

Basis and Method of the Commentaries

Excerpts collected by Tansen

GATHEKA: How does one perceive it (Intuition ed.)? It is first expressed in the language of feeling; that feeling spreading within the horizon of mind shapes itself; becoming more narrative of its idea; then mind turns it into a form; then language interprets it to you. Therefore it is the feeling heart to which intuition belongs.

TASAWWUF: Something like that also happened when one turned to writing the commentaries. At first it looked like analysis and personal views. But as one became more attuned to the subject he found the ether, so to speak, which recorded the state of mind of Hazrat Inayat Khan and he attuned to it. He had already learned to attune to Hazrat Inayat Khan when in the flesh; now he was able to attune to the mental imprints.

Then the next stage is to touch the heart-life. This is universal. It penetrates everything of the physical and mental worlds. There is a picture toward the end of The Soul Whence and Whither which symbolizes it. While a symbol, it is also like a chart of reality. The awakened heart can attune to and select everything in the lower worlds. An Edgar Cayce could do this with the physical body; a seer can do it with the mental body also and with events, and knowledge.

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

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

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

Commentary on Mental Purification

In 1930, when in Khilvat on the third anniversary of the death of Hazrat Inayat Khan, his spirit appeared to me and I began writing the commentaries from the standpoint of fana-fi-Sheikh. One of the last letters of Hazrat Inayat Khan, on his deathbed, was to thank me for my efforts. This letter was destroyed in the fire of 1949 along with 25 years research and collections of materials on the above and related subjects. The case of these commentaries is in one's hands.

Letter to Saadia Khawar Kahn May 17, 1967 Diaries 1967

It is hoped someday this person will be given the papers requisite to his place in the spiritual life so he can continue the commentaries as requested by Hazrat Inayat Khan.

Diaries 1967 - 6 Interviews with Hazrat Inayat Khan, VI

Hazrat Inayat Khan asked your Murshid to write commentaries on his writing, and your Murshid could not. Then exactly three years after his death he manifested and began dictating these commentaries, according to the capacity of your Murshid. And neither the language nor the wisdom belong to you Murshid but are products of fana-fi-Sheikh and tasawwuri Murshid.

From Diaries 1964 also in letter to Saadia.

Dear Saladin:

When Hazrat Inayat Khan gave the science of commentaries to this person, it was not envisioned this could be done sub-verbally and super-verbally.

Letter to Paul Reps April 4, 1963

All this time I am working on the commentaries as Pir-o-Murshid wished. Lessons and classes have to be arranged for. Seven classes a week now with probabilities of increase, inshallah. Without the higher papers of Hazrat Inayat Khan must get into mystical states and do creative writing. "The Rejected Avatar" is making a slow sale. There is the probability of submitting "Saladin" at the seminar on mystical experience. There is all the work of several gardens. There is all the work of internal and external attunement to a growing Sufi Order.

...

Our methods are very different. Basically I teach and hope practice that "Murshid and Mureed are one." The invocation is always kept in mind internally and externally.

Letter to Paul Reps April 9 1969

Anyhow one began writing the commentaries first by telepathy which no good Koharich could possibly have accepted and now slowly but positively as the result of inner experiences, understanding and wisdom which no "saint" must ever mention, only the "writers" can do that! Inayat Khan positively stated and who cares!—do not write or speak on what you do not know.

Letter to Paul Reps 27 April 1969

When I revise the commentaries on the Gathas, especially the first series, these will be masterpieces for the future, inshallah.

Letter to Paul Reps August 11, 1963

For there is the way of wisdom and the way of love and they are different and not different, like the two sides of a coin. I am waiting for a book of Hazrat Inayat Khan which was on Health. Once I wrote commentaries on his writings and a fire destroyed them. So one waits and when this comes it may be that we can open up a big field.

Letter to Saadia Khawar Khan 20th April, 1963

By kashf it was known that a certain climax would come in regard to the writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan. After years I have not been able to get back copies of my original commentaries on some of his teachings; always a promise and then an obstacle. Only, one does not react, one must be indifferent: "Praise Allah in prosperity and surrender to Him in adversity."

Letter to Saadia Khawar Khan Aug 3 1963

Beloved One of Allah:

As-salaam aleikhum. Alhamdulillah, at long last one completes one series of papers used by Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan in his class lessons for mureeds. We always used the Invocation, which does not always, but should appear at the top and after that we had a silence. Lessons were read, once each week or occasion, and then re-read at the next. Not too many at one time. There are ten papers of each of seven subjects to cover a year's theoretical training. But actually this covers one bayat, or initiation. For some it is much faster, for the conferring of bayat does not determine the makam of the moment and therefore persons who are advanced were given papers as fast as they could assimilate the contents.

Every word should be taken as real. When your Murshid conducts classes, he internalizes everything by having the mureeds feel whatever is taught. It is almost like a class in dramatics. But it is to become conscious of each thing. And then if one has a short coming naturally, one is able to introduce the counter irritant or medicine.

The Ryazat were not offered as class work first, and the Ryazat must also be taught to teachers with the commentaries. But now your Murshid has collected so much material that will become a mighty project.

But the commentaries on these lessons will be offered on approval or request of Sufi Pir Barkat Ali. For also they are very long and this means much typing, and some expense. Yet there should be no mysteries or complexities in tasawwuf and as the inner being is opened, things become clear.

Letter to Saadia Khawar Khan October 28, 1963

I am "up" in commentaries on Inayat Khan's works, commentaries which will live on after me.

Letter Vocha Fiske. Also Diary April 19 1969

My dear Shamcher,

Commentaries. The most evident harvest at the moment comes out of the interviews with Hazrat Inayat Khan in 1923. At that time he spoke of the Esoteric Constitution, the Science of Commentaries and the specific commentaries on his works, in particular, the Gathas. For purposes of clarity, and I am not even sure of the clarity, the subject will now be divided into Commentary and Esotericism.

As there are various planes in the universe, the first commentaries were necessarily discursive and intellectual. The intuition is that today Sam has enough intellectual accumulations, but he will send one or more disciples to the university to continue researches on the Mysteries.

The first commentaries were necessarily intellectual. They immediately merged into fana-fi-

Sheikh. The original basis of commentary, once the ego-accumulations had been fulfilled, was the opening of the mind of Hazrat Inayat Khan. A long time after, this was further expanded with the initiations into fana-fi-Rassoul. These in turn merged with what began as "Meditations on Salat." The commentaries thus merged intellection, self-effacement, and Divine Expression or Inspiration through one or more individuals. Thus the drawing by a very responsive disciple which appears in The Rejected Avatar.

Presuming here that Naqshibandi or symbology is the core of the Gathas, we have gone through phases of simple art and concentration practices (Murakkabah) which begin the Gatha studies. Art thus finds its outlet. But a higher dimension has intervened in the form of dance, ritual, and pageant. One could hardly imagine the effects of three and four dimensional applications of the Gatha studies. This is what is taking place today.

Ryazat. After this letter is written, at some time this morning the first serious efforts will be made to go over "the Ryazat of Inayat Khan." Some of this work has already been completed, but neither indexed nor put in order. Besides, with a single exception, it has not been applied, nor can it be until it is properly blended with the earlier commentaries on Ryazat (esotericism) of Githas series I, II, and III. This is the very core of the inner side of the Message.

Letter Shamcher Beorse November 11, 1968

Fana might well be the Arabic correlative of the biblical panah which means "turn the face to, respect." Practically it means "effacement in," for one dies to one self to live in the teacher (Sheikh), human ideal (Rassoul) and divinity (Allah) in turn. In its negative form it is called fana, in its positive form, tasawwuri.

But there is always a question in Sufis as to how far does the individual perform and how far one is subject to grace. The theory, as appears in Kashf-al-Mahjub of Al-Hujwiri and other books is that one's station (makam) is the result of one's effort, but one's state (hal) is the result of Divine Grace. In February 1930 I went into seclusion to commemorate the third anniversary of Hazrat Inayat Khan's passing and he appeared to me in quite physical form and began communicating in what we might call a telepathic fashion, although so far all persons and groups pretending to be interested in telepathy have refused any reports.

In 1926 when I called on Hazrat Inayat Khan at the Beverly Hills Hotel to report on the events of 1925, he sent for me constantly and there were six interviews. One of these concerned the science of commentary. Indeed just before his death in February 1927 he sent a letter of praise and approval for the first efforts.

But after he appeared it seems that the major portion of these commentaries were nothing but direct mental transmissions from the teacher.

From that point on to 1945 one felt an increasing awareness of the Pir. This did not often produce any emotional effects, which are quite common. The records were in two forms, the commentaries and the diaries. Most of the diaries were destroyed in a fire on the night of December 31, 1949. These included a tremendous amount of auguries, which the public would call "prophecies." Some of these foretellings were prophetic and these were in a book which was saved from the fire. They make Nostradamus and Blake look like amateurs, but they are nothing, absolutely nothing before the sayings of the great Saints, Christian and Islamic.

Genuine Mystical Experience Versus Pseudo-Mystical Experience

Six Interviews with Hazrat Inayat Khan (1970)

IV. Fourth Interview

The fourth interview with Hazrat Inayat Khan in Beverly Hills in 1926 had to do with the Gatha classes and related subjects. I had already been under the tutelage of Murshida Rabia Martin, his first disciple and his senior Murshida, despite the antics and policies of legal entities later established.

He had followed the teacher-pupil method common to some extent in mystical and esoteric schools, but it was agreed upon for a new age presentation of spiritual teachings, and to further a real active brotherhood/sisterhood, that there should be common lessons for all.

In 1925, these were largely called Gathekas for non-disciples and Gathas for disciples. But these were followed by papers called Githas, Sangathas, and Sangithas, arranged according to an esoteric constitution and presumably in accord with the teachings published in Volume X of *The Sufi Message*, "The Path of Initiation and Discipleship." All items and elements of this definitely published work were entirely in accord with earlier writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, but not necessarily in accord with voting proceedings of any legal entity bearing the name "Sufi."

At the other extreme was the seizure of my papers by Mrs. Ivy Duce, when she became leader of the Western movement. Totally disregarding everything else, she seized all my papers without any regard to either the moral teachings (as published in *The Sufi Message*) or the aforesaid "Path of Initiation and Discipleship" or anything else. Thus the records of Hazrat Inayat Khan have fallen almost entirely into the hands of legal entities, posing as mystical organizations, and operating independently of, if not contrary to, his teachings, and certainly independently of and contrary to the teachings and methods of Sufi orders both as written in literature and as practiced today by living orders in many parts of the world.

The teachings for the first three years are called Gathas and they were to be read in a certain manner. According to the esoteric constitution, Khalifs are supposed to submit commentaries on the Gathas, the work of the first three years' disciplines; and Murshids are to do the same for the Githas, the work of the fourth, fifth and sixth initiations. Murshida Martin had already been given full initiation and with it naturally full rights long before the establishment of any legal entity in England or Europe. The legal entities established presumably in London at one time and in Geneva at another time have no right according to any standard to operate *ex post facto*, and even less to operate contrary to both the written instructions of a Pir or to Sufi traditions and customs.

Rabia Martin had full instructions and permission from Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan to comment on the teachings, and all statements to the contrary are nothing but signs of unfitness of persons making such statements. As I had been studying with Rabia Martin, even in 1923 Hazrat Inayat Khan had spoken with me about the subject of commentaries. But the papers were not yet available. In 1926 the papers were available and he went into details on the subject matter. He gave me exact instructions of how he wished the Gathas to be presented, but he spent more time on the subject of commentaries. I immediately began this work, which he acknowledged on his deathbed, but which his European representatives never acknowledged in any form.

It is almost like a sort of logic that Hazrat Inayat Khan took up the subject of Gatha commentaries in detail with me, and I later discovered that the Khalifs, or tenth grade initiates in the Sufi Order, were expected to write commentaries thereon. It is notable that when one submitted to a contest for the Khalifate one passed easily, evidence of one's position in the gradients of both the esoteric papers and what has been published in "The Path of Initiation and Discipleship." (It is also notable that when one submitted to other contests for Khalifship one had no difficulty in passing.) It is only the legal entities, posing as Sufi orders, where one's work has been nullified and ignored. This holds true only in the

Western world. It does not hold for any traditional Sufi order based on the path of initiation. Everyone in the East has accepted, and there are a lot of them.

The general method of presenting Gathas to the disciples was the same as appeared elsewhere. But one read later in records which have since been suppressed, that the Gathas and esoteric papers belonged to, and belong to, the Sufi Order and not the Sufi Movement. The Sufi Movement was organized to facilitate the outer workings for the Sufi Order, which in its fundamentals is not separate from parent bodies, a matter which has been investigated further by Pir Vilayat Khan who received full recognition from the Chisti Order, which validates any claim he may make regardless of the actions and attitudes of any legal entity calling or mis-calling itself “Sufi” or anything else.

The other item was that of the commentaries. One found that the actual writing of commentaries was an application of teachings above alluded to—that to have the prowess to do such writing one had to have reached conscious operations in what have been referred to as Vijnanamayakosh and Anandamayakosh.

There are a number of schools in the West, and perhaps some in the East, which claim to present the Gita, without full recognition of Vijnana and Ananda. Yet it is only conscious functioning, if not initiation at such levels that give one the prowess to comment. The Ten Sufi Thoughts, which are read to candidates for Bayat, may of course be legally nullified by corporations, and this has occurred. But to be a real disciple in real Sufism, one has to accept these principals as operations of God, so to speak, and the universe. The nullification of these principles by legal entities has made a travesty of Sufism in the West, and caused writers like Idries Shah to so express themselves.

But this all applies to externals. The descent of Baraka and similar operations (which are found in the mystical processes of perhaps all faiths) continue to go on. God, so to speak, does not consult any legal group as to whom God may bless or manifest to. So the work of commentary goes on, and also helps fill the gaps arising either from the incompleteness of the teachings, or their legal but immoral withdrawal by votes of boards of directors of legal entities. There is no Bayat to any legal entity. There may be a Bayat to a representative of the Sufi Order—Sufi Order, not Sufi Movement—or to Teachers of the seen or Unseen, who do not consult with legal entities as to who is worthy or unworthy.

GATHEKA: If the spiritual link cannot hold, how can a material link keep intact? It will wear out, being only a worldly link. If spiritual thought cannot form a link between two souls, what else can constitute such a strong tie that it can last both here and in the hereafter?

TASAWWUF: The whole idea of commentaries may be challenged. Many have written commentaries to see them destroyed. Others have destroyed their own commentaries. But the link with Hazrat Inayat Khan enables us to restore a suitable science and art of commentaries to help people to understand, especially those who go on the spiritual path. And more and more people will need this and do this and all the help that can be given them should be given them.

Commentary on The Path of Initiation and Discipleship

GATHA: Knowledge of another person's pleasure or displeasure, the message of affection, the warning of hostility, all are received by the way of the breath.

TASAWWUF: The teachings of Metaphysics, in their higher phrases, were once limited to the classes for disciples, but later published in A Sufi Message and elsewhere. There is some doubt whether they can mean anything to those who have not imbibed the spirit of the true Teacher who alone has had such experiences. And therefore it has also become necessary to write commentaries on this subject for disciples so they can understand what is in the literature, what has been published which was

originally not intended for everybody but for mureeds. Still no harm can come, only confusions and theory instead of realization.

Pasi Anfas: Breath—Gatha with Commentary Series II

My own journey in fana-fi-Sheikh began on February 5, 1930, exactly three years after his death, when the Pir-o-Murshid appeared to me and helped me “from the other side” to write the commentaries on his esoteric works, i.e., his lessons for mureeds (initiated disciples). This was a provision in the constitution of the Sufi Order.

The Lotus and the Universe

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

Sangatheka Number 2

Beloved Ones of God:

Many questions will come into your minds as to the conduct of classes. These questions will be answered by your Pir-o-Murshida, and later by the Murshids who are given charge over the work. One should never be ashamed to consult them on any and all spiritual matters.

The first question will be about the reading of the papers. Directions for this have been carefully laid down, but each one of you will receive individual instructions on this point. Murshids and Khalifs are permitted to give comments on the papers, which have therefore been called “skeleton outlines,” but the Sheikhs and Readers should not undertake this without permission.

The Sheikh, however, is permitted to read parallel passages from other of Pir-o-Murshid’s works, and when all his books and papers have been edited, you will receive the indexes by which you can do this. After the first reading of the paper, questions are sometimes in order. This is a little different procedure, perhaps, than has been permitted, but because Pir-o-Murshid had to spend so much of his time in Europe where even many of the leaders were blind, the rules had to be stringent. At the same time, for the first year, it is advisable to permit as few questions in class as possible; it is much better to have each mureed come to you in private.

Later there will be commentaries on the Gathas, and when that is so, the Pir-o-Murshid(a) and the Jamiat will establish the precedents and methods for using these.

The one who sits in the post of teacher, whether Murshid, Khalif, Sheikh or Reader represents the Spiritual Hierarchy, and yet at the same time they are a mureed or pupil and should be studying the papers along with the class. Even when inner realization has illumined the soul, there is much in the word and magnetism that Pir-o-Murshid left that will be of great benefit through the ages.

One should never be ashamed to ask questions of one’s spiritual adviser, so that everything becomes clear. Modesty will prove itself by its acts. Also each year at Jamiat, it will be good to ask many questions so that all can work in harmony. Not only will this aid in spiritual advancement, but when mureeds must leave one center and will study at another, they will not be confused by great differences in the method of teaching.

To be read at Jamiat, 1930

Addresses to Khalifs and Sheikhs

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

Sangatheka Number 4

Beloved Ones of God:

As something has already been mentioned about the conduct of the Gatha classes, in this and in the next paper, something will be mentioned about the Githa classes also.

There are some differences between the rules for conducting the Gatha and the Githa classes. In the first place, only those who are Murshids and those who are especially qualified among the Khalifs and have received permission, may comment on the Githas. When the time comes that there will also be commentaries on the Githas, the method for using them will be discussed at the Jamiat Ahm. The mureeds who have reached this stage of development are better able to understand the teachings than at first. At the same time, it is not advisable to allow them to wander from the subject. There are many exercises required along with the Githa studies and some of these may even continue for the whole of life. Therefore Pir-o-Murshida will have instructions for these points which will benefit all the leaders.

It is not advisable to go very rapidly over the Githas. Follow the schedule for teaching, and it may be good to make a study of some of the more advanced of Pir-o-Murshid's books, such as The Soul, Whence and Whither along with them. This can be done together with the questions and answers.

After they are studied, it may be well to study The Mysticism of Sound. Even when we have a full set of all the esoteric papers, they can well be studied along with the literature. One must keep in mind always, and it never can be repeated too much, that the purpose of the Message is not to make great philosophers—although this may happen—or even to make great healers and clairvoyants, but to open the our hearts where is the shrine of God. Therefore as talibs advance, the meditations are lengthened in the class room, and everything is done to keep the atmosphere of Love and Harmony and Beauty.

To be read at Jamiat, 1930