

Githa with Commentary
Murakkabah: Concentration
Series I
of
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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Githa Series I Number 1

Concentration Practices

GITHA: First Week: Take an object from the mantelpiece or from the furniture in the room, a fruit, or a flower. Place it before you, and focus your eyes upon it.

TASAWWUF: As concentration is a practice of the Sufis which can be performed in everyday life, it is not necessary to go far to find some object upon which to focus one's attention and whereon to center one's mind. Although concentration has for its highest purpose the union with Allah, yet God is to be found in all things and it is through concentration that this can be accomplished, especially in the outer world.

It is well to begin with a simple object. If a fruit or flower is selected, let it not be in the stage of decay. By "simple" is meant one of geometric or elementary design, not having too much detail so that even a little child would be able to grasp it. Symbols and pictures are not so desirable at the commencement, at least for class work.

The mureeds should not sit too close together, so that the breath of each may move freely. It is also necessary that each sit so that the object can be easily observed. Therefore it is not required that the object be placed upon an altar. It may be put upon a table in the center of the room, although if the class can remain seated in crescent fashion it is better. The less things can come under observance the easier the concentration.

GITHA: Inhale and exhale rhythmically without letting your glance waver.

TASAWWUF: Practice of Fikr is of great assistance to concentration. Also to keep the heart and mind on "Toward the One" with each inhalation and exhalation (Darood). This should be continued until all inhalations are equal and all exhalations are equal and there is a balance between inhalation and exhalation. Although this seems very simple it is one of the most important factors in the process of concentration and its very simplicity often causes it to be overlooked.

GITHA: Keep all other thoughts away from the mind.

TASAWWUF: The general condition of a person may cause the rhythm to be slow or rapid, deep or shallow, but it is rhythm and not tempo or quality that is important. Of course during concentration rhythm may change, but the first requisite is to establish some rhythm. The secret is, if the rhythm

is maintained this will of itself automatically hold the glance. The glance wavers when one is not in rhythm, because then one is not in tune with one's own being.

Fikr is assigned to talibs for this purpose. One most important object in concentration is to attain mastery on the mental plane. The first three years of discipleship are largely devoted to attaining some degree of mastery on the physical plane, so to speak, and then the next period, when the

Githas are studied, to attaining mental mastery. The spiritual practices are also assigned to assist in this growth and development.

The real secret of mastery comes in rhythm and attunement. If the breath is controlled by the will, it is not so difficult to keep other thoughts away. The will-power, used to regulate the breath, can be more easily co-ordinated to the glance, until this process becomes automatic, and so keeps away foreign thoughts from the mind.

GITHA: And impress the mind strongly with the object before you.

TASAWWUF: This is the real problem. If the talib constantly watches the breath, using Fikr when there are intruding thoughts, it will not be so hard to carve an impression in the mental atmosphere of the object viewed.

GITHA: Look at it for fifteen minutes and hold it in the mind for fifteen minutes, and continue to do so until the object is visualized concretely before your mind's eye.

TASAWWUF: There are often obstacles in one's path. If the mind is not strongly attracted to the object, it will not retain impression. Therefore Fikr is enjoined. After looking at an object with the eye, it is still necessary to keep the heart and mind protected against extraneous thoughts and impressions.

While doing this work it is sometimes wise to keep a diary, making more or less detailed reports of one's progress. When symbols are assigned to talibs, especially at this stage or later, they often serve a double purpose of accomplishing the principles conveyed by concentration and also reaching the heart through attunement.

GITHA: Watch the progress each day and continue this for a week.

TASAWWUF: This time is arbitrary but serves as a norm for assignments. Even if the talib finds it easy to hold the object in the mind, it is often well to continue to full period as it brings greater light in the mind and so greater scope for development. However, along with spiritual growth comes increase in insight, and when spiritual experiences occur in concentration it is always important to note them. This will be especially true of clairvoyants of all classes.

GITHA: Second Week: Change the object; observe for twenty minutes, and hold the thought for

twenty minutes.

TASAWWUF: It is almost impossible to select flowers which can be used for over one week. Objects as vases, geometric forms, wax flowers and some fruits, as apples, retain their form. Symbols, such as the six-pointed star, which are not usually used in the Sufic spiritual work, may also be used. Also books of some kinds.

At first the object is just to impress the form and so the inner meaning of things will not affect the exercises very much. If talibs are given short concentrations in the earlier stages they may not find this work so difficult and with some progress will be rapid. Beginning with three minute concentrations in the first year and increasing it to at least ten minutes in the third year, it becomes a preparation for longer concentrations.

GITHA: Third Week: Change the object; observe for twenty-five minutes, hold the thought for twenty-five minutes.

TASAWWUF: Arrangement of time can be by a monitor, or a teacher. The gong may be struck at the appointed time, or somebody may say, "Amen." Sometimes an electric bell can be rung in another room, or some other signal which will not cause too great a shock. Should a mureed continue in the concentration over time, especially, in class work, it is not advisable to approach him unless it is evident he has fallen asleep. In that case it is sometimes well to ascertain the cause for sleepiness which is primarily due to lack of attention to the breath, maintaining its proper rhythm and equilibrium.

GITHA: Fourth Week. Change the object; observe for half-an-hour, hold the thought for half-an-hour.

TASAWWUF: This last practice can be continued indefinitely. The later lessons assign other methods for concentration, and for these the time may be altered, beginning with shorter periods and lengthening them. Also the ideal held in concentration is raised. One begins first with simple material objects, and seeks a definite effect on the mental plane from material objects. It is only later that one gradually adopts concentration for more spiritual purposes; yet this method, studied stage by stage and step by step becomes a ladder which brings one even to God-hood.

Of course this does not mean that the exercises stop at the end of four weeks. But what follows is determined first by the progress shown, and then by the need for higher development as well as the comprehension of the teachings of the Githas as they are studied.

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Githa Series I Number 2

Impression of Mind

GITHA: What is impression of mind? Impression is the shadow of earthly objects fallen upon our mind.

TASAWWUF: The mention of shadow indicates at once that the mind is in essence a realm of light. Therefore the sphere of the mind has been likened to the sky, for during the day the sky is bright and during the night it is dark.

Now this light on the mental plane in its pure nature might be called spiritual. The difference between spiritual and mental is that in the spiritual condition there is no darkness, but a universal light; there are no shadows, only varying degrees of light. On the mental plane (Malakut) there is every degree of both light and shadow. When all on the mental plane becomes illumined, then there is the condition called **Kashf** which is called Insight.

When the mind is in shadow, it is under the sway of the nufs, and often immersed in matter. Nimaz, Wazifa and Fikr serve to raise it from that condition. In reality there can only be pure shadow when there is pure light. In illumination the light may come suddenly, flooding everything, being very different in nature from a torch. The average mind may be like a torch but the mind of a sage is like an ever flaming sun.

In symbolism and in the Scriptures, sky and mind are often interchangeable. The sphere of mind is called "That World" by the Sufis, or sometimes "The Other World." The Kingdom of the Heavens means the control of the Mental World, or Malakut. Malakut by itself means **kingdom**, as well as sphere of the Messenger, Angel or Representative.

The attainment of the Kingdom of the Heavens mentioned in the Bible and in mystical traditions might be interpreted as attaining control over the mind. This control of itself brings that peace or Islam which all the world desires. It is the lack in human understanding which causes shadow and duality, and it is the presence of God which brings light and unity. Therefore God is the Creator of light and good, while unto man has been given the choice between good and evil. So Malakut is not necessarily identical with any concept of heaven or any idea of hell; it may be said to contain them both and more besides. Malakut may therefore be the meeting ground between God and man, but it is not the place of merging which is in the heart.

Impression in the mind is different from impression in the heart. The mind being the sphere of

duality, an earthly impression causes darkness while a Divine Impression brings light. On the other hand, all impressions in the heart are of the nature of light, although there are varying degrees of light and various types of impressions there.

GITHA: This shadow develops by the power of will.

TASAWWUF: It is Will-power which makes us cognizant of the various spheres. A baby, when born on earth, still recognizes the plane he has inhabited. Therefore Prophet Mohammed said that all are born believers, all come into **this world** as Muslims, meaning that the incarnating soul brings into this world, something of the knowledge of **that world**, and that its faith in God is inherent. In this connection Jesus taught that infants possess the Kingdom of Heaven, for they still see beyond the veils.

It is through will-power that objects are discerned and that concentration is possible. A child or an animal is not always able to distinguish objects as against a background, confusing them. Feeling plays a greater part in their lives than sight. Through power of will the senses are exercised and it is also through the power of will that we can distinguish through the feelings.

In concentration the will is strengthened so it can control all faculties, especially those of the mind. When it becomes contemplation it finds its place in the heart.

The shadow upon the mind makes its definite impression by being held there and this is not so much through force as through the regularity of the breath and the control of thought by feeling.

GITHA: And makes before us a concrete picture of the object in accordance with the power of our will.

TASAWWUF: Much of memory, conscious and unconscious, comes through such a process. The difference between concentration and ordinary education is that in the former case we determine what impressions are to affect us and in the latter case we permit all impressions to register without any choice. It is this latter condition which is called **Samsara** by the Buddhists and it is then that we are subject to pain and sorrow.

Now if this shadow is increased, the same power that increases it also brings greater capacity for light. While man, by his own will cannot restore that Universal Light, which comes through the Grace of God, yet he can through will-power deepen the shadows from impressions. In other words, **pure shadow** comes through human will and **pure light** by Divine Will. In the spiritual training it is not the light nor shadow which are so important, but the purity and its perfection which is the aim of the work.

GITHA: Development: turning of the shadow into concrete form.

TASAWWUF: It is the nufs of a thing which preserves its form; it is the nufs which possesses that

quality called inertia. The nufs is a mold about which thoughts gather to maintain a collective existence. Actually the nufs has no reality apart from the conceiver. The nufs of man has been conceived by Allah and the nufs of things by man, but the nufs is not the man nor is the nufs the thing. The nufs is the locus of atoms, mental or physical, formed by the breath, and combining these atoms to form **things**. Things do not exist in absolute reality but can take form and appear to live in conditioned existence. Yet the basis of their being is nufs or breath, so it can be said that there is breath or spirit in all things. These spiritual principles underlay all metaphysics.

The difference between the average man and the free man is that the average man accepts the shadows thrown upon his mind-screen as realities: the free man selects the shadows suitable for his purpose and through the practice of concentration transforms coarse (Kasif) vibrations into fine (Latif) vibrations in the beginning stage of concentration, and then learns to transmute the fine vibrations into coarse vibrations. The second practice is called **Sadhana**, which is the path of attainment.

GITHA: Our will being the ray of light thrown upon the shadow, that shadow develops into a concrete picture.

TASAWWUF: Mind has no existence in final reality but is an accommodation or akasha for that individual ray of Divine Light which becomes the human will. It becomes human after it has passed through the sphere of mind; beyond that it is Divine. Just as a ray of light is analyzed and broken by passing it through a prism, so the rays of Divine Light become broken in passing through the planes as they move outward from **Arsh**, the Central Sun.

Below the sphere of mind is the realm of shadows. Shadows are reflections of realities, they are not realities. As a fish lives in the water but cannot see above the surface of the water, so the nufs lives in the sea of manifestation and does not see beyond it. But just as a fish, by leaping above the surface of the water, or by becoming transformed into a frog, can see the sun—so the will of man, through sloughing the skin of the nufs can comprehend reality. This is the true rebirth, the being born from within or above as mentioned in the Scriptures.

As moonlight gives little shadow and sunlight much more, the more purified the nature of man, the stronger the light from within which falls upon his mind, and in this way determines impressions. So by taking interest in the work of concentration, and especially through the spiritual practices assigned by the teacher, one gets closer in spirit to the Divine Will and so is benefited in the mental sphere by the clarification of impressions made upon the mind either during concentration or during any processes in daily life.

GITHA: Is there any solution or power which works out the picture upon our mind? There are mental atoms which the physical eyes cannot see but the inner eye sees.

TASAWWUF: On the mental plane one sees thoughts as if of an objective nature, but that does not blind one to forms. One sees the form and yet sees more than the form, perceiving the purpose

beyond form. That is what was originally meant by the word **idea**, which was something seen and also something thought. The history of language shows the relation between these processes. Thus the eye may see a million objects, yet it is the mind which classifies them and so makes memory and recognition possible. In the realm of mind, order and purpose are possible.

According to the story of creation as in the Hebrew Scriptures first there was chaos and then there was order. What brought about this order? It was God Himself who through concentrating upon His work developed that which is beautiful through the power of his thought, creating beauty from chaos. The Greeks have the same myth in their story of Chaos and Eros in Hesiod and the Chaldeans and Hindus have also similar traditions.

GITHA: These atoms have turned from pure radiance into color.

TASAWWUF: In Djabrut, the angelic sphere, there is nothing that we can call color, although there are various sounds and tunings. These become colors in the mental sphere. In Djabrut there is only the Divine Light, although there are several degrees of light and even shadow caused by light interfering with light. That is why it is taught that good and evil can extend even into the angelic sphere.

But what are known as color, as well as all differences arise in the mental sphere, assuming the form of realities there. Philosophers have long discussed the problem of the reality of qualities. They are real in a certain sense, especially in a philosophic sense, as philosophy may be called the science of mental examination, but above the mental plane they reach pure Oneness. The purpose of Safa, purification, is to restore the pure radiance above color, which is behind color, and this is possible when feeling controls thought.

GITHA: And they group on the lines of the impression already there, and are perceived more or less in accordance with the light from within thrown upon them.

TASAWWUF: The Egyptian Ka or double was not so much the psychic figure as the personality built out of the thoughts. That personality was the same as the personality which appears on earth only it no longer required the physical body. Of what was this personality built?

It was composed of mental atoms which had become fixed either because the radiant atoms had been grouped around a focus made through accommodation in thought, or because shadows had been held in place until they assumed a form. This form has only a relative reality. The Divine Light has nothing which can be called a personality from the ordinary point of view; it adopts such forms for its purpose, for outer expression. The shadows of our thoughts select rays of light, and holding them through concentration, even if built upon slight interest, constitute forms of them.

Memory arises from prototype forms fixed in the mind through the activity of individual will. The will can readily mold the mind stuff of Malakut according to its type of experiences in the outer sphere.

Now in concentration the light can be thrown upon these thought-forms from within, while the shadow is thrown upon them from without.

Concentration, especially spiritual concentration, deepens the shadow and intensifies the light. The light is really always there, yet being accustomed to it, one does not always perceive it as light until attention is drawn to it by contrast of experience. For that reason meditation is beneficial before long concentrations are tried, and when other spiritual practices are added to it the mind becomes purified and the will can control it to advantage.

Everything possesses not only form but quality and purpose. Therefore in mental vision one sometimes sees a duplicate of the physical object and at other times sees much more than the duplicate, finding the reality, the thing-in-itself of philosophy. Through concentration the atoms on the mental plane, which are the atoms of light on that plane, become subject to law and mastery through the power of will.

The real spiritual law of Moses was that which rendered such processes possible and the real Kingdom of God and the real Temple of God are not the buildings which man erects without of stone and mortar and clay, but are those edifices which he builds within out of the mind-stuff and light-stuff which Allah has permitted him to use for the benefit and salvation of humanity and for the Glory of Allah himself.

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Githa Series I Number 3

Concentration as Holding and Letting Go

GITHA: Every experience we have through any of the five senses is an impression upon our mind.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, the experience of the senses adds to the composition of the personal mind, and in a certain sense adds color to the personality. It is not necessary, however, to discard the experience of the senses. The process of purification is one whereby one reaches a stage of development where the senses themselves become the doors to insight and observation becomes a valuable art.

Every movement, every activity produces some impulse. The mind can be affected from both within and without. Through self-mastery one does not have to disregard the senses. One learns to be open to impression or to be closed to impression and if the breath is kept in right rhythm and the thought is held by the feeling, the impression will not be harmful. For while we are living under Nufsaniat and know not how to control or subdue ego we lose the vitality which otherwise would be consumed in spiritual development.

Physical scientists confuse brain and mind. They say that the brain starts out as a mass of plasma, whose surfaces and convolutions increase in complexity of form as the brain is used. In geniuses and developed persons generally, there are many more folds and more grey matter. This shows that experiences and thoughts do affect the brain. People who are more animal-like or undeveloped have simpler brains; those of marked intellectuality have deeply grooved brains.

These changes in the brain actually correspond to changes that go on in the human mind, only we do not see our minds directly, at least not until we become masters in meditation and self-control. If we do no thinking there will be no ripples in our mental self. Sensation starts mind-waves in motion, they rise and full, and as they rise and fall they also make marks on the brain. Constant repetition of any kind, such as is followed in esoteric practices, makes a definite line or groove in the mind and this attracts the most refined vibrations. Therefore the repetition of the name of God has a wonderful effect upon the mind directly, and upon the brain indirectly.

Calmness, poise and indifference do not in any way hinder mental development, nor do they lessen the grooves of the brain. But they do hold back the emotional activities which rob us of vitality and cloud our consciousness.

GITHA: A word spoken by ourselves or heard from another, an action done by ourselves or done by another in our presence, becomes an impression.

TASAWWUF: We are impressed by every conscious word, deed or thought of ourselves. We are also impressed by all that we hear from another or by all that is done to us by another, at least except when we are indifferent. The master-mind learns not to be impressed by all that is unfavorable, and he avoids thinking unfavorably of others whenever possible. In this way he protects himself, as well as all the world.

GITHA: Its constancy depends upon the state of response on our part, also on the holding of that impression intentionally.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, we ourselves determine how much impressions remains with us. We can throw out the impressions. If we are not in a receptive or responsive frame of mind we will not even obtain the blessings that the cosmos offers us. Yet by not being responsive we can refuse to be affected by hatred, rage, envy or anything that we do not desire.

GITHA: There are some impressions which act to the benefit of ourselves or of another, and there

are some impressions which act to the disadvantage of ourselves and of another.

TASAWWUF: We do not have to settle this matter intellectually. We do not have to reason whether impressions are favorable or unfavorable. If we keep the breath in rhythm and perform Darood, those impressions which would be undesirable do not affect us so much, while then we respond only to impressions which can benefit us. Besides we feel a certain weakness or loss before every undesirable impression, especially as we grow in sensitivity. This same process brings joy or inspiration from other impressions which are beneficial.

This same weakness or strength, pain or joy comes to us with any feeling or impression about others. Thus we can avoid harming or hurting others and we can also protect ourselves against harm intended for us. No doubt there are sensual and emotional impressions, and the emotional impressions touch the heart even more than the mind. But the sensitive heart readily recognizes them and the protection one assumes against all that may be harmful to oneself is also a protection to others against the same evil intent.

GITHA: Therefore the Sufi seeks the good-will of another, worthy or unworthy, and avoids at any cost, at any sacrifice, the ill-will of another.

TASAWWUF: We may consider as “another” any other person or even God Himself. In the ordinary stage of human development, we feel and think differences between other beings and ourselves, we feel and think difference between God and ourselves. Then, even if we would follow the Will of God we know not how to ascertain it and we can confuse our own will with the Divine Will. When the breath is in harmony with the Divine Will it is smooth, rhythmical and fine. It brings us joy, inspiration and a response to all that is beautiful. We do not harbor any ill-will against anybody; we feel incapable of ill-will.

The Sufi ordinarily tries to be just and kind and good to everybody and to apologize when there are differences or difficulties. He does not then justify himself for the one who would justify himself before man can even get into a habit that he would justify himself before God, feel himself different from God. Often the Sufi walks the path of **malamat**, or blame. The higher one advances on the path, the less is the likelihood that he will be fully understood, appreciated or not.

There are countless people, many countries, several continents, but one sky. Likewise there are numerous minds, but one Malakut and every cloud in the sky of the mind-world is a source of obscurity. When we obscure our own minds, we make life harder for others; when we clear a difficulty for another, help another we help ourselves. In a certain sense there is no individual karma apart from the universal karma. The attachment to individuality itself is one of the chief causes of, if not the only cause of human woe. We can feel as good words, good deeds and good thoughts those which harmonize with our refined breath. Keeping the breath rhythmical and refined we help to establish the brotherhood of man on all planes.

If there is any difficulty in getting along with our fellow man—or with ourselves, we may repeat the

name of God or the Wazifas of purification. We may apply the lessons of self-protection, and thinking more of breath than of thought we can turn every defeat into a victory.

GITHA: The former falls as the shower of bliss, the latter rises as the blaze of fire.

TASAWWUF: It is this which produces heaven and hell, heaven being the region of fulfilled desire, hell the vision of the soul on fire. This fire comes out of our own being. Light, striking any surface, turns into heat. We can make use of the light as light, appropriating through our breath, after the breath is purified, to build up only those vibrations which are helpful and constructive. Or we can draw that light to our ego, and turn it into heat which is present as anger, envy and lust. The meaning of the word "Cain," means drawing to a center, in other words, building nufs. Cain stands as the prototype of the ego-personality.

Increase of good-will can only lead to greater and greater good-will. When the force is set into motion, its very inertia continues it on its path through its own momentum. Generally the Jemali personalities who are softer, more gentle and graceful avoid harming others, while the Jelali personalities who are stronger avoid harm being done to themselves. But the Jemalis do not protect themselves and the Jelalis do not always avoid hurting others. For that reason balance is needed in life.

GITHA: Concentration is, therefore, meant to enable us to hold any impression we may desire and to forget any undesirable impression which with the average person abides, making the heart its abode.

TASAWWUF: In other words, the actual practice of concentration builds the accommodation for spirituality around thought. Thoughts which follow Fikr are sure to be helpful. And if one has any doubt about thought and he concentrates upon the thought, at the same time repeating Fikr silently, if the thought or impression is desirable it will attract light, and if it is undesirable it draws heat instead. This is one sure way by which man can learn to walk the right path.

Therefore the Sufi is instructed to keep the praise of God before him because the right praise of God brings inspiration and joy, and whenever anything interferes with that inspiration or joy it is undesirable. The breath will be thrown out of rhythm, there will be coarser vibrations, and a sensitive person may even become ill.

The purification of heart helps man to dominate all that is unfavorable. By watching every impression, favorable or unfavorable, the surface of the heart becomes quite sensitive. Then from beginning to notice the impressions man in time comes to discover his faculty of insight or intuition. This protects him from dangers within and without. Besides, when the heart is alive, we do not have to trouble our minds with problems, we can get rid of complexities, and as we feel the presence of God we shall become aware of that living love which fills the Universe. In the light of that love all will go well with us.

Those who seek Allah and keep the feeling of Divine Presence in their heart will find it easier and easier to harmonize with others. Those who do not harmonize, even with all claims to belief in God, are still in the stage of belief, they have not yet come to self-understanding and are in no way fit to direct others. Therefore, it is said that there should be glory to God who is the highest, and from that there will come peace and good-will to all mankind. One will become the embodiment of good-will himself; he will radiate good-will and Baraka, the spiritual blessings which feed the earth plane and all planes.

Therefore Murakkabah helps everyone to build his own heaven and his own hell. With the practice of concentration we pass from time to eternity. We live in the worlds above as well as in the worlds below. We enter a higher stage of prayer, when we actually cooperate with God instead of beseeching him constantly to work for us. The words, “use us for the purpose that thy wisdom chooses,” take on a new meaning. The development on the path is not separate from progress in concentration, from grade to grade.

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Githa Series I Number 4

Three different States of Mind—Urouj, Kemal and Zaval

GITHA: As the sun has rising, zenith and setting, so the mind has the above three states, coming alternately.

TASAWWUF: The laws of Malakut, the mind-world, are in a sense reflected in our heavens, which we may study. The ancients used the same word “heavens” to apply to the starry sky, to the movement of the sun, and to the place of after-life. They did not always see the same difference that we see now, and their thoughts were not always arranged as ours are. The very language had a different molding. The study of ancient language often gives the key to their philosophy and religion.

We say that the sun rises and sets; we say it and yet know it is not so. This of itself should make us realize that language does not even convey material facts at all times. So we may also say that the light of intelligence is there, but our mind changes before it. We pass through phases and these phases constitute in a certain sense the time of mind. Solomon the wise has said, “There is a time

for all things.” This may be better interpreted, “There is a rhythm for all things.” All things have their rhythms, their qualities, their rates of vibration, which are the distinguishing features. Man has since lost the Wisdom of Solomon, yet it can be recovered by his diligence in seeking his true nature.

GITHA: Urouj is that state of mind when a person thinks with energy and enthusiasm: “I am going to do such a thing.” This state of mind produces such a force and power in order to create the object, that in its excess it produces such a mist that the faculty of reason and justice is often dimmed.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi, whatever be his state of mind, whatever be the state of mind requisite, seeks rhythm and balance. In Urouj energy is supplied often as mental magnetism, often as psychic power. Energy is needed because otherwise there might be such a lethargy that the life might not reach the surface. There are persons who think a great deal, yet never carry their thoughts into action. We may be sure that they are lacking in Urouj. Yet the wise have conserved Urouj because thereby they increase their store of magnetism and add to the latent power.

It is Urouj which is the source of all civilization, which has given to mankind the power to construct great buildings, to find and apply many inventions including gigantic and complex machines, to institute great organization, and to embark in mass movements. Today when these movements are no longer controlled, they are called “subversive.” This may be applied to any movement which, because of continuance of Urouj or because of too much Urouj results in unwanted, even blind enthusiasm. Forces are produced through impulse, and moral restraint is lost. And when various groups are in Urouj they often become blindly antagonistic; this leads to war.

Urouj also manifests in childhood and youth. We see it wherever there is a manifestation of physical magnetism, in their dances and games. They become enthusiastic, even tyrannical; they waste energy because they are overbubbling with zest. It is possible to restrain them by a little instruction in breathing. Then it is not necessary to correct them much otherwise, they will obtain a restraint of their own which is natural to them, which is not imposed from the outside.

Metaphysical action in Urouj should be directed from the heart. That is to say, it ought whenever possible to be based upon intuition or deep feeling, and in applying it one should be more careful of moral behavior than at other times. The average man is often unable to rise above the mental plane, sometimes he even remains on the verbal level, and thus he depletes his mental and psychic magnetism if he even develops them. Then a mist, so to speak, appears before his mental eyes, which has the same effect upon his mind that physical mist has upon activity.

It is not necessary, however, to destroy Urouj. Our duty is to control it, and use it when it needed. When man can bring out the latent light from within, Urouj will cease to be so destructive. This faculty is gained through the practice of Murakkabah.

GITHA: The state of mind which is Kemal is perceived during that time when action is being done.

This mist which the energy of mind has produced reaches, in Kemal, its culmination—which is the end of the joy or sorrow pertaining to the deed—because the excess of force becomes exhausted.

TASAWWUF: Kemal means perfection or culmination, for in this stage the energy of the former stage produces its fruits. It may be direct in the action itself and when there is no blinding emotion, it reaches the right rhythm which is most helpful in life. Whenever one accompanies one's action with the spiritual exercise—and there are many spiritual exercises which can be adopted to the practical, daily life—he reaches Kemal sooner, restraining Urouj when it is no longer needed. Besides, Urouj tends toward accelerated rhythm, while Kemal maintains a direct, mobile rhythm, without change.

To reach and maintain Kemal patience is always needed; impatience itself may be associated with Urouj. Thus, when we say there is a time or rhythm for all things, we can through rhythmical breathing and right concentration discover that time and this is the secret of “right action.”

GITHA: Zaval is that state of mind when the power of enthusiasm is lost, the joy and sorrow of the deed are past, but the memory remains.

TASAWWUF: This may be called retarded rhythm and it involves either a slowing down, or softening or else a transition from one activity to another. Thus Zaval corresponds to the period of the setting sun, or the late afternoon. It is the period when emotions are assimilated and when in the calmness of an inner state one gets a better picture of oneself and one's experience. Thus, from one point of view Zaval is most important; it enables us to assimilate wisdom from life.

Every experience within or without has an effect upon the mind and stores something in the memory. The memory however, does not belong to eternity. There is one aspect of it which may be called moral, which becomes our conscience. The conscience is the result of the light of the heart falling upon the memory. One can increase efficiency of memory by right rhythm of breath, by concentration, even by meditation. Those who have studied hypnotism know that there is a tremendous amount of “stuff” stored in the memory, some of which is quite useless. Through purification of mind we can, and often do, remove what is of no value.

GITHA: If the impression is sorrowful, the needles prick through the sore of the wounded heart; if it is joy, a tickling and uplifting feeling is perceived, which diminishes and vanishes in time, in the entire assimilation in the essence.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, nothing abides forever and time heals all wounds. Ultimately all goes back to the essence because what is foreign to the soul does not remain with it; the soul borrows from the planes and returns to the planes. The mind is an accommodation for certain experiences and certain purposes. Each experience however brings with it some emotional content or emotion and that establishes a state of delusion which is very confusing.

Ultimately both the joy and sorrow that come out of separate experiences are wiped away. In the

heart-life while there are definite periods of expansion and contraction, these are drawn from essence and not from things, not from the separate events of ego-life. Heart is not dependent upon such. The story of Adam holding on to the fruit of the tree of knowledge is that of man attaching to the joy and sorrow of experience. By doing so he bars himself from paradise. It is not that God or the Universe shuts him out; it is that he shuts himself out by holding on to these states which are the fruits of experience.

Perpetual bliss does not come in Malakut, nor do we necessarily face God when we rise out of the physical body and find ourselves clothed in mental sheathes. Mind is not God, although there is what may be called Divine Mind, or **Alaya Vaijnana**. The undesirable impressions which come to us from time to time show either that we are on the wrong track or that we are facing tests. In the former cases we must examine ourselves to discover our shortcomings; in the latter cases we need more and more patience. By leaving the fruits of joy and sorrow in their places we ultimately arrive at **baqa**, the Divine Life.

GITHA: The master of concentration is he who produces at his will not only Urouj but Kemal and Zaval also, and attains self-mastery, when both sin and virtues bow at his feet.

TASAWWUF: The question may arise how to increase these three stages of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval. The spiritual practices throw the talib into the right rhythm. He does not have to control the stages consciously. If there is heart attainment they come by themselves. Yet if he continues in the attunement and in the spiritual practices, generally he will find it becomes easier to adopt that rhythm which is most advantageous at all times.

Each one of the sacred phrases attached to the name of God which form the ninety-nine beautiful "Pearls of Faith" has its own rhythm and its own special application although one may not have to use them all during life. Besides, concentration before any action helps to bring the right rhythm for the beginning, culmination and termination of that action. And again, the breath may be heavier or more rapid at the beginning, but in the end it should be clam. Calmness not only helps us to terminate any activity rightly, but also prevents any emotional or mental after-effects from confusing us in the next duty of life. By that **wakt**, or period, is established.

GITHA: It is he who may sneer at the pleasures of heaven and jeer at the tortures of hell.

TASAWWUF: For as soon as man controls his rhythms he is not controlled by them. Hell is the result of conflict between man and the laws of life. Heaven may be the reward for virtue. Yet the heaven of one is not the heaven of another, and those who picture any heaven or who enter into a state of joy in the after-life also tire of it. Every experience in the mental world passes through its period of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval. Even streets of gold and ivory would be tiring after the enthusiasm of Urouj is gone. Pleasures weary just as much in the next world as in this one.

The accommodation for the Divine Light in the heart and deep devotion help the talib to enter the life eternal even when clothed in the flesh. In the sphere of heart there is no longer this turning and

the coming and passing of light, or change of day into night. And this is possible for all who apply themselves to the exercises assigned by the teacher on the path. This is not a reward; it is an accomplishment which each must most obtain by himself.

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

Githa Series I Number 5

Three Kinds of Concentration

GITHA: Concentration may be considered in three kinds. The first is visualizing a form; the second, thinking of a name, the form of which is not distinct; the third is the thought of any attribute which is beyond name and form.

TASAWWUF: Allah, in the creation of the Universe, as he passed from potentiality, designed three planes which the Sufis call Djabrut, Malakut and Nasut, or the worlds of the heart, mind and body. In this process, so to speak, Allah veiled Himself, yet actually this was not so, only a seeming. It is also a seeming by which man has lost contact with the worlds of finer vibrations. This seeming veiling is what the Hindus call **Maya**.

Now in concentration one employs a process of purification, of distinguishing each plane from the other and each principle from another, and in the end finds the relation of all to God. In visualizing a form, the soul, so to speak, turns the disk of the mind to the earth plane or physical world. In thinking of a name, the form of which is not distinct, the intelligence is kept on the mental plane, and in keeping the thought of an attribute, the light of the intelligence is reflected inwardly in the heart, toward the higher world called Djabrut.

GITHA: The one who has not mastered the concentration of form in its full extent must not try the second kind; and after trying the second kind of concentration thoroughly, one may try the third.

TASAWWUF: The first stage of concentration is based upon sensation and outer experience. The atoms of the physical plane are arranged in stable forms which do not dissolve quickly in the measurement of reckoning of time. In the mental plane the principle does not change but the time process is different. Therefore the physical plane serves as a mould for the accommodation of spirit. This is what was meant by prakriti in the Hindu philosophy. It is the mold for the

accommodation of spirit, called Matter or Nature.

Just as in sculpture one makes a master form and can reproduce copies from it, so the mind first learns to handle concrete substance, and to copy from it. Then the will acts directly upon the mental sphere. This is the natural process of creation. The lowest organisms react to light and environment; the nervous system develops through evolution showing that higher plants and animals have better developed subtle bodies. Faculty of reason comes later and it is not so much form which evolves, although this is also true, as the establishment of better accommodations for the light of intelligence, the whole work of creation and manifestation culminating in man.

In individual concentration at first the will of man follows the same process as the stream of life. There is always the danger, however, of the rational faculty interfering with the will, and so causing confusion. In that case the intellectual light is diffused within the mental sphere. Through the process of concentration that light is recollected and then traced back to its source. But the collection and orderly arrangement of atoms and vibrations is most necessary and most important.

GITHA: Lack in the first concentration will go all the way in the second and third grade; therefore, the first must be well mastered.

TASAWWUF: Until this is accomplished, it can hardly be said that there is any will at all. Nufs is not will, for it is a product of breath and mind while the true abode of will is in the heart. Nufs is not will, for the basis of nufs is shadow and the essence of will is light. The contractive and expansive forces develop about nufs a power, and while this power is limited, the fact that it can be increased and decreased within its limits, narrow as they are, gives one the impression that the ego controls the will-power, but this is true to a very limited extent even on the mental plane.

Control over the physical world does not produce mental control. Neither has the mind alone very much control over the physical world. The strong man is not necessarily a thinker nor is the learned man able to carry weights. But when will-power is added to mental control, it first brings about the proper correlation between the different parts of the metaphysical man, and prepares the way for the true spiritual life.

In this way, what might be called the **true self**, is born or reborn, mastery of will comes from use of will. Either the will is controlled or it controls, and the secret of thought-power or any other power is the control of it by will, for it is only through will that God Himself is enabled to assist humanity, for so has he created him.

GITHA: There are three different sorts in the first kind of concentration: visualizing the form of an object, looking into the details of the form, and visualizing a multitude of forms at the same time.

TASAWWUF: In concentration it may be said that one begins with the **species** and goes to the **genus**; one commences with the individual and traces it back to the universal from which it was derived. Until outline is discerned objects cannot be known. Lower animals and babies do not

always discern individual forms, and when the child learns to see forms, it does not at first distinguish details.

The infant first recognizes his mother by instinct, then by observation, then he distinguishes objects such as the mother's features and belongings, and only later recognizes other persons and things. And rebirth into the spiritual kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven may be said to retrace the steps of the infant on earth. Any object may be used to focus the attention up, and then through control of breath and attention of will the consciousness is raised to the mental plane, and a symbol differs from other things, that it may even take one beyond the mental sphere.

GITHA: There are three sorts in the concentration of name, too. The first sort is the name of the person or object, unknown to you, held in the mind or formed by one's imagination.

TASAWWUF: Concentration in name and form takes one from Nasut, the objective sphere, to Malakut, but concentration in name only can take one from Malakut to Djabrut, which is the same as Jannat, paradise, or the world of Adam. On that plane Allah gave to humanity the faculty to name things, and on that plane man, so to speak, has ability to call things into being. What are called akashic records are the knowledge stored up by the atoms in the sphere of Malakut.

In healing it is often necessary to endeavor visualizing a person one may not know. Concentration helps one to understand the meaning of all words, and takes one from the known to the unknown. Symbols serve as means by which man can rise from the concentration and comprehension of objectives to the knowledge beyond the senses. The continuous concentration upon Holy Murshid Inayat Khan, carried on by mureeds who will not have contacted him, brings them to a higher stage in concentration. A still higher one would be a concentration upon his murshid, Syed Mohammed Moudani.

This does not depend upon the evolution of the Pir, but on the faculties the devotee must use. Memory is not so high as imagination and sense-knowledge is not so valuable as love. The great sage whom the Sufis call **Khidr** is not even a name, but the name of a name or memory, the continuance of a soul in the hierarchal chain who serves humanity even though his name is no longer remembered. Thus he serves in heart who cannot illumine the mind directly.

There are many variations to these forms of concentration. One is to bring some object into the class, and without naming it, through mental concentration, its contents may be perceived. In this case there must be impression from within to bring light to the mind, which is very helpful. Continued practice of this kind can even develop faculties of detection and telepathy. And yet it is not so difficult if the breath is kept in rhythm and the heart be pure.

Concentration of this type also strengthens psychic vision in those who have it, and psychic power to all. Sometimes it becomes possible to visualize distant places, persons and things. Then it may be that first only the outline will be seen, then details will be observed and then many things. So the growth in this form of mental concentration is similar to the growth in visual concentration, only it is

performed on a higher plane. This method can be perfected until one can actually transmute things at a distant or nearby mental power, especially benefiting them as in healing, but healing can be applied not only to sick persons, but to things, conditions, places and areas. Wherever, whatever or whoever needs help, the healing service or the Sufic healing practices can benefit them.

GITHA: The second is the name of the known person or object retained in mind with the memory of the same.

TASAWWUF: This is a pure form of mental concentration, which can be used to visualize persons at other places when one has known the other person. It can also be employed to recall memories of the past and to enable the consciousness to function on the plane of Malakut.

What is called Tasawwuri Murshid is a concentration on the teacher, the living teacher. When it takes an objective form, such as looking at a picture, it is not so high a concentration, and in that condition does not differ from fana-fi-Sheikh, except that in Tasawwuri Murshid one practices concentration and mental visualization. When one holds the teacher in thought through the use of the name, it becomes fana-fi-Murshid, when the teacher is a Murshid or Pir-o-Murshid.

When the name only is held in memory, the concentration on a Pir-o-Murshid is of a higher nature than by keeping a picture before one. For Sufis in the Western school it is permissible to use this form with Pir-o-Murshids Khwaja Moineddin Chisti, Syed Mohammed Moudani, Sheikh Abdul Kadir-i-Jilani and Moula Bux. Each of these has no doubt its purpose.

Concentration on Holy Murshid Inayat Khan includes all grades of fana. When a picture is used it usually develops psychic power of some kind; when memory is used without resorting to a picture, it is of a higher nature and develops mental magnetism with all its faculties and advantages. When a mureed is given this practice, who has never met Holy Murshid, it is a high concentration of fana-fi-Pir, and when it is connected with the Spiritual Hierarchy, it is fana-fi-Rassoul. The outer form of these practices may not appear so different, but the inner significance and effect is very different. At the same time, no higher practice should be tried until one has mastered the lower grades, and sometimes mastery of the first stages in concentration automatically develops higher powers and faculties.

Psychic energy is better controlled and employed in healing when persons known to Shifayat and assisting talibs are helped. It does not do much good to try the healing service for strangers. In fact prayer is often better in such cases. But in all such efforts it is most important to keep the God-Ideal before one. Otherwise one is working in vain.

The difference between occultism and mysticism is that occultism is satisfied to find name beyond form and power beyond name but mysticism continues its journey until the One Primal Unity is reached. Therefore self-effacement is required in mystical development. Any motion in the shadow world activates the nufs, and shadow always hinders clear perception. Therefore while occult power displays the transcendence of the will, it may be the human will, and unless the will

continuously controls the mental atoms, there is a reaction in the shadow world below.

Here is where the greatest danger of psychism manifests. Conjuring name or form on the mental plane is one thing, controlling it is another. If one does not control that collection of mental atoms it may result in elementary forces controlling them, and in that manner gain a certain power over the individual on the physical plane.

In the mystical practices of concentration this danger is averted because the mystic is first taught to discover that Divine Power which is in his teacher on the physical plane, in his Pir on the mental plane, and in the Spirit of Guidance in the sphere of the heart where it may appear with or without name, with or without form. It is there that one contacts the feelings of Love, Harmony and Beauty and all higher feelings, and by this can rise even above the sphere called Djabrut to the world of Unity, Lahut.

This does not prevent manifestations and phenomena of any kind, only then they come by the Grace of God and not through the will of man. It is this most important factor which distinguishes all inner experiences of the talib from the psychic and occult manifestations of other persons. The initiate is under Divine Grace while all others are subject to Fate or Karma, and because they do taste the fruits of the tree of life, because they partake of good and evil, of light and darkness, they are restrained by the Angel with the flaming sword, which is the power of the Divine Will.

Communication with those on higher planes is therefore permitted under Grace for the sake of Allah and his cause. It should not be sought under any other circumstances. Developed in the right way, it may become quite natural. Then the mountain—that is to say, the place (makam) of manifestation of Divine Light—appears to Mohammed, the humanity under Grace.

GITHA: The third in this is the name of the entity that is difficult to be imagined, beyond the reach of the eyes or mind.

TASAWWUF: Through growth of the heart the consciousness may expand without limit. One does not seek contact with angels or jinns. This is the duty of those who live in those spheres. Power has been given to some masters to control the jinns. When this is done in the name of Allah no harm can follow. By self control, one can control the forces of the higher planes, and when this is accomplished, automatically, so to speak, one controls the corresponding forces of the outer world.

This stage of concentration has no limits and it is of great benefit to the creative imagination and to the heart. Yet this is still a concentration in name; a name may be given and the concentration upon it may bring great blessing. Yet this practice should never be tried until the other practices are mastered for it would be of no avail, name belongs to the mental sphere and one in this must have attained mental control first, and then can take the next step toward mastery.

Then it can be used to ascertain the meaning of spiritual practices. This is more than the translation of the words. As Fikr is used to help in concentration, this form of concentration can now be applied

to Fikr and Wazifa to get the spirit of the sacred phrases and touch Allah in spirit, in attribute and in essence. The highest form of this concentration may be said to be on Allah or Hu, which is really contemplation.

So whether a word is mentioned which has some meaning in a foreign language, or a thought is held without expressing it, or a transcendental expression is given, one can by mastery over the inner world discern something of its meaning. This is a faculty of will, not of mind and at this stage the will becomes assimilated more and more with the Divine Will. The mind no longer exerts direct power, and soul and heart attuned use the mind as a vehicle in the manner for which it was originally intended. So the Hindus call one Master who has mastered all three worlds.

GITHA: In the third kind also there are three sorts. The first is the natural feelings, such as kindness, goodness, amiability, or bitterness.

TASAWWUF: We have now come to the discussion of what may be called contemplation, yet it is still concentration, only of a higher nature. The mind pierces, the heart envelopes. The mind is a tool which shapes according to the direction of the will; the heart enfolds by attunement.

These qualities and others which are similar are the Jemali qualities which appear in the heart. In Wazifa one feels the relation between these qualities and Allah. The question then arises, can there be bitterness in the heart? The answer can be proven in physics that by crossing two beams of light, shadows arise from the interferences, and the same thing is true in metaphysics: that so soon as there is any feeling of differences it is just as natural to hold ill feeling as good feeling. Real good feeling is not the same as amiability; it is the same as Unity. Amiability and bitterness alike are based on the idea: "I am different and you are different," and this will be discovered in concentration that although amiability appears as light and bitterness as shadow, they are not so different metaphysically, both being born of duality.

Now the question arises, if evil comes from duality, why did Allah permit duality? The answer is that to attain manifestation, you cannot do it with one thing, you have to have something which is different and also something which unites these two opposing principles or forces. The dilemma arises in not seeing a purpose in it and making it appear as absolute opposition.

Now to attain the favorable Jemal qualities one may concentrate on some Holy Being who has developed them, as Buddha for compassion, Rama for wisdom, Moses for justice, as they are mentioned in Salat and in the Universal Worship. The other is to consider the qualities themselves, which are best for development in concentration and mastery, while the other method is to build up the qualities in oneself. All the qualities in Salat are symbolic and Salat contains many spiritual practices in concentration. (q.v.)

In the plane of attribution which is called Wahdaniat from the standpoint of God and Lahut from the view of man, only God exists, but not in the form of Absolute Unity so much as Harmony. Here the majestic Hu manifests in forms of light, of purified light which is music, containing no color except

the continuance of marvelous harmonies.

This is the sphere of relative Unity. What are called kindness and goodness come in the state of **Bast**, expansion, and bitterness may arise in the state of contraction, **Kabz**. One can feel this by concentrating on these qualities and in the former cases the heart will be uplifted, while in the latter case it will seem to dry up and contract. One way to determine the difference between good and bad qualities, especially if these qualities are beneficial or harmful to the devotee is to perform these concentrations observing the effect on the heart. This can even be done in Gatha class to the benefit of students of morals and metaphysics.

There is a similar effect with purely physical substances, that bitter things cause the mouth to pucker up and sweet or pleasant things often bring a smile. And this is true in all aspects of life.

Duality is caused by the Divine Breath which animates all things. Inhalation and exhalation bring expansion and contraction. There are five aspects of breath which do not exactly correspond with the five elements, yet there is a relation between them. Jemal resembles water, and Jelal fire and Kemal ether. Urouj has a resemblance to the air quality in that the air breath can be retained within the body better than the other breaths and Nasoul seems to resemble the earth breath, for in that breath the exhalation can be sustained. The difference is that the principles Jemal, Jelal, Kemal, Urouj and Nasoul are not only found in the breath but extend upward through the heart plane.

All attributes are connected with elements, but in the higher stages of concentration not only must the breath and mental activities be mastered, but the awakening of the heart qualities becomes the problem. Attributes are the loans Allah makes to man for the development of personality. Therefore personality is born before the person. As the light of intelligence attracts the qualities of Allah, it forms a sort of unit which manifests as a discrete being.

In the evolutionary process, when one attains Lahut, not only all the desires return to Allah, not only all the accretions of mind and heart are returned to him, but the personality becomes effaced where all the illuminated souls unite to form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

GITHA: The second sort is wealth, or power, or position, influence, magnetism.

TASAWWUF: These qualities differ from the others, for they not only arise from experience but are connected with the Jelal principle. Jemal qualities are more likely to appear in the involutory process of the soul, when there is a downward movement, for in some respects Jemal resembles water. Contrariwise, the Jelal force moves upward like fire and so collects these qualities when the soul is rising on its return journey.

In these forms of concentration the Sufi does not use a form but considers Allah as the source and substance of all qualities. It is not necessarily the work of the saint to concentrate on the Jemal qualities or for the Master to concentrate on the Jelal qualities. Saint is one who has qualities naturally and Master is one who has qualities naturally. All qualities may be used in concentration

as no person is perfect and every one lacks even wherein he is most developed.

This form of concentration may also be called Sadhana, for if performed properly it helps one to obtain his desires or needs. The method of the Sufi is to keep Allah in heart and mind at all times. If Allah does not wish these qualities to come in material form, the heart will take a contractive movement, but if it is according to the will of Allah that we obtain even what appear to be our most selfish needs, the heart will take an expansive movement. So these concentrations may be given for our inner need and also for our outer needs.

GITHA: And the third sort is intuition, inspiration, blessing, illumination.

TASAWWUF: These are the Kemali concentrations, those of the perfection of humanity and the completion of the Divine Temple within. If there can be said to be a difference between concentration and contemplation it is that in the latter one discovers it has been God who has been seeking God and that man is but the **means** Allah the Lover has chosen to unite with Allah the Beloved.

It is the quality of love and the vision of Deity which finally distinguish occultism and mysticism. In Lahut that quality and faculty which had been considered as will is discovered to be nothing but love. In seeking reality in the vibrations of the heart one finds oneself merged in that Deity. Then the life of man ends and the life of God manifests. This terminates in Rassoul.

If **fana**, or the effacement of self is a distinguishing characteristic of Lahut, **baqa**, or the subsistence of the ever Abiding-Allah may be said to be the distinguishing feature of Hahut. On this plane, which is not strictly speaking a plane, not only are all attributes and characteristics merged in Allah, but consciousness also, which is at the basis of qualitatives. Therefore the Sufis call this condition of Allah Wahdat, or Oneness.

In Malakut man is **Aish**, the activity or will of God individualized, and in Djabrut he is **Adam**, or the Kingdom of Man. In his enfoldment through Divine Grace he becomes Mohammed. And corresponding to these stages are the practices of **fana-fi-Sheikh**, effacement in name and form, and **fana-fi-Rassoul**, effacement in name.

Then one passes to the condition called **fana-fi-Lillah**, which takes one into the absolute, wherein every man becomes a Mohammed, or Christ, even for an instant. What is called the second Adam, the son of God, the resurrected Christ and Mohammed, the man illuminated by Divine Grace; all these indicate the soul attaining its purpose in the sphere of Unity, Lahut.

But there is a purpose of God and this is fulfilled in the final stage of contemplation. All these concentrations which are given are to help one to realize the path and the goal. These end on the concentration or contemplation on the Zat or Essence of God.

Say Allah and Allah you will become: think Allah and Allah you will become, feel Allah and Allah

you will become; let Allah alone be and the being in you will become Allah.

GITHA: A gradual progress, step by step, is advisable in concentration, which should be carried on with strength, courage and patience.

TASAWWUF: So it takes more than four weeks, four months or four years to do all these practices. And even if one knew the next step or the next ten steps, what is important is to perfect oneself in the concentration one has, and even if one keeps a concentration through life, in the end that may become more important than continually changing the object of concentration, which is not concentration. Anything that deprives one of the vision of Unity cannot properly be called concentration.

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

Githa Series I Number 6

Vibrations and Atoms

GITHA: Vibrations are that which becomes audible, and atoms are that which becomes visible.

TASAWWUF: Things are not in themselves heard but are recognized by the pulsations or vibrations which they emit. On the earth plane this takes the form of sound and is heard through the ears. On the mental plane it is also sound, but there sound appears as an attribute or property of things rather than as a vibration of the atmosphere. The sound of a thing may be said to be its personality, its **persona**, or how it sounds.

Bodies and forms are regarded as composed of atoms. We do not hear bodies when we strike them or when sound emanates from them; we hear because of the vibrations of air which come to our ears. On the other hand, we do not see light, but by means of light we see the material things which are composed of the atoms of this world, and on higher planes we see things as they are composed of the atoms of that world. But we can also see the atoms themselves as in the spinthariscopes, and in spiritual practices we can see the mental atoms take form.

The word **atom** does not correspond exactly to its scientific usage, but to its philological meaning; that is, the element or unit which cannot be cut or subdivided. These atoms do arise out of light and

are derived from light, but through a hardening process they impress us and so visibility results.

GITHA: There are two kinds of vibrations, fine and gross, and there are two kinds of atoms, which also are fine and gross.

TASAWWUF: Science speaks of these in various ways, but from our point of view all the material vibrations are gross, and arise from the all-pervading rays in the process of hardening as they emanate from the central power which may be said to be Allah. The fine vibrations arise as reactions against these grosser vibrations and form the substance of the heavenly spheres. The gross atoms arise from the grosser vibrations and the light atoms from the finer vibrations. All of this comes from the in-breathing and out-breathing of Allah by which the Universe is kept alive. This was one of the most important subjects considered in the philosophy of ancient India.

In concentration the will operates to direct the finer vibrations on the mental sphere. They are not so easy to control as the material of this sphere, which can be molded by hand. In fact it is not wrong to call concentration the art of Mental Sculpture. The form of the finer vibrations affect the coarser vibrations, and this is like saying the heavens were made and then the earth. And we see this in that thought does affect things. At the same time every physical body of any type has its counterpart of finer vibrations and atoms which persist in the mental sphere even after the physical envelope is destroyed.

GITHA: Fine vibrations are not perceived by the ears but are perceived by the sense of perception. These are the vibrations of feeling, which convey to us our sorrow and joy, and convey them to another to a certain extent.

TASAWWUF: These do not belong to the sphere of the mind so much as to the sphere of the heart. They act upon the mental plane forming the atoms of light there, and in turn the emanations from the physical plane throw shadows there. Thus in Malakut one finds both heaven and hell.

Beautiful objects, such as the jewels in the mineral world, as created here through a kind of reaction from the mental light back on to the physical world. Thus the Divine Light from the sphere of the heart creates the mental sun and the element gold on the earth plane. The mental sun creates the mental moon on its own sphere and reacts to affect the moon in the physical world and also the element silver. This process is very complicated, involving knowledge of music, astrology and all occult and hidden sciences, yet it is founded upon an absolute spiritual metaphysics. The difficulty is that these things are not so much the results of direct processes but of interplanic reactions and so are hard to fathom. However, spiritual concentration as well as other forms of insight enables one to understand something of even the most intricate operations.

The heart vibrations cause joy and the earthly vibrations cause sorrow. Sorrow is connected with the water element, and the movement of water such as tides, tears and even rain are connected with the relations between moon and earth, between mind and body. There are the same type of vibrations in joy and sorrow but the emotions are different, for these necessarily affect the breath

differently. When the vibrations determine the activity of atoms all is well, but when atoms affect the course of vibrations all is not well. All that is good comes from the heart vibrations and all that is not good comes from the material and psychic control over the breath, which causes deterioration of the mental substance and so brings misfortune.

GITHA: The fine atoms are not seen by the eyes, but are seen by the sense of perception. These, grouping together, form the thought.

TASAWWUF: There is sensation before there is sense, and there is sensitivity even before sensation. That is, the soul has of itself the potentiality and capacity to receive from its environment; then it is affected by its environment, and then it becomes covered by every experience of life. On the physical plane it experiences life through the five senses, but these senses unite in sensation which is an attribute of mind. The mind perceives directly through itself and by agency of the breath.

Beyond the mind and its faculties is the heart to which belongs sensitivity. On the mental plane as well as on the physical plane, there is a difference between the within and the without, between the self and not-self. On Djabrut, the sphere of heart, it may be said that while selfhood persists, egoism disappears. The heart knows of its existence but does not recognize its separateness, that is, its discrete existence apart from its environment. The world of the heart is made of hearts.

Thought is not so much self-created as a selective process whereby the ego, so to speak, selects such vibrations as seem to suit its purpose. In pure thought this process is performed without intervention of the nufs. Through concentration by power of will one can select the atoms of light which really arise from the heart. Therefore feeling is most important and enables the human will to synchronize and harmonize with the Divine Will.

GITHA: The grosser vibrations are of sound and voice which our material ears hear, and grosser atoms are the atoms which form substances which our eyes can see.

TASAWWUF: Ear does not perceive form but does perceive vibration. Eye particularly sees the forms which result from vibrations. In this sense the eye is responsive to the activity of prakrit and the ear to purusha, for it is purusha which is the center of personality and prakrit which is the center of form. Sound is very closely associated with personality. Through sound we hear the spirit in matter and through sight in concentration we see, so to speak, the matter in spirit—that is, it's taking on definite forms.

There is a growth in perception of sound on all planes which comes through the sciences of music and mysticism, and there is a growth through concentration, which is as much an art as a science by which one perceives light on all planes, until both reach the sphere of unity and become united. So all schools of Sufism in the end flow into one stream which empties into the universal ocean of life which is Allah.

GITHA: By concentration is meant the grouping together of the fine atoms on the model of the objects seen by our external eyes, so as to form upon our mind a picture of objects which are seen by our eyes in the external world.

TASAWWUF: It is this process which goes on consciously or unconsciously at all times. When there is no direction by the will, the thoughts pass through decay and death, and actually cause mental disease which wears out both the physical and mental vehicles. Through **inspiration** Creation builds earth from heaven and through **power** Creation reproduces the earth in the heavens. It is not enough to make earth like the heavens. It is also necessary to make heaven like earth. This is the meaning of the ancient teachings “as above, so below” which is found in the Gnostic traditions concerning Jesus Christ and elsewhere. The earth could not exist unless on its plane something was perfected, and the heaven could not exist unless on its plane something was perfected and in the spiritual life, all things are to be perfected on all planes, so that the real riches earth—the power of molding, fixing and retaining—can be carried along with one. In Astrology this is connected with the planet Saturn, which is also called the Great Initiator.

GITHA: It is difficult at first, because the mind has never been controlled; therefore it is not accustomed to obey.

TASAWWUF: In Alchemy this process has been referred to as the fixation of quicksilver, changing it to silver. The average mind is in a state of flux, constantly changing.

When we look at the earth, we can see what we call a mountain or a river or a continent or an ocean. These things, while they are material, exist as separate entities because our minds consider them as that. It is the mind which creates division and pluralism. In the theory of alchemy earth, as symbolized by salt, was mixed with quicksilver—that is, mercury. The earth represented fixity and formed a mold for the emotions represented by quicksilver. First the stabilizing process gave rise to silver, or the clarified mind, and later to gold, or the purified heart.

It is the mind which has been symbolized as the rough ashlar by the Masons and the wild horse in religion and mythology, when it is uncontrolled. Rhythm of breath and mastery by the will control it until it becomes the winged Pegasus or Garuda, the vehicle used by the soul. Therefore concentration becomes a form of purification—Safa—by which the mind achieves its purpose, becoming a spiritual instrument.

GITHA: It becomes tired when holding any thought grouped of fine atoms.

TASAWWUF: The mind has become used to facing the earth. Plato has given a beautiful allegory about it, likening this condition to the existence of men living in a cave, occasionally getting a glimpse of sunlight, but not venturing into the light. Habit has fixed it and prevented it from doing its best work. In the same way silver is subject to tarnish unless it is kept clean constantly. Now how can silver be purified, and how can the mind be kept clear? This answer has been given by chemists and alchemists that while silver is comparatively fixed it is not so noble as gold which does not

tarnish easily. So there is a method for controlling the mind.

GITHA: But when the feeling is holding the thought, then it is held fast even against the desire.

TASAWWUF: This is the secret of spiritual concentration. Feelings are the outpourings of the heart, and desires are the results of emotions and nufs, which influence us through the sympathetic nervous system. As there can be no thought without blood entering the brain and as all blood comes from the heart, when consciousness and will become identified with heart and blood, it is impossible for the mind to act independently. This process becomes possible to the talib who has performed meditation and the other spiritual practices. They form a ladder by which the soul can remount to its proper condition. The Sahib-i-dil who trust in their feelings do not find it so difficult to hold their thoughts even as the sun holds moon and earth to their courses.

Unless the feelings have been awakened, the higher forms of concentration are impossible. It is the heart which united the search for God, preserving unity, with all the various concentrations in name, form and variety. Spiritual attunement therefore serves to keep the mental atoms in place. When the desire for Allah is greater than all else, it is easy to control the mind and keep it one-pointed.

GITHA: For the atom is the outcome of vibration, and when the vibration holds it, the atom is held. It is just like steel with a magnet.

TASAWWUF: All forces arise from vibrations: force of love, of will, of tenderness, of strength. Vibrations control the breath, utilize the breath and serve the breath. The mind is an akasha or accommodation of vibrations: if they are held within its sphere they develop into atoms. The same idea is now held in the science of physics that the physical matter of this world arises from cosmic vibrations becoming fixed in the sphere according to certain laws, and the same is also true on other planes as on the earth, for all the Universe follows the same general principles.

At the same time atoms formed of fine vibrations produce coarser vibrations, which in turn give form to coarser atoms, in a less subtle sphere. In this way the whole universe was produced through emanation, and by the contrary process, turning back toward God, the Creator, the mystic controls the thought by means of feeling and masters matter through the thought-power.

GITHA: Therefore, concentration is developed by holding an object by the help of feeling. In this is the mystery of all devotion.

TASAWWUF: What is the mystery? If one through thought masters matter and through feeling controls thought, the question arises, how can the feelings be held? The answer is that that power which cannot be obtained by conquest is obtained through surrender. The King, who is God, shares all things with his subjects. Who are His subjects that are his vassals? Those who have surrendered to him. How can they surrender? What can they surrender?

It is only the nufs, the shadow which perverts and impairs all feelings, which stands in the way. Conjecture is the enemy of concentration, while devotion can be called its mother. The symbol for concentration might be the ladder, marking the path of the devotee. In this is the secret of all the idols and forms worshipped by man. But Allah is recognized by the Sufis as being hidden in all names and forms, in all seen and unseen beings and in every aspect of life without and within.

So by the practices of Fikr and Darood, coupled with regularity of the breath, the power of concentration increases and in time the mind acts automatically to all that is poured into it by the heart of man. Therefore devotion can also be the greatest help to concentration, keeping the heart filled with love and so subjugating thought. Mind-Mastery begins and ends with Heart-Mastery over the mind.

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

Githa Series I Number 7

Memory

GITHA: Memory depends upon two things: right focus and steadiness of observation.

TASAWWUF: The same principles of focus and steadiness of observation lay behind concentration as behind photography and the magic lantern. Poor focus causes distorted impression and unsteadiness of observation dims the outline. The myths of tradition hold that there is a relation between mind, moon and silver, and there is not so much difference between the impressions made upon mind through the operations of light and shadow and the effects upon silver-salt plated.

In concentration one strives to erect a picture in light even though the background may be in shadow and in this it differs from ordinary photography. Focus depends upon attention and purity of breath and mind, and steadiness of observation upon rhythm of breath. So it can be seen that the basic principles are the simplest teachings of Sufism given even to beginners and these teachings make it possible for one to advance to the higher stages in concentration.

GITHA: Any object that passes from our sight unobserved by us, for a moment, is seen by us and yet not seen, for it has passed from our memory but has not been collected by it. In other words, it was wiped off at the same moment when it passed from our memory.

TASAWWUF: Everything we witness consciously or unconsciously makes some sort of impression. In order that the impression may be lasting, the form must continue long enough to build a counterpart on the mental plane. It is these counterparts which form what we call memory, which is a continued knowledge of names and forms we have experienced. And it can be seen that this process is also quite similar to photography.

GITHA: Focus makes an object fully seen.

TASAWWUF: All mental activity is an activity of light. Actually we do not have to penetrate far into the unseen to know the laws of the unseen. The traditions have told us that the worlds above were as the worlds below, and the worlds within as the worlds without and this can be understood some through a study of the phenomena of light even without much mystical experience. At the same time one learns more about light through mystical experiences than by any other method.

The action of light is similar on all planes. The mental atmosphere is not so different from the physical atmosphere, only the physical plane, being the locus of the most outward manifestation, cannot receive from any plans outside itself, while the mental sphere can receive from the more subtle worlds as well as from the dense earth below. Besides that, the mental sphere acts and reacts upon itself, and it is there that the law of justice and retribution is best observed.

The ancient Egyptians used to symbolize this by the Goddess Maat, who was the Goddess of Justice, and yet in another aspect the World Mother and the Goddess of the Horizons, governing man's vision on all planes and returning to him in accordance to his deeds and needs. The object of the Sufi is to broaden his mental horizon but this cannot be properly done until focus is controlled. Repetition of the invocation makes this easier to effect.

GITHA: For all other objects become covered from our sight when the sight is keenly engaged in the observation of an object.

TASAWWUF: This is the ultimate purpose of concentration. As it says in Qur'an, we are to make Allah the sole object of our search. How can we do that when the sight is fixed either upon the things of this world or of that world? It may be true that in concentration our attention is turned from the world without to the world within, but if the consciousness is stopped at the mental plane, we have not entirely achieved that which it is necessary for us to attain. So long as other than Allah is the object of our search we have not touched Sufism and so long as thought is not controlled by feeling, neither through concentration nor through any other means can we satisfy the yearnings of our hearts and souls.

GITHA: This shows that steadiness of the sight and mind and of the object helps the impression to sink deeper into the memory, and focus of sight and mind makes the object clearer in the memory.

TASAWWUF: The purpose of mantras and Wazifas is to focus the atoms until even they sing in praise of God. A Wazifa without thought behind it can even purify the physical world and our

bodies; when thought is added to it, it touches the mind. This is because of the effect of sound. But when in concentration the eye and sight help control the atoms; the inner effect can be much greater.

Man has the power both to give and to receive. He gives with the tongue and receives through the ear, but with the eye he both gives and receives. Therefore spiritual training through the eye is most important, and especially when one understands that the eye is the window of the soul and more spiritual magnetism can be conveyed through the eye than by any other means.

Wazifa and Fikr help purify the breath and this is of great benefit to the mind. Why does Fikr control the breath? Because the call to God controls all other calls, and dependence upon God controls all other forms of dependence. From the metaphysical point of view it is God's breath which sustains the breath of all his creatures throughout creation. He who is dependent upon Allah is independent of all else, and all else can become dependent upon him. This is the secret of the control of creation and so makes mastery possible for Allah has placed all things beneath man's feet.

As Zikr and Fikr build up the light-atoms on various planes through sound breath, so concentration collects these atoms through repeated activity on the plane where they are needed, and most important is this in the construction of a purified memory in Malakut.

GITHA: Those who complain of their concentration not being good will find by a little more study of oneself that either too much activity of their mind and sight is the cause of this, or lack of focus, which is caused either by lack of interest or by lack of patience in their nature.

TASAWWUF: To control the mind in concentration the invocation is repeated mentally, followed by a short meditation. If one is still uneasy Fikr should be repeated, even during the process of observation for this prevents the thoughts from wandering and keeps the mind clear and one-pointed. As both sight and thought can be controlled by the breath, sometimes one may concentrate a little on the breath to maintain its rhythm. If the breath is disturbed for any reason, it is better not to spend much time in concentration and to perform the proper spiritual exercises to benefit oneself first.

If lack of focus is due to bad eyesight in observation this can easily be adjusted. The spiritual student does not employ dim or dark objects which strain the eyes and do not help the mind. But lack of mental focus may be due either to lack of interest or the general condition of mind may be the cause. In that case the teacher assists the pupil first to overcome his mental weakness by the proper training.

Lack of interest and lack of patience are both due to nufs. Practice of Darood and observation of the breath help to overcome these conditions. It is seldom that the teacher selects something which will of itself cause lack of patience. However, if that should be so, then the object of concentration may be changed. The training in the elementary class is generally sufficient to overcome lack of patience in the talib.

GITHA: The first thing, therefore, the Sufis do is to acquire steadiness of pose and posture.

TASAWWUF: This comes through meditation and the spiritual exercises assigned to the talibs before entering the more advanced classes.

GITHA: And steadiness of mind.

TASAWWUF: This comes through the development of the breath, especially the rhythmical control of the breath, which always furthers steadiness of mind. Practice of Zikr is most beneficial, and should be increased if the mind continues to cause difficulty. In some cases the spiritual lessons in music help also, but generally combination of melodic and vocative Fikr will produce the proper effect bringing steadiness to the mind and even joy and great interest in life.

GITHA: Besides deep interest and patience learnt in everyday life, together with hope.

TASAWWUF: Development of interest holds the attention and patience enables one to maintain their state, but hope is the life-blood which gives life to the lessons. It is not enough to see or visualize or reproduce; it is necessary to give life to it. Until then it is like printing negative plates from which no copies can be made because there is no life in life. It is hope which gives life to our concentrations and visions.

GITHA: One who has the inclination to move, who has the inclination of changing thought, speech and action every moment, whose attention is attracted from one object to another, whose faculty of interest is as dead, will always lack concentration.

TASAWWUF: Therefore short assignments are first given to the talib and it is not so important to require very long periods for practices as to perfect those practices within some period. A single thought in absolute steadiness and concentration upon God is worth hours of wasteful prayer where the attention is wandering. So in the training of mureeds there is physical, mental and moral purification through the practices.

Of course these evils are found mostly in people who have developed a certain degree of insanity. But it may be questioned how sane anybody is. It is the spiritual education which produces sanity more than anything else as it always insists upon balance.

GITHA: But he who is steady-minded, balanced in the physical movements, patient, alert and keen in his observation, is the person who will concentrate well.

TASAWWUF: Some peoples are naturally constituted to be good in concentration. Then they are trained in devotion so that concentration may bring them to Allah. Others may fall down for many reasons, but chiefly absence of love and interest. For them Zikr is generally prescribed.

GITHA: And good concentration gives promise of success in all aspects of life.

TASAWWUF: The master concentrator has the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is he who is the rock to whom Christ has given the keys and who can become master of earth and heaven. By concentration Allah produced earth from heaven and by concentration man can draw heaven to earth and regain all which is lost or lacking. There is nothing which cannot be attained through concentration either the spiritual satisfaction through growth in God, or the attainment of all desires and needs here upon earth. There are no limits in Murakkabah, and one who has attuned his heart to God may make the spheres of body, mind and heart, all, the tabernacles of the blessed.

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Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Githa Series I Number 8

Seclusion

GITHA: The life of the mystic teaches us. By observing it keenly we can learn many things.

TASAWWUF: Practice of Tasawwuri Murshid consists of two things: imitation and obedience. Actually this is the way the infant learns. First he imitates the actions of the parents, but later on he follows their will more and more. It is the same with the talib on the path to God. Actions of Murshids form the bases for customs of the men of the Khankah. The Hadith, traditions of Islam, have been the source for many customs following the personal habits of the blessed Prophet.

For the Sufis the actions of any holy being may serve as examples. More important than outward imitation is resignation, which means attunement of the will to that of the Spiritual Guide. Therefore obedience is better than imitation. But one may ask, how can one obey without knowing? The answer is that one can always concentrate on the form of a living Sheikh or Murshid and through feeling determine whether such action is appropriate or not. Concentration on the mind of the teacher is proper when one is in doubt or when the intuition seems asleep. This method has many forms which can be used to benefit.

GITHA: Sufis make Khilvat, seclusion, at a certain time in the day.

TASAWWUF: The hours of early morning and prior to sleep are generally reserved for meditations and spiritual exercises. The hour before noon and before sunset is also good. In the countries where Islamic rites are preserved, five or even more periods are kept sacred, especially those

times when the generality are engaged in prayer, and also the hours assigned by the teacher for spiritual duties.

In the Khankah it is always good to maintain some periods daily when activity ceases and silence is maintained, as well as to have meditations in which all may unite.

GITHA: On a certain day in the week, in a certain week in the month.

TASAWWUF: Friday evening is sacred both to the Hebrews and Mussalmen. The Christians observe Sunday and other religions have their sacred days. The Sufi always tries to adjust his practices to the customs of the country and in presenting a world message no uniform regulations are suggested until the whole of humanity is ready for them.

The period of the new moon is the most sacred time in the month, and those who understand psychic and occult law are able to take advantage of this fact to gain much benefit. Activity is better when the moon is waxing and repose when the moon is waning, especially the beginning of action is preferable near the time of the new moon or during the waxing. Just prior to the new moon is the best for extra silence.

GITHA: Or in a certain month in the year.

TASAWWUF: Early spring is an excellent time for Khilvat, before the buds open. This corresponds to the Christian Lent, which is a custom founded upon the 40 day Khilvat which Jesus Christ observed. All the great prophets as Moses, Elijah, Buddha and Mohammed also observed Khilvat, and the Sufis have continued these practices both in imitation of the Holy Ones and in obedience to the Divine Law which they observed. The whole earth, so to speak, enters into Khilvat before the approach of spring.

Rules for Khilvat are based upon custom and need. Need is more important than custom but custom can grow out of need.

GITHA: The greatest among them have devoted a certain period of their life—in the early part, or when aged—which they call Gusha Nashini.

TASAWWUF: The Khilvatis are a school of Sufis, mostly of aged men, who spend much time in silence and seclusion. Sometimes neophytes have also spent 40 days and much longer alone, in prayer and meditation. One may read about it in the lives of many Sufis, especially Shams-i-Tabriz and Abu Sa'id ibn Abil 'Khayr. Often such souls receive a Divine Call, as did the Prophet Samuel and also Jeremiah who served their apprenticeship to the Lord when very young.

Those who are destined to serve God in special capacities often receive such a call, even when young. However, it is generally the aged who practice Khilvat, for whom the world no longer offers any attraction, and who are no longer fitted to appear before the world to best advantage. The

ancient Vedic religion taught that it was proper for all elderly people to spend their time in seclusion. In some Buddhist countries, the children do it instead, before they are ready to face the world and this is supposed to help them understand life's problems better, as well as give their spiritual education along with their other needs.

GITHA: And have a shawl thrown over the head, keeping the eyes covered from all other objects in order to retain the object of concentration in the mind without any break.

TASAWWUF: The shawl not only serves as a disciplinary precaution but it preserves magnetism at the same time. Of course for those who could go into caves, such a message may not be necessary but Sufism teaches that spiritual development can and should take place in the midst of men. Spiritual energy is difficult to collect and easy to scatter, and especially for older persons, hard to retain. But magnetism also preserves the memory which in ordinary people often becomes weak with age. So besides any theoretical or purely spiritual advantages, Khilvat is of great practical benefit.

GITHA: The Christian monks and nuns showed in their life the tendency to seclusion.

TASAWWUF: There has been much discussion as to whether the Prophet Mohammed was opposed to the monastic life. The answer is that he was not opposed to any form of service to God, but favored natural living. Asceticism and celibacy are valuable if they lead one to God, but are not valuable if they rob one of manhood and womanhood. God's being includes all aspects of life. Prayer, meditation, contemplation and spiritual exercises cannot be said to belong to any one particular religion, they belong to all.

The Sufis preserved many ancient customs, some of which have been found among the Christians as well as among other peoples. Many of these existed long before Mohammed and some are found as far back as history can be traced. But more necessary than seclusion is seeking God's favor and following Divine Will. Therefore Khilvat of itself is not practiced except under spiritual direction.

GITHA: A veil is seen on the head of the nuns, covering their eyes from the impressions which may come from the right and left sides. The retirement of the yogis also suggests the same tendency for the purpose of concentration.

TASAWWUF: In concentration one-pointedness is necessary. The veil protects and preserves the magnetism of eyes and mind. It is also symbolic of the aura, or halo of light, of which there are both physical and mental counterparts. It also serves to remind one of the Divine Purpose of Being and the Goal which is being sought.

GITHA: We, busy as we are in our life with a thousand things in a day, naturally cannot have a good concentration, but our life needs more effort and seclusion than the pious ones who are already on the path. Therefore, our first lesson in the way of seclusion should be to practice the

principle in our everyday life.

TASAWWUF: Concentration is even more necessary in everyday life than anywhere else. Meditation throws the consciousness within but concentration can be performed on any plane and so preserves unity in all worlds, that all are where God is and where light is, for wherever there is light, there is Allah. Meditation preserves, breath strengthens and concentration determines the direction of every form of Divine Energy.

GITHA: When doing some work, we must try and keep our mind on it, not allowing it to be attracted by anything, however important and attractive it may be. If not, we lose both, as in the story of the dog who went after his reflection in the water with bread in the mouth, and lost the piece he had already.

TASAWWUF: The whole cycle, whether of the hour, day, month, year or century, is divided into parts, each for its purpose. Every breath can become important when devoted to a single duty. Not only the mind but all of life is purified when there is a supreme purpose. At the same time, if one carries all actions, even the simplest, to their conclusion, less effort, less magnetism is lost, and every action retains a purpose, which is most beneficial.

Sufis constantly practice Darood, keeping the breath in harmony with the Divine Breath. This helps to achieve success in all things, preventing the mind from wandering when engaged in work, and keeping the body in order in health and in activity.

GITHA: If we are thinking of something, we must not let another thought break in, either on our part or on the part of another. We must think it out thoroughly before we venture to think of something else.

TASAWWUF: Spiritual exercises assist the will to control the mind, by keeping the mental atoms in their proper places. This control is to be increased so it will continue when the mind is active as well as when it is at rest. If a thought seems to destroy any form of concentration, Darood helps to remove it. If it persists, then the breath is to be examined. Especially if the breath be in Kemal, there may be a warning of some kind, or an intuition to break the condition, and do something else. Often this comes when the situation is undesirable whether a person knows it or not, and so serves to protect one in disagreeable situations, places and conditions. Intuitions arise from the light of the heart-plane being thrown upon the mind, and spiritual impressions are of the same nature, only more particularized.

GITHA: When we speak, we must not change the subject of our speech in the middle of the speech.

TASAWWUF: Silence is preferable to wandering speech. Wandering speech causes confusion of thought and confusion of thought leads to illness of ease at heart and so bring destruction and even sickness. Music as taught in India requires the playing of a single type of music at one time,

and in the Chisti School the talib is kept upon a practice until it is perfected, even if it be constant repetition on one note.

Not only does concentration help purpose, but singleness of purpose benefits concentration. By having one object for study, it is possible to reach deeper soil than where several ideas are kept in view, and the fewer the subjects of conversation, the more benefit can be gained from such conversation.

Every change in discussion introduces a new note and often this new note may not harmonize with the music of another's personality, even when it seems pleasing to us. The mystic therefore preserves a condition where it is necessary to continue it and only changes the subject when the former subject has been cleared up, or when it has reached a stage where continuance would cause harm.

GITHA: We should finish that topic, even if it were of less importance.

TASAWWUF: When a subject is studied or discussed, it affects the mental atoms as well as the physical atmosphere. If something is left unfinished, and the topic be changed, there may be a new vibration set up in the physical world which is not in harmony with the mental atmosphere. If even one person present is dissatisfied and wishes to speak further on the former subject, when the new subject is introduced, then the mental atmosphere is disturbed.

The principle of Unity is best served not in agreement in conclusion, but on agreement to consider or not to consider a particular theme. In a chorus, while all may sing to the same music, there are the soprano and alto and tenor and bass voices. When instruments are played along with the voices, according to the Western methods, there are many parts in the harmony. If even ninety-nine out of a hundred played one piece and another single instrument played something else, there would be disharmony and discord.

In conversations there are some ways to stop this disharmony. In spiritual classes, the word of the teacher should be accepted as final, and when uttered discussion should cease, although a meditation may be necessary at this point before introducing another subject. Of course unanimity is to be desired when possible, but very often silence accomplishes what all discussion cannot attain to, and while many believe they respond to reason, more respond to sympathy, music and feeling.

GITHA: By doing so, in thought, speech and action, we develop our concentration, attending to our daily affair at the same time.

TASAWWUF: The whole life can become music if everything is considered as music, whether it be thought, speech, act, feeling or relation. For the student of Murakkabah to be changing the interests of the mind continually destroys the power and faculties gained through concentration, as well as ability in it. Of course interest plays some part in this, and a spiritual person may have more

interests than another, but restraint of speech is always better than change of subject, unless the type of subject be conducive to harm. Let them talk who will, while the talib keeps in tune with God, and he will learn to control the atmosphere and bring dignity to all gatherings, for there is no greater sign of sagacity than self-control, which is sure to bring us wisdom as we progress through life.

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the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Githa Series I Number 9

Concentration

GITHA: The will plays the most important part in concentration.

TASAWWUF: While concentration may be called an exercise or a practice, it is also a step toward realization. While the mind may be called the real man, the mind is not fully the Hu-man until it is controlled by the will, for the will alone represents that Divine Energy as it penetrates the grosser planes of creation.

GITHA: Its first work is to collect the atoms from the storehouse of memory, and the next work is to hold them together, making one single vision to concentrate on.

TASAWWUF: Recollection is impossible without the use of the will. The very word **recollect** describes what is going on in the mental plane. The mind by itself cannot be said to remember, although memory is regarded as a faculty of mind. If this were entirely so, one should always be holding things in memory and confusion would result through inability of the mind to segregate its faculties, one from the other. This shows that the mind must be directed. Yet the mind has its value for it is within the sphere of mind that the atoms are collected which are stored in the memory. Every breath brings something to the mind and all these accretions are preserved there. But the process of continuous accumulation has no value until these mental atoms can be put to work, and this is accomplished through concentration when the mind becomes the sphere of the action of will.

GITHA: It is therefore that the strong-willed can concentrate better than the weak-willed.

TASAWWUF: Who can be considered as the strong in will? It is they who have overcome their passions and animal natures. And how is this done? This is accomplished by power of will. But

when it is asked, what gives the most power to the will; it is through resignation to Allah, which unites the will of man to that of God. All the theoretical and practical aspects of Sufi training help to bring this about.

GITHA: Those who accomplish great works and difficult works and those who are always successful in every enterprise they take up are the possessors of a strong will.

TASAWWUF: Sometimes a person possesses an unusually strong will because of the obstacles he has had to face in life and sometimes one has as strong will because righteousness and morality bring it to one, and sometimes—and this is the most natural—it comes from the growth of love in the heart, whether this be toward God or man.

The ordinary strong-willed person may be successful in the things of this world but not always in regard to his own being. That is why many financiers and executives, no matter how capable they are in directing industry and employees, often fall victims to disease and family problems. Such a one has to combat the wills of all people about him, and when they are near and dear to him they may become even like enemies.

Now the person who has attuned his heart and soul to God can escape this dilemma. In the first place, the very attunement increases the cordiality in his being which makes it possible for him to harmonize with others. Very often he gains his desires without antagonizing or opposing another. But if the question is asked, suppose great opposition has to be faced and that victory has to be obtained, what can be done?

In this case one will find the breath out of rhythm and it must never be forgotten that to sustain concentrative effort or to attain one's desires or needs properly, the breath must remain in rhythm. By practicing Fikr or Darood this may be accomplished but if one finds that one cannot maintain the equilibrium and rhythm of breath in the face of opposition, one has to consider whether victory is necessary for oneself or for God. If it is necessary, by keeping the heart and mind on "Allaho Akbar" with each inhalation and exhalation, the breath resumes normal rhythm and balance, and it is a sign that one must continue.

Then by concentrating mostly on the breath and on the sacred phrase, one can stand in the midst of enemies or hostile surroundings and still accomplish one's aims. Only in this case one has to watch the breath more closely than ever, for if enthusiasm interferes—that is, one stresses too much the Urouj state of mind, when the Kemal condition is needed to accomplish action—then one may deceive even oneself. So dependence upon Allah is more valuable than anything else.

GITHA: Will develops concentration, and concentration develops the will.

TASAWWUF: Without will-power there could be no concentration. In insane persons the mental atoms have no focus and there is constant change and variation going on. We see this sometimes in restless people: this is caused by weakness of will. Every effort is sure to help, as it is said,

“practice makes perfect.” And by holding tightly to the trust in God and maintaining observation of breath, success is sure.

GITHA: The people who are changeable and go from one thought to the other show lack of will as well as lack of concentration.

TASAWWUF: Attention is developed, and then perception. Through adhesion and cohesion are these physical atoms held together in our physical bodies, and by a similar process are the mental atoms combined in our mental vehicles. If there was no will, if it was entirely lacking, disintegration would follow, which is death. So only by this means can one prevent physical, psychic or mental disease, and one cannot obtain healing power without first developing the will to some extent.

GITHA: Every person, whether acquainted with mystical things or not acquainted, has naturally the faculty to concentrate, to a lesser or greater degree.

TASAWWUF: Because every person not only has a will, but rather will is even more fundamental than personality, for the latter does not extend itself to the depths of the soul. Persons without will often droop away and die, and others, if they live physically, are subject to mental diseases or are feeble-minded. Insanity and feeble-mindedness could be cured or prevented by means of concentration and regulation of the breath.

GITHA: Of course, by exercise one develops the faculty, and by not making use of the faculty, one weakens it.

TASAWWUF: It is not only a privilege of the Sufi to practice concentration, it is a duty; and it is a duty not only to oneself, but to God also. Spiritual evolution not only liberates man, so to speak, it is the means by which the Creator Himself as well as His Creation are liberated. That is why one reads of the new heavens and the new earth in the Book of Revelation and elsewhere, which come after the soul has been liberated. When man is freed, the Universe is freed. The master of self is the savior of the world.

GITHA: It is little known to the world, but it is a great secret understood and practiced by the mystics, that if the will is able to collect atoms from the memory and construct an intended vision and can hold it, in time it becomes capable to mastering all affairs in the world, however difficult they may be. And when perfection in this is reached, one has attained the power of miracle.

TASAWWUF: This is not impossible and many among the Sufis have attained to this state and naturally obtained such faculties and powers through their surrender to God and their whole-hearted desire to serve only Him. Strictly speaking the will is the arm of the Lord. However much there may seem to be an individual will, this is due to Maya, the illusion of the world, and the activity of nufs. Freedom of the will is the freedom of the soul. The very practice of concentration brings this freedom.

When the moon stands in front of the sun, there is an eclipse, there is shadow, but if the moon could hide behind the sun there would be no shadow. The moon represents the mind and the sun is the will (source of power) as well as heart (source of love). The heart in man sustains the nerves as the sun sustains the moon. The blood stream in man carries the will-energy everywhere in his physical vehicle, and wherever there is blood there is life. Paralysis of a nerve brings the end of pleasure and pain and all sensation. So it can be said that the life in man while in this body circulates with the bloodstream and the mental life also is utterly dependent upon the condition of the heart, if one only knew it.

Once it is possible to reproduce a single condition on the mental plane by the power of will, the faculty has been attained. After that it is possible to arrange the mental atoms as desired and by holding them in a single position they form the model upon which the physical atoms pattern themselves. Therefore there is a thought at the basis of each thing.

The faculty which is used in healing to make an individual better can also be used to heal or protect a group, a community, a country, or the whole world. And this same faculty which can build up can also destroy; that is, creation of health and destruction of disease are not entirely separate. Power over the mind secures power over matter, and power of mind over matter is determined by the amount of control will has over mind. And what in reality is will-power? It is God-power; that power which is in the will is God, for God is the only power or force, Allaho Akbar. It is not will-power that is powerful; it is God who is all powerful.

The miracle may be described as the unusual rather than the impossible. There is nothing which we can truly call possible or impossible, but it is important to understand what is profitable. Sometimes one on the path of the Prophet or Master may of necessity perform the unusual on this plane, even as the saint—though his faculty is hidden—may be performing the unusual on other planes.

Man performs no miracles, but through the Grace of God all things may be placed at his feet and all knowledge given unto him. Therefore the Sufi term for miracle is **karamat** which means nothing but Grace. Such acts are of Grace, not off power and they become possible when one contemplates Allah with all one's soul, all one's heart and all one's might.

GITHA: That which is impossible for the world is possible for him.

TASAWWUF: The master of will is the servant of Allah. Control over the mental atoms gives corresponding control over physical atoms. In Hindu terminology such a one was called "master of great car," and in Hebrew mysticism he was the rider in the chariot of the Lord. What is below is as what is above, and every arrangement of the atoms on the mental plane forms a blue-print or model. So by concentrating all force there it becomes possible for one to attain one's desires, fulfill one's needs and serve Allah as the agent who makes an accommodation for the Divine Force here upon earth. Therefore the master in Malakut will be master of earth, and all things are at his disposal who serves Allah in all things. Amen.

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

Githa Series I Number 10

Developing Mind by Concentration

GITHA: Real concentration is the forming of the concrete picture of the object of concentration in the mind.

TASAWWUF: Steadiness of gaze is not enough nor even retention in memory. It is the definite effect upon the mental atoms, engraving forms and ideas in the light of that plane which proves the concentration.

GITHA: Lack of concentration comes from the wavering nature of the mind, and the mind wavers by lack of proper exercise.

TASAWWUF: The mind has been symbolized as water and as mercury, the waves of which are not so steady and have to be stilled in spiritual evolution. Use of the mind is not the same as exercise of the mind, any more than use of the muscle is the same as exercise of the muscle. Exercise is control under law for the purpose of strengthening and development. Sufis practice Safa, purification, which is the inner ablution of the mind and together with concentration bring that power to the mind which benefits it most.

GITHA: As the body develops with physical exercise so the mind develops by concentration.

TASAWWUF: And there is more in this also, that even as the body benefits more from proper breath-control than by mere lifting of weights, so in exercising the mind the breath can be of great assistance. As more work can be accomplished by the mind by the maintenance of rhythm of breath, so from the very beginning one is trained to maintain rhythm also in developing the mind and psychic power.

GITHA: The great hindrance that stands against concentration is the thought of one's own being.

TASAWWUF: It is the thought of one's own being which becomes the nafs and it is the greatest obstacle in one's path in every experience of life if one only knew it. The nafs is not the thought of

self alone so much as the thought of self which has been given power and life by continual concentration upon it, vitalizing it to such a degree that it seems to become of greatest importance.

Atoms on the mental plane are given life by continual thought, for what brings light to them brings life also. This particular thought, by receiving so much attention actually obscures other thoughts. It is not the self, and should not be confused with the self; nufs is the thought of self made apparently real and living through continual concentration and movement of breath until it produces a fog and a veil over the true being and usurps its place in life.

GITHA: When one thinks of one's own presence and at the same time thinks, "I am concentrating on a certain object," at that time it is impossible to have full concentration.

TASAWWUF: Because there are two thoughts upon the mind and where there are two thoughts there is not concentration. Besides that, every thought has—the tendency to cast a shadow over every other thought and thus interfere with the light of intelligence on the mental plane. The thought of self, more than anything else, interferes with all other thoughts and so stands as an obstacle to spiritual practices and all forms of concentration, spiritual or intellectual. It colors and shades all mental phenomena and thereby produces shadows. These shadows set up the condition of dualism in Ajsam and so befog the soul on the physical plane.

GITHA: The more one loses the thought of his own being from his consciousness, the more he becomes capable of concentration.

TASAWWUF: The thought of one's being being a thought and not an essence, it naturally prevents concentration. The same is true if other interests or persons attract one more than the object or subject of concentration. Generally they are easy to discern for love takes on forms, which, whether desirable or undesirable, have effects on the mind of a definite nature, but the thought of self is often a life concentration and so much more powerful. It not only sets a mark upon the mind, but touches the consciousness also and keeps it covered by the denseness of the earth.

The basic purpose of spiritual training is to free the individual from this self-created "self," so to speak, and let him live as a God-created "self," which was the intention of creation.

GITHA: As self-consciousness is the enemy of a speaker, singer, doctor or a lawyer, so it is the greatest enemy of the one who concentrates. Concentration is to avoid self-consciousness, and at the same time self-consciousness is the only thing that keeps one from progress.

TASAWWUF: The Hindus have the method of repeating "neti, neti," not this, not this. Sufis believe that the thought of negation of self has the same or a similar effect to the thought of the emphasis of self positively. In either case the nufs throws a shadow over the soul in manifestation, preventing it from perceiving its path.

On the higher planes the soul gives no attention to differences and so destroys their importance,

but in Malakut it perceives as an individual, it sees itself as separate and pays so much attention to its distinct condition that this feeling of i-ness or **Ahankara** blinds it to the light which is its true self. Then the shadow continues before one as a veil over the purpose of existence.

Even self-consciousness may be called a thought. Consciousness is; the earth has no existence apart from the solar system and a person has no existence apart from the stream of consciousness. The reality is in the consciousness and the allusion in the separation, which is for convenience only. Therefore in Buddhism it is taught that there is no ego, there is no individual soul, the reality being the stream of cosmic consciousness.

GITHA: The Sufi, while concentrating, uses abstinence against the constant and uncontrollable activity of the mind.

TASAWWUF: Just as the earth is in constant motion, so the atoms of the mental sphere are in constant motion, being of a finer nature, their motion is much more rapid, fluidic and harder to fix. The Sufi, by use of Fikr and Darood gains a control over these atoms by first getting into the proper rhythm of being. That is, he attunes his inner being to the rate of vibration of these atoms and so can overtake them in their movements, as a man catching a wild horse has to get into a sort of attunement with his motions and then it is not so difficult to capture that horse. And this has been made the basis of much in symbol and in myth portraying this inner condition and struggle.

Whenever there is loss of attention, whenever it appears difficult to hold atoms together on the mental plane, whenever one feels a lack in concentration, Fikr of some form is practiced. Continuous Fikr with determination actually becomes a most powerful concentration, where feeling and will are united. This develops the rhythm of consciousness so it is much more rapid than mental activity, for the atoms of feeling are finer than those of thought and can easily control them when the consciousness is placed in feeling. Then, just as a more rapid object can overtake a slower one, the soul raised to this pitch by feeling and devotion controls all thought.

In the path of mastery there is one task—to seek God, and thereby all other tasks are accomplished and what for the average man is considered a concentration becomes for him a need and a delight.