

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 7

Every Mind Has Its Own Standard of Good and Bad

GATHA: Every mind has its particular standard of good and bad, and of right and wrong. This standard is made by what one has experienced through life, by what one has seen and heard; it also depends upon one's belief in a certain religion, one's birth in a certain nation and origin in a certain race.

TASAWWUF: By this we may consider there are no absolutes. Einstein first brought in a doctrine of relativity. It was applied to the phenomena of light, then to wave mechanics and all those subjects which belong to the science of Physics. Then he was working on a universal teaching of relativity until the time of his death.

Actually this was not new; it had been taught by certain schools of Buddhism for centuries. As the world becomes more enlightened intellectually, it may be recognized that there are no particularly superior races or cultures, but rise and fall, that everything with name and form is subject to karma, to birth, maturity and decay. But intellectually speaking the acceptance of such a view is not enough. One can pass examinations in the schools but that does not mean one accepts this teaching in real life.

Indeed this seeming acceptance as part of the education and part of the policies of the literati without any deep marks being made in the human heart has caused more confusion than the acceptance of differentiations as standards. There have been verbal declarations of universality. Actually the so-called pure sciences accept these universals, but most cultures, being based on individuality and thus egocentricity, have not, in practice, applied those principles which are verbally acclaimed. And this difference between theoretical philosophy and actual practice has, if anything, only increased the confusion in the world.

Thus it would seem that persons as persons and also as members of groups, have tended to judge, each from his own point of view and has neglected to apply this method to others, so that rising above the differences and distinctions which divide men has been a slow process. On the other hand, their very open recognition of this situation is, in turn, awakening man's eyes to his own injustices and this is a great step forward.

GATHA: But what can really be called good or bad, right or wrong, is what comforts the mind and what causes it discomfort. It is not true, although it appears so, that it is discomfort that causes wrong-doing. In reality it is wrong-doing that causes discomfort and it is right-doing that gives comfort. And for the very reason that a certain thing gives comfort it is right, and what causes discomfort is wrong.

TASAWWUF: It is for that reason that there have risen disputes over what are called "generation gaps" but really are misunderstandings between those who confuse comfort and joy and those who seek Joy as an aim in life, or as the very purpose of life itself. No doubt it has been the aim of mul-

titudes to seek comfort but the western world has proclaimed that the satisfaction of desires is the purpose of society if not the very purpose of life. And the soul of man, knowing this is untrue, that it, the soul, is not particularly moved by pleasure or pain has a spirit of adventure that cannot be stifled by outer comforts.

There are many legends in different parts of the world which illustrate this. Also the same is found in the symbols, both as such and as appear as themes in folk-lore and animal stories in many lands. These seem to have as a common aim, that there is a wisdom apart from human comfort and ego-satisfaction, and that the soul's Joy is in something else. And no amount of explaining this away has affected the soul of man.

According to the mystic it is egocentricity which produces the wrong-doing. Seeing life from a particular point of view without scope for the points of view of others makes one feel superior. When one feels this seeming superiority compassion disappears—not the word, the word "compassion" remains and can be falsely substituted for actual compassion.

GATHA: Very few in the world look at it in this way. If one who does good all his life is unhappy, I would rather he did not do good. His well-being is neither good for him nor for another.

TASAWWUF: There is self-satisfaction, that a person is satisfied with his one private life and tries to impose it on others. And there is another type of self-satisfaction that one is satisfied and does not impose his satisfaction on others and mostly it does not work. For everyone has his own evolution, his place in the cosmos and he is striving to work out his salvation from his particular place in the cosmic evolution.

No doubt there have been commandments, both positive and negative, which appear in different civilizations and they have been most valuable. Indeed there is some common ground among them. But the devotees have proclaimed their standards and are more apt to proclaim the verbal standard than to fulfill it with their own examples. Instead of being angry the mystic sees each situation of itself and sees in the whole manifestation the beloved ones of God. He therefore does not impose any standards excepting that when there are disciples he tries to provide standards for them but for them only.

There is another way of looking at things and this becomes normal when we realize that Joy is inherent in the human soul. It may well be as the Upanishads teach that one's spiritual evolution and capacity for Joy go together. They are not two, but one.

GATHA: The standard of right or wrong or good and bad, made rigidly on the action, is the artificial standard which seems outwardly a moral law, but causes degeneration in the end. The standard of action must be made natural, not artificial. The curse of the present day is the artificiality of life.

TASAWWUF: There is no doubt that this proved to be prophetic. The Moral Law of the Sufis with its proclamation of Reciprocity, Beneficence and Renunciation leaves room not only for each action and attitude but is in accord with Occult law. The difference between occult law and that of the generality is that there is no scope in it for personality and there appears to be laws or harmonies in the universe which operate regardless of persons involved, regardless even of circumstances and certainly regardless of mental attitudes.

Too many cultures, in particular religious cultures, assume a superiority of their own, often because they know the words of their culture or religion and do not know other Scriptures. It is assumed that one has a superior religion or culture and this tends one to disrespect the religion and cultures of others. And then the Occult law operates because it is based on universal standards. God cannot be limited to any time or place of person or standard or anything. And when the young recognize it, they revolt against the standards of their parents and forefathers. Then it is assumed they have no standards but really it is a seeking of the soul for something more than narrow limitations.

All the Messengers of God have proclaimed love and compassion and all say that any code must be interpreted in the light of love and compassion. But the priesthood of each has held on to the words and to the formula and rituals and built them up artificially. So the time comes when the nature in man and of man revolts against this artificiality and seeks something universal and in accord with the brotherhood of man.

GATHA: Man must be taught to consult his own spirit, and from his own feeling to find out and make distinction between right and wrong and good and bad.

TASAWWUF: While this the basic teaching of Kashf, it also permeates the prayers and moral teachings. There is light in man and part of the work of the Sufi Order is to unveil that light and let it shine out in everybody. And as the capacity for Light increases, and as the Light-functioning increases so also does the love and morality innate in everybody come to the surface and manifest.

GATHA: When this natural principle will be adopted by humanity the greater part of the world-misery will come to an end. This wrong and artificial standard is taught today to children at home and to young people at school. They begin to learn that it is wrong which they have heard others call wrong, that is right which they have read in a book that it is right; something is good because their parents have it is good, something is bad because their friends have told them so. An artificial standard made in this way buries the spirit, which alone has the right to discern between right and wrong, good and bad. On the day when people will arrive at the freedom of making their own standard by their own feelings, a better condition will come.

TASAWWUF: We see this is exactly what has occurred. The old standard was to praise a standard and even more to offer glorification to the person who gave the standard. The glorification was substituted for the following and fulfilling of standards and a pseudo-devotion was used instead of morality. Sooner or later the very laws of the universe caught up with this state of affairs.

Mohammed declared that every child was born a Muslim and that his parents took him away from it. But the parents brought a code, heterodox or orthodox and would not change the codes. The codes were handed down from generation to generation and natural morality was covered with artificiality and legality.

Jesus constantly taught that only little children were assured of the kingdom of heaven but constant repetition did not impress either his immediate followers or those of later generations. And there instead of a legal and moral code, theologies were substituted. They failed to satisfy the heart and soul and resulted in the appearance of many sects and cults. And this always leads to divisions and differences.

When Syed Moudani said to Inayat Khan, "By the power of thy music unite East and West," it indicated that there existed a universal harmony into which all souls could fit. At first as it was music that was given, the people heard it as art and sound, they did not recognize the depths behind it. Then the deep philosophy was given and those that studied and pursued the deep philosophy began to realize it was for all people, not some; that it was more than code or theology and that it established standards and norms into which all humankind could fit.

With the awakening of heart a new spirit began to manifest beyond the artificial standards which had persisted for centuries. The young began to see that these standards meeting each other, fomented misunderstandings and wars and they began to revolt against their inheritance of wars, miseries, and misunderstandings.

One thing is certain, that a group seated, in or out of meditation, seeking guidance that comes from within, sooner or later finds an internal and external harmony. As they recognize both the internal and external harmony, not only the music of the day changes but the standards and ideals change. It is all there within; it comes out when man becomes more conscious of it and applies it to everyday life.

GATHA: For those searching after truth, journeying through the spiritual path, this is the first thing to learn, to find out for themselves under all conditions in life what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, not from what they are taught or told, but from their own feeling, which can be perceived by a delicate sense of realizing through life what really gives comfort and what causes discomfort.

TASAWWUF: There are several ways in which this can be done but all are based on Kashf, Insight. We find this in the instincts and also in the reactions of the nervous system. The nervous system reacts to all the vicissitudes of life and creates the samskaras or impressions which remain as sore spots in the mind. Some clever person has even said, "God may forgive your sins but your nervous system will not." This is not true. When one is God-conscious, or even has a high development in Kashf, he is able to control and direct the nervous system.

We may consider instinct, impression and intuition, all different grades of the natural unfoldment of what is within. External study does not help much in the controlling of nerves. Meditation, by whatever system one applies does. All systems of meditation control the samskaras and what are called in the western world, "semantic reactions." This control may be conscious of itself or it may be developed. Whatever means are used are beneficial.

But there is also an internal science called "Gnosis" or **Irfan** by which one applies the very sound **Al-lah** as well as the thought and feelings to each situation and this leads to mastery.

GATHA: Life is not made to be good and unhappy, life is made to be happy and therefore one has to be good—no happiness is to be sacrificed to goodness, but that goodness must be considered the real goodness which in its result is happiness.

TASAWWUF: Here we come back to the basic Indian philosophy especially of Vedanta. The question may arise as to its attainment. The Indians declared it but they did not always experience it. The Sufis, perhaps with a more scientific spirit, felt it was for everybody and that it was even more important than the rules or customs proclaimed for its attainment.

Buddha revolted against traditional Hinduism because the rules and traditions did not make the people happy. He sought to give prescriptions for happiness and it is remarkable that these prescriptions still work. One might imagine there, that they would be applied. But here again custom and tradition have set in and codes of limitations placed around them. It is necessary to remove these artificial barriers that all mankind can attain and experience the happiness. And this is done when one also upholds the moral standards; dispensing with them often establishes temporary satisfaction but only temporarily so.

Goodness is not life and yet goodness is not apart from life. The full experience of life and happiness also brings the maximum of goodness.

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Series II: Number 9

Keeping the Mind in a Pure Condition

GATHA: All that exists lives on its own element, springs from its own element, and returns to its own element. So earth to earth, water to water, fire to fire, and air to air.

TASAWWUF: This is a teaching we find behind all the religions. Even Buddhism which in one place affirms anicca, that all forms are subject to incessant change, does not face whether or not these elements are real. It proclaims that all bodies return to their original elements.

In Zen Buddhism, there is a koan that all things return to the One, but to where does the one return. The answer is that the person asking such a question is assuming that there is a One and that it is real, but how can the One, the real **return**: the very thought or word “return” suggests naively that there is other than the One. So there is confusion.

Rumi is much more clear on this subject for he proclaims that these five elements are subject to the creator, the One.

The next enigma is that in such a statement it remains only a statement until one finds the realities behind it. How do we know it is true? How do we know it is merely a grammatical utterance without any life of substance behind it? This is part of esoteric development to find the realities in these elements and also the Reality behind these elements.

GATHA: Purification means to make a certain object itself; nothing added, nothing foreign attached to it which does not belong to it. These two rules make one understand the process by which the mind could be nourished and purified.

TASAWWUF: The first stage is studying the verbal cover of the Message. Then to meditate upon it. But beyond that there is the uncovering, the experience, the realization.

This process of Purification is taught in the early stages of discipleship but it must go on. For what is learned first is the mental picture and not the reality beyond the picture. The Lesser Mysteries were ceremonies wherein anybody could be shown a picture; the Greater Mysteries were concerned with transformations, wherein one actually experienced a rebirth, a becoming into what one had not been, but perhaps becoming what one really is.

In the studies and particularly on Mysticism one learns about the nature and behavior of the Elementals and also their purification.

GATHA: The mind is nourished by thoughts and impressions that are harmonious and productive of beauty and which result in satisfaction. For harmony is the nature of the soul, beauty is its source and goal, and by harmony and beauty the mind is nourished, as it is made of harmony and beauty.

TASAWWUF: In the Tamasic stage there is no thinking going on at all, and the mind becomes negatively blank. There is no life. In the Rajasic stage, there is always action going on, good and ill. There are the impressions, samskaras which produce everything good and bad and keep the mind active, even in turmoil. Both the Tamas and Rajas belong to Samskara.

In the Sattvic stage, although one does not necessarily rise above the samskaras, one works with the harmony and beauty. One way to do this is simply watching the breath. One can by Fikr and other means establish a “pure breath.” And anything that alters that pure breath is productive of more samskaras and produces dissonances. But by watching the breath one can determine whether a thought or mental process is in “tune with infinity.”

The disciples are often asked to repeat mentally or even verbally, “Toward the One, etc …” This establishes a foundation. This foundation leads to and maintains love and harmony and beauty. It is a process not a philosophy; it is a practice and experience, not a goal. It is one’s own reality.

There is also Mantra Yoga which performs what is done with Wazifas but also with chanting and melodies and this also helps to establish and retain harmony and beauty in the mind. And as the Names of God are repeated, this forms a ceiling of purification and perfection which is most important.

GATHA: And the same elements are needed to purify the mind of all undesirable thoughts and impressions, harmony as water and beauty as soap, purifying the mind of all things which are void of harmony and beauty.

TASAWWUF: The superficial processes merely present the words. It does not change anything. People read books, listen to lectures, even memorize and they do not change. You do not produce water by repeating the word “water” often and yet this has been true in all ages, that verbal repetitions have been substituted for acts of purification.

There is the extreme opposite that one takes the very essence of mind and stops all thinking. There is a pure Zen which permits this, even compels this which like the winding of the motor and then when the motor operates, it operates with efficacy. But there is also a false Zen which is the discarding of the motor and one becomes like an idiot, useless and without moral character.

The complete purification is also taught by Sufis but in a different way from the Zen Buddhists. The goals are the same but the processes different. What is important is the attainment of the goal, and thinking is not a process by which the mind can be purified, The mind cannot correct the mind by the mind, it must go deeper.

Harmony can be obtained by rhythm of breath and then refinement. The harmony is taught first, then the refinement. The refined breath comes from the etheric element and at the same time by refining the breath (Blessed are the poor in Spirit) the capacity for the akasha is increased. Whichever way one approaches it the goal and achievements are the same, or similar. And then Beauty comes also by the increase in the Jemalic capacity, by restraining Power, developing it but never using it.

GATHA: The first thing in purifying the mind is to be able to discern the foreign element there. As all that is foreign to the body does not agree with the body, making it ill, so all that is foreign to the mind disturbs the peace of the mind, and it is that which proves that it does not belong to the mind: ...

TASAWWUF: Safa, or purification may seem negative. We have to consider what is natural to the mind and what is foreign to the mind. What is natural to the mind exhilarates it; what is foreign debases and fatigues. The words "good" and "bad" are either relative or conceptual. For what some would call "good" will enervate mind. What is harmful to the generality, what is pleasing only to the ego will in the end weaken the mind, for it is not only that "God is good" but this is operative through the universe, quite apart from any thoughts or ethics or philosophies on man's part.

Yes, there are processes of mind comparable to the cleansing of the body. What is not needed is discarded whether in time or by positive processes. And so Meditations and Concentrations are also practices of purification.

GATHA: ... such things as worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow, or any sort of disturbance that takes away the tranquility of the mind, preventing it from experiencing that joy and peace for which it longs and in which alone is its satisfaction.

TASAWWUF: We can cleanse the body of certain poisons by various processes of elimination. The same is true of the mind too, but the intellectual processes will not do it. They cannot get rid of their impediments by themselves. It is almost like asking a broom to clean itself.

It may be questioned whether there are any virulent diseases not accompanied by negative emotions; indeed they may so be caused. In the book, *Health*, the psychological cause of disease is discussed at some length. But still worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow, and disturbance continue because of the persistence of nafs, the ego. We are looking upon these evils apart from the ego, and so we do not get rid of them.

Esoteric exercises (Ryazat) disregard the ego and so discard the ego. The positing of God transcends any ego-operation. So in the end Health becomes a spiritual operation. But it is also true that the diseases arise from the negative aspect of the impurity of the elements, of their being contaminated by each other and also by the types of thoughts that the mind entertains and maintains.

The purification of the elements by the ether (akash) and by the Divine Presence removes the privations and negations. As the capacity for Baraka and the Divine Light increases, the negations go. And as worry, anxiety, fear, sorrow and disturbances go, one obtains purity and health of mind and body.

GATHA: There are many who do not know the importance of keeping the mind in a pure and harmonious condition, and the few who know it find it difficult to bring about better conditions in practical life. In the first place it is difficult to accomplish outward duties, to answer the demands of life, and yet to keep the mind in perfect tranquility. It needs the knowledge of purifying the mind of all external influences. And the way one can manage it can be said in a few words: To throw away inharmony by the power of harmony and to wash away all that lacks beauty by preserving the great power of beauty within oneself.

TASAWWUF: This is now being done by Walk and Dance. We do not need any philosophical impressions which fail in their aims. Sufism is based on experiences and these experiences may be at all levels. We live and move and have our being in the Presence of God. We draw in the Divine Essence

with every breath, with every concentration and every repetition of the Divine Name or the facultatives thereof. Power and Beauty are awakened together in, with and from perfection.

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