

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.

Chapter 3 Unlearning

GATHEKA: It is most difficult to forget what one has learned. Learning is one thing; and unlearning is another. The process of spiritual attainment is through unlearning.

TASAWWUF: We are given a piece of land. As soon as a tool is used that land is changed. In the same way with mental processes—as soon as anything is done in any way at any level there is a change. It is not exactly the same mind at all.

The Gita teaches constantly that man must overcome shankara and manas and instead of overcoming ahankara (the ego) and manas (the discursive mind), another thought is added, that of overcoming. Indeed the Christian book of Revelation also teaches about overcoming and instead of overcoming there is simply another thought added, that of overcoming. And the thought of overcoming is but another thought, another complication. It itself has nothing to do with overcoming. Nothing is overcome that way, rather it only adds to complexities and people are super-confused.

Meditation is another process. It includes stopping the operations of the discursive mind. The mind is not stultified by it; indeed it can be purified and renovated by it.

GATHEKA: People consider their belief to be their religion. In reality belief is a stepping stone to religion. Besides, if I were to picture belief, it is just a staircase that leads one to higher realization. But instead of going up the staircase people stand on it. It is just like running water that does not flow any more.

TASAWWUF: There are many examples and teachings on this subject in the Gathekas and Gathas. Belief is necessary but when it congeals there can be no progress. Many people are afraid of change, but Buddha taught that change is inherent in everything and when we do not change we congeal and when we congeal we cannot progress.

GATHEKA: People have made their belief rigid, and therefore instead of being benefited by their belief they are going backwards. If it were not so one would have thought that all the believers in God, in truth, and the hereafter would be better than the unbelievers. But what happens is that they are worse, because they have nailed their own feet to their belief.

TASAWWUF: Many stories, many examples of this appear in the literature. But many reading will shake their head and approve, but will not change. The purpose of the literature is missed. It is not for the sake of indulging the readers and criticizing others, it is for the sake of awakening. And therefore, of many seekers, few find.

There are special esoteric practices for this type of disciple. Very often there are elderly people who are most devout, and all their lives have been spent in devotion. But this devotion has not brought any awakening and one can say forever, “Blessed be the poor in spirit” and explain that this means being mild in breath. But the saying does not make the breath mild and the exhorting does not enable them to see light. So instead of turning them aside they are given special exercises.

Very often the young and old will be together and there will be signs of disharmony. In ancient times the young were restricted, and this very restriction was opposite to what Jesus Christ has taught about the children inheriting the kingdom of Heaven. To rise above the distinctions and differences that divide men we have to apply exercises not disciplines, exercises which will enable all devotees to become more aware of the light within. And with the softening of spirit also the mind comes more under control.

GATHEKA: Very often I am in a position where I can say very little, especially when a person comes to me with his preconceived ideas and wants to take my direction, my guidance on the spiritual path; yet at the same time his first intention is to see if my thoughts fit in with his thoughts. He cannot make himself empty for the direction given. He has not come to follow my thoughts, but wants to confirm to himself that his idea is right.

TASAWWUF: But ideas of themselves are neither right nor wrong. And holding on to thoughts, thought which makes for differences between people is itself useless. In the light of God, differentiations depart. And holding on to any differences is itself the worst of thoughts on the spiritual path. You cannot have harmony in that way; you can not build brotherhood in that way. And in unlearning it is better if we can stop all such thinking, which is not constructive. Differentiations and dualisms and what are called dialectics are apart from any spiritual life. "I am different and you are different" is a barrier to awakening.

GATHEKA: Among a hundred persons who come for spiritual guidance, ninety come out of that tap. What does that show? That they do not want to give up their own idea, but they want to have it confirmed that the idea they have is right.

TASAWWUF: Just as in the physical world that there is to every action an equal and opposite reaction, so in the mind-world it may be that there is an opposing if not opposite thought, some kind of mental agitation which balances off other mental agitations. And this shows that the samsara (nufsa-niat) is also applicable to the mental world.

When Buddha spoke of "right thoughts" he did not mean what is "right in contradiction to what is wrong." He meant that one should try to be on the path of perfection and universal harmony. This is also what Zarathustra taught. Although they seem to have given us something different it is different to those who are looking for the differences. But as in the story of the six blind men and the elephant, all views are right considered from the individualistic narrow aspect and all are in part wrong for the same reason, which is not real reason.

GATHEKA: Spiritual attainment, from beginning to end, is unlearning what one has learnt. But how does one unlearn? What one has learnt is in oneself. One can do it by becoming wiser. The more wise one becomes, the more one is able to contradict one's own ideas. The less wisdom one has, the more one holds on to one's own ideas.

TASAWWUF: If we say that wisdom is pure light, we must recognize that pure light is not only something that effects the eyes, it effects every part of the personality—the whole body, the entire mind and the heart. All are born of the light, but of the light manifesting in different grades and gradients. By "grades" one means there are different types of significances, values and divine qualities; by "gradients" is meant that within these qualities there are greater or lesser impulses of it.

In the fine light the coarse things cease to be significant. If the light is very pure and very great it will not notice the differentiations and distinctions. Then all becomes as if One, but One that has capacity for all. And as one increases this capacity, as one increases also the response, all the little efforts one has or has made become insignificant.

Thus even a strong man can lift only so many pounds, and compared to the whole earth this is nothing. A learned man can know only so much but even the most informed do not know much of what is in the encyclopedias, the compilation of all human knowledge. The true humility is to recognize this without belittling anything or anyone. And when one discovers that quantitatively one may know so little, he can the more easily erase.

But if this can be done with knowledge which has some real content, how much more readily it should be done with ideas which may have no content at all. Yes, it is right to say "I believe" for this puts one on a positive path. But it is only a step; no doubt a step in a right direction but still only a step. And when one recognizes the insignificance of ego-accumulations one can more readily call them "maya," the measurable which is infinitely small contrasted with the vast universe and all the planes thereof.

GATHEKA: The reason is that the wise person can easily give up his thought; the foolish holds on to it. That is why he does not become wise because he sticks to his own ideas; that is why he does not progress.

TASAWWUF: One can easily see, if he wears clothes a long time, there is a certain attrition, a wearing, an erosion. If he gets new clothing it often brings about a psychic and mental change, like a renewal. And to stick to one's ideas is to bring about a stasis. Therefore it is said in *Gayan* that the wise do everything to break down their own egos even if it means changes to go in a new and very different direction. For one can also travel mystically without changing his geography and many sages have done just that.

GATHEKA: Mental purification therefore is the only method by which one can reach the spiritual goal; in order to accomplish this one has to look at another person's point of view. For in reality every point of view is one's own point of view. The vaster one becomes, the greater the realization that comes to one, the more one sees that every point of view is right.

TASAWWUF: This has already been expressed in the dissertations on the six blind men and the elephant. But hearing the story does not infer that it is immediately applied. Too many think they are wise or awakened and if they so think and are unable to identify with others, this shows nothing but illusion and beyond illusion, ego. As the heart becomes opened it becomes awakened, and every mother either knows this or should know it at least for a little while every time an infant is born.

GATHEKA: The vaster one becomes, the greater the realization that comes to one, the more one sees that every point of view is right (a repetition). If one is able to expand oneself to the consciousness of another person, one's consciousness becomes as large as two persons. And so it can be as large as a thousand persons' when one accustoms oneself to try and see what others think.

TASAWWUF: There is a great deal of discussion about expansion of consciousness. When a metal or any solid is heated, it usually expands. When something passes from the liquid state to the gaseous state it takes up more room. This is one form of expansion, but when those substances are cooled

they may return to the same state and occupy the same space. There may be nothing learned by such experiences.

So it is with many who have psychic or psychedelic experience. There is an expansion, but it is not a real expansion of consciousness. If it does not become greater in capacity or realization for what is going on in the heart and consciousness of others, it is not real expansion. And if one then wants more consideration and even honour from others, it proves that it may have been an expansion but it was not a spiritual expansion.

GATHEKA: The next step in mental purification is to be able to see the right of the wrong and the wrong of the right, and the evil of the good and the good of the evil. It is a difficult task, but once one has accomplished this, one rises above good and evil.

TASAWWUF: We can see this in a mother with two or more children, that when they quarrel she is apt to look at both their points of view. When her child argues with another child she may take sides (or may not) but when her own children get into a dispute she tends to see from both points of view. This is excellent. And when one takes another step and sees other children as if they were one's own there is a real spiritual growth, a real expansion of heart.

Now this also is the point of view of a spiritual teacher with regard to disciples. Only there, it is not necessary to act as judge or psychiatrist. One has the internal medicines, the spiritual practices. They, as well as meditations help to mollify the ego and so establish harmonies without interfering with anybody.

This was also the Love-teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan that one began with one's immediacy, with one's own family and then gradually acted as if relatives were members of that family; then friends and neighbors. And so one grew in consideration and justice and this, and not some conception or illusion, is the real expansion of consciousness. The expansion of love is the expansion of consciousness and the expansion of consciousness is the expansion of love.

GATHEKA: One must be able to see the pain in pleasure and the pleasure in pain; the gain in the loss and the loss in the gain. What generally happens is that one is blunted to one thing and that one's eyes are open to another thing; that one does not see the loss or that one does not see the gain; if one recognizes the right, one does not recognize the wrong.

TASAWWUF: This is a theme that is dealt with at length in the voluminous writings of Swami Ram Das. It is not philosophy or injunctions, it is the direct experience alone which enables one to see and understand. Pleasure and pain both are effective, they both take one from universal peace. In both instances the ego reacts and when the ego reacts it is taken from the infinite stillness.

If one tried to see from the standpoint of God; God, so to speak, experiences pleasure in the pleasure of everybody and pain in the pain of everybody. There are even people called "masochists" whose bliss comes with pain, not with pleasure. They get no satisfaction out of pleasure. But this also is egotism; this is not deliverance.

There are spiritual practices which can set the pace. One can perform Fikr and get into a state of consciousness. And anything which affirms or strengthens that state of consciousness can be called "good" and anything that lessens it, not so good. It is not any affirmation of evil here, but a choice of

less good and more good. And when one comes to understand that, he begins to see from the points of view of others as well as of himself, that in all the experiences of life there is a choice.

GATHEKA: Mental purification means that impressions such as good and bad, wrong and right, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain, these opposites which block the mind, must be cleared out by seeing the opposite of these things. Then one can see the enemy in the friend and the friend in the enemy.

TASAWWUF: The Parsi sage, Meher Baba, who called himself "Avatar" wrote in great detail on this subject. Intellectually he was very right; he had some good literature which was very clear and even simple when profound. But that did not mean that his followers could see the wisdom in others. They began by denying the wisdom of other sages and ended by not seeing the wisdom in each other. So instead of going toward spiritual liberty and brotherhood, they fell into the very traps discountenanced by their own teachings.

Actually friendship and enmity are situations of the moment. They do not belong to eternity, they do not belong to the university of liberation. The friend is the enemy in the sense that one has made a differentiation. When one recognizes both friend and enemy as oneself, oneself in a separate body and mind, one is liberated. Or as Walt Whitman said, "In all men I see myself." This is beyond pleasure and pain.

GATHEKA: When one can recognize poison in nectar and nectar in poison, that is the time when death and life become one, too. Opposites no more remain opposites before one. That is called mental purification. And those who come to this stage are the living sages.

TASAWWUF: A good physician does not see his clients as friends or enemies. He sees ailing bodies and minds which should be corrected. He may resort to one of a number of methods and select one or more of a myriad of medicaments. If he is a good practitioner there will be no dualism. And his only pride should come in the recovery of patients.

So a spiritual teacher sees every one as a covered soul, a soul covered by the darkness of ego and his profession is to remove the darkness of ego and this is done by spiritual means. If other means sufficed, this would not be necessary, but other means, imbedded as they are also in dualism, have not brought health and happiness.

GATHEKA: The third field of mental purification is to identify oneself with what one is not. By this one purifies one's mind from impressions of one's own false identity.

TASAWWUF: This can be understood intellectually from the studies on samskaras. But of a thousand persons so studying intellectually, perhaps one actually finds through that studying the need and the way to overcome his own weakness. It is rather through meditation and what Buddha called upayas, which is the same as the Sufi ryazat, that one gets a greater point of view and through his own greatness is able to harness his own smallness.

There are many methods by which samskaras can be erased and they are found in books as well as in sacred and esoteric writings. But reading such books and nodding the head is even worse than knowing nothing about the subject. For Mohammed distinctly taught that those that had the guid-

ance and did not obey were especially subject to hell-fire, far more than the ignorant whom the Mercy of Allah excuses.

By one's own false identity nufs is meant, against which there are endless warnings, seldom heeded.

[The following stories were omitted by Murshid Samuel Lewis when the commentary was written.] (GATHEKA: I will give as an example the story of a sage in India. The story begins by saying that a young man in his youth asked his mother, who was a peasant-woman living in a village, 'What is the best occupation, mother?' And the mother said, 'I do not know son, except that those who searched after the highest in life went in search of God.' 'Then where must I go, mother?' he asked. She answered, 'I do not know whether it is practical or not, but they say in the solitude, in the forest.' So he went there for a long time and lived a life of patience and solitude. And once or twice in between he came to see his mother. Sometimes his patience was exhausted, his heart broken.

Sometimes he was disappointed in not funding God. And each time the mother sent him back with stronger advice. At the third visit he said, 'Now I have been there a long time.' 'Yes,' said his mother, 'now I think you are ready to go to a teacher'. So he went to see a teacher. And there were many pupils learning under that teacher. Every pupil had a little room to himself for meditation, and this pupil also was told to go into a certain room to meditate. The teacher asked, 'Is there anything you love in the world?' This young man having been away from home since childhood, having not seen anything of the world, could think of no one he knew, except of the little cow that was in his house. He said, 'I love the cow in our house.' The teacher said, 'Then think of the cow in your meditation.'

All the other pupils came and went, and sat in their room for fifteen minutes for a little meditation; then they got tired and went away; but this young man remained sitting there from the time the teacher had told him. After some time the teacher asked, 'Where is he?' The other pupils answered, 'We don't know. He must be in his room.' They went to look for him; the door was closed and there was no answer.

The teacher went himself and opened the door and there he saw the pupil sitting in meditation, fully absorbed in it. And when the teacher called him by name, he answered in the sound of the cow. The teacher said, 'Come out.' He answered, 'My horns are too large to pass through the door.' Then the teacher said to his pupils, 'Look, this is the living example of meditation. You are meditating on God and you do not know where God is, but he is meditating on the cow and he has become the cow; he has lost his identity. He has identified himself with the object on which he meditates.' All the difficulty in our life is that we cannot come out of a false conception.

I will give another example. Once I was trying to help a person who was ill, who had had rheumatism for twenty years. This woman was in bed; she could not move her joints. I came to her and told her, 'Now you will do this and I will come again in two weeks' time.' And when after two weeks I came, she had already begun to move her joints. And I said, 'In six weeks I will come back.' And in six weeks she got up from bed and had still greater hope of being cured. Nevertheless her patience was not so great as it ought to have been. One day she was lying in bed and thought, 'Can I ever be cured?' The moment she had that thought she went back to the same condition; because her soul had identified itself with a sick person. For her to see her own well-being was impossible, she could not imagine that she would ever be quite well; she could not believe her eyes that her joints were moving; she could not believe it.)

GATHEKA: People can be well in their bodies but not in their minds. Very often they hold onto an illness which they could get rid of. And the same thing happens with misery. People who are conscious of misery attract miseries. They are their own misery.

TASAWWUF: There was once established a "Confraternity" and it consisted of three grades; those who memorized *Gayan*, those who memorized *Vadan* also, and those who memorized all three; *Gayan*, *Vadan* and *Nirtan*. It was hoped that by so doing and repeating the aphorisms these would become examples to follow in their lives.

But they were not all evolved. They memorized the books, they could repeat the aphorisms, they might know all the aphorisms, but instead of producing change in personality it added pride and emotion and made such people pseudo-devotees, proud of their accomplishments and instead of nufs being overcome, it became worse.

There is the opposite trend toward self-effacement and this is done mostly by esotericism, by ryazat or upayas of some sort. These are actual methods. They consist of exercises and not empty words. They are most beneficial. And besides the knowledge of the Names of God offered by Mohammed bring one directly into attunement with the Divine Vibrations. They belong to Fana-fi-Rassoul and Fana-fi-lillah, whereas the knowledge of *Gayan*, *Vadan*, and *Nirtan*, valuable as they are, belong to Fana-fi-Sheikh.

GATHEKA: It is not that misfortune is interested in them, but they are interested in misfortune. They hold that thought, and that thought becomes their own. When a person is convinced he is going downward, he goes downward; his thought is helping him to sink.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the poetry of that great genius, Robinson Jeffers. One of his otherwise excellent compositions ends, "No where else to go but down." And after he wrote that and it was published and he became famous, his life grew worse and worse. He became, so to speak, his own negative guru. And some people followed him in his philosophy, and so his poetry, which may have established a style, has not held up so well for it took away hope from mankind.

There are many who are like this. Even *Gayan* teaches that success leads to success and failure to failure. We are caught in ruts. The esoteric teachings show how we can get out of the ruts, especially the negative ones. Sufism has teachings and practices which are valuable when applied and useless when used as theoretical philosophy.

Lord Buddha spent his whole career working in the opposite direction. Many have concluded he taught a form of pessimism. But if instead of reading books on what is known as "Buddhism" by non-communicants, we examined the early literature which was still under personal influence we find it impregnated with joy and hope and the highest form of optimism.

GATHEKA: Therefore the third aspect of mental purification is to be able to identify oneself with something else. The Sufis have their own way of teaching it. Very often one holds the idea of one's spiritual teacher; and with that idea one gains the knowledge and inspiration and power that the spiritual teacher has. It is just like a heritage.

TASAWWUF: Fana-fi-Sheikh is useless as theory. When one holds before him the name, the picture, the ideas of the Murshid and lives in and for the Murshid, it is not idolatry; it is love and attunement

and this enables the disciple not only to become a devotee but to absorb from the atmosphere and from the ethers beyond the atmosphere the same qualities that have manifested in the teacher.

Then there is *tasawwuri* which really means attunement—to take on the rhythm of the teacher in walking and breathing and by that means awaken the same areas of the depths of personality which have been awakened in the teacher. It is not just imitation; it is not becoming a glorified monkey; it is finding the Universe within oneself.

GATHEKA: The man who cannot concentrate so much as to forget himself and go deep into the subject on which he concentrates, will not succeed in mastering concentration.

TASAWWUF: Therefore in the esoteric lessons one learns to control thought by feeling. When we love much we can grow much. We have to have love and sometimes the teacher may use every effort to awaken love and joy in the disciples and generality. There is no sense in calling Sufism the religion of love, harmony and beauty unless there is manifestation and experience of love, harmony and beauty by oneself, in oneself, from oneself.

GATHEKA: The fourth mental purification is to free oneself from a form and have a sense of the abstract.

TASAWWUF: In the lessons on *Murakkabah*, Concentration, this is what is done. But the learning is through practice and effort. There is no gain from theory; indeed unapplied theories can become obstacles.

GATHEKA: Everything suggests to the eye a form, everything; even so much that if the name of a person whom one has never seen is mentioned, one makes a form of him. Even such things as fairies and spirits and angels, as soon as they are mentioned, are always pictured in a certain form.

TASAWWUF: We can read in the most ancient books of Indian wisdom about *nama* (name), *rupa* (forms) and *arupa* (formless). But these words can not be taken too literally. They may even be applied to the three planes to which we give various names. And it was by *tapas*, or austerities, that one became aware of different states of consciousness and obtained the knowledges of the various planes.

The same is found in Sufism in the lessons on *Murakkabah* for the more advanced disciples and in the commentaries thereon, that there are conscious means of becoming sensitive to and aware of what may be called the “unseen.” The “unseen” is not necessarily unseen, but for those steeped in the denseness of earth it is so. We have to become more refined. And it is not only by the refined breath but also by spiritual practices.

The phrase *Ya Latif* is often repeated to help man become as aware of the subtle as of the gross; to find that there is as much life, and more, in the subtle as in the gross; and thus to help one realize what has been called the Kingdom of the Heavens, which means conscious realization of what is ordinarily not seen or heard. But it can be seen or heard as soon as the veils are lifted.

GATHEKA: This is a hindrance to attaining the presence of the formless; and therefore this mental purification is of very great importance. Its purpose is to be able to think of an idea without form.

No doubt this is only attained by great concentration and meditation, but once it is attained it is most satisfactory.

TASAWWUF: The great inner sciences such as Murakkabah, Mushahida, and Mujahida are dependent upon man's capacity to rise both in and with name and form and also beyond name and form. The teachings of Murakkabah were presented in detail but require all the efforts of devotees to go through the practices one by one. Theoretical knowledge can here be a hindrance. When we have thoughts of things or thoughts of thoughts we are sending out hindrances to pure light.

In Murakkabah every effort is made to let the pure light operate. This is the Nur. And without this Nur nothing has ever been made. Qur'an and Bible agree on this. It is not the agreement that is important but man's endeavor. And so by proceeding up the ladder of attainment this becomes a possession of man and at the same time it can be said that man becomes possessed by it.

In Mushahida man identifies himself with the universe of which he is cognizant and no longer with his small ego-self. In Mujahida one proceeds negatively. It is like the neti-neti of the Hindus, only it is not philosophy, it is constant purification, constant removal, because everything can become an obstacle, a hindrance. This is also taught in the Ziraat, the agricultural esotericism of Sufism.

GATHEKA: And the fifth way is to be able to repose one's mind. In other words relax the mind. Imagine, after having toiled for the whole day, how much the body stands in need of rest; how much more then must the mind stand in need of rest!

TASAWWUF: Usually this is called Meditation. There are many kinds of Meditation, and all are valuable so long as the form, the ritual, becomes a means to attainment, not a barrier beyond which one must not go. True, there are methods which have been most advantageous. But too many schools adhere stringently to the means. Then the freedom is lost, the purpose is lost, and instead of there being relaxation and liberation, there is only another form of bondage. If this were not so, everyone trying the methods of Zen Buddhism would reach liberation. Millions try every year; hardly a handful attain.

GATHEKA: The mind works much faster than the body; naturally the mind is much more tired than the body. And not every person knows how to rest his mind and therefore the mind never has a rest.

TASAWWUF: The Sufi Pir-O-Murshid Syed Moudani said that there was only one real gain in life and that was to praise Allah with every breath and only one loss, not to so praise Him. One may wonder if we cannot protect the body and mind against fatigue and we can certainly do so. For instance the phrase "Ya Haya wa-Khayyum" not only helps one recover from fatigue but even prevents it. There are other sacred phrases which do that and all methods of practicing Akhlak Allah, or the Divine Presence, take one above and beyond ennui and fatigue. And for those who journey on the spiritual path and accept the methods offered by the teacher, not only is it easy to recover from fatigue but even to prevent it and live and work and also enjoy life without any great change taking place.

GATHEKA: And then what happens after a while is that the mind becomes feeble; it loses memory, the power of action; it loses reason. The worse effects are mostly brought about by not giving the mind proper repose. If such infirmities as doubt and fear happen to enter the mind, then a person becomes restless, he can never find rest.

TASAWWUF: It is easy to write a commentary on this, to be analytical, to go into causes. But the main problem is how to prevent such occurrences, to prevent rather than cure. And this is done mostly by Fikr. Fikr has many aspects, but all of them tend to direct the mind away from the ego and samsara toward the One and Only Being Whom we may be calling "God" or "Allah" — it is mostly "Allah" we use in the disciplines and it is not necessary to translate this word at all.

This subject is dealt with in the papers on Esotericism (Ryazat) and in the commentaries thereon, as well as in certain places in the literature.

GATHEKA: For at night the mind continues on the track of the same impressions. Simple as it seems to be, very few know the resting of the mind and how wonderful it is in itself.

TASAWWUF: When the commentator had to submit to a lengthy examination before returning to college, he practiced Fikr continuously and passed with a very high record. Then later he took another examination and depended on memory and failed. After that he always practices Fikr and never failed again and as he passed from semester to semester his records became better and better. Although the ego-self was involved it was remembrance of and dependence on Allah which proved to be all sufficient and practical although one does not generally regard esotericism and mysticism as being practical. Yet they are and it will be found out more and more in time.

GATHEKA: And what power, what inspiration, comes as a reaction from it, and what peace does one experience by it, and how it helps the body and mind! The spirit is renewed once the mind has had its rest.

TASAWWUF: The whole subject of commentaries, the writing of which is an art and science, comes from this sort. It is not to be assumed or presumed that a disciple has the ability to penetrate the arcana of the teacher, but by attunement, and also by the awakening of his own centers, the faculties which are latent come to life. This is one of the verbal purposes of the Sufi Movement. And it can come to life and be most effective.

It is one thing to pray; that is the first step. Then one can experience more and more the Grace, the Glory, the Wisdom, the Joy and the Peace of Allah which are the greatest of all blessings and benefits. And as one gets into the stream (to use the Buddhist terminology) the whole life is changed; this is the spiritual rebirth, renewal and awakening.

GATHEKA: The first step towards the resting of the mind is the relaxation of the body. If one is able to relax one's muscular and nervous system at will, then the mind is automatically refreshed. Besides that, one must be able to cast away anxiety, worries, doubts, and fears by the power of will, putting oneself in a restful state; this will be accomplished by the help of proper breathing.

TASAWWUF: Many going on the spiritual path will be told to relax, they will be given the word "relaxation" and then have to sit in postures and positions which increase the pain of the body while someone keeps telling, even yelling "relax." But this is not relaxation and according to the biochemical type and the customs of childhood, one will find different forms of relaxation.

Swami Ram Das forbade the commentator to take any Asian posture whatsoever. He even came with a stick like a Zen master to see that he sat comfortably. And within two weeks the commentator became so absorbed in Papa Ram Das he said, "It is time to go." He was no longer any ego-self,

he has become Swami Ram Das himself. This is the attainment. The union of teacher and pupil is the attainment, or as Jesus Christ has said, "Whenever two or three are gathered together in my Light (Shem) there I am in their midst."

Each one may have a different form of relaxation and it is relaxation and not a posture which is most helpful. Even if one has to take up gymnastics it is no hindrance if there are practices of relaxation, and first this must be for the body; then for the mind.

And then there is breathing. There are so many kinds of breaths but mostly we have to have a refined breath—which can be done at will; and also the relaxed breath which depends on posture and position, those that are easy and pleasant. And when one sits (or otherwise) in the comfortable position and finds refined breathing easy, he is going up the spiritual path which is a path of continual refining of breath, either as a means of discipline and development, or as the result of the Grace which helps to bring the spiritual awakenings.

The more one gets into the refined currents, the more one realizes Ya Latif, the easier it becomes to overcome and prevent anxiety, worries, doubts and fears.

GATHEKA: Great magnetism is produced by having stilled and purified the mind. And the lack of it causes lack of magnetism.

TASAWWUF: We are finding that repeating the Names of God, whether referring to essence (Zat) or attributes (Sifat) becomes most helpful. The devotees who repeat these names find changes going on in themselves, they begin to realize the divine attributes, they become absorbed in the attributes and in the blessings thereof and from this comes an ever increasing magnetism at all levels.

GATHEKA: The presence of those whose mind is not purified and stilled becomes a source of unrest for others as well as for themselves. And they attract little because the power of attraction is lost; everyone is tired by their presence, and their atmosphere causes uneasiness and discomfort. They are a burden to themselves and to others.

TASAWWUF: The more one becomes involved in the spiritual devotions, the more easily he distinguishes between the truth and the false. The true bring zest and the false take away vitality. Nothing can be substituted for the actuality of increased magnetism and with it Baraka or blessing. And after a while pretense is easily discovered.

Then one does not have to be told the advantages of having a true spiritual teacher. He is finding that out for himself.

GATHEKA: Once the mind is purified, the next step is the cultivation of the heart-quality which culminates in spiritual attainment.

TASAWWUF: Actually this is going on all the time. The true spiritual teacher is doing nothing else, using nothing else and by so doing awakens the corresponding ranges and areas of consciousness in the pupils.

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