

Githa Numbers 1–7 with Commentary

Sadhana: The Path of Attainment

Series II

of

Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

by

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis

(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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

Githa with Commentary Series II: Number 1

GITHA: What one values in life is worth striving for, whether material or spiritual gain.

TASAWWUF: The first cause for loss is the lack of unity within the personality which comes when speech is not unified to thought and action. Although there are moral reasons why a person should not gossip, the real loss comes because there is speech without any possible action. If one speaks or thinks against another, one produces a force in the thought world which may result in the end in an evil action by a stranger against the person opposed. But if a master finds it necessary to act against another, he conserves his force often by not speaking and performs the act in the way he deems wisest.

Every longing is really an outgrowth of the longing of the soul for God. The soul longs for God and this form of attraction appears in manifestation as the desire nature. The problem of the spiritual person is not so much that of crushing desire as of taming and controlling it. Therefore he uses the method of unifying his thought and speech and desire, and instead of abandoning the effort, he first proves his mastery by gaining the object desired and then renouncing it.

Heaven and earth are not so far apart as it may seem, and if there is any unfilled longing springing from the life on earth, it will reappear in heaven and remain before one until there is satisfaction. It is therefore advantageous either to accomplish what one seeks while upon earth, or else to learn the laws and principles whereby life whether in heaven or upon earth can be made most harmonious.

GITHA: Those who weigh the object that they wish to attain with the difficulty of the cost that is required for its attainment, neither they know the full value of the object nor do they know the way of attainment.

TASAWWUF: As has been said, with man many things may seem impossible, but with God all things are possible. The secret of the spiritual life is that it is really the life in God, and the life with God. So soon as one measures the cost or the pain required to win one's desire, at that moment one is viewing life from the aspect of self, in other words, nufs, and that state shuts out God and all divine blessings.

Prayer is very helpful to some persons and one reason is that it makes God the actor, the doer. It is a step beyond calling God "the only Being" toward making Him be in one's realization "the only Being." As all things are possible with God, often the devotee in his prayer makes the

accommodation whereby God can come to his aid and bring him the blessing he needs.

Meditation is also valuable in Sadhana because thereby one avoids any consideration of any useless thoughts such as, "Will this be difficult?" "Am I worthy of it?" "I should like to gain the object of my desire but it will bring so many problems and temptations." Entertainment of such questions in the mind are the greatest hindrances. They reveal a mind incapable of continuous effort and also show that the heart is not firm in its faith in God. Meditation is most helpful in correcting this state of mind and therefore it is well to learn how to meditate before taking up concentration, which often secures the object of attainment.

Repetition of sacred phrases also benefit because with each one of them the divine principle is put forward and this keeps the mind focused upon God in some way. If there is lack of faith there will surely be failure because the idea of self then stands as a shadow before God, and before the universe and makes the attraction of anything toward oneself very difficult.

GITHA: The first principle that one must learn in the path is to esteem the object of attainment more than the cost one has to pay for it. Even if the object be not of the value of its cost, still the law of attainment is to attain a desired object at every cost.

TASAWWUF: Behind every wish or desire is a central will and it is the cultivation of the will which is really the strengthening of the heart. In other words, every exertion of the will is a spiritual gain, and as cost is something only to be reckoned in physical and mental terms, the estimation of it is only to place physical and mental things above the spiritual. Therefore avoid evaluating things; the heart is kept firm in its love and devotion to God and there is no price too great to pay for this. For when the love of God dominates, the blessing is so much beyond all cost, that it is foolish to reckon it.

GITHA: The great ones who have achieved great things in life have achieved in this way. Nothing in the world could take them away from what they wished to achieve. Even a life's cost they considered too small a price for the object of attainment.

TASAWWUF: The manner of the great ones is set up as the ideal for the Sufi. Whenever one can look into the lives of the prophets or sages for an example for some course of action, one is to that extent justified. It is really a form of self-surrender and has the added advantage that the mind will not waste any effort in consideration of the difficulties before one. Of course there are and perhaps there will always be some obstacles along one's path in life. But is this not better so? For it is by meeting them that one grows in strength, and with each increase in will power there comes ease, as the Prophet Mohammed has taught us.

Problems of life and death are not always so important. If one only knew it, this portion of our existence is so small; one does not have to minimize it but surely one should not magnify it so many times that it becomes over significant. If one can feel the will of God, the course of action becomes clear before one's inner eyes and this makes success possible. The abandonment of wealth, the sloughing off of physical life, the loss of friends, all are small compared with the loss of

hope which is a death worse than death. When there is true trust in God, one will be hopeful under every outlook and situation.

GITHA: When this spirit directs the spiritual path man arrives at having God-communion, for the true pursuer will never go half-way. Either he gains, or he loses himself.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the purpose of development along the path of attainment is to reach that state and condition wherein one is actually an instrument of the Almighty. It may seem rather strange that the attainment of wealth, power and position, which is regarded as a very great obstacle to spiritual development can also be the greatest asset when one has the proper attitude to the Deity. All things are from God and He has placed all things at the feet of man.

For the undeveloped soul, the dispossession of property is often a good thing. How many times one will hear: "When I am rich, I will offer a great portion of my wealth to the cause of God;" "So soon as I complete this deal, I will have money and will help the Message." Such promises never help the Message, they are often totally unreliable.

If one wants to help the Message, let him put forth a small coin, be it ever so small and then increase it as he is able. By this means his giving is a growth. It is not the person who gives much who is spiritual, neither is it the person who gives little—it is the person who gives from his heart, and the gift that is promised without some material effort being made immediately, better that it were not spoken, for it remains as a debit in the book of life against the one who has spoken.

Actually the same principles hold in giving or getting. Although we speak of Sadhana as the path of attainment and at first sight it appears as receiving and it is mostly concerned with receiving, nevertheless useless giving is even worse than useless receiving. When Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," he meant, that it is blessed to surrender the self, it is not blessed to strengthen the ego. He was not specially thinking of material things except insofar as they represented symbolically the spiritual principles and ideals.

In the life of Jesus we find that he owned no property, but when he wanted an ass he sent for it and received it. When he wanted food he took according to the laws of Moses which enabled man to take grain and fruit under certain conditions. Indeed the whole spiritual outlook in such matters is quite different from the ideas of the West; whether those ideas seem very old or very new, all are quite different.

In God-communion, it may be said that then God is the Giver, whether man gives or receives. For when he gives it is God who is the Giver, and when he receives he is receiving with the blessing of God. For in God-communion one does not look upon his fellow as being a different personality, one recognizes only the opportunity God is placing before him whether it is a matter of giving or receiving, and when the blessing of God is upon the lips and in the heart, there can be no evil, there can be no loss; there can only be success and blessing.

GITHA: The words hatha yoga means abstinence, or sternness, to want what one wants, and, nothing else in its place will satisfy one.

TASAWWUF: Now what does one want? If one considers that what one wants is what the ego desires, it is not always wrong. There is a delicate situation which one must pass beyond to attain to wisdom. In the one state one will identify the ego with God, and although not realizing it, his thoughts will be obscure, and what he desires he will call the will of God, and when he attains to it, he calls that surrender to God, no matter what the nature of the thing may be. He will pay no particular attention to morals and say he has risen above morality and yet in his every action, his every thought, in speech and attitude he will be selfish and inconsiderate, and never show the slightest sign of having reached to divine-communion. It will just be words.

Then there are those who will avoid all kinds of action, and say they will do nothing without the will of God manifesting. But when asked how will they know whether something is in accord with the will of God, they often remain silent. They do nothing and they make no progress in life; they arrive nowhere.

Now it is true that there should be action with the will of God, and this truth, if such it can be called, consists of two things: action and will. It is man's action and God's will, and from the standpoint of Sadhana man becomes God in action and God becomes man in will. If man does not act, then God will have to select His instruments even though they be unconscious of serving Him. It is only those who serve Him knowingly who consciously receive the blessings.

Therefore in the spiritual sense, the idea of Hatha Yoga is to be consciously aware of the Divine Will. And this is best accomplished by one's earnest response to one's teacher until one is able to rise to a higher state. And if one never rises any higher it does not matter, for this earnest response is itself such a great blessing that on the path of Sadhana sooner or later it will bring to one all that he desires, all that he hopes to attain whether in this life or in the life to come.

GITHA: Those who are discouraged and come back from half the way will never arrive at a destination. Especially in the path of God, a person who takes one step forward with hope and two steps backward in doubt will go back or will linger on in the same place.

TASAWWUF: The wisdom of God is not anything definite or vague. The wisdom of God is not anything apart from life or manifestation. The wisdom of God is not something transcendental reserved for a favored few. The wisdom of God, in other words, Sufism, is for every soul who strives earnestly whether he be fully conscious or not in his striving.

Faith in God is proved in works and by works. What does this mean? It means that one must not only express faith in thought or in speech, which are easy, one must prove the faith by continuing it down to the material plane in action. For God is on the earth also, He made the earth-world. He is not apart even from the physical plane. Therefore proof of one's faith in God, of one's devotion, of one's religion, is finally offered only when one willingly goes forward in an unknown direction with

the firm feeling of trust in the heart.

Initiation is nothing but this willingness to move forward into the unknown, along some path where one has not traveled before. In this sense initiation is the opposite of experience. What has been learned from experience, whether of oneself or another, is knowledge; what one has learned by daring to move on in trust, this brings wisdom. And this trust can be shown in one's spiritual teachers, in the Hierarchy and in the Message of God. It is not shown by any trust in God apart from these forms of expressing faith, for the God Who is apart from His instruments and His revelations, what is He? That is only the thought one has been holding in the mind, a vague feeling, not a reality. It becomes a reality when one makes it so. And how does one make it so? By proving one's faith through actual works.

GITHA: By the sincere pursuit of the object, be it heavenly or earthly, with a willingness for all sacrifice, one attains to what the soul longs for—perfection, the only satisfaction in life.

TASAWWUF: The state of perfection is not something to be measured through imperfection or by any form of comparison. Perfection comes through attunement to God. When the heart is firmly fixed upon a goal, and the attainment is made while keeping in Darood, be sure that your will then is the same as God's will. So long as you can act in Darood, and so long as you can think or hope in Fikr, then your act, your thought, your desire, your will, your wish, they are in attunement with God, they are in harmony with God. And this is the sign of perfection. In other words, that is perfect that is perfect with or normal to God, and that is imperfect which is not in harmony with God. And the proof of harmony or disharmony is very easily demonstrated in the practices given to the talib from the very moment of his taking Bayat. Perfection is only the natural harmonious result of Bayat followed through to its highest state.

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Githa with Commentary

Series II: Number 2

GITHA: When talking about optimism and pessimism, I should say that there are times when the conditions do not allow man to be hopeful, even if by nature he was optimistic.

TASAWWUF: The conditions that are not hopeful are of two kinds, those of the affairs of the world and those of the affairs of oneself. The world is what it is because the general conditions are

determined according to certain laws; in other words they are from a certain point of view predetermined, and this is even true of the fate of man who allows himself to be drawn into the maelstrom of affairs. Then he rises and falls with the waves of circumstance.

But the man of will often makes his course independent of the general currents. He fights to blaze his own trail and he tries to rely upon his faculties, whatsoever they be, to help him in his everyday life. Nevertheless whether he takes the course of the generality or tries to work out his own salvation alone he is quite subject to rise and fall, to success and failure.

Even the spiritual man who may have gone another step beyond the willful person, even the one whose insight enables him to recognize the Divine Will in all actions, does not always see the favorable. In mental affairs even as in the states of weather, there are day and night, sun and fog, clouds and rain and dew and all conditions. The wise therefore strive first to see clearly and then to take advantage of the state of affairs. This is very far from fatalism, for it is not a surrender to what one cannot overcome; rather does the sage, like the skillful general, learn all about the terrain and surroundings before conducting his battles.

GITHA: The one who is placed in a situation where everything seems to stand against his prospect in life cannot keep his eyes open, see the condition, and at the same time have an optimistic view.

TASAWWUF: When faced with unfavorable circumstances some close their eyes and refuse to view facts and call this optimism. All the false prophets of all ages have taken this attitude and in this respect man has not changed very much since ancient times. When he is selfish he does not wish to accept the inevitable in a complacent manner. No doubt some Musselmans have gone to the other extreme in accepting all things as from God; this is excellent in cultivating inner peace but it does not lead to progress and improvement, and as a result, the Islamic countries fell into a state of lethargy except in a few instances.

GITHA: When the conditions in life go against, and everything stands in opposition, it is most difficult for one to have a hopeful attitude in life.

TASAWWUF: This is the test which makes a sage or breaks a man. Now how can one become a sage in the midst of turmoil? The answer is that that is often the time when man learns wisdom; he cultivates knowledge when he has ease and self-control, but wisdom often comes suddenly under duress. Therefore it is well to know this: **When the material conditions are unfavorable for advancing in the material aspects of sadhana they are often most favorable for achieving success in the spiritual aspects of sadhana.**

This is both opportunity for success and surrender to God's will. It is not necessary to fight against cosmic currents. No doubt those who go on the path of the Master have to fight always. Therefore they become indifferent to the state of earthly affairs, and sometimes it is harder for them when there is prosperity than when there is adversity because man often does not listen when he is well fed. From this point of view therefore the so called adversity is, so to speak, a chastisement, or

better a chastening.

Therefore it is not wrong to withdraw a little from earthly struggles and practice more meditation or even perform Khilvat. This is not to be regarded as withdrawal from the world so much as a preparation to carry on the battle in the world, whether for oneself or for others, in the most practical manner. It is not always necessary to have concentrations, but prayer and meditation are useful at all times.

If man is jealously regarding the will of God, every time adversity appears, in whatever form it appears, whether to oneself or to others or to the whole world, it is wise to retire a little and ask of oneself or ask of God, what is the trouble? What has to be done? What mistakes have been made? And as one grows more sensitive surely the answer will come to the heart and this answer will always be a true one.

Therefore while adversity is not the season for optimism or for worldly success, it can be the time for great inspirations. Inspirations mostly come through pain and again from these inspirations one draws both the wisdom and the knowledge which will help himself or the generality to rise above the disturbing conditions. But this all is a great process which sometimes takes considerable time, and for that reason patience is always practiced, and practiced still more, so that one sooner or later discovers the illusion in both success and failure and this discovery marks the greatest advance along the path of Sadhana.

GITHA: Outwardly, the conditions stand against belief, inwardly the reason supports the conditions, for reason is a slave to all that stands before it. Therefore, if under such circumstances an optimistic person no longer shows optimism, he is not to be blamed.

TASAWWUF: Optimism rises from the sunny disposition in man. You will therefore often discover that these people breathe more in the right nostril than in the left and that is also one reason why the right handed persons were thought to be more blessed than others. Nevertheless when these people lack insight and they feel that the turn of affairs is unfavorable, they are often put to confusion. If they speak optimistically they know they are not true to themselves, and if they speak otherwise, they go contrary to their wishes for they love brightness and cheer. So they often become silent or even sour.

To avoid this state, one has to learn the optimism of the heart rather than the optimism of the head. The optimism of head comes from the sphere of time, that from the heart from eternity. They may manifest similarly but their basis is quite different. The optimistic head cannot change conditions, it can only reflect them or try to do that, but the optimistic heart, especially that of the sage, can actually change the face of the earth, bringing light out of darkness, comfort out of turmoil, tranquility out of disturbance.

GITHA: No doubt the one who, in spite of all conditions, against and in spite of his reason, helpless to find a way, still strikes the path of hope, is much more advanced than the pessimistic soul; for

he, whether he knows or does not know, is holding the rope which is attached to Heaven and which is the only source of safety.

TASAWWUF: Pessimism is of two kinds, one of which seems to be natural, although it is not, and the other which has come from the loss of hope. The first kind of pessimist has not become so because his soul or true nature was that way. Very often he is the child of pessimistic persons or his early training or environment or bad nourishment or treatment made him that way. In other words he became pessimistic under conditions over which he had not the slightest control for he was then negative to other persons; he had to obey them or serve them.

These persons are greatly to be pitied, for they have never known what hope is and really they have never known what love is. It is often difficult to awaken them, but once the spark of love touches the heart they can become very good people. Nevertheless they differ very much from those persons who have lost heart and fallen into pessimism, they have lost hope and fallen into despair and they have memories which stand in the way of restitution, they have reasons which stand as obstacles on their path.

The one who has been betrayed, who has been deceived, who has been robbed or mistreated, he begins to lose his faith in mankind and as this goes on and on he becomes very pessimistic. What was lacking was faith, he did not have faith in God and he did not have faith in himself. He put his trust in another and when the other failed, he made the other's failure his own. For it is the nature of the pessimist to share failure in a psychological sense just as it is the nature of the optimist to have a share in the good things of life from the psychological view.

GITHA: This rope is the faith and trust in the greatness and power of God which is within. And however much things may seem to be against, yet his faith in God can turn all things in time in his favor.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, all disturbances, all storms, all tribulation, no matter what the source or nature, are temporary, they do not last forever. There are some diseases which bring immunity against themselves so they cannot recur. So are the pains of life. There are some pains, the very nature of which protect one against the contrary condition, and there are pains which bring such lessons and in the end such strength that they can be endured and no longer felt as pain. For pain is at least partially psychological and by inner control man can rise above the disturbance.

When there is faith in God, man realizes the temporality of things, he knows no state can persist and that sooner or later he will be relieved. And if we actually view life, we can see that even the earth itself passes through such phases, that pain or adversity often bring such inspiration to humanity that at the next stage of civilization he rises higher than before. So in all this the goodness and wisdom of God are paramount.

And what is true of the generality is even more true of the individual. For every person can quickly change to a state of perfect faith in God, and if nothing else, this brings the inner peace which

either terminates the adverse state of affairs or brings such self-control that man may rise to mastery. It does not matter how this is done, but the Sufis, by their daily practices, demonstrate their faith and hope that man can share in the holy communion which is ever before him.

GITHA: It is denying what one does not wish to happen, even to the moment that the happening is knocking at the door, and still deny. That person will turn that happening into something that he desired. Misfortune will turn into good fortune, disease will turn into health, and death will turn into life.

TASAWWUF: There is no end to the good which may arise out of the pure state of optimism which arises from man's dependence upon God. For the seer knows the law whereby events come to pass, and by observing approaching circumstances, through proper concentration and prayer, he can avert them. For example if there are clouds in the sky, he can prevent a storm by his concentration so that there is either a light rainfall or the water falls in the high mountains where it does no harm.

The sage is often able to affect the affairs of the world by a word; the power of the word is inestimable. If one wishes a certain affair to happen, and mentions it, it is possible that it will happen. By the same principle one should avoid speaking of things that he does not desire; by the silence of mind there is destruction of evil or undesirable thought and by senseless speech ill luck often befalls a man. For it is every breath which brings something from heaven to earth and the thoughtless man brings his own sorrow.

Therefore in the spiritual life there is something that may resemble suggestion and yet it is not exactly suggestion. For man through his wisdom can bring success or satisfaction to himself or another. By facing evil or opposing to the end that which he does not desire; or contrariwise by holding firmly to the thought that he desires to see materialized, it is possible for man to become the master of his fate, and by recognizing his responsibilities, steer the ship of life on its proper course.

This may be called self-suggestion and it includes self-suggestion. It is the best form of appealing to oneself, and it is by watching over one's own speech and thought, as well as one's actions that man can do most good to himself or another.

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Series II: Number 3

GITHA: There is no such thing as impossible.

TASAWWUF: Things are formations of atoms and vibrations. Formations of atoms are called objects, or bodies, or sometimes the word “things” is applied; these always belong to the realm of space. Formations or groupings of vibrations are not always called “things” but combinations of objects, or of atom objects and vibrational manifestations in time as well as in space, are called events.

Now whether we think of atomic bodies or of vibrations or of events or of any combination of them, we are producing some phenomena in the mental world, and this production is automatically a possibility. If we were in the mental world, as after leaving Nasut we shall be, we would find a very close relationship between the thoughts and events. If what is thought is possible, then the parallel event is possible.

The same is true of the imagination that it often causes affairs to occur or new forms to appear. Even though the imagination may be dealing with very subtle vibrations, nevertheless these are realities on their own plane. Even fantasia are to a certain extent real. It is true that on earth thought-forms do not appear directly as material objects because there are very definite laws governing each world as well as the relations between the various worlds. The cosmos is one of order and harmony. But so soon as the mind entertains an idea, that immediately and automatically makes it a possibility, and while it may not be manifest to the eye, even the slightest spark of thought produces a life-force which is somewhere, somehow a reality and operates on some plane.

GITHA: All is possible. Impossible is made by the limitation of our capacity of understanding. Man, blinded by the law of nature’s working, by the law of consequences which he has known through his few years life on earth, begins to say, “This is possible and that is impossible.”

TASAWWUF: This is a fallacious idea which judges possibility or impossibility by the ability of man. No doubt a few years back it was impossible, in a certain sense, for man to fly in the air, or travel far beneath the surface of the ocean and live, or move at rates of tremendous speed in certain complex engines. One age after another has exploded the fallacies of the previous era, and yet mankind goes on and on regarding some things as impossibilities, after he has given thought to them.

GITHA: If he were to rise beyond limitations, his soul would see nothing but possible. And when the soul has risen high enough to see all possibility, that soul certainly has caught a glimpse of God.

TASAWWUF: The ancients often based the apology for their religion upon the miracles purported to have been performed by their saints and leaders. Now there is no doubt that some marvelous phenomena have resulted because of the activities of the wise or clever, but what is a miracle? What we call an event is something which has happened, or is capable of occurring. There are

events which occur today which could not have taken place years ago because the knowledge of men was more limited.

What is true taken physically is also true metaphysically. Man may not know the law whereby Jesus drove obsessing spirits from the bodies of human beings into the bodies of pigs. It has been called a miracle but it is the natural working of psychic law which has not been studied very much. When people know the psychic laws as they know the physical laws, they will have learned that Jesus was not trying to produce any miracles. However as his knowledge attracted more people than his personality did, Mohammed refrained from exhibiting even the smallest part of his occult wisdom with the result that his personality in the end attracted more than any faculty which he may have possessed and this was the secret of his success.

Of course every marvel that has been reported is not necessarily a miraculous event and we are not to believe all the tales that have been told of the Hebrew rabbis or the Hindu yogis or Christian saints, or even of the Sufis. Many of these tales have arisen from the minds of people, who themselves were not very learned and often quite fanatical. Nevertheless if we make a thorough and detailed study of the lives of such personalities as Krishna, Moses, Solomon or Jesus we shall discover that they had a form of knowledge which has since been withheld from humanity in general.

Sometimes this manifested as psychic phenomena, sometimes as occult demonstration, sometimes it was a mystical experience. The lines between these is not always clear, but most true psychic power, no matter how unusual, is demonstrated without any change of personality or change of consciousness; in occult manifestation there must be great unity of will, while in mystical experience, the personality is submerged to a greater or lesser degree in the personalities of spiritual beings or even into the heart of God Himself.

But all this is within the realm of possible and not only are many unusual occurrences possible, they may be quite natural. The temptation of Jesus was natural, Moses holding up his hands and winning the battle was natural, the manifestation of Krishna to many Gopis was natural, and Solomon learning the language of the birds, that also was natural although very unusual.

This should make us realize how little we have learned compared to what we might learn, how little we have done compared to what we might do, how little we have experienced compared to what is before. And this should bring us humility before God and before those who have served Him best and most. But it should also give us hope, that all our failures mean nothing, that there are many opportunities before us, and in the endless life to come, all our desires and hopes will become realizations, even realizations that will be most helpful. For behind every wish, no matter how selfish, there is a tiny spark of love and goodness and although covered, there will come a time when it will appear on the surface and then man will pass beyond the limits of impossibility.

GITHA: They say God is all-mighty; and I say, God is all-possible. Possibility is the nature of God, and impossibility is the art of man.

TASAWWUF: Yes, God is Almighty. He can not only do much or all that we say is impossible, He can even cause to occur events of which we have never taken thought. For just as what we may conceive impossible seems far beyond what we hold possible, so that which we cannot conceive is far beyond that which we think is impossible. And there is no learned man but who will admit, if honest, that sometimes in his life he has come face to face with that of which he had hitherto no conception.

At the same time it is true that God works in a certain fashion; His Ways may be beyond understanding, but they are not haphazard, for He is the perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty. And if we can reach that condition whereupon we can study the manner of God, we will begin to comprehend His Wisdom. For when God acts, His goodness is paramount and His wisdom evident. Yet if He is to act upon earth, He selects an earthly instrument, and if He acts in heaven, He selects a heavenly channel. On each plane He performs what He will perform in accordance with the laws and harmonies of that plane. Otherwise He would be destroying the very plane.

Nevertheless it is true that the influence of the higher plane is greater than the lower, and from the worlds above a strong influence is exerted over the worlds below. So what may appear impossible upon earth, God performs first in Malakut, and if it is impossible to do something in Malakut He exerts His will in Jabrut, and from Jabrut the influence touches Malakut and from Malakut the earth. So with God is everything possible.

GITHA: Man goes so far, and cannot go any further.

TASAWWUF: Because by man we usually mean that supreme mental creature who is permitted to manifest also upon earth. He has power upon earth of which he may know and he sometimes has power in Malakut of which he does not know, and usually his influence does not go beyond Malakut. But supposing it is true that he can for some reason or other reach a state—and this is possible—that he has control in Jabrut, that his efforts in Jabrut have the desired effects in Malakut and Nasut, nevertheless that is as far as he can go, for beyond Jabrut, it is God alone who exists; the man above Jabrut is no longer man, he becomes the very Being of God.

GITHA: Man makes a flower out of paper, giving it as natural a color as possible, yet he says it is not possible to make it fragrant, for he has his limitations. But God, Who is the Maker of the flower and who is the Giver of the fragrance, has all power, and man, who is weakened by his limitedness, becomes more and more limited the more he thinks of it. In this is created the spirit of pessimism.

TASAWWUF: It is probably true of all pessimists that they know nothing of divine realization. It is hardly possible to have a grand mystical experience and remain a pessimist. Such a one has only seen the light of the sun; he has not seen the light beyond the sun and sometimes he gets into such a condition that he shuns even the daylight. This is a great pity and it reveals the shadow over the soul, for every soul in its natural condition feels the attraction of the sun in the sky.

Now while man, as man, may have influence only in three planes, there is a state and condition which can be reached, which has still greater possibilities. Even if it be true that there are many planes and sub-planes in the cosmos, nevertheless there is a place or station above them when diversification no longer exists, where unity is manifested in some manner or other. And it is possible for the spiritual man to reach such a place, and when he comes there and finds himself at the threshold of God, then he has acquired self-mastery, he has control over the ego and that shows he also has control over the non-ego, for every man who is master of himself is also master of his non-self.

What is the non-self? It is composed of everything which at first hand does not appear to be part of oneself. And yet it is not always easy, from the standpoint of the lower ego, to determine what is self and what is not self. For nufs, being a blind concentrate, does not investigate and it is also through pain and tragedy that one gets a larger portion of himself, and then he increases his idea of ego. And yet the wise know that what we call ego and non-ego are illusions, born out of the ego, which does not know its own nature and has substituted a false, but ever changing concept of itself and regarded that as the true being.

But in hal one cannot say, "This is I and that is not I;" such ideas are foreign to hal. And on the higher side, one will find through communion with God and unification that all things come under one's control. It is because of such a principle that the spiritual hierarchy manifests upon earth and operates thereon. They are personalities who are instruments of God. At least one of them must have had that realization which brought him into divine consciousness. Thus he has overstepped limitation and through him the hierarchy is able to affect the decree of God's will upon earth.

And from this point of view, all goodness reaches the earth from God through willing instruments. It is thus that His mercy appears; it is only when there are no willing instruments among men that His severity is manifest.

GITHA: Man who is conscious of God Almighty, and who in the contemplation of God loses the consciousness of his own self, inherits the power of God, and it is in this power and belief that the spirit of optimism is born.

TASAWWUF: This is experienced in many fashions. First there is the degree wherein one passes through many stages and remains sober thereafter, and this is regarded as highest and best. For then one consciously serves God as Pagambar or Message Bearer. It is not only the special messenger of God who is Rassoul or Pagambar, but every person who reaches the highest states, even for an instant, and then comes back with some revelation, is worthy of such an appellation. And it is probably true that there is always at least one such soul on earth, for as Mohammed has taught, God has never left humanity without a guardian.

Then there is the state of intoxication, when one has so felt the love of God that he has been overwhelmed. He drinks in the spiritual life as if it were wine. And it is this form of experience which has inspired so much of the Sufi poetry and which has been so sought by many mystics of the East

and West. It has many advantages in the cultivation of personality but it is not always so helpful in Sadhana as one not only gives up his will, he gives it up without considering that it may be God's will that he take it back again and function in normal consciousness.

The Nabi means, from one point of view, one who is intoxicated by God. But not every prophet is of this type; very often the Nabi has to be a sober man. Yet it is probably true that every such a one has experienced sukr; it is only natural and normal. Only he comes out of his intoxication and returns to sobriety and in Sadhana that means that he has retained the power of God after he has returned to his usual state, whereas the intoxicated soul, who can be blinded in his intoxication, does not always retain this power after coming back to earth-consciousness.

Of course for those souls who have not reached the highest degrees, there are ways by which God-power can manifest, and that is through the spiritual practices. This impresses one step by step and stage by stage with the power, wisdom and majesty of God. In the devotee this power is often manifested unconsciously, while in the sage it may be manifested consciously. This is because to be a sage, one has to know Kashf, that is, have deep insight or intuition, which attunes one always to the will of God; while the devotee, lacking knowledge, nevertheless may be a channel for divine love. Therefore the paths of the sage and devotee have sometimes been respectively called the path of wisdom and the path of love.

But they are both sub-branches of the path of Sadhana. Whether one is conscious or unconscious, one has risen to full attainment, and either sage or devotee may develop to the grade of saint, master or prophet, in full possession of all faculties, spiritual and material, and in full service to God, humanity and self.

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

Githa with Commentary

Series II: Number 4

GITHA: The secret of the working of the whole universe is in the duality of nature. In all aspects of nature, these two forces are working, and it is the working of these two forces which balances life. Therefore, in attainment, not only power, which manifests as enthusiasm or action, is sufficient, but besides power, enthusiasm, knowledge and the capability of working is necessary.

TASAWWUF: Most people do not realize that all attainment is really attainment by God. It is God

who attains and it is man who is the instrument of God in the attainment. Now this can not always be felt, and therefore man has been permitted to grow consciously, so that the spiritual activity of God and the spiritual development of man appear as one and the same thing.

Wisdom is the principle which appears as the opposite of power, and these two forces are known as Jemal and Jelal. The principles of them are taught in Sufi mysticism and by the knowledge of them man learns both how to act and when to act. So when this knowledge is applied in Sadhana, one experiences little difficulty.

To explain the four principles of power, enthusiasm, knowledge and capability of working: Power arises from the Jelal aspect of life and gives great strength. This may appear as strength of body, of mind, of will or of heart, the last being the same as love. Will is practically the same as love, and will is the manifestation of Jelal in the state of sobriety. Under the spell of intoxication enthusiasm is developed, and it is this aspect of Jelal which is most in conflict with Jemal. For if one is carried along by enthusiasm he is either lacking in knowledge or else he is ignoring the knowledge.

Knowledge in this sense is the Jemalic principle applied to particular circumstances. It is wisdom when it is present in the universal sense; it becomes knowledge when applied. Wisdom balances power so that it can be utilized properly. In concentration these two forces harmonize on the mental plane, and in the applied science of Sadhana they are made to harmonize on the physical plane and this is done through the capability of working.

What is meant by this working? It is the principle that man must carry his efforts on to the physical plane in some form. Sadhana is completed on the physical plane so long as man lives on earth; it is only after he has withdrawn from earth that it may be objectively applied in the thought-world. It is not enough to have power or wisdom, they are to be applied in experience and this is the meaning of work in this instance. It is not the lazy man who can master his desire, it is he who is capable of putting his thought into activity, his ideal into action; he is the master in life.

GITHA: Very often a person fails to obtain success with all his enthusiasm and power and will, and the reason is that either by the power he has he pushes along his object like a ball, or with his strength he hammers the rock, which he really needs as a whole and not in pieces.

TASAWWUF: Power and enthusiasm unchecked have the tendency to break down the good achieved by patience. No doubt patience is a faculty which does not of itself bring joy, which is not usually associated with inspiration and intoxication. Yet what we call enthusiasm is of two natures, one arising out of the spiritual state which is a holy enthusiasm (the word "enthuse" originally meant "to fill with the divine spirit"), which comes through some inner realization and which expands the personality without focusing the attention upon any particular thing. The other form of enthusiasm is that which comes from the intoxication of life and the objects of experience.

Now despite this, enthusiasm has its value. It gives one the impetus which results in activity, it destroys inertia, it starts things. Patience is not needed at the start, enthusiasm is needed. It is the

match used to light the fire, it is the force required to commence the motion. Patience is a faculty which continues the rhythm thus started, for too much enthusiasm would alter the rhythm, and making the motion faster and faster in the end brings destruction.

Therefore in Sadhana we have to use the various principles and keep them going in equilibrium. They are all valuable, and will-power, combined with patience and applied in activity, is sure to bring the results desired.

GITHA: Power is no doubt most necessary in attainment, but in absence of knowledge, the power may prove helpless. By power I mean power in all aspects, the power that one possesses in the outward life and the power of mind and body.

TASAWWUF: Power is needed in concentration to control, direct and fashion the atoms and vibrations of the mental plane. By the proper use of power one wields the forces of mind in such a way that not only are the ideals of attainment brought nearer to one, but the mind becomes in each instance a more perfected instrument.

Then this concentration attracts to one the object on the outer plane. Continuous thought always bears its fruit, and power hastens the day of its coming. Only there is the danger of early maturity; for that reason patience is also needed, but patience without power may lead to fatalism and the fatalist, however virtuous he be, accomplishes nothing on the path of Sadhana.

GITHA: It is the power of mind which is called willpower. No doubt, many with knowledge but lacking power also meet with failure.

TASAWWUF: People of the Jelali temperament are often likely to exert too much power or exhibit too much enthusiasm. This expenditure of power is apt to be devitalizing while enthusiasm can be very blinding. On the other hand the Jemali people, whether wise or learned, kind or clever, are not always practical. They may know much but through the habit of not transforming knowledge into action they do not achieve success.

On earth goodness alone will not bring success. If that were so, it would be the good people who would be in control. But control requires power also; therefore for a Jemali to attain success, it is necessary for him to attain balance first. The Jemali need not become a Jelali, he need not destroy any part of his nature; he should add to his treasury of merits by attaining balance for balance is the veritable key to success.

GITHA: If an object is pulled from both sides, by power and by knowledge, then also there will not be a success. It is the cooperation of these two powers which is the secret of all success.

TASAWWUF: Now to make Jelal and Jemal cooperate there must be the unity principle. The Sufi invocation is so worded that its repetition audibly or mentally influences the mind to enter into a state wherefrom failure will be removed. There can be no failure in the life of one closely attuned to

God and His instruments. And this principle is true whether applied to holy things or mundane things, whether used in the spiritual life or the material life.

All faculties have their benefits although all may not always be needed. The wise therefore do not attach supreme importance to qualities (sifat), they rather attach supreme importance to the Supreme Being under whatever condition He may be manifesting. No doubt in a group, especially in a fraternal group, in a brotherhood, all these faculties may be needed by being perfected, each within some individual or small group. At the same time it is true that once one has attained to God consciousness, all the treasures of the spirit are his, and if he be a Jemali, through his love for God he will attain the will-power, and through his attachment to God he will receive the wisdom.

Therefore it may be said, in a certain sense, that on the path of Sadhana, the perfection of the Jemali is not to become a saint, but to become a master, while the perfection of the Jelali is, with respect to Sadhana, to become a saint. Yet this is only necessarily true in attainment, it is not true in every respect of the other aspects of the spiritual life. The saint is a saint and the master a master, only in acquisition balance is needed to achieve success and in Sadhana the character must be rounded out to fulfill the attainment. For it is always by perfecting the self that the Sufi wins his battle in life.

GITHA: Success, be it of material character or of some other nature, is always a success. Success, however small, is a step forward to something great, and failure, however small, is a failure; it leads to something still worse.

TASAWWUF: Therefore it is always taught that there must be success. The talib is urged to discover the secret of success whether in his own life or that of another. There is no person, hardly, no matter how many his failures, but who has had an item of success. There was a secret for it, and most often that secret of success was in one of four qualities: power, enthusiasm, knowledge or patience.

If all these qualities are absent, especially in the talib, it is well that he be given special moral instruction. To the moral instruction practice in both meditation and concentration are necessary, as well as Zikr for enthusiasm. Then by the constant fidelity to these practices the qualities awaken in his personality. No doubt the weak man or woman will also be lax in the practices. The only cure for this is extreme patience on the part of the teacher and then the sympathy of the pupil for the teacher will serve to awaken patience in him and this will be the first step forward toward Sadhana.

Thus there are four kinds of Sadhana: material, mental, moral and spiritual. Moral Sadhana is chiefly for those who have met with failure in life and when they have increased this magnetism they will gain the strength and sometimes the knowledge necessary for their success in life.

Now the opposite condition, failure, is sometimes due to the difficulties of life. Man is not always to blame for his failure and the wise do not blame the ignorant. At the same time failure never helps one to rise in life; it brings problems and these problems remain unsolved even after man leaves

earth. If he has not succeeded here, he will carry his problems along and have to face them elsewhere. Therefore the cultivation of success in life produces a quality which is of value also in the life to come, while failure to gain this quality here means that one must seek for it in the hereafter and continue the search until he enters the stream of success.

GITHA: Success must not be valued from its outer value. It must be valued from what it prepares in oneself. And failure, however small, makes an undesirable impression upon one's self.

TASAWWUF: Not only are power, enthusiasm, knowledge, and patience needed in Sadhana but every success brings an increase in one or more of them. Increase in power is good when it means increase in magnetism and widening of one's sympathy. But if the power is concentrated, there may be too much power, and the success in Sadhana which brings moral loss is not a success. To prevent too great growth of power, repetition of Wazifas or of Salat are helpful.

Enthusiasm is even more dangerous for the intoxication at the end can turn success into failure. Praise to God is the best means of controlling enthusiasm. This quality is needed at the beginning of a venture, and sometimes in the middle, but at the end it can become blinding. So all success should be followed by praise to God and this praise often helps one along to the next success.

Increase of knowledge or of patience are generally more beneficial, provided that growth in knowledge does not lead to conceit and growth of patience to lassitude. Man is not to be lazy, although his activity may be confined to the inner planes. But the spiritual devotee, even with all patience and knowledge, is not apt to be caught in the web, for when the love for God comes first it controls and perfects all qualities.

On the other hand failure always produces some psychic loss which results in an unfavorable impression and this in turn lessens the mental magnetism. To guard against this, it is wisest to perform Darood at the beginning and during some action, praising God (as in Saum) if there is success and repeating Salat or Khatum in case of failure and then, through self-examination (if one is advanced) or consulting with the teacher (if one is young in the spiritual life), one can learn the cause and thus learn to uproot the source of the failure.

GITHA: This shows how very necessary it is to keep the balance between power and knowledge. It is of a very great value to try and develop in life power and knowledge in attaining one's object.

TASAWWUF: It may be asserted in truth that the attainment of an object is only a step toward the greater attainment of either power or knowledge or both, and yet from the practical point of view it is also true that the increase of power and knowledge are most necessary for the successful attainment of material ends. These two are therefore reciprocal.

In the spiritual life we do not need to regard them as different. Sometimes it is necessary to gain something material and sometimes it is necessary to have success within, and sometimes the spiritual successes are, it would seem, to be for oneself and again at other times for God. In truth

every success is for God if man only knew it. Holiness in life consists of wholeness in life, when the mind has passed beyond the stage when it views the spiritual and material as worlds apart from each other. In the life in God all affairs are interlinked. Therefore it is not necessary to dissociate the moral and the practical; they become one, are one.

GITHA: There are two kinds of people who become tired of the life in the world. One who has risen above the world and the one who has fallen beneath the world. The former has attained his object; but the latter, even if he left the world, any other life would not satisfy him.

TASAWWUF: One who has risen above the world is a sage or adept. He has learned in principle all that life can teach him from the earth plane and although he may continue to remain in this world for any one of a number of reasons, it appears that he takes the opportunity of learning about the worlds within even while he is hampered by the dense covers of the earth.

The sage is marked by indifference. He may be a poor man in appearance or he may be very wealthy. His wealth may have come to him through gift or inheritance or skill or even through his spiritual efforts. But to him it is not a supreme treasure. He can often acquire more if he so desires. If one comes to him for aid, he may grant his wish and it all may be accomplished very quickly for he has control of all that is upon earth. Of him it may be said, "The meek inherit the earth."

But the other class of people who are tired of life upon the earth have really never awakened even to the physical life. They have thrown away their substance, wasted opportunities. This is due chiefly to extreme selfishness or blindness. It is very hard to help them. Grant a request and the person will ask a thousand more; he is agitated, concerned with a myriad unimportant details, and is afraid of life because he is afraid of himself.

And there is no need for it. The chief lesson to teach such a one is the goodness and mercy of God. Any other lessons will satisfy them only for an instant and yet they do not see goodness, cannot find mercy. This is because the seeds of these virtues have been hidden deep within their natures and they stand forever in their own paths.

GITHA: His renunciation of worldly things means nothing. It only means incapacity.

TASAWWUF: If we study the lives of the holy ones, we find in their teachings both the idea of poverty and the idea of benevolence. The Scriptures constantly warn the rich and yet they also teach how to share the good things of life. There is no wrong in it. Poverty is required lest man be blinded by riches, for of him who has been poor it may be affirmed that he may be blessed who remembers God in the days of opulence, and who, through this memory, continues well-tempered, kindly and sympathetic. Then his wealth becomes a blessing and his poverty a still greater blessing.

But those who have never succeeded, who have not the ability for achieving success, they fail in the world because they have failed within themselves. Such persons are not among the blessed

poor. For if all people could succeed, they would not necessarily interfere with each other. There is room for everybody's success, there is scope for everybody's opportunity, there is a chance in life for everyone and the spiritual lessons enable every person to find his way through all circumstances.

GITHA: It is the conqueror of the life of the world who has the right to give up the struggle of the world, if he wishes to! But he from whose hands the life of the world is snatched away by his fellowman and who is incapable of holding it, who cannot progress, who cannot attain in life what he wishes to attain, if he left the world it is not renunciation, it is simply poverty.

TASAWWUF: In the Christian book of the Apocalypse there is the revelation concerning the conqueror who succeeds upon earth and who is blessed in heaven. No doubt the sage will not distinguish between the rogue and the wealthy man who has succeeded by questionable methods; morally he may see their faults, but from the standpoint of Sadhana there is something to be said in favor of either of them, that both the rogue and the financier have in some manner cultivated qualities which bring a modicum of success. Therefore if one tries to reform such persons, one must always keep in view those qualities which have brought success, which are not of themselves evil—such as power of observation, concentration, single-mindedness, foresight, etc.—all these are valuable in the continued life and should not be uprooted when one is trying to help another along the way.

For it may be said that failure indicates lack of life, life has not been grasped and some opportunity lost. No doubt bad home environment, questionable methods of education, wrong philosophy of life or absence of any, economic and social hazards all contribute so that the failure may be blameless. Yet there is no condition from which man cannot rise and once the flame is kindled in the heart, the impossible becomes the possible.

GITHA: It is not by any means selfishness or covetousness to want to succeed in life, for by success man is inclined upward.

TASAWWUF: Every success carries with it the opportunity for a greater success because at that moment the psychic currents of the stream of life are carrying one forward. If at that moment one does not become too self-centered, if he grasps the principle of success without becoming too attached to the object of attainment, he may be able to go on immediately toward another success.

From another point of view the progress of the world depends upon the success of such individuals. No doubt there are men who are consciously inspired, who because of innocence or purity of heart have brought the blessings of heaven to earth. At the same time it is true that God is always searching the world to discover fitting instruments for the performance of His will, and for all divine purposes a successful man is best. That is why often we find rich men bequeathing large sums to the poor. It is not by their goodness that that is done—a rich man is not good because he gives away money for that does not mean goodness of heart—but at the same time it is true that he is serving God by performing God's will and if he is conscious of it and desires no thanks or

reward, then he is both a successful man and a good man.

GITHA: Only when, intoxicated by his worldly success, he closes his eyes to the further path, he stands still; and that standing still is like death.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the reasons for suicide, especially among the wealthy and powerful. When the opulent become selfish, instead of advancing from stage to stage they want to repeat the same victory in the same way. They think that is growth and it is really standing still.

How then should we advise the wealthy? The rich who are not on the path of God, who do not come to us, we can only warn; we cannot advise them but we can warn them. They nearly always live a selfish life and not only are they afraid of the populace they are often afraid of themselves. Why is this? It is because the heart within is crying, it is imprisoned, and all earthly possessions and power do not bring peace or satisfaction. They are seldom satisfied, and their condition, despite its glamour, is often quite pitiable.

For these people we can do nothing. Until they come to God we can only warn, warn like Jeremiah warned and as Jesus and Mohammed warned. Especially do we find many teachings in Qur'an on this subject and their study is very valuable. But to those wealthy persons who come for spiritual help, to them we can offer the fruits of wisdom and for those mureeds who happen to have a store of worldly goods, the knowledge of Sufism is open.

In theory at least, every person who takes Bayat offers himself and all possessions to God. Jesus said to the rich man, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor." But this need not be taken too literally, for giving without blessing is not giving, it is often wasting; it is giving with wisdom which is the blessing to the giver.

But from another point of view, it is not so much giving away one's goods as dispossessing oneself mentally on the path of Sadhana. And how is this done? It is done by limiting the wealth that one is to receive with respect to concentrating and working, and selecting an ideal of a higher sort. Suppose, for instance, a man desires to accumulate a million dollars. Then, when he has reached that point he should select another ideal, say to become educated or to patronize or study an art, to become adept in certain crafts. This gives him an opportunity for further expansion of personality. It does not stop him from getting more money and it will bring him more satisfaction.

That is to say, there is really no end to accumulation, but on each plane or with respect to any object of attainment, there is either a limit or else there comes a point when there is interference with the moral law, or, with respect to Sadhana, one may reach a stage where further action would be contrary to universal will. When that point is reached, the pain becomes greater than the pleasure and one way to avoid this pain is to select another object of attainment.

By this method one can increase one's interests in life and this means a larger view, a greater outlook and spiritual growth. This means giving and receiving with wisdom and also with power.

Then one is not standing still, one is seeking to open another door and can grow. Such a person will never desire suicide, will not suffer from nervous breakdowns and will not have to fear obsession or mental disturbances. He has the key to life and so will live in the truest sense.

GITHA: The many successful people whom we see in this world who do not progress spiritually, it means that they did not continue in the path of success.

TASAWWUF: The wealthy man, for instance, becomes interested in wealth. He does not know that it was his skill, his ability, his luck, his psychic power, his wickedness, his cleverness, his concentration, his friends or wife that brought the wealth to him. He is so much interested in the object of attainment that he never stops to think of the faculty that brought him the success and he does not give further scope to the faculty.

If a man has become wealthy because of his skill, if he has been successful because of his skill, he can learn to study the nature of his being and try to determine whether he cannot apply himself in some other path. He may find that it is only in one line that he can be successful, and this may be true for a little while, but with respect to the whole of life it is practically never true. Even the strongest financiers have had their failings and failures, and at the same time it is true that most of them have had a little success in something outside their direct business.

Sometimes it is after a man has been rich and lost his fortune and become poor that he discovers his ability and this is a good sign. He has been applying his faculties but he has not discovered himself, he has not come to himself, he knows very little about himself. With all his knowledge of the world he is therefore often a spiritual failure. So he loses his wealth, and this is fortunate when it happens to man while on earth for then he has an opportunity to discover his true worth. But if he clings to his wealth, if he is a miser, when he leaves the world he only enters his own hell, for his love has been that which is outside of himself and he makes himself miserable when he has not his money.

GITHA: In reality, all roads lead to the same goal; business, profession, science, art, religion, or philosophy. When people do not seem to have arrived at their proper destination, it is not because they have preferred one path to another path, it is that they have not continued on the path.

TASAWWUF: Just as it is true that many successful financiers come to the end of their life in failure because they have not grown in Sadhana, in the experiences which call forth their inner faculties, so many artists are failure for the opposite reason. They say they cling to their art and this is a misfortune for life is greater than art, greater than business, greater than momentary success.

No doubt the concentration of the artist should be upon his own work. When he talks about poverty, he is introducing another idea, he is actually shutting the door upon himself. He must be indifferent to wealth or poverty but he must not close the door to money. And after he does his work successfully, he should open his heart and this will help him. No artist can continue in poverty, for this deprives him of growth, and there are many self-made failures who take as much pride in their

failings as others do in success. And it is not that poverty is wrong, it can often be a virtue, but the man who becomes attached to failure and is conceited, is also making his own hell which may be very different from that of the miser, but still it is a hell.

Hell is any state or condition where life is smothered. It may be experienced on earth, it may be man's portion in the afterlife. It comes from lack of self understanding; man becomes the slave of desire and this is the truest failure in Sadhana. To continue on the path of Sadhana, the doors must be kept open, and more and more opportunity must be given to oneself and others for life and growth. This is really one of the secrets of Sufism, that the whole course of spiritual training has been devised to give greater and greater scope to the personality.

GITHA: Very often, people lacking knowledge and with strength more than necessary, destroy their own purpose; while wanting to construct, they cause destruction.

TASAWWUF: Power is connected with Jelal, and when this is used constructively it sets into operation the fire principle which is also a principle of growth. When used contrary to cosmic law (dharma) it sets up that activity which the astrologists connect with the planet Mars. In the nostrils, this is the breath downward in the right nostril, which may be called a snort, and is present in anger and also sometimes in hatred.

This is the principle of war and disturbance as well as shortsightedness. The Martians, so to speak, would be very active, but often to no purpose and uncontrolled activity always leads to destruction, first through the increase of rhythm from the mobile stage to the chaotic stage, and second, through the lack of mental cooperation, so that thought and action are kept apart.

To guard against this, there are lessons in self-protection which may be practiced by everyone and they are very valuable both in helping one against another and also in purifying oneself, so that the soul can avoid this undesirable condition and state.

GITHA: The greatest fault of human nature is that every man thinks that he knows best, and when he speaks to another person, he thinks that the other knows half and when he is speaking about a third person, he thinks that the third person knows only a quarter. And some few who do not rely upon their knowledge, they are then dependent upon the advice of others. Therefore their failure or success or their being depends upon the advice of others.

TASAWWUF: Blindness of mind is the result of blindness of ego. Knowledge of mysticism prevents this as one who is very sensitive to breath will feel the thoughts of another and know whether he is producing harmony or causing disturbance. No doubt there are other methods by which one can discover the state of mind of a second or third person, as well as other means of avoiding disharmony and producing harmony, but the safest and surest course is through keeping the harmony with God. If followed this will aid one to avoid all of this sort of difficulty.

Reliance on another is of many sorts. There are credulous persons who may believe anything and

there are skeptics who do not want to believe. There are persons who will rely upon the printed word without any sort of criticism or examination, and there are suspicious persons who are never sure of themselves or others. In school and college the student follows the teacher or the textbook and in the spiritual life the talib follows the teacher. The child is dependent upon his parent and the employee and employer are each dependent upon the other in certain respects.

This shows the interdependence of man. At the same time we have to distinguish between those forms of reliance which prevent the soul from discovering life and those which give opportunity for self-expression. One who always depends upon another cannot grow, and yet one who does not take another at his word will never discover the meaning of love, the significance of life. This proves that man is related to man because this relationship itself is based upon some universal principle, which the Sufi discovers to be the Divine Principle.

No doubt the sage through his faculty of insight can tell immediately whether the work or thought of another is correct and thus he can rely in safety. And in the practice of fana-fi-sheikh as well as in the devotion of the child to his parents, there is dependence in love upon a greater person, one who has developed further in life, and this sort of reliance is always safe, always helpful, always beneficial.

GITHA: It is most difficult in life to have power, to possess knowledge, and together with it, to have a clear vision; and if there is any possibility of keeping the vision clear, it is by the keeping of balance between power and knowledge.

TASAWWUF: While dependence upon oneself brings power and dependence upon another knowledge, it is also true that with insight one may reach knowledge without relying upon any outer personality or force or object and at the same time increase in power. And yet it is also true that in the balance between power and knowledge one grows with respect to clear vision. That is to say, harmony between Jemal and Jelal is beneficial, and Kemal, when it comes through perfection, also develops both Jemal and Jelal.

Thus the principles of Sufism, although known as spiritual principles, can be applied practically in the daily life, so that every effort of man can be an effort toward God, toward self-illumination and spiritual realization.

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

Githa with Commentary

Series II: Number 5

GITHA: In worldly attainment or spiritual attainment, the first thing is to attain self-discipline. Many experience, and few know, that things go wrong when one's self is not in discipline.

TASAWWUF: What is this self-discipline? It is making oneself right with the world, in harmony with the cosmos. And how is this done? It is done by attuning oneself to God, or if one is considering it from the Buddhist point of view, with Dharma. For this is the same, only Dharma is the means and God is the goal, Dharma being the means to Godhood.

One only receives that to which he is attuned. If he is attuned to God he receives God and if he is attuned to misfortune, he receives tribulation. No doubt there are some gains through conscious effort and there are some through unconscious attunement. Therefore in self-discipline it is necessary to become conscious of what one is doing, to gain control, so to speak, over the body and mind.

To do this one performs certain exercises which are very valuable for every soul. No doubt man is subject to what he calls good-luck and ill-luck, but the adept sees these things as the natural effects of certain causes. Man may not be able to control the effects after he has aroused certain causes but it is most certain that he has control over causes. Therefore he pursues the path of morality which attunes him to the universal laws, and from both what might be called the selfish as well as the unselfish point of view, he strives to avoid all pain, harm and difficulty for himself or another.

GITHA: Those who give way to anger, passion, to emotions easily, they may seem for a moment successful, but they cannot continually succeed in life.

TASAWWUF: One reason for this is that in each emotion certain elements are present and certain ones absent. But an emotional state differs from a mystical state very fundamentally, as in anger one is the slave of the fire-element while in serving God one can be the master of the fire-element. In slavery one cannot change the master, the angry person remains in the fire and sometimes it is out of place to be in the fire, sometimes it is only wise to be under the water element or earth element and then the angry person cannot control anything, whether within or without himself, and he is most miserable.

By a knowledge of mysticism, besides all that one can learn directly from the breath, one finds the methods by which it is advisable to change the breath to keep the harmony with the existing conditions. Therefore sages cultivate indifference which makes it possible for them to accommodate themselves to all conditions. Besides enabling them to keep in harmony with all persons, it is valuable in that they can therefore avoid all the tribulation and pain which comes to those who are unable to control their emotions.

GITHA: Very often, misfortunes follow an illness or a failure, and the reason is that a weakness

gives way to another, and so a person who goes down, goes down and down and down. It is natural that a step one may take (goes) downwards, for the path of life is not even; but the wise thing is that if one step one has goes down, the next step may be taken upward.

TASAWWUF: It may be said for most people that they cannot control the world without. As hard as it may seem for a man to move the earth from its course, to alter its path through space and thus either interfere with or utilize the principle of physical gravitation, this is quite simple in comparison to controlling the mental karma and gravitation resulting from the mental and moral activities of humankind. Even a Buddha cannot change these directly; what he can do is to purify them to a certain extent, but to go beyond that would not be wisdom for it would be weakening the willpower of creatures and it is this willpower which can be of greatest service in the spiritual evolution.

Ordinarily man is so subject to mental gravitation, he starts to go down and cannot stop. Then he may become nervous and use tobacco or intoxicating drinks and when that does not help him he may even resort to drugs. These things do not destroy the causes of his trouble, they only weaken his willpower, that one faculty which God has given him whereby he may learn to control the source of his difficulties. And what is this source? It is nothing but his ego.

So if man has trouble it is often well to change his course in life, to change his habits, often to move from one place to another. Still more important is self-examination, to find out what is the trouble with one's own character, what is the source of weakness. For the center of weakness becomes, so to speak, a center of attraction for misfortune. This does not mean that willpower alone will help, but it is of great advantage, and when combined with wisdom and patience, man can learn to change his course in life.

No doubt it is very difficult to change certain habits. Then man will suffer pain. Pain cannot be avoided in the absolute sense, but it can be the means whereby its cause can be eradicated. Man can learn how to avoid much pain, and for this purpose the lessons in Ryazat have been given to man almost coming from the throne of God, to lead man back on the course to spiritual emancipation.

GITHA: It is no doubt resisting against the force that pulls one downward, but that resistance only secures the path of one's life.

TASAWWUF: Most persons feel that pulling against the tide is a failure, a source of failure. It is easier to go with the river than to work against the current. Nevertheless the nature of life is such that when man lives in a world where neighbor struggles against neighbor, where so much is done in the spirit of commercialism and competition, one does not always attain success by this method. But this does not necessarily mean fighting the world. No doubt fighting the world may bring a certain degree of willpower, but this is insignificant compared to the strength that comes when one faces oneself.

When one learns to swim at first he may be pulled under the water. The beginning of the struggle

of self with self is not very different. Even when one has been a failure, for the moment he seems to be a still greater failure, but the willingness to wrestle with one's ego gradually brings hidden power from within. However, for those on the path to God, the lessons prove to be so valuable that after a time one knows what to do in any given situation and the experiences of life bring strength and blessing.

GITHA: What generally happens is that man does not mind a little mistake, he does not take notice of a small weakness, he underestimates a little failure; and in that way in the long run he meets with a great failure.

TASAWWUF: Many persons have developed a conscience, which, although no doubt the product of one's own self, sets a standard which prevents them from falling down. A clever person may have very set principles and these can be of great use to him, but there can also come an occasion when such principles, instead of being a help, can become a hindrance. Therefore conscientiousness is not enough, it can only help one to a certain place and to get beyond that point self-surrender is also necessary.

Nevertheless the man with a conscience is much better off than the unconscionable person. For the last has nothing to prevent him from rolling down hill. As long as he is successful the psychic currents can carry him along, and sometimes he may be very powerful. But when failure comes to him he falls very rapidly and having wasted the strength of youth, he cannot always recover his equilibrium, so becomes worse off than he who may never have succeeded.

GITHA: The wise thing is, therefore, to whatever depth one has fallen, to fix one's eyes upward, to try to rise instead of falling.

TASAWWUF: There are two things to consider: what to do to help oneself, and how to assist another. For one's own self there are many spiritual practices, as well as the advice the teacher may give. If these are performed properly there is no absolute excuse for failure, although that does not mean that one is to be blamed. If the heart is attuned to God, if one knows how to discover God's will and then perform it, the result is success no matter what the apparent material fruit may be.

But in helping another there are other factors. First, one does not have to help another, for often when one gives too much advice it is a weakening of the will of another, it does not help the other to be his crutch. So we may consider at least four kinds of charity.

It is material charity when one gives to another food, clothing or shelter, when one gives another a present, or passes some material object to another person. It does not matter if one does this in the natural course of events or does it for some special reason, it is material charity only when an object is given, but it must be given with goodwill, otherwise it is a giving, but it is not a charity.

Moral charity is added when one offers hospitality, when one extends good fellowship, shows

kindness, offers consolation, tries to heal the heart of another. In moral charity something of love is offered, is given. But just as the mere giving of goods of a material nature does not constitute physical charity, so bestowing counsel or conferring with another does not signify moral charity.

To help another, one has to give of the ego whether it is in a moral or physical sense. If anything is done with the idea that it is more blessed to give than to receive, already it is not charity for one is performing a trade under the garb of charity. God is not a great merchant and Sufis do not pray to God for the sake of accumulating the wealth of the world. The prayers of the Sufis, however, make it possible to present a universal appeal to God in such a way that they include each kind of petition.

Mental charity is possible between teacher and pupil. It may include the presentation of facts and laws, but does not stop there. Teaching does not become charity until there is encouragement and advice given under example. Mental charity differs from moral charity in that the teacher must make an example of himself, whereas in moral charity the path is for the seeker, not necessarily for the sage. Thus the sage or saint may offer the moral charity while the Sheikh is the bestower of mental charity.

Spiritual charity is of a higher nature although it may include all of these. Its nature is self-sacrifice. In the Christian Bible it says: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son." Although we do not have to accept these words in the literal sense they give the idea, which is the essence of spiritual charity. This is only possible when the ego is laid down for the sake of God. So long as there is any reference to self, whatever else of good is present it is not spiritual charity. This is only possible when the personalities of the giver and receiver are merged in love.

GITHA: It is very interesting to observe that God or Heaven are always pointed to upward, although, in reality, God is everywhere and so is Heaven. And what makes one think that God is upward or Heaven is upward is that natural impulse, which is a divine impulse in man, which gives an inclination to rise above.

TASAWWUF: In the psychic law we observe that all movements upward are uplifting; they either raise the person or strengthen those before whom he is bowing. And this principle is used in Ryazat, especially in the movements of prayers. By this, praise to another may give a certain strength to another, but praise to God is most valuable to the devotee. Therefore the Message comes in order that people may praise God.

If we study the animal kingdom, we may observe that the mental alertness of creatures is increased in most instances as they are able to free themselves from the earth. The intelligent beasts are often tall and among the dogs we find the long legged ones generally more brilliant than the others, although the apparent sagacity of dogs is largely due to their association with men. Horses and elephants are naturally intelligent while the birds who fly in the air, who do not contact earth so often, have still more interesting capabilities.

There is no doubt that as man shows more interest in aviation either he will advance intellectually and spiritually by the modification of his environment, or conditions will change so that only the more advanced will control affairs. In some respects this will be a gain. But for the average person it is well to know, because of the shape of the earth, standing above the ground, rising upward, etc. all suggest expansion as well as growth.

This posture also represents freedom, for all creatures of earth are subject to earth. Therefore praise to God and the upward movements in Ryazat, whether in prayer or otherwise, bring freedom to body, heart and soul, and this freedom from law, from bondage, from physical gravitation, extends itself into the daily affairs of man. So the divine impulse in man is something which not only elevates heart and soul, it even brings potentiality to man in his everyday life to further his success there.

GITHA: And this shows that success, its attainment, is divine pleasure; failure and its experience is the divine disappointment.

TASAWWUF: For the mureed this gives one principle, that all his acts should be regarded as acts of God. It is very easy to become fatalistic and to fall back and say after every failure, "I resign myself to the will of God." Yes, resignation is excellent, but the wise always first try to discover the will of God before acting, and even to feel for the time that they themselves represent God in action. This is so important that it is more essential than any result. If one resigns oneself to the will of God before the action, that is resignation, Islam, but if one only resigns after the action, and especially after the failure, that is fatalism and the difference between the two is the difference between religion and fatalism, between selflessness and selfishness. Therefore it is beneficial always to resign first then act, speak or think. This gives the manner of the Sufi.

GITHA: People who blame destiny for their failure take the path of least resistance; but there are more difficulties in the path that appears to be of least resistance. For the man who struggles with life, his difficulties lessen as he goes forward. The one who takes the easy path, for him the difficulties grow more as he grows on.

TASAWWUF: This comes from a misunderstanding of the nature of will and destiny. God has given to man the will power that he might use it and gain mastery over the things of earth. The failure to use this power is the source of all failure. It is not success when the wind blows success to one, it is success when one can attain his object without recourse to the wind, even despite the wind.

Why depend upon any force outside oneself? The meaning of luck is that one obtains something through the intervention of natural forces. They may for the moment seem to be working in one's behalf but they never do continuously. Some persons resort to magical practices in order to control or appease the forces of nature, but the wise, recognizing God, resort to prayer.

If we study the psalms of Israel we can discover many instances where the devotee has not always had success, he is not always thanking God for some personal selfish gain. The devotee loves God

for His own sake and he is not a counting house official who reckons the goodness of God by personal returns. The true devotee offers his whole being to God, and this is the very core of success.

Therefore it is well to avoid depending upon fate or luck at all costs. It is only success when man puts himself into his task; if he waits for something and does not act he is making a purchase for which he must pay the price sooner or later and when this is taken out of his life substance, it is too much. The penance which he may have to undergo, the pain that he may later suffer, the tragedy he often has to face—all these are often too great a price to pay for a momentary gain.

GITHA: By this it is not meant that one should choose in life a path of more difficulties; by this it is only meant that in the path of attainment, difficulties must not be counted.

TASAWWUF: The wise see opportunity in every situation. Suppose one is going to obtain ownership of a certain piece of property. First he has to have finances and in his endeavours he will find many obstacles, unexpected bills, demands for funds from friends and creditors, little things that he has overlooked, and he will not always find the struggle easy. So many things that he has not noticed will appear in his path.

Then he will have to bargain for his property and he may have trouble in finding the land of the right size and convenient location at a cost he can afford. And even after that is settled there are legal matters to be faced, taxes and other questions, so that sometimes the simplest matters may become complexities. But what does it matter? Was man chosen to become an owner of property? No, it does not mean that. It means that life has brought an opportunity and that becomes an opportunity not only for an earthly gain but for a spiritual chance. The property is but the means, it is not the end and the faculties one has to develop, the patience one has to acquire, the skill one needs in transactions, these are the real attainments, these are the real gains, and the property is only the outer symbol of the inner state.

GITHA: Difficulties rise over his head who looks at them with awe, and the same difficulties fall beneath his feet who does not take notice of them.

TASAWWUF: By keeping the heart attuned to God one comes to the state where he looks at life almost as if he were a God, or at least a Bodhisattva. Jesus Christ said, "Ye are gods," which means that man has the opportunity to look at life while being upon earth, as if he were a superterrestrial creature and not a scion of earth.

There are some persons who complain of the weather, who feel pain or concern at every misfortune of themselves or others, who are shocked continually by the tragedies of life. They are not of much good to themselves or to others. They are the slaves of destiny. The wise, through the cultivation of indifference, actually become more seeing than others and recognizing the momentariness of pain, suffering and misfortune do not give vent to emotional outbursts. They practice self-control and this self-control is of greater value to themselves and others than anything

else in this life.

GITHA: The man who fails in the world, fails to attain to spiritual bliss also.

TASAWWUF: This appears to contain a contradiction, for all the wise have counseled against setting up treasures upon earth. But this is not so. They taught that man should set his heart upon the things of God and when he did that God would give him that reward which was greater than all the treasures of earth, for it included them along with many other blessings. Whereas if his concentration were for the wealth of this world, not only would man have to pay a greater price for it, but he would not be able to hold it, it would be holding him.

So it can better be said, that one who attains to spiritual bliss, he will succeed first in the worlds above, then in the worlds below. Only seeing the advantages of certain forms of attainment, he is able to gain the attainment in the world within, which he often finds more valuable than earthly gain. But if he desires earthly gain, it is his; the master in the heaven world is certainly the monarch of all that he surveys.

GITHA: Man is the king of his domain; his coming on earth takes away, bit by bit, his kingdom. During this trial he is tested, if he uses that human virtue which helps him to attain to the mastery over his kingdom.

TASAWWUF: In the mental world, where thought and action are more coordinated, the direct application of the will power to the daily interests brings an early result which is not possible on earth because of its denseness. Nevertheless man receives certain talents and he is expected to apply them in the life of earth. But in the dense world he finds that there is a space, time and gravitation process which makes it difficult for him to attain his desires, or even his needs. Besides that, in the world with so much competition man more often stands in the way of another man instead of helping him and this makes life harder.

The one who can apply himself to his task earnestly, faithfully and persistently no doubt gains the goal in the end, but often this is so difficult that he falls by the wayside. The great masters of wisdom have therefore tried to make life as easy as possible, only being wise, they know that strength comes more from self mastery than through trying to conquer the world by self-will.

GITHA: Whatever man's life, he will not be satisfied, for his soul's satisfaction is in the fulfillment of this purpose. The day when he arrives at that mastery, the day when he has gained the kingdom he has lost, he can say, "Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." And in this the fulfillment of man's being born on earth is accomplished.

TASAWWUF: Now we know that even those who have been successful in a material way do not find much happiness. The things they possess, wealth and power and fame and earthly honour do not always bring satisfaction and even when they do it does not assure him of his place. So he remains dissatisfied and sometimes is in a very unfortunate position because he cannot find the

cause of his uneasiness.

Now the law is that through man's control of his own inner being, he is able to master the outer world. The whole cosmos, in a certain sense, is within man and one who strives first to uncover the faculties of the heart world and the heart life, finds it possible to control his mind so that the spark of genius seems to burst into flame, and then with this new found power he is able to exert a great influence upon the affairs of earth, far greater than that of even the great among the worldly.

As this has been the practice and experience of so many mystics, the talibs are taught to walk the way of the wise. But if they perform the spiritual exercises which are given them, they will find this to be so, even though no one has taught it to them, even when they have not known it a little while back. So it is to help man that he is given practices, disciplines and routine, for by this it has been proven that he can most easily find the path to success.

GITHA: The question comes, what is it to be self-disciplined? It is to be able to say, "I can," and not "I can't." Of course, very often the words, "I can't," man uses what he does not think it wise or just to do. In that case it is different.

TASAWWUF: The ability of a sage is manifested in what he can accomplish and this is possible because he has recognized his own shortcomings and what he cannot do directly he is often able to accomplish through the instrumentality of another personality or through his control over the forces of nature. Of course control over nature may be nothing but an expansion of control over the self. Therefore instead of complaining at the weather it is wise either to accommodate oneself to it or to learn how to control it. Very often a person of high spiritual development may wish it to rain, and without his giving much attention to it, it may rain, and this may be the result of his wish.

Therefore the mystics are cautious concerning the use of speech and thought, lest unconsciously they bring that to pass which they would not want. For as one develops spiritually one's wishes more quickly come true, and the greater the attunement to God, the surer is it to happen that way, that one will gain a kind of success in life that he cannot always analyze and yet know it to be true.

So for a sage, it is not true that he cannot accomplish things which seem to be beyond the power of man. At the same time, from another point of view, he is not doing it, God is doing it, God is doing all, and he is helping to make God's action manifest. For possibility is the nature of God and impossibility belongs to man only.

But it is also true that there are moral inhibitions, and sometimes one will not do what he considers it unwise to do. It may even happen that he cannot do it, he can self hypnotize himself so to speak that he is unable to perform a certain action. In that case it is refusing the ego, and it is not wrong to refuse the ego.

GITHA: But when there is something of which he thinks it just, it is good, it is right, and he says, "I can't," it is then that self-discipline lacks. When a person says, "I can't tolerate, I can't endure, I

cannot bear, I cannot forgive,” all these are the signs of the lack of self-discipline.

TASAWWUF: For it is the ego which is foreseeing the difficulty or is unwilling to go forward. It is not the true self, for the true self, which is nothing but God, only sees possibility. Whatever the mind is concerned with, it is concerned with truth, according to the spiritual viewpoint, and this truth is reality and it can be realized in the daily life. So whatsoever the mind contains in thought, that is true also in action and to think about something and consider it impossible shows lack of unity within, lack of self-control, absence of peace. It is best that the mind entertains such thoughts at no time.

GITHA: In order to see this question more clearly, one must picture oneself as two beings, one the king and the other his servant. When one wishes, it is the king who wishes; and the part that says, “No, I can’t,” is the servant.

TASAWWUF: If one only knew it, every wish springs from the heart. It is like the life force, but it takes its color from the mind, it has no color of itself. From a certain examination it may be said that the sunlight is energy, it is not radiant light until it touches the earth and the earth’s atmosphere with its air and dust, then it manifests as light although it could manifest otherwise, in other forms of energy. So the life force is like a great light energy and when it passes from the astral plane to the mental plane it takes on the form it receives from the mental plane, and this is the change of wish into desire and passion.

Desire and passion are the wish, the wish being the individualized form of the will, coming toward manifestation. When this moves outward it is called desire and when it is more intimately connected with the ego it is passion, but the force comes originally from a spiritual source. But being covered by thought, it sees things as good or bad, desirable or undesirable, possible or impossible. Of course from the mental standpoint all spiritual things are impossible for the spirit can accomplish what the mind cannot, but from the spiritual view all mental things are possible; therefore the spirit in man can be a king and the mind in man can be a servant.

GITHA: If the servant has his way, then the king is in the place of the servant, and the more the servant has his way, the more the servant rules and the king obeys.

TASAWWUF: This happens whenever mind controls heart. Actually mind would never cover heart until it were allowed, but the ego often allows this and the result is that not only is the sway of the ego extended over the mind but even over the heart. Then a person may become hard-hearted or passionate or emotional. His heart is not free, and often it does not know it, and the servant dangles gifts before the king and the king is intoxicated with them and forgets his royalty. This is the tragedy of every human soul.

It is to arise out of this condition that the messengers of God have come to live among men, to set the example for them, to be among them and of them. They explain the kingdom of heaven which is within every man, so that every person can become a king in the truest sense, and by gaining

rulership over passion and desire, be able to accomplish what he will in the world without.

GITHA: Naturally, therefore, a conflict begins inwardly, and that reflects on the outer life, making the whole life misery.

TASAWWUF: Be sure that when there is trouble without there is also difficulty within. He who has found peace cannot be disturbed. It is of no value to speak about the sage, it becomes necessary to be a sage. Fortunate is he who sets up the wise as his examples, to become like them practicing self-control in thought, speech and action. Then when an obstacle is encountered, it first becomes necessary to find the inner difficulty and the more this is done, the less will be the trouble in the outer life.

GITHA: If a person be pious or good or religious, it makes no difference. If man does not realize the kingdom of God within himself, and realize his spirit to be king, he does not accomplish the purpose of his life.

TASAWWUF: This is the great obstacle encountered by many persons, both those on the path of God and the generality. So many have been given moral instruction but such instruction does not become teaching until it is expressed an example in the daily life. The Sufi morality is therefore not entirely the same as that of the world, for it is always practical rather than theoretical and it is sometimes better to be a sinner than hardened by one's goodness; it becomes dead.

The question is so often asked, Why do the good suffer? There is a goodness of life and there is a goodness of death and if any person thinks himself good, then he is not so in the eyes of God. For God created all persons, he fashioned them in so many manners, and if it appears that He desired so many kinds of persons, then it either must be that God is good, and many persons who are not considered good are, after all, good, in spite of human judgment; or else the human standard is correct, and then God is not all good.

Without trying to settle this point, it is most certain that God is all wise and that His judgments are far above man's judgments. It is then certain that goodness alone does not suffice, wisdom is also necessary, and if wisdom includes goodness it also includes its opposite. For if God is all in all, then His attributes include all possibilities. So the wise man, keeping his heart pure—which means keeping it fixed upon God and not upon his goodness or righteousness—is able to select in any given action or set problem, those qualities and attributes, which divine in origin, will lead him to success. For attunement to God is the secret of success.

We must therefore not judge our fellow men, but use them. Trying to find the good in them or the knowledge in them or the power in them, we can become the comrade or even the master of every one. Sometimes, like the saint, a slight suggestion may suffice, and at other times a command may be given; sometimes one may ask or even beg, sometimes one may tell or advise.

There is no one course of action to be rigidly followed. But there is an attitude which one must

adhere to and that is to keep the heart firm upon God. And to do that one must throw out every thought, every idea, every habit and face each new problem in purity and openness so that the impressions and inspirations which come from heaven may be one's own. This is gaining the kingdom of heaven which sooner or later brings mastery over all things in life and complete success in Sadhana.

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

Githa with Commentary

Series II: Number 6

GITHA: There are many in this world who push away the object of their attainment as a football, with their enthusiasm. They mean to take it, but without attention they push it on; and this occurs when one is too enthusiastic to attain a certain thing for which he has not made himself ready.

TASAWWUF: There is a danger in all enthusiasm that one may not maintain rhythm, and even when there is a certain degree of patience, the lack of rhythm interferes very much. It is this state of which it may be said that the self is not ready, the personality is not in a proper condition so that the attainment can be successfully accomplished.

This does not mean that the ardor of such a one should be dampened too much, for there is a certain energy in it that can be put to use. There are certain attainments which come with enthusiasm, but beyond that other faculties are necessary. With this class of people it is best first to discover and show them in what they can succeed and get them the feeling of success. If enthusiasm does not bring success in most instances, still it is sometimes necessary, as in athletic contests. But it is not always of value in the battles of life.

The fact is that enthusiasm is properly the offspring of success, not its parent. Then is not the time either for thought or action. One must first still the waves, not arouse them for the waves are more apt to carry the object away than to bring it to the shore.

GITHA: One must remember this in the path of attainment, that one must first feel strong enough to bear the burden of that which one wishes to lift. The wisdom which one sees working behind nature has intended and has arranged it so that every being and every thing will bear the weight that it is intended to bear.

TASAWWUF: One cannot avoid responsibility and succeed in this line. And after all, what is responsibility? It is willingness to face life and all that it may bring. By this willingness strength comes and through applying the strength in life the will in turn increases its strength, so that attainment is a task which covers all planes of life.

No one can advance far in this line who limits himself to the attainment or limits the attainment to himself. Each task is a means whereby the soul itself can accomplish that duty for which it was created. Initiation consists in taking a step forward in some unknown direction, and when one does this it means one is performing a task for God, which in the end can only mean an increase of success for oneself.

GITHA: Very often, man's ambition runs before his power of bearing. He, before thinking whether he is entitled to attain a certain thing, strives to attain it; and it is this which causes, very often, failure.

TASAWWUF: The cause of the failure is the self. If strength is lacking there are ways in which it can be developed. If wisdom is lacking, one may at least practice meditation before concentration and this itself is a sign of wisdom, for it is the manner of the wise. If there is a moral consideration, one will feel it if he has a sensitive heart, otherwise failure is preferable to success, for the pain of failure will at least make the heart sensitive whereas enthusiasm will dull it.

The root cause for failure is the failure to identify one's purpose in life with that of God. The Sufi practices become most valuable when they are applied in the everyday life. They are much more beneficial than when repeated because of devotion. Devotion is necessary but devotion is not enough, as it can easily lead to asceticism and abasement. He who can see God in the outer universe as well as in his heart, who sees the opportunities God is placing before him every moment of his life, he is the true devotee who will surely succeed in Sadhana.

GITHA: Man must become entitled first to have what he wishes to have. This makes it easy for him to gain what he wishes to gain, and it easily attracts to him what he wishes to attain.

TASAWWUF: How does man become entitled to have what he wishes to have? He becomes entitled to the things of life only as he becomes attuned to the Lord of Life. How, then is he to attain to this attunement? This is mostly a practice of the heart. Zikr is helpful, Fikr is helpful, but the extension of sympathy to one's fellow man is still more helpful. A Sufi is one who can see from the point of view of another, but does not expect the other to see from his point of view. He can look at life as God looks at it, as well as remaining man and seeing all things as a man sees them.

And how does he attain to the divine viewpoint? He attains to it when he reviews himself from his limited human point of view. And how does he do that? By ceasing to think of himself as "I," as refusing to look at life in the "I" sense, even avoiding the use of this term. But this avoidance is for the sake of reaching the divine viewpoint and is not the end in itself. His spiritual success does not destroy his personality; on the contrary it broadens it. And the more successful he is in this spiritual

attainment, of feeling the divine consciousness, of having that living sympathy for all creation, then the more successful he is sure to be in the outer life, for what is above will surely be reflected below. This is the spiritual teaching of all traditional schools.

GITHA: There is one thing, which is desiring; and there is another thing, which is imagining. Lying in a grass hut one can desire a solid wall around his hut, but one can imagine a palace before him. Therefore it is not imagination which helps so much in attainment, it is the earnest desire that is needed for it.

TASAWWUF: What is desire? What is imagination? What is the difference? The chief difference between desire and imagination is that in desire there is always some element of will, which is to say, love, also. In imagination the thoughts roam freely, the vibrations being uncontrolled by will, and there is not always unity or connection between them, there is not always purpose or coherence. Imagination is an excellent faculty, for without it it may be very difficult to rise in life, but it is not enough, it adheres to nothing, it stops nowhere.

Now the desire nature is very different and the fault in desire is the nufs, that one is abusing it instead of controlling it in the right direction. There must be something to lead man on, to make him come to better estate, whether in a physical, mental or spiritual sense. Not that this is something necessarily strict or tense, for it is not. But the love nature is so vast, if man only knew it, and it can adapt the life to so much advantage if he only knew how.

In Sadhana the imagination is valuable at one point, generally, and that is at the beginning of the enterprise. After one has a picture in view, after one sees a goal, it is not wise to cling to the imagination. Then one will cover one's clear impressions with all kinds of ideas and pictures and instead of advancing, one will hinder one's own object. On the other hand, if there is strong feeling for the object of attainment, and the love and will dominate all forms of thought, nothing can stand in man's path, sooner or later he will be successful for he has learned the principle of Sadhana through right application of the desire nature.

GITHA: There are things which are within one's reach, there are things which are beyond one's reach. One must first prove to one's own self one's capacity of attaining things which are within one's reach.

This gives one sufficient self-confidence, in order to attain that which is beyond one's reach.

TASAWWUF: Now how is one going to prove that something is in one's reach? He can prove it by noticing in what he has been successful, in what he can accomplish, whether it be feats of strength, of skill, of cleverness, of knowledge; whatsoever be within his power to further his success. But merely to let the imagination run off with the desire, this does not bring success, man will generally neither succeed nor be able to discover his fault which is a much greater failure than the loss of a particular attainment.

Until one has this self-confidence one should not begin a duty on the path of Sadhana. Indeed the difference between selfish desire and real attainment is that in spiritual attainment there is a feeling in the heart which is more than hope, which is a strong self assurance and that is the key to every true form of success. Some persons call this intuition and use it in business. It is intuition but its implications and potencies are so great that it can be applied in every activity of life.

Without this feeling of self-confidence in the heart, one cannot go far. One can wish and wish and plan and plan, but that will not bring the attainment. One has to be able to receive what the waves of life bring one. It is the calm and peaceful shore which receives the treasure thrown up upon it by the turbulent waves. A receptive attitude, one with hope and self assurance, is already an attitude of success, and it is that state of being which makes life so worth while.

GITHA: In the path of attainment, one must keep the eye of justice open.

TASAWWUF: There is a moral attitude of justice and there is a spiritual attitude of justice. Most people practice morality without succeeding in attainment. The principle is that the spiritual justice is needed in the acquisition and the moral justice in the retainment. That is to say, spirituality is for attainment, morality for retainment.

What is the difference between these? It is that in spiritual justice there is not and there can be no reference to the self. Injury to another and injury to the self are identical, and injury caused another is not only wrong, but it is injury to the self and therefore it stands in one's way.

The heart does not look upon life as the mind does. The mind sees persons as being outside itself, but the heart sees them as its own projections, even more than a mother sees her children as her own projections. Of course when the grade is reached that the heart sees all of life as a reflection of itself, Sadhana is completed, one has attained all that there is and is even above attainment.

But moral justice, which is a self discipline, is also of value to retain or to make the best use of what one has gained. For without it, one is not worthy to advance another step, and in fact he cannot advance no matter how much he may seem to be succeeding.

GITHA: One must be able to know what attainment is right for him, and what attainment he does not deserve.

TASAWWUF: Morality, being traditional, is usually taught by precept, learned from books, or through the spoken word, or sometimes in self-discipline and this strengthens the conscience. But spirituality is superior in that, by the proper practice, one can feel the will of God in the mind, in the breath, in the heart, in the body, in every aspect of the personality.

By keeping in harmony with God one can feel one's steps every moment of the way. The Naqshibandi Sufis, for instance, watch their feet and their breath and they can feel the inharmonies which they cause to themselves or others, as these will manifest in the broken rhythm of breath or

pace. This is a principle which one cannot avoid, it is manifest. Every inner irregularity will manifest itself on the outside, and one can by this method discover the mistakes of one's self or another.

GITHA: There is no soul in the world who is not striving after something. To one, his object of striving is distinct, to another, perhaps, it seems perplexed. Yet, no one is living and not striving after something. To one, his object of striving is distinct, to another, perhaps, it seems perplexed. Yet, no one is living and not striving after something.

TASAWWUF: It may almost be said, according to our striving so our living. The practice of Fikr has the benefit of purifying the mind so that when it is employed it becomes clear. For the spiritual persons whose thoughts are not clear, there is no more beneficial practice than Fikr, it is most helpful in clarifying the mind. But for one who is not on the path to God, prayer is often better or meditation or even relaxation.

If the thoughts are perplexed or perplexing, if there is a difficulty, then relaxation and Fikr are best until one feels the proper zest for continuing one's effort. These principles are really very simple, and yet so few seem to notice them.

GITHA: According to the extent that the object is clear to one, it is easy to attain it.

TASAWWUF: Next, after Fikr, the practice of Murakkabah is most valuable for if the heart is set upon something and the mind is concentrated thereon, not only will the impressions become clearer, the whole personality will feel at ease. If one tries a concentration which is wrong for him, he will not get clear impressions, they will be cloudy. Then he has to resort to Fikr to clear the mind, but if he continues the wrong concentration this will happen over and over. But if he tries that which is true and right for him, it will not be long before he gets very clear impressions and not only will these be helpful, but his added self confidence will go to strengthen his faculty of intuition which is the scale of his spiritual perfection.

GITHA: In the process of attainment, there are four stages. In the first place, in mind the object must be concrete, which one wishes to attain.

TASAWWUF: Generally if one sets out after one's first impression, this will prove to be the right attainment and the mind will hold the object in a concrete manner. If it is wrong for him to pursue it, he cannot hold the object in concentration while performing Fikr. If it is right, he can hold it and perform Fikr. This is a great secret of the adepts.

GITHA: Next, it must be reasoned out how the desire can be materialized.

TASAWWUF: If one reasons first and then concentrates, there will be confusion. It will be like putting the cart before the horse. The mind is not the master of life, the mind is the servant of life, the servant of the king. But if one has received an impression and it remains in the mind while performing Fikr, then it is quite right to use the imagination and the reason, to bring out all one's

mental faculties, to plan and think and consider whenever it is possible.

All this is really an application of concentration, for to rationalize one must concentrate and while reason has no doubt its limits, it can increase the power and interest in concentration for reason is impossible without holding the subject matter in mind.

Another value in reason is to increase the practicability of the attainment. If the heart holds it and Fikr approves it, then it means that it can come to life. But it still must be brought to earth and there may be one path or many paths, and reason can be applied in the selection of the most suitable method of action.

GITHA: The third is what material is to be used and to be obtained for it.

TASAWWUF: In this stage one comes nearer the earth and it may be said that even God, so to speak, followed this plan both in the creation of the world and in the formation of man. And if man wishing to become a god, wishes to follow in the footstep of the Almighty, he will begin by using his highest faculties and gradually draw up his more concrete abilities. So in this stage, the concentration may be turned in a most earthly direction, even as the concentration of the infant is earthward before he is born in a physical body. In this sense every concentration becomes a reincarnation, or rather a metamorphosis, for the soul enters into a new form.

GITHA: The fourth is composing, forming, or building of the object.

TASAWWUF: This includes action and this brings the completion of the plan on the material plane. Of course this is easiest to observe in the life of an artist or sculptor, but it may be true of the life of every man and woman. Action is needed to complete the plan of attainment in order to materialize spirit. That is the last step to materialize spirit and if all the other stages have been followed in the correct order, very often it happens that the obstacles which may have seemed to stand in the path of the last stage disappear. In planning correctly one has the secret of acting correctly.

GITHA: The central theme of the whole creation is attainment.

TASAWWUF: Therefore it is not right that one should ever hold back. God did not rest until He had created the universe and in a certain sense the universe is never completed in which sense it may be affirmed that God also is never at rest as we understand it. Yet it is also true that out of the silent life did manifestation arise, and therefore both these are necessary to complete the existence of the adept—to know the principle of silence and to apply himself in some form of attainment.

GITHA: In the striving of all souls in the world, there is one impulse, and that is the divine impulse. Yet the man who ignorantly strives after something and wrongly goes to work about it, ends in disappointment -- disappointment not only to himself, but even to God.

TASAWWUF: This should make us most careful. When we fail, God fails; whether it be in little

things or in big things, when we fail, it is God who fails. But the practice of Fikr not only purifies the mind, it operates so that in all we do, God is doing also. This is the most important aspect in the life of the Sufi, who if he does not this, is not and cannot be a Sufi, for when man's actions are not God's actions, that man, no matter what he be called and no matter what he calls himself, is not a Sufi.

Therefore a Sufi is one who is free alike from friends and strangers, from foes and relatives. If he considers any of them in his Sadhana, it is not Sadhana, and while he may have goodness he has not wisdom and it is wisdom which constitutes Sufism.

Behind all this is the hidden principle of the attainment of God, by God, through God. This is the opportunity for every man and it is accomplished by Fikr, concentration and Darood. If one takes the smallest step without the spiritual practice and the spiritual assurance, then it is a personal step, it is a selfish move, and no matter how laudable, it is not a spiritual gain, it is not the work of God. Attunement to God alone makes spiritual attainment possible and yet, with this attunement, even our most personal actions become the actions of God. In keeping the heart in God, we have the key to everything.

GITHA: The one who knows his affair and who accomplishes it rightly fulfills the mission of his life and the wish of God.

TASAWWUF: Thus, it is necessary to know one's affair and also to accomplish it and besides to accomplish it rightly. To know one's affair, it has been explained that Fikr will always be helpful; by the practice of Fikr one can always test the true impression from the false. Yet it will be that the first impression is nearly always the right one, for the clear mind always receives the clear impressions. And after that concentration will bring out the impressions more strongly and help very much.

Then action is necessary, to turn thought into action, and that is a duty of the devotee. But to perform rightly, Darood must be practiced and if done, sooner or later, with patience every object of attainment will be drawn to one by a positive spiritual gravity, for with God there is, can be no failure.

GITHA: No matter what one accomplishes, it is only a step towards something else.

TASAWWUF: However accomplishment is most necessary. Without the accomplishment there cannot be a step forward. One does not sit quiet and wait and hope for success. This could only be personal success, it could not be divine success. But if one performs Sadhana according to the spiritual methods, each success will carry with it a blessing often quite unforeseen, and be of most value in the life of that soul.

GITHA: As one goes along accomplishing in the path of attainment, he in the end arrives at the aim of life. In the final end, attainment is the aim of all souls, although in the beginning it seems different.

TASAWWUF: In the beginning one sets out with what might seem to be a selfish motive, or a very tiny and unimportant task. As one goes forward, becoming more attuned to God, gathering the momentum of success, the tasks may become greater, as one is worthy for something of a higher nature. And as one moves on and on, thinking, speaking and acting in the name of God and for the sake of God, the consciousness becomes merged in the heart of God which is the acme of Sadhana and its completion.

From this we see that even selfishness, even the desire nature, has been made for an unselfish purpose, as a center of accommodation for the sake of the universe. That is to say, in the true sense the self is for the sake of the universe and also the universe is for the sake of the self. But as one loses the feeling of selfhood in the increased consciousness of the Being of God, one rises higher and higher so that even a slight thought or word will bring to one what one has been saying or thinking. This of itself is not the end of attainment, but is a sign that either one is near the end or has reached the Goal. For when the heart has been merged in God, all the creation of God is before one's feet.

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

Githa with Commentary

Series II: Number 7

GITHA: The secret of all attainment is in the analyzing of the self. The impulse to attain a thing and the control of that impulse, both things are necessary.

TASAWWUF: Most persons do not stop to analyze themselves. It is always very easy to let the desire nature run away with one. Even when the brake of reason is applied it is not always sufficient, for reason is limited by the experience of a person. The real check on the desire nature comes when the heart is free.

Now while one is a Saluk it is not always possible to tell which impulse is correct, but there are several methods used by Sufis. One is to imagine that one's teacher is there, that one is not accomplishing the attainment, one's teacher is doing it and if there is any uneasiness, one should not go forward. But a more exact method is in the use of Fikr and concentration as well as other practices which form a constant check upon wrong doing.

GITHA: Very often, what happens? A man loses the chance of attaining something by his over-

enthusiasm, because he puts his life out of balance.

TASAWWUF: Enthusiasm can be to the mind what dizziness is to the body. No doubt it comes first as a dance of the mind, a dance of joy, but it can quickly be changed to an intoxication, a mental alcohol and under its spell the mind is like an inebriate, the energy is dissipated, and the joy that might come at the completion of an accomplishment is wasted at the beginning, so that sometimes nothing whatever is done. Restraint of speech, as well as of thought, is most helpful to such a one.

GITHA: At the same time the power of impulse is a great power; the person who has no strength in his impulse must certainly lose.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, enthusiasm is itself a sign of response. An enthusiastic soul is a responsive soul, but it is not enough to be responsive. In Sadhana one must be positive also, in order to accomplish something. Nothing must be lost in words or wasted action. Therefore at this stage self-control is necessary, often best secured by silence, but if this self-control is abused, it can result that all the energy is lost so that one will make no step forward at all.

GITHA: It is to strike a balance between impulse and control. There must be an impulse, but it must be under control.

TASAWWUF: Impulse is the motivating power, control is the brake. It is like on an electric tram; we need the force but the force must be under control, and then the car can run smoothly. Without the power there would be no action, without the control no success. The mind is like that in all things, it needs something to rouse it from inertia, it has to be roused, and yet it has to be controlled. Therefore the mind has often been symbolized by a horse, with its enthusiasm and which, if controlled, can be of greatest help to man.

GITHA: A person who is over-joyous on having riches must be sure that he will very soon lose; and the same is with everything.

TASAWWUF: Youthful persons, including both young of age and young of temperament, often become intoxicated with success and this intoxication is blinding. They do not see ahead, they do not save, they practice no self-control. They give no heed of the morrow, but instead of trusting in God about it, they either rely upon the wealth or whatever means are at their disposal, or they think not at all and often depend upon the clarity and good will of others. So youth is generally unsuccessful, although it has the virtue of being venturesome. If man could be both venturesome and reserved he would certainly have less trouble in life.

GITHA: And the balance is kept by knowing that "There is nothing too good for me in this life of the earth," that "Compared to all things that the earth can offer, my soul to me is more precious."

TASAWWUF: That is to say an earthly gain will only count when it is also a spiritual gain. An earthly loss is not a spiritual gain, an earthly loss is a spiritual loss unless because of it one has a

spiritual gain. This is taught as the principle of renunciation, but without renunciation loss is loss and even the most material loss can also stand as a spiritual loss.

However there are relative values in the universe and what is taught in Sadhana is to attain victory, get all the gain one can, win one's battles, but on the highest plane possible and with the highest motive possible. This brings a victory within a victory and a success within a success and such victory and success often carry one along to still greater achievements. So that even for the self, the self gains when it is surrendered, and the faith in God can bring it what it wanted even in a better fashion than the best of its schemes.

GITHA: The one who runs after things, the things of his pursuit run from him, frightened of his continual pursuit. But the one who is not running in the pursuit of the objects, then the objects, of necessity, will become his own. When God will become one's own, who else will not become one's own?

TASAWWUF: If one pursues objects, he is tense, his faculties are concentrated upon some particular goal and he loses consciousness of all else in the pursuit of that object. While that attitude may not be wrong, it so happens that he is seeking that which will bring no benefit. That is the sign of passion. In passion all of life is concentrated upon some particular satisfaction, the attainment of which either brings no joy, or little ease, even repulsion, besides the loss of much else in the attainment.

Now this passionate concentration is not disastrous of itself, only if there is surrender at the same time, there is a relaxation, and this relaxation of personality, by subtle gravitation, attracts what it needs. This is the law which the snake used in drawing food to itself. There is a very strong impulse which is continued always, but there is also a certain relaxation and when the snake has attained his want, he is very peaceful, he harms no creatures

In the spiritual path concentration is taught both as a practice of action and relaxation and by this combination, strange though it may seem, success is often assured, and in an easy fashion. But when one has the strong feeling of God within oneself, called intuition, or when one has inspiration it becomes easier to attain something for one often knows beforehand the divine wish. Finally in fana-fi-lillah, one may become God, the Wisher, and in that state of consciousness nothing can be lacking.

GITHA: In the attainment, confidence is necessary. It is according to one's confidence that the object of attainment is drawn closer. It is not by over-enthusiasm, for over-enthusiasm is intoxication. A person intoxicated by enthusiasm is liable to do the wrong thing instead of the right one.

TASAWWUF: What is this confidence and how does it differ from enthusiasm? Confidence is a state of heart, a state of will, while enthusiasm is a condition of mind. In enthusiasm the thought covers the will, the mind dominates the heart, while in the confidential mode, the heart restrains the

mind and directs it. And it would not be wrong to say that this should hold true of all man's actions, whether in attainment or otherwise.

And what is meant by the wrong thing and the right thing? From the spiritual point of view, that is wrong which is not God's will, that is right which is in accordance with God's will. And how is one to distinguish? There are many means, but for those who have not had clear inspiration Fikr is the best, for Fikr harmonizes with all right thought and can not be maintained when there is a wrong state of mind. So the practices check and help each other in all ways.

GITHA: It is always the inner power which is the secret of attainment, and the less the inner power is expressed, the better it is. A person who allows his power an outlet, he only wastes it. It is the conserving of the power which makes man a reservoir of power, the power with which all things can be accomplished.

TASAWWUF: The inner power is the divine power. When the breath is kept in proper rhythm and the life centered in the heart, then the all force of the cosmos impresses itself upon the surface of the heart. This is called intuition and when it is relied upon, one develops the faculty of insight (kashf). Kashf is not a special practice which can be memorized or imposed upon the self, it reveals the natural state of the heart, and personal goodness is just as much a hindrance to kashf as is personal wickedness, although the man of kashf will generally be found to be walking the way of righteousness.

This power is lost whenever it is transmuted into speech, thought or action. Every word, every activity, even every thought in this respect is a wastage, wasting of life itself. If one knew how to conserve this power he would attain to immortality. Yet it is true that the incarnation into this world has been for the sake of activity and therefore in a spiritual sense it is proper and fitting that man act, that he perform his duty in this life.

GITHA: To the person who has attained to the mystery of sadhana, the attainment, for him there is nothing in the world that cannot be attained. All is within his reach, all within his power, all within his grasp.

TASAWWUF: As in a certain sense the universe is within man, so in the same sense at least the key to everything in the universe is to be found in the heart of man. If the heart can be made to relax, freed from all feeling of selfhood, one can by prayer, meditation or concentration set up an accommodation in the mental sphere and by further concentration thereon set up an idea which can later find its way into the physical world. In other words, by right performance of action one attains to the fulfillment of all desires, and strange though it may sound, by control of desire and passion one can obtain every wish.

Why? Because in a certain sense, in the state of freedom, one is as a god and there is nothing in the universe which he cannot touch. And this state can only be attained when one comes to rely upon the impressions and inspirations which are ever finding their way into his heart. By a rigid

examination of his own personality, by a strict control over his personal weaknesses, man can become the master of all that is.

GITHA: As high as is one's object, so high one rises; and as low the object of attainment be, so low is the person.

TASAWWUF: As St. Paul has said, all things may be possible for the emancipated soul, but all things are not profitable. It is not enough to have the wish fulfilled; then stagnation would follow. It is wise to make the best use of Sadhana so that the station (makam) of the personality can be raised. Then one acts for the sake of God rather than for oneself and this becomes a great blessing which leads to still further blessings.

Now the longer the period of benefit from an attainment, or the greater number of persons benefitted thereby, the higher the attainment. In other words, one advances in this line as one's sphere of influence grows whether in the sense of time, space or quantity. By time-growth is meant that the benefit of the attainment continues longer; by space-growth may mean that it exerts its influence further; and by quantity-growth it may mean both that the thing to obtain is of greater consequence, of harder effort and has a more expansive benefit.

GITHA: If the object is honour-giving, the person is honourable. If the object is painful, the person is sad. If the object is pleasant, the person is joyous. If the object is exalting, the person is holy.

TASAWWUF: That is why the scripture says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The emotional state after an attainment tells something of the attainment and shows whether one is on the path of success or failure. For a Sufi the states of honour, sadness and joy should be regarded with circumspection, lest one become a slave to them. A Sufi does not refuse honour but he does not become attached to it. He does not make himself deliberately peculiar in the eyes of the world. He has to face the world as it is and he accepts all as coming from God. It is in this sense that he is able to accept and at the same time withstand sadness and joy. To him, they do not matter, for sadness is often the beginning of accomplishment and joy is important as it turns into exaltation.

Every true performance of Sadhana will end in exaltation. This is a sign of spiritual success. When there is no exaltation it can be questioned whether in any sacred sense, there has been success. Exaltation need not become intoxication, it will only transform into that condition when the ego is involved. The ego-intoxication is not evil in any moral sense, but it has the doubtful result of using up one's benefit at the time instead of seizing the opportunity to advance still further. Exaltation makes this possible, for in an exalted state one is not only highly sensitive to intuition, one is able to follow one's inner feelings without the slightest difficulty and this is the true success of life.

GITHA: And therefore, the person must know what object to keep before one's view, what object one should pursue through life.

TASAWWUF: At the beginning of attainment it is sometimes wise to take the suggestion of a

teacher. This suggestion is not always something strange, but it is an aim which the talib will be able to accomplish. By trying to obtain what is within one's reach one feels the pulsations of success, and from that moment one gets the feeling which can carry him forward. And after the initial effort it is best that one seek a goal in the daily life which he can accomplish, something which will carry him a little further on, materially and spiritually.

But that is not enough. Attainment in a material sense, for the talib, is only the manifestation of spiritual success. Although he is apparently striving for something in the world without, it is really the reflex of his progress in the inner life. Failure in Sadhana is spiritual failure, and in this it differs from the failure of the generality, for the average man, in his striving, is working for the ego; his success is that of ego, and his failure is that of ego. But of the spiritual man this is not true, if he is working for God, he is working for God and therefore his success is God's success and his failure God's failure, although in other respects his endeavours may not seem to differ from those of the ordinary man.

GITHA: There are many childlike people who do not know what is their object in life. One moment they think of one thing, another minute they think of another thing; in the end they arrive at nothing, because they have no object set before their view.

TASAWWUF: This is another reason why so many criminals succeed, so many wicked men succeed, so many good men fail. Goodness without life has no spiritual value. Some men are actually good because they have not the strength to be otherwise, and this is not so beneficial. A man was made to be himself, to express himself, to enjoy life, not to shut life out. He who is without an aim in life, has really shut life out and with all his goodness and piety he may not be much above the animal.

The practices of the Sufis enable persons to be units in themselves. This is most important, then they can decide what they want. A person who does not know what he wants should remain silent. Whatever he suggests to another causes confusion, because he has not yet learned to suggest to himself. It is the person who knows what he wants who is in position to help others. Indeed it would not be wrong to say that this is one of the qualifications for being a spiritual teacher, to have a clear idea of one's aim and object in life and to set forth on the journey toward its acquisition, with full heart.

GITHA: A person who becomes like this, no one can depend upon. Even the bird is frightened to sit upon a moving branch.

TASAWWUF: This person does not depend upon himself, he is sometimes called a leaner. In the crowd he follows the crowd, when with another person he follows that person. In the end it is found that he has no principles, not even morals, and he often does things in the crowd that he would shudder to think of when alone. This is one of the causes of mob rule and disturbances, outbreaks by those who have no idea what they want and allow themselves to be stirred by emotions.

GITHA: The person whose object is set, it is that person whose life is settled, whom one can call serious, on whom others can depend.

TASAWWUF: As soon as there is a set object or purpose in one's life, you may be sure that the principle of unity is operating. This of itself is the greatest help to man in keeping his will unified. When the will is a unit, it is at peace, it is at rest. The mind may be working, the body may be active, but the work of the will is for the time being, completed, and it then becomes the duty of mind and body to see that the will controls them in outer activity. It is this condition that makes man human and it is this condition which not only brings success, this condition is success itself.

Therefore in action, in life, keeping oneself as a unity is most essential. To be at one with oneself is to know the self in part, at least. And the unified person is one who not only has his will, he has his way, as it is said, "Where there's a will, there's a way." It is almost impossible to stop the person who knows his own will.

GITHA: The person who does not know his own mind, he cannot help his fellow man, he will only upset; neither can he attain for himself nor can he help another.

TASAWWUF: This is he of whom it is said, "The blind lead the blind." Most of the difficulties in politics, business, government and social affairs come from this condition. There are persons who want to lead, sometimes seem born to lead, but they do not know their own minds. With all their seeming polish and personality, they accomplish nothing. Sometimes they go to extremes, become tyrannous, blame others for their own mistakes and have a thousand excuses. But behind all these excuses and peculiarities, there is only one central fact, that the leader does not know his own mind.

And why does he not know his mind? It may be that he has settled nothing in his will. Or it may be that he only wants to lead and cares nothing more about it. But nobody can lead when he does not know the course of the path. Yes, in a certain sense he can lead to ruin, but that is not leadership, that is misguidance. Of course if one practices Darood, he will quickly find the way to lead or to follow but the one who does not know his mind, he has not performed this practice. If he knew about it, performed it, he would certainly be finding out something about his own mind. And even if in the beginning he was a tyrant or a weakling, he would, with God's help, find the way to attain that which he has desired, and having accomplished that, then he would know how to lead others, how to help others.

Thus it can be truly said that no one who has not succeeded himself knows how to lead others. How often do we find people telling others how to succeed, become rich, happy, win love who are not able to do it themselves. They make themselves ludicrous in the eyes of heaven and can become the laughing stock of humanity! He who would be a master, he sees that his own will is unified, his own mind fixed, he exerts all effort at self-control, and then if it happens that others follow him, he does all for the glory of God.

GITHA: Therefore, it is a thing to be remembered continually, that one must make one's mind so clear as to see one's object before oneself, to see its character, its nature, its value, and then to set forth in its pursuit every effort, to pursue the object patiently till one has attained it. No matter how small the object, the attainment of it builds one step towards the final goal.

TASAWWUF: The secret of attainment is in attainment itself. At the beginning, whether it is a spiritual person seeking something, or advising another, to understand Sadhana one should see what one has already attained and study the manner of success. If one has failed in everything and he comes to you for advice, his coming is his first success, for self-surrender is the key to true accomplishment.

Therefore in Sufism the first step was Tauba (Shuva in Hebrew) which means turning and also repentance. Although for all spiritual development repentance is requisite, with respect to Sadhana Tauba is better understood as turning, turning toward the one in success, whatever be that success. And if there has been constant failure and that is succeeded by surrender to a person, coming to someone for advice, that is the first step toward success, that is the beginning of a new journey, a turning, a tauba toward a new way in life.

Now the beginning of this way is in self-sacrifice, and if one realizes that, he will be able to advance. So one begins, perhaps, by assigning to oneself or another a very small task, perhaps something very simple and easy and one continues at it until the seeker is able to do it regularly. It may be the repetition of Saum once every day, it may be saying grace at meals, it may be a small household task at a certain time, it may be a habit of greeting people. It may be anything at first small and simple, but after its accomplishment, one will feel a certain satisfaction, and that is feeling the current of success. Then one is ready for the next step.

One can notice this method is used in the assignment of the spiritual practices, beginning with a few simple exercises, and adding thereto as one advances. But it is also true of the other affairs of the mureed's life, if he only examines them, and it is probably true of all of them after Bayat, although he may be quite unconscious of it.

Nevertheless once this step is taken, once there is success, then man is on the path of Sadhana which is really the path to God, or if one wishes to express it thus, a path to God. By traveling steadily and earnestly on this path, without recourse to asceticism or monasticism, taking life as it comes, one can find his way to success, to attainment and to God, so that in his life will be reflected the closing lines of Saum: "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives, until in us be reflected Thy Grace, Thy Glory, Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace." This is the acme of Sadhana.