



Githa with Commentary

Murakkabah: Concentration

Series II

of

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by

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
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Githa

Series II Number 1

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: Concentration has two aspects. In the first aspect the mureed visualizes an object that is seen and retains it in his memory.

TASAWWUF: This is often the first kind of concentration that is given to any mureed. Even when he is told to use a symbol or picture, he may be told to keep it in his mind's eye, until he reaches a certain stage of development when he is requested to use common articles in concentration. There are two aspects of this, the one being the training of his memory by the use of some form. The other is the reaction upon his character and the aid to his inner development through increased capacity for light.

Memory itself is connected with name and form. We derive sensations from the physical plane and impressions are made upon the mind. Perhaps all real studying is based upon this. Children go to school and there they learn to read books and to make observations and they do receive impressions. In ordinary education, however, not much attention has been paid as to how and why children are impressed or not impressed, and there has been little scientific investigation as to how to make them study, think and remember.

Of course if a person is undernourished, badly nourished or mentally crushed he cannot concentrate well, he will lack interest and his vital organs make such demands that he cannot focus his consciousness as well as he wishes. It is possible to live without much food and devotees have been successful in so habituating or disciplining themselves, but this is not so good for children, they need care, nourishment and peaceful surroundings.

Actually the same is true for all people, who are the children of God, and who need or will develop childlike qualities to enhance their spiritual evolution. Therefore the lesson of balance is taught and other preparations are made during the years of studying the Gathas wherein the mureed adjusts himself in many ways to the series of changes which usually accompany the life of the Path. He then learns that spiritual development and everyday life are not apart from each other and the ordinary things he sees and does can be adopted for the advancement in Murakkabah.

GITHA: But the second aspect of concentration is to imagine an object and improve upon it by the creative faculty of mind.

TASAWWUF: This is most important. If one could see into the mental plane he would know how fate operates. The light of the mental plane is the light of intelligence which draws its power from the heart-sphere. Our sun also draws its power from the inner spheres although that cannot be so easily proven scientifically. In Murakkabah there is ever increased capacity for mental development and to use it practically one adds the creative power and by that his skillfulness in the constructive use of the imagination and the application of intuition are enhanced.

When an inventor has an idea, when he gets some impression of a plan for something, he wants to make it as perfect as possible, even with his mind's eye. He glances at it inwardly with all his will-power and he keeps on concentrating upon it until it is clear enough for him to draw some plan or blueprint. If he stays in the Urouj stage he will keep on getting ideas and not advance to the stage wherein he can make his model. For that the Kemal rhythm is needed, and then during the Zaval stage he does not invent anything or try something new, he tests his model and finds out if it works. That is the Zaval stage. But at the same time he tries to improve it and to test it for defects. And the spiritual life is not different psychologically.

What the inventor does consciously or unconsciously the mystic also does until he becomes proficient in his conscious efforts. This is the lesson of skillfulness. The difference is that the mystic may be concerned with himself more until he includes in consciousness what the average person considers to be apart from himself. But the mystic says that all his thoughts, ideas, knowledge, friends, everything within his consciousness is himself and he tries to improve all that by concentration and devotion. Some have called this White Magic and perhaps it cannot be entirely distinguished from White Magic although pure mysticism and concentration together advance far beyond magic to mastery.

If one wants to improve the outer world he must hold a picture of it in his mind's eye and correct his vision of it, holding the perfect form before him and putting all his energy and magnetism in it. If he keeps on doing this, sooner or later the elements, vibrations and atoms of the material world will become his servants and adopt themselves along lines that will harmonize with his thoughts. This is the way the mureed accomplishes his desires on the path of Sadhana and also it is the method used by the Saints and Masters in their holy duties.

The same thing is seen in the healing work, both in Shafayat and in the Healing Service. Their success often depends upon holding a perfected form in the mind's eye, and concentrating upon it while drawing to earth all the spiritual blessings (Baraka) for which one has capacity.

GITHA: And instead of concentrating upon a single object, to concentrate upon a number of objects that make one scene.

TASAWWUF: In the Sufi Invocation the idea is given in the first words, "Toward the One." For without unity there can be no concentration. A divided mind turns out in the end to be no mind at all; there is no directive power and no wisdom. A person with a divided mind will not be so sure of himself or his aims. But by "One" is not meant a single object alone; it means wherever there is or can be unification. So the Sufi also says "united with all" because when there is union with God there is separation from nothing, and the whole universe will be found within man.

So the talib is first trained to hold one thing in mind. Then he looks at the details and tries to hold the details. Then he has a concentration on several objects and he looks upon them and holds them together. Then to these is added the idea of improvement, and concentration becomes both an inner and an outer process.

An application of this may be found in fiction writing. First a person may try to draw a single character and he will hold that character before him until he is clear to himself. Then he will introduce other persons and also delineate them. Sometimes he will weave them around a plot and sometimes the plot will unfold through the mutual reactions of these characters. This gives life to the story, it

makes it plausible and many of the best authors give reign to their characters concentrating firmly upon them and observing the results.

In Murakkabah, however, one must always hold tight to the impressions and not let the imagination get out of hand. Then there will be fantasy. By holding thought with feeling and keeping singleness of purpose one will probably not fall into this error. So no matter how Murakkabah is applied, either in the practical life or toward spiritual unfoldment, the unifying process is always necessary.

If we study the writings of Moses, we learn that the inspirations came to him first, and after the inspiration he received the various plans and laws which he bequeathed to the Beni Israel. Among these plans was one for the building of a temple. It took many generations before that could be accomplished and required much concentrating. Then came Solomon who was a master-mind and who had perfected himself in every grade of concentration. He held all forms and forces together in his mind as a unit and was the Perfect Master Mason, capable of directing other masters in the erection of a majestic temple to God.

That which Solomon knew in his day can again become human knowledge if there is some effort and self-sacrifice. There is nothing new under the sun but much of ancient knowledge and ancient methods have been lost and who is so wise to say that humanity would not gain by their recovery? The spiritual training in art, architecture and the bestowal of blessing will make it possible to use the arcane esoteric principles again in our lives.

GITHA: Really speaking when we analyze and see objects in detail we shall find that every object is formed of many parts, as many parts form one object.

TASAWWUF: It all depends upon the point of view. One may look at something and see a vase, an ornament, perhaps useful for holding flowers, perhaps for display only. Another will notice the design on the vase and point out the details thereof. Another will say that the vase was made in a certain factory out of certain clays and other materials. A chemist will analyze those clays. And we can take any material object and break it down to its ultimates which may be found to be vibrations of light of some sort and not matter at all. Thus a lump of clay may mean dozens of things to dozens of persons. This comes out of man's faculty of analysis and identification, associated with nufs, for otherwise nothing is actually separate from the cosmos.

Things follow the laws of atoms, have certain properties, among which is impermanency. Therefore there is no-thing-in-itself and everything phenomenal is subject to change. **And perhaps after all it is the state of mind and not objects which are really measured.**

Because of this transmutation is possible. The master-mind can control the affairs of mind. He arranges the atoms and vibrations there according to his will and ability, and the magnetism and reflect-action in turn influence the affairs of earth. Thus be it in great things or small that physical changes can be brought about by mental means. And that is probably the reason for the successful application or suggestion, metaphysical methods and the non-materialistic approach to life.

The nufs of a thing may be said to be man's concrete thought of it. How atoms form bodies may remain a mystery, but the true being of the object may be neither the nufs nor the knowledge of it, but the interaction between the forces of spirit and matter which enables vibrations to create atoms and atoms to align themselves into forms. So strictly speaking nufs is non-existent although in the

divine there is no separation. Things form groups which are designated as flock, group, mob, gathering. The behavior of these groups is not always the same as that of individuals. Indeed the psychology and metaphysics of the group requires much study, whether we deal with atoms of the mineral kingdom, species of the animal and vegetable worlds or cooperation on the part of man. Each forms what Madame Blavatsky called a “group-soul” and what the modern Sufi refers to as a group unit, integrated individual (individual formed by integration) or I-I.

The faculty of synthesis is not only one of the highest and best man can develop, it is very helpful for him to understand the life in the worlds within and without.

GITHA: This makes to the eyes of the seer the main truth clear, that there is variety in unity and unity in variety.

TASAWWUF: What the seer sees is a unity, whether it is something which the ordinary man regards as simple or whether it includes the multitudes. Christ spoke of the church and Buddha of the sangha while the Beni Israel formed a spiritual brotherhood. The principle involved in each was the formation of a unity or union composed of many individuals. Such institutions have only been successfully established by seers. The degradation and decadence in religion always follows when there is lack of true spiritual leadership.

The seer sees also the unity of the worlds within and without, below and above, and although he uses the same words as everybody else, the unfoldment of his life brings with it a point of view which cannot always be comprehended by the average man. The talib does not seek to become a seer, yet his practice of Murakkabah enables him to appreciate the seer and perhaps, gradually, to develop in himself the same faculties.

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Githa

Series II Number 2

Observation

GITHA: The first step to concentration is observation. The one who lacks observation cannot concentrate well.

TASAWWUF: The very beginning of life shows this. The child first has to learn to observe. It is then that his curiosity asserts itself and after that concentration becomes possible. Thus it is said that the heavens are born of the earth because the first contents of the mind are derived from the sensual activities and experiences of the infant. Indeed all the lower creation depends upon observation whether through direct sight or through other channels.

The capacity for thought is given to man on his journey toward manifestation. Prior to this capacity for thought there is the capacity for feeling. The angel feels and feeling is his chief faculty. He thinks, so to speak, only on the surface or outside of himself, just as the soap bubble is colorless but colors manifest on its surface. Angel and jinn do not concentrate as man does, depending upon impressions. They receive impressions much more readily than man does but have little control over them because their will-power has not evolved as in man.

GITHA: Observation depends upon steadiness of mind and this steadiness can be brought about by interest.

TASAWWUF: When one is curious as is the child there is sure to be observation, but observation can be left unfixed and uncontrolled so that there is no study. Steadiness of mind means the focusing of the mind upon something and to keep that focus there should be feeling and there can be feeling when there is interest. Curiosity is a blessing when it makes man observant but it is a curse when it detracts the attention. By various spiritual exercises the talib learns how to keep the observation and mind steady and to become interested in whatever he does.

GITHA: Those who have no interest in anything or anybody have no steadiness of mind, and those whose mind is not steady cannot observe properly.

TASAWWUF: Lack of interest may come from lack of life. This is supplied by learning the way to breathe and how to apply the breath in every aspect of life. Also the gradual cultivation of the heart faculties makes one more "alive," more keen and this very keenness increases interest. Although mystics have been accused of being other-worldly, the mystic is interested in all aspects of life within and without. An historical knowledge of the great Sufis proves that.

Students are often able to concentrate because there is some motive or some reward. To the esotericist life becomes its own reward. Those who desire greater capacity for life as well as for knowledge, those who have deep feeling take naturally to concentration. The world is filled with wonder and one gains knowledge of these wonders by shutting the ego from view and looking directly upon all things. And the secret behind this comes in heart-feeling.

GITHA: Bhakti Yoga among Hindus and Tasawwuri Murshid among Sufis both teach this secret.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, interest increases as heart experience increases. This is something which cannot be taught intellectually. Through Bhakti one feels the heart of the teacher and whatever knowledge the teacher's heart has becomes one's own. It is like drinking spiritual milk and honey only with the Bhaktis there is a strong tendency always toward intoxication unless Karma Yoga is added so that they can offer blessings to humanity while continuing their spiritual journey.

As love cannot be taught by other than love and as the spiritual teacher is one who has advanced in the heart-qualities and therefore in love, a heart-link may be established between teacher and pupil which is the greatest link in the universe. It is a link of hearts which leaves the minds free, which does not compel the disciple to accept the particular mental knowledge or views of his teacher, but gives him the blessings of the life-currents which flow through the teacher's heart. This is called Tasawwuri Murshid.

GITHA: As long a time as a person observes an object, so long in proportion its memory lasts and comes at every time by his desire before the eye of his perception.

TASAWWUF: That the longer the observation the longer and deeper the memory is, may be called a law of psychophysics, a name given to a science of observation of mind and mental behaviorism by some German investigations (e.g. Fechner) of the nineteenth century. The idea of a science of psychophysics would indicate that there was an intuition that the laws of the mental world would correspond to the laws of the physical world. And perhaps the line between these two worlds is not so great; only the vision of man is not keen enough to penetrate the barriers.

But long observation also depends on the power of will and strength of impression. And when a strong impression has been made one can recall or see what has been fixed upon the mind. The eye of perception may even be the physical eye (although it is not nearly so limited) and one uses it in dreaming, visualizing, imagining. But what it sees is generally considered to be **within** man although it has not been proved that all vision is concerned with what is really within; there has been no absolute proof of objectivity, only a pragmatic or practical reason for accepting it as such.

GITHA: When we think of a certain thing and cannot recall it to our memory, at that time either our mind is unsteady or there has been lack of observation of that object when we saw it.

TASAWWUF: It may be noticed that some little children have to read a page many times in order to study it properly and that with others a mere glance will suffice. Generally the latter have more steadiness of mind. They are not thinking of anything else, and if they have mastery over steadiness even a single glance will be sufficient to give them the impressions which will be kept in the storehouse of memory and used when needed.

In the Islamic countries children memorize the complete Qur'an. They move their heads about and intone the words of the sacred scripture. The intonation makes a deeper impression than mere speech. Musical sounds invariably strike a loftier chord and that reaches to the depths of the personality. And the movement of the head keeps the mind from tiring, the blood circulates better and there is no chance to be distracted outwardly. All of this stimulates the mental faculties of the students.

In Zikr and some other Sufi practices the head is also moved around although not exactly in the same way as in the young Muslims. Nevertheless such movements are helpful as well as those of Nimaz. By them one learns to memorize better with even a little observation. For the mind is in some respects like a photographic plate which requires a certain exposure to "take" and when the time is short or the light not sufficient it will not "take." The time process for the mind is the same, but the light of the mind comes through the breath and the development of the breath-faculty leads to mastery of mind.

Fikr and other breathing exercises are thus most valuable. Besides, constant rhythm is enjoined and when one finds difficulty the best thing to do is to watch the breath and not oneself.

GITHA: There is no better way of cultivating one's memory than observation of a single object at a certain time.

TASAWWUF: This observation draws together all the mental forces. Usually they are quite scattered about and often man unknowingly picks up the vibrations of the sphere and calls that "thinking." It is really a form of tuning in and it does not lead to profundity of mind, bring inspiration or help solve one's problems. When all these apparent external forces are removed, then one can focus his mind fully upon something. This brings out the mental magnetism and the continuance of the act brings out more mental magnetism.

A single object serves to collect the mental atoms around it. Any object will, in theory, suffice. The power goes from the eye to it and from it back to the eye. The mental magnetism increases and often one will see much more light. That light has come from one's inner being.

GITHA: The observants show by their very looks a powerful will, a steady mind and capacity for concentration.

TASAWWUF: That light is drawn out from the inner part of the personality when something calls it forth. It is always there; it is latent in every personality. It is waiting to be aroused and by concentration it is aroused. And that brings the gleam to the eye of which Jesus Christ has spoken. All spiritual persons have that gleam and by it they communicate blessings to their pupils and to all who become attuned to them.

The light of the eye is the light of the world reflected in the personality and is the sign of inner magnetism and light. That also brings power and this power we call the power of will. It is that which is exerted over the mind and body in concentration and which makes possible the stilling of the mind as well as the stilling of the body. This is the vehicle of the inner being and its use shows the extension of the spiritual life.

Such a one can hold on to a thought as long as he desires. When he speaks he does not change the subject of conversation and he tries to make himself clear to others. He is not detracted from his purpose by the efforts of others, for he is at one with his thoughts. He can pick them up or lay them down at will. Thus he collects the psychic energy and utilizes the psychic power on the physical sphere. He does not especially try to cultivate psychic power; it is there because he has the power of will and faculty of concentration. And the greater his inner attunement, the greater his capacity for concentration and his power for action.

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Githa

Series II Number 3

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: Concentration is much more important in life than any other activity, for it is neither activity nor repose and yet it is both.

TASAWWUF: For concentration includes the harmonization of feeling, thought and action and all success comes through that harmonization which makes a unity of the inner and outer personalities of man. When heart, mind and body are coordinated, the very light of the soul can find its way to the surface and bring success and happiness.

It has been said that what man thinks in his heart, that he is or he becomes. Thinking in the heart is feeling; feeling supplies the power and thought the content, and the maintenance of the same feeling with the same thought is concentration.

GITHA: It is activity in the sense of creating and constructing the object of concentration.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, during concentration either the mind is active or there is activity of some sort going on in the mind. The mind is not functioning outwardly so much as on its own plane. After so-called transition or death the mind continues to act that way so that in fulfilling one's concentration one is also demonstrating his immortality, although he may not think about it at the time.

According to all traditions Allah did not begin by actually creating the universe. First He entered into a deep state of concentration—by some it is said that that is His eternal state. Therein he conceived the world and all its parts in the essence of perfection, and then objectified His concentration. That objectification we call creation. The Hebrew Bible speaks of it as "good" and philosophers have spoken of it as perfect. This is not to be taken in the human sense or even in a mental sense. When we consider that all objects and things obey laws, that there are not distinctions and special privileges in the Universe, and we think upon these matters, we come to a realization of goodness and perfection. But if we look upon things from a limited point of view we will reach no such conclusion. The wars of men are not the wars of birds or genii and the conflicts of insects may in no wise concern us; each creature has his own standard of goodness and perfection.

When the Sufi establishes the God-ideal he pursues it in every way until he comes, be it gradually or suddenly, to act as a divine-man or angel-man in his ways. And one aspect of that behavior, which is called the spiritual life, is his performance of right concentration.

GITHA: And it is repose in the sense that one holds the object on which one is concentrating at that moment; one controls by repose the further activity of the mind.

TASAWWUF: The great mistake made by many people is their intensity. This is not repose and it maintains Urouj, to the degree that instead of the forces gradually dropping to the physical plane and seeking their intended destiny in action, all the energy and magnetism is consumed on the men-

tal plane. One says that such a person is thinking hard, but it is not concentration and it may even be brooding. One can see people frowning, holding their foreheads, feeling tense and then instead of there being clear thinking, there is often a degree of self-pity or self-recognition so that shadows are thrown across the plane of thought and little else results.

There is a difference between mental creation and ordinary activity. Ordinarily man loses vitality in his every act, thought and speech. In the true mental creation, although energy is given off outwardly, it is also received inwardly. This can only be in repose; that is why the symbol of the crescent moon is used. It signifies a person who inwardly is responsive to the light of God. That light includes in him the creative faculty, and instead of there being fatigue there is joy. The woman who remains in repose before childbirth is less likely to suffer thereafter and the child is more apt to be safely delivered. In mental creation repose does the same for thought, although most people never consider that the birth of a thought is in a certain sense the birth of a life.

It was said that Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom and Knowledge was born whole, a completed adult from the brain of her Father-God. This is symbolic of inspiration. True concentration leads to receptivity, to inspiration whereupon thoughts may appear whole and clear in the mind. This is normal to what has been termed the Buddhic state.

GITHA: It is like a rider holding the horse for a moment when it is standing on its hind legs, which is activity and at the same time repose.

TASAWWUF: The horse has been offered as the symbol of mind, and its limbs with their various movements of the breath. Among intellectual people there is a supposed identification of the self and mind. This is because with them there may be no knowledge of repose of mind and even when they practice it a little they do not recognize it as such.

When man is inspired the very energy of the cosmos comes into his personality and then he brings forth something which may seem new to the world. Instead of losing energy he gains it, and inner receptivity often brings knowledge, or better yet, understanding of things to which the mind may have been veiled. In other words, as has been stated, the one who follows the spiritual law is negative to God and positive to the world, passive within, active without.

Generally speaking the Western peoples have never learned repose of mind and while their activity has often been directed along constructive lines, it has not prevented them from devoting the faculty of genius to making instruments of torture and of war. And behind it may not be selfishness or ignorance alone; there is also the inability, it would seem, to control activity. The story of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" which has been set to music by Dukas is illustrative of this. It tells of a boy, apprenticed to a magician, who had enough knowledge to command a broom to fetch water but not enough knowledge to stop it. The result would have been a flood but for the timely return of the master. So the result to the world may at times seem like a samsaric flood but for the delivery of the Message, and even that does not stop the greater part of destruction.

GITHA: Concentration may be divided into three states, command, activity and control. First, the will commands the mind to become active and create the desired object.

TASAWWUF: As the average person does not distinguish between will and thought on the one hand or between will, wish and desire on the other hand, this leads to much confusion. Many people say

they do not know what they want or others will say that of them. This is not surprising; it comes from ignorance of the nature of self.

Command is a great factor in life and accounts for the success of wicked people and for the failure of many good people. To be successful one must know what he wants and work to obtain it, even at the cost of pleasure and delight. This means the direction and the disciplining of mind. It is said that God Himself created the world by an **Amr** or “word of command.” He said “Be” (kun) and it was. But the whole power of the universe was in that Word.

First this brings the activity on the mental plane as in planning, or even in scheming and plotting. One has to be more careful to observe one’s own weaknesses then. It is not the opposition of the world which brings so many failures, it is personal weakness. So long as people are more interested in correcting the faults of others than their own, this will continue. When they seek self-perfection it will be the dawn of a new day.

GITHA: Next, the mind immediately carries out this command by constructing the desired object, according to its capability.

TASAWWUF: When the light of the soul is turned on to the mind there is immediate activity there, either in thought or in imagination or both. It is natural; the light produces it. The power of that light we call will-power, and one may say it is human will-power yet it comes from the light of the soul and in another sense is Divine Power. It is man’s ego which stands before this light, and even a wicked person controls his ego somewhat when he is intently devoted to his plans. And the more careful the mental activity, the surer the physical results.

Lack of coordination is a great weakness. People wish and wish hard, but they often depend upon others or they ascribe results to fate. There used to be overemphasis in the Western world upon self-action, that success depended, it seemed, upon the freedom of the self. There was a period which was called that of rugged individualism which saw the rise of many persons. This was largely due to the fact that their struggles were with nature rather than with each other. But when nature was tamed and the psychological outlook did not alter, people turned upon one another, and the age of plenty brought a world war instead of universal prosperity.

There is another attitude which has long dominated the East but which is beginning to disappear owing to Western influence, and at the same time becoming more prevalent in the West owing to Oriental influence. That is fatalism. While there is praying and wishing and longing, it is assumed that either God will grant the prayer or that if it is not in one’s destiny he will receive it, his bad karma stands in the way. So the thought of karma itself becomes a karmic force which is not the real karma. This thought of karma which people elevate becomes a mighty burden upon them.

The mystic has learned that these states of mind can be corrected by the knowledge of breath and the practice thereof. Sooner or later this brings about the unity of feeling, thought and action. And then the will-power becomes a lamp which makes man more responsive to his intuition and to wisdom. No longer is it a matter of correcting others; one does not even have to correct oneself; one simply follows the feelings which become more and more vivid, the thoughts which become more and more clarified.

GITHA: And thirdly, the will holds the further activity of the mind as a master rider would hold the reins of his horse to stop it from taking any further steps from the place where he desires to stop.

TASAWWUF: Otherwise the mental activity goes on and on. Many people make promises and put intensity into their promises which are not carried out, and they do not realize why. This shows lack of mental control. All the energy is wasted in the mind and in speech. There is no control over the mind; the mind covers the will, so to speak. Sufi talibs therefore in their practice of Murakkabah learn to hold but one thought at a time, and work it out until its course is completed. The thought is born, matures, dies and fulfills its purpose.

It is one thing to build the thought, it is another to control it and control is necessary if one would avoid obsession on the one hand and mental idolatry on the other. These have been the curses of the world. By keeping the divine ideal to the forefront, one finds that light which enables him to move forward step by step. Then he discovers there is a world beyond mind, much greater than mind and this enables him to control mind, to use it or require it to rest.

The teachings of this lesson may be supplemented by a review of sections of *In an-Eastern Rose Garden* and *The Mind-World* together with their commentaries.

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Githa

Series II Number 4

The Control of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval

GITHA: The secret of continuing Urouj is known to the mystics, and it is their refraining from indulging in Urouj.

TASAWWUF: This seems a contradiction, that to continue Urouj one does not indulge too much in it. Every time one indulges in Urouj one sets forth a new stream of thought. If too many streams are set forth one may be overwhelmed by mental activity, there may be a contradiction between various thoughts or ideals, efforts will be divided, and there will be lack of clarity. To obtain excellence in Urouj one should during a period or **Wakt** keep as single-minded as possible devoting all energies to the thought or duty at hand.

In the elementary studies one is told that if a mystic were to live a number of years and it took him half that time to go up a mountain and the second part of the life would be spent going downward, he would make his pace slower and spend all of his time going upward, at the slower pace. This is another aspect of refraining from indulgence.

Still another aspect comes from restraint in partaking of the fruits of action and knowledge or even in identifying oneself too much with what the world calls personal experiences. Yes, they are personal from the worldly point of view, but when one says, "God, the Only Being," how can there be any stress upon personality? These attitudes reproduce the influence of nufs which in turn brings confusion.

One can even see in the social and economic problems that cause so much disturbance this law of knowledge of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval as well as ignorance of their control. One might say that production belongs to Urouj and distribution to Zaval and consumption to Nasoul. With the growth of inventive machinery it is possible to make all things that man needs. This movement of rapid production shows the over-influence of Urouj. Urouj is the cause of civilization, progress and technology. Many have called upon the scientists to stop until ethics catches up. They do not know that the reason that ethics does not counterbalance inventive genius is the lack of knowledge of Urouj and insight. The moral law may be outside the realm of rhythms and the purest morals are not confined to time and space. One may say especially morality which can last with little change through dozens of civilizations.

This brings up the question, should Urouj be restrained by more emphasis to Kemal and Zaval. Yes, that is one way of doing it. Another way comes from knowledge of breath, for when one knows how to breathe and to feel there is less likelihood of any mad rush forward out of time and out of tune.

GITHA: For instance, if a dish be delicious, a greedy person would eat it all the faster, but a person who wishes really to enjoy the dish must eat more slowly.

TASAWWUF: Slow eating even from the physical point of view permits the gastric juices to flow better, and also stimulates the saliva in the mouth, which is healthful. This enables man to experience joy and beauty even in his sense of taste and in his food and drink. Although taste has been regarded as one of the lowest of senses, because it is so associated with the ego, a sensitive person may develop refinement and artistry even at the table.

The experience of enjoyment through eating is not prohibited. In the Hebrew Scriptures one reads about the Beni Israel partaking of the manna while in the desert and according to the traditions whatever taste they desired in the manna, that was there. This is really an allegory for manna does not refer to anything physical and may be derived from the same root as **manas**, meaning mind. Nevertheless the Hebrews to this day offer prayers of thanks for bread and wine, the fruits of earth.

The Japanese people have habituated themselves to the enjoyment of food. They often eat quite slowly, trying to get the full benefit of every mouthful, and they do not eat hurriedly. Even the colors of their dishes, the arrangement and preparation of the courses and all else tend to awaken in one a sense of beauty. Nor do Sufis hesitate to have feasts especially when there is a stranger in their midst.

Thus there is a course in life which falls midway between the indulgence of the gourmand and the self-denial of the ascetic, whose restraint is often for the purpose of receiving a reward in another life, showing selfishness.

GITHA: A greedy person would take a fragrant flower and would wish to smell one moment, and the next moment he may not have the desire to sense and enjoy the fragrances and the flower will have lost its fragrance.

TASAWWUF: Thus we are drawn through Urouj to enjoy experience and the experience may contain an element of ecstasy. One can pass from ecstasy to ecstasy without loss or danger if there is rhythm and balance. Thus he (or she) enjoying perfume or incense or the fragrance of a flower, not indulging very much in it, will delight in it again and again. If he (or she) does not partake too much there will be joy in repetition.

Thus also there is beauty in the sense of smell. We can draw a flower slowly to us, take a deep breath, lay the flower aside, and repeat this slowly, deeply. We can restrain our breath and our enthusiasm in visiting a garden. If we leave with the desire to return or the ability to enjoy it upon return, then the experience has been valuable. And no doubt the day will come when, besides art to the sight and music to the hearing, there will be fields of esthetic enjoyment through smell, and even through taste.

GITHA: If one studies this secret in all aspects of life, one can enjoy life and could make even the passing joys of life stable to a certain extent.

TASAWWUF: It is not necessary to undergo austerities to attain to spiritual liberation although many have found the road to God thereby. The Sufi regards Allah as the perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty; he does not see the goal apart from the life as he finds it. The world seems to be full of difficulties and it is too often forgotten that the holy ones came to alleviate man's conditions, not to make it harder for him. Christ in his day said that when he came eating and drinking he was called a wine-bibber and a glutton, but the people looked equally askance upon John who followed the path of austerity.

Every faculty that God has given to man has some supreme purpose and the enjoyment of life is not wickedness. It is only the ignorant and wicked who have discarded joy. The very training that one receives in Murakkabah serves to elevate his consciousness above the denseness of earth that he may find peace, solace, bliss by receiving the blessings of the divine lights which can penetrate even to this plane.

Sufis have made use of music to induce ecstasy. The goal is not ecstasy, but when the soul is elevated above the earthly conditions it finds such a freedom that it cannot always remain contained and bursts into its dance. The ordinary forms of ecstasy are only the shadows of this although each type in its own way seems to remind man that this earthly life is not all and the worldly state of consciousness is a chain from which he can be liberated. And not only music but art and every avenue to beauty and through beauty can help man to break his bonds.

GITHA: It is a thing which every soul desires but none can accomplish it save the mystic, who by patience and perseverance has conquered the self.

TASAWWUF: Perhaps all people seek beauty and seek joy. But the majority confuses pleasure and happiness and the pleasures at the moment give them a delight or intoxication which makes them insensitive to pain. Then after a while when the delight of the pleasure wears away they feel the torture of life as before. This shows that they have been slaves to pleasure, even under the delusion that they were masters of happiness and of destiny.

The mystic who undergoes esoteric training finds before him a definite path and as he walks that path, areas of consciousness awaken in him, and his zest for life increases. This is particularly true as he comes to understand the functions of breath and imbibes the blessings of the universe through the breath.

It was in this respect that Jesus Christ taught that once the Kingdom of Heaven was attained all things would come to man. If he could master his inner processes he would not have to take much thought of the morrow, for things would come to him. Only they would not come through any miracle; it is the master-mind that attains all and mastery requires constant application to the acquisition of mysticism and concentration or the other means to spiritual and holy attainment.

The selfish man draws in a great breath and desires to attract all to him, but if he is not attuned to the cosmos or in rhythm with the conditions his efforts are in vain. He builds within himself an area of greater gas pressure than is found outside, but he does not attract. For as in the world forces move from all areas of high pressure to low pressure, so do the forces move on all planes. He who is poor in spirit, devoid of ego, in the end gains all.

Now one who is poor in spirit, devoid of ego, does not have such a coarse breath. His breath is more refined and there is within himself, so to speak, an area of low pressure. That draws things toward him. And the perfect example of this is the madzub who is sometimes utterly devoid of ego, and yet who does not accumulate. This makes him master of psychic power and he can obtain blessings for himself if he would, or for others, and most fortunate is one who obtains the good-will of madzub.

GITHA: And by conquering his self has mastered the whole of life.

TASAWWUF: For there is nothing which appears to be outside of man that cannot become man's possession or his faculty. The result depends upon himself. The more refined he is, the more refined his breath, his capacity then extends to the finer and higher portions of the universe, and that increases the life current which flows back and forth to him, through him and from him. This is the ladder by which he may mount to higher regions and gain the needs or desires. Only he must keep in harmony with the divine will, the laws of the universe and the principles of morality.

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Githa

Series II Number 5

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: The work of the mind is like playing ball or shooting at a target.

TASAWWUF: In the first place the mind is a tool or instrument. The mind is not man although the word **man** has been derived from the Sanskrit “manas.” Man has the supreme mental faculties and can obtain the Buddhic or illuminated condition of mind while he is on earth. Yet by a deep study the mind may be found to be part of his lower nature and the mind is not eternal although one might say that essence of mind is eternal.

The use of the mind by the soul operates largely in the world of karma. When one plays ball and throws the ball against a wall the ball bounces back. If one hits a ball with a stick it obeys the laws of mechanics and dynamics. These laws are not different laws; only man has made different observations and out of these observations derived the different sciences; many sciences yet one Nature behind all. And the karmic law brings back the bill or reward for every activity of mind.

Mental activity has been compared to shooting at a target because often there is a purpose in it and the nearer one gets to hit the center of the target the more satisfaction in life or the more growth. Jesus Christ himself used this simile, for the word “sin” found in the original Christian scriptures meant to miss the mark when aiming at a target. The target, like the wheel, has become a symbol for karmic activity.

GITHA: For in this the first thing necessary is that one should have strength in one's arm to throw the ball or hold the gun steady. This strength can be developed by concentration.

TASAWWUF: The strength that is needed to hold the mind steady is power of will. It is really the same power that appears in the flesh but in a different direction of magnetism. People are constituted or people are educated or people by choice draw more magnetism and vitality to the physical plane or the mental plane or devoid it for psychic development; others use it little or not at all, and it can hardly be said of them that they are fully living.

When one aims at a target a line of psychic power is drawn between oneself and that target. That psychic power is actually used by marksmen and archers. In Japan, where the traditions have been better preserved, they still have this knowledge and avail themselves of it in archery. Indeed for them archery is a form of concentration and spiritual discipline. And persons indulging in many sportings where there is aiming, throwing, shooting, all feel this to a certain extent, and instinctively make use of it.

Rhythrical breathing is also necessary because otherwise the glance will waver and the line of power will not always hold still. Indeed this simple exercise is one of the most helpful things in life, for it brings the very life to man.

GITHA: The next thing is to aim at a certain object and right aim is kept by advanced concentration.

TASAWWUF: For besides all the theoretical aspects of concentration there is the practical side. One says "theoretical" when the talib devotes himself to increasing his scope for activity on the higher planets and "practical" when his consciousness is alert on the plane of his body, although both are needed, both together bring balance and there is no hard or sharp line between them.

In advanced concentration one may use his faculties on different planes. He has learned to concentrate on the planes of feeling and thought as well as upon the physical plane. He can sit in silence until his feeling becomes very strong and there is an urge in his heart which controls his thought, and as he concentrates upon thought he does not lose the feeling. Then when he concentrates for the action of action he loses neither thought nor feeling. This is advanced concentration and when man becomes perfect in it, feeling, thought and action can become one. The master-mind or seer may say a word, and the thing may come to pass.

GITHA: The third stage is when the object or the aim is hit. Its result is the proof of the accomplishment of concentration.

TASAWWUF: Nothing can take the place of evidence. Many people think they are concentrating when they think hard, but there is no result. They may not even be holding on to one thought or one thing. Yet almost everyone has had some examples of successful concentration in life even if it was nothing else than the solving of his arithmetic lessons in the grade schools.

The best way to work is to attain something simple until one has set his first foot forward on the path of attainment. After that it is not so difficult to go ahead. Very often mureeds suppose that they are doing their best in concentration and there is no result. The chief reason for this is usually the persistence of the thought of self in the consciousness. Self-consciousness is always the enemy to concentration and to success.

The secret of concentration is that while man speaks of "self" and the rest of the universe is thought to be other than the self, or to be posited as "not-self," in God there is no self or not-self. Therefore attunement to God brings one closer to the not-self. When one finds that those things which he may desire are not so far away their attainment becomes much easier.

GITHA: A Sufi sees how far he has mastered concentration by seeing the fulfillment of his wishes.

TASAWWUF: That is to say one can really measure his own successes. Many people think they are concentrating or try to obtain some goal in life and make excuses. They forget that God is the For-giver of our short-comings and at the same time success is needed in life. One does not have to make much of his excuses, God does not. The thing to do is to concentrate upon success or attainment and to work for it unceasingly, and though one fails a thousand times to keep on trying.

As one maintains his inner concentrations, however, he will find that the world does not always place such obstacles in his path. Forces, people, things may come to him or to his help. They may not always be what he has desired and they may help him to gain something else than his original intention, or object of attainment. Yet the forces come to his assistance and this is a sure sign of growth. Practices such as fana-fi-Sheikh and fana-fi-Pir, and the observance of Tasawwuri Murshid are also most helpful and advantageous.

GITHA: The sign of mastery is “Word spoken and action done.”

TASAWWUF: Or as one might say, when the word becomes the deed. And if we study the lives of holy men we may see that they did not always need much time to objectify their concentrations. When the feeling is alert the time element does not stand in the way. It may even be that a single breath is needed; or as was said of God in the creation, “He spake and it was done.” This divine breath was the undertone of the cosmos out of which all the overtones and forms have been derived.

Mohammed was very proficient in concentration in his day. After he received one set-back on the battlefield he saw that the main thing needed in life was self-control, which he exerted unflinchingly to the end of his days. Thus it was that not only he won many friends, he won his enemies over too, and they became his friends. He united all the tribes of Arabia through the power of his personality, his wisdom and his love. He instructed his disciples in the mysticism of sound and of silence and so great was the psychic power of Bilal, the first muezzin, that people came from miles around to attend the services. And what they gained at those services was a blessing far beyond the words.

Many of the prophets of the Beni Israel have also given examples of this. There has been the tendency to speak of the prophet as a sort of soothsayer who could foresee events. The real prophet is one who feels as if he actually controlled the events. What appears to be in the space to others appears as if within his own mind. Then he may apply his power and insight and thus foresee or even determine events. And even if he is not exact as to time, what he establishes or perceives in the world of principle will come into objectification sooner or later.

GITHA: When one knows how to handle it and how to work with it he has attained the kingdom of God.

TASAWWUF: The kingdom of God may be said to be that condition when one is thoroughly subject to God, when the heart has become so sensitive that the needs of the universe are reflected upon it. Although we may call Allah by many names there is not much merit until the magnetism and Baraka of those names are experienced by man. And there is a time in life when one devotes himself to God, which is called *fana-fi-lillah*. Yet one does not see God apart from anything therein or anything apart from God. There is no exclusion, there is all inclusion.

When one reaches that state there may be no planes before him and the limitations which make life hard for the average person do not exist for him. He assimilates more and more the divine attributes and the divine faculties. He becomes more tender and more careful about others; he sees all as the beloved ones of God. The more he can say “yes” to others, the more proof he is giving of his own attainment for when man says “yes” that is the sign that he has possession over something which he can give away or bestow upon others.

The Celestial Hierarchy on earth is composed of those who devote themselves to the most holy duties. They serve God on earth while they remain in the form of man.

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Githa

Series II Number 6

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: There are three kinds of concentration: 1. Holding in the mind an object without detail.

TASAWWUF: This is the first stage of concentration and during it one learns the principles which are few and simple but most important:

1. Holding the gaze steadily.
2. Keeping the breath in rhythm.
3. Control the thought with the feeling.

Along with them are certain derived principles such as keeping away all other thoughts and holding the mind as steadily as the eye when this can be accomplished. During that stage the symbol or figure used may be an excuse, so to speak, so that one employs it as a tool.

In the training of little children, toys, flowers and bright objects are used and first one has to attract their attention, curiosity and interest. One cannot teach them anything much in the beginning. There has to be right focus, they have to become accustomed to the conditions. Constant repetition makes the knowledge easier. Their faculties grow along with them and thus they are prepared for the real education of life.

Disciples on the spiritual path are much older than little children and while the instructions for the inner path may contain no new principles, the mind which is the background, is in a very different state. Often a person comes to the path of enlightenment after much difficulty, a life of hardship and the mental akasha is covered with weeds, so to speak. There must be cleansing, physical and mental. During such a period one must gain the attention of the student.

GITHA: 2. Holding in the mind an object with every detail.

TASAWWUF: This is true whether one is trying to retain an image of something that one has first looked upon, or whether one is concerned only with the mental concentration. Unless one knows how to hold form and outline it is most difficult, if not impossible to hold the details; after one has learned those things it often becomes a simple matter.

Self-control is of extreme value. Many mediums and crystal gazers, who seem to possess a form of skill in concentration, are obsessed and instead of holding the image they are held by what they see. They may not be far from hypnosis. They are held in a certain state over which they have no control. The spiritual person, on the other hand, always retains self-possession.

GITHA: 3. Holding in the mind an object with possible improvement.

TASAWWUF: This is very important and ability in it makes of one a master-mind. Through Murakkabah the talib is not only a reflection; his mind is something more than a mirror which receives

light and the reflection of forms. Of course that reflection is important and it is a first step. Yet it is also true that all things are subject to change. The thought is associated with some thing, the thought one builds up in concentration or at any time has its birth, growth, maturity and decay, and it requires magnetism and vitality to sustain it. Nevertheless one can direct its growth and when the imagination is active the thought may always be in a state of change or flux. The difference between ordinary and master-thought is this, that in the former case the change may be haphazard, in the latter case it is directed. This has already been explained; it is the Murakkabah of healers, masters, saints and others.

GITHA: The first kind is the concentration of the average man, who does not wish to give himself the trouble to look into detail, but holds in mind what comes naturally.

TASAWWUF: The mind of such a person is like a photographic plate and does not differ fundamentally from that of animals. Whatever direction the mind takes something comes to the mind, such a one is more subject to the forces of fate or nature. He will not gain in self-control, in whatever else he gains. Indeed it is the people who do not develop in concentration who are subject to moods, emotionalism and propaganda. Yet for beginning, for children, it is right to pass through this stage so that one's faculties may be brought to light.

GITHA: The second kind is the concentration of a keen observer, who absorbs everything carefully and learns from everything upon which he casts his glance.

TASAWWUF: Artists, detectives and other specialists develop such qualities. They are most necessary for their work. Master craftsman, such as woodcarvers, watch-makers and others also develop it within limited degrees according to the nature of their work. Sufis say that after a mureed has passed the first stage in concentration he should pass on to the second stage. Besides the added value of it, he thus becomes a keen observer of life even without knowing it. He does not learn to stare, or have to stare. For when the faculties are coordinated and united the glance becomes powerful and brings more to the mind than with ordinary people.

GITHA: The third kind of concentration is the concentration of the artistic person. Whatever object he sees he feels inclined to improve upon.

TASAWWUF: One may also say that this is the concentration of the genius. In the genius world the mind works differently, the materials can be more easily handled; indeed there is an art there which might be called mental sculpture. There is less distance between thought and action. The dreamer who wants to make this a better world, the householder who is planning his garden, the architect drawing a plan for a home and many other people belong to this class. Inventors also, who have the gift of genius, although their approach may be different from that of the artist, also develop this form of concentration.

There are schools of art in which the student is required to draw only what he sees. There are others which require the improvement of the model, so that some idea, some color, some embellishment may be added; this is the Kemalic state. Then there are others who encourage the drawing of impressions. This is not true art. This is beginning with Zaval, and that which ought to be last is placed first. This can never lead to true art and inspiration.

GITHA: If he sees a plain cup, he thinks, suppose there were some lines of a beautiful color, suppose there were some flowers painted on it.

TASAWWUF: It is beauty which uplifts the heart of its worshippers through all aspects from the seen to the unseen. And it is also true that the uplifted heart delights in the beautiful, even delights in having others share in the beautiful.

And there are two approaches to this, the individual and the group. By individual approach is meant that the student or artist tries to improve upon that which is given him to do. He has a certain pattern to follow, certain directions, but nothing is said about details, embellishments, additions. And if he is inspired he will go ahead. And by group is meant, that one will feel that he can beautify something done by others or along with others. He feels he can better something already started, like painting a building or adding trees or flowers to a garden. All of this shows life for where there is life there is growth.

GITHA: Besides these three kinds, there are three kinds of the higher concentration. This is the concentration of nature, not of a single object, but a vast horizon, for the thought of the sea, or the sky or the forest or the desert, which is not one object.

TASAWWUF: By such methods one learns that the universe is inside of himself as well as outside. The realistic view is that we live in the world and may be of it, we do not know. The spiritual person has no special view in the beginning, he wants to find out and in his search he may discover that the universe is within himself. And that discovery leads to further discoveries and investigations to the end that man can become the builder of the cosmos. For it was the supreme purpose of man, according to all mystical and spiritual traditions, to make this world a better place for his having been born here.

Concentration on the Sea. One should not be too near the sea in doing this practice until he has acquired a degree of self-mastery. For he can become identified in consciousness with the ocean; that is the outer samadhi. Then he will not be able to distinguish himself from the ocean, and may even drown himself without knowing it. One learns by this concentration something of the nature of the ocean and its life. One sees the resemblance between the ocean and the mind and one may even become able to control the waves of the sea as he controls his own mental waves. The masters along this line have protected sailors and voyagers on the high seas.

In ancient times voyagers used to pray to the god of the sea such as Poseidon and among the Christians and Buddhists there have been saints who were supposed to be the guardians. Perhaps there were such persons and if they arrived at their development no doubt it came through proficiency in the practice of samadhi with the sea, the control of waves and storms first by inner control and then by outer rapport. And whether one prays to Vishnu or to Allah, he will learn that it is the inner control that produces the outer peace.

Concentration on the Sky. This is marvelous for the imagination. In her poem, "Renaissance," Edna St. Vincent Millay describes this samadhi in a beautiful form. Here there is a connection with the air element whereas in the sea-concentration one may have been concerned with the water element. This concentration, if successfully pursued, brings healing, purification, joyfulness, escape from sorrow, dullness, lethargy.

It is also a concentration which may be used with safety before going up in an aeroplane or even climbing a high mountain. It helps one to overcome dizziness, to withstand the lighter atmosphere of higher regions. In ancient times the people prayed to the God or Goddess of the Sky (thus, Varuna, whom the Greeks called Ouranos). The sky divinity was supposed to be beyond space.

Concentration on the Forest. If one associates the sea with water and the sky with air, then the forest is to be connected with earth. By this sort of concentration one feels in communion with the trees and flowers and shrubs and even with the animals dwelling in such a place. One has to be humble, impersonal and devoid of ego to advance in this concentration. Then, one may say of it that the lamb and lion may lie down together. In ancient times the sages of India dwelt in the forest and performed this concentration and they would be disturbed neither by snakes nor tigers nor any creatures; all became their friends.

In ancient times also spiritual teachings were offered in the forests, they were the places where one learned esoteric lessons from the master. They were considered the best spots for meditation. The early Buddhists built their temples and retreats in forests—they do so in some countries even now.

Concentration on the Desert. This is connected with the etheric element. That is to say either the concentration of this class helps to perfect the current of breath associated with the element named or the perfection of the breathing through mystical knowledge helps with the concentration—or both paths help one another so that mysticism and concentration may be studied and practiced together.

This concentration is not always very different from meditation. It helps to purify the mind, to remove all thoughts, desirable or undesirable (the teaching of Ziraat). It is excellent at the end of a cycle, when one wishes to remove something, to start anew.

Incidentally these concentrations correspond to certain stages in the lives of the holy ones and they are referred to symbolically in the sacred scriptures of the world. Moses took the Beni Israel through the desert in order that they might become entirely free from all the materialistic influences with which they had become infected while in Egypt.

GITHA: In this the first kind is nature's picture, the second kind is with detail, and the third kind is with improvement. By this is meant not only the thought of the sea, but the sea and a ship and the sunrise all together, or the forest and solitude and moonlight.

TASAWWUF: That is to say first one looks at the object or holds the scene in thought as it is or as he thinks it is. Then he tries to get all the details in it, and then he makes the improvement which is the way to mastery. To illustrate: first one has to hold the thought of the sea or the vision of the sea which he has seen. After he improves in that he includes in his concentration such things as the waves, the shoreline, islands and whatever may have been there. Then he adds the ships, or the sun, and finally he continues until he reaches a stage wherein he can become the guardian of the sea, the protector of it in hierachal post—in other words, the saint of the sea, or the Ghous.

The same is true with the sky. The sky of the day may be just the feeling of space. Then space with the sun and clouds and certain temperature, with or without wind, with or without birds or air-ships, until one cannot only hold the feeling and picture of the space as it is, but feel harmony with it. Then he is ready to take the highest step and become the guardian angel of Ghous for the space.

The same holds for the forest and desert, over which one may hold protection. One may thus guard the forest from fires and the desert from floods. But in all things there must be the feeling for the people and even for the creatures that dwell in such places. The higher one elevates himself, the greater should his feelings be even for the smallest.

The instructions of the work of the Celestial Hierarchy are offered elsewhere. Not all souls may be destined for this supreme and holy work. Many have other paths of development and others do not remain on earth long enough to accept the responsibilities and perform the duties.

After one has passed through certain degrees of these concentrations, there may be combinations of them as ocean and sky, desert and sky, forest and sky, desert becoming forest, rain coming to the desert, etc. This is an advanced step. This step used to be taken by the prophets who knew the mystery of rain, who by concentration could bring clouds to the parched lands. What they held in thought became objectified. They had mastery over the water element and over all elements. As they controlled them within, so they could summon them without. This shows advancement toward universal harmony.

GITHA: This makes the imagination vast.

TASAWWUF: The imagination has been used by many, studied by few. It is talked of as unreal even by those who have constant recourse to it. The Sufi, instead of discussing the reality or unreality of it, strives to find out what it is, then develops and uses it, and develops it more.

This growth of the imagination is almost endless, but it depends largely upon the development of the heart-qualities and faculties. This subject is discussed in "Cosmic Language." And it is this class of concentrations which brings one the direct knowledge of cosmic language. Then one may commune with the birds of all classes, even with insects and flowers. The personal mind is stilled.

GITHA: The bringers of the divine message were so great in their imagination which, in fact, was the result of their highly developed concentration.

TASAWWUF: We do not have all the details of their practices although in India there is a fairly good record. In the time of Akbar a study was made of all the known forms of mysticism and religious tradition and put in a book called *Dabistan* or "School for Morals," which is now regarded as a great work by many scholars. Jesus, no doubt, studied with the contemplative sects of Hebrews who lived in the desert, especially in Egypt. If one studies Philo first and then the Christian Scriptures and then the Gnostic remains, there will be a chain of events and a line of spiritual philosophy which is quite clear.

There is one difference with the message of this age that it is universal in the truest sense. The veil of geographical distance has been removed, and the secrets behind all religions are being revealed. Thus all men can come together and establish a brotherhood in the worlds within and without.

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Githa

Series II Number 7

The Nature of the Construction of an Object

GITHA: Every object that the eyes have once seen is stored more or less deep in one's memory.

TASAWWUF: This has been discussed and explained both in the Sufi teachings and in the psychology taught in the universities. The surface of the mind has been likened to a sensitive place, and every experience of the senses and every impression that comes to it draws some line upon it, attracts some of the life of the mind and energy of the breath. The result is stored in the memory, or what has been called the subconsciousness mind because the average person is not able to recall everything to memory easily, and would probably be in constant confusion if he did. But there is a record of some kind in the akasha, or accommodation made for that purpose.

GITHA: But it in time scatters in pieces.

TASAWWUF: Impressions settle upon the mind and make some form of mold there. From these moulds thought-forms or thought-forces arise and the more thought that is given to them the more life they have. But when they are not fed by recurring thought, they lose the little vitality they have, and the atoms and vibrations which compose them are scattered back into their original elements. Advantage is taken of this in forgiving and forgetting. In that case one rids himself purposely of undesirable impressions.

GITHA: And when one remembers it, by the power of the will he gathers the pieces that were scattered once, making it whole.

TASAWWUF: Memory thus depends somewhat upon life or will. If one has no interest, the experience may hardly make a mark. Yet every glance affects the light of mind and every sensation is an activity upon two worlds, the world within and the world without. The glance of the spiritual person is trained so that it can be directed upon the consciousness of a talib or sick person or one seeking aid and there arouse in him the latent energy of his heart.

The longer one practices concentration and performs Fikr, the easier it is to arrange, control and rearrange the atoms and vibrations which are associated with his mind. He can collect and disperse the fragments at will. By holding them together he remembers, and by scattering he forgets. But the master-mind does both of these at will, and does not permit thought-patterns and thought-forms to obsess him.

GITHA: The question arises, "What makes the object scatter?" The answer is, shadows of the objects we see and store in the mind fall upon the object, cutting it to pieces.

TASAWWUF: Every impression that we receive from earth casts a shadow upon the mind and makes a mark upon the mind. If we continue to give thought to that impression we draw the energy from the light of the mental sphere to it, while if we give thought to other impressions their shadows are

thrown upon the former impression which is thus covered and scattered. If this did not happen we could never think because impression would pile upon impression filling the mind to no purpose.

Indeed every thought throws a kind of shadow around it, just as every light throws shadows by falling upon objects, the shadow extending in the direction opposite to the light. Nevertheless the work of the mystic includes his drawing upon the light incessantly even though thereby shadows fall.

GITHA: And yet the pieces of every object remain close together; it is the affinity between pieces that holds them.

TASAWWUF: Every object, whether its form is merely temporary like that of a passing cloud, or more permanent like a tree or skeleton or mountain is composed of atoms of the same nature, combined together according to the law of attraction. By this law similar atoms are drawn together and held together; thus was the earth made and all form created. And one may have an impression of a mountain, and the mountain may not be destroyed when the impression is removed because of the law of affinity. Yet it is possible to destroy any physical form, and there are two mental methods for this. One is to give no thought to it, whereupon it will languish and die for the destructive movement is also going on every moment; the other is to use the thought to destroy it purposely.

GITHA: Man groups them by the power of his will and by the light of intelligence in his waking state.

TASAWWUF: It is the light of intelligence which illuminated Malakut as the sun illuminated the physical world. Were it not for some interference this light would shine continually and continuously. The influence of Nufsaniat is such that there are constant shadows thrown upon the mind-sphere; there is constant change and momentum.

While the ordinary man is not able to control his thoughts very much, one who concentrates because of the spirit of the genius within him, or one who is a devotee or lover develops this ability or has it naturally, but its scope is often limited. The master-mind learns to use his will-power at all times, to draw upon the power of that light of intelligence to give light and magnetism to those thoughts, ideals and ideas which he considers desirable and this automatically excludes the radiance from the undesirable thoughts which have difficulty in sending roots to his mind.

GITHA: When in a dream, sometimes he cannot group them properly, for the light of intelligence is dim and the power of the will is feeble.

TASAWWUF: When a person goes to sleep he may enter a realm of shadows. This is especially true when there are strong influences from his daily life; these influences remain with him and he has dreams. They are of no particular significance. They are merely the impressions which have been affixed upon his mind, and when his eyes are closed to the vision of the outer world he sees them in his mind, but they have no more significance than ordinary scenery which one passes by.

In sleep as the body relaxes the mind also relaxes a little. Then man can live in the mind-world. As he has not cultivated his inner light his consciousness remains in the shadows, so most people have what may be known as shadow dreams. They may consist of things connected with their daily life, or with wishes or ambitions, even with lusts. Various schools of interpretations of dreams offer

various explanations, most of which are not completely satisfying because they overlook even the simplest ones.

There is a vast difference between wish and will. Wish is a temporary desire which, while it may be said to be the offspring of individual will, is a part of the will cut off by the shadow of nufs, as if it were possible to cut an individual ray from the sun. The fulfillment of wish in a dream may have an effect, good or bad. It may be called good when it supplements material action, it is considered bad when its effect is depleting. A wish-dream may or may not precede the material event connected therewith, it may be a substitute. Generally one has these dreams when the channel of breath is not clear; often when there is an accumulation of gases within the body, which affect both body and mind. Psychologists generally have ignored this important material factor in their explanations of dreams.

People of strong mentalities often need less sleep because their wills are more developed and they can control body and mind more. The will, as a ray of divine light, hardly needs sleep. Nor does the mind need so much sleep as it is developed more, especially when one is able to meditate properly. Sufis who practice meditation and concentration have found it possible to get along with comparatively little sleep. And when one grows accustomed to rising early in the morning, after a while one will find it unnecessary to sleep long.

GITHA: Therefore, sometimes one sees a lion with eagle's wings or a man with the ears of the elephant.

TASAWWUF: This is a state of uncontrolled imagination. Strange forms in dreams often indicate the condition of the dream. The subject of the dream may be symbolic or it may refer to something outside the ordinary sense-range. In ancient times creatures of higher evolution were often depicted through a combination of forms, the idea being that each form symbolized certain characteristics. But when man has such dreams it is generally because he has not strength of will to hold a form properly. Instead of it being a higher development, it may often mean a lesser development.

Drunkards and opium-eaters see strange forms, and it seems that under the influence of drugs they behold their wishes and make their own heavens. What happens, however, is that they establish a sort of gaseous-heaven, not having any power to hold forms in their minds. And when they have not the strength to keep the suitable forms before them, then monsters and monstrosities appear and the same thing which may have been a source of delight also binds the victim to a hell from which escape is not so easy because of delusion piled upon delusion.

GITHA: All things seen and unseen that man sees in his dreams are pieces of more than one object joining them together thus, owing to the lack of will and intelligence.

TASAWWUF: This reveals samsara or Nufsaniat. While the ordinary person cannot control this, the master-mind, by his power over the mental atoms, can produce a state wherein his mind does not dream at all. When he wishes to rest, he rests, and when he wishes to sleep, he sleeps. He can shut his mind from all the impressions. He can also by his concentration keep it in a state wherein it may be receptive also. This does not mean that holy men dream, they may not dream at all, but they can shut out all the undesirable dreams. Many people go to sleep, dream and wake up fatigued because during the night the mind has continued to consume mental magnetism.

GITHA: The master-mind sees real dreams ...

TASAWWUF: That is to say, one who knows how to shut out all the earthly and all the undesirable impressions, who tranquilizes nefs, has the real inner vision and when there is real inner vision in sleep one has real dreams. This study of dreams is a subject of itself which is taken up by talibs on the path of occultism, which is to say, the science of inner phenomena. There are several classes of these inner dreams, such as direct and pure, indirect, symbolic, astral and spiritual. All of them depend to a greater or lesser extent upon man's ability to assimilate the divine light.

GITHA: ... because his will-power even in the dream is powerful and his intelligence even in that state is bright.

TASAWWUF: That is one reason why the talib performs many spiritual practices at night. Some, like the Wazifas, shut out all the shadows and shadow-forces which bring the delusions. Others like Fikr and Kasab, in their various ways, open up the accommodation for light. This makes possible the receiving of Divine Grace and Blessing. Even the words of the prayers, such as the last line of Saum can become actualized during sleep by the master-mind. And if one holds on to these words after he has gone to bed, after awhile he will have reached a state wherein he is protected from all evil influences, and may receive blessings and inspirations. Then his life will become complete, being closed to God neither day nor night.

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Githa

Series II Number 8

Constant Dwelling Upon Thoughts

GITHA: Dwelling on a thought comes from two sources: one is something external, an object or being, that constantly brings to our mind a certain thought, and the presence of this reminds man of the same thought, which he may be willing to hold or unwilling.

TASAWWUF: Every external experience makes some mark upon the mind, even though that mark may be temporary. It is only by such means that external knowledge is gained. A mirror of itself may hold nothing; a photographic plate also receives light and the line brings impressions which are recorded upon it. So the mind receives and this process is called learning. And if the slate or record of the mind is to be cleared away that process may be called unlearning. The world has been so much interested in learning that it has paid little attention to the unlearning.

Thus ordinary learning consists of receiving impressions from the world and building thoughts upon these impressions. Repetition and other devices help in this. The whole Western accumulation of learning is based upon this method which is regarded as most practical. But there is too much of the tendency to open the door in one direction, to receive and accumulate facts, even to no purpose. And the result is that education and study do not bring wisdom, the cream of life. This is only possible when the mind gets into the Buddhic condition. Then it sees a purpose in every little experience and knows whether to store the impressions in the memory or to root them from the soil of the mind.

The mystic therefore passes through the phases of learning and unlearning both and after that he comes to transmutation. This is the perception of the life in thought, so that one can derive lasting benefit from it. It often requires a selfless attitude, and it has been found that through selflessness it is much easier to learn and unlearn both; then to see the deeper purpose behind every experience and perceive that the life is not confined to one plane, that all planes are close to each other.

Psychologists have talked about the association of ideas, a device which often helps a person to recall something he has forgotten through its relationship to something which is present in his mind. This device and others used in memory training, while they have some advantages also wear out the mind, they bring fatigue, they consume mental magnetism. A better way, perhaps, would be to learn concentration which can only be done through its practice, and by it one could develop greater mental faculties and awaken hidden genius-qualities.

GITHA: The next source is feeling, which holds a thought constantly before the mind.

TASAWWUF: This tells us a secret about what does hold a thought before us. If it were not for that there might be neither learning nor unlearning; the mind might remain blank. Yet it is also true that in the angelic world whose inhabitants depend upon feeling, that thought is not retained. It is reflected as an image is in a mirror but does not remain. But this is also true of every person, only he becomes interested in some reflections and not in others. He looks into the mirror, and then

identifies himself with the mirror and finally comes to regard the reflections are realities and is thus caught in the web of delusion.

GITHA: It may be pleasure or pain. Pain lasts longer than pleasure, for the feeling of pain is deep whereas that of pleasure is passing.

TASAWWUF: Indeed when pleasure remains and becomes deep it often turns into pain. That which begins as a delight or source of delight and is persisted in often becomes a source of revulsion. Every person has experienced this with regard to food, sex-indulgence and every kind of pleasure. If one keeps on with them a long time the reaction comes which is not expected, proving that heaven and hell depend mostly upon attitude.

Both pleasure and pain indicate agitation of ego. Pleasure is that in which the ego delights. Pain requires the ego to move or to change its state or to be restrained. Therefore man shuns it yet he cannot avoid it because it is so connected with his false self. Besides under pleasure the mind often becomes intoxicated and only pain brings sobriety. So we learn through pain how to avoid those things which cause us pain.

GITHA: It is therefore that Sufis have considered love the greatest help to concentration for two reasons: First, the object of love stays constantly in the thought.

TASAWWUF: While pleasure and pain may be called the feelings of dualism, love is the feeling which takes one into unity. In love a relationship is established between the self and not-self which finds its consummation only in their union. Such love is all-powerful and when man is under the spell of love thought does not mean so much to him; he is moved by the love which radiates through his whole life.

What has to be avoided is the thought of love as a substitute for love. This has stood in the way through the ages. People speak of love and think of love and often are under the delusion that such concentration upon love is love. It is not love, nothing is love which keeps the ego in view; in love something or someone other than ego is in view at all times and there is constant attention to the person or ideal. This is the true concentration which carries one forward from stage to stage, from state to state.

Sufis and Bhaktis have used the method of love, and when once it is awakened it becomes all-compelling because the secret of life and the secret of love are one (Ishk Allah, Mahbood lillah). The lover makes his mind his servant, and the devotee also makes the mind his servant. And if one follows the stages of concentration carefully he will observe that as he advances he becomes freer from the agitations of ego and the countless thoughts and impressions which would burden the mind.

GITHA: Next, pain being the outcome of love, it makes the concentration stronger, as there is a verse, "The bringers of joy are the children of sorrow."

TASAWWUF: There is the pain of separation and there is the pain of intense longing, which latter is one of the greatest forces in the universe. Under their spell one is more apt to become single-minded, to work and pray for one objective, for one ideal alone, even if it be nothing else than the surcease from pain. This makes a person tender and sympathetic, more apt to be compassionate and considerate.

GITHA: This accounts for the serious people being thoughtful and the jolly people being lighthearted.

TASAWWUF: Serious people have experienced pain and thus they become more solicitous for others. They do not wish others to receive blows as they have experienced. Every blow forces one to seek deeper into the heart, and though one may receive blow after blow as if a pile driver were forcing him down, the further down he goes the more treasures will he uncover.

There are two types of light-hearted people, those who have never experienced the pains of life and those who veil themselves, hiding their identity. The former may be called frivolous; the latter are veiled and thus protect themselves.

GITHA: This is natural concentration, which is done unintentionally.

TASAWWUF: There is nothing out of place in such concentration. Man was meant to have a certain awakening in order that his faculties might be developed and used. It was not destined for him to go through any particular process and if he has not been entirely caught in the web of delusion so much the better. Besides the path to God cannot be circumscribed by the Sufi Movement or even by spiritual training. "God moves in many mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."

GITHA: This is the reason why it cannot be called mystical concentration.

TASAWWUF: Mystical concentration is impelled from within, and all the power is drawn from the heart, operating through the will, throwing light upon the mind. There is a very definite technique in it, and one does not develop in it because of the force of circumstances. He develops in it as he increases his capacity for the receiving of the inner light and all its blessings.

GITHA: For a mystic is powerful enough to hold a thought by the power of feeling at will, whether pleasure or pain, and would not allow any thought or feeling to work against his wishes.

TASAWWUF: As a lover holds one central theme before him so does the mystic, only the mystic does not limit his object or ideal of love. It may be that he sees the whole universe as an accommodation for love, or as an accommodation for duty, opportunity for growth. Or he may feel that his every effort should be in harmony with the divine will and he strives always for the accomplishment of that will. As nothing can stand before God, so he holds himself steadfast until he succeeds in his attainment. He does not permit his reason or that of another to stand before him.

For this reason the talib in Sufism is required to go through a course of Gatha "studies," as they are called. This period is in reality one of probation and trial. If he endures it he becomes better fitted to carry on the responsibilities and also to receive the blessings which are poured upon him in his later development. This will continue until will and love flow together in the stream of Kaza, the universal will. Then the divine will and his will become united, he feels the Presence in whatever he does.

GITHA: He turns pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure as he may choose.

TASAWWUF: What the ordinary man calls pleasure may be a burden to the mystic and what the ordinary man counts as disagreeable or irksome he may find to his satisfaction. When pain comes he seeks the reason for it and often he finds that it is a purge to his heart, which ultimately gives him the strength needed for his next duty. When a pleasure is there he does not identify himself with

it, but seeks the wisdom beneath it in identically the same manner as with pain. Thus he comes to search for God with every experience of life.

GITHA: To him both are the same and both serve his purpose. Sometimes sweet is pleasant and sometimes bitter is useful, as even poison serves as a means to heal, and sometimes sweet causes an increase in illness.

TASAWWUF: We know this to be true in the outer sphere. It is true also on the inner planes. What is before the mystic in his concentration is its usefulness, he has a purpose in it. The ordinary man delights in certain tastes and certain experiences without taking into account the results. The concentration of the mystic includes all the three stages of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval, and he sees them as parts of one complete whole. Therefore the immediate experience or state is not the final one.

There is a remarkable aspect to this also, that one who does this more easily responds to the Voice of the Silence or Spirit of Guidance (whichever one may choose to call it). Not that one hears anything during concentration, but at the same time he absorbs the vibrations of the light of intelligence through his practices.

GITHA: The master of concentration is he in whose command all thoughts and feelings stand in discipline and he can drill them as he likes.

TASAWWUF: That is the reason why one is carried through many grades in concentration, to learn to uplift the direction of his mental activities, to receive impressions on as high a plane as possible making capacity therefore, to uplift in every way his vision and to increase his keen sight. As one does that it becomes easier to rise above all the vibrations, agitations and movements which disturb the ordinary man making meditation and concentration so difficult and life so unsure.

As his plane of effort is higher and finer, the sage makes his heart like steel to withstand the blows that fall upon him, and yet like rubber that it remains tender even in the fact of blows. He avoids the dualistic attitude of finding things lovely or unlovely because so often these depend upon one's point of view, one's evolution or other factors. He seeks to uproot all evil and ugliness in himself, and then he finds it much easier to control his thoughts and feelings. As he breaks down the barriers which divide men he becomes mightier and mightier on the path to mastery.

GITHA: He becomes the commander of life and a king of the world within and without.

TASAWWUF: Not because he seeks it, but because it comes to him. He may not be thinking of himself at all. Or in another sense, as he finds the self so vast, so majestic and seeks to know more about himself, that search develops in him faculties of which the average man may not be aware. As his horizon expands so his influence may grow, expressed or not expressed, revealed or not revealed. Thus he comes to the fruition of his purpose of life.

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Githa

Series II Number 9

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: When a Sufi develops concentration he does not need a regular concentration, although a Sufi likes to do it, for his life becomes a concentration.

TASAWWUF: One may mean by this that the talib who has become successful in holding images within his mind and in mastering the impressions maybe called a Sufi. Whatever is given to him as a concentration whether of the symbolic type, or through the grades of progression in Murakkabah, or to produce self-effacement (fana), he will be successful in. Yet all these types of concentration reach their fulfillment when life becomes a concentration and when the method that he uses in his spiritual lessons is applied as the method by which he makes his way in the world.

There is one supreme purpose in life for every personality. Each one has his key note and with that keynote and its attendant notes he makes his music of life and that is the way of his character development. Then no activity becomes useless because he finds a purpose, a meaning in everything. His everyday life is the world where he applies his spiritual teaching and sacred knowledge.

GITHA: If he is speaking on a certain subject, he does not suddenly change the subject of his conversation.

TASAWWUF: The mureed is taught that there is the grade of learning the message, assimilating the message and spreading the message. These need not be separated one from the other; they may overlap and commingle. If one is taught that single-mindedness is needed in concentration, studying and development, it is also needed in application. The same principles apply to the world within as to the world without. And as unity in speech, thought and action makes for spiritual success, so this process of unification continues on at all times.

Besides that, right speech is dependent upon right thinking and no matter what thought be held in the mind, there is a thought-form established in the mind-world, and there is a karmic result from it. When that thought becomes speech and deed it is fulfilled in a certain sense. And if one starts to speak and establishes impressions half-way in the minds of others, then there are incomplete thoughts. These incomplete thoughts are the sources of confusion and obsession. Their fulfillment is the sign of right thinking.

GITHA: If he is thinking about something, he does not break his thought.

TASAWWUF: Even students in schools and universities feel that. Those who complete their studies on one subject before passing to the next are more likely to receive the best grades. Their minds become like machines of high efficiency. By this it is meant that the greater the effort the greater the result. The mind is more likely to retain what is studied when it is one-pointed.

When one starts a line of thought and adheres to it he is as a farmer who plants a tree and tends it, thinning it, weeding around it, pruning it and harvesting his crop in due seasons. He observes the teaching of Solomon, "There is a time for all things." And he does not depart from his task until it is wise. Then the tree becomes stronger and stronger, more beautiful and less attention has to be paid to it. The thought will go out and do work as of itself. The tawakkuls will become the servants of such a master-mind.

GITHA: And if he is doing something, he does not change his mind and leave it half-done in order to accomplish something else.

TASAWWUF: There is more loss of psychic power thereby than in anything else. It is very unfortunate when the idea is given out that another task is more important than the one at hand. There is a life and thought given to every duty and when unfinished, the thought-forces connected therewith become as weeds upon the mind. Then one feels over-burdened, he is not free, he cannot be happy. He will be carrying burdens because of these unaccomplished duties.

GITHA: He continues at every moment the work he is doing at the time until it is finished. That is the secret of concentration.

TASAWWUF: This is also the secret of power and mastery. And if a person has several duties sometimes it is best to do the ones he does not like first, and finish them. There is a thought, a certain kind of breath with each activity of life. Each one has its element of Urouj, Kemal and Nasoul and when there is harmony and balance between them there is harmony and balance between all aspects of life. This teaching is also presented in "The Mysticism of Sound" for thereby harmony is established within man and after that it is so easy to become harmonious with the world.

GITHA: A person may practice concentration for a certain time in the day and then if throughout the day he keeps on changing his mind from one thing to the other he will not be able to accomplish concentration in a thousand years.

TASAWWUF: That is why it is so necessary to connect the everyday life with the spiritual efforts. As a person develops in concentration and as his faculty of insight increases he can learn to feel what he should do during the day. It is as if there was a scroll of time before him and he could read that scroll and follow the advice thereon. Each day can become a unity, a cycle, and the whole of life can be connected therewith. Then if one completes a duty, no matter how small, that particular day, it will add to his magnetism and psychic power and make his further tasks easier.

One can, of course, practice Darood and that will help him maintain the right rhythm with his duty and he will become more willing to apply himself. His very breath will become more harmonious with the universal atmosphere, and he will find himself on the path to peace.

GITHA: Single-mindedness is the secret of concentration.

TASAWWUF: If one will learn that, he will learn one of the greatest secrets of life. There are ignorant people who speak about concentrating upon several things. If they think about combining several things in a single concentration there may be some truth in it. But it is really nonsense to talk about concentrating upon several things because that is not concentration. The desire nature runs after this and that and man has his lusts; they are not changed by his use of different words. The Buddha and

all great teachers have advised against this very thing, and have warned man that if he wishes to rise above delusion and follow and attain to emancipation he must not desire in that manner.

Whether it be inventor or plotter, bank-robber or bank president, sage or scholar, it is by sticking to the path that leads to the goal of attainment that establishes success in life.

GITHA: Thereby man improves his manners. When a man speaking about something, before the subject is finished, begins to say something else, as many people do, and while doing a thing before it is half-done begins to do something else, it is all ill-manners besides lack of concentration.

TASAWWUF: One knows that in social affairs, when even only two or three are gathered, it is quite impolite to change the subject of conversation and to show one's lack of interest in the remarks of others. Usually when there are several people, as the thought applied to the subject of conversation wanes, there is a period of silence and this makes it possible to change the subject without offense. Otherwise it can be done gradually.

Another way is to allow a person to be a sort of leader and to obtain the keynote from him. The mystic will try to attune the conversations of those present and will not always present the subject matter although he will always strive to bring about the harmonious results. And besides the social values in it there is a metaphysical advantage, for then one follows dharma, and as one sets such an example he helps others who will learn the same habit from him.

GITHA: There is also a possibility that a person with great development in concentration may become the slave of concentration, so that he may not be able to put out of his mind any thought that happens to come or he cannot stop humming a tune of which he himself has grown tired or he cannot throw off depression because a depressing thought holds his mind, the mind that is developed and capable of concentration.

TASAWWUF: Mostly this will indicate lack of knowledge of breath or deficiency of heart-development. When the heart is awakened there is less liability of depression and other undesirable psychological states. Also the master of concentration knows how to unlearn as well as how to learn. He not only receives the desirable impressions, he knows how to eliminate the undesirable impressions. Fikr helps in both and that is why the spiritual life is of tremendous advantage to the intellectual, who, though they may know how to concentrate well, are otherwise liable to become the slaves of concentration.

In the Buddhist teachings concerning the eight-fold path right-mindfulness and right concentration (or meditation) are included. The ignorant only too often explain that this means there are right ways and wrong ways and we should avoid the wrong ways. The wise see in such terms mere empty words, because every person has his ideas as to right and wrong. But there is a way of harmony with supreme law and one may maintain harmony with supreme law or one may go on the path of self-will. In this sense one may say there is a certain "right" way and that may be called "dharma" and any departure therefrom would be "adharma."

Therefore right concentration is that in which one observes all the moral, metaphysical and other principles which he has learned and makes no excuses for departing therefrom. Otherwise when he concentrates he may draw down upon himself mental forces and then cannot rid himself of them

when he desires, as the sorcerer's apprentice. If the mind is kept clear and pure, no one need fear such dangers.

GITHA: The Sufi therefore masters concentration but does not so let concentration master him. Mastery being the only motive that leads to perfection.

TASAWWUF: It has been explained how various concentrations lead to mastery, and how development along certain lines make of one a master though he has no such thought in his mind. One may say that concentration has rules or laws. These have been explained and when one follows them in all their simplicity and observes the rhythms of Urouj, Kemal and Zaval, his every step in life will become easier and easier. And if there is anything to add it is to keep in the consciousness that God is the only being, that man is the servant of God and his instrument and that in all our actions, thoughts and words we can be led by the Divine Spirit. Then we need never fear of being the slave of anything else.

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Githa

Series II Number 10

Murakkabah or Concentration

GITHA: Sometimes one pictures an object in his mind's eye and sees it, after a time, standing before him in reality.

TASAWWUF: This is the great accomplishment in concentration and is the sign of the master-mind. No matter how skillful one is in developing impressions and ideas and visions on the inner plane, life is not completed until this skillfulness is manifested without. And one may ask if this is the result of personal ability or the Grace of God, whether man attains it or whether God gives it to man.

Actually one can give no exact answer. For the development in Murakkabah is also a development in attunement, and the ego of the evolved person is not the same as the ego of the ordinary person. Success depends to a great extent upon divine attunement. Then one becomes the channel for divine activity and whatever he wishes may then be in tune with the divine will, and so it will come to pass. Furthermore the events of this world are patterned along the lines of mental activity and the greater one's control of the mental atoms, the surer he is to direct his own life first and then the lives of others. And if there are any "Lords of Karma" then it is those that have thus mastered Murakkabah.

GITHA: The more concentration of mind a person has the more he has this experience.

TASAWWUF: Concentration means constant effort and even constant repetition, and these in turn produce results. The line made on the mind becomes a deeper and deeper furrow. It draws great power to it until the world cannot stand before it because the material world is nothing before the master-mind and all the events of this world depend upon the conditions of the mind-world which permeate it.

While one begins with concentration as an exercise, drawing from the physical world to establish something upon the mental world, it is said that the real concentration is that performed as God performed it. And according to the theogonies of the world God Himself slumbered, then concentrated and then acted; only His action was instantaneous and did not require any time process to objectify it. Likewise as man approaches the divine threshold he requires less time to obtain results; the attunement and rhythm which he establishes or follows become the shortest path to accomplishment or attainment.

GITHA: I recall things that once I had pictured in my mind coming to reality even twelve years after.

TASAWWUF: For there is a time and rhythm for all things, and therefore patience is needed. Nevertheless what man wishes and longs eventually comes to pass. And the more he dwells upon such thoughts the sooner they will produce effects, or the clearer they will come into objectivity.

Many who have deep desires, selfish or unselfish, do not understand the principle of time. It requires a certain strength in concentration to draw anything toward oneself or to objectification.

Sometimes one has to combat the whole world, to meet many obstacles, even to controvert many enemies, and this requires much personal resourcefulness. Indeed the enemy within is always harder to overcome than the enemy without. Many who seek money talk and talk and thus waste effort which might be used to obtain the goal desired. And there are persons who presume that concentration is something that can be substituted for work and personal effort, a kind of magic or ethereal bribe.

There is nothing ignoble in work and personal effort. In India there is the path of Karma Yoga which seeks spiritual development through personal application, by working in the world and seeing that dharma is accomplished. The drawback has been that it has been set aside as a special path and there have been times in India where practices in concentration have led to gross selfishness, even to black magic. And today there is the same spirit in other parts of the world. People will concentrate for the sake of health, wealth, power and wonder-working, otherwise they may not want it.

When Buddha came into the world this condition was spreading throughout India, and he did his best to combat it. Some of the evils which existed in that day have never returned. And we can learn from Buddha that spiritual success depends largely upon selflessness.

Emerson says that we must be careful as to what we wish because it is most likely to come true. For every thought we have, even the most simple ones, work out their karma and manifest on this plane, although we do not know it. So if we wish to perceive peace, we have to learn to restrain **all** thought and personal effort, making no distinction between good and bad. This is the lesson of Ziraat, that there is no room for man and God, and in order to spiritualize the world, man must obtain supreme control over his own mind.

GITHA: A person wonders, is it that concentration made it in the course of time, or is it that concentration perceived beforehand what was going to come? The fact is that both things are right.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, concentration itself through the increased capacity for receiving impressions does help to develop intuition and foresight. And it is difficult to draw a hard line between the personality of man and the personality of the Universal God (Allah) in this. As one extends his horizon, even without thought, he sublimates his ego and absorbs the eternal life into his being. The lines between self and not-self become more and more dim. His desire harmonizes with the universal will and his feeling, attuned to the divine condition, both foresees and urges him to do that which is in accord with dharma.

Therefore whether one has a concentration selected by a teacher or another person or is following his apparently free will, the result becomes the same in the end.

GITHA: For instance, a person was thinking of buying a diamond of a certain shape, of a certain kind. He perhaps thought for some time strongly and deeply of this. And, after five years, when he had already forgotten about it, somebody presents him with a diamond ring.

TASAWWUF: This is one of the reasons for learning concentration; otherwise our wishes may come true when we may no longer desire it. Indeed they all come true at some time or other, whether we are still in this world or have been freed from earth and are establishing our heaven. Just as it takes time and life for the tree to bear fruit or the flower to blossom, so it is with thought. There are plants which bear flowers in a single year and there are others which require many years. And so it is with thought.

GITHA: Now the question whether his concentration made the diamond for him and made the friend give it to him or whether the diamond was to be given him and therefore he saw it in his concentration may be answered thus: no doubt there was a diamond in store for him, waiting to be given some day, which was his portion in life.

TASAWWUF: If this were not so there would be no feeling which could hold the thought. For there are many things in this world which we might each of us desire and even selfish persons will not desire all of them. They will feel no attraction for some things. This may be because it is not in their karma or because it is not related to the attunement of their heart which lays at the foundation of character.

One is sometimes able to determine whether a certain concentration is of advantage to him by the repetition of Fikr. If Fikr increases the facility by which he holds the object in the mind, then it is right for him and if Fikr does not increase the facility, then it is not his portion in life. Then, when it comes to application, Darood does the same as Fikr. If it is for man, Darood clears the pathway and if it is not, Darood takes away the zest for it, and destroys the Urouj rhythm. Once that enthusiasm is destroyed the desire will not remain. This is one of the ways also by which man seeks God's will.

GITHA: But at the same time the fact of his thinking strongly made the diamond come straight to him without going, perhaps, into the possession of many, and without his striving for it.

TASAWWUF: The law of attraction operates on all planes. The same force which the cobra uses to draw his food toward himself may be used by any man to draw the object of desire toward himself (or himself toward it). Real concentration, however, is not entirely an ego-activity. One has to make an accommodation by which something is drawn toward himself. That is why breathing and feeling have to be united to wishing and thinking. Then whether one calls it striving or not striving it does not matter. The very nature of attunement brings things towards man.

GITHA: Although concentration helps in foreseeing things, yet it is not concentration, it is foresight that aids.

TASAWWUF: Concentration serves to remove all the thoughts which impede foresight in the ordinary man, but concentration is an activity of will operating in the mind whereas foresight is a heart quality which manifests when the heart opens. For the mind is limited by time whereas the heart is not limited. As we ordinarily conceive it, time and space are greater than mind, smaller than heart. Concentration does not of itself make us see ahead and if we have foresight without the faculty of concentration we can nevertheless see ahead in some manner just as the animals do.

GITHA: Therefore a thought of this kind need not be a man's own thought, though at the moment it seems to be so.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, it is not an actual creation or idea of his. It is very hard to say exactly what is man's thought. Sometimes several inventors will get the same or similar ideas at the same time. As soon as one of them conceives something it is a reality in the mind world and others thinking along similar lines, becoming attuned to it and never hearing of it before, believe they have the real inspiration and are the first in their field. Man may pass patent laws but it is very hard to establish a line of justice which would insure the person with insight and foresight to prior rights. How-

ever, if he continued and added concentration and action to these heart-qualities, he would always complete his work before others; his very foresight would keep him at the head of the procession.

Nevertheless in all aspects of life it is hard to distinguish between direct creative thought and ideas selected by attunement. Whatever appears in the mind-world is the property of possession of the universal mind or mind of Adam, and so it becomes the potential property of all humanity.

GITHA: Really speaking, it should be called a vision or an intuition, the former in sleep, the latter in the waking state.

TASAWWUF: Vision is something which appears directly before the mind and seems objectified before the mind although it is subjective so far as this world is concerned. Intuition is a direct form of cognition, an application of the sense of perception not limited to a particular plane. Perhaps more people seem to have vision than intuition because more attention has been paid to dreams and visions and their possible meanings but actually people have intuitions at all hours, day and night, only they pay less attention to them, they are not so impressed by them. And one of the great gifts that comes to the person on the spiritual path is his application of his faculty of intuition; he uses what others ignore.

GITHA: Concentration has the power of creating things.

TASAWWUF: For as man completes his work on the mental plane he establishes the lines by which things will appear on the physical plane. So long as he does not place himself in his view he can do this. It is not necessary that the one who concentrates is the one who will do. The master-mind directs affairs and others do things. An inventor gets an idea of a machine and may make the first model or direct its making. After that other people may buy or build that machine and use it in industry. Thus the original concentration ends in the creation of things.

The same is true of every type of concentration. What appears above appears below is an anciently known occult law. Indeed this world is sustained by thought and the more mankind can direct thought the more successful he will be in making the world a better place for himself and his posterity.

GITHA: It can bring things that were not meant to be for a person.

TASAWWUF: For there is much useless thought. Often we hold thoughts of a nature that we consider all right if they are only held in the mind but we would not wish them to be objectified before our eyes. Yet they may be objectified somewhere and if not before our view then elsewhere. It has been said that many crimes are committed by weak persons who are responsive, who pick up the thoughts of others and carry them into action. One man hates another and keeps on hating but does nothing more; another one with little strength of character or perhaps with criminal tendencies will feel that influence and perform a crime. In the eyes of man he alone is guilty, in the eyes of the cosmos the hater is the real perpetrator.

GITHA: It creates things which otherwise the person might never have, if he had not concentrated his mind on the object.

TASAWWUF: For one can by concentration draw things which he would not obtain by honest work and effort. There have been schools of thought which have encouraged it and as has been explained, there was once a time in India when the knowledge of metaphysics was so misapplied. People see much injustice in the world and there are complaints of the uneven distribution of wealth, of power, of the good things of life. They do not always realize that those who gain do so because they apply the law of attraction, they use it and others do not use it. But it is also true that attraction becomes destruction when there is no moral consideration. Nevertheless talk does not do much to stop those who are concentrating; to overcome them one must make use of equal or greater force.

GITHA: In short, the master of concentration can raise himself from earth to heaven;

TASAWWUF: Which is to say that the master of concentration makes his own conditions. He reaches a point wherein he can arrange conditions on earth to his liking; he sees his wishes objectified. The elementals on the unseen and the machines and people on the seen plane serve him. All things come to pass as he wishes; only it may be he does not wish for much.

GITHA: Can turn a miserable person into a most happy one;

TASAWWUF: This faculty is the one which distinguishes the saint from the devil. For the true master of concentration will make use of his faculty to bring happiness to others, at least to help alleviate their unfortunate conditions. Laws do not change because time passes by and it is still the same human ego which stands in the way of the appearance of heaven upon earth. Yet the one who masters concentration stage by stage has made accommodation within his personality for grace, glory, wisdom, joy and peace. He can communicate something of their blessing to others, and in his presence others may feel their own hearts stir. This in turn changes their feelings for the moment at least and is a healing and purification. The one who does this for others may be a Buzurg or Pir or Rassoul.

GITHA: And can make a person who has always had failures successful.

TASAWWUF: For his suggestion to another will touch the depths of the other's heart. That deep suggestion is sufficient to change the way of any person's mind, which in turn reflects in his actions. Also the master-mind is able to remove something of the opposing conditions which stand in another's way. Many people are unable to battle against fate. When they feel the blessing of a spiritual person they think that fate is not strong enough to keep them down any longer and that means an immediate change in attitude which turns failure into success.

A spiritual teacher's successes are not marked by what he accomplishes personally in life. They are marked by the successes he causes to be manifested through others. This whole idea in concentration is that there is a stream of life, a brotherhood and it may be for one to concentrate and for another to do. In ancient times responsive souls were especially guarded that they might keep in attunement with the gods and goddesses and so protect society. This possibility has been lost in the materialistic age, nor is it necessary to restore the ancient wisdom in its ancient form. But the teacher may concentrate and the mureed may do, and this harmonization between personalities, until many act as a unit, is the greatest step forward toward the establishment of the brotherhood of humanity on earth, or anywhere.

GITHA: Hafiz says: "Befool not thyself, seeing these ragged sleeves (of a dervish) for under this ragged sleeve a most powerful arm is hidden."

TASAWWUF: The dervish or fakir is one who has become devoid of ego, and thus there is no impediment before him. Thus he potentially possesses all wealth, all power, all faculties, although none may be manifesting in him. The Sufi Message is still the same universal message as in ancient times and it offers the same teachings, the same wisdom, the same path. One who follows this line may indeed become a dervish, or a prince of men. But to work together, teacher as master, pupil as executor, through attunement without words being spoken, the disciple discovering the thoughts and will of the teacher is the sign of the spiritual progress of the whole of humanity.

