

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

Gatha with Commentary

Series II: Number 8

The Activity of the Mind

GATHA: The activity of mind can be recognized in three different aspects, mobile, rhythmic and chaotic. And the activity of mind can be seen by the speech and action of a person.

TASAWWUF: One reads much about the gunas, and one will memorize these gunas and their characteristics. But it is not so easy to pursue this knowledge into the daily life, to observe all and determine wherein the sattvic actually dominates; wherein the rajasic is foremost; and also what is tamasic or chaotic. Many people having a surface verbal or mental knowledge easily fall into tamas. The tamas person is full of suggestions—for others; he does not take himself seriously and it is a tragedy when others do that.

GATHA: If, in speech and action a person shows a friendly attitude, love and kindness, the activity is mobile, and every impulse prompted by this activity will manifest in the form of gentleness, generosity, gratitude and good will.

TASAWWUF: This is the sattvic outlook. No doubt the *Bhagavad Gita* has given us some splendid philosophy along with much else of wisdom. But this alone is not the Krishna-consciousness, and one can repeat mantrams all day long without having more than a tinge of the Krishna consciousness. For people also have repeated the names of Christ and Buddha and this has not produced any internal transformation. Indeed such methods are often contrary to the actual teachings. The substitution of personality for friendliness, love, and kindness toward others is a delusion, one much admired but bearing no fruit.

While Sufism is based on a different approach, nevertheless Sufism uses humanity more than any other teaching, and it is not in formulae or token mantrams, but in the actual application to life that spirituality and growth are manifest. As Sohrawardi, one of the great Sufis, has said, "Consideration consists of extending consideration to others and never seeking consideration for oneself."

GATHA: If the activity is rhythmic it will make a person more reasoning. He will be exacting, weighing, measuring, loving and hating; liking and dislike will be balanced. This is not an easygoing person; this person will be more businesslike. All that manifests from him in speech or action will be more substantial, reasonable, also progressive in a worldly sense.

TASAWWUF: The rajasic people are the ones who accomplish the worldly things. Among the nations perhaps the United States is the most rajasic. It best fulfills the principles connected with rajas. There is also change going on, and much satisfaction but not necessarily increase of happiness and if bliss is rising it is due to other factors, especially an innate awareness of the superiority of sattva. And when sattva and rajas are skillfully blended we may find the wisest courses of life manifesting.

It is rajas that has given birth to civilizations, to technologies, to inventions, and also to the fulfillment of ambitions. But it is rajas also that has brought about wars and struggles and rivalries. Still, action is needed in the world, and with all faults, this is far superior to torpor.

GATHA: But the person whose activity of mind is chaotic will be agitated, confused, suspicious, horrified, and all that will manifest in his speech and action will be anger, passion, intolerance, imprudence, and will be difficult for himself and for others.

TASAWWUF: The tamasic attitude is verbally decried and perhaps most of all by the tamasic people themselves. The splendid example of Mahatma Gandhi did not prevent the useless killing of millions of persons. For there is something especially in the East which regard the rajasic guna as evil and every effort is made to avoid action under the supposition that useless action is an ill. Such persons do not see that useless inaction is still a greater evil.

We need not be surprised therefore, when those people who make the greatest claims to spirituality are found engaging in more mob actions, more mass emotions than others. They have no self-control. Instability is the order of the day. And it is worse when this manifests among the educated and cultured people. When they go wild they are worse than others. They are like the cats which are unusually calm when calm and unusually hostile when perturbed.

The inability to study and apply the gunas, especially by those who study Scriptures superficially, has become the cause of more internal wars, and some external wars. This will continue until people apply their teachings to themselves first and do not expect too much idealism from others.

GATHA: No soul is by nature fixed to any of these three aspects of activity; it is what he allows himself to be or what the condition of his life makes him be.

TASAWWUF: There is a similar teaching in the Bible, that Noah had three sons: Shem, Japheth and Ham. They correspond to the three gunas. But knowing this intellectually or symbolically is not of much help. It is valuable when one can control the qualities, when one has made himself the master. And when one has made himself master, he may control all affairs of life.

There is a little known work, *Hebrew Language Restored*, by the Frenchman, Fabre D'Olivet, wherein he explains the meaning of the words and the functions attached thereto. These become valuable when first internalized and then put into practice. When Noah cursed Canaan he was condemning the human ego. The ego is greatest when the tamasic guna (i.e. Ham) is dominant in human nature.

Noah stands for universal repose and is found in the teachings concerning "Silent Life" which is beyond and yet within every aspect of life. In one sense Noah stands for the soul of man personalized. In another, for that Cosmic Peace from which all come and to which all return.

GATHA: Therefore the principle of Sufi teaching is to regulate the rhythm of man's mind. Then the Sufi becomes the master of the rhythm of his own mind, his mind becomes his instrument. He can play on it any music of any rhythm and nothing will affect it, for he is no longer in the hand of his mind; his mind is in his hand.

TASAWWUF: No doubt the first step is to appreciate this intellectually. But that is only an introduction. One has to learn, study, assimilate and digest; and to learn, study, assimilate and digest is not

a surface studying of these words and what they connote. There is such a thing as deep meditation which takes in each aspect of teaching until one identifies oneself with it consciously and also identifies the teaching with himself. The bare words are like clothing and the clothing can be changed, for one is not one's clothes.

To regulate rhythm one must first understand rhythm. We make use of music and dancing and breathing exercises for this purpose. Also in the practices of meditation and concentration it is most necessary to maintain rhythm in order to succeed. Thinking about it is no good and self-approval is a subtle obstacle. One must **become** the processes which one is considering.

To **say** that one can play with any music or any rhythm does not give one either the facility or faculty. For this most serious self-discipline is needed. When one goes to the opera one must either listen to the music and watch, or the whole purpose of one's attendance is lost. So it is with life and especially with the spiritual teachings. Therefore, the wise show the aspirants how to breathe properly, walk properly, sing properly, dance properly, and perform all services in life properly. By "properly" here is meant the skillful adjustment and adaptations of the blending of rajas and sattva.

There is a time when the descent of the Holy Spirit, so to speak, occurs. Then one's breath is refined; one senses and operates from a wider outlook; the heart is filled with living compassion, kindness and consideration. This makes it possible to lead others, to teach others, and to help others in the line of attunement which is most valuable and important for spiritual development.

When one cannot do this consciously, there is always recourse to silence, to silent meditation and to restraint of activity. For the cosmos is Living and the more one appreciates the Divine Presence the more this Divine Presence will operate through the personality.

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