints as the results of such methods; nor do we find that their prayers often bring what they have sought.

We need not seek pain deliberately to gain. There are many stories of saints and sages who have made useless sacrifices. This is also a form of egotism. Lord Buddha taught against it but in the world of Buddhism it has often happened.

In the case of the life of Jesus Christ we do have an example of a person who willingly forewent all comforts of life. But there is some question as to whether these were means used by him to attain the goal of life; or whether they became patterns after he had the attainment. And it has been questioned whether this can be an example for all mankind. Therefore Mohammed lived the life of an average man while fulfilling his purposes as the Messenger of God.

GATHEKA: When attaining something in life one always risks or meets with some loss.

TASAWWUF: We cannot obtain everything. Even in little matters, be it in business, in athletics, in going from one grade to another in school or university, one finds this to be true. We have to surrender standards to which we have adhered and which may have brought us success and satisfaction. Even in little matters it may be necessary to change one's mode of traveling, or one's residence and little things as well as big things to attain one's immediate goal. We do not generally regard these as losses but as necessities.

GATHEKA: It does not appear loss in the presence of an immediate gain; but in things that take time to gain and conditions that want patience for their attainment, an immediate and seeming loss means a bitter renunciation.

TASAWWUF: Here again a little consideration will show that all of life is filled with such experiences, from the time a child first leaves home to attend school until one retires fully from all gainful occupation of any sort, there is always the need of giving up habits, attachments, one's position, in order to rise in life.

GATHEKA: Therefore it is justifiable if a person shows a tendency to find a reason before renunciation of any kind. But his difficulty is that he will not be able to attain things that are abstract and things beyond ordinary comprehension, for he will not risk renouncing anything for such gains.

TASAWWUF: Reason is largely an outcome of the ego to find a certain harmony and justice in the universe. It tries to make order even if the order is only what appears clear to oneself, not to others.

The mind always tries to find some rationale but there is not always a rationale in abstract things, yet there may be a harmony and this harmony is even a greater justification than reason itself.

No doubt love has its own ways, its own justifications. And the further man goes into the realm of heart he finds clarity and beauty without any efforts at orderly justification. And the end result is often the discovery of a greater harmony and a greater vitality than beforehand. This shows the growth.

GATHEKA: And those who renounce without reason lose also; for they renounce and yet may not gain anything. That is why the success of renunciation lies in the renunciation itself; to be pleased with renunciation, not to renounce for gain. That renunciation alone is the renunciation which may be called virtue.

TASAWWUF: Many philosophies discuss universal mind and divine mind. If these things be, then there would be more order, more reason, more justification if one could step aside. But this stepping aside must come from the renunciation of ego. For there are many who practice thinglessness and there are others known as masochists and they often pride themselves on their attitudes, that they are negative and therefore spiritual. But they may even be more concerned with the ego-self than those who justify acquisition of wealth, fame, popularity or anything.

For the Universe itself is order—cosmos not chaos. And the mystics see the Divinity as the perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, not accidental or purposeful nothingness.

GATHEKA: There are four desires that man may pursue: pleasures, wealth, duty, and God; and every one of these attachments costs something, and nobody should deem it possible to attain any one of these without renunciation. Therefore, though renunciation is the last lesson, one must begin to learn it from the beginning.

TASAWWUF: Indian social philosophy had this basis. They called the pursuit of pleasure **Kama** and it was connected with all sorts of pleasure, but mostly that which was concerned with sex. This sort of activity may be accidental or instinctive or again it may be purposeful. And in “Rasa Shastra” we have the principle of the spiritualization of this aspect of life. So although the Indians divided life into Kama, Artha, Dharma and Moksha, from the latter point of view and from the Sufi point of view everything can be as if purposeful in a divine life.

The aspect called **Artha** has resulted in the growth of the social order; in the necessity to have some understanding between man and man. And there is no doubt that the sciences and art of Economics was much more developed at an early age in India than in Europe many centuries later. There are many Indian books known as Artha-Sastras. There are also Kama Shastras which have come to the attention of the Western world and seem much more delightful, or practical according to one’s point of view. But the Artha-Sastras seem outmoded in the life of the day.

Dharma or duty was considered the most important thing in life. It involved in a sense all that man

had to do, especially in his relations to God, to so speak, to heaven, and to his fellow man. No doubt there was a certain independence about Kama and certain rules about Artha, but when it came to Dharma, each man was free to accept God in the fashion he pleased and to regulate his life accordingly. And this was true during the stages of apprenticeship, family building, and retirement, everything should be according to Dharma.

But there was a more definite relation to God in essence and then man became a wandering ascetic or Sannyasin, without any attachment. This was the way of the renunciate, the one who lived without any dependence, and there are to this day many Sannyasins or pretenders to this sort of life.

There is a certain correspondence in the grades of nufs, the Ego, in Sufism, in what are called ammara, lauwama, mutmaina and salima. As the ego renounces, it grows and as it grows so also it is no longer so attached. And as man sees deeper into the heart of the universe and to himself, he discovers that many things which may have seemed important are of no value in the spiritual, on-going life.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation
Number 6: The Relativity of Gain

GATHEKA: Life consists of a continual struggle for gain, of whatever kind it may be. Gain seems to be the purpose of life and it is accomplished by mastery.

TASAWWUF: We have been taught that life has certain divisions or purposes and if we look deeply, in all of them this gain is involved. For example, the mountain is often presented as a symbol, and spiritual advancement, or the Path, is depicted as an effort upward toward a physical or superphysical victory.

In many scriptures we find the hill or mountain denoting a higher consciousness. In all the post-historical Buddhist scriptures the Buddha or Bodhisattva is presented as holding forth on the peak. Jesus not only gave a sermon on the Mount, but used terms like Mount Tabor etc. as symbolic, without precluding them actually and physically. Moses received the tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai, which signifies the Moon or receptive state of consciousness.

Thus, in whatever direction we turn, we find mastery presented both symbolically and actually. This

terminates in the Christian book of Revelation in a number of passages ascribed to the Conqueror. In the Gita, personalities are referred to as “Master of the Great Car.” Mohammed also received some of the highest revelations on mountains near Mecca or Medina.

GATHEKA: And this proves that one naturally must try to gain whatever seems to be good and attainable in life or whatever one needs in life; when one is able to attain it, it shows mastery, and when one is unable, it shows the lack of it.

TASAWWUF: There is a teaching in *Gayan* that success leads to greater success and failure leads to greater failure. There is the gain of attaining what is good, and the attaining of what is needed. These may not always be the same. Yet they need not be different.

It might be added that when one attains what is good for him, there is either an increase in magnetism or bliss; or, there is the realization of a deeper sense of peace within. Without the experience of one or the other of these, it can hardly be called gain.

GATHEKA: But by a still deeper insight into the subject one sees that every gain a person has in view limits him to a certain extent to that gain, directs his activities in a certain channel, and forms the line of his fate. At the same time it deprives him of a still greater or a better gain and of the freedom of activity which might perhaps accomplish something still better.

TASAWWUF: There a teaching in the Gita, that to man belongs action, and to God, the fruits of action. When man identifies with his gains or honors, he limits himself. It is like coming to a resting place. It is only the wise that are able to control themselves without letting their affairs control them.

Attachment may be comfortable, but attachment gives no cushion for an adverse turn of affairs. Therefore disciples in Sufism are given esoteric practices to increase their sense of reliance on God. This also brings further self-assurance to the heart, helps develop the insight, and makes possible the realizations of the promises in the prayers.

GATHEKA: It is for this reason that renunciation is practiced by the Sufis, for with every willing renunciation a person proceeds a step towards a higher goal.

TASAWWUF: The term “Islam” has been interpreted to mean both “peacefulness” and “Divine Surrender.” Unfortunately, the ignorant among the orthodox are confused by words. Surrender cannot be learned until surrender is practiced. Therefore mureeds are urged to see God, so to speak, in a loving mother, kind father, helpful friend, etc. Or, as the Christian Bible teaches, how can man love God whom he has not seen, until he has learned to love man whom he has seen?

RYAZAT: One of the first lessons learned in Islam is Sajda, the bending of the head, or the torso, or the whole body until the head touches the ground. This is also a practice of **emptiness**. Emptiness does not consist in using the word “emptiness;” it consists of practices which restrain and constrain the mind and the ego. In full Sajda, it is impossible to use the ego-mind; it is

impossible to self-assert; one is in full surrender to God-Allah. Many religions teach this; many religions have similar practices—each beguiling its own devotees as if it were the only faith to present this knowledge. There has never been a religion without self-surrender. Fikr and Sajda are means by which the teacher promotes the disciple on the path of Renunciation, without there being any need for sermonizing or chastisement.

TASAWWUF: Renunciation becomes easier as heart is affirmed. When love is awakened, when insight is awakened, man becomes the instrument of higher faculties or of the universe itself. Then there is no need to refer to the ego. One not only lives, the life lives in him and through him. As life lives in him and through him, he arrives at the state which in Buddhism is called “in the stream.”

GATHEKA: No renunciation is ever fruitless. The one who is looking for a gain is smaller than his gain; the one who has renounced a thing has risen above it.

TASAWWUF: Growth is a growth from manhood to Godhood. The stages of development are presented in various scriptures and mystical philosophies. The ignorant look upon these stages as growth in acquisition. The wise see them as a series of transformations. It is, so to speak, as if each brought a material loss and a supermaterial gain. But this is a short view. A transformatory experience presents a completely different vision of life—new values, new outlooks, new faculties, so to speak.

We can see this in the lives of certain insects which during their growths seem to have totally different external bodies, faculties, functions, etc. We see this in the whole world of insects, in the amphibia and in various animal forms. These are indicators of what happens in man’s aeonic existence, including his passing from the physical body to the universe of Jinns or Gandharvas; and thence to the angelic or Deva existence.

But this can all be done psychically without there being any need to leave this world or this body. Sufism teaches that the wise disciple does all he can to progress now, without considering his type of body, his environment, his social or intellectual connections.

GATHEKA: Every step towards progress and ascent is a step of renunciation.

TASAWWUF: Acquisition of fame, fortune, social or political position, etc., do not alter the spiritual status. One remains in the same place, so to speak. A transformation is a transformation, not a growth in the same status. We do not know our possibilities until we are able and willing to step forward in a new direction. This is the very basis of initiation in whatever direction it tends.

GATHEKA: The poverty of the one who has renounced is real riches compared with the riches of the one who holds them fast. One could be rich in wealth and poverty-stricken in reality; and one can be penniless and yet richer than the rich of the world.

TASAWWUF: One can make an analogy here Jesus has spoken about the riches of heaven.

Buddhists proclaim the acquisition of merit, **punya**. Sufis also teach about magnetism and **Baraka**. These are not so much accumulations as accommodations. The amount of material in a 40 watt lamp may be the same or less or more than in a 200 watt lamp. The accommodations for Light are very different. As man learns the refined breath, as man learns not to hold on to his inhalations, while seemingly there may be a decrease in acquisition (not necessarily so), there is certainly an increase in accommodation or akasha. It is this which makes it possible for man's light to shine before him; for his body to become a temple of the Holy Spirit; for him to be a servant of God in the outer manifestation. It is this kind of wealth that one can take with him when he departs from this material world.

Actually, the word "wealth" means well-being, not acquisition. It is quite independent of happiness, but it is not independent of grossness which often becomes an impediment to happiness. Therefore we pray, "Raise us above the denseness of the Earth." Denseness and joy do not usually go together; perhaps they never do. The rich man experiencing joy will become more detached from his wealth. Sometimes he will give it away entirely.

To be poverty-stricken means to be unable to do anything. When a person achieves something as a result of his being able to command, he is caught in the trap of his own false power. When a person achieves something because of his own developed faculties, he is on the way to mastery, if he has not already achieved it.

There is a tradition, and presumably a part of Buddhism, "Foregoing self, the Universe grow I." This may be an actuality. It is in this sense that dervishes regard themselves as being in possession of everything that they can command.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation
Number 7: Renunciation and Loss

GATHEKA: There are two different renunciations: one is renunciation, the other is loss. True renunciation is that which a person makes who has risen above something that he once valued; or whose hunger and thirst for the thing are satisfied and it is no more so valuable as it once was; or who perhaps has evolved and sees life differently, no longer as he saw it before.

TASAWWUF: Mohammed has said, "Praise Allah in times of prosperity, and resign to Him in times of adversity." When a man can do that, he will have no loss, or as is said in *Gayan*, "Charge it to

the account of God.” The loss to man is not a loss to God. In Allah there is neither gain nor loss; these things belong to the ego, human or otherwise. No doubt man does not easily rise above pain, but he can rise above the sense of loss. Who loses? What has been lost?

Looking at things deeply we may find that the whole of life includes a series of renunciations. The more easily man can cope with difficulties, losses, setbacks, etc., the more strong he becomes in reality.

Watching the breath, keeping the name of God on the breath, and other esoteric practices are the armors of life. They both enable the devotee to sustain difficulties but often also protect him against the hazards of life.

If we look at the history of the world, we may see a gradual increase in human consideration and concern for other people. The greater the capacity for this concern, the greater protection given to man, also given by man.

GATHEKA: Renunciation in all these cases is a step forward towards perfection.

TASAWWUF: The principle of **fakr**, although it literally means poverty, really means detachment—ability to live without many possessions, and even more, to live without reliance on possessions. Or as *Gayan* teaches, “He who holds the world is greater than the world, and he whom the world holds is smaller than the world.”

There have been adepts who have lived in utter poverty. There have been other devotees, really adepts, who have been emperors. Do you think that their economic status affected their well-being? Resignation to the will of God is the fulfillment of the Christian prayer, “Thy will be done.” It is not easy to reach this state, but once a spirit of self-surrender is attained, then the doors are opened to all joys and bliss, and to a higher satisfaction (*riza*) than may have been conceivable before the attainment.

GATHEKA: But the other resignation is one which a person is compelled to make when circumstances prevent his achieving what he wishes to achieve or from getting back what he has lost helplessly; or when, by weakness of mind or body, by lack of position, power, or wealth, he cannot reach the object he desires. That renunciation is loss; and instead of leading towards perfection it drags man down toward imperfection.

TASAWWUF: Without being bound by all the factors of the science of astrology, it is evident that positions of stars point out potentialities and defects in a person’s career. These are not necessarily defects in character for all mankind has infinite possibilities. But it is not always wise to work against the obvious; for instance, a small man may need a ladder to reach a high shelf which a tall man can touch easily. Likewise, a tall man may find difficulty in ducking under a fence or stile which may be an easy accomplishment for a child.

Likewise, we need not turn aside the teachings of various schools of psychology or even different methods of diet when these may be of help to our body and mind. When we say God is perfect it does not mean to regard all human beings as imperfect and ignore their advice. In other words, loss is due to over-extenuation of ego, either the ego of oneself or of others.

The totality of the universe may forever be the same; or as the Prophet Solomon put it, "There is nothing new under the sun." We do not have to go so far as certain schools which see God only as the source of infinite supply. We may realize that the sole satisfaction is not dependent on anything external.

GATHEKA: The wise therefore renounce willingly what they feel like renouncing; but they are constantly in pursuit of what they feel like gaining.

TASAWWUF: This may mean that the wise do not necessarily behave differently from others, only to them there may be gain without loss to other people. The wise need not seek leadership, nor need they restrain themselves from leadership, only it is they are not dependent on externals. Besides this, the wise are more apt to have the active intuition, and with it more pronounced intelligence.

GATHEKA: One or two failures will not discourage them; after a hundred failures they will rise up again with the same hope, and will gain the thing desired in the end.

TASAWWUF: There is a weighted image called a **billikin**. No matter what one does to knock it over, it will always come up straight. Nothing disturbs its equilibrium. This is the way of the wise man.

Many failures are so only in their human sense. The Scottish hero, Robert Bruce, failed many times before he succeeded in obtaining his kingdom, a free Scotland. The Mogul Emperor Humayan was not only dispossessed but even exiled, betrayed and trampled upon many times. He never lost faith either in himself or in Allah. In the end he recovered the kingdom which became the Mogul Empire.

In the teachings disciples are instructed in how to increase capacity in Endurance, Perseverance, Faith, Hope, and other desirable attributes. When these are merged into Divine Favor, the devotee is bound to win in the end. But even the material man knows that these qualities will bring success in the end.

The greatest weapon is Truth in the ultimate sense; that is to say, a realization of the existence of God with all His beneficent attributes. These not only guard against weakness, but they enable man to rise above all weakness.

GATHEKA: But there is another weakness, and that is holding what has been gained, and indulging in what has been attained. That limits man to his gain, deprives him of a greater gain, and even prevents him in the course of time from holding the gain he already has.

TASAWWUF: The teaching of the Gita, that to man belongs action but to God belongs the fruits of action, is of little value to those who are merely mentally minded. There is little use to a philosophy of life which cannot be applied in actions and attitude.

Moses has given the social law which can be called the Law. It is an early application of what may be called human consideration to society. Many have found this Law defective, but in all history we have hardly an incident of either it or a presumably better code becoming law or custom. It is of no value to the world to verbalize or philosophize a presumable higher morality, which cannot be objectified in the lives of man. Nevertheless, it can be pointed out that the Mosaic Code is essentially an application of the Law of Reciprocity, merging into the Law of Beneficence. True, beneficence is higher than reciprocity, and in this sense renunciation is higher than beneficence.

The funeral customs of many religions and societies adhere to the point of view that possessions and property are limited to this world, the material world. As Buddha taught, separation from the pleasant is painful. That should indicate the wisdom of what has been presented here, that man can be limited by his gains, can be the slave of gain, and often is then shunned by humanity.

Mohammed tried to universalize the principles earlier presented by Moses, and on them the Shariat of Islam is based.

GATHEKA: This philosophy was lived in their lives by the ascetics who traveled from place to place.

TASAWWUF: There have been ascetics of all sorts found among the followers of various religions. There is a question as to the wisdom of giving up material things for the sake of something called “spiritual attainment.” Spiritual attainment without love, mercy, compassion, tenderness has a very limited value. Here **things** may be surrendered but not always the ego self. It is therefore that Mohammed taught, “There is no asceticism in Islam,” Yet asceticism has remained both within Islam and among the devotees of other faiths. If one reads about earlier saints in the writings of Fariduddin Attar we can see how many men have submitted to hardships hoping to attain the divine grace. In pure Islam they would have willingly accepted the hardships—or any other course in life—if they had already had the grace. This also appears in the teachings of the great woman saint, Rabia of Basra. There is no question that an attachment to asceticism has persisted. It is a counter balance to the attachment to things. Lord Buddha taught a middle way. But the middle way does not consist of attachment to the phrase “middle way.” It became real when man avoided the extremes alike of asceticism and possessions.

GATHEKA: The happiness, comfort, and good friends they made in one place, they enjoyed for a short time and then left it lest it might bind them forever.

TASAWWUF: Buddha has taught separation from the pleasant is painful. The wise, therefore, practiced detachment rather than poverty. Detachment is the purest **fakr**. Detachment may deter comfort, but it does not interfere with bliss. The difference between happiness and bliss is that

happiness may be followed by unhappiness, but real bliss stands above the pairs of opposites.

GATHEKA: This does not mean that this kind of life should necessarily be an example for a wise person; but our journey through life's experience is also a continuous journey, and the good or bad, the right and wrong, the rise and fall of yesterday one must leave behind, and turn one's back on them, and go forward with new hope, new courage and enthusiasm, trusting to the almighty power of the Creator in one's spirit.

TASAWWUF: The Greeks taught, "Moderation in all things." Plato had his Golden Mean. This is perhaps the best way of life, neither attachment nor deliberate detachment, but pure detachment, trusting in God.

There are several factors which work in the life of every person. There are such things as karma and good karma and merit and the reward for one's own endeavors, and the Divine Grace.

There are some unfortunate elements which have destroyed the spirit of devotion in prayer. One of these is the constant beseeching God for the things of this world. The Sufi attitude does not eliminate beseeching God, but always adds, "Thou knowest." The real devotee seeks God's will, and this does not preclude even the things of this world. *Gayan* teaches, "Riches is a sin, but poverty is a crime." The teacher is not adverse to using various means, physical and metaphysical, to help prevent disciples from falling into utter need.

Once the spirit of "getting" has gotten into prayer, then the opposite spirit of foregoing also gets into religion. The supreme Renunciation is that of ego, not of thingness. No doubt there are those who have wealth because of karma, self-effort, and natural causes. Spirituality does not mean upsetting karma in its various aspects, but of adjusting to life as we find it. There is some question that the willful abandonment of possessions may not sometimes be more egocentric than unwarranted accumulation. God uses the hand of man to make this a more beautiful and fruitful world. Not to partake of this effort may mean placing self above God. And there is no question that, both in the east and in the west, **tamas** manifesting as sloth, laziness, and non-action has done incalculable harm.

The purpose of life is as if to go forward in God, with God, and near God in full love and trust.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation

Number 8: The Learning of Renunciation

GATHEKA: People think that renunciation is learned by unselfishness. It is the looker on who sees renunciation in the form of unselfishness, as a dog might see renunciation when a man throws away a bone: it does not realize that the bone is only valuable to it and not to the man.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual practices are based on affirming God rather than on denouncing self. As shadows disappear before great lights, so egocentrism (nufs) disappears when God-affirmation becomes conscious. That is why Sufi devotees endeavour to listen to the Voice which constantly comes from within.

Gayan says, "Give all you have and take all that is given to you." In other words, renunciation is not so much a vacuum cleaning process, as the emptying of a stage so scenery can be reset. There are forms of apparent self-denial which make people look like mice, no light in the eyes, or color in the skin. It may be questioned whether this may not be worse than overzealous selfishness. To be empty of nufs means indifference regarding gain and loss, poverty and riches.

GATHEKA: Every object has its peculiar value to every individual; and as a person evolves through life so the value of things becomes different; and as one rises above things so one renounces them in life.

TASAWWUF: In other words, everything becomes like our clothes, to be put on or discarded as we may need them or as they may need us. Thus in a sense not only do clothes beautify bodies, so also do the bodies beautify the clothes. This is like the wedding and wedding of spirit and matter, Shiva and Shakti. Or as the Sufis teach, tasawwuf is far superior to **fakr**, the abandonment of things and possessions. Full-abandonment requires detachment from thought even more than detachment from things.

GATHEKA: And when the one who has not risen above them looks at someone else's renunciation, he calls it either foolish or unselfish.

TASAWWUF: There is a school of Sufis called **Malamatiya**, which means devotees on the path of blame. Generally, theologians regard them as foolish, but some ignorant people regard them as especially holy. The true Malamatiya must be very indifferent as to his life, possessions, and feelings and reactions of others.

The Christian Bible has the teaching, "We are fools for Christ's sake." The real mystic is seldom understood by the populace; sometimes he does not understand himself. But the spiritual person need not justify himself. If he feels the spirit of God, he will draw virtues, faculties, powers and peace, which are more needed than the things of either heaven or earth.

GATHEKA: One need not learn renunciation; life itself teaches it.

TASAWWUF: It is obvious that we cannot study renunciation, which is negative, in the same way as we are trained in education. If anything, it is close to **unlearning**. It is very hard, but still very uncomplicated, to acquire unlearning. Sometimes it comes through pain, accident, hardships and the hazards of life. This is one aspect.

Another comes with the growth of the heart, such as we see in a loving mother, kind father, and helpful friend. Some have said that life itself teaches, but life can teach nothing to the closed mind. Therefore pain may become of supreme value, for in pain a person is compelled to listen.

GATHEKA: And to the small extent that one has to learn a lesson in the path of renunciation, it is this: that where in order to gain silver coins one has to lose the copper ones, one must learn to lose them. That is the only unselfishness that one must learn: that one cannot have both, the copper and the silver.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* teaches, "Initiation is a step forward in the direction where one has not gone before." It is not too different in business, investment and adventure. The principle of growth appears everywhere in nature, also in the presumed "life of the soul." The term "expansion of consciousness" can either be very real or very deluding. Real expansion produces new vistas, new outlooks and new manifest potentialities. A "state," however we interpret the word, is only temporary. Surrender of self implies surrender of all that we have been accustomed to in order to fulfill a grander life under circumstances to which we have not yet become accustomed.

GATHEKA: There is a saying in Hindi, "The seeker after honour dies for name, the seeker after money will die for a coin." To the man to whom the coin is precious the name is nothing; to him who considers a name precious money is nothing. So one person cannot understand the attitude of another unless he puts on his cloak, and sees life from his point of view.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the most fundamental, and at the same time most difficult teachings in Sufism, which seems to differentiate Sufism from other schools. The very words can become sources of delusion; therefore, feeling in the heart and of the heart is most important.

If we are to see from various points of view, the seeker after wealth should not disdain those who seek knowledge; the seeker after knowledge should not disdain those who seek possessions; neither should they disdain those who seek honour or have any other goal in life. In "The Inner Life" we are taught there are several paths of right behavior. It is necessary to surmount the thought, "There are many paths of right behavior." It is necessary to appreciate the many paths of right behavior in our selves and others. It is not necessary to introduce justification; even less to introduce condemnation.

GATHEKA: There is nothing valuable except what we value in life; and a man is fully justified in renouncing all that he has, or that may be offered to him, for the sake of that which he values, even if it be that he values it only for this moment; for there will never be a thing which he will value always in the same way.

TASAWWUF: The spiritual path has been likened to mountain climbing. Mountain climbing constantly brings one to new vistas. People who sit in lecture halls and hear words do not necessarily change their points of view. Rather, they are mostly crystallized in their own attitudes and outlooks. This may please them, but is of no value in spiritual development. Often it is to the contrary, that those who delight in lectures, and sermons, and philosophies are too pleased with themselves to progress further on the path of God. They are easily deluded by words and personalities. They retain their own values and self-increase the importance of them.

The mystic is of an opposite nature. He is aware that there is no abiding self, that the stream of consciousness within is constantly changing, and if this change is in the directions of expansion and awareness, it is most beneficial.

GATHEKA: “Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
 Before we too into the Dust descend;
 Dust into dust, and under dust to lie,
 Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer and—sans End!”

—*Omar Khayyam*

TASAWWUF: Buddhists have considered this teaching of Omar Khayyam to have been derived from their traditions. Spiritual awareness is one and the same no matter what the source. It is from God we come, to him we return, and as Solomon taught, “All accumulations are vanities.”

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation
Number 9: The Nature of Renunciation

GATHEKA: From a practical point of view life is like a journey started from the unmanifested state of being and going to the manifested state; and from manifestation returning again to the unmanifested or perfect state of being.

TASAWWUF: The mystical point of view is one of experience, not of thoughts concerning experience and still less of thoughts concerning the experiences of others. This mystical point of

view is fully explained in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*. It is also presented from another point of view in *The Inner Life*.

Disciples on the path are warned against any trust in dialectics. Dialectics is associated with the outpourings of minds, often geniuses. They are seldom concerned with either manifestation or with the unmanifested and less perfect state of being. Mohammed has taught, "From Allah we came and to him do we return." Much else is superfluous.

GATHEKA: As man, life has the fullest privilege of knowing about the journey, and of directing to a certain extent the affairs on the journey; of making this journey comfortable, and arriving at the destination at the desired time. The mystic tries to make use of this privilege, and all spiritual wisdom teaches the manner in which this journey should be made.

TASAWWUF: It cannot be over-emphasized that mysticism is concerned with direct experience and never with thoughts about the experience of oneself and others. When it is said the mystic uses privilege, it is the privilege of the awareness of God's existence made possible through the breath, through the heart and through light. This subject is also discussed in *The Inner Life* and in the commentaries thereon.

GATHEKA: As man comes from the unmanifested, it is evident that he comes alone, no one with him and with nothing.

TASAWWUF: It is a delicate subject to distinguish individualism and brotherhood as taught by the wise. The Jewish/Christian burial service says, "Naked was I born and naked shall I return." Both Mohammed and Buddha taught in their own ways that everyone must work out his salvation as if he were individually separate. At the same time Mohammed, Buddha, and many sages taught the unity of life. The realization of this unity can only come when man rids himself of every sense of separateness.

GATHEKA: After coming here he begins to own objects, possessions, properties, even living beings. And the very fact that he came alone, without anything, necessitates his being alone again in the end to enter his destination.

TASAWWUF: There is nothing new in this teaching. It is presented by all religions. It is also held by non-religious philosophies. These parties often argue about it, and their own presumable superiority, even when there is no difference. The result has been that the teaching itself has been covered. It is necessary now to uncover. Therefore, especially in Sufism self-renunciation is practiced as **fana**.

GATHEKA: But once man has owned things of the earth he does not wish to part with them, and wishes to carry the weight of all he possesses on this journey; these things weigh him down, and naturally make his journey uncomfortable. As nothing and no one really belongs to him, it must all fall away in time and he is made lonely against his desire. It is only willing renunciation which can

save man from this burden on the path.

TASAWWUF: Here is an instance of the departure of religion from the teachings of the founders of those same religions. Personality worship and theological dogmas are tremendous hindrances to self-realization. Indeed, if one holds to dogmas or to the proclamation of partisan leaders, he does not progress very far on the journey.

The soul owns nothing. At the same time we may regard all creation as Shakti, and this same Shakti may be the beloved of Shiva the God-head. In this sense, all that has been created is loved by the creator. The Hebrew Bible teaches, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." It has seldom been accepted by man, especially by ignorant religious people. True, there are some groups that accept it, but they are in the minority. Thus we find a condition wherein the soul, so to speak, is in revolt against itself, because it cannot accept the substitution of man's institutions for divine teachings.

Much of the turmoil in the world is caused by the uneasiness of the soul under any man-made societies.

GATHEKA: It is not necessary that this renunciation should be practiced by indifference to one's friends. No, one can love one's friends and serve them and yet be detached.

TASAWWUF: There are two conflicts here: 1) the first arises as to the laws concerning properties and their ownerships; 2) the second arises from the thoughts, impressions, philosophies and institutions in this regard. These are often more deluding and confusing than the physical institutions themselves.

Renunciation does not mean giving away, throwing anything away. As long as the left hand knows what the right hand is doing there cannot be renunciation. Often distribution of one's assets is nothing but vanity or, at best, the piling up of merit (punya) with the hope of benefiting from good karma. All of this is still the play of the self; it is concerned with the self and not with the eternal God.

GATHEKA: It is this lesson which Christ taught when he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." He has renounced who gets the things of the world, but gives them to the world; but the one who does not know renunciation gets the things of the world, and holds them for himself.

TASAWWUF: Even those who give and distribute from self-conscious effort are not free. Very often there have been instances where men gave away their possessions, and later becoming destitute, demanded them back. This shows that their minds were not free from possession and ego.

GATHEKA: Love is a blessing, but it turns into a curse in attachment; admiration is a blessing, but it turns into a curse when one tries to hold the beauty for oneself.

TASAWWUF: We see this in respect to things and properties. We do not always see it so clearly in respect to love, marriage and children. When it is said that “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” it applies to creatures as well as to things, and to human beings as well as to creatures. As *Gayan* teaches, “It is one thing to own, it is another thing to love.” Owning is a sense of self-separateness; loving is a sense of unity and brotherhood.

GATHEKA: The way of those who renounce is to know all things, to admire all things, to get all things ...

TASAWWUF: To love, to admire and to get does not necessarily mean legal possession. Many people can love public parks without any sense of ownership. Eyes appreciate apart from legal status. And when we turn to aesthetic enjoyment we at once realize that this is quite independent of any form of possession.

Jesus Christ has said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all else will be added to you.” He said **all else**, not merely the satisfaction that comes from increased possessions. Jesus also said that man could not love God and mammon together, and would have to choose. Can we not enjoy a multitude of things without any need of having to own them?

GATHEKA: ...but to give all things; and to think that nothing belongs to them and that they own nothing. And it is this spirit which will liberate man from the earthly bondages which keep the generality of mankind in captivity throughout the whole of life.

TASAWWUF: We have an excellent example of this in the life of Swami Papa Ramdas, who has described in careful detail all the elements, occurrences and dramas of the man who lives in God and for God. This does not necessarily mean either the preservation of society or the disruption of society. Rather does it mean a different outlook in regard to both possessions and peoples.

While the sage may possess nothing and be detached, it is not the way of the wise to give to those who make demands on the grounds that the sage or devotee should be a selfless giver or servant. A selfless man need not give anything to those who are self-centered. Neither does a free man have to bestow blessings on those who are held in self-captivity. Adherence to thoughts and philosophies is not fundamentally different from adherence to material possessions.

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Series 3: The Law of Renunciation

Number 10: The Final Victory

GATHEKA: The final victory in the battle of life for every soul is when he has abandoned, which means when he has risen above, what once he valued most.

TASAWWUF: Lord Buddha taught **annatta, anicca, dukha**. This implies that reality is apart from presumable manifestation. This is especially the teaching of the Prajna-Paramita school. We do find there are many persons who have gone through these disciplines who have achieved this outlook.

The teachings concerning **soul**, especially in the lessons on *Metaphysics* and elsewhere, present this in a positive sense. That is to say, the effort is made to see life from the standpoint of soul itself and not from any philosophies concerning soul. The constant repetition of "Toward the One," etc., presents an entirely different point of view, which may be called transcendent. This transcendency is also a teaching of the higher and finer sides of all religions. It must terminate in human experience, and human experience will terminate in it, though the generality be not aware.

GATHEKA: For the value of everything exists for man as long as he does not understand it.

TASAWWUF: This seems contrary to philosophies. Philosophies are all the productions of the mental side of life. Understanding belongs to a still higher side of life. The teachings of **fullness** and **emptiness** taught in many faiths proclaim independence of the soul from and over everything manifestable. Light does not possess the things on which it shines. They may benefit from the light, but they are not the light. Nevertheless, the soul strives for light and its conscious unity with it.

GATHEKA: When he has fully understood, the value is lost, be it the lowest thing or the highest thing.

TASAWWUF: There is a tradition among the Muslims that once Peter and Jesus were walking along the shore of the sea. Jesus asked Peter, "If you looked down and saw pebbles and pearls, which would you pick up?" Peter replied, "The pearls, of course." Jesus then said, "You are far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

In worlds of infinity finite values are lost. This can be studied logically in the mathematics. But it can be realized consciously in the mystical development. There is really no difference. But there have been mistaken views on spiritual attainment, that by becoming **zero** or nothing, there is the attainment. In Sufism this is called **fana** and it is characterized by perfection in **La Illaha**.

But there is the other side of perfection, the positive side which is realized with **EI II Allah** and when one becomes aware of the Existence of God, and then makes this Existence more and more a Reality in and with himself, the infinite potentialities become manifest. Fine things lose their values and finite values become as **nothings** as in mathematics.

Even in the Ultramicroscope the scientist is bound to recognize transcendence and transfinities. And there is a saying which was once prominent among communists, "Becoming naught thou shalt become all."

GATHEKA: It is like looking at the scenery on the stage and taking it for a palace.

TASAWWUF: When the mystical states (ahwal) are under control and one reaches a station or makam, one then sees transcendently, so to speak. From an aeroplane the people or things of the world become mere specks. It is only the eye that devaluates them then.

One can also be lost in a state where beauty manifests everywhere. Then also one loses all sense of values. And it is more true when one sees a God-value or an infinite value in everything. Then there will be no price to anything. And when one is aware of the divine light everything is like a palace.

GATHEKA: Such is the case with all things of the world: they seem important or precious when we need them or when we do not understand them; as soon as the veil which keeps man from understanding is lifted, then they are nothing.

TASAWWUF: In a complete state of abnegation, or fana, everything may take on value but the ego itself. Beauty may be seen in everything. And there is the opposite state when there is more complete self-realization and then nothing seems important in or outside the consciousness.

Thus there are two sides to moral perfection, that of the perfection of not-being or non-ego so to speak; and the perfection of the ego with an ever greater realization of God. There is a story of two dervishes which may illustrate the point:

A thin dervish and a stout dervish met and the stout dervish said to the thin one: "Why are you so thin?" "All I think of is **Allah, Allah, Allah**. I never think of anything but Allah and so I do not care whether I eat or sleep or work or do nothing. My only concern is **Allah**. But why are you so stout?"

"All I think of is **Allah, Allah, Allah**. I have no time for anything but **Allah**. So I pray: "Allah, give me more room so I can pray for you more and give you more accommodation both within me and outside me. My only concern is **Allah**."

Now the perfection in abnegation is symbolized by the thin dervish and the perfection in attainment is illustrated by the stout dervish. Only when man practices real abnegation and fana, he is also making accommodation for the Divine Grace, whether he knows it or not.

In a sense in the God-experience the separateness of person and person is only part of the process. There is no more separateness of thing and thing. And there are some philosophies and teachings like Kegon or Avatamsaka school of Buddhism which illustrate this elegantly. It would seem that all their teachings are based on the same principle as in the prayer: "Raise us above the

distinctions and differences which divide men.” When we are raised above differences and distinctions we can no longer make any values and even more shall we realize the truth of the saying of Jesus Christ, “Judge not that ye be not judged.” When there are no more evaluations one is near the goal or at the goal.

GATHEKA: Do not, therefore, be surprised at the renunciation of sages. Perhaps every person on the spiritual path must go through renunciation.

TASAWWUF: In the simplest form it is nothing but the control of **nufs**, the ego. This is a subtle matter for every sort of self-thinking makes the simple process difficult. The child can do that automatically but the adult will make a value of self-surrender or abnegation and by making a value of self-surrender or abnegation he destroys the very process which he thinks will lead to liberation. That is why meditation is practiced by so many, though in many ways, effective and not always so effective.

But what has to be learned is not any wonder at the renunciation of sages, but the attainment of our own renunciation. It does not help anybody to know what is in a book or has happened to others. Our hunger is not satisfied by others eating or our pain assuaged by somebody else taking medicine. And one of the hardest things to renounce is our own mental process, and the complications that arise therefrom.

GATHEKA: It is not really throwing things away or disconnecting ourselves from friends; it is not taking things to heart as seriously as one naturally does by lack of understanding.

TASAWWUF: The hardest thing to renounce is ego. The giving up of pleasures and possessions—which are hard to give up—is very simple in comparison. We read in the Zen stories that a Master refused to admit a poor applicant to the temple for although he was poor his mind was concerned with food and clothing and possessions. And yet this same Master accepted a wealthy applicant because that man was no longer concerned with possessions, was indifferent to the things of the world.

When we arrive in Joy at that time we are so concerned with the Joy that material things mean nothing. And ever more so in Love, that the Heart reaches toward Heart and is no longer concerned with either Mind or Matter. For even the willful or thoughtful dissociation with things is not itself a freedom; it is indifference and neither possession or non-possession which makes the freedom.

GATHEKA: No praise, no blame is valuable; no pain or pleasure is of any importance. Rise and fall are natural consequences, so are love and hatred.

TASAWWUF: This is a teaching found in many books of wisdom. But the disciples of these various schools of wisdom have arrogated to themselves the knowledge of principles. The knowledge of principles is not their application in the daily life. No one has any divine wisdom who cannot

illustrate it by example and action. And we find that sages of all schools, Buddhist, Islamic, etc., have been taught to practice this supreme indifference. But no school has a monopoly on it. It is a very necessary adjunct to spiritual attainment and it may come before, during or after real spiritual attainment.

Besides as it is taught in *Gayan*, *Vadan* and *Nirtan*, this indifference becomes the source of all strength, of all developed faculties and of the manifestation of the Divine Qualities (Sifat-i-Allah) in man.

GATHEKA: What does it matter if it be this or that? It matters so long as we do not understand.

TASAWWUF: A Sufi sage has said: "Quotation is the sign of the ignorant, and perception is the sign of the wise." It is very easy to quote from some source. We cannot compel anybody to accept from a strange source. There is also the teaching of samskaras that all efforts result in adding to the whirlpool of samsara and this also becomes an added thought or thought-complex which does not free us.

The stages of calmness, indifference and peace are no doubt attained through meditation or surrender to the living teacher. Otherwise they do not come. And there is no difference between this attainment and the understanding itself. Understanding is calmness and calmness is understanding.

GATHEKA: Renunciation is a bowl of poison no doubt, and only the brave will drink it; but in the end it alone proves to be nectar, and this bravery brings one the final victory.

TASAWWUF: That is to say experience alone demonstrates the attainment of this knowledge. It is not the intellectual studying of either books or sages or even of the teacher in one's midst that brings the actual renunciation. No doubt much can be gained by self-surrender to the living teacher (fana-fi-Sheikh). But the teacher who accepts the self-surrender of disciples and does not lead them to grander vistas is a limited teacher.

Gayan says that the role of the Murshid is to act as a cupid between the soul of man and God.