

Gatha with Commentary

Saluk: Morals

Series II

of

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by

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 1

The Training of the Ego: Vanity

GATHA: Man has the desire to do good and to refrain from doing evil because to do so feeds his vanity. Among one thousand good and virtuous people there is scarcely one who does good and refrains from evil because that is his natural inclination.

TASAWWUF: The terms “good” and “evil” are used wherein it might be better sometimes to use “pleasing” and “unpleasing” though it is hard to tell whether one means pleasing oneself or others. Many have felt the value in what is called the golden rule, but we read in *The Bowl of Saki* (Jan. 15), “the goodness of man is peculiar to himself.” And in *Gayan* we find, “Right and wrong depend upon attitude and situation, not upon action.” Or again, “all things are good, but all things are not good for every person, nor right at all times.”

We read in *The Mysticism of Sound*, “The standard of right and wrong, the conception of good and evil, and the idea of sin and virtue are understood differently by the people of different races, nations, and religions, therefore it is difficult to discern the law governing these opposites.”

The point to keep in mind here is that concerning “his natural inclination,” which means that there is something in man close to his ego, perhaps his ego itself, which determines for each what he considers good, what he considers evil. But beyond this is another standard not connected or concerned with self, and when one goes toward that standard he is pursuing a path of Morality. This is also presented in the literature on *Moral Culture*.

GATHA: The majority of those engaged in art, sciences, religion, or politics are conscious all the time of the opinion of others, and they can only work upon the lines they are following if appreciation comes from some quarter; the least antagonism or opposition discourages them and often kills their desire.

TASAWWUF: There have been schools of Sufis such as the Malamati and Khalandari that disregarded popular acceptance, and sometimes even regarded popular disapproval as a virtue. It is not that. It is to work independently of what the public admires or demands, and carefully regard the Divine Wish in all things.

There are people who draw magnetism through public approval. They are found on stage, in politics, at cocktail parties and social diversions. They actually draw on the magnetism of others

and when they do not receive it they languish. It is not that they are necessarily vicious, only they have not learned to turn to themselves, to draw on the infinite energies within.

GATHA: Among thousands it is one great soul that can keep firm and strong in his purpose through life, unshaken and unweakened by opposition from any side. It is that person who wins in the end and accomplishes things that are worthwhile.

TASAWWUF: This comes from inner vision and fortitude and trust. There are many teachings in the religions, even on the exoteric side which teach verbally. That is only the surface teaching, and it can be helpful, it can also be confusing. The Sufi learns to apply teachings to himself and does not expect their fulfillment in others, from others. That is why Sufis have been especially referred to in many lands as those who fulfill teachings of religion and the teachings beyond religion.

But this is in a sense true of all esotericists and mystics. If they use words, they apply them to themselves, they do not expect perfections from others. If they find the fulfillment of expectations in others they are very grateful.

GATHA: In the lives of all the great souls who have accomplished wonderful deeds in life, you will surely find this mystery hidden. Those souls have not learned it, it happens to be their nature, and the thinker will see in this a philosophy which teaches that it is the ego that chains man's feet, keeping him from progress in all paths of life.

TASAWWUF: This may be taught in a moral law. That is the first stage. Behind all the moral instructions, especially the negative ones, there are restrictions on the ego. And if they were put tersely they would not be believed, for it is necessary to appeal to people according to their evolution and circumstances.

One does not develop will-power by willing. One develops will-power by restraint upon passions and appetites and by various forms of self-denial. There are always prevalent philosophies and teachings which encourage gratification. They manifest as temporary successes, but even the flesh and bones demand spiritual sustenance and one does not get spiritual sustenance by ego-gratification.

A person can go around all day saying, "I am not, thou art," or "Neti, Neti" and that does not necessarily bring any satisfaction or success, within or without.

GATHA: The ego not only makes man self-conscious, but it makes of him a coward and renders him helpless. He is timid because he sees his own limitations and he is helpless because everything stronger overpowers him as he confines his being within a certain limit.

TASAWWUF: In Sufism the disciple is trained to rise beyond limit. This is not a philosophy, it is not a training of will. It is not even surrender. By watching the breath, by assimilating the divine qualities which can come from every breath, by practicing the presence of God, one gradually is

freed from limitations, especially those self-suggestions with which he has surrounded himself and so been limited.

Bowl of Saki (Feb. 25) teaches, "He who has failed himself, has failed all; he who has conquered himself has won all." *Gayan* says, "Self-will is the strength of the Spirit; but when the false ego expresses self-will, a soul instead of rising, falls." For in this ego expression of self-will one is not drawing from the unlimited sustenance of the cosmos; one is drawing from his own small accretion and this is very limited. Then one tries to draw from the public, from groups, from persons, and this also has limitations. And whatever is gained, is not so sustained.

GATHA: Besides all the other disadvantages that self-consciousness brings with it there is above all else one thing it does, it prevents man from realizing that the thought of self keeps him away from God.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* teaches that these two cannot exist, self and God, but there is hardly a person in a multitude that is able to sustain such teachings. It is by practicing the Divine Presence, whether with Zikr, Fikr, Akhlak Allah or otherwise, that one begins to sense a surrounding of infinity. When one is concerned with ego-self, whatever else be true, one is aware of shortcomings.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna tells of man's shortcomings and how to rise above them. The **ahankara** is particularly castigated. In his commentary, M.M. Chatterji says: "**Ahankara** usually signifies the principle of self-consciousness, or egotism." But the Hindu philosophers as well as others are loathe to take such a stand, and so, with all the presumable studying of the text, it may turn out, as Sri Krishna has stated, "some few come to Me."

The battle of Kurukshetra in the *Gita*, and all sacred battles, are nothing but the struggle against the ego.

GATHA: In the heart of man there is room for one only, either for himself or for God.

TASAWWUF: In *Vadan* it says: "I am what I am; by trying to be something, I make that self limited who in reality is all." This is the most difficult lesson, that by effacing of self there is expansion of consciousness, and by expression of self there is only dissolution and decay. We may try all the alternatives but there is no way to infinity excepting by the direct expression of infinity itself.

The seeming expansion of consciousness which man sometimes experiences is like gasification or distillation. When anything material enters the gaseous stage it takes up more room, it is more spatial. But it does not gain any special power by being more spatial; and when there is a cooling off, the gasses may return to a liquid or a solid state.

There are many stories in the Sufi literature about love and there are especially those of young boys who expressed full love for God in such a way, that there seemed to be no love for anybody or anything, not even for parents. But the love for parents is a love for some people separate from

others, while the love for God, with God, is all-including.

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Series II: Number 2

“Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit”

GATHA: Jesus Christ says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Why is not the word “ego” used instead of “spirit?”

TASAWWUF: There is an explanation given in *The Unity of Religious Ideals*. The principle is that those who are devoid of ego make of themselves repositories for blessings (Baraka). It is also true as the breath is refined, and one is able to control a very light, tenuous respiration, this means that the ego or nufs is no longer exerting or expressing itself. And when this occurs, man begins to find his own possibilities as well as the ability to get along better with his fellow-man.

GATHA: Man’s glance, expression, posture, etc., all speak of his ego, and tell to what extent it is hard and to what extent soft. People seek to disguise the true nature of the ego by diplomatic language and by good manners, but these do not really hide the ego, which is expressing itself in everything they say and do.

TASAWWUF: This subject is dealt with at length in the Gathas on Insight (Kashf) and elsewhere in the literature. Every vibration to which we are sensitive carries overtones from the subtle world, and those with keen sight easily interpret them. They are as an open book. This is also the subject of *Cosmic Language* in the literature.

We can also tell from the part of the mouth whence sound emanates, and there is no way to do this mechanically without there being a corresponding change in the tone and placement of the voice. Exteriorly we may harden or soften tones, and it is also easy to place them in the front of the mouth, but this only reveals more to the seer. For the tones from the front of the mouth show superficiality.

A voice does not have to be loud to convey psychic power. Deep guttural sounds often do more. Thus “OM” has to come from the rear of the mouth, otherwise the “oh” sound could not be made. But “Allah” is the most universal sound in that it can be said with the whole of the mouth. And for

that there is no artificiality, can be no artificiality.

GATHA: Every particle of a man's body and every atom of man's mind is controlled by this ego.

TASAWWUF: Very often neophytes are asked to repeat, "This is not my body, this is the Temple of God." This is suggestive to the mind. But there is much more, for as one begins to inhale and exhale the divine breath, one comes closer to the soul-consciousness, so to speak.

This body is held together by the breath, and it is through the breath that the forces of adhesion, cohesion, gravitation and love itself operate. In Buddhism, there is a doctrine of Nirmanakaya, which suggests that the appearance of the body is due to the operation of the mind behind it. We have ordinarily the ego-mind and this will first show the influence of heredity. But after a while man makes his own body, and it is influenced by his thought. It exhibits qualities which come forth from the mind. Either the ego controls the mind, or by the sublimation of the breath, the whole universe will affect the body, and then one will realize the body as a temple of God.

GATHA: If there is anything that is meant by the word "spirit," as used above, it is this. The least word spoken against it rouses man's anger; praise tickles his vanity and goes to the heart of the ego.

TASAWWUF: In India there is the doctrine of samskaras, that everything said or done concerning one's ego rouses a favorable or unfavorable reaction. This is also taught in another form in the twentieth century philosophy of America where the term "semantic reaction" is used to cover the same sort of phenomena. The Americans do not always know about Indian philosophies and the Indian philosophies do not always readily change under non-Indian influences, but they are discussing the same thing in the same way.

Another element of philosophy has been considered in both India and America and that is the egocentric predicament. But it will take a long time, it is taking a long time, to be considered seriously and also to have a solution to it. But once there is a solution, there will be a marked advancement in the world, especially toward peace and brotherhood.

We can deal with this subject dualistically but that does not effect many changes. Very few people change or reform because of some sermons. But everybody must change when there is change in the breath. One can learn to control the breath so that one does not react against external influences. One can also learn to refine the breath; this can be done at man's will. When it is so done, then there will be less evidence of temper; one can watch the breath and use the will to control the breath. As one's breath becomes more refined, under the influence of forces called Latif, the whole nature will change. The ego will become assimilated into the universe.

GATHA: And now the question arises: "If this ego is the chief thing in man's development why should we fight against it?" "Is it not the essence of man?" The answer is that there is the spirit of man and the spirit of God.

TASAWWUF: The Hebrew Bible teaches that God made man in His own image and the Qur'an confirms this teaching. Even the complex Indian metaphysics proposes this, though in another form. And the Gita really places Krishna as against ahankara or ego. But mostly the teachings fall into the hands of people who are themselves self-centered. They do not accept it, they do not understand it, and so they are kept under control of this spirit of man. Even when they use words otherwise, this does not effect change.

The purpose of esotericism, especially with its scientific applications of psychic law, enable man to become assimilated more into the Divine Spirit. This is particularly true from bowing the head and bending the knee. When this is done rather than said, it produces a profound change in the human nature. One cannot bow the head and have the animal breath and one cannot have heavy breath and bow the head and bend the knee so readily. So Sajda, which is an incumbent part of the Islamic prayers, helps very much in subduing the ego. And refined breathing also helps subdue the ego, and the repetition of mantrams and sacred phrases is also of great help here.

GATHA: These two are different and yet the same. Think of the sea and of the bubble, how vast the one, how small the other! How dare man claim that he is God!

TASAWWUF: Yes, there have been times when men, in ecstasy, have declared, "**Ani'l Haqq**—I am truth," and in one sense this is true, for nothing exists but God. But man ordinarily does not know it, and making the claim may be even worse. For in this state which is called Hakikat by Sufis, the adept is aware of his universal consciousness. When he is in this universal consciousness it is doubtful whether he will refer to the self, as "I" or "Ani" or in any way. It is only when God is speaking through him. But it is also true, "The nature of God is silence" and the man most immersed in God will probably keep silent and yet radiate all the blessings of the universe.

GATHA: Only the emptiness in which the echo is a noise is found in a heart that can claim such greatness as that. The true emptiness is filled by the divine light, and such a heart it is which in humility is turned to nothingness, so that the light shines out.

TASAWWUF: In Mahayana Buddhism there are what are called the Prajna-Paramita texts and among them one of the shortest and most famous is Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra, of the Great Intuitive Perfection of Heart, which is a transcendental and mystical Scripture. In it is said, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is not different from form, neither is form different from emptiness, indeed emptiness is form. Also, sensation is emptiness, emptiness is not different from sensation, neither is sensation different from emptiness, indeed emptiness is sensation. Also, perception is emptiness, emptiness is not different from perception, neither is perception different from emptiness, indeed emptiness is perception. Also discrimination is emptiness, emptiness is not different from discrimination, neither is discrimination different from emptiness, indeed emptiness is discrimination. Also, consciousness is emptiness, emptiness is not different from consciousness, neither is consciousness different from emptiness, indeed emptiness is consciousness"

We have here the sublimation of two entirely different attitudes which have been called samsara

and nirvana; and in another sense the will-of-God and the will-of-man. But as the bubble is not separate from the sea, so that conclusion is that the samsara which excludes anything is not the true samsara and the nirvana which excludes is not the real nirvana. They manifest as different and there is only the state of incompleteness which is called emptiness in one sense, but as soon as one gets away from emptiness one is caught in a maze which is really non-verbal.

Then there is another side, that when one removes the resistance, the light shines. It is almost like a law of electricity, that as resistance diminishes, the flow of the current is greater. So also as man sublimates his ego the light will shine forth as Jesus Christ has said, and as Mohammed manifested, and as the word "Buddha" indicates. So in Sufism, when the statement is made of light shining out, it is to be taken realistically and not symbolically. It occurs, and it is God manifesting through man.

GATHA: Man's ego is a globe, and the spirit of God is the light.

TASAWWUF: This is also a teaching found in many places. In Githeka (Heart and Soul) it is said: "When the heart becomes pure in essence, it produces the fragrance of humanity, and can easily be seen through the personality, as truthfulness, sincerity and faithfulness. When an individual becomes purified in heart, there is no need to purify the soul, for the soul is itself the pure light, and it then becomes the medium which receives the light from the soul.

A conception is not a realization, it is not an experience. In the Sufi training we must consider seriously the words of Jesus Christ, "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify the Father which is in Heaven." For this light is the evidence of God as Father, so to speak. It demonstrates as Qur'an teaches, that Allah is the light of the Heavens and the earth. It can become part of man's experience, and wisdom comes through and with this realization, not from concepts, ideas, dogmas, or the like.

GATHA: "Poor" is said in the sense of thin; and when the ego is poor or thin the spirit of God shines out. "Rich in spirit," would mean thick, or dense, in the ego-nature, which would stand as a wall against the divine light hidden in the heart.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, as long as man is in Nufsaniat, under the dominance of ego, the light will not be shining. Many clairvoyant people can easily perceive this light either directly or indirectly in the form of auras. Both are real, and each can be interpreted. And if the light does not shine, all the self-defense mechanisms are of no help. Light substantiates its own being.

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Series II: Number 3

The Training of the Ego: The Three Parts of the Ego

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

TASAWWUF: This subject is dealt with in “The Soul Whence and Whither” but there are references to it in many places in the literature, both of Hazrat Inayat Khan and in the Sufi teachings in general. This subject is also dealt with in many works on psychology and philosophy. Only as Sufism is based on Divine Wisdom, there is and has been the same general teachings through the ages. And if we study from the standpoints of general education and scientific investigation, there has been a continual change of both knowledge and opinions through the centuries.

Sufism urges that man see from the standpoint of another as well as of himself. The ego is limited and in arts and crafts there is no harm in such limitations for a specific production is required. So the ego has its usage. Without it there might not be specific products and productions, and the arts might languish.

GATHA: The physical ego is nurtured by the gratification of the bodily appetites. One sees that after a meal or some refreshing drink a sort of feeling of stimulation arises, and no doubt it covers with an additional cover the “I” within.

TASAWWUF: This is called **nufs ammara** in the Sufic terms. Sometimes this is referred to as nufs alone, but there are different grades of nufs, all based on egocentricity. In the ammara stage it is not so much that evil is desired as such but that one has little consideration for anything but the bodily appetites. It is almost as if there were a continuation of childhood. One does not mature.

Vices such as greed, lust and appetite tend to identify the ego with the body. It is possible that such a person might be religious but seldom thoughtful. He has the religion of a juvenile. He is concerned with reaching heaven by some shortcut. The disciplines and morals are not imbued upon his inner self.

GATHA: And therefore there is a difference between sleep and meditation. Although both produce rest, yet one rest is produced by stimulation of the body and the other rest comes without it. There have been cases of meditative people sleeping only two or three hours out of the twenty-four without becoming ill. A person who can sleep well shows the sign of health, and yet is subject to

any illness.

TASAWWUF: Sleep is usually a reaction against the use or overuse of the body and its organs or the mind and its appurtenances. It does not always restore the full vitality, and each waking stage shows a person, perhaps a little older. But meditation is resorting to eternity. It not only rests the body and mind, it revivifies them by taking the consciousness beyond time and space and egoicity.

The great Mogul Emperor, Akbar, who was also a Sufi, slept very little, and meditated a good deal. Geniuses like Bonaparte and Thomas Edison, who were so concerned with their own affairs, saw little need to sleep. Or as *Gayan* says, sleep is refreshing but waking is interesting. And if someone has much interest in the affairs of life he considers it a waste of time to be sleeping much.

There is a way of resting by control of Urouj. Urouj not only means impetus, it is connected with every inhalation of the breath. If one could control this, if one could soften and refine the breath, he would not be adding to the karmic complications.

Meditation is discussed in various places in the literature. The purest meditation comes when the consciousness arises above egocentricity, both of body and mind; when consciousness remains beyond thought, when it is not concerned with any aspect of conscious activity. Then the holy spirit, or refined breath is used, and this brings cosmic relaxation.

GATHA: The gratification of every appetite is a momentary stimulation and rest to the body, but this momentary satisfaction creates a further appetite, and every experience in the satisfaction of the appetites gives a desire for more satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: There are people who find contentment in such satisfaction. Buddha taught that misery came from the satisfaction of the desire-nature and the science-art of economics, especially as taught in the west, holds that the aim of life is to satisfy the desire-nature. The result is a conflict. And we find even when the desires are satisfied, when one seems to obtain all one wishes in life, yet there is not happiness. There is only at best a momentary euphoria.

The nature of Urouj, like that of motion itself, is toward acceleration, or constant increases. If desire is not controlled at the start it leads toward indulgence and satiation. This in turn brings disease and weakness, culminating in old age and death. The sage, controlling his appetites, is often able to live much longer than other people.

GATHA: Thus the ego, the cover over one's mental and spiritual being, becomes thicker and thicker, until it closes all light from within.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in the countenance of people especially as they grow older. Every form of self-indulgence shadows the personality, hardens it and removes the joy which is within. There will be no more light. There may be self-contentment but it will be a very limited self-contentment. Real contentment comes with radiation and ends in exaltation.

GATHA: There are some who eat in order to live, but there are many who live in order to eat. The body is an instrument for the soul to experience the external world, but if the whole life be devoted to the instrument, then the person for whom the instrument exists is deprived of his experience in life.

TASAWWUF: The bible teaches that God saw that His creation was good. He has given the body the faculty of instinct, which is a sort of hidden wisdom. The instinct of hunger is often necessary to draw the stomach to food. Much of energy comes from eating proper foods, both in quality and quantity. When one does not wish to eat, sometimes it is necessary to have savors and flavors to build an appetite. This may make the appetite and its appeasement artificial.

The same is true in another sense with regard to the sex life. Its importance can be overrated. Only a small portion of the nervous system is engaged in this type of activity; it is true, it is real. But the whole of the nervous system has a much wider range and has still to be developed.

GATHA: The blindness that the physical ego causes can be clearly seen among the lower creatures—how the lion is inclined to fight with another lion, how the dog is inclined to watch the bone off which it has already eaten the flesh, yet it does not want another dog to touch it.

TASAWWUF: The subject of nufs, the ego, is discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound* and other places. But it takes a long time to realize that one has been in the captivity of this ego, been in Nufsaniat, and when one is caught in the web of life, one does not benefit from the divine blessings which come from within, which are within.

In *Gayan* it is said that two things cannot exist together, Allah and nufs. Mostly it is nufs in control. Whenever a person thinks with “I,” it is nufs in control. There may be many stages to it, but it is nufs. In the God-state one does not think that way. And we can see this also in the Diamond Sutra of the Mahayana Buddhists, that there is a way of life without ego, and any efforts toward the ego-expression would be false.

Of course animals are bound by nufs; human beings seem to be so bound but humanity can rise out of these bounds. This is the meaning in the Hebrew faith of God delivering humanity out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage.

GATHA: This same physical ego gives man pride in his strength, in his beauty, in his power, in his possessions.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* also says that pride is the ego. We may not think of it that way, but every activity from this limited self binds man to the wheel of causation. It is possible to manifest strength without owning it, manifest beauty without possessing it, exhibit a power far beyond human endeavor, and to enjoy things without being possessed by them.

The bowing of the head in prayer, and more so the bending of the knee takes away the ego hold

without diminishing any attribute. And when the inner light shines there is a beauty far beyond mere physical handsomeness. And by Nayaz and beyond we learn to draw the power out of the sphere. And as for possessions, it is not wealth that is wrong, it is attachment to it that is misleading.

GATHA: If there is a spark of light in time it must expand to a shining star, and when there is the slightest darkness, that darkness will expand and put the whole life in a mist.

TASAWWUF: This is the lesson which appears in the Sura of Qur'an called "Light." It has had many commentaries, among the most important that of Al-Ghazzali. There one finds the phrases, "light upon light" and "darkness upon darkness." Actually, the light is expanding and expansive, but darkness is much more like mist, very confusing also.

RYAZAT: One may be given the concentration of the Star and also the repetition of "May the Star of Divine Light shining in Thy heart be reflected in the hearts of Thy devotees." This is the creative life, it is the creating light, it is the inspiring light. It may shine from one and through one. And it may also lead to the concentration on the whole Sufi Symbol which contains the star.

These are introductory practices. Along with them the repetition of "Allah Nuri" or some similar phrase; or the deeper concentration on Rassoul may lead to the manifestation of this light through the body and personality.

GATHA: In the intoxication of the physical ego man becomes so interested in the satisfaction of his appetites only that he can readily harm or injure or hurt, not only his enemy, but his dearest friend.

TASAWWUF: This subject has been given considerable consideration in the Candidate's Gathekas. But it takes long disciplines before one is fully aware of this intoxication. It comes in forms such as interest and ambition and even need. It also makes one feel separateness and brings in the spirit of competition.

GATHA: As a drunken man does not know what he says or does, so a person blind with his physical ego is intoxicated and can easily say or do things, regardless of the pleasure, comfort, happiness, harmony or peace of others.

TASAWWUF: We all breathe the same atmosphere. Any disturbance of the peace of others is a disturbance of the atmosphere. One breathes in both atoms and vibrations, and the vibrations cannot be other than what man has emanated from his own self-will. So whatever we put into the sphere must come back to us; we have put it there. It is not a matter of faith or philosophy; it is a matter that we create our own atmosphere and all forces or vibrations coming closer to us take on something from the character of the atmosphere as the person has caused it. In this way, all of us produce our own karma and do not receive from life other than what we have given to it.

Therefore lightness of breath and the repetitions of sacred phrases are most valuable in producing first one's own purification, and then the purification of the sphere, and then the ability to purify

others. But without this self-purification, this does not come. Self-purification proceeds other processes.

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Series II: Number 4

The Training of the Ego: Necessity and Avidity

GATHA: In the satisfaction of bodily appetites there are two things: necessity and avidity. A satisfaction which is necessary for existence is one thing, and ever-increasing joy in the satisfaction of bodily appetites is another thing.

TASAWWUF: Hazrat Inayat Khan used to say, "One for need and two for greed." One does not have to take this too literally. If there were not something of a desire nature, some satisfaction in eating and even in gaining possessions, one might remain in this sense, like a wild animal. Animals seldom store up food excepting some rodents, and they often forget this. It is their instinct which impels them to do this. So an instinct may be needed so that one does not starve the body. And the great teachers have declared that total neglect of the body, presuming to gain spiritual enlightenment thereby, is a false attitude, and there is no evidence that such ego-starvation and denial brought on spiritual awakening.

Yes, there is a sort of joy in partaking of food. The early Christians held the agape, or love-feast, and we can have such feasts when there is an expansion of joy, feeling that every mouthful is a spiritual communion.

GATHA: When man acts without regardless of this, in either way, in satisfying the appetites or in abstaining from satisfaction, he makes a mistake. In order to train the ego it is not necessary that cruelty be done to nature; discrimination is necessary, to understand how far one should satisfy the appetites and how far one should refrain from being addicted to such satisfactions.

TASAWWUF: The teaching is that of the middle way. We find this not only in Buddhism but also in other traditions. The followers of Zoroaster and Moses did not resort to extreme asceticism so this point did not have to be stressed much there. In India negative denial, not denial of ego, was practiced. It is not surrender to God who created the physical body for the enjoyment of life and for

the expression of His Own faculties. The body is the Temple of God and is a sacred edifice.

There are a number of teachings about this but in general they are the same. When the body is properly treated, with respect and devotion, the light will shine and there will be a form of beauty which is not derived either from heredity or from the use of ointments or lotions.

GATHA: Intense desire for bodily satisfaction has a bad influence on one's mentality, which acts, psychically, unfavorably on oneself and one's surroundings.

TASAWWUF: This has lead to the attitude that there is a difference between civilization and culture. Culture is derived form the growth of man's faculties, and his inventions, discoveries and artistic creations. Civilization comes from efforts to have ease and luxury, to avoid hardships which were necessary in the pursuits of culture and the use of faculties to overcome the hazards of the world.

Many diseases have arisen from the pampering of the body. Yet what is called "modernizing" with all the advances that have been made in certain directions, has left an increasing amount of dissatisfaction and discontent, for the cry of the soul of man is not answered. And it has been explained that every exhalation without the proper attitude poisons ones immediate atmosphere. And so with each inhalation we derive from the vibrations in the sphere. The way to overcome this is by constant remembrance of God either in the form of Zikr or otherwise.

GATHA: It produces jealousy, envy, and greed in the nature, and if the thought-currents are strong, it produces psychically poisonous effects.

TASAWWUF: There has been a misleading form of research, especially into cancer and related diseases, that these may arise out of the presence of unfavorable viruses. But where did these unfavorable viruses derive? Sometimes they appear to be so minute it can be questioned whether they are actually physical or basically psychical.

When there is scientific research one will find that jealousy, envy, greed and all negative emotions poison not only the atmosphere but the physical body. Poisons are created within the body by thought-activities, or psychic reactions. The Sufi learns to overcome them by meditation and also by the mystical sciences which are taught to the disciples on the Path to God.

In the Ammara stage the ego remains under the control of the desire-nature. One delights in them. Very often we find masses of persons concerned with food, drink, sex and little else. They then fall prey to their desires and do not know why. The physicians do not always heal them. The spiritual life offers every balm but everybody may not always be ready for the spiritual life.

GATHA: There is a belief in the East which is known by the name **Nazr**, a belief that any food or drink can have a poisonous effect upon the one who eats or drinks it if it has been exposed to an evil eye. This superstition is known in almost all parts of the East in some form or other, and the

psychical idea behind it is that the intense feeling of envy produces a thought-current which must surely spread its poison, which causes harm to the one against whom the feeling works.

TASAWWUF: There is also the counter-thought that food which has been blessed may be healing and exalting. The commentator was once given an initiation by the Sufi teacher spitting out food and getting it before it fell to the ground. It had the most marvelous effects on the after-life and growth. This was full of Baraka, the spiritual vibrations which can only emanate from an advanced soul.

Today disciples repeat Nayaz which reads, "O thou, the sustainer of our bodies, hearts, and souls, bless all that we receive in thankfulness." This may be considered as more than a grace. It is grace in every sense, and this increases response to Baraka, even if one appears to be creating it oneself. For it is through man that Baraka can manifest.

GATHA: When we consider the whole unrest of the present time in the world we find that it is caused by the physical ego. The wars and revolutions seem to have the desire for comfort and pleasure and for more earthly gain behind them.

TASAWWUF: And the ego finds reasons for it. The ego can always coin a reason, and for that reason the teachings on Tasawwuf are to prevent man from becoming a slave to this sort of reason. It is always self-excusing and has no great principle behind it. Besides it always produces its own karma.

This subject is discussed in many places in the literature and Gathekas.

GATHA: And, since the happiness of the world depends upon the moral standard of the majority, it is upon the education of human nature in the psychic law of happiness that the peace of the world depends.

TASAWWUF: This has been very hard to understand. Psychical sciences are new for the west and most persons or groups engaged in such activities tend to limit research and teachings either to what they produce or what they understand. And even when there are new discoveries or acceptance of ancient teachings which might throw light on the subject, these seem so far from common-sense and everyday life that these become specialties.

The Christian Bible posits the psychic body and the Hindu teachings refer to the subtle body. But such references do not tell us much. And if there is emphasis on the subject it often leads one astray. The three bodies of man occupy in a sense, the same akasha or accommodation, and interpenetrate. Any activity on any of the planes has an effect on the immediate time-space and on the atmosphere a person carries with him.

It ought to be obvious that over indulgence in food or drink does not produce happiness. Sometimes there is an euphoria, or temporary upliftment, but it does not stay. There are always

reactions. And then the seeming happiness passes away.

When the elements of psychic law are learned in the movements of prayers, one does not immediately recognize that these are psychic as well as physical movements. The same motions may be used other than in prayer. And as the psychic principles are applied in walking and dancing there is conscious upliftment ending in increased exaltation. This may not lead to immediate peace but it does help mankind to overcome inner and outer disturbances.

Sufis have a prayer which reads in English, "In unison with the will of God, we will to have peace." Many think they are willing something. Any willing is not in unison with the Divine Will. Unison with the Divine Will comes when self-expression, even the most devotional self-expression is abandoned. It is the abandonment of ego which makes it possible for Divine Will to manifest in and through man, and then also all divine qualities, the Sifat-i-Allah.

With growth in the understanding and practice of the psychic knowledge so also both mentality and morality will advance.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 5

The Training of the Ego: Humility

GATHA: Humility is the principal thing that must be learned in the path of training the ego. It is the constant effort of effacing the ego that prepares man for the greater journey.

TASAWWUF: There is a pseudo-humility which consists of repeating "I am humble" or referring to the ego. This is a most subtle form of pride, masking oneself. In *Nirtan* it is said, "I draw all my strength from my humility." So also Salat begins, "We greet Thee with all humility."

RYAZAT: In the Salat the head is bowed. This is one degree of humility. In the Islamic prayer there is a deeper bowing from the waist line and in the Hebraic ritual there is a custom of bowing called davening, only it became a ritual and thus lost its effect. But the greatest humility comes in the Sajda which compels one to lay the whole head on the floor. Then one can not think ego-thoughts or even consider "I am" and there is humility and no thought required, for if there is thought there

is not humility. So by Sajda there is self-emptying.

The same posture is found in many rituals of many faiths but always for the same purpose.

GATHA: This principle of humility can be practiced by forgetting one's personality in every thought and action and in every dealing with another. No doubt it is difficult and may not seem very practicable in everyday life, though in the end it will prove to be the successful way, not only in one's spiritual life but in one's everyday affairs.

TASAWWUF: Actually it is most practicable. There could hardly be any scientific progress if one kept the ego-sense in view all the time. One must forget this ego in the scientific laboratory; one must devote oneself to experiment or research; and experiment and research cannot be successful until this is done. That is why, with all the attempt of the obscurantists in the different religions to hold science is not so good, and even an enemy of religion, science is not an enemy of humility, science often depends upon humility, and too much of so-called religion is quite devoid of it.

In Sufism there is the long training of **fana**, effacement or forgetting of self. This is needed for the sake of the pupil. It sometimes takes long discipline for the disciple to become aware that by his effacement in the teacher it is for his benefit, not for the benefit of the teacher. The teacher does not directly benefit and only indirectly benefits when the disciple succeeds in the path of self-effacement.

Moral culture has been presented as a philosophy and is so considered in the literature of the message. But there is also the esoteric way, and without the esotericism or Ryazat, there is no Sufism. A system of beliefs does not constitute Sufism or make one a Sufi. The Sufi thoughts, as thoughts, have much in common, or all in common, with the ideas of other movements. But in Sufism there is the surrender, and when it becomes willing surrender the disciple can benefit from the **Baraka** or cosmic magnetism and wisdom accumulated by the teacher. In Sufism this magnetism (or power) and wisdom come together and it is imbibed like a child imbibes its mother's milk when there is the surrender to and effacement before the living teacher.

GATHA: The general tendency is to bring one's personality forward, which builds a wall between two souls whose destiny and happiness lie in unity. In business, in profession, in all aspects of life it is necessary that one should unite with the other in this unity, in which the purpose of life is fulfilled.

TASAWWUF: People can often see the self-advantage in doing this. Often in external self surrender there is gain, even monetary gain; and in the musical profession it is most important otherwise there would be no harmony.

In the Orient, business is often conducted in another manner, to bring about harmony of personalities before there is any monetary consideration. And we can see in different lands so far apart as Spain and China, certain customs to produce harmony and friendship before the monetary side of a transaction is completed.

In *Gayan* it says, "There is nothing that I consider too good for me, or too high to attain to; on the contrary, all possible attainments seem within my reach since I have attained to the vision of my Lord."

"There is nothing that I feel too humiliating for me to do; and there is no position, however exalted, that one can make me prouder than I am already in the pride of my Lord."

GATHA: There are two forms of the effacing of the self, which in other words may be called giving in. One way is by weakness, the other is by willingness, the former being a defect, the latter a virtue. One comes by lack of will, the other by charity of heart. Therefore in training the ego one must take care that one is not developing a weakness, presuming it to be a virtue.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the difference between the Tamasic and Sattvic gunas. Many become negative to fate and think this is self-surrender. It is a self abasement, it is not a surrender. Those who practice the surrender from charity of heart gain in strength, gain in all aspects of life, gain in life.

Of course there are devotional people who pray and sometimes their prayers reach their hearts and they become devout and change. But if one wishes to do the Will of God it is not by becoming nothing: it is by becoming a vessel for whatever the Will of God directs and this requires strength, intelligence, and wisdom.

With children, no doubt, one must be firm, but it is also true of disciples. They may be loved, they may be cherished like children but they also need direction. And until they learn to become truly negative to the master, they will be limited both in their development and in their life.

GATHA: The best way of dealing with the question is to let life take its natural course, and at the same time to allow the conscience to keep before it the highest ideal. On the one side life taking its natural course, and on the other side the conscience holding its highest ideal, balancing it, will make the journey easy.

TASAWWUF: This natural course comes with the cultivation of rhythm and balance. One also finds it in adjusting to the seasons of the year and hours of the day. Disciples are trained to practice the Presence of God in various forms and also to attune to the Teacher. This is not for the sake of the Teacher but to promote the inner development.

Gayan says: "He who can live up to his ideal is the king of life." "The ideal is the means, but its breaking is the goal." The weak person cannot do that. He may have a wonderful ideal, may verbally hold to the highest precepts, but he is bound by them, he cannot free himself. It is not enough.

Vadan says, "Hold your ideal high in all circumstances." Also, "Man's ideal shows the height of his heart." One may hold a living person before him as ideal, but he must come to the acceptance

of some perfect personality who has already lived on earth, to attune to him, imbibe his virtues and generosity and without slavish imitation, grow in the way that person has grown and shown others how to grow.

GATHA: The words of Christ, which teach man to walk with another two miles if the other wished him too walk one, prove the great importance of harmony in life. And his words, “Resist not evil,” show still more the importance of harmony in life, namely that if you can avoid evil, in other words keep it away, that is better than wanting to fight it.

TASAWWUF: This is discussed in *Moral Culture* and elsewhere. One does not keep evil away by fighting it. This can make the lines of the evil still more intensely engraved in the mind. Then there are thought forms and they take nourishment from any attention paid to them, and lose vitality as they are deprived of psychic consideration. This is also taught in the lessons on *Forgiveness*.

GATHA: And the idea of Christ’s teaching of giving in is also expression of harmonizing with the wishes of another person. No doubt in this discrimination is necessary.

TASAWWUF: The *Bowl of Saki* (April 18) reads, “Our success or failure depends upon the harmony or disharmony of our individual will with the divine will.” But first we have to attune. If we cannot attune with our neighbors, with those close to hand, how can we ever learn attunement?

By discrimination it is meant that we should not give in for the sake of giving in. Yes, for the sake of repressing our own ego it is good. But it is not always wise when so doing; we give more impetus to the ego of another. Then he will try to take advantage of us, and to keep one in the state of negativity instead of in attunement with the Divine Will.

GATHA: That harmony is advisable which develops into harmony and culminates in a greater harmony, not that which may seem in the beginning to be harmony and would result in greater inharmony.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound* in the chapter on Harmony. Harmony may be the means, and it is not necessarily the end. There are people who expect harmony from others, in the end you will strengthen not harmony, but dissonance and also weaken your own insight.

GATHA: In training the ego balance must be taken as the most important principle.

TASAWWUF: In the Bible it is said that one should not go to the left hand nor the right. In Sufism, one seeks to find a balance between power and wisdom. This can be achieved by devotion to one’s esoteric practices, the medicine ascribed by the teacher for the benefit of the disciple.

There is little gain, sometimes loss by overdoing. Besides here, overdoing may strengthen the very ego one is seeking to control. By following the teacher’s advice one is at least taking a step toward

the mastery of one's own ego, which is desirable above all.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 6

The Training of the Ego: Training by Abstinence

GATHA: There is no better way of training the ego than denying it what it wants for the satisfaction of its vanity. It is painful sometimes, and it often seems hard, to deny the ego all it demands, but it always results in great satisfaction. Spirituality may be called a capacity; plainly explained, it may be called a depth. In some people naturally there is this capacity, this depth; and in some it may be made.

TASAWWUF: In *Kashf-al-Mahjub* one reads, "God, therefore, has exalted Poverty and made it a special distinction of the poor, who have renounced all things external and internal, and have turned entirely to the Causer; whose poverty has become their pride, so that they lamented its going and rejoiced at its coming, and embraced it and deemed all else contemptible."

There is therefore the poverty of the weak, who have failed in life in the process of accumulation; and there is the poverty of those who are totally unconcerned with accumulation. In accumulation one makes a movement, as in Urouj, of drawing things and there is no change in one's capacity and so no growth. It is like holding a bag and trying to keep it full, but no effort is made to enlarge the bag or get a larger one.

The growth of heart is the deepening of capacity and this deepening of capacity permits accumulation and at the same time lessens the importance of accumulation.

GATHA: In order to collect the rain-water people dig the ground and make a capacity for the water to collect. So in order to receive the spiritual life and light, one must open within oneself a capacity.

TASAWWUF: The same thing is part of the theme of *The Mind-World* and is also used in the science of Concentration, and so of the other inner sciences of the Sufis. There is a difference between deepening and accumulation at the same level. What is called "makam" in Sufism is not only a state of awakening consciousness, but carries with it greater faculties, and enables the soul

to experience life more fully on the surface.

In the esoteric practices, it is shown how to hold the breath longer; how to concentrate more fully within and without; to have longer meditations. All the inner practices open up new capacities and as these new capacities open they show the way of life to the aspirant. Vision also deepens Kashf, or Insight, and all faculties. But first the capacity must be made therefore.

GATHA: The egoistic has no capacity, for it is his ego which makes the heart, so to speak, solid, giving no accommodation to the essence of God.

TASAWWUF: The *Bowl of Saki* (Apr. 3) says: "Life is a misery for the man absorbed in himself." "We blame others for our sorrows and misfortunes, not perceiving that we ourselves are the creators of our world" (June 6). "Self-denial is not renouncing things, it is denying the self, and the first lesson of self-denial is humility" (Nov. 8).

These aphorisms are good, but it is the practice that is important. Zikr can be used to break the hardness of heart and there are other ways. But again it is the doing, not any belief in their value, that is important. And as we strive to increase our capacity for God, we also pave the way for the greater manifestation of His Grace.

GATHA: The more one denies the demands of the ego, which satisfy its vanity, the more capacity one makes to be filled by the life of God. It is painful, sometimes, it often seems hard to deny all that the ego demands, but it always results in great satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: There are some people who find any form of self-denial painful. They want to hold on to everything and this may be a natural tendency. And there are others who let go, it seems they can hold on to nothing and if they are told to stop letting go, they also find that painful.

The Sufic way has been one of indifference, to take things as they come and not vainly strive for or against the demands of the ego. Attention to the ego gives it more power, and ignoring it makes it weak. Self-denial consists primarily of paying no attention to the self, not by looking at its demands and fighting back. This also increases the ego hold.

There are people who practice self-restraint in food, in habits, in possession, and there are those who live naturally, and they can find that their basic demands of the body come from its nature, and often from the self-centered desire nature. Thus there is honest instinct.

GATHA: When the will is able to rule one's life and not one's bodily appetites or mental fancies, then there is the reign of the Golden Age, as the Hindus say; there is no injustice and there is no reward.

TASAWWUF: *Vadan* says, "Man learns to follow the Will of God by practicing self-denial." "All the lack that we find in life is the lack of will and all the blessings that comes to us come by the power

of Will.” That is the formula. Now we have to control the bodily desires, and there are ways by which it can be done. Sometimes fasting is necessary and sometimes seclusion and there are other means. And as one does this, one gets control over the body and over the mind, and then they become one’s willing servants.

Then one is ready for the Golden Rules, for these are not rules which are the codes of life, but they are the codification of the way sages live. The sages do not make the rules, but the way they live can become the rules for others.

GATHA: When man finds disturbance in his life, a lack of harmony in the external life, he must take refuge under the reign within, which is the kingdom of God.

TASAWWUF: This comes through various practices and disciplines. Whatever reality one finds then can be held on to and held on to fast. It is this holding on which becomes a discipline for strengthening the will.

GATHA: To a Sufi this body is the Temple of God and the heart His shrine; and as long as man keeps God away from His temple, from His shrine, his limited ego reigns and that reign is called the Iron Age by the Hindus.

TASAWWUF: This means that the world of matter is dominant, dominant in thought, action and speech. And we need not be surprised that under such circumstances there is woe, for the whole consciousness is directed downward and outward, and so establishes Karma downward and outward, and so all the movements are downward and outward. People become divided, separated, and in competition; love, harmony, and beauty reach a low ebb.

But understanding this intellectually does not help much. This philosophy is also presented in *In an Eastern Rose Garden*.

GATHA: A person who has not opened his heart to God to abide in may yet be a good person, but as his life will be involved in the activities of the world, his ego will turn from bad to worse, culminating into the worst state of mind, and it is that condition of mind which is personified in the religious term Satan.

TASAWWUF: Sura II, verse 30 reads: “Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden) and get them out of a state of (felicity) in which they had been.” This refers to the grand state of bliss which is the natural condition of the soul. When it turns to the ego-identification, it makes for separation.

Thus Sura V, Verse 94, reads, “Satan’s plan is to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer: will ye not abstain?” This is really a variation of “Lead us not into temptation.” The thoughts of man are directed either outward by the ego, or by Satan; or inward by the Divine Remembrance or Zikr. It cannot operate in the two opposite directions at once.

The Orthodox of all religions picture a Satan or Lucifer, or Devil or Mara as an external being. And so long as this outlook is encouraged, man is caught. And Satan benefits while there is the outlook that he is an external being. So the ignorant fight such a Satan and the more they do the more the Satan thrives, for Satan is nothing but the nufs of man.

GATHA: In order to learn to realize “I am not, but God is” one must first deny oneself for his fellowmen.

TASAWWUF: One reads in the Christian Bible, “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.” (First Corinthians X, 23) This seems utterly non-Christian, for it de-emphasizes the spirit of the ego, and tends toward the brotherhood community, which is exactly what the word “church” (or ecclesia or genesth, etc.) meant.

We find it again in Philippians II, 4: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Or in Romans XV, 2, “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” This is an application of “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

The whole of the Bible maybe epitomized as “Love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy might; and love thy neighbor as thy self.” Jesus has said this is all the law and the prophets. Organized religions, Christian and non-Christian teach differently. They have become based on divisions, sectarians and heresy-hunting, and so become debased. Man, warned not to judge, has over-indulged in judging. Man, taught to consider others over his ego, is concerned with his ego. The world has fallen into error and terror, and a name is offered instead of the teachings that person brought. The Messengers all brought similar teachings and had the same goals. The religious bodies may offer dissimilar teachings and are concerned with something else than the happiness of mankind.

GATHA: Respecting another, enduring a person or an action which is uncongenial to oneself, tolerating all, overlooking the faults of others, covering the weaknesses that one finds in one’s fellowmen, willing to forgive—all these are the first lessons in self-denial.

TASAWWUF: We have these teachings both in the literature and lessons. That is the first step. The practice is the second step. And the understanding behind the practice is the third step, and by this alone does man help the weak, good or bad, to rise in evolution.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 7

The Training of the Ego: The Two Sides of the Human Ego

GATHA: The human ego has two sides to its nature; one side is to strive for its nature's demands, and that side of the ego may be classed as the animal ego.

TASAWWUF: The subject of the animal aspect of ego has been given consideration in many places in both the written literature and esoteric teachings. There are natural forces in man, needed to build up the body and its continuance. Mohammed has said there should be no asceticism in Islam and forced diets and starvation and conscious self-denial are not merits in the holy life. People who do these things and are proud or receive public appreciation are even more the captives of Nufsaniat.

But there are forces coming out of instinct which first turn to pleasure and then the enjoyment of that pleasure may become the aim in life with or without regard to the moral reciprocity.

GATHA: But there is another side which manifests when the ego shows its agitations for no other reason than intolerance. This feeling is a kind of blindness, or intoxication, and it arises from an excess of energy coming out from the soul quite unrestrained; it covers, so to speak, the light of the soul as the smoke may cover the light that comes from a flame.

TASAWWUF: We find in daily life frustration and frustration may come from the ego-agitations, or it may be that society or those in power wish to restrain others. **Nufs** has been explained by many Sufis as the spirit of agitation. It is the uneasiness which causes movements to and fro as the Bible tells us, but the telling does not reveal how these forces can be restrained. And they can be restrained. One way is by control of Urouj, which is connected with Inhalation and draws from the inner and outer planes both to the personality and with this drawing in also many forces.

There are types of people such as tyrants and despots and sadists who delight in finding fault with others and punishing them, taking upon themselves divine prerogatives. There are always forces which seek outward expression, and the animal and diabolic tendencies have to be restrained, but the others have to be channeled rather than curtailed.

GATHA: In order to allow the Divine Spirit to guide one's life one must clear the soul of its smoke part, leaving there only the flame to illuminate one's life.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of this, control and activity. Control is not repression. Whatever element dominates in one's nature, it will either be at the base of one's emotions and actions, or it will be used by a person in his outer life. The basic force is, of course, from the soul itself. We are not to restrain life, we are not to fall into tamasic errors, we are to develop and use

heart-faculties. The soul must ultimately come to the surface to understand its purpose and work out its purpose.

Basically, Tasawwuf is the science and art of purification from all that is foreign. And if by no others means, then meditation is to be used which clarifies the Kashf and enables the Kashf to clear the way in life.

GATHA: It is the nature of the ego during its ignorance that all that is very beautiful or powerful and all that is below the standard of its ideal agitate it. This sensitiveness may increase to such an extent that all that does not bring any comfort or joy or happiness to the ego may become repugnant to it.

TASAWWUF: We find this in certain critical types of people and especially artist and would-be artist who have been frustrated. If one can take away their frustrations they will move from negativity to positivity.

This is a work which faces all spiritual teachers. They may or may not feel it incumbent to try to lift the weights off of frustrated and exploited people. But the truth, the power is within the personality, although we may always be living in a social order which does not give as much freedom as desirable for the full expression of the heart-faculties.

GATHA: It is this ignorant state of the ego which in the Sanskrit language is called by the wise **Ahankar**, and the whole method that the wise have taught in any age and in any part of the world has been for recognizing and understanding this ignorance which is the primary nature of the ego, and then purifying one's ego from this, by gentleness, humility, by self-control, by tolerance, and by forgiveness.

TASAWWUF: The Bhagavad-Gita repeats over and over again the need to control Ahankara and Manas and the intellectual people read and discuss and do not practice because they do not know how to practice. They are caught in their own egos, and even while very good are thus self-limited. They cannot possibly understand the deep wisdom.

From the beginning, disciples are taught to breathe the fine vibrations, to take off a load by purifying the breath. This is a very necessary first stage. And then there are controls which come from repeating the Divine Attributes and by the esoteric methods of movements and singing and meditation which increase the accommodations for these attributes to manifest in man. So long as the attributes are confined to divinity alone they are not of much help. So every effort is made toward refinement.

Refinement does not mean weakness. The X-ray is very refined and very powerful. And so it is with both inner and outer aspects; with the lasers and maser beams and with the Light of intelligence from within which is both refined and penetrating.

GATHA: Man can dissimulate this ignorance, but that is not enough. Often outward manner may become a mask over something ugly hidden behind.

TASAWWUF: The whole culture is to put on the mask—the actors, the radio and television people, the newsmen, even the salesmen. They are practicing that which is not fixed deep within their own being. Being superficial it takes away their power and magnetism. It may succeed for a while outwardly but there will be an inner reaction.

That is why there are those who turn to alcohol or to psychic and psychedelic “drugs” and to other things. Man turns to everything but within himself and so he is caught in webs of deceit and retribution. Outward success may come this way, but happiness never.

GATHA: There is only one thing that can free the ego from this ignorance and that is the love of God, the contemplation of God and the knowledge of God.

TASAWWUF: This must not be taken as a threat. Many threateners consider themselves warners. Their power is simply borrowed from their own egos, or by a subtle absorption of the magnetism of others. Many like to hear threats and especially warnings against others. It goes on all the time and when we look at facts and at history it does not come out that way.

The Gnostics know that God is Love. With all Power, with all attributes, it has ever remained as Mohammed said, “The Merciful leans toward the side of Mercy.” If we could only realize this. If we could only get a glimpse of Divinity through the perfect attributes, we should find this is quite a different cosmos from what we may have imagined.

The Bowl of Saki (Jan. 11) says, “where the flame of love rises, the knowledge of God unfolds by itself.” *Vadan* says, “No sooner is the God-ideal brought to life than the worshiper of God turns into Truth. Then Truth is no longer his seeking; Truth becomes his being; and in the light of that absolute Truth he finds all knowledge.”

GATHA: Love of God comes from belief in God. Belief is the first thing necessary, but belief needs support. It can be kept up by the belief of others around one or by learning or study which will strengthen it.

TASAWWUF: This subject is discussed in the lessons on Tasawwuf for disciples. It had to become an attitude and a practice, then it is valuable. To believe in believing is, of itself, of no value. But as one practices forms of believing and applying them to life, the heart-essence will come to the surface and make its influence known.

Naturally one tends to agree with those around one and if not consciously then subconsciously. In this way customs and beliefs manifest. But as is taught it is believing that is the basis for them.

It begins as if in the darkness and goes forward with certainty into the light. All this belongs to the

living heart.

GATHA: But he to whom the love of humanity is unknown can never know the love of God; as you can see the painter in his picture, the poet in his poem, the musician in his music, so in humanity you can see God.

TASAWWUF: This teaching has been proclaimed in all ages. It has not been sustained. The Messengers of God, the Prophets, have proclaimed it. And the worshipers either worship these personalities or else establish codes and customs in which the practice of universal kindness becomes a small part of the teaching.

People have talked about the golden rule for ages, but excepting a little in ancient Egypt, we have not seen it work into the law-codes and customs. And today, after thousands of years, an attempt is being made to encourage human consideration. This is the very basis of the Message which is not something new, but a revitalization of something important that has been overlooked, overshadowed.

Jesus said that he came to bring a new commandment, that we love each other. It has not been applied. Instead we have institutions and churches and all kinds of schemes and devices. None of them can be successfully substituted for love and consideration and all are so substituted. So in the end Hazrat Inayat Khan called for human consideration above all else and instead this teaching was withdrawn. We find in the Christian Bible a constant reminder that until man loves his fellows whom he has seen he really cannot love the God Whom he has never seen. Instead emotionalized concepts and ideals have been substituted until they become mental idols. They are suppose to comfort; they do not comfort, and so with all exhortation, with all aspiration, with all presumed idealism, the human kind is not happy, not even contented.

For the soul can never be content excepting with God Himself and the reflections therefrom that God created mankind in His own Image and Likeness. Now this has to be learned. It ought not to have been made esoteric, but it has become esoteric because popular institutions are not based on cosmic morality.

There is a whole science and art of growth of love in human consciousness and the presence of the teacher is to help that love all else. Esoteric practices without the awakened heart have very little value.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 8

The Training of the Ego: Training is as Well a Science as an Art

GATHA: It is a science and an art to understand the nature of the human ego and to train it. One can understand the nature of the human ego by a study of human nature; but one can learn the way of training it by training one's own ego.

TASAWWUF: If we look at it intellectually or analytically we shall not get far. There have been all sorts of moral studies and psychological studies and the human problems persist and unhappiness prevails, and even when there is some satisfaction it is not always deep satisfaction.

One learns to train one's own ego in many ways. The traditional formula is to deny one's wants. This has some value, but it also brings up a subtle form of ego-attachment so that there is a pride in self-denial. And when there is a pride in self-denial, it is not real ego-denial, it is merely a path of deprivation. And Buddha has warned against this kind of existence and Mohammed went even further to proclaim no asceticism in Islam.

The ego may be trained in quite other ways. For instance there is the science and art of breathing. There are forms of sublime concentration. Above all there is the practice of the repetition of divine names. As one repeats those names one imbibes those qualities, for it is from God-Allah that we draw all goodness, not only in the form of things but even more in the form of qualities. And these qualities one can carry with one after one leaves the body.

GATHA: Man can train his ego by being patient with all around him that has a jarring effect upon him, for every jar upon the soul irritates the ego. When man expresses his irritation he develops a disagreeable nature; when he controls it and does not express it, then he becomes crushed inwardly. The idea is to rise above all such irritations.

TASAWWUF: This is a difficult path. Patience is the subject-matter for Gatha 4, Series 1, *Metaphysics*. *Vadan* says, "Let courage be thy sword and patience thy shield, my soldier."

Then there is the practice of the Divine Presence and this must begin with appreciation of a Sea of Tranquility. Yet in this tranquility is all life; it is the opposite of death, it is fullness, it is all embracing, it is the Divine Kingdom.

GATHA: Life has a jarring effect by its very nature which every sensitive soul can feel. If a person wishes to keep away from all jarring influences, he had better not try to live, for life is a continual jarring.

TASAWWUF: If one substitutes here the word "Samsara" for life, one will more regularly recognize

the whirlpool of existence. This is also posited in the first part of the Book of Genesis. Although Hebrew, it drew upon both Indian and Egyptian sources—so did the Babylonians, they both drew and did not necessarily borrow from each other. Or in the Sufic terms we may call it **Nufsaniat** which means the world as it is witnessed through the eyes of egos. As the ego or nufs is itself the spirit of agitation we have to choose between agitation and peace, between excitement and repose. Usually it is the excitement which dominates, and all who seek repose or peace are caught in dilemmas.

Gayan says, “Life is what it is, you cannot change it, but you can change yourself.” And, “Stand through life firm as a rock in the sea, undisturbed and unmoved by its ever-rising waves.” When people try to follow the injunctions of *Gayan* and *Vadan* and *Nirtan*, take them within their consciousness and cease to bother with authorship (God Alone is Author) then the spirit of mastery will appear. Each can find his own salvation.

GATHA: Life is motion, and it is the nature of motion to strike against something. It does not require strength to stand against the jarring influences of life—there is no wall of stone or of iron that can always stand against the waves of the ocean—but a small piece of wood, little and light, can always rise and fall with the waves, yet always above them, uninjured and safe.

TASAWWUF: The sailboat and the ark are able to do that. We read about the ark of Noah and do not know whether to take it literally or figuratively. Either way we take it, if we actually take it, we can learn some lessons. We do not gain by fighting rivers and currents. If there is a terrible rainstorm we have to learn to adjust to it. The same is true of more powerful agitations and calamities. We can learn the rhythms of things and how to move along with them. When we do that, they will not destroy us, they may not even harm us.

There is a science or art of which Jesus has referred when he said to let your “yes, yes,” mean “yes, yes!” and your “no, no,” mean “no, no!” You will stand firm and will not have to oppose the currents of life and after a while they will never harm.

GATHA: The lighter and the littler man’s ego becomes the more power of endurance he has. It is two strong egos that strike against one another. The little ego, the light ego, just slips over when a powerful wave of a strong ego comes for it to knock over itself against a stronger wall that may throw it over. The art of dealing with egos of different grades of evolution is to learn gentleness, tolerance, and forgiveness, which all come from charity of heart.

TASAWWUF: The first step is the philosophy of this which is found in the lessons on *Moral Culture* and also in the Gathas on Tasawwuf. This is a first stage. It needs some meditating, that is another stage. But then must come actualization, and for that usually a spiritual teacher is necessary, a guide who himself has the realization. For it comes not only in and with surrender to the teacher and teaching, it comes also by practices connected with the science and art of Ryazat.

This is especially true of imbibing the qualities indicated in the Wazifas and the Names of God, the

Sifat-i-Allah. We can become as Allah by absorbing these qualities. We repeat the sounds and ascribe them to God. But God has made man in His image and all of us have the divine potentialities. There through right breathing, right meditation, and the practice of the Divine Presence.

The Bowl of Saki says, "We should be careful to take away from ourselves any thorns that prick us in the personality of others." "The heart of every man, both good and bad, is the abode of God, and care should be taken never to wound anyone by word or act." And in *Gayan* we read, "Make your heart as soft as wax to sympathize with others; but make it hard as rock to bear the blows that fall upon it from within."

GATHA: When man stands on the same plane as the other, then he is subject to the influence of another ego. But if he rises above it, then every influence of the other ego falls flat.

TASAWWUF: This can be done esoterically and psychologically. The devotee learns practices, which, if pursued, refine him consciously or unconsciously. Then the inner senses awaken and after that the heart-feelings. This makes him perceive both the words and intentions of another, and this in turn gives him at least the strength of understanding. When one has the understanding, he is on the path of wisdom to respond or not to respond to the efforts of another to influence him.

By the various practices of refinement one rises above another without thinking of it. He becomes stronger and wiser at the same time without giving much attention to his own ego or that of another.

GATHA: There is a poem in Hindustani, the verse of Ghalib: "The world seems to me like a playground of children. How constantly busy the infants seem with their toys!" Verily the secret of peace is hidden under the cover of the ego.

TASAWWUF: *Gayan* says, "O peace-maker, before trying to make peace throughout the world, first make peace within thyself. "Thy peace alone is my life's repose." And we can quote endlessly which may be a very necessary first step. And the same is true of the intentions of Dowas, which are prayers for protection within the turmoil of the world.

The spiritual work of the day is not to run away. If one runs he must some day face what he has run away from. The spiritual work is to find peace amid the turmoil. The Mahayana Buddhists acclaim: "Samsara is Nirvana" What do they mean? Are these empty words? Can they be explained?

It means we can find our peace, our joy, our power without running away. In the midst of life salvation may come. **La Illaha El Il Allah** means that there is no God but God, and if we have to run away, then we are positing a "god" so to speak. We are positing a power, we are positing fear, we are positing weakness. By **Allah Ho Akbar** we find strength in everything. There is nothing to fear, there is nothing to run from.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 9

The Training of the Ego: Forgiveness

GATHA: In order to learn forgiveness man must learn tolerance first. And there are people whom man cannot forgive. It is not that he must not forgive, but it is difficult, beyond his power to forgive, and in that case the first thing he can do is to forget. The first step towards forgiveness is to forget.

TASAWWUF: This teaching is presented in the Gathas on Metaphysics. *Gayan* says, "Forgiveness belongs to God; it becomes the privilege of mortal man only when asked by another." But many assume that they can and do forgive, and yet they do not always forget. A sore spot remains. This is not forgiveness.

If we were to study the Jewish Esotericism which is called "Kabbalah," it is not always verbal. In the higher stages it is not verbal at all. We have to learn the words, then the teachings implied by the words. Then we must absorb. It is not easy to absorb. Therefore, there is the science and art of Ryazat, esotericism. Now we learn to use our bodies, minds and hearts in everything; not philosophically but actually. We learn the sciences of the psychic world and beyond. We practice them. We pray with body, mind and heart and we do with the body, mind and heart.

Therefore the disciple learns to move his body or a portion of it with the intent of absorbing psychic-currents and then heart currents. As he advances in this he makes the accommodation. And as the heart-circle widens, man consciously or unconsciously makes himself the Khalif of God on earth and the Sifat-i-Allah are reflected in him. Then forgiveness becomes natural.

RYAZAT: The teacher may have the disciple repeat the proper Divine attribute with movements and this helps him to absorb the Attribute, become one with it on the journey toward becoming one with Allah.

GATHA: It is true that the finer man is the more he is subject to be hurt by the smallest disturbance that can produce irritation and inharmony in the atmosphere.

TASAWWUF: Yes, we may become as harmless as doves and as sensitive, but at the same time

also become as wise as the serpents. Then we can stand up against disturbances and difficulties. Besides who determines what is disharmonious? When we cultivate the indifferences we may not be annoyed. We may not any longer hear and see, having a different focus on life, and in this there is great strength.

GATHA: A person who gives and takes hurts is capable of living an easy and comfortable life in the world. Life is difficult for the fine person, for he cannot give back what he receives in the way of hurt, and he can feel it more than the average person.

TASAWWUF: Here it is not a matter of philosophy, of ethics. What can one do to overcome these difficulties? This comes from practicing the Divine Presence. It is not a matter of philosophy, of belief. It is devotion and practice which brings the strength. In extreme cases (and many cases may be extreme) holding on to **Allaho Akbar** has many, many benefits. When one feels the Divine Presence, whether in essence or in attributes, one rises above this way of life when responsiveness is in control and one is not standing firm. We are not just reeds to be blown by the wind, we are capable of being giant trees which live on under many circumstances.

GATHA: Many seek protection from all hurting influences by building some wall around themselves. But the canopy over the earth is so high that a wall cannot be built high enough, and the only thing one can do is to live in the midst of all inharmonious influences, to strengthen his will-power and to bear all things, yet keeping the fineness of character and a nobleness of manner together with an ever-living heart.

TASAWWUF; The lessons in Akhlak Allah are no doubt the highest and finest. But we also say "Thy Light is in all forms. Thy Love is in all beings ... Allow us to recognize Thee in **all** Thy Holy Names and Forms." And so we can attune and adjust. We can find the Rama, the Krishna, the Buddha within ourselves. We can awaken the potentialities of all the so-called Bodhisattvas. We can become them because we have all the potentialities. We can practice the tasawwuri in many forms, many directions. And as we practice these tasawwuri, we awaken to find that really, not verbally, theologically or symbolically, but actually the kingdom of the heavens is within ourselves. We are all potential masters.

Self-control is explained in The Art of Personality. *Gayan* says: "The man who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life." And it is not the verbal but the applied teachings that benefit us.

GATHA: To become cold with the coldness of the world is weakness; and to become broken by the hardness of the world is feebleness; but to live in the world and yet to keep above the world is like walking on the water.

TASAWWUF: This is the test we all have to face. It is remarkable that the many messengers and Prophets of God who have come to earth from time to time have all given this same teaching. It becomes annoying when their followers refuse to recognize this and see only the nobleness of a

single particular personality. And thus they become involved with their impressions and not with the realities behind such impressions.

Coldness of any kind has therefore been looked upon as a sort of vice. When there is coldness in the body, attention is given to it. Something is wrong. The circulation is not as it should be. There are many ways to adjust it and all are important and necessary.

But coldness of character is more serious. This does not disappear as the result of treatments and unless it is eradicated one will leave this world and not be able to enjoy the blessings of heaven.

In the esoteric practices, one is given both symbols and disciplines which awaken the heart and its sensitivity. These also bring warmth. The warmth that comes from them is not of an ephemeral character. It comes from within and is not subject to change and circumstance. That is why in ancient times the spiritual practices were called "Tapas," which means **warmth** or **warming**.

There are two essential aspects to this. One is almost mechanical and comes from application; the other comes from the actual awakening of heart. When the heart stirs it also stirs heat. This comes out in bodily warmth, in magnetism, in joy, in consideration and in all aspects of the heart-life.

GATHA: There are two essential studies for a man of wisdom and love; that is, to keep the love in our nature ever increasing and expanding and to strengthen the will so that the heart may not be easily broken.

TASAWWUF: Again we face the dilemma of words. We have to accept the philosophy. Many will accept it. Many will applaud the words of the speaker. But when asked to explain and to illustrate from their personal lives they will be confused. They are not looking at it that way; they are looking for reforms outside themselves. These are of no value.

There are some who take refuge in a philosophy or a creed. This is fine as a first step, but only as a first step. One who cannot warm others really has no warmth himself. One who cannot promote joy in others, has not attained to the essence of joy. Wisdom is the result of processes, not of verbal or mental philosophy. Wisdom does not come from increased education, from knowledge of more names and forms, or even of greater understanding also. Wisdom must have in it the quality of attunement.

The Bowl of Saki says, "the only power for the mystic is the power of love." And in *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty* we read, Love is the state of mind in which the consciousness of the love is merged into that of the object of love; it also produces all the attributes of humanity in the lover."

We may quote incessantly. But we must learn also to apply ourselves incessantly.

GATHA: Balance is ideal in life; man must be fine and yet strong, man must be loving and yet powerful.

TASAWWUF: That is to say we should progress along both the Jemal and Jelal lines. One without the other is not balance. The words are not balance; the thoughts are not balance; the attainment **is** balance. We may have the Jemali morality but still we must have the Jelali character to stand up. Either development without the other may be incomplete.

Even the most extreme Master must have a glowing and growing love. Even the most extreme Saint can not live without power and determination.

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Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 10

The Training of the Ego: Training by Refraining from Free Impulses

GATHA: The wise, knowing that the nature of the ego is to rise and to move and to disturb the atmosphere, practice in their lives to restrain the ego from its free impulses.

TASAWWUF: The first stage, no doubt, is to keep on emphasizing this situation. But now we must come to the applications and they are not always easy. We can restrain our breath. We can learn that “blessed are the refined in breath.” This can be done and it is done on the path toward perfection.

Then there is the fulfillment of the *Ten Sufi Thoughts*. We have thoughts, we read them, we may even meditate on them, and then they may be laid aside. This often happens. Yet it is necessary to go over them over and over and over until they become part of our consciousness and character. This is another step.

We can quote Scriptures. We can read *The Art of Personality*. *Gayan* says, “Vanity is the impetus hidden behind every impulse, that brings out both the worst and the best in man.” Moula Bux Khan said that there is no gain in the world except by breathing in the praise of Allah and no loss excepting in not bringing in the praise of Allah. We bring in, we breathe in. This is part of Urouj. If we handle Urouj properly, we gain in life; and when we do not gain, it is because we have not handled Urouj properly.

GATHA: The tendency of the ego to rise shows itself in the desire of standing when others are

sitting, and running when others are walking, and dancing when others are standing.

TASAWWUF: These are also all aspects of Urouj and impetus. When we stop them, when we restrain, we are the gainers. We can both take advantage of them and restrain them. In the sitting we listen to teachings or meditate or chant. There is no need to rise. But there are also standing and walking chants, and meditations and all practices, and when these are performed, although still in the Urouj, we have dedicated all to God. The ego has no sway then.

It is the ego which wishes to change. The ego is not satisfied but the soul can be satisfied whether walking or standing or sitting or at any other time.

The nature of Urouj is such that with every inhalation there comes a tendency to an impulse or movement. When expressed it leads to action on some plane; when stored it adds to psychic power. The storing of it is called "Spiritual Economy." It is most valuable in the life of every person on the path to God.

GATHA: In the mental plane the desire to be proud, the desire to be vain, to show conceit, to show one's superiority over others, all come from the ego.

TASAWWUF: Ego tends to emphasize differences. We see things by colors, forms, variations, changes. The whole world is subject to constant change. We are caught in this tendency. But there is a middle path between fighting all impulses and making use of them to glorify life.

GATHA: The wise, therefore, by learning the lesson of humility, of gentleness, of mildness, make their spirit, as it is called in the Bible, poor—"Blessed are the poor in spirit."

TASAWWUF: And we can begin this by learning how to refine the breath. The refinement of breath leads to refinement of character. We may quote the Scriptures incessantly, but we have to find the Scriptures in ourselves. It has been said that a soft answer turneth away wrath. It is also true that the soft breathing makes the wrath impossible. Gentleness does not mean weakness. Indeed it sometimes takes tremendous strength to be really gentle.

GATHA: These manners are sometimes taught, but if one does not feel them within oneself they become forms and conventions without spirit or life or effect in them. It is only love which can teach these manners that keep the ego under control.

TASAWWUF: The reason, indeed the principle reason why there were so many obstacles in the early spreading of the Message, is that while it fell into the hands of good people, their goodness was often of form and convention. It did not yet reach those whose hearts were fountains of beneficence. So we can say that even the Sufi Teachings as a whole have to pass through their own initiations. Initiation is taught as if for persons, but it also affects groups, organizations, everything and everyone.

GATHA: If one does not learn them from love, then one learns them from suffering. Pain naturally crushes the ego, and if one has had much pain in one's life it has a softening influence on the ego.

TASAWWUF: Many people are satisfied with the words as if the words were the teachings. Words are only the skin of the teachings. We can grow willingly through love or unwillingly through suffering. The path to perfection involves both. But things do not just happen. There is no particular evolution in Samsara itself. All forms tend toward the human species and must go through the same gyrations, the same gradients and evolutions as others before them.

God is All-Mercy and Wisdom and does not wish pain for everybody; but while change is inherent in all forms, growth is also inherent, at least in the organic forms. There is not only the physical growth and evolution, but there is super-physical growth and evolution.

We may read in the *Gayan*, "Pleasure blocks but pain clears the way of inspiration. As fire can cook food or burn it, so also does pain affect the human heart." Or in *Vadan*, "All pain is significant of change; all that changes for better or worse must cause a certain amount of pain, for change is at once birth and death." And "If someone can discover, with any authority, the true source of happiness, he can find it only in pain."

Papa Ram Das especially taught that the capacity for joy and suffering was one capacity, that growth involved both and that one does not grow in joy without growing in suffering nor grow in suffering without growing in joy.

GATHA: Wisdom is the great teacher, it shows man what he is when he lets the ego be free and uncontrolled and what one gains by control of the ego.

TASAWWUF: *The Bowl of Saki* (Feb. 12) reads: "Wisdom is greater and more difficult to attain than intellect, piety or spirituality." And (Feb. 13), "Wisdom is intelligence in its pure essence, which is not necessarily dependent upon the knowledge of names and forms." And (Nov. 18), "Wisdom is not in words but it is in understanding."

We say Sufism is Divine Wisdom. This is the first step. Now how to attain to it? This is the whole purpose of the Path. All the instructions, all the disciplines are in this direction and with awakening wisdom comes; with wisdom awakening comes.

GATHA: Imagine a rider sitting on a horse without reins in his hand, letting the horse go free wherever it likes. He risks his life at every moment. The happiness is his who rides on the horse and controls it and has the reins in his hand, and he is the master of his journey.

TASAWWUF: There is no greater mistake than to assume one can sit back and evolve. If evolution were like that no doubt man would attain liberation sooner. But how about the sub-human world? How about the rocks? The trees? The animals? They would be stirred with constant suffering. The suffering and evolution go together.

The Wise God does not permit such disturbances to His creation. He is considering the whole of it. So there is something like stasis, non-evolution and this makes it possible for the lower kingdoms to adjust. Besides, if the mineral world were subject to such constant change, if the rock-forms were created and destroyed more rapidly, it would see that there would be chaos.

We can see something of this in the rise and fall of stars, subject to constant change. But no one has conceived the possibility of great living creatures on such stars. There must be some settling for living forms to adjust to environment.

Gayan teaches, "He who is master of his own domain is the ruler of life." The spiritual discipline brings about self control, and self-control brings about environment control. The Gita talks about "master of great car (?)" which is to say, controller of one's own personality and destiny. This comes, as Gita teaches, through Yoga. And what is Yoga? It is linkage with God. It may or may not involve external linkage with God. But by this, one stands above the constancy or evolution of life both. It is then that it can be said one is riding on the horse, not letting the horse carry him to wherever he will.