

## **Excepts from Commentary on Shafayat: Book of Health. Part II: Healing**

**Selected and edited by Tansen O'Donohoe**

### **Chapter 2: The Psychological Nature of Diseases**

#### **Number 1: The Causes of Diseases**

GITHA: The fear of catching a disease is also a cause of illness. There are people who wonder whether they are ill, and try to find out if there is something wrong with them.

TASAWWUF: These people are always examining themselves and keep the thought of self in front of them. This thought always interferes with the free flow of the breath and makes it impossible for the body to obtain full benefit of the spiritual light and of the energy of space. This in turn prevents inspiration and blessings from being received. There is nothing in life which is so akin to death as the constant thought of self.

When added to this there is the shadow of the thought "I am ill," and one receives an impression which one really does not want to have. But this impression, so connected with the self, works its way rapidly to outer consciousness. That is one of the reasons why there are epidemics. It seldom means that the diseases are physically contagious. Call it germ, bacteria, or anything else, there are mental contagions, there are thoughts which make the world within dark and then there is no protection against disease. The way to protect oneself is to block out the thought of self. Therefore meditation and prayer are among the great medicines.

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GITHA: There are many other causes of illness. Among them the most unfortunate is the impression: "I have got an illness that can never be cured," for this impression is worse than a disease.

TASAWWUF: This has actually happened in cases of radium poisoning. Instead of seeking some cure for the persons suffering therefrom, the thought has been broadcast that the radium poisoning is incurable. Now what is radium poisoning? Radium and other metals, and the X-rays, are finer vibrations than those to which the body is used; they are finer and more penetrating than the light rays or radiant energy waves to which we have accustomed ourselves. But they are not finer than the waves of the air, the rays of the sun and the all-pervading power of space, which are received by the mystic through the breath.

If we study the lives of the mystics and the words and works of the messengers of God we find many references to a body of light, a body which has been seen by some faithful disciples of the Master, whom the Master can trust, and who feeds them with this very light. The Christian Bible says that this light or Logos is the light of everyone that has been born into the world, only it is covered by darkness and it is not comprehended. So it is hidden, it is the hidden light, the hidden Logos, "the lost Word." But the illuminated souls have been illuminated even in a physical sense. Their bodies can become refined and this state of refinement is so great that there is accommodation for rays much finer than the X-rays and radium waves. These last could not harm such bodies.

Therefore there is at least one cure for this radium poisoning which is open to the spiritual students through refinement and for all people through meditation. For by meditation the process of refinement is carried on and even without much esoteric instruction victims of this condition can learn to readjust their bodies to withstand these rays. The etheric element, for instance, is not affected by radium, in the same way that the body of the other elements would be affected. And joined with this is hope and feeling that there is, can be, a cure.

Snake poisoning is supposed to be almost fatal in certain parts of the world and elsewhere one may be cured easily of the poison. In parts of Africa there is a special cult, the esoteric followers of which learn to make themselves immune to snake-bite and to heal those who suffer therefrom. They even learn the use of herbs and treatments which are specific treatments. And elsewhere, where this knowledge is missing people die from fright even more than from snake-bite.

No matter what the disease, so long as the channel of breath is open at all there is life, and as the saying goes, "where there is life, there is hope." According to the mystical view the whole universe is within us and there is nothing apparently outside to which we have not the key within ourselves. Therefore there is probably no "incurable" disease or condition. Though we be limited, God is above all limitations and conditions.

GITHA: In reality the soul of every individual, healthy or ill, is pure from any pain or disease, and it constantly heals mind and body.

TASAWWUF: The soul is never ill, the soul is life and health. The soul, through the breath, reaches the body and mind of every person. The specific practices given to a talib in Sufism are like "selective tunings" to the great All, Who is All-Power, All-Love, All-Beneficence. One repeats a name of God or the name of an attribute and thereupon suggests to oneself that which is associated with that name or attribute. Thus the blessings come from the soul to the outer consciousness.

GITHA: And if it were not for the mind and body, which create illness, a person would always be well. It is natural to be healthy; and all illness, pain, and discomfort are unnatural.

TASAWWUF: For the soul is the divine breath and the practice of Nayaz given to mureeds from the beginning may be called the Path itself. It is not so known to them and persons are not given esoteric instruction for any selfish purpose. Yet it is all there because the teachers who serve God wish to lead humanity to its inheritance, which is to receive the blessings of God in whatever form and in whatever manner they can be appreciated.

Really we are all healthy, potentially at least, without knowing it. We have made a study of the world and called the results of our study knowledge. We have not made the same study of the self. When we make a study of the self in the same manner as we make the study of the world, then instead of having the knowledge of the world we shall have the knowledge of the self, which in the end will prove to be the only verifiable knowledge, the only true knowledge.

As one lives a pure life, one purifies one's mind and body. Then there is no accommodation for anything except life, and then one has health. And we can keep on adding to our health as long as we maintain this inner state of purity. We may even be able to withstand the ravages of time, although that of itself is not important. What is important is that we can live every moment of our lives to the fullness of it.

## Number 2: Magnetic Power

GITHA: Both mind and body are made of atoms, the former of mental atoms, the latter of physical atoms; and the power that gathered them and made them into one body or one mind is the magnetic power.

TASAWWUF: What the Sufis call Jami is a unifying force which produces forms. In the creation, Allah, so to speak, made the different planes out of different grades of vibrations and atoms, the vibrations forming atoms on their own planes and the atoms giving off vibrations which manifested on the lower planes until the earth was reached which was the culmination of creation. Then the vibrations of earth were reflected back into the sphere and instead of spirit becoming matter, having finished its work,

then matter was turned back into spirit. This subject is one given much consideration in all esoteric and mystical metaphysics.

In Sufic concentration, which is called Murakkabah, we prove this for ourselves through our own conscious creative efforts. We learn to hold atoms and vibrations together by the power of will and to change their relationships and forms. Thus we can keep away all that is disagreeable and attract or shape what is agreeable to ourselves and others.

In its highest form the magnetism is spiritual and all-pervading. It is life-giving and life-absorbing, and it is beyond limitations. On the spiritual plane it begins to take on moral qualities, and on the mental plane it takes on those qualities which appear mostly in the jinn, also in human beings in certain stages of life and during certain grades of evolution. Finally the magnetism appears in matter as material magnetism, but this generally disappears with the departure of youth. Its vehicle in the first part of life is the Thymus Gland. Later on it manifests through various glands but the source of it always, in the body, is in the heart.

GITHA: The lack of this power causes all pain, discomfort and disease, while development of this power secures health of body and mind.

TASAWWUF: Now one is told elsewhere that the ego is the source of all pain, discomfort and disease and here it says that the lack of power is the cause. But the use of the ego produces the lack of power. All power is from God and of God. Whatever little power we have in our flesh or in our mind, is derived from that source and is generally developed or preserved through our own will, and the power of will in turn is derived from the Universal power.

There are, it is true, people who want magnetism for selfish purposes, for wealth, position, fame, success or for its power. Then, while there is a certain attraction for it, there is also a limit, and sometimes one has to pay a certain price and the price may be more than it was worth. Besides, attempting to gain magnetism apart from general development is to operate under the sphere of karma. One will have to accept the consequences; as one sows, so will one reap.

There are other persons who make no attempt to gain magnetism, or develop personality. They are essentially negative. They are easily impressionable, and lacking power they become quite emotional. They are often known as "pacifists" whereas they really lack strength. One meets them especially in India, and the doctrine of non-resistance has spread through their efforts. But they have such an attitude of "resist not evil" that they do not assimilate life.

The Sufi has seen a middle path between these extremes. When one lives wholly in God and for God, then the divine energy is assimilated into the personality. This comes naturally. Then one becomes strong and one is able to withstand pain. One may have to battle every moment of one's life but one will be able to maintain one's equanimity and indifference. This shows real development.

When magnetism is lacking, then the force binding the atoms and cells of the body is lacking. There is a constant process of renewal of the cells and organs of the body. If too much food is taken in, we grow stout and sluggish; if we are careless we do not gain any magnetism. By seeking life and light the magnetism is gained.

GITHA: By physical practices this power in the body is developed, and by mental exercises the same power is improved in the mind.

TASAWWUF: In the West people depend mostly upon dancing and athletics, and in India Hatha Yoga is practiced. While the virtues of Hatha Yoga have no doubt been overemphasized, still it is important to learn that one can become master of this body-temple and that there are many ways by which it can

be kept free from disease. Besides that there are special practices given by the Sheikh or Murshid so that one can develop and use the Healing Darood, the Healing Fikr and the Healing Zikr.

Perhaps the last exercises also help with the development of mind and bring on mental magnetism as well. In the lessons on Ryazat one learns the value of moving the body in devotions; then the body also joins in the devotions and gains something on its own plane. But the mind benefits whenever it is possible to remove the thought of self therefrom.

GITHA: People, of whatever evolution, whatever disposition, in whatever condition in life, need this magnetism more than anything else ....

TASAWWUF: If not, it can hardly be said that one lives. Sufis pray, "Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our lives until in us be reflected Thy Grace, Thy Glory, Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace." Now a prayer is one thing and a realization is another. It is not always easy to bridge the gap. If we were to use the same prayer as a concentration we might succeed in the concentration especially if we did not lose the spirit of devotion. The resulting selflessness might bring a most desirable result.

People are now studying the vitamins without knowing exactly what they are. It seems that certain food materials are depositories of vital life force in some form. Those who eat those foods gain in magnetism or preserve what they have; those who do not or who eat processed foods lose what magnetism they have. Nevertheless if there is a little of this life force in food, there is much more in the breath, and in space.

GITHA: ... for health, which is the greatest of all gifts in life, depends greatly on magnetism.

TASAWWUF: We cannot enjoy life to its full without health. This body was meant to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. The mystic is able to bring the breath into the body. For the patient who is a Sufi one can bring the full benefit of blessing by the various practices to be used in healing. For the one who is not a Sufi, rhythm in the daily life, exercises which are related to rhythmic breathing, restraint in thought and a modicum of silence are most beneficial, together with the healer's ability to impart such force, as she feels she should and may, into the body of the patient. But the development of that one's personality must depend upon herself, otherwise it is borrowed magnetism, which does not last. Real health therefore comes with the development of personality and that is why the psychological aspect of treatment is so important.

### **Number 3: Breathing**

GITHA: In Sanskrit breath is called Prana, which means life. This Prana not only gives life to oneself but it gives life to another person too.

TASAWWUF: Because of the influence of materialism the people of the world do not realize that the breath brings all the living energy and living force. The Bible says that God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life and we became living souls. All the ancient peoples knew a little about this relationship between soul and breath and life, and a study of languages shows clearly that they thought in different terms from the peoples of later times.

It is true that our bodies depend upon food and water for the solid and liquid particles which are needed. Breath may also bring us some food in a gaseous form although human beings are not generally fitted, as is the vegetable, to draw the food directly from the air, and mostly have to gain this in the form that is stored in the fruits and vegetables we eat. Nevertheless food alone does not account for the energy that we are able to exert and laboratory exercises and experiments, under our control, are very different from the actual tests life brings.

Even the common people of India know much more about the breath than the people of the Occident, and the Yogis have preserved the science of it through the centuries. The inhabitants of the high Andes mountains in South America are stimulated by chewing cacao leaves, and they carry heavy loads over high, precipitous places where the atmosphere is very light. This shows that it is not the food that sustains them.

Mystics say that the breath is the connecting link between all the planes, and brings us life. The mana referred to in the story of the Beni Israel in the Bible is really the breath. Breath can bring Baraka or spiritualized magnetism which produces blessing in a form that may remain on earth. Breath is the subject of considerable study by Sufis, and it is said that the master of breath is the master of life itself.

GITHA: Many deaths occur and many lives are retained by the phenomena of the breath.

TASAWWUF: People who die from shock reveal that they have no control over the breath. The same is true in most of the many cases known as "heart failure," which is a kind of life failure. The loss of the breath from the body is the loss of the life from the body. The increase of breath and breath capacity within the body is the increase of health and life in the body. When there is danger of loss of life, one can concentrate upon the sacred phrase "Ya Hayy! Ya Haqq!," substituting them for the healing Darood. This may be called the life Darood. One who repeats it will surely replenish all bodies.

GITHA: Therefore for the healer there is no greater source of healing. Healers can throw their breath upon the affected part of the patient as easily as they can cast their glance upon a painful part. Even eatables and objects that a healer's breath has magnetized carry with them the power of healing.

TASAWWUF: The practice of Sulp has been referred to before. It has been described as follows: While out of the sick room practice Fikr until one feels strong in it and that the fine vibrations are in the breath. These come from the sphere of the heart and are all-healing. It may take five to fifteen minutes preparation according to one's training, development and magnetism at the moment. There is no need to hurry about it as one ought to conserve one's own energy at all times.

The next step is to enter the room where the patient is and concentrate the breath upon them with the thought of curing the disease. One has to be sure one's own breath is much stronger than that of the patient, until it is like a mighty enveloping force. One should speak consoling words, that the illness is being cured by the Grace of God and the power of Divinity. One may in this direct the rays from the eyes directly toward the affected part, or one may close one's eyes if that helps the concentration, or one may just look at the patient in a natural manner.

If performed rightly, the concentration may enable the healer to draw the illness out by the eyes, instead of using the hands. Or it may impart life and light to the patient. One may turn the glance aside from time to time to refresh the spirit. Really, although the eye is used, the real healing instrument is the breath. The light and brilliance of the eyes come from the breath, are fed by the breath.

One may also by this glance magnetize food and drink. One may glance at the things for a while with steady gaze, repeating a sacred phrase and a blessing. The Brahmins have known this for centuries and that is why only a Brahmin is to prepare a Brahmin's food, and one of lower caste is not supposed to bring food and drink to another. Those of higher magnetism and vitality may administer to the less advanced, up to a degree.

GITHA: If touch makes certain finger-marks through perspiration upon a thing, why should not the breath, the very essence of life, live in an object and give the object some greater part of life, producing in it an effect which may be a greater cure than medicine?

TASAWWUF: Pyschometrists are often able to tell who has been in a room and describe them, thus proving that we leave marks more impressible than finger marks. One may leave a fingerprint behind

and a little magnetism with it, but the magnetism and life of the breath is so much greater. Now often one is able to tell whether someone has been in the room or even is still there, without having seen the person, because of some impression in the atmosphere. The breath of every stranger makes itself felt by the sensitive person.

Actually we leave our footprints everywhere we go. The followers of Dr. Abrams of San Francisco have invented machines which have been able to measure some of these marks and to trace forgotten experiences, especially when those experiences lead to disease or injury later on. But outside of that, the same life is in us which is in all things, and when we concentrate upon something, we leave a living sign. Salat says: "Thy light is in all forms."

The vibrations of touch are comparatively heavy and easily recognized. There is often direct magnetism carried through them. Perspiration also contains something in it of our mental and psychic personality. But the breath contains all the marks of one's self, and in recognizing breath we recognize everything. Mystics are able to discern past, present and future of themselves or of others, through the breath. And the faculty of insight increases one's ability along this line.

GITHA: When the breath is developed and purified, it is not necessary for the healer even to make an effort to throw their breath upon the patient; the very presence of the healer brings about a cure, for the whole atmosphere becomes charged with magnetism.

TASAWWUF: There are two aspects of spiritual development; that which comes from conscious effort and that which comes through grace. One who uses every conscious effort to progress is called a mureed, while one who is elevated by Divine Grace is called a murid. Actually it is difficult for another to distinguish between mureed and murid and the line is not always entirely clear. The practices in breathing from Nayaz to the control of the sun and moon currents make the body the repository of ever finer and finer vibrations. The breath goes deeper into the body, deeper into the mind, transforming each, purifying both. With this increase in penetration the personality also develops. It draws more from the living breath, it accumulates blessing from the living space.

This whole universe has been placed at our feet and the whole universe gains with the evolution of every human being. We are not so separate from one another as our habits might lead us to believe. If there are only a few people upon the earth who are instruments for the bestowing of Baraka or for the transmission of healing energy, that might be enough to save and benefit the whole humanity. For the earth-plane gets its highest blessings through us, and the development of every one is the development of the earth itself.

There is around each of us an aura or vital body which enables the body to receive vibrations of the breath and assimilate them. As the cells of the body become purified, light emanates therefrom and manifests around the body to those of keen sight. There is always some light around the body, and this light increases in brilliance with spiritual development. Therefore Jesus Christ said, "Let your light shine before men" and in this he was speaking of actual light, of living phenomena.

While no one on the spiritual path can go far being selfish, it is also true that as the light is assimilated it can be given to others. Each one can become a link for another to connect that one with the hierarchical, with the chain of illuminated souls. In the Healing Service conscious effort is made to bridge the gap between the ordinary humanity and the illuminated ones, that those who are sick and in need may benefit from the blessings thus brought to the earth-plane.

## **Number 6: The Psychological Nature of Diseases**

GITHA: There is a part of one's life which can only be called life; there is no other name appropriate for it, and the English phrase "to pull oneself together" means to set that part of life to work. It may be called spirit, as this part in itself is both intelligence and power.

TASAWWUF: Sufis say that life preceded manifestation. One purpose of manifestation is to draw as much of the life-energy which pervades the whole universe into the personality. For if one only knew it, the personality is greater than the universe itself, there is nothing in the whole cosmos which cannot be reflected in humanity. And ultimately the nature of light and life are found to be the same. A living person is a radiant person, light and life both will emanate from their body and they will carry an atmosphere which is truly healing and blessing.

If one traces the steps of life, we would recognize that during infancy we are not in possession of the faculties which manifest later on. The infant has no faculty of reason, the infant has no worldly experience upon which to rely. Our memory is not developed. We have only potential faculties, faculties which manifest as we grow older, because as we grow the body becomes stronger and has capacity for spirit. Then the spirit brings us its various faculties and we assimilate them according to the attunement of our souls, our evolution and the condition of the moment.

Psychologists have tried to trace the growth of life and have devised intelligence tests therefor. These are measurements of our knowledge and ability. It may be questioned, however, whether they touch the source of our intelligence, for there is little recognition of inner personality or any heed taken of the existence of a spiritual life which is much more fundamental than the worldly life.

GITHA: It is intelligence because any part of the body and mind or every part of both in which it dwells, it makes sensitive; and it is powerful because whatever part of the body and mind it touches, it strengthens that part.

TASAWWUF: This intelligence comes with the breath as the breath is refined. In its grossest state the breath or spirit carries only those vibrations which are needed by the body, which are absorbed by the body, vibrations which bring the muscular energy, which enable the cells and glands and tubes to function, and which make of them also vehicles for the breath within the body.

As the breath is more refined it brings energy to the nerves and then to the mind. Those finer vibrations make the mind sensitive, stimulate thought and produce the mental magnetism that manifests in wit, cleverness, logical ability and ultimately in insight. And a further development of the breath leads to the awakening of the heart qualities.

No doubt one cannot make any sharp and hard division between these because the nerves are part of the body and nerve energy is needed for the body and at the same time the nerves carry mental vibrations. Also the heart and mind are not entirely separate; we call the mind the surface of which the heart is the depth. Any part of the body, any section of the mind becomes sensitive through exercise and use. At the same time it is possible through refinement to make them sensitive. Sufis use Zikr and music for this purpose. Musical vibrations seem to set into motion the atoms of the various bodies and thus make them more sensitive, make the personality more sensitive.

But the same vibrations which bring the sensitivity are vibrations of life-force and all the strength comes from or through this life-force. We say that God is All Powerful, which is so. It is in the manifestation of life which is really the Divine Energy that the power manifests.

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GITHA: The mystic understands it by meditation, also by research into metaphysics.

TASAWWUF: Meditation enables us to restrain all the faculties, ideas, movements and habits which form our egos, which are produced out of our thought of self. It is this which stands in the way at all times. Under meditation all this is removed from the vision. Then all the afflictions of body and mind go too, because they are associated with these ego-agitations.

Now by research into meditation is meant Kashf. This is the faculty of insight. By the faculty of insight one gets in touch with the spirit. This manifests in many ways. It leads us to the development of inspiration, through the use of intuition, and perfects also our imagination. That is why in the prayer one says, "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls." The spirit acts upon all planes and we can receive its blessings on all planes.

GITHA: When we awake from a deep sleep, the first thing that rises through our minds to our bodies, when the tendency of stretching and contracting comes and of twisting and turning, and of gradually opening the eyes, is this spirit; it rises, so to speak, and spreads.

TASAWWUF: This is most evident at the hour of wakening. But we can develop sensitivity by rising earlier and practicing meditation, performing our devotions and even using concentration to continue the research begun by the meditation. This refines us within and without. The spirit is brought into the body more by the various esoteric exercises which are given to a pupil by the teacher according to their need and development.

The first words of the Bible are usually translated, "In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." But the Kabbalists say that the first word, "Barashith" may be translated "Bara Shith," "God made six." That is to say, there are six movements of spirit by which the creation was accomplished.

Two of these movements are associated with Urouj and Nasoul, inhalation and exhalation, contraction and expansion. The other four with the elements, earth, water, air and fire, each of which takes a particular direction and sends out lines of force in a definite form. All movements may be said to have come from these six. The seventh principle is that of rest. The ancients also associated these movements with certain divinities and planets.

GITHA: By the mastery of this spirit diseases are cured, age is mastered, even death is conquered.

TASAWWUF: So long as we recognize breath only as air or gas in motion we cannot understand this. The whole universe is filled with vibrations, vibrations also which create atoms, or from which atoms are formed. The life-energy permeates all. The words of Nayaz are most significant. Today the scientists are beginning to learn more about the vibrations. They have for many centuries had some knowledge of the magnetism associated with iron; they are just beginning to learn about the vibrations associated with the other metals and elements. The study of light spectra was the first step; of X-ray spectra was a second step and now many other steps are being taken. These indeed may turn out to be steps in the direction of mysticism.

This whole universe is permeated with living vibrations. The rays of the sun bring many, not only those used in Helio-therapy and Spectro-chromo therapy, but many others. They are used by the plants for growth; they depend upon the sun and its heat far more than do warm-blooded animals and humanity. Many plants and animals are attracted by sunlight; they have the faculty of tropism which may be said to be instinct at sleep; the plant is as if asleep in a dream stage, but it possesses this tropism.

Both animals and plants make use of the waves of the air, although again, these waves contain much more than is seen in the ordinary breath. But it is human beings alone who can get the benefit of the all-pervading power of space, which is divine power. Therefore it has been said that we are made in God's image. God blessed us, meaning that God gave to us "Baraka," the spiritual magnetism which can emanate through our bodies, our hands, our minds, our eyes, our speech. The more this Baraka is assimilated, the more radiant and living we become. We have more of life so there is less room in us for disease, weakness, pain.

There are several ways of developing this spirit, among which meditation, concentration, self-effacement, science of breath, sacrificial devotion and esotericism are the most important. Music and



dancing may sometimes be used, and there are also other methods. The net result is that the body becomes the vehicle of the very life of the universe. It may become a body of light, it may radiate light. Also when it absorbs the all-pervading power of space, which can be taken in through the skin, suspended animation is possible.

This is the line of development of the adept. The adept is one who is selected, or perhaps who chooses, to remain upon earth a long time. For this there must be constant and continual refinement of the body. It is then no longer subject to the ailments of humanity. In some instances the adepts have dissolved their being at the time of transition. This seems to have been true in the cases of Moses, Elijah, Jesus, Kabir and many Sufi saints.

GITHA: Comfort lies in being held, discomfort when that spirit is not sufficient to hold the body intact. Thus it is the lack of this spirit that is the cause of a great many diseases.

TASAWWUF: While all people breathe, few get the full benefit of breath. The breath development is the spiritual development. As one absorbs the finer vibrations and atoms one increases the life within the personality; this is the real development of personality, considered from any point of view. When the spirit is there, life is there. Therefore spiritual training is offered to the world so that people may get the full benefit of life and all its blessings.

The Shafayat cannot, of course, give the esoteric exercises to patients, even to mureeds, for at such times these exercises may have to be suspended. But the principles behind them we will know and there are other means by which these principles may be imparted. Even simple rhythmical breaths with the thought, "This is not my body, this is the temple of God," can be most helpful.

### **Number 7: The Origin of Diseases**

GITHA: Almost every disease originates in the mind, even when one catches infectious diseases.

TASAWWUF: Normally the soul would purify, revivify and heal the body. The light of the soul reaches the body through the breath. There is no obstacle before this light except that thrown by nufs, the ego. This is described as "the shadow upon the sky." During infancy the body is weak and the mind is not developed. The infant lives in the mental atmosphere of its parents and so suffers or benefits therefrom. With the development of body, and of mind, it is possible to attain perfect health.

At the present time the evolution of the world is such that the thought of sickness is held by many, and the concentration upon hospitals, physicians and disease weakens the general immunity. The light of the soul is all healing; even the heart is all healing if one's heart is awakened. There is no sickness, no matter how supposedly terrible, against which we cannot protect ourselves. Whatever weakness may appear without, it is nothing as against the strength which comes from within.

Now there is a growing interest in the psychological reasons for things, but the materialistic philosophy is still so strong that no relationship or correspondence has been properly established between mental attitudes and biochemical activities, although Rocine has made some slight headway in that direction. Rocine, however, did not recognize all the physical elements in the human body. If he had continued his researches or if someone follows him, no doubt this may become human knowledge later on. For all the juices of the body are stimulated through the nerves, which in turn depend upon the mind.

GITHA: It does not mean that it must always be wickedness of the mind; if it were so, good people would never be ill; and yet it cannot be overlooked that it is a weakness of the mind, in some way or other, that allows the disease to enter.

TASAWWUF: Where there is a strong mind, the breath currents are stronger and then more of the life-force is drawn from the sphere. One has to make suitable accommodation for this life-force. Strength of will and exercise deepen the breath, and fineness of feeling attracts the finer vibrations. Goodwill is not enough, for then wishing would accomplish things; this would give no scope for strength of character.

Weakness of mind may be due to impressions one has received in early childhood. The influence of these impressions is tremendous and they are our best friends or worst enemies throughout life unless we come to realize that there is a Divine Breath. If we can feel the pulse of God, so to speak, no disease can remain with us long, and our immunity will be greatly increased.

GITHA: Besides this, negligence, oversight, irregularity, mental and physical, also cause diseases.

TASAWWUF: Negligence breaks down the rhythm of life and in the absence of this rhythm there cannot be health. If one does not clean one's teeth, bathe, wash one's hands and face, not only will the dirt remain and bring physical blemishes, but the psychic protection which normally belongs to us will be taken away from us. That is why in the Gathas attention is given to very simple subjects, for upon the basis of this natural simplicity the whole of life depends.

Oversight proves that one is not in control of one's faculties. This is particularly true of all people who leave everything to fate or karma. They excuse weakness of will, even delight in it. They do not build up any center of accommodation, they do not draw the light into themselves, often believing that their power is as nothing and so they confuse God and the created universe.

Irregularity may mean laziness. It also results from pleasure seeking. We do not have to deny pleasure, but, as Rassoul King Solomon said, there is a time for all things, and one may regulate the time. When we overlook simple safeguards, the stomach, the liver, the sex organs, the mind, working or overworking at strange hours, performing different duties, we cannot so well stand the strain, and then disease follows.

In correcting the habits of these people it is not always necessary to blame; one does not blame the ignorant, one emphasizes the right way, one teaches them.

GITHA: Life and death are two forces, constructive and destructive, and there is continual fighting between these two forces. There are times when one power wins, and the success of that power means either better health or disease and death.

TASAWWUF: What are referred to here as life and death are not different from those processes which the physiologists call anabolic and catabolic. In anabolism food and breath and vitality are taken into the body, cells are formed, secretions are increased and the health is improved. But while this is going on, while the body with all its cells and organs and tubes is feeding, there is the creation of some waste material which has to be removed. For cells age and die, waste products must be discharged through the natural channels and these processes are called catabolic.

According to the Hindus, Brahma creates the world, Vishnu preserves it, and Siva carries the materials away, preparing for the re-assimilation of matter into spirit. This is a constant and eternal process, so Siva has been regarded as the divine aspect of change, of movement. So Siva is called the Lord of the Dance and yet Siva has been regarded as Divine Destruction and Death. Although we say it is a rivalry between life and death, it is only so if we look upon it from the standpoint of the physical body alone.

We may add to the life currents in many manners, as has been explained. It is the emphasis upon life which brings life. Zikr and Fikr are used by Sufis to develop body and mind in this respect. For the generality there ought to be other practices, such as the right use of music, sound, colour, impression and suggestions. When there are such constructive, right prescriptions one does not have to look to

the shadowy sides of life which we call death. We do not bring any impression of death, we want to increase and fulfil the life.

GITHA: The body must be ready and fit to fight this battle; but the mind has a still greater part to perform, and when the mind fails to perform its part the body with all its fitness is incapable of retaining health.

TASAWWUF: Those who contend that the whole of life's happiness depends upon the condition of the body are not wrong, only one may ask them, upon what does the condition of the body depend? Is the body self-sustaining? No, neither is body self-sustaining nor the mind self-sustaining. If they were, we would have found the answer to every disease long ago. According to the Sufis only the heart is self-sustaining and the heart can heal itself or the heart of another, and by healing the heart of another can also benefit the mind and body of that one.

During the nineteenth century the materialistic view came more and more to the front and especially in medicine. It became a very mysterious profession, more mysterious than the mysteries of old, not to be discussed by humanity. But its practitioners were no more infallible than other people, and yet into their keeping was left the life and health of others. Their goodwill was not sufficient; goodwill cannot overcome ignorance.

As a result there were some rather violent reactions against this view, some of the most important being started by a [Dr. Quimby], who is said to have been a student of Plato. Although Dr. Mary Baker Eddy has been accused of plagiarizing her views, it does not matter since there is nothing new under the sun. Her movement led the reaction against the narrow materialism and has indirectly influenced the thought of the day very much. One has to see life from both sides, and knowing the condition of the mind in the end may prove to be far more important than knowing much about the body.

Now there are many schools and many theories about the cause of disease and its cure, and also about the cause and cure of specific ailments, to which the medical profession has given many names such as tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, pneumonia, asthma, infantile paralysis, etc. All of these show that there is a break-down of bodily functions, but the names do not tell what the cause of them is and the lack of this deeper knowledge makes cures harder.

GITHA: But if the mind is capable of keeping health, the body to a great extent obeys it.

TASAWWUF: That is to say, when we can reach a stage of mental health, when we have a science of mental hygiene, and have the bright outlook upon life, the chances will improve greatly that the body will not suffer so much. The life force will more readily reach the body through the mind. This indeed is the view of an ever growing circle of new-thought and metaphysical movements. Even when their founders or leaders are selfish and clever, their teachings are not altogether wrong. They do demonstrate what is right. Just as someone, though they be a criminal, if they have the knowledge of mechanics and machinery, can become a skilful inventor, so a clever person, who has struck in some way the knowledge of the mind-world, can demonstrate it also. It has little to do with their moral natures in either case.

Now what is needed is physicians who will recognize more this mental side of life. When the profession ceases to be so materialistic and orthodox, there will be no need for cult-healing. It is right that healers have some knowledge of physiology, anatomy, neurology and psychology; it is right that they have suitable scientific training. But they also need insight and between the ignorant person with some insight and the intellectual without insight, the former may often be more successful in healing the ills of humanity.

This is particularly true in an age in which divorce is increasing. It shows that there is mental and sexual instability. Those things cannot be corrected on the physical plane. There are only a few physicians who have even a slight approach to them, and the result is a growing instability all around.

Then some metaphysical psychologist appears and they attract great crowds. They use many words, covering only a slight knowledge, yet that knowledge, slight though it be, is often greater than that of the most skilful doctor whose mind's eye has never been opened.

GITHA: Still, harmony of both mind and body is needed to fight the battle of life.

TASAWWUF: In other words, the attunement of body and mind is required. The mind must be given its hygienic treatment, and its strength. Then it will pass its magnetism and vitality to the body. The body and mind should be coordinated, which is very simple and easy when there is some knowledge of breath. And, as time goes on more attention will be paid to the mind. At present there is more interest in quantitative measurements revealed in the intelligence tests. After a while there will be qualitative studies of mind, and this will lead to a better condition for all humanity.

### **Number 9: Self-Control**

GITHA: There are many people who may be said to be of nervous temperament; who have a tendency if they walk to walk quickly, if they work to work hurriedly, if they talk to talk fast, so fast that they may drop words and make the hearer confused; whose temper may rise suddenly and who are inclined to laugh or to cry easily.

TASAWWUF: This shows that the person has been caught in what the Sufis call the Urouj rhythm, which is the accelerated rhythm. Life in the competitive world especially has brought out the philosophy that success is gained by conquest over others, that the one who outrivals the rest will succeed. It is quite different from the spiritual philosophy which holds that success consists of self-conquest, in knowing the purpose of one's life, in finding out what one can do, in seeking to do it and do it well.

Under the stress of Urouj the breath is not soft or easy. One does not get the full benefit of it. One draws more upon the oxygen, assimilates the oxygen and as a result, the biochemical processes take place with rapidity, a rapidity which tends to burn up the body and thus shorten life. There are persons who do not assimilate the oxygen, who are slow and ponderous, and they are not so much alive. But these persons, while fully alive, may live to no purpose, they waste their energy and sustenance and lose self-control.

While the Western world has shown great progress in certain direction, it has not paid so much attention to the individual, even where there is the philosophy of individualism. Thus the idea of a suitable balance between hours of work and rest, especially of resting during the mid-day when it is very hot, has not gained acceptance. Diseases and physical breakdowns have been regarded as preferable to anything which seems contrary to progress, a progress entirely in harmony with Urouj but not with life as a whole.

The Sufi says there are three rhythms, Urouj, the accelerated rhythm, Kemal, the mobile or steady rhythm and Zawal, the retarding rhythm which comes at the end of action or enterprise. No doubt all three are needed in each undertaking and all three are natural. When they are missing from one's life, they produce certain reactions especially in the nerves.

Generally a steady rhythm is best, varied by the needs of the moment. Solomon established the principle of rhythm and Sufis practice Darood which enables them to obtain a maximum benefit from the breath, from each single breath and from the cycle of breath associated with the thought behind

their tasks. Persistence in a steady rhythm ultimately stimulates insight and foresight, and brings success.

Such defects as stammering, stuttering, lisping, loss of memory, can be helped by proper rhythmic breathing. This may have to be slow and gentle at first, otherwise the tendency will be to get into a gallop. People who are nervous may benefit more from corrections in the breath than from anything else.

For this reason also meditation is the best of medicines. All people can be encouraged to meditate in some form, the religious people in their way and the non-religious people in their way, the old in their way and the young in their way. Continued practice of it will help establish a rhythm which will be found most helpful. When there is right relationship of thought, speech and action within oneself, one is on the way to self-mastery which produces all the success that is.

GITHA: This condition in a way gives a kind of joy, but it weakens a person and takes away one's self-control, and in the end this results in nervous diseases. It begins as indulgence in activity and ends in weakness.

TASAWWUF: We see this in the athlete, especially in the sprinter and in some football players. Under the stress of competition they would run faster than their rivals. They fall back upon the reserve of spirit within themselves and if there is not enough reserve there is a pull upon the heart. As there is no knowledge about the heart, how to replenish its energy and how to draw upon it for guidance, later on, when the athlete is too old or too worn out to continue at their art, there is a reaction and they may suffer from breakdowns and deficiencies. Thus care in their training is most valuable.

The same thing happens to people who are called upon to think rapidly in competition, or in the battle of life. Up to a certain point there may be an advantage in it. Intuitively one accepts intuition and sometimes one uses it. But if one lacks intuition and tries to think quickly, instead of there being inspiration there will be what is known as snap-judgment. There is nothing elevating in it; it can bring ruin to oneself and cause difficulties with others.

Concentration is also a valuable exercise for these people, to take one thing and think about it, holding the breath in rhythm while doing it. It can safely be given to almost everybody, spiritual student or not, and if indulged in will help establish a rhythm of breath which for each person may become their norm. It is not necessary that the breath of two people be alike any more than they are alike.

GITHA: Many mental diseases are caused by this negative state of mind and body.

TASAWWUF: There is a class of persons who are negative and receptive. They will listen to a speaker and without showing any resistance or criticism accept their words, hiding their own intuitions. While women are more intuitive than men they are also apt to be passive in their response, and thus to keep a mind so open that it will never enter into the creative stage of thought. This shows lack of concentration.

These people are among the most lovely and kind in the world, but that does not make them saints. The saint is the most gentle of persons, who does not exhibit even a mild form of rudeness. But saints keep their attunement with God, they have to have complete control over themselves. They watch themselves at all times and they recognize that the same divine light which is within them is within all others. This is the mastery of wisdom.

It is true that our mind was meant to be a palace of mirrors and also it is not necessary to build up ego thoughts. There is a right attitude of response. The intuitive faculty is built up by slow, gentle, rhythmical breathing. There is no insight when the breath operates rapidly, except, perhaps, some

instinctive movement. For no one can entirely destroy their instincts, without suffering terribly mentally and physically.

Slow rhythmical breathing is therefore almost a requisite for the healing of mental disturbances due to indulgence in Urouj. One does not have to correct a person of their habits nor scold them nor even warn them. One makes a suggestion, prescribes the form of breathing and a little concentration. Then, after winning the confidence of the patient, one may add to the treatment. Of course sulp and suggestion are also valuable, and an intelligent person will respond readily to this form of treatment.

GITHA: From childhood there is an inclination to this, especially among children of nervous temperament; and if it can be checked at that time there is a sure result.

TASAWWUF: Because in childhood Urouj manifests. The first part of life is, indeed, the period of Urouj. That Urouj energy is needed to build up the body and mind. When it is wasted in thought, speech and action it produces the nervousness. If it is restrained, if there is more silence, sleep, proper periods of rest, restraint from excitement without crushing the spirit, and right example laid before the child, it is very easy to control it.

Of course nervousness may appear in children because the parents are nervous or ignorant. In the Sufic training of the infant, discipline, balance, concentration, ethics and relaxation are proposed, together with rhythm and regularity. These things can be applied without offense to anybody's religion and they are also disciplines upon the parent.

Impression and rhythm play a most important role in the training of children, and music is very valuable. Of course there are all kinds of music and some—especially among popular dance music types—are apt to feed the Urouj spirit instead of restrain it. In the Mevlevi school of Sufis the young people were placed upon the discipline of silence first and then given instruction in Zikr in such a way that the Urouj tendency became entirely transmuted. While such methods may not appeal to the generality, and would hardly be proper anyhow, it gives the idea as to what may be done. It shows that there is a way of training the spirit so that mind and body will benefit to the full.

If the tendency is not stopped in childhood that does not mean it is too late. It only means it will be harder to correct. For habit establishes the ego and fixes the impression of it upon the mind. Patients will probably want to defend their habits even when they are not criticized therefore. One breaks them down by suggesting different ways of breathing; these in turn will break down the ego-mold for it depends upon the continuance of the same kind of breathing rhythms, or the same lack of rhythm. Once corrected at the root, the affliction will surely disappear.

GITHA: No disease can be worse than an increasing weakness of the nerves, which is lack of self-control; for life is not worth living when control over the self is lost.

TASAWWUF: The nerves carry energy from the higher planes to the physical plane and also from the physical plane back toward the spirit. When they do not function properly there is a break in the conduit of the life-force, and there cannot be the happiness and blessing which are our true lot.

The nerves are fed by the breath and by self-control, of which silence is an excellent form. The postures of the Hindus are very valuable in this connection. If there is a form of Hatha Yoga which is to be given to the people of the West, it may be safely applied by the Shafayat. Besides, there may be an eagerness on the part of patients to accept it; they will be interested in something strange and new.

For nervousness Dum and Taweess are prescribed. Dum means breathing up and down on a patient after the breath has been mesmerized by Darood. Three times may be sufficient for the operation, although the preparation may be long. The Shafayats therefore have to develop within themselves strongest will-power and learn to control the breath of another with their own breath. Instead of

arguing another down, they see that their breath is stronger and in rhythm, and they keep their spiritual concentration before them.

Indeed just as lack of self-control makes life not worth living, increased self-control makes life more worth living. The saint and the master depend upon it more than anything else. But everyone can benefit from it. When the idea of self-control and self-mastery is brought forth, that it is most important to be able to improve oneself and that it does not matter if we outlive others or not, there will be less disease, less unhappiness, less sorrow in this world.

### Number 10: Our Being

GITHA: We are not only constituted of matter in our being but also of spirit. However well built a body we may have with its mechanism in good working order, still there is something that is wanted in us. For the physical body is sustained by material food and drink, breath by the air, mind by thoughts and imaginations and impressions; but that is not all, there is something besides mind and body that we possess in our being, and that is our spirit, which is light, a divine light.

TASAWWUF: The Scriptures relate that we have been created by the Word of God, also that we were created in the Divine Image and Likeness. What is this Word? It is said to be the very light of the world. The tradition is that is the light and the words of the Holy Ones reveal that it is light, and the realization of the mystics at all times clearly indicate that it is light. What matter if the Christians say there has only been one Messiah, and the Jews that there have been many Messiahs? What does it matter if the Muslims say there is no intermediary between God and Humanity and the Hindus revere many Avatars? What are the teachings? Ultimately the same.

Read in this way one can find a harmony between the religions of the world, and in seeking this harmony one learns everywhere that the universe is made of light. There have been many critical persons, religious people, who have criticized other religions, and irreligious people who have criticized all religions. Now after all of this, the scientists are giving to the world what some say are new doctrines, and what are they saying? That light is the fundamental thing in the Universe, that space is not empty. They do not proclaim God yet, but already they are approaching the mystical and holy traditions from other angles.

The Bible also teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. What is this Holy Spirit? It is the divine breath, the breath that brings all comfort (the Holy Spirit is called the "Comforter") and perfection. Through it we can become perfect even as Our Father/Mother in the realm of Light is perfect. We can receive this light into our being, it is there before us, but in the darkness of ego-domination it does not come into its own.

The study of the human body is one of the most important subjects in Sufi metaphysics. It may seem strange that a subject called mysticism should be involved with something so material, so dense as the human body. Yes, viewed from below it is strange, but when studied from another side, one learns that the body is the temple of a divine breath and can become the accommodation for more and more light, for a never-ending degree of spirit. And then the body becomes transmuted into what the Buddhists call **Nirmanakaya** or body of transformation, what others speak of as the body of light.

In this life we need to sustain the body by food, drink and air. We not only need the solid and liquid materials, but we also need gaseous foods, and it is possible to sip or drink air, and this air, taken into the body as food, performs certain cleansing functions and prevents the body from becoming too dense.

We do not usually think of the mind feeding despite constant repetition of the phrase "food for thought." Yes, and if the mind is not fed it will suffer from undernourishment, while if it not rested it will result in nervous affliction. Therefore, there has to be a balance. What are known as "right

thoughts” are not a particular group of thoughts or beliefs which are “right” in some mysterious fashion while the opposing ideas are wrong. “Right thinking” means that there is a system by which one should think, there is a right way or receiving thought, and this is studied by the mystics.

Through concentration one learns what impressions to receive and what to keep from the mind. All impressions which cause fear, pain, worry, anxiety, are for that one wrong. An impression which will result in pain in the body or which will ultimately produce a complex is not to be kept, it should be purged from the mind. Concentration enables us to remove the undesirable thoughts and impressions and to discipline the imagination so that it can be employed constructively and become an avenue for intuitions to turn into constructive thought.

The spiritual life includes the refinement of the breath by practices, and this refinement increases the capacity of the body for light until such a time that the body will actually glow. This is not a fiction.

It may occur even to the one who denies it. There is a certain light that appears in dreams and visions, and at odd moments. Clairvoyant people see it one way and dreamers in another. Ultimately it will be discovered that it is the same light which they see in different ways, and that this light is the very life, the very outpouring of the soul. When one has it, one can be said to have come into possession of the kingdom of heaven (or of lights).

GITHA: It is for this reason that sunshine makes one feel bright; but it is not only sunshine that is needed for the spirit.

TASAWWUF: In Nayaz one prays for the blessing of the rays of the sun. The first impression is that one seeks the blessing of the sunlight, the light everybody sees in the skies. This is a correct impression. Everybody has a right to that blessing, saint and sinner alike. And it is a misfortune when people have to work underground or are so occupied that they see the sun very little. Their spiritual evolution, indeed their life, is hindered; they do not get the full benefit of that light.

But there is another sun which can be discovered within us, which is in the very heart of our being, and when that light comes out it is the sunshine for the spirit. It is the star of the East, the light that shone at midnight in the traditions. It is referred to in the Upanishads. They teach that when we have neither the sun nor moon nor stars nor lamps the light is to be found within us.

This teaching about the Holy Light is also found in the book of the Prophet Isaiah in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Book of Revelation in the Christian Scriptures and in the Sura called “Light” in the Qur’an. It is referred to directly and indirectly in numerous Buddhist Scriptures. The ancient name for God among the followers of Zarathustra was “Ahura Mazda,” which is to say, the light of the cosmos. The very Buddhists who begin by denying the existence of God have come to accept Amida Buddha, the boundless, all-pervading light.

GITHA: Our soul is like a planet; and the planet is illuminated by the sun, so our spirit is illuminated by the light of God.

TASAWWUF: Now while the intellectual people will accept the unity or diversity of doctrine, even of holy, sacred and esoteric doctrine, the Sufi wants to prove it by demonstration, by actualization. The words of themselves are of little value unless they can be proven in life. Where is this light of God? How can it be found? And then what use is it? It is of all use, and it can be found here and now. We do not have to wait until we are angels to recognize it. Their whole being is full of light, light which is attracted to light.

The kingdom of heaven is within us, and the question is how to uncover it. It is not easy to bring this teaching in its fullness to the generality. In the sacred studies and under the guidance of qualified teacher the talibs learn those practices which awaken the light within them. Paul Brunton, in his



excellent works, has written on "The Mystery of the Eye," "The Mystery of the Heart," "The Mystery of the Breath." Each of these the healer has to use in their own way.

The mystery of the eye is not given forth but one uses Sulp and sometimes Tawajjeh by which life energy is communicated to another. The mystery of the breath must be unveiled to us in order that we control the breaths of others and learn to purify the atmospheres. But the mystery of the heart is all important. One learns in Nirtan that only heart can heal the heart. It is the uncovering of heart which elevates us and enables us to elevate others. Therefore, even such a practice as blowing upon the heart is beneficial; it can waken that heart-life within this body of flesh, and once awakened both body and mind will benefit.

GITHA: In the absence of this, however healthy and joyful we may look, we are not really healthy. We must have some spiritual touch, some opening in our heart which will let the light come in, the light of God.

TASAWWUF: We lose magnetism with every breath and every step, with every action and every thought and with every word that comes out of the mouth. We do not give these subjects much thought and we do not know how to recharge the battery which has lost its energy. This is the main reason for sickness, old age and death. Yet there has always been a feeling that they are not so necessary as they may appear. The question is how to avoid them, if possible.

One method which is used by esotericists is that of concentration upon the sun. This concentration has a greater significance than may at first appear. It can be given to non-initiates because it is mentioned in the published literature. Anything that appears in the literature can be discussed with the generality within limits. The same is true of the teachings on healing and health. Insofar as they have been published, they may be discussed. The methods of the Shafayat and the Khifayat are brought before the public, and unless the statements made are proven by demonstration, the teachings are liable to degenerate into superstitions. To make them real they must be realized and actualized.

The health of every disciple, or every enlightened person, is the health of the whole humanity, of the whole world. When we can learn to awaken that sunlight within ourselves we will radiate blessings upon the world. According to Sufism initiation is the greatest healing and even one initiate can heal multitudes. This may be done more through the purification of atmosphere than by any other means, but it does not matter. It is bringing the light of God to this world, making it shine from our hearts which will assure health of mind and body and restore happiness to human experience.