

Githekas for Mureeds

Series II

by

Murshid Samuel L. Lewis

(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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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.

Githeka Series II: Number 1

[Psychism, Occultism and Mysticism](#)

What is Psychism? What is Occultism? What is Mysticism? I will give you an answer that will make them all clear to you, and this is especially so if you study the teachings of Fabre d'Olivet or the Kabbalistic philosophy that there are three aspects to existence, called God, Man and the world. In Reality All is God, but from a certain point of view there are these aspects.

These three aspects have been characterized by the three letters Aleph, Shin and Mem, which have many significations. For instance, Aleph represents sometimes ether and sometimes the air,

and again All Principle and All that is Infinites; Shin represents fire and expansion and force and will, and Mem represents water and sometimes earth and beauty. So they may be considered the same as Kemal, Jelal and Jemal.

Now Psychism may be called the negative Jemal aspect of the use of transcendental power, when that power represents the world. In other words, it is the Tamasic aspect; it moves downward, it is instinctive. In this case the power works through the emotions, but being instinctive it agitates the **nufs**. It is limited to the sphere of the earth and the shadow of the mental world. This is Psychic Power.

All animals have this faculty and man has it in so far as he is an animal. But it is not Psychic Power which is forbidden, but animal use of Psychic Power, and under Tamasic conditions man is as an animal, a beast. Therefore, Psychism is avoided not because of its inherent properties, nor because of its nature, but because of its tendencies.

When that same transcendental power is raised from the sphere of the instinct and emotions to the sphere of the intellect by the Will and is used by the Will, then it is called Occult Power. The term is relative, but what is known as Occult Power is the same power as in Psychism; only man, instead of being an animal, acts as a man.

In this case the force is individualized and works through the Will; the greater the Will the greater the apparent force. This is the Rajasic condition, but nevertheless it is a negative condition; it may be called a negative Jelal condition, because when man masters a force it is only seemingly so; actually the force masters him. Otherwise by Will alone one could escape Karma, and as by Will alone one is still bound to the self and the wheel, it is not an escape.

Now there is also a negative condition when the force acts in the realm of the heart which is called Mysticism, and especially in Christian Mysticism and some in Bakti, while there is a surrender, it is not a complete realization. There is **fana**, but there is not **baqa**, the continuous subsistence of God, the Only Being. One drowns in the Ocean of Love, but comes out dry and there are periods of darkness. This is a negative Mysticism. It is Sattvic, yet negative, and one becomes zero without gaining the One.

Sufism does not deny Psychism, Sufism does not deny Occultism, Sufism does not deny Mysticism: Sufism affirms God, Allah. The mystical condition raises one to the plane of the heart, but so long as lover and Beloved are separated even Mysticism is not spiritualized. The beauty and duty of Sufic training is to deny nothing, to spiritualize everything. And what does it mean to spiritualize everything? It means to see God in everything.

There are three stages in searching for God: the purification of the body, mind and heart; and there are three stages in the serving of God, in heart, mind and body. First one serves God in Heart, and if one does not serve Him there within, one will not reflect God without.

Therefore to the Sufi, Mysticism is the attainment and service of the Will of God through the Heart. That is the Spiritual Mysticism and all mureeds seek that duty, otherwise the other duties are unimportant. There are three grades by which man rises to God, and the three grades by which the Spirit of Guidance descends through man to earth.

Mysticism is the service of man in God to God in God, and Occultism is the service of man in God, to God in man. That is pure Occultism, spiritual Occultism. Service of this kind is not required, may not be necessary, but it is not the choice of man, but the choice of God to select the service. That is the difference between ordinary Occultism and Spiritual Occultism. The faculties and phenomena may appear the same, but the spirit is different.

Occultism is the service to mankind generally; Psychism is the service to mankind particularly. Even Psychism can be spiritualized although it is harder because its area is more limited. It is more limited in two respects: as Mysticism is to the heart, Occultism is to the mind, and spiritualized Psychism is to the body and emotions. So Occultism affects both mind and body, the mental and physical directly, but Psychism, even when spiritualized, can only reach the mind at some special time, for instance, in healing.

This does not limit the Healing Service. That service is Psychic, Occult and Mystical, all at the same time. It is Psychic when the names of individuals are read; it is Occult when one prays for the Pir-o-Murshid and also when one prays to be a channel of Divine Energy; and it is Mystical at the end when peace is desired for the whole world.

In other words, of the three aspects of Divine Energy, individual, universal and Infinite, the Psychic is connected with the first, the Occult with the second, and the Mystical with the third. So as Fabre d'Olivet put three circles in one, these three circles can be mounted one on top of the other: Mystical, Occult, Psychic; all within a great circle, the Spiritual or Divine.

The truth is that God is the only force and even man (the letter Shin) and the world (the letter Mem) are aspects of God. It is God creating, God Created, and God returning to Himself. This is proven in the Hebrew language, that God is Aleph, **AD**onai; that man is Aleph, **AD**am in his spiritual or mystical aspect, **A**ish in his volitive or occult aspect and **A**nesh in his psychic or individualising aspect; and the world is Aleph as **A**retz, the earth.

All are this one force, the Only Being, and the only thing forbidden is that which removes one from realization. You can say, "Toward the one" in the search of God, rise from Psychism to Mysticism and then above name and forms; and in the service of God, even Christ descended into Hell, even the Psychic can be spiritualized.

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Githeka Series II: Number 2

[Fikr, Breathing and Health](#)

Health is a condition of balance, a condition of balance for heart, mind and body. It is not true that the physical body can be well when the mind is ill at ease and it is very difficult to control the mind when the physical body is sick. Illness therefore is a condition where there is a lack of rhythm either in one vehicle or in all vehicles or in the relationship of the vehicles one with another.

What is it which enables the body to function day and night, awake or asleep, conscious or unconscious? It is the breath. The breath is the vehicle of the Spirit of Guidance which makes it possible for the body to function. As it is said in *The Soul, Whence and Whither*, "the soul is the Divine Breath; it purifies, revivifies and heals the instrument in which it functions."

But the breath has another function besides keeping the body in rhythm and order; it is the connecting link between the world within and the world without. All impressions have their effect upon the body through the breath and all sensation is communicated to the mind through the breath. If you stop breathing, sight becomes difficult, if not impossible, and you will not hear and the next thing you lose consciousness, you enter a state of coma. This shows that such conditions are caused by the absence or irregularity of the breath.

Now it is well known that breathing helps the physical body, but how or why it helps is not so well known. When you take some physical exercise, it sometimes helps, and when you take some breathing exercises it sometimes helps. If the disorder were purely physical, no doubt many could be cured by just altering the breath, but we see that very few people are healed this way and often it is impossible to give any but the simplest exercises.

The truth is that disease is not only physical; it is psychical and often mental. It is through the control of breath that psychic disorders are reached; you cannot stop them by ordinary breathing exercises or by medicine. It has been found that change of locality or making a room a certain color helps. The reason is that change of locality whether to a warmer or colder place or to a higher or lower place necessarily changes the rhythm of the breath and at least that breath which accompanied the disease goes away and sometimes the new breath is beneficial.

Fikr is a spiritual practice which can be practiced in some form anywhere. Besides the exercises given by a spiritual teacher for a special purpose, there are Fikrs for all purposes. And what is Fikr? It is the realization that through the Divine Breath one takes in all that is good or necessary in the Universe; it is most beneficial. The Bible says we shall some day worship God in spirit and in truth. What does this mean? It means that some day every breath that comes to us will be from God and

will give to us that which we need for our salvation, for our health, for our well-being.

The difference between Fikr and an ordinary breathing practice is the difference between God's wisdom and man's knowledge. Man can take an exercise which may benefit part of his body and may also be a strain on his heart, and will have very little effect on his physical nature and may not help his mind at all. The Divine Breath which operates from within to the without first finds the cause of the disease and then cures it, for it restores balance on all planes.

On the physical plane Fikr is much more beneficial than any exercises, for by Fikr one can hold the breath much longer. A breath held with thought or feeling is deeper, can be retained for a greater time, can be exhaled with more power. In other words, the difference between the breath in Fikr and the breath out of Fikr is the difference between right and wrong, between life and death. So the first thing Fikr does is to strengthen the breath on the physical plane, to do what any breathing exercise can do and very much better.

But the breath in Fikr also reaches the mental plane. It purifies the mind and this in itself touches the psychic nature and the emotions, and helps control them. This breath in the mind helps memory, thought, feeling, sensation; in other words helps every aspect of mind and by purifying and revivifying the mind becomes the very source of health. So breath in Fikr brings not only physical power but brings great psychic power.

Then Fikr touches the heart. While the thought must be held in mind, the thought on God touches the heart and so the light of God in the soul is reflected on to the vehicles of the soul, and this brings purity and balance. So in addition to strength and magnetism, Fikr brings balance.

No matter what aspect of breath you think of, Fikr is better than anything else. Then when Fikr reaches the heart, the Divine magnetism circulates with the blood to all parts of the body, and circulates with the nerves to all parts of the mind and restores and revivifies them. For it is the blood which carries disease or health and the nerves which reflect disease or health. Therefore disease is a reflection of nufs and health is a reflection of God. Nufs is born of irregularity of breath, and God realization through perfection of breath. And what is perfection of breath? It is the harmony, the order, the balance, the regularity of breath in the physical body, in the mind, in the heart, and in the connections between them which makes all into the city of God, with the temple of God and the altar of God.

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Githeka Series II: Number 3

[Worship and Devotion](#)

The question of worship and devotion is one which has often caused criticism of the Sufis in the past because many people have regarded worship as devotion and absence of worship as lack of devotion.

Namaz or prayer has three aspects: the bodily aspect, the mental aspect and the heart aspect. It is the bodily aspect which may be called Worship and the heart aspect which may be called Devotion, and if one wishes, the mental or intellectual aspect can be called Prayer to distinguish it from the others. In other words, Worship is the cover over Devotion and covers Devotion as matter covers Spirit.

It is possible to worship without devotion in the performance of rites and ceremonies, and it is also possible to have devotion without worship in rites and ceremonies. The ceremony of worship is the public prayer where many come together and the ceremony of devotion can be performed with others or alone so long as there is the right feeling in the heart. Therefore Sufis have sometimes neglected customs of a particular religion and have not gone on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet they have often gone to the tomb of some saint and not only to the graves of the dervishes but also to the tombs of Mussulmans who were not Sufis and even to the shrine of Christian and Hebrew saints. But so long as there is the spirit of devotion the Sufi might go to a Shrine, and if there is lack of this spirit, he might refrain from visiting the most Holy places as at Mecca and Medina and Jerusalem, where many congregate in the name of religion but not always with true heart-felt devotion.

It is possible to have worship of some kind for the enjoyment of the nufs, either because of a spectacle or because of meeting people there or for social prestige or worldly honor. Therefore Christ said that it was better to pray alone in one's closet in true heartfelt devotion. For that reason Sufis often built cells where they meditated alone, besides congregating together. Then they were blamed by the generality for not attending public services and not always observing all the external laws and were frowned upon and called free-thinkers.

In truth the Sufi is the real free thinker because he is free and he thinks. He is not attached to anything which may be called "free-thought" and although independent of orthodoxy he does not shun orthodox rites, for freedom which circumscribes action is not freedom. Therefore the Sufi is more free than so called "free-thinkers" who never go to places of worship because their so-called freedom prevents them from doing something, while the Sufi's freedom does not prevent him from doing certain acts.

In this one can see the two directions of nufs, one of which wants to be with the generality and never does anything except in accordance with the generality and never sets up any standard apart from the generality. This one lacks conscience, perhaps, but does not lack morals, because the

generality always sets up some kind of standard which is better than no standard. But there is another kind of nufs which seeks satisfaction in unpopularity or in setting up ideas not accepted by the multitude and calls it “thought” and takes more pride in that “thought” and their so-called free thinking is nothing but mental idolatry; instead of a physical idol they worship a mental idol.

From this point of view even atheists are worshippers. They do not worship a God, perhaps, but they have a sort of blind worship and their worship is worse than that of the religionist because even a hypocritical worshiper in religion can be impressed by the feeling of others around him to become a devotee; the presence of the spirit of devotion in the crowd may sometime effect him so there is hope for him. But the absence of anybody near the atheist to impress him with devotion keeps him on the outside of life so he can never express his heart.

The Sufi never opposes worship, therefore, because from worship devotion may arise. But the Sufi does not depend upon worship for his devotion for his goal is to make every act of life a devotion, not only spiritual duties but work and even pleasure, all can become devotion. The Sufi may enjoy any form of worship or he may never worship in public. When he prays he endeavors to equal all in fervor, and does not regard the fervor of those about him whether it is sincere or hypocritical, but by being fervid and sincere himself he benefits the orthodox and they may even think he is more orthodox than they are. At the same time he does not put any more reliance in public worship than in private worship or in private worship than in any other private act.

The Sufi's secret is that he regards the pleasure of God at every moment of his life, not only in the temple or even in the meditation hall, but every moment. As soon as God is absent from him, at that moment he has denied the Unity of God. In his head he has not denied it, for he can at all times argue in favor of the Unity of God, but if defence of Unity were Unity, the many so-called Unitarians in all religions would have made earth a paradise long ago. The true Unitarian is one united in spirit, who always feels Unification; that is the true spirit of Unity.

The Sufi is not required to pray in public and may even pray little when alone. What is important is that during his prayer he entirely effaces his spirit in Allah. So long as he regards himself as one and Allah another, he may pray, he may worship, but he is no devotee. The spirit of the devotee is therefore like the Bhakti, the lover who finds satisfaction only in effacement, in the beloved, so they are no longer two, they are one.

There is no advantage in ending public worship, and yet public worship is not the goal. There may be a hundred better means of approaching Allah than in public worship, but even if there were a million better means, so long as anybody finds God through worship, then worship has its eternal value. It is just like the story of Moses and the boy who wanted to worship God in name and form. Moses told the boy that God was above name and form and the boy felt ashamed. This is an allegory, not a story. Moses is the aspirant who regards his views as more noble than somebody else's and endeavors to impress the other with the greater nobility of his views. This is another form of self-praise. It is not God-Praise and therefore is not devotion.

The Universal Worship is different from all other forms of worship in that it can be given as a public ceremony or given in public without form; it can be arranged for initiates only and it can also be given in a different form for the individual. All Initiates are not required to attend any of these varieties of worship and yet for some it may be good to attend all of them.

The secret is, how far does it propitiate the heart of the worshipper? For if a service to Allah does not bring joy to the heart of the worshipper, the worshipper is not a devotee, and if standing beneath a tree brings joy to one and uplifts the soul to God at that moment one is a devotee. Yet it is not desirable to abolish all form, all ceremony and if the other churches of the world should disappear in time, there must be something to take their place and this is another reason for the Universal worship.

Worship does not take the place of spiritual practices and yet worship is also a practice. The Nimaz of the Sufis are carefully planned so every gesture, every movement and every word has a significance. In this way even one who is not naturally a devotee will find some value in them. Therefore Nimaz can be given to many who do not care for public prayer and whose devotions are of another nature.

In the end all come to devotion, worshipper and non-worshipper alike, whether devotion is in speech or in silence; but the praise of God in song is the highest on earth because even if one were really very close to Allah and worshipped always in silence it would not be an example and would furnish an opportunity for a worse sort of hypocrisy than pretended prayer. For the tone of the pretended prayer would betray its insincerity while the pretended silence of a false worshipper in the silence not only might betray but would lead others astray which is worse. So no matter how little one expresses in prayer, let the expression be full voiced and whole hearted. Besides one can by speech drive devils away and in the silence it is the most difficult thing. When the devil wanted to test Christ the first thing he did was to take him into the silence.

It is speech which brought man together, by which man can communicate with another and it is also through speech that man can communicate with God and God with man. Speech is a great secret and has great significance. The etheric element has no vehicle so good as the body of man and God has nothing on earth so fine to express His Will as the Voice of the Prophet, one who conveys to humanity His Messages. Therefore purest devotion will find expression in speech when the devotee becomes, so to speak, Allah and serves Allah in all things.

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Githeka Series II: Number 4

[Spirituality and Wisdom](#)

The subject of spirituality and wisdom is very interesting in the study of Sufi philosophy. Sufis do not claim to be the only ones who are spiritual or wise, and yet every wise man can be called a Sufi. But it is not so easy to be wise; to be wise does not mean to be learned although a wise man may also be learned, but the true wisdom is that knowledge which comes from the heart of God.

All people live under some kind of law, whether of code or custom. The people of Islam have, perhaps, been more favored than others because their common law has been based upon sacred law. The people of India have made their common law sacred but some things included in it are actually contrary to sacred law and the people of Europe have often placed common law above sacred law and that is why there has been so little spirituality in Europe.

There are laws of man and the laws of nature and also the revelations of God. There is nothing in the laws of nature which can be called moral or immoral although one might say that the cooperative or altruistic spirit is moral and the individualistic spirit immoral in nature, among animals and plants. But when it comes to human communities one cannot say this always holds true. Human law has been based upon human need but its great defect is that the need of one time is not necessarily the need of another time and so human law has often failed in times of great crises.

Now there is a sacred law, a spiritual law, and this has been taught in some form by the great saints and sages of humanity. The purpose of spiritual law is to save man from every form of adversity. To be called spiritual two things are necessary—one is that it have the widest outlook and the other that it have the faculty which may be called genius, which enables it to deal with problems as they arise. Spiritual law of the Sufis is called **Tarikat**, which leads to Wisdom.

The spiritual person is educated to observe life from two points of view, that of practicality and that of reality. Therefore as every man is looking out for himself, he sees some advantage in every man's ideas from the practical side, but on the side of reality he learns through the Intuition or through his own faculties what is the right course. Thus the spiritual person can always outwardly agree with another and see the truth from that person's point of view and at the same time try to reconcile it with the true view.

A spiritual person is not necessarily wise, but a wise person will be spiritual. Having all the knowledge of the world does not make one wise, for although the learned man knows facts, the knowing of facts alone does not give one the faculty of learning truth from those facts by reason. On the other hand, the Intuition enables one to synthesize truth from facts and also to perceive truth without facts.

How is this done? In the spiritual training one learns through head, heart and breath and has many

advantages over one who depends upon senses and logic. So the true spiritual person is intuitive. It is the growth of intuition and perception through the expansion of consciousness which makes the spiritual person wise. This is best done through self effacement in a higher ideal. This enables one to free himself from his own ideas which hamper his vision and when that is accomplished it is much easier to observe life in its trueness.

The Sufis have a system of training by which the spiritual person is instructed to rise above the limitations of life and above the distinctions and differences which divide men. This training frees one first from one's own limitations. A spiritual person may still have limitations. He does not know all but can often observe the right way to act by inner dependence and by observing the Will of God as revealed in his heart. The practice of meditation especially enables one to rise above his own weaknesses.

The end of this training is that one so depends upon the Voice of God in his heart that he listens to nothing else. He understands all, he sees all and he knows all. In that condition he does not necessarily speak his mind. He endeavors to agree with the views expressed whether they are true or false either from the human or the divine point of view. He agrees when it is possible and he disagrees either when the view expressed is immoral from the worldly or spiritual point of view or when agreement would do no good to the person stating an opinion. As a rule, it is not necessary to resort to this action for more can generally be done through agreement than through correction or rebuke. At the same time, sometimes correction or rebuke will do much good.

Therefore the wise man does not always express the truth, assuming that there is a particular something that can be called truth. If life were a fixed thing, this might be so, but life is mobile and there is always a practical side to it. The wise man seeing all aspects, tries to do that which will bring man nearer to God rather than to correct him on some point. Another may commit a fault or speak a partial untruth and the wise man may not contradict him and even be blamed for this. But the wise man is not necessarily the school-master or morality for the world. He is the gate to Allah and his actions are to bring others nearer to Allah, to bestow wisdom upon them.

So when one enters upon the spiritual path and obeys the spiritual law blame may be upon his shoulders. His standards may not be other men's standards although his acts may be no different. He may not consider it his place to correct others. After a while he will see God's point of view behind the collective view of all humanity, even though it be but slightly reflected in each one.

Spirituality is the beginning of attainment and wisdom is the end of attainment. Spirituality endeavors to embrace all. Wisdom actually embraces all. A spiritual person is striving to become perfect, a wise person is not necessarily perfect—Allah alone is perfect—but the sage has reached that stage where others cannot understand him, although in the end it will be found that his teachings or his deeds were the best for the humanity of his time.

The spiritual person should be a lover of God. The wise man may never express love and yet he is inwardly a devotee. The sage may appear more sober than the devotee or the sage and the

devotee may be one person. The sage may never express outwardly what the devotee proclaims; he may cover his devotion with his prudence and sagacity while the devotee may cover his knowledge with his love and devotion. From the standpoint of man they are different and yet both hard to understand. From the standpoint of God, both are His servants.

It is possible for all mureeds to be spiritual by their devotion to the cause of God and His representatives upon earth. But while it is also possible for all to become wise, that becoming depends upon utter self-effacement and absolute surrender to God. Then He will speak through their hearts and through their minds and through their tongues, for it is God alone who represents wisdom, and the real wise man is the one who ever keeps silence that Allah may express through him. Amen.

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Githeka Series II: Number 5

[On Terms of Respect](#)

In using terms of respect, there are certain customs to how and among the most important are the actual terms used in Sufi parlance and also the terms used by our Holy Murshid. We may think it our duty to use certain terms of respect, but it is not necessarily so. If you examine the Scriptures closely, you will find that not once did Jesus declare he was Christ. He would reply; "Thou sayest" or he would refer to himself as "The Son of Man" or by some other term. But never once did he openly affirm he was the Anointed of God, or Christ or Messiah.

We read in the 16th Chapter of the Evangel of Matthew: When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, "Some say that thou art John, the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.

This passage has many lessons. The 13th verse may be more properly rendered from the Greek; "Whom do men say that the son of Man is? "Jesus was the most selfless of men. Had it not been so he could not have been the Messenger of God. We do not find him expressing himself in any passage except where the text has been mutilated. This is a great pity for it takes away from him

the splendid humanity, the perfection of humanity which he was.

At the same time he did confess to some that he was the Christ when they declared it so. But he did not say so in the affirmative, and did not openly avow it. He told Peter that the knowledge which Peter had, came from Heaven, that the proof of Jesus being the Christ was an inward matter, not an outer affair. It may even be held that until Christ had baptized Peter spiritually and annointed him spiritually, even to Peter he was not the Christ. Here the text calls him "Bar-Jona" which means son of the dove, or of the Holy Spirit, indicating he had passed through a higher-initiation.

Unfortunately we find during the course of history many have given to Jesus high titles, titles which he never used for himself. The result is that the titles have clouded and shrouded his mission.

Respect has become largely a matter of calling him by some mighty title, sometimes even by some rather bombastic phrase, instead of emulating his personality and life. But we have his words, that not they who called him Master would reap spiritual reward, but rather those Who did the Will of His Father in Heaven; these were the righteous ones, the chosen ones. (Matt.VII, 21; Luke VI, 46)

The history of Christ and Christianity has a great lesson for us, for there is the danger that there may arise on earth two types of disciples of Holy Murshid; one type will give him marvelous titles and say many beautiful or fanciful things about him, but have little or no inner realization, never really knowing what his nature is or was, never understanding the God-Principle; then others may speak seldom about him, but feel him and be united to him in spirit, and as Christ has taught: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (John XIV,12)

Holy Murshid has laid down the rule as to how he should be named. He called his own Murshid "Holy Murshid, or "Blessed Murshid." That was his method of paying respect. If we wish to live after his manner, we will adopt the same terms. It may be objected that his Murshid, Syed Muhammad Moudani, was not a Pir-o-Murshid and that therefore there should be a term of distinction. This is false for two reasons. It is a contradiction of the Invocation, whereby one prays to become united with all the illuminated souls; and it is also true that Syed Moudani (on whom be peace) was a Pir-o-Murshid in the Chisti Order, one of exceedingly high attainment.

Besides that, it is not generally the custom of the Sufis to call the Pir-o-Murshid by that name. The one on earth who occupies the post is so alluded to, but the one who has withdrawn, he is no longer serving as Pir. He may be doing a very great service in the cause of God, but that is not something for man to decide. For whom among the mureeds, even of the highest rank, really know what it is to be a Murshid? On what is such knowledge based? There is no such knowledge, there is faith, even living faith, even spiritual faith, there may be intuition and inspiration, but until there is the realization, it is not knowledge.

Even merging (fana) completely or partially, in spirit with a teacher does not prove to one that the other is a Murshid. There are many grades of fana, beginning with fana-fi-Sheikh. Besides, the

experience is one thing, the interpretation something else. Effacement may be based upon the rank of another or it may be based upon one's own exalted condition, and it is wrong to qualify it or name it.

If it is so difficult to determine what is Murshid, who can say what are the spiritual qualifications of the Pir-o-Murshid? And when it comes to Nabi and Rassoul it is still more a delicate matter. For there may be among the mureeds one or many who serve God as Nabi. Yet if one were to apply this title to them, others would be shocked and think it a great sacrilege. They would say that such a one, albeit he bears messages from Allah every moment, could not be Nabi.

Yet they are wrong; at the minute one bears a message from God, at that instant he is Nabi. None have the right to call him Nabi because Nabi is not a title of respect, neither is it a title of attainment. Nabi is a title of duty accomplished, and the minute one is not performing such a duty, at that moment one is not Nabi. Nabi-hood comes through the realization of devotion, not through the judgment of others, or of all other people in the world. So how is one to distinguish who is Nabi and who not Nabi? How does one know whether a word comes from Allah or not from Allah? It is as Jesus Christ said: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which art in Heaven."

It is even more delicate in the use of the terms Avatar and Rassoul. While Avatar is not a Sufi term, it may be applied to those Messengers of God of the past who have been known as Avatars. It may even be applied to some whom you do not believe or accept personally as Avatar, and who may not have been Avatars, but who are called so by large numbers of people. If such a person, historical or not, brings solace to many and leads them toward a spiritual ideal, the term may be applied, even to benefit.

The term Rassoul is the most difficult to explain because actually there is no Rassoul and yet it is also true that there is Rassoul. Rassoul is the cream of humanity. It is the spiritual essence of an age which appears in human form. It is not one personality who makes the Rassoul and yet the Rassoul appears in one spiritual person. He is the embodiment of all the spiritual teachers for centuries, but he is only Rassoul in conjunction with them; apart from them he may be a Murshid, or he may come and have few disciples. The Rassoul is united with all the Illuminated Souls who together form the Embodiment of the Master, not a separate, disjunct personality.

Consider the words of Invocation. It is all the Illuminated Souls, Who together form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. Therefore Inayat Khan was not Rassoul, most decidedly not, and to call him such is a terrific mistake which might cause again on earth all the bloodshed caused by those who argued and fought over the natures of Christ and Mohammed, which they truly did not comprehend.

At the same time, Inayat Khan, as the disciple and successor of Syed Moudani and Moin-ed-din Chisti and Mohammed and Christ (on all of whom be peace) by uniting their missions in himself, and by also uniting the missions of all the other Holy Messengers of God, performed the service of

Messenger of God. Therefore he referred to himself **impersonally** as Messenger, just as he referred to his own Murshid **personally** as Holy Murshid.

This gives us the example on the use of titles of respect. To call such a one “The Nabi” or “The Rassoul” is to separate. Besides, upon what is such a conclusion based? To base it upon judgment or belief is not enough. It must come from realization, and in realization not only is the Ideal Rassoul, but **you also are Rassoul**, you also form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance, at that instant, in that holy state (hal).

It is not that any expression is wrong, that any belief is wrong. The humblest title in absolute **sincerity and knowledge** is better than any term with all sincerity but not all knowledge, or with great knowledge or even all knowledge (were this possible) but not all sincerity. Therefore what the Sufi does not **know** he does not teach. If he preaches what he believes, he is as all believers, but if he speaks what he knows, he belongs to the company of the Holy Ones on Mount Arif, the true spiritual Gnostics who alone have the right to be called Sufis.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Githeka Series II: Number 6

[Can the Heart Ask Questions?](#)

It has been asked, “Can the heart ask questions?” This question shows how difficult it is to understand the heart. For neither is the heart the piece of flesh nor everything that has been called feeling, nor is the consciousness in the heart because we have a certain attitude in life.

There are three conditions of consciousness which may be called Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. In the first, the consciousness is in the heart; in the second condition it is in the head with the nufs but not necessarily always bad, partaking both of good and evil; but in the third condition one must give some examples to make it clear for it negates mind but does not posit heart.

For instance, there is the idiot. He does not ask questions, he does not know enough to ask questions. He is like a soul not fully incarnated. He may even be like an angel, who is all heart and no head and never asks questions, but the purpose of evolution was not to create the angel. For the angel knows no questions and is above all answers, yet does not realize heart. The angel lives inside the heart, but does not truly know heart, for to distinguish one must know what something is and also what it is not.

It was Adam to whom Allah gave power to name things and this power of naming gave all power. Therefore mastery of mind is necessary to mastery over body. A person may be simple, but simplicity is not necessarily the sign of Wisdom. The illuminated heart will also have an illuminated mind, and perhaps an illuminated body, but the illuminated one will know the right course of action; the illuminated one is not free from mistakes but is free from doubts. The illuminated one lives by faith and trust and may mistake by over-trusting but never by over-doubting or mistrusting.

There are two escapes from pain: by rising above it and by falling beneath it. One takes dope and escapes pain; he has fallen below pain, he is in a tamasic condition and must rise from that condition through the Rajasic condition wherein he will again feel pain, in order to achieve mastery. He will feel pain more than another when he tries to accustom himself to it, for in his endeavor to escape pain, he lowers the threshold of consciousness so all sensations become pains to him. But to the Sattvic man the opposite is true; instead of all sensation becoming pain, all pain merely becomes sensation, and in striving to escape from sensation he automatically escapes from pain. This was the condition of Rabia, the great Sufi mystic.

Many people are so desirous of escaping from the head; they think that mind being the abode of the nufs, by destroying the home they destroy the nufs. So they may never ask questions. Yet they will find some people who are most ignorant and most conceited, who never ask questions and never do anything right. Does this make them live in the heart? No, they have gone even further from the heart plane, they have gotten below the mental sphere and are further away than ever from the heart sphere. And not only may the nufs abide in the mind, but it always abides in the lower spheres; without nufs there are no lower spheres, yet mind can both be slave to nufs and free from nufs.

No doubt too such is made of mind, but the difficulty is not in magnifying the mind but in failing to magnify God. If you magnify God, He may magnify your mind; and if you magnify your mind and give credit to God, He will inspire you. But if you do not magnify your mind, if you doubt your mind and do not praise God, you not only lack wisdom, you lack judgment also and your life will prove it and you will have endless trouble.

But the condition of heart is described in *Nirtan* and if you have not this condition, you have not heart. No matter what you claim, you have not heart; this is the condition of heart:

Heart

The heart hath its head in its own palm,

The face of the heart is veiled;

The heart's hands are bound with iron chains,

The feet of the heart are nailed.

The eyes of the heart are never dry,
The heart speaks only through tears.
The ears of the heart are so keen
That the voice from a distance it hears.
The voice of the heart is silent,
Yet far-reaching is heart's cry.
The heart hath no question and answer,
The heart is expressed in a sigh.
The ways of the heart are mysterious,
The heart hath the mind of a child.
The heart's breath is full of tenderness,
The heart's expression is mild.
The Ideal alone is heart's deity,
A constant yearning its life.
The heart's not concerned with life or death,
The heart stands firm through all strife.
Beauty is heart's only object,
Its inspirer, its all.
The heart is all power that there is,
The angels attend its call.
The heart is itself its own medicine,
The heart all its own wounds heals.

And none can ever imagine
What pain of love the heart feels.
The path of the heart is thorny,
But leads in the end to bliss.
Hope is the staff the heart holds in hand,
And the Goal heart shall not miss.

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Githeka Series II: Number 7

[Our Attitude Toward Other Spiritual Schools](#)

When a person applies for membership in the Sufi Order, he is generally required to read the Candidate's Gathekas, although sometimes one may receive the spiritual initiation first. In both cases it is made clear that by taking Bayat one trusts his spiritual teacher in spiritual matters. One is not required in the Sufi Order to go to the spiritual teacher for advice on all matters, on matters not spiritual, on business affairs, managing a home, the types of pleasures to be taken—in all these matters the greatest freedom is permitted. At the same time, if one desires to consult the Murshid on such matters, advice may also be given on them.

The Sufi Movement may or may not be considered as superior to other mystical schools. Differences are not emphasized and God-realization or the attainment of Nirvana, the blotting out of selfhood is all important. The question may then arise as to what Message has Sufism different from other schools, and this may be answered in part that the Message does not belong to Sufism, the Message is of God, "the Word is God;" yet the Sufi Order has preserved the Divine Knowledge in a certain manner and the purpose of the Sufi Movement has been expressed in its objects:

1. "To realize and spread the knowledge of unity ..."

Many schools teach or advocate the principle of Unity and may have some knowledge of Unity, but the complete Unity can only be obtained through inner awakening and is the possession of mystics.

In all spiritual paths one comes sooner or later to this point. Exotericists often spread the knowledge of Unity without having realized it and some mystical schools have preserved the realization of Unity but do not try to spread the knowledge. The Sufi Movement endeavors to do both.

“... the religion of love and wisdom, so that the bias of faiths and beliefs may of itself fall away ...”

It is very difficult to say that any one religion is the religion of love and wisdom. The greatest difference, perhaps, between Sufism and the other spiritual traditions is that they have been more or less associated with some particular religion and do not always notice that some other religion may also preserve the Arcane knowledge. Truth is the monopoly of no one. This is also taught by others, but they do not always greet the followers of another method of spiritual enfoldment as brothers, while the Sufis greet their Vedantist brothers and Jewish brothers and Christian brothers as brothers. This is no theory, this is an important fact in history and perceived by many travelers and students.

So Sufism perhaps is the only philosophy which has independently and freely tried to rise above all differences in actuality. The reader of the Bible may continue to be a reader of the Bible and the lover of the Qur'an a lover of the Qur'an, and one who does not desire Scriptures is not required to study Scriptures. The God-Ideal alone is stressed and other ideals are used only so far as they help toward the God-Ideal.

“... the human heart may overflow with love, and all hatred caused by distinction and differences may be rooted out.”

Bhaktis also teach the way of love. There is nothing wrong in it, only one may not be limited to the name and form of Krishna in this love realization. If one loves Christ, Mohammed, Moses, any great soul, or if one loves as did Majnoun, he may come to this realization of the love of God. Therefore in Sufism love itself is emphasized perhaps more than what may be called Bhakti, pure devotion, which could be associated with any personality. With the Sufis love is a means to unity and being is a means to love. In Sufism there is not only Bhakti but there is Jnana and other Yogi systems as well as non-Yogi systems of spiritual liberation all brought together which no other school or system does.

2. “To discover the light and power latent in man, the secret of all religion, the power of mysticism, and the essence of philosophy ...”

This is not the monopoly of Sufism either, because in every religion there has been a mystical school, a group of disciples who endeavored to preserve the spiritual teachers of the Founder. Only in many cases the traditions have not all been preserved, secrets have been lost or the mystics persecuted by the generality.

The Sufis have for centuries not only preserved mysticism but given to the world many great philosophers. The difference between the Sufi philosophers and the great mystical philosophers of other schools is that the Sufi philosophers not only reached the learned but also the generality, and have been studied and revered not only by Sufis and men of Islam but by people of all religions, so that the teachings of Avicenna and Al Ghazzali spread far and wide even in an age of darkness and were studied in Europe as well as in Asia and Africa. More recently the same has been done in regard to the Sufi poets, so that much Sufi philosophy has been expounded by non-Sufis.

“... without interfering with customs or belief.”

In this perhaps, is the greatest difference between Sufism and other methods of training. Such customs as living alone or in a cell or in a house or being married or not married or having children or no children—none of these things affect the Sufic training and Sufism does not require nor prohibit any of them. In some esoteric schools one is not permitted to marry for a certain period and in others one cannot receive the highest teachings if married and in others after the highest teachings have been received one who has been unmarried must remain in that state. In the Sufic training the ideal is God and one does not have to make any change in life unless it interferes with that ideal.

Of course Sufis often do not marry or may marry late in life, but the same is true generally that students who go to the university do not often marry as early as those who go to work and do not have to spend time studying. Their life permits them to marry earlier than the student, whether of worldly culture or spiritual culture, but in principle there is no difference.

Sufism does not make any suggestions as to manner of living. Of course in the spiritual life one will often see the advantage of changing the manner of living, but there are no fixed rules and you never find the Sufi Murshids telling mureeds to give up this life or assume that kind of life, without some deep reason behind it. Spiritual liberty brings you more liberty in other directions. The Sufi Message was one of Spiritual Liberty and has not come to make the life dry.

God made man and woman, male and female. From the spiritual point of view there is no more advantage in aborting sex than in destroying the food channels or other channels in the body. Control that leads to mastery is one thing, but abortion is something else. The man who cuts off both arms cannot go to war and may never kill another with weapons, but he can preserve a poisonous tongue and thoughts of hatred. Therefore Christ taught that real lust was in the eyes perhaps more than in the vitals. (Matt. V, 28)

3. “To help to bring the world’s two opposite poles, East and West, close together by the interchange of thoughts and ideas.”

Here Sufism has first place, for while other spiritual teachings come out of the East they do not ask for interchange. They want you to take something from them. In the same way Western culture has endeavored to reach the East but does not wish to compromise or to accept suggestions or to

permit interchange. In this respect the world is behind where it was many centuries ago when philosophers of all religions exchanged ideas. On the other hand, today there is more tolerance and it is a pity that some of the mystical schools have not seen that even the laity have become broader than they in seeing the good on all sides and this has been one of the greatest weaknesses not only of religious sects but even of some mystical schools—they would not recognize the worth of others. They might talk about it but in reality it often did not pass the stage of speech.

Sufism has always endeavored to bring East and West together. This is history and you will find it so everywhere from Spain to India and from Albania to Java and from Turkestan to central Africa and now in the West. Much of the culture from the East to the West and from the West to the East came through Sufism.

Therefore Sufism has no time and no need to attack customs or beliefs. It begins with each person where he is and builds up on the groundwork of his past and his own accomplishments to perfect them. Very often people in the East are attracted by some one from the West and people in the West by some one from the East that they will get some special knowledge from such a one, so you see people going to various teachers and sometimes accept a certain amount of teaching. But there is no teaching in any of the schools which is not also taught by the Sufism, and those who are very anxious for some special kinds of instruction can get it from the Sufi Murshids. It is not necessary to go further.

When you see mureeds going to some other teacher with the idea of supplementing the instructions of Holy Murshid, pray to God for pardon and ask forgiveness for Holy Murshid and for yourself, for the Sufi Message in the western world has then failed to carry out the traditions of the past and to present all the beauties of the Divine Philosophy.

Darood is taught to mureeds who are instructed to repeat “Toward the One” mentally and there are other practices day and night. Those who think there may be some advantage in going to another school for more light fail to recognize that everything is in the Sufi Invocation and in constant reflection on God. So when a teacher of some other school tries to influence you to take a particular practice, be assured that that practice is in the Sufi instructions and if your spiritual teacher thought it good for you, you would have already had that instruction.

3. “That the universal brotherhood may form of itself, and man may meet with man beyond the narrow national and racial boundaries.”

The Sufi Movement is not the only one to give this teaching, but the Sufi Movement does not teach that brotherhood will come through all joining the Sufi Movement, or even that it will come through organization or a universal religion or a universal empire. Sufism teaches that everything should be done so that the Universal Brotherhood may form of itself, or as Allah wills.

Many come and ask you to rise above name and form, above sect and creed, and in the end they

want you to adopt a name and form, a sect and creed which is more orthodox in some respects, perhaps, than all the sects and creeds of the world. So while you become free from the past, you become so free from it that it is like the past has never existed and you cannot learn any lessons from it, and having no insight into the future, you are worse off than ever. You are as a person who has left an old continent to seek liberty on a new one and are stranded on a desert island and there is little hope for you.

Sufism recognizes the good in all, not in word alone but in actual mental and spiritual recognition. This is its advantage above all schools, mystical or occult or exoteric. So when you join the Sufi Order, you join all order, you enter the path of all the Illuminated Souls. If some come along with particular teachings, praise God, be friendly as possible, and continue your path in spiritual rejoicing.

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Githeka Series II: Number 8

[Meditation and Sadhana](#)

There are two kinds of phenomena connected with communication between one on earth and one in Malakut or even in Djabrut: one is the phenomenon of the appearance in some form to earth beings of an inhabitant of the other worlds. This form has been most enticing, most beguiling, and also sometimes most valueless. For what is the use of seeing Christ or Mohammed or Buddha by clairvoyance if it does not make you a better person, if it does not draw you closer to God? And what is the use of enjoying the spectacle of a prophesy which might come true, if you are beset with your own problems? Therefore mystics strive rather to rise to the plane of other beings and to be receptive to God, which often makes it possible for them to receive through telepathy or intuition.

There is another sort of phenomena, and if you study it closely you will know how to attract what you need out of the universe. The ancient Brahmans used to meditate instead of work for their goods, and even today Sadhana is sometimes practiced for selfish ends. In those times it brought the decay of Dharma which one followed by the appearance of Gautama Buddha. But the people in the western world do not know much about attracting by concentration or meditation or magic. Some hear about it and some of them marvel over it, they think it most wonderful; others scoff and do not believe. Neither of these is necessarily the right point of view.

Sufis always begin prayers with an Invocation. Most invocations are valuable regardless of their theology, or meaning, as they work toward effacement of the personality. An Invocation of selflessness brings the true attraction, is the real Sadhana, wherein by drawing closer to Allah brings release from all problems and helps one to attain all desires which are in harmony with the will of God.

For instance there has been the need of certain musical knowledge, how to find certain notes from within and how to connect music with astrology. After meditating on this subject, a method has been discovered how to produce the inner sounds as they are produced in India and this has been accomplished without having to go to India. Likewise we have received material on the relationship of music to astrology. So through Sadhana it has been possible to attract and receive what was needed to fulfill a spiritual desire.

Then it was found necessary to study the teachings labeled "Sufi Literature," and by meditating on it a way was discovered whereby all of Omar Khayyum's works might be carefully studied and interpreted from the Sufi point of view by using the keys left by Holy Murshid. Besides, while meditating on it, a most important book was received which, with God's helps will assist us greatly in our endeavors.

Now the question arises, how to attract what is needed for the cause of God. The answer is to follow the directions given in the Gathas on Morals, Metaphysics and Breath, to keep in harmony with one's own being, to control the ego, to rely with faith and trust in the heart qualities, to keep in spiritual attunement; do not worry, do not grieve, do not fret.

Sometimes something is being attracted and a worry or fret or remark will drive away the very thing that one has been attracting and is needed. Perhaps Allah was going to give it to you, but an obstacle was put in the way; this is a most subtle law for the slight interference of the nufs can throw out of your course the greatest blessings.

The time will come when it will be possible to attract things, even without studying Sadhana. Then one's shortcomings can be turned into victories by self-examination, wants can become blessings through self-examination, personal defects the source of great powers and faculties through self-examination. For it is the ego alone which prevents Allah from manifesting, who brings us every blessing and joy.

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Githeka Series II: Number 9

[Aspects of Poverty](#)

In answer to the question, "Did the mystics, saints and pious people of old limit their expression in the next plane by living in the extreme of poverty in this world, it may be said that there are three types of poverty: poverty of body, poverty of mind and poverty of heart, and they are not so dependent upon each other.

There are two purposes for which the life of **Fakir** can be adopted: seeking for self and seeking for Allah. Besides these there is natural poverty which may be due to conditions of life. But every form of poverty is a condition of unbalance and while poverty of body may not bring poverty of mind and either or both may not bring poverty of heart, voluntary poverty except for the sake of Allah does not help in the spiritual evolution.

We find three types of poverty in this world: people who are poor because of indolence or economic conditions who are living in involuntary poverty, people who are living in poverty because they think that is the means to salvation, and the true fakirs, they who are detached. Now involuntary poverty is neither a hindrance nor harm to salvation except insofar as it may not prepare one for prosperity and when wealth comes to such people it may make them worse instead of better. But when wealth comes to the detached, the wise, they will know how to appropriate it and so their poverty has been an education.

Some people are poor because they think much poverty means spiritual richness. They have gone astray and it is against this type of poverty that Buddha and the Sufis especially preached. For upon what does the wealth of the next world depend? It depends upon richness of mind. Is richness of mind gained by eating or not eating? By wearing fine clothes or going in rags? Or by living moderately in food and clothing and culture and shelter?

By none of them. For the one who loves poverty for the sake of spiritual wealth will not gain spiritual wealth because his mind and heart are not better; the one who seeks riches and does not observe the Will of Allah, he will be very poor in the spiritual world; and the one who stays in the middle, he may become just as attached to the middle condition, saying the middle condition is best and perhaps it is because he fears poverty and cannot attain wealth and so he praise the middle condition as best and makes the means the end.

All these roads are the ways of separation. But there are further roads of separation. Wealth in the next world depends upon wealth of mind which can be gained here and now, and poverty in the next world can come from lack of wealth of mind here. The really poor people in the next world are those who are psychics here, who detach their psychic faculty and do not cultivate mind. When they are freed from the psychic vehicle they are as naked in heaven and their condition is shameful in the extreme. People who are not psychics here will seldom be very poor in heaven even if they happen to be idiots or imbeciles in this world, for these last are as children in heaven and become

educated to mental wealth.

There is wealth of heart and this depends neither upon physical wealth nor upon mental wealth. Nor can you obtain wealth of heart by remaining poor. The beggars are not always the kind-hearted. Neither are the moderate in worldly means the richest in heaven nor the richest in the world of the heart necessarily. They can be so callous and callousness in either the physical world or mental world means extreme poverty in Djabrut.

There is, however, another view, that one who longs only for God is detached and does not try to accumulate for himself. If he has not many possessions, he remains contented. The seeker of God does not try to accumulate wealth neither in this world, nor in the next world by the accumulation of knowledge, nor even in Djabrut through the cultivation of sympathy. What he strives for is to observe and express the Will of Allah on all planes.

The difference between heart and soul can be seen in the two qualities, sympathy and consideration. Sympathy is the joining of two who are not one, because of some particular circumstances, but Consideration is action or attitude or feeling or thought based on Wisdom. Therefore the Sufi is taught **consideration** rather than kindness in the world of the heart; **toleration** in the mind rather than being unbiased or leaning toward indecision, or getting into an unsettled condition called fair-mindedness, which means the tendency to avoid conclusions or to compromise even principles; **equanimity** in all conditions of life.

The Sufi's one object in life is to observe the pleasure of Allah. This is his wealth, its absence poverty on all planes, and nothing else matters to him.

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Githeka Series II: Number 10

[The Story of Phaeton](#)

In his excellent work *The Horse in Magic and Myth*, Mr. Oldfield Howey writes, pp. 120-121:

"The story of Phaethon is so well known, I hesitate to insert it; but as the account of the Sun's horses would be incomplete without it, I will briefly recount it. Helios, the Sun, having sworn to his son Phaethon, upon the Stygian lake, an oath which none of the gods dare violate, that he would grant him any boon he wished, Phaethon said his desire was to drive his father's chariot and

horses for one day. Helios begged him not to persist in his idea, for no mortal was capable of managing these fiery steeds, and he would inevitably perish in the attempt.

“In vain to move his son the father aim’d;

He, with ambition’s hotter fire inflamed,

His sire’s irrevocable promise claimed.”

“The father, greatly grieving, was forced to comply with his son’s rash wish. He carefully instructed him how to guide the horses and especially advised him to observe the middle path. Phaethon was frantic with joy as, climbing into the chariot; he took up the reins and began to drive. But the steeds, recognising a strange hand, and finding quickly that Phaethon was no match for them, ran away, and set both heaven and earth ablaze. Jupiter, horrified at the havoc, to, put an end to the conflagration, struck Phaethon out of the chariot with a thunderbolt, and cast him into the river Padus (Po).”

The Greek name Helios appears as Surya in Sanskrit, Sol in Latin, Shams in Aramaic and Shemesh (i.e. Samson) in Hebrew. It signifies the true light or being personified either as the sun in the heavens or the Spirit of Guidance in man. Phaethon, the bright, the shiny, the phenomenal, is the son of Helios. As Fabre d’Olivet explains, the word “son” signifies originally an emanation, a derivative.

Helios, the sun, having sworn to his son Phaethon, upon the Stygian lake, an oath which none of the gods dare violate, that he would grant him any boon he wished.

Mankind has been created with the faculty of Will, in which he differs from animals. He has liberty of choice, and as God has so created him, no power or force in the Universe can deprive him of this faculty; but once he chooses his course, he must accept the result. The Stygian lake is that shadow world through which the soul passes on its way to incarnation, during which time it reflects and meditates and gathers its desires which become material forces in this world.

His desire was to drive his father’s chariot and horses for one day.

The nufs constantly seeks to control the vehicles of the soul. Body, breath and mind together have been called the chariot of the soul, and to them we can add heart. Perhaps this was the symbolism of the animals which appear in the Bible connected with the sacred chariot (Merkabah) which is mentioned in the books of Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation: Bull, the physical body or body of clay, of earth; Eagle, the breath body; Man, manas, the mind; Leo, the Lion, the heart. The chariot also appears in the sacred books of the Hindus with the same meaning, and Buddha, the Compassionate, has been called the Lion of the Sakyas.

The word “day” in ancient language meant a cycle, and not necessarily a fixed period of time. It

has much the same meaning in Arabic even now. Here it signifies the period of incarnation during which time the nufs obscures the light of the soul, and this is the cause of all disharmony and consequently of all pain and destruction.

Helios begged him not to persist in his idea, for no mortal was capable of managing these fiery steeds; and he would inevitably perish in the attempt.

Phaethon is described as mortal and yet the son of an immortal. This proves the story is a symbolical allegory or myth, not a legend. Only the Spirit of Guidance is able to control the breath and mind. Fire takes two directions: centripetal and centrifugal. The Sufis call the two aspects of Divine Light Urouj and Nasoul and they are very carefully studied by mystics. As the nufs is constantly drawing unto itself, that centripetal force takes on the form of a coiled serpent, called in Hebrew **Nachash**, the fiery serpent or dragon on the threshold, the result of the breath of our selfish desires.

In the opposite condition, the breath is controlled by the Spirit of Guidance. Then it becomes a winged steed, the Pegasus of the Greeks and Burrak of Qur'an. The steed is often pictured in battle with the dragon. In the story of Siegfried, after he kills the dragon he rides a winged steed. Playing with the breath always causes disaster, but any irregularity in life, physical, mental or moral, is reflected in bad condition of breath. Sufis practice Darood and Fikr to enable the Spirit of Guidance, or Helios, to control the steeds.

The father, greatly grieving, was forced to comply with his son's rash wish.

Because man has been given the power of Will. At the same time God Himself suffers in the sadness of separation and undoing.

He carefully instructed him how to guide the horses and especially advised him to observe the middle path.

Man is given instruction how to control the breath. Especially in the practice of Kasab the initiate learns to balance the different forces and movements. This is the practice of the middle path taught in all esoteric schools.

Phaethon was frantic with joy, as climbing into the chariot; he took up the reins and began to drive.

The soul, coming on earth, is intoxicated by the world because of the veil of the nufs, and this intoxication affects the whole character and life.

But the steeds, recognising a strange hand, and finding quickly that Phaethon was no match for them, ran away.

Unless man has control over breath he is subject to all vicissitudes of the emotions. The emotions rise from the uncontrolled breath and cause the breath to lose rhythm. Man is also then subject to the elements which predominate in the breath and instead of his controlling them, they control him. Thus the horses run away.

And set both heaven and earth ablaze.

As the result of this, the soul does not direct and control the mind. The breath which is the connecting link between the world without and the world within is not mastered and so both mind and body suffer, not only in the case of insane people, but to a certain extent in all cases. Were the mind, breath and physical body all attuned and controlled, there could be no disease and no pain.

Jupiter, horrified at the havoc, to put an end to the conflagration, struck Phaethon out of the chariot with a thunderbolt, and cast him into the river Padus.

God made all vehicles so He could realize the world in which they manifested. The nufs acts as a spirit of separation and holds the life in the stream of Samsara. This comes not only from individual but from collective wrong-doing.

To free the soul from control or rather shadowing by the nufs, the Spirit of Guidance makes itself known either within man through a spiritual awakening, as in the case of Paul, or by the appearance on earth of a perfected human. Thus in the Bhagavad Gita Krishna appears as the charioteer, and the Spirit of Guidance controlling the forces, Arjuna becomes illumined. Likewise, Siegfried, after killing the dragon, rescues the Valkyr, Brunnhilde. The Valkyries are the Divine intuitions which come with every breath. These become man's possession through the conquest of the lower nature and through listening to the Voice within.