SUFI ORDER INTERNATIONAL

founded by Hazrat Inayat Khan in 1910

Keeping in Touch

A Letter by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

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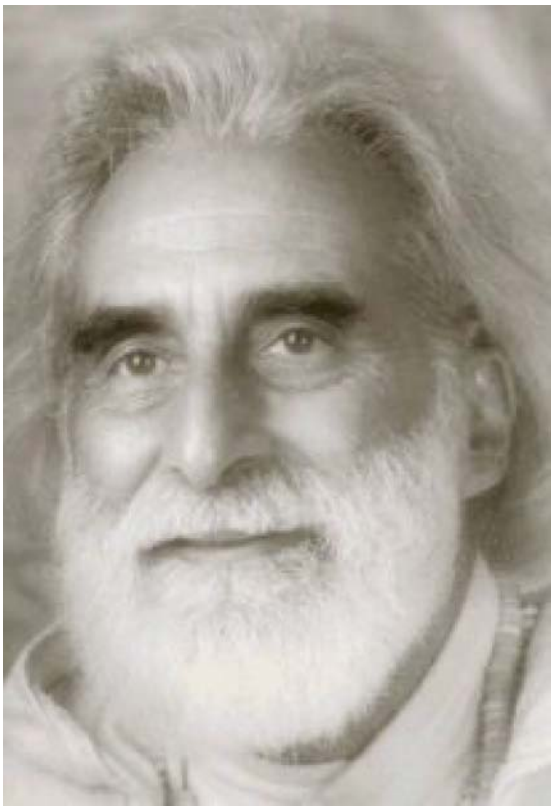

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1 - Christmas Message

From The Abode

May my Christmas message reach you from my pod in the middle of the woods at the Abode. May it be a joyous one, and may the New Year open up exciting new perspectives, and may your life be blessed by making room for the divine presence.

Christmastide evidences our attunement to the seasonal cycles of Planet Earth. We, too, just like the plants, do go through a threshold state of soul-searching, lying low, in anticipation of the rebirth of life when the light tide changes and daylight wins over the dark night. There is anxiety before the unknown. As we hear echoes of alarmist presages of an escalation of belligerent conflicts, we, of course, interrogate ourselves as to the wisdom of meeting a threat with a show of strength. Throughout the globe, there have been demonstrations of public opinion against the use of nuclear weapons that could lead us to the point of no-return by igniting the world arsenals. A demonstration of the absurdity of giving vent to warring instincts was to be found in the first world war when, on Christmas eve, soldiers on either side of the line used to drop their guns and play cards.

On the other hand, we are told how naive it is to assume that by disarming ourselves we will stay the hand of any potential violator of a gentlemen's peace pledge simply by being less threatening. Truly, when threatened, animals become more aggressive. "The one who draws the sword first will perish by the sword." But there are always the ones who will attack covetously or maliciously. Animals will hold each other at bay by threatening displays, but it takes but a little inadvertency to lose one's nerve and the truce is lost. Then things escalate beyond control.

The threat parade becomes absurdly self-defeating when, for example, in order to save one's side, one enters into a situation in which everything is inevitably blown up, which is the sardonic paradox of our time. On the other hand, non-violence would prove self-defeating, for example, in the hypothetical event of a Nazi holding one hundred hostages at gunpoint, given that one were placed before the choice of either shooting him and saving the hostages or observing non-violence and letting the hostages be sacrificed. Does not our sense of honor and chivalry call upon us to

protect the victims of wanton violence? How can one do this without retaliating in violence?

Is there a way out of this dilemma? How could one become a warrior of Peace? Remember Bernard Shaw's wager?: "Dare you wage war upon war?" Gandhi's non-violence was not quietist, as the historic peace march to the sea showed. The marchers were mown down mercilessly by the troops, yet kept on advancing to the extent that the conscience of the masses of Britons at home was stirred ad nauseam. This resulted in India's freedom. Christ's "turn the other cheek" is not passivity; it requires valiance. Pilate carried the power of Rome behind him while Jesus stood in front of him on the bench of the accused in the consciousness of the divine sovereignty suffering from the limitation of the existential condition, yet still sovereign. Pilate did everything he could to browbeat Jesus, who had previously been tortured. Finally, he was so impressed with Jesus' composure that when he was requested to have the plaque announcing "Jesus King of the Jews" removed, he refused, saying "It has been written." Such is the power of God-consciousness.

An application of this disarming valiance is to be found in the case of the Admiral in the Indian Navy who went out unarmed to face a raging mob of sailors and persuaded them to turn back by dint of his masterful sovereignty. The mad elephant can only be controlled by the madhzub - the dervish who is gifted with the sovereignty resulting from God-consciousness. When unsure of the strength of our being, we resort to the force of arms. In so doing, we will never plug into our own resourcefulness. Consequently, we neglect to fall upon our real inner power. We have no idea as to the extent of the power we represent jointly. I mean, the forces of goodwill in the universe are immensely more powerful and numerous than the individuals who flaunt the dignity of the human person and his/her right to self-expression and justice. But we are not as well-organized as they are, and are bickering in our own party disputes rather than linking together while respecting each other's idiosyncrasies. This is networking - networking for peace in the consciousness of our joint power in the name of the spiritual government of the world.

May this be our motto for the New Year, for the message of Christmas is goodwill in gratitude for the return of light after the threatening increase in darkness. The rejoicing celebrating the changing of the light tide at Christmastime acquires a new relevance at

Easter. A few days before, Jesus had enjoined upon his disciples to stand by him through the night until the light started dawning. "Did you watch with me?"

May every day of the New Year be a Christmas day for you. I am by your side in loyalty in our mutual dedication.

2 - Mastery - the Effect of Retreats

As we plunge deeper and deeper into retreats at the Abode, we become increasingly amazed at the effect of mastery on human transformation. The sheer determination that it takes to reverse the human machine, which is coming through from inside represents a remarkable victory of the will, with the result of unleashing intense magnetism. And it is this energy that shifts consciousness from its commonplace setting. Of course, meditation is the art of learning how to use the human focus of a universal will to mobilize that universal will in all its infinite scope. Eventually, the forces of life take over to set up a tidal wave of transformation. However, though will acts as a catalyst, it is ecstasy (the energy of the psyche) that avers itself to be the driving force. People of great accomplishment have performed feats of mastery. Murshid says that if you are not making a success of your undertaking, the chances are that you are not in control of yourself.

Yet mastery is subject to much controversy in the Sufi Order and in general. Most psychologists since Freud warn that inhibiting impulses, frustrating desires, and withholding anger, will damage the psyche and make a person up-tight, crestfallen and timorous. Protesting this view, a few teachers have been departing from the characteristic mastery of traditional schools to promote an epicurean permissiveness. The sluices are wide open, indiscriminately; everything goes. Public opinion is outraged.

In the nick of time, psychologist Carol Travers, in her book: Anger, The Misunderstood Emotion, points to the danger of simply giving in to anger. She says that by so doing, one escalates anger possibly to the point of a tantrum; it takes over. One may become an irate, inconsiderate and insufferable person.

Murshid took a balanced view of this problem. One is sometimes faced with the choice between wounding one's psyche by withholding an emotion or blowing a delicate situation by behaving simply in an uncouth manner, showing a lack of sensitivity and refinement (rather like an elephant in a glass palace). This behavior can sometimes do violence to a person in his/her self-esteem. In this case, just as it is not always advisable to mollycoddle the body, but rather expose it to the seasons, even so the psyche will get strengthened by rough handling it, provided one does not

overdo it. However, while the ascetic orders practice detachment and desirelessness to effect liberation, the Sufis see the whole universe as the divine nostalgia for self-discovery, the actuation of potentialities, proliferation, inventiveness and evolution.

If, as the Muslims affirm, "La ilaha illa 'llah," it is all one being, since there is none other than God, then what we believe to be our desires are extensions of the overall divine desire, albeit narrowed down by the limitation of our personal perspectives, maybe distorted, possibly eviscerated. Rather than quash an impulse, Murshid advocates harnessing it like a yachtsperson harnesses the wind to blow the sailboat where he/she wishes it instead of where it wishes. Rather than disperse the energy of anger in an explosion of fury, one could make use of that energy in an implosion: gaining an ongoing sense of dignity and sovereignty that imposes respect.

The trouble is that mastery easily becomes a feat of proving oneself to oneself or to others, especially when challenged. It is the stuff that makes the mountaineer, the athlete, the fireman, the hero, the yogi. Besides, people and fundamentalist institutions have a way of making one feel that one should do this or that; one often "shoulds" oneself. One finds oneself in a bind when pushing beyond the boundaries between stress and overstress. The bind is in the mind. One fears being humiliated in one's self-esteem, reproved, punished or even dismissed if one should fail. At a certain point, something has to give. If one has a vulnerable mind, one slips into schizophrenic behavior; if a strong mind, one could have a heart attack or cancer.

A perspicacious person will notice that he/she is more vulnerable to overstress when pitting the personalized will against odds doggedly and stubbornly. One must regard the natural trend of the formative processes within us that prevail upon us to stop hitting our head against the wall and get into synch with a will of a more universal and impersonal scope calling for attention from within. One could easily slip into cussedly "doing one's thing under the banner of mastery, unaware of it's effect on others. It is because the dervish musters the will of which his will is the extension (what we call the divine will) that the mad elephant will obey him. If he were to apply his personal end of the cone, of which the divine will is the big end and his the small, the dervish would be killed by the elephant. Such is the divine power that sparks one when, to quote Murshid, One discovers in oneself the same power that moves the universe.

3 - Bringing Spirituality Into Everyday Life

The ancients used to divide the world between the sacred and the profane. The temple represented an area considered sacred, and within it, the "sancto sanctorum" (the holy of holies) was out of bounds for anyone except the priests since they were organized in a way that was conducive to the strictest dedication to a spiritual way of life. In our day and age, we are doing away with the barriers. Under the guise of bringing spirituality into everyday life, we run the risk of profaning the sancto sanctorum with the gross and rather uncouth attunement of those who are vying for personal gain.

The link between you and me is chiefly in our quest for our spiritual home. The real sancto sanctorum is in the very depth of our beings.

The mystical tendency in people seeks for the personal experience of that which is formalized and organized in any religious institutionalization. We are the real temple. Truly, a person who has become deeply attuned to the atmosphere of the divine presence becomes sacred. Entering into his/her presence is an experience of communication with the condition of God in His/Her pristine condition.

It might be helpful to grasp the subtle difference between saying that "all is God" and "all is divinity", a distinction which Murshid illustrates by the difference between the drop and the sea, or, better still, the seed and the plant.

"Divinity is like the seed that grows in the plant and it comes again in the heart of the flower. In a similar way, the God who was manifested as the seed of the plant of this creation rises again towards fulfillment, and in that fulfillment He produces a seed in the heart of that flower, which is divinity. The seed comes last after the life of trunk, branch, fruit and flower. And as the seed is sufficient in itself and capable of producing another plant, so man is the product of all the planes, spiritual and material, and yet in him alone shines forth that primal intelligence that caused the whole - the seed of existence - God."

Though the plant is the unfoldment of the seed, it still never expresses all the many splendored bounty potentially present in its seed. Besides, just as the plant may get

tarnished and eventually will disintegrate, even so, disintegration sets into the body of God, the universe, since it is the condition for rebuilding and evolving. Just as in the body, the hair and nails are less important than the cells of the brain, even so, one might grasp that there are degrees of Godness. At the jagged ends, the universe and creatures get tarnished.

Getting in tune with this immaculate nascent sacredness in its pristine state prior to its becoming tarnished does make one rather out of synch with any grossness or just worldliness or selfishness. This is why the hermits do build up barriers (just like the precincts of the temple and the regions out of bounds) to protect their attunement from the profanity of the world. Meanwhile, hopefully the faithful may be observing ablution rituals with the effect of washing away some of the inevitable psychological pollution. Since one feels the need to adapt oneself to the common denominator, maybe one does not observe this tarnishing in the midst of life. When one is programmed into the personal vantage point, one fails to see that which transpires behind that which appears; one gets alienated from one's spiritual home, the holy of holies, and feels sullied and profaned.

Therefore, after freeing oneself from the conditioning of the environment, the next step consists in consciously building a temple out of the very fabric of one's being and establishing thresholds to protect the sancto sanctorum such, that the outer world cannot invade it and pollute it.

That temple, made of the fabric of our being, ranges from gross matter to the most subtle gossamer. All living structures in the universe including our bodies, are based on the same formative process as the galaxies, more elaborate than a vortex. In fact, the formation is a double helix on the principle of the caduceus of Esculapius: two crisscrossing spirals generated by an axis that is considered to be a vacuum but represents the threshold into an inverted space. It can only maintain its continuity in the process of becoming by continually dissolving and reforming itself and it edges off into the stars. It is pulsing, sparkling, radiating and whirling in many dimensions. The inlets and outlets are what the yogis call the chakras. One may discern an altar corresponding to the heart (anahata) chakra, mounted upon the tabernacle, the solar plexus (manipura) opening into the inverted space where one has access into the treasurehouse of the many splendored bounty of the universe (Pandora's box). For

the Sufis, it is the "hidden treasure that desired to be known." At the vortex, in the middle of the resplendent radiance, flashing out like a fountain, is a channel wherein one may experience the descent of pure spirit (which again is a dimension of our being).

By the sheer act of envisioning this temple, one will dynamize it and form its structure. Reciprocally, the energy so generated catapults one's consciousness into the higher spheres. At a further step, one envisions the temple as made of light, the aura. As soon as one realizes that the light of the aura is hurtling through space at the pace of 186,000 miles a second, one cannot look upon the temple as made of a membrane any more but as an expanding vortex reaching into the universe, intermeshed with the light of the whole universe while still maintaining some paradoxical mode of identity. If one observes the axis of one's aura, one will notice that it is like a flame, red at the bottom, violet at the top, surrounded with a corolla likened to a rainbow. In addition, one may consider one's akashic body as a further sheath of that temple, a body of vibrations which also diffuses, in this case, in the symphony of the spheres, while still retaining its own specific signature tunes or frequency patterns.

In considering the inner temple, moral codes represent the provisions taken by society to ensure a basic order and protect its members from exploitation and abuse. Its buttresses are built of the taboos we have come to observe to avoid being humiliated in our spirit. This is brought home to us particularly forcefully when we become aware of the divine nostalgia within us bursting in the pursuit of excellence of the divine creator, which is our innermost being, as a challenge and eventually, victory over any defilement in us. It is climbing the hill of divine orderliness, overcoming the entropy of slackness, disenchantment, destructiveness. It is a pilgrimage to the sources of life, much as the throngs of pilgrims trek to the source of the Ganges in the high Himalayas.

The world is a treasure house of splendor manifesting as beauty wherever it can overcome the resistance of those who obstruct it. By what sardonic twist do people choose ugliness when there is so much beauty about! It is very sad. There is no accounting for taste. Beauty is an expression of that sacred source of inspiration. The beauty of one's being flows through when one plugs into the splendor of the divine being where it is to be found, in its pristine state, in the holy of holies, within the

depths of our own being. Such is the mystery of the sacred heart.

4 - Love

"Love clarifies ambiguity. Love heals pain, but it must be based on understanding."

(A free rendering of Jelal-ud-din Rumi's poem: II, 1530)

Yes, we all nurture wounds deep down. When lovingly tendered, these may simply leave a scar. Somewhere in our psyche is the chipped pottery, or as Shams Tabriz says, "The palace in a ruin." It is also the masterpiece in the making. The flaws in an antique are a guarantee of authenticity and may carry their particular charm, if not too devastated. That ongoing work of artistry that is our personality is worth all our efforts in working with it, for the same pain that can blemish our personality can act as a creative force, burnishing it into an object of delight.

Our personal version or concept of pain acts destructively upon us when we wallow in it and fail to see the pain of the one we think is causing us this difficulty, particularly when our anger prevents us from working things out with the other. Pain is never an isolated situation; what we look upon as our pain is our participation in a network of pain that may well extend to the whole humanity. The sting of pain is in the isolation in which we tend to enclose ourselves in our own self pity: our self-inflicted loneliness, which refuses to see how the other feels or felt.

As we dig more deeply into our own and the other's conscious and unconscious motivations, each concealing and sometimes precipitating another motivation, we come to realize how ignorance of each other's intentions builds up into a totally phantomized mountain of misassessments, one resting upon the other. As one touches the bottom, where it hurts most, one realizes that the worst pain is caused by being misunderstood, or by misunderstanding the other. Communicating with one another will disclose one's real intentions reciprocally.

Where the probe exposes an intention evidencing a disregard for the other, love is outraged by a feeling of betrayal. The usual outcome is a devalidated self image: one had suspended one's self esteem so precariously upon being loved and the default of love has let one down! Of course, interests cannot always be in synch; one may entertain conflicting aspirations. But love is standing by one another supportively,

guarding each other's pride. When admonishing, Murshid says one should take heed that the thin thread linking one reciprocally is not unduly stressed. Its only resilience is the power of one's love.

In this nebulous context of our understanding, our love for the "other" becomes easily jeopardized, eclipsed, even undermined momentarily or irretrievably. This is where only a deep soul understanding of another's feelings can save the slender thread of love from being ripped by the weight of judgment. It is true, of course, that it is one's love that causes one to overcome one's biased judgment of the other in the first place.

Relationship then avers itself to be a thing of beauty, irrespective of or beyond the personalities building it up, a reality having a meaningfulness for the universe built on the sublimation of the mutual pains and joys of those involved in it gained through a respectful and loving exploration of each other's feelings, motivations, ideals, hopes and fears, and need of truth and freedom. When we handle ourselves beautifully in adverse circumstances, they become testing cases upon which each one builds trust in the beauty and meaningfulness of life.

5 - Looking Ahead

A new age Catholic priest, also a Hindu at heart (if there is any way of defining what it means to be a Hindu or whatever), Rev. Ramon Panniker, said at a memorable interfaith conference: "To be a teacher in this day and age, one has to have one's roots in one's tradition and the branches of one's tree reaching out universally". Indeed, this is our experience, whether in a teacher function or just a seeker (a mureed, in Sufi terminology) which we all are if sincerely seeking for understanding and fulfillment.

The modern scene presents a disconcerting contrast between a revival of fundamentalism in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, even Hinduism, on one hand and a progressive approach which admittedly does tend sometimes to go off the rails and smells of libertinism and a certain aggressivity against harmony, order and nobility.

The new movements are clearly more successful than the older ones because they are more aware of present day thinking and the need particular to our time of strife, violence, anxiety and insecurity. Yet they mushroom ephemerally and fizzle out listlessly in the winds of the turmoil of the modern turnover of thinking. The alternative is updating. This means earmarking the elements transmitted by the past that are not time-bound, and looking at them not only in the present context, but even inasmuch as they might represent signposts for the future.

Some of J.S. Bach's music is timeless, some of the cello Suite 'Bourrees' are hackneyed. Yet the powerful creations of the past are an essential part of our present life. Paris would not be the same without Notre Dame, but the Queen Elizabeth had to be scrapped. The way of the traditional sannyasin in India cohabitates with the jet aircraft, and is a heartening adornment in our ugly concrete, plastic and steel environment. Yet our times require that all more evolved people be motivated by the quest for freedom, awakening and ecstasy, without the ocher robe (that is, without the outer conformism) while working hard to build a beautiful world.

Likewise, Murshid extracted the essence of the teachings of the Sufis and, indeed, of the great spiritual traditions of the world, and applied them to the needs of his time, and what is more, drew pointers for the future. Now we may reap the fruit of his

masterful insight by learning how to glean the quintessence of his teaching and see its significance to the soul-searching of our time, for example, in the realm of psychology or finding the purpose in life or just learning how to stay high in the middle of everyday life. The external trappings are, as Murshid said himself, the "basket" enabling one to collect the fruit or flowers.

We are referring to the old dichotomy between the letter and the spirit which has spurned much controversy in all religious institutions. That Murshid said, "Do not change my words" becomes eminently understandable when one realizes from pursuing the "authentic versions" to what extent some of his ideas were misinterpreted or even reversed by well-wishers. But the original versions of the Gathas were headed as "sketches of thought for study."

Murshid pioneered in touching upon the essence of the teachings of the great religious schools. I suggest, therefore, as the forthcoming step in our work in the Sufi Order that we endeavor to grasp the very quintessence of this valuable teaching, attune ourselves to the particular cosmic emotion he conveys, and work out ourselves how it applies to real life situations, to our own self-creativity, what light it throws upon how we may lift our consciousness, and what contribution this may have in what is happening in our time.

This requires a constructive and creative effort on our part instead of just paying lip service to beautiful thoughts. This, however, must not be confused with interpreting these thoughts after our own thinking, but rather re-thinking our thinking and re-feeling our emotions, by our touching upon the very essence and spirit of the teaching. It is very often for this reason that the interpretation of representatives, of the teaching, in the classes has not proved satisfactory. My suggestion is, therefore, to earmark the core phrases which embody the meaning most intensely and meditate on these ourselves and reflect upon their relevance to our lives and our beings.

I have often pondered quizzically upon the reason why this teaching, that marks a landmark in the spiritual thinking of our time, is so little known. I feel, amongst others, a responsibility in making it known. One likes to share what has meant a lot to one. My question is invariably whether we have not been standing in the way of it spreading by appearing too much like a "sect" or charismatic group. Yet that is not all. There is a need of presenting it in a way that people are able to take. This has

been the case of all philosophers and scientists placed into focus by their exegeses. It has been the case of all the Sufi mystics. In fact, Sufism has been called "tamthil": that is, the transference of the factual and also conceptual reality into its meaningfulness, the gist, which is a reality for the soul, not for the mind or the body. It is not the conceptual interpretation of concepts, but rather metaphor, that gives one the chance of exercising creative thought by oneself.

6 - The Sinai Gathering

Some of us have just returned from a really exhilarating and fascinating meeting of religious leaders culminating on the top of Mount Sinai, a gesture of good will in a tough, violent world! That this historic meeting was not exposed to media publicity speaks, amongst other considerations, for the non-pretentious intention motivating it. Of course, everyone is aware that the Middle East ranks first among the most vulnerable areas which ignited beyond control, might be likely to trigger off a nuclear holocaust. We also know that issues are so complex and intricate that governments, with all their expertise, fail to find a solution acceptable to all.

Consequently, although political feelings, claims and grudges could not be overlooked or dismissed, there was a consensus that we were not habilitated or accredited or competent to meddle with purely political issues.

Why, then, did we meet? Could you believe that there are still a few idealists in the world who will leave their jobs and homes, cancel their busy schedules at their own expense, out of pure dedication, in the belief that since there is a religious factor in any war, let alone the Middle East conflict, it is incumbent upon the more progressive spiritual leaders of various religious denominations to demonstrate their solidarity in their dedication to a spiritual ideal while respecting their differences of outlook and ritual?

Obviously, numerically we represented a negligible fraction of the pleiades of rabbis, priests, ministers, imams and Bikkhus on the planet. Therefore, one might well question what impact our symbolic action might have upon the conflicting religious masses, especially since we were deprived of the powerful tool of mass media. "Small is beautiful..." and we believed that our gesture may, however, loosen tensions a little bit in, let us say, the 'software' of the programming of events materializing on the physical plane.

For the least, it may be said that we had a marvelous time sharing in the spectacle of the most diverse types of people and cultures and attires, and discovered the joy of communicating together with an open heart. For the Middle Easterners, the American New Age openheartedness, religious tolerance and optimism must have hit home as

something totally surprising and very reassuring, and served as the 'glue' that bonded us. Therefore, we feel grateful to Maureen Kushman and Joshua and many others for their beautiful initiative in calling this meeting. It was a striking expression of the spirit of the message of unity to which we are dedicated.

We sang Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Sufi songs at the top of the Mount where presumably Moses discovered the famous tablets. A native American lit medicinal herbs at dawn. What a privilege to be ushered into the "holy of holies" at the St. Catherine's monastery, dating as early as the year 50 A.D. - a tribute to the fervor of the Hesychasts, the early monks of the desert whose caves are still to be seen where water flows generously betwixt the barren desert land.

A remarkable feature of the event, which need not necessarily be put down to coincidence, was the fact that several Japanese religious groups had planned a similar event at the very same time. One more indication in favor of the synchronicity in the planning of the "good force!" These groups added a lot to the sheerly picturesque - remarkable by their cool and noble discipline.

President Sadat's project for a peace center including three buildings, for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, seems to have been scrapped, but the spirit of Sadat adumbrates the whole area. It was his favorite haunt. We felt that it was his spirit that had inspired us, and we were doing what we could to keep that ultimate hope for tolerance and good will, not only in the Middle East but in the world, alive.

7 - Dreams

Throughout the States, people are getting together in groups to discuss and interpret their dreams. This is a symptom of our times. People have become more realistic than before and seek to harvest aspects and dimensions of ourselves that we know nothing about or prefer to overlook. They sometimes send a pressing message across the borderline from the uncharted reaches of the unconscious into the pigeonholes of our mental constructs. These have a disquieting effect upon our projects and challenge our rationalizations, for the unconscious harbors an entirely different mode of thinking from the usual, encompassing wholeness. Here, that which is deemed as incongruous by the middle range of thinking of our day consciousness, acquires an abstruse meaningfulness.

Interpreting these with our commonplace logic, particularly considering the temptation of tendentious thinking, may prove dangerously misleading. Freud's attempt to haul unconscious elements to the surface is not without its drawback. A deep sea fish emerging at the surface would be bloated and could not feature or function any more according to its nature. Therefore, I would discourage the layman from playing the apprentice sorcerer, and leave the skillful task of interpreting dreams to the trained professional therapist. However, we have a more constructive recourse: dream therapy or, better still, promoting creativity in our dreams as a complement to diagnosis. I am referring to a technique explored and applied in Vedanta and also Sufism. Rather than draw unconscious motivations to the surface of the conscious, one thrusts the light of consciousness into the nebulous unconscious depths.

One of the many activities of our sleep life is simply digesting or regurgitating the residual impressions of the day. No doubt the unconscious can accomplish most of this work more efficiently than conscious volitional action. In like fashion, the motions required to type or play the piano or drive a car are automated. Nature always seems to find a way of insuring an economy of means. But where one makes a mistake, one has to deautomatize the process in order to imprint a correction. Clearly this could be applied to the dreaming process. But could there be a way of exercising an impact on one's dreams?

How about reverie? We call reverie the state in which we are suspended on the

threshold between diurnal (day) consciousness and paradoxical sleep (sleep with dreams). We know that if we shift slightly into sleep, we have no impact on our imagery and if we slip back into diurnal consciousness, we have some handle and incentive in the exercise of our imagination. We can steer it. Depending upon how close we are to the threshold, we may enjoy having more sway over the flow of imagery or find ourselves overwhelmed and willy-nilly invaded by it, not unlike steering a ship in a heavy sea.

Nidra Yoga is the art of maintaining oneself at the threshold, which means that one is keeping the door open between the diurnal and the sleep state. One remembers one's daytime mode of thinking and how things appeared when one was conscious of the material world, while on the other hand, one is aware of one's dreams. By maintaining the continuity of the Ariadnian thread of consciousness, one is able not only to remember the pictures projected in one's dreams, but the multi-dimensional personality that one assumed. What is more, one is able to influence one's dreams and so sow seeds in the deep recesses of one's personality that will eventually germinate in a tangible way. This would offer a means of fostering creativity under cover of the unconscious, whereas our conscious mind would have discounted the possibility of developing superlative qualities and therefore be blocked.

A new technique teaches people to learn languages while listening to music. The language curriculum is imbedded in the music subliminally so that the pupil is never consciously aware of it; yet when the same words are said aloud, they are recognized. Besides residual impressions of day experience, one may recognize several tiers in the dream world: unconscious or unavowed fears or wishes, features about oneself that the unconscious seems to aim at pointing out or resolutions of problems one failed to see. Probing into the elusive layers of our dream world, we will discover vestiges of impressions that tell us of other spheres of reality in which our psyche is immersed, but yield a cryptic hint of what they could be like. Among these, one may spotlight the emergent process of self-creativity. To grasp this eruption of unconscious elements, it is useful to intuit the way the soul sees itself projected in our personality, rather than try to glean something of the nature of the soul as viewed from the vantage point of our personal self-image.

Under the label "soul", I earmark that (or those) little known dimension(s) of our

psyche which appear(s) as more stable than the better known aspects of our psyche - perhaps even eternal. The secret of effecting this is first in reversing time, then inverting time; that is, first a retroactive mode of thinking, recalling reminiscence further and further back in time, then shifting one's thinking into a dimension of time not generally understood. One shifts the setting of one's consciousness from thinking of events viewed in their sequence to grasping the know-how gleaned from the events and deleting from one's mind the contingent circumstances. This is called in computer language, "input processing:" the substrate of the experience is eternalized as information. One likes to refer to these levels of our being (and of the universe) to account for such phenomena transpiring in dreams as premonition, hunches, visions of celestial beings, or landscapes of the soul described by numberless mystics. These impressions of a non-verbal, pre-logical, spaceless and timeless nature, appear to evidence an a-priori level of knowledge, where the soul grasps archetypes whose exemplifications constitute the subject matter of our middle-range mental activities. Here is the level of meditative activity taking place in dreams.

The parallel between the cryptic psychic activity conducted in sleep and meditation has been painstakingly elucidated in the Mandukya Upanishad and descriptions of visionary experiences left by Sufis viz Shahabuddin Suhrawardhi (maqrul), Avicenna, Najmuddin Kubra, Farid-du-Din Attar, and numerous others. Imagery presents the advantage of bypassing conceptualization. The self-actuating formative processes originating in the deep sleep state transpire as special forms in the dream state. The dream process projects aspects of one's self into landscapes, and even into beings who appear as other than oneself in the dream scenario (sometimes animals, even cars or planes). Inversely, the prevalent circumstances are sometimes so much part of one's self-image that one fails to detect the fact that these are circumstances impacting one from the psychological environment. Hence the ambiguity of our dream experience calling for skilled expertise. Reverting to therapy or creativity rather than diagnosis, one may train oneself to work with these landscapes, even as an artist might be given an unfinished painting to complete or even alter drastically.

How does one proceed? Let us remember that all creativity is a crossover between 'listening in' to the birthing process of the universe emerging in oneself and the way one customizes this universal trend by dint of one's own incentive, inventiveness and exploratory drive. An example of this would be found in a group of musicians

improvising. If each were expressing his/her fantasy, without listening to the others, it would result in a cacophony. If each were to toe the line to a leader, they would not be personally creative. But if each would be sensitive to the overall mood of the group as such, and at the same time contribute personally to the richness of the whole, they would be demonstrating a creative model.

Now, let us see how this would apply to working creatively with the human personality. It would involve one thrusting the searchlight of consciousness into the dark unconscious - like Orpheus - to intercept the tender shoots of qualities still in the formative process before they emerge into the personality as idiosyncrasies. Then reverse the process and apply one's will to auto-suggest to the unconscious will to shape these as one would like to have them, rather as one might cultivate flowers or breed animals by bending the formative process so that they depart from their state in the wild. This is culture: where the human creativity acts as an extension of the divine creativity, carrying it a few steps further in the evolutionary drive.

In order to effect the first step, one needs to learn how to turn one's consciousness within, as it were - discover an inverted space.

8 - High Key versus Low Key - Part I

There is a story which Murshid tells of a spiritual teacher and someone who was placed before his door that told awful, untrue stories about the teacher. Only those seekers who had eyes to see the truth piercing through the falsehood recognized the teacher and came in the door.

Many initiates who were living dedicated lives have now found their way into the active life, in fact, such seems to be the overall trend at this juncture. I believe this is the logical next step, in line with the leitmotif of the Sufi teaching. Many spiritual groups are criticized for encouraging a drop-out from real life and making people unadapted to deal with their problems, and therefore a burden on society. So we are gratified to evidence that we have had the opposite effect.

Jobs can be challenging and prove to be very time consuming and exacting, sometimes discouraging and depleting. The family scene with its joys and cares has its fascination and solace. For women, it may turn out to be a twenty-four hour chore, with its bright spots, but very demanding. Those who went back to school know how competitive and tedious it can be. Some of the less compatible couples may have their problems, leading - in the more dire cases - to painful soul-searchings. Beautiful friendships, when genuine, prove often to be the saving grace of a lifetime. Otherwise, the commonplace humdrum middle class existence just falls short of inspiring the more sensitive or idealistic people to find fulfillment. At worst, people get burned out and an insidious sense of frustration may surreptitiously creep into the unconscious, making people feel that they have failed to fulfill their highest aspirations, and that life is slipping by.

For those who have previously involved themselves in the "spiritual process", two options present themselves. For some, since they have become so inveigled in day-to-day commitments and have lost touch with their erstwhile spiritual attunement, the only solution seems to be a brief but radical break from the active life to the contemplative life, taking leave of the consuming responsibilities, at least for a few days. This, of course, accounts for the increasing demand for retreats at this juncture, by people who otherwise, in the ordinary rhythm of their lives, do not find any way of attending classes or doing their practices. It is then easier to immerse oneself into the

spiritual life in the appropriate setting and with guided instructions. Some initiates find however, that having now adapted themselves to the ordinary run of life, they have lost the ability to reattune themselves to the spiritual pitch. Representatives particularly, being deeply enmeshed and committed in life, feel it is an incredible strain to hoist themselves up sufficiently to meet the demands of guiding others. This often proves to be at the cost of one's effectiveness in one's job, which may require all one's energy.

In the more extreme cases, some people are harassed by a burning, quizzical and unsettling thought: could it be that I was caught up in a kind of spiritual mirage and now I am where things really are (although admittedly, it is devastatingly sobering and low key, and even rather disenchanting)? The clue to this enigma is obvious: when immersed in the commonplace middle range thinking in which most people have been programmed, one sees things from one's individual, focalized vantage point. You know, the way things look from a vantage point is not the way things are, but just the way they look from that vantage point. Consequently, one's outlook is one-sided, short-sighted, unimaginative. It is living in a slice of the multi-tiered universe, and failing to participate in all the bounty offered.

Friends, we desperately need something to hoist us beyond ourselves: a strong experience that liberates us from the constraint of our trite self-image and our inadequate assessment of life's events and situations. Rather, more than an experience: we need a breathtaking awakening into an overview, grasping the meaningfulness of ourselves in the universe, fulfilling our own purpose in relation to the purpose of the whole. Is it not an exciting feature of our gift as humans that we not only partake in our flesh of the physical nature of the fabric of the universe, but in our psyche of that very being that is the universe, and more so that we have access into the thinking, the programming, the software of the universe? This is the only thing that makes sense in life.

Imagine that you are a cell within a body, and as you evolve, you can see your function within the network of functions of the whole body, and can enter into the mind that programs the body. Thus, you would fulfill your purpose as a cell by over-reaching yourself. Since it is so difficult to maintain this attunement in life, one can well

understand why people have sought to drop out from the workday existence either in the Indian tradition of the 'sannyasin' or by the dangerous drug trip where the experience so dearly sought is distorted by a chemical stress on the brain. But neither of these alternatives is satisfactory, since one is missing out on life with all its challenge, excitement, fulfillment and attainment. Admittedly, at least in the case of the sannyasin or dervish, one would at least be high, sovereign, luminous, peaceful, free. The inescapable answer of our day and age is obviously the "reconciliation of the irreconcilable", not the middle way, tepid, undaring, holding back both ways, but to bring more life and punch and joy, laughter, intent and insight into life, reinforcing this by an occasional retreat - so long as the retreat is an occasion for an overview on life - insight into one's problems, recharging the battery of one's psychic energy and fostering creativity in one's personality.

After a retreat, one is more able to keep up with one's practices. One has been re-dedicated. Then, back to life with more zest than ever!

Be vibrant, alive, aware, life-giving. There is a French motto: "Reculer pour mieux sauter - Back up an instant in order to spring forward more effectively."

9 - High Key versus Low Key - Part II

Of course, it means growing up. It means being intensely alert and aware and luminous - not just aware of the "here and now", but of the "everywhere and always" (which, incidentally, must not be confused with the "nowhere and never" - often the outcome of spacing out, easily taken to be Samadhi). Being aware does not just mean being acutely observant of what is happening around and about one, with particular regard to its relevance to one's objective, but of all that lies behind the apparent situation and the implications of this objective, and what is more, of what are the issues behind one's objective.

To be precise - it encompasses several scores - first, setting a goal as definite as possible. This is admittedly difficult because our human representations of our objectives are based upon our own scale of values, which we are continually reassessing (Murshid says: "Shatter your ideals on the rock of truth"), and which fluctuate according to our attunement. Second, as we mature we become more realistic as to how to implement these imponderable values into tangible objectives. If we are really progressing, whatever we conceived of as our purpose is continually superseded by a further one. "The purpose of life is like the horizon: the further one advances, the further it recedes" Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. Not only is this true, but if one is truly creative in life, one constructs the path upon which one treads not unlike an aircraft (in contrast to a car) that has to follow a prepared red road.

Here, our own incentive will determine an azimuth upon the horizon which itself may vary, should one choose to reschedule the itinerary on the way. Furthermore, one would prove foolhardy to pursue one's proposed objective glibly without the slightest regard for what is going on around one. In fact, one is continually reprogramming one's objective on the strength of the wisdom that one gains by learning from the experience of one's fellow humans and from the feedback to one's ideas and actions gleaned from the life situations around one.

Having then some sense of one's purpose, it is advisable to foresee possible obstacles, although most of such are unpredictable. Obviously, one will have to be prepared to deal with these as they arise. However definite one is about one's purpose, one may be advised to be versatile enough to totally reprogram one's course

in view of the lay of the territory encountered.

The challenge of life requires of one to be highly astute. First, one may be able to observe how people, perhaps unwittingly, tend to draw one into their problems ("laying their trips on one" - in American). If one is inclined towards tender-heartedness, one inevitably does get oneself inextricably inveigled, which, incidentally, is not necessarily salutary for the person one is accommodating. In this case, the second modulation of consciousness advocated in meditation is extremely revealing: shift one's consciousness into the consciousness of another person. What a different perspective from one's own! One soon discovers how people both suffer and rejoice for having made themselves dependent upon one by, in fact, making one dependent upon them. Their fear of being unable to cope without one may be so desperate that one prefers just putting up with the pain oneself. One likes to boast to oneself of being stronger than the persons concerned, not realizing what it does to one's morale and one's personal unfoldment.

When one gets oneself inveigled in worldly affairs and dallies in small talk, not only does one lose one's contact with one's heavenly dimension, but one starts disliking oneself, and consequently develops hardness and bitterness. What is more, one may nurture a resentment against the people who were dragging one down, overlooking the fact that maybe they were looking to one to inspire them and give them an uplift!

As one matures, one learns how to help without being burdened, how to function like a 'sannyasin,' an initiate, in life. It is true that one needs to be alone to do a lot of repair work upon one's psyche and to see things in perspective. One may well understand Buddha. Yet in our day and age, it is more challenging and wiser to awaken, become very alert and aware right in the middle of 'all of this,' standing steadfastly while lending a helpful hand by thrusting the light of one's insight upon people's problems. This means earmarking the deeper issues behind their problems, to avoid letting oneself be trapped by or embroiled in the commonplace thinking, judgementalism and personal likes and dislikes of so many people, while keeping one's spirit in good tune. All of this, on the assumption, of course, that one is not being judgmental of them oneself. One is really more aware than they are of the way their interpretation of events and their dealing with events has tarnished them, and how this happens surreptitiously. One sees clearly where each person is "at" and what they would do to

one's attunement, to one's thinking, to one's values, how they would affect one in the pursuit of one's objective if one demurred.

Such clarity will undoubtedly bring one to handle life situations and all relationships wisely, harmoniously and beautifully in one's future dealings. Obviously, the emergence of a new awareness will carry as a consequence a difficulty in continuing to adjust oneself to situations previously taken for granted and even coveted. Of course, as people grow, they inevitably need to readjust their relationships accordingly. They are no more the persons they used to be. Relationships have to be re-wooed, updated, never taken for granted. Redressing current situations and relationships after reassessing them requires even more insight, assiduity and courage than dealing with new situations, because one has to safeguard people's pride while weaning them. One discovers that the wisest way of doing this is by strengthening them in their trust in their own resourcefulness. This can only happen by giving them a chance of having to rely themselves upon that untapped store of resources which they can only discover by actuating them.

This requires of one to watch the process very carefully and monitor it painstakingly, rather than go about crushing people's feelings recklessly like an elephant in a glass castle. However, sometimes a sharp change of tack is less painful than a lingering severing, leaving a person in a feeling of uncertainty as to one's true intentions. One needs to awaken people to the views that one cherishes rather than nurture resentment for the fact that they are constraining or restricting one. For this, it is best simply to communicate one's point of view, one's insight. People love clarity, and are excited by new points of view, and will value these, providing one does not criticize their narrowness, of which they are themselves not aware, even as we have a blind spot in our own eyes. On the other hand, people tend to feel threatened by a point of view that takes away the walls of the false security of their commonplace values.

10 - What is Spirituality?

As I try to explore new horizons in what has been called 'spirituality,' I am led to determine as clearly as possible what 'awakening in life' would really mean in practice. One might question the validity of practicing away from the scene where things actually happen: the value of learning to pilot a plane on a simulator, the effectiveness of meditating on divine qualities (wazaif) in a meditation cell isolated from the real life situations in which one is being challenged in affirming these qualities in one's actual handling of problems.

Granted, in a first step, one may auto-suggest a built-in programming, bearing in mind, as Murshid says, that one is just earmarking in oneself a quality that is already latent in oneself and actually effective in the entire universe. The neo-Platonic philosopher, Plotinus, once said: that which one fails to intuit in contemplation, one seeks to experience in the environment. In one's ivory tower, in splendid isolation, one may well glean something of the universe within oneself. Being conscious of the bounty, splendor and grandeur of the qualities inherited, converged, confluent, from the entire universe at all levels, one's divine inheritance, one would walk the streets with the majesty of a king or queen.

But I would advocate as a second step: while meditating, when one is still protected from the actual stress of impinging situations, to clearly envision those circumstances in one's daily life calling for the particular quality one is meditating upon. Clearly imagine yourself as you would be if you were faced with this very situation and were able than to manifest this quality more intensely than before, thanks to the emphasis laid on it by concentrating upon it.

But it is in the third step that one actually gets down to doing it. This is where things are really at. Presently, one finds oneself launched into real life. In a battle of wills, people are trying to blackmail one into submitting to their will. One did not quite realize it except that one felt frustrated. One resented the people for being bullies. Yet maybe one thought they knew more and had more experience. One is hoodwinked by their self-confidence. Anyway, one feels one does not have what it takes to bend their wills.

Besides, it is all too much of a hassle, and so tiring to keep on fighting. So one demurs, resenting them, resenting oneself for copping out, resenting fate for having placed one in this insidious situation. Half the battle consisted in realizing the situation, clearly seeing what people are doing to one.

What is the second half? Remembering one's wazifa, the mantram for power: discovering in oneself the self same power that moves the stars and the planets, the atoms, the sea, and propulses the sap in the trees and breaks through as the power of a kingly personality. One has it, too, in oneself. Maybe it is difficult to believe. Abraham believed in it; that is why he became a patriarch. If one were Abraham, these people would not be trying to undermine one's will. People have a sure sense of how far they can try it on a person. But one has the same latencies within as Abraham. Why is it they are doing this to one? Because one does not believe one has the same power as Abraham.

While one was meditating, maybe one could actually see it theoretically. "Pir Vilayat keeps on referring to the DNA in each cell that carries the same programming as the whole body." Each fraction of the totality carries the bounty of the whole potentially (albeit less effectively the smaller the fraction). But when on the battlefield of life, the theory seems far-fetched, star-flung, just a mind trip when faced with the stark reality. This is where awakening in life proves more effective than awakening beyond life; the knowledge gained by experience more effective than our intuitive preknowledge.

Yet involvement in life tends to draw one into one's personal vantage point and self-image. The chances are that in like manner, one also has allowed oneself to sink into that lowest denominator. Awakening in life does not mean being caught in the constraint of the personal perspective. It means being aware of it while reconciling it to a cosmic and transcendental perspective. Both together. Now you pull yourself together and awaken! Immediately, one is aware of an overwhelming cosmic force in one - this is in the nature of one's real being. Presumably one did not have the trust or courage to call upon one's real being faced with the aggressive ego impacting one. Now one has clinched it, thanks to having learned to avoid slipping into one's personal vantage point.

The question now arises whether this of itself will enable one to surmount the challenge. The answer is no. First, one's inborn courtesy and politeness and also

compassion and generosity of heart will certainly stay one's hand in bringing to bear all the power on tap. Secondly, how does one allay megalomania? Remember, pride in the divine inheritance, together with humility for how one limits this bounty by one's own concept of oneself - both together - the reconciliation of the irreconcilables.

One tends to palliate by thinking, "I wish to be the instrument of the divine will", evidencing once more one's built-in conditioning of thinking in terms of categories. No! One's will is the divine will, funneled down, limited, distorted, but still the divine will.

But will that do it? Or was there a hitch? Was it really power that one needed? Or was it mastery? Why is it that, having inherited divine power, one cannot muster enough of it in real life? Is one's self standing in the way of manifesting one's innate power? Could it be that one is currently unwillingly giving in to impulses leading to a sense of failure or inadequacy or helplessness? Undoubtedly, a sense of self-denigration would pull one further in one's self-image and stand in the way of one's confidence in one's divine inheritance. "If one cannot control one's horse, the reason may be because one is not master of oneself, of one's own fingers", says Murshid.

Shall we take up courage and be even more drastic with ourselves? Could it be that one is ashamed about something one is doing, that one has a guilty conscience about being dishonest, deceiving people? This would make it difficult to have self-confidence, except by putting on a show of force that could crack up if the truth should explode. Maybe here is the crux of the cause. Of what use is working with trying to draw power from one's hidden resources if one is blocking it oneself? You do not expect people to respect you unless you respect yourself!

The clue to the whole hang-up has now been unmasked. The answer now is in making a decision to change an action in life. Immediately, but immediately, one is able to walk down the street conscious of one's divine inheritance, with the majesty of a king or queen, while being aware of one's personality identity. Both together, this time in perfect sync and furthermore, one is aware of filtering one's real being into one's personality to extend its boundaries and become more and more cosmic. There was no point in repeating the wazifa unless it were consistent with one's action.

The above would be a practical way of enacting one's practices in real life situations. We have built a bridge between what we imagine the divine nature to be and our personality because we cannot know these archetypes except by exemplifying them in our own personality. The new knowledge is built on a preknowledge, but substantiated and 'customized' by personal experience. "By discovering Him in my being, I confer upon Him a mode of reality", says Ibn 'Arabi. Yet to actuate latencies is not enough; the divine archetypes are enriched when we mutate them in our personalities. Therefore, Ibn 'Arabi adds, "By actuating Him in my being, I confer upon Him a mode of knowledge."

New perspectives in spirituality! Exploring the new spirituality. More realistic. More honest!

11 - Awakening and Creativity

Awakening and creativity, the two poles of life's activity: the universe discovering itself in each extension of itself, and the universe existentiating itself as it mutates by fostering inventiveness in each extension of itself.

Let us think of ourselves as extensions of the universe rather than fractions, and the universe as the being we call God. For example, the live cell is not really a component of the body, but the expression of the whole program of the body (the DNA). Likewise, we are an expression of the universe as a whole and therefore of God, rather than a fraction of that universe or a creature. It is our realization of this in the course of our activity that is the first half of what we mean by spirituality. The second half is manifesting and existentiating the program - that is, the mind of God - in which we participate or to which we contribute by our creativity. The Sufis call the first "God Consciousness" and the second "manifesting the manner of God".

One could describe awakening as what would hypothetically happen to a live cell if it discovered the code of the whole body and was able to see itself as an expression of that code, and, to push the argument in infinite regress, if it could reach into the thinking of the universe and see itself as an expression of that thinking. Or a villager on a world tour. Or simply an astrophysicist discovering the galaxies. Or, better still, a planetarian on a spacecraft who becomes a space-person. But one has to bear in mind that what one is discovering is really the reality of which one is an extension; therefore, one discovers one's cosmic dimension.

But creativity is one step further: it is discovering possibilities that have not yet manifested in the universe by actuating them, just like an aircraft creates its own path rather than following an already constructed highway. Or, better still, the space engineer who discovers the mathematics that will chart the optimal track for the spacecraft. Or an electron that finds a further shell for its orbit around the proton when existing shells have already been occupied. Where do those shells exist if not in an inherent harmony governing physical phenomena? They are not material things like roads or tracks in the desert.

We must be wary of thinking of this harmony as "pre-established" as Leibniz did, but

as being invented step by step as the practical need arises. This is what the Sufis mean when they say that God had to existentiate Himself in order to discover Himself - that is, existentiate what He could become (which possibilities are inexhaustible) by becoming it in us, rather than manifesting what He already is (which is the religious dogmatic view).

This is why I believe the Sufi teachings represent the spiritual dimensions of the scientific paradigms of our time. Ibn 'Arabi calls the human "the created creator" (rather than the created creature) and Murshid emphasizes human creativity as being an extension of the divine creativity. Of all works of art, he gives priority to the art of personality. By discovering a new way of being, one contributes towards the advance of the harmony that is the software of the universe. We are the being of God discovering unforeseeable possibilities within Himself by concretizing that which has never been done before. This means prefiguring the new perspectives by inventing the way as one advances, finding new ways of being by customizing the advancing trend of the harmony of the universe in one's personality. This is called pragmatic knowledge as compared with proto-critic knowledge, knowledge gained by experience rather than theoretical knowledge (sometimes called transcendent knowledge).

And Ibn 'Arabi says, "By discovering His Consciousness in my consciousness, I confer upon Him a mode of knowledge, and by grasping His Nature behind my nature, I confer upon Him a mode of existence." It follows from these propositions that by recognizing His Consciousness focalized as my consciousness, I confer upon Him a mode of existence because in the light of His Consciousness, I can earmark His Nature transpiring through my personality, and consequently actuate it. Reciprocally, by actuating His Nature in my personality, I confer upon Him a knowledge of His Being that adds something to the knowledge that He had of Himself prior to projecting Himself into existence as me.

Murshid describes the transcendent knowledge as the state where human consciousness reaches into the divine conscience prior to the existential condition and the latter God's awakening through human experience. By emphasizing the empirical knowledge, I do not mean to discount the transcendent one. Murshid said wisdom is the interface between the external knowledge of the soul and the know-how gleaned by experience. Of course, the extrapolation between the Sufi view and the new

paradigms of science is mutually cross-pollinating and excitingly promising for the future of human thought. As evolution proceeds, human thought advances like a tide untiringly breaking into new horizons.

In practice, what does it mean for the individual? Being more luminous, joyous, aware, sovereign, life-giving, loving compassionate and honest than the universe has produced so far. Is that possible? Why not? Murshid says it is our ignorance of our divinity that is our limitation. We are not just the plant we think we are, but also the seed, and not only does the seed expect to reappear at the end of the cycle of the plant, but it carries within itself infinite possibilities of splendid mutations.

12 - Christmas Message II

Christmastide flashes once more on our calendars - a recurrent tide imprinting a pulse amongst the intricate rhythms of the harmony of the spheres and upon the humdrum of our lives. It evokes the hope that arises wherever one makes a fresh beginning, and carries with it a message of forgiveness, gratitude and goodwill for all beings.

This year's message heralds the hope for peace on earth, nurtured by the masses of forces of good will throughout the planet. We embody this massive plea, inasmuch as we have committed ourselves to serve the Spiritual Government of the World. Now the time has come to harness the network of forces of goodwill in an effective drive for peace. The way to effect this is for those who take responsibility for what is happening in our time to write this intention into our New Year's resolutions.

While our day and age seems to be besmeared with violence and some sordid permissiveness, it is paradoxical to discern, emerging in the midst of manifest decadence, an acute awareness of human suffering and despair. In fact, our era is hallowed by the awakening of consciousness fostered by elite esoteric movements. The signature tune of those who entertain awareness of the psychological, social and ecological tribulations of our time is "solidarity", a powerful rallying bugle call for a humanity recklessly risking massive suicide as well as genocide. What it really means is that we are all in this together and mutually interdependent. It is curious to see how synchronistically this development is perfectly in line with the holistic views of modern science; it is all a dynamic interplay.

A few decades ago, if people were being tortured for their beliefs, one would have said, "It's outrageous, but what can I do about it? ... Glad it is not happening to me. ... It is a political issue and there is no way in which I can interfere in the internal affairs of another country without myself getting tortured, perhaps." Now as a result of the experience of Amnesty International, it has been shown that when a large number of people from all over the world send a massive bulk of mail to the responsible authorities, in some cases, eventually, the guilty conspiracy that operated covertly started to crumble when unmasked. A tidal wave of outraged indignant human consciousness on a momentous scale represents an unwieldy force; the force of solidarity could stem the tide of violence. Unrelentingly, inexorably spurred on by

respect for the dignity of the human status which is being violated by unscrupulous people for the purpose of dominance, this human tidal wave will penetrate surely enough all the fissures of a power that is often precariously balanced on a hoax of make-believe and bad faith. We have often had occasion to witness this in our studies of the history of crumbling empires.

Singly we may cower under a frustrated feeling of impotence; together, in concerted action, the forces of goodwill in the world represent legion.

Knowing this, it follows that we each shoulder some responsibility in the balance between war and peace on the planet. Human activities on the planet are the outcome of thinking and emoting on an enormous scale. We all know that the simplistic, uninformed interpretation of outdated scientific views entertained fifty years ago led people to deride the effectiveness of "mind over body." Today we know of cancer victims in remission - paradoxically, from the medical view - purely for having applied positive thinking. Despair turns off the immune system and optimism and fun enforces it, as the experience of Norman Cousins indicates.

A recent experiment by physicist Buryl Payne, of the Academy for Peace Research, shows that synchronized concentration of a large number of people has an effect on sun spots. The Academy has studied the correlation between the curve of sun spots and the incidence of war in the course of some of our history. The inference is that, should a large number of people pledge themselves to concentrate on peace at the same time every day, we might contribute to shifting the balance of forces on the planet towards peace.

The British observed a minute of silence at the stroke of Big Ben at midday during the darkest and most distressful days of World War II. The buses used to stop and everybody stood still for one minute. Many attribute to this practice the prodigious turning of the tables of fortunes of the adversaries at that precise juncture in the war.

I would now wish to suggest that all of us motivated by a sense of responsibility and solidarity would observe a moment of silence precisely at midday, local time. Since midday in New York is not the same as midday in Los Angeles or midday in Paris or Delhi, we would thus be launching a circle of positive thinking encircling the planet. Meanwhile, the Academy for Peace Research will be checking on whatever effect this

has on sun spots. This will be our feedback to confirm that something tangible and observable does actually happen. Since Dr. Payne is demonstrating the impact of thought upon the bio-field of the body and consequently the impact of the masses of human bio-fields upon the sun's magnetic field, I suggest that during that minute we identify ourselves with being a force field and realize that it is without boundary and therefore, intermeshes with kindred fields to form a massive wave-interference pattern. It is then important to concentrate on the far-reaching power of this field and use the password, "Ya Vakil", the name of a protective archangel manifesting personally in each of us as our guardian angel.

I will always stand by you in loyalty in the name of our commitment to the Message of Unity brought by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

13 - Ecstasy In Action

"O, to sparkle my soul with ecstasy!" Is this not the plea sounded by so many, asking me invariably the same question, "Pir, how does one get high and keep high through life?" (need I say without the artifice of drugs, for an artifice they are). In a rather awkward attempt at candidness, I pride myself by preluding my answer with, "I wish I could" and then blissfully proceed to tell people how to do it. Well, life is only worth its wager if it is spurred by dreams, even if but a few ever come true.

Speaking with U.S. entrepreneurial managers successful in their field, what struck me was that unless fired by an enthusing objective or challenged at the edge of their ability, they tend to slump into boredom, disenchantment and lackadaisicalness and they lose their grip. In fact, for the upgoing businessman, life must be a venture to keep the adrenalin flowing and to span energy to its breaking point. The venture that spurs people on is making dreams come true, whatever the dreams are. They could be materialistic ones according to one's scale of values.

This is what Murshid meant when he eulogized some of the tycoons he met in the "New World", including Henry Ford. "Why has one been sent upon the earth if one cannot look at the earth for fear of being called a materialist? Those who make spirituality out to be something like this make a bogeyman out of God. In fact, spirituality is the fullness of life."

I am cheered to discover just how socially oriented that dream is, in more cases than one might have imagined. A productive job from a managerial point of view is a job which, while giving the initiator lucrative dividends, gives jobs to many others also, thus helping them to fulfill some dream of theirs. In fact, to enlist people's support in one's venture, the payment of wages is not enough. The great art of leadership is helping people with similar dreams who themselves would not have the initiative or wherewithal to fulfill them, thus helping one to fulfill one's own dream. This can only happen if these dreams match and reinforce each other.

I never cease to be amazed by discovering to what degree there is a basic commonality behind the maze of differences between people's aspirations: love, beauty, convenience, self-esteem, justice, adventure, creativity. Unfortunately, many

of these basic urges get distorted and even turned upside down in an incongruous and counterproductive way by disappointment or failure or for having been the victim of injustice or humiliation or brow-beating. You see, ecstasy is total involvement, taking the plunge for better or for worse, relentlessly coping with the odds, dauntlessly riding the tide of adversity and starting again if one fails or slips, believing against proof of the opposite in the values pursued, appraising the splendor and meaningfulness of life, facing the squalor and injustice wreaked upon humanity by those who lost that belief and contrive to draw all around them in their doom, sardonic sordidity, defeatism and self-destructiveness. Dreams are intended to come true. Their fulfillment is what they are about.

Usually, defeat is due to having failed to see the connection between the ideal and the hard facts, to unravel the Gordian knot connecting reality to actuality, linking metaphor to the nitty-gritty. The next stage after the dream stage consists in seeing how you get from "here" to "there", step by step, each step clearly envisioned, and to forestall anything that might come in between, waylaying one. This is crucial since failure begets failure and has a devastating effect upon one's self-esteem.

Life becomes a venture when taking the risk of being innovative, which is what creativity is about. In fact, the human spirit lives on creativity and dies in conformism, routine, towing the line. Ecstasy is the magic out of which life is born, the wand that opens doors into unpredictable perspectives. It is simply fulfilling one's zest for life with all its wonder, if one can take life's pain without self-pity, its attacks without bitterness, and its inevitable setbacks without discouragement. Ecstasy is the intoxication in which creativity thrives, the motive power in that supreme faculty inherent in the human being - creative imagination - the ability to anticipate, to prefigure, to forestall, to imagine how things could be if they would be as they might be.

Ecstasy is triggered off every time that one rises above oneself, every time one frees oneself from a constraint in one's circumstances, in one's way of thinking, emotions, self-image, every time one discovers the cosmic bounty and inexhaustible innovativeness invested in one, in fact, when one discovers the creator in one, as oneself. Ecstasy lies in waiting in anticipation of the delight of sniffing out the richness of diversification dormant in the unexplored drabness of many people's lives. For example, a snow-covered landscape may appear bleak until one discovers the

enormous wealth of crystalline patterns in the snowflakes under a microscope. We could exploit the bountiful richness hidden in our lives if we could first earmark it and then make something out of it. Creativity is the thrust of ecstasy discovering unexplored richness and making it an actuality in our lives.

14 - Dharamsala

We set off, Alami, Michael, Mikhail and myself, from L.A. on a venture wrapped in a certain measure of unpredictability. One thing was sure, though. Michael had awakened one bright day in Santa Fe with a compulsive call to study the 'dharma'. This did not surprise us as we had a dream of him before he was born in which he appeared as a lama; also, my grand uncle, Theos Bernard, who wrote the book, The Penthouse of the Gods, was one of the first Americans to become a lama and was believed by some to be the reincarnation of Padma Sambhava. Not that this means that Michael will become a lama. Maybe the future reserves new ways of teaching - having one's roots in a tradition and going beyond. However, I can see that the Tibetan exodus from Lhasa did open up the world to a teaching that definitely has a message to give in our times, as Yoga and Vedanta did a century ago with Swami Vivekananda and which tallies nicely with Sufism, which we will note as we continue.

Stopping over in Hawaii's luxuriance for an hour on Alami's birthday certainly contrasted with the atmosphere in Japan a few hours later. Tokyo was an impressive beehive of diligence, strife, tidiness, organization. Some faces on the train did convey that ultimate human value which is dignity and self respect. Tokyo was, of course, the obvious place to get a travelling printer for my computer which has served well in communicating this message to you. One could hardly believe the massive stocking of hi-fi and computers in the electronic supermarket. Stacks and stacks of them!

The evening lecture, well attended and beautifully translated, was the very epitome of rapt attention and silent reserve. Then for Korea, sleeping on a heated floor with mats and quilts in a traditional Korean Inn, in a space somewhat like a cubicle with the light filtering through wooden and paper sliding doors. We were too exhausted to see much of the town but the colorful roofs, turned up at their edges, looked quaint in the snow-fall.

A few hours later, landing in the tropical moist heat of Bangkok and charmed by the gracious manner of the Thai folk was rather soothing before the cultural shock of India, however mitigated by Katmandu. What a joy, Katmandu! Here was Tibet right at hand without the communist regime. Bodnath in the morning sun: the serenity of the Tibetan monks, and even of the ordinary folks - the colorful traditional clothes! One

was removed in time and space into the twelfth century, strongly rooted, untarnished by materialistic egotism but without its comforts and hygiene.

There in Katmandu I had occasion to converse with Rimpoches, heads of their monasteries. I was impressed with their clarity. high degree of evolution, humor and dignity. Of course, the topic was a parallel between Buddhism and, let us say, classical Sufism. I used to consider Buddhism and Sufism as complementary. rather than contradictory. However, I must say, the more we spoke, the more the differences seemed to fizzle out. We were excited to discover how much we had in common and how well we understood each other. It became clear that by awakening, they do mean what Murshid calls the awakening in life, or at least the Ariadnian thread is maintained, connecting this focus with the 'beyond the beyond.'

Well, admittedly, there is a difference of accent since Buddhism is the way of desireouslessness which is basically non-involvement which precludes achievement. That is why one of the Rimpoches said: "Awakening is easiest in a cave, more difficult as a monk and most difficult as a householder. Murshid demonstrated that it can be done as a householder, and in the course of the pursuit of achievement. One needs, albeit, to be clearly on the lookout for the way in which the objective pursued tends to draw

What would be the meditations which might foster awakening in the pursuit of achievement? The first step is pulling oneself together and being highly aware in the "here and now", confronting oneself as to one's real intentions in life as seen from one's personal vantage point. The next step would be envisioning a purpose behind the whole enfoldment of phenomena in the universe. The third step would consist in seeing how the "everywhere and always" is trying to work itself out ln the "here and now." And the fourth step would be to grasp one's motivations in the act of self-transcendence, that is, viewing oneself beyond the personal vantage point - while extrapolating this perspective with the personal one.

Replenished with the impressions of our encounter with these "awakened beings", we climbed the hills in sublime mountain scenery to the cave of Padma Sambhava where Michael received the blessing of Padma Sambhava's perceptible presence,

From Raymond we flew to Delhi. And Delhi, as most Westerners know, can be quite a

hassle, what with being pushed, flabbergasted by the reckless driving, a harrowing experience one might conservatively estimate as a near miss a minute! One soon learns not to be fooled by the lies of some and becomes rather saddened by the lack of self respect and the lack of respect for others by some, not to mention the incursions in one's privacy. We know, however, that this outer aspect conceals great treasures of wisdom, art, music and architecture. India is, as many know, a paradox. The pushing may be seen as a symptom of the competitiveness that arises out of overpopulation: first come, first served, otherwise, one will be left out in the cold.

The contrast between their rhythm of driving and the western rhythm could be accounted for by the nimbleness of the Indian mind which favors reflex reaction rather than concerted thought, aptly illustrated in their tabla playing. Here, I am speaking of the masses of people of course, since India has produced countless creative and great minds. However, I do feel it is rather inconsiderate to others to drive 80 recklessly. As for some of those lies, I suppose it is the result of centuries of oppression, injustice, poverty, underfeeding, and the resultant subservience. After being rocked to sleep all night long on an ex-British colonial night train, then taking a - three hour taxi ride northeast into the foothills of the Himalayas, we finally arrived in Dharamsala - or rather McLeod Ganj, greeted by the inevitable ice and rain storm.

Imagine a quaint little Tibetan village, two little main streets lined with derelict houses and shops with rudimentary wares and religious artifacts, a temple and market square, nestled in snow-capped mountains inhabited by bears, leopards and hawks. A fifteen minute walk to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama's palace, closely guarded by Indian security, and surrounded by hundreds of monks in their maroon and burgundy colored gowns! The meeting with the Dalai Lama was beyond description. He recognized Michael from the "past", asked him if he remembered him, treated him with honor as a kindred soul, and said there are lots of lamas, but Michael will bring something new. He conferred upon him a specially decorated white silk scarf and took him under his wings. We will be meeting up with the Dalai Lama again at Bodh Gaya (the site of the tree under which Buddha attained illumination) in a few days. And I am looking forward to meditating under the tree opposite the tree of illumination.

Now, at last for Bodh Gaya, an enchanted site centered upon the monumental stupa built to mark the actual place of illumination and, as a matter of fact, a place favorable

to illumination right to this day. It is the live center of Buddhism on the planet, studded by temples of various Buddhist orders: Tibetan, Japanese, Burmese, Thai, Ceylonese, etc. Owing to the visit of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, the place was seething with Tibetans and Indian beggars. The extent of the misery of these people is Appalling, heartbreaking: the lepers who prefer to share in some of the excitement of the street life, and the destitute mothers with children. the by-products of our ruthless, cruel society! Of what use 100 chapatis when 5,000 would just prove to be a sinecure! One would like to stop everything and help, but all one's help on an individual basis could only prove to be like a drop in an ocean, possibly even perpetrating suffering. The problem is staggering, disheartening.

The Dalai lama led masterly morning sessions, touching into the soul of the thousands listening with rapt attention, every now and again interspersed with mantras, smiling, even laughing all the while. From my view, he was so obviously playing the right game, giving people what they need, fulfilling his role. He is the magnet holding them together as a nation ln exile. But behind that magnificent display, there is some sound invaluable, esoteric knowledge. We visited him once more in private audience. What he said gave just that extra boost to my meditation under the tree opposite the Bodhi tree. He said, 'Sunyata' (the void) does not only apply to the objective world, but also to the subject. It really means realizing oneself as the 'essence' of all things" - precisely Murshid's words and it works! I was just back in time for the Urs celebration at the Dargah of Murshid.

The precincts have now been beautifully built and nicely upkept, and there is an air of serenity about the place. The being of Murshid was 80 apparent as we paid our homage to the great master whose human rests are enshrined in the implacable stone to bear testimony through the ages! After the traditional ceremonial of the procession of the new shroud, followed by the players of the mullas of the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, and the inevitable Qawwal (chanting). We listened to two outstanding singers, one being our friend, Pandit Pranath, the other, Sayiduddin Daggar, a very fine performance of the Dhrupad style of singing developed at the courts of the Mogul kings, rare to find amongst the present decadence of Indian music.

Murshid sought to rehabilitate Indian classical music in 1905! It is intended as the

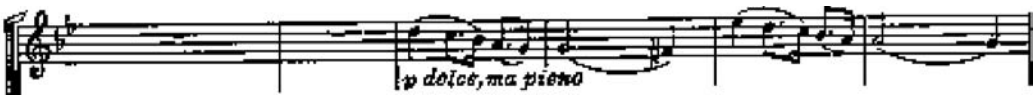
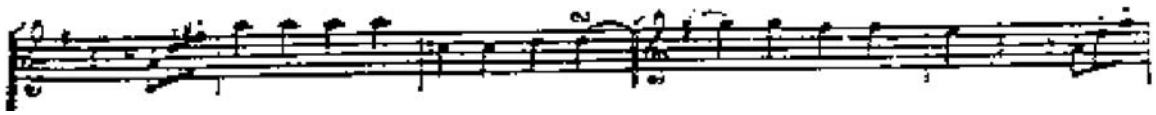
language of a spiritual message beyond what could ever be conveyed with words. "You will tune your western mureeds with the music of the soul", said Murshid's Murshid, Abu Hashim Madani, on his deathbed, sending Murshid to the West to spread the Message of unity is needed in our time.

15 - Music as a Training in Harmony

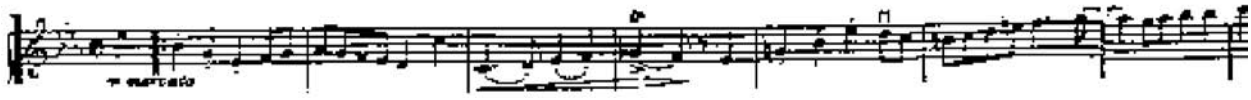
"What we call music in our everyday language is only a miniature which our intelligence has grasped of that music or harmony of the whole universe which is working behind everything and which is the source and origin of nature...the music of the universe is the background of the small picture which we call music. Our sense of music, our attraction to music, shows that there is music in the depth of our being. What does music teach us? Music helps us to train in harmony. Man, being a miniature of the universe, shows harmonious and inharmonious chords. Vibrations can be changed by understanding one's life - understanding the rhythm of the mind."

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

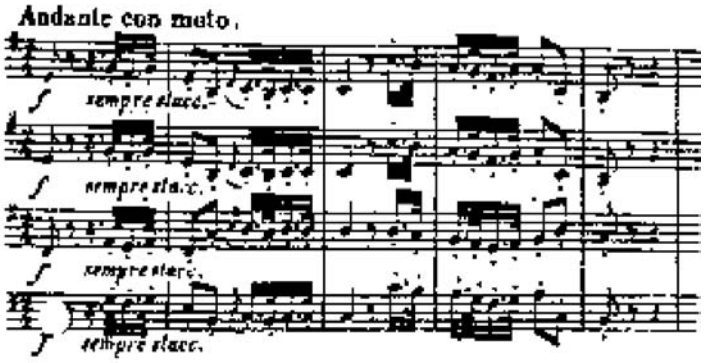
Have you ever stirred in your sleep as a melody came to you as from nowhere and bid to awaken to write it down or at least remember it in the awakened state? This happened to Brahms, out of which his 4th Symphony unfurled.

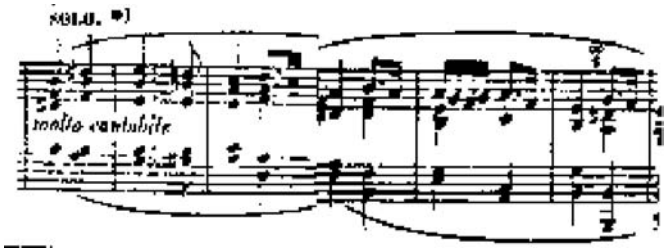
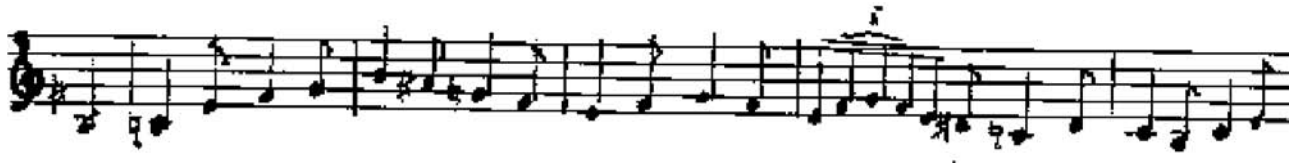
It was only after having resolved his frustrations and found a way of joy while accepting the constraint of the situation that Brahms was able to give expression to the joy of love. But compare with Tomaso Albinoni's uninhibited sentimentality, heartwarming but rather facile and unsophisticated, in his Adagio in Sol Minore.

Have you ever felt frivolously trifling, nonchalant and carefree? Mozart translated this mood into the dancing notes of a famous tune.

Let's try it out ourselves: drop your reserve for a moment, give your responsibility a break for a while and just let yourself in for a burst of the joviality that you have been holding back – let it take over.

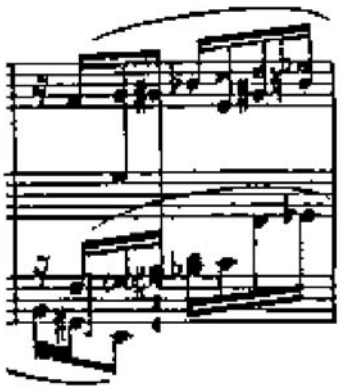
Have you ever felt facetious, flippant, pert, dallying with a burlesque edge, probably as

a reaction to people taking themselves too seriously, or against heavy sanctimoniousness? Dimitri Shostakowitsch reacted to totalitarian stiffness and stuffy formalism in his symphony #9.

Have you ever just thought of a melody, quite spontaneously to give expression to a bout of energy? Beethoven did this in the first beats of his 5th Symphony, giving vent to the emotions roused in him by his admiration for the verve and heroism of Napoleon in his younger unspoilt days.

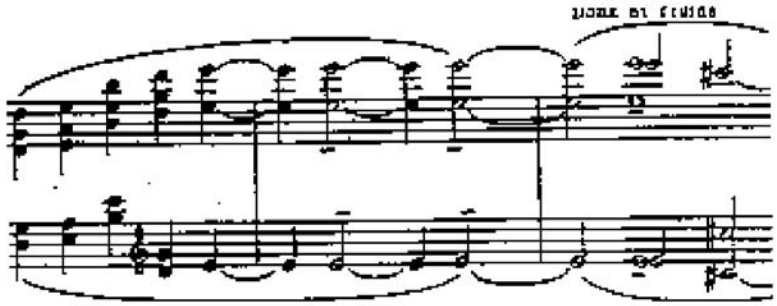
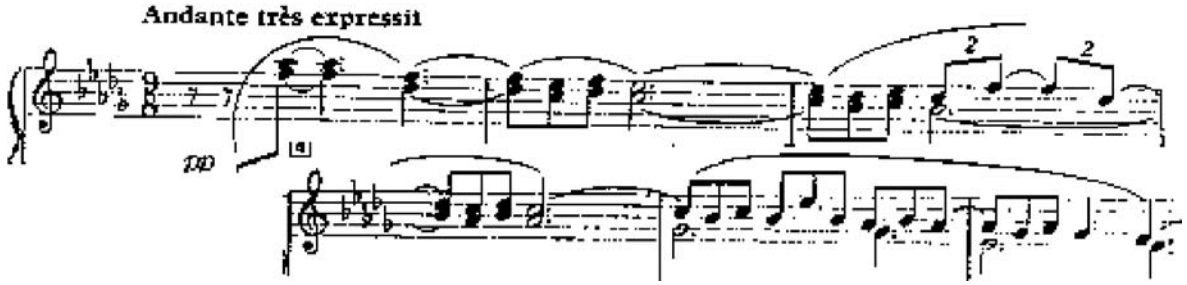
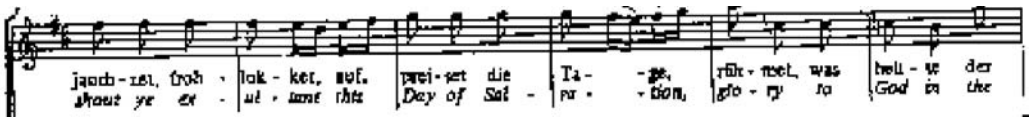
Notice the scanned, crisp rhythm here, expressing venture, aggressivity in comparison with the sweet, alluring rhythm of the first quotation, expressing the delight of love?

We all know how easily we yield to the forceful impact of the environment, both physical and psychic by reacting rather than acting upon the environment by dint of our self-motivation. A lesson in dealing with life's situations can be given in the language of music. In the slow movement of his fourth piano concerto, Beethoven teaches us to call a buffer between that impact and our emotional attunement. This he does by refusing to play ball, and calling a zone of silence, turning within in the stillness of an inverted space where all creativity emerges; thus setting his own pace upon the environment. The impact of the environment is reduced to functioning as a catalyst, triggering off our pent up potentialities.

Obviously Beethoven is depicting himself as the pianist and the world as the orchestra. Notice the contrast between the staccato of the orchestra with the poised legato of the

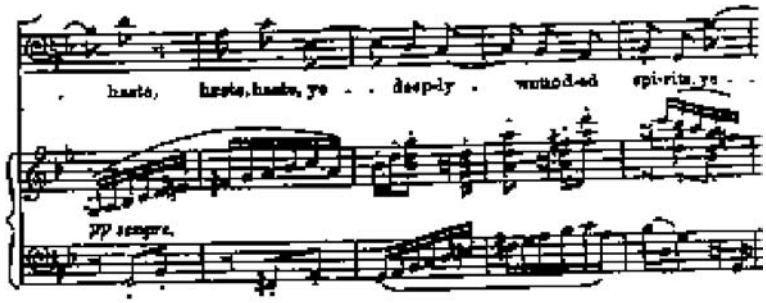
piano.

Supposing you drift into a mystical mood, you will find yourself shifting your improvisations from the major mode to the minor: and if you continue thus turning more and more within, you will fluctuate even further from the minor mode, exploring subtle nuances of emotion. This is what the Indian musician is doing, exploring unchartered areas of tone and rhythm as he/she improvises.

Note the departure from the minor mode. Note the effort to reach the dominant note by a process of escalation.

Stravinski ventured upon a novel mode in the Symphony of Psalms. Have you ever felt dreary, drab, low-key - ever tasted of the blues? Have you ever found yourself wrapped in a mysterious melancholy - a nebulous gray mood, like a lake in the mist concealing the unknown, the non-determined? Get it off your chest by burning off the mist so that it may rise as a curtain upon the dawning of a diaphanous light.

Can you improvise two tunes related to these two moods, operating the transit from melancholy to nostalgia; and then a third opening up into the brightest of suns on a

clear sky?

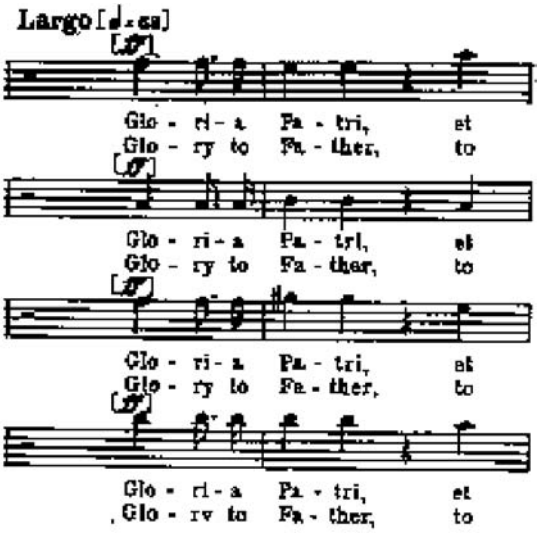
Claude Debussy portrayed the malaise and ambiguity of his time in a way that speaks of the soul-searching in each of us, exploring the unknown, in the Cathedrale Engloutie (the sunken cathedral.) Note the wealth of pastel intonations.

The next step he made in Claire de Lune; here he is describing something like clearings in the woods in the moonlight.

Reflecting his time, Debussy could never allow himself to come so clearly in the sunshine as did Bach in an untold number of compositions. A pertinent illustration of this advent of the Divine presence upon the earth is to be found in the beginning of Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

Have you ever felt free or freed, unfettered, liberated, unflappable, having shaken off a load, or having pulverized the walls that were hemming you in, or cast aside the harness imposed upon you by your friends? Like Bach describes in his Concertos for Four Harpsichords.

Now you are streaking across space eerily like a ripple of unbounded energy. Sometimes the verve of the situation is expressed by a sense of urgency. Hasten,

hasten says the bass voice in the following passage of St. John's Passion.

This sense of urgency is well known to us all - is it not? A further example of this mercurial verve is to be found in some of the choruses of St. John's Passion.

The urgency with which Bach calls our attention to a cosmic event on earth has attained probably its ultimate expression in the beginning of Bach's St. John's Passion.

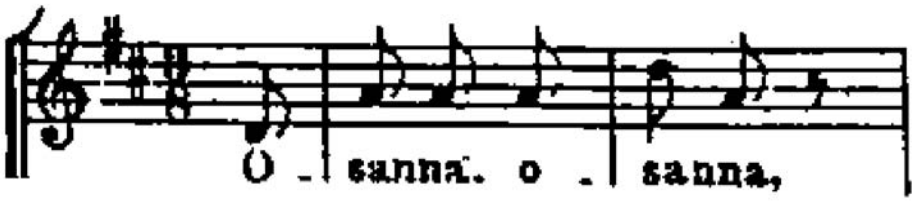
Note the sharpness of the notes intonated by the choir while the orchestra builds up into crescendo waves.

In contrast to this annunciation, we have an apotheosis in Bach's Magnificat's Gloria Patri. If you play this sequence, you will find that one apotheosis builds up into a further apotheosis, and so on until the final resolution.

Now apply all your verve to improvise melody to express your rapture. You ask, "How do I even start improvising?" If other composers did so, so can you. Their know-how may have been learned, elaborate, even tremendous, but their inspiration emerged irrespective of their know-how - just an impulse to express

the emotion felt at the time, first in rhythm then in tone.

Notice the repetitiveness of the rhythms in every case quoted here! Just start by expressing your emotion as a rhythm. Once the rhythm has set in, there may be fluctuations in the rhythm. The melody seems to emerge from the rhythm - check it out. You will find that: lo and behold, you can compose!

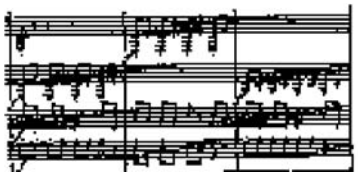
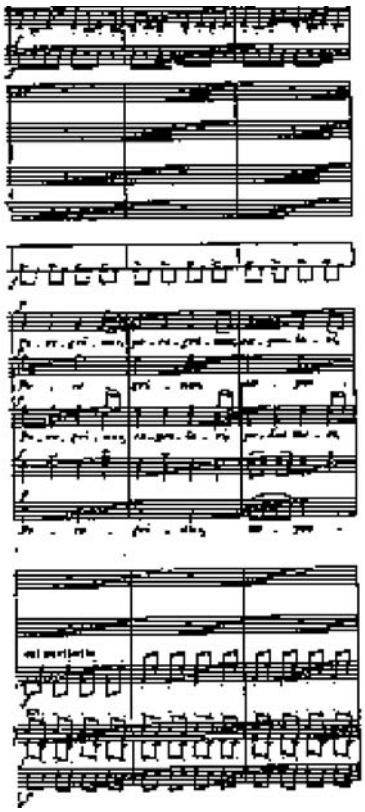
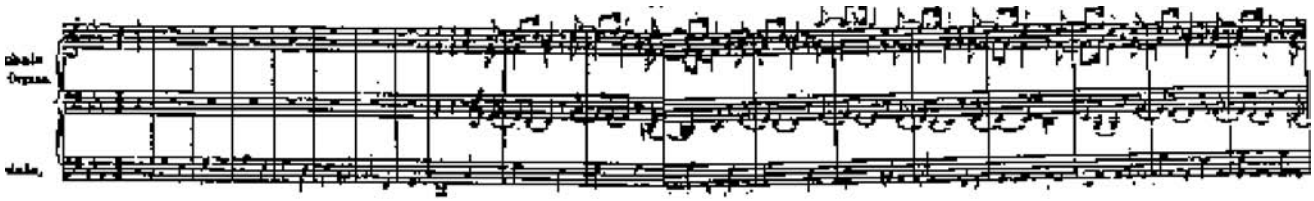
Could you this time give expression to not just unbridled joy which remains confined to the person, but cosmic glorification. Have you ever felt moved to the foundations of your being by an impelling urge to express glorification faced with the sudden realization of the splendor behind all of this we call the universe? J.S. Bach expressed this in, amongst untold examples, the Hosanna of his B-minor Mass.



Notice the break-through of energy affirming the certainty gained by faith by dint of repetition, while rising undauntedly like the arches of a cathedral.

How different from Stravinski's plaintive alleluia in his Symphony of Psalms!

It is difficult for the modern denizen of our Planet to nurture the effervescent optimism which sparkled the spirit of the early Church, releasing the emotion of fervor unrestrainedly.

Have you ever been daunted by the struggle for meaningfulness in our day and age against soul-killing realism or even the metaphysical anxiety upon sardonic reflections on where we are heading - where it will all lead to if we continue on this tack? Prokofieff's ponderous soul, searching on the edge of war and peace in the Peregrinus of his Alexander Nevski, reflects these misgivings we are all feeling.

Have you ever overcome a foible or an addiction or freed yourself from a debt? Have you noticed how as a result one could pace with poise and majesty and with an air of sovereignty and determination? Bach expresses this masterly pace in the Passacaglia for organ.

The pace is manifested by a continuous advance scanned by a syncopated rhythm, indicating the alternation between the left foot and the right foot.

"The purpose of life is like the horizon, one thinks one can see it, but as one advances a further landscape has become one's horizon." (Hazrat Inayat Khan paraphrased by Pir Vilayat.)

If you cannot read music, you may buy the tapes or records of these excerpts which will help you understand my commentaries; or ask somebody who can read music to sing the melodies to you. The excerpts are, unfortunately, very short.

16 - The Other Side of Life

When one realizes to what extent one has allowed oneself to be conditioned by the way things look and how one has let oneself be confined by one's self-image, and when one nurtures a hunch that there must be dimensions of the universe that one fails to countenance, one is moved by an impelling need to know something about the other side of life.

One imagines that perhaps it is in dreams that one might snatch an ephemerous peep beyond the curtain into other spheres concealed behind the phantasmagoria of confused impressions in the sorting-house of the mind.

Curiously enough, the more one tries to do this in one's day consciousness, the less one achieves even the slightest haul. At those moments when one awaits it least, a fleeting landscape of the soul transpires - just as one may catch a furtive overview of the land from a plane or a hang-glider in the instant of break in the clouds. "It has passed before one has noticed it", says the Upanishad.

Why is our most cherished nostalgia so difficult to attain? It is because, as the Sufi al Hallaj said,

"It is our wish of God that stands in the way of the experience of God?"

Perhaps we might understand this better by calling upon a double metaphor. Suppose that we converge the physical world like a whirlpool converges a lake. It follows that we are coextensive with it and, by the same token, with the fabric of the higher spheres and, what is more, with the consciousness and will of the universe that is, the knowing subject.

The paradox is really that behind the commonplace subject-object relationship we entertain with the physical aspect of the universe. there is a deeper form of cognizance whereby one realizes that what one experiences is actually one's self.

"That which is experienced is that which experiences", says St. Francis. In this mode, experience is self-discovery.

The key to grasping this paradox is to realize that it is because we think of ourselves as a fraction of the universe that we fail to experience the higher dimensions of the physical universe that we ourselves are. If we are indeed the convergence of the universe at all levels, we are those spheres which we think are out of our reach. It is in ourselves that they are to be found. This would explain the words of the Sufi Abdullah Ansari, who said,

"I searched for God and only found myself and then I searched for myself and found God."

This is where the second metaphor comes in. Supposing the vortex were three-dimensional. As we get closer to the apex, the bounty present in the base would be badly squeezed and impoverished. just as the details of a landscape are reduced on a photograph to fit it all into a small confined space. This is why, deceptively, the splendor we ascribe to these panes or spheres gets so badly limited, distorted, spoliated and desecrated in what we think is ourselves. We have 'converged' all that wonder that is behind our trite beings so that it is most times difficult to detect whatever splendor has been pressed into it.

The Sufi Ibn 'Arabi says,

"Grasp what transpires behind that which appears."

To see what beauty lurks behind a wounded and disenchanted face, or what modicum of intuition still looms behind a conditioned mind, one has to have the eyes of Majinun the lover, say the Sufis. Consider (as Prentice Milford has said) "...infinity in finite act and eternity in a transient act." I would add that behind the beauty of snow-covered landscapes is hidden a still greater beauty; the snow crystals.

If one could see the flickering and sparkling of light or hear the incredible melodies produced in the molecules and cells of even the hair that we shed at the hair dressers as they reproduce in mitosis or. more so, the shrewdness of the enzymes that unlock the transcription of the DNA by the RNA, one's spirit would be sparkled with ecstasy. And what of the light display of the galaxies and the symphony of the spheres! It beats even the most ravishing sunrise. And what do we know of the splendor of the heavenly spheres, since whatever transpires in us, even in the eyes of some children,

can only be a dull replica thereof! "In comparison with the beauty of God, the beauty of the creature is 'nada,'" says St. John of the Cross. From our limited personal vantage points, we cannot countenance it. One would have to discover and identify with the heavenly counterpart in oneself.

Yet see what richness our civilized life offers us in amenities and sheer beauty of art and music and architecture and theater and dance and poetry and technology through the incentives of pleiades of creative beings since the early stirrings of life on the planet. The beauty that comes through the inspired mind aroused by ecstasy is inestimable, monumental and unending.

Thus, the other side of life avers itself not to be like the opposite side of a coin, but the all-encompassing reality of that apex of a cone and which in our ignorance, we confine our notion of ourselves.

17 - Service

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan once said. "The Murshid is there for the mureed." (The teacher is there to serve the pupil.) One might add, the mureed is there for the public. That is the meaning of service. The demand produces the supply.

The ordeal of the fire triggers off the heroism in the fireman. The suffering of the patient calls for the compassion of the nurse and the skill of the doctor. The agony of the dying in the streets of Calcutta produces a Mother Teresa. The budding genius of the child calls for the teacher to facilitate it. The helplessness of the destitute calls for foodbanks and night shelters. The despair of the broken psyche calls for the dedicated priest or the psychotherapist. One species may call to be serviced by another as the trees dying in the rain forests tax the skill of the ecologist to service them or the endangered species call for the ecologist to perpetuate their presence on the planet. This is the meaning of service.

The whole planet calls out to be served and serviced; instead. it is being more exploited than served. There was a time when we humans took it for granted that it was our prerogative to control the planet. Leadership is not controlling but releasing potentialities, facilitating them and coordinating them. The reward is accessory. When the reward becomes the objective, there is exploitation.

The trouble is that we feel our generosity runs counter to what we believe to be our most dire needs, or more so. those of our families. Moreover, we rightly are afraid that once we get ourselves involved in helping others, we shall be drawn further and further into sacrificing our needs since the demands appear to be much greater than we had at first suspected. In order to help others, one needs to hoist oneself in a position where one can help but one needs to tithe some of one's gain into lending a helping hand to those who cannot fend for themselves. In Ajmer and Rishikesh, one may find that as soon as one metes out a few rupies or chapaties, one is harassed by a solicitous crowd who may even tear one's clothes to pieces to grab what they can, so great is their hunger. Consequently, many prefer not starting this in the first place. Some even argue that one is simply perpetuating their misery by giving a pittance which could never answer their needs. Nature has a way of stemming the population explosion by pruning it at the cost of starvation.

Then there is the burnout of overstressing oneself by sheer zeal. The danger lurks in self pity that might very well brook unconscious resentment for the person one is helping, which one refuses to admit to one's conscious mind but may cause ponderous soul searchings and internal conflicts. Therefore, the cutting off point between stress and overstress must be clearly evaluated to avoid being self defeating and counterproductive. This is where Murshid's wisdom regarding balance in life proves to be a saving grace.

One should be wary of the personal satisfaction of helping as witnessed in a number of do-gooders and philanthropists. It escalates patronization. People feel indebted to one's generosity as if strings are attached to one's beneficence and it culminates in sheer crass egotism. St. Vincent de Paul, who created hospitals for the poor in France, once said that those whom you have benefitted nurture an unconscious resentment against you for the dependence in which you have placed them. Is the answer in anonymous, impersonal service? Institutional welfare with all its positive side has proven its inadequacy in dealing with the roots of human problems by merely providing palliatives.

Jemaluddin Bolling, who is one of the U.S. pioneers in foodbanks and has provided shelters for numberless people, said that the problem is deeper than just providing food and shelter to the homeless. Behind their inability to cope is a broken self-image, low self-esteem and abysmal loneliness and ejection. The real issue is helping people to convince themselves that they can do something useful by giving them a chance to find an activity that is not too challenging, yet moderately rewarding. The public services do not know how to meet that problem nor can this be institutionalized. The trouble with an impersonal system is first, that it lends itself to terrible abuses and second, it tends to take away personal incentive and effort by making people rely on the system rather than explore their resourcefulness.

It is only under stress that one's latent resourcefulness is discovered and actuated. We are living at a time when an increasing section of the public is pushed out of the active sector because of their inability to cope with the increased demands for technological skills. They do not stand a chance competing with a growing number of highly skilled people. The dejected ones are the victims of our relentless progress into automation and eventually, computing robotology. In additional, our trade union laws

chase the unskilled out of the feasible brackets where unemployment is elicited.

Our affluence has created a demand; in turn, that demand is creating a supply. More and more people are sensitive to this call and are willing to help. In fact, if most people were aware of the extent of the despair of other people, they would do something about it. Unfortunately, most people do not quite know which is the beset way to make use of their services and there has been, up to the present, very little coordination between the supply and the demand. The momentous proliferation of personal computers in our time open up a whole new scope to deal with just this; to form a clearing station where people wishing to volunteer help may be brought into contact with those who need help and find out which is the most effective way of helping. This was the purpose of the Rescue Network Operation. As you know, it never really took off, except in the case of welfare, the Hope Project in Delhi and the Food bank in Atlanta, plus the efforts of quite a number of members working locally to help people unassumingly. But we never came across those who, having the skills, where able to give their time setting up a computer network.

We are living a second chapter in the unfoldment of our Sufi work where we find that quite a number of mureeds have graduated in our school to the point where they feel a need to the second step, which is to put the spiritual teaching to practice and service is the way to do it. This was the meaning of the Brotherhood activity of the Sufi Movement created by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, which so far, has never gotten off the ground completely, except in my Inter-Religious Congress, Omega Institute, and any welfare project, but here is much more that one can do. I would suggest calling it the Brother/Sisterhood activity and I suggest that Centers organize meetings in which members share ideas about creative ways of service and then spring into action.

It is not fulfilling to simply pursue one's personal advantage in life. Most evolved people need to serve a purpose beyond their own personal one in which the potentialities in their being attain fruition.

18 - Khumba Mela Invitation

Every twelve years, rishis, sannyasins, sadhus, and the masses of pilgrims from all walks of life converge upon Hardwar (a six hour car ride from Delhi) at the "unction of two rivers for a sacred ceremony; the ritual bathing in the Ganges in the slender hope of capturing maybe one precious drop of the Ambrosia that Shiva inadvertently dropped into the Ganges when the devil tried to snatch it from him after he had distilled it from the churning of the ocean of space.

The search for the ambrosia that confers immortality has spumed alchemy from the beginnings of civilization. Pilgrims flock to the sacred site by the thousands - I believe 25,000 was the count at the last event - and it is likely to escalate considerably at the forthcoming festival scheduled to climax on April 13th, 1986. Attendance builds up vertiginously as the auspicious day draws nigh, so that one inevitably finds oneself pushed and battered in the crowd as tension mounts. Some decades ago, the crowd was stomped by a mad elephant causing thou-sands of casualties, so you see, one does go there at one's own risk These days, mad elephants are not admitted, only mad people, like those who would elect to go there at that chosen time. That is you and 1, if you are one of those venturesome and reckless idealists who brave death for a moment of ecstasy.

This unusual but recurring event takes place every twelve years when Jupiter is in the Pleiades, which rather significantly was precisely the time for which Ulysses waited in the cave of Circea before embarking upon his Odyssey towards Atlantis. Behind that populous scene - a kind of Indian Coney Island Fair, I regret to say - something momentous happens. Some of the great rishis of the Himalayas descend from their caves, sometimes brushing shoulders with people for the first time since twelve years of self-imposed solitary confinement. At the apogee, a grand procession marches by to the rapt delight of the onlookers who are lucky enough to maneuver themselves in the right place by shouldering their way through the crowd. Imagine a crowd of 25,000 people congested like sardines, boisterous, excited, unruly, observing a moment of pent-up silence while the "mahatmas", (great ones) take their time in bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges.

This is the most impressive moment and the culmination of the whole ceremony,

followed by prayers and mantrams. But one would be lucky if one were able to see anything at all. Perhaps you will only experience being pushed about and harassed by the crowd. So think twice before taking that chance!

However, there are more ingratiating moments one might enjoy, particularly in the early morning while wandering at dawn at the bank of the Ganges, watching a few pilgrims bathe and say their prayers, walking in the bazaar or the premises of the fair and encountering the most odd assortment of ascetics; some weird, covered with cinders or exhibiting rather far-out headdresses, attire, or non-attire, odd adornments, waving flags and sporting rather ominous weapons fitted with bells to ward off bears or panthers in the mountain vastness. Amongst these, perhaps, a sage with light in his eyes, nobility in his demeanor and realization in his glance, begging as an ordinary beggar yet so inspiring. That is what you came for but you could return without having come across one. It depends upon your luck, or maybe you will attract the being you are supposed to encounter.

Perhaps you came to realize that you did not have to go so far to find what is at your doorstep, less exotic but perhaps more relevant. But there are times when one needs to call a break from the familiar and explore the far-flung reaches of our humanity, sample a taste of the unfamiliar, go through the trauma of a cultural shock and perhaps, cull some precious jewels of civilizations in transit that have not yet eliminated the fruit belabored through eons of traditions now ranked as obsolete and replaced in the West by the plastic gadgetry, technology, the standardization, sanitation, functional and rather conditioned life-style of western civilizations which, however, you might be glad to return to after all.

One thing is certain: you go there at your own risk! We cannot guarantee against the hazard of political demonstrations leading to violence although we are told that tensions have eased in this respect and the army will be there to ensure order. There is a health hazard when masses congregate and the current vaccines do not immunize one from certain forms of hepatitis or viral infections or even the plague, last but not least, rabies. Besides, taking anti-malarian tablets is quite taxing. But we are trying to set up a camp with reliable water and a hygienic kitchen and organize accommodations to minimize hazards.

So now that you are somewhat informed, come and join us if you are foolhardy

enough!

19 - The Leading Edge

Yes, we are somewhere about an emergent leading edge - if - we take the next step.

The ancients were more interested in discovering first principles or experiencing yonder. People in our day and age are concerned with the nitty-gritty: the unfoldment of the human person. I see here, a clue to Murshid's teaching and a confirmation of its relevance to our time. While most traditional schools were or are striving to reach beyond the middle range, for example, expanding consciousness, we are trying to identify with our planetary, solar galactic, and even angelic inheritance as the boundaries of our consciousness dissolve. See the difference? By the very fact of endeavoring to reach beyond, one is evidencing the assumption that the universe lies beyond some invisible boundary, delineating oneself, whereas in reality, one incorporates the universe (not only the physical) albeit by limiting it, even as a focal point converges a broad array of light, for example.

The more progressive schools in psychology such as transpersonal psychology, are now recognizing factors in the human psyche that lie beyond the boundaries of the zone that their predecessors defined as the human psyche, carrying Jung's collective conscious a step further. Yet most psychotherapists are still reinforcing people's confinement within their self-image by emphasizing the need to heal the trauma of earlier trials, rather than luring them out of that confinement by helping them to identify with the more vast dimensions of their being, revealing to them how they "could be if they would be as they might be." Admittedly, it seems logical that one needs to first remove the obstacles to growth before fostering that growth. But one must realize that this trauma reinforces them in the exploitation by their unconscious, allowing an excuse for having failed to become what they would have liked to be.

Causality is one of two parameters, the other being purposefulness. If you throw an arrow at a target, it is the bull's eye that determines the nervous impulse that triggers off the launch. The pull of the future is more important than the push of the past. If a person had the slightest inkling as to what he or she could be if he/she would be what he/she might be, h/s would have an incentive to remove whatever relic of the past was obstructing his/her objective.

Many handicapped persons excel in alternate or closely related fields to those in which they are incapacitated by dint of nature's mechanism called overcompensation. Many piano tuners are blind; the violinist, Perlman, is paralyzed in his legs but shows incredible dexterity in his fingers; one of the most outstanding brains of our time, the British physicist, Dr. Hawkin, is paralyzed to the extent of not being able to talk distinctly or write at all, Demosthenes and Churchill had a stutter; Beethoven composed while deaf. However psychologically damaged a person might be, there are creative areas in which that person may excel others. One becomes so convinced that one is the image that one makes of oneself, not realizing that it is just a "notion", that is, a construct of one's imagination and that what appears at the surface of one's being is only like the tip of the iceberg in comparison with the iceberg. From the moment one grasps that is an imaginary construct, one realizes by the same token, that one can change it, since change is within the power of one's imagination. What is more, within certain norms, one can make one's image into what one wishes.

In fact, the leading edge in psychology today is signposted by the magical words: "creative imagination" as pioneered by Dr. Rollos May et al. and this is precisely the gist of our work in the Sufi Order. We are onto something of great momentum if we do make the next step, which in this case, is to make ideas materialize, because progressive psychologists are trying to make use of the know-how gained in classical schools of meditation. We are amongst the few esoteric schools who are trying to interface our meditative practices with the latest developments in psychology in order to apply whatever insight we gain in meditation to helping people in their urge to grow through undergoing a process of transformation.

You may ask, "Why especially the Sufis?" Well, the answer springs to evidence. Sufis traditionally, and most particularly, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, place the accent on finding God in and as ourselves, rather than seeking God "up there" as other than ourselves. The DNA illustrates this reality by pointing out that the whole body is present in totality in each cell of the body.

The Sufis say we not only inherit the divine nature but are that inheritance, albeit limited and tarnished. We could interpret this in the holistic paradigm of our time by paradoxically coining an antique term, we are coextensive with the universe, and our minds are isomorphic with the thinking of the universe, which the Sufis call the mind of

God. Holding a belief is one thing; experiencing it in practice in one's being and letting that realization transform one beyond recognition, is another.

There is just that step we need to make. It means letting go of self-image, mental assumptions, of wallowing in whatever assets have been secured, then freewheeling on the strength of a sheer, anticipated vision of how things could be if we would be - if we allowed the universe to fall into place in a novel pattern in us.

20 - Towards a New Approach

Unless one is prepared to reconsider, restructure, innovate, one is not part of the evolutionary process. In fact, the outdated religious beliefs and practices of those who have not made the contemporary leap in thinking are largely instrumental in fostering the intolerance which inevitably triggers off the violence and wars that afflict our times.

We know that, having made the step required to be in sync with present thinking, there is no turning back; the paradigm shift is irreversible. But is it not foolhardy to devalidate or dismiss hackneyed attitudes and purport to start from scratch, when in fact, our present is an organic sequence to the achievements of our predecessors? Martin Buber relates the metaphor of the Golem; each man stands on the shoulders of another so that one of them may see beyond. I consider it my duty to explore with you the features of the spirituality in keeping with our time. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan was a great precursor and trailblazer, and I feel the call to pursue the tidal wave that he set into motion.

What then would be the features of an updated spirituality? Purely off the cuff, I venture: a spirituality without a belief system, without a set of prescriptions, and without authority figures (that is, gurus or established ranks).

It is wise, however. to avoid throwing the baby out with the bath water. One overlooks easily what was the wisdom in time-consecrated procedures which one wishes to discard. On one hand, the remarkable progress of science, technology and social organization was only possible by questioning and updating previous thinking or methods or procedures. On the other hand, we are beginning to discover the drawbacks: pollution, acid rain, the depletion of planetary resources. cancer, the population explosion, violence, decadence.

Re: "belief" As one evolves, one questions belief founded upon authority and seeks direct experience. Yet one needs to take into account that experience is interpreted and our assessment is questionable. Moreover, we preclude and prefigure experience by our assumptions. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls upon a totally different dimension which is faith rather than belief, based upon a kind of precognitive, proto-critic knowledge beyond the mind which he calls the knowledge of the soul. Imagine - this

basic human intuition gets blurred and devalidated by mind-games that prove totally inadequate and misleading, so that people replace faith by belief or skepticism.

Yet, while opinions are relative, enlightened insight can reveal new vistas. Hence, people need guidelines, landmarks, bearings, azimuths rather than goals.

Re: "do's" and "do not's". One will never lime to take responsibility for one's actions if one bases them on the opinion of a person. however enlightened, or upon public opinion. Non conformism to these prescriptions most often instills guilt complexes which obstruct genuine soul searching. When freed from this moral imposition. people are able to discover their conscience as their ultimate criterion.

Re: "counselling" Guides will have to make a policy of abstaining from advising, at the same time, acting as facilitators in order to help people untangle the incongruities in their own assessments and discover their real motivations. Undoubtedly. even as there are people who are more skilled than others in violin making or piano playing, or cabinet making or in physics, there will always be a need for teachers in every field including that of meditation or in that most lofty of all skills, helping people to get in touch with the sublime dimension of their being.

Re: "gurus" Leadership, guidance, pioneering are essential to human evolution, but our human expertise is not up to evaluating a person's degree of spirituality. Admittedly, there are certain norms. A person with a doctor's degree in medicine is allowed to practice medicine, but there are enormous differences in the skill of doctors. The world is graced with beautiful people without any pretense to spirituality, often more inspiring than those purporting to hold a spiritual rank.

While I recognize the need for organization, institutions. schools, we will need to be wary in the future, of claims to any established rank. Spiritual guides will have to prove themselves by the inspiration they communicate and by their radiance. This is the meaning of the Islamic formula; Khatum Rasul il'llah. Claims to being 'divinely special' may have had their place in credulous societies to establish credibility. Such claims are no more acceptable in our time. Islam announced a landmark, which, in fact, defines democracy. The prophet marked the transition by disclaiming any divinity,

announcing himself as the servant of God. But the followers carried this teaching beyond its purpose, denying the divinity in all beings which is the very implication of La ilaha illa 'lla!

21 - Reflections on Noor's Birthday

Today, my sister Noor's birthday, and her memory is stronger than ever! In the minds, hearts and souls of many, she is ever present, an example of dedication and self-sacrifice to an ideal of solidarity and compassion.

For many, women particularly, she personifies a projection of the feminine need to place herself at the service of a cause of mercy to which she could hand herself over altogether. This hallowed need is however, rarely fulfilled, either because life has its way of drawing one into its hum-drum patterns, or because this need is only triggered off when the call for help suddenly crosses one's way and shrieks of urgency. Even then, the human need for comfort, security, and the instinct of self-preservation outbalances this need of the soul to serve a great cause.

Thus the reason why Noor is so personally meaningful for so many women is because she represents that which so many women would have liked to prove themselves to be by giving expression to an area of the soul where sacredness is realistic, that is, feasible in real life (a feminine characteristic which, in most cases, remains tentatively latent).

It is this dimension of feeling which is the stuff of which heroes are made. But the price is terrifying. The inevitable outcome of undaunted courage is the ordeal of torture and death in the most devastating circumstances as a victim of the cruelty and sadism of ruthless and merciless men and women, poisoned by hatred born of resentment. The humiliation to which the captives, delivered into the hands of their executioners are subjected, may prove even more excruciating than the bodily torture. Yet, here is an extreme case of the basic reconciliation of the irreconcilables behind all real-life situations defined by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan as "the Divine perfection suffering from the limitations of the existential condition." In this case, it is only the circumstances devised by the oppressors that are humiliating, but when one carries one's dedication to the service of the victims of tyranny to that point, one holds one's head high and unmasks the bad faith of the tyrants, instead of cringing. This is precisely what Noor did when she said, "The time will come when you will know the truth." It is a sardonic paradox that the one who ventured out to the rescue of the victims of torture in concentration camps, should herself be subjected to the ordeal

from which she wished to save them.

Actually, I recall reviewing with Noor the principles upon which we would establish our handling of the challenge as the cannon outbursts were groaning at the gates of Paris. Both of us agreed. also our mother. that so far, we had been spreading Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's teaching; now the time had come to apply it. There can be no doubt; it is the teaching of kindness. Inayat means kindness. To be consequent, it implies sacrificing oneself for the sake of kindness to others. Of course. this is the Message of Christ: unconditional love. Simple, yes, not metaphysics, just reality in ail its painful realism, the axis around which the human drama revolves. perhaps, the drama of the universe in its breathtaking monumentality.

Here it was, right at our door, the call for mercy. People were being tortured, people were being contemptuously dejected like pariah dogs. There was a scent of war in the atmosphere; the folks were aghast, afraid, terrified, cowardly. Of course, who would not be but the stalwart, knowing what it means to stick out one's head? In such situations, one can tell who is who; the silver coating is off. Everyone is in life according to the measure of the price one is prepared to pay from one s advantage or well-being or security for the sake of the other. For me, this is the criteria of spirituality, not Samadhi.

22 - Attaining Peace

There is no doubt that desire brings one down into the body, mind, and personality, wreaking upon one, dependence and uncertainty which are negative to peace. One cannot reach one's higher self without having found 'rida', a satisfied state, that is, a state free from longing, pining. Otherwise, one is pulled In two directions: turmoil and ambiguity.

The circumstances in life in the world reinforce desires, especially bodily desires, modern comforts, permissiveness. One becomes addicted, whereas the wilderness has a decongesting, detoxifying effect. with peacefulness comes the recognition that it takes time to mature spiritually, just as It takes time for a plant to grow or a fruit to ripen. It cannot be forced. Furthermore comes the forbearance to painstakingly unravel the knots in relationships.

Where there is truth, there is peace of mind, giving one serenity, whereas if something is not quite right, much as one might justify it, somehow one gets sapped from within and feels uneasy and jittery. If you agonize over your problems. it is as though you were pulling on a knot instead of unravelling. Unravelling requires patience, perseverance and an Indomitable spirit.

There is a Greek legend according to which a village treasured a mysterious knot. It was predicted that whoever was able to unravel that knot would conquer the East. Alexander tried but In desperation, cut the knot. This was the famous Gordian knot. He showed the same precipitation in penetrating the East without ever conquering It, though governing the countries he crossed.

Slashing a problem, mutilating its niceties will not resolve It any more than tugging on the knot. The knot is relationship, actually part of a tapestry, a network of Inter-relationships, each related to each other. It is easier to tie than untie. When the knots become tangled, one easily becomes devastated, frustrated, or angry. In one's Impatience, one makes a hash of something, which, if dealt with painstakingly, would carry the portents of beauty. (When one's hair is combed, the strands run parallel to each other, oriented meaningfully, in concert. They do not cross one another. The strands of hair are still relating; the relationship has become harmonious.) One does

not have to forego or abandon a relationship. It is still there, transformed, pacified, maybe transfigured.

Pir-o-Murshid once said, "The relationship between two people is like a bridge through which God meets God, like the hands of a child trying to clasp the arms of a doll through the windows of the doll's house."

As one finds peace within oneself, especially during a retreat, one gains trust in the power written in all life. This power can right, restore, even redeem, and ultimately resurrect the crises or collapses which foster fluctuations within situations that might have become sclerosed in us, or remained mental binds. One learns passive volition at a soul level. That is why the Prophet Mohammed said, "Return pacified." Therefore, in order to reach the eternal cosmic vortex of one's being, one needs to sort out one's situations in life.

How can one reconcile the absence of desire that makes for the peace that enables one to grasp one's eternal being with Murshid's teaching in Sufism, that every desire originates in the divine desire for fulfillment in manifestation?

The soul in its human condition is like a bird. Most have to descend to the earth to fulfill their bodily needs. Some foul, (turkeys and chickens) are so earthbound that they hardly can fly at all. Hawks catch their prey on the ground, falcons in mid air, then perch to consume it. Some, like the stormy petrel, will stay on wing for weeks, perhaps months. only diving briefly for food. If one exhibits the features of the legendary Simurgh by identifying with one's real being, after having passed through the death of the ego, one can dwell within the haunts of men and communicate to them something of the states and spheres one has experienced. Those witnessing this will be inspired and illuminated to their own sense of dejavu. Every person has the capacity of intuiting existence beyond body, mind and personality.

The knot may have resulted from having tried to pull in two directions, pursuing objectives that are incompatible. One is trying to reconcile the irreconcilables, a set of terms I often use. What this stands for needs redefining. It blows the trumpet of a challenge. It reflects the attitude of someone who is pursuing mastery at all costs. One of the dangers with mastery is overstress. The danger lies in displaying reckless optimism. One forces the issue by a tour de force, rather than letting the natural forces

flow unflustered, only to find that force was unrealistic. Some irreconcilables cannot be reconciled. It could be like throwing a wager at fate, involving others irresponsibly. Of course, it could feature genuine heroism and stoicism, but one must guard against the temptation of an ego trip. To allay this, Pir-o-Murshid teaches balance. Do not overstress, but with the power gained by one achievement or obstacle overcome, you may test yourself with something a little more stressful.

The terms I so often use refer to words of St. Augustine: 'conjunctio oppositorum', the union of the opposites. Scientists call it complementarity. For St. Thomas of Aquinas, God is static and dynamic at the same time. The present day holistic view is: we are both transient and eternal, part of the totality and carrying the totality potentially in us. Pir-o-Murshid says, "We are divine perfection suffering from human limitation."

We can have at the same time. the greatest pride in our divine inheritance, together with the greatest humility because of the limitation that we impose upon that perfection. It is difficult to reconcile these in ourselves, therefore, it certainly is a challenge. But the acceptance of the limitation, which is a surrender rather than a challenge, brings us into balance. First a little pride and a little humility, then a little more on both sides as one gains the power to handle the dichotomy.

23 - On Retreat

Yes, it has really happened, "Years of dreaming, of yearning for the cave. ... alone at last in the wilderness; the rocks, the gurgling water echoing the wind, the sun pouring its magnanimity upon this body near seventy. exulting in the merging with its ground, mother earth at her most ravishing". These cells, the sequel to those of the body of Pir-o-Murshid and of that lovely being, my mother; so beautiful, so tender, so fragile, contrasting with the majesty of that king of kings. Yes, that king of kings.

Today, it is fifty-nine years since he left his physical shroud of which I am carrying a little cell that has proliferated a lot, merged with the cells of my mother. I also carry something of his manner of thinking, more so of his feeling, particularly when I think of him most intensely, as I do now. How he longed for the wilderness comes through clearly in his plays: "The Bogey Man", "The Living Dead", "Una", and in the paeans of joy as he mused on nature in the Gayan-Vadan-Nirtan. In the last days of his life, he gave vent to his nostalgia for the way of the anchorite as he encountered one on the banks of the Jumna. He said, "This is what I would have done if I had not come to the West, but I was called upon to demonstrate that one can maintain God consciousness in the middle of the activities of the world."

Why then. the impelling, ever recurring dream of the cave? I ask myself this as I exult in the night chill in the welcome warmth of the wood fire in the cave I have so longed for. It occurs to me that the glow of the sun I had enjoyed a few hours ago, the initial outburst of the big bang, is vouchsafed to me in the depths and darkness of my rocky reclusion by the bodies of the trees that have stored that mighty effulgence better than I can, kindling yet more light in my aura. So what am I escaping from? Is it an escape from the very thing these logs are doing for me, from the goodies of life, making life beautiful in the nitty gritty? To pursue practical well-being, one would need to involve oneself in life. But one needs to balance the giving out of energy in one's worldly pursuits by rekindling. replenishing oneself at the source. For a short spell, it is not an escape, but a very necessary rededication. Pir-o-Murshid may have lived longer if he had taken the opportunity to fulfill his dream and I am now graced with this opportunity, fifty-nine years hence. What a grace!

This is therapy. Life communicates life, especially in the silence, aloneness, the

solitude. And what of the internal energy emerging to resonate with the energy accruing from nature? The dhikr dialogues with space itself has lost its meaningfulness.

I mused upon Buddha on retreat and imagined how he would have loved to have a computer in the wilderness (pure conjecture).

While sitting in rapture amongst the glistening cascades and pools, the rocks incandescent in the sun, the cacti, I reached beyond the physical scene and it occurred to me that the more breathtakingly beautiful nature is, the more splendid can one imagine the fullness of reality behind it. Remembering how it looked, I could now off-set my consciousness out of the physical perspective. To do this, I had to let myself go and lose myself in the rocks and water, wind and sun, to step beyond. The consequence was that my sense of identity got totally shifted. At those rare moments, one occupies a vast space, and identifies with the universe. One can watch one's body and mind as one identifies with a reality of a different nature to these. I tried not to attach a label to the new reality by calling it intelligence, because I did not want to slip back into a mind trip. As soon as one calls off the activity of consciousness and meditation, one can see oneself clearly as not being either body or mind. However much some thoughts struck me as being relevant, I kept grasping the intelligence behind it all. Actually, there are several layers of the mind. If one lets go of the commonplace layer, an archetypal layer takes over.

Remembering how the mind thinks ordinarily, I dismissed my mind. and proceeded without objective or motivation, identifying myself with my higher self. By imagining the splendor behind the rocks, the flowers and the stars, one discovers that very splendor in one's own being. Gradually, every aspect of one's being that has become jaded becomes dispelled, until one literally becomes that splendor. I asked myself, "Is splendor what we experience of the heavens, magnified up there, or are we creating it out of the latencies within ourselves by the act of glorification?"

It became clear to me that one cannot dismiss one's ego personality in order to reach into the transcendental areas of one's being; one needs to sanctify it, then it is easier to tow it along with one in one's high quest. Idiosyncrasies get set in and become nearly indelible. Only spiritual power will transform beyond recognition. At a certain stage in the process, spiritual power comes through, surprisingly. Spiritual power

arises out of developing the magnetism of the soul, which in time, arises out of the emotion of the soul. The emotion of the heart, lovely as it is, links one to the world.

The magnetism of the soul is other worldly. It represents a value beyond life that moves all things. overriding the emotion of the heart, great and beautiful as the heart's emotion certainly is. To develop the magnet-ism of the soul is for the few because it means giving up attachments and their accompanying concerns, which is most challenging to our humanness. This signifies renunciation which is undoubtedly the way of the ascetic. I know.... and yet we are preaching fulfillment, accomplishment, unfoldment, which means involvement. Can one ever reconcile these two irreconcilables? I wish I had the answer. To honor one's personal loves, one covets worldly power: as the protector, the patron. the provider. To develop spiritual power, one needs to give up thoughts stirred by human emotions. Then one asks oneself, "Who am I?" And one watches one's involvement objectively. Now one can discriminate between acting when motivated by attachment or by a sense of responsibility and dedication.

In this perspective, one understands so well what Pir O Murshid and the Sufi dervishes said in moments of cosmic consciousness: The soul of a king, but one's self-image that has accrued to one, owing to one's ancestral Inheritance, is the source of all weakness. "Here lies the secret" One is cosmic, but one thinks that one is inadequate because one is impressed by the evidence of the body and the mind. Should one dismiss this identity, the change that occurs proves quite unbelievable.

Of course, I am, you are, the being of God, however constricted, spoliated, degraded at the jagged ends. But one needs to distinguish between that aspect of one which is the Knower and the Creator (**I** means God knowing Himself through that focalization of His consciousness that is one's own consciousness, and by manifesting His nature transpiring through one's personality) and that aspect of oneself that is the means to fulfill this. Both are God, but the second one is a deterioration of the being of God. That is why Ibn 'Arabi says, "He Is both the Seer and that through which He sees, but know whereby thou art God and whereby thou art not God."

24 - Khumba Mela

What is the internal thrust that lures a person away from the relative comfort or at least, routine of established life circumstances, to venture on a pilgrimage into the unknown? Is it the search for dimensions of the self that one had failed to find in the usual commonplace circumstances?

Remember C. G. Jung's, "Modern Man in Search of A Soul?" The Greek philosopher, Plotinus, once said, "That which one fails to discover in contemplation, one seeks to experience outside oneself." The Rishi's, "Why did you come so far to see what you should be?" becomes more pertinent as I grow; the answer, "To become what I am, I need to see myself in you", less crucial, yet still relevant. This applies to all of us and has its implication to the guru/chela relationship. Perhaps the clue is, "I would not be seeking for you if you were not already virtually in me, albeit in a different way, but I need to explore a different mode of expression than the one you have actuated in your being."

Of course, in the same way as your minds are able to realize that there is always a larger number than the largest number we have encompassed so far, or a wider space or a longer time, so our souls are able to imagine that there is a perfection beyond what we usually portray. It is the nostalgia for this idyllic unknown in infinite regress that prompts the evolutionary advance of the universe. In as much as we give vent to our nostalgia for perfection, we are in pursuit of this perfection. Now we may understand better why people leave their homes on the meager chance of an encounter that may change their lives.

Did the Khumba Mela offer this rare chance? One had to have eyes to see and know how to get to the right place at the right time, while avoiding being crushed to death by the crowd, cordoned off and whipped by the police. One had to avoid being way-laid by the more spectacular sights. One needed to spot the beings of spiritual stature in their hide-outs or after their bath, in a procession. It was more subtle than looking for gems amongst lots of stones. All that glitters is not gold. The atmosphere of beings is more significant than their appearance. Occasionally, the real thing: four eyes meeting, four hands clasped in greetings from afar - in mutual acknowledgement of affinity - speaking? Of what use the trivia of, "Where do you come from?" The realized

beings shun vain chatting and distrust verbal expression. I recognized in their bearing and glance, what I was experiencing on my retreats.

Yes, there were a few great ones, perhaps one could have counted them by the fingers on two hands, in that crowd of five million people, cantoned on a four mile square. The atmosphere was electric. Yet as we wandered at one A.M.. on the banks of the Ganges, amidst unteemed rows of sleepers, somebody remarked, "In the West, you would never get a crowd like this, so peacefully at ease with each other." In contrast, the atmosphere of many of the naked Sadhus was disruptive and reeked of pending violence. The contrast between the drug addicted Saddhus and the sublime "rishis" stood out so clearly as a confirmation of what drugs do to the psyche of humans, and conversely, what the effect of the clear light of realization, achieved at the cost of great discipline and renunciation, does to one's whole demeanor.

In the East, the first is called the way of the left hand (the lesser way) and the second, the royal road. The latter is the way through which one discovers the divine inheritance latent in one's being. Pir-o-Murshid once said, "This is the tradition of the King of Kings." Those wandering on this path recognize each other.

Greetings to you. Life is a great pilgrimage and we are in it together.

25 - Interface Spirituality Psychology

Psychologists accuse those who work as spiritual guides of teaching the 'spiritual by-pass, ' which is, failing to deal with psychological problems and lulling adepts into a metaphorical Shangrila while neglecting important day to day issues. This action reinforces people's temptation to escape rather than to face and unravel real life situations and often results in producing 'otherworldly dropouts' of society.

Conversely, some psychologists get burned out by recurrently administering the same therapy with exasperatingly little change in the patient. Why? Some patients, although they ask to be cured, unconsciously do not really wish to be cured, because they experience the therapist as one who is robbing them of their justification for not having become "what they would have been if they could have been what they might have been."

We, as spiritual guides. are fostering creativity rather than therapy. One might ask. "Should not therapy come first before rebirthing?" This seems logical but it is important to give a person something to live for to offset his/her reticence at being cured. The pull of the future is more motivating than the clutches of the past, and there is nothing more stimulating and motivating than creativity. If the human being is a holistic phenomenon, then the metaphorically creative levels of his/her psyche are essential to the organic wholeness sought after.

Most of the party line psychologists would lose their credibility if they were to prescribe the kind of practices fostered by spiritual groups: breathing practices, the mantram, visualizing the aura, grasping one's eternal being beyond the idiosyncrasies inherited from one's ancestry. and modulating consciousness in the cosmic and transcendental dimensions. But these are techniques which foster a correction in the psyche by working on the energy flow of the life field. These techniques help the adepts to overstep their self image and encourage a creative blossoming of latent qualities.

Actually, some spiritual guides and psychologists are exploring areas of mutual complementarity and enrichment. Fundamentally, spiritual guides and psychologists are dealing with a human need embodied in the struggle for self esteem, culminating in the unfoldment of one's personality, which is simply an expression of the

evolutionary drive. Basically, the crux of the issue is that people's self image is simply a notion, a purely imaginary projection, constrained by the very fact that consciousness in the human being is focalized as in a lens and Judges things from a localized vantage point. Therefore, the problem facing psychologists revolves around the fact that people get stuck in their fictitious self image, which blocks the evolutionary process from fostering a blossoming in their personality.

If we apply Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's paradigm of the seed, striving to manifest more and more of its bounty in the plant, the clue lies in grasping more dimensions of our being beyond the scope of consciousness in its middle range setting. This is where spirituality does make a contribution to psychology. Briefly, our being extends through several levels of reality in which transcendental and ancestral idiosyncrasies intermesh and overlap, particularly at the physical and psychic level.

We are encouraging people to earmark their eternal core being. irrespective of what they inherited from their ancestors, in keeping with the words of Jesus, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. " Notably, these more transcendental factors of our being aver themselves to be more impersonal or cosmic or to dovetail with those of other beings. so that one may consider oneself as an inverted cone whose base is coextensive with the totality of the universe and whose apex (which we usually imagine ourselves to be) is the convergence or funneling of all this bounty. To sift this quick of one's being, unravel it out of the humanly inherited factors and refertilize one's psyche through its creative power, is the work of spiritual guides.

One can trigger this off by self transcendence; observing one's body and mind objectively without identification. This seems paradoxical because. as already seen, our core being. irrespective of ancestral inheritance, does intermesh with our inherited characteristics in both the psyche and the body. However, thanks to the dimming of one's identification with the physical and psychological factors of one's being. During the self transcendent experience, a sense of dejavu emerges in the conscious from some impersonal level of the psyche's memory. One feels, "this is really me." The emergence of this genuine core of one's being has an overwhelming effect upon the self image and presents a new challenge; namely, reconciling and integrating the oceanic feeling of one's cosmic identity with the constraining self image.

Thus the need branded by psychologists as self acceptance is met by spiritual guides

by placing one's shadow self (attributed to one's inheritance) at the service of one's core being as a "bridge over troubled waters", and by interfacing and intermeshing with it, thereby transmuting the shadow self. Rather than considering the shadow and core being as two factors of one's being, one may consider them as two poles of the same reality.

It becomes obvious that spiritual guides and psychologists would gain much by working together since the factors they are dealing with interact and intermesh inextricably.

26 - The Hierarchy

All surrender to love willingly and to power unwillingly.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

When we talk about the hierarchy. we are thinking of beings like Saint Francis or Buddha or Akhnaton - the numbers are Infinite - beings held in esteem not only by their followers, but people at large throughout the centuries. Great beings are held in esteem, not because of their position or office in a government of the world, imagined by some on the model of our secular governments with all the bureaucracy and ego squabbles for power, but by the evidence of their selfless love and dedication to their fellow beings, and by their abdication from any claim to a position or use of personal power.

Most people find it difficult to handle power.

No sooner does one build an institution, than people are called to positions in which they are subjected to the temptation of exercising personal power, influencing other people, enforcing the will by dint of their official position. What follows are intrigues, quarrels, unkindness, backbiting, all the kind of things one finds in spiritual groups. just as one does in the rather selfish society we are living in. Great beings are people who have abandoned the values of the world, and because of that, deal with worldly problems in a different way, a subtle way.

For example, when Buddha, on his tour of Indian cities, visited Kapilavatsu (his native town of which he was the crown prince) his father, the king, sent a pompous procession to greet him. Avoiding this worldly recognition, Buddha was found with a group of monks begging in the back streets of the city. St. Vincent de Paul did the same when the President of the French Republic came to honor him. Gandhi refused the post of First President of the Indian Republic. Akhnaton relinquished many of the artifices of the pharaonic tradition. St. Francis abandoned the riches of his ancestral inheritance and so did Saint Clare, who walked bare-footed in the streets, in rags, and catered to the lepers.

This is what Murshid means by the aristocracy of the soul and the democracy of the

ego. "The Murshid is there for the mureed", he says. He or she is there by the esteem in which he/she is held by virtue of his/her realization, mastery, self-sacrifice, dedication, service, radiance, sacredness, not by virtue of a post or office in the hierarchy. One is only able to take that post when one does not wish for it. And then, for having lost one's ego, the divine power of love takes over from the despotism of the autocrats (which is so devastating to those who are struggling for self-esteem and lose self confidence by being undermined by people who purport to be superior).

No claim to superiority, such is the message of Islam marking the advent of democracy. But here comes the grind: the challenge comes if, when occupying the post to preserve it from the despots while upholding its sacredness, when striving to live up to the divine status present in each of us (while keeping the human touch) one is able to love those who envy one or denigrate one or try to foul one, and one can accept the responsibility while unmasking the sham of the adulation and deference to the outer position. This is the aristocracy of the soul together with the democracy of the ego.

27 - On the Teachings of Murshid

When one studies Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's teachings in depth, it becomes clear why they can never spread quantitatively in our day and age; it is too deep for the generality continually inveigled in concerns regarding material well-being. The more popular gurus appeal to the masses, fostering euphoria. Alternately, those burned out by life seek escape in a retreat. The traditional eastern teachings cater to that otherworldly attunement devised for monks and hermits. But Murshid's teaching lays emphasis on spirituality in everyday life and most people are too involved in the way things appear from their personal focus to be able to maintain the divine perspective throughout.

It is enough of a hassle to keep one's head and that of one's family above water for sheer survival without, in addition, striving to see God everywhere and identifying with the divine dimension of one's being. This is exactly what the mureeds who leave the Order or become inactive in the Order pretext: day to day life is so demanding that there is not time for anything else. The support system takes over. It is as though one were so concentrated upon the technicalities of an orchestra that one failed to be inspired by the music.

Yes, It is clear that the answer is enhanced awareness of what is enacted in life on an enormous scale rather than escape. The answer is not something added to everyday life but something that enhances one's effectiveness (if one is in the pursuit of excellence) by placing everything in a cosmic perspective. Murshid stresses this effectiveness in fostering transformation by never losing sight of the overall reality as a pervasive presence in the middle of daily activity. "It is the consciousness of God who is never absent that gives that "illumination, those riches, that strength, that peace to the soul for which the soul has taken the journey through this world of limitation." Actually. this is the new spirituality, the next step. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, like all pioneers. was In advance of his time.

To appreciate the whole value of Murshid's teaching, one needs to be fine-tuned, have a subtle mind. and have reached a stage of maturity in one's life. It is amazing what the awareness that "this is all one being" (however inadequate our representation of this being Is) can do to a human being's unfoldment.

"When the deeper side of man's nature is touched, what is hidden in it manifests on the surface." But for this manifestation, one needs to overcome the commonplace concept of God held by the generality. Murshid stresses how we confuse our concepts of God with the reality of God.

"At present, there exists in the world, only a belief in God; God exists in the fragmentation, in the ideal. It is the soul that has touched divine perfection that brings to the earth a living God who, without this soul, would remain only in the heavens."

Murshid is talking of a practical knowledge rather than a theoretical one. We think that we could only actuate the reality behind all of this if we could know it, but we can only know it by actuating it. This is Sufism. On the other hand, even though the God ideal is only the projection of an act of imagination, it triggers transformation for the reason that creative imagination at a cosmic scale is the very act that produces the universe. In that act, we are projecting the divinity of our being into the God ideal. This is actually the universal, undefiled dimension at the core of our personality. By identifying with it, we reach maturity in the blossoming of the seed of our personality. This changes our bearing, our atmosphere, and our manner of handling problems beyond recognition.

"Once man has arrived at that patch. he begins to express the manner of God in everything he does. It is the kingly manner." Pir-O-Murshid has a way of saying things that demonstrates that he is experiencing what he says. This results in insights couched in a nutshell in a unique way that have the force to transform one's life.

For those who realize what a treasure house he has entrusted to those who are able to value it, the onus lies in knowing how to present it in a way that people can assimilate progressively. The current word for that is packaging. A jewel needs to be presented in a setting, a bezel. Many have been exposed to the teaching and left because we failed to present it in a manner within their reach. I find it is my responsibility at this stage in my life, to meet this need, in fact, to meet this challenge. It may mean less travelling, less rushing about, but I will be laying a deeper foundation for the work of the Sufi Centers, for the building up of a hard core of dedicated people, and for coordinating their activities. That is the Sufi Order in motion. pulsing like a quasar. radiating. Perhaps that is the meaning of the word 'Movement' that Murshid

added to the word Sufi - an Order in movement.

28 - Perfume of the Rose

It has been a summer of intense activities, very exciting! I had reservations about personal adulations - for my 70th birthday celebration - that might spoil my ego but what I found by accepting the happening graciously was that I was giving many people an opportunity of expressing their love and an opportunity for me to reciprocate it a hundred-fold. I realize that this gift of love of so many launches me into a new lease on life in the service of The Message.

By practicing the B-Minor Mass of Bach, we are somewhat on the way to the performance in the year 2,000. We are grateful to him for opening the doors to the heavens by using the language of music.

The two plays presented at the celebration - one written by me at age 15 and one written by Michael Seraphiel (now Zia) shattered a sensitive fiber in the core of my being because they embodied so dramatically the concerns, ideals and challenges of those dedicated to a spiritual ideal! History repeats itself. One We could have added Pir-O-Murshid's play, "The Living Dead." The traditional way was either that of the sannyasin or that of the householder; today it is being in the world but not of the world. But the specter of the tradition hovers in the unconscious indelibly; it needs to be overcome by exploring the spirituality of the future.

Yesterday's journey of the pilgrim to the pinnacles of splendor in the solitude of unity or the glory of the heavens becomes today's laborer in the fields of the earth or the knight on the battlefield of our commonplace existences embued with a passion for excellence. One brings heaven on earth by handling ugly situations beautifully rather than escaping into a utopic no-man's land of bliss. Make God a reality. But is it not permitted sometimes, to suspend the strife to spend a chosen moment in beatific music? By emphasizing the God manifest in the divinity of our being, the glance behind our consciousness, and the background of our personality, are we not missing the uplift triggered off by the hunch of that aspect of God that is beyond any manifested expression whatsoever? Capture this moment between moments which passes before one has noticed it, when you have ceased to try to achieve to be. It is like the perfume of the rose that does not seem to have a utility, a kind of bonus, the divine grace.

29 - On the Champs - Elysees

Sitting on the Champs-Elysees doubtlessly has its very special Parisian charm. People do this for various reasons, if nothing else, to get out of the confining offices of shops or factories. More ponderous minds find this a perfect opportunity to watch the moving scene of life. For me, here is a prompt to reflect upon what is going on in the souls and hearts and minds of so many different types of people, what relevance to spirituality here? Musing on my rather more metaphysical grasp of what spirituality really means in my high tech, modern aluminum cave in the Pyrenees helps me x-ray - what strikes the eye, as the ceaseless crowds criss-cross right in front of me - a living film on the moving scene of life

Remember, I say to myself, the real cave is not carved in the stone, but an attunement (that paradoxical psychological chemistry of the objectivity of detachment with the subjectivity of involvement). How can I understand these beings if I do not recognize their idiosyncrasies in me? Of what value are my subjective impressions of them unless I were to involve myself with them, at least talk to them? "La ufe est un noeucl de relations. Life is a network of relationships", said St. Exupery. Life is interaction; we are intermeshed with each other. If we think of "that person" as "other" in what Martin Buber called the "I-it relationship", we become judgmental. We are lacking in love. So this is where spirituality comes in.

But now comes the test. That man with sunken cheeks right in front of me has so obviously been beaten by life, so disappointed, so forlorn, so bereft of hope. How can all my preaching about glorification have even the slightest meaning for him? When fate has proven to be so unfair, how can one enjoin upon its victim to believe in God?

In my seminars and retreats, I show how, by transcending the personal vantage point, one realizes that there is splendor behind "all this", but how can one not be locked into the personal perspective when fighting a losing battle for survival? What would be the use of presenting him this sublime teaching? Even if I had the opportunity of talking to him, it would fall upon his psyche like water on a duck's back. It took a leap into the sublime to overcome the floundering of my soul as I gaped upon the abyss in his soul. I smiled upon him. He couldn't believe anybody could smile upon him He did not have the strength to smile back. But after a double-take, I could see that something stirred

in the unsounded depths of his being. Here it was easy to love; facing suffering, it is easy to love. This was his only cure, love, not glorification. The emotion of the heart rather than the emotion of the soul. But I could only have found that love by getting in touch with the emotion of my soul.

But what about that thug (please excuse the obviously judgmental term) slouching down the Champs Elysees, yelling swear words, molesting the girls, throwing his beer can on the pavement and snatching the purse of a fashionable old lady right in front of my eyes in broad daylight, at the dismay of sheer incredulity of the passers by, then taking flight? Love comes less easily here; in fact, is it at all realistic?

It would be a platitude to say that it is just because he has so alienated himself from the sacredness of the very act of life that this could ever occur. This is where only our sense of paradox, as Pir-o-Murshid mentions, helps us face this aberration. "All faces are My Face", says God, according to the Qur'an. Could the Face of God have become spoliated? Fruit putrefies; the seed remains unscathed. Yes, all is God, providing we grasp that behind the immanent God, who, according to Meister Eckhart. "becomes and unbecomes", we grasp the transcendent dimension of God in His/Her perfection. Perfection, all inclusive, must include freedom, with the consequence that things can get out of hand.

Do we recognize ourselves in that thug? The propensities are inherent. Do we not nurture resentment? This is what has brought him to this point. He may well have been humiliated and abused as a child and disenchanted by the hypocrisy of the very people who profess spirituality. In this case, a smile would not help. What help does spirituality have to offer here? One would have to start from scratch; it would involve a whole educative process. It means overcoming heavily set in sardonic disenchantment, indelible resentment and bitter irony. The people in Plato's cave with their backs to the light could not understand what people meant when they said the grass was green and the sky blue, nor do fish know the sea they are floating in. Some might ascribe the condition to a lack of spirituality from the start. I would say, perhaps the lacuna is in the way spirituality is ordinarily meted out to the young, totally out of phase with the thinking of our time.

The young are living in a tougher world than ever before, suspended upon an atmosphere of hopelessness which all the permissiveness in the world cannot allay.

Youths need to have something to look forward to: out-run their father's records, unmask their blunders, free-wheel creatively, build a brave new world. Take this away and young persons become disgruntled, apathetic, sardonic, sometimes violent or degenerate. Spirituality. that totally incommensurate dimension that crowns our human values and spins one's mind and emotions beyond their middle range, has inspired civilizations to produce great cultures. It still remains the live force spurring us to outreach ourselves, but spirituality needs to be updated. Space age spirituality, further dimensions of reality, that is the pointer.

This realization came across overwhelmingly when a nun was passing by. Here at least, I had expected that spiritual dimension missing in the thug (in my estimation). But I missed the joy, the radiance, the sparkle of St. Theresa of Lisieux or the compassion of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. I sensed humility misconstrued into self-denigration, reinforced by a guilt complex. I sensed a cult of suffering bordering upon masochism. I do not wish to generalize but Christ could not have wished for this. I see him earnest because conscious of the suffering of the world but full of joy. "Be ye of good cheer", he says to the forlorn poor in spirit.

Updated spirituality, is that to be found in the new age flower people? Here was a typical hippie conforming to non-conformism. shipwrecked in the unleashed ocean of his psyche and taking it to be spirituality is it spirituality to so damage the delicately programmed brain we are invested with?

There was the colorful ramble of the good, steady mainstream loners. And now, standing out in the crowd, a one with sunlight in the eyes, nobility in the gait, strength blended with gentleness in the demeanor, restraint and wisdom in the voice. Our glances crossed, just as my glance did when I passed that Rishi at an earlier Kumbh Mela or communed with that dervish at Shams Tabriz's tomb. But here, no robes, no role playing, no pretense at spirituality. Just a mutual attunement, unspoken mutual realization, and mutual recognition. Such is spirituality in real life.

30 - The Guru Syndrome

To become conscious of inner contradictions, he must perforce act out the conflict and be torn into opposite halves. **C. G. Jung**

There is a pair of opposites in all things; in each there exists the spirit of the opposite. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

I am at the midst of my true life; I am most deeply myself. **C. G. Jung**

What we are looking for is a human spirit. The personality is the fruit on the tree of life. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

It has become clear to me that, because I have been emphasizing the idyllic dimension of people and the environment while underplaying the 'shadow,' mureeds have been lulled into a highfaluted image of themselves and of myself which matches neither the reality of their being nor of mine and brooks contradictions in how they handle situations.

The ideal is the means, but its breaking is the goal. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Here, my own idealistic temperament carries over into others, for one thing because my ideal of the sublime mirrors an archetype and aspiration latent and pressing as a nostalgia in those coming to me for spiritual nourishment, and furthermore, because of the impact that the 'guru image' has on those in contact with him/her. Nourishing this splendid dimension is so important for so many people in helping them to overcome their disenchantment in the sordidness of much of our society and to overcome their inadequate self-image. But if one fails to make the connection between this level of reality and the existential conditions, one runs the risk of escaping from real situations into wishful thinking, also thinking of oneself as special, whereas everyone is special in his/her own way.

Great people have great faults; it is their greatness that is their greatest fault. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Living up to that image to nurture the need of the guru image in people forces me,

(although I have consistently disavowed such an auspicious status) and indeed all those in a leadership position, into a role in which one runs the danger of neglecting to confront one's own defects and weaknesses or inadequacies. Because of a pupil's awe in the face of the aura of eminence of the guru, it is sometimes difficult to unmask the justifying faculty of the mind resorted to by a person who is looked upon as an example. The arguments offered often scramble the issue by flaunting contradictions, ascribing them for example, to the "reconciliation of the irreconcilables" instead of striking a balance between clearly defined choices. This is a typical guru syndrome which we are witnessing in our time: masking contradictions, instead of recognizing their incongruity and correcting them.

Those who try to make virtues out of their faults grope further and further into darkness. The way to overcome error is first to admit one's fault, and next to refrain from repeating it.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

The consequence of masking contradictions is the conflict and confusion that these ambiguities arouse in oneself and in others. Since in the drama of real life one senses how important the image is for people "out there", those in a leadership position fear that, should they admit criticism, they would spoil that image. However, by justifying oneself, one deprives oneself of the opportunity of ever progressing. The image cannot hold long unless matched by the reality of one's personality, so that in the end, one's scruple to uphold one's image to help people defeats its own end.

It is no use trying to prove what you are not. If you begin at the end, you will end at the beginning.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Anybody volunteering to embody the archetype representing people's higher self will have to choose between artfully concealing one's shadow, and when discovered, stand on one's high horse, justifying it hypocritically, or alternatively, by putting oneself on the line, be open to be exposed to scrutiny and criticism by all. Should one have the honesty and courage to confront one's shortcomings, one will, in addition, better understand people's problems through seeing oneself in others and others in oneself, thus affording real help to those who also need to transmute their shadow. Clearly, how could one expect to help another if one has not experienced their problems oneself and dealt with them constructively?

You discover your own faults in the faults of others.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

By justifying oneself, one blunts one's ability to earmark one's defects.

All impulses originate in the divine impulse but get limited and distorted in man.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

The human personality acts as a lens distorting the divine impulse. For example, wrath facing injustice gets distorted as hatred, or mastery as an ego trip; love as possessiveness or nobility as vanity; compassion as indulgence, condoning, or truth as callousness; cautious responsibility as fear or timorousness. If one is not extremely scrupulous about being honest to oneself, one tends to fail to recognize this distortion and firmly believes that one is acting under the higher impulse.

Our personality acts as a lens, distorting our divine inheritance, as in the picture of Dorian Gray. However, this distortion can be redressed by confronting it with its archetype, just like light distorted by a concave lens can be reconstituted to its original pattern by a convex lens. Caruso's voice distorted by the recording machines can be restored to its original beauty just as if we were able to reverse the arrow of time. Even so, our divine nature, suffering from defilement like a distorted exemplar of a perfect archetype, can be reinstated in its pristine glory.

This requires one to match a divine quality latent in divine inheritance with its distortion in our personality without slipping into a guilt complex or a state of despondent self-denigration. The role played by the ideal becomes evident when one realizes that one cannot compensate for the distortion we have inflicted upon our divine inheritance without referring back to the divine model. Conversely, the ideal can only be known in and by means of its exemplification which is perforce distorted.

It is only if one is able to recognize one's inadequacies as a distortion of that very ideal to which one pays lip-service that this ideal can operate in transmuting the 'shadow,' thereby realizing the divine legacy in our being so that it may become a reality in our personality. To know what one's defects are, all one needs is to recognize one's qualities and earmark the distortions of those qualities in one's personality. It is this very distortion of a quality that stands as an obstacle to developing that very quality. Should one fail to admit and confront the defect, that very defect will, by the

synchronistic interplay in our relationships with people, call a situation in which we are placed before the choice either of applying the defective idiosyncrasy in handling the situation, or the divine quality of which the former was a distortion.

Pir-O-Murshid was very aware of the hazards of the transference syndrome and warned people about role playing.

Every soul has its own way of life; if you wish to follow another's way, you must borrow his eyes to see.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

A further disadvantage of the guru image strikes clearly: if mureeds or representatives think of me as the image they have projected upon me rather than the real person, they run the risk of going wrong if they assume that my advice is absolute.

Do not take the example of another as an excuse for your wrongdoing. One should take oneself to task instead of putting one's fault upon another. Overlook the greatest fault of another, but do not partake of it in the smallest degree.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Much as I make it clear that neither I or the representatives are entitled to give advice to mureeds as to what to do, some still try to read, in the inflections of my voice, how I feel about a situation. Failing this, they think that, assuming I must have higher guidance, that they need to try to capture this guidance, whereas they run the risk of wishful thinking!

Representatives, particularly, and those active in spreading the message tend to model themselves upon my own life pattern which is practically 99% dedicated to service at the cost of my private life. In this instance, genetic traces of my atavistic ancestry of sannyasins and dervishes and my own temperament that prioritizes service above anything else sets a challenge that people tend to emulate. Here once more, the guru transference image acts adversely, though I warn people not to consider me as a guru or even as an example. People get burnt out, while I go on striding ahead apparently unscathed. This accounts for many representatives handing in their resignations because of being increasingly aware of the stress incurred by accumulating the responsibility of service with the need of matching up their job and

the care of their families.

In as much as I am fully aware of this issue in my life, my choice is involved. Assuredly I am becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for balance here, yet I must follow my conscience.

The way you choose is the way for you.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Pir-o-Murshid saw the need for people to give some satisfaction to their personal emotions. In the foregoing, the wisdom of Pir-o-Murshid comes through with clear evidence:

Balance is the keynote of spiritual attainment. A virtue carried too far may become a sin. The fulfillment of life is by being human.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Had Christ not already warned: ***Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.***

Pir-o-Murshid gave space to people's need for love, for recognition, for self-esteem, for fulfillment in achievement, for security while equally giving satisfaction to the need for ecstasy, for freedom, for glorification, for the discovery of the divine in one, for sacredness:

He who can live up to this ideal is the king of life. Devotion is proved by sacrifice.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

I have to shatter your image of me so that I may make my ideal a reality and you will have to shatter it also, and what is more, any replication of that image in you, especially if a representative or coordinator in The Sufi Order. Since we are so inextricably intermeshed I will have to recognize myself in both your ideal and your idiosyncrasies, as you may recognize yourself in my ideal and in my failures without the screen of your image of me or my image of you confusing the issue.

May our ideals resonate like the multiple projections of mirrors placed face to face, cross-pollinating each other, while we strive in our interconnectedness to make these ideals a reality in our lives so that restored to their pristine splendor, our ideals may fertilize our personalities.

31 - Spirituality in Real Life

What do we mean by spirituality in real life? "The discovery of any individual on the planet is the discovery of the whole humanity." (Pir-o-Murshid) There is no doubt that, using the word spirituality, we are referring to a whole other dimension than to the usual commonplace dimension. But are we really talking about something other than a way of thinking? If so, it must be substantiated by a level of experience beyond the ordinary and be verifiable and repeatable, according to the scientist. Certainly, the verifiability is in whether it makes a person luminous, joyous, alert and noble. If something is real, it must have tangible effects. Its repeatability is observed in the fact that most of the authentic mystics in the know of our human heritage refer to identical experiences. If real, spirituality must have its implications in our way of handling problems. It must govern our whole value system, determine our priorities: what we strive for, what we shun.

Those caught up in the "here and now" get easily burnt out, disenchanted, even sardonic, or alternatively if under a lucky star, selfish, arrogant, bumptious. Those hankering after the "everywhere and always beyond the beyond" tend to get out of touch with the nitty gritty, shun responsibility, and alienate themselves through fantasy.

We are in search of a healthy and invigorating spirituality at the dimension of the realization that humanity as a whole has attained in our day and age. This spirituality is at the leading edge that pioneering thinkers are feeling out.

A number of those who were deeply imbued in spirituality have been put off by the abuses of some gurus. Others find that they have less leisure or interest for such flights of fantasy owing to their family and job commitments and feel that any connection with spirituality alienates them from their co-workers, even puts their credibility in jeopardy. Yet if spirituality has far-reaching implications in our understanding and our determination of our objectives and achievements, then by neglecting spirituality, one would be missing out on dealing with prevailing concerns that eventually affect the personality, the family, and the job.

Suppose by inference that a being only capable of interpolating two dimensions

should occasionally have uncanny hunches of being part of a three dimensional world. He/she would strive awkwardly to infer what a three dimensional world would be like from the way the two dimensional world looks. This example shows why our inferences about the higher spheres or the nature of the soul are full of conjectures so disconcerting for the practical man or woman. On the other hand, if our two dimensional being followed up his/her hunches about other dimensions of being, he/she would hoist him/herself into an incommensurably different level of realization and achievement.

How would this simile apply to the mundane need of dealing with human problems? It would mean dealing with the implications of the problem rather than the symptoms. Here we are not talking about a further dimension of space/time, but of understanding. Grasping what are the factors that caused the events is a first further dimension of understanding that is not limited by a linear time-sequence, admittedly more difficult to cull. What are the qualities in me or in the persons involved in the problem that are at stake? How does my decision or way of handling things affect the higher counterparts of my being which must, by resonance, affect the higher counterparts of those in contact with me? These higher counterparts must eventually sprout through in my personality and of necessity, affect others by osmosis. What does our reciprocal interaction involve in the larger scheme of things?

The challenge may prove insuperable. For example: reconciling strength with kindness; the need for personal fulfillment and that of service, reconciling: freedom with involvement, joy with solidarity for suffering, the divine with the human; giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar; not paying your soul for the goodies of the world. What is your real motivation? The more all encompassing one's perspective, the more socially altruistic and less personal will be the objective, a reconciliation of the way of the master with the way of the saint. The new perspective is a matter of bringing the divine desire into the human will, the "everywhere and always" in the here and now.

This is where spirituality, awakening to the higher dimensions of one's being, does affect the nitty gritty of our lives. Failing to give it the attention it deserves spells a failure to become "what we could be if we would be what we might be."

32 - Our Many Faceted Personalities

"When a glimpse of our image is caught in man, When heaven and earth are sought in man, Then what is there in the world that is not in man? If only one explores him, there is a lot in man."

"The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. If the planet had no intelligence, it could not have intelligent beings on it. The collective working of many minds as one single idea, and the activity of the whole world in a certain direction are governed by the intelligence of the planet."

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Perhaps the secret of fostering personal growth is in realizing that our personalities are structured into multiple personae illustrated in an oversimplified way by the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde story. An apt example could be the potential pending varieties of mutations within a seed, needing just the right catalyst (in cell biology, an enzyme) to prime the desired mode into actuation.

Secondly, one needs to bear in mind that we exist and function at several levels which one might designate as the multiple dormant tiers of our being, also awaiting the flash of our awareness to spring into activity. It is our ignorance of these potential dimensions of our being that lock us into our inadequate self images in which we get straight-jacketed. The catalyst priming these many splendored potentials is the act of intelligence rather than that of consciousness. By that I mean self generated self awareness, rather than the kind of experience based on observation and the interpretation of the data observed. It is self discovery instead of experience.

The reason why introspection is so deceptive is that we split ourselves into two purely fictitious parts: the observer and the observed. This split sets up an artificial boundary within our wholeness which is just in the mind but does not exist in reality. No wonder that if we so proceed, we can never discover our potentialities nor identify with them and allow them to unfurl. Instead, we remain hemmed into our assessment of the input from our face in the mirror or our performance in life (successful or unsuccessful), or our disenchantment in our personality, or our inadequate self image,

or our uneasiness about our ponderous conscience, or our lack of sparkle. But is it not the role that we are called upon to play in our lives that draws our attention to certain idiosyncrasies rather than others and thus makes us discover them in ourselves?

For example, being in a situation of service will bring out the serviceable persona in us - being a father or mother, the affectionate and responsible persona - being a business man, the alert and well organized persona - having to fight even if for justice, the aggressive persona - a lover, the caring, perhaps the passionate persona in us - a musician or artist, the sensitive inventive persona - a spiritual teacher or seeker, the ecstatic, idyllic persona, etc. We have all of these personae in us. When succumbing to temptation, circumstances will trigger off, almost compulsively, the Dr. Jekyll latent in all of us; if inspired, elevated, the Mr. Hyde.

In addition, the role one assumes as one meets or speaks to different people may cause one to switch surprisingly from one of those latent persona within oneself to another persona in sudden leaps and bounds. The same person, so gentle with a child, may behave aggressively whenever faced with his/her neighbor, then prove convivial with a friend. The good samaritan may act meanly to a relative. The same person, solicitous with a person he/she is looking to for a favor, may prove hostile to a person who depends upon him/her. Besides, one's attitude toward the same person may undergo amazing reverses: the lover's passion may turn to treachery; respect may sour to contempt. An actor or actress may discover a variety of very different persona in his/her personality in accordance with the role played. Moreover, he/she may find it easier to depict a clearly distinctive character than a rich composite personality because the greatest of human arts consists in integrating the multiple and extremely varied potential persona within our inheritance, which is precisely what Jung means by the integration of personality.

Then there are those who put on an act, for example, turning the charm on or looking fierce, or putting on their downtrodden look whenever they know they are observed. This, then, is the real mask, an artifice which may make it difficult for them ever to display or discover or manifest their true being. We are primed by our awareness of our potentials and spurred by the challenge of the environment. The balance between these depends upon the extent to which we adapt to the environment or to which we act upon the environment.

This is where our free will comes in. Irrespective of what the outer circumstances wreak upon us, we may choose the brand of personality amongst the infinite variety of potential personalities latent within us. What is more, we may mutate the qualities inherited. Creativity of the personality is comparable to composing variations on a theme which we may fluctuate inventively. Here lies our choice. To operate a choice, one would have thought that one would have to know our latent personae and therefore, self discovery seems a prior imperative. But our choice lies in choosing the role we want to play. Then the challenge we take upon ourselves will release the appropriate latent quality which we thus discover. Surprisingly, we enjoy more freedom in choosing the role we wish than most of us realize. If indeed spirituality lures us forward in the evolutionary process, then we progress by discovering our freedom and using it.

So much for our cosmic dimension but how about our transcendental one? Here the bounty at our disposal is infinite! We are normally only using a minute fraction of our potentials at the higher levels of our being. What is the difference between our cosmic dimension and our transcendental? They are like the latitudinal and longitudinal vectors in our navigational reckoning. They are interdependent, not two distinct realities. The reason for underlining the word transcendent is because, if one says one inherits from the whole universe, one tends to assume that we are referring to the physical cosmos: the fabric of the stars, of the galaxies, the radiation of the Big Bang, the orderliness of a crystal's molecules, or the disruption of the harmony of the spheres in a solar or galactic storm, or the voracity of a wolf, the diligence of a bee, the playfulness of a monkey or the sensitivity of a butterfly. But we also inherit the planning, the thinking of the universe, the creativity, the ecstasy, the psyche of the universe, the will, in fact, what we mean by the soul of the universe. And by the words 'soul of the universe,' what we are designating is what we mean when we discover the traces of it as our divine inheritance.

Note, that in order to discover the more transcendent dimensions of one's being, observing the body and personality and even one's consciousness objectively, without identification, as Buddha taught, will cause one to shift one's self awareness and sense of identity higher up the scale of values or spheres of existence. But this is so only if one observes 'detachment' (anata), by not identifying with the object of one's act of consciousness or with one's consciousness. To identify would allow the activity

of intelligence to take over from the act of consciousness. Such is the method that will lead us to discover our divine inheritance.

33 - Creativity

God is all possibility; impossibility is born of the human mind.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Faith is the belief that one can extract something good out of almost everything.

Reverend Robert Schuller

An idea dawns upon the horizon of your mind. Are you moved to grasp it as it flashes at you, or do you let it pass by? If yes to the first case, if indeed, the idea is sufficiently potent, you are a creative person. It may be a catch word on an advertisement poised to draw your attention. Maybe someone said something that sparkled your spirit. Maybe you were moved by solemness suffering, or plea for rescue, or by a heroic deed. You may have captured a mood, a mode of being from the landscape or the skyscape that spoke to you of a mysterious meaningfulness and many splendored attunement behind this all. Maybe someone's prowess emboldened you, and set a whole tidal wave of psychic energy rushing into your adrenals. Maybe you were tickled by a humoristic thought or witty remark, or by a curious constellation of events, like the monkey earmarking in a flash of insight, a feasible link between that nut outside his/her cage or that stick inside. Perhaps you feel the surprising synchronistic concatenation of totally unexpected encounters and impressions is trying to impress cryptically upon you a message whose meaningfulness consternates your mind. Maybe you are spurred by a self-generated thought impinging impromptu upon your mind, or an evanescent feeling of nostalgia or unaccountable anguish, or passion, even holy passion, or cosmic wrath.

The idea could be crystallized in a single word, you may think of it as a topic; in fact, it is a seed thought. It could be an elusive emotion that gets spirited away if you try to hold it without harnessing it. Most frequently, the idea sparkles an emotion.

If these prompts were not meaningful enough to marshal your energy, if you did not feel stirred by them or did not believe you were up to making something out of them, possibly you lost a chance in a million of manifesting your latent creativity. If you rise to the occasion to which the loaded idea now challenges you, you will be discovering

a resourcefulness in yourself that you had never suspected that you harbored. The idea/emotion served as a catalyst for self-discovery. Now your turn to play ball. The idea/emotion may constellate galaxies of related seed thoughts interrelated with impelling emotions. If you remain stuck with the thought/emotion without germinating it, it will be stillborn. After you have responded to the input from outside, you need now to cross-pollinate the input of the metaphors striking you from outside with the metaphors that emerge from inside. The feedback loop has spurred the software of your psyche, rather, that of the universe! One idea/emotion will conjure another in infinite resonance, inviting you to endless variations. You are fluctuating the order of the universe!

Yet at this stage, "How do you feel?" is more important than, "What do you think?" All creativity is born of emotion. All the levels of your being are affected from the soul downwards and the body upwards. Do you sense the flutter of your soul as you gently touch upon the magnificence of the mind of which your mind is a ripple in the universe of thought behind the universe of atoms and galaxies and bodies? And do you feel the eddies of the thrill of the spirit reaching right down into your heart - even your heart of flesh - making it beat faster? Yes the heart needs to be shattered and overwhelmed, not just the soul, so that the divine intention carried by the incredible planning of the universe may be updated and fed back by you, yes through you.

You have become as a creator, the laboratory of the divine experiment in creativity. If you react this way to the winds that pummel you from out there and everywhere, you are a creative person. You have plugged into the matrix of all potent ideas/emotions that get actuated in this splendid universe of ours. Yours is the pursuit of excellence. Your productivity will not only aver itself to be a projection of a significant aspect of yourself into the observable existential realm, but will prove indeed to unfurl the potentialities lying latent in your personality. It will confer upon you the charismatic self image of the accomplisher; self-esteem and self-confidence. Your life will open up; the mists of despair and despondency will clear.

This is the experience of discovering God in oneself; one's divine heritage in the form of the All-possibility that moves the universe as indeed, each and all, wheels within wheels, universes within universes, minds within minds, souls within souls, hearts within hearts, worlds without end.

34 - Are We Being Tested?

Are we being tested? I have yet to come across someone who does not feel that life is testing him/her, although I am sure there are people who do not think that way.

Some people ascribe the test to God, others to the blind hand of destiny, others to the people in their lives who are giving them a bad time, or who are opposing them. Some feel tested by those they have to serve, or by the health of their own body, or by their inadequacy. But can one really say that our fate is preordained? If that were so, there would be no room for free will.

How aptly do the words of Christ, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" apply! Al Hallaj, tortured and crucified, who therefore one could say, was tested in the extreme, said, "Thy abandonment of me is a proof of Thy love, for Thou testest most those Thou lovest most." I would propose as an alternative, "Those Thou valueth most", just like a school teacher will give more difficult tasks to the better pupils.

Be it as it is, there seem to be degrees of tests. One tends to believe one's test is just about the worst possible one. Perhaps one of the tests where one's ability is challenged to its limits occurs when one is endeavoring to love a person one dislikes. There may be several reasons for disliking a person. The most obvious one is if he/she acts cruelly or ruthlessly towards other people or oneself. The extreme case is torture, physical or psychic, harassment to the point of mind bending, or confusing someone in his/her conscience to the point of torment, like making someone recant, or through intimidation or persecution. The second reason is often related to the first one, that is, when one pursues his/her interest and disregards the wellbeing of another, or unjustly flaunts the right of another, one acts grossly out of self interest.

The third reason is blatant dishonesty in the pursuit of one's own interest. Pursued in the extreme, this behavior might lead towards incriminating another for one's own misdeed and getting away with it, particularly by using bribery, coercion, extortion, blackmail, or foul play. This kind of psychic coercion can work very subtly, surreptitiously destroying another's psyche without the other realizing it. One tends to give in from sheer mental or emotional exhaustion to a stronger ego, especially if one does not have the clarity to nail the hoax of his/her arguments. Confusion and

uncertainty are compounded when these acts are ambiguously mixed with an occasional generous thought and word, perhaps even materialized in an act serving as a windscreen that seems to vindicate all the less tasteful actions. One should add to this list a disagreeable person, simply bad tempered, unpleasant, inconsiderate, often someone nurturing a grudge or convinced that he/she has been wronged.

The cases just quoted are obviously extreme; sometimes one can see better by magnifying. There are, of course, degrees of this. The opposite is probably also true: one is oneself guilty of precisely the same attitudes and so there is a double reverberation, thus escalating the psychic tension between two beings. More frequently, those features are more accentuated in one person than another, but present to some degree in both. Consequently, there is wear and tear on the psyche, particularly of those exercising these features less intensely. Conversely, the ascendency exercised by the one excelling in one or more of these features upon the one less so inclined is detrimental to the ego of the former and is reinforced by the condescension of the less aggressive one which is tantamount to a condonance.

Obviously, one cannot endorse these attitudes. When they are chronically reiterated, one condemns them in one's mind. Can one judge an action without being judgmental of the person? It is indeed difficult to dissociate the actions from the person, consequently, it becomes most difficult to like the person. Can one dislike a person and still love him/her? Here comes what I believe to be the ultimate test. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan says, "We are tested in life in our love." That is the rub. That is the message of Christ.

But I think one needs to combine love with detachment, not just love or not just detachment. Surrounding oneself with a zone of silence is a necessary protection, if nothing else, for the psyche with which one cannot argue logically or ethically, and which registers resentment beyond one's conscious control. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan once said that you can only turn your cheek if it is a buffer protecting the heart, that it might love irrespective of the treatment from outside, otherwise one would be acting instead of reacting.

Therefore, love is the prime action. I believe this is the most difficult thing in the world; everyone is tested in exactly this way. This test is more important than Samadhi or even Samadhi with open eyes because it transcends understanding.

35 - Awakening & Enlightenment

To carry the self forward and realize the ten thousand dharmas is delusion; that the ten thousand dharmas advance and realize the self, is enlightenment.

Zen Master Eihei Dogen's Genjo koan

Attaining this way in one's daily life is the realization of ultimate reality. Attaining this place in daily life is the realization of the ultimate reality.

What does one mean by awakening? What does one mean by illumination? Are they the same? How does one attain these? The paradox is that when one tries to define these, one cannot but confuse their meaning, like explaining non-Euclidian geometry to a person locked into the thinking of Euclidian geometry, or again, one distorts an electron by trying to observe it. Therefore, Zen masters consider a koan, a riddle one needs to decipher or unhoax.

Do not think that realization must become the object of one's knowledge and vision and be practiced conceptually. When Buddhas are truly Buddhas, one need not be aware of being Buddha. Realization is, therefore, something one needs to experience before one can know what it is, while one would normally expect that one would need to have an idea as to what we are talking about in order to try to practice it.

Awakening is a term used by Vedanta and Sufism and stands for a sudden switch over from one's commonplace perspective of things as they appear to our senses and the interpretation that we make from our personal vantage point to an impersonal overview. This shifts the notion of ourselves from an individual to identifying oneself with the totality, not just of the universe, but the thinking and feeling of which the universe is a projection or manifestation.

Enlightenment, the term consecrated by Buddhists, signifies precisely the same, except that the clarity that ensues is so reminiscent of one's physical experience of luminosity that one feels like a being of light and everything seems translucid and radiant. Hence the term, "the clear light of bliss" coined by the Tibetans. Note the inclusion of the emotional overtone that is unleashed by that sudden quantum leap of perspective: bliss beyond joy.

The Sufis draw one's attention so that one has not only shifted one's sense of identity to an impersonal cosmic dimension of one's being, but has also shifted one's sense of identity transcendentally so that one thinks of oneself now as pure, luminous intelligence. The body and psyche are looked upon as the support system. The important issue is that when one is observing, experiencing, one envisions oneself as a consciousness, the same as the reality behind the appearance of the universe. There is no more duality, therefore, there is no observation, no experience. Consciousness has withdrawn into its ground, which is pure transcending consciousness, reaching beyond the ego transcendentally (one thinks upwards). This is only the first step and actually proves misleading because it revolves around the personal vantage point which is a very limited vantage point.

36 - Old Wine in New Bottles

We think and feel differently today to the way our ancestors did in many areas, not only owing to the advances in technology, communications or science, but in terms of our philosophy of life, of our sensitivity to dissonance in music, and unrealism in art. We have moved quite a few steps in areas unexplored and even shunned by our ancestors. In no way could we build a cathedral like Notre Dame of Paris or Chartres or Cologne, nor would the ornate structure of Milano Cathedral or the filigree niceties of the more stylized Indian music tally with our sense of clear lines and functionality.

If we care to take an analytic look at the evolution of architecture, we will realize that the new emerges as of necessity out of the old, like organic life out of the inorganic. The new Coventry Cathedral was planned so that the ruins of the outdated cathedral are still in view, somewhat organically integrated. In an effort to bridge the old and the new, in Ted van Leer's and others' compositions, medieval folkloric tunes lead into the rock and roll style, spanning centuries with ease. Composers demure at the thought of composing anything of the caliber and maturity of J.S. Bach, yet Stravinsky in the Symphony of Psalms brought something of the mettle of the masters of the past through, monumentally.

Yet in the areas of spirituality, particularly religion, most of our cultures are medieval in their thinking and jaded in their emotions. For the sake of clarity, let us at least get a basic confusion out of the way; spirituality must not be confused with religion, nor necessarily, religion with spirituality. At best, religion is institutionalized spirituality, sclerosed into dogmas, rituals, partisan allegiances and the establishment's power game.

If the major areas of our cultures can be updated, cannot spirituality be updated by extricating itself from its religious underpinnings? Of course! And what is more, this is what we are about. Pir-o-Murshid's ideas were challenging to the established thinking in his time; the full implications of their relevance only come into perspective in our time. When asked what I would do when I was grown up, he said, "He will spread the message to the intellectual audiences of the future." That was the language of the time. Today we would say that the awareness of people in the 80's interested in spirituality requires an updating in keeping with the thinking of our time. This is

precisely the material of my brainstorming. Since Pir-o-Murshid's time, humans have landed on the moon. We can think of Planet Earth objectively as zoomed upon from outer space, instead of thinking of outer space as seen from the Planet. Science has provided mystics with several paradigms which serve as practical models to represent experiences that mystics could not explain before; the holistic paradigm, inverted space, new vistas in psychology which fascinated Pir-o-Murshid.

Sometimes we are saying what our predecessors were saying but in a new context, which means that implications with regard to our present way of living and thinking need to be woven into the picture. Being out of context reeks of an anachronism. Recently, Coleman Barks presented a rendering of Mevlana Jelal-ed-Din Rumi's poetry, which is to say the least, unsettlingly challenging and uproariously provoking. Would Jelal-ed-Din have thought this way if he had lived in our time? There is no way of knowing. Yet somehow, just like our bodies are those of our ancestors, converged and mutated, so with our minds. Our minds are their minds that have moved with the time. The Bible is appreciated by some in a modernized version.

Pir-o-Murshid lived much closer to our time. Could his words bear the trauma of Coleman's packing? How would Ulm Cathedral look if one replaced some of its naves by modern modular units? How would Pir-o- Murshid's thoughts be rendered in our modern jargon? What ideas would be catalyzed by those thoughts in an innovative and inventive way? Instead of saying, "The mind of God", one would say, "The mind of the universe", as I have been coining it. Instead of saying "Divine emotion", one would say "Emotion in its cosmic or transcendental dimension." Instead of saying, "Our divine inheritance", one would say, "The transcendent dimensions of the person looked upon as the whole person", that is, by virtue of the holistic paradigm or wholistic paradigm of our time. Instead of "spirit, one would say, "Energy in its subtlest form, operating as a catalyst." Instead of saying, "Make God a reality", one would say, "Actuate the resourcefulness programmed into your psyche, which is cosmic and impersonal." Instead of saying, "The hand of God or the divine intention", one would say, "The software of the universe." Quite frankly, I prefer Pir-o-Murshid's own words, although the above renderings sound very much like the way I speak and think. He said, "If it is not the coin of the day, let it be rendered an antique." There is room in our day and age for Notre Dames, for plainsong and square dancing and Bach and Schumann without doing what Kosmos did to Bach's three part "Invention in Solaris."

But there is also room for "Solaris" too. So there is room for Murshid's original words, and also Pir Vilayat's rendering.

It is not just a matter of linguistics; there is a shift in values in our time. For example, today we are wary that there may well be a touch of masochism in saintlihood or sadism in mastery. Predictably, Pir-o-Murshid had pointed out that the act of the policeman punishing the boys who had beaten up a dervish was better than that of the dervish inviting them to beat him for his foibles. Murshid said that mastery was not desirousless nor checking or frustrating impulses, but harnessing them. He wondered whether the rishis in the Himalayas would have the philanthropic dispositions of many American businessmen and that he wanted to show how one could bring spirituality into life in the world. There is no doubt that his thoughts were clearly novel as compared with the traditional spiritualists. Yet the thoughts and beings of the Hindu rishis and Christ and the Sufis found a new life in Pir-o-Murshid in their relevance to modern life in the world; so his thoughts live and blossom in us.

37 - Suffering & Creativity

Perhaps the most frequent cause of our suffering is the loss of one or more of the building blocks with which we construct the universe in ourselves. It could be the severing of a relationship, the departure of or splitting with a close friend, the termination of one's job, the breakdown of one's health, or some financial adversity. Buddhists put suffering down to object dependence. It is not surprising that we feel bereft if one or more of the building blocks with which we are trying to construct ourselves are being removed. We are frustrated by our attempts to construct ourselves, which is the very objective of the universe operating in us.

This accounts for the importance highlighted by Buddhism, of freeing oneself from dependence upon the object. This entails going so far as to question the very existence of an object, and indeed, of a subject. Among the Sufis it is called "fana fi'l madhkur an al dhikr", (the annihilation of the object in the act) and then "fana fi'l dhakir an al dhikr", (the annihilation of the subject in the act. Finally, there is "fana fi'l dhikr an al Hu" (the annihilation of the act in the being of God).

Buddhist schools seem to aim at fostering an already impinging disillusionment in the existential state. These schools stress the impermanence of all formations, unmask the hoax of the optical illusion constructed by the brain as an object made up of short-lived, discrete packets of impressions (as in a film), exemplified by the quantum leaps observed in sub-atomic Quantum Mechanics. They even push the fear about being fooled by the appearance of things to a kind of mistrust, aversion, solitude, masochistic alienation from participating in the joy of the universe, even disgust (the image of the decaying corpse), and eventually, despair. All of this to convince us to give up attempts to recover the lost object?

The same principle is then applied to the notion of the self in as much as it is a notion constructed upon discrete, non-continuous moments of experience and projections precariously based upon success or failure of performance or confrontation-avoidance behavior. This feedback comes from the mirroring of the social environment. Questioning our self image triggers a weakening or dissolution of the ego center and inevitably leads to the doctrine of the non-self, the non-entityness of what we think is the self. The same principle is applied to emotional attitudes: arousal, bliss, dread,

anger, resentment, fear, sardonic irony, hysteria, depressing withdrawal.

Our suffering has its roots in our attachment to the mental representation that we make of the desired object. This is how misassessments and inappropriate responses distort the creative process. Since these are moment to moment constructs and as transient and perishable as the objects, Buddhism enjoins its adepts to let go of internal representations. The realization that one is being conditioned or duped by these representations leads to the desire for deliverance from them, yet avers itself to foster the deprivation of psychic content, which is exactly what the universe is constructing in each of us. Besides, paradoxically the projections anticipating deliverance are themselves formations!

A little knowledge of Dr. David Bohm's theories concerning the "implicate" versus the "explicate" state will confirm that those transient formations are only the emergent projections of a continuum in motion (the holo-movement) to which the word transitory does not apply. Dr. David Bohm considers reality as "an unbroken and seamless whole in which relatively autonomous objects and forms emerge, which acquire some relative measure of stability, independence and autonomy." It seems rather counter-productive to be disenchanted in the shadows on a screen and miss what the producer is trying to convey in terms of meaningfulness, emotion, energy, and splendor.

Both Yogic and Buddhist types of meditation aim at unmasking the hoax of the conceptual interpretation that we interpose between sensorial input and ourselves, namely, input processing which reduces experience to the assessment of our commonplace, middle-range mode of thinking. Tibetan Buddhism clearly discriminates between the reactive-interpretive activity of the mind and the active-creative activity (the gross and the subtle mind). They add a third: a grasp of meaningfulness not based upon input-processing, therefore proto-critic: the very-subtle mind, which evidences the fact that our minds in their higher functions think the way the universe thinks. Incidentally, this mode of thinking is noncausal and therefore, transcends the space-time framework we try to fit reality into, thus it originates in the transcendent vector of time, contrasting to that commonplace notion we entertain of time, which is the process of becoming.

Paradoxically, what the brain constructs out of sense date is a cross between

interpretation (building a map, but the map is not the territory) and the way the mind of the universe thinks in the form of our thinking, and forms itself in our psyche and body. Therefore, both the gross and subtle mind may work in concert, while we are continually projecting our inherent sense of meaningfulness upon events and our notion of ourselves. Know that the very subtle mind cannot come to the rescue of the gross mind if we discard it altogether. Pir-O-Murshid calls wisdom the (meshing and matching) between the grasp of intelligence and that of consciousness, both together.

The real issue lies in what we construct in our personality out of what is coming through the ebullition at the surface of the world, which is our daily experience. That construct, which is our personality, is not made of the physical or circumstantial building blocks we encounter, but of their psychic counterpart, which we have transmuted them into and incorporated in our psyche. This psychic counterpart continues to live in us, transmuted.

It would seem that if we can see that, we do not need the building blocks whose loss we mourn, because they have become ingredients in ourselves. Yet our objective in life is not just to facilitate the action whereby the universe creates itself as us by our own inventiveness, but also to transform the environment, and even more, reorganize our rapport with the environment

The environment, both physical and psychological, needs first to be incorporated, having been transmuted, digested, ingested, then acted upon with our transfigured personalities. In this case, a relationship or mission or a financial asset is not lost, but reinstated in a new and enriching way; a love relationship can become a most mutually fulfilling friendship. One will find a better way to optimize one's talent, and one's know-how in business will enable one to build up an even more promising situation than that left behind. Instead of alternating between ego dissolution and the construction of the person from the universe, one could integrate both. For example, one can radiate while dissolving, and dissolve into the void in the inverted space while converging the universe.

The world which we might shun by hasty judgmentalism is the very being and purpose of God that we make into a reality in ourselves, or rather as ourselves, in the measure of our insight, of our enthusiasm. our ecstasy, dedication, glorification and our love.

38 - A Palate Full of Colors

Imagine you are the artist of your personality. Your personality is your work of art. You are working on it.

To start with, it is not completely your canvas. You inherited it from others; or rather it has passed through many hands, each contributing more features. However even before you got possession of it, you had had some hand at it, since you had influenced the previous artists in some remote way. But now, you are solely in charge, except that you have to watch how people influence you in fashioning it.

You have a well-garnished palate at your disposal; displaying a whole flurry of shades. Your eye falls upon a vivid green that yields an impression of vivacity. You remember reading in a book on Sufism that they use a mantram in Arabic to help trigger off that quality; vivaciousness - a life-giving force. It is called Hayy. Upon gazing at that lush green, you feel recharged, electrified. You feel so full of a life-dispensing power that you could cause the buds of flowers to open up and cure the sick. You daub it on your canvass over some of that non-descript brown, giving it a new gloss. You have dynamized your personality. In fact, you are prancing around your room like a leopard in his cage in want of an outlet for your new-found energy. Hopefully the color will stay, unless of course you spoil it again by one of those dreary moods that come on when unguarded.

Now your glance earmarks that lovely sky-blue. Yes, the sky on your/ my canvass is just too depressingly cloudy. It does not mesh with the bright green you have refurbished your canvas with! There is a clarity about that blue that makes more sense of the green. You hear that blue stands for a kind of immaculate sacredness. That is why the dress and aura of the Virgin Mary are traditionally painted blue. The Sufis thus depict the holy spirit (Quddus), ascribing this epithet to the angels. It is ingenue, cannot stand any artifice, eschews sophistication. You daub it too on the canvass, clarifying your sky with a diaphanous effulgence. All of a sudden, your whole painting lights up.

Can you keep the color? Can you will it to be indelible? Someone comes in the room telling you that she had seen the broach that you had lost on another woman's neck (or was it your pet tie on another's neck?). You are furious. You look back at the canvass: the blue of the sky is smeared. Within a split minute it has been spirited away, it has got murky by your selfish, resentful mood. You try again, promising to guard against ugly thoughts, however justifiable.

Now somehow the lovely golden hue on your canvass strikes your attention. It has a royal quality about it. The glorious golden incandescence has the immediate effect of making you glow. You feel powerful, cosmic. In fact, you now surprise yourself sauntering across your room with a haughty demeanor, head high, bubbling over with self-confidence. You figure yourself as the ambassador of that Being whose body is the universe and sets the pace of evolution by overcoming chaos by orderliness, incongruity by meaningfulness. You are in charge now. As you unwittingly visualize utopic beings ostentatiously manifesting sovereignty, like one would imagine the three wise men, you ponder upon all the reasons why you did not develop that wonderful quality as they did (unless of course you are convinced that you are a master - in which case, I apologize). You figure out that maybe it is because you gave in to compulsions, personal gratification, addictions. Daubed on your canvas, the golden hue confers a sumptuous sheen upon the whole picture. But you soon discover the need to avoid it just being a gaudy glitter.

In fact you wonder whether it would not have been better to have first smeared on the gold as a background, assuming that, that gorgeous radiance would transpire through whatever color you superimposed upon it, conferring upon your painting a rare quality. Assess what this means: effacing unteemed details on the picture and start again! And you are not sure to reproduce what you effaced! Yet somehow you are heartened by the thought that if this is to be your painting rather than that handed by those ancestral people, you are given a chance of updating it the way you like, if you can. It may be an admirable one, but you will wish to make something other of it - imprint it with the hall-mark of your special idiosyncrasies. For example the outlines were too rigid for your liking, you would like to bring in more fluidity, adaptability. Or you would prefer more contrasts. But you do not wish to loose its pristine positive features, all the invested thought and nostalgia and values of all those to whom you are beholden, may be heavenly beings too. It occurs to you that all you have to do is to retain a

mental picture of it, and take the plunge.

So with tongue in your cheek, you take courage at heart and wipe out the picture, lay on the gold and start again from scratch! Reflecting upon what this means in terms of your personality, you realize that all that you built up in your being or all that you inherited from your ancestors was precarious if it was not founded upon a masterly spirit of determination, discipline, personal overcoming. Moreover you realize that if you had just added more punch to your personality without it having been deeply grounded in your being by dint of sheer mastery, it would have proven to be a collage, an element that does not mesh with the other aspects of your being. Your personality needs to be organically constructed in synch with all its other constituent qualities.

Now of course the red zooms out stridently at your retinae from your palate. It captures your glance forcibly. It would be very tempting to spurt dashes of red all over the canvas randomly; give it some pep! The effect however would be sloppy, incongruous, like that of a person with bouts of uncontrolled anger interspersed with inveterate weaknesses - a flawed personality. Yet, not without a remote reference to the red scarf to the proverbial bull, the color red does arouse, to put it mildly, a certain vehemence in you. You feel more ready to confront challenges, unmask fraud, flay hypocrisy, unveil a cover-up. You burn with righteous indignation for the falseness, guile, manipulation, deception around you. You feel like righting the wrong, vindicating the innocent. The dervish in you is aroused. The password of the dervish is Haqq: the truth.

Yet too much red, especially in the wrong places can look hideous, unseemly, uncouth, even vulgar and disturbing to sensitive civilized beings. Truth ruthlessly eked out without being blended with compassion can prove to be be cruel, even unwisely destructive. A warm orange would seem to blend nicely with the fierce red as for example in a lovely dawn.

Now, in an other-worldly mood, the many-splendored array of hues on your palate merge in a kaleidoscopic way; somewhat as in a rainbow, yet differently, because they are intermeshed, mutually transpiring through each other in a gossamer effect. How uncanny! Are you living an alternate experience? just tired? or mesmerized? or is your psyche carried into a peak experience by your bewonderment at that marvel of color - the marvel communicated by color? Perhaps after all the color is just the medium, the

device, but what is coming through is more important; it is pure splendor - the splendor out of which the universe is fashioned and which the universe is briefed to display. Remote echoes of the cosmic celebration in the Heavens, manifesting as beauty in nature and as excellence every time you give expression to the higher dimensions of your being on your canvas, perfuse your mind. You have touched upon the keystone of creativity: ecstasy. Again the signature-tune of the dervish: 'Azim', ecstasy arising out of glorification.

If it is excellence that you seek, know that beauty is born of glorification, so is your personality if you wish it to display the splendor behind the universe or rather the splendor trying to transpire though what appears as the universe.

39 - Spiritual Power

When doing the Dhikr, you become a living pendulum. The point at the top of the pendulum where it is attached to the ball remains unchanged. So in the Dhikr, one pole of your being is moving in time and the other pole is beyond time, in a timeless state. It is during the time you hold your breath and attain a very peaceful state without any nostalgia or desire or impulse or will or consciousness that the memory of having existed prior to your birth comes back again, re-emerges. In that state you are in a perfect state. You represent the Divine Perfection.

Consider the physical world as being derived reality, expressing the reality far beyond the existential state. So you look upon the physical world as being an expression of the reality of your being which is beyond form and time and space. It is in that condition that you can look upon your life with a new view, whereas if you identified yourself with your personality, you would not have an overview. It would be like what you see when walking in the streets as compared with being in a helicopter and having an overview of the lay of the land. So the secret consists in remembering the sublime condition of your eternal being and having the courage to identify with it, overcoming the force of gravity that pulls you down into identifying yourself with your personality.

Now, you have to keep yourself upwind, afloat on the upwind currents, keep yourself aloft. Clearly, this is not introspection because introspection is judging things from one's personal vantage point, which is limited. If you tend to slip into your personal consciousness, there's no point in continuing; you have to let yourself be carried aloft and identify yourself with Ya Qaher, which is your Divine inheritance, your Divine status.

This process is illustrated by the Dhikr. The Dhikr is a pendulum. In the movement of the head, you make a circle but you reach out from the circle just like the sailors do in the Navy, throwing the sound to measure the depth of the sea. They make several circles and then get the advantage of the rising force to throw the lead at the end of the rope so it will reach its apex of the parabola and then fall into the sea at a greater height. That's what one does in the Dhikr. At the end of La ilaha, at the ha, you have lifted yourself right up. Then you plunge into the illa. So you haven't descended. what

you have done is that your consciousness has awakened in the course of the ends of time from the state of unity - Ahad - into the existential state, or rather, God has awakened through you. Your awakening is part of the Divine awakening, discovering aspects of Him/Herself that come to light in the existential state. Splendor becomes beauty in the existential state.

Now you watch your whole life like a film. They say that people about to die can see their whole life in front of them just like a film. You can see your personality evolving in the course of your life; you can see the circumstances. As long as you don't identify yourself with your personality then you can approach it objectively, as it has evolved, and by so doing, you'll gain great wisdom. First of all, you notice how the events in your life had an impact on your personality. I would take a particular event that was particularly traumatic and try to remember it. Remember how you felt; remember the kind of personality you had. Perhaps you were a teenager or a child. Remember how you thought at the time, how you felt at the time, what your values were at that time, your intentions, your motivations, and then recall an event which had a traumatic effect upon all those constructs. For example, it shattered your illusions. Your illusions were built upon your limited thinking, your mental representation of the world. One calls that mental constructs. As Pir-O-Murshid says, "Shatter your ideals upon the rock of truth."

So our ideals, our ideologies are our constructs that we make with the best of ourselves and finally, we have to re-think our concepts of life in terms of the feedback. What Pir-O-Murshid is saying is that wisdom is born out of the interfacing and intermeshing between our inborn, inherent knowledge and the cognizance we acquire by coming to grips with the feedback. The feedback is as if you are registering an event. You are trying to figure out why it happened or what it means. That's a kind of earth knowledge, knowledge of the earth. But you were born with an inherent knowledge. The flashes of intuition that come to you when you know something but don't know why you know it or where that knowledge came from are examples of inherent knowledge. You are in touch with knowledge from your deepest essence. So that's the transcendental knowledge.

For Pir-O-Murshid, wisdom is the result of the encounter, interfacing, intermeshing of those two knowledges, two forms of cognizance. He calls that wisdom. So there you

are, a young person, facing reality of life which turns out very differently from what you expected and this has a traumatic effect upon you. It shatters many of your preconceived ideas and if you have lost the battle, you have not known how to preserve your faith in the meaningfulness and splendor behind the universe, so that it is only your constructs that are shattered, which are your own product and which are limited. Try to remember, were you shaken in your faith? I think many of us are shaken in our faith when incongruous things happen to us which just don't make sense and which seem to be so very cruel. One wonders how there could be God. We are tested in our faith. The weak people rest their belief in reason. The strong people will maintain their faith, despite proof of the opposite. That's spiritual power.

40 - Faith and Belief

In the last Keeping in Touch, you explored being tested in your life in your faith. Do not confuse faith with belief. Belief rests upon some kind of proof: I believe in this or that. But faith is like doing away with crutches. It is intuition, that inborn, inherent mode of cognizance prior to experience, which philosophers call "proto-critic." What I want you to do is try to remember whether your faith flounders facing trauma. I must have triggered off a lot of thoughts in your mind. Try to remember these because I'm giving the guidelines of what you can do with those thoughts. Open your heart to another person and tell each other some of those things that you hardly ever talk about to other people. Somehow there is a moment when one feels like opening one's heart.

You might try to recall the following elements: first of all, the event must have had some relevance to your sense of values. For example, I remember when my sister Noor and I had to decide whether we were going to be non-resistant or whether we were going to participate in the war. It was a question of values. We had been brought up in the Ghandian idea of non-violence. I suggested that if the Nazis had a lot of people at gunpoint. and you couldn't save those people without killing the Nazis, if you don't kill the Nazis, you are responsible for the death of those people. I don't know what the validity of that argument is. You could discuss that but this is a clear case where a situation is challenging your sense of values.

The second element is your motivations. You started off with a kind of plan of what you would do in your life. A child says, "When I'm grown up, I'll do this and that." You might have had to revise your plans, not because you were forced to, but because something clicked in you, all of a sudden you discovered the purpose which you hadn't seen before. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan says, "The purpose of life is like the horizon; the further we advance; the further it recedes." I thought this was my purpose and now that event has totally shattered the idea I had about my purpose.

Illustrative is the story of a man known as the Lion of India, who was fighting the British to free India. He was walking the streets and there was a leper who asked him to take him to the water. He didn't have the courage to do that because he was afraid of catching leprosy. Then, as he was walking along the way, he felt terrible about it and though, "I, the Lion of India, don't have the courage to hold my fellow man in my

arms and take him to the rescue of the water." He walked right back and did it. Then he decided overnight that he was going to leave everything and build a leper colony. What he did was marvelous for those thousands of lepers. Now that's an example of a situation that might affect your programming. So try to remember those circumstances that changed your motivation.

The third element is - how do your feel? Did the situation trigger off anger? did it trigger off hatred? did it trigger off resentment? did it even trigger off guilt? because one can feel guilty for having allowed themselves to be victimized by someone. Guilt is not a very rational thing. So how do you feel? Do your remember how you felt prior to the event? And how did you feel when the event took place? If you're very perceptive, you'll find that there are certain emotions that draw one's soul downwards and have a kind of delaying effect. Somehow, one gets tarnished by the emotion. There are other emotions that make one rise; for example, an act of heroism will make one high. So, how do you meet that problem? Did it trigger off a sense of wanting to battle this knight against injustice?

That brings us to the fourth element: the dichotomy between the fight and flight reflex. We find that animals measure whether they can cope with an attack or whether digression is the best part of valor. That would be flight. If you decide on confrontation, it makes you strong; if you decide on not dealing with the subject, it makes you weak. So remember the event and remember how you reacted. Perhaps your instinct told you not to attempt anything beyond what you thought was your power and then, later on you regretted it and decided that if this should ever happen again, you would confront the problem instead of running away. The question is, did you at sometime in your life make a vow, a pledge of I will? It involves you in your honor. That gives you power; try to remember that. When you had that moment of euphoria, you suddenly realized that you were tested to the ultimate springheads of your being. The whole unfoldment of your being depends upon how you are going to deal with this challenge. If you goofed, well, okay, you are given another chance.

In the meantime, one does tend to deteriorate if one doesn't deal with the chances very positively. One sees people start life so beautifully and then gradually, they deteriorate in time. Then there are those who become more beautiful as life goes on. There are those who have lost the battle of life because they've been discouraged

and disenchanted and haven't known how to hold the "rope of hope", which Murshid calls it, that nothing can take away one's sense of meaningfulness and the splendor behind everything. The photons in a beer can are as beautiful as the photons that are reflected in a snowflake. When we can see beauty in people whom we dislike or who make it difficult to love them, it's a triumph of faith over judgement.

Looking at how you were transformed or let's say, affected by the trauma of the environment is only half of the task. The other half consists in seeing how a change in you changes the environment or circumstances. If we only work with the first half, then we look upon ourselves as the victims of fate. If you look upon the task from the second point of view, then you become competent in your ability to transform your fate. At first, it's not very clear because if we use our reason, it's difficult to see that we transform the circumstances. Do you mean to say that I called this accident upon myself? No, this accident was purely fortuitous. That's the way we think.

Remember the words of Jung, the Psychoanalyst, who said, "If you don't confront your shadow, it will come to you in the form of your fate." Those are very important words because you can't see the causal connection. Jung was talking abut a totally different connection, synchronicity, rather than the very commonplace causal relationship that represents the lower functions of our thinking. From the moment that you can recall a situation in which your being had an impact on the circumstances, instead of you being victimized by the circumstances, from that time on, you will gain confidence in your ability to govern your fate. That's why for the moment, we're looking back and trying to recall a situation in which it is very clear to see how your decision affected the circumstances.

If you try to figure it out with your mind, you're lost; there's no point; you're wasting your time. You have to keep your consciousness very high, being always conscious of your eternal being. Then see how your eternal being has had to deal with all that you had inherited through your ancestors, and the circumstances of your draw of life and how gradually, you lost contact with your real being and things went wrong. Now you have reintegrated your real being again; you're looking at things and beginning to see things clearly. One has to keep on working at it. Consider yourself as an instrument that you have to keep tuning all the time. It gets out of tune very easily.

41 - Miracles Do Happen

Musing upon the importance attached by the Sufis, particularly Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, to achievement, I am trying to figure out how these lofty theories would apply to living in our day and age society.

The commonplace way of life relatively straightforward with its ups and downs, bouts of joy or pleasure, disappointments and despair. There are natural laws, of course: what you sow, you reap. If you put energy into life, work diligently, the likelihood is that there will be dividends. Slothfulness most predictably will leave one indigent unless one has one of those rare lucks of "making money as one sleeps", which also occurs. But a profit that one has not attained by one's efforts is likely to be irresponsibly squandered; what one does with one's assets may prove disappointing. There can be doubt that the leading edge sought by the more progressive managers in our modern industrially oriented societies is the pursuit of excellence. That the pursuit of excellence is more psychologically rewarding than just cold calculated money-making or aggressive profiteering is the conclusion that a number of successful business men and women have reached today. In the end, it proves even more lucrative.

Pir-O-Murshid attaches very much importance to achievement because it releases potentialities, which he calls our divine inheritance. Of course, a further step would consist in grasping the divine nostalgia for actuation, you my call it existentiation (not just manifestion) of the many splendored universal potentiates longing for expression behind one's impulse. By linking up with the divine springheads of our personal motivations, life gains a whole other dimension. This is a typical Sufi way of looking at things and does make for creativity in achievement , since one is injecting a cosmic dimension into one's venture.

There is yet another step that lies still further beyond the commonplace and therefore, bypass that middle range laws of nature we just referred too. In fact, it looks as though there is a whole hierarchy of laws ranging from the middle range laws to transcendent laws, difficult to figure out by our finite modes of thinking, something like synchronicity or the concatenation of causes in the modern systems theory in physics. The Sufi, Ibn 'Arabi, refers to a causal chain moving down in the transcendent-immanent vector of time rather than the arrow of time moving in the process of becoming. These insights,

evidencing other dimensions of human understanding , are most perplexing; the Sufis refer them as the "consternation of intelligence".

Since it is energy - whether physical or psychic- that triggers a project or program (software) into actuation, we are indeed speaking about power but a power that makes thing happen beyond previsability or likelihood (in the conventional way of assessing likelihood). This is what we coin a miracle. The Sufis call this "divine power and so does Murshid. At the ultimate levels, even the divine fiat is delegated, but only to selfless, the dedicated, traditionally the renunciates. Pir-O-Murshid pinpoints the clue when he clarifies that, albeit that achievement enhances one's personal power so that one may undertake greater challenges, however, the personal objective (that is either the personal gain in terms of money or prestige or even the practical format of that goal) limits that power. Where as if one has renounced any concern about gain, or even just the fact of being successful, then the power one wields is infinite. This accounts for the fact that some renunciates or sages are ascribed the power of making things happens, sometimes quite miraculously, but it works for others, not for themselves.

Perhaps you belong to that clan of being who are only successful when you are doing things for others; no sooner do you try to promote your own well-being or pursue your personal wishes that it just doesn't gel. If so, you are with it amongst the blessed poor in spirit! Such altruistic sharing could consist in benevolent donations to hospitals or study or rehabilitation programs or research or competitions. Now a days, a progressive formula is upgrading one's staff with advanced training . How this power works is most intriguing. There was the case of Baba Farid Gang i Shaker, our predecessor in the chain of the Chishti Sufis. He was known to open doors to people who were destitute. He asked a man who needed to look after his aging mother to give all his money to the poor. Within a week, he got marvelous job! But to the man who shirked responsibility and asked for Baba Farid to help him, he instructed to repeat a few surrogatory prayers; it didn't work. Asked why, he said, " The first man needed help to help another, whereas the other man relied on my power and did not believe in God from whom my power derives!"

The secret behind this power is a covenant of fealty on the same lines as the pledge of suzerainty undertaken by the vassal with respect to his sovereign in the medieval

traditions of chivalry. In fact, the initiation in the Sufi Order is called Bayat, which means the vow of serving as the Ambassador of the divine sovereignty. Indeed, the sovereignty of a king depends upon his recognition by his subjects. However, reinstating things in their universal perspective, the Sufi Sahl Tostari says, "If you are the repository or warranty of the divine sovereignty, the "Sirr ar Robubiya" (the secret of his sovereignty) it is because He is the secret of that secret - "Sirr-as-Sirr-ar-Robubiya" - since the power rests with Him ultimately.

What this amounts to is that that strange divine power that makes things happen, the secret password that opens doors is the divine sovereignty and actuate that pledge by selfless service and kindness to their fellow beings. This is all very perplexing because on one hand Murshid says, "To achieve, you need enthusiasm, whereas to meet adversity, you need indifference." That's the commonplace law which accounts for the fact that we are pulled in two directions by both these imposes. But to insert indifference into the pursuit of excellence, that is the ultimate tour de force!

You do not renounce the world but you renounce yourself out of love; you are in the world but not of the world. You become the instrument of the divine fiat to help those beckoning for help in their despair, and in so doing, you make God a reality in your being.

42 - Death & Resurrection

"Die before death and resurrect now." **(Sufi saying)**

People are beginning to ask more questions about death and its process. This is because today people are more bent on confronting feelings honestly, rather than dismissing them out of fear. While all the investigations on spiritism of our forefathers in the beginning of this century, and the testimonies of people who have lived to recount their experiences in a "clinical death" are not considered by many as evidence of survival after death, it doesn't make sense to our minds to assume that a person has achieved and attained in a lifetime can be wiped out in a moment of utter annihilation. The programming of the universe, while often paradoxical and not altogether consistent to our way of thinking, still does not make more sense than that!

Admittedly, if one has left works of art or inspiring thoughts of pioneered break-throughs in science or technology, one survives indirectly through one's creativity that may indeed seed further achievements relayed by others. Besides, one's personality does indeed spill over that of those who love us by an uncanny osmosis, which links humanity by dint of a kind of interdependence in a network like that of the terms of an equation. Yet the individual - individuality - does it not mean something irreplaceable in its uniqueness? Mutations in nature are triggered off by individuals; the forward march of civilization is impelled by the genius of a few exceptional beings. If indeed, their incentive has meant so much to so many, how could one postulate that their special contribution is now replete?

Nature optimizes its chances of progress, of beatings its records. Perhaps our misconceptions about death are due to our preconceptions about our body, or matter in general. In as much as the body acts as a scaffolding for the building of the superstructure of our being, one might infer that if it collapses while the building is being is build, the completion of the building would be halted. who can claim that the building is ever complete? What sense for nature to leave a building half build? If we consider the body as the support system, then indeed it would collapse. What sense in all that went into it in the beginning? Is it tenable that the programming works that way? No, this doesn't make sense.

Matter never dies: it undergoes changes, gradual ones (as radiation, osmosis, aging) and also sudden ones, as in a quantum leap (water into steam, the jump of an electron from one orbital of the atom to another, what we call death).

In the evolutionary leap from the inorganic to the organic, the electrons within the atom rearrange themselves more meaningfully and efficiently as a support system for the advance of intelligence and consciousness than in the previous arrangement. Hastily observed, the devastating eclipse in the in-between stage could easily be misconstrued as a falling apart. Never does the same water flow under the same bridge, yet the river remains. Judged from the point of view of the particular drops, it looks as though they have eluded one's gaze.

If a magnetic field structuring metal filing into a pattern were to undergo a momentary de-polarization and then get polarized, perhaps with different voltage, the metal filing would dispense, then reform again, no doubt differently. The reality of the frequency pattern of the magnet is more importantly attributable to the magnet; the outer pattern of the metal filing is secondary. The reality of our body is not visible structure, but what Dr. Rupert Sheldrake calls the "morphic resonance", which is more basic than the building blocks and survives their demise, while mutating over the aeons of time. If you take a computer apart, just examining the chips, it would be difficult to figure out the software. If you know the software, however, you are in possession of the key that would enable you to make upteemed computers. Grasp the soft ware of the universe and even the intention behind that software. If after death you have freed yourself from the support system, you don't need the hardware anymore.

After the quantum leap we call death, then the protons and electrons of the body get scattered in the universe. Owing to the limitation in the speed of light, that cannot communicate by the kind of signaling that we encounter in the universe in its explicate state, but they are still interconnected, say the physicists, in a "non-local" state, the implicate state, while conforming to our ideas about causality. Since each sub-atomic particle stores some information (in its spin) and they still are interconnected, forming together the network that acts as a support system for our minds and consciousness, "Death, where is thy sting?" (a reference to the French physicist, Dr. Jean Charron). If you have experienced even a flash of out-of-body travel, you will realized that indeed, one can continue to see without eyes, hear without ears, displace oneself without

wings, communicate without language signals and understanding, without involving the brain.

While one may grasp splendor as it transpires through a scene of beauty, one can moreover grasp splendor directly, irrespective of or bereft of its physical support system. While one's understanding is usually based upon the assessment of a situation, one may, moreover, grasp meaningfulness directly, a kind of feed-forward instead of a feedback. Although the stress of a challenge will mobilize one's latent power to achieve, one gains a still greater power by renouncing the fruit of action; this is the epitome of unconditional love.

Information is built up at the cost of the expenditure of its support system: energy (negentropy). This is precisely what is meant by resurrection. Besides, we need to distinguish between the knowledge that we attain by processing and interpreting the input from outside (that is, reacting to circumstances and adapting ourselves with conditions), and a kind of pre-cognizance irrespective of the feedback of experience. In philosophy it is called proto-critic knowledge. Imagine the mind, having built its constructs on experiencing other than itself, now discovering meaningfulness within itself, because our minds isomorphic, homologous with (that is, of the same nature as) the mind of the universe and co-extensive with that global mind we call the mind of God. Even as the global mind, so our mind, which actuates that mind is self-generating. A good example in Greek mythology is Bellerophon abandoning his steed, Pegasus (the support system of the mind), who could reach no further and proceeded on his way to the Olympus!

"The tendency of the soul is to reach to the highest spheres to which it belongs, but is cannot rise from the lower regions until is has left behind all earthy attachments", said Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. Do you ever feel that your body cannot contain you or constrain you or live up to the thrust of your mind or withstand the exhilaration of your soul? These are the vistas attained in farther reaches of the mind where illumination flashes as realization. Here mediation will help one have a foretaste of life after life.

Imagine that you have awakened from your commonplace perspective, having shaken off that perspective like a snake of its skin, and you remember having been caught in that bind in the mind. For one who values splendor, the software of the universe is more thrilling than the hardware. I have a hunch that after death, if one has awakened,

while still getting flashes of the manifestation of the divine intention transpiring from a distant perspective, one highlights that intention grasped directly, so that its manifestation is secondary and in the twilight of consciousness. You may prepare yourself for this in meditation with open eyes by as the Sufis say, always looking for the hallmark of the divine intention behind all occurrence.

Imagine that you are attuned to the splendor that manifests as and through the forms of the universe. You will not suffice yourself with its inadequate expression in the forms your perceive in the universe, however beautiful. Suppose you have been cultivating mastery and now touch upon the magic that mobilizes the marvel of existence. You will exult in that power and not try to appropriate it for your own covetousness. Suppose that you are dancing with joy, not withstanding all the frustrations and wounds wreaked upon you by the limitation whereby the divine perfection in your being suffers in the existential condition. You will demure from building your joy upon precarious circumstantial conditions.

Suppose that you have reached a peace, not the peace of withdrawal from strife, but the peace in the vacuum of the existential realm out of which all activity emerges. You won't have to seek the cave or escape life. Suppose you are shattered by the ecstasy of unconditional love. You will love those who make themselves unlovable by acting loathfully and obnoxiously, even though you do not approve either of their behavior or their intentions or their attunement. The children of the world will spit at your face and tear your hair, poke our your eyes and trip you over, and you will still love them, for "they know not what do".

According to some testimonies, at the eleventh hour, at the moment of death, one's life on the Planet comes to a head. That which was accomplished, that which one failed at , one's assets and one's defects or foibles, the harm one did to others, one's resentments for those who offended one, the ruthless and inexorable unexpected we call fate, one's love and enmities hopes and disappointments, struggles and satisfactions, all interweave into an evanescent kaleidoscope pattern upon the screen of the mind.

The dint of the interfacing and interacting of the plethora of elements flashing over the over the threshold between the unconscious and the conscious issues enacted in one's life pattern and the challenges met or mis-matched by our resourcefulness, or

what we made of our resourcefulness, suddenly zooms into perspective. As Dr. Kubler-Ross once pointed out, one is assailed with the remorse of not having done those things one could have done, but more desperately, for not having become what one might have become. I like to add "how one could have been if one would have been what one might have been." Here lie the crucial issues, particularly the latter. Obviously, it would have been wiser to have dealt with this earlier. Let us deal with the paramount issue now: our personality. Three parameters strike us:

1. unfurling the resourcefulness lying dormant in our heritage from the whole universe as much in its enormous compass as at all its levels;
2. customizing these levels creatively according to our own bent or peculiar genius by rearranging them, fluctuating them like variations on a theme, and confronting and sharpening these by the encounter with the challenge of our lives;
3. transmuting them so as to extract the essence of them, like the perfume out of flowers.

In the early stages of one's life, the first seems to prevail; in the middle of life's struggle, the second; at the autumn of one's life, the third. One needs to learn to resurrect before death. This requires pruning, assessing priorities, freeing oneself from a lot of ballast, most importantly, identifying oneself with the perfume extracted from that flower that was our personality, with its many idiosyncrasies: it petals that will need to fall apart so that perfume may prevail.

43 - The Dance of the Cells

Jelal-ud-Din Rumi says, "I am so drunken with love. The whole world appears as a vision of beauty, the Divine splendor shatters me so deeply, and all I can say is, 'I am drunken with love.'" That's the way of the Dervish. And he says, "I am dancing with the galaxies by the power of love reaching beyond my body." We're going to make a little visit to the galaxies.

First of all, start realizing the marvel of being able to participate in the galaxies in your very body. Perhaps you could look upon your body with a kind of overview and think , yes, I have the privilege of somehow being able to connect up with this chunk of the living matter of the universe. It is, of course, the same manner as the as the planet but it's been so fantastically improved, so marvelously processed. The cells of my body are like the molecules of crystals. Just imagine, they are doing a lot of extraordinary things; for example, they are burning. They are in a state of combustion just like the sun. That is why I have a certain degree of temperature. That process is called phosphorescence; the cells are radiating light by burning. Jelaluddin Rumi says, "Enough of metaphor; I want burning, burning, burning." This radiant dance of light is the burning of which he speaks.

The cells also act like crystals in that they have the faculty of absorbing light, not only from the sun, but also from the stars and from cosmic rays because the whole of the universe is not just studded with lights as we imagine them to be, but the whole space is an ocean of light and we are participating in that ocean of light. I want you to feel the absorbing fact that the cells of your body absorb the light of the stars of the universe, and energized, dynamized by this light, they begin literally to dance. The electrons within the atoms within molecules within the cells start using that energy of the light to free themselves from their routine sort of orbitals and begin to reach beyond the constraint of the normal orbital and dance. The freedom that they enjoy because they are feeding on light is something that one has to experience. The dance of the atoms! As matter of fact, they exult in joy. If we become conscious of what's happening in our body then our souls exult in joy and that is the reason for the whirling of the dervishes. They give expression in that joy by somehow participating in the choreography of the heavens.

Now when the electrons have used up all the light energy that they are able to absorb, then any light remaining gets radiated as fluorescence, so that our body is fluorescing, like fluorescent light. That is what we call the aura. I want you also to experience the fact that gifted with this energy, the cells divide. They are using that energy, plus many other forms of energy, to kind of explode, to proliferate. As they divide in the process of mitosis, there is an explosion of light, so they are flashing light. If you could just imagine the cells of your body flashing light all the time, and the overall light of your aura then radiating into the universe, then you would realize that body is not that heavy sort of matter that you think it is. It is alive with light, sparking! The consequence is that you will start becoming radiant. If you keep on being aware of this you will enhance the light of your aura. More important still, your eyes will shine with a lot of light and whenever you enter a room, you will communicate light to people by the effulgence of your glance.

Your aura, your glance, the crown of light above your head (the corona) and the colors of the aura corresponding to the spectrum - red at the base, light blue and violet at the top, all different colors of the rainbow in between - saffron, orange and gold and green and blue, and then the whole array of rainbows around your aura, intermesh as rainbows , changing their color according to your attunement, shimmering at the top of the head with all of the colors emerging, The aura is very bright around the body and the more you concentrate on it the brighter it will become, so much so, that if you have eyes to see and come across a great being, you'll find that you can start seeing the aura.

The way see this is to cast your eyes - your glance - at infinity. Remember that the light accumulates around and inside the body, permeating the body. There is a continual exchange between protons and electrons but the important thing to know is that the light of you aura is hurtling through space at the speed of 186,000 a second! Since, according to physicists, light is matter, and this is the matter of your body, your body is extending into the galaxies. So it is purely illusory to think that we are bounded by our skin. Our light is intermeshed with the light of all other beings and the light of the stars forming a humongous wave interference pattern of light. This also means that you are not just here but you are everywhere, spread out in the universe. You are without boundary; at least as far as your aura is concerned there is no boundary. As a matter of fact, your aura is pulsing, just like some of the stars. There is ebb and flow; it

is absorbing or converging light; it is radiating light as you breathe in and breathe out, so try to feel that. That is a centripetal/centrifugal cosmic dimension.

Now you can revert to the other way of breathing, moving up from the bottom of the spine, holding your breath, exhaling downwards, so passing in review the different colors as you inhale and all the rainbows radiating out of each chakra. Pay particular attention to the golden color in your heart towards the middle of your inhaling. The heart is looked upon as a miniature sun by Pir-O-Murshid Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. As you inhale you keep moving upwards from the heart to the pituitary gland - called bindu - which is like a diamond, a colorless light which gives you the impression of being white like snow. The whole array of colors radiating from that diamond at the crown center is visualized toward the end of your inhaling. Then, as you hold your breath, you make a real quantum leap from identifying yourself with your body and aura to identifying yourself with what you have been prior to your incarnation, right in the beginning, before your descent into the spheres. You were a being of luminous intelligence. That's not light in the physical sense. Your aura, your body and your magnetic field are the scaffolding, the underpinning support system for the essential reality of your being, which is luminous intelligence.

Can you just experience the intensity of intelligence in you? That's what you really are - luminous intelligence - awareness beyond ego consciousness. That is called illumination, when you are able to see, when something clicks in you, you awaken from your body identity and you suddenly realize. "This is what I am! I am the spectator; I am pure intelligence." Consciousness results from intelligence when confronted with an object so you are even beyond consciousness.

It's not light in the physical sense and that's why the early Catholic Church fathers used to call it "the uncreated light." But it's just like light; it makes everything clear. The Sufis say, "It is the light that sees, instead of the light that is seen." Now, as you exhale, you become aware of the impact of the intensity of your luminous intelligence upon your aura. You know how, when suddenly see a point which you hadn't grasped, all of a sudden your face illuminates with a smile - Oh yes, I see that! Your whole aura flashes with light at the moment when you realize that you are luminous intelligence. That is what is meant in The Koran by "a light upon a light". As a matter of fact, your cells begin to flash light more intensity than ever before and start proliferating;

electrons start dancing; your whole being is alive with light!

44 - Our Solar Initiation

You know, we exist on several levels - the level of the mind and the level of emotion. You have to work with the intermediary levels. That means that you have to purify your emotions from any dark emotions: covetousness, resentment, hatred, jealousy, intolerance, judgmentalism, and then, dishonesty, dire manipulation, intrigues, so that the emotions become glorious, luminous, diaphanous, golden, very beautiful emotions. That will have an immediate effect on your aura. Thoughts become crystal clear, no more ambiguity, because there is some relationship between the emotions and thoughts. If your emotions are murky, thoughts get confused, ambiguous. When the emotions have become clear, like when a cloud is moved and the sun shines upon the landscape, then the thoughts become crystal clear, crisp and clearly defined. You are carrying your thinking into further dimensions, further frontiers of thought in the evolutionary process.

In this condition consider the starry sky. Just imagine that your body is in some way anchored upon planet earth; it is part of the proliferation of the planet, yet somehow your consciousness is able to reach out into the stars. Isn't that extraordinary? What does a flower know of the stars? We are able, just with our thoughts, to reach out into the stars. What an extraordinary feat of evolution! The flower has become the human being in the course of evolution and is able to have a more encompassing grasp over the whole meaningfulness of the universe.

In the past, you've practiced getting into the consciousness of beings by experiencing what it would be like to be your friend, for example, someone you are very close to. Consider the sun as it rises above the horizon of planet earth. Then consider that you could take off and the sun would not be rising above the horizon of the earth because the earth would be far away somewhere and the sun would be seen now continually. Instead of looking at the sun as an object of your vision, enter into the consciousness of the sun. You realize that your body was originally the sun because the planets emerged out of the sun, or at least the companion to the sun. It's not quite certain which theory is correct, but in any case, your body is of the nature of the fabric of the sun, the galaxy and the Big Bang. Not only your body, but can you earmark those qualities in your personality that you have inherited from that being of which the sun, which we observe with our eyes, is only the body. Don't think of the sun as being a

glob of burning fire suspended in the sky but think of it as a being whose body we experience as a burning spark of fire.

Giving life by burning, that is the sun. The Sufis call the sun an Archangel. They call it Prince Huraksh. Shams Tabriz had lost himself totally in the consciousness of Prince Huraksh. That's why he shattered the being of Jelaluddin Rumi by the radiance of his being. That's the secret. So if you can identify with your solar inheritance, realize that you are not only your body, but you have inherited some aspect of your being from the Archangel of the sun, Prince Huraksh. The being is covered by 22,000 veils but all you have to do is peel off those veils which represent layers of your personality to find, deep down in your being, the idiosyncrasies of the Archangel of the sun. Then you will understand the words of Jelaluddin Rumi, "I want burning." By burning on the sacrificial altar of holocausts you give out light and illuminate all creatures with your light.

Shahabuddin Suhrawardi called this a solar initiation. You have to recognize in you, the quality that is the nature of the Archangel of the sun. That quality is Ya Haqq - Truth. Dissipate the clouds of ambiguity; bring everything to light. When you do that you are operating as a sun. Unmask the hoax. One of the aspects of the hoax is self-deception. The dervish becomes like the sun, truthful. Now you proceed into the starry sky. You leave the orbit of the planetary system and you have to broaden your horizons. Remember, the earth bathes in the sun . The sun does not have a boundary so we are in the sun. The earth is in the sun, not outside the sun. The sun itself, is bathing in the galaxy so you are not reaching out from the planetary system. If you did reach out in a spacecraft beyond the planetary would be easier to grasp the immensity of the galaxy. Once more you would realize that it is a most incredibly powerful Archangel, humongous, even more glorious than Prince Huraksh.

Can you imagine a being whose body is ten million stars, intelligence, the emotion, the scope, the attunement of such a being. Remember, if you are just in a spacecraft, you would still be in your physical self-image, self-identity, but suppose that you jumped out of the spacecraft and started to float in outer space and while you were doing that, instead of identifying with your body, you would think of yourself as an aura. Your aura is spread out throughout the starry sky. Now the stars are not the object of your cognizance anymore because your aura is made of the light of the

stars. It is contiguous - coextensive - with the light of the stars. In fact, the stars are not those little dots in the sky but reach out into immensity. There's no space anymore. You forget space; you reach beyond the idea of space.

You are part of it all. So the physical world is no more the object of your cognizance. What is more, in that condition, you realize that your thinking is of the nature of the thinking of the universe, otherwise, you would never understand the universe unless you thought the same way as the universe thinks. In fact, at some level of your being, you are of the nature of the Archangel of the galaxy. That's what is meant by the splendor of the universe - the splendor of the being whose body may be beautiful as the galaxy is beautiful - but splendor is beyond its manifestation in the Now you are carried beyond any emotion that you could ever possibly have experienced - into cosmic ecstasy. It is so incredible! You shame yourself for having paid so much attention or attributed so much importance to your puny problems on planet earth. It's like picking up the crumbs when you're invited to the banquet of the stars. It is participation in the cosmic celebration of the heavens. You realize that the power of that super Archangel, Dominion, is the wondrousness of sheer majesty participating in the glorification of the cosmic celebration. You see the whole universe born out of the cosmic celebration.

The whole physical universe is just simply a derived reality that is trying to express the splendor and the meaningfulness behind it. Now you see that you are a pilgrim on the planet earth and you forgot who you were. Instead of climbing down the mountain, you are climbing up the mountain and beyond it into lofty realms. You see how inadequate our lives are when we've lost contact with our real Self. No wonder we get confused, disenchanted and embittered. We've lost the battle of life. Identifying with your solar inheritance is your saving grace.

45 - The Critical Issues

Our self-esteem is the real issue in our lives. This is usually precariously suspended on our own fallible assessment or that of others. That on this thin thread of a mind's notion hangs our performance in achievement, our prospects of unfurling our personality, and our joys and pains calls for serious soul-searching and some restructuring of our thinking. For here lies the critical issue.

At a time when in our present day civilizations the struggle for survival has become so desperate, the distress of the destitute so appalling, competition so ruthless, emotions so callous, the clue to material survival has become psychological survival founded upon our Self-respect. Thus the key to fulfillment is a function of our self-image.

Realizing how crucial our self-image is, it is the more amazing that it is really a projection of our inherent creative imagination. Our performance in life, our success or failure, is suspended upon an act of imagination! So the question becomes, how do we work with our self-image in order to upgrade it?

We are touching upon the very crux of psychology, and yet we must also include and honor our spiritual dimension since it would be a violation of the holistic paradigm to neglect or underestimate the value and role of this transcendent dimension of our psyche. Our self-image is the product of scores of unassociated factors and it gels easily into a tenuous Gestalt which resists change. This process is insidious. It can even become compelling and obsessive and may ultimately lead to self-defeat.

The clue is then to earmark the essential ingredients enmeshed in the particular admixture that is our personality. This is not easy since this is an enormous spectrum. After this we need to identify with these, that is, really convince ourselves that they are latently present within us and can be unfurled, reinforced, nurtured, and protected as they grow.

A perfunctory probe of our idiosyncrasies will evidence the degree of our parental, ancestral even evolutionary inheritance, as well as the imprint of our culture, upbringing, schooling, and social environment. The transpersonal elements in our psyche are more difficult to earmark, and are inevitably, inextricably intermeshed with

the ancestral ones. To cull these, one needs to apply methods of modulating consciousness into its transcendental setting. This is just exactly what meditation is about.

At this stage, it gradually occurs to one that indeed one does inherit from the genes of the entire physical universe including the stars, the galaxies, and cosmic rays. One inherits from other dimensions of the universe as well, such as: the thinking of the universe, the emotion of the universe, its programming, motivation, hopes, expectations, fears, precarity, disappointments, and more generally, its magic.

If the way you interpret the term God is: the universe as a being endowed with a body, mind, emotions, consciousness, will, etc., then truly one might say with Pir-o-Murshid Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan that we carry within us the divine inheritance. Seen holistically, this would also include a material inheritance as transmitted bodily through parents, for indeed our bodies are formations of Planet Earth and made of the fabric of the universe, including the sun, the galaxy, and traced ultimately to the Big Bang. And if we recognize that the universe is not just a physical reality, we will realize that we also inherit from the personality, consciousness, and will of that being whose body is the sun. This is the being the Sufis call Prince Huraksh, and who was looked upon by Suhrawardhi as an archangel. By expanding the envelope, we would discover our inheritance from that being whose body is our galaxy, the Milky Way, and whom the Sufis consider as a super archangel incorporating the psyche of Prince Huraksh and many more, including yours and mine.

And if this sounds disconcerting, there is more, because we have to include the clusters of galax- ies, and ultimately the whole of that being whose body is the physical universe. This indeed makes sense of that term: divine inheritance. Most importantly, what does it take to be able to experience this? The theory will not suffice. Perhaps the clue resides in the fact that while the peripheral and readily retrievable storage of our memory only covers data inputted since our birth (generally after a year or more), the ordinarily unfathomable depths of our unconscious store a host of data that never cease to overwhelm psychotherapists and especially those carrying out research in the unconscious, with utter dismay.

46 - The Human Drama and the Cosmic Celebration

When the mind idles ponderously, reflection upon the meaningfulness of life, the human drama comes into relief with all its emotional charge and paradox. The being of the Planet Earth as it proliferates and mutates evidences the incredible achievement of humans in the wonder of works of art, the skill of inventors, and social organization. We see everywhere the human emotional drama of joy, triumph, defeat, the thrills and pangs of love, fulfillment, resentment, the miracle of birth, the terror of death, friendship, aversion, loyalty, treason, the jubilations of acts of worship, the agony of those forlorn in the battle of life, the desperate struggle for self-esteem, the venture to unlock the unknown, the heroism of some, the depravation of others, cruelty, sadism, violence, vulgarity, self denigration, self-defeatism. How powerful are the forces at play, how sublime, how violent, how paradoxical! What is the meaning of it all? To what extent is it programmed? Could there be randomness? Could it all run off the handle in a disaster?

As one begins to unmask the mind games and debunk the ego trips, all the ephemeral illusions we have built into precarious constructs evaporate in the clear light of bliss. It is the moment of moments: the breakthrough of awakening.

"Every atom, every being awaits its moment of awakening" says Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. Doubtless, some languorous disenchantment subsists wistfully for the lost innocence like the after-glow of a raging fire as the shimmer of dawn enfolds the landscape in its clarity. But how much more fulfilling is that clarity!

It becomes clear that all those people in the human drama whom we admire or resent or try to emulate or criticize are expressions of the yet unmanifested expressions of idiosyncrasies in ourselves that we assess favorably or unfavorably. Idiosyncrasies which may have been repressed because we have condemned them, or have tried and possibly failed to unfold them. We are both the actor and the enacted in the human drama. We are potentially the hero and the coward, the magnanimous and the mean ones, the uncouth and the subtle, the jubilant and the melancholic, the agitated and the peaceful, the arrogant and the shy, the truthful and the divisive, the ingenue and the manipulative, the inventive and the conditioned, the witty and the boring ones. We are both enchanted and alarmed at what we unwittingly recognize of ourselves as

a reflection in the 'other'.

Relentlessly the drama forges ahead. As confusion dwindles in the clarity of awareness, one's participation becomes more purpose oriented, better motivated, designed by the maturity thus gained. What is being enacted in the human drama? What are the issues? What are the dimensions involved? What are the springheads spurring people to act as they do? What are the issues they or we fail to see whose relevance would unmask the hoax in which we are entrapped? We need to recognize in our minds' levels of thinking or realizing all the dimensions of the human drama.

If we presume our brain cells know precious little about our thought, are we to be surprised at the extent of our ignorance of our spiritual dimensions? Could we be oblivious of our invisible partners in our human drama? Yet do we not espy the features of the angel filtered through those of a child or hear echoes of 'other' worlds in inspired music? Moreover, what superhuman impulse could drive a person to brave death exacerbated by torture for the sake of a cause he/she believes in?

What do our brain cells know of our thinking, though they participate in that thinking? What do our minds know of the thinking of the universe? If indeed our minds grasp something of the thinking of the universe, it is because they are isomorphic and coextensive with it in the holistic mode. This holds true for the cosmic dimension of our minds, and by analogy, as far as the transcendental dimension is concerned, we need to recognize in our minds' levels of thinking, realizing, and even emoting a hierarchically ordered infinite regress that must hold true for the mind of the universe. "You arc to Him, as the corporeal body is to you, and He is to you as the spirit that governs your body" says Ibn 'Arabi.

What do we know of the many splendored transpersonal dimensions of our being, of our participation in the sphere of metaphor, of our body of pure splendor, or the spheres of the beings of pure splendor? There is a great difference between listening to a piece of music and entering into the mind of the composer as he/she composed it, or watching a flower as opposed to grasping the way the cosmic celebration is contriving to express its splendor in the form and color and perfume of a flower, or judging the personality of a person and grasping the splendor, the marvel that is striving to come through together with the person's resistance in accepting the glory of their divine inheritance.

It becomes clear that if we were to include all the dimensions of the human drama, that is give heed to the role of the cosmic celebration plotting and crowning the human drama, we would make a quantum leap in our understanding. This is where meditation avers itself to be the key to getting in touch with one's subtle counterparts and the corresponding celestial spheres. Albeit we must bear in mind that the divine motivation is both mitigated and enhanced by our very free will. Because, for the software of the universe to mutate, it needs to fluctuate from a point Or stable equilibrium (Prigogine) - variations on a theme! Both randomness and motivation vie in this evolutionary change, and this is precisely what we see in the human drama: randomness where there has been a loss of the sense of one's cosmic dimensions, and on the other hand stifling conformism where one is not aware of one's personal incentive. Watch the drama in this light.

You will earmark people stepping out on a limb and fashioning the treasures that give us a sense of release from the narrowness of the flattened out human framework within which we tend to assess the bounty of the universe. The ballerina surreptitiously perhaps filters through in her movements something of the emotion and thinking of the choreography of the stars or the atoms inherent in her genes. Who knows what monumental glory the choreography of the stars filters through of what we call the divine harmony - pure splendor beyond any mode of expression whatsoever, and yet whose material expression must inevitably limit it while manifesting it? The playwright highlights typical human features at grips with the human drama, sometimes so unaccountable as to be ascribed to a blind destiny. But the contemplative is trying to grasp the divine archetypes that get distorted as human idiosyncrasies.

And as the mind ponders upon meaningfulness, are any clues to be traced of the cryptic devolution of a fulfillment gained by the universe as a whole in the human drama where transcendent values are actuated in the melting pot of human strivings, jubilations and ordeals? Can a cosmic celebration really be sensed filtering through the human drama? It is when humans try to find a means of expression of their inveterate need for glorification that divine features inborn in our humanness begin to emerge. Admittedly our fumblings with religion aver themselves most inadequately and ofttimes have given vent to undesirable emotions: sanctimoniousness, self-righteousness, intolerance, sadism, persecution, hatred, violence, or simply

superstition, conformism, conventionalism, fundamentalism, and institutional ism and the complacency of the flock mentality.

As the mind ponders upon meaningfulness, it cannot suffice itself with dissecting the past. It projects ahead. A breath of fresh air sparkles the spirit with hope, as one brainstorms and pioneers for a liberated spirituality at the scale of our time. In this light, one detects in the inane imbroglio of the human drama a promising ingredient: the catalyst. Enzymes are an example of this on a bodily level. It is not good enough to go out on a limb and act creatively overcoming the inertia of all existential things, the conformism that sets into life situations. It is more creative to trigger off creativity in others.

This is the age of collective action with each being triggering off the potentialities of every other being, reciprocally quantifying each other in a bold bid to build a beautiful world of beautiful people. This I see as the next step in the Sufi Order, rather than telling people what to do.

47 - On Resentment

I am aware that by challenging people to find room in their heart for those who have offended them, I am arousing in many an obstacle to their wholehearted enlisting of the teaching because many feel that I am asking something which they feel they cannot do. This fosters in many an even worse sense of inadequacy than was already there; so that, instead of helping them, it is placing them in a bind. Confirming that this is the message of Christ still does not do it.

A similar situation arises when one is told by religious authorities that one is a sinner, blowing up one's sense of guilt beyond the tolerable level. One's self image is already bad enough - nothing is gained by making it worse. This may indeed aver itself to be the hitch in spiritual prescriptions: "shoulding" people and thus making them feel uncomfortable. While the intention is good, it does not generate realistic help.

In contrast the psychotherapists propose self acceptance - which would mean that, while one has difficulty with forgiving someone who has done one serious harm, in particular by wounding one's psyche, or one is struggling with resentment against a person with whom one is continually brushing shoulders and who brings out the worst in one, one feels that one needs to be open to work with it because one's resentment makes one feel most uncomfortable and festers like a lingering wound, continually bugging one and undermining one. Paradoxically, resentment is often surreptitiously linked with guilt: guilt for having allowed oneself to be slighted or abused. Add the guilt of failing to forgive to this, and it becomes intolerable. Most often this guilt feeling is unjustified and can be dismissed by the conscious mind, however, the unconscious brooks of no argumentation.

Resentment avers itself here to be written right into the programing of the psyche because it deters one from being the enabler that gives license to a person to do one harm, or for that matter harm somebody else. Therefore with the exception of those cases where the violence or threats of the aggressor have put one in a bind, it is more healthy to recognize and admit failure to having given vent to one's anger, thus unmasking and disarming the culprit, rather than covering up one's resentment even from one's own view because one does not like being cantankerous. Notwithstanding, the crunch is that, bereft of one's defence system, one is not only vulnerable, but is

facilitating malevolence.

Now to deal with both one's resentment and the guilt is difficult to substantiate because on one hand, one may be indicting oneself unjustifiably, and on the other the mind provides every argument to acquit one. Subliminal feelings need to be unearthed gradually and with enlightened supervision to avoid overstressing by disorienting our already precarious self-image. In short, one's resentment or anger or rage need to be released cautiously from the unconscious, that means identified, recognized, then skillfully processed by converting rage into outrage - first healing, then regenerating. If not, it may erupt dramatically, leaving the psyche devastated and stymied.

How does one heal a physical wound? Starting with first aid, one needs to protect it from further irritants , which includes infection. Likewise one needs to be sheltered in a protective and supportive psychological environment, feeling cared for. In these circumstances, the regenerative process gets on its way, gradually rebuilding damaged tissues. Similarly, damaged elements of the psyche need to be rebuilt skillfully and painstakingly and of course it will take its appointed time.

However, sheltering is only half the battle, the regenerative forces of the body expend energy and may require an extra boost; even so with the psyche. Ultimately it is ecstasy that avers itself to be the energy of the psyche. While it might be more conservative to spell enthusiasm, ecstasy is the superlative, enthusiasm quickening itself ad infinitum. There can be no doubt that it is by admiring something beautiful, or contemplating or accomplishing a valuable deed that one's bewonderment ardor is aroused, or glorifying the splendor manifesting as the universe, whether or not personified as God, that one sparks one's spirit to ecstasy. How does one bring oneself to be high when circumstance are disenchanting, at best low key? This is where spirituality affirms itself to be a tonic for the injured psyche rather than a sedative, because the act of glorification unveils the divine status of one's own being - the sense of sacredness that triggers off self-validation which in turn permits personal creativity. Since the self-image is an albeit totally inadequate image of the psyche, a notion and therefore is of the nature of imagination, one can work with it creatively.

What is more: the infirmities of the psyche can be diagnosed in their traces in the self image. Pain is the alarm signal that there is some lesion which manifests as a distortion of one's real being. Yet, curiously enough our true being can be retrieved

out of this distortion unscathed, exactly as the voice of Caruso, so badly distorted by the recording technology of his time can be retrieved from the old records. The difference with the psyche is that while the record registers the past, the psyche need not just reinstate its pristine state, but can improve on it. While the template is impervious to any defilement, the psyche is ever recurrent.

The hitch is that one often obstructs this regenerative process by failing to believe that nature has the property not only of restoring itself, but of mutating, and likewise the psyche. And it takes a trauma to set the evolutionary process into brainstorming new ways of being. According to physicist Ilyia Prigogyne, the evolution from more rudimentary to more sophisticated structures in nature requires a breakdown of the stability achieved in states of equilibrium. He calls the structures thus arrived at, thanks to the disruption of the status-quo, dissipative structures. It is the vision of how things could be that saves the structure from irreversible disintegration.

Therefore one needs to not only lend oneself to the regenerative process, but also welcome the strong, sometimes dramatic pummeling of the forces of the cosmic drama upon one. Eventually not only bygones get more and more into bygones even though they may still linger in the twilight of the lighted up area of consciousness (at least one develops the ability to live with the scars), but also one learns to put pain to good use. This is the great art. Many of the handicapped learn to adapt themselves to their disabilities, and some even compensate for their inability with enhanced acuity, as for example a blind piano tuner - or enhanced zeal like Dr. Stephen Hawking - or capitalize on pain using it as a catalyst to enhance inspiration like Brahms.

What can meditation propose at this stage? In the first place, if indeed emotion calls for a conceptualization of the problem and the conceptualization escalates the emotion into overacting, one can gauge the wisdom of the Rishis about questioning one's assessments, thus avoiding that the emotional charge slips off the handle. The danger is that under the emotional overstress, the thinking gets awry and the psyche runs amok into unrealistic fantasies.

But the crunch of the matter is that by putting conceptualizations on hold, one releases a whole different dimension of thinking: the intuitive mode. One substitutes feed-forward to feed-back. One scans the events from the vantage point of the programming rather than try to infer the programming from an analysis of the events.

We are talking of a non-commonplace mode of understanding called transcendent cognizance, not based upon the feed-back of experience, but upon the properties of our own thinking which functions on the same principles as that of the thinking of the universe, except infinitely less adequately.

Some psycho-therapists disentangle their patients from their conceptualizations by asking them to say how they feel rather than what they think about their problem. The added advantage here is that the focus is now in the heart. Of course it is true that ultimately one is tested in one's love. It is one's love that has been wounded, violated, desecrated. There has been a betrayal of the pure love of the early days. The innocence has been sullied. Love has soured into a paradoxical love-hate syndrome. Here lies the acid test. Can one love a person whose actions or behavior has devastated one, or that one condemns, or abhors? Does one have the strength to scan one's mind to provide excuses for them, mitigating circumstances to ease one's wrath? Such as: they were badly brought up, they are spoilt brats, they are struggling for self esteem, and I am the scape-goat. . . their genetic package was flawed.

Combining these would require a difficult coordination of left brain/right brain activity. The danger is that, trying to do this, intellectually, the left brain takes over right brain functions, so that one does not really love, but tries to believe one does because one is enjoined to. The answer would therefore be for the right brain to take over, so that there is no point in trying to provide an alibi for a person. This is the unconditional love. One's love for one's child will overcome any criticism or admonishing in one's mind. Such is the power of love - it triumphs over the mind. Where the right brain prevails, one does not have to provide mitigating arguments, one zooms on the good points of a person. People who manage this become very charismatic and have the makings to be successful in life by mastering the art of dealing with people, rather than dismissing them from one's heart. And what is more, by dint of some ironical divine wit: here lies the secret of being high!

Furthermore, it is helpful to grasp clearly the distinction between struggling to control things or not trying to control but letting a sense of orderliness and sovereignty operate, where one's higher self takes over. For example, it is realizing that Planet Earth feels and thinks through one or rather in one, that Leonardo da Vinci's inventiveness or Bach's attunement, or Einstein's insight are features of the thinking

and feeling not just of that being that is Planet Earth, but also that being that is the Universe and which some call God. Precisely the same is true of our thinking and feeling and willing except that it gets limited, sometimes distorted by being funnelled down.

This is why people find it difficult to forgive. No matter how much one wills, one cannot overcome one's resentment and heal the pain by one's own personal effort. In fact the will can put one in a bind by hating oneself for hating another and not being able to avoid it.

Resentment degenerates into hatred and gets transmuted by heroism. One cannot "should" oneself or, for that matter, another person to be a hero. One volunteers one's heroism when the call for service is sounded, or one does not. Giving vent to the latent hero in one is ultimate fulfillment. It elicits one's need to see and fulfill a purpose in one's life. What is more, in releasing this need, one is honoring a dimension of one's being that one treasures as representing a higher value. This is where meditation will ultimately help one overcome resentment, after processing it.

But it is giving vent to actuating one's role in life in dedication to service that triggers off the discovery of the more transcendental dimensions of one's being, heretofore unknown and latent. This is discovering by doing. The confidence gained by the discovery of these strata of one's being upgrades one's performance. Often, dedicating oneself to service will prove to be therapeutic in overcoming the side effects of resentment.

There can be no doubt that the key to safeguarding one's self-image from further inroads lies in considering it holistically, that is including the more cosmic and especially transcendental dimensions of one's being, where one's self-image is crowned in something of the nature of the splendor that is behind all creativity which is trying to manifest and actuate itself in the universe; then reconciling this aspect which is latently present in the depths of one's being with the inadequacy born of one's having the support system of one's personality made of the fabric of the evolutionary process occurring on Planet Earth. This confirms Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's aphorism regarding reconciling "the aristocracy of the soul with the democracy of the ego".

Thus, honoring the divine status of one's being proves to be the ultimate safety-buoy, keeping one afloat through the crisis in one's self esteem facing resentment, triggered off by self-pity, thus rescuing one from sinking into the bitterness of hatred with its epidemic of violence and the resultant cruelty wreaked upon one's fellow beings.

48 - The Next Step

The new patterns of procedure after more than fifty years with the Sufi order: In the course of experience one faces a choice.

However much you tend a plant, it will eventually deteriorate and die, but should it have an opportunity to reproduce itself, it may become a harvest or a forest. So it is with human institutions. But what is the point in sheer proliferation?

A more advanced way of proceeding would consist in fostering mutation. In the more evolved species, mutation is speeded up. So it is also with the human being and even our social institutions. As the evolutionary thrust advances, further fluctuations from a set order emerge, opening the way to potentials lying dormant in the earlier forms. We would use this as our model in devising our methods of working in the Sufi order. In my present perspective, I envision the Sufi Order with all that has been invested in it throughout the transmission of its teaching as a catalyst spurring spin-offs, such as in the realms of psychology, music, healing, mastery through accomplishment, science, or social work; as well as the Abode, the Sufi choir, the International School of Meditation, Omega Institute, the Psi Institute, the Omega Institute of Spiritual Psychology, the Zenith Institute, the Hope Project, the Universel, etc.

Moreover the spin-offs represent a fresh view and new procedures unimpaired by their more traditional predecessors, exactly as young people (or people who have not allowed their minds to be sclerosed), on the whole, have a flair for the coming trend. Consequently, we respect our spiritual mother, Sufism, which has conveyed inestimable richness to our minds and souls, and, more so, its universal rendering that was always there latent among the greater Sufi masters. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan laid a landmark, projecting way ahead of his time, and surpassing in universality the tradition that prompted him. He, more than any of his predecessors, encouraged his mureeds to use their initiative and explore new ways in their particular expertise with the message being the catalyst sparking creativity, thanks to its focus on spiritual freedom. And now, more than a half a century hence, spurred by this very spirit of freedom, we are trying together to explore spirituality at the measure and in the attunement of our time.

We are living in a much tougher, problematic, and challenging world. In the light of the discovery of freedom emerging in the evolutionary advance, I can see that by 'shoulding' people to work according to a fixed pattern, one is failing to avail oneself of a large share of the potentialities of those dedicating their services to working in the spiritual field. However, working within clear guidelines and honoring a discipline will equally bring out latent potentials. One is learning ways of looking at things and procedures heretofore unknown.

A typical case where limitation makes for more variety is language. If the meaning of words were not defined by limiting their content, every word would overlap on every other word, and the rich variety of meanings would not emerge. On a wider scale, schools of thought or philosophy underscore points of view that make a definite contribution to previous ways of thinking. Such is the case of the teachings we are giving. These can act as seeds for unforeseeable development or as themes upon which composers create infinite variations, transpositions, cannons, fugues, counterpoint, cadenzas, and free wanderings in unexplored no-man's lands of thoughts and emotion.

So it works both ways. Thus, it is judicious to find a nice blend of these two attitudes: receptive and creative. Admittedly, this will not happen if one is too constrained within a model imposed upon one. On the other hand, if everyone 'did their own thing', we would loose the advantage of the coordination and cross-pollination of inspiration, emotional attunement, know how, etc., as well as the osmosis between personalities mutually enriching each other. The same applies to creativity. For it to be meaningful, enriching, and exciting, there needs to be a nice blend between incentive and adaptability.

Such is the principle of leadership in the Sufi order. Incidentally, the cause of suffering is not desire, it is 'shoulding' making another a martyr or allowing oneself to be a martyr. The fear of being overstressed by feeling unequal to what is expected of one can trigger off a resentment which may degenerate into conflict, even hatred, and manifest as bitterness in one's character. This would forfeit what the original objective was - namely, what we mean by spirituality: awakening, freedom, joy, ecstasy, mastery, magnanimity, and building a beautiful world of beautiful people.

Mandatoriness is suffering; freedom is joy. Yet, curiously enough, freedom while

restricting one's freedom out of love is the very epitome of creativity; since, in creativity, there is always a blend between joy and suffering. The suffering is in the limitation of the needs and the joy in the perfection coming through. As Pir-o-Murshid says, "The divine perfection suffering from human limitation, even though paradoxically that limitation cannot take away an iota of that perfection."

I see my job in life at present as inspiring people to discover and actualize their enormous resourcefulness. This will come through in the course of 'doing' - mastery through accomplishment, awakening through creative imagination, joy through generosity, making the cosmic celebration a reality on earth by the pursuit of excellence.

Therefore, taking responsibility in an organism where humans cooperate in encouraging people in their quest for spirituality, as we are indeed endeavoring to do whatever our institutions, will help one to unfold oneself. However, it must be emphasized, that it is being prepared to take responsibility that will release one's potentialities. Here lies the secret of leadership, which is embodying and fostering people's nostalgia and quests, thus helping them to actualize these so that their wills and your will act exponentially rather than your imposing your will upon them. One learns more trying to be up to teaching than by following.

The new methods of pedagogy aim at teaching people to be creative, take initiative, and take responsibility. But one must be aware of the conceit that if one is in a leadership position, one need not learn any more. I am indeed encouraging people to take responsibility and use their initiative. But, if by so doing they get out of touch with what I am doing (since I keep moving ahead), I regret that they might loose the advantage provided by the new vistas I am exploring, should they break off completely on their own.

So let us keep in touch while respecting the need of each other for leeway. Each of our creative impulses may trigger off each other's creativity respectively and mutually.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan once said,

A certain stage can be reached in the course of working on the spiritual path where no more is the murshid the murshid, nor is the mureed the mureed, but

they have become friends - the most wonderful relationship in the world.

49 - Leadership

Free will is the hidden divine power in man, and it is his ignorance of his divine heritage that holds him back.

Those who have not recognized that the divine inheritance is in them are still like the machine. But there comes a time in the evolution of man where he becomes the engineer and works with the machine.

The purpose of life is like the horizon, the further one advances, the further it recedes.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Many people are disappointed or disenchanted in their lives because they have not found the purpose of their life, or have not achieved their projects. The consequence is self denigration which acts as a deterrent to any further strivings. Now these negatives vie together in reinforcing each other respectively in a vicious circle dragging one downhill.

If one still entertains a spark of positiveness, obviously one needs to break the vicious circle either by steering clear on a tangent: finding freedom in one's person; or tugging the circle into a spiral: the spiritual dimension.

1) The first step consists in getting very clear about one's motivation. To make it easier, since some have difficulty in being turned on by any motivation whatsoever, one might ask oneself: what would you like? or prefer ? Actually you may well find that this alters as you evolve and is based upon the values you ascribe to things.

2) This consideration is however linked with the second one which is: what am I good at? And if you don't think you're particularly good at anything, where amongst my many inadequacies am I a little more capable than in other respects? You might find that this tallies with what you wish (as under 1).

3) But if you are a dedicated person which is the type of person I am addressing, (because that is the hallmark of spirituality, and that is what I am about) then you will

only feel good about your motivation if it is at the same time of service to others. This gregarious motivation is founded upon a deep feeling: really caring for others.

4) It is by aligning the three above mentioned considerations that you develop the makings of a leader.

5) Many people out there entertain wishes, even motivations in resonance with yours, but these remain in the never-never realm of wishful thinking, or the legendary 'mañana'. So to gear the leader in making potentialities of your being into realness, that is if you answer the call of the Seraphim by "send me" then you will have to make those people's dreams which are also your dreams come true.

6) It is an incongruous observation that most people do not like to take responsibility; and a sardonic observation that people paradoxically both want to be told what to do and do not want to be told what to do. So much for the rational mind! But if you embody their aspirations and prove yourself that they can be materialized, then they will gain enough confidence in you to trust your judgement.

7) This means that you have to go out on a limb and make it happen; which entails that you have to work out every detail and program the steps leading to the target set for accomplishment, watch for the pitfalls, bear in mind the security measures to protect the project and the people involved, guard people's pride because you can destroy their psyche by dealing unfairly with them or undermining their self esteem. On the other hand if you give in to a person because they are more pushy, you might jeopardize the project that so many have been looking forward to or have invested their energy into.

8) This is where both your insight and your mastery are at stake, and what is more, you are being tested in your love. If you trip over, just one mistake, and they not only loose confidence in you but you have blown all their hopes in themselves.

9) There are good reasons why people procrastinate or demure at going out on a limb, and that is caution regarding their judgement (or that of another). This is generally based upon past failures due to faulty judgement. Also it is so difficult to foresee the consequences of a move. The success of the chess-player is in his/her ability to envision the consequences of a large number of moves ahead, and those

consequences of all the alternatives which nears a cipher somewhat of the nature of a logarithmic exponential progression coasting on infinity. The other reason is of course sheer laziness, lethargy, timorousness and of course a lack of self-confidence which is grounded on poor self esteem.

10) This is where one needs to cast an in-depth look at human judgement, and where the things I have been saying lately about the limitation and therefore unreliability of judgement based upon our fallacious interpretations of situations prove to be relevant. Our opinion cannot but be limited by our personal vantage point which is just one vantage point in an infinity; moreover a further limitation is our middle range thinking. And this is where complementing one's point of view with the hunch of intuition proves to be the hall-mark of the successful leader. Note: this means reconciling these two poles of the antinomy of cognizance - not simply dismissing one's personal assessment either. And this is where complementing one's point of view with the hunch of intuition proves to be the hall-mark of the successful leader. Note: this means reconciling these two poles of the antinomy of cognizance - not simply dismissing one's personal assessment either.

11) But how do I develop intuition? And how do I gauge if it is reliable? No doubt learning how to turn within will shift consciousness into the intuitive mode. However one cannot integrate the 'input processing' type of judgement with the intuitive mode if one dismisses totally the judgmental.

Consequently, rather than 'placing a sentinel at the doors' just of perception one places a sentinel at the doors of perception and the doors of the speculative mind; one grasps the issues behind the situations or facts as one turns within. However admittedly the intuitive mode is in stark contrast to the speculative one in that one does not set oneself up as the subject passing judgement on an object, but one tunes oneself to a state of resonance, which means that one discovers in oneself that which one was experiencing as other than oneself.

12) How does one know if one's intuition rings true? By one's scruple about truthfulness, one develops a sense of authenticity about one's own inner sub-liminal feelings and promptings.

13) One might rightly ask: where is the spirituality in all of this? Yes the spiritual

dimension requires of one a whole other quantum leap. It allies divine insight with divine power.

14) We started with looking at things from a very personal view point. Now if we wish to crown our actions with this infinite dimension offered us as our divine heirloom (but hardly ever availed of), we will need to have the courage to make a complete about turn of our vantage point and look at things as they would appear from the cosmic vantage point.

15) One may well query: but how do you know you are not fooling yourself? How do you know it is the divine vantage point? The answer is that we are programmed with a built-in sense of infinity, otherwise we could not envision infinity in numbers or space or eternity in time. This intuitive inherent knowledge is evidenced in our ability to envision that there can always be a larger number than any number that we conceive etc. But to transpose our consciousness into the infinity of consciousness is a tour de force that few, mainly the mystics, sometimes the scientists achieve. A clue to our ability to do so may be found in our ability to transpose our consciousness in that of another human or animal or plant or even mineral or angel and by analogy in infinite regress: God.

16) The same applies to power, discovering the divine heritage that is the infinity of potentialities invested in one's being. To all intents and purposes it looks as though there were some magic in this: the dervish reaches a point where what he / she wishes materializes.

17) Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan gives the clue to both when he says: if one's motivation is limited by personal interest, one's power to achieve it is limited by one's personal axe to grind. The same applies to understanding: one's personal motivation sets up constraints on one's insight and hence one's sagacity. Where the motivation is totally disinterested, both one's insight and the power one yields are limitless, overwhelming, magical, and inspiring. Albeit we must be clear that what we mean by being disinterested does not mean indifference, but espousing the aspirations of others and indeed of the nostalgia moving the universe; which means not just caring for others (3), but caring for others more than oneself.

18) At this stage the leader is a catalyst, inspiring and emboldening people to follow

their bliss and actualize their incentive for the fulfillment of their purpose in the context of the overall purpose of life, which like the horizon *"recedes as one advances".*

50 - The Human Drama

Before we realize it, we are involved in the human drama willy-nilly, irretrievably. Life may prove exhilarating, disenchanting, awesome, disturbing, depressing, or just hum-drum.

Our co-actors on the scene may prove to be friendly, supportive, or inimical, compassionate or vindictive, loyal or manipulative, harmonious or treacherous, insolent or gracious, inspiring or repugnant or just indifferent and incompatible...or some or all of these contradictory traits paradoxically lumped together.

At every move our intentions are tested; shall we say by life itself? We are ourselves mostly precious little aware of what these motivations are, except that life itself unmasks us; besides they do emerge to view to the eye of the aware even if we ourselves fail to espy the proof in the proved. Even when our covetousness or grudge, or axe to grind, or cantankerousness, or conceit, or power-trip, or failure to take responsibility had devastating consequences, perhaps decades later, we may deplore our poor judgement or our folly or our inane decision, but still belie our intention, perhaps because it masks something deeper: our need for self-validation, for self-esteem, for attention, for security, for achievement, for love. Besides these we may uncover the precious ones: idealism, dedication, a spirit of service or self-sacrifice, altruism, compassion, mercy, an unscrupulous concern for truthfulness, purity, innocence, beauty, glorification, holiness, a need to partake of the intoxication of divine ecstasy. These may aver themselves to be the moving drives behind our handling of situations.

Our involvement with people, with situations, with the problems that arise apparently uncalled for can pummel our heart into agonies of excruciating pain, or more rarely spur it to outbursts of joy, or just pleasure or a sense of well-being at the venture of life.

The interplay of destiny and incentive, baffles our understanding. Are we the victims or the doers? As in the game of chess, sometimes we assume that it is our move, but how far are we reacting to the move of our partner, looking back into his/her mind, witnessing in the move the signature of his/her intention? Or how far are we projecting

into the future, that is forecasting what his/her move could be if we decide to move this way or that way? Yet even when reacting to our partner's move that is his/her intention, our move is still motivated unmistakably by our intentions.

Moreover, what do we know of the role played by a cosmic motivation behind our moves? Let us not think of it as other than our motivation, but just the cosmic dimension of our motivation - something like the harmony of the stars and galaxies, the Pythagorean harmonic relationship that governs the intricate mechanism of which we are a part. The more we become conscious of this dimension of our own being, the greater our achievements. Here lies the real meaning of spirituality according to Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

Of course the intricacies of our motivations in life's drama are incomparably more complex and paradoxical then in the game of chess; and consequently the influence of this cosmic factor is more readily detectable. Here in real life our motivations really give away where we are at. Here lies the criterion of our mettle at this point in time - which hopefully may improve. Here the real person is revealed in all its nudity and authenticity, eluding any pretence. But also here as Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan says "the hand of God" which we often ascribe to fate or destiny is made noticeable to the intuition of the seer.

Since unmasking our intention proves to be so ultimate a criterion, as to what we are in our person, it constitutes an incalculable feed-back system right there at our disposal. And doubtless our ability of availing ourselves of it depends upon our readiness to confront ourselves, and call our own bluff. But earmarking somehow the way the universe fulfills a purposefulness through or rather as us, which the Sufis call the divine intention behind our intention; or discovering the conflict between this and our personal intention - which is really tantamount to a conflict of allegiance to different values within ourselves becomes difficult.

It is as difficult as assessing whether it is the trace that a physicist detects on a screen is the same electron that reappears, or whether this trace betrays the 'probability' of another one substituting itself to the first one. Or is it another one? Or is it just the whole process appearing and disappearing in its parts? Thus the issue that we may read as our intention or the other's intention is far greater than the purview that we may have ascribed to it in our introspection. Therefore beware of miss-assessing

yourself in your self-confrontation in a closed circuit.

Behind the thrust of our motivations lie deeper roots: our innate qualities, or foibles, or rather those that have been so far actuated in us; which are precisely those which we believe we possess. Unfortunately our self-assessment is often mistakenly based upon our success or failure in our performance in the challenge of life, which cannot by any means be the ultimate criterion. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan points out that a victory may aver itself to be a defeat and defeat a victory.

The push that it takes to move out of a rut, go out on a limb into an undertaking whose success remains questionable may be sparked by the values we believe in, but is powered by our belief in our potentials. Our real value is stored in our potential which is ultimately infinite, albeit it is the activated fragment of this potential that has real life effectiveness - that is that measure of our potentials that is turned on, in contrast with those infinite bounties that lie in wait unknown to us, because unexplored. For example we only discover our power when we are called upon to overcome obstacles, or our compassion when faced with someone suffering, or our perspicacity when unmasking a fraud.

Besides it is our motivations that spur these potentials or their shadows on into existence in the human drama. For example if one's motivation is service to people, one's potentiality for compassion will emerge through one's personality traits more markedly; and one's dedication to service will have the effect of allaying one's resentment, so that one will prove more magnanimous towards the person who has offended one. If one's motivation is personal gain and dominance, one's personality will no doubt manifest more power, but this kind of ego trip may be looked upon as the shadow of genuine power. It distinguishes itself from real power by its ruthlessness. Here the potentialities of one's being have been constricted, defiled and deviated.

It is as though life offers us the most incredible array of bountiful values that corroborate the values that we ourselves cherish and uphold. Just consider what our civilizations have bequeathed us as a heirloom of works of art and architecture and music and poetic lure, of ingeniousness, of know-how of organization, of skill, of discipline, of inventiveness! Consider the wealth of emotion that has filtered through the human transducer and been customized by our inventiveness! The acts of dedication and mercy and heroism! The whole universe is enacted in the human

drama including that little patch that seems to be of our resort: our problems and life situations, our achievements, our fates and destinies! Our lives are traversed, in fact fermented, suffused by the fruits of the inspirations of creative beings in the past and all around us. The bottom line in our lives is what our contribution is to all this bounty. We are not only the products of these civilizations, of the genius of their outstanding pioneers but also their successors and nominees.

Moreover we need to extend our grasp beyond our terrestrial civilizations, and include all that lies behind the moving scene of the human drama on Planet Earth. Do we know what spawns the stars? What emotions or aspirations convulse the galaxies? What beings lie beyond our ken? Do we espy traces of the symphony of the spheres or the cosmic celebration in those emotions that make our heart beat faster, or shatter and delight our soul, or spark our spirit? It is these springheads of cosmic moment that lie behind our motivations and potentials, sometimes dormant, sometimes hopefully active.

A formidable power lays waste at our doorstep. The Sufis call it the divine power, actually it is the potentiality of our divine inheritance. While at the transcendental pole of our being (let us say in the seed of our personality) the bounty of the qualities that flower in the existential universe lay potentially dormant, these qualities contrast with their actualization in the existential pole of our being (let us call it the plant) in excelling everything one might imagine by their awesome perfection. Besides by becoming conscious of our divine heirloom, we start integrating the opposites while paradoxically by-passing them: for example being powerful and radiant at the same time - that is manifesting power without being stern; or being both loving and at the same time free inside; or wise without being smart.

To avail ourselves of these features of the divine perfection invested in our being, we need to extend our thinking beyond the middle range. Evolution advances by burning the hurdles on the way and continually making the leap to the next step which always takes off from a springboard that integrates all the previous steps, thus carrying them further.

The clue lies in espying the motivation of the universe behind our motivations and the qualities the Sufis call the divine qualities behind the qualities that we have actuated so far, and assessing what are the values that are being enacted in that fragment of

the human drama that we are involved with, while realizing that in fact it is not a fragment, because everything involves everything else, so that we are irrevocably involved in the cosmic drama, and this is the measure of our grasp of what it is all about.

To track down this infinite dimension of ourselves, albeit remotely, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan outlines two steps: the first conceptualizing God, because by so doing, one is nurturing one's creative imagination which is the self-same power that projects the software of the universe as its hardware. The act of conceptualizing needs a support system which consists in actually recognizing the values that one cherishes in nature, than in the qualities that are being enacted behind the drama of our lives, then recognizing them in our own nature, finally embodying them - thus making God a reality.

51 - God : Idea or Experience?

In Sufism

One often confuses God for one's idea of God. **Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan.**

That the search for a god, or God, has lured civilizations forward in the evolutionary process. One might imagine a cell of our body - for example a blood cell - exploring the body, then making a visual representation of the body of which it is a cell, projecting its idea of beingness upon this larger reality than itself; and more: trying to grasp the thinking of the body, and yet, yet even more: trying to grasp the programming of the body or even more so: the software of the thinking of the body!

We have a need to discover the nature of our relationship with that enigmatic reality that escapes our grasp, which the Upanishad calls "beyond the beyond" and we perceive unqualifiably as the Totality.

In his book *The Unity of Religious Ideals*, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan alludes to the concern of religious leaders from time immemorial, to come forward to answer the quizzical fumblings and phantasies of ponderous minds; sometimes by clumsy ratiocinations. At a scale tantamount to infinity, such inferences could not fail to fall short of the mark within the scope of our finite minds. Yet one may earmark stages in our discovery of our relationship with the Totality.

People would like to know what that paradoxical being looks like. Since one can only imagine something in the likeness of the known - in nature, particularly oneself - the Hindus and the Jews imagined that we are formed in His-Her image. Here our need to complete our representation of ourselves by looking upon ourselves passively, discovering ourselves in the model of ourselves. This view entails a new philosophical equation because, our relationship with that greater reality, rather than being of the nature of that of a fraction to the Totality, like a cell in the body is now seen as that of an exemplar with respect to its template, each fraction carrying the Totality (potentially) within its configuration - which is precisely the holistic paradigm we now encounter in science.

"Those to whom Unity is revealed see the Absolute whole in the parts; yet each is in

despair at its particularization from the whole...Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is a man and man is a world. The heart of a barley seed conceals a hundred harvests" Mahmud Shabistari. Some Sufis - for example the Egyptian Dhul Nun and Baba Farid and the Iranian Baba Kulli express their awe at discovering the divine splendor transpiring through the appearance of the forms of the world. You will notice that God is recognized as that which manifests through the forms rather than seen as actuated in the forms. Here we recognize the impact of Islam that cautions against the idolatry associated with form which one also finds in the Vedantist theory of 'maya'. Abu Yazid Bastami says: "God deceives you in the forms of the world - mere effigies". But the veil of the Muslim lady paradoxically espouses the contours of her countenance and therefore conveys inadvertently a clue to what it conceals, as Farid-ud-Din Attar says.

However our difficulty in believing that we are invested with the inheritance of the many splendored divine qualities in their perfection when grappling with our inadequacies or poor self-image, may be met in the answer to the question: can the template be surmised from a poor or distorted exemplar? The answer is that our mind tends to correct a form to the way that tallies with an inborn sense of orderliness: for example deformed square will be reconstructed in our representation of it to its geometrical integrity. Children naturally fill in the missing parts in incomplete illustrations. Can we not imagine the missing arm of the Venus of Milo? The voice of Caruso can be retrieved from the distortions due to the bad technology of the time when it was recorded, unscathed. The corrected form transpires as it were from behind the apparent form in the likeness of the template.

The same principle applies to what the Sufis call those subtle forms that configure our psyche: qualities. Every quality has its shadow counterpart: we have the defects of our qualities. The shadow of joy may well be facetiousness, of peace, indolence, of mastery, ruthlessness, of truth, callousness, of compassion, indulgence etc. If we know our defects, we may infer our qualities; the qualities transpire through the shadow. One might add: it is the inborn sense of orderliness of our ultimate faculty: pure intelligence (proto-critic) that espies the template or software because this faculty is of the nature of the thinking of the universe. In fact this is where the divine mind lies latent surreptitiously within us, if we can only discern it.

In fact one may look upon the bountiful legacy of creative thinking on Planet Earth as the brainstorming of the collective mind of that Total Being that is the Universe proliferating and thereby limited, funneled in the form of what appears to be the minds of humans that has fashioned all the beauty of our civilizations in art, crafts, architecture, music, poetry theater, dance, ritual etc. At this junction a new realization dawns upon the Sufi - a total reversal of the outlook of the cell seeking to grasp the whole body (or the thinking of the body); the Sufi now apprehends that it is the whole body in our previous analogy that is gaining a further outlook upon itself by seeing itself through the vantage point of the cell, while the cell discovers itself through the consciousness of the whole body. "By contemplating us, He contemplates Himself and by contemplating Him, we contemplate ourselves". Ibn 'Arabi.

But there is a further stage that the Sufi reaches: he sees himself through the eyes of God. "The knowledge gained by grasping in oneself the divine archetype is only the first degree; the second is knowing oneself through the knowledge that God has of Himself through you." "God discovers His perfection through man's limitation" Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. Borrowing the divine glance, we discover the divine qualities invested in us in their pristine perfection through their imperfect actualization in our personality.

However Abu Yazid Bastami soon realized that to grasp the model of which the exemplar lies dormant in his own personality, he had to actualize in his personality the prototype of these qualities latent within him. "By actualizing the divine nature which is the ground of one's personality, one confers upon God a mode of knowing" (Ibn 'Arabi). This is exactly what the Sufi practice of the wazaif is about. The sculptor discovers his/her statue in the course of making it.

Pir-o-Murshid says: the concept of God is the stepping-stone, but be clear about the difference between believing in God and experiencing God. After espying "the hand of God behind all things", one meeds to "awaken God dormant in one's being". The discovery of the hall-mark of that Being that is the Totality begging to be awakened in one's psyche is awe-inspiring - can alter one's life. Bastami was so overwhelmed when he realized this that he said: How great is my glory! How can one say this if one means one's personality rather than that which is trying to come through?

The next step beyond the discovery of the relationship: model/exemplar consists in

discovering a relationship in the nature of the covenant of allegiance or fealty of the knights of all times and civilizations with their lord. Hence the reference to God as the Lord. Incidentally, there must be a tacit covenant of sorts between the DNA of our cells and the RNA of conformation to the sovereign code governing the body, the violation of which spells cancer.

Indeed the programing of our bodies provides for the correction of mistakes in replication thanks to the fine-tuning operation of enzymes. The relevance of our human status as Viceregents becomes the more impelling the more one feels the need to dedicate oneself to a purpose beyond one's own well-being - in other words in service. Hence the reference to a Covenant in the Old and New Testament and Qur'an, but particularly the Iranian Zoroastrian tradition of Espahbad, the knighthood and that of the magi-kings which was perpetrated by Sufism.

Our personalities are linked with the divine nature in a relationship of suzerainty by whose observance we ensure the divine governance on earth. "By recognizing God's sovereignty, I constitute him as Lord" Sahl Tostari. Eventually the qualities of the sovereign are passed on to the vassal.

Thou playest this game of Thou and I that at the end all I's will realize the oneness of I. **Rumi**

A few dervishes are carried in the course of their inner itinerary by their awe at discovering themselves as being part of the one and only Being which includes the galaxies, the angels, the divine archetypes and the divine thinking, and their bewonderment at the traces of the splendor transpiring at every level of reality into a state where in the consternation of the mind, the act of cognizance pales - in fact collapses - in the magic of ecstasy (hal) - the rapture of the mystic echoing the divine nostalgia (ishq) which now avers itself to be the motivating springhead behind the whole process of existence, rather than the wish of God to discover Oneself in another oneself.

52 - Therapy

Most of us struggle in our lives to meet responsibilities, to upgrade our condition including that of others, to do a worth-the-while objective, to partake of the heritage of our civilizations. And sharing in the destinies of our Planet, most of us are to a smaller or larger degree subject to being pummeled and battered. Pummeled and battered in our sensibilities, our self-esteem, our self-confidence, challenged in our values, our philosophies, our beliefs, our performances or skills.

Our targets tend to lead us into a narrow purview. Sometimes they even lock us in a bind, obsessively, masking the relevance or meaningfulness of our motivations in terms of a wider purview. We may reach a point where we realize that we are by passing the major issue: that something went wrong. That which draws our attention to this realization is suffering. One did not realize that one was unhappy with oneself, with circumstances, with one's way of thinking or behaving. One is causing others suffering inadvertently because one is disgruntled, disenchanted. The warning has sounded!

Our good-wishers will say: you're pushing yourself too much, relax, take it easy, give yourself a break, perhaps a holiday, forget your homework while sharing convivial conversations.

One has not realized that the reason that one finds it difficult to be peaceful is one secretly despises that lazy person chronically lying on the beach, compulsively eating chocolate cakes and aimlessly chatting about trivialities.

The therapist will enjoin: get in touch with your feelings are you happy? If not why not? You may repartee: I really have no time to decide whether I am happy or not, nor do I know whether I am or not.

Reader, you have identified the workaholic. Unmistakably! One has become obsessed with one's will at the cost of one's emotions. The personal squeezes one into one's trip at the cost of what it is all about.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan makes this clear when, while appreciating the power that one gains by achievement, he points out that the objective that one sets out to do

limits the power. The more impersonal the objective is, that is the more dedicated to service, the greater the sovereignty gained. This way of looking at things sets priorities - fulfillment over achievement. Fulfillment defines a broader spectrum and implies that one's being enhances in the pursuit of the objective rather than sacrifices for the objective.

This is where meditation comes in, if rather than pursuing stress reduction, it fosters self-discovery and self-enfoldment. But you may ask: where does therapy come in? Therapists are teaching us to be kind to ourselves. Spiritualists are teaching us to be kind to our soul.

Pain in the body or the psyche is a warning signal. Our programming is drawing our attention to something that needs to be dealt with. First it needs to be acknowledged. It may be telling us that our present course is not proving fulfilling, and inviting us to consider a change of tack. Perhaps our pain spells our response to that of another or others; therefore it is telling us that our present course does not match our need to be of service.

Where there is pain, there is damage; it could be damage to the psyche, which affects our self-esteem, and then our efficiency or effectiveness. Where there is damage, there is a need of therapy. Wherever possible, the patient needs to be protected from the stressful agent; which admittedly is not always easy or even feasible.

Most importantly, one needs to be appraised of that built-in programming with which we are gifted. The cosmic power of regeneration might be trusted, and we might lend ourselves to its therapeutic effect. This is where faith comes in, which has proven decisive in healing. It requires a commitment on our part to avoid letting ourselves into a recurrence of the trauma, or paradoxically, obsessively seeking the trauma, as in an addiction.

No doubt the spiritual contribution to the therapy does consist in balancing the thrust of the personal will by giving vent to an impersonal will, called 'passive volition', as illustrated in meditative practices. There is obviously a place for both, or they may even balance or combine; in fact they are the poles of the same thing.

The better informed strata of the population have learned from an interface between

the world's spiritual traditions. The interface points to two complementary solutions that for the sake of simplicity one might find illustrated in (I) Buddhism, (II) Sufism.

The first one evidences the need to shield oneself, protect oneself by as Buddha says: placing a sentinel at the doors of perception. This does not mean shutting the door to the input from the environment - both physical and psychological - but filtering that input including that of one's own psyche.

The spiritual factor highlights the excellence of qualities in our being, which we tend to overlook when dissatisfied with ourselves. The dissatisfaction stems from our underplaying our resourcefulness. Simply overlaying our foibles with pride in our divine excellence would prove to be a clear case of an esoteric school "spiritual by pass". Nor would the voidness of the self, or of the world prove any more helpful.

The operation of the built-in repair system of the psyche is of an identical nature with that of the regeneration of body cells. Unless overstressed, the enzymes governing the replication of the DNA by the RNA and vice-versa will correct mistakes, like self-correcting spelling software. Even so any distortions in our psyche may get ironed out by our faculty of replicating our real being in our personality that remains unscathed by the distortions. Thus our psyche can be restored to its pristine glory if we so decide.

The operative factor here fostering the repair process is confidence and even an intuitive grasp of one's eternal being. No doubt one needs to protect the conviction that one gains by grasping it from the psychic environment, because this is where our self-image is based. Here detachment avers itself a safeguard.

The counterpart is rather than seeking refuge in one's eternal being, to work on one's self-image. This is done not so much by ironing out the distortions, but by positively reconstructing it the way we want it to be. Now that is creativity.

Here rather than unclutching from the environment in an ivory tower, which is often the way of meditation, the creative person fosters the interaction between the perfect model and the environment. This is the art of the composer: capture something of the trend of the time, but add a positive and original lead.

Here the party-line psychological approach would foster building a strong personal self. The spiritual factor would consist in fostering the convergence of the transcendent dimensions of one's being into one's ego consciousness so that one's creativity gains a cosmic stature.

The Sufis say God creates and recreates Him/Herself in and through us in the measure that we reverse our vantage point and grasp the divine operation in us. Clearly these two approaches, rather than contradictory are complementary.

53 - The Temple as Refuge for the Sacred

Fashioning the Temple of Light out of the Fabric of your Aura

People used to prepare a place to invite the presence of God.

Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan

On a certain night where there was sunlight, Hermes was at prayers in the Temple of Light, when the column of dawn blazed forth, he saw an earth about to be engulfed, with cities upon which the divine wrath had descended, that fell into the abyss. Hermes shouted: "You are my father, rescue me from the enclosure of those near to perdition!" And he heard a voice replying; "take hold of the cable of our irradiations and climb up to the battlements of the throne." As he climbed up there, beneath his feet, there was an earth and a heaven.

Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi

Perhaps our greatest need of which most of us are unaware is that of the sacred. What does this mean for us? To most it is our connectivity with that ineffable reality mysteriously concealed behind our lives that traditionally formulates under the ready concept: God.

In our personal purview, it is embodied in our sense of the dignity of our human status that we may treasure as our divine status, of which we become ostensibly aware when, being insulted or humiliated, it is flaunted. When the boundary of our self-respect is trespassed, we fell defeated, betrayed, devastated. Perhaps the most sickening examples of this total violation of this most fundamental human value are to be found in the psychic degradation meted out to prisoners in those shameful blotches on our civilizations: the concentration camps.

The watchdog of the threshold of the sacred area of our being is outrage. Contrasting with personal rage, the whole of humanity, nay the whole universe seems to join us in solidarity for any kind of abuse of the dignity of the human status which is what we mean by the divine principle invested in our being.

Traditionally the demarcation between the sacred and the profane was and is still somewhat defined by the threshold of the temple or place of worship. Purification and other rites mark the passage from the profane to the sacred. In some churches several thresholds are delineated, culminating in the "sancto-sanctorum" reserved for the priests.

These outer manifestations of deep inherent principles evidence the need of the human being to protect that sacred from sacrilege. Some hermits or monks consider the profanity, selfishness and guile experienced in the "the word" with contempt and seek refuge in a physically and psychologically protected zone, in the cave, the cloister, or just a psychological aloofness or seclusion. A clear delineation between the sacred and the profane is to be found in the Hindu tradition of the "sannyasin", the anchorite, who is supposed to be celibate. He is not allowed to possess anything, nor get a job, (he may carry a beggar's bowl, although he is not supposed to beg) as opposed to the household who has a family and is supposed to grind the mill.

Nowadays, there is a tendency to relax this compartmentation. Many people aspire to bring spirituality into their lives, to honor their highest ideals in service of their fellow beings in real life. Still a few, disappointed in their circumstances, followed by some disenchantment in "the profane" seek refuge in a spiritual environment. Some judgementalism may lurk behind this altitude, and causing one to disassociate from fellow beings in their strifes and sufferings.

However, exposed to so much grossness, greed and vulgarity, and the effects of immersion in the power games and materialism becomes addictive, the more sensitive souls nurture a desperate need to protect the sacred zone of their psyche, honor it and exult in it. This is why people meditate. There is a way of building an inner temple to house that sacred dimension of our being, within which it can be nurtured.

The Sufi practice of the "dhikr" lends itself favorably to this deep felt need of the human being, because it is a meditation in motion. By churning one's magnetic field: that is rotation the upper pole, namely the head of that magnet constituted by our bodies around the center of gravity that is the solar plexus, one is churning the magnetic field of the Planet and of the universe in a vortex. This a reality in terms of an energy field structured as a personal sanctuary.

As one seeks to turn within, one naturally tends to cut the input of impressions from the environment, as for example one does as one falls to sleep. Understandably the yogis covet this inner harbor from the turmoil of profane life in "Samadhi" where all sensory and even mental impressions are silenced. Yet, if presently we ascribe some value to achievement in life, then we must find a way of incorporating the environment, both physical and psychological. Those elements that we wish to access may be selected, and even transmuted as they flow into the deeper recesses of our being where we harbor and treasure that dimension of our being which we deem sacred. This process of selectivity (filtering in alchemy) followed by transmutation (distillation in Alchemy) is effected by affinity: to the like, the like accrues.

In the view of Sufism, this input processing yielding speculative knowledge cannot compare with the intuitive, emerging from within, knowledge. But we are talking about a revealed knowledge that cannot be acquired, and this is the programming of the mind of the universe, that one can only receive "signs" of it in the silence of inner contemplation. There is some little facilitation that one can provide by preparing oneself (like the proverbial five virgins).

A thought-raising clue to what some dervishes do to enlist this paradoxical divine knowledge is to be found in a Mazdean practice. It is one more indication of the transmission of the knowledge of the Magi to the Iranian Sufis. The clue can be deciphered from a cryptic story: in the early legends of Eran Veg - the pristine Aryan paradise, Jamshed, a famed Mazdean magus is ascribed a bowl punctured by 7 holes (obviously the seven sensory inlets in one's head.)

That magical bowl was endowed by ten straps; and here comes the riddle: when he pulled on the straps, the bowl opened (instead of closed) and revealed to him "signs" of the invisible. Now try to figure that one out! One obvious clue; the seven holes, taken as the seven sensory apertures in our head - you grasped that; the next one: by being closed, it opened from inside; the senses as Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan says were turned inside. You guessed that? Have you guessed what are the ten straps? I hope you did if you are ready to practice it. The riddle does not end there: he found a way of rotating the bowl, thus fashioning a temple of light! Here was the site of revelation.

Building One's Own Temple of Light with One's Aura

"This is not my body, it is the temple of God; this is not my heart, it is the altar in the temple of God.

Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan

Introductory Remarks:

It is incumbent to realize that:

A) the cells of the body (actually the atoms) absorb light from the environment, including cosmic rays from outer space, and emit (also transmit) light into the environment;

B) the human aura in its purely physical aspect is constituted by the radiation of this light that sparkles as the cells divide (in mitosis), the nerve cells being the most effective;

C) since the brain is made an intense concentration of nerve cells, the brain is lit up from inside - the optic nerves, being an extension of the brain, projects the middle range frequencies of this light through the retina and cornea into space, but the high frequency (ultra-violet) passes through the skull and can be beamed by dint of visualization;

D) visualizing a form projects part of the aura into a real light structure in space, like a hologram;

E) this structure is greatly enhanced by moving the body in a regular architectonic motion repeatedly.

PRACTICES:

"The exercise of zikr sets the heart to rhythm."

Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan

1) Imagine that you are gazing into a blinding light, courageously. ("To look

into the sun, one has to have eyes like the sun." Plotinus)

2) Fix your attention upon the brain, being an intense concentration of nerve cells is as though intensely lit up from inside.

3) Visualize the effulgence within the brain threaded down through the optic nerves and projected into space from the retinae through the cornea as two beams of light.

4) Close your eye-lids, turn your eye-balls upwards, and as you inhale, concentrate on the intense light in the brain.

5) Visualize the corona of sparkling diaphanous light - colorless, although flickering flashes of multi-colored light that appear as a corona above your head.

6) Now hold your breath with your eye-balls still turned upwards, though now you focus above your head, and fix your attention on your consciousness (or better, your intelligence) that you represent as having the ability to cast light upon things, yet not a physical light.

7) As you exhale, imagine that the luminous intensity of your awareness and wakefulness enhances the effulgence of the beams cast from your eyes which you visualize as sky blue; moreover visualize a third beam cast forwards through the middle of your forehead that you imagine to be violet.

8) As you inhale with eyes upturned, visualize the corona.

9) Now as you exhale, converge the two beams of your glance (blue) into a spotlight suspended in the void, approximately 6 feet ahead.

10) Again as you exhale, concentrate on the violet beam breaking through the blue spotlight.

11) Presently visualize the spotlight as a blue sapphire being traversed by a violet beam.

12) At this stage, as you exhale, notice the green hue emitted by your throat

chakra (pharyngeal plexus), and the glorious golden radiance of your heart chakra (cardiac plexus).

13) The moment has come when, as you exhale, you rotate your upper body clockwise around that pivot of your body that is the solar plexus, describing first a violet circle with your third eye, accompanied with a blue concentric circle, now the colorless (with flashing hues) outer circle described by your head, and the golden inner circle described by your heart.

14) By sheer force of repetition, these circles become apparently indelible: you have literally constructed a whole structure of light around your body - numberless bands of hues aligned in concentric circles after the model of the spectrum - like a rainbow.

15) By widening the circles, they appear as ever extending spirals - like a vortex (a galaxy) of light.

16) To extend these into concentric spheres instead of two dimensional vortici, you now rotate your head and upper body forward, downwards, toward behind you as you inhale, eventually returning to the left and right motion as you exhale. We now have two meridians building a three dimensional light structure. You will still notice that the left-right motion conveys the impression of an ever widening sphere (centrifugal) whereas the forward-backward motion gives you the impression of drawing within (centripetal). The protective membrane of the temple is your radiance, not a barrier; also it filters and transmutes light from the environment. You have fashioned with your aura a temple of light. Yet it is only a splendid vortex of light in that infinite temple of light shaped by the galaxies.

17) You introduce a moment of retention of your breath between the inhaling and the exhaling, so that toward the end of the inhaling, you concentrate on the void in the solar plexus (the power station, the white hole from which new energy emerges into your universe). Immediately shift your attention from the solar plexus to the heart chakra, and you experience this upward flow of new-born life-energy and radiance.

18) Now if you were endowed with the spirit of a dervish and started revolving like the Mevlevi, the meridians being circles or spirals of light would indubitably form a

sphere - or ever extending sphere of sheer effulgence. You are dancing, revolving like a star in the choreography of light of the heavens!

19) Last move: still holding your breath, you quicken your heart chakra with the breath of pure spirit that you experience as descending in that temple of light that you have built through an aperture at the top.

20) You have the impression that the temple of light has been transfigured into a further temple of subtler light that appears to adumbrate the temple of physical light and seems positioned a little higher up, space-wise. And this feeling may be perpetrated further and further in infinite regress.

21) There is yet one further step: was not the purpose for which the temple is built to provide a sacred abode in which the Divine Presence may be ideally experienced? An idyllic environment fashioned in light providing protection against mundanity and sacrilege eminently conducive to discovering one's highest ideal: God?

22) Are there any further steps? Discover that we not only need to fashion the temple, but also fulfill our human role in the temple, as priest, as knight, as hermit, as devotee, as musician, as verger, as sweeper, and many more.

54 - The Temple of Celestial Light

In the previous issue, I presented the light of the aura in its so-called physical (actually explicate) mode. But the explicate mode of reality is a mere ripple in the ocean of the implicate. Therefore what we experience as physical light is only a signal (ayat) of what light really is. This would give us a clue to what the Sufis mean by the celestial light, and the early church fathers (i.e., Gregory of Nycea) meant by the 'uncreated light'.

One might consider what we generally call light: i.e., the light absorbed by the cells from the environment, constituting the aura, as waves. These waves are in the ocean of light that the Sufis call the celestial spheres.

There is a continual enfoldment of the whole in each region, along with the unfoldment of each region into the whole again . . . the grosser manifest feature depends upon the subtler aspects.

If you go to infinite depths of matter, we may reach something very close to what you reach in the depths of the mind.

Energy in the implicate state . . . the energy of empty space is enormous; if you raise it, you get light, or if you raise it in a way that makes reflection take place, it will become matter.

Dr. David Bohm

One may therefore build a temple of celestial light, fashion the celestial counterpart of one's aura into a temple of celestial light. To this end, the motion of the physical body is superseded . . . the dhikr has become internal. The temple of celestial light cannot brook the limitations in our thinking incurred by our mental representation of our physical body. The compass of the middle range needs to extend to the scale of the choreography of the heavens. For this reason, the Mazdeans used to reach out in their minds into the starry sky.

So one is experiencing the freedom and delight of being a being of light at a cosmic scale. There is some sense of likeness with the stars while one represents the stars

as intermeshed in an ocean of light rather than as specks studding the sky. To do this, one needs mentally to drop the body as a shroud and enjoy the freedom of gravity-less motion in space. Light (physical light) passes through space without any resistance (though deflected by gravity). At a certain stage, whirling like a dervish as Mevlana Jelal ud Din Rumi taught his disciples to do, one identifies with one's aura that drags the body in its rotation. The body can remain still while the aura whirls.

At a further stage, we overcome our sense of space that is simply a frame imposed upon reality by our finite minds. Then we are not working with a temple of light endowed with a form or structure any more, but with a luminous reality of pure splendor. This is in what the Sufis call the sphere of Jabarut (splendor beyond beauty). We think of the stars and better still the galaxies as the mere explicitation of the unseen (covert, implicate) light of the universe. Our consciousness reaches beyond our commonplace representation of what we mean by the physical universe into the perspective of the celestial spheres.

The light of dawn rises on the soul so that part of the (predominating) realities emanating from the constellations and from the angels who are their liturgies predominates in them.

Shihabuddin Suhrawardi

At some point, the Sufis experience something more specific than simply this immersion into the ocean of light subjacent to the apparent light of the starry firmament that they ascribe to a participation in the effulgence of the heavenly spheres, but discover themselves as "the light that sees rather than the light that can be seen." The stars are not just globes of effulgent physical light manifesting a deeper subjacent orb of light, but are as archangels endowed with a luminous consciousness.

Sometimes the apparition takes on human form, other times the form of a constellation . . . When the blazing light lasts long, it obliterates the form; the figures are taken away and the individual visitation is effaced. At that point one understands that what is effaced is giving way to something of a higher order . . .

Shihabuddin Suhrawardi

To reach into their consciousness, one needs to reverse the commonplace way of thinking or experiencing. One switches one's consciousness so that one discovers how the spheres of light appear from the vantage point of the celestial archangels. In this perspective, they appear as the epiphany of these beings - a glowing extension or projection in the physical universe. The clue is to hoist oneself through the celestial perspectives, eventually reversing one's memory, shifting in the second dimension of time, namely moving from transiency to transcendence, until one can envision one's intelligence as of the same nature as the intelligence of the archangels of the stars ('aql qahira), perhaps an emanation of these.

Perhaps a most evocative description of this switch of perspective is to be found in the words of a very rare and sublime Mazdean sage who was also a Sufi initiate attached to Shihabuddin Suhrawardi:

When I passed in rapid flight from material bodies,
I drew near a pure and happy spirit;
With the eye of spirit I beheld spirit:
In every sphere and star, I beheld a spirit . . .
But when I reached a great elevation,
Splendor from the Almighty gave me light;
As the radiance increased, this individuality departed.
God only existed; there was no sign of me.
I no longer retained intellect or recollection or spirit;
I discovered all my secrets to be but shadows;
I then returned to the angelic intelligences.
And from these intelligences, I came back to the spirit;
And thus at last to bodies summoning me . . .
Azar Kaivan

The wonderful thing about this is that all of a sudden, something clicks in one's consciousness. One discovers one's true identity: one is the real temple of God, beyond form, beyond space, beyond time and beyond what one in one's limitation imagines to be light - the temple of pure celestial splendor.

Practices to Build the Temple of Celestial Light

1) Start by going through, one by one systematically, all the stages in the previous lesson (building the temple of light).

2) Shift your consciousness in such a way as to imagine that you have awakened from the perspective of what appeared as the physical world. There is realizing that the usual was just a perspective determined by the focus of your consciousness in a vantage point. What appeared as matter was simply a construct or projection, like a hologram or the projection of forms on a celluloid film appearing as shades of light and shadow upon a screen.

3) Now imagine the ocean, and grasp that the waves are not fragments of the ocean, but the entire ocean emerges as each wave; that the next swell is not the effect of the previous one (as one infers from a cause and effect sequence), but it is again the whole ocean that reappears in this new swell.

4) Now represent to yourself that that which emerges into your usual conscious perception as an object, for example a tree, is like the wave. It is just the manifest signal of the way the whole of reality appears squeezed as it were within the limitation of the capacity of the tree to manifest it.

"God discovers His perfection in the imperfection of the creature . . . it is just like seeing the root when contemplating a flower."

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

5) Now imagine that you see lots of lights; for example many candles, or stars. Imagine that behind the sense of apparently solid (opaque) objects is a world of light; for example the auras of those objects. For example, imagine flowers as photographed by Walter Chapell, translucid, gossamer-like, surrounded with a corona of flashing, diaphanous light. Now imagine these flowers in their luminous appearance dove-tailing, so that their auras intermesh. Their coronas do not have a boundary, so they all interfuse in a light wave-interference pattern.

6) Now identify with your aura and imagine your own aura being intermeshed:

a) with the auras of other beings, including the trees,

b) with the auras of the planets and stars.

7) Now whirl your aura. Since it does not have a boundary, the whole fabric of light of the universe is drawn into a swirl amongst an infinite number of swirls in the boundless vastness of space. One participates as a being of light in the choreography of the heavens. By swirling the fabric of the celestial light of which the stars are just a temporary expression, you are building a temple of celestial light.

8) Lie on your back and do 'yoni mudra', holding your breath.

a) pay attention to the music of the spheres;

b) identify with your being as a being of celestial light - your aura being only its limited manifestation;

c) concentrate on the beams projected from your eyes as the explicitation in space of the celestial light that you really are.

9) Now open your eyes, and look through your third eye. You will encounter a maze of evanescent, elusive, nebulous forms. - They are archetypal symbols whose objective seems to reveal a paradoxical meaning to you that you need to decode.

10) Now again take stock of the fact that you have awakened from the commonplace diurnal perspective and realize that this is indeed the way the universe is in reality. But as everything criss-crosses everything else, it is much more difficult to distinguish 'entities'.

. . . a continual enfoldment of the whole in each region . . . all entities . . . objects, forms as ordinarily seen are somewhat stable independent and autonomous features . . . the order of the world as a structure of things that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order.

Dr. David Bohm.

11) However, you can distinguish temporary formations within this symphony of light that is the universe emerging and fading back into their universal ground like the waves in the ocean. It is as though, having awakened in sleep, your dreams manifest the phenomena or circumstances of the 'outside world' in their wider context.

12) If you now make an effort to extricate yourself from the dream perspective, and awaken in deep sleep, beyond the state where there are forms or formations, then you will find yourself accessing the consciousness of luminous beings. If you focus upon a star, you will grasp how the being of the star experiences that aspect of him/herself that you beheld in your ordinary consciousness watching it from the vantage of Planet Earth. It will now appear as the extension in space time of the consciousness or intelligence of that being that is the star.

13) You will now discover a kind of kinship with these celestial beings, realizing that this is what you are essentially and eternally. And in this dimension of your being, you have inherited your celestial nature from these celestial beings. This is where you have the deep roots of your being.

14) The clue to this break-through is in shaking off the memory of the existential perspective, and cleaving to the memory of the whole universe, latent within your explicate memory. It is the memory and therefore the grasping of significance rather than events.

55 - Transformation; Mutation; Transmutation; Regeneration; Transfiguration; Resurrection

Achievement, however great does not seem to grant most people a complete sense of satisfaction. Perhaps the greatest human need is transformation. No doubt this is because unconsciously we are tugged forward by the inexorable forward march of the evolutionary process of which we are participants.

Since time immemorial the best brains of our species have vied to unearth means of promoting and accelerating the process of human transformation at both the physical and psychic level. Alchemists searched their deep unconscious for clues while believing that the coveted secret must be culled from a study of the processes that regulate the transmutation of materials. Metals, elixirs, chemicals, or crystals, were used. They posited that there must be a unified principle governing all transformation, whether at the level of the body or the psyche: "as above, so below." Their objective was "the spiritualization of the body and the materialization of the spirit."

They posited that if we could only wrest these principles, we could not only accelerate these processes of transformation in the laboratory, but similarly enhance the process of transformation in the psyche of humans. While working with the transmutation of metals, they were really discovering their own psyche and an infinite number of valuable clues. The simplest was 'solve et coagule': all transformation commences with a falling apart of the constituents, then a new structuring. As applied to the psyche, it is called the royal art: 'Ars Regia'.

Since the heyday of the alchemists, scientists, physicists, chemists, biologists, physiologists, psychologists and meditators have carried that early research a great deal further. Yet, the tenants of the mechanistic and positivistic theories neglected much of what the Alchemists were conveying, albeit cryptically. The mutual interface mind-body is now appearing increasingly on the scene. The holistic paradigm, and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, and in general what one might define as a philosophy of science are emerging in our day. Dr. David Bohm intimated that "A change in our sense of meaning will affect the circuits of the brain." Such a far reaching declaration triggers off in us a renewed vision of prospects. They might be actuated in many procedures devised to improve ourselves and so fulfil our purpose in

the universe.

Since the dawn of Indian thought, the Yogis have been working with mental and physical methods designed to promote the influence of the mind upon the body and the impact of the body upon the mind. In the view of Buddhists the body provides us with a most resourceful vehicle in which to foster illumination. This is so providing its potentialities are exploited and its fabric transmuted.

We would like to know more about how precisely this works. What we can do to promote this transformation? Could it be promoted by the influence of our thinking and emoting upon the endocrine glands, and therefore on the enzymes that supervise the replication of the DNA? What can we do by exploring the way that our joy or sadness affects the light that we emit as an aura, or our electro-magnetic field? The early Mazdeans, followed by the Sufis highlighted the role played by the subtle bodies in the transformation of the physical body.

Advances in science and technology have opened up new vistas as to how thoughts, images, emotions, affect the brain and particularly the endocrine functions. It may be said that the choreography of the molecules, atoms, even electrons and photons of our bodies ensure the miracle by which the splendor of cosmic software endeavors to emerge through structures and functions of the existential realm. What is meant by subtle bodies or acupuncture meridians, or the 'chi' force, still eludes the grasp of our middle-range thinking. We are only beginning to investigate how our resentment, guilt and violence, and our self-image affects the immune system. Instead of thinking in terms of the psycho-somatic, Dr. David Bohm considers the soma and the significance as the two constellated poles of a same reality that he calls the soma-significance. This way of looking at ourselves challenges us to explore new ways of fostering transformation.

Many techniques of meditation are devised to unmask the hoax of our commonplace thinking and emoting. Besides fostering transformation through insight - called awakening, we are working with life energy - called quickening.

Nature not only provides for the gestation of stars and atoms, but for an evolutionary drive in setting up more and more complex inorganic atomic structures. With the leap forward into the organic - the advent of the biological field, orderliness gets more and

more intricate. Instead of structuring themselves in regular lattices, the molecules diversify to assume specific functions that are meaningfully coordinated. Thus there is increasing mental sophistication and inventiveness.

Doubtless at the human scale, we need to account for the way the care and perfecting of body functions affects the personality. Conversely we need to account for the impact of our grasp of significance upon this support system provided by nature as it evolves.

How this can be effected optimally is precisely the question before us. The cells of our bodies with all their idiosyncrasies and volitions and dedication to the service of our understanding need to be participants in the illumination of our minds. Our personalities need to live up to the challenge of our ultimate motivation.

Given that nature does provide for an evolutionary progression in its structuring of atoms, molecules, cells, organisms, etc., the early alchemists may be considered blacksmiths (the ancestors of the industrial revolution). They believed that metals were incubated in the womb of the earth. They posited that we humans could intervene in the operation of nature and accelerate the process in the 'athanor' (the oven) or the alembic (the distiller). The secret was providing heat - obviously energy.

From the beginnings of time, the original state of randomness of atoms in the universe called the primordial soup (the chaos) gets gradually ordered. It moves into clearly systematically programmed atomic structures, evidencing the impact of intelligence upon energy. The same applies to the way thoughts get structured by our sense of significance. According to the second law of thermodynamics, this costs energy. In the realm of the psyche it is our nostalgia and enthusiasm that represents energy.

This orderliness written into the programming of the universe falls apart if one does not inject energy into it, like a library in which the books are scattered randomly. It takes energy to put them back into their respective places. As in a computer, information is gained at the price of energy. This is called entropy.

Note that the same applies to the psyche (as C. G. Jung showed). Its orderliness out of the chaotic unconscious was gained during the evolutionary process leading to the human condition throughout aeons of time. It gets lost very easily unless one keeps

putting ever renewed resolve into it. Besides, should we not also credit the influence of the sense of meaningfulness of which the atoms, molecules, cells and organs of our bodies are endowed?

Now supposing these beautifully structured molecules avail themselves of more energy. For example, one heats them gently, gradually the molecules begin to free themselves from the constraint of a rigidly structured program. As Dr. Prigogine says they self-organize themselves, exploring new combinations or ways of being. The cosmic programming itself has now unfolded into infinite ramifications, thus enriching itself considerably.

There is a little understood energy that is self-generated, illustrated at the physical level by chemical reactions that generate heat instead of absorbing heat. On the biological level it is illustrated by phosphorescence rather than fluorescence, for example in the firefly or deep sea fish. Regarding the psyche, one might say that enthusiasm is in some way related to the interfacing with the environment, whereas nostalgia is self- motivated.

Basically, we are faced with two steps in evolution: first the impact of the orderliness of the whole upon the parts; secondly the incentive of the parts that act upon the overall programming. The first stage incites one not to come in the way of the operation of the universe upon ourselves as a fraction thereof - called the divine operation by the Sufis - by interposing one's will or vagabonding into one's personal random musings. Evidence of the importance of this attitude is to be found in passive volition in bio-feedback.

The will of the universe, called the Divine will in religious lore, seems to self-organize itself as it unfolds in one's psyche. Here long-range planning takes precedence over self-determination that is evidenced in our personal contribution to the programming of our being, and breaks through as creativity. At a threshold condition, that is difficult to determine, it is the personal will that shifts the system from equilibrium as Dr. Prigogine shows and opens the way for fluctuation, hence new programs, new ways of being.

As we observe them more deeply, the atoms, or cells, prove themselves to be not what we imagine matter to be. They display the mentation or consciousness or

inventiveness that we have consistently denied them and attribute to ourselves. However it is the availability of energy that actuates this meaningfulness into physical functions. Useless to say that this is much more marked at the organic or biological level.

At the level of the psyche, the clues we can infer from this intrusion into physical nature, point to the role played by freedom from an imposed order in creativity; and therefore in the transformation of the personality. Conversely it demonstrates the role of incentive in freeing oneself from complacency in an imposed order.

Moreover, it is found that the impact of significance or purposefulness served by information economizes energy. This is called negentropy. The better organized one is, the more economically one runs one's business. Or in respect of one's personality, the clarity of one's understanding of the meaningfulness of one's life - called awakening - will spare much wasted opportunity. The secret resides in availing oneself of both the insight one gains in life and the psychic energy of the human evolutionary thrust. In fact, it may well be that in a highly meaningfully organized state, one is generate fresh energy internally (like a white hole) instead of absorbing it from outside. This is one of our objectives in meditation.

The Alchemists substitute the 'athanor' (the oven) and sometimes the alembic (the distiller) to the womb of the earth in the incubation of metals, or crystals, or elixirs. The mediator envisions our body, magnetic field, aura etc., aspects of our total being in its holistic model as constituting a temple - the psychic substitute for the athanor, and our subtle bodies form the altar of the temple.

The primary material the alchemists work with - called the materia prima - is our given nature before all the transformations it has undergone during existence. If indeed, if "as above, so below", then, just as in the blastema, the original cell in the embryo, all genes are present without yet a determination. Which genes will be turned on and which turned off to diversify the cells of the unfolding embryo is undecided. So only a few of the infinite possibilities invested in what the Sufis, quoting Christ, call our Divine inheritance are turned on in our personalities, most of them are recessive.

Just as the initial cell in the embryo is a hybrid in which the universe having converged in umpteen scores of beings, cross-pollinates with that of numberless other beings, so

the substrate of our subtle bodies carry the many-splendored bounty of untold denizens of the heavenly spheres. Still this primeval material, of which we avail ourselves whether bodily or psychically, has both evolved and deteriorated during its involvement in the existential condition. Yet, just as the voice of Caruso is still buried in its pristine glory in the bad recording of the time, so is the celestial counterpart of our being unscathed even though defiled.

56 - Mirror Images

Not being is the mirror, the world is the reflection and your eye is as the reflection of the eye of the seer.

Mahmood Shabistari

By contemplating Him, we contemplate ourselves and by contemplating us He contemplates Himself.

Ibn 'Arabi

The same physical phenomenon may be computed in two complementary space-time frameworks.

Einstein

Typifying the characteristic outlook of the Sufis, the great Sufi mystic and metaphysician Ibn Arabi invariably presents the same reality as seen from two complementary points of view.

I see him through his eyes, he sees me through my eyes.

Ibn 'Arabi

We humans are continually striving to discover ourself in another ourself. But to discover ourself in another ourself, we cannot suffice with contemplating the other as the object cognized, nor can the other know us. To discover the features of the identity we are looking for, we need to place ourselves in the vantage point of the 'other'. One can espy in him/her as the mirror-image of oneself (representing that which we have in common with the 'other ourselves'). Therein are one's own qualities and defects and aspirations and anxieties, concerns, resentment, motivations, and passion and compassion.

Reciprocally, one can discover those very same features of oneself in the other's mirror image of him/herself that we are for him/her. This is illustrated by two mirrors reflecting one another in infinite regress as in the typical Sufi architectural model of the

place of mirrors, Aina Khanah, adopted by the Mogul emperors. The light of a single candle would be duplicated in a plethora of scintillating lights. The face of a person would be duplicated into an endless glut of faces in an inane degree. Now for the sake of hypothesis, suppose that face were that of God and supposing the mirrors fail to project a genuine replication of the Divine Face, that would be an apt metaphor to describe the world of humans. Still, as in the Qur'an: "All faces are His Face."

Yet admittedly a mirror may well - whether designedly or by its defectiveness - amplify defects or blow up qualities or distort the features of one's personality. For example we may discover a fault that seemed negligible in ourselves in the more blatant fault of the other. We also may discover their faults because we have them in ourselves. Conversely, since every quality has its shadow defect, we might discover a quality in ourselves by observing the shadow of that defect in the other. For example we may discover our inherent joy while disapproving facetiousness in the other.

This way of considering experience is called the permutation of vantage points in a one-to-one relationship. Essentially this example is simple enough when the reciprocity of the terms is on a parity basis. But consider the relationship between the totality and the constituents of the totality, such that each fraction carries potentially within itself the attributes of the totality.

Examples are provided by the difference between a fraction of a hologram and the total hologram, or the relationship between the DNA of a cell where certain genes are turned on and others recessive and the DNA of the Blastema (the cell at the outset where the DNA is in the undifferentiated state). Now this relationship could not be expressed in the mathematical formula T=p+p+p etc., but rather T=px¥ , which represents the basic mathematical formula of the holistic model of the universe'.

Those to whom unity is revealed see the Absolute whole in the parts; yet each is in despair at its particularization from the whole . . . Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is a man, and man is a world . . . all mingled together: angels with demons, Satan with the archangel, all mingled like unto seed and fruit together are gathered in the point of the present. The heart of the barley seed equals a hundred harvests!

Mahmood Shabistari

So much for the assumption that the holistic paradigm is a find of this century!

Furthermore, the Sufis recognize a mirror image of a very different nature - if we may call it so. Certainly they (we) consider the corporeal world as a reflection by way of forms - endowed therefore with spacial parameters - of a reality that is formless yet is endowed with what one might call a metaphysical orderliness.

"Can you or anyone else reach the central order of things or events whose existence seems beyond doubt as directly as you can reach the soul of another human being? . . . yes the word soul refers to the central order to the inner core of being whose outer manifestations may be highly diverse and pass our understanding . . . For Kepler these are the visible expression of the divine law."

"But the decision upon goals cannot be made within science and technology; it is made if we are not to go wholly astray, at a point where our vision is directed upon the whole man . . . And in the spiritual patterns known to us, the relation to a meaningful connection of the whole, beyond what can be immediately seen and experienced, has always played the deciding role."

It is only within this spiritual pattern, of the ethos prevailing in the community that man acquires the points of view whereby he can also shape his own conduct wherever it involves more than a mere reaction to external situations . . . These ideals do not spring from inspection of the immediately visible world, but from the regions of the structures lying behind it.

Werner Heisenberg
(Nobel Prize in physics, inventor of the matrix quantum mechanics theory)

The soul is awe-stricken and shudders at the sight of the beautiful, for it feels that something is evoked in it that was not imparted to it from without by the senses, but has always been already laid down there in a deeply unconscious region.

Plato

The reason why our sentient, percipient, and thinking ego is met nowhere within our scientific world picture can easily be indicated in seven words: because it is

itself that world picture.

Erwin Schroedinger
(Nobel Prize in physics, inventor of the wave equation in quantum mechanics)

This way of looking at things highlights implicitly the antinomy between an archetype and an exemplar - a totally different mode of mirror reflection. Such a relationship could possibly be described in a transcendental equation, i.e. T=px¥.

In this borderline case, the polarity is infinitely offset. And this is where mysticism comes in: the contemplative grasps and embodies the harmonic order beyond the existential universe of which the existential universe is conventionally considered to be a mere projection. Though meaningfully structured, this archetypal order is a reality beyond form. The Sufi mystics strive to tune their consciousness to a level in the celestial spheres called 'jabarut' where reality is grasped as pure splendor beyond form.

Plotinus called it: "the translucence of the eternal splendor of the One through material phenomena." (Plotinus was a Greek mystic philosopher of the Neo-Platonic school that inspired Sufism in Iran)

Yet these 'gestalts', these pictorial patterns shining forth upon the mirror of the psyche from the deep recesses of the soul, albeit mere inadequate and distorted projections of a posited perfect divine orderliness, possibly bewildering optic illusions spirited on the rainbow bridge between the celestial realms and the hackneyed palace of mirrors, nevertheless fulfil the purpose of existence because they intimate the divine intention. While our interpretation of the feedback of experience proves disappointing by its limitation, in the patterning of images within the psyche.

Let us beware of considering the physical universe as a mere projection of the 'real reality' behind it all! If indeed we are speaking of mirror images; we are talking about reciprocity. However rather than reality mirrored in a mirror, we are talking about the two terms of an antinomy.

This is the implicate versus the explicate order of Dr. David Bohm. Or one might say it is the timeless spaceless versus the transient, local - a bi-polar reality, however offset the relationship between these two poles might be. Instead of thinking of God and

man, let us think of it as two poles of the One being.

God is human perfection and man is divine limitation

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you just see the impact of the eternal on the transient, you neglect the feedback of the transient into the eternal. It is actually a two way system: the feed-forward and the feed-back. Rupert Sheldrake emphasizes the feedback from the existential level of reality to what he calls the morphogenetic field. Dr. David Bohm elicits both: the feed-forward and the feed-back. Moreover he highlights the two way exchange from what he calls 'the information field' to the existential and vice versa.

Seen thus, it is in the physical patterns of the universe and in the human heritage of works of beauty, of culture and human enterprise - in which we exult - that the creative act of the universe is actuated. The elegance of the universal software is perceived as the beauty evidenced by "the proper conformity of the parts to one another and the whole", a phrase of Aristotle.

For the Sufi Ibn 'Arabi, "God is both the created Creator and the creating creature", not a Being removed from the universe. Yet the terms of the antinomy are incommensurate. Note that transcendence is still respected since it includes that which it transcends.

The place of concepts is taken by images content that are not thought but are seen pictorially.

C. J. Jung

As ordering operators, and formatives, in this world of symbolic images, the archetypes function indeed as the desired bridge between sense perception and Ideas . . .

Werner Heisenberg

Ultimately, these images, evanescent as they might be are equally part of our being, as well as the archetypes of which they are the projections.

What Shabistari is conveying, is more still: we are not only in our form an albeit inadequate effigy of the divine archetype, as is said in the Old Testament. Our personal vantage point, rather than being the convergence of the total vantage point having incurred considerable constraint by the funneling down, is but the reflection of the Divine Eye in that mirror which is paradoxically mere void, in which the universe appears as a reflection.

Was it utterly absurd to seek behind the ordering structures of this world a consciousness whose intentions were these very structures?

Werner Heisenberg

By espying in the footprints in this bountiful universe of the divine blue-prints, symptoms of orderliness, or peering into the scenario in Alice's mirror, or scanning the patterns of the shadows on the wall of the cave (the electronic vapor chamber for the physicist), and extrapolating between these, we are actually discovering our own minds and through our minds the mind of the universe.

Now if we adopt the Sufi point of view, jockeying with the permutation of terms: what is happening is that it is ultimately the mind of the universe that is discovering itself. It is doing so through and as our minds by dint of the projection of this mind in what we call physical reality. The consequence for the Sufi is that instead of thinking of ourselves as the observer or even the instrument of the observer or, the convergence of the glance of the observer, we need to think of our consciousness passively with respect to the divine action.

In the state of union there can be no mediation between God and man; and consequently the dialogue with God is evacuated. When God intimates His intentions, our act of listening stands in the way.

Abd el Jabbar Niffari

57 - Freedom

Part I Social Freedom

We are witnessing in our time the bursting forth of the forces of freedom in many fields. Dr. David Bohm (perhaps among the foremost scientists of our time) once defined by two analogies:

One was the difference between the behavior of molecules at low temperature constrained within a clearly defined pattern, or the same at high temperature, fluctuating unpredictably. The other a ballet whose choreography may be strictly configured, or the same ballet where the dancers are able to enjoy a certain degree of incentive within the overall pattern.

I like to illustrate the same in a group of musicians. If they play according to a composer's score, the scope of their initiative is scarce as compared with a situation in which they would improvise. But if each were doing his/her thing, it would be a cacophony. J. S. Bach revealed the secret behind his music by pointing out that each voice had its own area of freedom, but each had to constrain its incentive in the interest of the whole. The balance between the restrictiveness imposed by the whole upon the parts or the inventiveness of the parts overcoming the autocratic imposition of the whole is a delicate one. The guide lines vary according to our sensitivity.

Another example in music: having been exposed to the pressure of a gruffer civilization than that of our ancestor of the 17th century, our ears have become tougher. We can stand dissonances that would have made Mozart cringe. The consequence has been the opening of a greater range of possibilities for modern composers. Sardonically the challenge to their craftsmanship is proportionally greater, and tends to outweigh their stature.

Another leading physicist, Professor Ilya Prigogine, shows that it is the fluctuations from an order whose equilibrium is offset (in what he calls dissipative structures) which explore new possibilities. The newness would be unforeseen if the older order was observed. Creativity is within the individual inventiveness. On the other hand phantasies that do not resonate at the scale of the community are automatically

weeded out. This is because if everyone did their thing, it would be chaos and the collectivity would suffer. There would be an opening to abuses in which the stronger would victimize the weaker. This is the reason for the observance of the law edicted in concert with competent socially minded people.

The above models illustrate aptly our problems in the world at large, in politics, in morals, in our belief systems. As civilization advances, the constraint of our social institutions may suffocate our creativity to a point of exasperation for those caught in the 'prefigured ballet.' On the other hand those who try to challenge a despotic order run the risk of being martyrized. Situations may, however, arise where the pressure of the despair of the oppressed is strong enough to embolden them to take the risk of being immolated for the sake of overthrowing the despots. When the decks are clear the jockeying for power once more releases the instinct of domination, hopefully now checked by the collectivity.

Part II Freedom of the Individual

At the scale of the individual, one may distinguish several 'liberations':

a) freedom from the assumption that the physical world is as it appears; b) freedom from our assessment of circumstances, especially those in which we are involved. c) freedom from being caught into the perspective of others; d) spiritual freedom: freedom from dogma, or theories, considered a simply more or less enlightened view-points; e) freedom from dependance upon circumstances for one's joy; f) freedom from bodily pain or the fear of death - giving one a kind of psychic immunity; g) freedom from one's self image; h) freedom from one's sense of individuality, i) freedom from the quest for freedom, which spells voluntary involvement; j) involving oneself to free others.

One is always running the risk of forfeiting one's freedom by one's co-dependance. If one is not wary, another person may make one dependant upon their dependance upon one. One may yield to the will of the other out of weakness, but often out of pity or compassion, or to avoid a row, or simply out of kindness.

If one's self-esteem is staked upon one's 'goodness' rather than one's wisdom, one will easily fall a victim to this psychological trap. And the escape gets more and more

difficult, since the pain caused to the person one is enabling, if one were to decide to wean them, becomes greater as time goes on.

It is often an angelic nature who falls in the grips of a domineering and egoistic person - or gets close to it as illustrated in the Parsival legends. Incidentally the fear of co-dependance ought not make one unkind and simply selfish in pursuit of one's own well being, impervious to the needs of others. Incidentally too, one ought not confuse co-dependance with inter-dependance where two people balance their mutual dependance in full conscious consentment and dedication.

58 - Suffering and Joy

"I don't want to know whom you are, I wish to know what is your suffering.

Pasteur

Why O my feeling heart do you laugh and cry?

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The victims of sorrow have often been the bringers of joy.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Are you harboring suffering somewhere deep within you, yet smiling? Do you feel wronged by someone, although you bear no grudge? Do you conceal in your unconscious an uncanny notion that life (fate?) Has been hard on you, yet spell gratitude for all that life has brought you? Do you harbor a feeling of unfulfillment for not having accomplished what you would have wished to in your life. Yet do you experience bewonderment at the great achievements of our civilizations? Do you feel sorry for yourself for the sacrifice you have taken upon yourself to help someone, while withholding any smidgen of resentment toward the beneficiary of your munificence?

Are you pining in your being locked in the dilemma of unrequited love, but rejoice in his/her happiness? Or are you frustrated from being with your loved one, through the prevailing circumstances while you welcome your rival open-heartedly? Are you aware that while you feel sorry for a dear one who has died, you are really sorry for your loss, while the deceased has found release from pain? Do you suffer from loneliness yet prove the bright spirit of the party? Do you long to be alone, yet give your whole-hearted solicitation to your guests? Can you rejoice in the good luck of your friends while you are desolate and abandoned? Can you commiserate with the depression of another without slipping in that despondent mood? Do you have the tenacity to persevere in an unsuccessful enterprise on your hunch that it will eventually prove itself? Can you hang on to the last shreds of the rope of hope when everything collapses around you?

Can you maintain your composure in the midst of turbulence, keep your wits in an emergency? Can you honor your faith in the divine meaningfulness behind the cosmic software faced with proof of the contrary? Can you see some mitigating grace in the hearts of those who have let you down? Can you love the people you criticize and guard people's pride at your detriment? Can you brave being maligned while feeling precarious in your self-esteem? Can you listen to the woeful plaints of the unfortunate while straining on the lead to get on with your concerns? Can you cater for people's pain while yours is far greater? Can you live with unbearable guilt compulsively present, yet keep your spirit high? Can you give joy to people around you while your heart is bursting with grief? Can you jubilate in the cosmic celebration, glorifying God while in your moment of need feeling abandoned by Him?

Here lies the challenge of life - of your life. Life avers itself to be a battle for the victory of alacrity against suffering - at the extreme: jubilation against despair. The wager is inestimable, the triumph, and the tragedy! Winning or losing are in the balance - one needs to know where the ultimate issues of one's life lie; where one is being challenged.

Getting away from suffering proves illusory. It will stick to you on the luxury yacht or in the desert, or in the underground caves or on the mountain top or amid the laughter of the comedy show or in your sleep or upon awakening. Or under tranquilizers, surreptitiously concealed in the unconscious, it will sometimes erupt furiously irrationally and unquellable. It will turn your revelling sour when you face it and mar your quest for entertainment to get away from it. The opiate of distraction will wear thin. Can you fight tears with laughter? Can one transmute suffering into joy? Or is it more realistic to be able to live with suffering, whilst simultaneously exulting in joy?

But the cruelty of some knows no bounds - concentration camps, murder - unbelievable! What a tour-de-force to make good the scars! Is there a cure? Engaging head-long in creativity has sometimes proven a wonderful palliative particularly if the work of art sparkles with joy. Suffering like all emotions is a psychic energy that can be put to good use. Ultimately only in acts of service is there a way out - by serving other suffering beings, alleviating pain wherever possible, even if such help only gives a scant relief to the victim. Scanning another's suffering off-sets one's pondering upon one's own. Self-pity can harden one's heart - nurture spite, mask one's sensitivity to

another's plight. In contrast, love directed toward fellow beings melts one's heart, ridding it of rancor; so acts therapeutically.

Look around you - world wide. Wherever you go, what do you see? Is it people suffering, people having fun, sometimes oblivious that it was at the cost of much suffering by those who made this well-being possible; people struggling to stave off starvation, some dying of starvation, others more fortunate, surviving marginally; others opulent; the lazy, the inefficient, the mixed-up ones, the smart, the venturesome, the tycoons, the stalwart, the timorous, the opportunists, the traitors, the facetious, the play-boys, the sadists, the criminals, the despots or simply the ruthless or the greedy or the selfish, the oppressed under despotism, the heroes, the activists, the handicapped, the mentally ill, those who have lost the last grains of self esteem, the homeless wandering the streets, sleeping in appalling conditions where life has become an ordeal, the patients in bodily pain and anxiety about death, the dedicated ones, social workers, environmentalists, medical practitioners, teachers, healers, therapists, consolers, those who administer the solace of faith to the broken spirits, the saintly, the bigoted, the sanctimonious, the jesters and buffoons who are sometimes more successful at fighting suffering with joy, and despondency with good humor, the artists, the mystics, the scientists, and last but not least numerically the good God-fearing honest-to-goodness living middle range. What a drama we are involved in! Or rather how far are we aware of what is going on, and to what extent are we actively involved in it? What are the issues being enacted? Or do we pass it all by, pursuing our own trips?

What is the degree of your involvement? That is precisely the measure of your mettle. What are your motivations to do what you are doing on Planet Earth?

What contribution does spirituality have to offer to these vital problems? Genuine spirituality evokes awareness and enhanced sensitivity and therefore compassion for all beings because the thought of God raises one above and beyond one's personal self-concern or limited perspective. I am obviously not referring here to dogmatism or fundamentalism or belief systems. Rather the reference is to genuine spiritual emotion found amongst the mystics and sages who inspire one to rise above one's selfishness by awakening the greatest of all powers: love.

59 - Healing the Wounds of the Psyche

Pain is a faithful companion that collects more of its kind on the way and does not let itself be fooled by our facetiousness. Yet pain wearies when we give ourselves over to glorification. In fact pain is a host at the center of the cosmic drama that extends the cosmic celebration to the existential realm.

Its lineage may be traced to what Dr. Stanislav Grof calls the perinatal stage of our life's trajectory in nebulous strata of our memory. However fleeting memories of our pre-natal uterine sojourn may sometimes break through from the unconscious. Nature protects us somewhat from the memory of the trauma of birth by blanking out consciousness, so that we embark upon our terrestrial episode with a (relatively) clean slate. But this is where it starts: childhood memories - vaguely erased, yet sometimes erupting with uncontrollable force.

Of course, there is no way of cataloguing these, since the scenarios of our childhood background vary so greatly; sometimes from the sublime to the horrendous, depending upon the case. It may be somewhat innocuous - a toothache, an upset tummy; or worse: being left unattended by one's parents, perceiving quarrels or even violence - being frustrated from one's wish, or confined, or unjustly treated, or punished, or abused, or derided. Whether actually trivial or traumatic, these impediments assume in our childish perception humongous proportions.

Mother nature was putting us through the apprenticeship of pain in preparation for possibly yet greater trauma as we grown to adulthood. Later upon reflection, one may come to realize that just as muscular stress, (within certain limits) tonifies the muscles of our body, so does psychic trauma toughen our mettle. This is providing trauma does not exceed certain thresholds, after which it can prove to be psychologically depleting. Yet, it is good to bear in mind that the threshold between stress and over-stress shifts according to one's determination and realization.

Doubtless a traumatic event, however past, leaves a mark in the psyche, most likely a wound which if not tended is likely to fester and even grow disproportionately out of hand. Physical wounds offer us an apt model for what happens to the psyche: the way is open to bacteria, even viruses. The difference between bacteria and viruses:

bacteria are attacked by the immune system; viruses are more insidious, they take over the very programming of the host cells and deplete their attackers.

Just as a timorous person is more prone to be mugged than a valiant character, since our wounds constitute our weak spots, so people inadvertently perhaps, perceive this weak spot. And if adversely disposed they will aim their attack right there; and if not, life will somehow find a way of doing this to one. Alternately thoughts and emotions accruing from outside and then ingested and incorporated, may infect the wounds, manifesting as bitterness or despondency. Painful thoughts may haunt one obsessively if not dealt with.

How does one effect a cure? In medicine two methods are availed of:

a) administering a foreign product that attacks the bacteria - rarely the virus
b) enhancing the organism's own defense system (likewise with the psyche)

What healing processes does meditation have to offer? Positive thoughts auto-suggested in meditation themes provide a most apt antidote to the negative self-defeating thoughts often triggered off upon our reflections and our psychological trauma. These will sometimes counter the negative thoughts forcefully and effectively protect the psyche from further infection. The sheer repetitiveness of a meditation theme as a mantra, conditioned by its association with a sound sequence will act as a protective dressing smeared with a balm upon one's sensitized heart.

Where the wounds are more deep-seated, affecting the overall structure of the psyche, then it is incumbent to call upon our psyche's inbuilt immune system. Indeed nature does provide us with a degree of inner resilience against upsetting impressions, thoughts and emotions. This ability is effected by the traditional 'indifference' illustrated by the 'imperturbability,' (vairagya) of the Hindu anchorite (sannyasin).

The strategy devised by our smart programming is to refuse admission to unwanted elements in based upon a differentiation (vivea) between self and non-self. In other words to refuse upon our sense of identity, albeit that this sense of identity is extended to the zones in the environment which are usually considered as lying beyond oneself but bear an affinity with one's nature. Certain meditation practices

extend one's sense of identity to everything in which one discovers attributes akin to one's own and thus leads to further reaches of self-discovery.

This sense of recognition (replicated in artificial intelligence) rests upon a more advanced therefore more subtle process than the commonplace subject-object relationship based on otherness (the I-It relationship of Martin Buber). This is identity based on resonance, similarity - in practice a blend between absolute identity and difference. For example, two gongs may have certain frequencies in common and others dissimilar, but owing to the similarities, if one strikes one gong, the other will start vibrating in resonance. This function built into our psyche allows us to enrich our personality with elements in harmony with our being. They have something in common with our own nature, yet differ in certain respects; on the other hand there is a turning down of any response (indifference) with regard to anything that is too foreign.

Also our programming needs to consider that our heredity is a hybrid consequently extending to zone of identity, while setting certain limits for example to cross-pollinization and breeding based on similarities versus incompatibilities. So our genetic programming provides the organism and indeed the psyche with some accommodation by which it can ingest elements in which the heterodox features may even outweigh the homeostatic ones. This is exactly where we are at risk to make a compromise and accommodate elements that prove toxic, harmful, destructive to our being.

Let us bear in mind that since this defense mechanism of the body and the psyche is inborn, it does not depend upon the feed back of experience. The defense mechanism is genetically determined, so there are vast differences of innate susceptibility accountable by heredity. (It is a feed-forward.) Actually we need to account for pre-conceptual features: in the parlance of esoteric lore, (let us call it meta-psychology), we differ in the particular composition or admixture of qualities. The qualities are our divine inheritance, (called 'ayan al Thabita' by the Sufis); yet it covers a vast range. This is predetermined.

It its incipient stage, therefore the immune system acts as a deterrent, repelling harmful intruders, likewise with the psyche. However, once in function, the system adapts itself to the environment. If the intruder manages to gain access within the

organism or the psyche, the organism or psyche learns how to attack it, ultimately defeating it totally by killing it or eliminating it. The genetic code that mostly exhibits much stability throughout our lives to provide a template for the structuring of our tissues, does mutate greatly in respect of the immune system. The ability of the individual to respond to a particular antigen needs to be tailored to the nature of that antigen. Even this is foreseen in our planning so that it may be held that the wherewithal to resist harmful psychic elements is written right into the pool of our divine inheritance. We are provided with a psychic defense system highly adaptable to what seems to be unexpected trauma.

The macrophages first neutralize the disturbing element by engulfing it, then disintegrating it; precisely so does the psyche when its function has not been impaired by over-stress both emotional and mental. But the stress of our lives in our present day civilizations being the way it is, harmful psychic elements tend to gain access into our psyche and our defense mechanism gets over-stressed. This is where psycho-therapy and meditation - optimally a judicious combination of both will prove to the ultimate resort when disturbing thoughts have become ingrained and persistently obsessive. Mercifully the challenge of the assailant will enhance the immune system.

In the psyche, the antigens need to be reinforced by a concerted volitional act since in our civilizations, we have turned down the autogenic psychic defense mechanism actuated by the myths of old. Certain methods of meditation are devised precisely to trigger off archetypal psychic forces that effect recovery. The organism and psyche know how to self-heal, if we know how to let them take over: our will acts as the catalyst triggering off an unconscious, cosmic will, if we know when to let the transit take place. This does rest upon an act of faith: to enlist the action of those archetypal factors of our being, we need to honor our higher being.

60 - The Astronaut of the Mind

Reflections of a nomad in a past life, having become a skipper in this life and dreaming of becoming an astronaut (of the mind) in a future life.

One has seen his life's purpose as light seen in port from the sea.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

On watch by night, it becomes clear to me that the safety of my fellow passengers depends upon my being awake.

As from deep under water, one may scan the shore, even so from the abysmal depths of my slumber I espied as beyond a threshold evanescent flashes of what the awakened state was and could be like. A powerful thought impinged upon my dimmed consciousness enjoining upon me to awaken to capture it. Yet what a struggle to keep my mind alert amid the jumble of thoughts that beset slumber! How impelling the temptation of surrender to sleep! How comforting an escape!

Sinking, I watch the desperate struggle of the mind for coherence against the entropy of blurred thoughts. I vaguely discern apparently unrelated words, even gibberish sentences surfacing at the edge of my mind, then meshing in a somewhat meaningful way, only to vanish beyond range. Sleep seemed to befuddle the mind in waves of nebulous inanity and lay a snare upon my faltering resolve to rise from my torpor. But safety is at stake! the safety of all of us, including mine depends upon both my sight and my insight subtended by that dwindling resolve that keeps evading my grip.

Yes it is the sense of urgency that comes to the rescue, fortifying my determination to steer our way with foresight, determine where I am heading for and why. I am in a desperate bid to eschew catastrophes while off-guard. I must admit an insatiable curiosity to make sense of life and to understand what is enacted in the drama of life all around. And to guess why I am doing what I am doing is also essential to my orientation.

Navigating by the planets soon proves misleading to a nomad who places more reliance on the 'fixed stars'. Besides they would look very different as seen from

Paloma or Brazilia. Moreover the expectation of dawn is for those who are at the time on the dark side of the planet. For the astronaut there is no dawn because there is no sunset with the exception of the rare case of an eclipse. And the stars would look very different if I were hurtling through space at the speed of light.

But if I were to space-walk, can I really say that I am flying above San Francisco rather than London? My sense of location in space has shifted and so my sense of meaningfulness. Incidentally what does it mean to be located in space? Pushed beyond its customary range, the mind reels. Planet Earth is in outer space; ergo, am I not in outer space when my body is on the Planet? Yet paradoxically my aura which is also my body extends in the starry sky.

My intuition tells me that the guidelines for our joint safe faring rests upon a sense of meaningfulness rather than aimless rambling, and that such meaningfulness can only lie beyond my personal horizon of meaningfulness. I ponder upon the meaning of my life and life in general. Brainstorming my mind for explanations within the purview of my understanding would inevitably stand in the way of the understanding they seek to support.

Explanations are the steps to understanding; yet lingering upon them will obstruct the very understanding that they led to. Are we not limiting our grasp of the meaningfulness of the universe by our rudimentary assumptions that it should be logical? Are not contradictions part of its meaningfulness? Is it not our aversion to accepting the contradictions of our thinking that has so far debarred us from accessing the thinking of the universe? And is it not a feature of the freedom of the mind to refuse to demure to the constraint of logical consistency?

Under pressure, I come to realize that it is my insight that alerts my sight, spurring it to espy beyond its range, snuffing out clues which surreptitiously spring into sight as dawn adorns the shadow world with flashes of uncanny effulgence. By what jugglery of mind am I able to muster these clues into guide-lines giving me a sense of orientation beyond the range of my horizon?

But what do I mean by a horizon? It only exists in my mind, not in reality. A horizon is function of a vantage point which spells a limitation. Consequently it has the virtue of making me aware that it hangs precariously on the measure of my ignorance - one

more evidence of my failure of having availed myself so far of the many dimensions of my mind.

Indeed I had not realized that my mind is not just a fraction of the mind of the universe, but coextensive with the mind of the universe. Is that what one means by the mind of God? What does one mean by God? The being of which the physical universe is the body? Or is one not limiting what one ascribes to God by one' anthropomorphical projection upon infinity of the finitude of what one assumes is one's own mind? That is why theologists insist upon the 'transcendence' of God.

Incidentally, could it not be that it is my reliance upon the impact of the mind of God upon my mind that stays me within that illusory horizon? Such an horizon does not really exist except from my perspective. That is: it is because I assume that my mind is limited that I call upon 'other than myself', when in fact these are further dimensions of me.

Since all is God, thou art not other than God.

Ibn 'Arabi

Yet one still needs to account for transcendence - "beyond the beyond".

The way I think of myself changes with my perspective, and so my understanding. But if the safety of my fellow passengers depends upon my sense of meaningfulness, and this depends upon how I think of myself in the universe, imagine the challenge I am facing!

How could I not feel unequal to the challenge to my mind? It is in a spirit of modesty (of which I clandestinely pride myself) that I pretext that my mind is limited, comparing it with the mind of the universe. Do I realize that it is my assumption of being what I think I am that spells my ignorance? Imagine it is my self-image that screens my own self knowledge that keeps striving to make itself known to me? Is it not this very assumption that obstructs my accessing the boundless reaches of my mind?

By positing that my mind circumscribes a limited range within an unlimited compass, by assuming that the universe or God is 'other than myself', I fail to apply the holistic paradigm: namely that my mind like a wave in the ocean expresses the mind of the

whole universe albeit less well than the mind of the universe. Yet I must ever remind myself to leave room for the majesty of the divine thinking: divine transcendence way beyond the holistic level that I share. The two areas of my thinking: the circumscribed and the boundless work against each other!

Yet I can see why many mystics await the grace of divine revelation, thinking of God as 'other'. Maybe this is a worthy means of accessing further reaches of understanding by by-passing the limiting effect of the personal self-image. Maybe applying passive volition unleashes further dimensions of being. Some Sufis however change the terms of this antinomy by imagining what the converse perspective would be like.

I follow the clue: I flip my sense of identity to the other side of that fictitious horizon; suddenly I watch those emerging thoughts that now aver themselves clearly to be contrivances of a hologram projected from my real being, not the thoughts of my real being! I observe that they obey certain rather rudimentary laws of the middle range mentation programmed into humans within a bearable measure like radio sets for domestic use, not for high-tech users. How on earth did I allow myself to be fooled all this time!

Now I realize that the limitation I ascribed to my mind was due to my using it as a buffer to protect me against the power of boundless thought lest it annihilate my view-point? It is like emerging from Plato's cave into the glaring sun, overwhelmed but shattered by the magnificence. It would take the released prisoner time to cope with the bounty of meaningfulness, hypothesized the philosopher, but what a wonder! Yes life does make the most ultimate sense, but it takes this altitude to encompass it! I can see why when entrapped in the middle range thinking, it could not possibly make sense.

As I watch by night while my fellow passengers are sunken in the slumber of blissful oblivion, while our safety depends upon the prospect of exploring the unchartered reaches of the mind - of the universe? of me? my understanding struggles to shake off its support system: lo there is a moment of illumination - a flash of meaningfulness at a cosmic scale. Is this illumination? Then the gravity pull of the non-existent yet fictitious ego takes over - back to mediocrity.

O to roam in the outer space of intelligence at a cosmic scale as an astronaut of the mind to contemplate the sun of sheer perspicaciousness forever but for the short spell of an eclipse rather than being immersed in the arctic winter when the sun emerges but a few minutes above the horizon to plunge one back into the dismal night! But why the eclipse? How could one know of light if not for the contrast of darkness?

By the way, I have being absent-mindedly referring to 'me', speaking about reaching beyond 'my understanding' throughout, but if my understanding is co-extensive with that of God or that of the universe (except less efficient), or is this further transcended by divine omniscience? then what do I mean by me? - by me in the universe?

As I watch in the night of understanding while my fellow companions trust themselves to my looking beyond my self-styled horizon, flashes of lucidity beset my soul as I leave my mind behind; it is not the light I see, though, it is the light that I am in reality, if only I knew that I know!

When the unreality of life pushes against my heart, its door opens to the reality.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

61 - A Dream

O My Feeling Heart, Why Do You Laugh And Cry?

Wandering through the meandering labyrinth of the market place, two men were fighting with knifes. "Its mine... no its mine! You blackguard, you hypocrite, you son of a... you stole it."

The turban of one of the belligerents got dislodged and unfurled itself in a serpentine flurry. It was billowing in the breeze, apparently unnoticed by its erstwhile owner while the skirmish proceeded unabated.

Out of the shadowy comers of the bazaar, as by beguilement, a prostitute emerged in broad daylight. Compulsively reaching for the jagged end of the turban, snatching it from its trail and wrapping it around herself, she danced in sheer abandon much to the glee and opprobrium of the multi-colored crowd.

I loved him with my whole being - my body, an unworthy gift to his magnificence! They cast me out of my opulent Zenana - that most comfortable prison into the filth of the back-streets, amidst the greed, lust and vulgarity of the uncouth - me, who had always been so meticulous! Of course he left me. Yet this was a puny price to pay for that moment of 1ove's glory we shared once in a life-time. His turban which I wrested from him as a keep-sake was my flimsy protection from the lascivious glances that wounded and humiliated my soul. It served as my Purdah veiling my face from the sacrilege of the libidinous.

A Sufi passed my way, unable to offer me material succor in my ordeal, but he helped my soul to survive. He said: "The veil that conceals your face espouses the contours of your face and reveals your eternal countenance which is pure beauty". Then he quoted the Holy Qur'an: "All faces are His face". I cried for sheer relief and vindication. My tears flooding my face became the substitute of the turban which a pimp snatched from behind.

From his pedestal in his favorite street comer, a dervish was watching the scene, lost in ecstasy, listening to the exquisite echoes of a chant emerging from the nearby mosque. Bemused by the sheer exultation of that music, the prostitute's dance

escalated into a frenzy. The turban swirled around her waist and then oscillated back to the head of the man still fighting.

Suddenly discovering the dervish, the prostitute uttered a shrill shriek and started winding the loose end of the turban on the head of the dervish.

The dervish broke into a quake of laughter that reverberated amongst the increasingly gathering crowd. "Allah Ho Ahad, Allah Ho Ahad!" (God is one), he exclaimed repeatedly. Then he added: "See we are all one, linked by that Ariadne thread of the turban! The men fighting do not have the slightest idea of that unity. They are like the two hands of the same person wrestling and wounding each other.

The prostitute's love is her way of giving expression to the divine nostalgia, longing that the fragments of Himself should realize their unity. So she projects that nostalgia in the form of love for that idol - her lover - in whom she discovers the divine love. It is all the sortilege of emotion: love, hatred, covetousness, libidinousness - like different makes of wine, until you realize the oneness of divine ecstasy behind its multifarious expressions. Then one can only laugh at one's own stupidity for not having seen that in the first place!"

As by enchantment her tears were replaced by laughter and smiles as she danced joyously.

By this time, the blood was pouting in rivulets along the bodies of the belligerents. A mullah cast himself between them, beseeching them: "stop in the name of the Prophet Sal Aleihi wa Salam". They stayed their hands a moment, placing their indexes upon their lips and eyes, then once more cursed each other blasphemously and the fight resumed even more viciously than before.

Taking what she thought was the hint of the dervish, she approached the belligerents laughing hilariously as she prance around them. She resorted to an unusual form of defiance as they snarled and ranted at each other. The now excited crowd burst into applause and laughter in mock derision and scorn. They were totally unaware of the fact of having unwittingly picked up the dervish's clue - but not quite.

Now the prostitute, remembering the dervish's references to the hands of the same

person wrestling with each other, started wrapping the turban closer and ever closer around the two belligerents. She paired their movements, squeezing them tighter and tighter as she danced around them lost in the consciousness of the ecstasy of divine unity, exclaiming: "Allah Ho Ahad... Allah Ho Samad! God is one, we are one in God... linked inextricably with each other by the turban - the veil concealing the divine beauty.

62 - How to Find Peace in the Cosmic Drama

Whether more closely or more remotely involved in the present mess in which humanity has maneuvered itself, it would be insensitive on one's part not to feel distressed, disturbed, dismayed, unsettled in our emotions. We may be angered and disgusted at the barbaric attrition which extremes of concupiscence in the human nature have inflicted upon so many innocent victims, on the other hand heartened by the courage and heroism of so many. Can one find equanimity and is it helpful to seek serenity amidst the thoughts rushing through one's mind. Or would that be an escape? Alternatively we ask ourselves: what is it that we can do? Moreover, faced with the reality, we feel as though we are being challenged in our belief, in our faith.

If we could view things from the cosmic perspective rather than trying to reach beyond our personal perspective and middle range, we would see that willy-nilly, we are plunged into the drama on Planet Earth that was impending all the time. We have failed to see, wrapped as we have been all the while in the false security of our complacency, oblivious of the drama and misery around us which we dismiss as 'bad news' from the media. Seen in its wider context, the 'Desert Storm' on Planet Earth is simply a pale reflection of the soul-searchings and the birth and continued re-birthing pangs of the universe. Can we halt a moment and take stock of what it takes to make life at all possible, the issues behind the more immediate scenario on Planet Earth in the hope that it might help us to understand better what is happening globally? Seeing what we are involved in unawares, we might better grasp what our role is or could be.

At the cosmic scale, can we have the slightest idea of what could be the intention behind the whole process of existence - the issues, what is enacted in the process? Do we have any idea what the shift from thought to matter could mean at a cosmic scale? A good illustration of this would be a composer striving to give concrete expression to a powerful emotion that came upon him/her suddenly. What does it take for a motivation - whatsoever, whether at the cosmic scale or human - to be followed up and vehicled by a whole organization programmed as its infra-structure? How does thought structure itself into what we call matter at a sidereal dimension? Just imagine our privilege as humans over animals and plants in being part of what is happening in this regard!

Now imagine what would be the cost of introducing freedom - that is personal incentive - in the system! This would require that the pattern on which the universe is built would need to shift continually from simpler models of harmonious orderliness to models exhibiting more and more complex orderliness that allow for the intervention of the free resolution of its constituents. In the interval between these there would inevitably be a transit situation where chaos sets in, in which the existing pattern is dismantled and the new one has not yet gelled. Thus this very 'divine intention' would open up the risk of disruption, conceivably even the extreme hazard that the system runs amok and destroys itself. We are witnessing this in the decadence and corruption in the so called advanced civilizations we pride ourselves of. Doubtless this is also the reason for our fear in the present crisis that it should escalate ominously because the anger aroused by cruelty begets hatred and the ensuing exasperation keeps unleashing yet greater violence.

Yet paradoxically, for a system to evolve rather than being bogged into its own pattern by vain repetitiveness or recycling, it needs to 'fluctuate beyond equilibrium', to use a word of Dr. Ilya Prigogyne, until the previous order is sufficiently disrupted. Then it becomes obsolete and needs to be replaced by a new one. This is illustrated in nature or rather in the evolution of the chemistry of matter on Planet Earth, by the quantum leap from the inorganic to the organic. At the inorganic stage, atoms form a rather monotonous grid, rather like a repetitive wall paper. Suddenly in the evolutionary advance, some molecules shift into a more complex pattern whereby its atoms diversify. Each specializes in a different role in the overall architectony of the molecule. Thus they cooperate, and to cooperate, they become necessarily interdependent. An identical leap in the evolutionary advance takes place at the level of the chromosomes in the live cell which code for the variety of functions that make possible the advent of live organisms. Thus comes an ever more effective support system for the upsurge of intelligence in this corner of the universe.

At a higher level, we encounter an extraordinary complex and sophisticated infra-structure owing to the infinite diversity of functions in our civilized societies. There is the enhancement of the intelligence of the Planet with humanity at the prow. In fact the advent of the human on the Planet would not have been possible without this fluctuation beyond equilibrium from one order to another. But it must be understood that the gift of freedom needs to be supplemented by its imperative

correlate: interdependence.

By dint of the application of the universal principle of economy, to avail itself of the fund of resourcefulness of the insights, incentives and initiatives of its constituents, the system would now need to concede some freedom to these in the determination of its program and decision-making, government and hence destiny. However to avoid that the differences of opinion, of perspective, the conflict of interest, should break loose in the inevitable surge of greed, ruthless exploitation of freedom to rob others of their free-will, cruelty, atrocities, all those appalling things that erupt already in peace and escalate in war conditions, freedom needs to be tempered by interdependence. The ideal would be where each and all of the participants find their respective place in cooperating in the interest of the whole, as we have witnessed in the organic molecules and in a healthy biological cell or cell formation where that cooperation makes the advent of more sophisticated forms of intelligence possible in the universe.

Here, more than ever this evolutionary leap forward calls for a step in our realization of the imperative of introducing interdependence if we are to avail ourselves of the gift of freedom. This principle of cooperation is beginning to emerge in the consciousness of our more advanced human societies in what is now coined: the new world order. J. S. Bach pointed out that this requires, not the despotic dominance of one theme on others, but that each should contribute towards the whole, but restrict his/her/its incentive in the interest of the whole.

Of course the marvel behind all of this is - far beyond the enhancing of intelligence - to be found in the advent of beauty. The splendor of the emotion behind the miracle of life manifests as beauty is first of all in natural structures, the perfect geometrical configuration of atomic, molecular and biological patterns, or the motions of the planets, stars, galaxies. It also manifests in cosmic structures filtered as it were through the human creative mind: the musical scales, harmony, the symphony, art, monuments. This is why when chaos sets in, and the forces of evil and corruption are let loose, one seeks refuge in beauty. In the very midst of ugliness, beauty confirms in us our shaken trust in the meaningfulness behind it all.

We need beauty! As a respite in stress and surrounded by defilement and violence and the attendant fear, our hearts resonate wherever there is beauty. But

there is a yet subtler form of beauty: where the splendor behind existence manifests, not in a special form, not in esthetics, but in compassion, magnanimity, solidarity, dedication, sacrifice for an ideal, unconditional love. Ultimately, the very pinnacle of this motivation which we can read into the programming of the universe is attained in prayer - I would say non-sectarian or alternately in loyalty to one's spiritual heritage, yet with openness to religions other than one's own.

Unfortunately, as we have seen, the condition for the shift from one stage in the evolutionary advance to the next is a break-down of a sclerosed order - this is the meaning of chaos; or shall we say this is its role in the cosmic programming. In the midst of this 'de-stabilization', we are disoriented anxious, confused, afraid. This is where we are tested in our understanding of what is happening and what are the issues enacted - we are being tested in our faith in the inherent meaningfulness and well-meaningness behind phenomena. From our commonplace perspective, we cannot possibly expect to grasp this; consequently our faith runs the risk of wearing thin. What is more, just as the need for serenity and a sense of the sacredness is most needed, we find it more difficult to meditate or pray. It seems like opening one drawer after closing another, or burying one's head in the sand, fleeing reality.

If indeed the issue behind existence is the surge and preservation of the freedom of the individual, albeit tempered by interdependence, it follows that the 'Powers that be' have to constrain their intervention, (His/Her's intervention). Yet does that mean abdication of any control whatsoever? Perhaps this would be best illustrated by a car-driving monitor, or pilot coach, handing over the steering wheel or stick to the pupil, restraining himself from stopping a false move until it becomes too hazardous, and then taking over. That power which the Mazdeans ascribe to Ahura Mazda to maintain the ultimate control in the struggle between Spenta Mainu and Ahriman is the one to which Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan draws our attention: it is called Kaza by the Sufis. In tribulation if we invoke God or the prophets, masters and saints who form the spiritual hierarchies of the Government of the World, it is in the desperate hope that they will be able to stem the tide of evil and avert disaster. But if indeed their overall commitment is to preserve the principle of the freedom of incentive and decision of the individual, then their intervention needs to be limited to simply avoiding that the system should auto-destroy itself. Would this means that the intervention of the 'kaza' force is withheld until the eleventh hour, at the brink of

disaster? No, not necessarily, 'Kaza' stands for inertia, in scientific terms 'homeostasis'.

There is always a principle of stability, of balancing opposing forces written right into the programming of nature at all levels. This may be observed for example in politics or all human institutions where innovation is always countered and thereby balanced by a conservative force. In physics, it is called the "order out of disorder principle" for example in the Brownian movement within a liquid, the random movements of the individual molecules cancel each other out. Thus there is a safety mechanism programmed into nature that ensures that a system does not auto-destruct itself ultimately.

At the level of human affairs, it is embodied in the influence of the spiritual hierarchy, and more generally in the power of prayer and the propensity for peace inherent in people of good will throughout the world. The strength, range and reach of this power is enhanced by the number of its supporters, and the degree of their commitment. The bastion that we could build up by our prayers could, if backed by the uncountable billions of people of good will in the world, present a sizeable antidote to the forces of political dominance.

How does one maintain calm in tribulation? And more particularly, how does one maintain joy in suffering, despair? An apt illustration is given in the picture of Buddha sitting unperturbed in the middle of a storm. This must not be construed as failing to recognize the reality of the problem breaking loose as the storm - that the problem needs to be dealt with. Peace needs to be availed of as the spring-board for action - as a source of power, not as an escape. We know that the center of a hurricane is a vacuum: inertia balancing the turmoil and thereby staying it from running amok.

Where can we find this salutary principle of inertia in our psychological set-up in life? Obviously if one withdraws one's attention from the environing drama, in splendid isolation, to meditate, oblivious of what is going on, which means unconcerned with human suffering, in a state of Samadhi, touching upon one's eternal being, one will doubtless find peace. But this seems rather like the despicable legendary ostrich act. However, there is a way of capturing the attunement encountered as we snatch a taste of our own eternity but in the instant we call 'now' -

the present without change; and of the infinity vested in our human nature in the existential 'here'.

In the ordinary course of experience, the instant is continually being flooded by the past that continues to live in our psyche and by the future which we anticipate or apprehend. A good illustration of this would be a piece of music: while following the trend of the melodic or harmonic sequence, or rhythmic progression, one can often forestall the next step. The prior elements of the music flow into the oncoming ones, and the future ones are already anticipated, so that they overlap in the present. Thus the present is not limited to being a threshold, but is rather a moving transition that peters out in infinite regress on either side.

To understand what is meant by eternity, we could picture a pendulum. At one point, the point where it is suspended, it remains stationary, at the other end, it moves in time-space. The Samadhi state corresponds to the apex. However, there are two moments in the swing of the lower extremity of the pendulum where it also experiences a state of suspense: at the apogee of its orbit to the right and likewise to the left. One must be circumspect about imagining that time flows at a regular pace linearly; in fact it is landscaped. At those critical points (which could qualify as singularities) it is suspended; the process of becoming is arrested in a hiatus. Or could we posit that eternity is written right into the process of becoming, and what is more, we are endowed with the capacity of grasping it, not just in Samadhi, but in the 'here and now'? In fact this is what Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan means by 'awakening in life'.

How can we capture these moments in our lives, illustrated by the halt in the swing of the pendulum? We can learn from a Sufi technique of meditation which consists in evacuating the psyche of any memory of the past or any projects for the future in the instant where the arrow of time is arrested. We have for an instant emancipated ourselves from the constraint of the process of becoming in the 'here and now' rather than escaping the 'here and now'. This corroborates clearly with Dr. David Bohm's view regarding the 'enfolding' of the totality of the bounty of the universe at any point of the universe in what he calls the implicate state, and of the encounter of the past and the future in what he calls the holo-movement. Rather than being bogged into the 'here and now', one sees how the 'everywhere and always' conflues into the 'here and now'.

It is in this instant, free of becoming - of homeostasis -illustrated by the Buddha, that we may find peace in the middle of the storm raging at present without escaping from it. The recipe is: wherever you can find an opportunity, put a screen upon your preoccupations with the past (remorse, recriminations, resentment) and stop worrying about the future, (the desire for acquisition, greed, covetousness), but realize the privilege offered to you by the universe of experiencing the miracle of life in a break-through of realization!

Like Henri Bergson, the Sufis distinguish the instant from duration. Hearken to the eleventh century Sufi Afghan Sufi Hujwiri whose tomb is in Lahore. Thanks to that sense of the timeless instant, one frees oneself from the way the future is conditioned by the past, so that one can determine it oneself as illustrated in Zen. In Herrigel's Art of Archery, the teacher says: the target determined the path of the arrow, not my hand.

Becoming represents our destiny, eternity our freedom.

63 - Meditation as a Factor in Addiction Reduction

The escalating number of case histories of recovery from addiction confirm that medication, while undoubtedly effective in reducing and even removing the physical withdrawal symptoms, most times leaves the patient high and dry, emotionally deleted, in a kind of moral limbo. The reason is that a therapy limited to the physical syndromes fails to address the deep psychological motivations behind the craving, whether it is alcoholism, drug abuse, cigarette addiction, masochism, sadism, over-eating, sexual perversions, or the quest for trance.

These motivations present themselves as an antinomy: on one hand a need for an emotional high, in the hope that it may lead to access a more cosmic and transcendental and nobler dimension of ourselves and indeed of the universe than our commonplace one; conversely an escape not just from the platitudes of the hum-drum daily routine of most people and the ensuing low-key emotional attunement incurred, but from the despair attendant upon the sense of powerlessness to control one's life in which most people find themselves jammed.

The same applies to meditation which paradoxically offers the very complementary therapy to the medical one required for effective addiction remission. The craving for an emotional drug-free opiate masks an escape from a sense of inadequacy in dealing with one's responsibilities.

For this reason, the Sufis seek an emotional high 'in life' rather than beyond life by advocating modes of meditation that aim at awakening in life rather than beyond life. In fact, the key issue is our desperate need for the sacred, both in and beyond the universe including ourselves. Failing the fulfillment of this need, our self-esteem is eroded.

What do we mean by sacredness? An example: one is forcibly aware of the sacred when one is humiliated: a violation of the divine status of one's being; the same applies to the outrage aroused in us when the divine status of others is defiled and profanated.

Our sense of the sacred is obviously inextricably linked with our concept of

God. One needs to grasp that one's higher self is coextensive with that aspect of God called in the Twelve steps the Higher Power. It may be helpful to visualize as a model: think of radial lines that have an epi-center in common, or alternately apply the holistic paradigm. Furthermore one needs to extrapolate between the cosmic and the personal dimension of oneself (called by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan one's nature in contradiction to one's character.) Since we limit God by our conceptualization of God, it is important for us to explore how our human psyche actually projects its experience of the 'superlative' in terms that are meaningful to it.

The notion of God conveyed by the Unconscious is embodied in the archetype of the (1) nurturing mother: our evolutionary underpinning, (ii) the archetype of the father: our divine inheritance, (iii) the archetype of the child within: our recurrent rebirthing, and (iv) the archetype of the alter-ego: the universe in its many splendored bounty of those we cherish and love - enlisting the enriching cross-polinization with 'other than ourselves'.

The transference to the actual mother, father, child-within and partner is most times fraught with fulfillment or frustration, or both simultaneously. Dependance upon these must in the very nature of things be followed by severance with the ensuing sense of loss, or alternately one feels a need to free oneself from this dependance, in both cases in order to find one's own self-actuating self whereby one arrives at a healthy mature relationship with these.

Sufism therefore values both the fulfillment and enrichment attained by involvement and the invulnerability and overview gained by freedom from involvement, moreover most particularly they foster the great art or cross-pollinating between both.

For the Sufis, our need for involvement in life, with people, in circumstances is the way in which the divine nostalgia works through/as us to the end of building a beautiful world of beautiful people. Craving is considered as a distortion of the divine nostalgia for existentiation where the divine impulse has been lost to sight. And our need for freedom from dependance upon the existential underpinning of our lives exemplified in asceticism evidences the conditioning to the more advanced modes of the programming of the universe in which we participate by our incentive in ':fluctuating the orderliness of the universe from a state of equilibrium" (Ilya Prigogyne) which if perpetrated would stifle the evolutionary advance. The Sufis illustrate the quest for

freedom as a participation in the divine act of unification whereby the know-how gained by experience at the existential level is recycled into the programming of the universe.

Dr. Stan Grof's research reinforces our hunch about the pain and sense of loss in the severance and weaning from the mother, or alternately frustration because of a paucity of nurturing. Thus frustrated, the child's resort to the father is obstructed by the fear of ego loss under the constraint of authority. Moreover to find fulfillment in partnership, the adolescent needs to attain a certain degree of self-actualization. Hence the need for dependance therefore is transferred to a surrogate prop or crutch: alcohol, psychedelic, tranquilizer, cigarette, otherworldliness that addresses one's need to find a relief from the strain of taking responsibility by a dalliance with one's powerlessness that betrays complacency.

When one however comes to the realization through the Twelve Steps that one is fooling the body and mind by failing to acknowledge that one's crutch is self-defeating, one is ready to uncover within oneself the dimensions of one's being from which healing may be mustered.

The Sufis recognize four dimensions of healing energy:

1) an earthly dimension which operates a repair process, restitution to the originally unimpaired state, (homeostasis)

2) an inner dimension from which a regenerative force emerges which will revitalize the cells of the body and the emotions of the psyche

3) a cosmic dimension from which energy may be availed of from the environment

4) a transcendent dimension from which a paradoxical energy acting as a catalyst releasing latent energy may quicken one's being in a sudden flash of instant healing (called the holy spirit)

Let us now examine the four archetypes of the unconscious referred to earlier, a little more closely and outline the corresponding meditation practices with a view to explore

the manner in which they may effectively help in the addiction recovery program.

The Mother Archetype

Our resort to the mother archetype evidences our need to be both shielded and nurtured owing to our sense of powerlessness and inadequacy, or at least owing to our sense of the limits to our personal power or capabilities. Our dependance is compensated by the quality of dependability embodied in the mother archetype: reliability, stability against excessive turbulence or uncertainty. This stability also requires and encourages an enhanced sense of practicality, the importance of ensuring the practical underpinning of our enterprises, with the inevitable quest for material comfort.

Mother earth, nature presents an essential feature ensuring homeostasis: the tendency for the reinstatement of a state of equilibrium that has been disturbed, a repair faculty written right into the system; conditioning, habit-forming which is an essential factor in learning. By the same token, the disadvantage of this stability could be excessive conformism, traditionalism, even fundamentalism; yet paradoxically adherence to traditional modes of worship safeguards and fosters the attunement to the sacred in age-old ceremonies.

It follows inevitably that the religious practices enlisting the importance of the mother aspect of God are embodied in earth rituals, as that of Persephone, sometimes leading to orgiastic rites as in the Greek mystery cult of the Menaedes.

Yogis harness this telluric energy in the Kundalini practices whereby the upward surge of nerve impulses from the bottom of the spine is fostered. This is called kindling in neurology, reversing the more usual energy flow of nerve impulses initiated by the will which generally flows downwards.

Typical meditations illustrating refuge in the mother archetypes are achieved by practices enhancing an oceanic sense of oneness with the environment or the universe at large which the French poet Rimbaud called 'participation mystique' and described by the astronaut Gusty Shweikart relating his experience in a space walk: "You are out there, no frames, no boundaries... your identity is with that whole thing".

In the Buddhist practice liberation from dependance upon the physical mental and psychological underpinning of our being is achieved by clearly distinguishing between the observing self on one hand and the body, thinking, emotions and psyche, systematically withdrawing one's identity with these by considering these as 'other' than oneself and identifying with pure consciousness; then in a next step withdrawing one's sense of identity from one's personal consciousness to an impersonal 'I' is considered as the fundamental illusion. Clearly, by freeing oneself from the limitations upon one's notion of oneself by one's dependance upon one's existential underpinning (the mother archetype), one awakens into one's cosmic identity - not however to be confused with one's transcendent identity found in the 'Arupajhnas' of Buddhism as in the yogic Samadhi. Therefore it might be defined as self-transcendence.

In contra-distinction thereto, the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions and of course Tantra include the body, and psyche as integral aspects of our total self but distinguish between those elements in us that we should reject (the monster) and those that we may make good use of (the monkey - our ancestral evolutionary inheritance) but needs to be transmuted (alehem).

The Father Archetype

The quest for the father archetype fulfills the need to discover the archetype of which one is the exemplar; and hence evidences our innate hunch regarding transcendence which the French mathematician Henri Poincaré describes as our intuition that there always is a number greater than the greatest number we have envisioned so far and this in infinite regress. The same applies to time and space and accounts for our sense of perfection.

The practices illustrating the quest for the father archetype envisioned as 'beyond the beyond' are typically embodied in the Yogic search for Samadhi: that is awakening beyond the existential realm by unmasking the hoax of our mind-games, that is upgrading the commonplace conditioning of our middle-range thinking by substituting a more sophisticated software (Patanjali) exhibiting cosmic and transcendental dimensions more in keeping with the thinking of the universe. Rather than taking for granted that one awakens out of the sleep perspective into diurnal (day) consciousness, Shankaracharya advocates awakening out of the perspective of diurnal consciousness first into the dream perspective (orthodox sleep), then into deep

sleep (paradoxical sleep) where the object of consciousness whether perceptual or imaginary has fallen out of focus. Consciousness evacuated of its content evaporates, giving vent to the awakening of intelligence which is actually the ground or seed-bed of consciousness.

It offers direct access to the thinking of the universe without reference to its actuation in existential experience. One discovers that if for example the physicist is able to make sense of the programming of the universe, it is because human thinking is isomorphic and co-extensive with (that is of an identical nature with and holistically enmeshed in) the thinking of the universe. Isaac Newton said: "I think after God's thinking". This is transcendence, not to be confused with self-transcendence encountered in Vipassana where consciousness has spilled beyond the boundaries of the notion of the self, but has not petered out.

Typical involvement in the father archetype may be found in people who have difficulty in taking responsibility and need to be guided or enjoy being dominated, even sometimes by a despot (which accounts for typical political incongruities), also in quite a few cases of guru worship. This may equally be encountered in excessive value or credulity attached to belief systems based on religious authority or institutions. God is looked upon as irascible, fate as irrevocable. The result is fatalism and the down-play of personal initiative.

The father archetype appears thus as threatening to the ego will. This inevitably manifests in resentment for authority and a defiance of orderliness; one dethrones the father. The result is slackness, slovenliness, permissiveness, even unruliness, hooliganism, culminating in a lack of self-respect. However a Higher Power is yielded to when there is no alternative, when every effort of one's incentive has failed. This spells surrender - the return of the prodigal son.

By some sardonic paradox, that which ventured to challenge the divine will (ascribed to fate), avers itself to be one's vulnerable puffed-up display of masquerading personal power, actually masking one's fear of exposing one's inadequacy under the smoke screen of addiction. (Tav Sparks). This personal evaluation of one's inadequacy, vulnerability and fallibility is based upon one's having convinced oneself that one is powerless to control one's life. Both assessments are of course relatively fallacious because based upon (i) one's failing to grasp what is being enacted behind one's

problems and (ii) one's identifying with one's personality rather than grasping the cosmic ground of one's being attained in the appropriate meditation (iii) one's looking at things from the personal vantage point rather than (a) extending one's consciousness into its cosmic dimension or (b) awakening beyond the act of consciousness into the realization grasped by the act of intelligence attained in the transcendental modes of meditation.

When confronted, the Trojan horse of one's make-believe and self-deception sustained by the illusion meted out by the drug admits to having been a ploy. When fully broken down this subterfuge will yield to an awakened respect for the sovereignty of the orderliness behind the programming of the universe manifesting as the divine operation in one, embodied right into one's own higher will.

Resolution may be arrived at by integrating one's personal ego personality with the ground of one's personality which the Sufis ascribe to one's divine inheritance. We have difficulty in achieving this because of the obvious incompatibility between the splendour of our eternal self and the inadequacy and sometimes paucity of our personal idiosyncrasies. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan addresses this need "to reconcile the aristocracy of the soul with the democracy of the ego".

Moreover resolution may be attained by availing oneself of the virtues of passive volition, that is letting the divine operation have its way while at the same time asserting one's will. This would tally with Dr. Ilya Prigogine's 'f1uctuating the equilibrium of the orderliness behind the universe", rather than 'doing one's own thing' without regard for that orderliness, like a yachtsperson or hang glider pilot harnesses the wind to the pursuit of his/her objective. The art of achieving this consists in clearly discerning the difference between the personal dimension of one's will and a more cosmic and sovereign dimension of that very will. This is mastery rather than just stubbornly forcing one's will upon situations willy-nilly.

It would also mean extrapolating between the perspective of awakening beyond life with that of awakening in life, that is transcendence with the oceanic feeling of being holistically enmeshed with all things. Ideally this would mean being clearly aware of the nature of the physical phenomena surrounding one and experienced in the very cells of one's own body, and equally of the reality of the circumstances and situations affecting not just oneself, but humanity, in fact, aware in the global environment at

large while at the same times grasping what is enacted behind the scenario of life, intuiting what is the programming behind the events, letting the thinking behind the universe transpire in one's thinking as in Samadhi, while grasping the values at stake, the personal issues involved, unmasking the mind games and guile and sham.

The Archetype of the Child Within

The child within proves to be our saving grace when alone in suffering from a poor self-image, we pine over our profligation. When confronting ourselves in all truthfulness our acknowledgement of guilt may lead to a sense of having profanated and the child within. This is a frequent occurrence in alcohol and other addicts and appears irreversible, The converse may well occur: namely the feeling of having been defiled by an inappropriate act of another person upon one, as in the case of rape.

There seems to be in psycho-therapy a tacit assumption that in these cases the child within has been damaged. Attention needs however to be drawn here to an analogy: the voice of Caruso which was very badly distorted by the bad technology of the time can today be retrieved owing to our high technological advances. This points to the fact that the voice is still there within its distortions, even as eddies on the surface of a lake maintain their integrity even though intermeshing in wave-interference patterns.

Here lies the saving grace of the child within against our self-made sense of opprobrium. The child within is still there unscathed, covered under unteemed sheaths marked by the spill-over wreaked upon us by our adaptation to the environment, also the mortgage of our maturity.

To earmark the child within, we need to peel off the accumulated sheaths just like in order to retrieve the voice of Caruso, sound technicians had to reverse the distortions. This would mean owning up to dishonesty, thus opening up to public blame, giving up any contrivance to use guile in self-interest, thus appearing ingenue to our smarter fellows, eschewing any feelings of dislike or hatred for people who may well be obnoxious.

We may discover this archetype still present in the depths of our being in the clear eyes, the innocence, the propensity for compassion, the trustingness of a child. This may encourage us to trust ourselves to make a fresh start, from scratch as it were,

make a pledge that opens a new chapter in our lives. Our spiritual legacy eulogizes the child archetype as being immaculate, exemplified in the immaculate state of the Virgin Mary, or the mother of Buddha or of Zoroaster.

The Sufis ascribe it to our celestial counterpart or subtle bodies, and Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan describes the quintessential core of our psyche as a mirror that can never be tarnished by the impressions upon it. The meditation practices aiming at the discovery of the child within consist in learning how to turn within. As we hold our breath after inhaling as we withdraw our attention from the environment and in addition our psyche, we discover the emergence of a fresh blossoming of qualities trying to break through in our personalities - a rebirthing. Moreover discover a fresh dispensation of vitalizing energy that dynamizes the cells of our body and our minds.

Of course the child in us needs to grow up to maturity: in the existential drama, the angel becomes the master. Therefore at puberty the adolescent sheds off the child in him/her like the snake of its skin because the paucity of the child's discrimination makes him/her badly adapted to the challenge of real life. Here lies the moral of the Parsival legend. To mark the passage from the angel to the master, he sins: he kills the swan - the symbol of the immaculate. For this he is banished - he has to learn to discriminate between that which is appropriate or not; but his encounter with the very epitome of evil in the Queen of the night brings him back to the father archetype represented by the Grail temple, not just as the prodigal son, but the hero, the knight, the controlling master.

The way to get control over our fate where we previously felt powerless is therefore fraught with the overcoming of whatever it is in us that causes our devalidation of ourselves and which we are trying to escape in addiction.

Resolution between involvement in and weaning from the child archetype is illustrated in the combat between Jacob and the angel until as the light dawned upon him, he realized the angel was his celestial counterpart, his own higher self which he was not owning up to.

Resolution once more requires extrapolating between the effigy of the child within and that of the master envisioned as two superimposed images, both bearing a striking resemblance, yet one being a distortion of the other.

The corresponding meditation practices consist in a catharsis, exemplified for example in the 'theosis' of the Hesichasts. It is a kind of cleaning out of one's thoughts and emotions, working with one's aura of light while identifying increasingly with one's celestial counterpart thus purified.

The Archetype of the Alter-Ego

The need for involvement with 'other than oneself' whether in a personal relationship or partnership in general or with nature or the universe at large evidences the virtue of discovering oneself in another oneself who is better able to actuate the qualities lying dormant in oneself than one has achieved so far. Plotinus said: "That which one fails to discover in contemplation, one seeks to experience outside oneself." Hence the perennial quest for the alter-ego - anima of one's animus, or the animus of one's anima.

Moreover the latent resourcefulness lying dormant within the seedbed of one's psyche emerge by being called upon to meet the challenge from 'outside'. Hence the need to achieve in life in one's partnership with others.

It ensues that one's self esteem is precariously poised upon proving oneself to oneself and particularly to others. One becomes overly susceptible to criticism, and most vulnerable.

The outcome is inevitably dependence whether material or emotional and if one is not a match for the ego of the partner, condescendence, that is an over-transference of one's ego in another ego to the extent of enjoying self-validation by satisfying the needs of the other. This is tantamount to becoming dependant upon the dependance of another upon oneself.

It is the quest for liberation from dependance that prompts the ascetic, the hermit (in India the Sannyasin to leave the world, abandon possessions, seek the solitude, practice austerity by subjecting him/herself to severe discipline, emancipate him/herself from the susceptibility of personal emotions in order to become invulnerable - pursue peace rather than joy with its mortgage of pain. The consequence is aloofness, remoteness, the introspective mode.

What would be the resolution in an effort to reconcile these two irreconcilables? There is a saying of the Sufis: "Renounce the world, renounce yourself, then renounce renunciation out of love". The challenge would then consist in involving oneself with people and circumstances without letting oneself become emotionally dependant, loving irrespective of whether or not one is loved, unconditional love, that is loving a person who makes him/herself most unlovable. A good example of the actual application of this resolution would be interdependence rather than dependance - self-actualization in a creative way while networking, sharing. This would require triggering off in others one's vision of perfection which was virtually present in them although they may not have been aware of it.

A further resolution would consist in extrapolating between the knowledge gained by experience with the intuitive insight gained by turning within. This is achieved by learning by doing, acting upon the environment, or circumstances to confirm one's hunch, rather than merely interpreting occurrences, active looking: casting one's glance upon things rather than using one's eyes merely as passive organs of perception.

The corresponding meditation consists in filtering out the grosser and deleterious impressions from 'outside', sublimating that is distilling those that are somewhat compatible with the subtle effigy of one's being. Moreover rather than trying to reinstate one's Pristine celestial state, brainstorm the way one wishes to be and what is more transfigure the effigy thus fashioned into the body of resurrection.

A further meditation practice consists in cultivating qualities present in oneself in an embryonic state by exploring their relevance with dealing with problems. Meditation thus avers itself to be a rehearsal for life.

64 - Suffering

The first cause to answer is suffering. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Since time immemorial beautiful beings have dedicated their lives towards coming to the succor of those in distress in body, mind and soul. In his search for a solution to suffering, Buddha renounced his palace. While many have renounced personal well being out of a feeling of compassion, many more have caused untold suffering to others in ruthless pursuance of personal interests, out of greed or crass disregard for the ordeal that millions are enduring in our day and age. Most people find their place somewhere between these two extremes. Is there any way of allaying the psychological affliction attendant upon illness and death, starvation, penury, failure, abandonment, injustice, moreover the nagging, often unconscious fear that these arouse?

While recognizing the reality of the dire physical pain endured by many, sometimes beyond the pale of human endurance, our recourse is to call upon the influence of mind over body, first by recognizing the impact upon body functions of our attitude towards psychological trauma. Resentment, remorse, self-pity, envy, hatred, frustration, anger, addiction, co-dependence alter physiological functions mediated by the endocrine glands affecting digestion, blood pressure, the lymph glands, the immune system, neuro-transmitters, the replication of the DNA by the RNA. A large body of research is being carried out at present to determine which psychological syndrome affects which hormone secretion and which hormone affects which body function. But we can explore methods of dealing with the psychological trauma.

Reciprocally, since the bodily afflictions and the prospect of death arouse psychological attitudes, one would need to investigate how best to deal with these. No doubt these attitudes involve our sense of identity and how our sense of identity is related to our body. Buddha's solution: not identifying with the body or even the personality may well yield concrete results by dis-identifying with the seat of the pain or despair, but it does go counter to our involvement with the existential reality with all its implications with regard to accomplishment, building a better world, fostering a way of life, providing a practical underpinning for the development of culture, human relationships, etc. Besides owing to the momentous developments of science, (for

example we can now see the live body cell in action), we have developed in our time a healthy respect for the privilege of involving ourselves with the fabric of the universe in our intimate relationship with our own bodiness. We are also our bodies; our bodies have accrued to us from the universe and have become part of our being, and so are our personalities.

A way of looking at ourselves taking into account the emerging paradigms of science, and indeed confirming Hindu, Buddhist and also the experience of Sufi mystics would consist of rather than envisioning ourselves as discrete entities, realizing that we are a cross between a vortex, coextensive and isomorphic with the nature of the whole universe, and being a temporarily stable but evolving sub-whole, that is a continuity in change.

Undoubtedly we are inexorably drawn into the process of becoming, which means entropy, but we also have the ability of intercepting the arrow of time vertically as it were by our incentive and inventiveness which then will enrich the flow like a tributary to a river which then will be drawn into the flow. Moreover we have the ability to escape the entropy by resurrecting.

This updated sense of identity involves then two views. The first one is: we expand - and here to find fulfillment, we need to concentrate upon radiating rather than disintegrating, The second: transmuting - that is extract the quintessence of our being from its underpinning, as in distilling in Alchemy. An application of the scientific principle according to which information is built on the expenditure of energy, and that matter is a state of energy would mean in practice that we would strive to make the best of the energy that is our body to foster realization, wisdom, enlightenment, be of service, contribute to the well being of the physical and social environment. What is more, both energy and its state as matter exist in various degrees of subtlety versus grossness, and nature takes care of the transmutation of both. The photon evidences a degree of rarification or sublimation above the electron and the electrons of our body stuff get transmuted into photons before and after death and the state of energy is defined by its frequency, hence the difference that contemplatives make between pure spirit, acting as a catalyst and the grosser states of energy for example high amperage proportionately to low voltage.

If anything is gained by the existential condition, then the relatively stable sub-wholes

must be assured pre-eternity. But for there to be evolution, they must communicate to the environment the know-how gained by experience by expanding, and to the software programmed by the mind of the universe by resurrecting.

The Sufi outlook adds a whole further perspective to those availed of so far: supposing we would look at ourselves at the other end of the divine vantage point and as an expression or derivative of the divine nature. So long as we start with our personal vantage point, we will have difficulty in transcendence; but if we proceed in the opposite direction, we will glean a whole different sense of identity which will envision dissolution and reinstatement in the context of the thinking of the universe.

The Sufis call this 'uns', enjoying the intimacy of the proximity of the King, by being invited to share in the strategy at the court of the King. May I also add: and the Queen.

65 - Ibn 'Arabi's Vision of Beauty

For the Sufis, the propensity of the divine nostalgia which manifests in the human being as love is fulfilled by the act whereby God creates Him/Herself. There is thus a generating of the miracle of the vision of beauty and the majesty that evidences the orderliness of the divine planning of the universe. Consequently for the Sufis our involvement in the creative act of what we perceive in beauty ranges at all levels of our being, including our celestial bodies.

In fact our evaluation of beauty calls upon a resonance at the higher levels of our being. Indeed, the vision of a beautiful object, being, action, or work of art, carries our consciousness and attunement surreptitiously into celestial spheres. The contemplation of beauty triggers off self-discovery.

For the Sufis, beauty is the objective of the intention behind the formative process of the universe. It is in the universe that God reveals the many-splendored potentialities of the virtuality of beauty inherent in His/Her essence to the ones who are able to grasp it.

We shall show them Our Signs on the horizons and in their souls.

Qur'an (41:53)

The Sufis give some clues as to the landmarks mapping the spheres. These may serve to pilot one as one ascends from sphere to sphere.

Now His/Her journey in God involves the dissolving of their composite nature and acquaints them with what corresponds to them in each world of being, by passing with them through the different sorts of worlds.

Ibn 'Arabi

Let us follow the itinerary proposed by the Sufis in their discovery of beauty in the many-tiered universe.

ALAM AL NAZUT. The physical plane

Granted that the ground floor is the physical level of reality framed by time and space and where a projection - as in a hologram - of a formless reality appears in tangible constructs endowed with form, the form of objects conveys the meaningfulness that programmed them.

God reveals His/Her intention through signs.

Ibn 'Arabi

The substance is just the support system of the form that conveys the meaning.

ALAM AL ARWAH. The etheric plane.

The Sufis sometimes interpose here the sphere corresponding to our etheric, astral or subtle bodies or even our aura, which will act as the body of resurrection.

As for the Sufis, they have spiritual journeys in the intermediate world during which they directly witness spiritual realities that are embodied in forms that have become sensible for the imagination; these sensible images convey knowledge of the spiritual realities contained within these forms.

Ibn 'Arabi

Ultimately a subtle form transpires through the outer form (like a countenance behind the features of a face). Moreover that subtle form which manifests as a configuration rather than a profile is actually the form of the subtle matter that transpires through the grosser matter.

The shift of our consciousness and attunement from the perception of gross matter to that of form and then to that of subtle matter and then to that of subtle form is looked upon as the first fumbling steps, in the journey that will lead the aspirant into the celestial spheres in search of the divine intention.

One can fashion the subtle fabric of these bodies imprinting them with the hall-mark of one's celestial body, and with the wisdom gained in one's experience on earth, according to the form one wishes to manifest.

If the forms reveal meaning it is because they serve as expressions of a language which articulates that meaning. It is as though God were endeavoring to reveal His/Her intention in the measure of each creature's ability to grasp what is revealed rather than be impressed by the devices whereby it is revealed. Traditionally that language is spelled in sound (the verb). The Sufis refer to the 'names' of all things.

God revealed to Adam the names of all things.

Qur'an

Indeed, each object is endowed with a frequency pattern. Although objects may produce sound-waves when struck, basically what is meant by a frequency pattern is a pattern of frequencies of energy. And this is precisely what the Sufis mean by 'saute sarmad', pure vibration.

Hence at this level our qualities, considered by the Sufis to be subtle forms, are also characterized by their frequency patterns and therefore are articulated by the Sufis in the form of the names (asma).

MITHAL. The level of metaphor.

To hoist oneself to the sphere of metaphor, one needs to imagine in order to experience; beauty reveals to us the divine meaningfulness buried in ourselves.

To qualify to be appraised of the revelation of the divine intention through His /Her names, one needs to contemplate these names (in the practice with the wazaif) discovering in the seed bed of one's personality the same beauty one sought outside. For this, one needs to cleave to the level of metaphor that is easily masked by one's own personal mental constructs (khyal).

The transformation that one undergoes by proceeding thus opens up one's knowledge of these and through these, the divine intention. Our appreciation of beauty as perceived through the mediation of the world brings us in contact with the celestial spheres of imaginary forms (and this includes formative processes). Rather than assuming that these forms are static we need to realize that they are ever newly generated by dint of the activity of the creative imagination of our minds functioning at

this lofty level (mithal).

In so doing we participate in the divine creative act that spawns all creation: Our imaginings are extensions of the divine imagination behind the fashioning of the universe. Let us also bear in mind that these evanescent forms or formations have their existence irrespective of whether or not they are actuated in physical matter.

MALAKUT. The angelic spheres

Furthermore, the Sufis recognize a celestial sphere where the states of consciousness corresponding to the attunement of the soul fashions the forms and formative processes that shape the universe. In their ecstasy aroused in the exercise of austere disciplines, the Sufi dervishes are tuned in resonance with the souls of beings at this level who convey something of the nature of the inspiration that animates them. Thus this level can be acceded to by either discovering in oneself the guilelessness of the angelic beings who have not yet incarnated on earth or the wisdom of the masters who having disincarnated, convey the know-how acquired on earth to the sphere of Malakut.

Ibn 'Arabi refers to:

"...heavenly encounters with the spirits of earlier prophets and saints. "

At this level which appears as a dream in a dream, one realizes that the forms at the physical level (nazut) and at the level of metaphor (mithal) are configurations that manifest higher levels of reality; that beings are indeed embodied spiritual realities.

Thus the Ascensions of the saints are the Ascensions of their spirits and the visions of their hearts, the vision of forms in the intermediate world and of embodied spiritual realities.

Ibn 'Arabi

At this level, one does not suffice oneself with trying to have some clue of the eternal model behind that hologram that is the world by earmarking clues in the 'signs' in which God reveals something of His/Her being, in the world or in one's personality.

Rather one accedes to the second mode of cognizance, according to Ibn 'Arabi:

There is a further perspective: you discover in your consciousness the act of the divine consciousness discovering Himself through your discovery of Him through you.

Ibn 'Arabi

JABARUT. The level of pure splendor

Beyond this sphere, the Sufis recognize a sphere at which beauty eschews all forms. Consider this level as that at which the (non-spacial) archetypes manifesting at the existential realm as forms have their seat. One recognizes a degree of perfection in its beauty beyond any perceptual image. At this level there is no form, one does not perceive, one is attuned to pure splendor. It is simply a matter of allowing oneself to be moved by bewonderment and glorification.

We have hoisted ourselves at a level beyond existence - the state of potentiality - within which lies the:

"...possibility of existing or not existing...But having been once existentiated, there is no way in which things can return to the state of potentiality.

Ibn 'Arabi

Since this plane can never be the object of our perception, nor can we espy in it the signs or traces of the divine nature, it can only open up to our awareness through divine revelation.

For the wise, nothing appears as a 'discrete entity' but everything is seen as: "the face of reality" **- Ibn 'Arabi**

Ibn 'Arabi gives His disciples the clue as to how to hoist themselves to this sphere:

Then the spiritual traveller leaves behind in each world that part of the world which corresponds to it.

Ibn 'Arabi

LAHUT. The sphere of the archetypal attributes.

The Sufis describe the next sphere (lahut) as being the level where the divine essence (the quintessentia of the alchemists) permeates all living things by imprinting each sphere in the descending order with the seal of the attributes with which it is predicated. The Wazaif are the names of these attributes.

So the glories of the Face are lights pertaining to the Essence; between us and them are the veils - the divine name...the divine names are relations, (not ontological realities) occasioned by the entities of the possible things." ...The essence never reveals itself as such but only to a causal quality.

Ibn 'Arabi

We are referring here to a, so to speak 'vertical causal chain' instead of the usual causal inference based upon the inexorable advance of the process of becoming. Looking down (as it were) from His/Her lofty vantage point the Sufis recognize by analogy the hallmark of these archetypes (the divine attributes) in the forms that express the divine intention in the language of beauty.

This recognition comes both in the scenes of nature and in their own personality. The clue is to try and imagine how things would look from the divine vantage point whereby God discovers His/Her attributes through our participating in this discovery by earmarking the traces of those attributes in our personality and moreover actuating them in our personality.

ALAM AL HAHUT. The divine essence behind manifestation

Ultimately, the Sufis refer to a level (Hahut) at which the divine essence eschews any predication and therefore appears as a void, which is described as darkness. At this level, the Sufi mystic grasps the cognizance that God has of the principle of His/Her being unmediated by the attributes, qualities, names, forms and potentialities which convey some clue as to His/Her essence by qualifying it. This is the secret treasure.

The real Being is exclusively God as essence (dhat) and His initial expression pure spirit ('ayn) beyond His names ...The one who is immersed in the vision of multiplicity is in the world in the aspect of the divine names, and the names of the world; and the one who is immersed in the divine unity is with God in the grasp of His unity irrespective of the worlds... When that which has never been vanishes (from your sight) and that which has never cease.

Ibn 'Arabi

At this level the mystic grasps the cognizance that God has of Him/Herself in the principle of His/Her being whereas by the mediacy of the attributes, names, and qualities which manifests His/Her essence by qualifying it, it becomes known in a somewhat derived manner.

The one who is immersed in the vision of multiplicity is in the world in the aspect of the divine names, and the names of the world; and the one who is immersed in the divine unity is with God in the grasp of His unity irrespective of the worlds...All that one knows of reality is through the qualities which are relations occasioned by the entities of the possible things. If these veils were lifted, unity would erase the existence of the entities of the possible things, and they would cease being described by existences, since they only become qualified by existence through these names.

When that which has never been vanishes (from your sight) and that which has never ceased to be remains, then the sun of the ultimate proof by actual vision arises.

Knowledge is a veil upon the known and vision the door at which one halts...You were the veil over your own eye.

Ibn 'Arabi

The journey upwards as it were is reversed downwards whenever one has reached the highest level that one is able to relate to. The Sufis attach more importance to the descent whereby one embodies the states of consciousness attained.

Thus he continues to pass through the different sorts of worlds, taking from each world that (aspect of himself) which he had left there and reintegrating it in His self, and he continues to appear in each successive stage (of being) until he arrives back on earth.

Ibn 'Arabi

66 - Embodying States of Consciousness Reached in Meditation

The Celestial Celebration on Earth and the Human Drama

There are moments when our minds are stirred by a compulsive need to explore uncanny levels of our being that inspire in us a sense of wonder. We touch precariously upon the unknown. At those magical moments we know that what we are experiencing is real. At least the nebulous scene was adumbrated with a tenuous sense of deja-vu that bears some semblance to what we ascribe to reality. Yet we do not know how to convey these impressions to others, let alone to ourselves in a lucid fashion.

Such precious moments fill us with awe and delight. If we have qualms about what our civilizations have done to our beautiful planet, perhaps such moments confirm our hopes in the continuing possibility of a wondrous effulgent world. Unfortunately those fleeting impressions pass, leaving us with a double-take before we were able to secure a handle on what actually transpired. But we may perceive in this unusual encounter the answer to an imperative, in fact possibly desperate need for the most precious of all gems: the gift of the heavens in our otherwise trite lives.

Much as we would feel moved to recount the experience from the roof-tops, it would be foolhardy to spell it out to those who may have even repulsed such an experience a hallucinatory and fanciful. If a zephyr of beauty has brushed across our world, let us not expose it to those who would besmear it with mediocre truism.

Truly enough we have a valid argument for the scrutiny of our questioning mind: Yes, come to think about it, there was that 'deja-vu'! - a remote sense of something familiar - something to assuage my mind's doubtfulness. Yes, I have witnessed the likeness of the very same luster that gleamed across those heavenly landscapes in the eyes of that child whom I shall never forget.

Why did it trigger off a memory of deja-vu? Because matching experiences set up association processes in the mind. Was that not a handle to cleave to in my temptation to demure to my skeptic leanings? A glimmer of a reminiscence of having

witnessed on Planet earth something of the nature of the celestial realms flickered on the horizon of my mind.

In similar vein, listening to a choir may have evoked a wisp of deja-vu. The composer was attempting to convey a feeling of the atmosphere of the heavens in a sacred celebration. Conversely lofty human emotions may open to the composer vistas of heavenly splendor. For example, in his soul-searchings triggered off by his love for Clara, Brahms touched upon an intangible level of his being. It came flooding in as a flurry of notes, melodies, and rhythms. In so doing, he built a bridge giving us access to unknown strata of ourselves. To make this miracle happen, one has to allow oneself to be uplifted, moved to the very core of one's being by an intuition that bespeaks of a splendor beyond the apparent world. Does it not seem ironical that we should let ourselves be confined to a slice of our being (the physical and mental) when our total being actually fans out in a vast spectrum?

In their musings, people in a contemplative mood have sometimes culled clues as to the nature of these spheres. Then, in the wake of those who have trodden the no man's land come the philosophers who build systems to account for the testimonies of the mystics. In the scriptures of all religions, the references to celestial spheres are legion: often codified in intellectual cosmologies, angelologies, etc., to be stored in the archives of our minds. These may offer the advantage of providing us with a topography of the unchartered reaches, the landscapes of the soul. This has been particularly elaborated by the Sufis.

The Sufi Sheikh Ahmed Ahsa'il points out to the existence of a level of our being he calls 'Jism A', our celestial body which communicates the nature of our Super-celestial being 'Jism B' down to our subtle body (or effigy) 'Jasad B'.

Can you identify with this template behind the structure of your mind, which he calls 'Jasad B' - an archetypal level of our understanding? Thus through the mediation of our higher bodies, the cosmic programing provides for a practical means of communicating something of the nature of the heavens to the earth.

Conversely, our subtle mind/body (Jasad B) and celestial body (Jism A) ensure the feed-back of the know-how and wisdom we have gained by our interfacing with the physical and psychological environment encountered on earth will become

part of the divine programming. We could well envision ourselves after death, distilling the impressions of the earth, transmitting their gist higher up to our Super celestial being. Imagine the prospect offered of being able to occupy oneself totally to being creative. Imagine creating out of the interface between the many splendored planes beautiful and meaningful structures like an artist or a musician!

Important is that we learn to work with ourselves to translate the impressions transpiring through from lofty levels of our many-tiered being into our personality. These may eventually even gel into our physical atmosphere, perhaps even countenance.

Of course the ultimate work of art is the human personality.

Man's art is an extension of the divine art.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Here we are the artist, the fabric and the work of art.

No sooner we pay attention to our deep need for this precious food for our soul, we awaken covert unconscious memory which suddenly erupts. We remember what seems to be our eternal being. At least it seems eternal in comparison with our personality that changes so rapidly. Can you remember the countenance of your eternal face?

Reverting back to our physical body, we cannot fail to be devastated by the contrast. We have a feeling of having incurred defilement in the course of our descent through the spheres. On the other hand, in comparison with our existential frame, our celestial nature seems embryonic. Obviously owing to our incarnation, we have on the other hand matured and enriched ourselves through the interface and osmosis with the physical and psychological environment. Our latent qualities have unfurled and we have distilled wisdom out of the know-how gained by meeting the challenge of life.

At this point, it is an ingratiating thought to realize that our celestial counterpart is still present within the very configuration of our physical frame, interspersed with its defilement just like the pristine voice of Caruso is still present within its distortions owing to the bad recordings of the time. Imagine a holographic slide in which two

similar yet different images are superposed - one blue the other violet. You can toggle from one to the other. By dint of your will-power and creative imagination, you can correct, reverse the distortions in the blue one to approximate to the violet, while honoring the maturity evidenced in the blue one. You are able to confirm that you can ally wisdom with innocence.

Having captured a hunch of the nature and even features of your angelic being, can you see how the attunement of the celestial spheres tends to configure your psyche, even your body (at least the expression of your face and your deportment).? To be creative, we need to customize consciously and willfully that which the universe is doing beyond our compass. This means that we need to be inspired by the splendor that is continually endeavoring to seep through the very shaping of things, and at the same time take into consideration the drama on earth.

While acquiescing to the shocking accounts we are continually assailed with of the greed, the cruelty, the deceit, the grossness, the vulgarity, that comes through or tries to come through our humanness - the rape of the Planet, could we ever be appraising the incredible wealth and bounty gained by dint of incarnation - by the people, by our civilizations, by our cultures and our technologies, by the thoughts and emotions aroused in our encounters, interrelationships with others, with beings of all kens and at all levels? The nostalgia, tenderness, perseverance, faith, idealism, realism, loyalty, caring, sacrifice, imagination, compassion, generosity, honesty that breaks through in the human venture is overwhelming and warms us to the values gained on the Planet.

Of course such a bounty cannot be achieved without conflicts, disruptions, disasters, chaos. Orderliness does not beget change, rather it encourages complacency. Change requires involvement, courage, venture, risk of a disaster, humiliation in defeat, deprivation, suffering to the point of being the victim of a terrible ordeal or calamity. Modern physics points to the fact that to evolve, which means to change, living systems have to 'fluctuate from equilibrium.'8 Our incentive shifts the software of the universe. Indeed free-will unleashes forces beyond one's control or knowledge.

The dramatic fiasco on earth that we cannot fail to be involved with is due to the fact that, according to the Sufis, God's motivation in the whole process called

creation is to bequeath His/Her ultimate asset: free incentive. To understand how this comes about, can we place ourselves in the antipodal perspective to our usual one? Suppose that you were to bequeath the best of your assets out of love. Since indeed the most treasured resource in life is free-will, the Sufis ascribe to God the foremost quality Rahmaniat - magnanimity. So let us consider our free incentive which is the very springhead of creativity as the ultimate divine gift.

Unfortunately the price of that act of generosity is that, by the very fact that the totality gets funneled down into each fraction of the totality, the many-splendored bounty potentially present in the totality gets constrained, limited. Each expression of the totality (that is ourselves) sees and assesses things form his/her point of view. Consequently greed, rancor, conflict, hatred, violence, profanation crowd in; or alternately simply apathy, resignation, sardonic irony - being low-key. One needs to protect oneself against the abuse of that very free-will. Willy-nilly we are involved in the drama.

How do we uphold the values that we inherit from our celestial inheritance in the middle of real life situations? We are at the cross-roads between heaven and earth. How does the celebration in the heavens of our souls interface with the drama in our psyche? How do they interact, inter-mesh, then gel in our personality? To what extent do they match or are they pulling us in opposite directions? Are we doomed to have to compromise in order to adapt ourselves to the commonplace, or can we uphold our ideals in the middle of it all, while still honoring all the values garnered by human endeavor, sometimes at the cost of hard strife? Can we remain high, radiant, aware joyous while meeting situations instead of escaping them? The clue is we touched upon in our discovery of our heavenly inheritance. In this perspective it is clear that in the handling of ugly situations (with selfish or unfair motivations of people around us) there is an option offered us between reacting in the same vein, giving vent to our resentment, concupiscence or gratification; or applying those values that we cherish as they come through us, such as magnanimity allied with sovereignty, truthfulness allied with compassion, beauty allied with rigor, wisdom allied with innocence, or alacrity with serenity.

Or are we fooling ourselves? Are we justifying our own handling of situations on the misleading adage that the end justifies the means? It is the means that

constructs the end. Recognizing our humanness without trying to justify it, yet honoring our celestial inheritance, can we get these two poles of our being to cross-pollinate? That is precisely what personal creativity is about.

How do we celebrate the betrothal between heaven and earth in our personality? Dare you see things from two complementary perspectives at the same time? Have you ever, while climbing the high mountains, surrounded by evescient clouds lighted up by an array of most amazing hues, watched a storm raging in the valley? And hiking in the valley have you been shattered by an alarming outbreak of thunder and lightning while capturing evanescent blue patches of sky as the dark clouds rushed by, above? Both perspectives are complementary, depending on where you are - your vantage point.

I am sure (or at least hope) that you experience moments when the forces of life are aroused with a vengeance and you give vent to the lightning and thunder bursting forth in your own being. One's frustration as one meets opposition to one's commitment in life will ignite anger. In this scenario all the forces of violence, unkindness, rancor, hatred are rife. To succumb to them is just too easy. Here is your chance to fulfill that covert wishful thinking that you may be entertaining: of being a knight. Violence is energy. It can be harnessed by catalyzing a creative act. This energy might just provide one with the push to achieve precisely that for which one had not been previously sufficiently motivated.

We are endowed with the option of becoming a new person. We do not have to be what we have always been. We can even shake off the conditioning of the past and our forestalling of our future prospects.

But evolution proceeds by leaps and bounds. It takes an outburst of energy to bring about a change - a quantum leap - a total departure from the past. It takes the pain and glee of the drama on the earth to pen a clearing in our sky revealing the splendor of the heavens, thus sparking that change.

The power thus wrought will erupt in your will: in fact the clue, the clue to a radical change is in . . . resolve - making a binding pledge to change.

67 - Ring Out the Old, Ring In the New

The very turn of the season beckons upon us to turn a chapter in our lives. A change of tack is a precious instant because it is in a condition of unstable equilibrium that the slightest impulse will cause the largest effect - the creative instant. This is where hope has its chance, hence the custom of making New Year resolutions. The only way for your New Year to be Happy is to make it Happy.

The solstice is a singularity - that it an exceptional conjunction in space and time in the elliptical orbit of our Planet. It marks a special though annually recurrent, transitional configuration in the rapport between our Planet and its environment: the solar system, in which the equator is farthest removed from the sun. Conditions of precarious equilibrium are favorable to change.

Since the time of Jesus, the inhabitants of the Northern Hemisphere of our Planet have enjoyed a grand-stand look out upon the constellations of our galaxy around Capricorn. Now our perspective is shifting towards Sagittarius. This shift is due to the precession of the equinoxes: the axis of our Planet traces a complete circle around the center of the Earth's ecliptic orbit every 25,800 years. It is at the precise instant of the sunrise at the vernal equinox (around Easter - March 21st) that the precession of the equinoxes is established. (Of course it could be calculated from the winter solstice.)

A parallel between the zodiacal houses and the advent of new religious outlooks or prophetic messages reveals the influence of astrological constellations and major shifts in history, in the spiritual evolution of humanity. In the prehistory of Egyptian Mythology, the sun rose at the vernal equinox in the zodiacal house of Gemini, hence the cult of Shu (the sky) and Tefnu (the earth), obviously Gemini. In the ancient empire in Memphis, between the years 4380 and 2200, it was the cult of Apis, the bull, (in Asia Mithra). From 2200 till the time of Christ it was the cult of Amon, the Ram, epitomizing Aries. With the advent of Christianity, Pisces, the fish which indeed we find in medieval symbols. As the year 2000 approaches, we are gradually moving into the Aquarian age - a time presaging abundance, the horn of plenty, the many-splendored gift of the bounty we have arrived at in our civilizations which is what we would be enjoying if it were not for our quarrels, crimes and wars.

Incidentally, we need to consider that the period of 26,000 years is divisible in 4 decades. This explains the advent of Buddhism 7 centuries before Christ and Islam 7 centuries after Christ.

These powerful zodiacal influences account for the tremendous shifts in motion in our civilizations, the dramatic political, social, and technological reorganizations, including the spiritual awakening in our time, plagued with the shocking decadence and uncertainty about the fate of our beautiful Planet. Transitional conjunctions favour spectacular progress providing that the inhabitants of the Planet take advantage of these conditions to pledge themselves to join in common action, otherwise it can lead to a catastrophe. Quite apart from the environmental problems, our social problems can only untangle if we discover a spirituality in keeping with our time, freed from beliefs and observances but soaring on the wings of awakening, the discovery of meaningfulness, mutual respect, kindness, world service.

At the personal level, the change of tack of the Planet on its course at the solstice bids us a unique chance of turning a new leaf by making a pledge. Life keeps relentlessly luring us forward. If we do not honor in ourselves that creative forward thrust of life straining on the lead in ourselves, we will be pushed out of the race and lose our very reason d'etre.

To extricate ourselves from the stalemate which we may well have maneuvered ourselves into, owing to a faulty strategy in the game of life, or from the rut into which we may have inadvertently stranded ourselves by taking things for granted, we need to rethink our lives. To achieve this, we need to hoist our vantage point from the commonplace narrow range of the immediate environment and look at things in a wider context. This is where some of the skills of meditation can prove helpful. It is somewhat like witnessing how different a familiar landscape looks when flying over it in a helicopter or suspended from a hang-glider. Doing this, we realize that our assessments of our life-situations change with the altitude as it were, and furthermore that they are function of our values which manifest the higher levels of our being - and monitor our motivations. Moreover we realize that our sense of personal inadequacy or our pessimistic judgement in our assessment of a situation were due to our mind's having gotten entrapped in a way of thinking from which we failed to see a way out. Yes, one can get trapped in one's thinking and ascribe the prison to one's

fate. The bind is in the mind.

To escape from this prison takes two things: a flash of insight and resolve. How do we trigger off the flash of insight? We need to first ask ourselves: what if my assessment of my life situations, (or of people around me), upon which I have relied all this time and which I have always taken for granted was wrong? What is more, if this is true, any new assessment we might convince ourselves of at this point stands an equal chance of proving later erroneous. If we therefore forego not only previous assessments, but any attempt at a reassessment, then, faced with the collapse of our opinion, we find ourselves hopelessly groping our way in the dark night of understanding. Bereft of any crutches, a different mode of understanding dawns upon us. Imagine that, walking in pitch dark, suddenly you were able to see the auras of people and that the features of their real countenance would be revealed to you in contrast with the features of their faces.

It takes courage to let go of all that one has built up over the years without any guarantee that a new light will dawn upon one's horizon. But we find ourselves sometimes confronted with the choice between situations which progress gradually like a bud unfurls, or where things remain at a stand-still or run the chance of reversing into decay, or where nature proceeds by leaps and bounds. There are situations which one cannot change in their outer circumstances, but will change by one's changing oneself or by a new way of handling them. In exceptional cases - perhaps the most meaningful -, there is no slow transition from one perspective to the other, the transit is sudden. Here lies the difference between the moment of time where there is an overlap between past and future and the instant where there is a sudden and irreversible break of continuity.

These rare conditions called singularities in astro-physics occur in our lives and in our thinking. They may be illustrated by a sunrise or sunset, or solar or lunar eclipse, or the equinoxes or solstices where there is an alignment in space between two luminaries at a given time called a syzygy. Let us bear in mind that the coincidence is only meaningful from our vantage point, therefore relates the objective world to our subjective dimension.

A particularly rare coincidence between two numbers, illustrated in mathematics by an algorithm, illustrates our mind's ability to grasp coherence of a

sudden where two mental constructs seemed previously to be irreconcilable. More generally what we mean by our sense of meaningfulness is our mind's ability to click when it grasps a correspondence between two thoughts which had hitherto appeared unrelated. The grasp of congruence sparks our being with delight because it gives us a sense of thinking in sync with the thinking of the universe and feeling in resonance with the emotion of the cosmos, and hence makes us aware of our holistic connectiveness with the totality which we call God, not just at the physical level, but at all levels.

At the moment of birth, two worlds meet: all that we have cumulated in our descent through the spheres and that which we have inherited from our ancestors.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We are ourselves hybrids, born of the alchemical betrothal between heaven and earth. Moreover we can rebirth ourselves by going through the steps that led us to our present state, altering them willfully and consciously. Here we witness in ourselves the very task we have investigated so far: conjugating in our very personality our celestial and ancestral inheritance so that they actually click.

C. G. Jung spent much ponderous enquiry upon this paradoxical conjunction between our psyche and the physical world. In paradoxical cases, rather than it be a perception or an event that impacts our psyche and gets processed by our psyche, it is our psyche that triggers off the event. He called it synchronicity. He defines these rare and surprising cases that one would normally explain away as situations which cannot be causally determined as: the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningful but not causally connected events. Yet he still strived to grasp the mystery behind occurrences that could not be connected in a chronological sequence where one occurrence could have triggered off the other; rather they seemed to be causally connected in a network irrespective of the arrow of time.

The connections of events may in certain circumstances be other than causal and requires another principle of explanation. Then it occurred to him that rare events (like a syzygy or singularity) cannot be governed by the same laws that apply to statistics, for example. Indeed the conjunctions that take place in an instant of time are

rare events as compared with the gradual transformations where at each moment, the past overlaps with the future.

Probability theory is able to predict with uncanny precision the overall outcome of processes made up out of a large number of individual happenings, each in itself is unpredictable.

Arthur Koestler

Of course granted is that our minds can affect our body functions:

You see the deep changes of meaning is a change in the deep material structure of the brain; we already know that certain meanings can greatly disturb the brain, but other meanings may organize it in a new way.

David Bohm

But how does a grasp of meaning affect the outer physical world? (Incidentally this is what it meant by psycho-kinesis). After years of painstaking research in psycho-kinesis, Dr. J. B. Rhine arrived at conclusions that throw some light on the problem. For Rhine space and time are dependant upon psychic conditions and therefore can be reduced to almost a vanishing point

A parallel with David Bohm is called for here, but there is still a mental pole at every level of matter..and eventually if you go to infinite depths of matter, we may reach something very close to what you reach in the depth of the mind.

We are touching upon a most important point: space-time is only meaningful regarding physical reality. Indeed for the psyche, space is only meaningful where one is reminiscing physical occurrences or the mind functions creatively in the act of imagination. Yoga distinguishes where the mind adopts as it were the form of that which is perceived or reminisced (Nirvetarka), from the state where the mind absorbs the quintessence of the perceived irrespective of form (Nirvecara), and at some point the mind looses notions of space altogether (Asmita) and a further point at which the mind looses the sense of time (Asamprajnata Samadhi). For Speiser, at a certain level of our thinking, our psyche touches upon a level prior to causality.

It is an initial state which is not governed by mechanistic law, but is the pre-conditioning of law, the chance substrate upon which law is built.

Andreas Speiser

Compare with Bohm:

The mind has two-dimensional and three-dimensional modes of operation. It may be able to operate directly in the depths of the implicate order where this timeless state is the primary actuality. Then we could see the ordinary actuality as a secondary structure.

Indeed our commonplace concepts of causality are based upon our concept of time as being uni-dimensional: the event that we infer having been causated by another one, followed it in a sequential order. In our ordinary thinking, we also assume that an event causes another if they are related in space either by electro-magnetic forces that extend in space or gravity that also extends in space (including the strong and weak forces between sub-atomic particles) . But modern physics questions the mechanistic theories of their predecessors, replacing them with acausal, non-local laws.

If everything in the cosmos is connected with everything else as in the holistic paradigm, then location in space is irrelevant in the determination of events: it is simply easier for our minds to see the connection between the motion of a billiard ball and that of the one it has hit, then to see how the surge of a wave we think is in the Pacific could influence that of a wave which we think is in the English channel. Yet, as Dr. David Bohm points out, a wave in the ocean is not caused by the previous one, but each wave is introjected back into the whole ocean and it is the whole ocean that projects itself in the next wave. A form emerges or is creatively projected from the whole, then it influences the whole, or is injected back into it; in the implicate order, it resonates with similar forms and then is projected back into the explicate order.

However, long before the holistic paradigm envisioned by General Smuts revolutionized science, the Sufis saw the insufficiency in reducing causality to the dimension of time which we call the process of becoming. One needs to account for at least another dimension of time moving from transcendence to transiency and

vice-versa.

The Sufi Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi felt that beyond the sidereal empyrean, other universes would be found in a hierarchical sequence of spheres of light of increasing subtlety . The higher ones precede the lower ones and enjoy a hierarchically higher value (precellence) and consequently sovereignty (prevalence); the lower ones proceed from the higher ones in a causal order in a different time order that the commonplace arrow of time - a kind of exponential order. This so called vertical hierarchy which he refers to as the 'world of mothers' then splits up in a lateral order where equality takes over from dominance. Here we find the prototypes of the species. It is at this level that our ordinary notions of the process of time take effect.

But it is in the conjunction between a physical phenomenon and a spontaneous thought that was not triggered off by an actual occurrence that our delight reaches a degree of intensity such that it could spark our creative faculties - whether of a work of art or of our personality. One could define creativity as the act of exploring unchartered regions of the mind while grasping a correspondence between the mental constructs thus gleaned and a form or configurations or scenarios in the fabric of matter. Creativity is a congruent conjunction between the timeless and the transient, the heavenly and the earthly.

We could say that our action toward the whole universe is a result of what it means to us . . . In the long run only those meanings that allow changes that tend to bring about accord between us and the rest of the universe will be possible.

David Bohm

We shall sooner or later have to give up many of our old habits of thought and adopt new ones: habits that are better adapted to life in a world that is living in the presence of the past - and is also living in the presence of the future, and open to continuing creation.

Rupert Sheldrake

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68 - Dreams

There is a place that one cannot reach by going there.

Buddha

Oh, to cross the threshold into the unknown! From time immemorial people have been interrogating their dreams in the unrelenting human excursions into the far reaches of the mind.

Notwithstanding human curiosity, we - not totally disinterestedly - would like to read in our dreams a personal message, directions, the solutions to the paradoxical riddles we ponderously grapple with. Should we venture beyond the wall of mystery we find ourselves dumbfounded and shattered, and often confused, unable to extrapolate between the profusion of bounty flooding the skylight of our mind. The human mind is yet in its developmental stage and still has a long way to go until it grasps the thinking of the universe which is however enfolded in our own mind.

That veil offered by sleep to shield our minds is a protection. Yet flimsy clues regarding wider dimensions of thinking or realization, evidencing the software behind the existential scenario sometimes trickle through, particularly when one is precariously poised upon the threshold between the diurnal (waking) condition and sleep with dreams.

Skills are taught in various esoteric tradition to train ourselves to maintain ourselves at that threshold. At that juncture the door is open between the perceptions of reality manifesting at the physical level and the unbridled effusion of imagination ranging from the fanciful to the congruent. In Yoga you will find some rare milestones in the carefully guarded practice of Yoga Nidra. In Buddhism in the art of freeing oneself from the illusion of the appearance of the world in order to foster the confection of the 'illusory body'. Sufism highlights the act of imagination to work creatively with our personality.

God placed within each thing - including the soul of man - a manifest dimension (Zahir) and a non-manifest dimension (batin) . Through the manifest dimension, man perceives things as entities; and through the non-manifest

dimension, (batin), knowledge.

Ibn 'Arabi

In that twilight of the spotlight of consciousness, the difference between the incoming impressions hailing from our memory of perceptions or interpretations thereof and the free-wheeling of our creative imagination blurs. When consciousness is off-set from its usual focus, the environment overlaps with the psyche most times in an ambiguous fashion. This is because our psyche is holistically implicated in the whole existential realm at all levels including the physical.

The content of consciousness of each human being is evidently an enfoldment of the totality of existence.

David Bohm

When reminiscences of the physical or psychological environment lose their compulsive impact upon our awareness and get assimilated by the psyche, their outer appearance seems deluding. This accounts for the theories of maya and is precisely what makes for the dream perspective.

Meditators and contemplatives of all ages stalk these elusive vestiges of sensorial perceptions, or the mental constructs they trigger off, as they skirt the spotlight of consciousness. The art of so doing - and in general of meditation - consists in avoiding to turn that spotlight towards the overt impressions. In this sub-liminal perspective a deeper level of the psyche espies 'that which transpires behind that which appears' (a word of the Sufi Ibn 'Arabi).

This discovery of those who have explored the unchartered reaches of the mind is in our day and age borne out by those physicists who are at the prow of the advance of scientific thinking. In fact the idea of enfoldment is an ancient idea. It was known in the East a long time ago.

...separate entities are relatively constant and independent behaving forms abstracted by the mind from the whole in perception and in thought.

David Bohm

While in the diurnal state, we react to the impact of the challenges impacting us from outside, in the dream state the imaginings that emerge from 'inside' prevail upon these in our psyche, reducing the effect of the afterglow of the reminiscences to the role of catalyst orienting our imaginings. Similar conditions favor creativity. If a composer simply describes the environment, without conveying how he/she feels perceiving it, he/she fails to convey that precious emergent psychic content of all masterpieces that resonates with kindred feelings that we were unable to sense without that extra spur.

The secret of the skill in maintaining oneself on the threshold consists in being able to toggle between (i) on one hand the (diurnal) state where one clearly distinguishes between one's consciousness as the spectator and the object of one's awareness: either the physical world or one's psyche (or thoughts) and (ii) on the other hand the dream state in which spontaneous imaginings flow from one's consciousness unawares. By spotlighting our emergent thoughts, we slip back into the diurnal subject/object format and lose our spontaneity. Therefore to tune into a state of reverie, you have to lose your identity in the flow of thoughts.

According to Yoga: in Nirvecara Samadhi, consciousness espouses the forms of the emergent thoughts of the subtle creative mind, manifesting the nature of the timeless essence of our being (purusha).

This brings us to the second clue to switching off from the diurnal perspective: take it for granted that, not only the physical world is not what it appears to be, but your self-image is not your true identity. A still further clue consists in the realization that the forms assumed by your imaginings are not your imaginings, but only projections therefore - the tip of the iceberg thereof. Consequently let the forms emerge out of the flow without trying to spotlight them. They may or may not leave some trace in your diurnal memory. When you have gotten used to toggling between the two perspectives, you reach a point where you are capable of countenancing a double-exposure. That is where your creative ideas gel so that they may be communicated to others and furnish your conscious psyche with their resources.

Perception would separate him from many things which he would perceive if not for this obstruction. God places within each thing, including the soul of man a manifest and a non manifest dimension. Through the manifest dimension,

man perceives entities; through the non manifest dimension: knowledge. Self-disclosure consists of His manifestation to the one to whom He discloses Himself.

Ibn 'Arabi

The only way of retaining one's memory of the diurnal state while in the dream state is to consider the forms of the physical world to be the way that the reality of which one is aware inside appears when projected to the surface. This could best be illustrated by imagining that a plant is just the way that its DNA manifests at the surface but this manifestation is secondary and derivative, its reality being the DNA, the seed has information which is transmitted to the matter of which the plant is eventually formed.

At this point, to keep maintaining yourself at the threshold, you have to keep awareness that mind and matter are not separate realities. But there is still a mental pole at every level of matter... And eventually if you go to infinite depths of matter, you may reach something very close to what you reach in the depth of the mind. To achieve this, one needs to train oneself by repeated auto-suggestion prior to going to sleep (it needs to be drummed into one's mind until it is taken for granted).

For the Tibetans, as one falls to sleep one shifts from the activity of the gross faculty of the mind which is based upon the input from outside to the activity of the subtle faculty of the mind which grasps meaning without resting upon perception. Simultaneously one shifts from identifying with the gross wind (energy) to the subtle wind (actually one's subtle bodies). One needs to distinguish several stages here.

As one begins to become more familiar with the lay of the land as it were of the dream world, in addition to the factors and levels we have examined so far: (i) the simple regurgitation, digestion and storage of inputted impressions, (ii) the aspirations, nostalgia, repressed emotions trying to make themselves known by crossing the barrier (or censorship) between the covert and overt zones of the psyche, (iii) out of body travel, (iv) uncanny impressions of the heavenly spheres, even communication with celestial beings or people's minds: one distinguishes different levels of bodiness and mindness that spark pre-natal memories which one ascribes to celestial spheres, (v) the spontaneous creative thoughts that appear as inspirational.

To switch over from the diurnal state into the dream state, one has to disidentify with one's body, now considered perfunctorily as a shroud, and feel oneself as a gossamer effigy of subtle unstable fabric. However, to balance oneself on the threshold, one needs to maintain a remote memory of the form of one's body while superimposing the countenance of one's dream body upon the profile of one's physical body. Now one sees a correspondence between these - as a kind of double-exposure. One even realizes that one's subtle bodies arise out of the configurations of one's very thinking and in turn affect the formative processes of physical matter.

One learns to mould the shape of one's subtle bodies in the shapes that are expressive of one's emotional attunements or one's paramount thoughts. The Tibetans do this by imagining that their subtle bodies are those of the deity of their choice. The Sufis proceed likewise by highlighting a particular divine quality (sifat) reinforced by repeating the name (Asma ilahi) corresponding to that quality and imagining the form that this quality would assume as it manifests through them in their personality and consequently marks their very countenance.

The accomplished meditator takes the body of his or her personal deity in place of such an ordinary intermediate state body...The actual enjoyment body arises from the isolated mind of ultimate example clear light: the very subtle mind and the mounted wind.

Gesche Gyatzu

The Sufis distinguish the subtle bodies and corresponding spheres highlighted as one shifts from one stage to the next. As you become more conversant with these nebulous regions, you will learn to distinguish between a state in which you feel like an ethereal elusive body called Ajsam (the body of resurrection or illusory body of the Tibetans) from a state in which your body seems to be hewn in the fabric of light, corresponding to the celestial spheres Malakut, (the emanation body of the Tibetans) from a state in which you have lost any sense of form Jabarut which Buddha calls being of pure splendor, (corresponding to the enjoyment body of the Tibetans), to the infinitely transcendental levels: in Sufism Lahut and Hahut corresponding to the Truth body of the Tibetans.

Let's look into the methods used to shift one's body identity from one level to another which one might well envision as the underpinning of energy serving one's mind from one level to another. We need to remind ourselves of weaving the Ariadne thread of consciousness over the threshold and saddling several levels. The rational behind this consists in grasping how mindness and bodiness not only are the two interdependent poles of the same reality but somehow the different bodies intersperse rather than separate out (as in Astral projection).

To achieve this it is necessary to compare the feel of the kind of energy at the periphery of your being as compared with the kind of energy you feel as you move into the center. Think of your energy field as a vortex and realize that the center thereof which corresponds with your solar plexus is a vacuum. Now you will notice that while on one hand the grosser energy tends to get scattered at the periphery, in a centrifugal action, on the other hand some measure of energy gets sublimated (the Alchemists say distilled) as it gets sucked into the center. In addition, while as you turn outside, it is what the Tibetans call the grosser functions of your mind that are active, as you turn within, it is the subtle mind (the creative mind) that takes over. To maintain yourself at the threshold you must not dismiss the memory of your gross mind, but unmask the hoax of your commonplace thinking.

If you identify with you aura, you will find that the further you turn within, the subtler the nature of the light until you reach what Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls the 'all-pervading light'. This term avers itself to be eminently appropriate, since in the implicate state, everything intersperses with everything else. Therefore one cannot spot a location from which light spreads out. Incidentally as you move up from one sphere to the other in Yoga Nidra, you are encountering what the Sufis call the 'light that sees' rather than 'the light that can (or could) be seen'. To understand this, one needs to grasp the difference that Dr. Bohm makes between the Implicate and the Super-Implicate state.

The model that is most likely to help us understand what happens to our minds in our sleep is Dr. David Bohm's 'implicate state' as opposed to the 'explicate state'. In the diurnal perspective, illustrated by the explicate mode, our commonplace intelligence earmarks waves in the sea. It takes the mystic or the scientist to see that it is the whole sea that emerges as each wave. Another example: the sounds we hear

from the radio, are just the way the radio extrapolates the immense variety of interspersed radio waves which extend in space as an inter-woven web (a wave-interference pattern) in a manner such that our intelligence is able to make sense of. A lens functions rather in like manner by focusing a large panorama to make it more accessible, however thereby reducing much detail. That is more than our intelligence could extrapolate. Our eyes function rather in the same way. So does our brain.

Contrasting with this, in the dream state, as in the state experienced by the meditator turning within, thoughts are so fine-woven (in Greek 'imlicare' means fine woven) that one cannot distinguish them, but one gains an overall sense of meaning implied as it were behind the variety of thoughts. However to explain that meaning, one would have to project one's mind back into the explicate state whereby the meaning would be reduced - which is precisely what we experience when we deem our verbal expressions inadequate.

It is helpful to distinguish between a two-way motion of our minds which Dr. David Bohm calls the holo-movement: under cover of sleep the mind digests the diurnal impressions, breaking them down as our liver breaks down the amino-acid chains, then projects them in nascent forms intended to enrich our conscious psyche if they are able to cross the barrier between conscious and unconscious, just like the way our RNA builds new amino-acid chains according to the code of our body.

...the state of the whole organizes the parts.

David Bohm

This is why thoughts and emotions are blurred should we venture to peer into the phantasmagoria of our dream world. But if we capture the nascent thought patterns as they try to break the barrier into real life, then we access an enormous and invaluable pool of resourcefulness revealing a new meaning to our problems or personal development or inspiring us in our creativity, particularly in works of art.

There is still a further dimension to the dream process: as we cast the light of our awareness and intelligence upon the nebulous regions of our unconscious psyche as we sleep, at first we cannot make sense of the paradoxical thought-wave

interference pattern opening to our view. Our natural tendency is to blank out, or at best to find our understanding stunned and stymied. With determination and by repeated exercise, we train our mind by stretching our intelligence beyond its normal frontiers. Our mind now switches to its implicate mode which is precisely what we mean by intuition and if we wish to remain poised on the threshold we learn to toggle between this mode and the explicate mode.

This is illustrated by a holograph. In every part of that construct of light that is the holograph, the light-wave patterns of every part of the original object are interspersed with those of every other part. Our eyes and brains could not make sense of this wave-interference pattern. But when a laser beam, that is a beam of coherent light is thrust across the holograph, it extrapolates between the enormous variety of waves in a coherent way that makes sense to our understanding (which rests upon coherence). This is what Dr. David Bohm calls the 'Super-Implicate State'.

This is how Dr. David Bohm describes Dennis Gabor's invention:

Light from a laser falls upon a half-silvered mirror. Part of the waves reflect and part of them come straight through and fall on the object . The waves that strike the object are scattered off it, and they eventually reach the original beam that was reflected in the mirror and start to interfere with it, producing a pattern of two waves superimposed.... It may be invisible, or it may look like a vague indescribable pattern. But if you send a similar laser light through it, it will produce waves that are similar to the waves that were coming off the object and if you place your eye in the right spot, you will get an image of the object that will appear behind the holograph and be three-dimensional.

We now understand the role of the coherent light of our intelligence as it projects into the nebulous region of the unconscious, it coheres the paradoxical wave interference pattern of our mind in its implicate format into an understandable sense of meaningfulness, however reducing the richness of our covert mind. This evidences the action of this further dimension of our mind illustrated by what Dr. David Bohm calls the Super-Implicate State.

If you apply this model, the enfoldment is now seen on two levels: first an enfolded order of the vacuum with ripples on it that unfold; and second a

super-information field of the whole universe, a super-implicate order which organizes the first level into various structures. Of course this serves as a model of the impact of the light of intelligence upon our minds. Interestingly not only does the beam of our intelligence cohere interwoven thoughts, but it acts creatively in making these thoughts functional at the existential level.

The glance of the seer not only imparts knowledge, but is creative.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This transcendental dimension has often been eluded in the past by in scientific paradigms. However, today, quite apart from David Bohm, Ilya Prigogine, Rupert Sheldrake, Costa de Beauregard and psychologists Ken Wilber and Stanislav Grof are recognizing its role in the evolutionary drive. The fashionable term now used is 'attractor'.

The kind of creativity expressed within the context of already existing morphic fields is creativity in a weak sense of the word - the appearance of entirely new fields with their new goals or attractors involves a higher order of creativity or originality. Another approach is to start from above, from the top down, and to consider how new fields may have originated from pre-existing fields at a higher and more inclusive level of organization.

Amongst the plethora of embryonic thoughts that proliferate and cross-pollinate in our unconscious, only those that click with existential reality prove creative. In the long run only those meanings that tend to bring about accord between us and the rest of the universe will be possible.

69 - Global Thinking

It would be a truism to say that Planet Earth, and we as the decision-making members of the Planetary population, are right in the midst of a revolution. For the evolutionary thrust of which we are the beneficiaries to advance, the status-quo has inevitably to break down; our concern is whether a radical break-through will outweigh the break-down, or whether the break-down will reach a point of no-return. Clearly we and we only have the answer in our hands. But who are we? I hope I am not making too judgmental a statement by saying that only a very small portion of the population of the Planet are prepared to prioritize the interest of the whole over their greed, failing to see that the well-being of the whole does reflect upon the living standard of the individual.

The troubling increase in crime, violence, vulgarity, lack of charity, sacrilege, abuse, and the ruthless exploitation of the environment is an indication that a growing portion of humanity is in trouble. Moreover we have the bigotry of fundamentalists; perhaps a large majority of well-meaning people are still into their thing, not having the foggiest sense of what the global perspective could possibly mean! We have the irresponsible population-explosion. On the other hand, we have the few whose intuition gives them some clues as to what measures we need to take to avert a catastrophe.

Paradoxically the very technology we have in our grip which is destroying the environment could be harnessed to save it. But it is our way of thinking that is the determining factor, and more so our values. We have not grown on a parr with the potentialities that, as the apprentice sorcerer, we have unleashed. It is really a matter of both consciousness and conscience. Vested interests have sabotaged technological break-throughs - there is also simply complacency, habit-forming, and sectarianism. Sometimes one wonders how things could ever change for the better. Yet indeed we never cease to be amazed by the dramatic upheavals in our day and age. This being so, there is hope.

The evolutionary forward thrust has not reached its apogee in homo sapiens such as we are in our day and age. Looking back gives us some clues as to how we could improve. Clearly species progress through an increase in the scope of their

consciousness. Whereas the tree is locked in the immediate environment, the awareness, the thinking of our pioneers amongst us encompasses the galaxies. Thinking big will get us out of the rut. Global consciousness: to understand that we are all in this together; that the well-being of the whole promotes our personal interest.

There seem to be two issues: promoting global awareness and thwarting the abusers. Granted the media have alerted people throughout the globe of the hazards we are running into; yet the populations, industries simply go on abusing the Planet and other people as though they had not been warned. This cuts right into the political field where it is religious parochialism that has caused the death of thousands of innocent people and wreaked havoc on the environment. In many areas, advocating tolerance in the interest of a global religious vision would be interpreted as treason. How can we reach a global sense of the unity of the human family if we cling to our divisions?

To advance we must not like the wife of Lot look back, with the risk of being sclerosed by thinking as we did in the past. It is a positive vision of the way the future could be, the way we could make the future that will propel us forward.

We shall sooner or later have to give up many of our old habits of thought and adopt new ones: habits that are better adapted to life in a world that is living in the presence of the past - and is also living in the presence of the future, and open to continuing creation.

Rupert Sheldrake

It takes courage to let go of all that one has built up over the years without any guarantee that a new light will dawn upon one's horizon. But we find ourselves sometimes confronted with the choice between situations which progress gradually like a bud unfurls, or where things remain at a stand-still or run the chance of reversing into decay, or again where nature proceeds by leaps and bounds. There are situations which one cannot change in their outer circumstances, but will change by one's changing oneself or by a new way of handling them. In exceptional cases - perhaps the most meaningful -, there is no slow transition from one perspective to the other, the transit is sudden. Here lies the difference between the moment of time where there is an overlap between past and future and the instant where there is a

sudden and irreversible break of continuity.

Evolution is the outcome of fluctuations from a state of equilibrium or near equilibrium.

Ilya Prigogine

The holistic paradigm has revolutionized science, but in our commonplace thinking, most people still think as ever before in categories. If you think holistically, you are not a fraction of the totality, but a relatively permanent expression of that totality in its wholeness which is potentially present in you. Should we apply this way of thinking to our relationship with the environment, we would not think of it as something one can exploit without spoiling one's very underpinning from right under one's feet.

The revolution in the thinking at the prow of the evolutionary advance has moreover changed our way of looking at causality. Instead of the simplistic view, it is now understood that each wave in the ocean is not simply the result of the previous one, but the whole ocean rises as each wave and each wave is introjected back into the ocean and the whole ocean arises as each new wave. Generalizing, we realize the implications of our interventions not only in the hardware, but also the software of the universe. Also we see how intervening in one area of the psycho-eco-system affects every other. Therefore our free-wheeling into the future must integrate a greater compass and complexity than ever before. We need to extrapolate between several vantage points; by integrating the know-how of creative thinkers, consciousness at the leading edge is becoming stereoscopic.

To network with those who are not in the race, we even need to integrate old ideas into the wider web of new ideas rather than rejecting the old like a baby being thrown out with the bath-water. We will even need to extrapolate between thinking in the reductionist way and the holistic way. We will even need to account for further dimensions of time in our understanding of causal inference, for example include a transcendental vector of time to the simplistic process of becoming, as illustrated in Jung's 'synchronicity'. We will be learning how to see how the "everywhere and always" manifests in the forward march of becoming. If we hoist our vantage point from the commonplace narrow range in the act of self-transcendence, we will grasp

things in a wider context. This is where some of the skills of meditation are proving useful to people in our societies.

The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today, if the Planet had no intelligence, it could not have intelligent beings on it. The collective working of many minds as one single idea, and the activity of the whole world in a certain direction are governed by the intelligence of the Planet.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Our way of considering the cosmos, and the planet Earth in particular, has taken a quantum leap. Instead of looking at the stars as viewed from planet Earth, we are now able to imagine how planet Earth looks as viewed from the stars. This has surreptitiously revolutionized our way of considering our Planet, which in turn revolutionizes our way of seeing ourselves. We imagine outer space to be "out there", but has it ever occurred to you that actually planet Earth is in outer space? It all depends on how you look at it. Since we can now see our live cells in powerful microscopes, our whole perception of the fabric of our body has undergone a dramatic change. Instead of dismissing our bodies as other than ourselves, we are beginning to honor the involvement of our innate sense of meaningfulness with the very fabric of our bodiness.

In the realm of psychology, by the same token, we realize that our sense of personal inadequacy or our pessimistic judgement in our assessment of a situation were due to our mind's having got entrapped in a way of thinking from which we failed to see a way out. Yes, one can get trapped in one's thinking and ascribe the prison to one's fate. The bind is in the mind.

More than ever more and more people find themselves willy-nilly enrolled in the inexorable machinery constructed generation after generations conditioning them and robbing them of their creativity. At what cost our modern efficiency! People suffer from the total lack of opportunity to harness their creative urge as was the case before arts and crafts were replaced by machined standardization - now computerized.

Our experiments with political institutions have proven how crucial freedom is to promote progress - in fact freedom from conformity generates creativity. On the

other hand there is nothing in the world more abused. We see its consequences in the decadence, vulgarity, slovenliness and permissiveness of our modern societies. There is no accounting for taste!

One could define creativity as the act of exploring unchartered regions of the mind while grasping a correspondence between the mental constructs thus gleaned and a form or configurations or scenarios in the fabric of matter. Creativity is a congruent conjunction between the timeless and the transient, the heavenly and the earthly. It is a sudden sense of meaningfulness that sparks our innovative faculty. What we mean by our sense of meaningfulness is our mind's ability to click when it grasps a correspondence between two thoughts which had hitherto appeared unrelated. To be creative rather than just fanciful, one's vision needs to click with the possibility of its actual realization at the existential level.

We could say that our action toward the whole universe is a result of what it means to us . . . In the long run only those meanings that allow changes that tend to bring about accord between us and the rest of the universe will be possible.

David Bohm

The grasp of congruence sparks our being with delight because it gives us a sense of thinking in sync with the thinking of the universe and feeling in resonance with the emotion of the cosmos, and hence makes us aware of our holistic connectiveness with the totality which we call God, not just at the physical level but at all levels.

70 - Preparing for Resurrection

Our notion of death is perhaps the most nonsensical of all our notions! Exploring the software of the Universe, physicists never cease to be amazed by the intelligence of the planning. How could we possibly believe that all that has been gained not only by our know-how but by the uniqueness of each of our personalities should get lost from the bounty of the universe?

If we are unaware of our immortality, we will think that we die. It is all in our way of looking at things. Our fear of death is linked with our failure to grasp more advanced paradigms of thinking: the first step in learning how to resurrect consists in widening our sense of identity which eventually avers itself to be co-extensive with the universe.

We commonly think of ourselves as a distinct individual but if we are updated with the holistic view of our day and age, we realize that every fraction of the totality carries virtually the entire code.

If you envision yourself as the keyboard of a piano most of whose keys are scotch-taped so you can only play a simple melody, and should you then realize that you could tear away more and more of the scotch-tape and awaken many-splendored features of the investiture of the universe latent in you, you will exult in self-validation.

In addition to the holistic paradigm, we need to consider the transcendental one. Our commonplace thinking thinks in terms of categories: mind, body, perhaps the soul, that mysterious unknown. The consequence is that our thinking breaks up in a dualistic or pluralistic view: the body dies, hopefully the soul continues to live - two categories.

The advanced way of thinking is in terms of polarity: I am also my body. In our spiritual beliefs, we are so old-fashioned! We still think in terms of one time-dimension. If we shift into the new paradigms, and are able to extrapolate between two or more dimensions of time, then we may envision ourselves as a pendulum of which one pole is moving in space-time, and the other remains unchanged. In between these two poles there are numberless transitional stages. Information imputed from our

perceptual interface with the physical environment is processed upwards so that ultimately the quintessence is recycled into that level of our being where meaningfulness prevails over perception - eventually into the software of the universe.

As we shift our sense of identity upwards, our feeling of the process of becoming merges into a sense of being a continuity in change. Indeed the very cellular structure of our bodies - particularly our faces, that configures our emotional attunements and insight will imprint the fabric of the subtler levels of our being; for example, our electro-magnetic field, the sparkling of our aura, the morphogenetic field that acts as a template of our body and further upwards in degrees of subtlety in infinite regress. Thus our bodies will outlive the dispersal of the building blocks of our body, the electrons and protons that survive and carry some bytes of memory. This could be illustrated by the fact that not one cell of our body is today the same cell as a few years ago, yet we think it is the same body. This is because its basic structure survives the disruption of the cells.

Consequently we can consciously and willfully fashion as a sculptor in a creative way our bodies of resurrection - that is our celestial bodies that maintain the gist of the countenance that sometimes transpires through our face when we are aware of the bounty and thinking of the universe coming through us.

By identifying with our self-image, that is a fallible notion of ourselves, we are obstructing the shift in our thinking that enables us to by-pass our transiency which is the condition of our learning how to resurrect. The resulting miss-assessment of our involvement in our problems stands in the way of our realization because we are ultimately our realization and it is this transcendent dimension of our being that survives its support system.

This would require then that we would need to stretch our minds beyond their middle range. We would see what the implications of our problems are from the point of view of those involved in them, and while surveying ourselves with a birds eye view in the context of the cosmic drama in all its compass, grasp the dovetailing of our lives and beings with theirs.

In this perspective, our way of looking at ourselves and our participation in the human drama will aver itself to be just the kind of thinking that will prepare us for the

experience of resurrection: we cease to limit our assessment of our problems to causation in a linear fashion in the arrow of time, or succumb to the conditioning of our personality, but grasp as Speiser says: A pre-causal stage out of which the programing of the universe arises behind the apparent universe of our own self-image. Then we see ourselves in the universe, not just on Planet Earth or in our personal dramas (our storms in our tea-cups) and interrogate ourselves: what are we doing on Planet Earth, what is our place in the universe?

The body then, rather than being our space-suit on Planet Earth that we will discard at death is seen as a support system. Truly enough, Pegasus could not reach the Olympias, but imprinted upon his rider, Bellerophon, the thrust that hoisted him aloft. The bodiness of Pegasus was transmuted into energy.

Admittedly while many of the recollections in Dr. Moody's *Life After Death* and sequels could be accounted for by the residual exercise of brain functions, the out-of-body overview of the physical shroud gives us some clues as the aftermath of this episode: Life after life.

I quote Shams Tabrizi the mentor of Mevlana Jelal Ed Din Rumi:

"I walk without feet and fly without wings, and see without eyes and hear without ears..."

and may I add: ***and think beyond the mind.***

However we cannot be creative be it of a work or art or of ourselves just by willing it. We have to be moved and shattered and bewondered and bemused.

71 - Future Spirituality

In a large number of human activities the know-how must be continually updated. Meditation also needs to be updated. Armed with the information in the enormous pool of published material available in our day, we are now able to make a comprehensive study of the methods of meditation taught in the classical schools. By taking this opportunity to compare all these methods, we can gain a whole new grasp of the core issues facing our pioneering meditating predecessors. This in turn will help us to look ahead, and to brainstorm perspectives on the future of meditation at the scale of present-day thinking.

Since the challenges of our times are, in some ways, more demanding than those faced by our predecessors, our free-wheeling into the future must integrate a greater complexity. For example, we will need to take into consideration futuristic views in physics (some of which have not yet gained acceptance in the party-line of physics), or the latest developments in psychology. Meditation needs to give us the means to reduce stress, improve decision-making, overcome resentment and overcome poor self-image. We need in meditation to honor our concerns about the environment, the population explosion, crime, and political oppression. We need to gain insight into the disenchantment about institutionalization, particularly in the field of spirituality, and join the nascent trend to explore new expressions of our need for the sacred, emancipated from hackneyed forms of sanctimoniousness, prescriptions, dogmatism, and superstitions.

Thanks to the momentous advances in communication (the media, technology, education, and the new paradigms), our way of considering the cosmos, and the planet Earth in particular, has taken a quantum leap. Instead of looking at the stars as viewed from planet Earth, we are now able to imagine how planet Earth looks as viewed from the stars. Looking at those photos of the Earth from outer space is almost like having been out there personally. This has surreptitiously revolutionized our way of considering our Planet, which in turn revolutionizes our way of seeing ourselves. We imagine outer space to be "out there", but has it ever occurred to you that actually planet Earth is in outer space? It all depends on how you look at it. This progressive vantage point is bound to open up new vistas in our meditation practices.

Consequently, for example, instead of sitting still in meditation, simply observing the body or mind (which is tantamount to observing a mere cross-section of reality), we can see the whole forward march of the evolution of bodiness from our ancestors to the present state (which is like the prow), and even anticipate the future of the evolution of bodiness. Our development from our animal ancestry has not finished; it keeps advancing. The human race keeps on improving (albeit at the cost of decadence at the jagged ends).

Instead of aiming at escaping the "here and now" to scan transcendental levels of reality (subliminal to the existential level) as did our ancestral meditators, we will endeavor to look at the "here and now" from an overview.

I ask for no less than the impossible possibility: infinity in a finite fact and eternity in a temporal act.

Prentice Milford

Even this is too commonplace. It still evidences a static view of the existential state, whereas, as we have seen, existence is only a slice of reality in its dynamic state. Therefore, we will be learning how to see how the "everywhere and always" manifests in the forward march of becoming.

Furthermore, instead of modulating consciousness from one vantage point to another, we will need to learn to extrapolate between several vantage points. The consciousness of future humanity may well be called stereoscopic consciousness. This applies equally to the mind, which will learn to extrapolate between thinking in terms of categories and grasping the wholeness of a situation. In addition, as a corollary, we will learn to avoid accounting for things merely in terms of a causal chain in time, of which they are the effect, but we will also include causal chains moving from the transcendent dimension into the transient. We may even grasp the concatenation of many causal chains coming together in our time and space. As a consequence of this forward step, we will be able to meditate in movement, even dancing, which will reinforce the dynamic mode of meditation, rather than the static.

Quite understandably, the ancients, who had not yet acquired our knowledge of matter, witnessing the decay of the body after death, considered it to be like dust

returning to the earth. Since we can now see our live cells in powerful microscopes, our whole perception of the fabric of our body has undergone a dramatic change. Instead of dismissing our bodies as other than ourselves, we are beginning to honor the involvement of our innate sense of meaningfulness with the very fabric of our bodiness. We are intrigued by the manner in which these two sides of the same coin interact and modify each other reciprocally. It is not just mind over body, but body over mind as well.

This is different from psychosomatic, because with psychosomatic you say that mind affects matter as if they were two different substances ... any change of meaning is a change of soma, and any change of soma is a change of meaning.

Dr. David Bohm

Consequently, we need to brainstorm a new method of meditation that incorporates the earlier methods and carries them into the future.

To extricate ourselves from the rut into which we may have inadvertently stranded ourselves by taking things for granted, or from the stalemate which we may well have maneuvered ourselves into owing to a faulty strategy in the game of life, we need to rethink our lives.

To achieve this, we need to hoist our vantage point from the commonplace narrow range of the immediate environment and look at things in a wider context. This is where some of the skills of meditation can prove helpful. It is somewhat like witnessing how different a familiar landscape looks when flying over it in a helicopter or suspended from a hang-glider. Doing this, we realize that our assessments of our life-situations change with the altitude as it were, and furthermore that they are a function of our values which manifest the higher levels of our being- and monitor our motivations. Moreover we realize that our sense of personal inadequacy or our pessimistic judgement in our assessment of a situation were due to our mind's having gotten entrapped in a way of thinking from which we failed to see a way out. Yes, one can get trapped in one's thinking and ascribe the prison to one's fate. The bind is in the mind.

To escape from this prison takes two things: a flash of insight and resolve. How do we trigger off the flash of insight? We need to first ask ourselves: what if my assessment of my life situations, (or of people around me), upon which I have relied all this time and which I have always taken for granted, is wrong? What is more, if this is true, any new assessment we might convince ourselves of at this point stands an equal chance of proving later to be erroneous. If we therefore forego not only previous assessments, but any attempt at a reassessment, then, faced with the collapse of our opinion, we find ourselves hopelessly groping our way in the dark night of understanding. Bereft of any crutches, a different mode of understanding dawns upon us. Imagine that, walking in pitch dark, suddenly you are able to see the auras of people and that the features of their real countenance are revealed to you in contrast with the features of their faces.

It takes courage to let go of all that one has built up over the years without any guarantee that a new light will dawn upon one's horizon. But we find ourselves sometimes confronted with the choice between situations which progress gradually like a bud unfurls, or where things remain at a stand-still or run the chance of reversing into decay, or where nature proceeds by leaps and bounds. There are situations which one cannot change in their outer circumstances, but will change by one's changing oneself or by a new way of handling them. In exceptional cases - perhaps the most meaningful - there is no slow transition from one perspective to the other, the transit is sudden. Here lies the difference between the moment of time where there is an overlap between past and future and the instant where there is a sudden and irreversible break of continuity.

These rare conditions called singularities in astro-physics occur in our lives and in our thinking. They may be illustrated by a sunrise or sunset, or solar or lunar eclipse, or the equinoxes or solstices where there is an alignment in space between two luminaries at a given time called a syzygy. Let us bear in mind that the coincidence is only meaningful from our vantage point, therefore relates the objective world to our subjective dimension.

A particularly rare coincidence between two numbers, illustrated in mathematics by an algorithm, illustrates our mind's ability to grasp coherence of a sudden where two mental constructs seemed previously to be irreconcilable. More

generally what we mean by our sense of meaningfulness is our mind's ability to click when it grasps a correspondence between two thoughts which had hitherto appeared unrelated. The grasp of congruence sparks our being with delight because it gives us a sense of thinking in sync with the thinking of the universe and feeling in resonance with the emotion of the cosmos, and hence makes us aware of our holistic connectiveness with the totality which we call God, not just at the physical level but at all levels.

We are ourselves hybrids, born of the alchemical betrothal between heaven and earth.

At the moment of birth, two worlds meet: all that we have cumulated in our descent through the spheres and that which we have inherited from our ancestors.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Moreover we can rebirth ourselves by going through the steps that led us to our present state, altering them willfully and consciously. Here we witness in ourselves the very task we have investigated so far: conjugating in our very personality our celestial and ancestral inheritance so that they actually click.

C. G. Jung spent much ponderous enquiry upon this paradoxical conjunction between our psyche and the physical world. In paradoxical cases, rather than it be a perception or an event that impacts our psyche and gets processed by our psyche, it is our psyche that triggers off the event. He called it synchronicity. Jung defines these rare and surprising cases that one would normally explain away as situations which cannot be causally determined as: The simultaneous occurrence of two meaningful but not causally connected events.

Yet he still strived to grasp the mystery behind occurrences that could not be connected in a chronological sequence where one occurrence could have triggered off the other; rather they seemed to be causally connected in a network irrespective of the arrow of time. The connections of events may in certain circumstances be other than causal and requires another principle of explanation.

Then it occurred to him that rare events (like a szyzgy or singularity) cannot be governed by the same laws that apply to statistics, for example. Indeed the conjunctions that take place in an instant of time are rare events as compared with the gradual transformations where at each moment, the past overlaps with the future.

Probability theory is able to predict with uncanny precision the overall outcome of processes made up out of a large number of individual happenings, each in itself is unpredictable.

Arthur Koestler

Of course, granted that our minds can affect our body functions:

You see that deep changes of meaning is a change in the deep material structure of the brain; we already know that certain meanings can greatly disturb the brain, but other meanings may organize it in a new way.

David Bohm

But how does a grasp of meaning affect the outer physical world? (Incidentally this is what it meant by psycho-kinesis).

After years of painstaking research in psycho-kinesis, Dr. J. B. Rhine arrived at conclusions that throw some light on the problem. For Rhine, space and time are dependent upon psychic conditions and therefore can be reduced to almost a vanishing point.

A parallel with David Bohm is called for here:

But there is still a mental pole at every level of matter...and eventually if you go to infinite depths of matter, we may reach something very close to what you reach in the depth of the mind.

David Bohm

We are touching upon a most important point: space-time is only meaningful regarding physical reality. Indeed for the psyche, space is only meaningful where one

is recalling physical occurrences or the functions of the mind creatively in the act of imagination. Yoga distinguishes where the mind adopts as it were the form of that which is perceived or reminisced (Nirvetarka), from the state where the mind absorbs the quintessence of the perceived irrespective of form (Nirvecara), and at some point the mind loses notions of space altogether (Asmita) and a further point at which the mind loses the sense of time (Asamprajnata Samadhi).

For Speiser, at a certain level of our thinking, our psyche touches upon a level prior to causality.

It is an initial state which is not governed by mechanistic law, but is the pre-conditioning of law, the chance substrate upon which law is built.

Andreas Speiser

Compare with Bohm:

The mind has two-dimensional and three-dimensional modes of operation. It may be able to operate directly in the depths of the implicate order where this timeless state is the primary actuality. Then we could see the ordinary actuality as a secondary structure.

Indeed our commonplace understanding of causality is based upon our concept of time as being uni-dimensional: the event that we infer having been causated by another one, followed it in a sequential order. In our ordinary thinking, we also assume that an event causes another if they are related in space either by electro-magnetic forces that extend in space or gravity that also extends in space (including the strong and weak forces between sub-atomic particles) . But modern physics questions the mechanistic theories of their predecessors, replacing them with acausal, non-local laws. If everything in the cosmos is connected with everything else as in the holistic paradigm, then location in space is irrelevant in the determination of events: it is simply easier for our minds to see the connection between the motion of a billiard ball and that of the one it has hit, then to see how the surge of a wave we think is in the Pacific could influence that of a wave which we think is in the English channel. Yet, as Dr. David Bohm points out, a wave in the ocean is not caused by the previous one, but each wave is introjected back into the

whole ocean and it is the whole ocean that projects itself in the next wave.

A form emerges or is creatively projected from the whole , then it influences the whole, or is injected back into it; in the implicate order, it resonates with similar forms and then is projected back into the explicate order.

However, long before the holistic paradigm envisioned by General Smuts revolutionized science, the Sufis saw the insufficiency in reducing causality to the dimension of time which we call the process of becoming. One needs to account for at least another dimension of time moving from transcendence to transiency and vice-versa.

The Sufi Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi felt that beyond the sidereal empyrean, other universes would be found in a hierarchical sequence of spheres of light of increasing subtlety. The higher ones precede the lower ones and enjoy a hierarchically higher value (precellence) and consequently sovereignty (prevalence); the lower ones proceed from the higher ones in a causal order in a different time order than the commonplace arrow of time - a kind of exponential order. This so called vertical hierarchy which he refers to as the 'world of mothers' then splits up in a lateral order where equality takes over from dominance. Here we find the prototypes of the species. It is at this level that our ordinary notions of the process of time take effect.

But it is in the conjunction between a physical phenomenon and a spontaneous thought that was not triggered off by an actual occurrence that our delight reaches a degree of intensity such that it could spark our creative faculties - whether of a work of art or of our personality. One could define creativity as the act of exploring unchartered regions of the mind while grasping a correspondence between the mental constructs thus gleaned and a form or configurations or scenarios in the fabric of matter. Creativity is a congruent conjunction between the timeless and the transient, the heavenly and the earthly.

We could say that our action toward the whole universe is a result of what it means to us. ..In the long run only those meanings that allow changes that tend to bring about accord between us and the rest of the universe will be possible.

David Bohm

We shall sooner or later have to give up many of our old habits of thought and adopt new ones: habits that are better adapted to life in a world that is living in the presence of the past - and is also living in the presence of the future, and open to continuing creation.

Rupert Sheldrake

PRACTICES

What would be the kind of meditations embodying the progress in our thinking in our day and age and oriented towards the future? Having learnt how the mind works when it awakens beyond the existential realm, we need to learn to awaken in life - grasping our place, our role in the universe.

Let us follow retrospectively the trails of the two evolutionary networks that have intermeshed into the formation of our being as it is at present: (i) the legacy of our celestial origination, (ii) our genetic inheritance. To do this we need to reverse in our mind the forward thrust of the arrow of time and carry our memory right back in time - into prehistorical aeons of time whose traces are stored (though recessively) in deep memory in the archives of the depths of the unconscious zones of our psyche.

1) Bear in mind that the fabric of your body originated in the big-bang explosion at the onset of the present aeon in the genesis of the universe - there were however previous universes! Ponder upon the fact that your body is made out of the fabric of the stars.

2) Try to imagine what it would feel like to be a vibration - more precisely a high-frequency vibration of pure energy.

3) Imagine that this pristine state in which you were gels into a crystal.

4) Can you visualize the marvelous symmetry of lattice-work of the molecules and within them the atoms of your crystalline primeval body jiggling and sparkling?

5) Can you envision the glee of the electrons within the atoms as they avail themselves of the energy of ambient light to free themselves, even if for a split second, from the rigor of the constraint of the order of the universe maintaining them in their orbitals, and dance with abandon. Imagine the outburst of joy at participating with some measure of freedom in the choreography of the cosmos!

6) Now imagine the sudden evolutionary leap of the molecules constituting your body from the mineral state to the plant - from the inorganic to the organic. Envision the intelligence of the universe self-organizing itself in an improved fashion through the awareness now emerging in the molecules, finding a way of grouping gregariously with their neighbors to cooperate by specializing in their mutual contributions to the living cell. To illustrate this: instead of the repetitive series of frescoes on a wall paper, we have a flurry of proliferating forms and radiant colors.

7) Can you see the way the crystal connects with light after being entombed in the earth? Now experience the plant's ability to power its cyclic unfoldment, and more so: its mutations by dint of light. Can you envision yourself as a flower at night fluttering in resonance with the trembling of a star? Can you feel the thrust of the evolutionary drive striving to free the plant of its roots that it may explore neighboring space as an animal whose instincts still conspire in us.

8) Or is it the impact of our heavenly legacy that seeks freedom from the strict conditioning in the more primitive developmental stages of our being and makes for ever more variable structures in the material underpinning of our being? Notice that simply thinking of the celestial spheres conveys to you a sense of freedom. Now you may feel somehow the connection between your body as it has evolved from its precursors and your heavenly legacy.

9) At this stage, we are ready to understand the implications of the alchemical betrothal. Recollecting the two main genealogical streams generating your being, the celestial and the genetic, try and see how they have been intermeshing in both your body and your personality. If you recall some of the practices we did, envisioning our celestial bodies, fashioning them in accord with our thoughts and attunements and creative imagination, and observing how this affected our countenance and even our demeanor, you will have established that connection. The same applies to our personality.

10) In meditative vein, envision yourself descending through the spheres. Now gage the need you felt through your descent to understand how the intention governing the software of the universe gets actuated on earth. Now realize that it was this very need to understand that you felt throughout that impelled the mutations in the very fabric of your body as it progressed though your precursors in the course of evolution that enable your present body to be better able to serve the intelligence of which it is the support system.

11) Now consider that, while you converge the universe and therefore incur a great measure of conditioning, you also act upon the universe. See how your incentive exercises an impact upon the legacy of the past in your body and personality which we have been recollecting.

12) Bearing in mind that the human condition is just a developmental stage in the evolutionary march, can you sense in yourself a longing to awaken beyond the human condition? Can you feel the evolutionary drive spurring you on? Can you see that if the initial spring-head behind the whole evolutionary drive is the very freedom that resonates with your pristine celestial nature, then the Cosmos envisioned as one being (which is what is meant by God) tends to converge in each being . This is incidentally the holistic model. If this is so , then the more we converge of the bounty of the universe, the more self-sufficient we become. Think of yourself as aiming at becoming gradually a spin-off in which the universe rethinks and reconstructs itself.

13) Instead of visualizing the stars as they may appear from Planet Earth, now reach out there and imagine them as supporting civilizations different from ours and how our civilization might look from the vantage point of their intelligence.

14) Now if you ponder upon how the mind of the crystal evolved into the mind of a plant, then of an animal, then reached the human stage, realize that you can stretch your mind beyond its limits. The clue to spurring our mind to surpass itself is by jettisoning a lot of pre-conceived ideas - which is precisely what we have learned in this course. There could be no limits to this, but if indeed our minds are holistically sub-wholes of the mind of the cosmos, and if indeed the smaller the fraction of the holograph, the less well it reflects the original object, then the more we stretch out minds, the more truly our thinking will prove isomorphic with the thinking of the cosmos! Think: we are decoding the code of the universe!

15) However we should not limit our thinking to its cosmic dimension (its ability to extrapolate between more and more factors); we could highlight transcendental dimension. As we shift our sense of identity from plane to plane we discover different levels of thinking. We normally ascribe the notions acquired by our thinking at higher levels to our sense of values. Values such as compassion, humor, authenticity actuate themselves increasingly as evolution marches on.

16) Starting with your spontaneous thoughts however random, prompted by inspiring emotions, try to grasp the archetypes of which these thoughts are the exemplars. You will find yourself exploring a whole different dimension - the world of metaphor. Now if you turn your mind as it were downwards, you will find that these thoughts self-organize themselves as forms, or landscapes, or scenarios, as in your dreams.

17) Now we arrive at a kind of pinnacle of cosmic cognition: See yourself in the universe, your origination, your purpose, your destiny, your past and future, your ability to shift your focus through the spheres by adjusting your attunement.

18) At this point we grasp the antimony between thought and emotion as the two sides of the same coin, and permutate between them. Consequently we can trace our origination to the emotion behind the universe beyond the software. Just like the way that the emotion moving the cosmos, (the emotion behind the universe that manifested as the universe) passing though J. S. Bach's soul was crystalized into the notes of his music, you can feel the emotion spurring the universe at the cosmic scale configurating itself in the idiosyncrasies of your personality and the countenance of your face behind its external features.

19) You could willfully reinforce these emotions by indulging in the musings of your soul, by enjoying your sense of bewonderment at the marvel of yourself and the universe of which you are a part, and giving vent to your need for glorification. Lo and behold, what at first seemed to be your personal emotion - rapture - culminates into impersonal, cosmic emotion - divine ecstasy

20) Now honor your intuition that behind all manifestation there is great splendor and that you are born of the divine nostalgia to manifest that splendor in every possible way in and through your being at all levels. Accept the divinity of your

being. Awaken to the divinity of your being. Accept the beauty of your being if you can reconcile it with a sense of modesty, as long as you do not confuse it with false humility. Priding oneself in one's self denigration avers itself to be a failure to recognize one's divine heritage, and proves self-defeating. The Sufis consider this to be an insult to the divine Artist.

21) We have been exploring methods of meditation whereby we may actuate the splendor of our divine investiture thanks to the ability of our intelligence to surpass its previous outreach, and by discovering in our high attunement, deeply rooted in the very spring-heads of our being, the divine nostalgia in search of beauty and love. Eventually we understand the enormous implications of a saying of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, my father, embodying the very quintessence of the metaphysical traditions of the Sufis and representing the spiritual paradigm for the future: *awakening consists in seeing oneself as the fulfillment of the divine purpose and recognizing that purpose in the universe at large.*

72 - Meditation Aftereffect

At a certain point in our search for meaningfulness, it may suddenly dawn upon us that our quest of trance-like meditations or retreats may arise from a perhaps unconscious wish to escape from a life situation (for example, parental authority or the ruthless, merciless civilization we are living in: its violence, its greed, its manipulation). Moreover, it has become evident in recent years that meditation practices can and do lead people to drop out of life in general and eschew taking responsibility in their lives for loved ones or fellow beings.

Further, we just may be trying to validate our own personality in our own view or that of others by being special or different! Actually, we may be missing out on the inestimable value of that which has been acquired by humans throughout the ages in terms of beauty, material convenience, and orderliness: the marvel, the excitement, the courage, the vulnerability and the enriching effect of sharing joy and pain, relationship, friendship, loyalty, and service in which God is to be found as a living reality. It is tragic to cloister oneself in an anesthetized psyche that shields one from confronting the challenges of the drama of life, which both actuates the celebration in the heavens in a concrete way, and tests our mettle. There is a way of being high without being spaced-out!

When meditating (or prescribing meditation), it is important to be clear about the aftereffect that the shift of focus of consciousness may be expected to have upon our personality, attunement, and world-view, and to know which practices trigger off which effect.

1) Since our notion of ourselves needs to be expanded when extending consciousness, we contemplate vaster and vaster reaches of space, we identify with zones of our being beyond our notion of a skin-bound material body. We may become aware of and identify with our magnetic field and/or aura. As these do not have a boundary, we then envision ourselves as being like a vortex (boundless). What is more, we tend to assume that we lose ourselves by merging with the totality of the universe.

It is important here to keep in mind that one is both a vortex and, at the same

time, something like a cell, bounded by a membrane, albeit porous. We need to work with both in combination, not just one or the other. Our minds in their commonplace thinking mode find it difficult to reconcile these two paradigms. This problem is similar to the one that physicists encountered in accepting that, since photons of light behave either as waves or as particles according to the way the experiment is conducted, they may be considered as displaying both of these properties. So it is with our notion of ourselves.

Our bodies (including the subtle bodies, the psyche, personality, and consciousness, etc.) are indeed holistically related to the totality of the fabric of the universe. This means that they carry potentially in them the bounty of the totality of the fabric of the universe, just as every drop of water has the same properties as the water of the ocean. In fact, every cell of the body has the same genes as every other, but in one some will be activated and in others different ones, so that by diversifying they create the change to cooperate. Thus they differ while being potentially identical, and in that sense may be considered as "discrete entities." It is in this diversity that our freedom is rooted. A vortex is open to its environment, and in fact incorporates its environment indiscriminately, whereas a cell, thanks to its membrane, may select the elements it takes in from the environment, or secretes to the environment, while still being open to some measure of osmosis.

If we identify just with the vortex model, we are overlooking the containment which ensures our protection against undesirable impressions, honors our idiosyncrasies, and confers upon us our incentive. If we neglect our boundaries, we run the psychological risk of finding ourselves disoriented, spaced out and unable to confront circumstances as real (one may even invoke the concept of maya to justify this attitude). What is more, just as we generally fail to realize that an eddy does not lose its identity by joining with other eddies in a wave-interference pattern (whirlpool), and can even be retrieved, we tend to believe that we lose ourselves as we merge blissfully with the totality of the universe or the being of God. However, the objective of the universe is that the bounty of the totality should be customized in each of its sub-wholes in a unique way! Fana does not mean that one loses oneself, but only one's commonplace notion of oneself.

2) In meditation we learn to "turn within", which can easily be misconstrued as

encapsulating ourselves in our psyche while blocking any impressions, physical or psychological, from the environment. Here it is the opposite: by setting up a boundary segregating ourselves from the environment, we tend to merge with the totality in an inverted space. A person unfamiliar with physics would find it difficult to have any clue as to what one might mean by "inverted space." It may therefore be preferable to envision that our magnetic field or aura intersperses with that of other such fields, like the eddies on the surface of a lake as they compose to form a wave-interference pattern. It is difficult for us to realize that this does not imply that they spread out or diffract in space. A good analogy would be the difference between a short musical theme, each note following the other and the notes forming a chord without being stretched out as a melody. This happens in our dreams, where impressions are jumbled; in order to retrieve them in our memory, we sort them out in a space-time framework.

If, however, as we turn within in meditation, instead of setting up a boundary encapsulating ourselves in our thoughts, we envision that we are protected by a porous membrane that filters impressions from the environment (at all levels of reality) and that we are consequently able to radiate into the environment, then we will enjoy an incomparably richer experience. Now, envision that you are not just filtering these impressions, but transmuting them, just as we digest our food in order to use it, since we can only deal with amino-acid chains that match our own. Just as in digestion, we need to break down the ingested elements and rebuild them on the model of our own idiosyncrasies and reject those elements which, being too alien to our own beings, would prove to be difficult to incorporate, or might even be harmful. Here our sense of having boundaries will help us reject unwanted impressions, on the one hand, or filter and transmute those impressions that can be put to good use if adjusted to our particular attunement, on the other hand.

3) Transcendence: there can be no doubt that our involvement with life at its lowest common denominator fosters greed, limitations in the field of consciousness, and conflict, while our quest for freedom from conditioning opens the doors to the wonder and meaningfulness behind what seems to be happening at the existential level.

Another way of putting this is to say that we must instill something of the way

of the hermit into the way of the knight. Our need for freedom is as compelling as our need for involvement. Are they necessarily mutually exclusive? There is a way of reconciling the irreconcilables. One example is to love without being dependent upon being loved. In meditation, detachment frees one from the conditioning of one's thinking and the constraint of one's self-image. Freedom from the usual setting of consciousness will enable us to shift consciousness into an inner space or, alternatively, into a mode of self-transcendence.

73 - Human Understanding - Divine Meaningfulness

There is geometry in the humming of the strings; there is music in the spacing of the spheres.

Pythagoras

The pilot of our being, our mind-brain that extends throughout our body to our whole nervous system, right into the nuclei of each cell, needs a wide scope of understanding and stimulation to reach a state of fulfillment.

Imagine, it took fifteen billion years of the cataclysmic convulsions in the birth pangs of umpteen cosmic galaxies to fashion the hundred million trillions of atomic particles constituting the fabric of our bodies. It took that amount of time to coordinate them to the point that they may, in their cooperation, offer a support system to the mind of the universe that we call the mind of God customized into what we call our thinking!

The very structure of our cells and organs and the organization of our body functions illustrate laws of harmonic resonance. It bears the stamp of the thinking of the universe that evolves as its material support systems become more elaborate. Reciprocally, the support system perfects itself as it evolves, just as our brain (and body for that matter) develops latent faculties as our thinking brightens and we exult in our grasp of meaningfulness. Our thinking perfects itself as our brain (and its extension as the nervous system) gets activated. Yes, the nuclei of our body cells are endowed with a degree of pragmatic understanding greatly enhanced by their cooperation.

In turn, by virtue of our tacit covenant with the universe of which we are a part, the cosmic mind, called the mind of God, delegated to our minds gains vistas, albeit latent in the domain of responsibility assigned to us to ensure the orderliness of that divine sovereignty. By so doing, we foster the mutation of the software of the universe, fluctuating it by our personal incentive.

For tonight the teeming world gives birth to the world everlasting.

Rumi

Since the divine mind (or mind of the universe) is the matrix of our mind, it can never be the object of our cognizance. Yet we can invite more of its bounty to percolate as our thinking. To do this, we need to extirpate the mental restrictions we impose upon our thinking by our very notion of ourselves as a fraction of the totality and by the same token as 'other than God'. That is the very principle of the Islamic Shahada:

Thou art not thou: thou art He, without thou; not He entering into thee, nor thou entering into Him, nor thou proceeding forth from Him or Him proceeding forth from thee.

Ibn 'Arabi

Our limited way of thinking evidences our having failed in our commonplace thinking to make the step in the evolution of human thought landmarked by the holistic paradigm - and beyond this even, realizing, that, while the fraction of a hologram functions like the whole hologram, it functions less effectively, but acquires a uniqueness that makes for variety and cooperation in the interest of the whole which would not occur if everything were undifferentiated.

Know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God.

Ibn 'Arabi

The functioning of our minds is illustrated most pertinently by the DNA. Each cell organizes the fabric of the environment absorbed in its tissue on the model of the blueprint of the universe, which ensures that the cells differentiate to cooperate in the interest of the whole body. Similarly every human psyche is formatted by the software of the cosmos, albeit each psyche customizes the principles governing that software in its own unique way and thus processes the environment differently from its neighbor. Thus the complex structure of our body serves as the support system for that very intelligence configured in the cosmic blueprint, by turning certain genes on and others off. Even so with our minds, although they carry potentially the mind of the universe, they are diversified, thereby restricted by their vantage points and their specializations.

Karl Pribram showed: the brain functions jointly as a hologram and as a network of circuits - may I add; ensuring both the transpersonal and the personal dimensions of our motivations. The more transpersonal, the more the holistic mode of our thinking prevails over our personal opinion. This is what is meant in mysticism by awakening to God consciousness. It is as though one were de-scotch-taping one's personal constraints to one's understanding of meaningfulness, more precisely one's personal interpretation of situations and problems which is exactly what is meant by maya.

But the exhilarating aspect of the whole marvel of which we are a contributing part is that the spring-head behind its superb alacrity is sheer excitement! The brain needs stimulation; the mind needs the joy of discovering ideas; and the psyche needs ecstasy.

Dr. Alfred Tomasis, a physiologist, found that our brain requires three thousand million stimuli a day to keep awake. These include of course light and sound, smell, taste and tactile impressions. These sensorial stimuli are translated by the brain as energy pulses stimulating the mitosis of nerve cells. We know that our body cells, particularly our nerve cells absorb light from the environment that catalyses their powerhouse, freeing their electrons from their initial constraint for a split second of spree into a degree of freedom, and that they are picking up and communicating sound messages. Hence the importance of music as fuel for our brain, also for our communication with the physical environment which is nothing less than a communion of light between the light fluoresced by the environmental objects, the sun, the stars; and is of the light thrust by our brain through the optic nerves and retinas into the environment.

But contemplate now the degree of excellence attained with the extraordinary variety of frequency resonances in the already complex atomic configuration of vocal cords, guts, wood and metals of musical instruments, already reflecting the orderliness of the blueprint of the universe, may be further configured by the mind of God when funneled by the human as in symphonies and choruses of our civilizations! Or when the latticework of the internal fabric of stones and glass and ceramic are assembled into a statue or cathedral. Or the gossamer film of paints which in many ways are of the nature of liquid crystals already so splendid in themselves are blended

into a painting!

Paint, like sound, is a noble expression of the software of the universe and does not need to be fashioned to copy perceived objects like the paintings of old, or like Beethoven's description of a thunderstorm in the 6th Symphony, or Honneger's imitation of a train puffing along. Albeit the form of a flower, or the countenance of a human face, figure at the prow of the evolution of divine thought configured as form and the soul-searchings, the aspirations, the misgiving, the compassion, the wit, erupt in human emotions. These are described for example by Brahms, who dramatizes the mutations incurred by the divine being in the existential condition. The mutations represent a progress in comparison with the sounds of nature in mineral or plant life sometimes depicted in the dehumanized austerity or exuberance of some of our modern music.

When these media are fashioned to express our creative thinking, they enrich the software of the universe. Our thinking that customizes the divine thinking, having projected itself into matter that already carries the hallmark of thinking at the cosmic level, is recycled into the cosmic thinking. Our minds and emotions delight when carried beyond the trite commonplace by the inspiration of poets, rearranging the divine thinking in unexpected ways! We discover new horizons of meaningfulness evidencing the splendor seeking to transpire through the appearance of things. Our mind-brains feast at the banquet offered by the creative geniuses who have conceived our great civilizations. We are thereby enriched and transformed.

What of the light that we awaken ourselves (probably as phosphorescence) by our visualizations as has been demonstrated by Dr. Motayama's experiments with meditators in light-proof cells equipped with photoelectric sensors? Can we imagine the delight of composers improvising musical themes emerging from inside as it was projecting an inner mandala in a visible or audible structure? Like a Toccata and Fugue of Bach or a Prelude of Chopin or a Sonata of Brahms! Most all of us have that uncanny ability as we hum randomly, yet it gains incomparably in excellence when cultivated.

According to Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, as we turn within in meditation, we discover our ability of awakening the sound of the universe, the audiosphere. May I add this sound is written right into the fabric of our body cells. They carry not only the memory

of the sonic outbursts accompanying the birth and demise of the nebulae, whose star-dust has coagulated into the atomic fabric of our body cells, but the present resonance of the subatomic structures of our cells that are affected by our psychological attunements. What a miracle is the human skill which translates this ubiquitous symphony of the spheres into music meaningful to humans!

Further Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan points out the way to arouse the light within that flares like a flame. The ebullient incandescence that burst out of the cataclysmic conflagration of the big bang is stored in the very fabric of our bodies. It is released as phosphorescence whereby we transform the atomic structure of our body cells into light - a capacity found in the glow worm and which we also possess, and can be released by dint of the appropriate visualizations.

It is not just the energy of stimuli which charges the powerhouse of our brains, but the meaningfulness of the universal blueprint conveyed by these stimuli. There are configurations, of the atomic structure of the fabric of the environment and of our very flesh that our minds grasp because they are modeled on the mind of the universe. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan adds: it is not light or that sound spells awakening, but the vistas that they trigger off in our intelligence. Every 'aha' moment triggers off a peak experience - a tidal wave of delight. The spring-head of the whole phantasmagoria that we perceive as the universe, divine nostalgia, spills over into our psychological attunements as we discover the intention behind it all written right into our deep motivations. But this only happens when we reach beyond our limited thinking, limited vantage point, and limited self-image. Imagine: our psyche is garnished with our misassessments of the physical and psychological environment!

Consider the impact upon the brain cells (and similarly upon the whole body) of our mind's ability to reach beyond its middle-range and of our emotions reaching into the many-splendored shimmering gamuts of cosmic ecstasy! This is precisely what we achieve with our meditation skills, in Samadhi practices, Vipassana, Kabala, the theology of Aquinas, the Sufi dhikr. A major aspect of meditation consists in learning how to think beyond the commonplace syllogism. P. D. Ouspensky announced in Tertium Organum the advent of a super-logic surpassing the simplistic syllogism: Men are mortal; Socrates is a man, ergo, Socrates is mortal.

Our ordinary logic helps us to gauge only the relations existing in the

phenomena world. ... We must come to the conclusion that separateness and combination are not opposites in the real world, but exist together and at the same time without contradicting each other.

Ouspensky

What worlds mysterious roll within the vast,

The all-encompassing ocean of the mind!

Rumi

74 - God as Archetype, the Human Being as Exemplar

To the question: 'how can one know God?', Ibn 'Arabi answers: "all that one knows of the archetype is what is exemplified in the exemplar". Roundness is only knowable through round tables, wheels, etc. This elicits a totally different relationship with what we think we mean be God. In our practices, we shall learn to recognize in the idiosyncrasies of our personality the divine qualities that they exemplify. Rather than being like a cell of the body, we could see ourselves as exemplars carrying potentially the bounty present in the template or archetype which we exemplify. This elicits a totally different relationship with the totality we project as God.

Those to whom Unity is revealed see the Absolute whole in the parts: yet each is in despair at its particularization from the whole...Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is a person and each person is a world...The heart of a barley seed conceals a hundred harvests.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

However, there is a more profound way of looking at this: What then in this view could the archetype of our personality be if we refuse to ascribe a personality to God?

It would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake to deny God a personality. Each being is the flowering of the personality of God...the seed does not show the flower in it, yet it culminates in the flower: therefore the flower already existed in the seed.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

But the breakthrough is in awakening the God within:

Believing is just a process. By this process, the God within is awakened and made living.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Our notion of ourselves as the observer can be shunted backwards in infinite regress as one identifies more and more with that aspect of God which we represent as the

Spectator.

To illustrate this, our consciousness endowed with the ability to imagine how planet Earth would look from outer space, or in some cases, how we are perceived by another person. Moreover, our minds are able to outreach any limits we may have assigned to its compass. As the French mathematician Henri Poincarré showed: "the concept of infinity evidences the mind's ability to always imagine a larger number than the one enunciated so far". In fact, our minds are coextensive with the mind of the universe. Albeit that just as in the holistic paradigm: insofar as one can fraction the totality, every fraction of the totality does not simply act as a section (like a section of an orange, for example,) yet the smaller the fragment, the less well it manifests the totality.

One needs to make a clear distinction between belief and faith. Belief is opinion based upon authority, or custom, routine, conditioning. Faith is reinforced by opinion based upon experience.

The mind gets easily caught in a bind. A bind is a situation in which thoughts follow one another in a circular fashion - popularly called a vicious circle. The pending catastrophe is routed in the storms in human thinking. Thoughts thus caught just as in a whirlwind become compulsory, and gain great emotional support by their very addictive nature until they explode in violence. Imagine: it is this very flaw in the functioning of the mind that begets conflicts, disasters, ordeals of terrible human suffering and terror!

As seen from the serenity of a spiritual retreat, the disastrous effect of an ideology upon the destinies of masses of people stands out clearly. The excesses of cruelty that people will wreak upon others in the name of sheer opinion not based upon real life experience is appalling!

The mystics of the various religious denominations seek after real experience, whereas the thinking of the followers is governed by belief. The originating revelation gets gradually distorted by what Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls "the followers of the followers". Therefore the Sufis hold that one needs to base one's concept of God upon one's discovery of the traces (ayat) of God in real life. That is why the Prophet Mohammed said, "for each person his religion." Because if that belief were to fail; if at

some point doubts should arise as to why the mind finds difficulty in relating the belief to actual real life experience, then the mind becomes plunged in the dark night of understanding.

St. John of the Cross who escaped his prison thanks to the darkness of the night sees in this crisis in our thinking the way out of the bind. Now the mind revolts against its conditioning, against those who have held it trammeled. Once more there is revolution. When there is a paradigm shift in belief there is a revolution in values, in paradigms, and likewise when that shift is reversed. It is a great tour de force. But this requires some degree of consensus and marks a stage in people's evolutionary advance.

However if the dark night serves to free oneself from the prison in the mind, it does not show the way. Therefore St. John cleaves to a tenuous spark of light in his understanding: the dawning of meaningfulness. Trust yourself to this fragile light as you advance towards it. It will grow as the effulgence of dawn. It represents a level of thinking beyond the kind of thinking that spins inexorable in a vicious circle. It dawns upon one's understanding as the horizon of one's understanding expands. Therefore the Sufis consider that it is revealed to one when one has found freedom from opinion.

From the moment that we realize to what extent our assessment of reality is distorted by referring everything to our notion of ourselves, we appreciate our ability to look at things in reverse. For example, "I am seen" rather than "I see", or "I am thought of" instead of "I think", or "I am the convergence of an infinite and eternal reality", instead of "I experience reality".

What is the criterion distinguishing this intuitive mode of cognizance and opinion based upon belief? One would need to investigate the levels of thinking of the human mind.

At the bottom line: experience of the physical environment imputed through the senses and hearsay, opinion, psychological data are interpreted from the limited vantage point of our commonplace consciousness. At a higher level, our minds project their grasp of reality which our consciousness cannot encompass into metaphors. This is why mystics express their conviction in the splendor behind real-life in terms of poetry. To value what comes through in the experience of the world, one needs to tap

one's inborn sense of beauty and meaningfulness.

This virtual sense is 'revealed' if one does not limit one's opinion to the way things look from the vantage point of consciousness focalized by our commonplace notion of 'I-ness'' nor to opinions borrowed from others. According to the Sufi Niffari, one is suspended on the threshold until one is ready for that revelation which he calls the divine revelation. For how could the mind transcend the concept of divine transcendence by striving to carry experience to the edge of the unknowable while still confined to his/her sense of I-ness? Rather it can only be revealed thanks to the significatio passiva (being passive to the divine operation). By trying to define God, one confines God to the narrowness of one's mind, however expanded. Therefore let us not limit God by seeing in this a proof of God's reality.

This is revelation: the meaningfulness of the universe as a total being erupts in each fraction of that being when that fraction reaches out beyond its horizon and plugs into the thinking of the universe. Here lies the next phase in human evolution. Evolution advances by dint of the revolution in our minds and a harmonious resolution.

75 - Psychological and Transformational Stages of the Mass

Some of the more traditional religious ceremonies are preceded by a procession exhibiting festive pageantry. Participating in a procession fulfills our need to discover whatever is holding us back from our quest and release ourselves from it.

But it is in the custom of performing ablutions that our sense of guilt is sparked. It brings home to us the importance of confronting our conscience as we recollect having offended or abused or harmed a fellow being. By the same token it draws our attention to the immaculate nature of that deep core in our being in which we discover the sacred.

There is a deep core in our being that is of the nature of a mirror that can never be tarnished by the impressions upon it.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Just as in the Catholic Mass, we first need to go through the **Kyrie** and **Christe Eleison** before participating in the **Gloria**. We cannot approach the immaculate center of our being without coming to terms with our guilt. To be honest with ourselves, (otherwise it would be a masquerade), we resort to ponderous soul-searchings. Memories of forgotten incidents besiege our minds and pummel our emotions. Our reason will come to our rescue, furnishing us with the most unconvincing arguments intended to justify ourselves. We may fall for these unaware, yet our conscience may not feel totally assuaged.

Our assessment of our guilt avers itself not to be too reliable. It easily overlaps with our resentment. We may feel guilty for having allowed ourselves to be abused, or co-dependent. Anger serves as our defense system. But we need to clearly distinguish between rage and outrage. Consider rage as the personal dimension of outrage and outrage as the impersonal dimension of rage. Rage can degenerate as hatred; outrage can erupt into heroism.

Toying with the impelling emotions generated in the drama of our lives, religion avers itself to be our saving grace. By grasping the splendor in the heavens behind the iniquity in the earthly drama we are lured out of our self-pity, which helps us to

heal. Is it worth missing out on the **Gloria** by being waylaid by our hurts in our storms in our teacups, when life in all its glory beckons us to participate in the cosmic celebration?

Is it the act of glorification rising aloft from the fervor of the congregation into the high vaults amidst the rafters adorning the colossal masonry of the nave as incense echoes the celebration in the heavens - or is it our incantations that enchant those celestial beings by an eerie sortilege into an upsurge of jubilation? It is as though a skylight had been suddenly opened between earth and heaven.

The **Gloria** of the Mass serves as a reminder that it is only out of an act of glorification that we can raise ourselves above our commonplace self-image in which we are encapsulated by our trite emotions, our greed, our lack of mercy and compassion. It brings home to us that it is our ability to honor our intuition about a splendor that is continually trying to break through the painful circumstances constraining us in the existential condition that fosters our transformations.

Of course those realms that we ascribe to the heavens are not located elsewhere; they are not confined to us either. But we accede to these by confectioning that very temple built in the fabric of our own person, our body, magnetic field, aura, psyche, securing a psychological area offering us protection against the sacrilege rampant in the world, also within ourselves.

It is indeed our faith in our intuition - a kind of inborn sense of meaningfulness not based upon the judgments of our limited minds - that gives us access to the higher dimensions of our being, and by the same token of the universe. Incidentally let us not confuse faith with belief which is based on authority.

This is where the **Credo** comes in, bolstered by the power of our personal convictions. It is a mode of cognizance, not based upon our assessment of situations but upon the fact that our thinking is of an identical nature to the thinking of the universe when not limited by our personal focal center. This perspective emerges only when we are able to grasp the cosmic and transcendental outreach of our being.

It is prayer, the act of glorification that shifts our thinking from the commonplace mode to this cosmic and transcendent mode. The effect of prayer is

challenging to our minds by revealing to us hidden causes behind events that do not make sense in our lives or that of others. In our ignorance of that which is enacted behind situations, sometimes dramatic, we tend to make serious mistakes in our handling of our affairs with dire consequences for ourselves and others. It is difficult for our minds, functioning in their limited fashion, to grasp the interaction between destiny and free-will. It is difficult to gauge the cosmic laws whereby the interplay between our covetousness and our dedication to service affects our destiny. Or how this effects our personality, our attunement and our fulfillment of our life's purpose. That the act of giving, sacrifice, relinquishing even to the point of surrender should be the ultimate issue in our lives defies rational common-sense. Why this moral injunction about sacrifice epitomized in the rituals of all religions illustrated in the oblation of the **Agnus Dei**, the lamb of God, or the immolation of Isaac, culminating in the **Crucifixus** of the Mass?

Those who are crucified on earth will be free in the heavens and those who are free on earth will be crucified in the heavens.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It is not much use trying to argue with whatever we ascribe to destiny - that is the bona fide of the enigmatic intentions of the programming of the universe. But it is clear that we cannot appraise this intention from our limited perspective. However I think that we can agree that charity makes peoples personalities appealing and welcoming.

However the only sense renunciation could possibly make is in resurrection - **Resurrexit**. That the quintessence of whatever has been achieved in the process of becoming is feedback into the pool of resourcefulness of the cosmos makes metaphysical sense. However since that which has been achieved by existentiation is that the virtual Totality should be diversified in each of us, points to the original contribution of our personal dimension - that the quintessence of our personality and know-how must be resurrected.

It becomes obvious to ones soul-searching that one cannot expect ones being to be resurrected unless purified of its blemishes. To extract the quintessence, Alchemists need to drain away the dross. This is where one finds that asking for

forgiveness is not good enough; one needs to repent, which means renewing ones pledge never to repeat the offense: the **Confiteor**.

This pledge to service illustrated by Issaias send me is a commitment to accept whatever the office asks of one in terms of sacrifice to the point of persecution, torture, martyrdom. There is a feeling that those called to cosmic service are being eulogized by heavenly beings - the **Sanctus**. Moreover something in the human spirit surges forth to honor, venerate, sanctify our heroes who have lived up to this higher calling - the **Hosanna**. They figure in our sacred treasure-house as living examples of the value we treasure most. Only after this may the celebrant approach in the **Introit**, the altar, the holy of holies to participate of the **Eucharist**.

Hic est enim Corpus Meum; Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis Mea.

This is my body, this is the chalice of my blood.

According to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:

The body of Christ represents the matter of the universe that is continually being transmute into spirit (energy), and the blood is the suffering implied by the incarnate condition, being transfigured into joy.

The ritual serves as a reminder that we do carry within us the inheritance of the whole universe which may be looked upon as the body of God. But if we are not aware of our divine inheritance, it remains recessive in us - we cannot actuate it in our personal idiosyncrasies. *

Be ye perfect as your Father.

The celebrants now return to their seats replenished by the many-splendored bounty lying in wait in their own being. Conversely by following the psychological stages celebrated in the Mass the contemplative may in his/her own personal orison experience this holy communion with the whole universe at all its levels.

The altar is amongst the stars.

Teilhard de Chardin

The kind of peace that passeth all understanding in the **Dona Nobis Pacem** could not possibly be reached unless one has gone through the cosmic drama, enjoying the privilege of the gift of life and suffering defeat and humiliation and despair. There is no peace equal to that at the aftermath of a storm - when one has confronted the challenge and come to terms with it. Hence the last words of Christ: *It has been fulfilled.*

Ita Missa Est - the Mass is completed.

* Reference could be made here to the Greek myth of Zagreus, the son of Zeus. When Zeus vacated his throne, his son Zagreus sat upon it. While stupefied at the discovery of his resemblance to his father as he looked into the mirror presented to him by the Titans, they precipitated him into the abyss and devoured him. Zeus shattered the Titans with his thunderbolt and men were born out of the ashes of the Titans who had ingested the body of the son of God.

76 - Inner Experience of the Mass

I. KYRIE

Confronting Guilt.

(i) As we exhale, we apply the alchemical process - separating, earmarking the idiosyncrasies in us which we dislike and those we gladly own, and drain the former (filtering in Alchemy).

(ii) Suspending breath in Kasab, we grasp the instant of time, where the process of becoming is intersected by the transcendental dimension of time. Here is an opportunity for a fresh beginning. This is triggered off by making a pledge.

II. CHRISTE

Only then can we deal with resentment. Think of Christ forgiving the Roman soldiers who were torturing him. A clue is found in applying the alchemical process of distilling. After draining off the scories, one cleaves to the essence of one's being, fostering an attunement where one is more ready to forgive.

III. CREDO

See yourself as a wave in the sea, the whole sea emerges as each wave, your body as being made of the fabric of the galaxies that spewed forth at the Big Bang, or your personality as being the outgrowth of a seed - a code - but you can actuate much more in your personality than what has come through so far.

Now see that it is all one being and it is only your own notion of yourself that makes you think that you are an individuality.

Now see that the Totality converged as your transforms itself through focusing its will as your will.

Can you stretch your mind to reconcile the irreconcilable: to accept that you are like the apex of the totality and yet an individuality?

IV. INCARNATUS

de spiritu sancto ex Maria.

Participate consciously and volitionally in your rebirth, resulting from an excellent integration of on one hand the fabric of the galaxies molded through eons of time into your body and in our personalities through the cultures of Planet Earth woven into our ancestral legacy: and on the other our unique representation of our inheritance of the divine archetypal nature manifesting as the many-splendored universe and in us as it diversified in the descent through the spheres.

V. CRUCIFIXUS

Accept your suffering as your share in the global burden of suffering of people and animals in the world today and ever in the past. See what it does to you. Does it make you bitter or more sensitive to the tribulations of others? Note that it makes you more thoughtful, cautious. In fact it is a catalyst of growth to make you mature and a bountiful personality.

It will occur to you that suffering is the signal accompanying the process of disintegration that is the necessary precursor of a new integration: rebirthing.

But this realization may be carried deeper: Once you have accepted your own annihilation and reinstatement, you will notice that

(i) your representation of the physical world falters, giving way to an overall grasp of matter that tallies with that described by physicists;

(ii) Your simplistic self-image will evaporate, giving way to the paradoxical wholistic self-representation of your psyche which we have already encountered.

Such is the discovery followed by a transformation sparked by the enhancing of the centrifugal, centripetal, ascending and descending forces in the practice of the dhikr.

Hence Crucifixus and Resurrexit are inextricably linked in their complementarity.

VI. RESURREXIT

However a remarkable feature stands out in Resurrexit: that by accepting dissolution, one becomes vulnerable, hence malleable which is a condition that is favorable to undergoing a process of molding. It is a matter of jolting oneself in a position of precarious equilibrium (Kemal in Sufic terms), which optimizes the effectiveness of the slightest catalyzing force. (Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures).

If we carry this further, we will realize that to resurrect, one needs to extract the quintessence of one's know-how and personal characteristics from its contingent underpinning, thus becoming very ethereal and consequently vulnerable. In fact one feels like pure spirit: strong in a strident way yet imponderable.

VII. SANCTUS

Call me!

We have now reached the stage where it is incumbent upon us to make a pledge. This is a different pledge than the one we made when recollecting our guilt, but a pledge of fealty, of service, like a knight, to the 'powers that be', that is the Spiritual Hierarchy of the Government of the World.

This is the moment to confront ourselves, make an introspective inquiry into what our real motivations are in life (called Mohasibi by the Sufis) and take clear decisions as to our future course.

VIII. HOSANNA

He comes in the name of the Lord.

The consequence is that we now have found our real being. Now only are we empowered to recognize and honor the holy status of our real being which was covered before under a masquerade of albeit well-intentioned pretense.

Furthermore this is the attunement which will enable us to establish a thought-bridge with the masters, saints and prophets who form the hierarchies of the Spiritual Government of the world.

IX. DONA NOBIS PACEM

Heretofore we had been pulled in two seemingly mutually exclusive directions on the horns of a dilemma by on one hand seeking to achieve sometimes simply indulging in covetousness, involve ourselves with people, sometimes on a power trip and one the other hand our quest for freedom and peace. Our power to attain our objectives was eroded by our incurring the spill-over of the agitation of the world: reacting rather than acting. Now we discover the sovereignty that arises out of the ultimate freedom: freedom from conditioning. Delegating the divine sovereignty confers upon us an ascendency with enables us to fulfill the purpose of our lives.

77 - Practices Based On Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's Teaching

Cosmic

We occupy only as much horizon as we are conscious of. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

1) Simply envisioning the starry sky has the effect of expanding our consciousness.

2) Also identifying with our magnetic field, and particularly with our aura, is consciousness expanding. However, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan draws our attention to our need to hold this magnetism while expanding it. This means: consciously radiating while avoiding dispersing the energy thus generated. Action develops magnetism, but repose controls it. This is why active people always develop their magnetism but without being able to hold it. It is like earning money from one side, spending it on the other, and always being without.

3) Applying Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's teaching, we explore further horizons.

4) After the manner of the Sufis, we always envision ourselves as a ramification of the One and Only Being.

5) This has the effect of expanding our sense of identity. For example, envision that it is the divine power that is coming through you and you will feel a wider expanse of power extending in your outreach. Likewise with the extent of your compassion, or the reach of your awareness.

6) Concurrently, you will gain a clearer sense of your influence on the people you are involved with as well as the prevailing circumstances and your physical environment.

7) By being aware of your outreach, your impact on your social and physical environment and life circumstances will increase.

Every individual has his own world, and the world of one individual is as tiny as a grain of lentil, ant that of another as large as the whole world. Every soul has its domain in

life, consisting of all it possesses and of all who belong to it. This domain is as wide as the width of the soul's influence. It is so to speak a mechanism that works by the thought-power of each individual soul. The above is an outline that is the first in a series. The next ones will deal with turning inwards, the transcendent reach, and the overview. Then the practices will address working with intuition, using creative imagination, and working with the glance. Eventually we'll explore clues to the meaning of the names of God in Murshid's rendering of Sufism.

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78 - A Dream in a Dream

Several components of your being are trying to speak to you in your dreams. Or is it that what you think you are is interrogating your deeper self, only to find that the layers of your being are part of a many-tiered puzzle in infinite regression. Will you ever reach the elusive depths? Umpteen obstructions block your access. Yet those thwarted pieces of your being beg for recognition, cry for expression - to play their role in fashioning your being. Imagine what we are missing out by neglecting to listen in!

Of course thoughts, emotions, images are jumbled like radio waves in the atmosphere or eddies on a lake. To your day thinking, you only express a slither of what you imply. And what you imply even eludes your own awareness. Maybe it's the job of the Shaman among the wiser minds around you to earmark a flash of the emotions behind you words, your semantics, the effigies of yourself which you project in your narratives, the myths concealed behind your reality. But the wise are rare and far between and one is indeed privileged to have any such wizards around. So one is left with the alternative of falling back on the wise person mysteriously lurking within in one's dreams or aroused in rare moments of vivid lucidity.

The forced tempo of 'real life' estranges one from one's dreams. Our longing for life to be a dream come true is condemned to the wastepaper basket of utopia except - except - if one is prepared to fight for it at the cost not only of great strife and stress, but pain to oneself and others, and of course incurring the scourge of being labeled a freak. On the other hand, society sees to it to marshal people within the limits of the common denominator called the 'norm', which operates as a salutary safety valve against whimsical, incongruous aberrations. It is the correspondence of our dreams to our everyday life that guarantees their relevance and saves our creativity from the entropy of erratic fantasizing.

A whole barrage stands between the deep yearning of one's soul and the 'real world': our involvements, the desires of our bodies, of our hearts, of our minds, our likes and dislikes, our vulnerable self-image, our upbringing, our conditioning, sheer survival. One tends to slip down to the lowest common denominator, the path of least resistance. One would no doubt find it easier if chances opened up to give one an opportunity to prove oneself to be a hero. But they do not come to us that way, we

need to create those opportunities.

Of course in your pensive ponderings, scan yourself, confront your motivations with the power of truth to eliminate insidious self-deception and justification. But while revealing its secret step by step when cross-examined, by virtue of its need to parade a masquerade of validation, our psyche covers up the deeper frustrated motivations conspiring in our soul. Unless you succeed in piercing this smoke screen in meditation (or hypnosis) it is in your dreams that some clues as to these deep springheads of your soul may erupt. Images, effigies, scenarios blurred or distinct may project themselves on the screen of your dormant mind with sufficient force to buffet your memory when waking up. The chances are that our interpretations of them are afflicted by wishful thinking or sheer conceit or dusky misgivings.

If in deep meditation, turning within, you may be able to spot a deeper motivation that your psyche will concede - the cause spurring the cause, whereas turning upwards, you may grasp lots of different values, sometimes at loggerheads, sometimes reinforcing one another. Is it your quest for beauty? Is it your pursuit of excellence? Is it your honoring truthfulness? Is it your concern for compassion? Is it joy? Is it peace? Is it love? Is it accomplishment? Is it wisdom? Enlightenment? Freedom? These may conflict and not tolerate any compromise. Your soul may be pummeled, pulled in opposing directions as in a tug of war, or etiolated in a challenging quandary. In no way could you expect to solve the riddle you are faced with because everything is important, everywhere are priorities and priorities of priorities.

Your dreams may however prove of good counsel because they bypass the mind's commonplace rationalizations. The key is accessing your dreams through your meditations. Meditation skills may be devised to auto-suggest to yourself a pilgrimage into your dream world.

But watch out for the emotions lurking behind the imagery of your dreams featuring fleeting incongruous effigies. This is where the message incubated in your dreams explodes with the greatest thrust. Gauge its compelling urgency, its insidious forcefulness. It may catch you unaware, not realizing how important the emotional need it conveys is to you. The emotions of the heart are imperative enough and cannot always brook their inability to adapt to real-life situations. But the nostalgia of the soul is overwhelmingly compulsive when unmasked and arouses a challenge to

the status quo of one's life and the established order or routine built over years of dedicated hard work, perhaps because it affects one's self-validation so deeply. This nostalgia erupts in every recess of one's mind and sparks the emotion of the heart which delights in rising from the personal emotions into responding to its more cosmic source.

To access the emotions at the soul level, the ordinary dream will not suffice. It takes the tour de force of awakening from your dream into a 'dream within a dream'. You dream that you are dreaming of images, while realizing that these are mere projections of your creative mind. But at the level where you are, there are no forms, no metaphors, no mental constructs just ecstasy and realization.

79 - Turning Within - Part I

Practices Based On Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's Teaching

There are two directions or dimensions in which to expand. The one is the outward, the other the inward.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

I have used Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's insight to develop the following visualization and concentration practices. These practices, and the ones in the next KIT, are preparation for the development of intuition.

The Initiator must give to one's pupils one's own meaning of the Sufi teachings, with added definitions, in order to make that teaching fully comprehensible to the pupil. Pupils must be told not to study the teachings but to meditate upon them. This way the teachings become a living experience, not only a book knowledge. The oral teachings given in Gathekas, Gathas, Githas, Sangathas, Sangithas of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan are as a line to tread upon.

As one goes along the line, one observes different things which are necessary to be observed on the spiritual path.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The following are models of the way the focus of consciousness can be modulated, accompanied by the corresponding practices to strengthen one's mind in exercising mastery over one's thoughts. This serves as a first step in learning to meditate. To achieve this, one needs to train one's mind and consciousness consistently in daily practices staggered from the elementary ones to the more advanced ones.

The effect of spiritual practices is gained like interest on capital. The practices do not always produce effect when a person is doing them, but practices once done are never lost. They are seeds sown on the soil of one's subconscious mind and must bear fruit in due course of time. No doubt, conditions may be against unfoldment,

which may delay the result of practices.

ATTUNEMENT

Ordinarily, the impressions accruing from the environment, both physical and psychological, force themselves upon one's attention, leaving one little chance of getting in touch with one's deeper feelings and motivations. Hence, the urgent need to learn how to turn within.

Each person in everyday life gives out their energies through the activity of life and, therefore, meditation is taught by the wise with posture so that the energy which is always spent in activities may be spared for some moments, and during these moments some additional energy may be taken in by the help of the breath.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Sit in an upright position and perform some of the breathing practices with which you are familiar. Or simply be aware of your breath, this will suffice to make your breath slow down.

As you do this, you will notice that your mode of thinking is very different. In contrast with the way your mind works when turned towards 'outside', you will find that your thoughts, rather than flickering from one thought to another, seem to intermesh and blur. In the physical world, you are here and everything else is without you, you are contained in space. In the dream, all that you see is contained within you. Therefore, to prepare yourself for this unusual perspective, you need to be clear about how your mind functions, then train your mind.

If you are unable to control your thoughts, you cannot hold them.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Therefore, start from scratch by simply visualizing an object. I suggest choosing an inspiring object: a flower, or a star, or a crystal - eventually the face of a master or angel.

The first thing that may be given to pupils is an object to concentrate upon which will centralize their thoughts and make their minds still. However the mind functions in a dynamic rather than static way. Therefore, let us start with a little mind drill to get your thoughts under control:

1) STEREOSCOPIC VISION. Suppose you were encompassing a wide span of the field of your consciousness, a wide panorama. You will notice that you combine lots of pictures into a composite one. Now observe how your mind in its ordinary setting is continually considering several thoughts that are not very well integrated.

2) DISCRETE THOUGHTS. You will find that since your mind has difficulty in integrating disparate thoughts, it is more effective to consider each thought or thought-package separately in turn. Here is the first step in meditation: disciplining the mind.

There are three things which those who follow the inner path use as exercises for spiritual attainment: concentration, contemplation, and meditation. Concentration is an exercise to train the mind to hold a certain object steady, without wavering, and by the power of concentration there is nothing in the world that cannot be attained. But concentration is a very difficult exercise to accomplish; for the nature of the mind is such that when the mind takes by itself something such as worry, or trouble, or a grudge against someone, or an insult, it holds it without any effort; but when one desires to hold an object in mind for the sake of concentration, the mind acts like a restive horse. Once concentration is mastered, one has mastered life on earth.

Contemplation is not much different from concentration, the difference being only that in concentration the mind holds an object, in contemplation the object holds the mind. Concentration itself, when mastered, turns into contemplation. The contemplative person is one who easily holds in mind all he or she thinks about.

Meditation is something different. It is a training of the mind, not in activity but in passivity, the training of the mind to receive some inspiration, power or blessing from within.

3) SUPERIMPOSED THOUGHTS. Envision your thoughts as illustrated by a double exposure of two superimposed pictures. They are blurred. Try highlighting one

picture rather than another. Now try combining them. This will prove difficult if not well-nigh impossible.

4) INTERCONNECTIVENESS. Now that you have gained some control over your thoughts, make a first attempt at relating two thoughts. See how their combination triggers off a meaning not present in each separately. This is illustrated by the classical intelligence test for monkeys to determine if they see the relationship between a stick in the cage and the nut outside! Grasp the meaning that the interconnectiveness between two thoughts conveys to you. At first, alternate slowly between one and the other, then toggle to and fro; if you are in control, you will enjoy the ease with which this takes place.

5) SIMILARITY. If two pictures were organically related, for example, if they resembled one another, yet differed slightly, you could extrapolate between them somewhat. This is indeed precisely what the brain does extrapolating between the pictures perceived by both eyes which differ slightly owing to parallax by ordering them in a three-dimensional composite picture. Therefore, at first, select thoughts that are closely related. Consider them both simultaneously. Gradually, you will be able to do this with thoughts whose relationship was difficult to grasp at first.

6) SPACE. Extrapolate between the objects closer to you with those placed in the background. Now you can see that pictures that would be difficult to fit in a two-dimensional composite, can be represented by your brain more easily when distributed in a three-dimensional framework, whereas thanks to the lens of a camera they could be disposed in a two-dimensional picture, albeit at the cost of much detail.

7) TIME. Pan as you scan the horizon. Note that in order to combine the components of the composite picture, you had to remember the past ones and combine them with the new ones. You will find that your present thoughts do incorporate in an implicit way previous thoughts. However, the habits of one's thinking tend to pull one back into one's commonplace thinking and, therefore, one needs to reconnoiter the way the mind functions and learn how to shunt into the internal mode of thinking.

You will find that both the physical and psychological environment exercise a pull upon your consciousness, forcing it into the commonplace focus. To turn within,

you need to dismiss the usual perspective on things. This can be achieved by devalidating it.

The surface of human intelligence is intellect; when it is turned outside-in, it becomes the source of all revelation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Actually, if you think of yourself on the model of the holistic paradigm: (that inasmuch as one can fraction a hologram, each fraction carries the whole picture, albeit the smaller the fraction, the less well it describes the whole), rather than thinking of yourself as a portion cut out of the whole, then you clinch the clue to turning within, because then you can visualize that the totality of the universe lies potentially latent within you. (Incidentally, Pir-o-Murshid had already anticipated the holistic paradigm.)

For instance, a modern brain specialist may perhaps say that every part of the body is represented in each nerve center, and that the condition of each is relative to the condition of the whole body. The whole is in every part.

Pir-o-Murshid gives a clue to this by describing how he feels:

When I open my eyes to the outer world, I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and turn within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart.

In a drop, the sea is as small as the drop; in the sea a drop is so large as the sea.

And if one is to see that one is a bubble, then one becomes part of nature's government.

80 - Turning Within - Part II

Practices Based On Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's Teaching

APPLYING MEDITATION TO DEVELOPING INSIGHT INTO PROBLEMS

One must learn how to apply the teaching of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan in everyday life, and how to see the beauty and complexity that one will find in life, by taking the roads leading to the desired goal.

Insight in one's problems will lead to unfurling one's potentials.

In the complete unfoldment of human nature is the fulfillment of life's purpose.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

1) Choose a thought connected with a current problem and earmark an event in the past that bears some similarity. Toggle between them to ascertain which features they have in common and in which features they differ.

2) See how the experience of the past throws a light on your present problem: maybe the same pattern keeps repeating itself until you no longer slip into that groove. Now see if the present picture throws light on something about the past you had never perceived before, and therefore the complete knowledge of the past will be a knowledge of the whole.

By turning within, we free ourselves of the constraint of the 'here and now', and therefore can retrieve the knowledge of the whole past bequeathed to us by the universe, subliminally latent within.

An illustration might be helpful here: peering into a hologram, carrying the double exposure of two three-dimensional pictures, you can toggle between both pictures by oscillating the perspective of your glance; now try rather than toggling to extrapolate between both pictures. If you succeed, or in the measure in which you succeed, you are capturing a double exposure of two interspersed three-dimensional

pictures. This would prove almost impossible, at least confusing. However, if there were some resemblance between these, it would be easier.

Having thus trained your mind, step by step increasing your integrative faculty, you will now suddenly grasp meaningfulness where you had not seen a relevance in situations. Thereby, you will develop great wisdom.

For the mystic, everything is connected: there is no condition that is detached from another condition. A mechanism is always running in relation to another mechanism, however different and disconnected they may seem. To gain insight, the mystic enters into the depths of the whole mechanism of the universe.

Another illustration: with two video cameras, film simultaneously the fish swimming in an aquarium from both sides of the aquarium. If you were able to view both films simultaneously, you would grasp a connection between both films although different from each other. These perspectives would be linked by dint of complementarity. Here you are not just extrapolating between two pictures, but between two vantage points (simultaneously or in a different time frame) and extrapolate between them.

3) Practice this by viewing your problems from one perspective; then another. Now view your problems from your personal perspective, then that of a person connected with or involved in the problem. Ask yourself how all you see affects you and what is your reaction to it all. First, how does your spirit react to the objects or the conditions you encounter, to the sounds you hear, to the words that people speak to you? Secondly, see what affect you have on others, conditions and individuals when you come in contact with them.

4) See how your point of view may be complementary to that of the other person. Even reconcile two complementary points of view in your own mind.

5) Try to shift your consciousness into that of another person and imagine how things would look from that person's vantage point. Now try to earmark which are the points you have in common and which contradict or do not tally.

If one is able to expand oneself to the consciousness of another person, one's

consciousness becomes as large as two persons; and so it can become as large as a thousand persons when one accustoms oneself to try and see what others think. It is the understanding of two points of view: the one and its opposite that give a fuller insight into life.

The progressive steps we have taken illustrate what we mean by shifting consciousness from the commonplace diurnal focus (explicate) to the state of reverie, anticipating the state of consciousness experienced in meditation when turning within.

6) Now see how the problem looks when you are in your ordinary consciousness; then how it looks when you turn within.

The external life is but the shadow of the inner reality.

The manifested life comes from the unmanifested.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But this can be illustrated better still by the following models.

You are watching an eclipse (sun/moon). Note that they are only in alignment from the vantage point of the earth. At times other than when they appear to be aligned, their spatial relationship does not appear to most people to have any significance - only in that relatively rare conjunction.

This example confirms that ordinarily we only see things from our personal vantage point in which we are entrapped and, moreover, what is important to us at the time. For example, the problem only exists in relationship with our particular attachment or concern. If you were free from that attachment, the problem would have no relevance and vanish. Regarding one's concerns, they are based upon one's scale of values and change as these evolve.

7) This could be further illustrated: if you were to shift your vantage point to any location in space, there is always one point in which the sun and moon are aligned (called a syzygy in Astronomy). This ability occurs when turned within in meditation we are able to imagine what it would feel like to see things from an inexhaustible assortment of vantage points. Consequently, one would be weary of judgments taken

on face value. You will realize that a defeat may turn out to be a victory and a victory a defeat.

8) A still further stage of shifting consciousness would be reached if, rather than envisioning that your consciousness is dispersed in space as represented outside you, you imagine that everything is connected like a network of radio waves. Therefore at any point in space you could access the whole scale of frequencies simultaneously. This could, of course, occur inside. To illustrate what we mean by the space inside, imagine a piece of paper so crumpled that every fragment is continuous with every other.

This space of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is in the inner dimension. The inner dimension is different; it does not belong to the objective world, but what exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in three-dimensional space. In reality what the mystics see in space is something that is within, but when they open their eyes, they see it before them.

9) The way to achieve this is to reach that which seems outside from inside, instead of exploring your psyche as you turn inside. Then you will find yourself in a totally different relationship with the world. You are not the subject perceiving or imagining other than yourself, nor are you observing your psyche in contradistinction to that in you that is the Spectator, but you resonate with the outer world by dint of affinity because that which seems in you is the same as that outside. The world within you is reflected in the world without; and it is the action and reaction of the two upon one another that constitutes your life.

10) To achieve this, shift your self-image into identifying yourself with the quintessence of your being, shedding all that is the result of the spill-over with the environment or the mask you are wearing or the role you are playing that has not yet been really digested in the core of your being.

You will find that your true being is immaculate and somewhat of the nature of a mirror that epitomizes clarity. This will give you an insight into yourself and others you never had before.

The one who tunes him/herself not only to the external but to the inner

being and to the essence of all things gets an insight into the essence of the whole being. Therefore, one can to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty that delights him/her in a rose. One, so to speak, touches the soul of the thought. It is just as by seeing the plant one may get an idea of the root. In this way things unknown are known, and things unseen are perceived by the mystics; and he/she calls it revelation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

By doing these practices, you will develop your intuition. Here is the key: identify with the seed of which your being is the unfurling. You will not find it in your mind, but in your heart unless you will accept that mind and heart are the two sides of the same coin. Therefore, all mental activities need to be turned inside-out. To do this, you will first have to unmask your mind trips and, what is more, deal with them. If you succeed, you will touch upon the divinity of your being in the silence of thought.

Divinity is like the seed that grows in the heart of the flower. It is the same seed that was the origin of the plant, and it comes again in the heart of the flower.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The clue to realization is to grasp God realizing Him/Herself in and through our realization of God. It is by realizing the God within that God is manifested without. But once God is realized, God is no longer only within: God is within and without and in all.

81 - Practices Leading to Illumination

There comes a time in one's evolution when a passion is awakened for the unattainable.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

1) Continually concentrate on the light radiated by your eyes; imagine them to be two beams of light rather than receptive to the light from the environment. Meanwhile keep identifying with your whole aura.

A sparkling soul flashes through the eyes.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

2) Hold your breath between inhaling and exhaling. While you hold your breath, turn your eyes upwards. When exhaling turn your eyes back to their forward position and represent your glance to be made of two beams of light that cast their light upon the environment. Do not focus on the profile of objects in the environment; keep concentrating on the beams of light.

As one evolves, one naturally ceases to look down on earth, but looks up to the heavens. If one seeks the heavens, one must change the direction of looking.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

3) This practice will be ineffective unless you entertain beautiful thoughts. The very thought of being a soul rather than a body and mind will beautify your thoughts which will have an immediate impact upon your facial expression. Conversely your facial expression will affect your attunement. Therefore smile if you can; otherwise there is no point in doing this practice.

The light which comes from the soul, rises through the heart and manifests outwardly in one's smile, is indeed the light from heaven.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

4) On the other hand, the key to inviting your soul's attunement to come through depends upon whether your thoughts reflect that attunement.

Heaven and hell are manifestations of agreeable and disagreeable thought.

The mind is a world, a world that one makes and in which one will make one's life in the hereafter as a spider lives in the web it has woven.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

5) Offset your sense of identity from its usual setting so as to represent to yourself that you are not simply a visitor on Planet Earth, but are a denizen of the heavens.

The one who lives in his mind is conscious of his mind; the one who lives in his soul is conscious of his soul.

As the birds will never have a lasting attachment to beasts, so it is among people: the wayfarer of the heavens can never keep constantly attached to the dweller of the earth.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

6) Be aware of your nostalgia for the sublime.

Souls who have become conscious of the angelic spheres, even in the smallest degree, hear the calling of that sphere; and the discomfort they have in this world is that of homesickness caused by the call of the angelic spheres.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The more closely a person is drawn to heaven, the more the things of the earth lose their color and taste.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

7) You will find that if you give vent to your nostalgia for your highest ideal, you will begin to identify yourself with your soul.

The wonderful thing is that the soul already knows to some extent that there is something behind the veil, that there is something to be sought for in the higher spheres.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

8) Consider your body and mind as support systems for your real being whom we shall call your soul. By so doing, you will create an inner disposition which is favorable to sensing what one means by the soul.

The soul manifesting as a body has diminished its power considerably, even to the extent that it is not capable of imagining for one moment the great power, life, and light it has in itself. Once the soul realizes itself by becoming independent of the body that surrounds it, the soul naturally begins to see in itself the being of the spirit.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

9) Keep reminding yourself that you exist on several levels simultaneously; that you can highlight one sphere or another by your attunement.

The soul in its manifestation on earth, does not change its plane. It lives in all spheres, though it is generally conscious on only one plane. If it is only conscious of the earth plane, it is impressed by the troubles and limitations of life on earth...The soul during its life on earth and after does not change its plane of existence. It simply quickens and transfuses it with consciousness, and identifies itself with all the things that it sees, and changes its own identity with the change of its constantly changing vision.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

10) Now try to remember your condition at the celestial level prior to your birth (or rather, conception). Know that you continue to exist and function at that level now and after death, accept you will have matured.

We live in the world to which we are awakened, and to the world to which we are not awakened, we are asleep.

The soul has manifested in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of existence and yet be aware not to lose its way, but regain its freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

11) You will get used to raising your consciousness at will.

Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's own will and realizing one's immortal self which is God within.

The soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its breaking through the ties of the lower planes. It is free by nature, and looks for freedom during its captivity. All the holy beings of the world have become so by freeing the soul, its freedom being the only object there is in life.

There is a state at which, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life and given that power and peace and freedom, that light and life which belong to the source of all beings.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

12) Now as you exhale with open eyes, imagine that the beams which you project are the light of your soul rather than the light of your eyes. Besides, highlighting that light will make your aura sparkle. Remember to clear the mind and emotions of any sense of limitation or grudge otherwise the light you project will not be the light of your soul.

As the sunshine from without lightens the whole world, so the sunshine from within if it were raised would illuminate the whole life, in spite of all seeming wrongs and limitations.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Such is the way to illumination.

82 - Heaven and Earth Interspersed - Part 1

We are at a stage in the Sufi Order where the need for illumination has become imperative. One can say that ultimately illumination is the only thing that makes sense of life and for many there is an almost desperate need to obtain it.

Illumination is associated with awakening and awakening may be described in terms of experience such as suddenly seeing things from a different perspective. An example would be walking in the woods and having a sense of being in a transfigured world, one that is absolutely magical. Or being convinced that your assessment of a problem is the way you thought it was and all of a sudden something switches in you and you see it in another way. Or walking in a street and instead of seeing a lot of people, you see that it's all One Being, ourselves being the fractions, although ultimately the total Being can never be fractionated. So we see that our usual representation of the world is the result of the commonplace focus of our consciousness which is rather limited. One's vantage point can change, and the consequence is that one's perspective on what one means by reality switches over, clicks into a totally different perspective.

We say that we are in pursuit of spirituality but there is no way in which we can define it or have a clear idea of what we mean by spirituality. We would like to make it a little more real, however, otherwise it becomes like lip service to a belief system. One way of doing this would be to think that what one is trying to do is to introduce another dimension into our commonplace lives which brings in an element that has a transforming effect. And this idea is substantiated by the thought 'bring heaven to earth'. But when we say bring heaven to earth we are thinking in terms of duality; we are thinking heaven up there is to be brought down to earth. There is some contradiction in this. The reason for this is that our picture of ourselves is usually limited and so the heavens would be other than what we think is ourselves, like angelic beings. We need to realize that there are no boundaries to our being and the heavenly realms are part of ourselves just like for example the people you love become part of you and are continually present in you. So if we think of the heavens as other than ourselves then we will not discover the features of the heavens within us. To know the heaven in us we have to unfurl the potentialities of the celestial features of ourselves, so it's a knowing that results from doing instead of just knowing.

Of course we would like to simply try to define those features we could ascribe to the celestial dimension of our being as compared to those we call human. But then again we're thinking in terms of duality because in fact they are interspersed.

So if our thinking stands in the way of our experience then we have to embellish our thinking with greater wisdom so that we are able to overcome the limitation of our mind that is standing in the way of not only our experience but our unfoldment. An example could be illustrated by a loaf of bread which you could slice and then you could select any slice. Or if think of yourself as being made of different components you could call on a certain component to try to unfurl it.

Likewise, the usual way of thinking is that we have all kinds of qualities like compassion and truth and joy and peace and so on but the holistic paradigm in our time presents us with a much richer understanding. This could be illustrated by a hologram which incorporates several images which are superimposed and interspersed, it's not like a slice of bread that you can separate. So you can toggle between the focus that brings out the perspective on one image from the focus of consciousness which brings out another image.

As with a hologram, somehow our brain has the capacity to extrapolate between those two images and the consequence is that we see three-dimensionally otherwise we would not recognize three dimensions. And the same thing is true in what we call spirituality. Instead of thinking of the heavens up there and the earth down here or even thinking that there are features in us down here that are of the nature of the heavens we need to see that in fact they are interspersed with our humanness. For example in India it was believed that the Sannyasin was different from the householder but now we're trying to see in which way they relate.

We could of course highlight certain features in us that would typify the angelic in us as a guideline. This is in accordance with the teaching of Christ of being in the world but not of the world. What Christ is saying is precisely what I'm trying to clarify in our minds. We see people who are typically of the world in their way of thinking and of doing, we are surrounded by them, suffocated by them. If we follow the prescriptions of Christ, which are crucial to our objective, we need to see what it is in us that is not typically of the world but which we could actualize in our behavior so that we are not pulled between two different objectives or motivations. Any such attempt to define

them is bound to be perfunctory but still one needs to start doing this.

The thing that strikes me particularly is innocence. There is a kind of cleanliness about innocence as opposed to the kind of psychological pollution which we see around us which I think is sacrilege and where the dividing line is very difficult. So it is or natural innate sense of the sacred which gives us the ability to ascertain what is inappropriate for us because it violates our sense of the sacred. The consequence of this is that one becomes very sensitive to any manipulative tendencies in one, any guile, or lack of truthfulness. So the beauty of the child is that the child will come out with the way he or she thinks without any concern for what it does to another. But the consequence is that the child is extremely vulnerable and fragile and can so easily be hurt.

Of course the celestial dimension of our being is very vulnerable and in order to defend itself it creates a defense system which unfortunately takes over covering the most essential aspect of our being which is the celestial in order to protect oneself. The consequence is that one is drawn into guile, manipulation, being divisive, being ruthless, availing ourselves of the kind of support system that gives us a sense of security against our vulnerability So the whole western civilization is clearly a support system with all kinds of amenities which aim at being comfortable but protect us from the storms of life and the precarious nature of our lives. The one thing that it can't really do is to protect ourselves against pain, somehow, so that our vulnerability is still there. Therefore the support system tends to take over so that one has little time to care for one's soul.

As Pir-o-Murshid says one's spirit is very vulnerable and just a little disappointment or dishonor or anger will harm it. Caring for the soul is something that the support system just cannot do. In fact we must be careful that the support system does not harm the soul. As Christ said, *'what point is there in gaining the whole world if you lose your soul'.* That is our concern in life. If we protect ourselves then we can't experience life in all its fullness so it means taking the good with the bad and accepting one's vulnerability and trying to make a dream come true and being prepared to find that one's ideal can never totally jell in the nitty-gritty of the situation because that's not what life is about. Life is an opportunity so that we may become better people, wiser, more loving and illumined as we progress in evolution.

Every moment in life has its mission, every moment in life is an opportunity.

Why should this opportunity be lost? Why not use every moment of one's life towards the accomplishment of that purpose for which we are here? It is the question of bestirring ourselves to make the best use of every moment of life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

83 - Heaven and Earth Interspersed - Part II

The question in the mind of Buddha and also of those in the Hindu tradition was whether pain is due to our giving in to our humanness and whether we can find protection against pain by withdrawing our need to fulfill our desires. I believe it's similar to anesthetizing oneself. Cancer patients who have the choice of doping themselves with painkillers have to decide to what extent they feel comfortable about doing so or to what extent they feel that it is separating themselves from the reality of life.

Maybe there is another way of looking at this. The consequence of trying to highlight and also unfurl the celestial aspects of our being is that we encounter pain when our celestial ideal is being violated. So the pain is in the way of translating our celestial ideal into earthly conditions. The curious thing is that in fact if we look at it we will realize that it is love that typifies the celestial aspect of our being as opposed to desire. Desire can lead one to slip into wanting things that are comfortable or even wanting people in our relationships that give satisfaction to our ego, that's not love. Of course in love there is the greatest of all vulnerabilities as is illustrated in the songs of the Sufis where one is on tenterhooks as to whether one's love is reciprocated. We can illustrate it by the heavenly beings being rejected by the egos of the denizens of the earth with the consequence of being bereft of their ability to nourish the earth with that special dimension that they represent. It's a kind of refusal of beauty. It's a very strange thing but it's something that one wouldn't believe unless one saw it happening today, replacing love by desire.

By love I mean unconditional love which you could see as a yeast which has a transforming effect, but also makes one extremely vulnerable. Paradoxically this vulnerability avers itself to be a great power: it's the power of truth. As we know youthfulness has a resilience that is lost when the personality becomes jaded. This innocence bespeaks of reliance upon the parents and has a lesson to teach us as adults, however important our incentive, that there are times when we need to trust ourselves to the self-organizing faculty within us and beware of interfering with it by our personal volition. This is precisely what the Sufis call reliance upon God.

So if we introduce this into our way of doing and thinking then we have an

immediate measuring rod which gives a sense of what we are doing in our lives which goes counter to bringing heaven on earth. We have a feedback system there. Then it becomes very clear that what we are doing to Mother Earth is the result of greed, desire having snowballed, having reached the point of gross exploitation. Ruthless cruelty is the opposite of love. This has been the message throughout the ages but somehow it has been downplayed, even in the name of religion like the terrible persecutions in Spain at the time of the reformation.

So far I've highlighted innocence as being one of the features of the heavenly states and then love. I think we also have to feature beauty or we could think of it as splendor rather than beauty. Beauty is just the way that splendor assumes a form. It could be the beauty of our thoughts, or it could be the beauty of our way of handling things, or it could be the beauty of our aspirations, the beauty of our willingness to be of service, or making personal sacrifices. There are many ways in which the kind of beauty which we ascribe to the heavens become a reality on earth. Of course it is on earth that beauty is to be found. That is why we need to change that tendency of thinking that the heavens are up there and that's where we want to reach and perhaps we will reach it when we die.

If you seek beauty it will elude you. If you unfurl the beauty latent in your being, it will attract beauty. This is the reason why seeking for the angel in the heavens is misleading. Instead, find the heavenly dimensions of your being and the environment will be transformed.

Pir-o-Murshid said that the state of the heavens is embryonic, that means that it is a virtuality. It means that the reality is down here because this is where the celestial virtualities of our being are unfurled in our personality like an egg that has unfurled into a blastema and an embryo and then a baby and so on, originally it was an egg. So think of the heavens as being in a seminal state but then it doesn't have to be up there, it's in us. It's not contained in us but if you think of the hologram again it's a virtuality that can be highlighted and by being highlighted it can be really called into existence.

At the very thought of the divine splendor there is a kind of ecstasy that Sufis have often called an inebriation. Now one projects it as a reality up there but the great breakthrough is when one discovers the splendor in oneself and one doesn't dare to

do this because one thinks that it is too grandiose. Pir-o-Murshid gave us a clue as to how one can do this and that is to accept that we have both in us, the aristocracy of the soul and the democracy of the ego. Otherwise if one were to claim that one is the splendor then one would be guilty of megalomania. But that is why Abu Azid Bastami said, *'how great is my glory*.' So he did make that step that we have difficulty in making, at least I do. So it's much easier to project and think that one is enamored or enthused or inebriated by the splendor of the heavens.

It seems rather prosaic to be enthused by the splendor that one discovers in oneself, it seems very self assertive and yet ultimately it's the same but one needs to see that it is the same thing by overcoming one's sense of otherness. By highlighting one's problems one tends to slip into a very commonplace picture of life which does not honor the needs of one's soul even though one is in theory trying to actualize spirituality into real life. A criteria that might prove helpful is the difference between one's needs and one's wants to which Pir-o-Murshid drew our attention and moreover the needs of the soul, in contrast to the needs of the psyche although these are both interspersed and reciprocally relevant.

Our pain is the wounded child, so it is the celestial in us that feels rejected by the human. On the other hand the child has an extraordinary capacity of laughing and crying at the same time. If we dwell in our pain, then we are allowing the angelic in us to be bogged into the human condition. Therefore the joy that we ascribe to the heavens is a liberating emotion from the constraint of our humanness. If we do not avail ourselves of this resort we get bogged in by our human condition. Those who are trying to actuate spirituality in daily life continually encounter the tendency to get caught in the perspective of human problems to the extent that one has lost sight of the spiritual values behind them even while one is trying to actuate those values. It's like the perspective in the hologram, if you highlight one then, of course, the other tends to fade away and it's very, very difficult to extrapolate between both at the same time. So our attentions are right in line with the need in our time which is to make God a reality. But as Pir-o-Murshid says very clearly the soul in its search for fulfillment on earth tends to lose its way. That's the reason why one needs to refer back to the original motivation of one's soul and realize that our minds tend to sclerose the dynamic intention into concepts. When this happens we get caught in our concepts of spirituality and that's not spirituality, it's our concepts.

Therefore, although Pir-o-Murshid said, '*shatter your ideal on the rock of truth*', I think it would be better to say, shatter your concepts of your ideal for the sake of being realistic. Then you will find that your ideal will find further outreach, further perspectives that will free it from its limitation in your mind, but never give up your ideal because then you are lost.

In order to fulfill the practical duties of life, it is not necessary to forget our ideal. We can hold the ideal in the tenderest spot of our heart, and yet fulfill our practical duties. The ideal is to illuminate our lives, not to paralyze our actions.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

84 - A New Impulse on the Dhikr

When you do the dhikr you are participating in an assembly of dervishes. If you take a magnet and move it in a circle then the energy of the magnet will be enormously enhanced so that it becomes a dynamo. So that's one way of looking at the first step in the dhikr, working with energy and as our energy field develops so will our intuitive faculties. To start with simply make a circle with your whole body, irrespective of your breath. Experience what it does to you. See that it tends to pull you out from the center of the circle so that your magnetic field is developing centrifugal forces. Think of your body as partaking in some way in the nature of the stars and planets and galaxies that continuously rotate. Imagine the flesh of your body having began at the beginning of time, being born out of stardust. Since that first impulse of life, billions of molecules have continued to live and proliferate to eventually form your body. The memory of the symphony of the spheres, of the choreography of the heavens, is right in the very cells of your body and you rediscover it when you do this motion. Even if you are not conscious of it, your body is.

When you identify with your magnetic field instead of your body you realize that it does not have a boundary. When you identify with your aura, in a more advanced stage of the dhikr, you are doing the dhikr of light. Experience your aura as being interspersed with the planets, the galaxies, the stars, and the whole universe so that the universe is not other than you or out there somewhere but you are intermeshed with it. You could think of the wazaif Ya Kabir or Ya Mutakabir, God is very, very great. This sense of vastness and greatness will enhance your sense of identity and you discover that your personality is endowed with a dimension of greatness. That's why one is seeking for vast horizons, one doesn't like to be trapped in a small space. I find that it is that sense of honoring the greatness of God invested in one's being that makes it possible to forgive a person. Are you big enough to forgive? That's greatness. A puny person has difficulty in forgiving. Immediately your self-esteem is greatly enhanced.

Now try and see if while you are doing this and you are experiencing centrifugal forces reaching out, if you can experience the opposite which is a pull towards the center. We call these centripetal forces. These forces are felt most as you interrupt the circling. You interrupt the motion when you are in the most precarious of

all conditions which is when your head has turned towards the zenith. This is a state of unstable equilibrium, and in Sufi terminology it is a kamal state. So take advantage of the labile state to let your head bend forward and inhale. Exhale in the circle and inhale as your head descends. It seems very strange to inhale as one's head comes down but it is very powerful. Immediately you feel that the energy mounts up right away but you want to capture that moment when you turn within.

The reason why people circumambulate a temple is because it strengthens the concentration on the center of the temple. So that concentration has been growing as you were encircling and now you are giving vent to that tendency to reach the center. In Sufi terminology it's Batin, the center of your being which is a void but it is also that area of your being which is most sacred. This is evidenced by the fact that there are things that one finds that there are no words that could possible express them. For instance, one might find it's a kind of misnomer to say, 'I love you'. Love is a very deep feeling in your soul and you find there is no way of expressing it in words. One shows love by loving. Somehow by formulating it in words one betrays its sacredness. That is perhaps the great secret of meditation when you get in touch with your deeper self and you don't have to talk about it. It's something you feel but you can't say. The Sufis call it the secret of the heart.

When you turn your head towards your solar plexus, which is like the gravity center of your body, all of a sudden it is as though you had plunged into the depth of life and everything that you used to think was the universe seems to be right there at the surface. It's as though you were swimming under the water and somehow you can reach the universe from underneath. So you are not encapsulating yourself in your psyche, you are reaching the universe much better from inside then you could ever from outside. When you experience a vast panorama of nature or look into the starry sky at night it seems to be endless but somehow from inside you can reach the unreachable, you can reach in the hearts and thoughts and souls of humans, of angels, of animals, or plants. So when your head descends try and sustain that moment for as long as you can.

For a moment don't bring your head up, just keep maintaining your concentration on the center but instead of thinking of it in terms of a circle think of it in terms of a vortex or as a spiral getting larger and larger. So you are experiencing what

the Sufis call the ecstasy of the vastness and in that we see the majesty of God. For the Sufis this is a state of revelation: God reveals to you the secret of your soul. In our ordinary consciousness we tend to deny the feelings of our soul even though we may be in touch with the feelings of our heart. The Sufis call it Sirr as-Sirr, the secret of secrets, which is the secret of God, the divine intention behind the universe. Somehow you are in sync with the deep Ishq Allah, the deep nostalgia that moves the universe that you experience as your own personal nostalgia. If you go into this very deeply you realize that you can never formulate that secret in words. One is betraying the secret by trying to voice it and yet there is still that longing to do so. The power that moves the universe is that nostalgia for the unknown to become known and for this the great mystics have endangered their lives. Al Hallaj was accused of revealing the divine secret which was his love relationship with God and in doing so lost his life. In fact it is love which is the secret behind the universe rather than understanding. The terminology of the Sufis say it better than one could in the European languages. The Sufis would express it as Ya Kabir or Ya Mutakabir followed by Ya Batin and Ishq Allah Ma'abud Lillah (God is love, God is the adored one).

So while you are inside, look at the universe as though you were looking at it from under water and you realize that only a semblance of the beauty that is to be found inside ever breaks through the surface. That is why the Sufis say the physical universe provides clues as to the divine nature behind all life. But these clues can easily be distorted by one's lack of understanding. So you learn not to rely on what appears at the surface any more unless you able to understand that which transpires behind that which appears. Now in regards to what affect these practices have on your daily life, they give you a kind of depth. When you are with another person you are able to grasp what is behind what they say or do or the issues behind any problems that you may have in respect to them. So it helps you go deeper, never relying upon apparent facts.

After having hit the solar plexus, let your head come up gradually, shifting your concentration upwards. It's like kundalini but you're not starting at the bottom of the spine, you are starting in the solar plexus. Prolong your inhaling as your head rises. Inhale as your head comes down and continue to inhale as your head reaches upwards again but not very high, just up to the horizontal. Try to maintain concentration in the solar plexus for some time and then rise. So it's not just a matter

of transferring your attention from one chakra to the next, we are ascending through the spheres as the head comes up and so it's very useful to know the different levels. Words will help a little but it is your intuition that bespeaks of the glory of the heavens that will lift your consciousness up from the earth sphere. The important thing is the sense of deja vu or rather deja commune, a sense of something that is familiar to you but you can't quite pinpoint it. Looking into the eyes of a child, looking into a beautiful sunrise, listening to some beautiful music, somehow triggers off the memory of something sublime which we have alienated ourselves so much from that most people don't believe it, they think it's just imagination. The world can be so vulgar so let yourself be enthused by beauty. Feel your need for beauty, your need to live in a beautiful world, and your need to manifest beauty. Without giving your soul this kind of nourishment, life can be unbearable.

How are you responding to the challenges of life? One tends to take on the kind of attunement of the commonality which is low-key or even vulgar and one gets so used to it. So give yourself this luxury of enjoying beauty and beauty will act as a stepping stone towards the splendor beyond beauty. And imagination is a stepping stone towards beauty. The magic of imagination is that it pictures the formless as having form and that form is beautiful and bespeaks of the splendor behind it. One recognizes beauty because it is latent within one. So this is a new form of ecstasy. It is the ecstasy of turning within. Ibn 'Arabi said, *'one discovers beauty when one grasps that which transpires behind that which appears*.' So that attunement puts you in a very high state and you find yourself in a transfigured world. This makes you beautiful.

As our head rises we experience awakenings at the level of mithal, or metaphor, the way that a thought can be illustrated as an image. These awakenings correspond to the chakras. We call the solar plexus, alam al anwar, the world of subtle beings like beings who have died and exist as subtle bodies and the thinking that goes with it mithal, the world of metaphor. Malakut, the heart center, is the level of the angelic spheres, the world of celestial beings, your angelic counterparts which are still there. The throat center is Jabarut, the world of pure splendor beyond the personification of angels. Your link with the angelic spheres is strengthened by your glorification of God; it's not tangible but something you can experience in your own attunement. The third eye, Lahut, is the plane of the archetypes, the divine attributes, the seeds of your personality, and Hahut is the crown center. Murshid said that the

seed that is the origin of the plant reappears at the end of the cycle of the plant. As you evolve the divine inheritance emerges out of the features of your personality and this is the birth of God, according to Pir-o-Murshid , the awakening of God in you.

So these levels lead to samadhi. It's as though you had freed yourself from your incarnate state until you reach the level whereby you are the being of God and that's what al Hallaj was talking about. That's why Ibn 'Arabi said: *know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God.* You experience the unity behind all things. One sees that it's all one reality, the physical world, the angelic planes, everything. From a certain vantage point people appear as different but at that level it's all One Being. And for the Sufis that is the divine revelation. God reveals to the mystic that he or she is His/Her Being. So it starts with duality and in the end it's unity. But that is very short-lived in the dhikr and that's why you hold your breath after the inhalation so you have the experience of eternity. But the Sufis don't want to linger in a samadhi state because that is not honoring the purpose of life which is to be awake in life rather than awake beyond life. And that's why when you hold your breath, you concentrate on your heart center instead of on the crown center which you would have done if you had been in samadhi.

So this is just a very brief touch of samadhi, unity. In Sufi terminology unity is Ahad, but when you awaken in life it's Ahadaniat, multiplicity in unity. When you awaken beyond life there is a kind of memory of your existence on the planet but somehow this memory is enshrouded into a sense of having been under an illusion, being caught in a perspective. That's what one means by maya. So that's awakening beyond life, that's samadhi. It's knowing that you thought that things were the way you thought they were but now you realize that is was just the way you saw things. When you reach a state of immunity against your perspective of the world, you experience the most utter freedom.

So this gives you some clues as to what happens when you hold your breath but for the Sufis the purpose of life is to awaken in life. So now you are aware of the physical world, you are aware of your personality, of your thoughts, of your emotions, of your relationships with people and so on but somehow you never slip into your personal vantage point, somehow you are always seeing the different expressions of the Being of God. It is much more difficult to describe awakening in life than

awakening beyond life.

Murshid said, "*God discovers His perfection through our imperfection.*' The whole universe is the means whereby God discovers Him/Herself and you are part of this. According to the Hadith: *God became in my consciousness the subject of His self-discovery and became in my personality the object of His self-discovery*. Can you see the unity behind the duality? That's looking at things from high up and you realize that most people have the worms eye-view and this is the eagles eye-view. Pir-o-Murshid describes this as what it's like to be awakened in life. Imagine that you are the only person awake among a lot of people who are sleeping or a lot of people who are caught in an illusion. It's like going to a play and getting caught up in the illusion of the scenery and costumes but now you see the play in the eyes of the producer. That's samadhi in life.

So go into a very wide circle as you exhale. Then inhale as the head comes down and suddenly everything is reversed, you are seeing things from the inside out. And lift your consciousness to the heavenly spheres and discover the divine inheritance, the seed of your being, yourself as the plant or the flower. And then as you reach higher you don't identify with your personality anymore, or the archetype of your personality, but something much more fundamental which you could call beingness and you awaken! All of a sudden you awaken, freeing yourself from your trips, your vantage point, your involvement, everything. You find yourself free and awake as you hold your breath. And now you look at the world again but this time maintain your freedom, do not descend into your personal vantage point until you start exhaling and then you get back into your vantage point again, back into the circle. Exhale deeply in order to take in more oxygen on the inhalation and you will be able to hold your breath longer. Don't do it fast, do it very, very slowly. You can't do it much to start with, it's only when you get used to it every day that eventually you can maintain your concentration a long time. So this is a new impulse on the dhikr.

Did I not leave the unseen world in Thy pursuit?
Have I not come to this world of limitations in search of Thee?
Have I not followed Thy footprints on this earth?
Have I not looked for Thy light in the heavens?
But where did I find Thee, Beloved, at last?

Hiding in my heart.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The Sufi dhikr, La Ilaha Illa 'Lla Hu: there is no God but God. La on the exhalation while describing a circular motion of the head, third eye facing left shoulder, solar plexus, right shoulder. Ilaha as one reaches upwards to the apex of the circle. Illa on the inhalation while thrusting the head downwards, the third eye striking the solar plexus. 'Llah (Allah), the great proclamation sounded in the heart center as the head rises. Hu as one holds one's breath.

85 - Steps Toward Awakening

There comes a time in one's evolution when a passion is awakened in the soul that gives the soul a longing for the unattainable. And if the soul does not take that direction, then it certainly misses something in life for which it has an innate longing and in which lies its ultimate satisfaction...Every atom, every object, every condition and every living being has a moment of awakening. Sometimes this is a gradual awakening and sometimes it is sudden.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The forthcoming series of Keeping in Touch's constitute a study in the steps earmarked in the teachings of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan and the Sufi mystics of the past, including sometimes the teachings of various traditional esoteric schools leading to awakening in life. Each step however represents a degree of awakening.

One's grade of evolution depends upon the pitch one has attained. It is a certain pitch that makes one conscious of a certain phase of life. Every belief and every experience for a wise person is a step of a staircase; when one has taken this step, there is another step for one to take.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In the description of the Sufis, the steps towards awakening are layered in tandem: for each level with which we identify, corresponds a mode of thinking or realization. As one shifts one's sense of identity from one level to the next, one awakens from one perspective to a further realization. Following, a synopsis:

NAZUT: Identifying with body. If extended, dovetails with physical cosmos.

KHAYAL: The mode of thinking when identifying with the body.

ARWAH: Identifying with subtle bodies, aura, life-field - holistically interconnected with implicate network of the universe.

MITHAL: Metaphor: creative imagination.

MALAKUT: Identifying with celestial counterpart.

JABARUT: The human mind accessing the divine mind.

LAHUT: The archetypal level - divine inheritance - the seedbed of personality.

HAHUT: Identifying with divine intelligence beyond consciousness.

TAWHID: Awakening in life. The divine spectator - stereoscopic consciousness.

We do not wish to force live experience into a theoretical system. However, if you consider a change in one's sense of identity as an awakening, then you could hold that there are nine awakenings; if you wish to consider the realization clinched at each shift of identity, then one could list five awakenings.

I. FIRST AWAKENING: THE COSMIC OUTREACH OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In the art of meditation, one trains one's mind in the skill of extending the range of one's vantage point beyond the usual setting of one's consciousness focalized in a focal point. This is illustrated by the Wazifa "Ya Basit". By shifting the focus of your consciousness, you can free yourself from the constraint of your restrictive vantage point. Just as you can modulate your glance between encompassing a wide panorama or pinpointing a letter on a book which you are reading, you can modulate your consciousness between envisioning the universe as a global reality while losing your sense of the details or highlighting an event while failing to grasp all its implications or ramifications.

If you achieve the likeness of this by offsetting your consciousness, you will experience awakening beyond the middle range. The breakthrough of freedom from any manner of constraint, in this case freedom from the tyranny of the confinement in the notion of the personal dimension of the "I", will spark a breakthrough of bliss.

We occupy only as much horizon as we are conscious of, as far as we can expand. Every individual has their own world. The world of one individual is as tiny as a grain of lentil, and that of another as large as the whole world.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As you exhale, envision your consciousness expanding, encompassing increasingly wider fields of perception and mentation. Now if you think that your body was confectioned out of the stardust - that the outburst of radiance at the instant of the big bang continues to live now as your body, your sense of identity - your notion of yourself extends. The cosmic dimension is evidenced by our sense of participation in the entire cosmos.

A million galaxies are a little foam on that shoreless sea...We came whirling out of nothing, scattering stars like dust. The stars made a circle and in the middle we dance, Turning and turning is sunder all attachment...Every atom turns bewildered and it is only God circling Himself.

Rumi

Take advantage of your exhaling to merge with the environment. Inasmuch as we identify ourselves at this first stage with our body, the very thought that the fabric of the galaxies has culminated in the cells of our body has an impact on our identity. But this acts more powerfully still when we feel our body magnetism - rather like the field of a magnet, which, just as with the magnet extends beyond its boundaries, our skin - but also intersperses it. At this stage let us simply try and feel the zone of magnetic force around our shoulders, arms, and chest. Realize that it does not have a definite boundary and remind ourselves that it does intersperse with that of all the beings that constitute our physical environment.

Try to experiment. If you stretch the notion of yourself as you exhale, you run the risk of either losing your sense of individual identity or identifying with the cosmos. You will discover yourself as a vortex without boundary. This is illustrated by the Wazifa Ya Basit. However, as you inhale, you will notice that the cosmos gets converged as you (Wazifa: Ya Qabid) . If you do not recover your personal identity, a flood of impressions will overcome you obsessively which is precisely what happens in pathological mental states. This is where you will discover that it is your sense of your uniqueness (reflecting the incomparable divine uniqueness "Ya Wahid") as an individual that confers upon you the ability to select those impressions which you can handle and those which you need to protect yourself from.

You will realize the danger of eschewing your individual identity. Our

programming provides us with a complex defense mechanism made up of thresholds which screen and filter the environment (Ya Muhaimin). This is to be found in the Sufi idea of "containment, encompassing" illustrated by the Wazifa Wasi. This is what Buddha meant by the sentinels. Besides it is our individuality that makes for the rich variety of existence (Ya Mughni). But its is difficult for our ordinary minds to reconcile these two aspects of ourselves: the vortex as opposed to the cell albeit endowed with a permeable membrane unless you think of yourself as an eddy that intersperses other eddies in infinite regress without losing its idiosyncratic features.

Incidentally, this is further illustrated in the dhikr where one says or thinks "La ilaha". Describing an arc of a circle with one's head, one expands while the "La" warns one against assuming that the environment is what we may believe it to be. As one says or thinks "illa" as one's head turns towards the solar plexus, one is reminded that this warning applies also to one's psyche and self-image. These then are the conditions for hoisting one's consciousness into the higher spheres as one says or thinks "llah", then awakening to God consciousness in existence: "Hu". Take advantage of your inhaling to observe that, thanks to your memory, the physical scene or scenario continues to live in your psyche while you downplay your perception of it.

Under careful scrutiny you will notice that you recollect the physical scene such as it appeared to you from your vantage point: for example Notre Dame of Paris. If you had seen it only from another angle, your recollection of it would be different. Remember, the "here and now" is only a cross-section of reality squeezed into the framework of our commonplace mind's incapacity of encompassing the "everywhere and always". Therefore Yoga draws our attention to the fact that we are carrying a personally biased picture of the world in our psyche. And this is the more pertinent in our assessment of our problems. If we wish to awaken from the middle-range, we need to question our representation of the physical world, of our body and particularly of our personal, social situations. Therefore we need to do some work with our psyche. For example we need to learn to consider our situations from several view points instead of just asking what they mean to us in our commonplace self-image. To achieve this, we need to learn to turn within in meditation. This will bring us over to the next step: it is not the physical world that is 'maya', but our misassessment of it.

To hold that the world is maya is a false claim unless you can prove it.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

For the Sufis, the physical world is an assemblage of traces (ayat) of an invisible and unknowable reality (haqq) devised to give us some clues as to the nature of that reality. Consequently one needs to reconnoiter "that which transpires behind that which appears" (Ya Batin).

Follow the hint rather than cleaving to your personal perspective or alternately dismissing it as "maya". This requires the most utter detachment from one's personal bias. Suddenly everything assumes great clarity; it is as though one had awakened from an illusion (Ya Khabir). One's psyche had masked reality and one had taken one's assessment for granted. Now one has shaken off the hoax. If you apply this to your appraisal of the physical world, you will enjoy a sudden breakthrough of awakening, so that your relationship with the physical world will no more be an I-It relationship but one of deep communion and resonance. The consequence will be that you simply plunge into the reality of the universe or the realness of physical phenomena. You will envision the physical universe as the body of a being and the cosmos as being that being:

The world is a man.

Mahmood Shabistari

Now for our self-image. Since the richness latent in our personality is constrained by our self-image, the consequence of extending our notion of ourselves beyond our skin triggers off an remarkable unfurling of our potentials (Ya Wahhabo) and enrichment of our idiosyncrasies (Ya Mughni).

The spirit of limitation is always a hindrance to realizing the spirit of mastery and practicing it. The experience of being powerless is one's ignorance of the power within one... It is the situation where we are in that makes us believe we are this or that. Whatever the soul experiences, that it believes itself to be. If the soul sees the external self as a baby, it believes I am a baby. If it sees the external self as old, it believes I am old. If it sees the external self in a palace, it believes I am rich, If it sees itself in a hut, it believes I am poor. But in reality it is only I am. When one lives this limitation, one does not know that

another part of oneself exists which is much higher, more wonderful, more living and more exalted.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The consequence of this realization is felt right away in your impact upon the prevailing circumstances with the result of increasing your sphere of influence (Ya Malik ul Mulk).

Every soul has its domain in life consisting of all it possesses and of all who belong to it. This domain is as wide as the width of the soul's influence; it is so to speak an mechanism which works by the thought power of each individual soul.

KHAYAL

For each notion of identity we entertain, there is a corresponding mode of thinking. In our ordinary thinking, our minds think in terms of categories: this tree/that tree, subject/object, I/it, spirit/matter, immortality/transiency, transcendence/immanence - "either", not "and". In our ordinary thinking it would be considered folly to question that we are the spectator or subject experiencing the objective world, or our body or thoughts objectively. This is reflected in the simple faith which represents God as "other".

If we expand our consciousness, freeing ourselves from our personal bias, we will still entertain a conceptualization of God as "other", but our concept will reflect our sense of immensity, of grandeur (Ya Mutakabbir).

To make God intelligible, you must make a God of your own... It is, however, impossible to make God intelligible, really. The God ideal is so enormous that man can never comprehend it fully, therefore the best method which the wise have adopted is to allow every man to make his own God. By this he only makes a conception of God according to what he is capable of making. He makes Him the King of heaven... in fact he ascribes all perfection to Him

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The God who is in a faith is the God whose form the heart contains - who discloses Himself to the heart in such a way that the heart recognizes Him. Thus the heart only sees the God of the faith.

Ibn' Arabi, Fusus al Hikam

Since the form in which He discloses Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which He discloses Himself. That is why there are many different faiths. To each believer, the Divine Being is He who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith. If God manifests Himself in a different form, the believer rejects Him, and that is why the dogmatic faiths combat one another.

H. Corbin

On the day of resurrection, God will show Himself to His servants in a form that they have not known. It will not be the form of their faith, but some form from among the divine determinations in which the believers have known their God. The servants will deny and reject Him and take refuge in God against this false god, until at last He discloses Himself to them in the form of their faith. Then they recognize Him.

H. Corbin

86 - Arwah - Identifying with the Subtle Bodies

This Keeping in Touch is the second in a series outlining steps aiming at awakening. The method advocated consists in first shifting one's sense of identity, for example identifying oneself with one's subtle body, or aura, or celestial body, or divine inheritance. Each shift in our sense of identity is accompanied by a new mode of thinking which we are describing and triggers off a new awakening. There are several awakenings, as we shall see.

In the last KIT, we described how we feel when our sense of identity expands and how it affects our way of thinking, quoting the Sufis and Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan in particular. In the present KIT we are describing what we experience as we turn within. Shall we call it the introspective mode?

Arwah: The Second Level Of Identity

When we are in the introspective mode, as we turn within and consider the environment it appears vastly different to how it appears in our normal consciousness. Our relationship with the environment is dramatically altered. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan communicates his experience:

When I open my eyes to the outer world, I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and turn within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart.

In the cosmic state we experience everything interspersed with everything else. We also see how the interspersed elements are somewhat congruently interconnected.

The order of the world as a structure of things that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order.

David Bohm

This space of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is in the

inner dimension. The inner dimension is different, it does not belong to the objective world; but what exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in the three dimensional space.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

To illustrate the way the universe appears in this setting of consciousness, imagine the universe as a hologram in which two or more interrelated pictures are projected so that you could toggle between highlighting one or another, or even extrapolate them. As we have seen these pictures are interspersed, not diversely located, and more important, they are features of an underlying wholeness.

You will find yourself in a transfigured universe which appears much richer than the way the universe appears in the ordinary setting of consciousness transpiring through the apparent world that now seems illusory.

The one who tunes oneself not only to the external but to the inner being and to the essence of all things gets an insight into the essence of the whole being, and therefore one can to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty which delight one in a rose.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Furthermore, you will discover yourself as very different from what you thought you were - you yourself are transfigured. This may be reminiscent of the state of lucid dreaming in which you assume a totally unfamiliar personality contrasting with the personality you remember you had in your diurnal state.

In the physical world, you are here and everything is without you - you are contained in space. In the dream, all that you see is contained within you.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you let yourself be lured deeper within, downplaying the consciousness of your physical body, you will feel as though you were made of a fine texture - like gossamer. Maybe you are sensing your life-field or electromagnetic field.

See if you can distinguish several layers intertwined. You will find it most intriguing because behind one layer you will find another finer one: that which you discover behind one veil avers itself in turn to be another veil!

The external life is but the shadow of the inner reality.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Sufi metaphysics (Tasawwuf) distinguishes several veils screening, and at the same time revealing by their configuration, whatever erupts behind the apparent (Zahir), the shroud (Hijab). See if you can espy behind the profile of your face, the countenance that transpires through the cells of your face.

...that which transpires behind that which appears.

Ibn 'Arabi

It evidences a deeper reality (Batin), the etheric template, more cosmic and lasting - that which this illusive reality reveals (Tajalliat).

Whither you turn, there is the Face of God. ... Everything is perishing except His Face.

Qur'an

This would mean that behind all faces, the Face of God is hidden.

God is hidden in His creation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Pondering upon your experience now it will occur to you that, while at the jagged ends of your being you dovetail with the environment, (in fact the universe), at the center of your being you seem to be continually resorbed in a void (an undifferentiated implicate state) then recurrently reformed - reborn anew, (an Islamic view).

At this point, turning within has lost any reference to space - you have lost your

sense of space.

Where art Thou, since my space has convoluted?

al Hallaj

As any vestige of a sense of bodiness has absconded, you lose the feel of the gravity pull of the Planet. Just as when you intone 'illa' you cease whirling, as you keep turning deeper within you reach into the void, (al 'ama) at the epicenter of your being: your solar plexus.

The foundation of Khalwa (seclusion) is al Khala, the void.

Ibn 'Arabi

If you hold your breath between inhaling and exhaling, concentrating on your solar plexus, (particularly if you attempt the dervish whirling or intoning 'illa' when repeating the dhikr) you will have a sense of touching upon a vulnerable state of unstable equilibrium (called Kemal by the Sufis) such that you will find yourself prone to react to the slightest nudge. This could be illustrated by an aircraft, which as it reaches the stalling point is totally subjected to the slightest breeze, or the muscles of your arm can be triggered off by the flicker of a thought. This state of delicately balanced dynamic tension is made use of by Sufis to trigger off a sudden change from one state (hal) to another.

Divinity is like the seed that grows in the heart of the flower; it is the same seed that was the origin of the plant and it comes again in the heart of the flower.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Discovering this cosmic law in yourself allows you to recognize your ability to effect dramatic changes in your being by your realization.

As the whole universe is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by oneself.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Concentrating on your solar plexus, you will discover that the core of your being is immaculate however much you may feel tarnished either by the spillover of the world, or of your own transgressions (I hope, no offense). It acts as a mirror simply boomeranging back impressions from the physical and psychological environment as well as inside from your psyche which, though normally envisioned as being inside, now seems external.

The spirit is like a mirror which does not retain the impressions upon it. By turning the mirror, the impressions are effaced.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Holding your breath between inhaling and exhaling, you discover a condition of time whereby the forward march of the arrow of time is interrupted, just like the motion of a pendulum is suspended as it reaches the farthest reach of its swing. In this state of suspense a different dimension of time (imagine a vertical vector) seems to intercept the process of becoming (the horizontal vector) to which we limit time in our ordinary thinking.

You will discover the difference between the sense of time experienced in the first awakening - (i) the moment of time where the past overlaps with the future to the extent to which it can be predetermined and therefore foreseeable in a 'here and now' whose edges remain nebulous, and (ii) the instant of time where, according to the Sufis, the arrow of time is intersected by a second dimension of time moving from transcendence to transience and vice-versa.

Waqt (the instant of time) is like a sharp sword that cuts the guilt of the past and the expectations of the future.

Hujwiri

The programming of the universe provides for the chance of making a fresh start, opening a new chapter starting from scratch. Take advantage of this divine gift - the divine grace (Rahman and Rahim). But we have to merit that grace by repenting and making a pledge never to repeat the mistake. The pledge marks a hiatus, an apostrophe in the process of becoming, intercepting the chain of causal conditioning - the law. In Kabala, it is Chesed rather than Din.

Fluttering over one's consciousness is a whiff of what it would be like to be liberated from the conditioning of the past and the feed-forward of one's destiny that one's limited self built out of inadequacy.

Referring back to the vortex model, the vortex does not simply converge the environment and boomerang it back but let us consider life as recurrently rebirthing itself and reemerging from the unsounded depths of the void, in new unpredictable ways.

87 - Mithal - Metaphor: Creative Imagination

Practices Leading To Awakening At The Mithal Level

The key to awakening to the level of Mithal is, as we have seen in the previous KIT, in shifting one's sense of identity by discovering the deeper reality of one's physical body to be rather gossamer. As seen from inside, your physical body now seems like the crystallization of the volatile, evanescent, quintessential subtle body that you now discover yourself to be. It does seem to have some kind of configuration but without a profile, rather like our countenance, continually shifting, sometimes shimmering.

If you can reach out from within, (which is best done as you exhale), you will find that, in the perspective of inverted space where everything intersperses everything else, your subtle body dovetails with those of kindred beings. Moreover it seems to oscillate in sympathetic resonance or sometimes jam in dissonance as your signature tune finds its place in the cosmic symphony.

Your perception of matter has altered. For example instead of light appearing as radiating from a source, you can see as Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan showed that in this perspective light is "all-pervading".

In contrast as you inhale, you will regain your sense of personal identity, discovering that, while you enrich yourself with the bounty of the universe, you do enjoy freewill in selecting those elements you wish to ingest and those which you find difficulty in incorporating.

Paradoxically while the model of the vortex came naturally to your mind when you exhaled, now when you inhale as you turn within you will no doubt find that quite the opposite strikes you. Now you appear to be somewhat of the nature of a cell endowed with a permeable boundary - or rather have the impression of being formed of concentric zones, or buffers, each exhibiting the characteristics of protective thresholds. Consciously place sentinels at the door of perception, screening, not only what you ingest from the environment, but also the unwanted features at the periphery of your psyche which are due to a spill-over from the psychological environment which

are not in resonance with your real being.

Do not place a wall between you and the environment, incarcerating yourself in your psyche and dismissing the world as many meditators do. When blinded by the more overt nature of things one misses out on reality in its subtle, covert attire; you cannot see the stars while the sun is visible. Thus protected from the glare, you can reach outside from within highlighting the divine intention bursting forth in the miracle of life, in the marvel of the cosmos, and in the great achievements of civilizations, of human thought, creativity and ingenuity, thus boosting your self image and enhancing your creativity.

A sentinel allows some things to pass through and rejects others. You can see how by your willfulness to adapt to the environment, while gaining invaluable resources, you tend to ingest indiscriminately at the periphery of your personality elements that distort your specific uniqueness.

One asks oneself how all that one sees affects one and how one reacts to it; how does one spirit react to the objects or the conditions that one encounters, to the sounds one hears, to the words that people speak to one; and further what effect one has on others, on conditions, on those individuals one comes in contact with.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

So that, while being implicated with the overall reality, you will be aware of being furnished with boundaries, albeit permeable. This is evidenced by your ability to make a choice ensuring your uniqueness within the global unity.

Those to whom unity is revealed see the absolute whole in the parts, yet each is in despair because of the particularization from the whole.

Shabistari

If you now strive to maintain great clarity as you meditate, you will find that your mind is obliged to accept what seems contradictory: that we can be inextricably enmeshed in the totality yet preserve our identity.

Only in an atmosphere of serenity can you find your attunement. Now as you hold your breath, as you discovery the deeper core of your self, you will be struck by recognizing how genuinely "you" it is. It is as though you discovered yourself for the first time! It seems somehow to be larger, more universal than your ordinary self-image and you will notice that it is ever-recurrent, rather than sclerosed. Moreover it appears to dovetail in its seedbed with a latent network out of which all creatures surface - the template of all kin, the fountainhead of all creativity.

Refuge In A Retreat

Having now had a sense of your real being, you realize that your environment, your circumstances, the greed, the grossness, the brutality, that you witness in life draws you away from your own germane authenticity. Your clamoring for the sacred will overwhelm your thoughts, you wish to discover your real being and you will strive to obtain this precious jewel in the course of a retreat. But let us be wary of the easy course: escapism.

Some seek refuge in a retreat because they are over-stressed by society, oppressed by the view of the world, even of their family, perturbed by incessant activity, and are on the quest for tranquillity. Others seek in a retreat the delights that one hope to encounter. These are indeed weak motivations which will not confer spiritual stations or spiritual ranks.

Ibn 'Arabi

When he cannot put up with conditions around him, he may think that he is a superior person, but in reality conditions are stronger than he.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

One would be missing out on discovering the clues whereby the divine reality is revealed in everyday life.

When the contemplative does not see anything else than God in all beings, the void (khala: root of Khalwa, retreat) is impossible.

Ibn 'Arabi

Therefore if one can maintain one's perspicacity in an awakened state in everyday life, it is a greater achievement.

The key to withstanding the "pull" of the ordinary appearance of the physical world to facilitate turning within is difficult to acquire because it consists in overcoming one's attachment to favorable physical amenities or from emotional dependence. By downplaying the input from outside, one favors the emergence from within of thoughts that are not determined by existential conditions.

However one may take a Sabbatical for a short time to get in touch with the deeper recesses of one's soul, since the challenge of our ordinary lives make it exceedingly difficult to achieve this.

How are meditative souls awakened? How do they maintain themselves in the experience of the inner life? In the first place the adept values his object of attaining the inner life more than anything else, more than wealth, position, rank. Seclusion, silence, thoughtfulness, meditation and gentleness, all these make circumstances in their life appropriate for receiving illumination.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

METHOD

In the previous issue, we learned, while in the first mode of thinking, to consider objects and phenomena as signs, clues as to the nature of Reality or God. Now as you enter the retreat, or as you turn within in your meditations, try to spot these clues inside.

The first revelation unveiled to the retreatant is that the signs of the world need to precede the signs that he finds in his soul, for the world is prior to his soul.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Now while turned within, recollect how the physical scene appeared when you were in your ordinary consciousness: it varied according to your vantage point. If you have seen for example Notre Dame of Paris from different angles, you know how very

different Notre Dame looks purely depending upon the vantage point.

Now recollect your life situations, relations with people etc. Notice that you can look at the problem one way or another way, yet somehow these views are dynamically related. Therefore as Yoga points out, we are carrying in our psyche a biased picture of the world, of ourselves and of our relationship with the world. Consequently, if you wish to awaken:

(i) Question your assessments.

(ii) Now consider how your assessments would look from another angle - for example the point of view of another, irrespective of what they mean to you.

(iii) Extrapolate between several points of view.

(iv) Now plunge deeper within the core of your psyche (best done as you hold your breath after inhaling) in which you touch upon the impersonal wellspring of your being recurrently emerging from its virtuality. Thus you will have eliminated the personal projection of your psyche upon objective phenomena. This requires the most utter personal detachment which the Sannyasins call "Vairagya".

(v) Try to unmask the hoax of our commonplace logic which infers cause to effect sequences in the process of becoming. Try to grasp other causal inferences, for example a) emerging from the depths of your being to your personality, then exercising some impact on circumstances, or b) from the programming of the universe to the "here and now".

Since your psyche carries inexorably the impressions of the universe as interpreted by you, your psyche will now be somehow refurbished. If you forego what the universe or the circumstances of your life mean to you personally, looking outside from inside, you will recognize in the appearance of things features that now make sense to an emancipated mind. Moreover you will resonate with the reality of the universe or the realness of physical phenomena. Suddenly everything assumes great clarity; it is as though you had awakened from an illusion: you can now see what are the implications, the issues enacted by the apparent situations.

Looking back upon how things looked when in the Nazut focus, you can clearly see how your psyche had masked reality and you had been living with these missassements taken for granted during your whole past. You have awakened from a hoax! Fancy enjoying freedom from what one erroneously mistook for one's self and one's plight!

88 - Review of Extending Consciousness and Turning Within

Before exploring further dimensions of awakening, it is advisable to take stock of where we are and then anticipate new horizons. Therefore let us step back, then move forward.

As a preliminary, it is good to have clear aspirations:

If you are a sensitive person, bereft of the spiritual values in your human condition and have a need for the sacred, you will feel impoverished, incomplete, uprooted. You may even notice a tendency to slip into rank material greed which may lead unwittingly into unkindness with its attendant violence. Or alternately, you may simply sport a bad self-image

You have the option between basing your value-system upon religious belief, complete with a set of "dos" and "don'ts" or cultivating your latent faculties of insight. The latter step is indicative of the evolution of consciousness in the human being which is being accelerated in our day and age in those who are at the prow of the advance of our civilizations

With the maturity of the soul, one desires to probe the depths of life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This is precisely what has been highly prized by the initiatic traditions as "awakening".

Clearly this is our objective here - your objective. In the Sufis tradition, we are moreover intent on applying the insight gained in fostering the unfurling of the potentialities latent in our personalities, and in it effect upon our accomplishments in real life situation.

To resume the conclusions we have arrived at so far:

(i) Extend the outreach of your conscious field beyond its middle-range purview, by decentralizing and expanding your conscious field. As we have seen, you

will notice that your notion of yourself becomes increasingly bountiful; moreover your self-image dovetails with the psychic environment. We find an apt illustration for this if we were to throw pebbles on the surface of a lake: the eddies tend to merge into what physicists call a "wave-interference pattern". The peaks and troughs either reinforce one another or neutralize one another. You will confirm this in your relationship with people: sometimes your mettle is spurred, your self-confidence reinforced by discovering similarity with another person; sometimes you find solace in completing another who is quite the opposite to yourself.

To pursue the analogy: as we try to earmark these eddies, at some point, we lose sight of the individual eddies, although physicists tell us that they can be retrieved. Precisely in the same way you will find as you expand your consciousness, your mind is confronted with a paradox because, while merging with the environment, you can at the same time maintain your identity.

If you identify with your subtle body (*arwah*), in addition to merging with the physical environment, you will experience an osmosis with the psyche of other people: you will find traces of them in yourself and discover some quintessential whiff of yourself in them. This is the attunement of *Ya Basit*.

If one is able to expand oneself to the consciousness of another person, one's consciousness becomes as large as two persons or a thousand persons.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But what we are aiming at is: rather than blurring at the jagged ends, learn to sense the boundaries of your outreach. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls this your domain. Survey the areas in your life situations within which you exercise some measure of responsibility (*Ya Wasi*). Try to assess its boundaries. The more encompassing it is, the greater your sovereignty. *Ya Wasi* combines beautifully with *Ya Wali*. Envision your impact on circumstances as an expression of the divine nostalgia *Ishq Allah* to handle situations in such a way as to actualize the harmony underlying the divine planning, *Ya Samad*.

It is owing to our limitation that we cannot see the whole being of God; but all that we love and admire belongs to that beauty beloved by all.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

(ii) Now compare this experience with how you feel when turning within. You discover a whole different relationship with the environment: instead of conceiving of yourself as a discrete entity merging with the environment, you now envision yourself as emerging as an individual out of an impersonal seedbed that is ascribed to what we mean by God as the One and Only Being: Ya *Mubdi* (the originator).

Thou wast not aware that thou wast He. Then when the knowledge came upon thee, thou understandest that thou knowest God by God, not by thyself.

Ibn 'Arabi (Know Thyself)

Those to whom unity is revealed see the absolute in the parts.

Shabistari (The Scented Garden)

If you keep envisioning yourself as made of gossamer or a boundless aura, converged from the light of the galaxies, your sense of space and time will collapse. In this unfamiliar perspective where you have lost the sense of being located in a definite spot in space, your consciousness is spread out as it were "from inside". Consequently an uncanny realization dawns upon you:

When a being becomes the truth, s/he reads into the hearts of all beings, like an open book ... While an ordinary person can see the action of another, the seer can see the reason ... the cause behind the cause ... the primal cause.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You see how situations are interconnected at their roots while you would not have grasped that connection in your ordinary consciousness: You are awaking to a whole new dimension of insight which we ordinarily call intuitive.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan refers to a situation in which you feel upset and on the way you witness an accident. Somehow these two are connected though not causally. This is a case of C. G. Jung's synchronicity.

Retracing your steps you will recall that to clinch this alternate perspective, you

needed to relinquish your ordinary notion of yourself and discard the usual focus of your consciousness as the observer.

Our minds and bodies being reflected upon a portion of the all-pervading consciousness make that part of consciousness an all pervading soul which in reality is a universal spirit.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You also had to give up your ordinary understanding and grasp, as Pir-o-Murshid says the understanding of the soul rather than of the mind.

Indeed, for each level of identity corresponds a mode of thinking. You will discover this mode of understanding buried beneath your thinking. Envisioning yourself as the veiled one, (Batin) in the silence of the activity of your mind, will have the effect of freeing you of the compellingness of your ordinary thinking now seen as a veil.

To withdraw your consciousness from the "pull" of the ordinary appearance of the physical world in order to turn within - try resorting to a curious blend of detachment and interest

He who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest attains the blessed state. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat invite the impact of the universe upon you, which is what is meant by the divine operation.

The work of the spiritual man is to forget his false self and to realize the true Self which is God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You thus invite the divine operation upon you.

Your sense of time will also be altered, so that you can see how new dispensations intercept the process of becoming. While identifying with your life-field, now think of yourself as recurrently reformed - that is as the emergence of the ever recurrent impersonal non manifest aspect of God manifesting itself to view.

One thing is that a person asks himself

Try to grasp qualities as they traverse the threshold between your unconscious and your conscious field to take root in your personality. You will reinforce them by your awareness.

As the whole of nature is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by himself.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Now you are taping the source of creativity within your own self surfacing from impersonal unsounded depths. The corresponding "implicit' mode of thinking will appear as of the nature of metaphor

I am a metaphor of god transported in man, not an analogy of man to God, nor a manifestation of God, nor an infusion of the spirit of God in a material receptacle.

al Hallaj

Watch your thoughts surfacing out of the pool of what seems like the thinking of the universe. Your individual thoughts customize these cosmic seed thoughts which for the Sufis belong to the level of metaphor: al Mithal. You are thereby diversifying that which otherwise would appear as generalization, just like in music variations on a theme bring out the potentialities locked in them. Your processing the thinking of the universe enriches the universe. This is what creativity is about.

In man, the Creator has so to speak completed nature. Yet the creative faculty is still working through man.

Man is a miniature Brahma, the Creator. If man were aware of his creativity, he would create as he wished and would make a world of his own. this is the work of the masters who grow to become with their spiritual advancement creators of their own world.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As you meditate, observe creative thoughts as they surface from the unknown in the vacuum of your Arwah body. Introspecting, you may ascertain that while indeed they were triggered off by impressions from "outside" they are not simply reactions to the challenge of the environment, but arise *ex-nihilo* as the church fathers say unpredictably. They eschew your will so unmistakably that perhaps more than ever you find it difficult to determine the edge between what is your incentive and what may be ascribed to God (or the impact of the universe upon each fraction of itself). In fact in creativity you encounter the basic paradox: while you realize that you are embedded in the ultimate oneness without a boundary, at some level of your being, you delegate the divine will by your incentive and thus enjoy some relative autonomy

He creates of Himself. Therefore the creation and the Creator are not two. Or rather they are two but at the same time they are not.

Ibn 'Arabi

Creativity is not only the fresh perception of new meanings, and the ultimate unfoldment of this perception within the manifest and the somatic, but I would say that it is ultimately the action of the infinite in the sphere of the finite.

David Bohm

Moreover you will find that these geminations of original seed-thoughts gel into forms by dint of the very nature of your imaginative faculty. Try and see if you can fashion your aura by translating these creative thoughts into human features. R. P. Teilhard de Chardin calls this "the hominization of God"

Thus the ascensions of saints are the ascensions of their spirit, and the vision of their hearts, the vision of forms in the intermediate world of pure spirits.

Ibn 'Arabi

In this state of awakening, since you have ceased to interpret your problems as they appear to your personal assessment, your involvement with your situation assumes greater clarity, since you see what is in you that is involved in the situation and what are the implications, the issues enacted by the apparent situations.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

Moreover by grasping emerging thoughts, you are able to counter your problems creatively rather than being subjected to them.

In this attunement you have forfeited any justification to mask your motivations which stand out unequivocally in the light of your sincerity.

In a small affair, or in a big affair, first consult yourself and find out if there is any conflict in your own being about anything you want to do.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

89 - Malakut - The Celestial Level

Truly enough, we need to be alert on the physical plane in order to deal with our problems and achieve our goals. Yet to be creative, in particular in ourselves, we need to marshal all the resources of our being. For this we need to take stock of our whole being - wholistically (also holistically) - rather than suffice with our commonplace self-image which is a mere cross-section of the bounty of our many-tiered being.

In the complete unfoldment of human nature is the fulfillment of life's purpose.

If unaware of the immensity of the environmental space, one is not aware of being enclosed in a prison. The moment a person feels that he will no longer remain in prison, the prison bars must break instantly of themselves.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Hence the reason for drawing our attention to the importance of awakening to vaster and loftier dimensions of our own being.

We occupy only as much horizon as we are conscious of. The next world is the same as this; and this world is the same as the next. Only that which is veiled from our eyes, we call the unseen world. We live in the world to which we are awakened, and to the world to which we are not awakened, we are asleep.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Consider two steps: 1) alternately switching the focus of your consciousness from one perspective to another; for example, from reading a book to embracing a panorama, or being highly body-conscious as in the case of an athlete or mind-conscious as in the case of a philosopher, or soul-conscious as in the case of a mystic. 2)) extrapolating between several settings of consciousness simultaneously; for example, being aware of your divine inheritance and at the same time of your humanness, or of your perennity together with your transience, or of your celestial identity versus your incarnate status. The first step is easier, and is a good

preparation for the more difficult second step; towards which we are aiming. In this KIT, we will be exploring the first step, while anticipating the second step which will be the subject-matter of a future KIT on awakening in life - "TAWHID".

How do we gain awareness of the loftier counterparts of our being? In the previous two KITs on Arwah, we have learned to sense our etheric double and identify with it. It is fluid, almost volatile, fine-textured like gossamer, highly malleable as its configuration responds to our emotional attunements and imaginings. In the KIT on Mithal, attention was drawn to the way our thinking operates when identifying with our etheric counterpart: instead of interpreting impressions imputed from outside, our thinking is self-generated in a creative way.

At this stage we wish to explore how we can gain a sense of our celestial counterpart. No doubt it is elusive; therefore it will require an enhanced sensitivity to discover it.

One's grade of evolution depends upon the pitch one has attained; it is a certain pitch that makes one conscious of a certain phase of life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Curiously enough, by foraging in pre-conceptual, peri-natal memory stored in the deep unconscious in an effort to retrieve random clues, we may muster some sense of the nature of our celestial counterpart such as it is now.

The soul in its manifestation on earth is not at all disconnected from the higher spheres. It lives in all spheres, though it is generally conscious only on one plane.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Although it may be defiled by some of the more obnoxious impressions accruing from our society or our own guilt, you will find that it remains in its essence unscathed (as the voice of Caruso within the bad recordings of the time) and can be retrieved in its pristine glory. Yet it is different now to what it was (hence caution regarding resorting to memory, since it turns backwards in time). It has gained wisdom through existential experience without losing its innocence and by continually exulting

in glorification. In fact innocence, effulgence, and glorification are the keys to the heavenly spheres.

Innocence is a natural condition of the soul and the lack of innocence is a foreign element which the soul acquires after coming on earth... The light which comes from the soul rises through the heart and manifests in ones smile... That which we see of our Beloved is the beauty displayed before our eyes; whereas that aspect of our Beloved which is not manifest to our eyes is the inner model of that beauty of which our Beloved speaks to us.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

That our celestial effigy should be now both as it was before our birth yet matured is paradoxical. It is difficult for our finite minds to reconcile change with the prevalence of perennity. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan distinguishes between the angels who have not yet incarnated and those who return enriched by the experience on the physical plane. These are conditions of the same person; for example, the child that has become a master still has the child present in him/her although latent, as a warrantee of his/her candidness and enhances authenticity..

What are then the methods to clinch our heavenly image?

We discover ourselves by spotting outside ourselves that which matches what was always latent unknowingly within ourselves. Earmark in the physical or social environment impressions that spark in you a sense of deja-vu featuring your most idyllic values, even if you fear that they may well be utopic. Be awed by the beauty of a multi-hued dawn, by the geometry of crystals and snowflakes, by acts of heroism, of compassion, of love, of dedicated service, by the light in the eyes of a baby; also by the masterpieces of the cultures of our great civilizations, temples, cathedrals, art, music. You will find solace in observing that the great accomplishments of humans were sparked by their belief and adherence to their ideal.

There comes a time in one's evolution when every touch of beauty moves the heart to tears; it is a this time that the Beloved of heavens is brought to earth.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you fail to challenge your records, you will be sclerosed and close the door to the future. It is our idealism that frees us from the prison of our trite realism. We must succeed in discovering a richer realism than that of the unimaginative as the practical underpinning of our idealism.. Hence the signpost points to investing your faith in the values that give you a feeling of uplift, of splendor, of heroism, of love and compassion, of the sacred.

There comes a time in one's evolution when a passion is awakened in the soul that gives the soul a longing for the unattainable.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We indeed come across clues to what we ascribe to the heavens by scanning the earth, if we look out for them. Yet it is by matching these with our aspiration to the celestial dimensions of our own being that bespeak of the celestial spheres that may attune us to these spheres which we are seeking to explore. It is a matter of what we value most.

As one evolves, one ceases to look down on earth, but looks to the heavens. If one wants to seek the heavens, one must change the direction of looking... Souls who have become conscious of the angelic spheres hear the calling of that sphere.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

While confirming that our aim is extrapolating between the heavenly and earthly perspectives, we need to free ourselves from the compulsive impact upon our consciousness of the impressions hailing from the earth fostered by our attachment to material satisfaction. If we wish to access the heavens, we will have to, as a first step, highlight the heavenly perspective by downplaying the earthly one.

The more closely a person is drawn to heaven, the more the things of the earth lose their color and taste. ... Verily who pursueth the world will inherit the world, but the soul that pursueth God will attain in the end to the presence of God. ...The soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its breaking through the ties of the lower planes. ... If you do not rise above the things of this world, they will rise above you.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It will require of us to assess honestly in self-confrontation the value scale determining our motivations. Where in our life's activities do we invest our enthusiasm, our interest? And where does our detachment give us a leeway of freedom from dependence upon circumstances - service versus greed!

All that produces longing in the heart deprives it of its freedom... The real proof of one's progress in the spiritual path can be realized by testing in every situation in life how indifferent one is. .. Indifference and independence are the two wings that enable the soul to fly.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

These then are the indispensable premises, but what are the methods?

We've already learned to shift our identity from material bodiness to our etheric counterpart. Now we work with light. The practices with visualizations of light (see previous KIT) starting with the physical aura, then light beyond the purview of our senses or instruments, if followed systematically lead to the state of illumination. Identify with being a being of nonphysical light - recollect having always been a being of light prior to incarnation on Planet Earth.

As the sunshine from without lightens the whole world, so the sunshine from within, if it were raised up would illuminate the whole life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you tune up your concentration to the point of identifying solely with being a being of nonphysical light, having lost any vestige of your physical body identity, suddenly you realize that you have an existence independent of the body, that you can think without the encumbrance of the mind.

The Sufi practices that process whereby he is able to touch that part of life in himself that is not subject to death...Once a person realizes that one can exist without the physical body, one gains a conviction that frees one from earthly conditions.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you succeed in visualizing what it would be like to:

See without eyes, hear without ears, walk without feet and fly without wings.

Rumi

Your prenatal memory will surface and will spark flashes of insight into your present celestial state; even beyond in uncharted zones of your being.

Let your state be similar to that of the dematerialized spirits of the sublime celestial Assembly... Then God acquaints them with what corresponds to them in each world by passing through the different worlds...

Ibn 'Arabi

But the clue - the condition - is that you let go of your human identity - physical, etheric, and psychic.

Then the spiritual traveler leaves behind in each world that part of himself that corresponds to it.

Ibn 'Arabi

A further clue is letting go of your identification with your physical form, rather than simply physical bodiness, particularly your face. If you achieve this, you are creating conditions favorable to discovering your celestial countenance which will overwhelm you with consternation.

Amongst these forms, you will recognize your own likeness.

Ibn 'Arabi

At first it seems confusing, not only because, although it does not have a profile, it still sports an expression, and further because it flickers continually according to your attunement (even more rapidly than your etheric body or physical

aura). More paradoxically it seems to be featured by several superimposed images, like a hologram highlighted by the focus of your consciousness. By modulating the setting of your consciousness by dint of your attunement you could highlight the innocence of your early childhood or shift to the tarnishing effect of the darker side of the word. If you found fulfillment in achievement through mastery you would notice the impression of maturity imprinted upon your celestial countenance carried upwards at that lofty level evidencing the wisdom you gained due to your experience of life on the Planet.

You will encounter an amazing discovery: the very sacred and immaculate nature of your celestial counterpart which you have now become aware of will lead you inevitably into exulting and glorifying the divine splendor now unveiled - actually revealed At this point a breakthrough of insight will make you realize that your very act of glorification creates in you the very likeness of the way your glorification translates itself into form (like the music of some composers).

'"Allah al makhluk fi'l 'itiqadat" God creates Himself (as you) through your prayers.

Hadith

For prayer is a means of causing God who reveals Himself to appear in the form which precisely He reveals by revealing Himself by and to your form... Through the prayer of man, the form of God becomes visible to the active imagination which projects before it the image, whose receptacle is the worshiper's being in the measure of his capacity.

Henri Corbin

Our soul is blessed with the impression of the glory of God whenever our lips praise Him.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Here we have the clue to acceding to the celestial sphere: not through meditation, but through religious worship, mystical ecstasy.

90 - Jabarut - Identifying with the Perennial Level: Realization

Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages between man - the manifestation - and God - the only Being, knowing and realizing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence, and so accomplishing the heavenly journey.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

By identifying with a more perennial level of your being: your angelic counterpart which is not subject to perishing or decay, you will venture into the more advanced modes of thinking. As you shift your identity from your physical body, and then your etheric shroud to your celestial body of uncreated light, concomitantly you will shift your notion of being the spectator from the I that is body-conscious, through the I that flowers in creative imaginings to your celestial I: 'the spectator in the heavens'. This step will eventually lead to the next state of awakening (to be studied in future KITs) in which, by dint of a radical reversal from one's personal perspective, one sees things from the divine (transcendent) perspective.

The key to this is eschewing or downplaying any knowledge gained by experience and highlighting a kind of inborn, inherent knowledge reminisced from prenatal memory (or access from peri-natal levels of awareness). This is where both ascetic detachment and the lover's yearning for the sublime prove crucial.

The one who lives in one's mind is conscious of the mind; the one who lives in one's soul is conscious of the soul.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You thought that you were the spectator, the witness of what you experience, but the real witness in you is your angelic counterpart - the witness in the heavens.

Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi

We are skirting here the transit from individuality to the Oneness.

To know one's own archetypal essence is to know one's angel, that is to see one's eternal individuality as it results from the revelation of the Divine Being revealing Himself through Himself.

Henri Corbin

Let us now summarize the stages we have gone through in the current series of KITs.

1) When we identified ourselves with our physical body, we were programmed in our commonplace thinking (Khayal) and took for granted that our personal subjective I was the spectator of what we perceived and experienced. All that we could grasp of what we ascribe to God were the clues, the signs in the physical scene and scenario of our lives of what was trying to transpire through that which appeared. If we permutate the terms of this perspective, then it is God revealing Him/Herself through that projection of Him/Herself that is this magnificent bountiful universe.

2) When turning within, feeling like gossamer, (the Arwah level) we reconnoitered thoughts emerging from within, impromptu, bespeaking of the way the universe unfurls as our personal idiosyncrasies. We were picking up those clues or signs within our own selves (the mode of cognizance called Mithal).

You noticed that your notion of being the spectator had changed. For one thing: you saw yourself as both the spectator and the object experienced. ('taijasa' in the Mandukya Upanishad). Furthermore you may have envisioned your eyes as being the 'eyes through which God sees'.

Then thou understandeth that thou knowest God by God; not by thyself.

Ibn 'Arabi

Therefore if once more we reverse the perspective, then it now appears to us that God is discovering Him/Herself through our discovering His\Her nature exemplified as our idiosyncrasies.

The second degree of the Sufi is knowing yourself through the knowledge that God has of Himself through you.

Ibn 'Arabi

3) Now to hoist your notion of yourself from the physical or etheric levels to the celestial level: (i) Offset your body and also etheric consciousness. (ii) Shift the field of your thinking from the physical world and your emergent thoughts which translate emotions into images, into grasping God irrespective of the clues whereby He discloses Him\Herself.

Wipe away the phantasmagoria of images, then Haqq (reality) will emerge from inside.

Jami

Absorb yourself in the dhikr until the imaginary world escapes you and the abstract thoughts manifest to view. Eventually the one who is invoked will disclose Himself beyond the signs. ...Then thou understandeth that thou knowest God by God; not by thyself.

Ibn 'Arabi

(iii) Bridge the gap between your being the experiencing subject and the object (which may be a thought or emotion) further than in the Mithal mode. Instead of thinking 'I am the eyes through which God sees', think 'my glance is the divine glance that has gotten funneled down and therefore limited, maybe distorted'.

(iv) It must have been your experience that when you meditate, you are assailed with random thoughts. These are constituted by the regurgitation of experiences of the physical and social environment in the process of digestion of the psyche. They are remnants of the past. You may also be pondering your future projects, taking into account both the advantage and the fear of failure. At the Malakut level, your being seems perennial and therefore not inveigled in the process of becoming. To identify with your celestial being, let go of the memory of the past and prefiguration of the future which are both of a finite nature; you will have a sense of having transcended the passage of time which now revolves in the twilight of your consciousness but

cannot reach you unless you turn the headlamp of your consciousness towards it, thus slipping back into the commonplace perspective.

While awaiting the next steps, (in the next KITs), let us however compare the modes of cognizance encountered so far:

I) You will recognize the first, (elementary) mode - ordinarily taken for granted: (i) one assumes that one is the subject and the world or the circumstances the object, (ii) the world seems to be composed of 'discrete' entities, occupying different locations in space, (iii) one infers an effect from a cause in a time sequence, (iv) one interprets situations as assessed from the vantage point of what one assumes is one's consciousness which is the focalization of an overall universal consciousness which we may call God's consciousness. It is clear that this perfunctory way of thinking is limited and therefore could not possibly give an exhaustive opinion about your problems.

II) As we readily wallow in ponderous thoughts about ourselves revolving around a fictitious self-image with which we identify, we are touching upon the personal dimension which we project upon the outer world. It eschews logic. Avoid confining your thinking to the commonplace mode we described earlier. As seen in the KIT on Mithal, we can 'reconcile the irreconcilable', 'gauge complementarity'. We can see both sides of a problem, we can envision ourselves as a continuity in change. We can grasp the connectivity between situations that do not seem to be related in time and space or in a causal sequence, what would seem ordinarily like unpredictable coincidences. Everything seems to be intermeshed in a way that defies our ordinary sense of space:

The order of the world as a structure of things that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order.

Dr. David Bohm

This mode of cognizance could be described through the holistic paradigm illustrated by the holograph:

Each part of the holograph is an image of the whole object. It is a kind of knowledge which is not point to point correspondence...Therefore every part contains information about the whole object... information about the whole is enfolded in each part of the image.

Dr. David Bohm

We call this intuitive thinking as opposed to commonsense. Our intentions actualizing in our motivations hail from this nebulous mind-field which Polanyi calls 'tacit knowledge'.

We cannot possibly describe in detail more than a very small part of the significance that we sense at a given moment. ..Deeper intentions generally arise out of the total significance in ways of which one is not aware, and over which one has little or no control ('I didn't mean to do that').

Dr. David Bohm

III) In the mode which we are now exploring, we can detect the limitations of ordinary logic. Even in our subjective way of projecting how we feel into irrational ways of thinking that may prove creative, we can see how easily we may be caught in a perspective that locked us into a logical framework.

As you hoist yourself into transcendent levels in your meditations, you will discover that at each level there is an underpinning (subtle body, body of uncreated light), getting subtler and more elusive as you rise, and you will notice that your sense of being the spectator becomes less and less personal - and therefore one ascribes it to divine consciousness). Also you will discern a different mode of cognizance - a more transcendent logic.

In a New Model for the Universe and Tertium Organum (1982), Ouspenski had announced a super-logic:

Our ordinary logic helps us to gauge only the relations existing in the phenomenal world.

While it is often taken for granted that body consciousness stands in the way

of the realization of the soul, if you shift your sense of bodiness into the subtler non-substantial textures, you will not find that your sense of being a celestial body stands in the way of the sublime understanding encountered at this level. In fact, you will find that your bodiness and consciousness are mutual expressions of each other.

The soma and significance are two aspects of one overall reality... If you go to infinite depths of matter, we may reach something very close to what you reach in the depth of the mind.

Dr. David Bohm

Mind and body are two poles of the same reality. Both poles are to be found, no matter how you fragment the totality.

...every part sustains a superposition of north and south poles.

Dr. David Bohm

This holds good for the finer counterparts of our being. If you identify with subtler levels of your being, you will have the impression of awakening from the mind-bind encountered at the grosser levels into the free outlook of realization.

What is manifest on one level may be subtler on another. Therefore the relatively subtle somatic form of thought may have a meaning that can be grasped in still higher and more subtle somatic processes. And this may lead on further to a grasp of a vast totality of meanings in a flash of insight. . . This sort of action may be described as the apprehension of the meaning of meanings which may in principle go on in indefinitely deep and subtle levels of significance.

Dr. David Bohm

Let us see how the insight gained at this level of meditation applies to our assessment of our problems. (i) At first, we were projecting our own personal psychological bias upon the situations, judging our problems and people generally within the limits of this perspective. (ii) Then we were seeing how everything is

interconnected and the extent to which our own idiosyncrasies and free incentives are involved. By discovering our own potentials, enhancing our own creativity, we could apply our realization upon the situations. (iii) Now we can envision how the situation looks from a transcendental point of view, what the cosmic issues are that are enacted here, customized as it were in our particular 'storm in our teacup'.

To summarize: we saw a reason, then a reason behind that reason encompassing it. Now, freeing ourselves from the mind-bind confining us to the reasons we had previously entertained, we grasp reasons beyond reasons or significances beyond significances in infinite regress.

Ecstasy comes from touching the reason of reasons and by realizing the essence of wisdom.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

91 - Lahut - The Divine Inheritance

As we know, perhaps the main thrust in Pir-o-Murshid's teaching is gaining awareness of one's divine inheritance which he calls the seed of our personality. In Sufism it is called Lahutiya.

The one who is conscious of one's earthly origin is an earthly person, one who is conscious of one's heavenly origin is the child of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You may think of yourself as a plant in which only a little bounty latent in the seed is manifest. Yet in you the seed that caused the whole existence - God - is to be found. The seed out of which the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are made arises again at the end of the cycle. The same God so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again in its pursuit of excellence trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

For the Sufis, as soon as we do this, we discover the bounty of what they call the divine names, asma ilahi. For the Sufis, the word 'names' (the sound of the Wazifa) carries a particular significance (also for Hinduism: nama rupa), because we are talking of the divine language. Each object has its specific signature-tune - each object is the configuration of a composition of vibrations which we perceive as sound. We try to reproduce these sounds in our Mantrams or Wazaif.

Then God makes him journey through his Names (that is His archetypes) in order to show him His signs. Thus the server comes to know that he is designed by every name. It is through these names that God appears to the server.

Ibn 'Arabi

If you have followed the previous KIT's, you will have noticed that the Sufis distinguish different kinds of signs, ayat, through which God reveals something of

Him/Herself by means of clues. The first one in alam al nazut was through the forms of the world; the second in Arwah, by dint of that which transpires through our nature of the divine nature. Now at the Lahut level, after passing though the Jabarut state where we forego our conscious act to give vent to the divine point of view, the divine nature is revealed directly notwithstanding any signs that might have been culled in our personality.

We remember that the forms of the world and the idiosyncrasies of our personality were signs - clues as to the formless Reality. Now that any vestige of forms has faded away, it is the divine attributes (which the Sufis call His Names), namely the archetypes of which our idiosyncrasies the exemplars, that reveal themselves.

Is it possible, realistic, to see things from the divine vantage point? Let us remember that we are describing here a very advanced level that can only be reached after experiencing the previous ones leading up to it. It is that transit that we need to look into. At some point Ibn 'Arabi said: one only knows the archetype through the exemplar. What meaning does roundness have for us if not through round objects? Our minds extrapolate between the experience we have of the round objects experienced. Somehow when we see a round object, what is common between all the round objects we have previously perceived is subsumed: that is what we mean by the archetype. The question is: could we have any notion of roundness without having experienced round objects? It may well be that it is just because roundness is written into the software of our minds that we recognize roundness in objects. But how can we reach it? What do the divine attributes mean to us? This is the complementary way of grasping the attribute in the divine mind. Such is the significance of a method used by an early church father, Tauler, which proved invaluable to Martin Luther. It is called significatio passiva.

In the presence of the Psalm verse in justitia tua, libera me (may Thy attribute of Justice liberate me), he experienced a movement of revolt and despair. What can there be in common between this attribute of justice and my deliverance? And such was his state until the young Luther perceived in a sudden flash that his attribute must be understood in its significatio passiva, that is to say: Thy justice whereby we are made into just men, Thy holiness whereby we are hallowed... Similarly in the mystic

theosophy of Ibn 'Arabi, the divine attributes are qualifications that we impute to the Divine Essence... as we experience it in ourselves.

To grasp the divine archetypes, Martin Luther was extrapolating between the two poles of the same reality: the archetype and the exemplar - which is what one does at the Malakut level...

Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithl) in the higher world. The forms in the higher world preserve the existence of their likeness in the lower worlds. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each form to its likeness.... These are like ladders for the angels, while the meanings that descend in these tenuities are like angels.

Ibn 'Arabi

This realization establishes a new mode of relationship between God and the creature (or sentient being), the two poles of the same reality are the nature of the relationship between the lord and the vassal originating in the Iranian chivalry: futuhat.

The divinity seeks for a being whose God it is. The divine sovereignty has a secret and that is thou.

Sahl Tostari

We establish God's sovereignty by our recognition of our divine office which facilitates God's manifestation of His/Her qualities, sifat.

Each manifest being is the form of a lordly Name 'ism rabbani'. The Rabb becomes a reality in relationship with a being who is designated in the passive form.

H. Corbin

The divine suzerainty has a secret (sirr robbubiya) and that is thou.

Sahl Tostari

By actuating the divine nature in my personality, I confer upon God a

mode of existence.

Ibn 'Arabi

However, if one has reached the perspective of the Lahut level, one proceeds more radically: one captures directly the seeds of those qualities we inherit irrespective of what we have made of them in our personality so that in the Tawhid one will be able to customize them in one's personality in a new dispensation while disintegrating one's previous personality rather than adapting it, which could be a compromise.

There is no way in which we can gain a clue as to the divine magnificence vested in our divine inheritance, or even of what it is, unless we reverse our vantage point and look at things from the divine point of view. This is indeed the main objective of Sufism. To achieve this, one needs to let go of one's personal self-image, which is an outgrowth of what one really is. If we cease identifying with it, it will dissolve to give way to a fresh dispensation from the seed which is our divine inheritance.

Oh God! Do away with my Nasutiyat (human idiosyncrasies), so that Thy Lahutiyat may replace it.

Al Hallaj

The soul acquires only those qualities in which it is interested, and the soul keeps only those attributes in which it is interested. However many undesirable attributes a person may have, one can lose them all if one does not approve of them.

Pir-o-Murshid

Here, at this level we are overwhelmed by the inexhaustible bounty of possibilities of which so little ever materializes at the existential level. It is called by the Sufis sometimes the level of possibilities, imkan.(Buddha refers to this level in the arupa meditations - meditations beyond form which he encountered on the way to illumination). In Islam, it is the treasury.

There is no thing whose treasuries are not with Us.

Qur'an 15-21

I am not authorized to give you the key to the divine treasury, you have to discover it yourself.

Niffari

For clarity sake, let us recall that at the Arwah level, we were facilitating the unfurling of the potentials of our being in the process of becoming. But here, at the Lahut level, since our notion of time as an arrow has collapsed, we are experiencing conditions that favor our being aware of the immortal dimension of our being. The Sufis refer to a different causal chain than Laplacian determinism; they are talking of what one might call a horizontal chain of cause and effect.

When one says that the Truth most glorious comprehends all beings, the meaning is that He comprehends them as a cause comprehends its consequences, not that He is a whole containing them as His parts...

Jami

In our meditations, if we can let go of our personal identity, and reverse our consciousness so that instead of looking for God as the object of our cognizance, we try to open ourselves to God's revealing His\Her vision in pre-eternity, Azaliat, irrespective of ourselves in our temporary state, we will find ourselves in sync with the following perspective of al Hallaj who left an unforgettable testimony of what was revealed to him in a meditation:

In His Self He contemplated in His pre-eternity (Azaliayat) all the invisible... This is the original state in the absence of all creatures, of all qualities... Then He entertained a dialogue through a thought, by means of all His thoughts. He conversed with Himself. Then He contemplated Himself in the attribute of love, because in its essence, the essence of all essences is love. Then He contemplated in His attribute of love all the other attributes of His Being. Then He glorified Himself in Himself... He looked into pre-eternity and created a picture. This picture is His picture, the picture of His essence. And when God beholds anything, He creates His picture in it for all eternity.... Then He saluted it and congratulated it for its splendid countenance.

Al Hallaj

92 - Hahut - Consciousness of the Unity

As I pronounce the "h" of the word "Allah", not only the experience of the world and my self-awareness fade away, but even the memory of these.

Every time you consider a thing, He will have already escaped you.

Ibn 'Arabi

The "h" of Allah represents the shift from my sense of being the subject (the knower) to the take over of God as the Knower (the Super-eminent Subject). But where there is a knowing subject, even if singular, it follows that there is a "known." This is dichotomy; consequently, we are still at the level of duality. When the "h" is transformed into the hu, however, I am hoisted beyond multiplicity into unity.

Let us summarize the steps we have been following. In my ascent, I first integrated the objects or thoughts experienced in the world into a vision of the universe as one being I called God. Then I shifted my notion of being myself, the knowing subject shahid, to the One and only Witness. And now as I by-pass the al's and la's and ll's of my recitation by intoning the "h" of Allah, I reach into the state of paramount Hahut. It is only accessed beyond the existential realm.

The letter "h" is the symbol of something that is absent.

It stands for the state of non-manifestation of the pure essence.

Ibn 'Arabi

Paradoxically, even the void in which I thought I lost myself (in the illa) opens the way to the ultimate reality. This even though I cannot experience it: it is self-revealing. Now the perspective of the qualities (at the Lahut level) fades away as I pull myself away from even the slightest spur of the seeds of the existential state,

The real Being is only and exclusively God in His essence (dhat) and principle (ayn); not under the aspect of His names. . . In the station of unity, touching upon the unity, one accesses the supreme knowledge whereby the grasp of the qualities falls away; indeed the qualities cannot add anything to the

essence. . . If the names disappeared, the Named One would appear.

The one who is immersed in the vision of multiplicity is in the world in the aspect of the divine names and the names of the world; and the one who is immersed in the Unity is with God in the grasp of this unity irrespective of the worlds.

Ibn 'Arabi

Do not confuse the perfection of the manifestation through existence, where the essence is individuated (like the manifestation of the Totality in the parts), with the manifestation of the essence to itself, in itself and for itself.

Jami

I realize that since any sense of being the observer is vanishing, the only way in which cognizance can take place at this level is by dint of the fact that my mind is homologous to the mind of the universe, albeit customized and thereby less effective (on the holographic model). Any remnant of my sense of individual identity limits the vastness and splendor of the thinking of the universe, shattering my faltering mind.

Knowledge is a veil upon the known.

Ibn 'Arabi

In Yoga, one would say, Bodhi has been resorbed into its ground: Purusha.

What is more, one cannot say that one is experiencing fana, because one is not conscious of being the experiencing subject. This is called "fana al fana." One is not aware of not being aware.

To be conscious of annihilation is incompatible with annihilation.

Jami

But something in the depths of one's being spells a kind of premonition of death. It is the Asamprajnata Samadhi of Yoga, "parat param", - "beyond the beyond". The word fana assumes its apparently irrevocable meaning.

Later, upon reflection, I understand al Hallaj: at the supreme moment, hanging on the cross after the most atrocious tortures, there was no more "I am" left to recite the Shahada: la ilaha illa 'lla - hu. There is a contradiction in affirming the divine unity if one is aware of oneself as the one affirming it. Therefore, at this pinnacle of the mystic's acid test, at the collapse of any remnant of one's sense of "I-ness", any human affirmation is handed over to the supreme and ultimate divine unifying act. His last words were:

It suffices if God alone unifies the mystic in His Unity (wahid-wajid).

al Hallaj

Here lies the difference between Yoga and Sufism. It is mind-shattering to hear that this crucial and last sentence of al Hallaj was the answer to the impudent question asked him by his erstwhile presumptive friend, Shibli, while he hung bleeding and agonizing on the cross: what is Sufism? Indeed, by dint of trying to reach beyond the edge of their consciousness by isolating themselves from the existential realm, the Sufi mystics lend themselves to the divine action which resorbs them in the Oneness of His being.

I see myself when Thou art not before me; when I see Thee myself is lost to view. I consider it good fortune when Thou art alone with me, but when I am not there at all, I think it the greatest blessing.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The subtlety of the language used by the Sufis makes it possible to distinguish different aspects of God. The word Allah originated from the word "luh", which means the One whom I make into the "worshipped one" by my glorification. But God cannot be limited by this aspect of His/Her being that requires the dichotomy of the worshiper and the worshipped one, which I bring forth by my worshipping Him/Her. Nor can it be restricted to that aspect called Rabb, whereby my manifesting the divine qualities invested in my nature, I confer upon God a mode of existence in/as me. For the "awakened one", the ultimate reality (called Haqq), by-passing any dichotomy, takes precedence over these aspects of God. Whatever we countenance and ascribe to the universe as we whirl our head is only the projection or the shadow of that aspect of

God that is denoted as Haqq. Therefore the dervish's dhikr is "Haqq la ilaha illa 'lla - hu." Hence al Hallaj's famous exclamation: Ana'l Haqq (I am the truth).

A zephyr of perplexity may trouble your spirit. The dervishes evoke this uncanny divine emotion encountered by the dhakir called hayrah ecstasy, or perhaps beyond ecstasy sometimes called the consternation of intelligence.

This cannot be known by reason, nor conceived by thought; only he who has attained Divine intuition savors the pure taste of this total revelation which one calls the "divine unveiling"; and it is the object of the perplexity, hayrah, of the perfect amongst the initiated.

al Jili

So there is nothing but perplexity upon perplexity.

Ibn 'Arabi

Be not surprised if God Himself is perplexed!

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

93 - Tawhid - Only God

We confront the crowning enigma of the implications of the awakening attained "beyond the existential level" when we face the critical turning point of real life situations again, without losing sight of that transcendent awakening.

When one does not see anything other than God, the void (khala) is impossible. . . for such a being, a retreat (khalwa) is not possible.

Ibn 'Arabi

For the Sufis, in the ascetic seclusion one would be missing out on the opportunity that life offers, whereby God reveals His being in the measure of our capacity to countenance the clues covertly intimated through the existential realm. We are witnessing a radical reversal of perspective: granted our objective is to awaken beyond the limited, commonplace, personal vantage point, what point could there be in one's incorporation in the fabric of the universe if one alienates oneself from it? One would be missing out on the purpose of life altogether.

The man who shuts himself away from all men, however highly evolved he may be spiritually, will not be free in the higher spheres . . . The man conscious of his duties and obligations to his friends is more righteous than he who sits alone in solitude.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

I trigger off the transit into life by espying distant echoes of a remote inflow of what one might call "know-how", featuring the way in which the distillate of existential experiences (wisdom) is being fed back at this lofty level into the programming of the universe. Otherwise, whatever is gained by experience, by the interaction between the fragments of the One Being, would be lost, which wouldn't make sense.

For tonight, the teeming world gives birth to the world everlasting.

Rumi

That which is taxed of finitude will become eternal.

Jami

These elusive impressions serve as the chain linking me to an anchor beyond my reach in the "world." But I do not wish to lose my perspective, the awakening gained in the ascent. I distinguish two stages leading to awakening in life:

(i) Hu manifests as Allah so long as I abstain from trying to experience what is happening, but simply exult in glorification

If the huwa (beyond subjectivity) were apparent, it would not be huwa, but ana (the paramount subject).

Ibn 'Arabi

Huwa manifests as Allah only if I cease to identify with the experiencer (the subject: ana) because the ana stands in the way of this manifestation.

Ibn 'Arabi

(ii) I regain my sense of being the spectator, then I can only address God as "Thou", anta.

Should the ana outlast while Huwa manifests as Allah, then we have anta (Thou).

Ibn 'Arabi

As I intone "Hu", I become aware of the way the realization I attained in the state of Hahut transformed my whole being at all levels, including the configuration of the my subtle bodies, then the material body, starting with my celestial shroud and becoming concrete in the descent towards manifestation. Now the challenge consists in maintaining the divine point of view while recovering one's personal identity.

My contemplation has brought to light the pure essence of my existence so that I have not found another than myself in my extinction and in my perennity.

Ibn 'Arabi

While there is no way in which we can discover the ultimate realty, Haqq, which is the ultimate condition of God, we may be invited to participate in the divine vision whereby He/She sees that reality projected in the mirror of the universe as in that reflection of His/Her Being that constitutes our personalities. To accede to this mode of cognizance, we need to serve as a mirror, that is, abstain from interposing our reason or our act of consciousness, rather simply allowing our understanding to be transfigured by this unfamiliar way of looking at things.

Paradoxically, this ineffable reality may be revealed from within the existential perspective, rather than beyond existence (which is that which is sought in the yogic Samadhis). And therefore, for al Hallaj, the Sufi dervish must abstain from isolating him/herself; then, absorbed in the divine unity, he/she is co-opted by the divine unifying operation to be integrated in His/Her divinity (infirad, rather than tajrid or tafrid; L. Gardet defines tajrid as isolation from any objective input, and tafrid as retraction of one's self from any act (operated by the self). In contrast, al Hallaj advocates infirad, the passive of the verbal form).

It is God who elects him and draws him into His state of isolation that he may participate in the mystery [of the divine solitude].

Gardet

Therefore now, rather than losing myself, I can see myself inextricably intermeshed in the total being of which I am clearly an integral element. It is a shattering and at the same time overwhelming experience.

At this point, as we intone Huwa, turning our head towards our heart, we are invited to extrapolate between all the perspectives encountered in the course of the whole recitation of the dhikr. This would mean, then, (i) expanding the outreach of our vantage point, (ii) seeing the "outside" from "inside", (iii) hoisting one's consciousness "beyond the beyond", (iv) now to partake in an overview of the way things appear on earth. This represents a kind of tour de force, challenging all the views we have encountered so far. In fact it could be defined as stereoscopic consciousness: being able to extrapolate between the perception vouchsafed through our personal vantage point and the transcendental one.

How can this be achieved? It is a matter of keeping constantly in mind one's connection with the totality of which one is a part, while acquiescing that one has gained some kind of relative autonomy as a visitor on planet Earth.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Tracing back the stages I passed through in the ascent, I avail myself once more of the creativity of my imaginative faculty:

Imagination causes archetypal notions to descend into perceptible forms.

Ibn 'Arabi

The same data must be recaptured at each of the degrees of being, or levels through which they had to descend in order to reach the mode of being corresponding to the plane on which they are evident to our ordinary consciousness.

Corbin

Moreover, one needs continually to keep oneself highly attuned by offsetting one's consciousness so as to grasp the splendor that is striving to transpire behind the sometimes offensive appearance of things.

There comes a time in one's evolution when every touch of beauty moves the heart to tears; it is at that time that the Beloved of heavens is brought to earth.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Note that as we hoisted our concentration from 'la ilaha' to 'illa', we shifted our awareness from the perceptual and interpretive mode to grasping the emergence of the world and ourselves from the implicate state; then, when we hoisted our consciousness from 'illa' to ''llah', we shifted from the world of metaphor to thoughts bereft of any form or image whatsoever. Now, as we intone 'hu', we descend into the realm of configurations and matter. Our intelligence discovers itself by awakening in

the atoms of the cells of our bodies.

Thoughts shift from the perception of the senses to the imaginary ones; then the intelligible thoughts will descend upon you in the form of perceptions.

Ibn 'Arabi

You will observe the engendering of the possibilities lying in the spiritual plane into the corporeal world.

Ibn 'Arabi

Let us now see how this attunement and perspective is going to affect our daily lives. Passing though the stages of the dhikr, we have not only been discovering unfamiliar perspectives, beaming new light upon our problems, but awakening dormant faculties. The shift in outlook triggers off transformation. Let us now consciously awaken the innumerable faculties governing the programming of the whole universe, dormant in ourselves.

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Realization needs to be backed up by doing:

In order to gain God consciousness, the first condition is to make God a reality, so that He no longer is an imagination. . . At present there exists only in the world a belief in God; God exists in the imagination. It is such a soul, which has touched upon divine perfection, that brings to earth a living God, who without him would remain on in the heavens. . . If there is any sign of God to be seen, it is in the God-conscious one.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The clue consists in experiencing God discovering Him/Herself as oneself.

How is higher consciousness attained? By closing our eyes to our limited self and by opening our heart to the God who is all perfection, who is in heaven and

on earth, within and without, who is visible, audible, perceptible, intelligible and yet beyond man's comprehension. . . . The key to spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the Perfect One who is formed in the heart.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The Sufi's task is to be instrumental to God's purpose in the very creation of the world. Here lies the secret of the Hadith Qudsi that lies at the basis of all Sufism: "I was a hidden treasure. . ."

Divinity resides in humanity. It is also the outcome of humanity. Divinity is to God what the drop is to the ocean: the drop is of the same nature as the ocean, but in comparison it is only a drop.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man. And this object is only fulfilled when man has awakened that part of himself which represents the master, that is, God Himself. It is in man that the divine perfection can be seen. God knows Himself through His manifestation. Manifestation is the self of God, but a self that is limited, a self that makes His perfection known to Himself when He compares Himself with the limited self we call nature. Therefore the purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God gains by discovering His own Perfection though our imperfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The key is, rather than thinking of God as other, discover the various levels of Godness in yourself.

The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contains God according to the accommodation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

How do we reconcile this with the thought which we came across and which led us to the Hahut or Samadhi state: "work through the ties with the life of the world"? Having loosened these, we are able to reconcile what would seem like the

irreconcilable: involve ourselves with unconditional love with all beings, while not being dependent upon attachment or gain.

The way of those who renounce is to know all things, to admire all things, to get all things, but give all things and to think that nothing belongs to them and that they own nothing.

He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest really attains the blessed state.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Here lies the enigma:

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, yet at the same time motive limits power. Yet it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. On the other hand, so long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

SYNOPSIS

A = Subject/Object perspective L= Identity: body, psyche subtle and celestial bodies (according to level of identity) I = personal subject, witness H= ultimate reality. U = The aspect of God actuated as the existential reality

Ia:

You experience reality biased projection of psyche. (L > psyche, A > reality as existential)

ilaha:

The subject realizes the delusion (the first step towards awakening). The witness (I) is extended, grasping reality (A) from an all-encompassing span. The representation that the psyche (L) carried of reality is now replaced by an objective one. But to be germane, the new representation of reality (the second A) needs to be adumbrated by the divine point of view (H).

illa:

The witness in you (I) is looking within. Of necessity your identity shifts from the first (L) your physical body (Nazut) to the second (L) your subtle body (Arwah, in Yoga tanmatra). Concomitantly from your psyche (Khayal), to a new mode of thinking (Mithal) you project the reality you discover internally (Arwah) and now identify with. Reality is now off-set from the time/space frame of ordinary experience and seems to flow recurrently into the way it transpires in the physical world and also as your psyche; you grasp the physical world (A) "from inside-out" dynamically instead of statically; that is: instead of simply ingesting the input from the physical and social environment, interpreted and assessed by conditioned assumptions, you can envision it (A) unfolding from its seedbed, like a plant releasing the genes that were previously turned virtual. By the same token, you can envision these potentials unfurling as the idiosyncrasies of your personality The creative thrust of the universe in you fosters the genesis of form (physical or idiosyncratic) from subliminal patterns of energy which thus materializes as matter (the physical body: Nazut) or subtle matter (the subtle body: Arwah) or at the level of thinking as the psyche, Khayal, or the creative mind (at the level of metaphor: Mithal

'llah:

Since creativity integrates the different modes of reality (which vary from one level to another), you now realize that the creativity materializing as you, while emerging from within, includes patterns hailing from all levels. My consciousness is now hoisted from that unsounded first "a" of the word Allah which represented my grasp of reality emerging from within (Mithal) to the second "a" of the word Allah which represents reality at the archetypal level (Lahut) . To reach the perspective grasped at the (Lahut) level, you will need to let go of your identity from your previous identity with

your etheric body (Arwah) and shift your identity into your celestial effigy (Malakut, which is like a countenance without substance), represented by the first (l) of the word Allah; next, you shift your identity into identifying with being pure intelligence beyond form, time and space (Jabarut) , represented by the second "l" of the word Allah).

h:

When intonating the "h" of the word Allah, we leave not only the existential world out of focus, but even the programming behind it to touch upon the reality that it unfolds and actuates.

hu:

The "u" of hu indicates the descent through the spheres. We would be discounting all that is gained by the interfacing and osmosis fostered at the existential level if we did not awaken in the perspective of the world while extrapolating it with the perspectives encountered at each of the levels explored in the entire dhikr.

94 - Spirituality for Our Time

What are the salient features in the teaching of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan that are creating a new spirituality for our time?

In our challenging, decadent but promising world, there is a scent of hopefulness on the ubiquitous trail upon which we advance into the unknown. Perchance you may espy the fumbling emergence of a new spirituality keeping with the trend of our day and age! Yes, there was - there is a message at the scale of our global consciousness, offered by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan - a pointer by a pioneer amongst the pioneers vying to build a new world, a mystic visionary, a holy man, amongst the holy men adumbrating with the clarity of futuristic insight, the beclouded horizon of our anguished ponderings.

To fulfill our profound need for the sacred - for that perfume that makes sense of life: our spiritual dimension in our present day lifestyles - we now know that we need not leave the world, as our hallowed predecessors did. We need not team up in institutional conformism, or follow a guru. The religious heirloom bequeathed to us in the initiatic transmissions of a wide range of spiritual traditions offers bountiful food for the soul.

Furthermore, we may consult our consciences, honor our scale of values instead of being dictated to by the "do's and don'ts" of religious reformers, past and present. Instead we may seek personal enlightenment (with the cost of shouldering our responsibilities.)

We are moreover, invited to participate and contribute to the tidal wave of global awakening that is occurring inexorably in our time. This was - is - the message of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

When asked: What exactly is that message?, he declared it to be:

The awakening of humanity to the divinity of man."

What does this mean in practice

First of all, the emphasis is upon our interconnectedness in our quest for spiritual progress or enlightenment instead of seeking enlightenment for our personal selves, which has an egotistic flavor. Secondly, as the key to spirituality: we seek emancipation from the constriction of the commonplace individual self-image in order to extrapolate this dimension of our being with our cosmic and transcendent dimension, which Sufis call the divinity 'ulluhiyat' of our being.

How can we achieve this?

This does imply a dramatic reversal of our hackneyed views of God as "up there" and us "other" than God. It inevitably confronts us with modes of thinking that we may coin as "more advanced" than our middle-range thinking: - challenging and paradoxical if we are attached to our usual way of thinking: a super-logic, "reconciling the irreconcilables. How can we be the individual we think we are and at the same time incorporate in some enigmatic manner the totality of being? This was the very dilemma that faced Catholic theologians in their dogma which inevitably could not fit into the simplistic logic that we call reason: the dual nature of Christ divine and human. Here was a role model - a hint for our own identity.

Know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God.

Ibn 'Arabi

Man is divine limitation and God is human perfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This is the crux, the fulcrum upon which the new spirituality is precariously balanced in our sentient minds. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan demonstrated that the *reality* of what we project in our beliefs as spirituality is to be found in a person who is God-conscious.

Where are you to find God if not in the God conscious?

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But how does one do it in practice?

This is exactly what Sufi meditation is about and is precisely the objective motivating the kind of practices taught in the Sufi Order and Sufi Movement.

Of course there are steps:

(1) In the physical and social environment: espying that which transpires from behind that which appears - this is contemplation;

(2) in our own psyche: discovering our idiosyncrasies as the exemplars of the archetypal qualities, predicating reality, that we ascribe to the divine nature but are only knowable by inference;

(3) rather than identifying with being the spectator of our experience, we need to envision our consciousness as the funneling of a cosmic/transcendent, impersonal global consciousness which we traditionally call the divine Spectator;

(4) transcend the sense of "otherness" of God's presence, realizing that we are that presence. (This is the most difficult but most powerful step).

You might ask: What is the gist of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's teaching? The above are the four cardinal steps that you will find when scrutinizing the teaching.

Wherever I look, I see Thy beloved face.

God is hidden in His creation. In matter, life unfolds, discovers, realizes the consciousness that has been so to speak buried in it for thousands of years.

The one who is conscious of his earthly origin is an earthly man, one who is conscious of his heavenly origin is the son of God.

By realizing their divine inheritance, they free themselves from all earthly inheritance. The spirit of limitation is always a hindrance to realizing the spirit of mastery and practicing it. The experience of being powerless is man's ignorance of the power within him.

The outlook becomes wide, as wide as the Divine eye.

When we are face to face, Beloved, I do not know whether to call Thee me or me Thee! I see myself when Thou art not before me; when I see Thee, my self is lost to view. I consider it good fortune when Thou art alone with me, but when I am not there at all, I think it is the greatest blessing.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You will also find the same if you look into the teaching of the ancient Sufis.

God's eye sees the heavenly beauty through the godly.

Akibat

Wherever you gaze, there is the Face of God.

Qur'an

Wherever I look, all I see is God.

Kulli

By actualizing the divine nature which is the ground of my idiosyncrasies, I confer upon God a mode of being.

He is both the Spectator and that through which He sees.

Ibn 'Arabi

Take away this "I am" from between you and me! . . . I am the One I love!

al Hallaj

Of course we realize that these are unusual perspectives that we only clinch by dint of a lot of assiduous and ever-repetitive practice in the course of meditation. Then only can it be willfully applied in the everyday scenario. Eventually it will become an inveterate way of thinking and feeling and identifying. It does mean either drastically downplaying the commonplace perspective which might lead to otherworldliness or extrapolating between both perspectives. The latter is the very paradigm of the new spirituality.

These steps are hewn into reliable supports for our realization by the means of training. The consistent drill of mental skills, volitional, and emotional attunement, results in the release of power, power that thrives on our reliance upon inherited faculties that need to be awakened.

Here, this visionary pioneer of modern spirituality offers us a ladder out of the rut that we may not realize we are in (identifying with our self-image), by updating hackneyed articles of faith thanks to persuasive metaphors which prompt new ways of thinking. We commonly identify with those features of our personality that may be illustrated by the superstructure of a plant, neglecting its infrastructure: the root or seed which represents a more essential ground of what we unfurl as our idiosyncrasies. One learns to shift one's notion of identity from its surface to the very foundation of one's psyche that houses a bounty of which little is generally unfurled in our personality.

You may think of yourself as a plant in which only a little bounty latent in the seed is manifest. Yet, in you the seed that caused the whole existence - God - is to be found.

The seed out of which the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are made arises again at the end of the cycle. The same God so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again in its pursuit of excellence trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This crucial shift in one's identity could be illustrated by shifting one's glance looking at a cube on a blackboard in different ways or scanning a holograph. It is done by highlighting one perspective and downplaying another. This is where the attitude of the ascetic may nonetheless play a role in upgrading our accomplishments in life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's vision of the interplay between interest and indifference offers an intriguing breakthrough. How can one reconcile these two objectives pulling one in opposite directions?

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of

interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, at the same time motive limits power. Yet, it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things.

So long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

By asceticism one can develop one's soul and reach ecstasy, but what is the use of Samadhi if we are not first human?

It is difficult, but exciting, exhilarating, transforming and fulfilling. Moreover it helps us vindicate our wounded ideals - to save them from the wastepaper basket of our faltering faith in meaningfulness, and belief in a splendor behind its sometimes ugly distortions.

By ecstasy the consciousness is freed from this body, from this confinement; it experiences its true existence. No doubt, the highest ecstasy is in the communion with God, and that ecstasy is completed when one has forgotten oneself to that degree that there remains nothing of himself or herself but God. And it is in that ecstasy that the purpose of life is fulfilled.

95 - The Inner Journey Part I

We are all on a journey; life is a journey.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The Sufis have consistently attempted to earmark the steps by which one progresses on the inner journey in what is called the *Maqamat*. From the discrepancies between the various systems, it avers itself that these steps differ from one individual to another. However, it is useful to cull a modicum of information in this regard.

Abu Nassar al-Sarraj enumerated seven stages: **1) *Tawba*:** owning one's guilt instead of trying to justify it - then repenting; **2) *Wara*:** an untiring alertness with regard to one's conscience; **3) *Zuhd*:** detachment and independence with regard to worldly conditions (the two wings that enable the soul to fly according to Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan). This includes an impervious attitude towards people's judgment; **4) *Fakr*:** poverty (Murshid points out the difference between want and need); **5) *Sabr*:** patience. nature has a way of self-organizing or righting itself if we accede to forego our will to compulsively interfere. (This is true in some cases; notwithstanding, in my opinion, that using one's incentive may be called for at some point. It is difficult to determine when.) The shadow of this quality (patience) is obviously fatalism: a spiritual bypass; **6) *Tawwakul*:** ordinarily interpreted as trust in God. It is the attitude that ensues from a supernal realization, acquired by the initiate at this stage, of a level of action that beside which our human strivings pale - a level that bypasses causal laws. Mystics prize the divine power that emerges in them through God realization and that makes things happen unaccountably; **7) *Rida*:** a serene peaceful state in which one has overcome grudges, resentment, frustrations, and disenchantment.

In his elaboration of Sarraj's sketch into 100 thresholds, Sheikh Abdullah Ansari, the Afghan Pir, unveils clue after clue, stage after stage for the assiduous searcher after awakening, stressing the need to make amends for guilt, whether the truth comes to you, or through you, making up for time lost , having the foresight to forsake attachment , observe honesty, overcome grief , fear, worry, hypocrisy, even to overlook habitual faults through dignity, scorning whatever is renounced, heeding

one's conscience, devotion, hope, yearning, etc...

Sheikh Jabbar Niffari points out that one cannot make the next step until one is ready for it:

As the mystic in his journey is transferred from one station in which he has experienced confirmation and presence, to another, he pauses between the two stations).

Actually, we are venturing on two parallel, though not unrelated, journeys: 1) Our involvements, our know-hows, our accomplishments, mortgaged by the accumulated ballast that bogs us down and hampers our freedom, and 2) our inner journey which, if we do advance, manifests as insight, as an upgraded sense of values: a high attunement, as our dedication to our ideal, our quest for excellence and beauty, together with detachment and independence regarding worldly values. Note that we do not necessarily progress in either our inner or outer journey (sometimes the same patterns repeat themselves or even people regress instead of progressing). We will not progress unless we do something about it.

The antinomy between our inner being and our personality was aptly portrayed as Janus, the twin faced Roman God. This disparity may be seen in, on one hand, the influence accruing from both our ancestry and our environment and, on the other hand, our real countenance - hidden, yet transpiring from behind the mask: our face. The tell-tale of what our motivations are in life leaves a hallmark on our psychological and physical configuration as illustrated fictionally in *The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

Both journeys are interrelated.

The inner life is not necessarily in an opposite direction to the worldly life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If we have a strong enough commitment to the values we recognize in our inner perception, they will affect the way we handle situations in our lives. Counterwise, the means we use to pursue our objectives in our outer journey could impair our inner journey. (The means do not justify the end). While it seems obvious that the situations in our lives in which we involved ourselves at an earlier immature

stage in our inner journey may obstruct our fulfilling the purpose we now wish to pursue in view of our present realization, it is in the way we handle these endemic situations that our spiritual ideals are tested and critically actualized. Pir-o-Murshid says that, one one hand we are tested in our love, but on the other hand, we are tested in our indifference. Contradiction? Or complementarity?

We may gain a clearer sense of what the stages of the journey are in Pir-o-Murshid's teaching, if we look through the disparate testimonies of his own realization transpiring through his words. We may assess the stages of inner progress that we are going through. Actually, they correspond to the levels of our being, or spheres of reality, according to Sufism.

What are the realizations corresponding to each level both in our outer journey and our inner journey?

1) Concern for an efficient support system:

In the course of the outer journey, we are concerned with the well being of our physical bodies and commonplace minds, with building a convenient, perhaps comfortable, certainly a more efficient support system for our lives; with living in "lifestyles" instead of in caves, with the momentous progress in technologies, in transport, in communication, information, security measures, in psychotherapy, and in management. This stage corresponds to the levels described by the Sufis as *Nazut*.

2) We still assess things in our common mode of thinking:

At this level, regarding the inner journey, we still see things from the point of view of ourselves envisioned as "discrete entities". We are concerned with the control of body functions (as in Hatha Yoga) and mental control (as in Raja Yoga). We assume that our individual consciousness is the spectator, not only of the physical world, including our own bodies, but of the psychological and social systems in which we are enmeshed, including our own psyches. This mode of thinking is at the level of *Khayal*. At this level, one may look for a role-model to help one discover one's self.

3) Discovering our interrelationship with the universe and with all beings:

This is the level we reach by turning within and identifying with our subtle

body. It is a feature of this step that people in our societies are more open to para-physical phenomena, and therefore promote well-being by the therapy of the subtle body (as in acupuncture or homeopathy).

With regard to the inner journey, typically in this stage one acknowledges a wider outreach than our skin-bound representation of ourselves, portrayed as our self-image. This manifests as our trying to enhance the effulgence of our aura in meditation, for example. We also become sensitive to the effect of our inner attunement, and of our inner insight upon the configuration of our aura.

It is the exaltation of the spirit which is productive of all beauty.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

One begins to give credence to our inter-relatedness with all beings, we learn to shunt our consciousness into that of another.

One is in at-one-ment with all living beings and it gives one as much insight into another as the other person has of himself...not only the thoughts of that person, but his whole spirit is reflected in your spirit. In this consciousness, distance is no longer distance.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This affects our outer journey because we become aware of the effect of our concupiscence, of our desire for material possessions or our ambition, and particularly of the unkindness towards others that may foster these gains.

A further sign is in the domain of our thinking: we begin to think holistically. Instead of conceptualizing in categories of thoughts, we are able to reconcile the irreconcilables.

You realize that you are connected with all beings, that there is nothing and no one who is divided or separated from you.

Man occupies a certain horizon, as far as he can expand.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this stage, one finds inspiration in communing with the attunement *(tawajeh)* of the beings towards whom one looks for guidance. This stage corresponds to the level called *Arwah.*

4) The need to be creative:

Creativity surfaces by reaching out from inside. Our subtle body now acts as a feedback system that helps us be creative with our personality, which is actually a non space-like form. Now we gain further insight about ourselves by discovering ourselves in the way that the different pictures of ourselves are superimposed, and at the same time integrated in our personalities. As in a holograph, we can shift from one picture to another by modulating our focus. Thus, according to our attunement, we may recognize the innocent child in us within its distortion, intermeshed with the wisdom we may have acquired. Our progress in the inner journey is indicated here by our ability to extrapolate between these realities.

Looking outside from inside, we learn to translate our attunement and insight into external forms - art, the environment - with which we surround ourselves - inventions, our handling of situations, etc.

At this level instead of idolizing a teacher, picturing his/her form or personality which one admires, one resonates with his/her attunement.

Consequently we could define this stage in our inner journey as one in which we are gaining insight into the cosmic matrix of our being without losing its individual core. The journey avers itself to progress from our individuality to our cosmic dimension, instead of envisioning ourselves as discrete entities as we had done previously.

The process of going from limitation to perfection is called mysticism. ... Just as one's own sub-consciousness would awaken one at a certain time, if previously warned, in the same way the consciousness of God is the agency for awakening His manifestation. Yet man in this life of illusion has the same intelligence, the perfection of which he can realize in that state of consciousness where he is aware of his own perfection.

To become an illuminated soul is only a difference of consciousness.

When one is conscious of limitation, one is limited, when one is conscious of perfection, one is perfect.

Therefore, our greatness or our smallness depends upon our consciousness. It is through consciousness that we become small or great, and through consciousness we either rise or fall, and through consciousness we become narrow or we expand.

If consciousness of wealth makes one feel rich, and if consciousness of strength makes one feel strong, how much stronger and richer should he feel who is really God-conscious!

In the physical existence each individual is distinct and separate, but behind this physical existence all are one, the consciousness is one.

Akibat

By making many sacrifices, and practicing renunciation, he will attain that consciousness which is God-consciousness, in which resides all perfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this stage, instead of looking outside for guidance, one's guide is "whom one could be if one would be what one might be" - that is, the way God is in the process of becoming as oneself. The Sufis call this level *Mithal.*

5) We discover our celestial dimension:

What are the clues to making the next step in the inner journey?

There comes a time in one's evolution when a passion is awakened in the soul that gives the soul a longing for the unattainable.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

There is an enticing longing to touch upon that intangible splendor of which we can only gather a clue at the existential level wherever beauty or majesty or excellence transpire - the sacred, perfection. This lies beyond not only our perception, but also beyond the grasp of our minds, and therefore is unattainable. This longing lures us further and further into a transcendental dimension, therefore our minds represent levels or spheres of reality beyond the existential.

In this experience the consciousness touches a sphere from whence it cannot get an impression of any name or form. The impression it gets is a feeling, a feeling of illumination, of life, of joy.

That which we see of our Beloved is the beauty displayed before our eyes; whereas that aspect of our Beloved which is not manifest to our eyes is the inner model of that beauty of which our Beloved speaks to us. There comes a time in one's evolution when every touch of beauty moves the heart to tears; it is at this time that the Beloved of heaven is brought to earth.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It would evidence our simplistic way of thinking that it is to be found in the heavens (up there).

There is a place that you cannot reach by going anywhere.

Buddha

We occupy only as much horizon as we are conscious of. The next world is the same as this; and this world is the same as the next. Only that which is veiled from our eyes, we call the unseen world.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This aspiration does inevitably have an effect upon our sense of values by making us weary of platitudes, of the commonplace, the trite motivations we see being pursued around us - which we ourselves had pursued.

There are strivings which pull one down in the eyes of others and in one's own

consciousness, and there are strivings which raise one in the eyes of others and in one's own consciousness.

The moment a person feels that he will no longer remain in prison, the prison bars must break instantly of themselves.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This will alter dramatically one's pursuits in the world.

As man evolves, he ceases to look down on earth, but looks to the heavens. If one wants to seek the heavens, one must change the direction of looking...Souls who have become conscious of the angelic spheres hear the calling of that sphere.

The more closely a person is drawn to heaven, the more the things of the earth lose their color and taste...Verily who pursueth the world will inherit the world, but the soul that pursueth God will attain in the end to the presence of God... The Soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its loosening the ties of the lower planes...If you do not rise above the things of this world, they will rise above you.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

However, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan warns us against the sanctimonious disregard for what is important to others:

When he cannot put up with conditions around him, he may think that he is a superior person, but in reality the conditions are stronger than him.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This longing will hoist one's consciousness into sublime spheres.

96 - The Inner Journey Part II

We live in the world to which we are awakened, and to the world to which we are not awakened, we are asleep...The soul in its manifestation on earth is not at all disconnected from the higher spheres. It lives in all spheres, though it is generally conscious only on one plane.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The key to opening up to the impressions of these sublime spheres lies here in a dramatic shift of one's identity. In addition to discovering one's cosmic outreach, now one discovers one's celestial dimension. It is sublime, sacred, an attunement of exaltation, an attitude of glorification.

...by soaring upwards to those spheres where spiritual exaltation manifests.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

And when one reaches the stage where the angelic quality manifests, then one begins to show innocence, simplicity, love for all, sympathy and God-consciousness. A symptom of this step in one's inner journey is that one surreptitiously seeks situations that trigger off the exaltation of the soul rather than the thrill of the heart. As one's sensitivity increases, one becomes more aware of the levels of emotion.

The pitch of exaltation can be determined by the different grades to which consciousness rises.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

There is a physical aspect of exaltation which comes as a reaction to, or result of having seen the immensity of space, having looked at the wide horizon, or having seen the clear sky, the moonlit night and nature at dawn. Looking at the rising sun, watching the setting sun, looking at the horizon from the sea, being in the midst of nature, looking at the world from the top of a mountain, all these experiences lift one up and give one a feeling which one cannot call sensation. It is exaltation.

Here ecstasy is triggered off by the perception of nature in its most alluring expression; but it is still dependent upon perception. However, to tune oneself to the resonance of the celestial spheres, one finds exaltation when our humanness is sublimated.

A higher aspect of exaltation is a moral exaltation - when we are sorry for having said or done something unpleasant; when we have asked forgiveness, and humbled ourselves before someone towards whom we were inconsiderate. We have humbled our pride then. Or when we felt a deep gratitude to someone who had done something for us; when we have felt love, sympathy, devotion which seems endless and which seems so great that our heart cannot accommodate it; when we have felt so much pity for someone that we have forgotten ourselves; when we have found a profound happiness in rendering a humble service to someone in need; when we have said a prayer which has come from the bottom of our heart; when we have realized our own limitation and smallness in comparison with the greatness of God; all these experiences lift man up...even such an experience as watching the little smiles of an innocent infant.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Ecstasy, erupting through the very appraisal of the "elegance" of the driving intelligence of the universe, which is shattering one's commonplace mind, will reveal a meaningfulness beyond one's ken that opens totally new perspectives to one's understanding. No sooner is one able to recognize one's celestial identity than a mode of knowledge, transcending that which was acquired by experience, is revealed.

Ecstasy comes by touching the reason of reasons and by realizing the essence of wisdom.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

While Pir-o-Murshid says: "Wisdom is born out of the co-mingling of the knowledge of the heavens with the know-how of the earth." He does clarify that one needs to downplay experiential knowledge to grasp this higher knowledge. However:

Intelligence confined to knowledge of phenomena becomes limited, but when it

is free from all knowledge, then it experiences its own essence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If one goes further, there is consciousness in its aspect of pure intelligence, because it is the knowing of things that blunts the faculty of knowledge...Consciousness is covered by something which it is conscious of. The moment that cover is taken away, it is pure intelligence...it is a kind of omniscient condition.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This tallies with Ibn 'Arabi, who says: "Knowledge is a veil upon the known."

The annihilation of knowledge in the known.

Ansari

At this level, one has surpassed any consideration of form, or image, or conceptual teaching; therefore, rather than envisioning God as the perfect archetype, one discovers God as the Spectator, and one's consciousness as a derivation from God, as paramount intelligence. Now the known avers itself to be the knower. The emotion erupting out of one's discovery of one's celestial identity triggers off a total reversal of the commonplace assumption that one is the spectator: one shifts one's subjective focal center and identifies with God as the Spectator - a total turnabout of perspective which confers a revealed knowledge instead of an acquired knowledge.

There is a still deeper sphere to which our memory is linked, and that sphere is the universal memory; in other words, the divine mind where we do not only collect what we have seen or heard or known, but where we can even touch something we have never learned, heard, known or seen. For this the doors of memory should be laid open.

Who so draws not knowledge from the spring of knowledge, knows not the reality.

Ansari

Mastery in accomplishment will equally give one ecstasy.

If one can make oneself obey one's own will one will surely rise to a greater exaltation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this stage in one's inner journey one will be almost compulsively drawn to any expression of glorification. One will see the forms of the ritual as simply devices to trigger off a level of exaltation that sparks a sense of *deja vu* of the heavenly spheres.

Religious prayers, rituals, and ceremonies were intended to produce exaltation, for it is one of the treasures of life; exaltation is as necessary, or perhaps even more so, as the cultivation of thought.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But eventually exaltation is enigmatically self-generated. This represents an advanced stage in the inner journey.

Sometimes exaltation may be the outcome of sensation. It is possible; but at the same time exaltation which is beyond price comes of itself, as soon as we have shown an inclination towards it.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this stage, the role model to inspire one on the path is that element in one that Suhrawardhi calls "the witness in the heavens". This level corresponds with the level which the Sufis call Malakut, the celestial level.

6) One discovers the software transcending even one's latent potentialities:

Now we are ready for the most magically creative stage. It is not the unfurling of latent, dormant potentialities as in the *Mithal* stage, but rather a totally different mode of creativity linking us with the archetypal level of which our personalities are the exemplars - a level beyond causality. The difference between our latent qualities ready to be unfurled (given favorable conditions lying within), and the unlimited all-possibilities inherent in what one might call the software of the existential reality,

could be illustrated by the difference between the continual recycling of the seed through the plant as compared with its mutation. In its recycling, the seed is subject to determinism, causality; but the variables presiding over its mutation are infinite and hence, unpredictable. This could again be demonstrated by the fact that, while every cell of our body carries the code of our whole body, the cells of our immune system are open to develop unforeseeable faculties ad infinitum.

Such is genuine creativity - it is unpredictable and hence involves levels of reality beyond the known.

It is an initial state which is not governed by mechanistic law, but is the preconditioning of law, the chance substrate upon which law is built.

Andreas Speiser

We find evidence the "pull of a future that is exploratory", rather than the "push of the past", insofar as it determines the present. In fact, we are referring to a state that is neither initial nor forthcoming, because it transcends the arrow of time.

The exemplar now discovers its relationship with the archetype through the discovery of what the archetype has of itself in the exemplar. Consequently, the personality of the inner wayfarer may now exhibit qualities beyond even its latent idiosyncrasies, because the divine archetypes, predicated by all that manifests in the universe, are themselves unlimited and hence undefinable. The Sufis ascribe them to the divine intention.

Therefore to reach this stage on the inner journey, instead of envisioning the cosmic dimension of our being in holistic fashion, as at the Arwah level, when one says that the Truth most glorious comprehends all beings, the meaning is that He comprehends them as a cause comprehends its consequences, not that He is a whole containing them as His parts...

Jami

We need to relate our sense of identity to its archetype: imagine a rose seeing itself as the expression of "rosehood", imagine that we see our qualities as the expressions of their perfect models which we ascribe to God!

Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithal) in the higher world. The forms in the higher world preserve the existence of their likeness in the lower worlds. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each form to its likeness. ...These are like ladders for the angels, while the meanings that descend in these tenuities are like angels.

Ibn 'Arabi

To achieve this requires a tour de force in our thinking: instead of assessing the potentialities latent in us, we discover unlimited possibilities not yet existent. The Sufis call this *Imkan* and Buddha calls it the sphere of all-possibility.

Now, having transited through the volte-face at the Jabbarut level, instead of reaching out towards the universe from our personal center, we recognize the universe forming itself as us. Moreover, the intention, even the nostalgia of the universe (what we mean by God), is to discover potentialities unknown to Him/Herself as us.

This for the Sufis, establishes a knightly relationship between us as the vassals, and the Lord whose qualities we actualize in our personalities.

Then God makes him journey through his Names (that is, His archetypes) in order to show him His signs. Thus the server comes to know that he is designed by every name. It is through these names that God appears to the server.

Ibn 'Arabi

Each manifest being is the form of a lordly name. The Rabb, the Lord becomes a reality in relationship with a being who is designated in the passive form.

Henri Corbin

The divinity seeks for a being whose God it is. The divine sovereignty has a secret, and that is thou.

Sahl Tostari

We might recognize two complementary states here, which may be discovered on the inner journey in two steps. 1) Thinking of one's personality as the exemplar of the diving Being; 2) Letting go of one's human identity and identifying with the archetype of which one's personality is simply the exemplar through which God, as the ultimate reality behind the existential show, makes Himself (Itself) known.

When thou perceives, thou seest limitation openly, and thou seest Me at the back of the unseen. When thou art with me, thou seest the opposites and him whom I have caused to witness them.

Niffari

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan points out the complementary view to our own personal one:

Therefore the ultimate aim of the eternal Consciousness in undertaking a journey to the plane of mortality is to realize its eternal being.

Akibat

God discovers His Perfection in our limitation...Therefore the soul may be considered to be a condition of God, a condition which makes the only Being limited for a time...The one who is conscious of his earthly origin is an earthly man, one who is conscious of his heavenly origin is the son of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Now one's role model is one's projection of what one imagines to be the divine perfection.

Just as one's own sub-consciousness would awaken one at a certain time, if previously warned, in the same way the consciousness of God is the agency for awakening His manifestation, projecting itself through different names and forms to accomplish His desire of being known.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The Sufis call this level *Lahut*.

7) One awakens beyond life:

Unless one has a strong commitment to one's responsibilities or to service in real life situations, if it were not for one's delight in wonderful people, in acts of heroism, and in the achievements of great civilizations; if it were not for one's bewonderment when enjoying the beauty and negotiating the power of nature, one could find oneself continually disappointed by the greed and cruelty of many, and the sham values pursued. One tends to turn away from "the world" and seek that which lies behind the scene and scenario of life, which powers the miracle of life. To grasp the "reality behind the here and now", it is easier to downplay the existential actuality and highlight "that which transpires from behind what appears", while it would be more difficult to extrapolate between the two perspectives. This would then represent a further stage in the journey.

Now the existential world appears simply as a perspective, like an optical illusion evidences that one's consciousness is captured in a certain perspective. The consequence is otherwordliness, detachment, alienation - the way of the ascetic, the monk or the nun, the anchorite. On the other hand, one finds oneself awakening on the other side of a veil, into a realness that confirms one's sense of the illusoriness and the deceptive nature of one's usual representation of life.

When the unreality of life pushes against my heart, its door opens to the reality.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The consequence is a sense of freedom, emancipation, authenticity, exaltation, ecstasy and serenity.

The criterion determining this stage on the inner journey is the degree to which one is able to shift one's personal consciousness into God consciousness without losing one's self or rather, to see one's self center as the customizing of the cosmic/transcendent reality we call God.

There is a stage at which, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life, and is given that power: peace and freedom of light and life, which belong to the source of all beings. In that moment of supreme

exaltation, one is not only united with the source of all beings, but dissolved in it; for the source is in one's self.

Here it is, the Being whose attributes served as one's role model, who is revealed to one irrespective of the devices whereby one may gain a clue to His/Her nature.

There is a further stage at which one knows God by God, instead of through His signs...discovery of Himself through one.

Ibn'Arabi

This is the level that the Sufis call *Hahut* and the Yogis call *Samadhi*.

8) One grasps the unity underlying multiplicity and the multiplicity inherent in unity *(Tawhid)*:

Exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As one progresses in one's realization and advances in one's inner journey, one increasingly finds oneself in a state where, although unintentional, one's perspective suddenly shifts and fluctuates. This perspective moves between grasping a basic unity underlying the multiplicity of what our minds had conceived as "discrete" objects, persons or events (an example would be emphasizing the grasp of the sea at the cost of the grasp of the waves); or on the other hand, apprehending that what appears as objects becomes manifest by dint of a plethora of ephemeral and elusive projections of the multifarious bounty inherent in the Oneness (like the minerals present within a distillate, but only apparent at the point at which they precipitate).

According to Kalabadhi:

... tafrid is the mystical state where one sees unity in multiplicity (wahdat) and tajrid, the state in which one sees multiplicity in unity (Wahdadiyat). Titus Burckhardt defines all-Wahadiya as the way that Unity appears in its various

aspects, and al-Wahid'ya as the unity hidden behind these predicates.

This becomes, not only an ever-recurring feature during one's meditation, but even while active in everyday life situations. Eventually one catches a third perspective whereby one is able to extrapolate between these antipodal perspectives.

One becomes conscious of one's own self in God, and of God in one's self. Man is divine limitation and God is human perfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It is just like touching the Presence of God, when one's consciousness has become so light and so liberated and free that it can raise itself and dive and touch the depths of one's being.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We reach the realization of which Ibn'Arabi speaks:

Thou art not thou, thou art He without thou; not He entering into you, nor thou entering into Him. Thou art not ceasing to be nor still existing. Then if thou know thy existence thus, then thou knowest God; and if not, then not.

Ibn'Arabi

When all idea of this external being is gone, then comes the consciousness of the unlimited Being of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

When asked what is the message of our time, Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan said:

It is the awakening of the consciousness of humanity to the divinity of man.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The Sufis call this level Tawhid.

97 - Why the Wazifa?

The effectiveness of our practice of the *Wazifa* presents us with a paradox: it depends entirely upon our realization, while on the other had it confers realization. It only works in the Sufi perspective of always looking at oneself from two complementary points of view: the personal and the way things look from the complementary (or opposite) point of view to one's own which the Sufis call the divine point of view. It requires us to push our point of view beyond its limitations in infinite regress and therefore spells emancipation from simplistic, commonplace thinking. This would be aptly illustrated by our mind's ability to always imagine a number greater than the number which we have envisioned so far. Without this dimension of vision, the *Wazifa* is not a *Wazifa* and therefore cannot be effective. If it is practiced as a method of boosting psychological idiosyncrasies, it cannot possibly work. It would be a simplistic view to assume that the *Wazifa* is a prescription to develop a certain quality. This would be missing out on the very seed bed out of which our personality may blossom.

However, in Sufism, this complementarity honors our incentive in participating in our own creativity by opening ourselves to the revelation of the divine skill whereby the divine artist fashions us - each uniquely … this requires of us to be sensitive to our intuition of a completely different way of thinking and emoting than our own. Here we recognize two factors in our creativity: unfurling latencies by the power of imagination (at the *Mithal* level) and actualizing impersonal or transcendent archetypes (at the *Lahut* level) into our personalities which are their exemplars. Such is spirituality, it represents a further dimension, complementary to the purely psychological one. It is always challenging, unforeseeable, perplexing and exhilarating!

As we know, the Sufis seek the fulfillment of the purpose of life which requires cultivating that precious gift of the universe to us: our human personality. Hence the importance of, amongst all our spiritual practices: the *Wazifa*.

While as we know, the prime orientation in Sufism is awakening in life. However in the Sufi sense, to awaken in life, one does need to unfurl one's potentialities and this requires integrating all levels of one's being (wholistically, rather than holistically).

ARTICULATING A REALIZATION BY MEANS OF AN IDIOM

The *Wazifa* is the practice of invoking a divine name repetitively. The name Ism Ilahi or Asma'ul Husna is a label conveying a quality.

With us the name of everything is its outward form; with the Creator it's inward essence.

Rumi

The divine names are relations, not ontological realities, occasioned by the entities of the possible things.

Ibn 'Arabi

A mental association is established between the word and its archetypal meaning. By mentioning the "name", one evokes the meaning.

Then God makes him journey through His names in order to show him His signs. Thus the servant comes to know that he is designated by every name. It is through these names that God appears to the servant.

Ibn 'Arabi

In our human understanding, we ascribe a quality to a person or ourselves, but if we envision this quality as God's quality manifesting in us, it will open up our personality to a totally different spectrum, magnitude and status. The Sufis consider the idiosyncrasies of our personality as the exemplars of the divine archetypal qualities. To unfurl these we need to refer back continually to their archetype. The exemplar is known by means of the archetype: for example if we know that a table is round, it is because roundness is inherently written into our sense of meaningfulness, and contrariwise, the archetype is known by means of the exemplar. For example, after having seen many roses, a child sees their difference with lilies.

When practicing the *Wazifa*, it is important to assess at which stage you are, and assess the next step in order to progress. But one must never skip a stage, otherwise, one may have to backtrack. Following are the developmental stages of the

Sufi initiate with regard to the *Wazaif*:

1) The Empirical Level: *Nazut*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Zahir

The dawning of the evolution or consciousness is evidenced by the rudimentary sensorial perceptual experience accompanied by the commonplace naive interpretation: 'I feel this object; it is hard, prickly, round ...I feel cold, hungry, angry', This represents a rudimentary stage of human thinking. Any physicist will confirm that matter is not the way it feels or looks. And by the same token, our emotions can lead us into subjective 'make-believe'. So our interpretation of experience could be understood as 'this is the way things look from a particular vantage point'. It represents therefore a limited opinion, bearing upon a slither of the situation - for example, 'Note Dame in Paris looks like this', neglecting that this is the way it is seen only from a certain angle and it looks totally different from another angle; or again a light-buoy should not be mistaken for the haven. Realization lies a long way ahead! and that is the objective of those who are seeking for greater understanding.

The same applies to elementary subjective statements which bespeak that the person is caught in a personal, hence biased perspective for which the only therapy is to pull oneself out of that perspective and see things from alternate perspectives. And this applies pertinently to our perfunctory interpretation of events in which we are involved which we judge from our personal bias and take for granted.

These are the trite modes of thinking that Yoga brands as illusory or rather deluding maya. The Sufi view highlights the way of avoiding being caught up in them: by considering them to be clues, (signposts) that should never be taken for granted as such, but could lead to the meaningfulness toward which they point. This is what awakening is about. The signpost has fulfilled its purpose when one has left it behind. Lingering in these perfunctory judgments is getting into a rut without issue.

We shall show them our signs at the horizons and in themselves.

Qur'an

At the *Nazut* level: the adept recognizes in the many-splendored aspects of nature clues - ayat - matching qualities that are meaningful to him/her. For example a lake at moonlight: peace; a colorful dawn; splendor; etc. For the Sufis, at this stage God wrapped in mystery, reveals Him/Herself through these clues. Earmarking these clues will make the Wazaif that evoke them more meaningful.

2) The Psychological Level: *Khayal*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Alim

At the *Khayal* level, we are on the lookout for clues whereby God reveals Him/Herself through the way a paramount model of excellence, which Sufis ascribe to the divine nature, is exemplified in our own personality. Once more, we will gain some sense of the *Wazaif* as we pinpoint the personality feature they evoke in ourselves.

Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is man and man is a world.

Mahmood Shabistari

3) The Introspective Level: *Arwah*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Batin

At the *Arwah* level, we are trying to stalk the divine nature 'transpiring through that which appears,' making allowances for the fact that there is bound to be distortion and defilement in those very precarious and perishable signs, rather than relying upon our interpretation of events. Here we find the converse: rather than searching for the quality evoked by the *Wazifa* in our personality, such as it is, we capture it trying to surface in our personality as it unfolds.

The one who tunes himself not only to the external, but to the inner being, and to the essence of all things, gets an insight into the essence of the whole being, and therefore he can, to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty of the flower.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As we discover the more germane inner lining of our psyche, we will be aware of the need to debunk the hoax of our psychological projections upon our problems whereby we deceive ourselves by our own assessments of our problems.

Thought grasps the form of the object directly without the help of categories; illusion and imagination; done away with impressions (samsara); all antecedent mental functions are destroyed.

Eliade

4) The Level of Metaphor (Creative Imagination): *Mithal*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Khaliq

At the *Mithal* level, (the level of metaphor), we consciously participate in the creativity of our personality by unfurling potentialities lying in wait, realizing that our creativity customizes the divine creativity.

The soul of man is the spirit of the Creator, and therefore has within it the same power of creating by the power of mind as his Creator has.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this level we capture the seeing sprouts of our personality as they are surfacing by translating reality in the mental and emotional mode into evanescent forms.

Thus the ascensions of saints are the ascensions of their spirit, triggering off the visions of their hearts whereby they perceive forms in the intermediary world of embodied spiritual realities.

Ibn 'Arabi

Here all the essential realities of being are manifested in real images. … So what the soul shows to itself is precisely its own image, since the earth it projects directly reflects the image premeditated by the soul.

Vide Corbin

At this stage, we realize that God is revealing His\Her qualities - sifat - which we evoke in our *Wazaif* in the unfurling of His\Her nature as our personality, albeit restricted by the very limitations you wreak upon this process by your own assessment of what you think are your qualities or defects. Interestingly, these spontaneous thoughts that seems to arise from within and coalesce into images are clues as to 'how God is trying to manifest through me (and as me) by the qualities that I am awakening in myself'.

This requires of us to reverse our vantage point in order to discover ourselves through the knowledge that God has of Him/Herself through us.

God describes Himself to us through ourselves.

I know God through the knowledge that God has of Himself through me.

Ibn 'Arabi

5) The Celestial Level: *Malakut*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Quddus

At the Malakut level, the recollection of our celestial nature to which we attune ourselves, awakens qualities in our self-creativity which would not have arisen if we had continued to identify with our psychological self-image.

As man evolves, he ceases to look down on earth, but looks to the heavens. If one wants to seek the heavens, one must change the direction of looking.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This is triggered of by our giving vent to our aspiration toward the sublime and the sacred.

Man's grade of evolution depends upon the pitch he has attained; it is a certain pitch that makes him conscious of a certain phase of life.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This will awaken our memory of Deja vu prior to our birth.

God acquaints them with what corresponds to them in each world by passing with them through the different worlds.

Ibn 'Arabi

However it does require of us to let go of our commonplace self-image.

Now their journey in God involves the dissolving of their composite nature and acquaints them with what corresponds to them in each world of being, by passing with them through the different sorts of worlds.

Ibn 'Arabi

The soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its breaking through the ties of the lower planes.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this point in our evolutionary development, we are living an active and effective reciprocity between ourselves and God - that is, between the qualities that have been actualized in our personality, and the many splendored potentialities that are still latent, the legacy of the divine archetypes manifest in our celestial counterpart, but somewhat defiled in those exemplars of the archetypes of our being that are our idiosyncrasies.

It is only by glorification that our celestial nature reveals itself to us. Thus our celestial nature serves as a bridge in that reciprocal action between God and man or between the divine and human poles of our being.

Have Me present to your heart, I shall have you present in myself.

Qur'an

Therefore according to the Sufis, 'we know God through the knowledge that God acquires by our discovering God's qualities in our idiosyncrasies'. This antinomy is found in Ibn 'Arabi's description of two fundamental spiritual developmental stages:

I know God through the knowledge that He has of Himself by my discovering Him.

6) The Level of the Divine Knower as Our Intelligence: *Jabarut*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Shahid

At the *Jabarut* level, we can see that our realization of the full implications of each *Wazifa* changes dramatically, if we reverse our assumption of being the spectator and invite the Divine Witness to illuminate our point of view.

You thought that you were the Spectator, the witness (Shahid) of what you experience, but the real witness in you is your angelic counterpart - the witness in the heavens.

Shahabuddin Suhrawardhi

The consequence is that, we can now see how our assessment of our self-image was based upon our perception of our personal idiosyncrasies, and how this perspective on our identity was standing in the way of and thwarting the actualizing of the bounty in store at the *Lahut* level of our being, those seminal qualities or attributes - Sifat - which we invoke in our *Wazaif*.

Whereas if we let the divine Witness presiding over our consciousness prevail over our personal perspective, an inherent knowledge accessed through the act of intelligence rather than of consciousness that was being blocked by our judgment breaks through, liberating us from our self-image and flooding our awareness, "awakening the God within" (as Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan says).

When consciousness is not conscious of anything, it is resorbed in its ground which is intelligence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Man attains insight into meaningfulness from the divine mind that confers form to material beings. Therefore, to obtain insight into meaningfulness, do not obstruct the gift from above, by excessive attachment to the perceptual reality.

Avicenna

8) The Archetypal Level: *Lahut*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Kemal

Lahut. This about-turn in our vantage point (trying to see things from the divine point of view will) open the way to our accessing the *Lahut* level of our being, where we discover the archetypes of which our idiosyncrasies are the exemplars.

Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithl) in the higher world The forms in the higher world preserve the existence of their likeness in the lower worlds. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each form to its likeness. ... These are like ladders for the angels, while the meanings that descend in these tenuities are like angels.

Ibn 'Arabi

Therefore we now discover our idiosyncrasies and the potentialities of their being further deployed by grasping with our intelligence (rather than our consciousness) the archetypes of which they are the exemplars.

Since the ephemeral being manifests the form of the eternal, it is by the contemplation of the eternal that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself. ... You know yourself with another knowledge, different from that which you had when you knew your Lord by the knowledge that you had of yourself, because it is through Him that you know yourself.

Ibn 'Arabi

The unfurling of the seeds of our personality triggered off by the creative power of our imagination (at the *Mithal* level) would be reiteratively tautological and therefore would exclude the possibility for further improvement if it were not for that extra-temporal, (extra-samsaric), open ended, transcendent, archetypal matrix of our being at the *Lahut* level carrying the inexhaustive possibilities of what we mean by divinity - *Ulluhiyat* - (just as the repetitive recycling of the seed in the plant can only be relieved by mutation).

Possible things become qualified by existence from behind the veils of the divine attributes.

Ibn 'Arabi

Here is the break-through.

The one who is conscious of his earthly origin is an earthly man, one who is conscious of his heavenly origin is the son of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

From the moment that we can see things from the divine point of view, we access dimensions of our being that transfigure our personality radically. Here lies the secret of the *Wazifa*. This is spirituality. While serving our creativity, imagining the qualities evoked in our *Wazaif*, as we have seen at the *Mithal* level, the level of creative imagination does limit the unfurling of these qualities unless we call upon the eternal models of which the seed-bed of our personality is an expression.

One must avoid looking for one's instructions in the realm of imagination...which only gives indirect indications regarding pure archetypes.

Ibn 'Arabi

Here imagination is not proceeding from inwards outwards, but from upward downward.

Imagination causes archetypal notions to descend into perceptible forms.

Ibn 'Arabi

Our being grows to its cosmic dimensions.

When the inner nature manifested by man's inclinations and faculties has become pure, he contemplates therein whatever is of the same nature as in the cosmos.

Shahabuddin Suhrawardi

We participate in creating our being through our glorification. By our attunement to the sacred. We awaken sublime propensities in our being that would otherwise lie latent. We awaken the God within.

Allah al makhluk fi'l 'itiqadat: God creates Himself through your prayers.

Hadith Qudsi

8) The Unitive Level: *Hahut*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Ahad

The *Hahut* level of our being represents a whole different stratum. It is the reality that transcends the existential state even as it manifests as our being.

When the unreality of life fades away, its reality strikes my soul.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We have risen beyond the conditions in which God can only be known by revealing Him/Herself through His/Her "signs" which requires the existential state (at different levels)

At an advanced stage one learns to grasp God as He is in Himself rather than the knowledge gleaned of Him. ... The one who is immersed in the vision of multiplicity is in the world in the aspect of the divine names and the names of the world. The one who is immersed in the divine unity is with God in the grasp of His unity, irrespective of the worlds.

Ibn 'Arabi

At this pinnacle, not only the existential state but the programming is by-passed and that means it is unaffected by the feed-back from the existential realm. That is why Buddha called it not only beyond existence, but beyond non-existence, in fact beyond conditioning. If you have a whiff of this state, you will experience the most utter freedom, in fact liberation.

The real Being is only and exclusively God in His essence dhat and principle

'ayn; not under the aspect of His names. ... In the station of unity, touching upon the unity, one accesses the Supreme knowledge whereby the grasp of the qualities falls away; indeed the qualities cannot add anything to the essence. … If the names disappeared the Named One would appear.

Ibn 'Arabi

Do not confuse the perfection of the manifestation through existence where the essence is individuated (like the manifestation of the totality in the parts), with the manifestation of the essence to itself, in itself and for itself.

Jami

Every time that you focus on an object, He will have already escaped you.

Knowledge is a veil upon the known.

Ibn 'Arabi

One feels called upon to forego one's sense of oneself as an individual, but Hallaj points out that this would be contradictory, because one would be availing oneself of one's self to annihilate oneself.

It is God who elects him and draws him into His state of isolation that he may participate in the mystery [of the divine solitude].

al Hallaj

In this ultimate step, the switch-over occurs when we are no more concerned with our personality, and qualities generally, which are, according to the Sufis, the means whereby God manifests Him/Herself. Therefore it is of the resort of the dhikr rather than the *Wazifa*.

When we are face to face, Beloved, I do not know whether to call Thee me, or me Thee. I see myself when Thou art not before me; when I see Thee my self is lost to view. I consider it is good fortune when Thou art alone with me; but when I am not there at all, I think it is the greatest blessing.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

9) The Level of the Overview of the Existential State: *Tawhid*

Typical Wazifa: Ya Mawjud

Tawhid. Having peered behind the curtain, back-stage of the universe, we make an about-turn into 'awakening in life', which we could call in Sufi terms '*Tawhid*'.

How do we awaken in life? Those veils that are the appearance of things are only veils concealing reality until one looks from behind the veils. Then we see the divine intention and its fulfillment and realize that instead of being an illusion (a veil) it was the drama and achievement of existence that was the objective behind all that we have encountered in our ascent through the spheres. The purpose of the blue-print of your house is your house.

The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man. And this object is only fulfilled when man has awakened that part of himself which represents the master, that is God Himself. It is man that the divine perfection can be seen. God knows Himself through His manifestation. Manifestation is the self of God, but a self that is limited - a self that makes His perfection known to Himself when He compares Himself with the limited self we call nature. Therefore the purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God gains by discovering His own Perfection through our imperfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This is the real, whereas reality was the virtuality behind the real. It remains imponderable, bewildering, enrapturing, wrapped in mystery, however much one strives to decipher it. But if one switches over to look at real life situations from the other side of the curtain then one discovers the divine intentions in action.

When thou perceivest, thou seest limitation openly, and thou seest Me at the back of the unseen. ... And I considered the veils; and lo, they were everything that has appeared, and everything that has appeared in that which has appeared. ... Whoso knows the veil, is near to the unveiling.

Niffari

However it is the kind of knowledge that one can only achieve by doing rather than knowing in theory. ... by actuating the divine nature in my personality, I confer upon God a mode of existence.

Ibn 'Arabi

In order to gain God consciousness, the first condition is to make God a reality, so that He no longer is an imagination...At present there exists only in the world a belief in God; God exists in the imagination. It is such a soul which has touched upon divine perfection that brings to earth a living God who without him would remain on in the heavens. …If there is any sign of God to be seen, it is in the God-conscious one.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

To make God a reality, we need to express the divine manner in our personality, hence the importance of the *Wazifa*.

This is awakening in life. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan points to the sudden realization that triggers off this dedication to our purpose in life.

In man is awakened that spirit whereby the whole universe was created.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in he fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The consequence is that, instead of loosing our individuality or trying to annihilate it, we revalidate it in its uniqueness.

The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contains God according to the accommodation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

One is overwhelmed by the discovery that, by trying to see things from the divine point of view, one is conferring upon God a mode of reality, hence the value of our personal contribution to the total being of God, however small.

Divinity resides in humanity. It is also the outcome of humanity.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this stage, both our personal creativity at the *Mithal* level and the impersonal dimension of our creativity, attained by exemplifying the divinity of our being at the *Lahut* level, integrate:

You will observe the engendering of the possibilities lying in the spiritual plane into the corporeal world.

Thoughts shift from the perception of the senses to the imaginary ones; then the intelligible thoughts will descend upon you in the form of perceptions.

Ibn 'Arabi

It is typified by that state in which, seeing oneself mirrored in another, one recognizes that reality being distorted by lenses, blurring it to the extent that one has failed to see the underlying unity, which is what one means by God.

He brought the cosmos into existence upon His own Form. Hence He is a mirror within which He sees His own Form. ...Thou art His Form and He is Thy spirit.

Ibn 'Arabi

I am the mirror of Thy face, through Thine own eyes, I look upon Thy countenance.

Semnani

Of course, the ultimate secret is that rather than by cognizance, the very configuration of our being, rendering states of consciousness corporeal, is powered by divine love.

I emanated upon thee a force of love so that you might be fashioned according to my glance.

Qur'an

In the course of this peregrination through the stages (*maqqam)* the *Wazaif* have revealed a meaningfulness that we could never have clinched in our commonplace thinking, but through our glorification. At first we were assessing values, now it is being rather than meaningfulness that is revealed. It has been a journey of us in God At first we were motivated by covetousness, then indifference, lastly interest, nostalgia, love - Ishq Allah.

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man h as made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, yet at the same time motive limits power. Yet it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. On the other hand, so long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

98 - Peering into the Basics of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's Teaching Regarding the Ego

The primary process upon which Pir-o-Murshid bases the training of mureeds revolves around his adage "make God a reality, so that God is no more just a belief or concept." To make God a reality, one needs to "awaken the God within." It is realistic, rather than based on a belief system - God transcendent. It means discovering and identifying with the holistic dimensions of our being, which Murshid calls our divine inheritance, rather than limiting ourselves within the constraint of our commonplace self-image.

Somehow to validate ourselves against self-doubt we, maybe unconsciously, resort to a deceptive strategy; being defensive may lead to being sanctimonious, pre-possessive, overbearing, self-righteous, or arrogant. This is a very dangerous syndrome often found amongst people dedicated to a high ideal or purporting to be "spiritual" who incur the risk of stumbling between the horns of a dilemma: the ideal versus reality. This leads to incongruity, inconsistency, ambiguity, a mismatch in our self-image between parading make-believe self-validation while floundering in the abyss of self denigration.

Therefore, the first step is "muhasibi", matching our motivations with our objectives, and our objectives with our values.

We ask ourselves why we are doing this or the other thing and what our motivations are in our relationship with another person. Somehow our attitude towards people, and consequently our way of handling people and situations is a function of our own self-image which is ordinarily deceptive. This self-image is commonly a device used, probably unconsciously, to protect ourselves against the onslaught upon our self-esteem by others - a built in strategy which proves ultimately counterproductive because it does not enlist all our resources. In our ignorance of the bountiful qualities of our real being, we resort to a perfunctory strategy!

Investigate whether you are resorting to this strategy. Are you yourself parading an imaginary self-image to protect your vulnerability? If so you may detect the same

strategy in others. This representation of what is really one aspect of our real being, with which one identifies, is precisely what Pir-o-Murshid calls "the false ego." Murshid defines the "false ego" as a faulty self-image. Our faulty self-image avers itself to be an inadequate and misleading support upon which to establish our identity, and its consequent effect upon our handling of our problems may have disastrous consequences. Hence it is a fraction of our being with which we identify, whereby we are not enlisting all our potentialities. The crucial issue is therefore unmasking the hoax of what Pir-o-Murshid calls "the false ego."

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego, and the true ego is the ego of God, it is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Sardonically, our defense system may in extreme cases, be blown up to the extent of parading a puffed up masquerade of selfish disposition, oppressing and down-treading kindred beings who themselves nurture an inferiority complex, or at least a poor self-image, and do not have the gall, the impudence, perhaps even the impertinence or the ruthless heartlessness to counter this assault on their vulnerable self-esteem. Since by deceiving themselves, they fool others, maybe unawares, the less discerning may submit to their patronizing impact.

This is how this false notion of ourselves may develop: In our youthful, trusting, germane naiveté, we believe in our projections of ideal values to which we pledge allegiance. Soon we get hurt by people, wounded, disenchanted, rejected, disenfranchised. The need to provide protection against further assaults upon our vulnerability becomes imminent, urgent, imperative, compelling! What are the resources which promise to provide us with a shield? Where can we find a healing? Outside, in friendly, compassionate, reliable support from the brigade of dedicated helpers, counselors? Or inside - in our very in-built self-healing propensity? Our self-esteem, our self-confidence, our ability to make way in life is at stake!

Our programming equips us with several strategies. The perfunctory one (the commonest) is simplistically reactionary and fraught with rudimentary emotions. See if you can detect these strategies in yourself, then you can earmark them in others:

1. If abused or humiliated: anger, resentment that can exasperate into hatred with the ensuing cruelty.

2. If oppressed or repressed by a despotic or tyrannical ego: either aggressivity, spite, or resenting having to yield by losing one's self-respect.

3. In one's endeavor to validate oneself by vying in valor or emulation: feelings of envy or jealousy may be aroused.

4. If one grounds one's self-esteem on one's vying with the Jones's in one's possessions: covetousness and greed may ensue. (A curious trick of the ego is that the egoist sees in every other person a pronounced ego. "Why has he got a higher rank than me?")

5. If there has been a pattern of being punished or disadvantaged by having owned up, or stood for what one believes, or simply being up-front: a tendency of being devious, cowardly, or manipulative may ensue.

All these reactions (and probably many more) evidence our rather perfunctory and therefore inadequate efforts in dealing with the challenge to our being accruing from the psychological environment. They may present themselves as a shield, a dressing, a parade, or a masque concealing or camouflaging our real being. The consequence of their effect upon our self-image is confusing, contradictory, ambiguous, incongruous. It could work sardonically both ways: it can bloat one's ego to the point of making one megalomaniac, judgmental and contemptuous or on the other hand self-defeating and demeaning. It can lead toward sanctimoniousness or toward false modesty.

According to Pir-o-Murshid this ego feels vain when it says: "I cannot bear it. I am better than the others." And so one's weakness is presented as strength.

Failure to reconnoiter these features in our personality as strategies obstructs one's discovery of our true identity, which would help in our overcoming or transmuting them. On the other hand, to remove these protective displays, or crutches would trigger off dangerous withdrawal symptoms: otherworldliness, helplessness, listlessness. Yet, they aver themselves to be counterproductive in the long range.

Since they are reactive, defensive, and therefore only engage a small, peripheral area of our psyche, to forestall the withdrawal symptoms that one would trigger off by removing them, it is advisable to replace them gradually by enlisting the rich gamut of resourcefulness latent in our various inheritances. Removing them with the kind of will that we develop when identifying solely with this area of our psyche (which Pir-o-Murshid calls "the false ego) can only cause conflicts and result in a split in our personality.

No doubt by failing to recognize and own features in our personality like guilt, resentment, anger, jealousy, covetousness, they would simply conceal themselves in the unconscious and erupt uncontrollably or make us feel mortified and frustrated. But if we become aware of the way the universe conflues in us (as the ocean in a wave), which is what Pir-o-Murshid means by God consciousness, then we would muster a transpersonal will which is what is meant by the divine will that would supersede the limited, egoistic personal will. This could be illustrated by plugging a battery into the charger.

Furthermore, it is in the nature of life that life is continually self-organizing itself as us, and to achieve this we are concomitantly dissolving at the jagged ends. This could be illustrated by a flower: for the fresh petals in the center to unfurl, the jagged ones at the periphery need to fall apart. One does not have to chase them away; they will disintegrate to give way to the new dispensation.

Besides, Pir-o-Murshid presents an original concept of the will, which he illustrates by the yacht's captain harnessing the wind but directing its momentum in the direction s/he wishes to steer the yacht. One could represent the wind as the self-organizing faculty written into the programming of the universe and our will in availing ourselves of this force, yet bending it according to our personal initiative (which is what we mean by our will.) In this case it is clear that we are not talking about a will of a fraction of our being, that has alienated itself from our whole self (which Pir-o-Murshid calls the false ego), because our will is a "customized" expression of the divine impulse (in this illustration, the wind).

More importantly, since our false ego represents only a small portion of the bounty of our being, by calling upon it to meet an undesirable onslaught upon our being, one is failing to actualize the virtual potentialities that lie in wait in the wider range of our

being: the seedbed of our personality; whereas if we place a buffer between the challenge of the psychological environment and ourselves so as to discover that bountiful underpinning of our personality, that challenge will act as a catalyst rather than an onslaught spurring those latent potentials. One tends to evaluate one's idiosyncrasies on the strength of one's self-image. If one discovers wider areas of one's self-image, latent idiosyncrasies will surface.

This is the reason why Pir-o-Murshid attaches so much importance to becoming aware of what he calls our divine inheritance.

The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man and this object is only fulfilled when man has awakened that part of himself which represents God Himself. The same God, so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again at the end of the cycle, trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection. The one who is conscious of his earthly origin is an earthly man; the one who is conscious of his heavenly origin is the son of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Since the ephemeral being manifest the form of the eternal, it is by the contemplation of the eternal that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself. You know yourself through another knowledge, different from that which you had of yourself, because it is through Him that you know yourself.

Ibn 'Arabi

Pir-o-Murshid points to the efficacy of meditation to downplay our false self-image and therefore overcome the counterproductive strategy of the false ego, thus mustering all our resourcefulness by discovering the bounty latent in us.

The false ego is overcome through meditating upon the true self which, in reality, is God. It takes a powerful impact, involving our being in its very substance, to bring about a change so as to shift our identity from the constraint of the commonplace self-image. This is where meditation culminates in prayer.

When they stand before God to learn, they unlearn all things that the world has taught

them; when they stand before God, their ego, their self, their life, is no more before them. They do not think of themselves in that moment with any desire to be fulfilled, with any motive to be accomplished, with any expression of their own; but as empty cups, that God may fill their being, that they may lose the false self.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The beauty in this is that, when man-the most egoistic being in creation, who keeps himself veiled from God, the Perfect Self within, by the veil of his imperfect self, which has formed his presumed ego-by the extreme humility when he stands before God and bows and bends and prostrates himself before His Almighty Being, makes the highest point of his presumed being, the head, touch the earth where his feet are. He in time washes off the black stains of his false ego, and the light of perfection gradually manifests. He stands then first face to face with his God, the idealized Deity, and when the ego is absolutely crushed, then God remains within and without, in both planes, and none exists save He.

In that state, called Fana-fi-Allah, when the soul is absorbed in God, we lose the false sense of being and find the true reality. Then we finally experience what is termed Baqa-i-Fan, where the false ego is annihilated and merged into the true personality, which is really God expressing Himself in some wondrous ways. This is the same also as Nirvana, where the true reality of life is experienced and expressed by rising above themselves.

If this limited self which makes the false ego is broken, and one has risen above the limitations of life on all the planes of existence, the soul will break all boundaries, and will experience that freedom which is the longing of every soul.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

99 - Awakening Beyond Life; Awakening in Life

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The usual inadequacy in our understanding of what is being enacted in our lives presents a resistance to further unfurling of our personality potentials. The resultant vulnerable self-image and dissatisfaction in our accomplishments is owing to our being entrapped in our personal perspective, thus we fail to avail ourselves of all the resourcefulness of our being. This is the crux which may determine ultimately "whom we are."

How can we free ourselves from such constraint of personal perspective, or complete ourselves with additional wider perspectives?

If you look at a cube drawn on a black-board, you can toggle your glance and alternate between seeing it "this way" or "that way" in what may be considered complementary perspectives. How does the set-up of our nervous circuits operate that fluctuation? The unconscious automated programming of our neurological sensory pathways is sensitively balanced in a state of near-equilibrium so that it may shift easily from one pattern to its complementary function. That precarious balance (Kemal in Sufi terms) eschews the disadvantage of a system getting bogged into a sclerosed impasse which resists change, and therefore favors the advance of the evolutionary thrust.

In our psyche, this delicate balance is ensured by the antinomy between interest and indifference, which is one of the important themes in our Murshid's message. Hence the chance of freeing ourselves from the rut into which we may easily slip lies in the degree of our enthusiasm for, dedication to, and motivation for what we value. This is sometimes accessed by our intuition, in what at first seems a hunch: regarding an alternate perspective to the commonplace one, heartening in its excellence and splendor. To this alternative one may toggle the setting of ones consciousness f rom the commonplace perspective in which one gets so easily entrapped.

Secondly, this chance lies in giving vent to our nostalgia for freedom, our ability to extract, redeem ourselves from our dependence, addiction, selfishness. This provides

the power to shift the perspective of our consciousness in meditation as in real life situations. Murshid defines this nostalgia as "the quest for the unattainable" which has the power of shifting our perspective from the compulsiveness of "maya". The choice of that word "unattainable" indicates that it always lies further - we can never claim to have "got it".

However, the paradox lies in that it is the power of love that involves us in the existential condition (the way of the householder according to the Sufis),while it is the power of freedom (the way of the ascetic) that frees us from being entrapped in a constrained and deluding perspective. Toggle between joy and pain and ecstasy, between awakening in life or beyond life. Now try to extrapolate between these two poles of your being which are of necessity interrelated and interdependent, rather than toggle. To reach beyond the middle range, we need not just to shift our sense of bodiness and self image into discovering ourselves as subtle bodies, or better still as auras of light, but also activate the process of transmutation of matter into spirit in our very constitution - an alchemical process.

Our quest for the unattainable actuates our curiosity to "peer beyond the veil"; to espy not only the "programming" of our lives and life in general, but what is the originating intention set up in the "software", and more so to apprise the way that our incentives affect and update the programming of our lives and of life in general. Let us bear in mind that, much as the knowledge of the programming exhilarates us by stirring our understanding beyond its limits, it is for the sake of the house that the blue-print is designed. The blue-print only enlists a small sampling of all the creative potentialities that it customizes. This could be illustrated by the fact that the radio simplifies the bounty of the wave-interference network from which the sounds that we hear are derived by limiting the frequencies in a manner that our ears can handle.

The paradox is upon us in our life as soon as we seek to make sense of it. We are shattered by joy flawed with pain, and overwhelmed by pain, illuminated by flashes of joy, and ecstasy beyond. The precious gift, which is it? Hope, despair, interwoven? Like a kaleidoscope, the scene or rather the scenario of life passes on unaccountably.

The encounters of beings are tokens of our involvement in life. Sometimes ephemerally like ships in the night, sometimes compellingly involving, they may bid

rapture or wreak constraint upon our freedom; their impact may prove intrusive or enriching and healing. One may be lucky to come across such encounters that trigger off illumination, realization, a break-through of alacrity apparently providentially or those that spark a sense of deja-vu that shatters and enchants our soul. What a miracle - life!

100 - Modes of Thinking
Corresponding to Focalization
as seen in the Perspective of Sufism

Our notion of reality is a function of the setting of our consciousness. We can indeed distinguish several modes of thinking corresponding to the focalization of our consciousness.

1) If we modulate our consciousness to the empirical perspective *(nasut):*

a) we believe that we are the spectator

b) reality seems to be composed of objects or particles (discrete building blocks)

c) we identify with our consciousness, our psyche and our body.

We shall show them the signs at the horizon of themselves. **Qur'an**

2) If we modulate our consciousness to the psychological perspective *(khayal),*

a) the spectator in us projects its personal perspective upon events

b) the object of our cognizance is our psyche, or thoughts, or those of others

c) we identify with our consciousness and our psyche.

Behold the world entirely comprised in your self. The world is man and man is the world. **Shabistari**

3) If we modulate our consciousness to theintrospective perspective, *(arwah),*

a) we identify with our life field (subtle body or electromagnetic field)

b) we adopt a holistic vision of the world: everything intersperses and is interrelated with everything else,

c) our notion of being the spectator intermeshes with that of others (eventually an

undifferentiated cosmic consciousness),

d) we become more aware of our implicit mode of thinking, rather than the analytical.

The order of the world as a structure of things that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order. **Dr. David Bohm**

The one who tunes himself not only to the external but to the inner being, and to the essence of all things, gets an insight into the essence of the whole being; and therefore he can, to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty of the flower. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

4) If we modulate our consciousness to the imaginative (or ideational) perspective *(mithal)*

a) our consciousness is not receptive, (or perceptive), but configures ideas into images in our psyche,

b) we discover potentialities dormant in our psyche,

c) we identify with a dynamic self-generating self-image,

d) we participate volitionally in the unfurling of these potentialities as our idiosyncrasies,

e) our imaginative faculty represents to itself the elusive forms of our subtle body

f) this is our personal participation in the recurrent creativity of reality at the existential level.

So what the soul shows to itself is precisely its own image, since the earth is a being, it reflects the image premeditated by the soul. **Corbin**

5) If we *carry* our memory back into peri-natalstates, (*malakut)*,

a) *our sense* of identity straddles *our* identification with *our* psyche in the process of

becoming intermeshed with our extra-terrestrial self-image,

b) we loose our sense of location in space,

c) weare able to envision ourselves as a continuity in change (we see ourselves as both (relatively) external and transient),

d) we are able to extrapolate in our self-image between the sublime and the defiled features of our nature, in both psyche and aura's configuration.

As man evolves, he ceases to look down on earth, but looks to the heavens. If one wants to seek the heavens, one must change the direction of looking.
Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its breaking through its ties of the lower planes. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

6) If *we* refer our consciousness into the perspective of its ground intelligence, *(Jabbarut),*

a) we realize that the personal focus of our consciousness acts as a distorting lens,

b) we access a mode of cognizance which is not based upon our interpretation of experience.

When consciousness is not conscious of anything, it is resorbed in its ground, which is intelligence.**Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Man attains insight into meaningfulness from the divine mind that confers form to material beings. Therefore, to obtain insight into meaningfulness, do not obstruct the gift from above, by excessive attachment to the perceptual reality.
Avicenna

7) From thearchetypal (proto-critic, preliminary to experience) perspective, *(lahut)*

a) we grasp the archetypes behind their exemplification at the existential level,

b) we identify with the impersonal and (relatively) eternal seed bed of our personality.

Imagination causes archetypal notions to descend into perceptible forms. **Ibn 'Arabi.**

Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithl) in the higher world The forms in the higher world preserve the existence of their likeness in the lower worlds. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each form to its likeness. **Ibn 'Arabi**

8) We reach a state transcending the existential perspective, *(Hahut)*

a) undifferentiated unity. (Ahadiat) together with a sense of omniscience.

The one who is immersed in the divine unity is with God in the grasp of His unity, irrespective of the worlds. . . . In the station of unity, touching upon the unity, one accesses the Supreme knowledge whereby the grasp of the qualities falls away; indeed the qualities cannot add anything to the essence. If the names disappeared the Named One would appear. **Ibn 'Arabi**

9) If, having reached the previous perspective, we adopt an overview of existential experience *(tawhid)*

a) we grasp the unity behind multiplicity, (*Wahdat*)

b) and the multiplicity within unity (*Wahdaniat*).

c) We grasp the intention behind the programming of events.

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God gains by discovering His own Perfection through our imperfection. The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man. This object is only fulfilled when man has awakened that part of himself which represents God Himself. At present there exists only in the world a belief in God; God exists in the imagination. It is such a soul which has touched upon divine perfection that brings to earth a living God who without him would remain on in the heavens... If there is any sign of

God to be seen, it is in the God-conscious one. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

SYNOPSIS

Fana-Baqa:

NASUT

Annihilation (absorption) of the subject (psyche) in the object (God manifesting as the cosmos).

fana bi'l madhhur 'an al dhakir

I espy God through perceptual clues.

God reveals His/Her nature through clues in the cosmos.

KHAYAL

Annihilation (resorption) of the object (cosmos) in the subject (psyche)

fana bil dhakir 'an al madhhur

I espy God through clues in my idiosyncrasies.

God reveals His/Her nature through clues in my personality.

ARWAH

Annihilation (dissolution of) the object (God revealing Him/Herself as our psyche) in the (furtherance of) the act (discovery of the seed of our psyche)

fana bi'l dhikr 'an al madhkur

I know myself through the knowledge that God has of Him/Herself through me.

God knows Him/Herself through the knowledge that I have of Him/Her.

MITHAL

Annihilation (deployment) of the act (imagination seed) in the (furtherance of) object (psyche)

fana bi'l madhkur 'an al dhikr

I espy God brainstorming through my creative imagination God reveals His/Her nature to me as it evolves by dint of my creative imagination.

MALAKUT

Annihilation (dissolution) of the subject (spectator) in the (prevalence of) (the divine existentating) act

fana bi'l dhilr 'an al dhahr

God knows me through the knowledge that I have of Him/Her at the celestial level.

I know God through the knowledge that God has of my knowledge of Him/Herself.

JABARUT

Annihilation (sublimation) of the (divine existentiating) act in the (prevalence of) the subject, (the divine spectator)

fana bi'l dhakir 'an al dhikr

God reveals to me the knowledge that He/She has of Him/Herself irrespective of the cosmos. God knows Him/Herself irrespective of the cosmos.

LAHUT

The persistence of the object (the divine programming)

baqa bi'l madhkur

Thanks to my insight into His/Her knowledge of the archetypes (sifat) of His/Her

Being, God is moved to bequeath upon me a trans-existential matrix of being, adumbrating my existential inheritance.

By grasping God's auto-contemplation of the archetypes (Sifat) of His/Her Being, irrespective of the cosmos, I make God (originally a virtuality), into a reality through me, in me, as me.

HAHUT

The persistence of the subject (divine intelligence)

baqa bi'l dhakir

My knowledge of God irrespective of the cosmos is God's knowledge of Himself irrespective of the cosmos.

TAWHID

The persistence of the act (the divine Being)

baqa bi'l dhikr

I see God's intention in the cosmos.

God reveals to me His/Her intention in the cosmos.

101 - Elemental Breaths: Earth and Water

The best time to do practices is before the sunrise. We are then picking up ultraviolet rays before the sun passes the threshold of the horizon. Secondly, we haven't set our clock into activity yet; so we are in a much more receptive state than after having started being active.

These are the breathing practices that Pir-o-Murshid gave to every mureed to do every day in the morning: in through the nose out through the nose, in through the nose out through the mouth, in through the mouth out through the nose, and in the mouth out through the mouth. Another way to remember the sequence is: nada-nada, nada- mucho, mucho-nada, and then mucho-mucho. Nada, "n" for nose and Mucho, "m" for mouth. If you understand Spanish, it's starting from the negative and going to the positive.

Each of these breaths is characterized by a certain element. We call it baptism with the different elements. There is a saying of Pir-o-Murshid that we can find that which we need in the Universe, and as I say myself, we are ingesting the Universe. We have the discernment to enable us to choose that kind of medicine that we need for our unfoldment. It requires of us a certain fineness of perception to be able to determine which are the elements and how they work. It's also true that since we exist on several levels and have, therefore, different counterparts to our being, each one of these counterparts needs its kind of food, so we need to shift our sense of identity, when we are doing these practices, from the lower levels of our being to a higher.

Our physical body is constituted of the five chief elements, which compose even the whole universe. The skin, flesh, and bones show earth properties; and the blood, perspiration, and saliva represent the water element. The heat in the body and the digestive fire in the system denote the fire element. The breath and its inner work within the body, which enable us to stretch and contract, and the power of movement, which does not allow us to keep still for one moment, represent the air element. The ether element in us is that which controls our activities and gradually consumes all other elements.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

THE BAPTISM WITH EARTH

At first we are breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. As we breathe in through the nose, it's important to get some sense of resonance with the magnetism of the earth. In fact, looking at things from purely earthly point of view, we are the magnetism.

First of all we feel the magnetic field of our body. We feel it around our shoulders and around our forearms. Just like the magnetism around a magnet, we can feel it. Then we feel the magnetism in the bottom of our spine and even in our feet. We can feel the magnetism of the earth when we're walking, or when we're standing, or when we're sitting cross-legged. Then we feel the way there is an ebb and flow - to and fro - oscillation. Notice the way the magnetism of the earth seems to be drawn into our magnetic field as we inhale, and the way our magnetic field seems to be resorbed into the earth's field as we exhale.

The direction of the earth element is level, and its nature is spreading; therefore, the smallest island in the sea, in time, grows to be a big island.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Our point of contact with the earth, whether it's the bottom of our spine or the soles of our feet, is a threshold situation in which there seems to be passage from one magnetic field to the other, even though our magnetic field permeates the earth's field and the earth's magnetic field permeates our magnetic field, so there's no real threshold. We feel that magnetism rising as we inhale, passing from one chakra to the next. Then we feel the way that when we exhale, the magnetism of our magnetic field gets polluted. Imagine the field of a magnet in which there are a lot of faulty nodes, and distortions that take place due to all kinds of influences, extraneous influences from outside and from inside. It is good if the whole magnetic field gets drained and then renewed. We need to feel the draining effect of the earth which is so kind as to absorb our pollution. That also applies also to the level of the psyche.

This corresponds to the first stage in the Ziraat process, agriculture, which is to get rid of a lot of old roots and stones and all kinds of elements that are disturbing to our growth, that stand in the way of our growth.

It's what is called a catharsis. In alchemy it's the first stage, in which there is a sifting between the grosser elements and the finer elements, and the gross elements are then rejected. They feel the gravity of the earth, that exercises more pull on the grosser elements of our being than on the finer ones. The catharsis starts by getting rid of the grosser elements in our being. Eventually our whole magnetic field gets resorbed and then renewed again.

Pir-o-Murshid does give *Wazaif* that can be used with the breathing practices. The one I suggest for this first breath, which is called the baptism of the earth, is *Muid*. *Muid* is not just inertia. Inertia represents a kind of stability. But Muid also represents something a little more dynamic, which is the ability of the organism to self-organize itself if it has been disturbed, and to return to its original state if we don't intervene with our will. That's what is called "stay with it." It has a kind of stabilizing effect, as the earth has.

In fact, each of these elements creates out of itself its child-element and again in time absorbs it within itself. The elements show the Creator's nature, Who creates at times and absorbs at times. This is explained thus in the Qur'an: "All come from God, and all are bound to return to Him."

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

All of this work we're doing with our subtle body actually does affect us at the level of our psyche. Pir-o-Murshid does describe people according to the element that predominates in their being. Just imagine that you have all these elements in you. The earth element in you represents your durability, the fact that you have some kind of stability and reliability. You can be relied upon. Murshid also says that a person who has entirely, or predominantly the earth quality, needs to be directed. This person is full of good will but can not take initiative. You might recognize that as one of your qualities or, defects, or whatever it is; one of your characteristics is that you want to do things but you're blocked, find it difficult to take initiative, to make a decision, and are very glad if somebody else takes the initiative in telling you what to do. Then you can do it very well.

THE BAPTISM WITH WATER

Next we work with the water element. Experience the difference between breathing in through the mouth or breathing in through the nose. Just try it. First try inhaling through the nose and out through the nose. Now try breathing in through the mouth and out through the mouth. So you see that breathing through the mouth activates the thyroid gland which has the effect of affecting many other hormones in the body including the adrenaline.

We breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth, thinking of an aperture at the top of our fontanel, the crown of our skull, and then of very fine energy descending. We see how it seems to affect one chakra after the other. We're awakening the latent, virtual energies in our being, we're opening of the heart center, the region of the heart, the solar plexus, and stimulating adrenaline. There is a chakra between the solar plexus and the second chakra, which is the "hara" of the Chinese and of Zen, which awakens the flow of adrenaline in our blood. As we descend to the second chakra forces need to be transmuted. As we inhale again, they are activated. Then, as in tantra, they need to be sublimated, and then transmuted into the forces of love. Then the breath moves right down to the bottom chakra, muladhara, where we are awakening the serpents, the snakes, the caduceus.

When we inhale, we have unleashed these vital forces that are waiting to be nurtured by the descent of the Holy Spirit. They are lying in wait for that moment that they can receive the baptism of water, which is really the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like Elijah finding refuge at a wonderful spring of water, the waters of life.

Of course the Bedouins have a legend about the appearance of Khidr, who is Elijah actually, the green man of the desert. If you've traveled in the desert, you know what it means to be days and days in the sand, and then all of a sudden coming to an oasis where there is greenery and all this vitality. Of course people and camels congregate there. In the vastness of the desert one can get lost. The Bedouins talk of the appearance of this green man who comes and says, "Do you want me to help you? I can show you the way, but don't question my guidance." Then you see a shimmering on the horizon and you think he is going the other way. So you say, "Khidr." And he looks at you and he says, "There was a condition. You think you know how to get there. OK. Go on your own." That's water, the waters of life. You have to know how to find the waters of life.

Among the ancient Hindus there was a custom of giving water as a benediction to guests, which is observed even now. A Brahmin will as a rule first offer water to his guest which means not only to quench the thirst, but is like giving life to the guest. The Persians have called the water of life Ab-e Hayat, and in many verses one finds this word.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In this practice we breathe in through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Now we are making a differentiation between the two poles of our being, the north pole and the south pole of the magnet, and of course the energy field between the two. Imagine that the north field, which is above our head, is of the nature of the Holy Spirit. A very fine energy seems to be quite the opposite of the energy of the earth. In fact the energy that we ascribe to the earth could be illustrated by gravity, the gravitational forces coagulate the atoms into formations, what we call solid matter. What we call spirit represents quite the opposite, a kind of buoyancy, as compared with gravity, levity, disperseful, therefore freedom from constraint of conditioning.

As we draw in, as we inhale, we concentrate on that very fine energy that we call pure spirit. Think of this concept that we find not only in Catholicism, but in Judaism also and in Islam: the quickening of the Holy Spirit, *ruh al quddus*, which has been illustrated by the visitation of the Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. It's not just the visitation, but also a quickening.

We feel a different kind of energy coming through us when we're doing the first practice, baptism of earth. We had to clear all the dross, the obstacles, in the first baptism. In the second baptism, we're doing something very interesting. First of all the space that has been cleared by the catharsis in the first baptism is now filled by the Holy Spirit. It's as though the heavy material of our being is being drawn down into the earth, and at the same time the influence of the Holy Spirit is gaining ground, descending through us from one chakra to the next. That's where we exhale through the mouth. We feel that sweeping effect of the descent of the Holy Spirit that's quickening us.

When we come to the water element, we find that it is pliable, and can be poured from one vessel to another. The course of a river or a stream may be diverted

and made to go in another direction. It is poorer in spirit than the earth, for it is a higher element. A more exalted state of consciousness belongs to the poor in spirit, the pliable and the serviceable, than to the stiff and set.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The *Wazifa* is *Muhyi* instead of *Muid*. It's a whole different matrix that has the effect of really shattering us. The descent of the Holy Spirit can be shattering and overwhelming. It's no longer recycling. It's introducing a whole different, celestial, influence. That's the baptism with water.

It's like irrigation in agriculture. You have to give some life sustenance to the seeds. What Pir-o-Murshid said is that a person with this water quality is very sociable and sensitive and lovable and active, just like water that is running from a stream, life giving and joyous. Water still needs to have some direction because it can flow one way or the other, and is influenced by the wind. People predominantly of a water nature could easily be influenced by other people because they don't have the stability, the resilience of the earth people. You've got that in you, as I said. It's not each person has just one quality. You'll notice in yourself that flexibility which ensures that you are not stubborn, but you're open to the influences from all sides. You see that it gives life to your being, which would be stodgy if you only gave vent to your earthly quality (stubbornness, as I say). Now you are much more flexible, more adaptable, which has a disadvantage too. That is the baptism with water.

102 - Elemental Breaths: Fire and Air

Fire

The next baptism is the transmutation of fire into light. Breathe in through the mouth and out through the nose. Identify yourself with the flame that is sucking in air from the environment. There is a tremendous demand of the flame in you, combustion that is going to draw the energy from the environment, or at least enhance the convergence of the air energy of the environment. We are in a continual state of combustion. Otherwise we wouldn't have temperature. This is the effect of phosphorescence rather than fluorescence that takes place when we draw in light and transmit light from the environment. (Both are called bioluminescence.)

As you breathe in, think of a flame that starts burning at the bottom of your spine. You may think of the different colors of the aura in a sequence corresponding to the spectrum: red at the bottom of the spine, terracotta in the second chakra, orange in the solar plexus, and then gold in the heart, green in the throat center, blue in the eyes (actually there is a chakra in the eyes between the two eyebrows) violet in the pituitary gland, and then colorless light in the fontanel above the head. So traditionally one says that fire is transmuted into light. In fact scientifically you can say that one is transmuting infrared light into ultraviolet. Passing by the whole range of colors. If you look into a flame, you'll see that indeed you'll discern red at the bottom of the flame. Then you'll see some orange color, then yellowish, and then gold. You find green and blue at the top. You'll find all these colors in the flame in that sequence. So by imagining those different colors, which are just the way we perceive different frequencies, you will be enhancing what is called transmutation of fire into light, phosphorescence into fluorescence. Fluorescence is a different process than phosphorescence. Phosphorescence is combustion of matter. Fluorescence you are drawing light from the environment and you are transforming it (not merely boomeranging it back again) in the cells of your body and you're re-emitting it again.

Now in advanced practice, you continue with the movement upwards above your head. In the practice of cacina, where you're getting into the reflex of physical light, and the reflex of the reflex and so forth, upwards. These are different levels of light which Hildegard de Bingen refers to in her testimonies of her experiences in

meditation. These levels of light will help you reach samadhi because they correspond to planes beyond the existential ones, as Buddha says, beyond existence, beyond consciousness, and beyond existence and non-existence, and beyond consciousness and non-consciousness. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan does give the practice of imagining a rainbow above the head. But the colors are not what we understand by colors that are visible to our eyes.

Now if you pursue this further, you would be holding your breath after inhaling and discovering the luminous intelligence at the apex of your being. We do that in the more advanced breathing practices but not in this one. There is no holding of the breath at all. However when you exhale through the nose, you'll notice the effect of what we might call higher qualities of light over the lower qualities of light. I don't like those words, higher and lower, but it's to be found in the Quran, light upon the light. This is the way the light of those higher planes which Hildegard speaks about does permeate, does infiltrate into the light of your aura, and has the effect of transforming it, in fact transfiguring it.

Now the description Murshid gives of the fiery person is like a cracker. So it just takes a match to make that person really explode with a lot of anger, and of course it can be very destructive. On the other hand people with this quality are very truthful and cannot stand dishonesty and are ready to sacrifice themselves for what they believe. Therefore I think of Shams-i-Tabriz who said, "Enough of metaphor. I want burning, burning, burning." It bypasses the mind and all of its justification.

Of course it brings about a radical change in you. Perhaps the baptism of the earth didn't get rid of a lot of things that need to be put aside before you can reach your goal of perfection. Neither was water able to wash it away, but the fire will certainly be able to do it. The fire is destructive because it is indiscriminate, and there is no way of controlling it, so it's very difficult to control. You'll find that a fire person is always looking for an air person, a vital need, and the air person gets vamped by the fire person. The fire person will of course bring confusion in the mind of the air person, will bring doubt in their thinking because the fire person always questions the thinking, the assumptions of people.

You may see that you also have that element in yourself. The earth or the water may balance it. One can't say it's really balanced by the earth because that combination is

volcanic, with eruptions and instability. The earth is very stable, but under the effect of the fire, it can be very badly disturbed. Fire is afraid of water, but will transform water into steam so it doesn't have any action upon it any more. So it's a very traumatic combination. Fire is looking for but when fire is transformed into light, then there is no need of this influx of air any more. In fact then the fuel is ether instead of air which is a very mysterious element. Pir-o-Murshid talks about that cryptically.

So see if you can do this as you breathe in through your mouth. Think of your spine as a chimney and inside there is a flame. At the beginning, you feel the heat of your body, infrared. Then as you move upwards, you sense light, the radiance of your heart. It becomes very subtle light at the level of the throat center, then even the eyes. At the level of the third eye it becomes violet. Just think of violet light. Like an x-ray it has the ability of passing through walls and through your skull. It gives you a kind of penetrating glance. You are able to see into the souls of people. That light above the head would not be called light at all. It's not existential light. It gives you a clue to what we call the celestial spheres.

So that's above the crown center, or beyond it. I must say there's a kind of geographical sense of one's lifting oneself. It's true because one is shifting one's attention from one chakra to the next. But when you get beyond the head do not think it's above somewhere, that the angelic spheres are somewhere up there. The best you could do is to think it is interspersed with we call the physical reality or reality at the physical level. Of course as you exhale, the descent of the Holy Spirit makes quickening easier, but this is illumination rather than quickening. Probably the secret of illumination is the light upon the light of the Quran, because the impact of the light of intelligence, that is a sudden realization, is going to transfigure your whole aura.

Air

Breathe in through the mouth and out through the mouth. Just do it and see how you feel. Perhaps you've noticed that breathing through the mouth and exhaling through the mouth will enhance your need, your yearning for freedom. One's mind jumps to the conclusion that one wants to be free from circumstances. That's why people leave the world to become sannyasins. But that does not necessarily bring freedom. In fact the great science of finding freedom is as Buddha says, "Find freedom in your opinion,

in your way of understanding things, in your attachment and your emotions and in your self image." So it's really freedom from being caught in a trap of your personal vantagepoint, and also freedom from the condition that ensues from being trapped in your personal vantagepoint. It's a longing for a whole other dimension, bursting from frustration of being caught in a trap in one's mind, in one's realization, in one's ignorance.

So the trouble is that, if misunderstood, the air element in one is going to make one unreliable, unpredictable, moody. Therefore one's energy is not directed in a congruous, consistent way. On the other hand it certainly encourages creativity and communicating a lot of energy unpredictably, impromptu. The trouble is that a person of the air element is not so much influenced by other people, but by the impulse rising from within. A readiness to experiment with anything might go just too far, so on one hand it could manifest as the greatest virtue and celestial quest, and then on the other hand it could even skirt evil, purely experimentally, out of a kind of curiosity. So it's a paradoxical kind of state that one finds amongst people. Perhaps you can also find it in yourself.

On the other hand, of course, those are the qualities that make for awakening and ultimate freedom from the limitations of earthly conditions. I would say that can happen if the air is directed upwards in what is called an upwind, the kind that allows the eagles and falcons to soar, rather than in the horizontal wind that can be turbulent.

So in the previous practice with light, the winds were converged inwards and born upwards. Incidentally the *wazifa* for that is of course *Ya Nur*. Here the best way to direct the air energy is not to converge it and then turn it upwards, but simply to turn it upwards. That's what Buddha does by shifting his attunement to levels beyond the existential level. Then air acts like a Pegasus that carries Bellerophon to the Olympus, although Pegasus cannot fly high enough to reach the Olympus, he imprints upon Bellerophon the momentum that allows Bellerophon to proceed on his own.

That is what you're doing as you breathing in through the mouth, Feel that kind of buoyancy of your need for freedom, drawing you upwards. (Of course "upwards" is metaphoric. You have a sense of freeing yourself from the gravity pull of the earth. But remember that we are briefed now in Sufism to transmute the bodiness, and therefore the earth quality in us, and even the water and fire qualities in us, as we proceed

upwards, instead of leaving the body behind. That is the practice of resurrecting the body before dying. You feel that buoyancy. It's what Pir-o-Murshid calls a kind of longing that becomes stronger as you evolve for the unattainable. As Pir-o-Murshid says, "It's like the horizon. It's always beyond whatever you could ever foresee."

At the end of your inhaling, you find you've discovered that level beyond conditioning. Therefore you can see there is ultimately freedom from destiny. You can see that. You see you are not really totally bound by destiny because you are gifted with the greatest of gifts, the gift of divine freedom. That's an incredible discovery because we often ascribe what happens to us to our bad fate. You are discovering free, I think it was Fariduddin Attar who says, "Oh man if you realize that you're free. It is your ignorance of your freedom that is your captivity." So that's what you do as you exhale. You suddenly discover you are free and you didn't know it. It doesn't mean you are free from circumstances. It's a kind of inner freedom, knowing that nothing can affect you and change you and influence you because you are free. Then your relationship with people is going to be as Kahlil Gibran says, "A fresh wind blowing between big trees that do not grow in each other's shade." Now you can dance with joy. You have overcome pain, overcome pain by the power of joy. So God bless you now.

103 - Reconciling our Psychological Needs with our Spiritual Needs

Here lies the crucial issue for those who harbor an imperative nostalgia for the sacred, yet honor their responsibility in our human society in the world.

We may acquiesce to our need to involve ourselves - with people, with situations - to manipulate the fabric of our Planet, to find fulfillment. We may achieve mastery by taking responsibility, upgrade our support system in the physical environment, improve ourselves physically, healthwise, unfurl our human potentials, nurture our intellect, cultivate our culture, our music, our art, to enjoy entertainment, relaxation, jokes, to discover hidden perhaps unavowed aspects in ourselves by identifying with the person enacted in the human drama.

However, we may become increasingly concerned that in the course of this involvement, we easily and unconsciously get inveigled in constraining situations, not only circumstantial, but in our way of thinking, which affects our attunement, which evidence the impact of conditioning upon our free-will. Our sense of suffocation, of frustration can become desperate. That which once delighted us avers itself to be a prison. Our need for freedom becomes all-consuming, compulsive.

The moment a prisoner feels that he will no longer remain in the prison, the prison bars must break instantly, of themselves.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At first shot, we tend to jump perfunctorily to the conclusion that our prison is our environmental and social circumstances; that to grow, we need favorable circumstances, just as a plant may need just the right sunshine and water and quality of earth to flourish. We suffer if our need for the sacred is waylaid by the sacrilege of worldly ways. We feel that we are missing out on something quintessentially important in our life: awakening, enlightenment. But what do these words mean? Are they cliches of our mind? Are they projections of our wishful thinking? Let us be wary of words, of doctrines.

We may well have created these circumstances (as we imagine a spider confined to

its web), before we had this breakthrough of realization, albeit there may be cases where it appears that the prevailing circumstances are fortuitous, irrespective of our choice.

Many a soul in their yearnings for freedom have escaped from what they thought was prison while failing to recognize that the prison was in their thinking.

There is a place that cannot be reached by going anywhere.

Buddha

As our outlook changes, our sensitivity is sharpened. The grossness, the selfishness, the worthlessness of so much that is avidly pursued in the world, the facetiousness, ruthlessness of some, the insensitivity to the suffering caused, wounds our soul to the core. Modern technology has made our lives in the world more comfortable and practical, while more challenging, albeit at the cost of much defilement, pollution, unfair competition wreaking destitution on the unadapted. At what point does need become greed?

All that produces longing in the heart deprives it of its freedom.

Yet He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in his life is incomplete.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

What at first seemed worthwhile now avers itself to be trivial. The support system takes over, so that our purpose in gaining insight, unfurling potential qualities, our attunement to the divinity of our being, gets lost from our view. This is what everything was about! The futile, misconstrued game played itself out. As this gradually dawns upon us, our suffering seems to need to exasperate itself to a paroxysm of pain before we either do something positive about it or simply go under, wallowing in self-pity. We ask ourselves: what am I doing in life?

There comes a time in one's evolution when a passion is awakened in the soul that gives the soul a longing for the unattainable.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As soon as we realize that we are ourselves party to all of this - that surreptitiously it has spilled over in us, while we were inculpating others - we realize that the prison is in our having failed to spot this. We had been denigrating ourselves unbeknown to ourselves on a hunch that "something was wrong", unwittingly intuiting that it eroded our spirit, and we had failed to see this until the burst of realization struck us. We had been contriving to escape from circumstances whereas we failed to acquiesce that we were trying to flee from aspects of ourselves that we dislike and had been denying, albeit unconvincingly, and which are our real prison.

Consequently, we make a decision to not participate in what arouses our wariness, our aversion, our abhorrence. Can we live the life of the world without belonging to it? Instead of "seeking another kingdom", can we bring the sacred right into the profane? Can we handle ugly situations beautifully?

Those who think that heavenly knowledge is sufficient are mystical; but the joy of the heavenly knowledge and the full understanding of it come from being able to express it in the world's medium of expression.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But here one encounters the danger of falling into a still more pernicious prison: vanity in our sanctimoniousness, which traps us in our ego, and which is the ultimate misconception. This is precisely what Pir-o-Murshid points out: what we call 'me' (the ego), is only a fraction of what we are. If we earmark and identify with a fraction of ourselves without including the whole picture, we distort the picture. Under the glare of awakening, that phantasmagoria exhausts itself. The way out of that prison is to extend our identity beyond what we think is our self.

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego, and the true ego is the ego of God, it is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe that we are this or that; whatever the soul experiences, that it believes itself to be.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Suddenly we realize, "I am not what I thought I was, whereas I was thinking and behaving according to what I thought I was!" It is by shifting our consciousness and sense of identity in the transcendent dimensions that we first grasp unity: beyond matter, beyond the subtle body, beyond form (imagination), in the realm of pure light, beyond consciousness, beyond the seeds of existence - awakening beyond existence - then reversing and seeing unity in diversity - in the seeds of existence, and then in existence.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.

In him is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Encompassing all beings, we see God as a potentiality, striving to emerge in each fraction of itself.

The soul may be considered to be a condition of God; a condition which makes the only Being limited for a time.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The eternal is to be found in the becoming. It is a virtuality actuating itself in each fraction of the totality, which is what we are ourselves, also the "others".

When a person awakens to the spirit of unity and sees the oneness behind all things his point of view becomes different and his attitude changes thereby. There is nothing and no one who is divided or separated from him.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

But to believe in the metaphysical concept that 'all is one' is not good enough. Experience eludes the meshes of the knowledge that tries to scoop it up. Reciprocally, will knowledge spur us to experience? to experience what we know?

The breakthrough of realization will make us beautiful; and if we have been able to lift the veil that buried our own beauty, we see the beauty in others behind that same veil. When they discover themselves in the mirror of our soul, the chances are that they will undergo the same awakening process that we have gone through ourselves.

At this point in our forward march, we stumble upon the ultimate realization: is our quest for freedom not the ultimate selfishness of the personal ego that we confused with the Self? Is not that erroneous notion of ourselves the ultimate prison? Is our quest for freedom not itself an expression of the ultimate concern of the personal self?

The ego holds its prison around itself, it takes this prison with it, and there is only one way of being delivered from it, and that is through self-knowledge.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Discovering our real Self, which is what we mean by the Oneness behind the fragments of the One, opens the door of the prison. The way out of that prison is love. It is here that we are tested in our love and compassion, which is a gratuitous act of our free will - perhaps the ultimate freedom from the want of the self. This is enabled by avoiding criticism of those who are still immersed in "the ways of the world", who are struggling, self-destructively, incongruously, blindly. People need to go though their trips, be replenished or disappointed, or disconcerted, or devastated. We must know that we cannot spare another from his/her follies by dint of having overcome our own. These are the pangs of birth. Our latent perfection and that latent in others, which we ascribe to God, is striving to break through our imperfection, which we ascribe to ourselves, and so indict others.

As soon as we have ceased to fret about our own suffering, we become sensitive to the sufferings that spark the arrogance of other people toward us. When we see how they overcompensate their vulnerability by their possessiveness, we love them and would wish to help them in their covert distress. Laughing at our own past stupidity while bemoaning the suffering it caused acts as an alarm signal to those still in the quagmire.

We should be careful to take away from ourselves any thorns that prick us in

the personality of others.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In India this is coined "indifference"; it is really finding freedom in ourselves from being disturbed by the attitude of others. The consequence is the peace that is not born of the escape from prevailing conditions, but which is the catalyst of benevolent action arising out of the peace within. We need to watch that our equanimity is not reliance on a doctrine rather than having been achieved personally by meeting a struggle chivalrously.

We find that there is no end to the demands of people: they will want us to help them achieve their selfish ends, they may wish us to support their ambition, their power trips, to flatter them, feed their vanity, bolster their self-esteem, overlook their foibles, have patience with their follies, understand their incongruities, corroborate their judgment of others, or to commiserate with their sorrows for failing to attain the satisfaction of their desires. Perceiving our innocence, people may deceive us, to pull us on their side in their conflict with another person. We must be careful lest by our good will to fulfill their demands, we find that we participate in their covetousness and sometimes concupiscence, or at least reinforce them. We do not want to become dependent upon their dependence upon us.

Things that people take to heart will seem to him of little importance. Things that people become confused with will become clear. Disappointments and failures will not take away his hope and courage. There comes a time when all that he has accepted in his mind, all that he believed in appears to be quite the contrary to what it seemed before. Wealth, position, all the things he had pursued sometimes seem to become the opposite of what they seemed.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Every new outlook that frees us from perfunctory assumptions will change our relationship with others, and thereby alter the circumstances.

Suddenly the same world that we despised appears beautiful, we see the struggle for perfection in imperfection, the transparency of beauty trying to pierce the veil of ugliness; we see the immaculate present within its very defilement, order within

disorder. "That which transpires through that which appears" is already present in that which appears; it is not elsewhere, it is not "other". It is in the highfaluted legendary past of a pre-established harmony, and it flashes in the future as an intention: it is "infinity in a finite fact and eternity in a temporal act" (Preston Milford). It is the everywhere and always in the here and now. The existential is not an illusion veiling reality, it is the reality embedded in actuality. The purpose and fulfillment and reality of the blueprint of your house is in your house. The cosmic code does not precede the existential universe, it is self-organizing itself and thereby discovering itself in the "here and now" - "God hidden within His Creation" (Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan)

104 - The Test of Authenticity

It is significant that mainly amongst contemplatives do we find people who are in a high state of attunement. We ourselves may also spark a spell of ecstasy in our meditations. Also, the prayers of glorification of the devout may lift their souls to a state of exaltation.

Man thinks, speaks, and acts according to the pitch to which his soul is tuned.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

People, particularly initiates, lament that they fail to maintain that "high" in everyday life. The social environment, particularly the trauma of pain, exercises a compelling impact upon the setting of our consciousness, coercing it into our ego, which devises strategies for our self-defense. Projections, denials, pretensions are strategies which parade a useful though deceptive image of our real self to safeguard our self-image, which is not by any means what we really are. By the same token our concern about adapting ourselves to the challenge of the environment has the effect of constraining us in our self-image, which is not what we are but what we think we are.

Accomplished contemplatives are able to maintain their "high", by observing a combination of two complementary outlooks:

I. the doubt that their assessment of situations, including their self image, is reliable (this is applying the theory of 'maya' - unmasking the personal bias) and

II. continually (with unrelenting diligence and observation) maintaining the alternate perspectives (the wide embrace, looking out from inside, and the overview) which need to be examined here in more detail.

The reason contemplatives, or devouts are able to escape from the commonplace conditioning, and thereby maintain (or recapture) their high, is because of an enhanced sensitivity to the grossness and greed and guile that they ascribe to "the ways of the world." And there is a passion for the "sacred" to which they give priority beyond their "earthly" needs (which in our day and age need to be met in the appropriate proportion). All depends how either figures in our list of values.

The trouble is that to attune to the "sacred", it is helpful (or easier) if we find ourselves in an environment, both physical and social, which favors that attunement. That is our fragile attunement seeks to lean upon a support system. Inevitably, owing to the flaws in our human nature, this support system may prove manipulative, may be administered in the form of a "display" of spirituality whereby the adherent ascribes sacredness to the device rather than what it represents, (hence the destruction of idols in Islam). The same may apply to ascribing sacredness to the personal dimension of role models, instead of their cosmic or transcendent dimension. This is idolatry. The Sufis replace tassawuri Murshid, the image of the Murshid with tawwajeh - to resonate to the pitch to which the teacher is attuned at the crest of his/her conscious reach, rather than envision his/her face.

Since the Sufis were conversant with the nomadic life, they could not rely upon having a temple or church, or mosque or synagogue as a support system (albeit the prayer carpet introduced an extraterritorial space in the profane environment). Consequently they had to construct the temple out of their own body, and a temple of light out of their own aura, finally discovering that what they thought was a temple averred itself to be the priest (or priestess) in themselves and in others.

If the altar which embodies our projections as being a sacred object, (a totem) avers itself to be made of gilded cardboard boxes (as in Bernstein's Mass) and the guru a phantasmagoria of make-believe, (as has often proven to be the case amongst self-styled role models, on further inspection) then our faith which is vested in them collapses in dismay, outrage, offense, indignation.

When the hoax is unveiled, the feeling of having allowed ourselves to be fooled reeks of betrayal, and proves demeaning to our very self-esteem which was riding high on the "spell" sparked by the "display".

What is the sign that one is ready to awaken from sleep? It is when a person begins to think, "All that I have dreamed and understood seems so unreal; there are some realities of which I am vaguely aware, and yet compared with them all I have studied and done seems to be of no account." As the dawn comes after the night of darkness, so he sees light appearing; but he has not yet seen the sun; he is only beginning to awaken.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It is our concern for authenticity, together with our realization, that triggers off our doubt, which in turn unmasks the hoax of our belief in wishful thinking, and eschews reliance upon a support system for our "high." This has the effect of opening the door to genuine experience and the ensuing realization. It was the wise man (not the heckler) in the Bernstein Mass who pointed out that the wonderful scenario was in fact a sortilege, an enchanting display. How judicious it is to thrash people's simple faith-when their only way to uphold it is through belief-is of course questionable, as is illustrated in the famous story of Moses and the shepherd.

It is only safe to let go of the support system if one can replace it by genuine spiritual experience, as indeed is the problem in withdrawal symptoms after addiction. Otherwise one falls in a hole which is the dark night. One cannot exit from that dark night by the same door through which one entered. That can only occur if the fictitious display, and the role model parading sanctimoniously to exercise dominance over the believers, is replaced by a clear sense of the immaculate and germane sacredness inherent in its very distortion in real life. That transit is personified in the Bernstein Mass by the transfer of leadership (or rather the metamorphosis) from the high priest to the redeeming child with the candle, chanting, followed by the crowd who had been stymied in the dark night.

The art of so doing consists of being able to keep riding the tide of doubt in an ongoing way while promoting the progressive transformation without allowing ourselves to be bogged in by it.

This is precisely the process that any spiritual group needs to go through to respond to its own need for authenticity, and you may have noticed precisely the transforming journey that we have shared in the Sufi Order.

This is why Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan beckons upon us to self-generate the "sacred" in ourselves by "awakening (arousing) the God within."

All genuine spiritual groups embody a transmission equipped with a support system that needs to be updated to meet the process that their adherents go through.

The risk, however, is that unless we are sharply perspicacious, when we are bereft of the sacred support system, our doubt may induce us to slip back into our trite personal self-image, our middle range vantage point, and our commonplace thinking.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way, that it may regain its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

The doubts of pupils prove troubling to their teachers. The teachers themselves need to honor the truthfulness of their own doubts rather than denying them, or circumventing them. It is by making that journey, passing though the dark night of doubt while clearly seeing the way out by themselves-negotiating that transit from the "apparent" to the real-that those leading may give a helping hand to those floundering.

When the teacher wants to offer his/her hand, the teacher must know that s/he is in the water at the same time. It is not that the one who is sinking is sinking, but the teacher also is in the water. The sinking people might drag him/her down with them and make him/her sink. S/he must be moving his/her legs and hands to stay afloat while at the same time holding the mureed from sinking down.

For this the teacher needs to spot where the incongruity in his/her own thinking, and that of others, causes the bottleneck.

There comes a time when a mureed gets an idea which does not fit in with the teacher's idea. It does not mean that it does not fit in with the teacher's idea, but s/he does not allow the teachers idea to fit in.

The clue resides in the fact that, unless we are clearly self aware, we tend to confuse our real being with our self-image which is only the notion that we make of "who we are". Indeed the personal dimension of our total being carries within it the potentialities of our total being (this is the holistic paradigm), and therefore opens a door to the extensive being somnolent within us (the Creator buried in His creation, H.I.K), and of which our personal being is a "relative and temporary sub-whole." If we can envision this fragment of our total being in its relation to our total being as carrying within it the potential of our whole being, then through its door we can arouse its bountiful potential, but not if we identify with our self-image which proves misleading. This is the

criterion of discernment. The awakening that we seek hangs upon this "discernment" - our ability and acuity in spotting this disparity.

If someone asks us how we feel, unless we are very perspicacious, we tend to fall unawares upon the "I" with whom we identify, not the "I" that we are. Here lies the conundrum.

This requires us to have explored in meditation the wider areas of our being, beyond the personal nexus of our psyche (and body) and consequently see for ourselves how constraining and deceptive our self-image is in our assessment of our problems and our validation of ourselves.

We occupy as much horizon as is within our consciousness, or as much as we are conscious of. We are as great as our spirit, we are as wide as our spirit, we are as low as our spirit, we are as small as our spirit.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Having seen this, we are now able to see the personal dimension of our being in its context - in its relation with the whole. This will save us from confusing our self-image with the personal dimension of our total self.

Then we reverse our perspective.

When I open my eyes to the outer world I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and look within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart. The one who tunes himself not only to the external but to the inner being and to the essence of all things gets an insight into the essence of the whole being; and therefore he can, to the same extent, find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty that delights him in a rose. He, so to speak, touches the soul of the thought.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Now we can see how our personal bias in our representation of occurrences perceived as "outside" load our psyche with misrepresentations which undermine our self esteem. Consequently we seem to reach what we thought to be "outside" from

"inside" and moreover capture the budding of our recurrently renewed being as it surfaces from inside.

In the person who participates actively in his/her own creativity, God can gain a greater degree of perfection.

Then we need to reconnoiter the psychological gravity pull exercised upon our psyche by our concupiscence-which enlists "the way of the world", with its trail of unkindness, manipulation, and suffering-and give vent to our bewondering at the splendor and meaningfulness, which we ascribe at first to God as "other" in an awakening "beyond life", and then in an overview we see it coming through real life - awakening in life.

How is higher consciousness attained? By closing our eyes to our limited self and by opening our heart to God who is all perfection. . . Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and realizing one's immortal self which is God within.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

There is a stage where, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life, and given that power and peace and freedom, that light and life which belongs to the source of all beings. In that moment of supreme exaltation, one is not only united with the source of all beings, but dissolved in it, for the source is one's self.

Now only can we zero in on the personal dimension of our being, envisioning it in its relation (in its context) with the totality (in the cosmic outreach and transcendent mystery crowning our being) without slipping back into our trite self-image.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there his spiritual being.

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

The key to spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the perfect One who is formed in the heart.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

105 - Strategy for Dealing with the Ego

The question confronting us now is what are the methods whereby we may identify with our real being? Let us explore the stages. Here we discern four dimensions discovered as we pass through the stages of the Sufi practice of the Dhikr. Each describes the realizations and attunements experienced in the Dhikr. Every new phase represents a breakthrough of realization and every new insight triggers off the next breakthrough.

(1) Cosmic: extending our identity beyond its middle range: La ilaha

Meditation presents skills to extend our identity beyond the range of our perfunctory, skin-bound self-image: (i) envisioning our physical body as made of the fabric of the galaxies, (ii) sensing our etheric field, which is like gossamer, and has no boundary (like a vortex), (iii) extending our consciousness into the vantage point of others, (iv) the antipodal perspective, envisioning the universe as thinking through our thinking. Freed from the constraint upon the bounty of our being and the meaningfulness of our problems due to our inadequate self image, the richness of our real being now is able to flow unimpeded; moreover, freed from the personal bias, we need not resort to the inadequate stratagem of the ego, but can rely on the strength and richness of those features of our real being which emerge to meet the challenges of life.

We occupy as much horizon as we are conscious of. The world of one individual is as tiny as a grain of lentil, and that of another as large as the whole world.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At the outset, our behavior is reactive, adaptive. While the Yogis point out (in the stage called Savitarka Samadhi) that our assessment of our problems is unreliable because it is evaluated from the personal vantage point (flawed by illusion), the Sufis consider that they are clues about the Divine programming beyond our ken. While our problems present us with a challenge to muster appropriate qualities in ourselves to meet the tide of demands, our faulty assessment of these would misrepresent this challenge. Action offers a process of self-discovery, like a sculptor discovering his/her statue by fashioning it (in fact his/her self) which evading the world would not offer.

However, by reacting on the strength of our faulty assessment, our handling of the problem would not match the problem in its reality. Besides, we would not enlist all the resourcefulness of our being.

(2) Turning within: illa

Arwah is a state subliminal to our diurnal state.

In the world, you are here, and everything is without you; you are contained in space. In the dream state, all that you see is contained within you.

God is hidden within His creation. Awaken the God within.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In this setting of consciousness, we can find the vaster reaches of ourselves as they overlap with those of others within ourselves.

All things and beings on the surface seem separate from one another; beneath the surface, they approach nearer to each other, and in the innermost plane, they all become one.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Now we see our problems in their context, everything in its interrelationship with everything else. The strategy devised to deal with the problem when we envision ourselves, as a "discrete entity", does not match the wider issue. While Yogis consider our self-image as illusory, and as misleading as our assessment of our problems, the Sufis consider that our idiosyncrasies are clues that reveal the Divine nature funneled as us. Hence, once more we see the fallacy of identifying ourselves with "the traces" (the features of our personality), rather than the reality of ourselves they reveal.

If we are still limited by our personal self-image, the best that can happen is our capturing the fresh blossoming in our personality which we imagine are emerging from the universe "as other." When turning within, we discover that seedbed of our being self which is co-extensive and isomorphic with the universe, God, (therefore not "other"), organizing itself as it surfaces as our personality.

(3) Transcendent: 'Ilah

This is the lofty thrust of awakening beyond the ordinary human level of consciousness. It is triggered off by "a passion for the unattainable." The key consists in a first step of downplaying (Murshid uses Nelson's metaphor of "turning the blind eye") our personal perspective, and our limited sense of identity, in order to highlight the higher range of "who we are."

The soul's unfoldment comes from its power, which ends in loosening the ties of the lower planes.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

One may distinguish here three steps.

(i) Malakut

First those aspects of ourselves, normally masked by the ego's ploy, which are guileless, defenseless, innocent, holy - that thrive on glorification - celestial. Ibn 'Arabi points out that at this level, imagination is superseded; at this level there are no more forms, not even the countenance behind the face. Buddha says: "beings of pure radiance." To discover and enlist this dimension of our being, we need to forego any strategy of the ego. This is the perfection of "ahimsa", nonviolence, the way of Christ, Khatum al Awliya (the seal of the saints).

We will eschew thinking of ourselves as being a victim, being called upon to be an avenger to vindicate our self-respect.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that. When man lives this limitations, he does not know that another part of him exists which is much higher, more wonderful, more living, and more exalted.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Our quest for beauty is stymied by the dastardly act. In a spiritual school we learn to create beauty in ourselves rather than simply seek to enjoy it outside.

All that man considers beautiful, precious and good is not necessarily in the thing or the being, it is in the ideal. The thing or being causes him to create beauty, value and goodness in his own self.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

At this level, we become aware of our aura of light, with which we identify ourselves. We discover that it configures our real being, while revealing the distortions due to the famous strategy of our ego. Both are intertwined, like the picture of Dorian Gray. Here we have something concrete to work with, because we can - like a sculptor - reverse the distortions. To achieve this, we have to peel off the attitude, charged with the emotional attunement, that is causing the distortion, to unveil our beautiful inner being. Our countenance becomes radiant. If we wish to be high and radiant, this is the only way: eschew bearing a grudge. Otherwise we slip back into the commonplace. Where then is spirituality? It is not in dogma, nor in ritual, nor in a sanctuary. It is in the reality of the process of inner transformation. It is in struggling with ourselves to live up to our ideal when faced all around with iniquities. This struggle with ourselves instead of with others will give us spiritual power.

An example of this saintly attitude was illustrated by a Sufi Pir of the Chishti Sufi Order.

An apt description of manipulation could be illustrated by someone seizing our house, then inviting us for tea. If we protest, the usurper says: "I want harmony!" What did Ganji Shakar do? He left his Khanqah and thousands followed him. He became a very beautiful holy person. If he had countered with his ego, he would not have become that radiant being. The person was more important than the house.

We find that if we let ourselves be affected, we lose our power. Therefore our power needs a shield, and that is inner calm, inner freedom, psychological immunity.

The real proof of one's progress on the spiritual path can be realized by testing in every situation how indifferent one is.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

(ii) Jabarut. The two ll's of the word Allah

At this stage, we realize that the real witness is the consciousness of the universe (which is traditionally attributed to God) funneled down, or rather focalized, as the light of our consciousness.

Our glance becomes like two beams of light, or the head-lamps of a car, making the unseen visible. The light of our soul infiltrates through the light of our consciousness, then through our glance.

Wipe away the phantasmagoria of images, then Haqq will emerge from inside.

Jami

You thought that you were the Spectator, the witness, of what you experience, but the real witness in you is your angelic counterpart - the witness in the Heavens.

Shahabuddin Suhrawardhi

There is a further knowledge: God makes Himself known to us through Himself and reveals to us His knowledge of Himself by Himself.

Ibn 'Arabi

(iii) Lahut: The last "a" of 'llah

At this stage (Lahut) we discover that dimension of ourselves that is not reduced or limited either by our bodiness or our psyche.

How is higher consciousness attained? By closing our eyes to our limited self and opening one's heart to the God who is all perfection.

Once the soul realizes itself by being independent of the body, the soul naturally begins to see in itself the being of the spirit The Sufi practices that process whereby he is able to touch upon that part of life in himself that is not subject to death. Rising above one's earthly condition.

(Lahut) ... a particular phase of existence where one feels raised above the conditions of life

The light of our higher being descends upon the light of our consciousness.

(4) Hahut: the h of Allah

At the stage of Hahut, there is no more difference between "the light that can be seen and "the light that sees."

(5) The overview: Tawhid.

In this further step we are transfiguring our personal identity pattern and "making states of consciousness corporeal and psychological."

At the stage of Tawhid, the light of the Divine witness is threaded through the light of our glance.

106 - The Banquet

I entered the back door of Your house, oh Lord;
and stole my joy unseen and undiscovered
Like an uninvited guest, I sampled
The wine of thy divinity.
Oh Lord, like a thief, I crept
Into Your treasure trove
And spun the radiant light upon my brow
To enter all the hearts of pearls.
Beauty will always be your cosmic love.
Oh Lord, forgive me then for this love's trespassing
Unready for the banqueting hall,
This uninvited guest,
Was unprepared for Thy great glory!
Dazzled by your light Divine,
I am now left alone in my crying,
Half blinded by the sun ... and tears.

Mary Inayat Khan

Do we realize yet that we all participate in the delights of the cosmic feast only to the degree of our nostalgia? What a gift is ours: sharing in the cosmic celebration, in the cosmic banquet!

From our personal vantage point, we feed on the fabric of the Planet - in fact on the fabric of the galaxies; yet does it ever occur to us that by ingesting food, by breathing, by thinking, by feeling, by suffering, by rejoicing, by experiencing, by discovering our Planet, by exploring stars in outer space, by espying the thinking materializing as the cosmos, we are transforming the Planet (the galaxies) into humans - into ourselves?

Brahman is food. **Taitiriya Upanishad.**

This sacrament becomes holy when we realize that the universe is a Being traditionally called God from whose very nature we inherit, if we recognize our host.

There are grades, of course between the fast food snack, the rustic "pot au feu" or the

refined banquet, and we have a choice between the chatter, elegant conversations, or participating in holy communion notwithstanding those starving souls who crawl to pick up the crumbs from the floor. Pride of place is given to the privileged ones who have earned their official invitation at the behest of the "powers that be", the spiritual VIPs who legislate the dos and don'ts of our spiritual lives, and who organize the faithful into "the institutionalization of spirituality" to those adepts who, owing to their assiduity in spiritual practice, by dint of asceticism and piety, are person grata.

But is there room for the non-invited at the banquet, for those who feel they do not deserve that privilege, for those with tears yet sunshine in their eyes? Does Divine love stay the hand of the sentinel? Would the Divine host refuse admission to those who solicit His/Her grace? Al Hallaj was certainly not welcomed by those who arrogated to themselves the right to legislate for the prevailing religious authority which condemned him. Could we conjecture that, in his case, bureaucracy was bypassed by the Divine host Him/Herself, but at the cost of what suffering!

I have been invited to the banquet by the Divine host, who offered me to drink from His chalice but his drink is poison. How could I refuse? **Al Hallaj.**

Those who venture closer to the Divine host are either awed (Haybat) by His/Her majesty, or moved by Divine love by His/Her proximity (uns).

God annihilates the souls of those who love Him by revealing His majesty and endows their hearts with everlasting life by revealing His beauty... When God manifests His glory to a man's heart so that His majesty (jelal) predominates, he feels awe (haybat), but when God's beauty (jemal) predominates, he feels intimacy (uns)...There is a difference between one who is burned by His majesty in the fire of glorification, and one who is illuminated by His beauty in the light of contemplation. **Hujwiri, Kashf ul Mahjub**

The lover, desperately longing for the presence of the beloved, runs the risk of encountering opposition from the world. In traditional lore, he/she needs to proceed by stealth, incognito, to evade the prison wreaked upon him/her by authority. Protected by the darkness, in the night of unknowing, St John found freedom from the prison that our societies have built for the unconventional, the rebels.

On a dark night, kindled in love with yearnings - oh happy chance! In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest in the happy night In secret when none saw me, Nor I beheld aught, Without light or guide, save that which burned in my heart, This light guided me more securely than the light of noonday To the place where He (well I knew who!) was awaiting me. Oh night that guided me, Oh night more lovely than the dawn Oh night that joined Beloved with lover. Lover transformed in the Beloved. **St. John of the Cross**

If we feel we have not earned the Divine grace, we may invite the Divine joy of giving.

107 - Escape? or Creativity?

What contribution does our spiritual dimension offer our human problems? Circumstances are not always favorable. Most people are afflicted by hardships, frustrations, misfortunes, even misery and catastrophe. Therefore hail to the good moments! The yearning for escape from those circumstances if one perchance entertains such day-dreaming could simply lead to ruthless unkindness (generally only to slip back into a similar pattern) or to unfulfilling isolation, or to the other-worldliness of an Ashram.

Do you ever experience that yearning for the zephyr of not just evasion of the turmoil, greed, manipulation for power and possession, and the conditioning of our society, but the search for the serenity, the nobility, and the ecstasy of "another kingdom", only to find, as Buddha said, "*there is a place which you cannot reach by going anywhere.*"? "That kingdom" is meshed in "this kingdom", however, being subliminal to our existential universe, and consequently clues to "that kingdom" may transpire through what appears in our life circumstances. These clearly represent another dimension than the one paved by our daily life struggles, therefore we need to find the route accessing its reaches through our meditation practices.

Let us explore what light the spiritual overview may throw on our assessments of our problems.

If you train the light beam of your eyes and your consciousness to espy what is trying to transpire from behind whatever appears, wherever you turn your eyes, the splendor of the universe in all its bounty and at all its levels will reveal its potentiality; whenever you listen, or feel, or taste, or smell, or love, or bewonder not only in a dawn in the high mountains, or in a cathedral or a Beethoven symphony, in human ingenuity, in the scientist's mind probing outer space, in the eyes of a baby, or the prowess of a hero, but also in a resentful victim of abuse, or the millions in distress, in those who are disenchanted and embittered and floundering in our sometimes cruel society. Oh marvel! It is also in you, lying in wait to be aroused by being awakened. We discover the splendor latent in our own being through the object admired, and it reveals to us our own beauty, but to have eyes that see "what transpires", our eyes need to be active rather than passive.

All that man considers beautiful, precious and good is not necessarily in the thing or the being, it is in his ideal; the thing or being causes him to create the beauty, value and goodness in his own mind.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We must look further. To paraphrase Verlaine: two prisoners - one sees the bars the other the stars.

Our prison is our horizon, our self-image, the outreach of our realization, our discontent, the measure of our ability to love unconditionally people who make themselves difficult to love, our addiction, our self-pity, our inadequate ploys to protect our vulnerability by a puffed up front briefly, our own ego.

To be disenchanted by the hum-drum of the life to which we have been conditioned by our civilizations, to find our responsibilities confining, the challenge of opposition and competition stressful, to find the support system for survival leaving too little time for spiritual practice, to complain at being let down by acquaintances, and especially, to be disappointed in what situations do to our personality, can only prove counterproductive.

Unhappy is he who looks with contempt at the world, who hates human beings and thinks he is superior to them; the one who loves them thinks only that they are going through the same process that he has gone through.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Check to what extent you are affected by prevailing circumstances to ascertain to what extent this hampers your freedom to be yourself.

A person asks himself how all he sees affects him and what is his reaction to it all. First how does his spirit react to the objects or the conditions he encounters, to the sounds he hears, to the words people speak to him. Secondly see what affect he himself has on others when he comes in contact with them. One should learn one's condition, the condition of one's spirit, of one's mind, of one's body, one's situation in life and one's individual relationship with others.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We may think that we long to escape from unfavorable circumstances, but if so, we most likely fail to see that we are unconsciously trying to escape from the way we were in the past that contributed towards creating those very circumstances. Turn within and ask yourself introspectively where your decision triggered off those circumstances, and to what extent the fortuitous situation that you ascribe to fate could have been called upon surreptitiously by something in your nature that needed to surface to heal or overcome. This may not be the case, because randomness upsets the programming of the universe to offer scope for a further degree of orderliness.

We find that our resentment rivets us to the past. Somehow we lose our real self by identifying with the person afflicted by external conditions.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The only way to free ourselves from our past is to reconnoiter our fears and motivations to protect our psychological vulnerability, and admit that we have been falling back on our ego's strategies having a cantankerous, disgruntled nature due to our frustration at being unable to retaliate, or being loaded with self pity, flawed by its inadequacy rather than relying upon the rich pool of resourcefulness latent in the seed-bed of our personality, and thus evolve.

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

By independence is meant self-sufficiency: that what they can get from their own self they must not look for outside. That is the principal motive of those who are striving for self-attainment, because it is the means of overcoming the sorrows and troubles and woes of this life. One sees a constant striving in the life of the adepts to make themselves independent of outside things as much as possible. On the other hand worldly people think it progress if they can become daily more dependent on others. Every step we take is towards dependence;

and the more we depend upon others, the more we think we are progressing. In the end we come to such a stage that for what the soul needs, what the mind needs, what the body needs, we depend upon others.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Moreover, one so longs to turn the tables on time to undo one's iniquity, the harm done and the pain wreaked upon others. Could good deeds ever compensate, or give absolution? If we have changed, does it change the past? Indeed, the past has changed, our resolutions are retroactive. One learns by trial and error.

Everything has its purpose, but knowledge of that purpose makes us able to use it to the best advantage.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

The key is to try and prefigure "how I could be." Our nostalgia for "the way things would be" if we became "how we could be" will redeem us from our past by opting for our next move on the chess board.

Give vent to this longing for our projections of a state of awakened awareness and unfoldment concretized by the creative power of our imagination. It will arouse latent faculties lying in wait in the seed bed of our personality

All depends upon the expanse of the environment we embrace: our commonplace lives with its "storms in our teacups", or the trivia and drama, perchance the exciting findings dispensed by the media, or alternately the creative visions of the "explorers of meaningfulness", or the expanse of our own being as it customizes more and more of the inexhaustible bounty of the many-splendored universe of which we are a part.

We occupy only as much horizon as much as we are conscious of.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We can only enhance our way of being by exploring beyond its confines. To achieve this, imagine as we meditate how things would look from the antipodal point of view (the divine). What if the universe (God) finds fulfillment in being liberated from its

(His/Her) virtuality by being existentiated as us? Conversely, is it not that nostalgia of the universe (God) which sparks our realization of our need to actuate the universe (God) as ourselves by our personal incentive?

As the seed is sufficient and capable of producing another plant, so man is the product of all planes, spiritual and material and yet in him alone shines forth that primal intelligence that caused the whole.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As the whole of nature is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by himself.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Rather than resorting to escape, which arises out of your personal perspective, you will find in your meditation personal fulfillment in the way the universe may reveal itself to you as yourself, in the unfurling of your personality. Think that you are transforming the universe into yourself by dint of your creativity, which is triggered of by the awakening of your realization. The wider and loftier that scope, the richer your creativity.

Man's greatest need today is for the exploration of the human personality, in order to find there the latent inspiration and power upon which to build the whole structure of his life. For life means not only to live, but to ennoble oneself and reach that perfection which is the innate yearning of the soul. The solution to the problem of the day is the awakening of the consciousness of humanity to the divinity of man.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

If you greatly improve your personality, you will find that circumstances now need to adjust to your new being, or alternatively, your circumstances will not disturb you that much (like the elephant that gets use to the jiggling of chickens).

Instead of trying to escape the prison, expand its walls (like Marcel Marceau in his mime) so that it is no more a prison by including the higher dimensions of your being,

like overtones in a musical tone, without which the tone would sound flat. Our social circumstances will prove confining unless we see it is our domain, and work at embellishing and brightening it with those "higher octaves" of our being.

Every soul has his domain in life consisting of all it possesses and of all who belong to it. This domain is as wide as the width of the soul's influence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

To make this quantum leap, you will need to ride the tide of evolution, you will venture to access a wider orbit than the samsaric repetitiveness of the commonplace: the spiritual dimension. This does not mean to elude your life's situations, but include them on a wider octave like the Comet that has not lost its contact with the solar system, including Planet Earth (or other planets), but connects these in the perihelion (nearest to the sun) in its orbit in a wider loop than the scope of the planetary orbits with that mysterious nebulous cloud, at its aphelion (farthest removed from the solar system).

To escape, on a tangent, from the repetitiveness of the samsaric wheel we have generated, we need to hoist ourselves in a very elongated elliptic orbit (like that of the Comet), polarized by an ever more advancing vertex, lured by extra-samsaric dimensions, without losing our connection with our earthly personalities.

We now know that Comets may be the originators of our solar system, emerging out of a nebulous cloud that little known area of space-time which the Sufis call Adam, the cloud of unknowing and continues to spew upon us, and consequently ferment us, maybe feed us with its ionized gasses and stardust by sublimating itself, approaching close. Yet its gift to us denizens of the Solar system is not without a life-threatening risk to itself. If it allows itself to be caught by the gravity of Jupiter, it will immolate itself to give its life over to the solar system, as was the case Shumaker Levy in July 1994, or crash into the sun, as West did in 1976. Moreover, it is invariably perturbed by its ever-intermittent visit.

If you espy this originating cloud of unknowing lying at the edge of the outreach of your consciousness in infinite regress, you will find that it dispenses recurrently renewed vitality and bounty to the existential underpinning of your being, which it will,

however, annihilate if overstressed.

Likewise, the celestial counterparts of our being suffer by their investment in our earthly personalities, yet they ferment them, ripen them, and sublimate them by overarching them. By evolving, we are setting in motion in ourselves this further latent dimension of our being: "the evolutionary drive", which is inviting us to find our place in the scheme of things.

108 - Finding A Wider Perspective

If we look at Notre Dame in Paris from only one angle, we haven't seen Notre Dame. Likewise, if we look at a problem from our personal vantagepoint-what we think we are-then we can't have a real sense of what the problem is. Just to say, "It is not what I think it is" is a negative statement. The positive way to do it is to start looking at the problem from alternative points of view to our own point of view. What I suggest is to think of a problem, but as seen from the point of view of another person who's involved with us in that problem. That doesn't mean that another person's point of view is more valid than our own, but at least we now see the situation from two angles instead of one.

Generally we think of another person as the object of our awareness, but in meditating, we discover we are literally able to transpose our consciousness into that of another person. That person's way of looking at things may be as limited as ours, or may be better than ours, or more limited, but it does alter our perspective. For example, if that person were attuned to a very high state, then what we grasp of that person is going to be different from the way that person would be if s/he were dealing with the nitty-gritty of human problems. We can imagine how we appear to that person, and we realize the image that person has of us is not what we think we are and neither necessarily better nor worse, but then, I am not saying this is the real thing. No, I'm saying that we then the ability to see something about ourselves that maybe we didn't see when we were in our personal perspective. Our eyes can't see themselves.

The next step is to expand our consciousness to more people-three people, four people, and many more people-and eventually, we can just feel the joy of our consciousness expanding. It's like, for example, we have been sitting in the office or in the house the whole day, and then we have the opportunity to make a trip to the mountains and sit on the mountaintop and watch a fantastic dawn. What a joy to be out of that prison! Marcel Marceau does a famous mime routine. He's walled in, and he keeps on pushing the walls and they get further and further away, and the further away they go, the better he is able to dance, and eventually he dances the dance of freedom. Now that is essential to our work, pushing out our limitations.

There is another way of doing it. We imagine the starry sky, clusters of galaxies, and realize that the very fabric of our body is the fabric of those galaxies. The fabric of our body originated in the Big Bang as a pure outbreak of light, of pure radiance, and this light crystallized itself into what we call matter-although for a physicist, light is also matter-imagine light that has gelled into a crystal. Our bodies are much more elaborate than crystals. They are not frozen as a crystal, so from the moment we reach out in our thoughts to the vastness of space, and we realize that we ourselves, our body itself, is part of this starry universe-they can't be separated-that has a dramatic effect on our way of thinking of ourselves. We no longer see ourselves as a discrete entity with a boundary, the skin. We are not just expanding our consciousness; we are altering our sense of identity, or rather gleaning awareness of the vastness of our identity.

It is true that as we extend our consciousness, we lose the sense of our individuality, so it's good to balance that with the opposite. When we exhale, we experience this wonderful expansion of our consciousness reaching out further and further, losing the sense of our individual center. We then do the opposite as we inhale; we see how the totality of the universe converges as us. It converges just like a three-dimensional panorama converging into a two-dimensional photograph. The consciousness of the cosmos has become focalized, like light is focalized through a lens. We are focalized as our consciousness. Our consciousness is not different, not other. It is the consciousness of the totality.

We have the ability to toggle between an all-encompassing setting of consciousness and a personal one. For example, when we read the pages of a book, our eyesight is highly focalized, but when we look at a panorama, our eyesight is all-encompassing. We could toggle between the two. We could read a book while sitting in beautiful mountain scenery, and then look at the panorama, and look at the book again, toggling between the two. We can do the same thing with our consciousness. When our consciousness is expanded, we can see our problems in context. That means we can see the implications of our problems instead of just seeing them from our limited, personal bias. Then we realize that what we thought was our problem, is simply our participation in the drama of the universe.

That is a way of liberating ourselves from the constraint of our commonplace

assessment of situations, and our self-image that we carry in our psyche throughout our lives. We are carrying in our psyche a false assessment of our situations, of ourselves, of our relationship with the universe, convinced that that's the way it is. We suffer because of it. We are confused because of it. The expanding of our consciousness does have an effect upon our identity. We can expand our consciousness like our eyesight. We then have a wider sense of our identity. It doesn't seem logical to think that we are a fraction of the totality. We think, "How can you say that? I am a totality." Some mystics say that, but we wonder if they're crazy. We can't understand how they could say anything like that. It's something we have to gradually train ourselves to in meditation.

We would never, for example, be able to make sense of radio waves. The radio processes those waves by impoverishing them, so we can make sense of them-by limiting them. The same thing is true of our lives. We have difficulty in extrapolating between different situations. Remember Cinerama, where there were three screens in the cinema, and idea was to grasp this wide panorama, and we found that in fact we were scanning anyway. We didn't have the faculty of being able to encompass all this richness, If we trained ourselves, we would be able to extrapolate between those different images and make sense of the whole. That's what we do with our eyes. The vision of each eye is different, but we are able to extrapolate between those two visions. This is what we are learning to do in mediation, to be able to make sense of our lives in the context of the whole humanity, instead of being caught in our personal trip. That makes for maturity. We become a mature being. We become more and more cosmic, and less personal. That's the reason we use the word Tatagatha for Buddha instead of Siddartha or Gautama, because Tatagatha means "Thus." We become Thus. Impersonal.

What we are doing now is to try and reach beyond our narrow self-image, which not only distorts our understanding of our lives, but also affects our self-esteem. Our self-esteem is important, helping us to to find fulfillment in our lives. We are proceeding in a counterproductive manner in our lives by standing in the way of the fulfillment of our lives-by limiting ourselves to our self-image. We need to notice that we are always relating our self-image to the totality, and totality to the self. We are always connecting the two. That is why the Sufis speak about the Divine Consciousness. It seems at first, in our minds, (because we think in categories) that

the Divine Consciousness is out there somewhere, and this is my consciousness. In our meditation, we start working with expanding our consciousness over a period of time. It might take months and months, even years. We might reach that point which St. Francis talked about when he said, "I thought I was looking at the universe, but the universe is looking at me." That's a breakthrough in meditation. The Sufis would say, "I thought I wanted to know God, but it is God who is discovering Him/Herself through me." Or "I can only know myself by trying to have a sense of the knowledge that God has by discovering Him/Herself as me." That's Sufism.

Maybe it's difficult. In theory, in poetry, it sounds beautiful, wonderful, and paradoxical. We have the faculty of transporting our consciousness into that of another person, then the capacity of transporting it in the consciousness of more and more people, then in infinite regress, we are able to transport our consciousness into the consciousness of the universe. In order to do that, we have to downplay our personal consciousness, or the purpose of our personal consciousness, and highlight the consciousness of the universe. That's what happens in a very advanced state of meditation.

There is a difference between the cosmos and the universe. The cosmos is the body of the universe. Think of the universe as a being, composed of lots of cells-just like the cells of our body-which are endowed with a certain amount of consciousness, and will, and awareness. Our consciousness is the focalization of this total consciousness, this global consciousness. That means it is part of that global consciousness. That means our knowledge of the cosmos makes a contribution to the knowledge the cosmos has of itself. When we are looking at the stars, the stars are discovering themselves through our glance. Now perhaps we can better understand the words of Ibn 'Arabi, who says "God discovers Him/Herself as you", meaning the way the totality is actuated in a unique way in each fragment of itself. It's not God static, it's God dynamic.

Discovering God awakening by becoming existential-that is activating Him/Herself as us-is a very different way of thinking. We no longer think of God up there and us down here as miserable worms. It's a completely different way of looking at it. This way of thinking is going to open the door to having a sense of the sacred, because we respect each being as an expression of the Divine Being. This is what is called

God-consciousness. "Is it possible that the being of God, whom I imagined to be up there somewhere remote, is present within my own being?" We realize it is only our concept of ourselves-self-image we call it, our refusal to accept the Divine gift of our being-that stands in the way of our ecstasy, that makes us low key. The breakthrough of ecstasy-realizing that the totality of Being at all levels, not just the physical world, but all levels, that is coming through us, or is us, or is being aroused as us-is an incredible thought.

Imagine Einstein pushing a pram in streets of New York. A lot of people pushed prams in the streets of New York, but while he was doing it, he was thinking of space and time and galaxies. Most people think that they're pushing their pram, right there in the streets of New York. They cannot see that that is only a very small piece of the totality. It is so easy to be caught in a perspective.

The first American astronaut who landed on the moon gave a seminar at the Zenith Institute. He said, "You can't imagine the thrill of hurtling back home through space at tremendous speed and thinking, 'my family down there, right down there on that planet, over there it is very far away,' and thinking, 'well, yes, I am looking forward to meeting my wife and children and all the circumstances, but I just hope that I won't lose that sense that I have gained of the vastness of reality.' " In fact, he never lost it.

We don't have to take a space ship to gain a sense of the vastness of reality. This is what we are doing in meditation now. It's a matter of our realization. That is the way out of the prison, and it makes for the maturation of our being. We can't come back from the door through which we came to this state. We can only come back through another door.

109 - Personal Development as a Catalyst for Achievement

Upgrading existential conditions is more fulfilling than simply enjoying them. Facing the challenge to achieve this arouses dormant human faculties. Therefore, the imperative is to upgrade our personal idiosyncrasies. The clue is in matching our personality features with our objectives: envisioning the way circumstances could be improved triggers off envisioning how we ourselves could be. If we overlook the importance of our personal growth, we get inveigled into the thirst for our own personal well-being, oblivious to the well-being of our kin-sometimes at their cost-and wallowing in our personal aggrandizement. The price we pay is a defilement of our own personality, sometimes burnout and disenchantment, and sometimes a disinterest in undauntedly upgrading our product.

Creativity is only fulfilling if it is meaningful for humanity. Hence the challenge of updating our creativity calls for the upgrade of our personal qualities and the creative upgrading of our qualities has the effect of upgrading our contribution to the progress of the world in which we live. How can we work creatively with ourselves to unfurl our personal potentials?

The skill is in enlisting the bounty of the universe, invested in our being, while customizing it in our own unique way. The clue is in continually being aware of our relationship with the Universe as a living being, rather than being encapsulated in our personal vantagepoint and identity. The Sufis call this God consciousness. It is enlisting the knowledge that the Universe acquires of itself through the knowledge that we have of it by arousing its archetypal qualities as the features of our personality, and applying these to foster creative action. By our enchantment and bewondering at the marvel of life, we are moved to project a personal representation of what we imagine God to be into a virtual space. To proceed thus, we arouse the very qualities we ascribe to God, which are lying in wait in our being, and even upgrade them by modeling them on visions of cosmic superlatives.

What are these archetypal qualities thus homonized? They are splendor, nobility, authenticity, mastery, love, joy, radiance, serenity and many more. Thus can we translate these into objects, circumstances, behavior, demeanor, the countenance transpiring through the appearance of our human masks, the reality concealed behind

our divisive role-playing, the meaningfulness disclosing itself from behind our mind's ponderous explorations.

A passion for achievement! A passion for embodying in ourselves that miracle that is the universe (God)! A passion for the 'aha' breakthrough of awakening to ever more perplexing realizations! The pull of the future is stronger than the push of the past if we stalk it, but the future is not already there. It is inherent in an infinite host of inexhaustible possibilities. We create it by imagining how circumstances and ourselves might be if they would be as they is inherent in an infinite host of inexhaustible possibilities. We create it by imagining how circumstances and ourselves might be if they would be as they could be.

110 - Stalking the Light: Transmuting Fire into Light, Anger into Compassion

Light is a particularly important factor in our lives because it acts as a bridge between matter and the ineffable, beyond our perception. At the psychological level, we all know how it feels to be hot under the collar, burning with rage when abused, insulted, repressed, or when we are outraged with righteous indignation at witnessing an injustice or a blatant lie. It seems wise to contend that we condemn an ignominious act, not the person, but how real is it? Surely the action we condemn must reflect something of the person. We can intervene to counter evil like a noble knight, without hatred. That a gesture of compassion can transform the fire of anger into the radiance of our countenance by the generous feeling of love is perhaps the greatest miracle of life. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan told those training for leadership, "We are tested in our love." Being able to love a person who is obnoxious and unkind faces us with an almost unrealistic challenge. How strong is our love? I mean a wholesome, all-embracing, cosmic, unconditional love, not a sentimental love. One can be judgmental while protective. If we try to wean ourselves from our reactive ego, which is our defense system, we will suffer from psychological withdrawal symptoms, unless our love is very strong.

The phenomenon of light hands us a number of clues which convey realizations that open some escape from the enigma posed to our understanding when we discover that we cannot account for things on the strength of what we perceive. For one thing, light behaves-according to the test devised by scientists in laboratories-either as though it were constituted of particles (photons), or of waves. Particles collide-like what we understand by particles of matter-but waves compose, forming a network (a wave-interference pattern). We imagine that particles occupy a definite location in space at a given moment, and collide if vying for the same space, whereas matter cannot be locatable as a wave.

Our human behavior follows the same principles. Our psyches can clash in conflict, or cooperate by completing each other. Waves can configure themselves in such a manner that they build up-like a kind of knot, called a solliton; this is called a standing wave. Such is also the case for us humans when, in the course of cooperating, somehow a conflicting situation arises. If we consider our consciousness as a focal

point located in space, light seems to radiate from a point located in space: the sun, the stars, a candle, an electric bulb. But when we turn within in our meditation, our consciousness, as it gets inverted, is diffused. Consequently our representation of light has shifted-it is diffused. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls it "the all-pervading light." We find the same in the words of Ibn 'Arabi.

Light is of two kinds: a light having no rays, and radiant light. If self-disclosure takes place through radiant light, it takes away our inner vision. As for the light that has no rays, it is the light within which self-disclosure takes place without rays. Then its brightness does not go outside of itself and the viewer perceives it with the utmost clarity and lucidity....

Ibn 'Arabi (Fut III 274 23, Chitt p 213)

Physicists never cease to be amazed by the paradoxical way light behaves when they try to track it down in laboratory experiments. They can only ascertain and measure what happens at the instant it interacts with their instruments, but light eschews giving any clues as to its behavior before, after or between the measurements. It seems a misnomer to call light matter, even though it is an electro-magnetic phenomenon, because, unlike any other form of matter, it does not have mass. It provides us with a useful model of the relationship between reality and actuality-the universe and the cosmos. Reality escapes any efforts on our part to track it down beyond the existential, perceptual world we commonly know. This familiar world looks like the cross-section of a multiple, multi-dimensional, and many-tiered universe of which we only know what intersects it. This paradox becomes even more bewildering, because when we stalk it, reality appears as a virtuality that becomes an actuality in the existential condition.

We are a condition of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

We are baffled by the unknown, stymied, ever wishing to decipher the secret of the mysterious unknown that affects us in such uncanny ways.

He takes you from perplexity to perplexity.

Ibn 'Arabi

Reflecting upon the wave-like / particle-like antinomy, we ask ourselves whether our known world is not the crystallization of the reality beyond our understanding, just as we imagine waves to have crystallized as particles, or photons having crystallized as electrons to form a crystal. Just stop to ponder the miracle whereby our thoughts or emotions configure the muscles of our face; more so, how we may fashion the fabric of light of our aura into the countenance that transpires through our face. To stalk reality beyond actuality, we would then have to reverse this process and transmute the electrons of our bodies into photons (as is the case with fireflies in the process of phosphorescence) or transmute the particle-like photons of our aura into wave-like, ineffable light. This would represent an ingratiating prospect for life after life. Perhaps we could already start preparing for this right away, now. It would mean trying to stalk light as far as we can reach beyond its perceptual existential condition.

Should we attempt this-for example, trying to shift our consciousness into that of a master, saint or prophet, or an angel, or departed loved one-we would reach a point where, the light that escapes our grasp, intangible yet luring us ever further, does not seem to be any different from the light of our intelligence.

Light is perceived; and through it perception takes place. Were it not for the light that belongs to the souls, there could be no witnessing since witnessing only takes place when two lights come together.

Ibn 'Arabi (Fut II 485 29 Chitt p.226)

What would it be like to live bereft of the body? Our advanced meditations "beyond existence", as Buddha coins it, may offer us some clues. Imagine brain-storming creative ideas, while interfacing and interacting with the minds and attunements of other disincarnate beings, and fashioning these ideas into forms without substance-as an architect, or tuning to a bountiful symphony of emotions without translating them into musical notes and rhythms-as a composer, discovering new modes of meaningfulness without manipulating objects, working at the software of the universe, knowing that your programming will, if viable and meaningful, be intuited by those on Earth who will carry them out concretely and practically, then updating them by being receptive to the feedback from the Earth. The feedback of experience upgrades the

feedforward of creativity acausally. The clues to soar into worlds of celestial light are, first, in overcoming resentment and shifting our notion of light from its physical underpinning to its ineffable dimensions beyond the existential state, and then, rather than identifying ourselves with our aura, identifying ourselves with the light of our intelligence. Then we bring heavenly light to Earth through the glow of our eyes. This is the "Light upon a light" of the Qur'an.

'The light that can be seen' and 'the light that sees,' according to the Sufis, now seem like two poles of the same reality rather than being separated-like the horns of a dilemma-as they appear to our commonplace thinking. Therefore to stalk the light of those we yearn to reach beyond this limited world-to be inspired-we need to transcend our commonplace thinking and allow our minds to be overwhelmed in what the Sufis calls "the consternation of intelligence." Our ordinary thinking sees 'otherness,' whereas our peri-personal thinking sees similarity, likeness, in a process of resonance. Pir-o-Murshid calls it the thinking of the soul, rather than of the mind-the state of bewondering, and more so, glorification will spark our souls to ecstasy.

We do not have to condemn ourselves if we cannot forgive, but it is the clue to being luminous and radiant. It is our choice. Resentment traps us in our personal dimension, forgiveness will make us free to stalk light beyond its constraint at the existential level. In life after life, if one has not found freedom, one will be stuck in one's thoughts, regurgitating acrimony, and fail to interface and interact creatively with wonderful beings in skyscapes of light and splendor. The message of Christ, "forgive those who offend us", is hard to follow, but it carries a great secret - perhaps the greatest secret - the sublimation of our human nature, like the way infra-red light can be transmuted into ultra-violet, (passing through the spectrum). Our incandescent aura becomes diaphanous: we have transmuted the fire of truth into the light of love.

When the unreality of life pushes against my heart, its door opens to the reality.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

111 - Freeing Our Thinking from Restrictive Concepts

While the transmission of the past remains ever present, I strive to think and write in keeping with the language of our time. An example is Coventry Cathedral in England. Rather than reconstructing the old cathedral which was destroyed in World War II, a new modern cathedral was built adjacently, with the old very much in view, and somewhat present in the new, coming through the windows.

For us, while going about our occupations, the Sufis are here, through the windows of our souls. Particularly Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, but also Buddha, and Christ, and Pythagoras, and Mohammed, are ever present, albeit in the perspective of our day and age. How would they speak today?

Pir-o-Murshid says we progress as we mature from dependence to self-sufficiency. By independence is meant self-sufficiency: what we can get from our own self we must not look for outside. That is the principal motive of those who are striving for self-attainment, because it is the means of overcoming the sorrows and troubles and woes of this life. One sees a constant striving in the life of the adepts to make themselves independent of outside things as much as possible.

Upon weaning from dependence upon the mother (or father), a plethora of addictions represent many tenuous, and spurious threads upon which we precariously hang our lives. The downside of the comforts and power we achieve by our technologies is our dependence upon them. This includes, not just circumstances-our plans, which can collapse-but people, all of which can let us down. In our despair, it may include our simplistic concepts of God as 'other,' whom we hold responsible for what we ascribe to our fate. We enrich our psyches, as indeed our bodies, with what we consider as 'outside,' little realizing that we are discovering our own potentials by their affinity or resonance with 'other ourselves.'

Our commonplace way of thinking refers to an egocentric notion of ourselves-rather like the Ptolemaic view of Planet Earth as being the center of the cosmos. Our inadequate self-image is restricted by our old fashioned concepts of the 'otherness' of God. In contrast, the emergent thinking for the spirituality of the Millennium offers a multi-dimensional, bipolar, even a many-tiered grid in which to orient our thinking and

find ourselves. These are not simply perspectives from which the universe (a new name for God) may know Him/Her/Itself, but in the holistic paradigm, we, while being fractions of the Totality, carry the totality within us virtually. We are a circle whose center is everywhere and whose periphery is nowhere. This is achieved by extrapolating between our personal vantage point and the anti-polar vantage point which is traditionally called the divine point of view. Maybe we need to account for several poles: cosmic, internal, and transcendent-beyond our understanding.

Our inadequate self-image breeds negative thinking which proves self-obstructive and counterproductive. Should we discover ourselves as potentially co-extensive with the universe-traditionally called God-we would learn to rely upon the bountiful possibilities lying in wait within us. This way of thinking and knowing offers us an incomparably richer insight into meaningfulness than if we are confined to one pole while God is considered as 'other,' but it can only prove convincing if we have actualized our thinking into action.

The consequences of this encompassing view in the realm of our thinking are quite dramatic. Instead of saying: "I think therefore I am", like Descartes, one would have to say: "While I think, I am thought of; while creating, I am inspired; while exulting, I am overwhelmed; while I become, the universe becomes me." This way of thinking is not new, but was articulated in the traditional language. It was coined "significatio passiva" by Martin Luther and was formulated by Ibn 'Arabi as:

In contemplating Him, He contemplates me. He describes Himself to me through me. He discovers Himself in the same form (my form} in which He discloses Himself to me.

And by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan:

The purpose of life is fulfilled by God discovering His perfection in our imperfection.

This way of thinking, liberated from the constriction of what Pir-o-Murshid calls "the false self", (our inadequate notion of our self) would relieve us of our resentment, because it is our self-image which is victimized by abuse, whereas our immaculate core can never be defiled, nor can we be deprived of the bounty we inherit from the

universe, except by our failing to recognize it. There is no way of denigrating the God in us, as us. Our solace lies, then, in downplaying our faulty concept of ourselves as a discrete entity, and recognizing the boundlessness of our real being.

The soul is a condition of God; a condition which makes the only Being limited for a time. How is higher consciousness attained? By closing our eyes to our limited self and opening our heart to the God who is all perfection within and without, visible audible, perceptible, yet beyond man's comprehension. True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come on earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Besides, denigrating ourselves-for which we sometimes pride ourselves-can affect our body, while positive thinking can cure miraculously.

112 - Awakening Leading to Illumination

A series of studies on Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's teachings will be featured in some of the forthcoming Keeping In Touches, based on the database for a curriculum which is being sent by the Secretariat to Center Representatives for monthly classes. The relevant excerpts of Pir-o-Murshid's teachings will then be published in a booklet upon completion of the course. Alongside these, corresponding excerpts from the ancient Sufis will be furnished, and sometimes Yoga and Buddhist texts which apply to Pir-o-Murshid's Message of the Unity of Religious Ideals.

I well realize it would be congruent to observe the sequence of themes set forth in the database for the curriculum. However, it is sometimes imperative to first state the objective and then outline the steps leading to that objective. Hence this presentation-our first-a kind of introduction.

There are many valuable and exciting things we pursue, enriching to our psyche, which are more readily available today thanks to the significant progress of technology. We need also to reckon with the chores we do to obtain and maintain them; moreover, we mostly find ourselves battling with the stress of simply surviving to "keep up with the Joneses" as life becomes increasingly demanding. However, in this medley of interests and responsibilities, it is well to assess priorities, to eschew prioritizing "the urgent" rather than "the important." Go for the best, at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of values (and I must say, most challenging, and most enthralling and transforming): illumination, enlightenment.

Watch to what extent the values which we ordinarily pursue in our social environment-as it has developed in our day and age-are conditioned, and to what extent we are clear about what we really rate highly, and uphold our self-esteem. It is a serious reflection on our alertness if, albeit somewhat enriching our personal idiosyncrasies, our pursuits tarnish our personality. It is ingratiating to realize to what extent our quest for illumination in the course of our meditations can transfigure our whole being-body and psyche-and unfurl qualities lying in wait.

Watch what qualities and defects that such or such pursuit may exercise upon our personality. If we pursue what delights our soul, and this gives us a sense of

fulfillment, our whole being will blossom. Of course the most satisfying quest, felt by the more aware, fulfills a daunting need to see meaningfulness in life, and meaning in our own life. We become alerted by a surreptitious intuition that to assess circumstances on their face value is deceptive-a simplistic mode of thinking-that there must be some congruent planning, or intention, or meaningfulness behind occurrences, appearances.

That this programming needs to account for the somewhat whimsical, unpredictable nature of our personal incentives represents a surprising view, and strikes a whole new breakthrough, in contrast with traditional thinking. It validates human incentive and creativity. It stands at the core of Pir-o-Murshid's message, and is, moreover, paralleled by Ibn 'Arabi's insight.

The Divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the divine mind.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them.

Ibn 'Arabi

That this programming, which we strive to be apprised of, should take into account our own volition makes the whole process of awakening most intricate, because it points out to us the importance of realizing the reciprocity of the Divine and human dimensions of our own being and the Divine and human dimensions of God. Only in this realization can we understand Pir-o-Murshid's teaching.

Man is Divine limitation and God is human perfection....The soul conscious of its limited existence is man; and the soul reflected by the vision of the unlimited is God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Thou art not Thou, Thou art He without Thou. Not He entering into Thee, nor Thou entering into Him, nor Thou proceeding forth from Him, or He proceeding forth from Thee.

Ibn 'Arabi

We also find the reciprocal thought:

The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body that contains God according to the accommodation. The key to spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the Perfect One who is formed in the heart.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

God makes Himself known by projecting His shadow. This shadow is Him and not Him.

Understand whereby thou art He and whereby Thou art other than He. The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contains God according to the accommodation.

Ibn 'Arabi

We may discern our ability to shift our perspective, in a first step, from "that which appears" to "that which transpires through that which appears", for example personal problems, or most particularly the way that "whom you really are" is trying to surface and unfurl as your personality. In a second step we may try to decode the "software" of the universe that determines the "hardware" of the cosmos. This gives us a sense of "awakening" - actually, there are several awakenings. In fact this is now our most prized objective: awakening.

As we meditate, we can actually grasp in our own being the way in which the bounty of the cosmos is squeezed into our personality, albeit virtually present, while regaling us with its many-splendored potentials and wide compass (the holistic paradigm as applied to the psyche).

The soul may be considered as a condition of God, a condition that makes the

Only Being limited for a time.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

There are more such quantum leaps in our thinking - or, shall we say, in our realization. They occur as traumatic shocks coined as "awakenings" - not just an identity jolt, but discovering that super-logic that defies our commonplace (syllogistic) logic - which Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan calls "the reason of reasons." Indeed this is, rather than awakening from sensory perception and the resultant world-view, awakening from our commonplace conceptual thinking.

Not knowing that God experiences this life through us, we are seeking for Him somewhere else.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

When all idea of this external being is gone, then comes the consciousness of the unlimited being of God.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In what manner is awakening related to illumination? This quandary could be better framed by asking: what relevance does illumination have to awakening? We may ascertain a clue in the paradoxical behavior of light. In the first place, light distinguishes itself from other physical phenomena in that it has no mass, which is precisely the criterion that defines matter for non-scientific minds. Secondly, it can only be known by its interaction with our body cells, particularly our brain cells, and those of our retina. It escapes our grasp beyond these transducers. This conundrum could be aptly illustrated by flying fish in murky water; all we know is how they behave when observed above the water, but what occurs under the water is usually ascribed to our inadequate sense of the void. Light therefore lends itself most welcome as a bridge between the known and the unknown, the ponderable and the imponderable, body and mind, the existential world and its (Divine) programming. It illustrates most aptly the paradox of illusive thoughts. As we meditate, let us observe how thought gets coagulated, so to speak, in order to be tangible to our consciousness.

The pure consciousness has so to speak gradually limited itself more and more

in order to enter into the external vehicles such as the mind and body in order to be conscious of something.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Knowledge is of things in their forms and characteristics, whereas realization is of things in their deeper reality.

Abu Bakr al Warraq

On the other hand, when we realize that it cannot be reduced to that ephemeral "apparition", it eludes our grasp. Without trying to clinch it, to stalk it, we have to shift our sense of being the personal observer to identifying with the ineffable observer.

Not being is the mirror; the world the reflection; and you are as the reflected eyes of the Unseen person. In that eye, His eye sees His own eye.

Shabistari (1880 p.15)

The great art of illumination then consists in shifting our perspective, just like in a hologram, from one perspective to another, highlighting one perspective while downplaying another by means of shifting our sense of being the observer. By "closing one's eyes", Pir-o-Murshid does not mean ignoring, but simply downplaying a perspective in order to highlight another. It is only at a later stage that we are able to extrapolate between both perspectives.

How is illumination attained? by closing our eyes to our limited self and opening our heart to the God who is all perfection.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In the next issue, we will be describing the practices with light prescribed by Pir-o-Murshid for attaining illumination, and parallel views of the ancient Sufis.

It is by this process that man becomes like a luminous star.

113 - Practices Leading to Enlightenment

A light upon a light.

(Qr. 24:35)

I emanated upon Thee a force of love so that thou mayest be fashioned according to my glance.

(Qr. 10:39)

To spark transformation in all the chords of one's being, one needs to be overwhelmed by something beyond, yet overarching one's personal dimension, so stupendous that one finds oneself carried beyond one's commonplace self-image in the far reaches of the splendor of the universe.

The magical spark that can ignite the fire of fervor in our core is the miracle of the phenomenon of light. Light lures us beyond its physical appearance into spheres which we call celestial, from which we unconsciously believe we have been exiled. More so, if we stalk light beyond its physical underpinning, as our human intelligence excels itself, we espy the intelligence of light and grasp in it a clue to our inadequate representation of what we mean by God.

As we know, the guiding principle upon which Sufism is based consists in envisioning ourselves as fragments of the Total Being, which is the universe, traditionally called God - each fragment containing and incorporating the totality holistically - in contrast with the old-fashioned representation of God as "other". On the other hand Pir o Murshid says,

Manifestation is the self of God, but a self that is limited.. It is in man that divinity can be awakened… The soul is a condition of God… The soul of each individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contains God according to the accommodation.

Compare this with Ibn 'Arabi,

God reveals Himself to the potentialities of His being by projecting His shadow.

This shadow is Him and also not Him.

The "divine genes", however, need to be aroused by awakening awareness. Such awakening calls upon us to shift our vantage point step by step from its personal setting into its cosmic dimension, which is in theory co-extensive with the Divine point of view. To upgrade our awareness we find that shifting our notion of light - from light perceived externally, to the light of our own aura, to more subtle levels of light, eventually touching upon the light of intelligence - triggers off a breakthrough in awakening at a cosmic scale.

Since spirituality means grasping and incorporating a further dimension of our being (which is co-extensive with the universe), it is essential to continually bear in mind that the object of our search is God emerging in (and as) ourselves, and the subject searching is God as the ultimate witness, focalized as our consciousness.

Learn, oh my friend, that the object of the search is God, and that the subject who seeks is a light coming from Him.

These last words were those of a very wonderful Sufi dervish, Najm ud-Din Kubra, whose whole life was dedicated to unraveling the mystery of light. For the Sufis, reality (the truth: al Haqq) is revealed to us through form, while being limited by this device whereby God reveals Him/Herself to us; hence God as "reality" transpires through the countenance of God-realized beings:

If God can be seen, it is in the God-realized beings.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Compare this with the words of another Sufi dervish, 'Ala ud-Daula Semnani, equally dazzled by the sortilege of light.

Through Thine own eyes, I look upon Thy countenance.

Just like Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, Ibn 'Arabi distinguishes light radiating from a source located in space from what he calls "light that has no rays", which Pir-o-Murshid calls all-pervading light (like radio waves, intermeshed and spread everywhere).

Light is of two kinds: A light having no rays and radiant light.

Ibn 'Arabi

For Ibn 'Arabi, while perception takes place through sources of light located in space (radiant light), vision takes place through the light within the witness (all-pervading light).

As for the light that has no rays, it is the light within which self-disclosure takes place without rays. Then its brightness does not go outside itself and the viewer perceives it with the utmost clarity and lucidity.

For this, the light cast forward by the eyes needs to be stronger than ambient light.

When ambient light is stronger than the light of sight, man perceives it but does not perceive through it.

Ibn 'Arabi

Pir-o-Murshid points out that this insight is achieved by converging the all-pervading light as one turns within, and then focusing that light as a searchlight.

First the all pervading light, second the light when concentrated on one point, and third the light illuminating all that can take its reflection... You are instrumental in making the all-pervading light allowed to manifest...The all-pervading light manifests as such when it finds a capacity where it can be concentrated.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Turning within, you will find yourself in a transfigured world; you will espy the subtle effigy behind the objects transpiring through their physical appearance. Now notice the affinity between the nature of the fabric of your subtle body and the etheric counterpart of the objects, then the effulgence of your aura (bioluminescence), and the imponderable luster of the auras of the objects thus viewed.

I saw myself through the lights which things carry in their essence, and which

are given to them by their realities - not through an extraneous light.

Ibn 'Arabi

If you identify yourself with your subtle body, then you may discern the beam of your third eye as an extension of your subtle body.

Turn your eyes back into the space within. Then the same eyes that are able to see without are able to see within. In closing the eyes, still the eyes are looking forward. No, they must be turned inward in three centers, in the center between the eyebrows, on the bridge of the nose, and downwards towards the tip of the nose. As the sense of sight is situated in the brain and the sight so charged with the light from within when turned on to the life without see through more deeply. The aura affects the brain and the brain affects the eyes. Thus what the eyes take in effects the brain and the brain effects the aura. Sometimes the third eye sees through the two eyes.

The Sufis have ways of developing the eyes. They show you ways of looking into space that make the eyes capable of seeing what is reflected there. From these the past, the present and the future can be told, and all that surround a person.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Furthermore, Pir-o-Murshid taught his pupils to thrust their light forward through the breath.

The light is thrown forward by the breath. When one has mastered the breath, then one is capable of drawing all the forces of life. And when they are drawn in, and focused in a center, then illumination comes. ... Then you begin to realize that you are like a searchlight, wherever you cast your glance.

Breath is then directed through the eyes or radiated from the heart. Inhale, so to speak, through the eyes and exhale, so to speak, through the eyes.

In the course of this practice, Najm ud-Din Kubra sees two orbs (circles) surrounding his eyes.

Najm ud-Din Kubra (Sirr al Sayr 57. Cf. Corbin 1071, p83)

At a certain point,
The Sufi sees beyond the eyes - or without eyes.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Compare with:

To rend every instant a hundred veils,
The first moment to renounce life,
The last step to fare without feet...
To look beyond the range of the eyes

Rumi (Cf. Nicholson: Diwani Shamsi Tabriz, Selected Poems, CambridgeUniversity Press, 1898)

Light can be cast forth by the breath through the heart. Pir-o-Murshid considers this to be more powerful than that of the eyes.

This power is nothing as compared with the power of the heart.

In a further step, identify yourself with the witness in you - you as the spectator rather than your subtle body or your third eye.

As the eyes cannot see themselves, so it is with the soul - it is sight itself.

The moment it closes its eyes, its own light manifests to its own view.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Compare with Ibn 'Arabi,

Let your state be similar to that of the dematerialized spirit of the Celestial Assembly.

Yet another dervish in search of illumination:

The source where these lights take place is the spiritual entity of the mystic himself.

Najm ud-Din Razi (Cf. Corbin, 1978, p 110)

It is as though it returns to the root from which it became manifest. So nothing sees Him but He.

Ibn 'Arabi

The secret skill here consists in identifying with one's soul rather than one's consciousness as the witness, yet considering one's eyes as carrying this light.

In man there is a hidden light which is divine light. It is by the power of that light that his eyes can see further than the physical eyes can see.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Compare with,

Were it not for the light that belongs to the souls, there would be no witnessing, since witnessing only takes place when two lights come together.

Ibn 'Arabi

To perfect the skill leading to enlightenment, envision the light of your soul threaded through the light of your glance:

Hence light becomes included in light.

Ibn 'Arabi

This could be paralleled with,

Wisdom is born of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Yet, if one overrides one's tendency to ascribe one's glance to one's soul as envisioned as an individual entity, then one awakens into a yet further dimension of the witness.

All things and beings on the surface seem separate from one another, beneath the surface, they approach nearer to each other; and in the innermost plane, they all become one.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Then:

The light of dawn rises on the soul in such a way that that part of the paramount realities emanating from the celestial constellations and their angels who are their souls predominate in it... They are reflected on the bodily habitation.

This quotation is from Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi (maqtul), perhaps the most prominent advocate amongst the Sufis for working with light. He weaved the threads of the original Mazdean tradition (that of the Magi) into the corpus of Sufism.

An intriguing Zoroastrian, Azar Kaivan was a Sufi initiate stalking the light.

When I passed in rapid flight from material bodies, in every sphere and star, I beheld a spirit.

Azar Kaivan (Cf Dabistan, NY. 1937, p 55)

As one puts this into practice, it becomes clear that the clue to insight into the meaningfulness of experience is found by spotting one's celestial identity.

Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages between man, the manifestation of God, and God as the only being; knowing and realizing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence and so accomplishing the heavenly journey.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Compare again with Ibn 'Arabi,

God acquaints them with what corresponds to them in each world by passing with them through each world... The spirit in man is a heavenly subtle organ, the "himma." When it is lavished upon him, he is reunited with the heavens.

You thought that you were the Spectator, the witness (Shahid) of what you experience, but the real witness in you is your angelic counterpart - the witness in the heavens.

(Shahabuddin Suhrawardhi (Cf Corbin 1939)

The practice prescribed by Pir-o-Murshid consists in bridging the discontinuity between the physical plane of which we are generally conscious, and the celestial spheres by first toggling between the two intermittently, then eventually by correlating or extrapolating both.

The soul in its manifestation on the earth is not at all disconnected from the higher spheres, it lives on all spheres, though it is generally conscious of only one place... Only a veil separates us.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

To contact the celestial spheres, it is helpful to turn the eyes upwards.

As man evolves, he ceases to look down on earth; he looks to the heavens. If one wants to seek the heavens, one must change the direction of looking... Look up first, and when your eyes are once charged with divine light, then when you cast your glance on the world of facts, you will have a much clearer vision - the vision of reality.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You will discover that your aura is many-tiered, ranging from infra-red to ultraviolet, as you shift your attention from one chakra to the next. To trigger off this upward thrust, feel the incandescence of your aura, (phosphorescence). Now represent to yourself a flame transmuted as it rises, ascending in your spinal cord envisioned as a chimney.

By closing all the senses one helps that fire to blaze and once the flame has risen, it lights up all the centers within, so all things within and without become clear... And the flame rising from it illuminates the globe - the head.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As soon as you turn your attention to the source of the light of your being, then it seems to dawn upon you like the morning sun.

Each time a light rises up from you, a light comes down towards you. Light rises towards light and descends upon light - it is "light upon light". When the substance of light has grown in you, then it bears an affinity to what is of the same nature in Heaven. Then the substance of the light in heaven which yearns for you is attracted by your light and it descends towards you.

Najm ud-din Kubra, Sirr al-Sayr

The light of dawn has risen upon my soul and there will be no more sunset.

al Hallaj

As Suhrawardhi announces, it will affect the "body habitation."

The seer's own soul becomes a torch in his hand. It is his own light that illuminates his path. It is just like directing a searchlight into dark corners which one could not see before. It is like throwing light upon problems that one did not understand before, like seeing through people like with x-rays when they were a riddle before. He sees the cause behind the effect. He who looks at this marvel begins to see the divine evidence in every face as a person can see the painter in his painting... The glance of the seer opens, unlocks and unfolds all things. As it falls upon a thing, it makes that thing as it wants to make it. This is not actual creating but it is awakening that particular quality which was asleep.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This cannot happen until I become a light. As long as I am not a light, I cannot perceive anything of this knowledge.

Ibn 'Arabi

114 - Unconditional Love

Pir o Murshid cautioned his representatives:

We are being tested in our love.

There are those with whom we resonate quite naturally by the gift of affinity, or those whom we admire, those dear to us, even if we do not see eye to eye with them. But we are challenged in our capacity to love by those whom we find difficult to love, or who make themselves difficult to love, whose personality we criticize, or whose actions we condemn, those who have treated us unjustly or even abused our confidence. In fact this is precisely where dislike or simply incompatibility escalates to the point of culminating in resentment. It is resentment that constitutes the veil separating us from our celestial counterpart and will block access to our celestial home in the hereafter.

The mind is a world, a world that man makes and in which he will make his life in the hereafter as a spider lives in the web it has woven.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

Should one remain encapsulated in one's ego self-image, and one's love is oriented towards the personal dimension of the loved one, one's human love is bound to be vulnerable. One is on tenterhooks as to whether one is still being loved, one may be trying to validate or prove oneself in the eyes of the loved one, or one's love may easily get tarnished by criticism, resentment - a battle of egos. This is where the wisdom of the perennial spiritual lore bespeaks another dimension and a further all-encompassing perspective, removing the impasse. It consists in including dimensions of one's being and that of the loved one which one had failed to countenance.

The false ego is that which that ego has wrongly conceived. It is not that the false ego is our ego and the true ego is the ego of God. It is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

By the same token, one opens to a perspective whereby one sees how everything and every being is interconnected with every other. This is traditionally called the Divine point of view -let us call it trying to see as one imagines the universe would see - everything in reciprocal context rather than in the content of one's personal grasp.

The outlook becomes wide, as wide as the Divine eye. We occupy as much horizon as our consciousness or as much as we are conscious of. We are as great as our spirit. We are as wide as our spirit. We are as low as our spirit. We are as small as our spirit.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

According to the Sufis, the loved one becomes the mirror in which one sees oneself, in all the dimensions of one's being in which the bounty of the universe converges.

Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is in and man is a world ... . The heart of a barley seed conceals a hundred harvests. Behold the world kneaded as dough, the angel with the fiend, the cherubim with Satan.

Mahmood Shabistari (Octogon Press, 1969, p 15 & p 27).

Of course, the more sensitive we are, the more idealistic, the more we entertain a nostalgia for beauty, unaware usually of the fact that this is the way in which our intuitive sense of the Divine perfection, of which we are an imperfect exemplar, is disclosed to us in form.

All faces are His face. My heart has seen the Lord in the most beautiful of forms.

Hadith

God said to love: 'if not for Thy beauty, how should I pay attention to the mirror of existence?'

Rumi (D 26, 106)

The dervishes highlight the dichotomy: splendor (as beauty) and power (as majesty) - masculine and feminine archetypes.

When God has decided to adopt one of his servants as a companion, He opens the door to memory. When the servant exults in this recollection, God opens to him the door of proximity. Then he lifts him to the spheres of (respectful) familiarity, inviting him to sit on the throne of unity. At this stage, He frees him from the veil and invites him into the sphere of unity and from the perspective discloses to him the majesty and the magnificence.

Al Kharraz (p.13)

When God manifests His glory to a man's heart so that His majesty predominates, he feels awe (haybat), But when God's beauty predominates, he feels proximity (uns)... . There is a difference between one who is burned by His majesty in the fire of awe and one who is illuminated by His beauty in the light of contemplation.

Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub, tr. Nicholson, p 376

This is why the personal dimension of love is associated with beauty and majesty, in their more overt expression, in their physical form, but more so in their subtle mode. This is to be grasped in the splendor that transpires through that which appears, rather than in that which appears. In its more advanced mode, it is the beauty or majesty of a human personality.

There comes a time in one's evolution when every touch of beauty moves the heart to tears. It is at that time that the Beloved of Heavens is brought to earth.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

But to grasp it in another, as indeed in oneself, we need to come to terms with the fact that we are many-tiered, and that these many-faceted effigies of our being are intermeshed. Moreover they change rapidly in accordance with our thoughts and attunements. Furthermore, let us realize that the deep core of our being remains immaculate within its own defilement. Should we identify with it, we will grasp beauty transpiring across ugliness

And if you see an ugly face, it is you and if you see Jesus or Mary, it is you.

Rumi

Consequently one will have understanding and compassion for the desperation or compulsiveness in a person who is awkwardly and counterproductively struggling for self-esteem at our cost - or ourselves at the cost of another. Should one overcome the constraint of one's personal identity, and also that of the loved one (thinking that one is a "condition of God" as Pir o Murshid enjoins us to do will have that effect) then, instead of being the target of our judgment, the personal dimension of the loved one becomes the stepping stone leading to the One who represents one's ideal, that is the One whom one really loves.

It is He who in each beloved being is manifested to the gaze of each lover.

Ibn 'Arabi, Ii 366, 18

When this stage is attained, love outreaches its personal dimension and, prevailing over the personal joy and pain of personal love, sparks ecstasy.

This is love: to fly heavenwards, to rend every instant a thousand veils, the first moment to renounce life, the last step to walk without feet.

Shams Tabriz, Diwan, tr Nicholson, Cambridge 1898, p.137

Actually, one is really searching for one's self in the loved one, only to find that it is the Divine Beloved disclosing Him/Herself by manifesting Him/Herself and actuating Him/Herself in the loved one that helps us to find our real selves.

I looked for God and found myself, then I looked for myself and I found God.

Abdullah Ansari

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is me. We are two spirits in the same body.

al Hallaj

For the Sufis, our quest to know "who we are" is our response to the Divine nostalgia.

The Hadith Qudsi says:

I was a secret treasure and I loved to be known.

It does not say: I wished to be known, therefore the motivation was not the curiosity of knowing, but love.

If it had not been a desire and hope of the fruit, how should the gardener have planted the root of the tree? The branch came into existence for the sake of the tree.

Rumi. III 118

The seed does not show the flower in it, yet it culminates in the flower; therefore the flower already existed in the seed. The seed out of which the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are made arises again at the end of the cycle. The same God so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

For the Sufis, the original impulse setting off the momentous process of existence was love, and the mystic's love for God is simply his/her response to God's love for him/her.

On the day of alast, the Beloved said something else - but in whisper: 'Do any of you remember? I have hurried to you.' I said: 'who art Thou?' He said 'the desire of all.' I said: 'who am I?' He said: 'the desire of the desire.'

Rumi, (p. 69 D 9265-67).

And God in His Perfection turned towards that which was in Him: the attribute of nostalgia, and this attribute was also a form in His Essence - which was His essence. Imagine you saw something beautiful in your essence and you were enchanted by this feature in your essence! Turning toward pre-eternity, He spirited a form - His very form and essence.

Having thus radiated, He spirited a person "Huwa, Huwa" (Himself). He considered it for a time amongst His times. Then He saluted this effigy for a time amongst His times. Then He spoke to this human prototype, and complemented it on its good appearance. Then He rejoiced about the good tidings. reaching beyond everything that is knowable or not-knowable. Then He lauded it and glorified it and appointed it as the elect.

al Hallaj, Kitab al Ishk. Cf Massignon, The Passion of al Hallaj, Princeton, 1982.

If indeed love is the magical trigger that sets off the explosion of life as the cosmos, it remains the mysterious imperative spurring our human endeavors, evidenced by the scruple of creative minds for perfectionism, and points to our ponderings concerning the meaningfulness of our lives, our strivings, our frustrations, our disappointments, our disenchantment, and perhaps our reenchantment. Moreover, it is the power of unconditional love that gives us the resolve to uphold a person's pride while acquiescing to their flaws and follies. The great paradox is by loving one's ideal of God espied in a person, one helps that person to honor his/her real self. Therefore it is love that makes God a reality.

115 - What is the Universel?

Awakening in Life

Following is an attempt to explore how our vision of the spirituality of the future (the millennium - Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's message in our time - the Universel) opens new perspectives in our quest for awakening. The spiritual itinerary of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan led him to branch out from the traditional transmission of his Sufi predecessors into an even more encompassing span, as found amongst the more liberal Sufis nurtured in the Chishti Order in India. He incorporated this broad outreach in the Universal Worship; but he clearly anticipated that the message for our time could not be a syncretistic collation of the bountiful gifts of the great world religions in their diversity. The original insight of the religious pioneers - patriarchs, rishis, prophets, masters, saints, women dervishes - has often been distorted or paraphrased by the transmission of their pupils, interpreters, and by the 'institutionalization' of spirituality. Their dogmas or methods of meditation at first sight appear as conflicting. When, however, their doctrines and faiths are rethought and updated in the perspectives opening up to us in our day and age, and more particularly in a projected vision of the future, we can appreciate their congruity in their complementarity. This is the task that Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan initiated and that we are invited to pursue in the Universel. The Sufi transmission remains the seed embedded in this splendid flowering of spirituality he baptized as the Universal Message - the Universel, announcing the millennium.

We need to first meet a preliminary which calls our attention: owning to the reality of pain is our compelling concern.

I hear a call from the Earth - the message answers the call by the voice of the heart.

Paraphrasing Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

I wish to know what is your suffering.

Pasteur

In what way can awakening meet that plea? This is what we are venturing to explore.

First, let us list a few typical cases of pain:

(i) Physical pain: cancer, Aids, arthritis, acute nerve pains, all bodily pains.

(ii) Psychological distress: having been abused, humiliated, snubbed, derided, having been treated unjustly, repressed by the ego of a person - particularly in a marital relationship, let down, abandoned by spouse or partner, experiencing unreciprocated love, a feeling of inadequacy, a poor self-image, a sense of failure, pathological disturbances, loss at the death of a dear one, having a retarded child, drugged teenagers, imprisonment, or being tortured.

(iii) At the soul level: feeling suffocated by the limitations in one's understanding, failure to see meaningfulness in life, or in one's own life, feeling trapped by conditions that seem to preclude enlightenment, being disheartened, disgusted by the profanity, the grossness in the psychological environment - a desperate need for the sacred.

The question before us is what solace, what remedy (if at all), what help can the new vistas in 'spirituality,' meditation, and awakening offer? Simply escape from prevailing conditions cannot offer meaningfulness and joy.

Unhappy is he who looks with contempt at the world, who hates human beings and thinks he is superior to them; the one who loves them thinks only that they are going through the same process that he has gone through. If he cannot put up with conditions around him, he may think he is a superior person, but in reality the circumstances are stronger than him.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, The Alchemy of Happiness

It evidences a lack of appreciation of the invaluable legacy of the great civilizations from which we benefit: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Chaconne of Bach, Notre Dame of Paris, Persepolis, Rembrandt, Shakespeare; the technologies - TV, the computer; the achievements of mountaineers; outer space exploration; the exploits of the minds of mathematicians, physicists, psychologists; the dedication of welfare workers, rescue workers, valor in battle; the exploits in the mind of rishis, physicists, the divine power of dervishes. The ascetic's 'desirouslessness' would not bring the

universe to that degree of sophisticated flowering. It will, however, free us from the constraint of our personal perspective. It fosters detachment, freedom; provides a psychological analgesic against anguish due to our dependence upon environmental conditions that wreak confinement and stress. It is certainly a refuge when we are stymied by psychological overstress that has become intolerable; and therefore a useful rescue vademecum in our psychological first-aid chest.

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

In Buddhism, the crucial step leading to awakening is letting go of the launching platform. Obviously, to awaken from the perspective of the way things appear to the cosmic thinking behind it, one needs to downplay the commonplace perspective to highlight the perspective of the meaningfulness underpinning it, but does that entail discarding all the bounty of the heirloom of our civilizations that are essential features of our psyche? To eschew doing just this, we need to operate a transmutation of these features in our psyche so as to carry them aloft in our flight above existential conditions. Beethoven's optimism in the victory of good over evil, Brahms' conversion of pain into joy, the glorification of the sacred that inspired the builders of the Chartres Cathedral, Mother Theresa's compassion, the courage of firemen and rescue operators, represent the quintessence of the symphonies, or the monuments in stone, or the sordid details of the Calcutta slums. The culmination of the thinking of the whole cosmos at its leading edge is incorporated right into the electronics and hardware of the rocket hurtling across sidereal space, carrying the quintessence of the human ingenuity nurtured on planet Earth beyond the telluric orb of matter, into the noosphere.

Do you not think that our world has intelligence? The whole of humanity has contributed to the way we think today. There is a mind behind all minds; there is a heart which is the source of all hearts; there is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every living being has had. No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. It all accumulates and collects in that mind as an eternal reservoir - the divine mind. The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

What help does awakening 'beyond life' (as in Samadhi) provide us to find a solution to suffering? Significantly, this feat of stepping out of the common-place into a cosmic outreach and transcendent overarching dimension that motivated the Hindu rishis and Buddhists is precisely what sparked the genius of creative people to explore a psychological space beyond the middle range.

Spiritual attainment is to be reached by the raising of the consciousness from limitation to perfection. We occupy as much horizon as is within our consciousness. Then a person does not see every condition as it appears to be, but sees behind every condition its deeper meaning.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, The Alchemy of Happiness

Here indifference is countered by enthusiasm. These outstanding achievements of human initiative and strenuous toil are, for the Sufis, the many-splendored outbursts of the nostalgia of the universe (the Ishq Allah of the Sufis) breaking through each of the fragments of itself (we humans) as it evolves (as we evolve). Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan beckons us to exploit that driving force, while being cautioned by the way this nostalgia can become deviated in us, where selfishness and greed corrupt us in our strife to improve our human conditions, in our personal involvement in existential circumstances, rather than honoring a concern to share in building a beautiful world of beautiful people. He therefore urges us to orient that force with a wise, masterful will (the example of the yachtsperson).

Creativity is sparked by the "homonization" (a word of Teilhard de Chardin) of the driving emotion of the whole universe, customized by our diverse uniqueness, in the context of the problems that arise when the individuated wills of the fragments of the universe affirm their individual idiosyncrasies and conflict, causing joy and pain. Creativity, born out of the human drama, peaks in the cosmic celebration signaling itself to us, sometimes erupting within that very drama when it inspires us to overarch our differences out of love and understanding for the sacredness of the human spirit. Thus the divine creativity is carried further through the human being, says Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan; spurred by suffering, it proves healing.

It is our passion for our ideal that fosters our creativity. Our artwork is our own personality. The beauty is that we can make it what we wish. Our thoughts, emotions, and realizations - especially if recurrent - shape our personality and our face.

In our day and age, we are challenged into extrapolating between our need for freedom and our sense of fulfillment from being of service by involving ourselves with people and circumstances out of love, responsibility, sharing the joys and pains together, and discovering the meaningfulness which we were seeking 'beyond the beyond' right in the drama and tour de force of life in the world. The religious tenets need to be updated by virtue of our present day concern for realism. This is why Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan does not say "give up the world", but "loosen the ties", thereby honoring your need for freedom within constraining circumstances while at the same time taking responsibility. For him, awakening is achieved by downplaying the commonplace perspective while highlighting a perspective where you see what is enacted behind the apparent scenario, rather than simply dismissing not just the physical world but also psychological circumstances as maya - awakening in life rather than beyond life.

Applying the theory of maya at the psychological level, according to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, distress can result from a faulty assessment of our problems, moreover from our deceptive self-image. Nirvetarka Samadhi is the first step towards debunking one's biased self-deception.

But being cautioned against 'what is not' is not sufficient. We wish to know 'what is.' This is where Sufism holds a complementary rather than contradictory view about maya. What is enacted in our problems, that we may fail to grasp - albeit blurred by our faulty assessment - is signaling to us by dint of those very problems. Let us consider our problems as clues leading to grasping what the issues are at a cosmic scale, rather than entrapping ourselves in our personal bias. Follow the clue by shifting consciousness to the antipodal vantage point to that of the personal pole of our being by identifying with the deathless and impersonal pole of our being, which is co-extensive with that of all beings - in fact this is what is sometimes meant by the word God.

This validation of life is in some way connected with an evolutionary trend in the notion of God - no more 'up there,' transcendent, out of reach - as the universe, including

ourselves.

This breakthrough in the 'concept of God' represents freedom from the theological conditioning of our minds. Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan was announcing the spirituality of the millennium. He called it the "Message of Spiritual Liberty", liberated from many of the hackneyed views of the past. Notice also that it is a collective awakening, rather than a personal one, therefore something that is happening to humanity as we evolve.

The Message is the awakening of the consciousness of humanity to the divinity of man.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

This may serve as a clue to what is meant by the "Universel." It now becomes clear that on that last day when Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan was with his mureeds in Suresnes, before departing for India where he was deceased, he was announcing the next step: the Universel, beyond all 'isms.' The temple could not just be a building in stone, a housing for the celebration of the unity of religious ideals, but a temple made of people - people who, through the power of prayer, are announcing the spiritual message for the future: the liberated message of spiritual liberty.

The solution to the problem of the day is that the consciousness of humanity may be awakened to the divinity of the human being.

O Thou who art the maker, moulder and builder of the Universe, build with Thine own hands the Universel, our temple, for Thy divine Message of love, harmony and beauty.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

116 - The Dance of Joy

A million galaxies are a little foam on that shoreless sea.
We came whirling out of nothing scattering stars like dust.
The stars made a circle and in the middle we dance,
Turning and turning, it sunders all attachment.
Every atom turns bewildered,
And it is only God circling Himself

Rumi

Thy music causeth my soul to dance; in the murmur of the wind I hear Thy flute; the waves of the sea keep the rhythm of my dancing steps. Through the whole of nature I hear Thy music played, my Beloved; my soul while dancing speaketh of its joy in song.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

To be happy, to dance, we need to be beautiful and to be beautiful we need to validate ourselves, and it is just in our ability to love those others who make themselves most difficult to love that life tests us in our love of ourselves, because, often unbeknown to ourselves, it is our self-esteem that is at stake.

Souls are moved to dance at the sight of beauty.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Why should the gardener plant the seed if it were not for the love of the flower?

Rumi

The bottom line is, as Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan pointed out, "we are tested in our love." Yes, this is precisely what is enacted in life. It is admittedly difficult to keep one's joy - the dance of one's soul - high when dealing with a cantankerous person, or an unkind person or a domineering or manipulative person, or a person who exhibits a pattern of trying to draw one into a conflict.

Our spiritual progress is determined by our ability to harmonize with our social environment; but how can we harmonize with people who would only be well disposed toward us if we give in to their egos, thereby forfeiting our own values and responsibilities? This is assuredly the great art of life: being able to cumulate authority, and kindness, and joy - and insight. People are awkwardly vying to validate their vulnerable self-esteem by affirming their egos - maybe at our cost. Maybe it is the only way they know to fulfill this need. Maybe they justify it in their reasoning as standing up for their opinion.

Understanding is the first step to forgiveness. One can entertain understanding, and forgiveness, and love, even respect, while standing by one's commitment in life. Forgiving someone who hurt a dear one is much harder than forgiving oneself. Moreover some cases are so outrageous that one questions: how is it possible in this case? Yet forgiving is the key to joy and to that authority that is not powered by the despotism of the human ego - having room in one's heart for those who offend and betray one.

The Sufi's constant attitude towards others is that of love. What does love mean? Love means forgiveness.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

As for guilt, if we are honest, it leaves us no escape. Remission? To acquiesce to divine forgiveness, we need to forgive ourselves. Making a pledge to never repeat the offense, and making amends, will help.

However much you have sinned, you are welcome in our caravan.

Rumi

God has Mercy and forgives your sins.

Qur'an

To give joy to others, we need to find joy in ourselves. Therefore now to dance, we need to dance the dance of joy over the thorns under our feet, while rejoicing that we have been transformed by reconnoitering our shadow and thus being able to confront

it. We rely upon our ego to ensure our psychological defenses; it features our crutches. To wean ourselves we need to validate our self-esteem by including in our self-image the celestial levels of our being.

We are inexorably immersed in the very selfsame process whereby life, in its vertiginous ascent that we call evolution, transforms the dung feeding the seed into a beautiful flower - moreover with the bonus of a perfume. Does not the seething clash of warring clouds resolve in the luminous fireworks of lightning? Is it not significant that, as the universe evolves, matter in the form of the human body serves the awakening of higher levels of being? The pain of childbirth opens up a peep into the heavens revealed to us through the eyes of a babe. We learn that the ordeal of those tortured in concentration camps erupts in a break-through of ineffable ecstasy as death rescues them from their executioners. The example of heroic beings may help one. It can help to make the transit into "life after life." A revered friend once told me he had been tortured twice during the second world war, once by the Nazis, then by the Soviets, and in his ordeal, he kept feeling sorry for those who were causing him agony in body and mind because he saw they were brainwashed and consequently he could forgive them. He said all he had to do was to get into the consciousness of Christ being tortured by the soldiers of Herod.

Forgiving makes the difference between incandescing in the fire of the psychological hell of acrimony, or exulting in the splendor and clarity of celestial effulgence.

Have you ever been graced by a dream revealing the abandon of the heavenly dance of jubilation when, by forgiving the traitors who betrayed them, heroes are crowned with the beatitude of saintliness?

117 - The Universel / The Message

If we ponder a moment about the teaching which we have shared throughout the years, it becomes evident that we have been training mureeds in meditation skills with a view to helping them introduce further dimensions into their lives, to consequently unfurl latent potentials, and to be better able to meet the challenges of their lives by applying the insight gained through spiritual awakening in real life situations. Thus we have been obviating the danger of the fallacy of the "Spiritual Bypass", of which many spiritual groups have been accused, by making their disciples otherworldly and therefore unable to deal with their personal problems in the world in our day and age.

On the other hand there are other issues in our life than our personal problems: the need for adumbrating our personal beings through transpersonal spiritual values, an attunement to the sacred. A movement is erupting in the Sufi Order, particularly amongst the more long-standing Representatives, for the universal dimension of our teaching. This beckons us to eschew our personal concerns and transcend our personal identity.

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego, and the true ego is the ego of God, it is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

It is the notion of God as the antipodal pole to our personal ego that shifts our identity from its constraint in our personal dimension. The personal pole of our being - commonly called our ego - figures in our psychological defense system. It protects us from the egos of others, and can lead us to try to dominate others to upholster our self-esteem. It has been bequeathed to us by our conditioning, devised in the course of evolution in its primeval stages. To evolve, one needs to substitute for this level of conditioning the higher modes of programming of the universe, and this is where we find freedom from the more primitive modes of conditioning.

The only way to wean ourselves from this bumptious notion of ourselves (however incongruously flawed it may be by a sense of inadequacy) without incurring psychological withdrawal symptoms, is to discover and eventually identify with the

higher levels of our being, which correspond to higher attunements of our consciousness of sublime spheres of the universe that we ascribe to God. When we have negotiated this step, we realize that the deep thrust behind all our teachings is the Message. Personal development is only a component of the fulfillment of our being.

Just as at one time there was a call from everywhere to guard self-interest, now the moment has come for the message to be given for men to understand and consider one another. The happiness and peace of each individual depends on the happiness and peace of all. The complete joy is in sharing one's joy with another. The selfish one enjoys himself and does not care for others. Whatever he enjoys, things of the earth or things of heaven, his enjoyment is not complete. In this third stage, following, the message is fulfilled, when he has heard and pondered upon it and passed the same blessing to others.

The Sufi Order, or Esoteric School, was the school for training to open the door to the spirituality of the future, called the Message.

Our activity in the line of religion - which is a side activity, considering the Esoteric School and esotericism as the main activity - is still the answer to the cry of the whole humanity, not the Esoteric School. Before the soul has expressed its cry, it has reached the heart of the messenger.

Pir-o-Murshid clarifies that the Sufi Order is not a sect:

The Sufi Order is a school that represents the embodiment of all the schools, and is answering the need of the present day. The Sufi Order, therefore, is the body composed of those interested in spiritual attainment who have been initiated in the Sufi Order which was formed in 1910, when the Sufi message was brought to the Western world.

To reach out beyond the boundaries of the personal self, one needs to be concerned about others, about the human family, about the Planet. By dedicating ourselves to service, we nurture the cosmic outreach of our own being. Here lies the step transiting between the Esoteric School - the Sufi Order, and the Message.

The whole humanity is as one body; and any organ of that body, hurt or troubled, can cause trouble to the whole body, indirectly.

This can require sacrifice of personal greed beyond personal need, also self-abnegation, ambition, conceit, (which may require us to forfeit status).

When Pir-o-Murshid founded the "Universel" in that historic ceremony of Hijerat Day on September 13th 1926, he was doing more than placing the cornerstone of a temple of all religions...

The other need just now is the need of a Temple for the Universal Worship. When your Murshid was brought here, destiny settled him here. Spirits were moved to take this piece of ground, that a temple be made here. But now that destiny has made your Murshid settle here in Suresnes, not very far from here, in this vicinity a miniature Temple may be erected; and on such a model, however small, that it may be copied in the different countries.

...but announcing the next step: the Universel emerging out of the Sufi Movement.

I wish to say a few words on the subject of our efforts in constructing something [The Universel]. We have come together, brought together by destiny in friendship, in sympathy, in love, and this must have a special meaning. And that special meaning is that we are constructing something, we are building something in the air. And this building is not a building for a certain time. This building is built for centuries to come.

These statements made by Pir-o-Murshid as he was approaching the fulfillment of his life bear testimony to two last wishes: First, that a temple of all religions be built in Suresnes...

Someone asked me, "But why must it be in a place like Suresnes? If the Sufi message sought from a practical point of view what is best for its earthly progress, certainly we should ignore that mystical significance which is working behind our efforts. There is a mystical outlook, there is a mystical significance, there is a mystical point of view which is different from that which we call a practical point of view. Things of great significance are beyond what we call our

practical point of view.

. . . and second, that conjointly a temple be built of people dedicated to serve the message of unity.

It is our thoughts and our feelings which will serve in this temple as stones and bricks and tiles, and it is our feelings which will hold this temple for centuries to come. My earnest mureeds are the trustees of what is given and will be given; to collect it, to guard it, to protect it, and preserve it for future generations. This opens up a different thought before my mureeds; every mureed has a contribution to make to this temple, and the best contribution he can make is his devotion, his faith in the message, his sincere service to the Cause, his sympathy, his friendship with Murshid.

We feel the urgency of doing something for others rather than for ourselves. Pir-o-Murshid was a pioneer, sensitive to the pulse of the trend through which our human family has and is going. Listening to what he called the cry of humanity, he pointed out to his fellow beings where a crucial fallacy is causing suffering and misery at a world scale, to meet a dire need.

There is lightning, there is thunder, and the rain falls; and there are wars and disasters before the message comes. Storms are very often warnings of what is to follow, and the different kinds of battles and revolutions are often warnings, before the coming of peace the deeper the sorrow, the higher the voice of the heart rises, until it reaches the throne of God; and that is the time when the answer comes. And at this time when the world is upset this message conveys to the world the divine message... The Divine message is the answer to the cry of souls, individually and collectively.

Pir-o-Murshid sounds an alarm that resonates with our own concerns in our day and age, and beckons us to rise to the call. Only a change in thinking can bring this about individually and collectively. There are intonations erupting though the words spoken by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan that bespeak the cosmic dimensions that mark the stature of a prophetic message.

There is something in the whole creation, which is like an alarm clock set for a

certain time to make a sound, so that one may awaken. That clock sounds through all the activity of evolution, and when a certain point of evolution is touched man is awakened by the alarm: that is the word that was lost. It has its echo in the longing. When a person cannot wake up in the morning of his own accord, then the alarm clock awakes him. The prophets were this alarm.

Pir-o-Murshid diagnosed the malaise in an area that affects millions, billions of people: religion.

People think that the reason for war is mostly political, but religion is a greater warmonger than any political ideas. It is often for no other reason than clinging to the personality of their particular teacher, claiming for him superiority over other teachers, and degrading a teacher held in the same esteem by others, that people have separated themselves from one another, and caused most of the wars and factions and contentions which history records among the children of God. Rejection of the stranger, and belief only in the one whom he has once acknowledged, has kept man in darkness for ages. Man has held fast to one prophet and ignored the others, because although he knew his religion he did not know the message. He has taken the book as his religion without recognizing the message.

There is a tendency in the human race which has appeared in all ages: it leads man to accept every expression of the message which has been given him, to be won by it, blessed by it, and yet to fail to recognize who the messenger is. The followers of each form of the message profess devotion to their Lord and Master, by whatever name he had in the past, but they do not necessarily know the Master. What they know is the name and the life of the Master that has come down to them in history or tradition; but beyond that they know very little about him. If the same one came in another form, in a garb adapted to another age, would they know him or accept him? No, they would not even recognize him, because it was not the message but the form that they accepted in the past; a certain name or character; a part but not the whole. Man refused to believe the Masters and their teachings, whether of the past or future, if their names were not written in the particular tradition he believed, or if he had not heard their names in the legends handed down for ages among his people.

Therefore the people of that part of the world who have acknowledged the Hebrew prophets do not for instance recognize Avatars such as Rama and Krishna, or Vishnu and Shiva simply because they cannot find these names in their scriptures. The same thing occurs in the other part of humanity, which does not count Abraham, Moses or Jesus among its Devatas, as it does not find those names written in the legends with which it is familiar. Even if it were true that Brahma was the same Devata whom the Hebrews called Abraham, and if Christ was the same Master whom the Hindus have called Krishna, yet man would not recognize as one those whom he has distinguished as different, having a higher opinion of one of them and a lower opinion of the other.

The work of the Sufi Order is to give the combined theory of the Semitic line of mystics and of the Hindu line of mystics, the two joined together. By Semitic I mean not only the line of Moses, but it included Christ also. There are also two distinct mystic lines, and both are joined in what is called the Sufi message. Besides this, to interpret this in a modern form is the meaning of the message.

The premises of religious unity were already present in Islam and particularly in Sufism.

We have sent our messengers to every part of the earth.

Qur'an

This calls for a particularly relevant statement recorded as a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad in Muslim's Sahih:

On the day of the resurrection, God will show Himself to His servants in a form that they have not known. It will not be the form of the God of their faiths, but some form from among the divine determinations in which other determinations have known their God. Then the servant will deny and reject Him and take refuge in God against this "false" God, until at last God discloses Himself to them in the form of their own faith. Then they would recognize Him.

Cf. H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination According to Ibn 'Arabi*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p 199.

Also W. Chjittick: *The Sufi path of knowledge*, State of NY University Press 1989.

In this same vein, the Sufis recognize the differences in the faiths of people.

The God who is in a faith (says Ibn 'Arabi) is the God whose form the heart contains, Who discloses Himself to the heart in such a way that the heart recognizes Him. Since the form in which He discloses Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which He discloses Himself. That is why there are many faiths. To each believer the Divine Being is He who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith. If God manifests Himself in a different form, the believer rejects Him. And that is the reason why dogmatic faiths combat one another.

H.Corbin, opus cit. p. 197

Every instant the Loved One assumes a new garment.
He became Noah and went into the ark when at his prayer the world was flooded.
He became Abraham and appeared in the midst of the fir, which bloomed with roses for his sake.
Then he became Jesus and ascended to heaven and glorified God.
In brief, it was He that was coming and going in every generation thou hast known,
Until at last He appeared in the form of an Arab, and gained the empire of the world.
The lovely Winner of Hearts became a sword in the hand of Ali.
No, no, it was even He that cried in human shape "Ana 'l Haqq".
There is no transmigration, nothing is transferred,
Rumi has not spoken and will not speak words of infidelity; do not disbelieve Him!

Rumi: Selections by Reynold A. Nicholson, George Allen & Unwin, London1964.

To understand what is meant by the Message, our minds need to grasp the meaning of perennity: a continuity in change.

Those who limit Christ to the historic period of the life of the prophet of Nazareth surely limit the message, in spite of his open declaration that he is the

first and the last. Christ also said, "I have not come to give a new law, but I have come to fulfill the law", which means that no new religion has ever been given, although the world has taken it so. Those who came with this message of religion have given it in diverse forms, in accordance with the evolution of the people at that particular time, but the religion was one and the same.

These are the premises that have flowered in the message announced by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

We are living at a time when the world is gradually, though sometimes reluctantly, weaving itself into a whole. Many welcome this message of mutual understanding and respect while recognizing the differences. The Universal message is not syncretism:

The Sufi does not say this religion is greater than the other, nor does he come out and say this religion and that religion are equal. He leaves it to the individual to think as he thinks. He only holds his service as the proof of admiring all the teachers and respecting all the scriptures, which are respected by humanity.

It makes it easier to understand another religion to one's own if one sees how they emerged in the course of history.

To every individual, nation, and race, there is a special message. Every prophet had to speak in the manner of the time in which he lived, and according to the evolution of that time. Also, the custom of each country differs from that of other countries; the manners and life differ. If the messenger is born in one country and has to give his message in another country, surely he has to consider the way in which the people there look at life, and to give his message accordingly. That the Messengers came successively did not mean that they were to give different Messages, but that they should correct the corruption made in the message of the past by its followers; and also to revive principles in order to suit the evolution of the period, and to recall the same truth to the human mind which had been taught by the past Masters but had become lost from memory.

Their messages differ from one another in their outer appearance, each message being given in accordance with the age of man's evolution, and also in

order to add a particular part in the course of divine wisdom. Certain laws and principles were prescribed by them to suit the country where the message was given, the climate, the period, customs, manners and requirements. For instance when wealth was esteemed the message was delivered by King Solomon; when beauty was worshipped, Joseph, the most handsome, gave the message; when music was regarded as celestial David gave his message in song; when there was curiosity about miracles Moses brought his message; when sacrifice was highly esteemed Abraham gave the message; when heredity was recognized, Christ gave his message as the Son of God; and when democracy was necessary, Muhammad gave his message as the Servant of God, one like all and among all; this put an end to the necessity for more prophets, because of the democratic nature of his proclamation and message.

He proclaimed: la ilaha illa 'llah (none exists but God). God constitutes the whole being, singly, individually and collectively, and every soul has the source of the divine message within itself. This is the reason why there is no longer the need for mediation, for a third person as a savior between man and God. For man has evolved enough to conceive the idea of God being all and all being God, and has become tolerant enough to believe in the divine message given by one like himself, who is liable to birth, death, joy, and sorrow, and all the natural vicissitudes of life.

The purpose of the Sufi message embodies a growing feeling amongst many well advised people in our time to eschew sectarianism, one of the calamities of our times, the cause of so much intolerance and violence.

The Sufi Movement will try to avoid sectarianism, which has divided man in all ages of the world's history. The Sufi message is not opposed to any religion, faith or belief; on the other hand it is a support of all religions; it is a defense for religions which are attacked by the followers of other religions. At the same time the Sufi Movement provides humanity with the religion which is in reality all religions. The Sufi Movement does not call man away from his belief or church - it calls man to live it. The Sufi Movement, therefore does not stand as a barrier between its member and its own religions faith, but as an open door leading to the heart of his faith.

The positive side is that it is not just tolerance. It is all-encompassing and thereby announces the emergence, out of the spectrum of diversity, the perspective of a world religion.

Sufism is not a new religion or community. It does not want to add a community to the world. At the same time the Sufi Movement provides humanity with the religion which is in reality all religions. It is the world message and that religion which will be the religion of the whole humanity, a religion which does not distract the mind of any person from his own religion.

When it comes to recognizing the one initially transmitting the Message, Pir-o-Murshid's response is even more enigmatic, for good reasons, and challenges the commonplace mind beyond its limits in once more reconciling the irreconcilables - the continuity in change. Pir-o-Murshid often quotes Christ:

The key is in the words, 'I am Alpha and Omega ... I am the first and the last.' Can that mean, 'I came only for a time, and then I was called Jesus, and only then did I give a message; I spoke neither before nor after that time'?' Alpha and Omega means First and Last; always, continually present; never absent from the beginning of creation to the end If one could only see that spirit hidden behind different personalities, one would be constantly in the vision of Christ.

Pir-o-Murshid points out that in the past the voice of the message needed to make a claim:

There was a time when the world was not capable of seeing. Humanity did not have enough realization to recognize the message, which is why the claim of prophecy had to be made. But now the world can recognize, sooner or later, what is right and what is wrong. The warner, the master, the messenger of today will not claim; he will only work. He will leave his work to prove for itself whether it is true or false.

Besides the message is not heard, not understood, not received until the messenger has disappeared.

We are living in different times:

Each prophet had a mission to prepare the world for the teaching of the next; each one prophesied the coming of the next, and the work was thus continued by all the prophets until Mohammed, the Khatim al Mursalin, the last messenger of divine wisdom and the seal of the prophets, came on his mission, and in his turn gave the final statement of divine wisdom: 'None exists but Allah.' There was no necessity left for any more prophets after this divine message, which created the spirit of democracy in religion by recognizing God in every being.

We are living at a time when several spiritual leaders have laid claims to be the prophet or avatar.

The messenger never makes claims. Thousands will listen to those who claim to be messengers, but the wind of the spirit will destroy all that is false. It is not the claim that makes the messenger, it is the message. The being of the prophet, the work of the prophet, and the fulfillment of his task are themselves the proof of prophethood. He lives as a human being, subject to love, hate, praise, and blame; he passes his life in the world of attachment and the life that binds with a thousand ties from all sides. Yet he does not forget the place from whence he has come.

It requires wisdom on the part of those fired by the power of this universal message to avoid deterring people who perceive proselytism in our enthusiasm, especially at a time when guru-worship has proven so deceptive.

I may warn it is never enough, and that is to keep in control your appreciation, your enthusiasm, and your sympathy for Murshid, and for the Cause, and always take care so as not to make the message conspicuous in the eyes of the world. I very well know the feeling of my sincere mureeds, who at the moment of appreciation of the Message, of the blessing, wish that the whole world could share with them.

Moreover from past experience, people have become (quite rightly) wary of sects.

The Sufi Order is not a community and not a religion; it is a nucleus of the human brotherhood which is the inner call of every soul without any intention of forming an exclusive community, but to unite in this service the people of all

different religions. The Sufi Movement is not supposed to take the whole humanity in its arms so that they should become members of the Sufi Movement, but on the service of the whole humanity is the fulfillment of the Sufi Mission.... It will share with them and it is sharing with them unconsciously; but the ideal of its members is to invite humans to become members of humanity....

However when appraised of such a powerful thought, so important at the present transit through which humanity is going, the need for workers is felt as it was indeed in the time of Pir-o-Murshid.

It is natural that it is difficult to have workers in a world cause sufficient to provide everywhere there is need. But still this must be understood, that as many workers in the Cause we possess, so more facility and strength comes to the spreading of the Cause. Although very few whose destiny it is to serve God and humanity in this direction, we ought to feel ourselves blessed. In the strength of that blessing, we should feel fully encouraged and helped to serve God and humanity. Are the workers of this message priests? No, they are the soldiers of the army of peace, the army which is working to bring about peace in the diverse religions of this world, which have disputed, argued, and kept themselves away from one another, looking upon one another's religions as wrong.

We have been working on a curriculum for the Sufi Order - the Esoteric School, but what could be the curriculum or the Universel - the Message? Most of Pir-o-Murshid's teaching opens a perspective on the wide vision of the spirituality of the future. The second installment of the curriculum is on its way, showing parallels point by point between Pir-o-Murshid's teaching and that of the Sufis. There can be no doubt that the message emerged out of Sufism. So where is the dividing line? Upon deep reflection and meditation, it avers itself that it is absolutely not definable, but a matter of growing to the realization of the vast spiritual outreach that Pir-o-Murshid reconnoitered.

People mostly think that the spiritual message must be something concrete and definite in the way of doctrines or principles, but that is a human tendency which does not belong to the divine nature, which is unlimited life itself. I do not wish to give any particular teaching to my mureeds on the subject of the

Message, because it is something which must come from themselves, a realization which must spring from their own heart, that the soul may become convinced from itself, and from within, without outer teaching. Only as my mureeds will grow in the realization of the Truth, so they will realize the importance of the Message, the sacredness of the Message, and their own responsibility in the delivery of the message of the time.

During those last years when Pir-o-Murshid was walking on the Planet, a Siraj had suggested setting up a school of comparative religion for the training of cherags. Pir-o-Murshid saw that this was not the answer. For one thing, comparative religion is a matter for scholars, and even most of these need to specialize in one religion. The reason for Pir-o-Murshid's attitude is that the message is not syncretism. It would not do justice to their rich contribution to our spiritual heritage.

Unity is not uniformity.

Efforts of comparing their tenets or dogmas show contradictions and incomparabilities. It is easier to compare their methods of meditation because here they prove to be complementary rather than contradictory, here we are talking about experience rather than belief.

Instead of doing as the theologists in colleges who only want to find what is the difference between Moses and Buddha, one should look behind all religions to see where they unite, to find out how the followers of all the different religions can be friends, how they can come to that one truth. To say that the whole world must belong to one Church, one religion, is as absurd as for all people to wear one kind of dress. The world would become uninteresting; the difference between them existed only in those principles and rituals which were given to the people of that time and harmonized with their standard of intelligence and evolution. Let the people have Churches, beliefs, faiths, let them have different conceptions of things as long as they are brought closer to the realization of truth. Then they will naturally understand better that it is true wisdom, which is the real light, that it is the central wisdom which brings them together and which is the inspirer of humanity. It is in self-realization that the mystery of the whole of life is centered. Belief is a thing, but faith is a being.

Even most of the followers of religions do not know their own religion let alone that of others.

Does every Christian understand the Bible? Does every Muslim know the Qur'an, or every Hindu the Vedanta? No, they may know the words of the verses, but not always the real meaning. Among the Muslims there are some who know the whole Qur'an by heart, but that does not fulfil the purpose. The whole of nature is a secret book, yet it is an open book to the seer. How can man translate it? How can man interpret it? It is like trying to bring the sea on to the land; one can bring it, but how much?

Besides, Pir-o-Murshid warned us against the bias that our interpretation may incur by our very enthusiasm for the Message:

When they give an interpretation of these secrets to others, they become limited, for they take the color of his own personality and the form of the thought of those to whom the message is given.

Syncretism freezes one in static conceptualization. Life moves on - thoughts evolve.

Advancement or progress is not standing still and stopping at one ideal or principle. The work of the Sufi Movement is not to collect all the rainwater in its own tanks, but to work and make a way for the stream of the message to flow, supplying water to the fields of the world. The greatest progress is a constant expansion of the divine spirit, expansion in any direction so long as the ideal of unity is applied.

However, are there not certain thoughts which - although already articulated in the religions of the past and particularly in our Sufi transmission that Pir-o-Murshid highlighted - that might serve as guidelines for those enthused by the Message?

The Sufi message is the awakening of humanity to the divinity in man (not just personal awakening through meditation).... The note, that the Sufi message is striking at the present time, is the note, which sounds the divinity of the human soul - to make human beings recognize the divinity in the human soul. It is the spirit of all souls, which is personified in all ages as God. The Sufi sees the

vision of God, the worshipped deity, in His immanence, manifest in nature, and life now becomes for him a perfect revelation both within and without. What did the spiritual message bring? It brought to the world a living God. The limitless God cannot be made more intelligible to our limited self unless He was first made limited. That limited ideal becomes as an instrument, as a medium of God Who is perfect and Who is limitless.

The advanced views offered by the message cannot fit into the framework of the commonplace mind and therefore cannot avoid being paradoxical. It was imbedded mysteriously in the dogmas for the beings of enlightenment; as the thinking of humanity evolves, it needs to be articulated:

God is in man and man is in God, yet God is God and man is man.

In what way can this help those who are fired by the perspective of the message and wish to spread it to their fellow beings?

Warning comes in time as intuition to the soul. Nothing can answer the purpose of humanity save the process of sages and of the wise of all ages which leads souls to self-realization.

Since it is not proselytizing or propagating a doctrine, it can only arise out of a deep experience and attunement.

In this experience the consciousness touches a sphere from whence it cannot get an impression of any name or form. The impression it gets is a feeling, a feeling of illumination, of life, of joy. What message does it give? It gives a message of God, which comes directly to every soul. And what is this message? God says to the soul, 'I am with you, I am your own being, and I am above all limitations, and I am life, and you are more safe, more living, more happy and more peaceful in this knowledge than in anything else in the world.

This is where we need to prepare ourselves through the realizations arrived at in the meditations we learn in the Esoteric School.

The spiritual man reaches higher than the human plane, touches the divine

plane, and brings the message from the divine to the human plane. In this way, instead of remaining on the divine plane, he arrives among his fellow men, for their welfare… Then one knows that language which is the language of heaven.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's final bequest:

Every person possesses this faculty in some form and to a limited degree; but the spirit of guidance is found among few indeed of the human race. Every soul has the source of the Divine message within itself. This is the reason why there is no longer the need for mediation - for a third person as a savior between man and God.

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* all quotes are from Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan unless otherwise noted.

118 - Updating our Understanding of Spirituality

While the prow of the momentous advance of civilization is exploring new perspectives by abandoning previous formats, the more populous bulk of human potential is still bogged into diehard customs, habits of thought, and dogmas. There are prescriptions, institutionalization, authoritarianism, vested spiritual interests - in fact we're right back into the sclerozed obscurantism, and bigotry of the middle ages. As we stand on the brink of opening up exciting perspectives for the millenium, in the midst of the din of war cries, testing technological weaponry to stem the primitive territorial conquests fed by hackneyed, outmoded feuds, the ugly face of resentments, intolerance for the unfamiliar unknown, revenge, vendettas, the ordeal of victims of abuse throughout the world, the victims of religious fanaticism; we seek rescue in the way of life, the dedication, the human values of the saints, recluses and prophets, "warners of coming dangers and awakeners of the world from sleep". These values are embedded in the conscience of the more evolved beings, appalled, alerted by the sounds of alarm to take responsibility in redressing the infamy.

At this juncture, more then ever in the world's history, we are poised between the push of the past and the pull of the future. Advances in technology, cultural changes, new ways of thinking, anomalous art forms are beckoning upon us to brainstorm a brave new world - while the attendant greed, crass materialism, elitism, callousness and manipulation, balks the sensitivity of nobler souls. Those nobler souls' cultural values include the dedication to charity for the victims of that emerging power which abuses our physical resources; and include the splendor that sparks creative minds exploring loftier dimensions of thinking, uplifting our spirits by an intuition of the sacred nature of our human status.

The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. If the Planet did not have an intelligence, it would not have intelligent beings on it. The collective working of several minds and the activity of the whole world in one direction are governed by the intelligence of the Planet.

The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The Creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind...

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, from the Unity of Religious Ideals.

There is a mind behind all minds; there is a heart which is the source of all hearts; there is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every living being has had. No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. It all accumulates and collects in that mind as an eternal reservoir - the Divine Mind.

Thus we are recurrently pummeled between honoring our sacred traditions as a safeguard against loosing one's roots, and conversely updating by upgrading our thinking beyond undemonstrated assumptions taken for granted for having neglected to examine them. Pioneers in the thinking of humanity in the religious realm, even in the secular, have consistently bypassed conformity to the traditions of their ancestors even as they honored those ancestors, and thereby opened wider horizons embracing both the past and the future. Such was the curve of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan's spiritual journey as he moved from the transmission of his Sufi predecessors to the all-embracing purview of the "Universel", the Message of Unity. We encounter this challenge in our Sufi institutions such as the Sufi Order or Sufi Movement to forestall them becoming sects. Pir-o-Murshid warned us about how the "followers of the followers":

Therefore there is a difference between the followers and the followers of the followers... But the real following is the imitation of the prophet. And what is it? It is greater than study, and even greater than meditation. Among a thousand disciples, perhaps there will be nine hundred for study, one hundred for meditation, but hardly one who will follow.

The followers, if failing to see the breadth of outreach of the pioneer, would discount Pir-o-Murshid's readiness and wish to explore new ways. Pir-o-Murshid would undoubtedly have explored new ways if he had lived in our time.

Pir-o-Murshid's s vision incorporates the traditional transmission of the ancient Sufis, while making it accessible to people in their daily lives and updated the teachings of the great schools of the world religions, rather than discounting them. He embodied his latest views in the 'Universel', a temple made of human beings sparked by the vision of the Message of Unity and Spiritual Liberty of our time, announcing thereby the next step which he placed in our hands: "I have placed the Message in your

hands". The Universel carries Pir-o-Murshid's vision of an overarching organization which implements his intention embodied in his institution of International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement to ensure the coordination of activities such as the Universal Worship, Healing Order, etc., opening up the perspectives of this message to a broader public. This encompasses a wider outreach than the Sufi Order which is the Esoteric school to train the "the ten thousand workers" to spread the Message of Unity in the world.

On Hijerat Day, September 13, 1926, Pir-o-Murshid announced the next step: the Universel. Honoring the different world religions together on the same altar is a bold and necessary step in the interest of peace. A further step is getting into the consciousness of the prophets, masters and saints as he did on Tuesday evenings. This for example illustrates the aims of the "Universel of Human Beings" rather than the temple of stone, and while subsumed in the Universal Worship it represents a further development. More than paralleling the teachings of the world religions, it invites participants to effectively participate in "getting to know the composer so to understand his music better". Maybe this is what Murshid meant by the "formless Universal Worship".

Why do you suffice yourself with the known, when you can know the Knower? How much more important is the Knower than the known.

Niffari

Such is the great art of distilling the achievements of the past and fertilizing the future with their essence. New formats to link people in resonance with a shared vision are emerging out of the antiquated ashrams and khankas and parishes without enclosing them in institutions 'in the name of spirituality' which an increasing number of people reject. Initiation, pledges, consecration are beginning to prevail over 'membership' - being a Sufi or a Christian or a Muslim.

Moreover, this process is enabled by a delicate, balanced shift from a hierarchical format to a selective group processing which presents the advantage of availing oneself of a far greater pool of human resources in terms of visions, ideas, and good-will. This needs to be carefully articulated so that the insight and wisdom of those assuming positions of greater responsibility are not handicapped by more

pre-possessive and domineering partners. This is a precaution for the future, but does not apply in our present group processing based upon trust and mutual respect.

There is clearly a difference of emphasis between the two poles of Pir-o-Murshid's vision (two poles of the same thing): the Sufi Order and the Universel. The Sufi Order, while honoring its transmission needs to be more hierarchical. It is a school for training for those who feel called to spread Pir-o-Murshid's vision of the Message of unity of all people and all religions (without being reduced to uniformity). On the other hand, the Universel needs to extrapolate between the many-facetted bounty of a vision implemented in the rich variety of human experience and the nitty-gritty of carrying it out in actual real-life situations, while holding the vision delivered in the hands of the many-tiered gamut of human realizations

The vertiginous advance of civilization we may be witnessing is counterbalanced by the current decadence, vulgarity, and deterioration of noble values. But let us hold ourselves from being stymied to the point of defeating our heart in our endeavor to build a beautiful world of beautiful people. Birthing is accompanied by pain, and sometimes disruption. The faster the spearhead of our civilization advances, the more disruption it is bound to stir. It bespeaks of a painful and rather unwieldy adjustment to change.

As one evolves, one develops a passion for the unattainable.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Humanity is just espying a whole new dimension of thinking, exploring other dimensions of the cosmos than the commonplace existential cross-section of our many-splendored universe. Although awakening to this or these dimensions of the universe has always sparked the passion of great beings for the unattainable, 'beyond the beyond' pioneering thinkers are beginning to ascertain with increasing conviction that it is the limitation in our thinking that blocks us from making the next step in the inexorable advance of evolution. This is our only way to move forward updating and upgrading our human paradigm, in consonance with the material progress of technology by extending our thinking to these other dimensions of thinking.

One needs to surpass familiar concepts because one cannot account for the world or

for our rapport with the old by relying upon them.

D'Espagnat, La physique Quantique, Cf. L'homme Face a la Science.

Since the challenges of out current civilizations are different and greater that those of our spiritual predecessors, we will need to even update their thinking while honoring their deep insights and instructions. The onus is upon us to carry further the inestimable research in the little or unexplored no-man's land of the human mind they conducted in the solitude, by exploring and fraying a serene yet venturesome path riding the tide of the tumult of our covetousness for comfort, to crown our concerns with a nostalgia for meaningfulness and holiness.

In the beginning of a world, all the matter which will eventually form a completed whole is already in existence, but it is in a state of chaos. It is not that any new thing or world, or being, is to be created, but that there shall be a re-arrangement of all the parts until the whole is complete. The number and arrangement of every atom has yet to be made. Every electron and atom must take its own appointed place in the mighty scheme. This is the great evolutionary process. The God buried in humanity must be uncovered and placed on His throne in the heart of man.

A world-in-the-making can be likened to a great jigsaw puzzle, whose separate parts have life and are capable of independent movement. Each part has its own particular place, and its relation to every other part; and no thing or being can live to itself alone.

119 - Sincerity

We may go though a phase where we are preoccupied with an impelling need to understand (*Alim),* or the need to be in control of our life *(Wali*), display authority *(Qaher)*, the need for vastness (*Basit),* the need to discover one's inner being *(Batin),* the need to love *(Wadud),* the need to have compassion *(Rahman),* the need for energy *(Hayy),* the need for nurturing *(Muqit)*, the need for success *(Ghani),* the need for guidance *(Hadi),* the need for the sacred *(Quddus),* the need for awakening *(Khabir),* the need for light *(Nur)*. There may come a time in one's life when the need to face oneself becomes imperative. Then the compellingness of truth becomes obsessive. Suddenly as though a veil had been lifted, one can see one's real intentions behind the hoax of justifications-one's motivations behind one's endeavors x-rayed in the clear light of sincerity, *(ikhlas).*

How is it possible that one had not spotted them before? One's ability to function in the world is so precariously suspended upon one's self-esteem to save one from the counterproductive despair of a bad self-image. It might materialize in sticking stubbornly to one's point in an argument, for fear of losing face, refusing to admit one's mistaken view even if one's unconscious is hinting to one that one is of bad faith. This is precisely what Pir-o-Murshid calls "the false ego," a crutch that serves the purpose of giving one self-confidence by self validation, like a cane, or a masque, or a costume, or a cigarette, or a title-a status. One may well experience a stage in one's life where one has a need for a status to bolster one's self-confidence and benefit by acceptance from "the world", until one reaches a stage where one does not need it anymore.

It is surprising to what extent one may fail to detect the hypocrisy of self deception damaging one's soul – by masking one's masquerade not just from others but even from one's own self by denying one's personality defects – which no doubt are devalidating to one's self-esteem – by sheer pretentiousness, parading an ostentatious affectation.

The hypocrite's ego is keenly affected by praise or blame. **Abd el Qadir Gilani**

The only way to heal one's soul from this spoliation is uncompromising sincerity,

authenticity. This means first cross-examining one's own conscience, baring justifications, admitting any covert motivations behind one's actions if indeed one does not feel totally happy about them. It may mean relinquishing any claim of superiority based upon pretence. Then one is ready to admit to people up-front those flaws in oneself that one cannot subscribe to anymore.

If you wish to get rid of your enemies, repent at once. **(ibid)**

It is a common observation that a prepossessive disposition is efficacious in order to make way in the world, by dominating others to promote self-interest. But there is no escape from the choice between material gain and the beauty of one's personality.

Of what good if you win the world but lose your soul! **(Words of Christ)**

The soul tuned to God becomes as beautiful as God and begins to express God through all one does, expressing in life the Divine manner. Why is it a kingly manner? The word kingly signifies someone who possesses power and wealth in abundance. The soul tuned to God, before whom all things fade away and in whose eyes the importance of the little things of which every person thinks so much is lessened, begins to express Divine manner. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

Admittedly the personal ego serves as a deterrent or a warning to people who might abuse one by taking advantage of one's good-will and selflessness. One's personal ego is a feature of one's defense system and therefore its weaning needs to be operated painstakingly to guard one from the opposite of megalomania: an inferiority complex. This is why the Sufis always compensate fana, commonly called the annihilation of the false self-or self abnegation-by baqa reinstatement, shifting one's sense of identity from the personal to the transpersonal-Divine-dimension of one's being. Unless one knows how to enlist a noble alternative to the soul-demeaning strategy, in order to secure profit for oneself or for one's fellow-beings, or indeed to achieve something of cultural value, one resorts to it.

Man desires power, because it is natural for him to gain. But he surrenders his kingdom to his little self, depriving himself of the Divine power that is in his heart. Somewhere a power is hidden in him. On coming to earth, man loses connection with that Divine power whose instrument he is, thus keeping not

only himself but even God from helping His will to be done. Therefore the soul has in it a potentiality, a creative power as its Divine heritage. On the one side man is limited and imperfect; on the other side he represents the unlimited and perfect. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

How then can one wean oneself from the flaws of one's personal ego while maintaining one's self-validation? The answer is of course in calling upon the transpersonal dimension of one's ego.

Pir-o-Murshid declares:

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego, and the true ego is the ego of God, it is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us. The only difference is that in one aspect it is the whole, in the other aspect it is a part; in one aspect it is almighty, in the other it has only a certain might, or a certain power; in one aspect it is unlimited, in the other it is limited. The difference between the Divine and the human will is like the difference between the trunk of a tree and its branches; and as from the boughs other branches and twigs spring. In a tree there is a trunk, and there are some prominent or large branches; from these there spring many smaller branches. So there are the powerful beings, the masters of humanity. Their will is God's, their word is God's word, and yet they are branches, because the trunk is the will of the Almighty.

To avail ourselves of this Divine power which we inherit we need to awaken it.

We inherit the Divine will as our own Divine heritage, and it is our consciousness of it which makes it greater. The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man and this object is only fulfilled when man has awakened that part of himself which represents God Himself. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan**

To avail ourselves of our inheritance, we need to conquer it**. Goethe**

The clue is in one's faulty representation of God as "other" which stands in the way of

calling upon the transpersonal dimension of one's being. If one is encapsulated in one's ordinary consciousness, it is admittedly difficult to include the impersonal, transpersonal area of one's being. It requires of one to reconcile complementary ways of identifying oneself: to grasp that, while being unique at the more personal level of one's being, at the highest levels of one's being one is co-extensive with all beings (which is what we generally mean by God). Here lies the secret of the "spiritual sovereignty" *(Mughni)* of the Dervish.

The secret then is to shift one's consciousness to the antipodal pole of one's being, trying to represent God (the Universe) discovering Him/Herself in the infinite personalized and unique expressions of Him/Herself as us.

You know yourself through another knowledge, different from that which you had of yourself, because it is through Him that you know yourself. **Ibn'Arabi**

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through His manifestation. The Divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine mind. **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan *(Unity of Religious Ideals)***

120 - Curriculum of the Sufi Order

Preamble

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis.

There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul, which gives the soul a longing for the unattainable.

The further one advances, the further the horizon recedes.

We have the honor of communicating in this Curriculum the quintessence of the teaching of an outstanding master, patriarch and pioneer in announcing new perspectives for spirituality in the future, Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan. This teaching marks a significant step released from the springboard of the spiritual conditioning of the past - incorporating it while updating it to meet the way the prow of the thinking of humanity advances today.

This Curriculum was intended initially for Representatives of the Sufi Order in their classes for mureeds (also for guides and conductors in the various activities of the Sufi Order and, if so desired, for use by kindred Sufi Orders or organizations). We do not want this material restricted to the classes because we realize there are people who cannot attend classes. We recommend that representatives also use this material for the classes. It is regrettable that so relatively little is known of this teaching.

We need to distinguish Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's personal teachings from those where he corroborates views held by his Sufi predecessors. Therefore we are including the more salient sayings of earlier Sufi mystics. You will find that Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan was concerned with helping pupils by casting the light and insight of Sufi dervishes upon the problems and challenges encountered by people in our day and age in their daily lives in an experiential way. He had the art of making these sometimes abstruse and metaphysical views relevant and meaningful to even the non-initiated in spiritual lore.

Islam prepares one to become a Sufi.

Sufism itself is the essence of all the religions as well as the spirit of Islam.

The Sufis of ancient times brought wisdom to the Muslim world and presented that wisdom in Muslim terminology.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

In his special contribution, Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan flashed perspectives in the inexorable advance of the trend of spiritual evolution in our time. He opened up far-reaching insights into the future of spirituality which, albeit in line with the traditional views of his predecessors - which he sometimes highlighted in a new context - were ostensibly novel, and sometimes even challenged views long taken for granted. In this, he bore a message for our time.

Our school today has a wider field of work, and we present it to the followers of all religions, as well as to those who perhaps have no religion, to both spiritual and material persons. Therefore the realm in which the esoteric school of the Sufi Order presents its method is necessarily different and distinct.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

Moreover, this message - while encompassing the views, doctrines and attunements of the prophets, masters, and saints of the world's great religions, rather than being a synchretistic collation of these, while distilling their essence - frees our minds from hackneyed conditioned assumptions and dogmas. Hence the Curriculum for the "Universel" that we sent represents a further chapter in the curriculum and flows out of the study of the unity of religious ideals for the Universal Worship.

The solution to the problem of the day is the awakening of the consciousness of humanity to the divinity of man.

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

Man is divine limitation and God is human perfection.

The Creator is hidden in His creation.

The key to spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the perfect One who is formed in the heart.

So far there has only been the belief in God. It is in the God conscious that God can be seen. And if the world has been able to believe in God and to recognize God in a being, it is in the godly, it is in the soul which reflects God. It is in man that divinity is awakened, that God is awakened, that God can be seen.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

Pir o Murshid's insights into future vistas are challenging:

The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. If the Planet did not have an intelligence, it could not have intelligent beings on it. The collective working of several minds and the activity of the whole world in one direction are governed by the intelligence of the Planet.

The divine mind is completed after manifestation.

The creator's mind is made of His own creation.

The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind.

There is a mind behind all minds; there is a heart which is the source of all hearts; there is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every living being has had. No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. It all accumulates and collects in that mind as an eternal reservoir - the divine mind.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

He drew our attention to being a "condition of God," rather than representing God as "other." He defined steps leading from the "conceptualization of God," through awakening the God concealed behind our existential self-identity, to arousing that secret (and therefore sacred) treasure (the seed behind the plant) by "making God a

reality" instead of a belief.

The soul of man may be considered as a condition of God - a condition that makes the only Being limited for a time.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

When man lives this limitation, he does not know that another part of him exists which is much higher, more wonderful, more living, and more exalted.

As the seed comes last, after the life of trunk, branch, fruit and flower, and, as the seed is sufficient in itself and capable of producing another plant, so man is the product of all planes, spiritual and material. In him alone of all the forces of life shines forth that which caused the whole...

It is man who may rightly be called the seed of God, for in him alone intelligence develops so perfectly that he is even enabled to attain self-sufficiency and all-pervading consciousness of the everlasting life of God.

The same God, so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again, trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

More so, we need to account for a special theme, which he developed profoundly: methods of fostering personal growth by fashioning our personality creatively. He called this the "art of personality," in which the "spiritual dimensions" of psychotherapy (I would add psycho-creativity) are highlighted. It explores various vantage points of our consciousness, including an authentic confrontation with our conscience, even including its effect upon our body in a process one might call "rendering states of consciousness corporeal." The steps leading to this restructuring of our personality are defined in a sequence of developmental stages written into this Curriculum.

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

The best of all arts is the art of personality.

When a person gets an insight into beauty, then he learns the art of arts, which is the art of personality.

There is one thing: to be man; and there is another thing: to be a person, a man, by completing the individuality in which is hidden the purpose of man's coming on earth.

In the making of personality it is God who completes His divine art.

As the whole of nature is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by himself.

In the person who participates actively in his/her own creativity, God can attain a greater degree of perfection.

If man dived deep enough within himself, he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life…and as long as he has not realized his unlimited self, he lives a life of limitation, a life of illusion….

What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul so that it may lose the false sense of identification and identify itself with the true self instead of the false self.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

The curriculum is structured so Pir o Murshid's statements are given and are then paraphrased by me, to demonstrate how the insight they open up may foster a breakthrough in people's lives in how they meet problems and spark the unfurling of latent potentials in their personalities. We are living at a time when people wish experience rather than theory.

At this stage I would like to thank many dedicated persons who have worked on transcripts and editing. Amongst these are Amida Cary, Avalon Gallien, Mariel Walters, Mikhail Davenport, Dr. Sharif Graham, Jyoti Roshan McLachlan, and the staff of the Sufi Order Secretariat.

The Journey

Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages between man, the manifestation of God, and God the only Being; knowing and realizing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence and so accomplishing the heavenly journey.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

Glory to Him Who made His servant journey one night from the sacred place of worship to the farth est place of worship...so that We might cause him to see Our signs.

Qur'an 57/4

Our objective in the Sufi Order is to respond to the need felt by many for other dimensions - of their being, and of life generally - than the commonplace. This is called "spirituality." One could illustrate this by envisioning oneself as a cell in that body called the cosmos or as ongoing thought in that being: the Universe. Most cells have no idea of the body or the mind of that body. They may resent their neighbors, enter in conflict with them, or cooperate with them without having a clue as to the overall intention of the body or the mind. However, some smart cells are beginning to inquire, to explore the total being. Then they discover they are not just separate (discrete) entities, but each fragment of the whole carries potentially the whole. Thus the possibility of grasping some sense of what we mean by God.

There is no way of getting proof of God's existence, except by becoming acquainted with oneself; by experiencing the phenomena which are within one.

One finds a kind of universe in oneself and by the study of the self, one comes to that spiritual knowledge for which one's soul hungers.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

People's concerns are: (i) in what way can the exploration of these "other dimensions" help them in their problems and in unfolding their personalities; and (ii) enlightenment, realization, awakening, freedom from conditioning, upliftment, and a sense of the sacred.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way by regaining its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

Actually these "dimensions" are different levels or perspectives, rather than worlds, and are therefore embedded in the existential world. They are called in Sufi terminology *nasut, khayal, arwah, mithal, malakut, jabarut, lahut, hahut, and tawhid.*

You may discern several levels of energy and several levels of reality. To hoist our consciousness from one perspective to a loftier one, we need to remove our mental barriers and connect ourselves with the totality of which we are an expression, thus inviting the action of the Universe (God) upon us.

We are endeavoring to grasp the techniques and know-how that the contemplatives have culled, and apply them to dealing with our problems in action, in worldly life. It is worth the challenge. Suffice it to imagine how it would be if we could maintain a stalwart peace and serenity in the midst of a stressful situation, grasp the hidden springs behind the programming of our lives, and develop intuition, mastery, radiance.

This will require us to instill something of the hermit into the way of the knight. Our need for freedom is as imperious as our need for involvement. Are they necessarily mutually exclusive? There is a way of reconciling the irreconciliables. An example: loving without being dependent upon being loved. In meditation, detachment frees one from the conditioning of one's thinking and the constraint of one's self-image. Freedom from the usual setting of consciousness will enable us to shift consciousness into an inner space or, alternatively into a mode described as self-transcendence, the antipodal point of view.

For life means not only to live, but to ennoble oneself and reach that perfection which is the innate yearning of the soul. The solution to the problem of the day is the awakening of the consciousness of humanity to the divinity of man.

Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan

121 - The Art of Personality:
Sparking the growth of the personality –
an emerging construct unfurling in the cosmic symphony.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis.

Cogito ergo sum.

Descartes. (I think, therefore I exist)

- or is it : I exist because I think.?

I am that I become.

Moses. (not I am that I am)

When we say "I am," we are declaring that we identify with a notion of what we think we are. What we really are remains an enigma enshrouded in the dark unknown, "the secret treasure that loves to be known," according to the Sufis. Moreover, rather than "who I am," it is more relevant to ask "who am I becoming." "Whom I am" is only a static cross section of the dynamics of the evolution of my being.

That notion "I" is what Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan calls the ego, which he defines as a faulty notion of our self.

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego, and the true ego is the ego of God, it is that the true ego, which is the ego of God, has been reduced to a false ego in us.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

The ego is not to be confused with our personality, which is a real – though

evanescent – ephemeral construct of human idiosyncrasies (qualities and defects). It is endowed with a non-spatial configuration of our imagination which translates thinking and emoting – a way of envisioning oneself versus circumstances and an emotional attunement – into an ubiquitous mental fabric in flux. This corroborates Descarte's statement that existence involves thinking or knowing – or the act of consciousness. Both our notion of ourselves, and our personality, are of the nature of the level of existential reality we call thinking.

While our ego is a notion, our personality is an – albeit ineffable – reality. It is of the nature commonly ascribed to mental activity, which is a valid mode of reality (though not configured or located in space) that fashions our subtle bodies, aura, and the countenance transpiring through the features of our face and our demeanor. Thus in the personality, fiction gets actuated into matter – mind over matter – the psycho-bio feedback recycled as a feed-forward.

If you go to further depths of matter you find what we call mind

David Bohm

Moreover this mental formation, emerging within the momentous global thinking of the universe, itself evolves by disintegrating and reconstructing itself recurrently in the forward march of becoming. This is like the sequence of notes we perceive as a melody, or the cliches of a film that we perceive as a continuity, failing to grasp the discrete units in the series. It is a continuity in change: perennity.

Buddhists emphasize the ephemeral nature of all formations, physical and mental. Illusion is seen as the error of hanging onto that which is elusive. But the Sufi, Jami, points out: The world may be illusion, but through it a reality transpires.

It is an evolving reality transpiring through vanishing outbursts, like a tide erupting as evanescent waves.

Such is the elusive nature of our personality, which is our realization configured in a formative process in a fluid structure. Our identification with it gels it to the point of psychological sclerosis, hence Buddha's deprecation of the hoax of identification. This is where our ego – which is what we erroneously identify with – hampers the

unfoldment of our personality. Hence the meaning of Pir o Murshid's description of the real ego concealed behind the false ego which is the "I am" buried under the bush.

Our sense of what we could be if we would be as we might be frees us from this imbroglio. Hanging on to what our personality has become as it evolved though the past is illustrated by Lot's wife, who turned into salt because she looked back.

The pull of the future is stronger than the push of the past.

Euler.

Thus we see the role of our quest for freedom from conditioning. It is triggering off creativity, which represents precisely the aim of ascetics, but in creativity, we are infusing our involvement in life with a dose of freedom, thus preventing it from incarcerating us in an inextricable rut.

So how can we enhance our creative activity in fashioning this mental vision that crystallizes as that psychological construct that is our personality? The clue is to be found in the activity of a composer. Consider your personality as a symphony taking shape within Pythagoras' "symphony of the spheres" formulating – albeit an incomparably unequal likeness of its excellence and bounty – yet an exemplar of that cosmic model and transcendent archetype.

The secret of the art of my science, the science of my art, nobody knows but myself. I am endeavoring to fashion a model for the human commonwealth in the language of music. For each theme an instrument, for each instrument a theme. Not just a melody with accompaniment. Each theme, enjoying initiative, yet each theme limiting its incentive in the interest of the whole. Such is the harmony of the stars..

J.S.Bach.

Indeed Newton confirmed that each star is impacting every other, and each is concurrently reacting to one another in harmonic interaction.

The lover of music attains sooner or later to the most sublime field of thought by completing his individuality, in which is hidden the purpose of man's coming on earth.

The art of personality is like the art of music: it needs ear training and voice culture. To a person who knows life's music the art of personality comes naturally.

When a man looks at every soul as a note of music and learns to recognize what note it is, flat or sharp, high or low, and to what pitch it belongs, then he becomes the knower of souls, and he knows how to deal with everybody. In his own actions, in his speech, he shows the art that harmonizes with the rhythm of the atmosphere, with the tone of the person he meets, with the theme of the moment. To become refined is to become musical; it is the musical soul who is artistic in his personality. Spoken in different tones, the same word changes its meaning.

Hazrat Inayat Khan.

In fashioning your personality, you are projecting a sophisticated mental formation in the mind field of the universe. Once conceived, it is endowed with a sustained perpetuity like a symphony configured in the mind of a composer, regardless of whether it is or has ever been written down or performed.

122 - Prayer: the key to personal creativity

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis.

Allah al Makhluk fi'l itikadat

Through your prayers,
God creates Himself through you.

(Hadith)

Make God a reality so that
He is no more imagination.

(Hazrat Inayat Khan)

We are moved by our spontaneous urge to pray. When facing the meaningfulness of our life and the significance of life in the universe, we are suddenly overwhelmed and humbled by a sense of awe and reverence, confronting the vastness and splendor of the reality beyond our grasp.

This is the way in which an unanticipated hunch that there is meaningfulness and splendor behind our limited understanding and emotion frees us from our limited outlook, and particularly from the inadequacy of our self-image – precisely that which has been hampering the unfoldment of our being and the fulfillment of our life's purpose - and fosters our personal creativity and accomplishment in life.

The purpose of life is that we grow towards perfection; from the greatest limitation we grow towards perfection**(Alchemy of Happiness)*****.**

Can a limited man be conscious of perfection? The answer is that the limited man has limited himself; he is limited because he is conscious of his limitation. It is not his true self which is limited; what is limited is what he holds, not

himself **(Alchemy of Happiness: Attainment)*.***

When one is conscious of limitation, one is limited; when one is conscious of per-fection, one is perfect. The thought of one's limitation covers what is true in one's being, one's true self **(Religious Ideals: Purity)*.***

Even in its limitation the soul has the spark of perfection. The real self can rise to perfection; the false self ends in limitation.**(Alchemy: struggle).**

To pray, we try to imagine God by projecting upon Him/Her qualities that we only know in their imperfect actualization in ourselves or others, by imagining them as they might be in their perfection. Our minds are equipped with the ability to represent a quality (or an outreach of space or span of time) always more infinite or excellent than those reached so far - in infinite regress. Of course we can never imagine them in their perfection.

Everything in the world that has a name is imaginable; the one and only Being the imagination cannot reach is God. And yet as God is manifested in all things and in all beings, so in all things and in all beings there is always a part which is unimaginable…..Man can reach God only as far as his imagination can take him. **(Social Gathekas)**

Ibn 'Arabi says:

To Him we attribute no quality without ourselves having that quality **(1975 p. 16).** ***Since the ephemeral manifests the eternal, it is by the ephemeral that God reveals to us the eternal. Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithal) in the higher world. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each to its likeness.*** **(Fut. lll 260, 6, Chittick, 1989 p. 406)**

However, the Sufis always see things from two antipodal points of view: the Divine and the human:

However, the ephemeral is not conceivable as such that is its ephemeral and relative nature, except in relation to a principle from which it derives its possibility, so that it has no being in itself, but derives it from another to whom

***it is tied by its dependence* (1975 p. 15)*. Man is incapable of appropriating the Divine knowledge which is applied to those archetypes in their state of non-existence…however the essence only reveals itself in the form of the disposition of the individual who receives this revelation.*Ibn 'Arabi (p. 23)**

How then can we grasp the eternal model of our personality?

***God brings them out of the treasuries that is from an existence we do not perceive, to an existence that we do perceive. Hence the treasuries contains only the possibilities of the things* (Fut. III 199, 3). *When meanings are embodied and become manifest in shapes and measures they assume forms, since witnessing takes place through sight.*Ibn 'Arabi (Chittick, 1989, p. 354).**

***Our active imagination is a moment, an instant, of the Divine Imagination that is the universe*.Jili (Corbin, 1970, p. 214)**

In our prayer, our faculty of creative imagination leads us from stretching our minds beyond their commonplace reach to actually being transformed ourselves.

Since imagination can produce beauty outwardly in the form of poetry, music, art, or literature, it can produce beauty of much higher and greater value when it is directed inward* (Initiation)*…

***If you have no God, make one. By making God great, we ourselves arrive at a certain greatness. Imagination becomes a ladder on the path of the mystic. The mystic begins his work with the ladder of imagination, and actual experience follows* (Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism).**

***He is not wrong who makes God in his imagination, for by that imagination he is drawn nearer and nearer every moment of his life to that Divine Ideal which is the seeking of his soul. And, once he has touched Divine Perfection, in it he will find the fulfillment of his life.* (Sangathas)**

Thus prayer avers itself to be the secret of personal creativity, whereas trying to perfect ourselves while limiting ourselves in our personal self-image would be like trying to lift oneself by one's boot-straps.

He realizes that all that is lacking in it and all that remains to be done, or all the faults that it may seem to have, are his own faults, while his ideal is perfect. This is a stepping-stone for the mystic to come closer to God's shrine; by this he attains more quickly to a higher degree of perfection**(Philosophy: Mysticism in Life).**

By so doing, the faithful arouse qualities dormant within themselves.

The best way of losing the self is by the repetition of a certain sacred word which gradually makes one lose the conception of the false self, expressing at the same time the idea of the real self.

The difficulty lies in reconciling our normally limited self-image with the transpersonal dimension of our being. This is the key to understanding Hazrat Inayat Khan and all Sufism: accounting for both dimensions of our being rather than considering God as "other".

Divinity is human perfection and humanity is Divine limitation. (Gayan**, Boulas)**

Man is Divine limitation and God is human perfection. **(Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

By contemplating Him, I am contemplating myself; and by contemplating myself, I am contemplating Him. **(Ibn 'Arabi)**

I searched for God and I found myself, and I searched for myself and I found God. **(Abdullah Ansari)**

However, know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God. **(Ibn 'Arabi)**

All is God, but man has a mind of his own. We are a condition of God. **(Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

To spark creativity, we need to match the idiosyncrasies in our personality with the archetype that represents the higher dimension of our being, which is co-extensive with all beings, and we call God, while both poles of our being are incommensurable. This is not easy.

It is not an easy thing to make a God of imagination and make out of Him a reality. For every person it is like making an idol, a statue, and trying to make the statue live. But if ever anyone has reached God, he has not reached by finding God in the abstract, something where nothing is to be found. But he had to make God, and then through that God, which was once made, that God of abstract became knowable. **(Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

He brings them out of the treasuries that is from an existence that we do not perceive, to an existence that we do perceive. Hence the treasuries contain only the possibilities of the things.**(Fut. lll 199, 3)**

By imagining God as the paramount reality of our own being, our ideal becomes

homonized (made human - a word of Teilhard de Chardin) in the features of our personality. Through our prayers God becomes a personality.

It would be a mistake to limit God to being a personality, but it would be a greater mistake to deny the personality of God**...(1979, p. 96).**

Though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower. And therefore the flower already existed in the seed **(ibid.)*.***

Moreover, as the seed comes last after the life of the trunk, branch, flower and fruit, and sufficient in itself of producing another plant, so in man, the product of all the planes, spiritual and material shines forth that which caused the whole: the seed of existence: primal intelligence …Man in the flowering of his personality, expresses the personality of God **(ibid. p 76).**

One sees one's personality as an exemplar of the Divine nature:

Then comes another unveiling in which your forms in Him will be manifest in you. Among us are those who know that his knowledge takes place in God

Ibn 'Arabi: (Chittick 1989 p. 298).

The Islamic prayer is a dialogue between the two poles of one's being: between the supplicant in his/her personal identity and the supplicant trying to see him/herself as

seen from the antipodal vantage point (considered to be the Divine view) as he/she imagines God seeing Him/Herself in him/herself.

The knowledge you may glean by grasping in yourself the Divine archetype of which you are an exemplar is only the first degree of a Sufi, the second is knowing oneself through the knowledge that God has of himself through you **(Ibn 'Arabi).**

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through his manifestation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind, **(Unity of Religious Ideals)** ***Not knowing that God experiences this life through us, one is seeking for Him somewhere else…Man realizes his perfection in God and God realizes His perfection in man. God discovers His perfection in our imperfection.*** **(Hazrat Inayat Khan).**

A Hadith of Prophet Mohammed often quoted declares: (God speaking)

I was a hidden treasure and loved to be known and therefore I created the world in order to know myself.

Or was it out of love for the possibility of us that God is seeking to become a reality as us?

A further Hadith says:

But for thee, I would not have created the heavens.

In consequence God becomes real:

But if this imagination is to become a reality, then exactly as one feels for one's earthly beloved sympathy, love and attachment, so one must feel the same for God **(Social Gathekas).**

One communicates with God, so that God becomes to the initiate a living entity; God is then no longer an ideal or an imagination, no longer one whom he has made; the One whom he once made has now become alive - a living God.

Before this there was belief in God, there was worship of Him; perhaps He was made in the imagination; but in this stage God becomes living. And what a phenomenon this is! This stage is a miracle in itself. The God-realized person need not speak of or discuss the name of God; his presence will inspire the sense of God in every being, and charge the atmosphere with it. Everyone that meets him, whether he is spiritual or moral or religious or without religion, will feel God in some form or other **(The Path of Initiation).**

Thus prayer transmutes one's self image - the false ego - into one's true self and thus avers itself to be the ultimate personal creativity.

When they stand before God, their ego, their self, their life, is no more before them. They do not think of themselves in that moment with any desire to be fulfilled, with any motive to be accomplished, with any expression of their own; but as empty cups, that God may fill their being, that they may lose the false self.

When man - the most egoistic being in creation, who keeps himself veiled from God, the Perfect Self within, by the veil of his imperfect self, which has formed his presumed ego by the extreme humility when he stands before God and bows and bends and prostrates himself before His Almighty Being, makes the highest point of his presumed being, the head, touch the earth where his feet are, he in time washes off the black stains of his false ego, and the light of perfection gradually manifests. He stands then first face to face with his God, the idealized Deity, and when the ego is absolutely crushed, then God remains within and without, in both planes, and none exists save He.

In that state, called Fana-fi-Allah, when the soul is absorbed in God, one loses the false sense of being and finds the true reality. Then one finally experiences what is termed Baqa-i-Fan, where the false ego is annihilated and merged into the true personality, which is really God expressing Himself in some wondrous ways. When one has risen above the limitations of life on all the planes of existence, the soul will break all boundaries, and will experience that freedom which is the longing of every soul **(Hazrat Inayat Khan).**

123 - Millenium Message

Holiday Greetings from Pir Vilayat

Although the threshold leading into the Millenium does not correspond to a significant astrological conjunction, nor to the actual birth of Christ, we have created that quantum leap in our minds: therefore for us it has an important significance if we will take heed of what it is telling us. Its message: the future is not there for us to enter into, we create it. The collective thinking of the Planet is beckoning upon us, warning us to change.

The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. If the Planet did not have an intelligence, it could not have intelligent beings on it. The collective working of several minds and the activity of the whole world in one direction are governed by the intelligence of the Planet.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

When one turns a new page, particularly a new chapter, one needs to let go of the previous page even though it is still in the book. However in real life the past itself has changed. From your car window, the landscape you left behind may still linger in your mind, but from the overview of a helicopter you can see that it has changed - a car may cross the road. Interestingly, our memory is gifted with the faculty of extracting the gist of the experience of the past. The task for our mind is now to interfuse the insight gained by the legacy of the past with the prospects of the future.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

Our motto for the Millenium is in the words of Euler: "the pull of the future is stronger than the push of the past." Since we create the future, it is our New Year resolutions, actually: our New Millenium resolutions - our pledges that will open the door to change.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has

realized there its spiritual existence.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Our soul-searching concerning the spoliation of our beautiful planet, crime, vulgarity, point to the challenge before us. To trigger off change, there is first work to do with ourselves: rise above resentment. The tour de force is to love people who make it difficult to love them without capitulating to their domination and thereby abandoning our values. It is our sense of the sacred that is the door out of the imbroglio - glorification lifts us above our selfishness and greed and invests us with spiritual authority.

A new spirituality is emerging out of the religions of the past free from dogmas, prescriptions, gurus, the institutionalization of religions, calling upon us to take responsibility, honor our values, celebrate the marvel of life and realize the privilege of participating in the cosmic celebration right in the middle of the drama of humanity.

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

You may recognize in this vision for the future of spirituality, the features of the Message brought by Hazrat Inayat Khan - a message for our time. A pioneer, he foresaw this perspective, in advance of his time: it is the Universel - the message for the Millenium of spiritual freedom, honoring the divinity of the human status, mastery through accomplishment.

It carries a heartening energy: re-enchantment.

124 - A Comparison Between Buddhism and Sufism

Part I

PRINCIPLES

At a time when Buddhism has gained so much acquiescence in the public eye, and Sufism increasingly intrigues the serious amateurs in quest of the unknown, an inquiry into their differences and similarities seems called for. Hence the following study, which is simply a cursory attempt.

Shall we contrive to consider as complementary that which at first seemed contradictory? Moreover dare we in the all- encompassing trend of our day-and-age extrapolate between these apparently antipodal views, in an integrated picture?

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

At this point, we urgently need to confront the apparently intractable differences between the Sufi's continual reference to God and the Buddhists' undogmatic attitude towards the notion of God. Probing deeper, if we look into the insights gained by the mystics, rather than basing our judgment on belief systems, the differences tend to be overbridged more easily.

Granted, in his scruple for not affirming anything on the strength of belief, Buddha was wary of the popular anthropomorphic projections paraded as God in his time. Indeed, Buddhism in our time is still wary of this.

Of course Sufism recognizes our anthropomorphic projections upon what we ascribe to God.

Since we know Him by ourselves and of ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we attribute to ourselves. **Ibn' Arabi (1975, p 16).**

On the other hand, Sufism always elicits the counter-proposition to any proposition by permutation of the terms. Seen from the antipodal point of view, the counterpart is, therefore:

***He describes Himself to you by yourself. Since the form in which He discloses Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which He discloses Himself. That is why there are many different faiths. To each believer, the Divine Being is He who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith. If God manifests Himself in a different form, the believer rejects Him, and that is why the dogmatic faiths combat one another.*H.Corbin: (1969. p 197).**

Should we have a problem with the anthropomorphic connotations of the word God? Since this is the term used, we could call it 'what we mean by reality, both known or unknown.' Do we mean 'that which lies behind the physical cosmos?' Shall we say 'the software behind the hardware of the universe?' (or do we include the hardware?) Or do we mean 'that which transcends all human notions?'

Should we strip that ambivalent idiomatic term "God" of its anthropomorphic semantics, we would be depriving ourselves of the wide range of "realness" ascribed to that term.

In Sufism, the term God is looked upon as the antipodal pole of an antinomy of which what we consider to be our personal self is the opposite pole. Without this pole, our personal dimension would not make sense – as in mathematics, where the notion of the unit presupposes implicitly infinity and infinity presupposes the notion of the unit. Mathematics would not be possible without seeing the connection between the unit and infinity.

For Hazrat Inayat Khan, the concept of God, upon which belief may be grounded, is an indispensable, albeit an unreliable, stepping stone.

***The man who has no imagination to make a God, and is not open to a conception of God (even his own) finds no stepping stone to reach that knowledge which his soul longs for but his doubts deny.*Hazrat Inayat Khan (Unity, 1979, p 96)**

***It is not wrong to make God in one's imagination the God of all beauty, free from ugliness and evil, for by that imagination, he is drawn nearer and nearer every moment of his life to that Divine Ideal which is the seeking of his soul.*(ibid, pp.**

96-97)

People ask: "If all is God, then God is not a person". The answer: though the seed

does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower; and therefore the flower already existed in the seed." **(ibid, p 95).**

No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God**(ibid, p 76).**

Man in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God. **(ibid, p 76)**

THE ANTINOMY: REALITY SEEN AS TRANSCENDENT OR IMMANENT

In his retreat under the Bodhi tree, where Buddha attained illumination, he found refuge in the "non-become", marking a clear cleft between the transcendent and immanent,

This being that becomes from the arising of all of this and this not becoming. **(Majjhima Nikaya II, 32; Samyutta Nikaya II, 28)**

Exhausted is life - the bond of becoming is destroyed. **(Majhh.LXXV)**

Does this last statement dismiss the relevance of the existential condition to the eternal in attaining illumination?

Presumably this may be understood as referring to the incongruity of allowing oneself to be inveigled in the vain, repetitive, vicious circle of recurrent birth and rebirth. Suppose we were to illustrate this in the field of genetics: the seed that emerges out of the unfurling of a seed would be a similar one unless the system mutates, which sets the pace of evolution.

The seed out of which the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are made arises again at the end of the cycle. The same God, so little of whose perfection

manifested in the plant, arises again and again in its pursuit of excellence trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human imperfection. **(Hazrat Inayat Khan.)**

It is as though, lying in wait, there is a propensity to escape from the constraint incurred in our understanding by confining our consciousness to the existential condition.

The physical body becomes dependent in its experience and expression, thus making the soul dependent and limited. If the soul could see independently of the mind and body, it would see infinitely more. **(1982 - 52) Hazrat Inayat Khan**

This may therefore be seen as an emancipation from allowing our forward thrust to be hampered by our existential condition.

We find this also in Sufism.

The soul's unfoldment comes from its power, which ends in its breaking through the ties of the lower planes. It is free by nature, and looks for freedom during its captivity. All the holy beings of the world have becomes so by freeing the soul, its freedom being the only object there is in life. **ibid (1979, p 237).**

One reaches a point where there is not only no awareness of existence, but no vestige of awareness that you are not aware of existence. Jami

And paradoxically, the opposite:

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual existence.**Hazrat Inayat Khan. (1973 p 242)**

O Thou who art absent there, we have found Thee here. Thou art nonexistent as Essence, existent in Thy person. **al Jili, (1983, p 5)**

Actually there is the need for the insight gained by extrapolating between the inherent knowledge gleaned beyond the existential, transient condition and the wisdom acquired by 'doing' – achieving, creating.

All that one knows of reality is through the Names (qualities), which are relations occasioned by the entities of the possible things. If these veils were lifted, unity would erase the existence of the entities of the possible things, and they would cease being described by existence, since they only become qualified by existence through these names. **Ibn' Arabi**

And yet

Knowledge is a veil upon the known.

This then would be the mode of cognizance of the non-become.

You are the veil over your own eye... In the absence of the Names, the "Named" would appear.**(Hikmat un Nuriya, Cf Etudes.. 151, 27) Ibn'Arabi**

The Sufis try to grasp the link between these two dimensions of our being and, as a matter of fact, of the divine being, pulling us in two directions: the need for involvement and the need for freedom, and integrate these complementary bi-poles.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not loose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.**Ibid, p 242**

For the Sufis, if we look at things from the personal vantage point, which is the usual way, all that we know of that reality we call God is through clues.

Know that the Essence never reveals itself to you as such, but only by means of a causal attribute.**(Etudes, June 1952 p 186)...**

Yet there is a further stage whereby we reverses our vantage-point so as to try to see things from the divine point of view. It is only at a very high level that Sufis describe the state of human realization where God reveals Him/Herself regardless of any clues as to His/Her nature, and regardless of His/Her experience of Him/Herself as projected in the cosmos. Sufism acknowledges modes of knowledge that do not rest upon experience. By shifting the notion of the personal self, a meaningfulness may be revealed to the contemplative which he could not acquire by his personal volition

The second degree of the Sufi is knowing yourself through the knowledge that God has of Himself through you. Ibn'Arabi

And then Sufis recognize a yet further degree

***At an advanced stage, one learns to grasp God as He is Himself, rather than the knowledge gleaned of Him(Her)*Ibn'Arabi**

***Under the decree of silence, God will stay you in your timeless impersonal vision beyond the transience of words.* Niffari. (1935)**

In their view, there must be some relationship between that intangible reality and its means of manifesting itself, which is of a transient nature.

The difference between these perspectives could be accounted for by the contrast between the activity of consciousness, which experiences reality in the space-time existential state, and the act of intelligence - the ground of consciousness - that is endowed with an inherent proto-critic knowledge of the software of the universe, not bound by the duality of subject versus object that is found in the activities of consciousness.

***Consciousness must always be conscious of something. When consciousness is not conscious of anything, it is pure intelligence.*Hazrat Inayat Khan (1979, p 69)..**

Buddha ascribes this perspective, rarely reached by a contemplative, to the plane beyond existence attained through the practice of the *Jhana.* (*Sangiti Suttana* XXXIII, 1965 p 236) and passing beyond.

As a result, in Sufism, one's logical understanding is continually taxed by what seems like blatant contradictions. To add enigma to paradox, one could entertain two complementary (though at first sight contradictory) views:

***God can only be known by the synthesis of antinomic affirmations.*Abu Sa'id al Kharraz. (Cf. Ibn'Arabi 1975 p 36)**

It is at its transcendent level of thinking, as Buddhism confirms, that the mind can

overcome these contradictions that aver themselves to be conceptual.

At the transcendental level where all intellect-born contradictions are finally resolved in a state of unimpeded mutual solution, the Mahayana transcends even its opposition to other schools, thus revealing its essentially non-conceptual character. **(Sangharakshita, 1987, p 246).**

125 - A Comparison Between Buddhism and Sufism

Part II

NOSTALGIA VERSUS DESIRE

As he surveys the links in the causal chain *(pattica samupadha)* leading to the suffering attendant upon existential conditions, Buddha infers that suffering is due to craving *(asava)* – normally rendered as desire – that in turn begets ignorance; whereas liberation from attachment to "contact" with the world sparks realization and enlightenment.

Both Buddhism and Sufism see desire as the prime mover leading towards existence. Desire is considered pejorative in Buddhism, and liberation from the existential state is coveted.

The ascetic has given up worldly craving... **Evola 1951 p 176.**

The ascetic causes the awakening of mindfulness derived from detachment.**ibid, p 177.**

Sufism distinguishes between craving (which is personal) and nostalgia, whereby one is giving, albeit personal, expression to the cosmic emotion, and sparking the whole process of existence (according to the Sufis *Ishq'Allah.*)

On one hand:

The real proof of one's progress in the spiritual path can be realized by testing, in every situation in life, how indifferent one is.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

(Unpublished Esoteric Papers)

All that produces longing in the heart deprives it of its freedom.**Hazrat Inayat Khan**

If you do not rise above the things of this world, they will rise above you.

Hazrat Inayat Khan.

And then the absolute opposite:

He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest really attains the blessed state...

Hazrat Inayat Khan

How can we reconcile these two objectives pulling us in opposite directions?

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, yet at the same time motive limits power. Yet it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

So long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The very foundation of Sufism, based upon the famous *Hadith Qudsi* earmarks *"Ishq"* (variously translated as desire, love, nostalgia) as the motivation behind the great achievements of our civilizations. Ideally, the existential state must have a purpose other than just offering a leg-up for awakening beyond it. What a loss of an opportunity to escape from it and thereby neglect all the enrichment that it offers!

The soul reaches a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes to him one sublime vision of the immanence of God. This is the real exaltation, when one has risen above one's limitation and has become conscious of the

Perfection whom we call God. The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man.

(*The Supplementary Papers* of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, The Sufi Order, USA, p 130)

It is in man that the divine perfection can be seen. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Manifestation is the self of God; but a self that is limited - a self that makes His perfection known when He compares Himself with the limited self we call nature. The purpose of the whole creation is fulfilled in the attainment of that perfection which is for a human being to attain.

Hazrat Inayat Khan.

For the Sufis, realization in life is attained by fulfilling the purpose of life, which is actuating the splendor behind the existential level in "building a beautiful world of beautiful people." In the course of accomplishment new horizons of meaningfulness reveal themselves.

The purpose of life is attained in the mastery achieved through accomplishment. ...

However, admittedly, once involved in the rat race, one tends to forget one's initial motivations and gets entangled in the vicious circle: greed - unkindness - ignorance.

A man who has gone through all experiences and has held his spirit high, not allowing it to be strained, to rise above everything that seeks to drag it down, that is spirituality.

Hazrat Inayat Khan, (1973, pp. 242-243)

Buddha lived as a recluse and founded a monastic order. Christ said of his disciples, "They are in the world but not of the world." For Ibn 'Arabi, by cloistering oneself from the world, one misses out on the divine revelation, because if one can espy what transpires behind what appears, one will – at least at the first stage – earmark in the existential realm, signs (*ayat)* giving clues to the "intention" behind the human drama. In a second step, clues to the perfection of the divine, archetypal attributes are

exemplified, albeit imperfectly, in our very human nature. The exemplar gives a clue to the archetype. Therefore the key is to see clearly the relationship between the two poles of this dichotomy.

***Since the ephemeral conditions manifest the form of the eternal, it is by contemplating the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself.*Ibn Arabi. (1975, p 15).**

For the Sufis, as in *Advaita Vedanta,* reality includes both its paramount eternal ground and its unfurling in the transient existential condition of becoming and unbecoming, in their interrelationship. In Sufism, when considering our contingent ego, it is always envisioned with reference to this pinnacle "pole" of our being. It is the categorizing faculty of our finite minds that sees duality, but in the state of awakening in life, *tawhid*, these apparently contradictory propositions can be reconciled in an antinomy:

***Thou art He without thou.* Ibn'Arabi (1976 4)...**

***When thou knowest thyself, thou understandeth that thou art He .* (1976, p 16)..**

***Understand whereby you are He and whereby you are other than He.* (1975 I,103, Cf. 1969. p192).**

LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE, SPHERES OF REALITY

Conceptualization is the first step. Mysticism starts with experience.

The God who is intelligible to man is made by man himself, but what is beyond his intelligence is the reality.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

Looking from a loftier vantage point, all the aforesaid depends upon the level at which our thinking is operating. To make ultimate sense, we would need to explore these various levels of our thinking and reconnoiter in particular those levels of thinking that are bereft of the notion of the personal I, of our middle range, spacio-temporal windows through which we try to scan reality. This is what is meant by enlightenment

and where the conjunctions between Buddhist and Sufi views (though not identical) are remarkable and gratifying.

Both Tibetan Buddhism and Sufism distinguish several levels of thinking. But we cannot really understand these unless we have ourselves experienced them.

He does not disclose Himself to you except to the measure that your level allows.

(1989, p 105) Ibn'Arabi.

The similarity (though not identity) is striking. For each body one identifies with, there is a corresponding mode of thinking. There is a Tibetan slogan: "the mind rides the wind". The wind typifies levels of energy (matter is energy). We might say that the same reality appears to us in different degree according to our perspective, that is, to the degree of our insight.

We are talking about various levels of reality evidencing one's insight. Depending upon one's perspective, one could posit degrees of "Godness" ranging from an impersonal absolute to an all-encompassing view of God as the Being of whom the universe is the body. For our intellect, these two extremes, designated in Buddhism as the non-become and the become, are designated in Sufism by *Haqq* and *Khaliq.*

RECONCILING THE IRRECONCILIABLES.

Is it possible to extrapolate between these two perspectives?

The Sufi dervishes bear testimony in lofty flights of their souls, to planes or spheres beyond the existential sphere, where an infinite plethora of possibilities *(Imkan)* lie dormant. While eternal in the principles of their nature, these virtual archetypes of what is experienced on earth project themselves in the existential mode, which is transient. Moreover, there is an ever-recurrent flow from the inexhaustible pool of all possibilities into the existential realm. The non-manifest slumbers in the virtuality of possibility.

There is no thing whose treasuries are not with Us. **Qur'an 15-21**

***The treasuries of the things are only the possibilities of the things, nothing else since the things have no existence in their entities. On the other hand they possess immutability. For in the state of their nonexistence, things are witnessed by God.*Ibn' Arabi. (1989, p 87)**

The crucial issue is: whatever interaction these two poles of the antinomy might entertain.

He brings them out from the treasuries from existence which we do not perceive, to an existence which we do perceive.

Ibn' Arabi (1989, p 87)

...Possible things become qualified by existence from behind the veil of the Divine attributes.Etudes

***For possibility is a prayer, a call to the Necessary being who at every instant recreates the cosmos in a new form.*Ibn'Arabi (1989, p 89)**

***In matter, life unfolds, discovers, realizes the consciousness that has been so to speak buried in it for thousands of years.*Hazrat Inayat Khan...**

God is hidden in His creation.

(*A Meditation Theme for Each Day.* p 31)

It is in the manifest realm that it becomes a reality.

According to al Hallaj, God, envisioned as Reality beyond the existential state, in the solitude of oneness (beyond multiplicity), projected Himself by dint of form, (although intrinsically formless) in order to acquire a subsidiary, supererogatory mode of knowledge that accrued to the knowledge of the principles of His being, that he embodies eternally , presumably adding further sense to this primeval, paramount knowledge.

One could equally say: God wishes to see His essence in an all- inclusive object which, by being endowed by existence summarizes the divine order, so that He

may thus manifest His mystery to Himself . **Ibn'Arabi (1975 p 8)**

God discovers His perfection in the imperfection of the creature... Imagine grasping the bounty in a seed while contemplating a flower. **Hazrat Inayat Khan.**

For the Sufis, beyond the existential condition, all possibility lies in wait as the undertone of the universe; these virtualities are released in the existential condition out of love rather than necessity.

God does not need the world.

Qur'an. (III, 96)

He created them to enable them to enjoy existence, to free them from the constraint of the void. **Ibn 'Arabi (1975 p 146)**

(Nov 12st 2001)

132 - Our Wounded Humanity

Suffering is our first call.
Hazrat Inayat Khan.

N.B. The following is simply my personal opinion and neither an official statement of the policy of the Sufi Order nor a proposition for a such statement, and should not be construed as such.

The tidal wave of resentment that has surfaced in our troubled days jeopardizing the fruit of the toil of dedicated human endeavor and skill, disrupting our society, the damage to our lovely Planet by disregard for its sacredness, the despoiling of cherished values that bepeak of decadence shake us out of our smug complacency and challenge us into exploring the core issues at the social scale and in ourselves. It manifests in bombs, computer viruses, biological contamination, crime, dissolute manners, vandalism …

We need to listen to the grievances behind the turmoil of outrage on all sides that spur our quarrelling, hating each other, killing each other, wreaking excruciating suffering upon our fellow beings. In the incensed fire of our anger, we humans are destroying each other's homes, buildings, amenities, facilities, organizational blue-prints that represent decades, sometimes centuries of human toil, skill, know-how achieved at great cost, technologies of brilliant and dedicated minds! What a senseless wanton waste! And unless dealt with it risks to escalate beyond control! If we do not take heed by dealing with the causes there will inevitably be outbursts of anger availing itself of the update abuses of technology.

Could and should we not have foreseen and forestalled the Sept. 11th attack?

A computer game may have given terrorists the idea to crash into the World Trade Centre.. The Microsoft Flight Simulator instructs computer users how to 'fly' Boeing and other aircraft across Manhattan, Washington or London. It stimulates crashing into one of New York's towers.

Echoes of the screams when the neck of a stewardess was split by a razor blade and the eyes of the pilot were gauged out and the voices of passengers sending messages to their families: "*We are hi-jaked, perhaps we will never meet again – I love you"* and the scene of bodies tortured in the flames jumping to their death still resonate in our ears, and linger as wounds in our hearts, now intermeshed with those of ordinary people being bombed in Afghanistan.

Our emotions are seriously aroused, wounded, pummeled, stunned, distraught, our thoughts disquieted, disturbed, perplexed, our projects stymied, our opinions and motivations subjected to queries in deep ponderings and soul-searchings.

If one entertains values such as love, harmony, beauty, respect for the dignity of one's fellow beings, kindness, discovering the degree to which the emotions of hate and the insensitive discard of suffering erupts mercilessly, unscrupulously when threatened or frightened even amongst people who normally would function according normal standards of appropriate behavior is so distressing! Never has the Message of the awakening of conscience been so urgently relevant!

If we try to reconnoiter what are the emotional motives behind the present crisis, more than ever, it is clear that the hatred that triggered off this mutual violence at a massive scale is of the same nature as our resentment in our personal "storms in our cups of tea" and hence the importance of Christ's message "forgive those who offend us… they do not know what they do" beckons upon us more relevantly than ever. And it is this message that resonates implicitly in Hazrat Inayat Khan's message of respect for all religions and all races that has meant so much to so many people in our day and age.

The challenge draws our attention more than ever to whatever we can do (albeit how limited the outreach of each one of us is) to value and share with our friends, distraught as we are the importance of "the awakening of conscience". Here lies the crux of what sparked the crisis; it urges us to deal with that very originating emotion. We cannot extricate ourselves from the plight of our fellow beings in a time of strife. Each little contribution on our part, (however small) has its part to play in the overall tidal wave of sensitivity to the sufferings of people and, to be consistent: focus on the cause that sparks violence. It starts at the personal scale. The feedback that reaches us is that, rather than simply meting out retribution for the sheer monstrous atrocity of

the Sept 11th, we need to reconnoiter the originating Machiavelian emotion that spurred the terrorists, explore honestly what motivates the retaliation? This beckons upon us to scan our own psyche to spot whether we nurture similar albeit less pernicious emotions ourselves at a personal scale. We cannot preach kindness as an antidote to cruelty if we ourselves are entertaining resentment, particularly if we are acting on the emotion of this resentment to harm (or wish harm to) another living being. It starts with us. Resentment is an inherited, primitive survival instinct written into our psychological defense system which gets transmuted in the course of evolution into unconditional love.

Our concerns and misgivings are now heightened, exasperated by the fear of the horror of the increasing danger in which the world is plunging, escalating beyond control by the intensification of hatred and arousing more hate. Or will wisdom sober out the fever and prevail? Let us at least not play into the ploy of that game of intimidation. Let us not allow the chaos in the world to perpetrate panic in our hearts and thoughts. It is one of the methods used by those threatening havoc to exercise pressure to halt the present intervention. Never have our meditations been so relevant. I remember during the First World War when as baby, when the bugle announced the Zeplins, people rushing for shelter, Pir o Murshid remained in the meditation room with those who stayed, maintaining peaceful serenity.

The inane outbreak of violence is nothing new to in the chronicles of our battling humanity. If by some superhuman colligation of our human society, we were endowed with a collective memory, running though the centuries, we would realize that the advance and collapse of civilizations of the past was fraught by extremes of savagery, abject cruelty, tortures, depravation, power plays, domination, oppression conspiracy, betrayal, stealth, (with amidst it all, heroic acts of chivalry, mercy and nobility), sparking dramatic changes, sometimes progress, sometimes decadence. Western legend tells us that it started with Cain and Abel. Let us just recall the Assyrian atrocities to subject the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Persian and the Jews: *("I flayed all the chief men who revolted, and covered the pillars with their skins, some I walled up inside the pillar, some I impaled upon the pillar with stakes… I cut off the limbs of the officers who rebelled"* King Ahurnasipal), the savage onslaught of the Huns, the Spanish inquisition, the genocide and extermination by colonial powers, the millions of victims for Stalin's access to power, the millions of young men who died in the

trenches in World War 1, the monstrous Holocaust, the mutual bombings and destruction of cities between the Germans and the British in World War 2, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Bosnia, merciless feuds in Africa, etc, etc

Are we progressing, even a little, learning by trial and error? It is ingratiating to hear that the strife that spells the present conflict is not against Islam or any nation or race, (although some perceive it as such) which is a sign that we have evolved over the national hatred that triggered off previous wars. Occasionally there are flares, glimpses of wisdom erupting in the conscience of humanity which announces a way out of the dark insensitive imbroglio.

In this conundrum, we have an impelling need to communicate with each other our quandaries, open our hearts, admit our uncertainty as to which is the appropriate action to deal with the ignominious challenge to the world in which we have been accustomed to live, perhaps admit that we ourselves are not immune from perhaps unavowed emotions of hate, intolerance, discrimination, a partisan spirit understandably inspired by loyalty. In this we are tested in exactly the challenge that determines the decisions of not only of those responsible for the conduct of situations that affect our lives, our security, our welfare but those operating behind the scenes disrupting the world order to give vent to their grievances. Moreover there is no telling to what atrocities this 'cause' can be exploited by 'uncouth, unaware' hooligans (as in football matches) ignorant as to how another person feels who, taking advantage of the pandemonium, suddenly appear out of the woodworks, wreaking diabolical atrocities, spoiling it for the misguided indoctrinated, ideal-driven activists and the outlawed staunch knightly spirits outraged, exasperated by the very oppression condemned by the United Nations Charter on Human Rights - especially refusal to ban torture! Unfortunately they seek to redress injustice in the only way they can imagine is within their power at the cost of cruel suffering for others that escalates into further unkindness and cumulates in atrocities spiraling ever further.

It is said that on the hilt of Prophet Mohammed's sword were the words: *Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you, and speak the truth although it may be against yourself* (Cf. Helminski).

Quite understandably, we have a need to communicate what is in our hearts and thoughts, but I am pained when these exchanges that divide world opinion spill over in

dissentions in our spiritual family. It is natural and healthy for us to share our thoughts apprehension, opinions as to the propriety of the policy used to intervene in the present situation, in the light of its moral implications. But let us not slip into partisan squabble, criticizing nations, governments, institutions (although we cannot posit that politicians are infallible!) I sometimes hear a note of emotional antagonism in our statements, sometimes national resentment. Our judgment could well in some cases be afflicted by conditioned bias which bespeaks of loyalty to one's community. It is a great art to agree to disagree respectfully.

(A reminder: the following is solely my personal view, as a human being not that of the Sufi Order International).

What do we know about the hidden concerns behind Government strategies, (the cause behind causes), especially now as they become increasingly global. Glib opinions about politics are fraught with amateurishly jumping to conclusions. Quite understandably when hurting others our conscience is lacerated and we feel called upon to speak up, as long as it is not construed as the official view of the SOI. I realize that spiritualists can take refuge in a non-commital ivory tower to reassure people worried about the situation; we have agreed to spell our opinions however questionable.

Rather than retaliation are we motivated by a global concern to protect the victims of violence? In which way can one ensure that security without one's intervention having the opposite affect by triggering off a back-lash? Could there be behind the scene concern to forestall at the eleventh hour the use of nuclear weapons in unwise hands? Preventive medicine? A surgeon's scalpel, however painful may save a person's life. That was the story of Moses and Khidr. Or counterwise could intervention have the effect of antagonizing emotions, sensitivity? In some cases operating an encapsulated malignant tumor can trigger off a generalized proliferation of the metastasis of the spores.

The good news is that emerges in the cruel battle is that at last it frees the oppressed women! But that was not the instigating motivation! Moreover, It has taken all this pandemonium to coerce Israel to withdraw from its take-over of some some Palestinian occupied territories. Rabbi Salman Shachter amongst strong public opinion in Europe warned against bulldozing Palestinian houses This, being one of

the last vestiges of an obsolete, redundent mode of colonization has been all along one of the major piece in Arab grievances, (though not the only one). If settled a long time ago, could it l have prevented the Sept 11th excesses? Other grievances have been invoked. How can these be addressed respectfully without violence? Update political standards seeks to eschew violence by conflict resolution as in personal psychology. The present imbroglio is telling us to learn how to deal with political conflicts in the new worldviews. Are we up-to it before it is too late?

There are deeper issues: cultural dissentions. In any efforts to sit around a table, Westerners must take into account the differences between the Western and Eastern mode of thinking where faith plays the decisive role. There is a concern about the degradation of cherished moral values safeguarded by tradition and a plethora of concupiscence while one's kins on the planet are struggling in penury.

Religion is intended as the custodian of the sacredness of our paramount values.

What does traditional Sufism say?

The Prophet reserved next to (or at) the Mosque of Medina a place (later Sufis built *Ribats* or Khanekas or Zaouia) where learned Shaykhs, the Sufis (the people of the Sofa) discussed '*ta'wil'* the exegis (comment) of the 'revealed' *ayahs* (saying) under the guidance of Salman Pak. Salman, (often branded *Farsi* (Iranian), brought up a Mazdean, became a Christian hermit, joined the Prophet who adopted him in his family. It is held that the Prophet preoccupied himself in interpreting the revelations received when in a high state. His esteem for Salman led him into consulting him with regard to the light that could be cast upon them originating in the Greeko-Iranian gnosis (called Sophia) . That the Qur'an was dictated by messages received in contrast with the Hadith which are purported to be the Prophet's own words is evidenced by the elliptic, exceptional Qur'anic idiom. According to the Qur'an, not only the world and our psyche but similarly the Qur'an itself is composed of signs that need to be interpreted. This view is not generally accepted despite Qur'an 20-28. (Cf. L. Massignon, Salman Pak, Societe des Etudes Iraniennes May 30th 1933) Sufism originated precisely here. But the subtlety of thoughts of Sufi masters like Ibn 'Arabi, Rumi, Hallaj, Jili, Jami, Niffari, Muin ud-Din Chichti, was difficult to understand. In the present miscommunication at the core of the crisis, the teaching of the authentic Sufi

masters has light to throw on the cultural paradigm dichotomy around which the cultural dissentions gravitate which sparks the global conflagration.

Once again: according to our Statutes, the Sufi Order International is not allowed to intervene in politics or make statements with political implications. Therefore our governance cannot as a spiritual institution try to articulate a concerted official policy regarding government decisions – it is not of our resort, not within our expertise. However we as free human beings must be free to express personal opinion; It is our right to differ; we can agree to disagree; but we must expressly state that it is our personal opinion by labeling it 'personal'. Certainly as Mureeds of a spiritual Order, we can affirm our spiritual values. Admittedly there is a fine line between the two between these and inevitably an overlap.

It is told that Hazrat Ali when spat upon by his enemy released him. When asked why, he said: I did not wish to act in wrath!

But, one may rightly ask, can we not protect ourselves if attacked?

If one's compassion leads one to tolerate a person's mistreatment, it encourages their unkind misbehavior and therefore is not good for that person. As already said, our ideals are: love and forgive your neighbor, rather than the eye for 'an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. This was our Founder Hazrat Pir o Murshid's paramount principle. However there are cases where, giving in to people hurting other people is failing in taking responsibility. Hence Pir o Murshid's caution:

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is necessary when kindness and forgiveness will have no power whatever on the hard heart of the enemy. But so long as there is a chance of meeting the enemy's revenge with kindness, then the above law may not be practiced. Hazrat Inayat Khan.

Therefore one needs to combine authority with compassion. This requires great composure in the realm of emotion: making one's opponent aware of one's strength without affirming one's ego. Here resides the great art of life – the hallmark of evolution from primitive instincts to what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls 'the quest for perfection'. It applies both at the personal level and the social scale.

This very provision avers its paramount antinomy in the Sephirotic tree of the Kabbala :
Khesed (compassion) – the way of the saint, and Din (rigor, the law) – the way of the master are balanced in tandem.

The relevant *Wazaif* are therefore:
YaRahman (magnanimity) – *YaWali* (mastery)
or *Ya Rahim* (compassion) – *Ya Qaher* (sovereignty).

"Dare you wage war against war" exclaimed Bernard Shaw in Major Barbara. Cruelty countered by cruelty! Dare we wage peace on war?

What if we dared attempting the unrealistic improbable! What if we emboldened ourselves to turn the tables on violence? What if we gave love a chance?

Gandhi: *The objective should not be to punish the opponent or to inflict injury upon him. We must make him feel that in us he has a friend.*

It is a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent consistent with truth and justice.

To turn one's opponent into a friend, one needs to listen to his or her grievance, his or her suffering – ask: "am I obstructing your vital, desperate needs? Have I been snubbing your dignity? How can I help?" Then give heartily and receive heartily in honorable exchange in love, respect and kindness. Just imagine the pain, suffering and senseless waste of human resources (the slow down of world economy and productivity) that this would free us from!

People submit to power unwillingly – to love, willingly. Hazrat Inayat Khan

Last minute. One more catastrophe! Our hearts go out to the victims, our friends in New York - but it affects us all.

133 - I have a Dream

(Dec. 2001)

Martin Luther King:

We cannot walk alone. As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. This is our hope.... With this faith we will be able to hew out the mountain of despair. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together…. This will be the day when all God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning "My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died…." When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village, from every state, and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, [may I add Jews and Arabs?], Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

I had a dream. My hopes suffered a tragic setback – maybe yours have, too. Our hearts have been devastated: people killing each other, blowing themselves up, revenge, torture, leaving a trail of misery, of despair, the hordes of displaced refugees, contempt for human dignity.

Yet I still have a dream – a dream of peace. Is it likewise with you? Do you still hold that dream? Is it ok to dream wishful thinking? They call it ineffective, utopic.

Utopia was the dream of Thomas More (the title of his book published in 1516). He named it an imaginary island that might serve as a model for human communities governed by an ideally perfect social and political system. It reflects earlier idyllic political models, for example Plato's Republic. Also J. S. Bach described his music as a model for a human commonwealth: "each theme enjoying a range of freedom but each limiting its freedom in the interest of the whole." He added: "such is the harmony governing the motion of the stars."

Perchance dreams do come true. We call it a miracle because it defies logic. But in mathematics, one chance in a million or even in a billion is still not illogical – just not

very probable, but for the heroes, not to be dismissed.

There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul, which gives the soul a longing for the Unattainable. Hazrat Inayat Khan (*The Unity of Religious Ideals*)

It is never in your pocket, but it lures you ever forward into breaking new ground – opening new horizons. This is the stuff with which the spirit of heroes is made. It challenges one to defy those albeit reasonable words: 'unpractical,' 'not feasible,' 'it doesn't work,' 'it cannot possibly work.' The answer is, 'What if it could? What if my assessment is wrong? What if what is judged impossible is possible? What if my belief, and your belief, and that of umpteen people makes what seems impossible possible?' Belief is an unaccountable force. However it can also operate as misconstrued and misleading obscurantism. Hence Hazrat Inayat Khan's injunction:

Shatter your ideal on the rock of truth.

As a soul evolves from stage to stage, it must break the former belief in order to establish the later, and this breaking of the belief is called by Sufis Tark, which means abandonment.

He who fights his nature for his ideal is a saint; he who subjects his ideal to his realization of truth is the master. *(Gayan)*

The ideal is a stepping stone towards that attainment which is called liberation. *(Religious Gathekas)*

One needs to distinguish between belief and faith. Belief is based upon a holy scripture or the injunction of a believer, sometimes factual evidence; whereas faith is a kind of gut feeling, not based on evidence, a sense that everything makes sense ultimately and that there is splendor behind the existential, awry universe. This conviction overrides the proof of the contrary. It belongs to a higher knowledge. It is what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls "*the reason behind reason."*

Blind idealism can lead to the kind of intolerance that begets violence, persecution, cruelty, even torture (as evidenced in the Spanish inquisition), and in our day and age in the 11th of September massacre. The wager is to give priority to the minimum

ethical decency, over one's impulse to pursue one's belief at the cost of human suffering. In the hierarchy of ideals, Hazrat Inayat Khan calls the paramount value: the truth.

It comes by rising above all that hinders one's faith in truth: the abandoning of the worldly ideal, the abandonment of the heavenly ideal, the abandoning of the divine ideal, and even the abandoning of abandonment. This brings the seer to the shores of the ultimate truth. *(The Way of Illumination; Private Papers)*

Surprising words that aver their pertinence in the present world situation! Yes, as one becomes more aware, one's erstwhile ideal concedes to one its inadequacy. Here is proof that one has progressed. This is the dark-night of the mind of St. John of the Cross. In *politrics* (a word of my uncle Murshid Musheraf Khan), one easily confuses ideal with ideology: i.e. Nazi ideology, Communist ideology, racist ideology. Ideology begets hatred with its inevitable follow up of conflict, war, misery, poverty, uprooted refugees, the disruption of the fruits of efforts of dedicated people, civilizations built sometimes over aeons of time….

The present world conflict is triggered off by a tug of war. On one side, the ideology fostering material profit, profiteering (sustained by ever more sophisticated technology) which has the disadvantage of opening the door to ruthless, insensitive greed (affluence while people are sleeping in the streets), manipulation, perjury, ego-games, power-games, a degeneration in standards (drugs and alcohol), in morals a pursuit of ugliness in art (hard rock), slovenliness, facetiousness, vulgarity, crime, a lack of self-respect, making its victims and even subsidiary beneficiaries beholden to one. On the other side, we find a more traditional ideology that upholds age-hallowed standards of dignity, that criticizes what is considered a moral decadence, and condemns depravity, sacrilege, snubbing of the sacredness of religious transmissions, a contempt of strict religious prescriptions - the profanation of the sacred.

Among those adhering to the latter contention, called Fundamentalists (nowadays Islamists), some adopt extreme bigoted inflexible attitudes called fanaticism and feel threatened by the 'established' holders of power, spoiling it for those loyal to the prescriptions of their religion. Is there a way of reconciling these seeming irreconciliables?

Sufism teaches that spiritual progress and material progress are concomitant and that there can be no genuine or lasting progress until the spiritual quality is adopted.

When dominated and repressed by the holders of power, when frustration reaches a point of uncontrollable emotion of desperation, it can explode, culminating in horrendous, preposterous, destructive acts as the inconceivable, uncondonable 11th of September outrage, triggering off a spiraling vicious circle of retaliation, then retaliation of retaliation in irreversible regress, while a dignified solution looms so obviously at hand for those who see the counter-productiveness of hot-headed retribution.

The nations of today stand in the quest of their own national benefit regardless of other nations. This has made the world a battlefield of continual struggle where life has become nothing but chaos.

Can you now hear the voice of despair at present? Can we measure how great must be the degree of frustration and anger for young men to offer their lives for freedom from oppression? Where there is suffering, where there is misery, penury, if the oppressed feel threatened that their grievances will not be heard or heeded, they will resort to terrorism to exercise pressure for their cause. Aggression is triggered off by fear, frustration, suffering. True, it is counter-productive. This very aggressivity puts the wrench in the wheels of conflict-resolution. The end does not justify the means; violence proves in the end to defeat its purpose, playing into the vicious circle of violence. There is here a misconstruction that needs to be unmasked on both sides. The communications breakdown is sparked by a lack of trust. Mutual trust is gained painstakingly by the on-going experience of working together, as Martin Luther King said. If one discounts one's memory of history, one easily stumbles into a Catch 22. The killings by the oppressed who feel maligned by a contempt of human rights is considered as terrorism, whereas killing the new terrorists by those comfortably and legally established who owe their position of power by themselves having resorted initially to terrorism is accepted as a legal act by dint of invoking the righteousness of their anti-terrorist claim against the terror that they themselves triggered off in the first place. There is no doubt that the human factor here is the criterion: respect for human dignity.

Much as the counterproductive vicious circle of conflict in which the world is engaged

seems inevitable, it is difficult to realize that the solution is right at hand. One has difficulty in seeing how it could work. Resort to force is shortsighted; it will never solve problems in the long run.

Christ says this clearly – it is peremptory. To St. Peter who sought to protect him from Judas's betrayal:

He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword.

Indeed, of what use would it have been if St. Peter had attacked Judas?

Yet one needs to take precautions to protect innocent people by taking appropriate measures so that the 11th of September outrage could not be repeated. Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan advocates:

Avoid the harm done by the enemy by taking precautions, facing it with strength.

He warns, however, that the strength of intervention should be resorted to

…only if one is sure that kindness and forgiveness will have no power whatever over the hard heart of the enemy, but on the other hand will make it worse.

Could one forgive the terrorists who committed such a monstrous crime on September 11th? Innocent people as hostages in hi-jacked planes turned into live bombs - innocent people fleeing the flames by jumping out the windows to their death! We can never forget this. Could one forgive Hitler or Stalin, and many, many heartless brutal beings? Could anyone have converted Hitler or Stalin by non-violence? By forgiving them? They would have scoffed at our naivety! Of course one cannot force one's forgiveness upon a person who does not recognize that he is guilty.

If we had not countered Nazism with strength, we in Europe would be living under a ruthless dictatorship with the ensuing damage to the values of our civilizations achieved at the cost of so much dedication, sacrifice and ingenuity.

Christ intervened with violence in the temple against the profanation of the sacred.

Yet the secret of breaking the pattern of the vicious circle of retribution and escalating

retaliation is to bravely and trustingly opt for the reverse: kindness, forgiveness, but together with authority. One needs to take precautions to ensure, to prevent, that outrages to decent behavior do not reoccur, causing further victims "only if one is sure that kindness and forgiveness will have no power whatever over the hard heart of the enemy, but on the other hand will make it worse."

On the other hand, in some cases the way of kindness will disarm the opponent if we listen to their grievance and take heed of them as Gandhi said:

The objective should not be to punish the opponent or to inflict injury upon him. We must make him feel that in us he has a friend. It is a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent consistent with truth and justice.

And from Ghaffar, sometimes called the Afghan "Frontier Ghandi:"

If one is really committed to non-violence one has to deliver one's self into the hands of one's enemy and try to convert him.

Forgiveness is difficult and obstructed by those who fail to believe in a peaceful solution. It requires implicit trust that this solution can prove effective.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:Forgive the enemy and forget his enmity if he truly wishes it. And take the first step in establishing friendship instead of holding in one's mind the pain of the past.

This is my dream, my faith, the policy I have arrived at dealing with my frustrations, my ultimate trust in the basic need of humans for peace and harmony which is disrupted when grievances are not dealt with and hatred and violence are aroused; the belief that there is a way of understanding, of kindness and mutual trust, of respect for human dignity and love. Do you believe this too? I believe that if one overcomes that psychological layer of resentment, one will uncover that core of the goodness that lies in wait in the depth of the human soul, which Hazrat Inayat Khan calls the divinity in the human being.

My faith is that with shared endeavor we can make what seems impossible possible. I hear that many kindred spirits think this way. Together we can build a force of peace

in a disrupted and wounded world. It starts in our personal lives and snowballs in society at large at a global scale. Forgiveness starts by getting into the consciousness, the *conscience* of the 'other' (the 'other oneself'), where one sees his or her grievances, resentment, and struggle for self-esteem. Forgiveness is sparked by understanding, by withholding one's condemning. One hopes that one's love and forgiveness will diffuse the resentment of those whom one has offended, and who have offended one. I realize that it is difficult if one has been abused. How far can one go? One needs to trust that eventually, in the long run, our trust in shared forgiveness will spread far and wide to build a beautiful world of beautiful people.

This is to wish you
A Happy Christmastide
And Blessed New Year.

The story goes that there was an old man called St. Nicholas, with a 'long' white beard, trekking through the snow in Northern reaches, whose joy was giving – giving presents to children so that as they grow up they may themselves give presents to kindly, giving people in the form of kindness and generosity (P.V. who likes *highfalutin* words says magnanimity, *Ya Rahman).*

That present is love. *"*We are tested in our love,*"* says Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan. This can be very difficult not only if it is a person who has harmed one, more so a person who has hurt someone whom one loves. So we are tested in the utmost. It is the message of Christ whose birth we celebrate at the solstice when light begins to increase carrying a message of hope.

This is my wish for the New Year: Hope – faith in the power of love.

136 - The Message of Forgiveness:

Breaking the Circle of Vengeance in the Middle East

Archetyple principles in the life of Jesus appear as stages leading toward resurrection and shed light on the way to break the circle of vengeance in the Middle East.

In the first stage the miracle of life was that God became man so that man might become God.

Teilhard de Chardin :
Christus homo est.

At a next stage, as it is said in the Qu'ran:
God shows His signs in the horizon and in ourselves.

The stars led the way. The three wise men Melchior, Caspar and Baltasar followed the stars until they disappeared from the horizon. It was at this point that they arrived at the birthplace of Jesus, the epiphanos, the manifestation of light in the world.

Next came the great betrayal.

Christ had foreseen that and told Judas: Do what you must do. Judas had hoped that Christ would free the Jews from Rome and was disappointed that freedom would be in the hereafter. It is a tradition that the people kill the prophet they chose so that his personality does not stand in the way of the worship of God. Christ was betrayed with a kiss.

While Christ said: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law of the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil." Matthew 5:17, he faced the opposition of those who held to the moral paradigm of the time. They opposed Christ giving a new message: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who hate you." Matthew 5:43 - 45.

Christ's message was to forgive. It was the only way to stop the circle of vengeance brought on by those who resent. His message went further than "an eye for an eye, a

tooth for a tooth" by introducing forgiveness. Consequently he was condemned for violating the dominant moral paradigm.

Christ's last words, "Why hast Thou abandoned me?" could be interpreted as God saying through Christ's voice, "Why hast thou forsaken Me?" Recognizing this perspective has a healing effect. As the impulse of blame is released a new way opens. One can only attain illumination by overcoming resentment.

At present the state policy in the Middle East is based upon an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This is the principle on which vendettas are established.
While you involve yourself in a vendetta you are never free. One vendetta follows another without reprieve. The only way to free oneself from the vicious circle of vendetta is by forgiving. That is introducing a principle unacceptable to the old paradigm.

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7: 4 - 5

Turning the other cheek is the only way of stopping the inevitable destruction and killing that comes from vendetta.

In the spirit of dedication to her side of the conflict a young Palestinian woman sacrificed her life to destroy Israelis. Although one may feel some sympathy for her nothing was gained by her action. Indeed, the circle continued as her family was investigated.

Pardon and forgiveness are the only means of ending the conflict.

Christ says:
But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. Matthew 5: 39

The only hope for a solution in the Middle East crisis is introducing love and forgiveness, rising above the moral constraints of vengeance.

137 - What is Meditation?

How does one meditate?

with Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan and Taj Inayat

INTRODUCTION

Taj Inayat

I'd like to share with you the background against which this Keeping in Touch was written.

It took weeks after Pir Vilayat's first stroke for him to recover his ability to speak and communicate his ideas. Gradually, he developed a system of communication where he would dictate his thoughts and have them read back to him. Try to imagine, if you will, the difficulty of keeping the sequence of entire paragraphs clearly in his mind as he listened to what was dictated back to him and then made revisions.

It was a tedious process, but one that he never seemed to [get] tired of. He often dozed off into sleeping episodes, yet upon waking he would always say, "Now, where were we?" Then he would begin again immediately. This went on for days and weeks. He worked intensely on several articles, some of which were published before his death in past issues of Keeping in Touch.

One day he said that he would like to write an article on meditation with me, that we would each write a portion of it. At first, I didn't think he was serious, so I tried to delay it several days. I thought he was just trying to keep me busy, thinking I didn't have enough to do all day just sitting by his bed. When he finished his portion I hadn't even started mine. Every time he asked how my part was coming along, I responded with some excuse. But he continued to bring it up, until I started feeling guilty and finally began to write down a few thoughts.

Then of course, I would have to read back to him what I had written and he would ponder what I had said. His eyes would light up at certain points, such as the phrase "God becomes man so that man can become God." I never found the source of that quote. I must have read my portion of this article to him 20 times, sometimes nearly screaming in his ear because of his hearing loss. I thought the other family members

in Fazil Manzil surely must be sick of it, but he never appeared tired of hearing it. He seemed happy to see the two poles of meditation spoken about together.

I remember that time now with so much tenderness. I feel grateful in those last days, even under such difficult circumstances, to have had the joy of sharing deeply our inner thoughts and experiences as we had for over 35 years. In some way, this Keeping in Touch is a testament to our ongoing dialogue: the conversation we started when we first met and which continued until he was not longer able to speak.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?
HOW DOES ONE MEDITATE?
Pir Vilayat

It is a fallacy to put a certain amount of time aside to meditate and then to return to one's ordinary thinking. The objective of meditation is awakening - seeing the programming behind the facts. It requires one to change one's point of view from the usual one. Awakening affects our thinking and acting in everyday life.

To meditate one must first expel thoughts related to the physical world. Shagal is the first step because one eliminates those thoughts that are related to what is not. By closing one's senses one shuts out the impressions of the day. The consequence is that if one's consciousness is blinded on one side, the 'outside,' then it turns inside.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
When he can go into the inner chamber and shut the door to every sound but to that of his soul he will know the keynote of his life. Sangatha III

One needs to reconsider the thoughts regarding oneself in light of the whole picture. One touches upon another level of reality than the physical. Reality does manifest in the physical, but to grasp it one has to see the physical from the point of view of the divine.

So in shagal one is seeing everyday reality as secondary, as a concretized and personalized expression of the divine planning. The power of meditation lies in seeing things from the divine point of view.

Actually one is seeing backstage of life and into the motivations of the divine planning. This is what is meant by: “seeing things from the divine point of view.”

Meditation is the art of correcting distortion in order to grasp reality.

To do this one has to first deal with one’s identity. One needs to include in one’s identity one’s transpersonal being, which is what we mean by God. It is a totally different realm to the physical. One considers material facts as the application of the programming; one is always seeing the motivation behind existential facts. Awakening requires that one dismiss the usual way of seeing things to grasp the cause behind the effect. One has to avoid slipping back into one’s ordinary consciousness.

There is a disparity between our opinion and reality. This could be illustrated by the description of an electron as a particle gravitating in an orbit. That description would be a total misinterpretation of the path of the electron because one cannot estimate the speed and location of a subatomic particle at the same time.

One’s personality is like a variation on a theme of music. It is the divine theme but somehow the individual has arisen within the perspective of the whole. It is separate from the whole in that it has its own point of view, yet interprets the divine point of view in a unique way. The divine being has fragmented itself and those fragments enrich the divine being just like the variation on the theme enriches the musical theme.

What is gained by life is the individual in its relationship with the totality.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?
HOW DOES ONE MEDITATE?
Taj Inayat

The practice of meditation can help us fulfill the purpose of our life: awakening to our divine nature and further, embodying and living this Mystery in our day to day life. Embodying our deepest nature is the spiritual keynote of our time. As Hazrat Inayat Khan says, the message of the day is the awakening of humanity to the divinity of the human being.

Evolutionary Intelligence “desires” further and further integration of all aspects of its

Being. This takes place through the process of descent and ascent (see the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan in The Soul Whence and Whither). All is one in the eternal beginning (the Alpha of our being) yet through the process of manifestation, the Only Being divides or discriminates into distinguishable forms (subtle and gross) for the pleasure of the Creator/Artist.

“God has become the human being so that the human being can become God.”

The soul incarnates, substantiates, through a gradual process of learning to be a separate “I.” When this “journey” is more or less completed, the soul finds itself, here, in a subject-object world, individuated into a unique ego-centered universe, no longer able to feel and abide in the inherent loving oneness of existence.

Yet in spite of this sense of estrangement, there is a great purpose behind the “fall.” As Hazrat Inayat Khan says, “Hail to my fall from the Garden of Eden…if this had not happened, I would not have been able to taste the depths of life.”

Mystics throughout the ages concur that our highest human task is to realize the unity of existence in and through all levels of being. Yet most of us experience our self and the world around us subjectively, through the lens of an historical, conditioned point of view and sense of self. Beneath a thin veneer most people feel a vague sense of unhappiness, agitation and emptiness.

The whole mystic path is the process of awakening from our ego-centered existence with its inherent dissatisfaction and meaninglessness into a deeper ground of being which by its nature gives a sense of wonder, joy and peace. In fact our attempt to gain love, value, peace and joy is really the search for our own Self, our deeper self that is buried in our own heart.

The practice of meditation can help us dis-identify from our usual limited sense of self and open to this deeper, more true nature. In discovering and living from this depth we not only gain our heart’s desire but fulfill the purpose of human existence.

How can meditation help?

Just the intention to meditate regularly begins to shift the centrality of the ego life. By

first believing and then experiencing a greater existence or field of awareness beyond our normal range, our self-centered view is made relative. We start to become loyal to a greater, deeper center. At the simplest level, to commit to a daily practice means that our ordinary way of doing things needs to change. For example to add a half hour of meditation to our morning schedule implies the loss of time for other activities (such as sleeping, reading the newspaper, procrastinating, etc.)

To stick with a meditation practice day after day, sometimes with very little reward, requires discipline, loyalty, love and faith. In the beginning it is common to believe that enlightenment will end our suffering so we are highly motivated to practice. But gradually it begins to dawn on us that the self who desires enlightenment is actually the main barrier to experiencing our deeper ground. It is natural to go through developmental stages in our meditation practice. We begin as the seeker and discover we are the One who is sought.

Poem by La La:
I searched everywhere for you. You played hide and seek with me, until I realized that I was you. And the celebration of that began.

Hazrat Inayat Khan speaks to these stages beautifully:

When Thou didst sit upon Thy throne, with a crown upon Thy head, I did prostrate myself upon the ground and called Thee my Lord.
When Thou didst stretch out Thy hands in blessing over me, I knelt and called Thee my Master.
When Thou didst raise me from the ground, holding me with Thine arms, I drew closer to Thee and called Thee my Beloved.
But when Thy caressing hands held my head next to Thy glowing heart and Thou didst kiss me, I smiled and called Thee myself.
The Complete Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, p. 103.

As our meditation deepens we learn to abide more and more in the deeper ground of existence (God). This signals a shift away from a more ego centered experience towards a more divine centered experience. The temporary state is called a hal. For a hal to become a station, however, more and more attention needs to be directed towards how we live our daily life. (See the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan on Moral

Culture). Having peak experiences of the divine is a first stage, but to embody this reality in an ongoing way requires a radical overhaul of our whole personality structure.

The systematic dissolving of our habituated life is the spiritual work of a life time. This process requires profound dedication, love and guidance. Very few of us seem to be genuinely interested in such a complete surrendering of the ego life we have become accustomed to living. Yet this transformation is the invitation we are given. If we accept this path, and offer ourselves whole- heartedly to the divine operation, our historically constructed personality gradually dissolves (“dying before death”) and we become a temple for the Only Being to live a human life. The previously “merely human” has now become the “sheer divine.”

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Man is divine limitation and God is human perfection.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan:

THE WORLD CRISIS - THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH

How can we deal with the outrage?
Is there anything that we can do?
What can we do?

We are all emotionally shocked and outraged by the incredible cruelty, the horror, of what has happened: the voice of despair reaching us from the air, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" as brain-washed kamikazes transformed passenger aircraft into lethal bombs loaded with human lives, wreaking heartless human atrocity upon innocent people. The mass destruction will resonate through history as a portent of the vulnerability of the constructs of our affluent sophisticated civilizations in the hands of a few brainwashed lost souls, acting on a faulty interpretation of their religion, who have never heard of the pursuit of "the awakening of humanity to the divinity of the human status; the awakening of conscience."

How could a human being ever conceive of inflicting such heartless atrocity on fellow beings? Imagine people jumping to their death out the window in despair, being surrounded by flames and smoke, roasted alive, unable to flee. We could never assess the degree of the wanton destruction of what has been built by so much care and dedicated work and skill! An affront to civilization! And now: the alarming prospect of the millions of innocent people who may be sacrificed for the retribution. Yet we cannot responsibly allow this diabolical abomination to reoccur.

In the present crisis, in our dismay at a disturbed, faltering world teetering at the edge of disaster (or is it being afflicted by exceedingly pernicious and hazardous birth pangs announcing a brave new world?) as we quiver at the threat of wreaking further unimaginable escalating havoc upon our erstwhile beautiful planet and killing or causing excruciating pain upon millions, perhaps billions, of innocent people, our spiritual values are at stake. We are tested as to whether to retaliate for the atrocious cruelty to people going about their daily work. Is it helpful to kill masses of other innocent people who are not responsible for the barbaric act of terror to assuage our outrage - as vindication? This would be slipping into primitive feuds, vendettas, where it was customary that an insult could only be atoned by revenge to indemnify one's

honor.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
A person has a natural tendency that if he is insulted, he thinks that the proper way of answering is to insult the other person still more. Yet he gets a momentary satisfaction to have given a good answer.

Umpteen numbers of lives have been forsaken in past wars motivated by retribution when they could have been spared by a more civilized sense of honor. Moreover it rebounds upon the avenger.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
A fire thus starts in that mind that had been peaceful and by reacting it too participates in this fire which will burn oneself. It is giving fuel to the fire that rises for destruction and causes further destruction.... By giving way to disharmony, one causes disharmony to multiply.

Thus, spurred by our wounded emotion, we tend to react out of anger with bravado rather than act in a concentrated way to control the situation. Let us recall an incident in the life of Hazrat Ali who released an enemy who spat at his face. Whereupon the enemy asked him why he did not kill him. Hazrat Ali said: "I did not wish to react in anger."

Christ's teaching "resist not evil" is a hint not to participate in and be guilty of the same evil. Christ's time honored announcement on the Mount of Olives, valiantly and bravely challenging the vituperations of the Pharisees marked a radical turning point in the course of history from the law of retaliation to the ideal of love. Kabalists had aptly spelled the cosmic antinomy by opposing Chesed (magnanimity) and Din (the law) in the Sephirotic tree - Ya Rahman and Ya Wali.

You have heard that it was said: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you: do not resist an evil doer....You have heard: you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you so that ye may be children of your father in heaven. **Matthew 6 - 38,43**

This is the ultimate exhortation - admittedly difficult to follow.

Gandhi:
It is non-violence when we love those who hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? The objective should not be to punish the opponent or to inflict injury upon him. We must make him feel that in us he has a friend. It is a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent consistent with truth and justice.

How can we be the friend of a ruthless, brutal killer?

Christ:
They do not know what they do.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The wise understands; for he knows that the others are drunk and he cannot expect better of them. Vol. 6, Alchemy of Happiness, Life a Continual Battle (2)
During the battle it is an intoxication; [one] is battling but he does not know where he is going, and at the end of the battle, even if he is victorious, he will find that his victory is a loss. Vol. 6, Alchemy of Happiness, Life a Continual Battle (1)

But we cannot allow them to perpetrate their deadly harm upon innocent people or besmear the sacredness of our ideal. Therefore we need to intervene with might as a knight.

And having made a whip out of cords, he chased them out of the Temple. **St. John's Gospel**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Love for a devil should be to wish him to become better, but enduring his mischief is like giving him a hold upon us.

This was precisely the issue I discussed with Noor as the Nazi cannons were approaching our house. "We have paid lip-service to the Message of unity, respect of all religions, all races, the sacredness of life. Are these just words? Now comes the acid test: this ideal is being violated and obstructed - what are we prepared to do for it?" We decided to volunteer, to engage in the struggle heart and soul at the cost of our lives, but without killing, to save the victims of this violation of the values we stand

for. We abandoned our home, our security, but held our heads high.

Gandhi:
I do not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer; but I mean the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. I do believe that where there is a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence... But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Strength does not come from physical capacity; it comes from an indomitable will.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
He who has enough self-control to stand firm at the moment when the other person is in a temper will win in the end....But in order to stand firm against this disharmony that comes from without, one must first practice to stand firm against the disharmony that comes from within. For one's soul is more difficult to control that the others. And when one fails to control oneself, it is most difficult to stand against the disharmony without.

So what are we to do? Are we just to sit back, stick together as a family and listen passively to the news? Fret about the danger or hardships that could befall us? Try to heal the wounds in our souls? Or are we simply to preach the unity of religions to people blinded and deafened by despair? This was precisely what Noor and I were discussing.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Suffering is our first call.

There could be more suffering in store, much more suffering of innocent people. Are we prepared to help those victims of the situation in whatever way we can? There will be a need for food against mass starvation, for clothing and medicines. There will be a need to welcome and adopt distant and unknown friends, to show love and understanding - as do the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, Amnesty International, rescue operations....

Let us laud our heroes: the policemen, the firemen, and the rescue workers who sacrificed their lives in the brunt of the catastrophe.

We are living the crux of the human drama right here and now. The issue is what are our values? And are we prepared to uphold them? Rather than fretting over the sword of Damocles hovering over our own heads or fleeing it to save our lives, we need to involve ourselves by offering a helping hand, to maintain order against abuse with authority but without hate, to affirm authority by our solidarity in service to our cherished ideal of a civilized people inspired by the divine ideal.

Notwithstanding, let our distress not overshadow our faith in a better world and our joy of contributing to it each in our way.

Rev. Martin Luther King:
We must make the pledge that we shall march together.... We cannot turn back.... No, no! We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Enjoy the Challenge

June 2, 2002

Dear friends,

I am overwhelmed and graced by the powerful, loyal support and love reaching me here at Fazal Manzil from all parts of the world. I bid you all a heartfelt thank you. I attach judicious credence to the power of positive thought and prayer.

I am in the best and most expert of medical hands. Curiously enough, I have not felt quite so buoyant, energetic and positive, even humorous, for a long, long time. I already feel better which means that the treatment is working. Hopefully we caught it in the nick of time, at the eleventh hour, and we are dealing with it energetically. Officially the treatment has an 80% success rate. My doctor Dr. Haddad at the Hartman Institute told Dr. QwanYin Linda Wexler, my US doctor, today that, "It is *impossible* for Mr. Inayat to die on account of his present health condition," so that sounds reassuring! I have been working regularly at my office computer, from 6 am, on my book and curriculum, enthused by the rush of ideas. For age 85 plus, my health is not bad! In fact it is amazing.

I already feel a great relief as though that naughty "crab" (fictitious) has been bullied to let go its grip. It is now clear that this condition has been incubating for several years, defying detection (while I must own to neglect on my part, which I tried to justify by being so busy!!!)

Present day technology has improved by leaps and bounds. It has pushed its way into the area of the organic - endocrinology - beyond the inorganic drug. This accounts for one half of my treatment. The other half is radio-therapy [radiation] which is (if you permit my amateurish interpretations in the language of metaphor) healing with light, albeit with rather fierce light rays (the lance of Perceval). This is to incinerate the claws of the crab attacking my heart chakra, *Anahata*, from behind (5th dorsal), as did the lance grabbed by the Queen of the Night (Kali) in a smart ploy to attack King Amfortras. Furthermore it involves the thymus (6th cervical - immune system) and my left (4th) rib, 'the Sufi heart on the left,' drawing attention to my concern about dealing with the world instead of retiring in 'splendid, beatific isolation.' Do you believe it???

I have been complementing the medical treatment with my own meditation: visualizing my aura and the impact upon my aura of the cosmic rays descending as a lance of light (the lance of the Grail) into my aura, represented as a chalice of light. Incidentally, during and after the radio-therapy, while incandescent light is aggressing the pathological cells laterally, I meditate on the galactic cosmic rays directing high frequency light (ultra-violet) through the fontanel downwards along the spine (not upwards as in Kundalini) to regenerate the healthy body cells which proliferate in the process of mitosis by being quickened by that high frequency energy called the holy spirit. Our pineal gland is sensitive to the light of the center of the Milky Way, in addition to the influence of the sun, and therefore links us with influences of enormous outreach crowning the survival of the higher dimensions of one's being over the dismantling and distilling of the existential dimensions.

One can, indeed, in one's meditations, scan the wide spaces of light transpiring through the galaxies explored by astro-physicists, while the wreck of one's 'palace in a ruin' (the battered body) still registers the impact of the celestial experience on humans on Planet Earth, so as to communicate it to one's friends and, beyond that, heavenly light. So here is a further reason to reconcile meditation and science at this critical transit in the evolutionary advance of humanity.

In one's spiritual practices one awakens dormant faculties in one's body that reciprocate functions in the higher spheres, which one does not generally use.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
You can also become aware of your higher bodies - develop insight into the ethereal spheres. You can be instrumental to making this all-pervading light manifest as radiant light. It is in this process that man becomes like a radiant star. (Esoteric Papers)

Hazrat Inayat Khan gives many clues. Importantly:
If you make your soul more subtle in order to turn away from this world, you can find within yourself the different worlds by tuning to the different planes of consciousness…you gain a conviction that frees you from earthly conditions. (The Smiling Forehead/ Sufi Teachings). **By making this body in a different condition you may become conscious of annihilation. If you produce the condition of death at will, in the reaction the opposite will occur.** (Esoteric

Papers/ Sangatha III). **The great Yogis and Sufis have always progressed by the help of their practices toward the highest state of perfection by etherealizing through the knowledge of vibrations.** (Vol. 2, The Mysticism of Sound and Music/ Esoteric Music)

Indeed, by one's meditation practices one is reinforcing the medical therapy with spiritual self-healing in parallel. Here we can confirm experientially the impact of the mind over the body. Let us further bear in mind that the imaginary representation of the light of one's aura can only be truly actuated physically if one cleans one's emotions, by entertaining generous, up-front emotions and crystal clear, luminous thoughts thereby clearing one's thought from guile lurking in the dark unconscious.

Of course one needs to die some time; it is current before my age. Whatever the result, (green or red - I don't like the ambiguous orange in between!) is OK. I am not afraid of death. There is nothing wrong with dying! But I would like to wait a little bit longer before the great jump because I have so much to do and explore.

Our programming provides for an irrevocable slow down of the regenerative process hopefully affecting the body rather than the mind, first targeting the reproductive system, then the immune, nervous and circulatory systems. It is quite current that senior citizens of a certain age are vulnerable to an incidence of cancer, albeit it advances slowly at that age and may evade detection even through a biopsy. So the (Vishnu) destructive macrophages need to fulfill their mission so that Shiva can resurrect.

What happens after life on earth is a question mark for most people. Rather than relying on belief or dogma, I am trying to espy clues in physics, biology and psychology as to the transformations and transmutations that occur in the fabric of the body cells and the mental processes after transiting - a further reason to pursue my study on meditation and science to which the present situation is drawing my attention. The 'flying Dutchman' who cannot die is not enviable; fettered to the Planet, he misses out on the glee of galactic travel. But the great jump could wait a bit. It could be delayed because I am straining on the lead to write the book ordered by my publishers on Meditation and Science. Having their hand on the pulse of the merging trend in the advance of human thought -

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. (Spiritual Liberty). **The collective working of many minds as one single idea and the activity of the whole world are governed by the intelligence of the planet. It is the Message of spiritual liberty.**

- they have a hunch that the alert minds in the leading edge of human thought see in this the opening of unexplored perspectives for the spirituality of the future.

D'Espagnat:
One needs to surpass familiar concepts because one cannot account for the world or for our rapport with the old by relying upon them. (La physique Quantique, Cf. L'homme Face a la Science)

Although several physicists are encroaching (surprisingly naively for otherwise brilliant minds) upon the realm of spirituality, and a few gurus have been and are trying to validate their antiquated belief systems on faulty interpretations of modern physics, the encounter between spirituality and science on the table is mostly explored by Buddhists. But the contribution of the insight of Sufis and particularly Hazrat Inayat Khan has not been explored and I deem that it is my job in this autumn of my life if I am given a few years respite. I am dialoguing with physicists and some physicists appreciate to find in me a teacher of meditation who has a background in science (which is not often the case, as far as I know with the exception of Mahesh Yogi, certainly of Sufi methods.)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The more deeply we study matter, the more proofs shall we find of intelligence working through the whole process of continual unfoldment. There is a gradual awakening of matter to become conscious. Through the awakening of matter to increased consciousness, matter becomes fully intelligent in man. In matter life unfolds, discovers and realizes the consciousness that has been, so to speak, buried in it for thousands of years. (The Smiling Forehead)

The opportunity offered by the 'transit' furnishes us with a 'leg-up' by hoisting us into extremely valuable, generally unknown unexplored areas - transpersonal dimensions of our being carrying the promise of opening up new perspectives.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The ultimate aim of the eternal Consciousness in undertaking a journey to the plane of mortality is to realize its eternal being. (Spiritual Liberty). **The soul's unfoldment comes from its power which ends in its loosening the ties of the lower planes...closing your eyes to your limited self… and realizing your immortal self.** (Spiritual Liberty)

The false ego is what does not belong to the real ego, and what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. (The Mysticism of Sound and Music). If you dived deep enough in yourself, you would discover your real ego. (Cosmic Language). **Our soul begins to realize a much greater expansion of its own being. The ego itself is never destroyed. In the knowledge of the ego there is the secret of immortality.**

Unfortunately the dying process can be painful. One may wish oneself a painless death, but one would be missing out on the value of pain. In some cases pain acts as a catharsis sublimating the human materialism by distilling it into spirit.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The cry of agony which comes from the depth of the heart may be a sound of the greatest beauty….There are moments of intense feeling when pain and joy meet, and one cannot distinguish where one ends and the other begins; they have their meeting place in the heart of man. Pain is like the herb in the hands of the great Transmuter, the divine Alchemist; falling on the melted silver of the heart it turns it into the purest gold, and renders the heart of man more fitting to be the altar of God. (Spiritual Healing)

Pain can help one overcome one's gross ego and make one beautiful. If one wallows in self-pity, it will make one bitter and cantankerous.

I certainly do not relish any condolences or that horrible word: 'pity,' or "rest in peace after all your work!" Amongst some who have given me a hard time (which has proven helpful in the long-run) some (hopefully in rare cases, but I am not sure) might consciously or unconsciously think 'good-riddance' (as has actually happened before), albeit most of these are polite enough not to say it too loudly. I would rather that they come forth frankly and say it. (Excuse me for a bout of temerity - I am working with

laugh therapy.) I am not sorry for myself and when I feel pain, it pales into near nothingness when I think of the ordeal that my sister Noor and many through the history of the world suffered and are suffering today at the hands of brutes.

I do not welcome either well-intended patronizing back-stage, armchair, amateur psychologists or even professional psycho-therapists telling me: "Why don't you…?" My concerns, motivations, estimation of pros and cons, scruples about how my actions affect people and theirs affect me are personal to me, to my particular psychological and spiritual idiosyncratic configuration and values. That of a psychologist is his or hers, does not apply to me, and I am not prepared to deliver the secret of my soul and heart to anybody in the world. I do not wish it to be surmised or interpreted or misinterpreted by well-wishers who are not privy to my perspective.

DEALING WITH THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

I have often pointed out the link between psychological issues with regard to the interface with the social environment and the bodily concomitant: cancer. Surprising cases of remission of cancer by laugh therapy and visualizing the T-cells, macrophages, combating and vamping the parasitic cells that are conspiring to take over by confusing the body's sense of identity (so that our genetic enzymes make mistakes in the replication of our genetic code from DNA to RNA) have been recorded. Therefore, at the psychological level, our sense of identity is at stake. This is precisely what we are working with in meditation.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul so that it may lose the false sense of identification and identify itself with the true self instead of the false self. (The Alchemy of Happiness\ The Inner Life and Self Realization)

The cosmic issue looming here is that in my involvement in the human drama enacted in my 'storms in my cup of tea,' my attention is being drawn to the fact that I am invited to sort this out myself in my own life (in the hope that it may prove useful for others) rather than quoting theoretically physiologists and psychologists. Maybe this is true for all of us.

Those who have made one's life hard help one to try one's best to overcome resentment, which by the same token is precisely what I am prescribing. However, the cosmic challenge that I need to sort out in myself to throw light into the psychological processes that triggered off consequences in my body (however currently recognized in medicine as a standard process) has resulted in my beginning to appreciate that one must not even condemn resentment in others, albeit it triggers off aggressivity, ruthless insensitivity, and ignorance with all its trail of brutality, cruelty, suffering. Maybe it has a psychological purpose in life in the divine strategy because that is a conditioned programming of the human defense system -

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
…everything has its purpose.

- to protect one from being abused, oppressed, victimized and violated in one's self esteem if one does not know a better way of dealing with the issue.

FREEDOM VERSUS INVOLVEMENT - DETACHMENT VERSUS LOVE!!!

Here we are bumping into precisely the crucial issue: processing in one's own life the reconciliation between two antithetical cosmic principles (and thereby helping others to do so) embodied in (i) the way of the saint - compassion with the danger of slipping into its flaw (that need not be) of co-dependence, facilitating rather than dealing with tyranny -

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Man seeks freedom and pursues captivity. (In an Eastern Rose Garden) **All that produces longing in the heart deprives one of one's freedom. One sees a constant striving in the life of the adepts to make themselves independent of outside things as much as possible.** (The Art of Personality)

- and (ii) the way of the master - with the danger of slipping into its flaw (that need not be) of an ego trip, dominating others, hampering people's freedom and taking responsibility from them.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
He who fights his nature for his ideal is a saint; he who subjects his ideal to his

realization of truth is the master. (Gayan)

It is challenging for one who has tasted of the freedom of the sanyasin, but recognizes that it is an escape from responsibility, to conform to the constraint of worldly circumstances in which one incurs the temptation of slipping into acquisitiveness, facetiousness, opulence, pretentiousness, impertinence, and the aggressivity of the ego for one's psychological protection. On the contrary, in the spiritual quest one is scrambling to transmute (rather than annihilate) the false ego.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Things that people take to heart will seem of little importance, and he finds that all his life he has given his thoughts to something which does not last, which does not even exist…. When one's soul is awakened, one becomes in one moment a different person…. Something has touched it and made it uneasy, restless. This makes it yearn for release.

Let us remember:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and realizing one's immortal self which is God within…. Awaken God within.

The soul cannot rise from the lower regions until it has left behind all earthly longings and attachments. (Spiritual Liberty/ Aqibat)

My assignment has, therefore, been and is to insert freedom within constraint; that is to operate according to one's standards and values within the constraint of circumstances valiantly without self-pity. The Sufi call this condition *zhud* which means maintain a sense of satisfaction even in a battered body and overstressed psyche, undaunted, whatever the hardship of the circumstances, without complaining. (The secret of toughening up psychologically.)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Those who have accomplished something really worthwhile in the world have had to sacrifice comfort, convenience, pleasure and merriment. The higher the

attainment, the higher the sacrifice it asks.

This is what it takes to explore the way that awakening in life in our tough new world leads to dedicated action. This is indeed the door to the spirituality of the future.

Incidentally (iii) the way of prophet-hood that overarches sainthood and mastery at the soul level, thus reconciling the apparent irreconciliables, needs to be implemented in our lives where this dichotomy challenges us to find a practical solution.

By some enigmatic paradox: while motivated by the quest for independence characteristic of the saint, his or her compassion squeezes him or her increasingly into the bind of limiting and frustrating circumstances. Like so for the master whose constraint is continually endeavoring to overcome the obstacles to his or her power rather than finding freedom from his own addiction to dominance.

Our body is drawing our attention to the fact that this is the crucial issue to deal with and tells us to work harder on sorting it out, urges us to deal with the need of working with it.

I have been pining for years, imagining, trying to relive the ordeal that Noor went through, ignoring all the logic that it was the birth pangs of a very strong magnificent being who has overcome the horror a long time ago, whereas it was affecting my health unnecessarily, since I cannot help by my commiseration for healed wounds that are no more there.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
One finds a kind of universe in oneself. If man dived deep enough within himself he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life. One's own self is the object of one's realization. One finds a kind of universe in oneself and by the study of the self one comes to that spiritual knowledge for which one's soul hungers. (Vol. 6, p. 2). **A person asks himself how all he sees affects him and what is his reaction to it all. First how does his spirit react to the objects or the conditions he encounters, to the sounds he hears, to the words people speak to him. Secondly see what affect he himself has on others' conditions and individuals when he comes in contact with them.** (Vol. 11, Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism). **By the study of human nature one realizes the nature of life in**

general. (Unity of Religious Ideals)

Here is the therapy. The vital issues at the macrocosmic scale latent in the principles that overarch the existential state need to be worked out at the microcosmic scale in us.

The very same cataclysms erupting in the collisions of humongous galaxies that spark the birth of stars is replicated further in us at the microcosmic scale in 'our storms in our teacups' as the catastrophes in our lives can spark in us a new birth.

Hazrat Inayat Kha**n:**
Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity….The planet has culminated into human beings. (Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism/ Philosophy/ Intelligence). **The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind.** (Unity of Religious Ideals)

We are assigned to explore, under the aegis of the divine strategy customized by us, the premises for the spiritual ethics of the spirituality of the future in our personal lives by dint of our insight into people's motivations and attunements, and being aware of the way that our attitude, insight, attunement and behavior affects them and theirs us.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
It is like coming into the same room in the daytime that the soul has once visited in the darkness of the night….(Githa III). Everyone else seems to be with open eye and yet not see…. (Social Gathekas). **It is like when a child is born and begins to see everything new.** (Vol. 10, Path of Initiation). **Wherever the light of pure intelligence is thrown things become clear. This light becomes a torch for the seer. It is his own soul that becomes a torch in his hand; it is his own light that illuminates his path. It is just like throwing a searchlight upon dark corners which one did not see before, and the corners become clear and illuminated again. It is like throwing light upon problems that one did not understand first; it is like seeing with x-rays persons who were a riddle before.** (Social Gathekas)

What value our contribution?

It is precisely the same as the way that a variation on a theme enriches the theme. That is our assignment in our lives.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
As the whole of nature is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by himself. (Social Gathekas). **Think that the same power that moves the stars and the sap in the trees is in you. By man's limitations he, so to speak, buries the divine creative power in his mind.** (The Way of Illumination). **The soul is God, but man has a body and mind of his own.**

Here is the challenge, the wager.

Remember:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and realizing one's immortal self which is God within… Awaken God within.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world. True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to Earth and has realized there its spiritual being. (The Alchemy of Happiness)

The purpose of life is fulfilled in rising to the greatest heights and in diving to the deepest depths of life, in widening one's horizons, in penetrating life in all its spheres, in losing oneself, and in finding oneself in the end. (Volume 1, The Way of Illumination, The Inner Life)

So I have a very tangible reason to try to live a few more years and I am not the type to give up! But to achieve this, I will need to spend more time meditating, particularly on light, and explore how it parallels with the circumspect views of scientists. I also wish to explore the interface between the celestial spheres (also shaken by cataclysms at humungous scales in 'seculo seculorum'), and the human drama in our violent, decadent yet creatively free-wheeling brave new world.

I will need to revise my scheduling, yet I will continue traveling some. (I am the unrestrainable *salik*, the pilgrim on Planet Earth - I have wings on my heels.) Moreover, I wish to encourage mureeds to visit Suresnes - build up Suresnes, the energy and outreach of the Universel - and place more and more responsibility on the shoulders of my wonderful son Pir Zia.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

The statutes of the Sufi Order International forbid expressing an opinion on politics or intervening in government decisions, as a corporate body. But I may have my private opinion and communicate it. This must not be construed as the policy of the Sufi Order International.
Of course, everybody is welcome to express his/her personal opion. But I repeat the Sufi Order International cannot make a joint, official statement, even if only remotely referring to politics.

WAR OR PEACE

RETALIATION OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

By Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Suffering is our first call.

The horror, the terror, the heartless cruelty, the bloodshed, the devastation, of war! The despair, the folly, the violation of the sacredness of life: of the message of love, harmony and beauty! Watch those pictures on TV! People killing each other, young men with a future killed or maimed for life! Innocent men, women children, victims of hatred, atrocity blatantly committed in insensitive cruelty.

The destiny of humanity and indeed our planet is in the hands of a human phenomenon whose election could be subject to question, motivated by emotions of revenge by retaliation, having vowed revenge, sitting pretty at the White House can send (i) thousands, millions (we do not know if it escalates trillions of people world wide) to their death or being maimed or starving or losing may be the few possessions they had, separated from their loved ones, exiled in refugee camps, (ii) torture by hatred and to extol information by bringing the victim half conscious to denounce his friends (iii) recklessly wreaking wanton destructions on buildings, monuments, indiscriminatingly blowing up many invaluable archeological ruins meticulously preserved by so much care by archeologists, facilities, implements built at the cost of hard work and skills by of umpteen dedicated people, and squander millions of dollars invested in them and (iv) endanger our planet by polluting the environment with lethal gases

The dastardly, cruel, merciless Sept 11th assault on the towers was triggered off by Arab fury over Bush's having given support to Mr Sharon's policy who has been bulldozing Palestinian houses, expanding Israeli population, and colonizing Palestine. We need to reconnoiter the originating emotion that spurred the terrorist's machiavellic cruel, merciless reaction, explore honestly what motivated their retaliation and our retaliation to their retaliation. We need to listen to the grievances behind the turmoil of outrage on all sides that spur our quarrelling, hating each other, killing each other, wreaking excruciating suffering upon our fellow beings.

But let us not thereby condone that cowardly, vicious act. It is helpful to our understanding to see how a grievance can trigger off outrageous acts of retribution which triggers off retaliation which sparks a power play with its trail of misery, despair, devastation!

We respect all religions and all races This message fostered by Hazrat Inayat Khan that has meant so much to so many people in our day and age. We try to highlight their commonality. Therefore we cannot agree to manipulating the believers of different faiths for political objectives.

My sister Noor gave her life and was tortured to death to support the attack on the Nazis who were torturing the Jews and now the Israeli Government is torturing the Palestinians!

Hazrat Inayat Khan.
The whole of humanity is one single body, and all nations, communities, and races are the different organs. The happiness and well-being of each of them is the happiness and well-being of the whole body. If there is one organ of the body in pain the whole body has to sustain a share of its strain.

Or is there a deeper issue? (i) Prejudice against Islam often based upon fanatics who do not represent the real Islam and (ii) prejudice by Muslims against the West's discarding of the values they uphold.

There is another deep core issue that erupted in the protests about globalization: the plea of the 'have-nots' against the affluent, opulent minority cumulating the world's resources.

Are we letting ourselves being inveigled in the vicious circle of the primitive vendettas which never end? Retribution sparking retaliation and retaliation triggering off counter retaliation and so on indefinitely in infinite regress?

Mr Bush could do with a course in the modern sophisticated art of conflict-resolution.

Who are we contriving to protect against Iraq by disarming it of its weapons of mass destruction For what reason this unnecessary massacre and devastation , when the solution is at hand (do you mean to say???): no more territorial expansion. Respect for the neighbor's territory. This is irrefutable, inferential deductable, congruous logic, the recognition by the Government of Israel of the legitimacy of the the sovereign state of Palestine, like any other United Nations states. How could one fail to see it? It is the core issue.

Do you believe that it is by compassion for the Iraqi people, to redeem them from the oppression of that monstrous tyrant who has used in the past weapons of mass destruction (which have at present as yet not been found) not only against his neighbors, but his own minorities and has drained his people, lamenting their poverty to build incredibly sumptuous palaces for himself and embezzle millions of his people's taxes investing them in a Swiss bank his name? Or do you believe that the prime motivation of the war against Iraq is controlling rather than sharing the world's prime source of energy. Could it be that for this purpose we are being exposed, us all, the whole world, if the conflict escalates to a global nuclear catastrophe?

When meditating last night a whole further perspective kept on revealing itself: the wisdom of the divine programming that overpasses our personal reasonings and initiatives.

When the unreality of life pushes against my heart,
its door opens to the reality.

These last words of Hazrat Inayat Khan as he was passing beyond tell us that it is deceptive to count upon our intellectual reason, our perfunctory assessement of situations that seem so ovious! When one's heart is broken (because of the terrible sufferings wreaked upon some people) then an understanding emerges which makes sense of what our intellect could not grasp: the divine intention behind what seems

totally incongruous to our mind.

The Muslim story of Moses and Khidr points out the intention in the cosmic code: Khidr who is considered to be privy to the divine intention explains to Moses why someone had to be killed - because he knew that he would have killed many, many people.

The present invidious situation calls upon our intelligence to grasp the 'reason behind the reason'.

A mystic does not look at reasons as everybody else does, because he sees that the first reason that comes to his mind is only a cover over another reason which is hidden behind it. ... He does not see things through the reason he has learned from the world, but he begins to see the reason of all reasons, the reason which is covered by ordinary reasoning. …The mystic touches the reason of reason, the cause behind the cause, the purpose beyond the purpose.
The same reality can look different according to the vantage point from which you look at it.

Ibn Arabi:
He does not disclose Himself to you except to the measure that your level of realization allows. ... One may see the Real behind the veil of things. ... Unveiling conveys knowledge of the Real in the things. Things are like curtains over the Real. When they are lifted, unveiling takes place. Then he will know God through God. The Real is not known in the things without the manifestation of the things and the lifting of their properties. The eyes of the common people fall upon the properties of the things but the eyes of those who have the opening of unveiling fall only upon the Real in the things. Among them is he who sees the Real in the things, and among them is he who sees the things while the Real is within them. Between these two there is a difference. When opening takes place, the eye of the first falls upon the Real and he see Him in the things, but the eye of the second falls upon the things, and then he sees the Real within them because of the existence of the opening. If you witness creation, you will not see the Real and if you witness the Real, you will not see creation. So you will never see both the Real and creation at the same time: you will witness this in that and that in this, since the one is a wrapper and the other enwrapped. ... When that veil is lifted disclosure takes place. That veil may become transparent.

What we may consider to be our or another's initiatives or decisions may aver itself to be just the way that the universe sparks these decisions to implement its concern about the state of the totality of the universe. To ensure the divine gift of freedom, humanity is furnished with a program that triggers off overriding that which suppresses its freedom: dictatorship.

Unfortunately the heroes without a personal agenda who plot to destroy a dictator who is torturing fellow beings are generally caught by the powers that be and themselves tortured (as in the case of my sister Noor and those who plotted against Stalin, Hitler and Cesesco and many others). Unfortunately both the quest for involvement and the search for freedom involve not only joy but suffering. Hazrat Inayat Khan pacifies us by saying:

Crucifixion alone is the source of resurrection. Immortality comes from the annihilation of self. ... The grape, by turning into wine, lives; as a grape it would have vanished in time. Only, by turning into wine, the grape loses its individuality, and yet not its life. The selfsame grape lives as wine; and the longer it lives, the better the wine becomes. For a Sufi, therefore, the true sacrament is the turning of one's grape-like personality, which has a limited time to live, into wine; that nothing of one's self may be lost, but, on the contrary, it may be amplified, even perfected. Immortality is not to be sought in the hereafter; if it is ever gained it is gained in one's lifetime. ... Virtues such as tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, or compassion rise of themselves in the heart which is awakened to love; and infirmities such as jealousy, hatred, and all manner of prejudice begin to spring up when the shadow of love has fallen on the heart of the mortal. The former love raises man to immortality, the latter turns the immortal soul into a mortal being.
The loss of every mortal thing is a gain in the immortal spheres; for it wakens the heart which is asleep both in the pursuit and the pleasures of the gain - under the mantle of every loss a greater gain.

In the peace covenants following world war II, Churchill respected the freedom of the German people.

When no weapons of mass destruction were found in Irak, Bush' tactics shifted into purporting to liberate the Iraqi people. If it is to control the petrol supply it is at the cost of that very freedom of the Iraqi people claimed to be the motivation

In contrast with the case of Churchill, someone motivated by something to gain by overcoming the dictator confronts the dictator by force (at the cost of other people's lives) opening Pandora's box unleashing pandemonium, anarchy. In this case, that very person himself or his cohorts torture their enemies while their justification is that they are obstructing the monstrous cruelty of the despot whom they are attacking – wreaking the same cruelty as a retribution. Gandhi said: "the end does not justify the means".

In the present crisis, in our dismay at a disturbed, faltering world teetering at the edge of disaster (or is it being afflicted by exceedingly pernicious and hazardous birth pangs announcing a new world?) as we quiver at the threat of wreaking further unimaginable escalating havoc upon our erstwhile beautiful planet and killing or causing excruciating pain upon millions, perhaps billions, of innocent people, our spiritual values are at stake.

We are all emotionally shocked and outraged by the incredible cruelty, the horror. In fact we are a wounded human family. The present crisis demonstrate the degree to which resentment and hatred can lead towards monstrous acts, especially if they are sustained by a faulty understanding of one's religion. There is misunderstanding, misassessment, miscommunication.

Umpteen numbers of lives have been forsaken in past wars motivated by retribution when they could have been spared by a more civilized sense of honor. Moreover it rebounds upon the avenger.

How can we deal with the outrage and suffering?
Is there anything that we can do? What can we do?

In this conundrum, we have an impelling need to communicate with each other our quandaries, open our hearts, admit our uncertainty as to which is the appropriate action to deal with the ignominious challenge to the world in which we have been accustomed to live, admit that we ourselves are not immune from perhaps unavowed emotions of hate, intolerance, discrimination, or a partisan spirit understandably inspired by loyalty. In this we are tested in exactly the challenge that determines the decisions not only of those responsible for the conduct of situations that affect our lives, our security, our welfare, but of those operating behind the scenes disrupting the

world order to give vent to their grievances and resentment.

The tidal wave of resentment that has surfaced in our troubled days jeopardizing the fruit of the toil of dedicated human endeavor and skill, disrupting our society; the damage to our lovely Planet by disregard for its sacredness and the despoiling of cherished values that bespeaks of decadence; these shake us out of our smug complacency and challenge us into exploring the core issues at the social scale and in ourselves.

In our present situation our pain has been enhanced tremendously and it has forced us to get in touch with ourselves more than ever before, uncovering covert emotions that we do not like to own.

Each little contribution on our part (however small) has its part to play in the overall tidal wave of sensitivity to the sufferings of people and, to be consistent: focus on the cause that sparks violence. It starts at the personal scale.

Perhaps the best way to understand and to participate in the total happening, each in our own little way, is to look at it at the personal scale. One can say this challenge invites us to look within ourselves and discover hidden emotions. It is not always easy to reconnoiter them. They hide. It requires an act of truth, of sincerity, to really have enough faith in truth to be able to face them.

War, violence, cruelty, with all its trail of misery, starts in each one of us, with our little human problems (our storms in our teacups). And altogether it escalates into terrible problems, even mass murder.

We are tested as to whether to retaliate for the atrocious cruelty to people going about their daily work. This would be slipping into primitive feuds, vendettas, a time when it was customary that an insult could only be atoned for by revenge to indemnify one’s honor.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
A person has a natural tendency that if he is insulted, he thinks that the proper way of answering is to insult the other person still more. Yet he gets a momentary satisfaction to have given a good answer. ... A fire thus starts in that mind that had been peaceful

and by reacting it too participates in this fire which will burn oneself. It is giving fuel to the fire that rises for destruction and causes further destruction... By giving way to disharmony, one causes disharmony to multiply.

Thus, spurred by our wounded emotion, we tend to react out of anger with bravado rather than act in a concentrated way to control the situation.

Let us recall an incident in the life of Hazrat Ali who released an enemy who spat at his face. Whereupon the enemy asked him why he did not kill him. Hazrat Ali said: “I did not wish to react in anger.” It is said that on the hilt of Prophet Mohammed’s sword were the words: *Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you, and speak the truth although it may be against yourself.*

Christ’s teaching “resist not evil” is a hint not to participate in and be guilty of the same evil.

The whole of Buddhism started with Buddha’s search for an end to suffering by compassion.

Are we soul- searching about the degradation of cherished moral values, safeguarded by tradition? The challenge draws our attention more than ever to whatever we can do (albeit how limited the outreach of each one of us is) to value and share with our friends, distraught as we are, the importance of “the awakening of conscience.” Here lies the crux of what sparked the crisis: it urges us to deal with that very originating emotion. We cannot extricate ourselves from the plight of our fellow beings in a time of strife.

If one entertains values such as love, harmony, beauty, respect for the dignity of one’s fellow beings, and kindness, then discovering the degree to which the emotions of hate and the insensitive disregard of suffering erupt mercilessly, unscrupulously, when threatened or frightened - even amongst people who normally would function according to normal standards of appropriate behavior - is so distressing! Never has the Message of the awakening of conscience been so urgently relevant! If we try to reconnoiter what are the emotional motives behind the present crisis, more than ever, it is clear that the hatred that triggered off this mutual violence at a massive scale is of the same nature as our resentment in our personal problems and hence the

importance of Christ's message, "forgive those who offend us…they do not know what they do," beckons upon us more relevantly than ever. And it is this message that resonates implicitly in Hazrat Inayat Khan's message

There is`a saying: 'To understand all is to forgive all', for it is the sign of the noble spirit to comprehend all things, to assimilate all things and therefore to tolerate and forgive all things. For everyone says or does or thinks only according to his own particular evolution, and he cannot do better. One cannot arrive at true nobility of spirit if one is not prepared to forgive imperfect human nature. And as one is ready to forget the faults of children, so the wise are ready to forgive the faults of men.

Resentment is an inherited, primitive survival instinct written into our psychological defense system, but in the course of evolution it needs to be transmuted into unconditional love.

How do we deal with resentment for people who are standing in the way of our doing what is our vital need, possibly our highest call in life?

Hazrat Inayat Khan
Life is difficult for the fine person, for he cannot give back what he receives in the way of hurt, and he can feel it more than the average person. And there is only one safety from all these blows that might destroy the heart altogether: it is to learn how to tolerate, to learn how to forgive.
A Sufi tries to keep harmony in his surroundings, the harmony which demands many sacrifices. It makes one endure what one is not willing to endure, it makes one overlook what one is not inclined to overlook, it makes one tolerate what one is not accustomed to tolerate, and it makes one forgive and forget what one would never have forgotten if it were not for the sake of harmony. But at whatever cost harmony is attained, it is a good bargain. For harmony is the secret of happiness

There are ways to look at our resentment. Imagine a knock at the door in the middle of the night. One peers out: Christ is knocking at the door! This great, cosmic being comes into the room and says: "I ask you to forgive. Do you know that all the misery in the world starts as resentment? Then he has left. It is not the same as trying to force oneself to forgive. If Christ asks one to forgive, one can. It makes all the difference. The transpersonal and cosmic dimensions need to be included in our being, inherent,

powerful, transforming factors.

To help us in our relationship with people we resent: consider they have a faulty assessment of us. People misjudge one, abuse one, and make one feel bad that one is abused, all unconsciously. We encounter these conditions personally, and globally when they escalate into group emotions: being unreasonable, uncompromising, not wanting to discuss things,

Ask yourself: Have you never done anything that has caused pain to another person? Can we see from their point of view and see how they suffer? Could I have spared that person that pain? We are tested in our conscience for what we are doing to other people even by our emotions. People suffer from our emotions. If we don't like that person, that person feels it. Maybe we are called upon to open up to people who are causing us pain.

Hazrat Inayat Khan
When we forgive, the others forgive us

How do we convince those standing in the way of our need that they are misguided about us? Was Christ able to convince those torturing him they were misguided? No. But he was able to forgive. Can we turn the tables on our foe; feeling sorry for him/her being misguided and allowing bestial emotions to crop up? In her work with chimpanzees Jane Goodall reports that they are capable of the most loving acts, of compassion, humor and even a sense of awe. But those very chimps are also capable of the most monstrous acts of hatred and violence and cruelty.

Our sense of self-esteem, self-validation, is so precarious. Recognizing our defects de-validates our self-esteem even more. We are called upon to uncover those unconscious emotions. Only one power will help us to overcome or offset those emotions. That is love. That is the message of Christ. We are challenged out of our complacency and insensitivity. It is disarming:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Love is the strongest weapon in the world that will overcome obstacles.

The most difficult thing in the world is to love a person that is difficult to love, that is

standing in the way, but at the same time not allowing them to hurt you or, especially, other people.

We need to listen to the grievances behind the turmoil of outrage on all sides that spur our quarrelling, hating each other, killing each other, wreaking excruciating suffering upon our fellow beings.

We are offered the opportunity to make our world a paradise by building a wonderful world of lovely people. And it just takes a few people to create hell on earth not just for themselves, but others (the concentration camps) and for all of us.

If one entertains values such as love, harmony, beauty, respect for the dignity of one's fellow beings, and kindness, then discovering the degree to which the emotions of hate and the insensitive disregard of suffering erupt mercilessly, unscrupulously, when threatened or frightened - even amongst people who normally would function according to normal standards of appropriate behavior - is so distressing! Never has the Message of the awakening of conscience been so urgently relevant!

Religion is intended as the custodian of the sacredness of our paramount values.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SPIRITUALITY

(January, 2004)

I have been deprecating the institutionalization of spirituality because these man-made institutions tend to limit the originating spiritual inspiration. Pir O Murshid says: ‘We need a basket to collect flowers or fruit . Of course the amount of flowers or fruit collected is limited by the size of the basket.'

Shall we suggest that the Sufi Order be all-encompassing? I suggest that the answer is not there. Instead it is in building a coherent construct – an organism rather than an organization – to serve as an infrastructure for the vision of the Message.

Yesterday morning at 3 o'clock , all of a sudden, the importance of an infrastructure for the vision of the Message became clear to me. Precisely as our thoughts and our emotions need a body to actuate them in the existential world and the Cosmic Code needs to be actualised in existential circumstances, the vision of the Message needs an infrastructure.

It all starts by the one assigned with prophetic inspiration picking up a message conveyed by the hidden Spiritual Government of the world whose objective is introducing a global awareness. In our day and age this has consequences in people's relationship with their religion and with the religion of others.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Church-bell, what do you proclaim?
I proclaim that every head which resounds like mine,
spreads abroad the Message of God.
[Gayan]

The Message is followed by a vision of how it can be actuated concretely in the world. This is where the organization, or rather organism, becomes operational.

That vision is thus the second step. We could learn from the game of chess how this organism is structured. It is based upon a hierarchic principle.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

How the light of the sun functions in the moon and how the light of the sun is reflected by all the different planets, and at the same time, how the different planets differ in their light and character - and how every planet in the universe fulfills the scheme of nature, there is a model of life that nature has produced before us. Social Gathekas, The Problem of the Day

It is the necessity of life that there should be a hierarchy – hierarchy by election or hierarchy by appointment. The Unity of the Religious Ideals, The Spiritual Hierarchy

*Man is born in this world ignorant of the kingdom which is within himself and to attain to that kingdom which is within him is the true aristocracy.*Social Gatheka.

To recognize that kingdom in another person is aristocracy and to see the possibility of that kingdom in oneself and to try to fulfill that ideal in life is true democracy. Social Gatheka 15 & Volume 10: The Problem of the Day

If in anything divine origin is seen it is in the aristocracy of the human soul, it is in the democracy of the human ego. Sufi Teachings, The Privilege of Being Human

Real democracy means recognizing the possibility of advancing just as others have done, trusting in that possibility, and trying to advance to the same level as that of the others. Volume 10: The Problem of the Day

The natural consequences of this will bring about the spirit of brotherhood and equality and will result in preparing the outer democracy and the inner aristocracy which is in the nobility of the soul whose perfection is hidden under the supremacy of God. Social Gathekas

Whether there be aristocracy or democracy, there will always be a few souls who will have influence over many. Unity of Religious Ideals, Law

The object of life is not in revolting against someone who is more advanced than we and by this revolt to pull him down to one's own level; that is not democracy. Democracy is seeing the possibility of advancing as the other; and trusting in that possibility, trying to advance to the same level; that is the real democracy. Social

Gatheka 15 - The Problem of the Day

But the man who is not evolved, who is pulling the most evolved down to his level, has a wrong conception of democracy; it is going downwards instead of upwards. If lack of manners and consideration can be democracy, it loses its real ideal and true spirit. The Alchemy of Happiness, The Development of Personality

To some people the word aristocracy, when not understood, often sounds very unpleasant, but the real aristocracy is not necessarily the picture of its abuse, its degeneration. Volume 10: The Problem of the Day

The chivalry of the knights and the noble manners, the noble ideals that the ancient people, the aristocratic people had, seem to be finished today. And although we are not realizing it today, there will come a day when we will realize that something which was most beautiful in humanity has been lost. I do not mean to say that we must become today what the world was a hundred years before. It is not necessary, and it cannot be. But at the same time we need not forget and we need not disregard all that was beautiful at that time. The Message Papers, July 6, 1926

Freedom is the soul's purpose, and if, without hindering the conventionalities, one can rise above them, so as to breathe the breath of freedom, that would be the true democracy . Democracy void of culture and refinement can very well be called anarchy. Gatha III

Democracy unfortunately can lead to the governance being decided upon by people unapprised of the vital issues who elected a leader because he or she is charismatic. It is those thus idolized who by dint of their popularity have the makings of dictators.

In the Sufi Order the teacher raises his or her initiate

… to the same throne upon which he himself is sitting and even higher if he can; for in raising the initiated one the Initiator himself is raised high. Verily the greatness of God is brought unto Him by the greatness of man. Sangitha I

At the top the unity of the overarching principle is polarized as the King and the Queen. This counterbalancing principle is to be found in the game of chess. To

protect the King against his enemies, the Queen restrains the King from becoming a dictator. She takes upon herself the risk of being knocked out by those who oppose themselves to the authority of the King. Should she be out of action, the king is checkmated – the whole organism breaks down.

It could be the other way round: the Queen abusing her position could overrule the King. In this case Shakti has become Kali. This is illustrated by a statue where Shakti is standing over the reclined body of Shiva. Spirituality aims here at converting Kali into Sita.

Sita, also called Janaki in Hindu mythology, the consort of Rama, is the embodiment of wifely devotion and self-surrender. Her abduction by the demon king Ravana and subsequent rescue are the central incidents in the great Hindu epic Ramayana.

According to Hindu mythology, the divine monkey Hanuman aided Rama in recovering his wife Sita from the demon Ravana. The monkeys under his aegis built a bridge between India and Sri Lanka – the bridge over troubled waters. Hanuman is sometimes depicted as having wings, because, not content with that bridge, he crossed the strait between India and Sri Lanka in one leap.

Hanuman represents the transmutation in the evolutionary process from our animal ancestry to even surpassing the human condition and is therefore worshipped in India as a God.

This is also illustrated in the Parsifal legends where the Queen of the Night, whose king had intercepted the arrow of the Grail, becomes converted by Parsifal, who retrieved the arrow of the Grail, so that the chalice could sparkle again in the temple of the Grail. The arrow symbolizes the king and the chalice the queen. The king needs to be rescued from the temptation of the Queen of the Night, Kali, so that the queen, Sita, may find her place in the divine order.

This very same process takes place when our psyche is transmuted by the power of the Holy Spirit so that the immaculate core of our being may prevail over its defilement.

The game of chess illustrates this. The vision needs to eschew any distortion by failing

to assess it and be protected. The queen's strategy is protected and reinforced by the castles. Their movements are restricted but are assisted by a coherent configuration of the pawns while the king himself cannot move.

The whole success of the operation is dependent upon the authority of the king. Thus the need for the loyalty of the other pawns, the knights and the castles, and of the ordinary pawns.

This is why according to the Qur'an our very existence is based upon a covenant of fealty: “Am I not your Lord.” And, our answer: “I testify that you are my Lord and I am your vassal.” It is this covenant that establishes the order of the existential world.

The strategy of the king is carried out by the knights.

The question thus arises what your position is in this infrastructure that institutionalizes the Message and we call the Sufi Order International. Participating in the Sufi Order therefore cannot be reduced to receiving the teaching but calls upon you in addition to take responsibility. The message of unity is embodied in a vision by Hazrat Inayat Khan and concretized in the Universal Worship which he called the Church of all Churches which he founded.

Hazrat Inayat entrusted the ritualization of this cosmic vision of his to Murshida Sophia Saintsbury Green who, familiar with the hackneyed Victorian Church of England ritual, formalized it according to her personal capacity to encompass Hazrat Inayat Khan's vast cosmic vision. There is always a danger that in our good-will we create yet another church.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

And how shall we work? […] *We do not need to work as the missionaries of the different churches. That is not our mission. Why? Because we are not the missionaries of any particular church. If we are, we are the missionaries of all churches, our task is different.* […] *We devote our life and services not for a community, or sect or a limited circle of humanity.* [8 . Address to Cherags]

When a Cherag forces his belief upon those, an unripened soul, incapable of

appreciating the beauty of it, he will prove himself to be narrow. By wanting to prove their belief to be better than that of another they expose themselves to all sorts of arguments which will never end, for argument creates argument.[9. Address to Cherags]

I remember that Hazrat Inayat Khan said, “The day will come when the Universal Worship will be celebrated by the priests of the different religions together.” We have tried this, and have encountered resistance – Rabbis who are not allowed to officiate in other than their own religion or Buddhists who consider that Buddhism is not a religion. However if we can overcome that resistance Hazrat Inayat Khan's vision of the Message for our time will be fufilled.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

There awaits a duty, a task, [which is beyond comprehension.] … those among us desiring to render their services for the Cause must realize that this aspect of the Sufi Movement which is called Universal Worship will one day be the future religion of the world. I do not mean to say that all existing in the world will come and join the Sufi Movement by this. I mean to say that all will partake of the Message directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously in the future. Those among us whose souls without the slightest doubt accept this and believe this, then what remains for them is to make up their minds to do what little they can in furthering the Cause. One must be conscious of its significance before one begins to work; and its significance is the future religion of the world.

Yes, just now we feel the great lack of workers… So far Europe and the United States seem respondent, but now in Asia an awakening is anticipated. … No doubt, when we look at the vast world and our limited means and small number of workers it is distressing. But instead of allowing ourselves to be distressed, … we ought to feel a greater responsibility that we are so few, that our task is so great, that our means are so little. … we should be wide awaken and feel more responsible, and at the same time feel more privileged and blessed to have to work at this time of need. For there are many friends, but a friend in need is the great friend. …

If we only knew what is in store for the Message, if we only realized Whose Message it is, if we realized to Whom we offer our services in serving the Cause! He is

responsible for it Whose Message it is; we are only workers. We must do our best, and leave it to Him, Whose Message it is, to accomplish it. …

When a person says to me: "I cannot work because people are not respondent," or, "I cannot accomplish anything because no one listens," or, "I cannot do because I cannot work outwardly," or, " I cannot do because I am not gifted," or, "because there is opposition from my family," or, "from those around me," or, "from those hostile to the Cause," or, "those who live in my house," or, "from my neighbours," or, "associates," - these excuses all sum up in one thing, and that is that the person is not yet ready to do the thing. Once the desire is born in the heart, nothing in the world can stand before you. Remember therefore that no excuse of any kind must disappoint you, once your heart has heard the call from within. You must go on in spite of all disturbing and opposing influences, and with faith and trust you will overcome all difficulties, and climb the summits. [8 . Address to Cherags]

This is the reason why there are several grades of initiation according to the dedication to the service of the Message.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

A world-in-the-making can be likened to a great jigsaw puzzle whose separate parts have life and are capable of independent movement. Each part has its own particular place, in its relation to every other part; and no thing or being can live to itself alone; but if they are in their wrong places, the hand of God must move them before the complete picture can be revealed. The way by which man can find his own place is to tune his instrument to the keynote of the chord to which he belongs. Sangatha III

The higher the grade, the greater the responsibility in continually correcting any deviation from the vision of the cosmic outreach of the message. This could be illustrated by a conductor who continually stops the orchestra to correct a false note or a faulty interpretation as he or she understands the intention of the composer. Failing this the order becomes disorder.

To make this happen, our way of handling problems in our relationship with people and the way our leaders exercise authority in the centres needs to reflect the principle of an organism as described above. Otherwise indeed the originating inspiration is

lost.

On the other hand, following the principles actuated in the game of chess: hierarchy needs to be counterbalanced by synarchy. The reason for this is because otherwise the king would become a dictator. Moreover it is important for the king to receive feedback from the grassroots. This is the role of democracy counterbalancing aristocracy.

The danger is that institutions open the way for power games so that just as at the individual level, we need to pass through fana (that is the break-down of the personal ego) in order to reach baqa , reinstatement. For the institution to reflect its originating inspiration those serving it need to eschew being tempted by power games and affirm their initiative while respecting that of those with whom they are co-operating.

Bach:

I am contriving to sketch in my music a model for the human commonwealth: not a melody with subsidiary accompaniments, rather for each theme an instrument or voice; each enjoying a degree of freedom yet constraining its free scope in the interest of the whole. Such is the harmony of the stars.

It is the same principle that determines the atomic structure of chemicals, which are based upon a complex symmetry, which Bach actuates in his Toccatas and Fugues. In them he interrelates as much as 6 themes. Beyond that our mind's capacity cannot reach. And then quizzicaly he says *quaerendo inventis* :

Find it yourself.

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The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis.

So far a few installments have already been issued as a preview, conveying a sense of the foundations of Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching.

Now, we proceed systematically in an in-depth study of the teaching to be given as a Curriculum in the classes of the centers of the Sufi Order. It is also available to those organizations dedicated to giving the teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan.

These lessons will be sent in priority to active Representatives holding classes, then to mureeds wishing to receive it, then to the public.

Since these lessons are programmed to correspond to the progressive developmental stages in a consistent training, we may have to reiterate some of the thoughts already sent out while elaborating them further experientially. Besides for the Curriculum to grow, as all living things it will have to evolve, to keep being improved as we go along.

Earmark each saying of Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan and meditate upon it for some time asking yourself how it affects your thinking, your realization, your motivation, your insight, your attunement.

The condition of doing this lies in acquiescing that the progress in our understanding does consist in grasping ways of thinking that are novel, more sophisticated than the familiar one. Although It would seem reasonable to abandon the earlier vistas to cleave to the more advanced ones, actually, as one develops further insight, one realizes that all these perspectives have their validity (albeit relative). It is just like shifting ones' perspective while looking at a hologram; all those perspectives are valid. In the case of our lives, there are circumstances when one of these perspectives calls our attention particularly. But if we familiarize ourselves with these different perspectives, we could learn to extrapolate between at least those better known to us, which will give us a richer understanding of the issues that we are encountering in our lives.

But let us bear in mind that our minds can not only extrapolate between these perspectives, but grasp the way they actually cross-pollinate in what one might call a mirroring effect. Furthermore we need to account for the effect of doing upon understanding, not just understanding upon doing.

But there is more: one needs to account for the antipodal point of view to one's own, which esoteric traditions call the divine point of view, but in our modern way of thinking one may ascribe to the thinking of the universe.

As a preliminary to starting any meditation there are some basic realizations that are of the utmost importance to spark your motivation and your orientation.

True exaltation comes from the fact that it has come to earth and has realized there its spiritual being.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages of life between man: the manifestation of God and God, the only Being, knowing and realizing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence, and so accomplishing the heavenly journey.

There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul which gives the soul a longing for the unattainable, and if the soul does not take that direction, then it certainly misses something in life for which is its innate longing and in which lies its ultimate satisfaction.

This craving for the attainment of what is unattainable, gives the soul a longing to reach life's utmost heights. It is the nature of the soul to try and discover what is behind the veil; it is the soul's constant longing to climb heights which are beyond his power; it is the desire of the soul to see something that it has never seen; it is the constant longing of the soul to know something it has never known. But the most wonderful thing about it is that the soul already knows there is something behind this veil, the veil of perplexity; that there is something to be sought for in the highest

spheres of life; that there is some beauty to be seen; that there is Someone to be known who is knowable. This desire, this longing, is not acquired; this desire is a dim knowledge of the soul which it has in itself.

The love for the unattainable object has every possibility of developing, whereas when the object of love is within reach this is often a check upon love.

There is a stage where, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life and given that power and peace and freedom, that light and life which belongs to the source of all beings, but dissolved in it; for the source is oneself.

One can lift oneself beyond worldly conditions at the command of one's will.

So our first lesson is our preparation for the journey:

We are all on the journey; life itself is a journey. No one is settled here; we are all passing onward, and therefore it is not true to say, that if we are taking a spiritual journey we have to break our settled life; there is no one living a settled life here; all are unsettled, all are on their way. Only, by taking the spiritual journey you are taking another way, one which is easier, better and more pleasant. Those who do not take way, they also will come in the end: the difference is in the way. One way is easier, smoother, better; the other way is full of difficulties; and as life has no end of difficulties from the time one has opened one's eyes on this earth, so one may just as well choose the smoother way to arrive at the destination at which all souls will sometimes arrive.

By inner life' is meant a life directed towards perfection, The inner life is not necessarily in an opposite direction to the worldly life, but the inner life is a fuller life. The worldly life means the limitation of life; the inner life means a complete life. The ascetics who have taken a direction quite opposite to the worldly life, have done so in order to have the facility to search into the depth of life; but going in one direction alone does not make a complete life. Therefore the inner life means the fullness of life.

The inner life is a journey, and before starting to take it there is a certain preparation

necessary. If one is not prepared, there is always the risk of having to return before one has arrived at one's destination. When a person goes on a journey, and when he has to accomplish something, he must know what is necessary on the path and what he must take with him, in order that his journey may become easy and that he may accomplish what he has started to accomplish. One must have everything prepared, so that after reaching a certain distance one may not have to turn back.

The first thing that is necessary is to see that there is no debt to be paid. Every soul has a certain debt to pay in life; it may to be to his mother or father, his brother or sister, to his husband or wife or friend, or to his children, his race, or to humanity; and if he has not paid what is due, then there are cords with which he is inwardly tied, and they pull him back. Life in the world is fair trade, if one could only understand it, if one knew how many souls there are in this world with whom one is connected or related in some way, or whom we meet freshly every day. To everyone there is something due; and if one has not paid one's obligations, the result is that afterwards one has to pay with interest.

There is the inner justice which is working beyond the worldly justice, and when man does not observe that inner law of justice, it is because at that time he is intoxicated, his eyes are closed, and he does not really know the law of life. But that intoxication will not last; there will come a day when the eyes of every soul will be opened; and it is a pity if the eyes open when it is too late. To some consideration is due, to some respect, to some service, to some tolerance, to some forgiveness, to some help. In some way or other, in every relationship, in every connection there is something to pay; and one must know before starting the journey that one has paid it, and be sure that one has paid it in full, so there is nothing more to be paid. Besides this it is necessary that man, before starting his journey, realizes that he has fulfilled his duties, his duty to those around him and duty to God. But the one who considers his duty to those around him sacredly does his duty to God .

Man must also consider, before starting on his journey, whether he has learned all he desired to learn from this world. If there is anything he has not learned, he must finish it before starting the journey. For if he thinks, 'I will start the journey although I had the desire to learn something before starting', in that case he will not be able to reach his goal; that desire to learn something will draw him back. Every desire, every ambition,

every aspiration that he has in life must be gratified. Not only this, man must have no remorse of any kind when starting on his journey, and no repentance afterwards. If there is any repentance or remorse, it must be finished before starting.

There must be no grudge against anybody, and no complaining of anyone having done him harm, for all these things which belong to this world, if man took them along, would become a burden on the spiritual path. The journey is difficult enough, and it becomes more difficult if there is a burden to be carried. If a person is lifting a burden of displeasure, dissatisfaction, discomfort, it is difficult to bear it on that path. It is a path to freedom, and to start on this path to freedom man must free himself, no attachment should pull him back, no pleasure should lure him back.

Besides this preparation one needs a vehicle, a vehicle in which one journeys. That vehicle has two wheels, and they are balance in all things. A man who is one-sided, however great his power of clairvoyance or clairaudience, whatever be his knowledge, yet is limited; he cannot go very far, for it requires two wheels for the vehicle to run. There must be a balance, the balance of the head and the heart, the balance of power and wisdom, the balance of activity and repose. It is the balance which enables man to stand the strain of this journey and permits him to go forward, making his path easy. Never imagine for one moment that those who show lack of balance can ever proceed further on the spiritual journey, however greatly in appearance they may seem to be spiritually inclined. It is only the balanced ones who are capable of experiencing the external life as fully as the inner life; to enjoy thought as much as feeling; to rest as well as to act. The centre of life is rhythm, and rhythm causes balance.

On this journey certain coins are necessary also, to spend on the way. And what are these coins? They are thoughtful expressions in word and in action. On this journey man must take provision to eat and drink, and that provision is life and light. And on this journey man has to take something in which to clothe himself against wind, and storm, and heat, and cold; and that garment is the vow of secrecy, the tendency to silence. On this journey man has to bid farewell to others when starting, and that farewell is loving detachment; before starting on this journey he has to leave something behind with his friends, and that is happy memories of the past.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER
Teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan,
Parallels with earlier Sufis,
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LESSON 2

MODES OF THINKING:

LIMITATION / COSMIC CONSTRAINT / FREEDOM DETERMINISM / CREATIVITY

We are as great as our spirit, we are as wide as our spirit, we are as low as our spirit, we are as small as our spirit.

The world of one individual is as small as a grain of lentil, and that of another as large as the whole world.

We occupy as much horizon as is within our consciousness or as much as we are conscious of. (Healing)

The outlook becomes wide; as wide as the divine eye.

Mysticism means developing from limitation to perfection. (Healing)

The soul, conscious only of its limitation, of its possessions with which it identifies itself, forgets its own being and becomes captive of its limitation. (Alchemy)

The mystic knows, if anyone knows, what limitation means, for it is in perfection that his joy and his happiness are to be found. (Philosophy)

Pir Vilayat' s comments:

Of course the obstacle standing in the way of our finding fulfillment in our lives lies in the inadequacy of our self-image. But how do we deal with it? Awkwardly one may try to annihilate oneself. The riddle is that one cannot obliterate the personal dimension of one's self by dint of the personal dimension of one's will. Of course the answer is God-consciousness; that is, discovering the bounty of the universe lying in wait potentially in our own being and longing to awaken.

PRACTICE:

To start with, check your self-image. This is less easy than one might at first suppose, because one identifies with it. This is where the Buddhist techniques of Satipatana will prove helpful.

As long as one's little personality stands before one, as long as one cannot get rid of it, as long as one's personality and all that is connected with it interests one, one will always find limitation. (Volume 1, Chapter IV; Gk 27)

The false self is the greatest limitation.

Pir o Murshid coins our self-image as the false ego:

The false ego is what has been wrongly conceived as one's real being. (Cosmic Language) It is not his true nature which is limited; what is limited is what he holds to be himself. (Alchemy) ... The false self is the greatest limitation. (Volume 2, Chapter X; Gg 27) So the ego has its two sides: the first is the one we know, and the next the one we must discover. The side we know is the false ego which makes us say "I." What is it in us that we call "I?" We say, "This is my body, my mind, these are my thoughts, my feelings, my impressions, this is my position in life." We identify our self with all that concerns us, and the sum-total of all these we call "I." In the light of truth this conception is false, it is a false identity...It is the imperfect division of the perfect ego. (Volume 9, Prophets) ... The real self can rise to perfection; the false self ends in limitation. (In man there is a real ego; this ego is divine. It is not that the false ego is our ego and the true ego is the ego of God, but that the true ego which is the ego of God has become a false ego in us. (Volume 11, Philosophy) ... But this divine ego is covered by the false ego. (Initiation) ... The ego itself is never destroyed; it is the one thing

that lives. In the knowledge of the ego is the secret of immortality. (Volume 12, Cosmic) … If one realized that spiritual development depends upon the awakening of the false ego to the true ego, its very foundation, how simple the way to spiritual perfection would become!

How do we proceed?

A person has to analyze himself and see: 'Where does "I" stand? Does it stand as a remote, exclusive being? (Cosmic Language)

PRACTICE:

Observe your self-image. You can only observe it by disidentifying with it. Then only can one explore (admittedly at first vaguely) the many-splendored bounty of one's real being latent behind the idiosyncrasies of one's personality. Here again, the key is in rating one's commonplace thinking as not sufficiently comprehensive and therefore incomplete.

Can you reconnoiter your false ego? The key lies in checking whether you identify with what is perishable (your body) or transient (your thoughts).

Then we identify our soul with that which is mortal. This is the false ego. (Health)

Imagine that your real being is covered by many veils.

To become selfless is to realize the self by unveiling it from its numberless covers which make the false ego. (The Soul, Whence and Whither)

One of those veils is our role-playing.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

Whatever the soul experiences, that it believes itself to be. If the soul sees the external self as a baby, it believes I am a baby. If it sees the external self as old, it believes I am old. If it sees the external situation in a palace, it believes I am rich. If it sees itself in a hut, it believes I am poor. But in reality it is only I am.

When man lives this limitation, he does not realize that another part of himself exists which is much higher, more wonderful, more living and more exalted. This is His unlimited Being.... (Gk 27) Either we live in our limitation or let God reign there in His unlimited being.

Man's failures in life, together with his impression of limitation, keep him ignorant of that great power which is hidden in the mind. Man's life is the phenomenon of his mind; man's happiness and success, his sorrows and failures, are mostly brought about by his own mind, of which he knows so little.

Now let us try to reconnoiter our real being:

How can one be in tune with the infinite? The nature of being in tune with the infinite can be seen by comparing one's soul to the string of an instrument. It is tied at both sides: one is the infinite and the other is the finite. When a person is conscious all the time of the finite then he or she is tuned with the finite, and the one who is conscious of the infinite is tuned with the infinite. Being in tune with one makes us limited, weak, hopeless, and powerless; by being in tune with the other we obtain the power and strength to pull through life under all adverse conditions. (Gk 31)

If man dived deep enough within himself he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life. It is that realization which brings man to the real understanding of life, and as long as he has not realized his unlimited self he lives a life of limitation, a life of illusion. (Gth 1)

Checking your self-image again, ascertain how limited it is and then discover how you suffocate in restriction, in constriction, and long for the vastness. You can find vastness in yourself. Ponder again upon these words:

The world of one individual is as small as a grain of lentil, and that of another as large as the whole world.

We are as great as our spirit, we are as wide as our spirit, we are a low as our spirit, we are as small as our spirit.

We occupy as much of the horizon as is within our consciousness or as much as we are conscious of. (Healing)

The outlook becomes wide; as wide as the divine eye.

PRACTICE:

In the tranquility inside, ponderous thoughts regarding the nature of your being surface with unexpected clarity. You can observe that, indeed, your self-image is based upon the more overt features of your psyche, even your body. But if you dive deeper, you will discover that in one's ordinary experience, one tends to identify with one's role playing, also with the features of one's face, also with those thoughts which while formulated in one's mind, get constrained by trying to articulate them within the constraint of language. In contrast: try to grasp your real person behind the pretence of role-playing; try to envision your real countenance behind the face you see in the mirror, which now appears as a mask. You will now be able to ascertain that your sense of meaningfulness is often distorted in your commonplace thoughts and that your personality only manifests a sliver of the bounty of that seed of your personality considered as a plant.

Now ponder upon the fact that, in the course of experiencing the existential world, you have involved yourself with people, with situations, with the fabric of the Planet. Caught in the narrow perspective that determines seeing things in detail, you have lost the overview and consequently forgotten who you are.

Pir Vilayat's comments:

Our consciousness is ordinarily squeezed into a microscopically small range while we are oblivious of the way it relates to an infinite totality. What you are experiencing in this room on the screen of your mind is not only a sliver of what is happening on the Planet, let alone in the galaxies, but an infinitesimal cross-section of an *n*-dimensional world of beings living their lives in worlds of which we are not familiar (that escape our grasp), including our world in the past, which is still there, although it has changed. These far reaches include those whom we have known in our life-time or whose lives have been recorded

in the annals of history, and those whom, in our inadequate thinking, we tend to believe are no more.

Consider this screen of your mind as a doorway giving you access beyond its limitation. Envision that the shadows on the screen are not simply what you perceive, but clues which if followed would open vaster and vaster horizons. This could be illustrated by a radio which functions as a transducer of an infinite web of radio-waves that we could not make sense of unless this complex network of waves - this wave-interference pattern (in physics) - were reduced to fit into the range of our perception.

Can you now see that what we perceive as objects are simply abstractions of a deeper dynamic reality which could be described as the interrelationship between events. What we perceive as events are simply cross-sections of intercepting interrelationships that criss-cross. Everything resonates with everything else.

Our consciousness functions like the radio that reduces that stupendous network that our intelligence would not be able to extrapolate and therefore make sense of.

PRACTICE:

Now try to expand your consciousness. See the difference between reading the letters on the pages of a book and scanning a vast horizon.

Of course it is an ideal situation if you meditate at night under the stars and think how extraordinary it is that your retinæ are sensitive to light reaching you from distances measured in umpteen light years! Furthermore, imagine that the molecules, atoms and electrons of the cells of your body originated in the "Big bang" as they coalesced though the æons of time to provide a support system for the intelligence of the universe focalized as your consciousness.

In a further step, see if you can feel a force field around your arms, in front of your chest, in your back, around your head just like the magnetic field of a magnet. Identify with it, considering it as the template in which your body cells

are configured.

And further, if you can, sense a light field surrounding your body, also interfused in your body cells. Now identify with it.

Now we can do the reverse: having expanded consciousness, see if you can have a sense of encompassing a wide horizon with your consciousness. Then hold people in your heart. Harbor them in safe asylum that they may be nurtured, also that they may feel supported by you, so that you would intercede in their favor.

Now, says Pir o Murshid, since your outreach has expanded: take stock of the areas, that Murshid calls your kingdom, for which you assume responsibility and of those people for whom you assume responsibility to be better able to manage one's affairs.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

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LESSON 3

TURNING WITHIN

PART I

Note: if not otherwise stated, the quotes in italics and indented are of Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan, the commentaries are by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, the reference of quotes by ancient Sufis and other esoteric schools are appended to these. Instructions on practices corresponding to the sayings follow these.

We have seen in the previous lesson that our usual sense of personal identity has the effect of encapsulating ourselves in a limitation - with the consequence that we fail to fulfill the purpose of our lives which is to realize and unfurl the divine perfection invested in our being. The method advocated by Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan was to explore the wider dimension of our being in our participation with the totality by overcoming the habit of contrasting our sense of "me" from what we represent as the universe (or God) as "other." This we called "the cosmic dimension" of our being.

In the present lesson, we are working with an alternate dimension: "turning within." Very often meditation is considered as "turning within." Meditation consists not just in turning within but also, as we have seen, discovering our outreach and, further, as we will be exploring: our "transcendental dimension."

"Turning within" opens up an infinite perspective upon our being, one which Pir o Murshid emphasizes significantly in his esoteric teaching. Normally we are only aware of a sliver of the bounty that we are immersed in.

When a man looks at the ocean, he can only see that part of it which comes within his range of vision; so it is with the truth. **Bowl of Saki.**

We are in search of ourselves and our relationship with the universe, in all its dimensions (which we represent as God), in our longing to grasp the significance of our life.

Man, with the maturity of his soul, desires to probe the depths of life. He desires to discover the power latent within him, he longs to know the source and goal of his life, he yearns to understand the aim and meaning of life, he wishes to understand the inner significance of things, and he wants to uncover all that is covered by form and name: he seeks for insight into cause and effect, he wants to touch the mystery of Time and Space, and he wishes to find the missing link between God and man - where man ends, where God begins.**Unity of Religious Ideals.**

PRACTICE:

Let us at this stage make a start in our meditations and ask ourselves whether we feel that we are missing out on grasping the meaning of our lives, of our relationship with the situations in the outer world.

What man knows is generally the world that he sees around himself….What he knows is to express outwardly and to receive from this same sphere as much as he can receive by himself….but there is something around themselves beyond that which they realize.**Mysticism of Sound.**

As we ask ourselves these questions, we wonder whether it would not be easier to call a halt for a few moments from our commonplace life style - whether we are not missing out on grasping areas of ourselves not commonly experienced.

If we respond to the things of the earth so much that our whole life becomes absorbed in earthly things, then it is quite natural that we do not respond to those riches which are within us, and yet are far removed from them. **Social Gatheka, Art.**

We hope that if we follow a method based upon instructions devised by beings who have clinched a more meaningful sense of life in general and their own life, we will gradually gain more insight into our own lives.

Having explored wider areas as in the previous lesson, we have a hunch that there is a whole area to explore inside.

How one wanders all one's life in search of something which can only be found within oneself. **Gatheka 11.**

Instead of finding it within he always wants to find it without. **Social Gatheka, The Power of the Word.**

Before we look deeper into this, can we be clear as to what we mean by turning within?

One commonly takes for granted that all that lies outside one's skin-bound body is the "world" whereas what lies within this skin is "myself." Turning within cannot be reduced to simply becoming aware of what is happening within one's own body. Moreover it is a misconception to think that the mind is "in the body" – in the brain.

To a material person 'within' means in the body, inside the body. In reality 'within' means not only inside, but also outside the body. This can be seen by the light inside a lamp: the light is inside the globe, and it is outside the globe too. So is the soul; it is inside and outside too. So is the mind; it is inside and outside, it is not confined inside the body. **Mental Purification.**

What Pir o Murshid means by "within" is not included in the three-dimensional space that evidences the limitation in our middle range mental faculties.

They might think 'within oneself' means inside one's body; but that is because man is ignorant of himself. Man has a very poor idea of himself, and this keeps him in ignorance of his real self. If man only knew how large, how wide, how deep, how high is his being, he would think, act, and feel differently; but with all his width, depth, and height, if man is not conscious of them he is as small as he thinks himself to be. **In an Eastern Rose Garden.**

There is another space, within which this space is contained. **Supplementary Papers. Metaphysics.**

Within us there is space too; the space within extends in another direction.

Smiling Forehead.

This could be illustrated by our dream world:

In the physical world, you are here and everything is without you, you are contained in space; in the dream, all you see is contained within you.

We have experience of this world of mind even while awake, but the contrast between the world within and without makes the world without concrete and the world within abstract. **Metaphysics.**

Furthermore, it includes:
(i) Occurrences, events;
(ii) What is enacted behind our problems, which is often masked by our assessments of our problems;
(iii) Particularly, the virtualities of our psyche, whose outer face is our self-image – our identity.
(iv) Intuitive hunches;
(v) Creative imagination – inspiration.

Since we are so used to taking for granted that the objects in the world are "discrete entities," it is difficult for us to imagine how everything could be intermeshed (like radio waves or, if this were possible: a piece of paper so crushed that every part was in contact with every other part).

That the world appears different according to one's perspective is a theory in physics. Dr. David Bohm contrasts the way things look in our commonplace perspective which he describes where things are perceived as unfolded (like the piece of paper) or alternately enfolded (explicate versus implicate).

Each part of the holograph is an image of the whole object. The light from all parts of the room contains information about the whole room. Therefore every part contains information about the whole object….Information about the whole is enfolded in each part of the image. Information about the whole object is dynamically enfolded in each part of space while the information is then unfolded in the image. **(David Bohm, Unfolding Meaning, p. 10)**

The order of the world as a structure of things that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order. The order of elements external to each other would then be called the unfolded order, or the explicate order. **(ibid. p. 13)**

So all the aspects of the mind show themselves and are enfolding each other, and transforming through each other through enfoldment and unfoldment. Mind and matter may consistently be related without adopting a reductionist position. Perhaps they both arise from some greater common ground or perhaps they are not really different. **(p. 19*) The state of the whole is such that it organizes the parts.* (p. 7)**

It is heartening for the meditator to see the way that the views of Hazrat Inayat Khan, already foreseen by his Sufi predecessors, are corroborated in the findings of a modern physicist.

This space of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is in the inner dimension. What exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in three-dimensional space. In reality what the mystic sees in space is something that is within, but when he opens his eyes, he sees it before him.

For the mystic everything is connected. There is no condition that is detached from another condition. A mechanism is always running in relation to another mechanism, however different and disconnected they may seem. To gain insight, the mystic enters into the depth of the whole mechanism of the universe.

All things and beings on the surface seem separate from one another; beneath the surface, they approach nearer to each other, and in the innermost plane, they all become one… The closer one approaches reality, the nearer one arrives at unity. Smiling Forehead.

Those to whom unity is revealed see the absolute whole in the parts. **(p. 7 & 8)** ***Yet each is in despair at its particularization from the whole.*** **(p. 17)** ***Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is a man and man is a world.*** **(p. 15)** ***Shabistari:*** **E.H.Whinfield,** ***Mahmood Shabistari's Gulshan i Raz*** **(1880)**

Is it not then drunkenness on the part of man when he claims to be an individual standing separate from all others, thinking himself to be a single entity when he is already many within himself? **Sangitha II**

PRACTICE:

While exhaling, with eyes open, you can see the objects perceived as separate entities; for example the trees. Now closing your eyes represent to yourself a forest where all the trees, windswept in one direction, seem to be various expressions of a basic reality. Or again bees as the diverse expressions of the global reality of the bee swarm. Or again bubbles as ephemeral expressions of water.

When I open my eyes to the outer world I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and look within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart….as the bubble is small before an ocean, and yet it not of any other element than the ocean.

Another metaphor is the wave and the sea. This realization will help us, because to understand what we mean by God it is helpful to see ourselves as a wave in the sea.

Man is a condition of God as a wave is a condition of the sea.

Instead of emphasizing the contrast between these two perspectives, now try to grasp the correspondence between them. While perceiving the outer world, you still keep in mind that it is an expression of what you have now grasped as its deeper reality, so that you may feel acommunion with all existential things instead of deeming them as "other" than yourself.

This process takes place in two directions: outwardly by being one with all we see, and inwardly by being in touch with that one Life which is everlasting, by dissolving into it, and by being conscious of that one Spirit being the existence, the only existence.

The one who looks within finds when he looks without, that all that is within manifests without**. Mental Purification.**

The only way of wakening to the life within, which is most beautiful, is first to

respond to the beauty outside.

Let us now try to correlate those two dimensions: cosmic and within. As you exhale with open eyes, imagine that all that one perceives in the environment or conceives in one's ordinary thinking is just what appears at the surface of a reality, grasped as you inhale with closed eyes, that is so complex, so intermeshed, that one cannot with one's ordinary reason make sense of it.

As you inhale represent to yourself radio waves that are so intricately interwoven and which we could never extrapolate. As you exhale now imagine that they are processed through our radio into sound that makes sense to our ordinary minds. To this purpose, they need to be reduced. So what we are listening to on the radio is a reduced expression of the bounty of the audiosphere.

Another example would be the way that an idea can configure itself as a form: As you exhale, imagine that you are swimming at the surface of a lake and enjoy the view of the water lilies. Now as you inhale think of the network of roots in the depth of which they are the expression. Better still the genetic code of the seed.

As the seed is sufficient and capable of producing another plant, so man is the product of all planes, spiritual and material and yet in him alone shines forth that primal intelligence that caused the whole. **Sangathas p. 37.**

Thus then, try to sound the depth below the threshold of your grasp. Here you may espy that "secret treasure" that we would like to decode and which according to the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed "loved to be known." However, while it is known, albeit inadequately, by inference thanks to the clues perceived or conceived, one may venture into that mystery on condition that one gives up one's middle-range logic and stretches one's mind beyond its usually limited outreach.

Sufis often call upon the metaphor of the mirror.

There is a quotation of a great Yogi, who says, "in order to see what is before you you must see within yourself." And that means that within yourself there is a mirror and it is that mirror which may be called the inner world. **The Inner Life.**

This illustration is not altogether exhaustive since the image in the mirror has a profile whereas the images in the depth of our psyche are like Kirlian photographs*.*

Forms seen in mirrors, just like imaginary forms are not imprinted materially either on the mirror or in the imagination. No, they are "bodies in suspension"… These non-spatial forms in the intermediary world have places where they appear (epiphanic places), but they are not contained in them. **Suhrawardhi (Vide Corbin, 1977 p 127 & 1973, p.127)**

The comparability however is valid in that it is represented as being "outside" one's body.

This mirror is two-sided, its two sides facing opposite ways; one facing within, the other without; and the secret of working with it is to close it from one side in order to make it take the reflection from the other. **Esoteric papers.** ***It is in this mirror that all that is before you is reflected. But when the eyes are looking outside, then one has turned his back to the mirror which is inside, but when the eyes are turned inside, then one sees in this mirror all that is outside reflected.*** **Social Gathekas.**

Pir o Murshid adds a further metaphor: the photographic plate rather than the mirror, because the imprint of an impression, or a friend, can become adamant (like gold) rather than remain "in suspense."

That reflection only depends upon the object being before it. No sooner the object is removed, the reflection is gone. But the reflection on a photographic plate is like the reflection, but becomes an impression, which then can be developed by a certain process in mind.

But, Murshid sees the value of not simply storing inside impressions that have accrued from outside albeit quintessentiated, but how this enrichment can spark creative thoughts and the unfurling of our personality emerging from within towards outside. The impression finds its fulfillment by growing and being productive, by acting as a catalyst for our creativity.

A reflection on a photographic plate remains, but does not live; the reflection

upon the mind lives, and therefore it is creative. It does not always live, but it helps one to create within oneself the same thing. **Mind World.**

By the power of unconditioned love we can find our friend unfolding in one's own self and thus contributing to one's own unfoldment.

The real awakening of his sympathy is on that day when he sees his friend and says 'this is myself'. Then the sympathy is awakened, then there is the communication within one's self. **Mysticism of Sound.**

P.S. These studies on "turning within" will be continued in Lesson 4 (Part II of Turning Within: Discovering the Sacred Through Prayer) and Lesson 5 (part III of Turning Within: Dealing With Our Psyche, Ego, Sense of Identity, Assessments of Problems, etc.).

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER
The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 4

PRAYER:

THE KEY TO PERSONAL CREATIVITY

Allah al Makhluk fi'l itikadat
Make God a reality so that He is no more imagination.
(Hadith)

Through your prayers, God creates Himself through you. (Hazrat Inayat Khan)

Note: Before proceeding to the next stage of turning within, we are inserting this lesson on prayer. It is essential to consider at this time and will help us to move to the next phase of turning within. Despite some overlap with a prior lesson (KiT 122, September, 1999, Curriculum of the Sufi Order, Number 2), this version is more fully developed and contains elements absolutely essential for prayer.

The most precious moments in our life erupt when we are moved by our spontaneous urge to pray. Sometimes it is triggered off by desperation. This is recognizing a greater power than one's own.

Glorification starts with admiration for the beauty of a form – the beauty of a crystal, a cathedral, a flower, a beautiful face, watching the stars at night. It extends further in a dynamic scene: when one is delighted by the changing landscape as it vies with the vicissitudes of the weather, of the wind, of the light of the sun, the seasons. A whole new perspective opens up if one sees the live human cell in an electron microscope or looks at the photos of matter observed under ultraviolet or infrared light, or if one could hear the rumble of the voices of animals, birds, of elephants communicating in infrasonic tones, or whales in supersonic tones.

The harmony of the movement of the planets and stars (and galaxies) strikes a deep chord somewhere in our psyche because it evokes a deep sense of harmony resonating in our emotions. A symphony is a dynamic form enfolded in the dimension of the arrow of time. Here the form reveals its dynamic potentials instead of being seen as a static gestalt, like one's impression of the crystal (unless one is aware of the jiggling of the atoms and electrons within it). Admiration deepens when one grasps the expression of the countenance behind a face – that of a person whose face does not fit into our concept of aesthetic beauty, but has a beautiful personality that transpires through the countenance to the inner eyes of those "who have eyes to see." However, beauty cannot be confined to form, even that which transpires from behind that which appears, unless one considers (as the Sufi do) the idiosyncrasies of our human personalities as "subtle form." This could be illustrated by a beautiful gesture - compassion. One grasps splendor behind beauty. We have reached the mystical dimension.

Physicists peering into the depth of matter unsounded by our bare senses never cease to be amazed by what they call the "elegance" of the programming of life.

Glorification may be sparked by facing the meaningfulness of our life and the significance of life in the universe, confronting the vastness and splendor of the reality beyond our grasp. Then one is suffused with an attunement to the sacred.

One may *repartée*: "Yes, but the forms of the world are not always beautiful. How about the ugliness, horror, evil, decadence, pollution physical and psychological, the cruelty we are surrounded with and we he hear about in the media? Moreover how can we account for the cataclysms of nature, in the galaxies at a humungous scale?" In the human drama, suffering reveals the evil motivation causing it. The crucifixion of Christ stands historically as the epitome of suffering caused by evil. Untold countless cases of such agonizing ordeals have happened in the past and are occurring right around us right now.

By virtue of its creative imagination, our human mind is endowed with the ability of restoring the distortion.

For the image to lead to the divine model it needs to be transmuted, and moreover it is transfigured thereby. **Ibn'Arabi**

We are tested in our prayer in our ability to espy beauty when distorted, disrupted, or defiled.

PRACTICE:

While looking at or imagining a faded flower try to reconstitute in your mind that flower in its pristine glory prior to its being faded – or rather how it has been conceived in the divine blueprint before it got pummeled by existential circumstances. Likewise, can you intuit the Divine intention in your life that either we have flouted because we followed our own intention alienated from the Divine intention, or we had acted to the best of our understanding in our ignorance of that intention. The glory of the intention cannot be blemished by its defilement. That is the power of faith in prayer.

Is it not amazing that a thought is configured into a form? That is what is gained by life. What is more, the very concretization of thought in a form unfolds the thought further in the breathtaking advance of evolution.Moreover, in Sufism, vision is not confined to the input of the senses of that which accrues to one from "outside," but is our faculty (based upon the divine faculty) of translating a thought, or realization, or emotion into a form. Imagination is the faculty of doing just this. Here lies the key to creativity. What is more: thought avers itself to be sparked by emotion.

One is filled with amazement as one's mind is able to peer into the programming one may espy while pondering upon the events in one's life – reading into "the mind of God." That cosmic intention sparking our being, transcending all form, should manifest and materialize as us (and of course as all living reality) pummels our soul (beyond our mind) with awe. This is the secret of prayer. Prayer culminates when we are awed by discovering in our very selves the potentialities of that Being whom we had hitherto worshiped as "other."

O Thou who art absent there, we have found Thee here. **Jili**

At this point we are faced with the enigma that always besets us when facing our concept of God. It is only by by-passing these concepts that we can reconcile the irreconcilables.

When thou knowest thyself, thou understandeth that thou art He **(1976, p. 16*)... Understand whereby you are He and whereby you are other than He.* Ibn 'Arabi, (Corbin 1975 I, 103, cf 1969, p.192)**

When we are face to face, Beloved, I do not know whether to call Thee me, or me Thee! I see myself when Thou art not before me; when I see Thee my self is lost to view. I consider it good fortune when Thou art alone with me, but when I am not there at all, I think it the greatest blessing. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The difficulty lies in reconciling our normally limited self-image with the transpersonal dimension of our being.

God can only be known by the synthesis of antinomic affirmations. **(Abu Sa'id al Kharraz; cf Ibn'Arabi, 1975, p. 36)**

Thy spirit is mingled in my spirit even as wine is mingled with pure water.

When anything touches Thee, it touches me.

Lo, in every case, Thou art I. **Hallaj**

This is the key to understanding Hazrat Inayat Khan and all Sufism: accounting for both dimensions of our being rather than considering God as "other."

By contemplating Him, I am contemplating myself; and by contemplating myself, I am contemplating Him. **Ibn 'Arabi**

I searched for God and I found myself, and I searched for myself and I found God. **Abdullah Ansari**

Hazrat Inayat Khan points out the difference.

We are a condition of God.

Divinity is human perfection and humanity is divine limitation. **(Gayan, Boulas)**

Man is divine limitation and God is human perfection**.**

One of the distinctive features of Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching is emphasis on human incentive.

All is God, but man has a mind of his own.

It should however be noted that this was already in incubation in the teaching of Ibn 'Arabi.

When God sent Himself down to the Waystation of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them...He does not determine our properties except through us. Or rather we determine our own properties through ourselves though within Him. **(cf Chittick, p. 299)**

Prayer opens the door to giving credence to an unanticipated hunch that behind our limited understanding and emotion lies meaningfulness and splendor. Prayer frees us from our limited outlook and particularly from the inadequacy of our self-image – precisely that which has been hampering the unfoldment of our being and the fulfillment of our life's purpose – and fosters our personal creativity and accomplishment in life.

Can a limited man be conscious of perfection? The answer is that the limited man has limited himself; he is limited because he is conscious of his limitation. It is not his true self which is limited; what is limited is what he holds, not himself **(Alchemy, Attainment)*****. When one is conscious of limitation, one is limited; when one is conscious of perfection, one is perfect. The thought of one's limitation covers what is true in one's being, one's true self*** **(Religion, Purity)*****. Even in its limitation the soul has the spark of perfection. The real self can rise to perfection; the false self ends in limitation*****(Alchemy, Struggle)*****. The purpose of life is that we grow towards perfection; from the greatest limitation we grow towards perfection.*** **(Alchemy)*****.***

To pray, we try to imagine God by projecting upon Him/Her qualities that we only know in their imperfect actualization in ourselves or others, by imagining them as they might be in their perfection. Our minds are equipped with the ability to represent a quality (or an outreach of space or a span of time) always more infinite or excellent than those reached so far – in infinite regress. Of course we can never imagine them in their perfection.

Everything in the world that has a name is imaginable; the one and only Being the imagination cannot reach is God. And yet as God is manifested in all things and in all beings, so in all things and in all beings there is always a part which is unimaginable….Man can reach God only as far as his imagination can take him. **(Social Gathekas)**

Man is incapable of appropriating the divine knowledge which is applied to those archetypes in their state of non-existence…however the essence only reveals itself in the form of the disposition of the individual who receives this revelation. **Ibn 'Arabi**

We are cautioned that when we say God, we are projecting our own anthropomorphical representation of what we imagine God to be or would like God to be.

Ibn 'Arabi says:

To Him we attribute no quality without ourselves having that quality. **(1975, p. 16)**

However it is in the world and ourselves that we can find clues to that which lies beyond our imagination.

He shows you His signs at the horizons and in yourselves. **Qur'an**

Since the ephemeral manifests the eternal, it is by the ephemeral that God reveals to us the eternal. Know that there is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithal) in the higher world. Between the two worlds there are tenuities which extend from each to its likeness **(Ibn 'Arabi, Fut. lll 260, 6, Chittick, 1989,**

p. 406)*. God brings them out of the treasuries, that is from an existence we do not perceive, to an existence that we do perceive. Hence the treasuries contain only the possibilities of the things* (Fut. III 199, 3)*. When meanings are embodied and become manifest in shapes and measures they assume forms, since witnessing takes place through sight* (Chittick 1989, p. 354).Ibn 'Arabi

However, to overcome the limitation of our projections, we need to see things from two antipodal points of view: How then can one grasp the eternal model of our personality? Reverse your sense of identity to the antipodal pole of your being which one usually ascribes to God as "other." This is the key to Sufism.

God discovers His perfection in the imperfection of the creature…Imagine grasping the bounty in a seed while contemplating a flower. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

However, the ephemeral is not conceivable as such that is its ephemeral and relative nature, except in relation to a principle from which it derives its possibility, so that it has no being in itself, but derives it from another to whom it is tied by its dependence. **Ibn 'Arabi(1975, p. 15)**

Our representation of God as remote, actually as "other" hinders our ability to recognize His/Her nature that is trying to manifest and actuate itself in our personality. The consequence is that our idiosyncrasies are constrained within our personal self-image, which cannot but limit the bounty lying in wait in the seed-bed of our being.

People ask: "If all is God, then God is not a person." The answer: though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower; and therefore the flower already existed in the seed. Moreover, as the seed comes last after the life of the trunk, branch, flower and fruit, and is sufficient in itself of producing another plant, so in man, the product of all the planes, spiritual and material, shines forth that which caused the whole: the seed of existence, primal intelligence.

No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God.

Man in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God.

The man who has no imagination to make a God, and is not open to a conception of God (even his own) finds no stepping stone to reach that knowledge which his soul longs for but his doubts deny.

It is not wrong to make God in one's imagination the God of all beauty, free from ugliness and evil, for by that imagination, he is drawn nearer and nearer every moment of his life to that Divine Ideal which is the seeking of his soul. And, once he has touched divine Perfection, in it he will find the fulfillment of his life. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

In our prayer, our faculty of creative imagination leads us from stretching our minds beyond their commonplace reach to actually being transformed ourselves.

Since imagination can produce beauty outwardly in the form of poetry, music, art, or literature, it can produce beauty of much higher and greater value when it is directed inward **(Initiation)*… If you have no God, make one.By making God great, we ourselves arrive at a certain greatness. Imagination becomes a ladder on the path of the mystic. The mystic begins his work with the ladder of imagination, and actual experience follows*** **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

Our active imagination is a moment, an instant, of the Divine Imagination that is the universe. **Ibn' Arabi(Corbin, 1970, p. 214)**

To spark creativity, we need to match the idiosyncrasies in our personality with their archetype that represents the higher dimension of our being which is co-extensive with all beings and which we call God, while both poles of our being are incommensurable. This is not easy.

It is not an easy thing to make a God of imagination and make out of Him a reality. For every person it is like making an idol, a statue, and trying to make the statue live. But if ever anyone has reached God, he has not reached by finding God in the abstract, something where nothing is to be found. But he had

***to make God, and then through that God, which was once made, that God of the abstract became knowable.*Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Thus prayer avers itself to be the secret of personal creativity, whereas trying to perfect ourselves while limiting ourselves in our personal self-image would be like trying to lift oneself by one's boot-straps.

***He realizes that all that is lacking in it and all that remains to be done, or all the faults that it may seem to have, are his own faults, while his ideal is perfect. This is a stepping-stone for the mystic to come closer to God's shrine; by this he attains more quickly to a higher degree of perfection.* Hazrat Inayat Khan**

In order to imagine God in our prayer, we are not only arousing the qualities we project upon the concept that we make of Him/Her, that are lying in wait in our personality, but also configuring our subtle bodies to manifest the miracle whereby the Divine intention is configured as an evanescent, evolving, self-organizing form.

PRACTICE:

The representative prescribes a *wazifa* and the mureed projects the quality upon his/her representation of what he/she imagines God to be as epitomizing this quality in a more and more perfect way, in infinite regress. Then, reconnoitering this quality in oneself in a reduced form, one tries to enhance that attribute in one's personality so that it may conform to the Divine model.

By so doing, we arouse qualities dormant within ourselves.

Avicenna says:

It is prayer which causes the human soul to resemble the heavenly abodes eternally worshipping absolute truth - for worship is knowledge. The real nature of prayer is therefore to know God in His uniqueness Whose essence is infinitely exalted and Whose qualities are infinitely holy.

By imagining God as the paramount reality of our own being, our ideal becomes homonized (a word of Teilhard de Chardin) in the features of our personality.

Through our prayers God becomes a personality.

One sees one's personality as an exemplar of the Divine nature:

The Islamic prayer is a dialogue between the two poles of one's being: between the supplicant in his/her personal identity and the supplicant trying to see him/herself as seen from the antipodal vantage point (considered to be the Divine view) as he/she imagines God seeing Him/Herself in him/herself.

The knowledge you may glean by grasping in yourself the divine archetype of which you are an exemplar is only the first degree of a Sufi, the second is knowing oneself through the knowledge that God has of himself through you. Ibn 'Arabi

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through His manifestation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind **(Unity of Religious Ideals*). Not knowing that God experiences this life through us, one is seeking for Him somewhere else…Man realizes his perfection in God and God realizes His perfection in man. God discovers His perfection in our imperfection.* Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Actually, the hidden treasure is love. One can discover the traces of the Divine mind in the deeper processes of one's own thinking. But when one discovers God as a person embedded in one's own personality, one realizes that this is Whom one loves and Who loves one in an intimacy of the soul that surpasses the love for "another" person. This is because one loves what one admires most, albeit that one realizes that in this relationship, the love for the person is sparked by this Divine love.

He is the One every lover loves in every beloved. **Ibn' Arabi**

If it is love rather than understanding that motivates one, then rather than sufficing oneself with the clues "on the horizons and in one's own psyche," then…

At an advanced stage, one learns to grasp God as He is Himself, rather than the knowledge gleaned of Him. **Ibn'Arabi**

In the absence of the Names, the "Named" would appear. **Ibn'Arabi (Hikmat un Nuriya, cf Etudes, 151, 27)**

If these veils were lifted, unity would erase the existence of the entities of the possible things, and they would cease being described by existence, since they only become qualified by existence through these names. **Ibn 'Arabi (cf 1998, p. 95)**

The bridegroom does not have to suffice himself with the veil of the bride. **Bastami**

The God who is intelligible to man is made by man himself, but what is beyond his intelligence is the reality. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

A Hadith of Prophet Mohammed often quoted declares (God speaking):

I was a hidden treasure and loved to be known and therefore I created the world in order to know myself.

It is out of love for the possibility of us that God is seeking to become a reality as us.

A further Hadith says:

But for thee, I would not have created the heavens.

In consequence God becomes real:

But if this imagination is to become a reality, then exactly as one feels for one's earthly beloved sympathy, love and attachment, so one must feel the same for God. **(Social Gathekas)**

One communicates with God, so that God becomes to the initiate a living entity; God is then no longer an ideal or an imagination, no longer one whom he has

made; the One whom he once made has now become alive - a living God. Before this there was belief in God, there was worship of Him; perhaps He was made in the imagination; but in this stage God becomes living. And what a phenomenon this is! This stage is a miracle in itself. The God-realized person need not speak of or discuss the name of God; his presence will inspire the sense of God in every being, and charge the atmosphere with it. Everyone that meets him, whether he is spiritual or moral or religious or without religion, will feel God in some form or other. **(The Path of Initiation)**

I am He Whom I love, and He Whom I love is I. We are two spirits dwelling in one body. If thou seest me, thou seest Him. And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both. There is not one tear between my eyelids or drop of blood in the cockles of my heart that does not proclaim Thy presence. **Hallaj (cf Nicholson, 1963, p.151)**

Since what is gained by existence is that formless reality is configured and therefore manifests and is actuated as form, one projects what one admires most into "the most perfect of forms." Hence the Muslim prayer is not just a dialogue where one is communicating with God as a being in which the Divine intention in life is being revealed, but in the ecstasy of the love relationship one reflects the very Divine action whereby God discovers a dynamic feature of Him/Herself that adds itself to the knowledge that God has of Him/Herself in the principle of His/Her being, in the human form in which God discovers Him/Herself by disclosing Him/Herself to the supplicant .

Then comes another unveiling in which your forms in Him will be manifest to you. Among us are those who know that this knowledge takes place in God. **Ibn 'Arabi (Chittick, 1989, p. 298)**

A Hadith says:

Adore God as though thou seest Him. And if thou dost not see Him, He sees thee.

Another Hadith (God speaking):

I witness the invocation of he who invokes Me. And if he is endowed with vision, he finds himself in the presence of He whom he invokes. But he who does not have vision cannot contemplate Him.

Thus prayer transmutes one's self image - the false ego – into one's true self and thus avers itself to be the ultimate personal creativity.

The best way of losing the self is by the repetition of a certain sacred word which gradually makes one lose the conception of the false self, expressing at the same time the idea of the real self.

When they stand before God, their ego, their self, their life, is no more before them. They do not think of themselves in that moment with any desire to be fulfilled, with any motive to be accomplished, with any expression of their own; but as empty cups, that God may fill their being, that they may lose the false self.

When man - the most egoistic being in creation, who keeps himself veiled from God, the Perfect Self within, by the veil of his imperfect self, which has formed his presumed ego by the extreme humility when he stands before God and bows and bends and prostrates himself before His Almighty Being, makes the highest point of his presumed being, the head, touch the earth where his feet are, he in time washes off the black stains of his false ego, and the light of perfection gradually manifests. He stands then first face to face with his God, the idealized Deity, and when the ego is absolutely crushed, then God remains within and without, in both planes, and none exists save He.

In that state, called Fana-fi-Allah, when the soul is absorbed in God, one loses the false sense of being and finds the true reality. Then one finally experiences what is termed Baqa-i-Fana, where the false ego is annihilated and merged into the true personality, which is really God expressing Himself in some wondrous ways. When one has risen above the limitations of life on all the planes of existence, the soul will break all boundaries, and will experience that freedom which is the longing of every soul.

This is the real exaltation, when one has risen above one's limitation and has

become conscious of the Perfection whom we call God.

The soul reaches a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes to him one sublime vision of the immanence of God. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

PRACTICE:

Kneeling.

As you exhale, prostrate. Earmark the idiosyncrasies of your personal ego. Reconnoiter its strategies by eschewing a tendency to resort to justifications and acknowledge that it is in some way related to an inadequate notion of your total self in its wholistic, multilevel dimension. (*Fikr: "Illa"*)

As you inhale, sit upright on knees. Enjoy a sense of freedom from the constraint of your personal ego. Exult in glorification and merge in that reality sought "beyond the beyond," and which one ordinarily calls God. (*Fikr: "'Ilah"*)

Now hold your breath, realizing that that reality sought yonder is the seed-bed out of which your being has unfurled in a unique way carrying the totality called God. (*Fikr: "Hu"*)

P.S.

In the teachings of the more advanced Sufis, the Message of unity of spiritual ideals of Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan has its forerunners.

Avoid relying upon that upon which your faith is founded: intellectual speculation. God is too vast to be conditioned by an intelligence based upon belief or a belief based upon intelligence. However the light of intelligence can carry a certain receptivity irrespective of rational thinking. **Ibn 'Arabi**

Avicenna says:

The outward part of the prayer is prescribed by the religious law….This outward or disciplinary part is connected with the body because it is composed of certain postures such as recitation, genuflexion and prostration….They act as

controlling the body to bring it into tune with the harmony of the universe.

The law-giver prescribed prayer for the body as an outward symbol for that other prayer. As for the second or inward part or truth of prayer, this is to contemplate God with a pure heart and a spirit abstracted and purified of all desires. This part does not follow the path of bodily numbers or physical actions, but rather the art of pure thoughts and eternal spirits.

The Prophet said: "The man at prayer is in secret converse with his Lord." This is only to be predicated of that inward knowledge that belongs solely to the pure souls that are abstracted and free from events in time and directions in space... They behold Him with spiritual, not corporeal vision.

It is an imploring of Absolute Being to perfect the soul through contemplation of Him and to complete the worshipper's felicity through the inner knowledge and apprehension of Him. The divine injunction and holy emanation descends from the heavenly void into the confines of the rational soul.

A Hadith of Prophet Mohammed:

I manifest myself to my worshiper only in the form of his belief.

And Ibn 'Arabi:

The divinity which conforms to the belief is created by the one who concentrates on it. He who concentrates on a certain belief is necessarily ignorant of the intrinsic truths of other beliefs. If he understood the meaning of the word of Junaid: "the color of the water is that of the receptacle," he would admit the validity of all beliefs and he would recognize God in every form and every object of faith.

Since the form in which He discloses Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which He discloses Himself. That is why there are many different faiths. To each believer, the Divine Being is He who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith. If God manifests Himself in a different form, the believer

rejects Him, and that is why the dogmatic faiths combat one another. **(cf Corbin, 1969, p. 197)**

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan

Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 5

TURNING WITHIN

PART II

Man, with the maturity of his soul desires to probe the depth of life. He desires to discover the power latent within him. He longs to know the source and goal of his life. He yearns to know the meaning of his life. He wishes to understand the inner significance of things. And he wants to uncover all that is covered by form and name. He seeks for insight into cause and effect. He wants to touch the mystery of time and space. And he wishes to find the missing link between God and man – where man ends and God begins. **Hazrat Inayat Khan** ***(The Unity of Religious Ideals)***

Our objective in this sequence to the previous study of turning within, is to explore Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's instructions against the background of the ancient Sufis as to how to apply the practice of turning within to gaining insight in our problems and by the same token awaken qualities in our personality lying in wait as potentialities unbeknown to us.

For the secret of all knowledge that one acquires in the world, whether worldly knowledge or spiritual knowledge, is the knowledge of the self.

PRACTICE:

Observe that when we try to meditate we tend simply to regurgitate the impressions of the physical and psychological environment, assuming that this is what is meant by turning within.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

What man knows is generally the world he sees around himself. What he knows

is to express outwardly and to receive from this same sphere as much as he can receive by himself.…He overlooks that there is something beyond that which he realizes around himself. **(Mysticism of Sound)**

The source of the realization of truth is within man; he himself is the object of his realization.

The world continues to live in our psyche distorted by our personal bias reinforced by personal emotions.

Try to earmark the impact of your being upon your situation rather than the situation upon your being.

How one wanders all one's life in search of something which can only be found within oneself. **(Gatheka 11)** ***Instead of finding it within, he always wants to find it without.*** **(Social Gatheka: Power of the Word)**

Now downplay the impressions accruing from outside by highlighting those that emerge from within. This will throw new light on our assessment of our problems.

And by the study of human nature, one realizes the nature of life generally….

SELF-ANALYSIS

Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan points to self-analysis as the first step in meditation:

One should learn one's condition, the condition of one's spirit, of one's mind, of one's body, one's situation in life and one's individual relationship with others.

A person asks himself how all he sees affects him and what is his reaction to it all. First how does his spirit react to the objects or the conditions he encounters, to the sounds he hears, to the words people speak to him. And the second thing is to see what effect he himself has on objects, on conditions, and on the individuals he comes in contact with.

PRACTICE:

Close your eyes. Turn your attention away from the noise of the environment; also away from your memory, or concern about social or psychological circumstances, having acquiesced that your assessment is bound to be biased, and therefore is not reliable. Imagine that your eyes are turned within.

Close the eyes and the mind from the outer world and, instead of reaching out, try to reach within. **(Mental Purification)**

When the eyes are turned inside, then one sees in the mirror all that is outside reflected. **(Social Gatheka)** ***And when this light is thrown within oneself, then the self will be revealed to a person. He will become enlightened as to his own nature and character.*** **(Mysticism of Sound)**

If you now peer deeply into yourself, then your personality will appear to you as the outer manifestation of a deeper, more cosmic reality.

When the soul goes further on the path of knowledge, it begins to find: "Yes, there is something which feels the inclination to call itself 'I'." There is a feeling of "I-ness," but at the same time, all that the soul identifies with is not itself.

A UNIVERSE IN ONESELF

One finds a kind of universe in oneself. And by the study of the self, one comes to that spiritual knowledge for which one's soul hungers.

Man is born in this world ignorant of the kingdom which is within himself.

No sooner we scrutinize ourselves, the question emerges, "Who am I?" One questions one's previous notion of one's identity and cannot identify oneself anymore as a 'discrete entity' because one sees oneself inextricably intermeshed with the whole reality.

A person needs to analyze himself, and see, "Where do I stand? Am I a remote, exclusive being?"

To know the self is the most difficult thing in the world, because what man can perceive first is a part only of the self, a limited part. When man asks himself,

"What is it in me that is I?" he finds his body and his mind, and in both he finds himself limited and apart from others. And it is this conception of his being that makes man realize himself as an individual.

PRACTICE:

Dive deep in yourself, and try to reconnoiter the cosmic roots emerging as your personality rather than identify with your self-image which is an inadequate - in fact, delusive - notion of whom we are.

But to declare that the world or one's self-image is *maya* does not take one very far; it is not good enough to unmask the hoax of *maya*. This is a negative proposition; rather one would like to discern what one really is camouflaged by the self-image.

***The world may be an illusion, but behind it reality appears.* Jami**

This is where Islam advances a complementary view to the Yogic *maya* theory: what appears at the surface are clues through which the reality thus revealed may be inferred.

***God shows His signs on the horizons and in the human psyche.* Qur'an 51:21 (my translation)**

***All that we know of Him is through ourselves.... Since we know Him by ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we attribute to ourselves.* Ibn 'Arabi (Fusus al-Hikam)**

Thus the features of our self-image, however deceptive, yield clues as to our true being.

***Do you not see that the Absolute appears in the attributes of contingent beings and thus gives knowledge about Himself, and that He even appears in the attributes of imperfection and blame?* Ibn 'Arabi**

Compare Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan:

Man does not know that there is nothing that is not in him. A person who says to himself: "I do not possess that faculty" shows his lack of understanding what he is.

Moreover it is our resentment that traps us in our self-image which is a faulty representation of whom we are. Ascertain that it is our identification with our self-image - our ego - that is victimized by the blows, unkindness and abuse from the egos of people. And therefore if we knew who we are, the arrows of our abusers would fall on the shield of our psychological immunity.

Anger is power, but the willpower is greater. Therefore the right to develop willpower is the right of the superior man.

What is standing in the way? Denial. The ploy that conceals our true being behind our self-image is indeed smart, albeit mostly unconscious: it is denial of one's flaws. Our validation of ourselves is so precariously suspended upon our self-image, so that we are safeguarding it as best we know by either parading an inflated psychological demeanor or lying low to evade confrontation – humility as inverted tentative pride. Little does one know most times that one is not only deceiving others but oneself.

Once that smoke screen has melted away, one's true being reveals itself. Therefore the method of what is traditionally called annihilating one's ego (*fana*) is actually unmasking this ploy of the ego and correcting one's self-image so that it may tally with one's true being. Granted the real ego, of which our "false ego" is just a sliver, is what we mean by God, then it becomes clear that to discover who we are, we need to reverse our sense of identity to its antipodal pole (God) as the impersonal dimension of our being and therefore see our ephemeral image as a condition of the totality which is the ground of our being, and which we call God.

It is owing to our limitation that we cannot see the whole being.

PRACTICE:

Now dive deeper still.By turning inside you may come upon the immaculate

core of your being. It is only if you touch upon non-being in the void of being that you may espy the secret treasure in you: your real self.

How dare man claim that he is God! Only the emptiness in which the echo is noise is found in a heart that can claim such greatness as that. The true emptiness is filled by the divine light, and such a heart it is which in humility is turned to nothingness, so that that light shines out. Man's ego is a globe, and the spirit of God is the light. "Poor" is said in the sense of thin; and when the ego is poor, or thin, the spirit of God shines out. **(Morals: Blessed are the poor in spirit)**

THE EGO

Hence the importance of the light thrown by Pir o Murshid upon our representation of our ego. In our meditation, attention will be drawn to correcting our self-image by seeing it in its context with the totality of our being.

What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul so that it may loose the false sense of identification and identify itself with the true self instead of the self-image.

Our self-image is an incomplete and hence deceptive notion of ourselves.

The false ego is what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. It is not that the false ego is our ego and the true ego is the ego of God; it is that the true ego which is the ego of God has been reduced to a false ego in us.

On the other hand, clearly, our false ego is a device of the cosmic planning of our defense system – our boundaries.

V*anity is the power that can lead man to either good or bad.*

Therefore it should only be weaned with sagacious care lest one incurs psychological withdrawal symptoms.

If you started in life with self-effacement you would never become a self. What would you efface? Effacing comes afterwards. First you must be a self, a real

***self that is worth being. He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest really attains the blessed state. Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. It is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because although motive has a power, at the same time motive limits power*.**

ANNIHILATION (*FANA*)

Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan points to a frequent error that has often been made in assuming that to find one's real self (the real ego in one) hidden behind one's self image (the false ego) one needs to annihilate the ego *(fana).* Indeed there is even a danger that one prides oneself by one's "false humility."

***The soberness of the ego is divine vanity and the intoxication of the ego is the conceit of man.* (Alchemy of Happiness)**

The solution that Pir o Murshid advocates is:

If in anything divine origin is seen it is in the aristocracy of the human soul, it is in the democracy of the human ego. In the world we see that there is aristocracy and that there is democracy, but in spiritual unfoldment these two become one, culminating in real perfection.

By acquiescing to the virtual presence of the Totality (God) in each fragment thereof (one's ego), one can see how the total Being gets squeezed and reduced yet exemplified in one in a unique way. The advantage of the individual dimension of the cosmic ego is that each ego, by communicating to each other the features in which the totality of the Universe (God) is homonized, is enriching the entire cosmos.

There is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every

being has had.

PRACTICE:

Represent to yourself your ego as the tip of the iceberg and the divine ego as its foundation.

If man dived deep enough within himself he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life. It is that realization which brings man to the real understanding of life, and as long as he has not realized his unlimited self he lives a life of limitation, a life of illusion. When man in this illusion, says "I," in reality it is a false claim. Therefore everyone has a false claim of "I" except some who have arrived at a real understanding of the truth. This false claim is called in Sufic terms Nafs, and the annihilation of this false self is the aim of the sage. But no doubt to annihilate this false ego is more difficult than anything else in the world, and it is this path of annihilation that is the path of the saints and sages.

By effacing oneself one does not annihilate oneself. It might seem so, but it is not so in reality. Really speaking, it is the finding of the self, a self which is perfect…. The ego itself is never destroyed, only the illusion is lost. It is the one thing that lives. In the knowledge of the ego is the secret of immortality.

Compare:

Most of those who seek to know God make a ceasing of existence and a ceasing of that ceasing as a condition of attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight.

It is not thy existence that ceases but thy ignorance.

Ibn 'Arabi (Whoso knoweth himself….)

THE PARADOX: GOD IN MAN, MAN IN GOD

The difficulty is accepting in our minds that we are both a "discrete entity," and at the same time the totality is potentially inherent within the fragments of the

whole.

There is no way of getting proof of God's existence except by being acquainted with oneself, by experiencing the phenomena which are within one. **(Mind World)**

At some point Ibn 'Arabi declares:

Thou art not thou; thou art He, without thou, not He entering into thee, nor thou entering into Him…thou never wast, nor wilt be, whether by thyself or through Him, or in Him, or along with Him….Then if thou knowest thine existence thus, then thou knowest God; and if not, then not. **(Whoso knoweth himself….)**

Then he seems to contradict himself:

Know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God.

At an advanced stage, the human mind reaches into more sophisticated modes of cognizance: complementarity – the conciliation of irreconciliables.

God can only be known by the synthesis of antinomic affirmations. **al Kharraz**

Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan advances the most understandable paradigm:

Man is a condition of God like a wave is a condition of the sea.

By identifying ourselves with the personal dimension of our being, we fail to realize the bounty of our potentials and ascribe this to God as "other." If you think of God as "other," then you can envision that the archetypes of our form are only present in God. If you consider that all is God, then of course the divine perfection is latent in us.

PRACTICE:

Try to imagine that, while you are used to thinking of yourself as a discrete entity in the immensity of the world, the whole world is potentially present within you.

The Creator is hidden within His creation.

Compare:

Behold the world is entirely comprised in yourself. The world is man and man is a world.
Those to whom unity is revealed see the absolute whole in the parts. Yet each is in despair at its particularization from the whole. **Shabistari (The Mystic Rose Garden)**

When the subtle nature, owing to man's inclinations has become pure, he contemplates within himself whatever is of the same nature in the cosmos. **'Ayn ul-Quzat Hamadhani**

As we have seen in the previous lesson, Pir o Murshid shows that it depends upon one's perspective:

When I open my eyes to the outer world I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and look within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart.

ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE VERSUS REVEALED

Since to do this, the personal vantage point of our consciousness needs to be bypassed, this is not a mode of cognizance that can be acquired. If we cease to try to grasp it with our consciousness, it will gradually be revealed (revealed knowledge instead of acquired knowledge – the *"significatio passiva*" of Martin Luther).

No one knows what is within himself until it is unveiled to him. **Ibn 'Arabi**

Compare Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan:

Revelation is the disclosing of the inner self. The consciousness throughout manifestation, facing towards the surface, turns its back to the world within, the sight of which is therefore lost to it. But when it begins to look within, the world unseen is disclosed.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan

Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 6

WORKING WITH LIGHT - ILLUMINATION

Hail to the company of all who have become mad and drunk with desire for the world of Light, with their passionate love for the majesty of the Light of Lights, and who, in their ecstasy, have become like the Seven Poles of the world. (Corbin, 1977, 134)***.*** **Shihab ud-Din Suhrawardi**

We have now reached a point where we are ready to work with light, starting with our own body. Once more draw your attention around your body. Instead of focussing on the magnetic field of your body, or subtle body, can you sense the glow, the effulgence radiating all around you?

Imagine that you are looking into a gorgeous sunrise in the mountains. Now draw your attention to your eyes. Do you notice that as soon as you draw attention to the light in your eyes, your eyes sparkle?

1) Identify yourself with the light counterpart of the fabric of your body.

Our bodies draw light from the environmental light, resorb it into our body cells and radiate it out in the environment. By being aware of it, you will absorb more light.

PRACTICE:

A good technique in meditation consists in drawing in light as you inhale, concentrating on the way your body cells jiggle when nurtured with light as you hold your breath. Then willfully radiate a lot of light as you exhale. Think that that light hurtles through space at probably more than 186,000 miles a second into outer space; it might even bombard the stars.

If you meditate at night, you will become aware of your relationship with the stars. You will realize that our aura is the light of the cosmos converged as us. When you sense the light surrounding your body, think that, "What I call my aura is the same as the light of the stars." Our body does absorb light whether of the sun, the stars, a candle or electric light. On the other hand, light crystallizes as matter – photons can convert into electrons and visa versa. A crystal absorbs light but it is itself light that has gelled. In physics waves can consolidate as 'solitans.' There are reasons to believe that the template configuring our embryo is a magnetic field. Light is of the nature of a magnetic field. Maybe we, already as embryos, draw the light of the stars in our mother's womb.

Exalt in the captivating thought that this is the world to which you belong, that you are in exile on earth and that behind the image of your body, you are a being of light.

It is by this process that man becomes like a luminous star. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

THE LIGHT WITHIN

2) Identify yourself with the light counterpart of (not your body) but your subtle body at all levels.

If you concentrate intensely on light in the environment and then draw your attention to the light surrounding your body, you will discover yourself as an effigy of light of great beauty, and your physical face will now appear as a mask, through which albeit your real being is trying to transpire. It seems like a scintillating kaleidoscopic array of pure effulgence, or the glow of a flame, or the awakening from the perspective of the human dimension of your being. One step will lead to a further one.

If you consider your consciousness as a focal point in space, light seems to radiate from a point located in space: the sun, the stars, a candle, an electric bulb. But when you turn within in your meditation, as your consciousness gets inverted, it is diffused, and consequently your representation of light has shifted; it is dispersed in an inverted space. Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan calls it

"all-pervading light." We need to clearly distinguish between the all-pervading nature of light as we turn within and the radiant light. We find the same in the words of Ibn 'Arabi:

Remember that light is of two kinds: a light having no rays, and radiant light. As for the light that has no rays, it is the light within in which self-disclosure takes place. **Ibn 'Arabi**

I saw the robe of light altogether in me and I was altogether in it. (Corbin, 1978, 23) **Suhrawardi**

When you turn within, notice that you sense what seems to be a different kind of light to the light you perceive through your eyes. It could be illustrated by the light in a white hole in outer space which surfaces from subliminal levels of physical reality (that we ordinarily call the void) as a new-born star.

You will have noticed that the inner light does not radiate like a lamp for example, but is like a web where everything is intermeshed with everything else, like radio waves.

Originally the all-pervading light pulled itself together in a center. Then it shoots its ray, dividing itself as it proceeds towards manifestation. **Hazrat Inayat Kahn**

PRACTICE:

As you inhale, draw your attention to yourself absorbing light from the stars. Then hold your breath, turn within, concentrating and identifying with the all-pervading light. As you exhale, think that you are converting the all-pervading light into radiant light as your aura.

By concentrating on that light, you can be instrumental to making this all-pervading light manifest as radiant light. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Concentrating on this inner light will enable you to discover yourself rather than perceive the environmental world. Ibn 'Arabi calls this vision, to visualize, whereas perception is called witnessing.

It is its own light which shows it to us, and that light is its soul. (Akibat, Life after death) **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

I saw myself through the light which things carry in their essence – not through an extraneous light. **Najm ud-Din Razi** (cf. Corbin, The Man of Light)

GLANCE

3) Identify yourself with your glance.

After turning within, cast the inner light (all-pervading light) forward through your eyes.

As the sense of sight is situated in the head, it then perceives the light when it is turned within; the brain and the sight, so charged with the light from within, sees through life so deeply when turned on to the life without. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

When ambient light is stronger than the light of sight, man perceives it but he does not perceive through it. Hence unveiling only takes place through a light which is the light of sight. **[Ibn 'Arabi ?]**

4) Envision yourself as being a luminous mind. Entertain luminous thoughts. This requires one to purify emotions from resentment.

It is not good enough to envision light, one needs to cleanse one's psyche from its defilement owing to concupiscence, greed, resentment, guile. The key is to love people who make themselves difficult to love: clear the mirror of the soul by cleansing the mind with the light of the heavens.

The great obstacle to be overcome in meditation is the false ego or Nafs. For the light of the soul shines in the heart and is reflected in the mind. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

And through His self-disclosure in radiant light, He makes manifest the incapacity for the eyes and the power of the rational faculties, preferring them over the eyes. **Ibn 'Arabi**

The world of the unseen is perceived through the eyes of insight just as the world of the visible is perceived by sight. When these two lights come together, unseen things are unveiled as they are in themselves and as they are in existence. **Ibn 'Arabi**

STALKING LIGHT BEYOND MATTER

The more deeply we study matter, the more proofs shall we find of Intelligence working through the whole process of continual unfoldment. **Hazrat Inayat Khan** (Philosophy)

5) Discover a whole hierarchy of the higher frequencies of light in the many-tiered areas of your aura.

Reality appears as a virtuality that becomes an actuality in the existential condition. Light is a particularly important factor in our lives because it acts as a bridge between matter and, beyond our perception, the ineffable. It furnishes us with clues giving vent to the unknown, enabling us to decode the paradoxes regarding the higher spheres and life after life that so baffle us. Perhaps we could already start preparing for this right away, now. It would mean trying to stalk light as far as we can reach beyond its perceptual existential condition.

PRACTICE:

To reconnoiter the higher levels of your aura, in your meditation, try to stalk light as far as you can reach and even further beyond your perceptual outreach.

Then the light of dawn rises on the soul in such a way that that part of the paramount realities emanating from the constellations and the angels, who are their prototypes, predominates in it. **Najm ud-Din Razi**

Each time a light rises up from you, a light descends upon you. When the substance of light has grown in you, then it is the substance of the light in Heaven which yearns for you, is attracted by your light and it descends towards you. **Najm ud-Din Kubra**

Now transmute your aura itself beyond what one commonly understands as

physical light. Perhaps a clue to this world could be in representing to yourself higher frequencies of light, such as blue, then mauve, violet, then ultraviolet, and imagine that this continues beyond the visible range. Do not limit light to what you perceive.

Physicists never cease to be amazed by the paradoxical way in which light behaves when they try to track it down in laboratory experiments. They can only ascertain and measure what happens at the instant it interacts with their instruments, but light eschews giving any clues as to its behavior before, after or between the measurements. It seems a misnomer to call light matter, even though it is an electromagnetic phenomenon, because unlike any other form of matter, it does not have mass. It provides us with a useful model about the relationship between reality and actuality – the Universe and the cosmos. Reality escapes any efforts on our part to track it down beyond the existential, perceptual world we commonly know. This familiar world looks like the cross-section of a multiple, multi-dimensional and many-tiered Universe of which we only know what intersects it. We are baffled, stymied by the unknown, and ever wish to decipher the secret of the mysterious unknown that affects us in such uncanny ways when we stalk light beyond its physical appearance.

In its finer aspect the supreme Spirit is the light of intelligence, and in its dense aspect the radiance of all objects (Smiling Forehead)***. The expression of man's countenance is the light of intelligence in its dense form*** (Philosophy)**. Hazrat Inayat Khan**

THE HEAVENLY SPECTATOR

6) There is yet a further step: identify yourself with being a pure luminous intelligence and consider your aura is its infrastructure. Now envision luminous intelligence threaded through your glance.

The divine light has shone upon the mineral and vegetable kingdoms; and there too it has shown its phenomena, although its full radiance has been reached only in man. It can be seen in the developed intelligence. (Some aspects of Sufism)**. Hazrat Inayat Khan**

PRACTICE:

Now, rather than identifying yourself with your aura, you will identify yourself with the light of intelligence. Imagine that the physical substance of your body subtle body and aura is just an infrastructure to sustain an altogether different - non-physical kind of light - which the Sufis call the *Nur aqil*, the "light of intelligence."

The Sufis distinguish between the "light that sees" and the "light that is seen."

One direction is the light that sees, the other is the light that is seen, and the third is the light that shows all things (The Smiling Forehead)***.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Identify yourself with your intelligence that adumbrates your aura and subtle body and physical body that are infrastructures. This is what is meant by the "light upon a light" in the Qur'an Sharif. Identify with luminous intelligence – the witness in the heavens – and illuminate your eyes with that non-physical light.

God is the light of the heavens and the earth,
He is likened to a niche in which a lamp is burning.
This lamp is in a crystal,
Likened unto a starry pearl,
Which hails from a blessed tree,
An olive tree that neither is of the East or the West
Whose oil burns without even touching the fire.
It is a light upon a light.
Qur'an

Were it not for the light that belongs to the souls, there could be no witnessing, since witnessing only takes place when two lights come together (Chittick, 1989, 226)***. The object of vision which is the Real, is light, while that through which the perceiver perceives Him is light. Hence light becomes included in light. It is as it returns to the root from which it became manifest*** (Ibid. 215)***. As long as I am not a light, I cannot perceive anything of this knowledge*** (Ibid. 225)**. Ibn'Arabi**

7) Now envision luminous intelligence threaded through your glance. Represent

the divine glance as passing through your glance – Imagine God sees through your eyes.

PRACTICE:

The key to doing this is instead of thinking that you are the spectator, imagine that the real spectator who is looking through your eyes is God.

You thought that you were the Spectator, the witness of what you experience, but the real witness in you is your angelic counterpart – the witness in the Heavens. **Najm ud-Din Kubra** (cf Corbin, 1978, 73)

If you want to find Him you will find Him in the higher intelligence. When intelligence manifests itself on the surface, that is God (In an Eastern Rose Garden)***.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The secret of realizing oneself as the light of intelligence is to overcome one's conviction that one's consciousness is the witness. If you identify with the light of intelligence, you can envision your glance as that of the divine glance, of which it is a focalization; then you will understand the Qur'an. Everywhere you look you will espy the Divine countenance trying to transpire through that which appears.

You are as the reflected eye of the Unseen Person. In that eye, His eye sees His own eye. **Shabistari**

8) Realize that your glance is the divine glance but focalized as through a concave lens.

It is in the intelligence of an individual; but the collective working of many minds as one single idea, and the activity of the whole world in a certain direction, are governed by the intelligence of the planet (Philosophy)***.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

When you look for God, God is in the look in your eyes. **Jami**

When we look at the all-pervading intelligence as centralized intelligence we call

it God, because it begins with centralizing; from this point manifestation begins. For manifestation there must first be centralization (Vision of God and Man)***. The Omnipotent Light by this tendency becomes concentrated.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

It is intelligence when there is nothing before it to be conscious of, when there is something intelligible before it the same intelligence becomes consciousness. Intelligence confined to knowledge becomes limited, but when it is free from all knowledge then it experiences its own essence. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The pure consciousness has so to speak gradually limited itself more and more by entering into the external vehicles, such as the mind and the body, in order to be conscious of something. Consciousness must always be conscious of something; if it is not conscious of anything, it is Intelligence. Intelligence confined to phenomena becomes limited but when it is free from all knowledge then it experiences its own essence (Manifestation)***.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

This is awakening or illumination: Suddenly everything becomes clear.

This light becomes a torch for the seer who is journeying towards the eternal goal. Wherever the light of pure intelligence is thrown, things become clear. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Doing this practice, you will find that your glance unveils the Real from the appearance we call reality.

There comes a time in the life of the prophet or of anyone who contemplates, when whatever object he casts his glance upon opens up and reveals to him what it has in its heart (Sufi Poetry)***.*** **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

9) According to the Sufis, God discovers His potential being through your personality. Furthermore His potential being becomes a personality through your personality and through the configuration of your countenance. This becomes revealed to you if you reverse your vantage point and try to see as God sees – represent your glance as the Divine glance.

When I looked with God's eyes, only God I saw. **Baba Kuhi** (cf 1975, 59)

Be the One who looks at me, and hide Thyself from my glance. **Ibn 'Arabi** (A metaphysical oration, cf Etudes Traditionelles)

Through Thine own eyes, may I look at Thy countenance! **Ibn 'Arabi**

I contemplate Thee through Thy glance. **Ibn 'Arabi**

I see God through the same gaze through which God sees me. **Ibn 'Arabi**

When God discloses Himself…He discloses Himself to the manifest dimension of the soul and perception takes place through sensation in a form within the barzekh (threshold) of imagination. Self-disclosure also occurs through the name manifest (Zahir) to the non-manifest dimension of the soul. Then perception takes place through insight (Basira) in the world of realities and meanings disengaged from substrata…This only takes place within the meanings. **Ibn 'Arabi**

Just stop to ponder upon the miracle whereby your thoughts or emotions configure the muscles of your face; more so, fashion the fabric of light of your aura into your countenance that transpires through your face.

10) According to the Sufis, God gains knowledge of Him/Herself through your knowledge of Him/Her manifesting in and as your mind.

As in order to make the eyes see themselves, one has to borrow a mirror to see the reflection of these eyes, so in order to make the real being manifest, God uses a mirror…Your soul is just like a mirror which shows the object reflected in it instead of its own existence. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

God speaking: "I created perception in thee only that therein I might become the object of my perception." I**bn 'Arabi** (cf Corbin, 1969, 174, The book of Epiphanies, tr. Osman Yahia)

O Thou whose picture confers splendor to the mirror.
Nobody has ever seen a mirror without Thy portrait,

No, no because thanks to Thy grace in all mirrors,
It is Thou Who appeareth, not Thy portrait. **Jami** (1982, 143)

For in all that which is beautiful is intelligence. (Social Gathekas) **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

He is a mirror within which He sees His own form. **Ibn 'Arabi** (Futuhat II 326, 28 Ch 297)

My image looks at me with my glance. I look at it with its glance. **Majriti, Ghayat al Hakim** (cf Corbin, The Man of Light, 17)

11) Try to distinguish the way the intelligence of the universe (God) gets formulated in your thinking and the way that your thinking contributes towards the thinking of the universe.

The guidance from the outer knowledge and the guidance from the inner intelligence are both necessary. If the inner light were enough, then man would never have been created; he would have been an angel. **Hazrat Inayat Khan** (class for murids)

The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contain God according to the accommodation. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them. **Ibn 'Arabi**

Wisdom is born out of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the

experience of the Divine mind. **Hazrat Inayat Khan** (Unity of Religious Ideals)

12) God's potential being becomes an existential reality through your envisioning His/Her being as the archetype of which you are the exemplar.

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through his manifestation.

Wisdom is the result of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

When the blazing light lasts long, it obliterates the form – the figures are taken away and the individual visitation is effaced. At that point one understands that what is effaced is giving way to a higher order. **Suhrwardi** (cf Corbin, 1977, 124)

SCRUTINIZING GLANCE

PRACTICE:

Look up first and when your eyes are once charged with Divine light, then when you cast your glance on the world of facts you will have a much clearer vision, the vision of reality…when His glance meets their glance. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The glances do not reach Him; he reaches the glances. **Qur'an** (6: 103)

A personal remark: I remember as a child my sister Noor saying to me: "Have you seen Abbah's eyes today?" We stood at the door of the oriental room. As he opened the door, his eyes were like two suns.

PRACTICE:

Practice looking at a flower, then at a person, and instead of focussing on the petals or the features of the face, concentrate on the countenance transpiring through the face.

The sign of that awakening is that upon every person and upon every object the awakened person throws a light, a light of his soul, and sees that object, that

condition, in that light. It is his own soul that becomes a torch in his hand. It is his own light that illuminates his path. It is just like throwing a searchlight upon dark corners which one did not see before, and the corners become clear and illuminated again. It is like throwing light upon problems that one did not understand at first. It is like seeing with x-rays persons who were a riddle before. One whose every glance, wherever it is cast, invites them to reveal to him their secret. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The glance of a sage has the power to open every object and to see through it; in reality it is the light which the sage throws out from within that makes the same things clear to his vision which are only half seen by the ordinary man. Then a person begins to communicate with all things and all beings. Wherever his glance falls, on nature, on characters, he reads their history, he sees their future. Every person he meets, before he has spoken one word with him, he begins to communicate with his soul. Before he has asked any question, the soul begins to tell its own history. Every person and every object stand before him as an open book. The will power works through the glance…and when this light is thrown within one's self, then the self will be revealed to a person; he will become enlightened as to his own nature and his own character. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

One might add: "He also sees His own countenance."

COMMUNICATIONS WITH BEYOND

You see and discern nothing whatsoever except by something that is its like (or which is a part of it): the precious stone sees only the mine from which it originated, it yearns and is homesick for that alone. Therefore when you envision a heaven, an earth, a sun, or stars, or a moon, know that this is because the particle in you which comes from that mine has become pure. **Najm ud-Din Kubra** (Corbin, 1975, 71)

Amongst these forms, you will recognize your own likeness. **Ibn 'Arabi**

I go towards my likeness, and my likeness goes towards me. He embraces me and draws me close as if I had come out of prison. **An anonymous Mazdean**

magus (Corbin, 1977, 103)

This high initiate had discovered his celestial counterpart. I realize that it requires a tremendous challenge to one's ordinary sense of identity to recognize a likeness between one's representation of oneself, myself, and one's celestial counterpart. However, this quantum leap may be triggered off by imagining that one's aura is not confined to its physical light, but includes higher levels of light.

When you envision a heaven, an earth, a sun or stars, or a moon, know that this is because the particle in you which comes from that mine has become pure. **Najm ud-Din Kubra**

The next world is the same as this, and this world is the same as the next. Only that which is veiled from our eyes, we call the unseen world. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Since our minds tend to represent the abstract in a concrete image, we imagine the angel in a perceptual form resembling familiar though outstanding faces.

A relation or a friend may appear and tell him something about the other side of life…One may see faces never seen before that have once existed in the world…a saint or sage may appear who may guide him further. An angel may appear as Gabriel did to Moses…As highly evolved a person is, so high is the vision. Sometimes the object of his vision wishes to manifest to him; sometimes he creates the object of his vision before him. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

The experience of authentic raptures in the world of Hurkalya (the heavens of the "World of the Image") depends on the magnificent prince, Hurakhsh…There are also visitations and communications from other princes. Sometimes the visitation consists of the manifestation of certain of these celestial princes in epiphanic forms or places appropriate to the moment…Sometimes it is the souls of the past which induce an awakening or an inner call. Sometimes the apparition takes on a human form (Corbin, 1977, 123)***…They see human forms of extreme beauty who speak to them in the most beautiful words*** (Ibid 132)***.*** **Shihab ud-Din Suhrawardi**

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

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LESSON 7

FASHIONING OUR PERSONALITY

Do you have a taste for creativity? It gives a wonderful sense of fulfillment without which one may ask oneself what is the purpose of my life.

The art of personality is the purpose for which man was created. For other arts cannot be compared with the art of personality. **(Art of Personality.)**

One may ask: If we have a personality, why must we develop it? But even a diamond must be cut! It has light in it yet cutting is required to awaken it. It cannot show its glow and brilliancy before it has been cut. It is the same with the personality. **(Privilege of Being Human.)**

Rather than trying in one's meditations to assess one's circumstances or figure out one's problems, Hazrat Inayat Khan recommends working with the self. This will in turn throw new light on one's situation in life.

Man himself is the object of his realization. And by the study of human nature one realizes the nature of life in general. **(Unity of Religious Ideals.)**

What an opportunity those few years on the planet offer to fulfill our purpose! To achieve? Yes, being of service, even in a small way as a cog in a wheel of that humungous machine that our civilization has constructed! But even if that is our objective, the richness of our personality will make us more effective.

The saints and sages, who have been gifted with insight, often commune with God and through their inner heart-development have been able to achieve God's purpose in this world. **(Githa 2.)**

It is of course exciting to enjoy the marvel of life and live it intensely. But what

do we do with it? We have a palate of colours; do we make a painting of it?

PRACTICE: **(I am paraphrasing Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's words)**

Instead of just regurgitating your assessment of your problems, ask yourself how all you see affects you and how you react to it.

First, how does your spirit react to the objects or the conditions you encounter, to the sounds you hear, to the words people speak to you?

Secondly, see what effect you yourself have on conditions and on others when you come in contact with them.

Thirdly, observe the condition of your spirit, of your mind, of your body, of your situation in life, and of your relationship with others.

Fourthly, analyze yourself and see where does "I" stand? Does it stand as a remote exclusive being?

In your meditation, concentrate on the change of identification of your soul. Loose your false self and identify yourself with your true self.

***…As your soul goes further on the path of knowledge, you will notice that it begins to recognize the feeling of 'I-ness' and see how it identifies with what is not itself*. (The Soul Whence and Whither.) *The soul changes its own identity with the change of its constantly changing vision.* (Spiritual Liberty, p 227.)**

To be part of what it is all about, we need to find our place (and even play our part) in the advancing march of evolution which itself is trying to blossom as our being, while on the other hand, the perfecting of our being contributes to that very advance of the cosmic evolution.

PRACTICE: **(my paraphrasing of Pir o Murshid's words continues)**

Try to discover a kind of universe in yourself. You will find that by the study of yourself, you will come to that spiritual knowledge for which your soul hungers. You will find that all is in oneself, and that you can cultivate in yourself what you

wish. As soon as you begin to look within yourself a world opens to you for it is not a little plot of ground that you have to cultivate; but you have the opportunity to make a whole world of yourself, and to make a world is a sufficient occupation to live for. (Philosophy.)

SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

While traditional spiritual transmissions from the East in pursuit of Samadhi have often led to what psychotherapists have coined the "spiritual bypass," overlooking one's own idiosyncrasies Hazrat Inayat Khan announces the spirituality of the future: rather than a belief in God, making God a reality by incorporating more and more of the bounty of the universe in that wonderful work of art that is the personality.

PRACTICE:

Be cautious that while working with your personality, you keep being aware of the action of the Universe (God) upon the formative process of your personality rather than slipping back into your personal identity.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way by regaining its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world.

To arouse our potentials lying in wait in the seed of our personality, we need to learn the skill of contemplating our personality from the antipodal vantage point, which the Sufis call the divine point of view. The realization arrived at by making this shift in perspective contrasts with the knowledge acquired by the personal vantage point (acquired knowledge); it is revealed when having seen that one's personal vantage point is limited. One invites the thinking of the universe (which albeit adumbrates one's thinking) to take over from one's personal thinking.

This calls for a complete reexamination of our concept of God as "up there." We need to strongly and realistically discover in ourselves God as a potentiality that becomes an actuality as us.

God is hidden in His creation. The soul may be considered to be a condition of God, like a wave is a condition of the sea… a condition which makes the only Being limited for a time. It is in man that divinity is awakened, that God is awakened, that God can be seen….

Ibn 'Arabi:

Then you make Him manifest in His creation.

Al Jili:

O Thou who art absent there, we have found Thee here.

Thou art non-existent in Thy Essence, existent in Thy person. **(1983, p 5.)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

As God comprehends the whole universe within Himself, being one, so man contains within himself the whole universe as His miniature. **(Akibat: Life after Death.)** ***… Man is born in this world ignorant of the kingdom which is within himself.*** **(Power of the Word.)**

Admittedly, the word God embodies anthropomorphic projections.

Ibn 'Arabi:

Since we know Him by ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we attribute to ourselves. To Him we attribute no quality without ourselves having that quality, nor Him.

Owing to the widespread influence of Buddhism in our time, the word Universe, often used by Hazrat Inayat Khan, is more acceptable to some.

To many the thought of a personal God does not appeal, though they might accept the idea of an abstract God. But they forget that something abstract cannot be a living being… Let them call God by any name, or think of Him with whatever imagination they have: it is after all the highest ideal. ...Urging upon

someone that God is abstract and formless and pure, and that God is nameless, all these things do not help that person to evolve; for the first step on the path of God is to make a conception of God….Then awaken the God within by making God a reality.

However as he points out,

There is no way of getting proof of God's existence except by becoming acquainted with oneself, by experiencing the phenomena which are within one. **(Mind World p 265.)*…Very often, many who are ready to accept the God-Ideal question the personality of God. Some say: "If all is God, then God is not a person, for 'all' is not a person: 'all' is what is expressed by the word all."… No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the Personality of God.***

However, although he points to the aspect of God actuated in existence, and by the same token in ourselves, Hazrat Inayat Khan does not limit God to that dimension.

God is beneath all, within and without all things. It is owing to our limitation that we cannot see the whole Being of God.

…but all that we love in color, line and form, or personality - all that is beloved by us - belongs to the real Beauty who is the Beloved of all. **(Music.)**

PRACTICE:

While envisioning your personality as an advanced condition of the cosmos, the way by means of which God (the Universe) becomes a personality, still leave room for the transcendent dimension of God as "beyond the beyond" – as "other."

Hallaj:

O consciousness of my consciousness so subtle that it escapes the imagination of all living beings. **(cf. Massignon, vol. lll, 1975, 56.)** ***How can contingent creatures who have alienated themselves from Him by the abyss of***

time, try to prove the Creator by His works. **(cf. Diwan Q viii.)**

Ibn 'Arabi:

So He knew Himself through witnessing in the manifest. But He knows that He could not be known in respect of His transcendence (Huwiyyah) – in respect that He knows Himself in the principle of His Being. **(cf. Chittick, 1989, 131-2.)**

YOUR PERSONALITY AS PLANT; POTENTIALITY AS SEED

Hazrat Inayat Khan illustrates the relationship between man and God with that of the plant and the seed.

Is not man the seed of God? Is it then not his life's purpose to bring forth divine blossoms? In the heart of the flower there is something that tells the story of the whole plant….The key to spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the Perfect One who is formed in one's heart. God is hidden within His creation… Awaken the God within.

PRACTICE:

Instead of just identifying yourself with your self-image try to envision your personality as a plant and imagine that it is the unfurling of its seed which is buried in your unconscious, but tries to become known by manifesting itself as your personality.

The seed represents a dimension of God as a potentiality becoming a reality in God in His/Her existential condition.

While Hazrat Inayat Khan places so much emphasis on the development of the human personality - that is the plant, the flowers:

The fulfillment of the purpose of that seed is that it is put in the ground, that it is watered, that a seedling springs up and is reared by the sun; it brings forth its flowers and fruits. This is the fulfillment of that seed which already contained in itself the fruit and flower. A person who does not see the reason of all this, is in the seed state; his mind is in the state of a seed which has not yet germinated,

which has not yet produced its seedling, which has not yet experienced the springing of the plant.

- he still draws our attention to the seed. Therefore, while fashioning our personality, we need to be cautioned against the tendency to slip back into our personal vantage point and identity.

On the other hand, it is the discovery of God as the seed of our being that will spark the unfurling of that plant that is our personality….One might say that it is for the sake of the flower that the plant was purposed, but really speaking, it is the seed which comes in the heart of the flower which continues the race of the plant, which is the source and goal of the plant….One can see that in the essence of the seed of the rose there is the rose itself, its fragrance, form and beauty. Although in the seed it is not manifest, at the same time it is there in essence. The one who tunes himself not only to the external but also to the inner being and to the essence of all things, gets an insight into the essence of the Whole Being, and therefore he can find and enjoy that fragrance and flower which he sees in the rose, to the same extent even in the seed. **(Mysticism of Sound.)**

Yet Hazrat Inayat Khan sees both as complementary.

The effect is in the cause and the cause is in the effect, as the flower is the outcome of the seed and the seed is in the heart of the flower. It is difficult to decide whether to name the flower "seed" or to call the seed "flower." **(Sangitha 1.)**

PRACTICE:

Try to reconnoiter, identify with, the bounty lying in the root of your personality rather than simply identifying with your personality (which one erroneously confuses with one's self image).

The stem sprung up first, then the leaves, then came the flower, and from the flower came the seed….The final purpose is to bring about that seed which is the source of this whole manifestation. **(Smiling Forehead.)…*The same God so***

little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again in the pursuit of perfection trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of the human condition.

Man may be called the seed of the whole existence. As the seed comes last, after the life of trunk, branch, fruit and flower. And, as the seed is sufficient in itself and capable of producing another plant, such as that of which it was but a small product, so man is the product of all the planes, spiritual and material, a being small in comparison with the mountains and rivers and seas, or even in comparison with many beasts and birds, and yet in him alone that shines forth which caused the whole – that primal intelligence, the seed of existence – God. Therefore is man termed Ashraf-ul-Makhluqat, the Ideal of the Universe. **(Sangathas I)**

Avicenna:

He began with the noblest thing: intelligence and He concluded with the noblest beings: the intelligent. **(Arberry, Avicenna on Theology, John Murray, 1951, p 50.)**

Furthermore Hazrat Inayat Khan sees a level in the programming of the universe beyond the seed – the cosmic code: the initiating divine intention:

On the other hand, we cannot really compare even the seed with the source. The ultimate source does not depend upon anything. **(Mental Purification.)**

PRACTICE:

Can you imagine that the very code of the cosmos not only embodied in your genes but the seed of your personality is simply the program that enlists the divine intention that escapes and defies our reason.

YOU DISCOVER YOURSELF THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE GOD HAS OF HIM/HERSELF THROUGH YOU

The soul has in it a potentiality, a creative power as its divine heritage. On the one side man is limited and imperfect; on the other side he represents the

unlimited and perfect. **(Alchemy of Happiness.)…*God is 'all possible.'***

Ibn 'Arabi:

He brings them out from the treasuries which are with Him; that is from an existence which we do not perceive to an existence which we do perceive.

For the Sufis we discover ourselves by discovering how God discovers Himself by manifesting to Himself, and by the same token disclosing to us the eternal principles of His being in the idiosyncrasies of our evanescent personality.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through our imperfection.

This knowledge cannot be acquired, but is revealed.

Al Hallaj:

***No one knows Him except the one to whom He makes Himself known*.**
(Massignon, vol. III, 1975, 72.)

Ibn 'Arabi:

God describes Himself to us through ourselves.

No one knows what is within himself until it is unveiled to him instant by instant.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The intelligence knows, not because it has learned. It knows because it knows. This is the reason of all reasons, the cause of all causes, beyond man's limited reason….Reason cannot be broken except by a still greater reason. **(The Way of Illumination.)** ***If anywhere there is a trace of God to be found, it is in the intelligence.*** **(Social Gathekas.)**

These are not unrelated points of view; rather they are interdependent. One might illustrate their relationship, albeit inadequately, by the relation there would be between a three dimensional panoramic view (the cosmic dimension) and a two dimensional snapshot. But this does not suffice. It is also like the relation between the code and its existential configuration, or the archetype and the exemplar.

Besides, Hazrat Inayat Khan recommends extrapolating between contemplating the plant (our personality) and the seed of that plant (the cosmic code); that is, extrapolating between the divine point of view and the human.

Wisdom is born of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom.

To be continued in the next installment.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

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LESSON 8

FASHIONING THE SELF

Note: For the sake of the coherence in the sequence of steps in this lesson it will be helpful if, occasionally, a few texts of Hazrat Inayat Khan are repeated in a new context.

Our objective in this course of studies illuminated by Hazrat Pir o Murshid's insight and practical instructions is to crown our person with the cosmic and transcendent investiture with which we are bequeathed by discovering it and unfurling it.

As one's awareness increases, one encounters an imperative need to find fulfillment and meaningfulness in one's life.

By the study of human nature, one realizes the nature of life in general. **(Unity of Religious Ideals.)**

PRACTICE:

1) Ponder upon your life and ask yourself what you would like to achieve and why.

2) Now consider your person (which we are used to calling our 'self') as an ephemeral, evanescent, ever-changing, ever-renewed, many-tiered construct – a continuity in change – a formation within the totality of the cosmos like a vortex, or whirlpool without boundary, powered by the self-same force that moves the stars and the galaxies (spurring your will), and piloted by your intelligence which overarches the transcendent levels of that construct (which you are) that enlists the code of the universe customized as your intention.

Like a musical composition, you can make it what you will, depending upon your sense of values, your insight or wisdom, and your attunement. Albeit, you are not only the composition, but the composer and even the instruments that play it (your body, your heart, your personality).

PRACTICE:

Ask yourself what are the values that you appraise and would like to pursue in your life. Make a priority list; you could redefine it as you progress.

As we have seen in the preceding lesson, Lesson 7, Hazrat Inayat Khan orients spirituality into concrete, practical activities: translating our ineffable musings about the purpose of life or belief in God into the fashioning of our self by working with the person.

There is no way of getting proof of God's existence except by becoming acquainted with oneself. **(Mind World p. 265.)** ***If you dive deep within yourself, you will discover a universe in yourself.*** **(The Vision of Man in God.)** ***…that perfection lies in realizing the universe in man, he can touch the depths where he is united with the whole of life.*** **(Gatheka)**

PRACTICE:

Acquiesce to the fact that if you treasure these values, it is because they are latent in your true nature and are beckoning upon you to pursue them in order to discover and actuate your potentials.

Discovering yourself (or rather how you could be) is creative unlike regurgitating your problems. Avoid this. It is counterproductive. The reason is that our assessment is biased by the fact that our consciousness is a limited focalization of the consciousness of the whole universe.

The pure consciousness has so to speak gradually limited itself more and more by entering into the external vehicles, such as the mind and the body, in order to be conscious of something. **(Akibat)**

The caution spelled by the Hindu theory of *maya* only points out that things are

not what they seem:

There comes a time when all that he had accepted in his mind, all that he believed, appears to be quite the contrary to what it was before.

PRACTICE:

Keep in mind that your objective is to 'awaken' – that means to downplay a perspective and highlight another which you had not heretofore considered and now dawns upon you with greater pertinence.

However the Sufis draw attention to the complementary view: that they serve as clues as to what is enacted behind the facts.

Jami:

***The world is an illusion but eternally reality manifests through it.* (1982, 125).**

This is based upon a *surat* in the Qur'an:

God reveals Himself through signs (ayat) in the physical world and also in your nature (psyche).

Paradoxically, to grasp these tenuous revelations, one needs to reverse the overt orientation of one's consciousness and turn within. Therefore I suggest following the lead of your previous assessment, but not taking it to be ultimate, just as if you follow the pug-marks of a bear in the snow, you might find the bear. The Sufis call this *tawil.*

There are some realities of which I am vaguely aware; compared with them all I have studied and done seems to be of no account.

Consequently, rather than reckoning upon your assessment of your problems, turn within to detect how they are related to qualities or defects or incongruities in your own being.

You are yourself the object of your realization.

INCLUDE ALL THE LEVELS OF THE RANGE OF YOUR BEING

As we have seen, consciousness operating in the human being is limited, and therefore deceptive, yet a transpersonal consciousness adumbrates it. We need to marshal all the levels of our being (as far as we can encompass these) by stretching our minds beyond its middle-range.

We occupy as much horizon as we are conscious of.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.…When man lives this limitation, he does not know that another part of him exists which is much higher, more wonderful, more living, and more exalted.

The outlook becomes wide, as wide as the divine eye. **(The Soul Whence and Whither)**

Consequently we need to complement the personal vantage point by the antipodal pole of our consciousness. This beckons upon us to call upon the notion of God as the transpersonal pole of our being.

It is not self knowledge that leads to God knowledge, it is God knowledge that leads to self knowledge.

PRACTICE:

Rather than imagining God as "other" and "up there," could you try to represent to yourself that your being extends between two poles: (i) your individual self which is, as we have seen, an evanescent construct in which the totality of the universe is converged, and (ii) the higher dimension of your being, coextensive with all beings, which is, as Hazrat Inayat Khan says, a "condition" of what you mean by God.

Now in assessing your problems and scanning yourself, you will be overarching your personal vantage point with a paramount vantage point, observing yourself as though the universe were discovering itself as you. What a difference it makes!

Ibn 'Arabi says:

God created perception in you only that therein He might become the object of His perception. **(Corbin, 1970, 174)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind. Not knowing that God experiences this life through us, one is seeking for Him somewhere else. **(Unity of Religious Ideals)**

Our mind becomes saturated with impressions from the physical and psychological environment that can aver themselves obsessive.

The more the mind is allowed to go on without a purpose, the more likely it is to become a vehicle or machine which all manner of influences around it of other beings will employ instead of its owner. **(Eastern Rose Garden)**

Through meditation, one can take control of one's thought by training the mind.

Concentration is activity of the mind in the direction desired. Train your mind. Control your thoughts and then use them for your benefit. Create a thought, hold it. Learn to expel it. Check every thought, every word, every act that you do not wish to occur. Ask yourself what was I thinking? Why was I thinking it? Why think of things that do not matter?

How do we achieve this? Hazrat Inayat Khan gives a clue:

We can go out of our thoughts, ideas, feelings just as a cobra sheds its skin. **(Mental Purification)**

PRACTICE:

Try to pull yourself out of your thoughts. This requires one to not be attached to their emotional charge.

This requires something else than mastery, a non-emotion: detachment. It is a

great secret – immunity. It is a matter of freeing oneself from the emotional charge behind a compulsive thought. This ability can be discovered. Somehow we are pulled between our need for the sense of fulfillment that results from the enrichment gained through our involvement with people, with life, by accomplishment; and on the other hand we have a nostalgia for freedom from the constraint that ensues and generally from conditioning. Hazrat Inayat Khan illustrates our ability to free ourselves emotionally by the mirror.

If you find freedom in yourself, you will find that your soul is just like a mirror which shows that object reflected in it instead of its own existence. **(Supplementary Papers/Philosophy/Illusion and Reality.)** ***If you turn the mirror the reflections are gone. All life's joy and sorrow, ups and downs, are reflected for the time being upon the curtain of the soul, and after the mirror has turned, the picture has disappeared.*** **(Spiritual Liberty, Aqibat, Life after Death/ The Philosophy of the Soul)**

The attunement of the ascetic in the middle of life will alleviate a lot of suffering. However, Hazrat Inayat Khan suggests that rather than lamenting, we harness impressions as catalysts for our personal creativity. Impressions seep deep in the unconscious where they can be processed and find a resolution in our personal creativity. Turning the mirror illustrates the ability to free yourself from the emotional impact from outside.

PRACTICE:

Envision your consciousness as a mirror which, when turned towards the environment is receptive to impressions and reflects them in the environment (i.e., your actions reflect your impressions). Now imagine that you turn the mirror inside.

As the Sufi closes the door through which the soul is accustomed to look out, it turns its back to the external world and sees within. **(Esoteric Papers)**

Now Hazrat Inayat Khan presents the next paradigms: the photographic plate, and a yet further one, the seed.

One needs to choose between those impressions from which one wishes to free oneself and those that enrich one's being and make these indelible.

Our mind is a receptacle to all to which it is exposed. It is like a photographic plate. Its first impression is on the surface and as the impression is retained in the mind, so it reaches the depth of the heart.

Now the further paradigm:

***But the photographic plate is not creative… A soul not only takes an impression like a photographic plate, but it becomes nurtured by it*. (The Soul, Whence and Whither? Towards Manifestation.) *A reflection on a photographic plate remains, but does not live; the reflection upon the mind lives, and therefore it is creative.* (Healing and the Mind World, The Mind World)**

THE SECRET OF CREATIVITY

But self-observation, *jhana darshana* in Sanskrit, while being the first step is not sufficient. One needs to work with the self creatively.

PRACTICE:

Instead of observing who you are, project how you could be. That is: enlist the pull of the future instead of the push of the past. Turning within, try to espy and capture the fountainhead of the new qualities that are knocking at the door as they spark renewed inspiration upon emerging through the threshold between the unconscious and the conscious.

Acquiesce that you carry within yourself the same creative power that configures the cosmos:

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created. **(Religious Gatheka)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan sees this creative power as bequeathed.

The soul has in it a potentiality – a creative power as its heritage. **(Alchemy of**

Happiness)

This power is delegated.

In the person who participates actively in his own creativity, God can attain a greater perfection. **(Religious Gatheka, p 43.)** ***As the whole of nature is made by God, so the nature of each individual is made by himself.*** **(Social Gatheka, p 4)**

PRACTICE:

Instead of the old-fashioned view that you are created by God without your intervention or contribution, consider yourself as the artist of your self; you can place into that work of art that is your person whatever you wish.

Hazrat Inayat Khan considers our personality as the finishing touch in the creativity of the self.

In the making of our personality, it is God who completes His divine art. **(The Art of Personality)**

PRACTICE:

The way to understand this is to imagine that you are studying composition and given the task of improvising variations on a theme given to you. You have a lot of leeway to bring out potentials latent in the theme, and therefore must not forget the theme.

Think that the theme of which your personality is a variation is the personality which one endeavors to imagine to be the personality of God.

Hazrat Inayat Khan underscores that dimension of God that is His/Her personality.

People ask: "if all is God, then God is not a person." No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God. **(Unity of Religious Ideals, The God Ideal)**

He illustrates it thus:

Though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the flower already existed in the seed. **(Ibid.)**

In the perfecting of our personality, the personality of God is actuated.

Man, in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God.

It is in the God-conscious that God becomes a reality so that He is no more an imagination; it brings to the world a living God. **(Unity of Religious Ideals, The Personality of God.)** ***It is in man that God is awakened. God is hidden in His creation; awaken the God within.***

To perfect our fashioning of our self, we need to bring into account our ability to endeavor to imagine God as the perfecting of one's self.

On one hand, man is limited and imperfect; on the other side he represents the unlimited and perfect. **(Alchemy of Happiness)**

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LESSON 9

CREATIVITY: HOW DOES ONE PROCEED?

WORKING WITH THE BODY: *NASUTIYA*

Can the findings of the meditators of the perennial esoteric schools who have stalked by their explorations the cosmic code - stretching the human mind beyond its middle range in its ubiquitous, enigmatic no-man's land - help us to discover who we are, or rather who we are becoming?

When one starts to meditate without knowing how to meditate, while regurgitating impressions from the environment and particularly one's circumstances, one remains conscious of one's body and the physical environment such as one commonly conceives them to be. At this level, one thinks in terms of categories and causality. Tibetans call it the gross mind. For each level of identity a mode of thinking corresponds.

Hearken! The fulfillment of our life's purpose hangs precariously upon our vulnerable self-esteem, which in turn is tentatively balanced upon our self-image which is frankly unreliable and specious.

Applying the doctrine of *maya* will lead us to dismissing our representation of the physical environment and our body, also our mental ponderings, as deceptive. This can lead to a trance condition to the extent that we might claim to have had an experience of *Samadhi*, and will inevitably lead to the flaw of other-wordliness - the spiritual by-pass, eschewing to take responsibility for human conditions - for which some psychotherapists accuse spiritualists.

PRACTICE:

Survey your life from what one may call a bird's eye view and ask yourself what

is it all about.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world. …True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to Earth and has realized there its spiritual being. **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

PRACTICE:

Now imagine that, indeed the whole universe has been funneled down as me. So to know myself, that is 'who I am (and am becoming) in all its dimensionality,' I will need to infer the wider and loftier dimensions of my being which I might call the archetype of my being from that exemplar of that archetype with which I identify as my self-image.

Let us at this point recall points of view expressed by Hazrat Inayat Khan in the previous lesson (Lesson Eight):

There is no way of getting proof of the existence of God except by becoming acquainted with oneself….One finds a kind of universe in oneself….If man dived deeply enough within himself, he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life.

Ibn 'Arabi:

All that we know of Him is through ourselves….Since we know Him by ourselves and from ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we attribute to ourselves. **(1975, p. 16.)** ***Thus you know him from your knowledge of yourself*** **(cf. Chittick, 1988, p. 290)*… Since the ephemeral being manifests the form of the eternal, it is by the contemplation of the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself.*** **(1975, p. 15)**

For clarity, we need to distinguish between the state in which: (i) consciousness being oriented in the transcendent dimension loses contact with the physical plane (including the body) and even the memory of it; and (ii) consciousness

oriented inwards loses the perspective of the physical environment including the memory of it.

(i) TRANSCENDENTAL

While seeking one's transcendental dimension, to avoid the flaw of 'otherworldliness,' Hazrat Inayat Khan emphasizes the importance of maintaining an awareness of one's bodiness, albeit in its relationship with the investment of consciousness in matter which means in nature and in our body, and furthermore in its relationship with the subtle bodies.

PRACTICE:

When we first try to meditate, we tend to turn our attention away from the physical world. But our body and mind carry clues as to who we are. Of course it is difficult to maintain, somehow, the recollection of the physical environment while reaching into the software of which it is the hardware. But it is essential to do so.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

There is a gradual awakening of matter to become conscious. Through the awakening of matter to increased consciousness, matter becomes fully intelligent in man. In matter life unfolds, discovers and awakens the consciousness that has been, so to speak, buried in it for thousands of years. **(The Smiling Forehead.)** ***The more deeply we study matter, the more proofs shall we find of intelligence working through the whole process of continual unfoldment…It is the dense form of the intelligence which is light.*** **(Smiling Forehead.)** ***In its finer aspect it is the light of intelligence.*** **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

Intelligence becomes known to itself when there is something intelligible. Therefore the Knower had to manifest Himself, thus becoming an object to be known.

Hazrat Inayat Khan even proposes how one can do this:

In one's spiritual practices one awakens dormant faculties in one's body that reciprocate functions in the higher spheres, which one does not generally use.

More specifically by concentrating on the chakras, which correspond to the plexi of the autonomic nervous system, that is, by arousing the intelligence embedded in the centers, one enhances their activity which otherwise would remain dormant

PRACTICE:

If you concentrate on your solar plexus, envisioning it as a gate into the inner dimension of your being, you will develop intuition.

With closed eyelids, turn your eyes upwards as you inhale.

Then as you exhale, open your eyes and turn them forward.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Place a blind in front of the mirror; consciousness will turn within. To turn within, the Sufi closes the door through which the soul is accustomed to look out, and as it finds the doors of its experience closed, a time comes when it turns its back to the external world. **(private papers)**

The same reality can look different according to the vantage point from which you look at it. There are two awakenings: man awakening in the Divine perspective and God awakening in the human perspective.

PRACTICE:

While practicing the *dhikr*, you will notice the same shift as previously described between turning within in the *'illa'* and reaching out in the *'llah.'* Furthermore, notice the shift from the 'h' of the word *Allah* with eyes turned upwards to the *'hu'* concentrating on the heart. If you concentrate on your heart chakra, you will awaken resonance with the emotional attunement of people, of nature. This represents a deeper sense of meaningfulness than the intellect.

By the practice of the dhikr (Remembrance of God), the Sufis arouse certain centers operating the way the mind affects the body that otherwise would remain dormant….We pass to the higher planes of existence in the lift by means of the breath, and hold to the rope, the physical body, and come back to the first floor. **(Spiritual Liberty)**

The consequence is that we never consider our body objectively as 'other' (as in the first Buddhist *Satipathana* practice, or in Yoga), but recognize the impact of our intelligence and indeed our personality upon the configuration of our body. Indeed when identifying our consciousness in its personal dimension, one may, with practice, envision the body as 'other.' But if one were to envision the body from a 'bird's eye view,' that is by envisioning that the whole Universe (God) is looking through one's eyes (which is actually what the fourth *Satipathana* is about - without mentioning God or the Universe), then one clearly sees the impact of intelligence upon matter, most particularly, one's body. (Buddha describes this in the first *Jhana*.)

The Sufis are always envisioning how things would look from the antipodal point of view to the personal vantage point:

PRACTICE:

This is the key: in addition to extending your sense of identity, try to identify the spectator in you - the perceiving and knowing subject as the focalization of the consciousness of the Universe (God).

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The purpose of the whole creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through His manifestation.

Ibn 'Arabi:

The Real knows Himself. He knows the cosmos from Himself, and he brought the cosmos into existence upon His own form. Hence, He is a mirror within which He sees His own form. **(Chittick, 1989, p. 297.)** ***Whenever the Real***

discloses Himself to you, within the mirror of your heart, your mirror will make Him manifest to you in the measure of its constitution and in the form of its shape. **(Chittick)**

This requires one to envision oneself wholistically - including all the levels of one's being and ultimately the divinity of our own being, while making allowance for the limitation incurred by existentiation. In most of us, our self-image includes only a sliver of the vast range of our total being. Meditation aims at extending that range into ever wider and higher dimensions of our being.

By man's limitations he, so to speak, buries the divine creative power in his mind. **(The Way of Illumination)**

Ibn 'Arabi cautions:

The knowledge of ourselves through the divine perspective insofar as its form appears to one as a form in God, is by necessity limited by our ability to grasp it through ourselves. The perspective of unity is lost. **(cf. 1975, pp. 42 and 57)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

We live in a world to which we are awakened, and to the world to which we are not awakened, we are asleep….The soul in its manifestation on Earth is not at all disconnected from the higher spheres. It lives in all spheres, though it is generally conscious only on one plane. **(The Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

The soul manifesting as a body has diminished its power considerably, even to the extent that it is not capable of imagining for one moment the great power, life and light it has in itself. Once the soul realizes itself by becoming independent of the body that surrounds it, then the soul naturally begins to see in itself the being of the spirit. **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

We are clothed in the garb of an angel, of a jinn, and of a human being. When we see ourselves in the garb of a human being without seeing the other garbs, we believe that we are human beings. **(Spiritual Liberty)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan describes how this consciousness is attained:

Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and realizing one's immortal self which is God.

You need not leave behind your body; you can also become aware of your higher bodies. The first step is awakening to our celestial dimension.

PRACTICE:

The key to doing this is to be found in identifying, not just with one's aura of light, but higher levels of light. To this end it is advised to follow step by step the light practices which will be given in a future installment of the Curriculum. But this in turn requires that one transfigure one's ego.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

As man evolves, he ceases to look down upon the Earth, but looks to the heavens. **(The Unity of Religious Ideals)**

Souls who have become conscious of the angelic spheres hear the calling of those spheres. When the soul is cleared of all earthly shadows, heavenly pictures appear upon the curtain of man's heart**. (Esoteric Papers/Githa III)**

The key is: the form, the way matter is configured, the body fashioned.

PRACTICE:

Match the forms in the physical perspective with their transcendent models - archetypes. For example, the configuration of the lattices of a crystal exemplify a transcendental archetype: orderliness. Likewise, try to imagine the archetype of which the form of your subtle body is the exemplar. For example, a thought of kindness towards someone will alter your countenance; bitterness will show in your countenance.

Ibn 'Arabi:

When meanings are embodied and become manifest in shapes and measures they assume forms, since witnessing takes place through sight. **(Chittick, 1989, p. 354)**

Qur'an:

There is no form in the lower world without a likeness (mithal) in the higher world.

Ibn 'Arabi comments:

Between the two worlds there are tenuities, which extend from each form to its likeness. **(Chittick, 1989, p. 406.)** ***He brings them out of the treasuries that are from an existence that we do not perceive to an existence that we do perceive. Hence the treasuries contain only the possibilities of the things.*** **(cf. ibid. p. 87)**

Here it is that magical creative faculty with which we are endowed that connects these two poles of ourselves.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The soul has in it a potentiality, a creative power as its divine heritage. Think that the same power that moves the stars and the sap in the trees is in you. **(The Way of Illumination)**

The mind is a magic shell in which a design is made by the imagination**. (The Way of Illumination.)** ***On the physical plane this process may be seen in a more concrete form*****. (The Mysticism of Sound and Music.) …*****Imagination becomes a ladder on the path of the mystic. The mystic begins his work with the ladder of imagination, and actual experience follows.*** **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

PRACTICE:

Acquaint yourself with your faculty of imagining a form.

Ibn 'Arabi:

Imagination causes archetypal notions to descend into perceptible form. **(Et.7.10, 1961, p.354)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan instructs us as to how to sustain this antinomy:

The act of raising the light on high is to hold the torch of intelligence in one's hand in order to see into the external world - that which is seen - and also into the world which is within and unseen. **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

(ii) AS VIEWED FROM WITHIN

When considering form, it is necessary to distinguish between forms perceived in the existential perspective and the forms of our subtle bodies.

According to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the first step to *Samadhi* is identifying with one's subtle body, sensing subtle matter, *tanmatra*, viz: v*ikara,* the subtle shape of object.

Therefore in a further step, Hazrat Inayat Khan advocates extrapolating between the perspective of the physical world and that when turned within. To start with, connect these two perspectives by oscillating between them on the ebb and flow of your breath.

The process takes place in two directions; outwardly by being one with all we see, and inwardly by being in touch with that one life which is everlasting by dissolving into it, and by being conscious of that one spirit being the only existence. **(Path of Initiation)**

The one who tunes himself, not only to the external, but to the inner being and to the essence of all things gets an insight into the essence of the whole being; and therefore he can to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty that delights him in a rose. He so to speak touches the soul of the thought.

PRACTICE:

As you inhale, turn within; as you exhale open your eyes without losing from

your memory the way things looked from inside.

Ibn 'Arabi:

The interpreter operates a transposition from the form perceived by the dreamer to the real "form" of the implied reality. **(1975, p. 59.)** ***Then He manifested it in tangible form after it had appeared in imaginative form.*** **(Ibid. p. 61.)**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

This space of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is the inner dimension. What exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in the three dimensional space. And it is the action and reaction of the two that constitutes your life.

In the world, you are here, and everything is without you, you are contained in space. In the dream state, all you see is contained in you.

All things and beings on the surface seem to be separate from one another, beneath the surface they approach to each other, and in the innermost plane, they all become one….

When I open my eyes to the outer world, I feel myself as a drop in the sea, but when I close my eyes and look within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart. The bubble is not any other element than the water of the ocean.

Ibn 'Arabi:

Never look at anything without perceiving in it the real face. For the Sufi, nothing appears as a discrete reality, but everything is seen as the face of Reality.**(cf. Valsan, Et. 6, 1952, p. 183)**

PRACTICE:

Now try to capture the form of your countenance behind your face and ascertain how it matches your aura and how it changes with your thought and

emotions.

You may test this out. Consciousness is offset. The physical environment seems remote, out of reach. The mistake is in simply plunging and encapsulating oneself in one's commonplace thinking, assuming that one is the subject observing one's thoughts. This is the danger incurred by introspection since one is deceiving oneself by one's personal bias, because one is observing one's thoughts simply from one's personal vantage point. Whereas one needs to extrapolate between one's personal vantage point and also that antipodal vantage point which the Sufis call the Divine point of view.

Wisdom is born out of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom.

Ibn 'Arabi says precisely this in other words:

The world of the unseen is perceived through the eyes of insight just as the world of the visible is perceived by sight. When these two lights come together, unseen things are unveiled as they are in themselves and as they are in existence.

You will recall that for the Sufis, what in our commonplace dualistic representation we imagine God to be as "other," is a level of oneself which is coextensive with what in our dualistic view we consider as "other."

Ibn 'Arabi:

When He discloses Himself there is no other; when He conceals Himself, everything is other. **(cf. Valsan, Et. 9, 1949, p. 254)**

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan

Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 10, PART 1

THE UNIVERSEL

[Note: This lesson is similar to Lesson One of the Universel Curriculum.]

When Siraj Baron Sirdar van Tuyll suggested to Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan in 1925 to set up a school of comparative religion for cherags, Murshid rejected the proposition. Sirdar was confounded: it seemed logical that, since we read the scriptures of all religions at the altar of the Universal Worship, the cherags selecting these texts should be cognizant of the world religions and compare them. The answer is that simply presenting them as initially rendered in the chronicles of history does not suffice. Endeavoring to compare them, one soon realizes to what extent they are fraught with contradictions, customs owing to the thinking and social structures of the time when they were announced, political concerns obsolete in our advancing civilizations, historical data and biographies. Within the framework of our ordinary reasoning, trying to reconcile dogmas proves counterproductive, albeit its study has some academic relevance. It is in the testimonies of the mystics of those religions that a common ground is found.

Most importantly, traditional transmissions need to be seen in the perspective in which we think today.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Not knowing the condition of that particular time nor the psychology of the people at the time when the prophet existed, man is ready to judge that personality by the standard of ideas which he knows today; this does not do that personality justice.

The prophet brings the message of the day, a reform for that particular period in which he is born.

The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. **(Spiritual Liberty.)** ***The collective working of many minds as one single idea and the activity of the whole world are governed by the intelligence of the planet. The thought of any person is the thought of the entire human race and so the intelligence of the whole planet has an effect upon all those living on the planet….It is the Message of spiritual liberty.***

PRACTICE:

Ponder upon the degree to which your thinking is influenced and shaped by current trends. In fact grasp the thought that your thinking is an expression of the way the universe thinks as it evolves in the evolutionary process.

Envisioning the spirituality for the future, Pir o Murshid could see that it was more important to overarch our understanding of the traditional transmissions with the all-encompassing vision of the Message of our time. This clearly defines the Universel: it is orienting our insight in an exciting outreach looking into the future while ranging through the perennial revelation of the divine guidance by the Prophets of all religions as it proceeded step by step historically in the great civilizations.

The Universel is the perfume emerging out of distilling the gist of the sacred yield of the world religions honored in the Universal Worship; it is also the leaven quickening the dough of the conventional perusal of sacred texts in the Universal Worship. It operates as an encompassing embrace, integrating religious lore beyond apparent differences. It spans the old and the new.

By unveiling radically revolutionary perspectives spelling the advance of human thinking, Pir o Murshid throws new light on earlier beliefs, adjusting them to the trend of our modern thinking.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity….The planet has culminated into human beings. **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism/ Philosophy/ Intelligence.)** ***The soul is God, but man has a body and mind of his***

own.

We are living at a time when personal problems have been enhanced by our availing ourselves of more and more freedom. Our concerns for the purpose of our lives has become increasingly daunting and our need to discover 'who we are' desperately crucial, rather than the somewhat speculative metaphysical enquiries of theologians, the antiquated reliance on belief systems, mandatory prescriptions and role models.

Pir o Murshid saw that, to reach clarity in facing these needs, one had to unmask the hoax of our self-image, modulate our consciousness beyond its normally limited range, and explore unfamiliar propensities of our thinking, while trying to reconnoiter the issues enacted behind our life situations.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul so that it may loose the false sense of identification and identify itself with the true self instead of the false self. **(The Alchemy of Happiness: The Inner Life and Self Realization)**

The false ego is what does not belong to the real ego, and what that ego has wrongly conceived to be its own being. **(The Mysticism of Sound and Music.)** ***It is not his true self which is limited; what is limited is what he holds, not himself.*** **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

PRACTICE:

Try to get a clear sense of your image of yourself: the idiosyncrasies that are characteristic of you as you imagine yourself to be: qualities, defects, skills, ideals, strivings, fears, misgivings, doubts about yourself, self-assurance, resentment, guilt, anger, hope, expectations, disappointments, degree of freedom, courage, incentive, dependence, independence, detachment.

Now take for granted that many of these evaluations of yourself are incomplete, subjective, liable of bias, even risk being deceptive, self-deceptive – parading

vainglory, and, perhaps, wishful thinking.

Now try to capture the potentialities lying in wait in the cosmic underpinning of your being. You will discover that they are inexhaustible and sublime.

We have a catalogue of archetypal qualities in the *Ism Ilahi* (which we call *Wazaif*). All these qualities are latent in what one might call the seed of which your personality is the plant.

Earmark a quality which is of compelling consequence to you, and try to spot it deep in your being waiting to be aroused and awakened.

In a further step, explore what would be the effect if you developed this quality upon how you deal with one of you problems.

BUILDING A BRIDGE WITH THE PROPHETS, MASTERS AND SAINTS FOR GUIDANCE IN OUR PROBLEMS

While in earlier schools initiates were focused upon the prophet of their religion or their personal *guru*, in announcing the Message of our time, Pir o Murshid opened up a vast outreach embracing all prophets, masters and saints of all religions. By contemplating them, we build a bridge with our thoughts and our hearts through which they can inspire us, thereby guiding us.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

People in the world, through their intoxication, even in following or accepting these wise men, have monopolized one of them as his prophet or teacher. The Sufi message is a reminder to humanity - not to any one nation, but to all; not to one, but to every creed - of the truth taught by all the great teachers of humanity.

This broad view was in incubation only among the greater Sufi teachers.

Ibn 'Arabi:

He describes Himself to you by yourself. Since the form in which He discloses

Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which He discloses Himself. That is why there are many different faiths. To each believer, the Divine Being is He who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith. If God manifests Himself in a different form, the believer rejects Him, and that is why the dogmatic faiths combat one another. **(cf. H. Corbin, 1969, p. 197)**

Imagine that you consult an illuminated being looking at what you see as your problem in the light of his or her insight into its programming!

Here we hit upon the crucial issue. Rather than assessing or trying to solve our problems by looking at them from our personal vantage point, which is counterproductive, we will gain an illuminative insight by learning from great beings how they faced and dealt with similar issues.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The great thinkers who contemplate the flow of that divine consciousness, rise in their contemplation above the boundaries which must limit the view of average men at any and every stage of civilization.

There is no being in the Universe whose consciousness we cannot consult; albeit, admittedly, to really communicate, we would have to be up to their level of thinking and up to the contribution the pitch of their emotional attunement gives to their realization.

PRACTICE:

Instead of cogitating thoughts, contemplate the beings who incorporate these thoughts, for thoughts live in beings. Where is the thinking of the universe to be found if not in beings?

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

***In reality, there are no things. They are all beings. It is simply a gradual awakening from the witnessing aspect to the recognizing aspect*. (Gatha I, Insight, The Glance)**

When a person witnesses an event or a thought, it has not yet been embodied in their being. But if he or she recognizes in his or her person or that of another the idiosyncrasy that matches that thought, and thereby arouses it, awakening it, then that thought becomes a living reality.

The same applies at the macroscopic scale.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

People ask: "If all is God, then God is not a person." The answer: though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower; and therefore the flower already existed in the seed."

No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God…. Man in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God.

And if the world has been able to believe in God and to recognize God in a being, it is in the godly, it is in the soul which reflects God. It is in man that divinity is awakened, that God is awakened, that God can be seen.

The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind. **(The Unity of Religious Ideals)**

The Creator is hidden in His creation.

Man thinks and speaks according to the pitch of his soul.

One's grade of evolution depends upon the pitch one has attained that makes one conscious of a certain phase of life….

It is not his form, it is not his appearance, it is not what he says. It is his atmosphere, it is what his presence conveys to you, it is what his atmosphere tells you. **(Supplementary Papers, The son of the Murshid in Delhi)**

For example, if your thoughts wandered to Mount Kailas to visit Shiva sitting in

samadhi **for having mastered physical and mental functions, and you were still encumbered with addictions, you could not attune to his consciousness, but the impact of his powerful being might help you overcome these addictions.**

You would not be welcomed to discuss with Dr. Ilya Prigogine his theory of near equilibrium unless you understood a whole range of sophisticated physics, but reading his books may lead to entering his thinking.

If you long to attune to the ecstasy of dervishes, you would have to let go of being uptight or low key. You would not be able to communicate with Shihabuddin Suhrawardhi, unless you removed the bushel (if there is one) of selfishness masking the light of your soul. Counter wise, the light in his eyes would prove worthwhile eschewing greed to share its effulgence. To look into the eyes of Hazrat Babajan, you would have to abandon any guile, deception or self-deception. Counter wise, looking into her eyes would clear any vestige of divisiveness.

To be granted an audience with the President, unless you were a buddy of a celebrity, whatever be your skills or spiritual status they would not carry much weight!

To appreciate Beethoven's or Brahms's music more profoundly, you would have to know something of their life's struggles which may lead to getting into their consciousness and see how they turned the tables on their most painful problem by harnessing its energy creatively. This method could be used in transforming one's person.

Christ? You would have to forgive those who have abused you – even love your enemy! That is a very challenging mandate! It is more difficult to forgive those who have harmed or tortured others than those who have betrayed or demeaned one's self! Would letting them off the hook be interpreted or rightly condemned as condoning or irresponsible tolerance?

As for Buddha, reaching into his consciousness would make you free since he has himself found freedom, but he is uncompromising, so you would have to not only give up your wishes, but wishing for anything.

To access these perspectives of ubiquitous beings, one has to carry one's thinking beyond its confinement to the perceptual or conceptual mode of thinking.

PRACTICE:

Thinking of a prophet, master or saint has the effect of turning your attention to and attuning you to levels in yourself in which he or she ranges. Choose a prophet, master or saint to whom you feel particularly attuned, envision him or her as described in the annals of history, then, inspired by this vision, hoist your sense of identity into its higher levels so as to establish some degree of concordance. Now try to shift your consciousness into his or her consciousness and, knowing something of his or her pronouncements when incarnated, try to glimpse how he or she thinks and feels in considering your problems from his or her point of view.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and realizing one's immortal self which is God….

Ibn 'Arabi:

When God moves any servant through his spiritual states, in order to show him His signs, He moves him through His states. **(Futuhat)**

It is helpful at this stage to realize that, while our thinking moves within the framework of space-time, it can take flight notwithstanding this constraint.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The soul manifesting as a body has diminished its power considerably, even to the extent that it is not capable of imagining for one moment the great power, life and light it has in itself. Once the soul realizes itself by becoming independent of the body that surrounds it, then the soul naturally begins to see in itself the being of the spirit. **(Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)**

However you need not leave behind your body, you can also become aware of your higher bodies.

Our mind can contemplate 'pure thoughts' while transmuting its conceptualization of the existential condition of reality within the space-time frame. Therefore it is irrelevant whether these beings are disincarnated.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

This process takes place in two directions: outwardly by being one with all we see, and inwardly by being in touch with that one Life which is everlasting.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world. **(The Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan.)** ***True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to Earth and has realized there its spiritual being.*** **(The Alchemy of Happiness.)** ***Illumination is obtained by rising above one's earthly condition at the command of one's will and thereby realizing one's immortal self which is God within…. Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages between man, the manifestation of God, the only Being, knowing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence, and thus accomplishing the heavenly journey.***

Pir o Murshid showed that the emerging spirituality throws light on human issues and can transform one's being. How can we achieve this? We know fromexperience that learning consists in replacing our view by availing ourselves of the grasp of the question at stake by a wise being endowed with a more informed know-how, or extrapolating between our point of view and that of another, or overarching our view by the encompassing overview of an illuminated being. Pir o Murshid calls this 'the reason behind reason.'

The mystic touches the reason of reason, the cause behind the cause, the purpose beyond the purpose.

So it is with the assessment of our problems. Let us distinguish here two

dimensions. We learn to see them in their context rather than in their content. Moreover we learn to see them from the antipodal vantage point to our personal (obviously biased) vantage point.

To this end, in a first step, we train our consciousness to see things from the point of view of another in a grasp including both our point of view and that of another. One discovers that one can actually shunt one's consciousness into that of another and witness how things appear to them. One discovers that one is able to extrapolate between these views (just as our eyes are able, by dint of parallax, to extrapolate between two different two-dimensional perspectives into athree dimensional one).

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

***The first sign one notices after the awakening of the soul, is that one begins to see from two points of view*. (Social Gathekas)**

PRACTICE:

Think of a person you know. Imagine that you are that person. Imagine that you are in the circumstances, the situation, in which this person is. Imagine how that person feels and sees things. Imagine what are his or her aspirations, motivations, concerns, precariousness, and overcoming.

Next proceed likewise with a person who is inimical to you, or has harmed you. See that they needed to boost their self-esteem by trying to exercise power over you.

Next, combining more and more differing views from more and more people, arrive at a multidimensional, all-encompassing grasp.

In a second step, try to see how you appear, or your standpoint appears, from the point of view of another, or more people.

St. Francis:

I thought I was looking at the world, but the world is looking at me.

In an ultimate step, try to grasp some tenuous clues as to the meaningfulness of the programming - the code ordering your life's situation. This is not a knowledge that one acquires by figuring things out with one's mind, but it may be gradually revealed to you as you evolve in your realization. Where are the clues to the programming of life hidden in the particular circumstances in which you find yourself?

Ibn 'Arabi:

***Since the ephemeral being manifests the form of the eternal, it is by the contemplation of the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself.* (1975, p 15)**

***To Him we attribute no quality without ourselves having that quality.* (1975, p 16)**

However, any attempt at making sense of this strategy proves perplexing to our understanding, and yet dawns upon one, providing that one forfeits one's reliance upon acquired knowledge. The Sufis endeavor to make this revealed knowledge prevail upon acquired knowledge.

Ibn 'Arabi:

***At an advanced stage, one learns to grasp God as He is in Himself, rather than the knowledge gleaned of Him*. (cf. Valsan Et. 4/5, 1962)**

***Then thou understandeth that thou knowest God by God, not by thyself.* (1976, p 16)**

So, let us recall that our objective is:

(i) to ascertain clearly our assessment of our problems or life situations;

(ii) to caution ourselves as to personal bias, denial, self-justification, self-deception, ego trips;

(iii) to shift your consciousness into the consciousness of the persons involved with you in your problem or life situation so as to see the same situation from

complementary vantage points;

(iv) to try to reach into the consciousness of a prophet, master, saint or wise being and try to imagine how that being would deal with this situation. Note that one needs to proceed in two steps:

(a) imagine to oneself that being as described in the annals of history (in some cases his or her face or demeanor in an environment);

(b) now in a second step, try to transfer your consciousness into the transcendent perspective of that honored being, and see how the situation looks from his or her point of view, while resonating with his or her attunement.

(v) Now try to match our standpoint with that of this being, endeavoring to value the wisdom of his or her stance, while acquiescing to the limitations in one's ability to conform and the compulsion of one's psychological needs. At first one might only be able to toggle between one's view and the challenging superlative one of that being - permutate to and fro to see the complementarity of their relevances. Can one extrapolate while honoring one's own stance as relatively valid if not as an all-encompassing, overarching evaluation?

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Wisdom is born out of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. When the light from within is thrown upon the knowledge of the earth, then the knowledge from outer life and the light from within make a perfect wisdom.

Ibn 'Arabi:

The world of the unseen is perceived through insight, just as the world of the visible is perceived by sight. When these two lights come together, unseen things are unveiled as they are in themselves and as they are in existence.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Insofar as man is capable of seeing the seen world, to that extent he is also

capable of observing the unseen world on condition that he first sees and observes his own unseen world.

The method to reach into the cyber space-time of ubiquitous beings, or even beyond, consists in shifting one's mode of thinking and the pitch of one's attunement from one perspective to another, step by step through the gamut of levels of consciousness in a sequel of developmental stages delineated in the transmissions of the classical esoteric school of the world religions. It is indeed gratifying to notice how they parallel, as follows.

YOGA	SUFISM	BUDDHISM
7 Asamprajnata	Hahut	Cessation of determined
6 Sarbija	Lahut	Beyond existence and non-existence
5 Anandanugata	Malakut	Beyond consciousness
4 Nirvekara	Jabarut	Beyond existence
3 Savikara	Mithal	Consciousness
2 Nirvetarka	Khayal	
1 Savitarka	Nasut	

[Cf. the improved topography of levels in Part II of this Lesson! - Kaivan]

It is now clear that, to avail ourselves of the wisdom and example of hallowed beings, we will have to lift our consciousness to those levels latent within ourselves at which they are operating.

We will be proposing in the next installments a few basic guidelines to navigate the meditator through these levels (sometimes called planes or spheres) based upon a comparative study of the methods of meditation of some of the esoteric schools. They are here labeled in the Sufiterminology in a mapping of topographical perspectives which have their parallels in other schools(as listed

above). They will however need to be elaborated further as we proceed in the installments.

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LESSON 10, PART 2

THE UNIVERSEL, continued

Knowledge is found in the realization of people – not in the abstract.

The present text may appear in some way as a repeat of Lesson 10. It is a clarification devised as an introduction to the next installments in which we shall be systematically exploring the developmental stages step by step. Quotes repeated gain relevance by being reiterated in new contexts. All quotes are from Hazrat Inayat Khan.

PROPOSED FOR NEXT INSTALLMENTS

We propose to explore in the teaching of Hazrat Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan, the clues to find out who we are, to deal with our problems, to make sense of our lives, to fulfill our life's purpose, and to achieve what we wish to accomplish. This study includes parallels with the ancient Sufis, also sometimes Yoga, Buddhism, Kabbala, Christianity, Islam and, in addition, some references to psycho-therapy and present day scientific theories. Since many people eschew trying to figure out sophisticated scientific views, while some are intrigued by the challenge, references to these, as the case might be, will be placed in an annex at the end of the installment. It is reassuring to find to what extent these views corroborate experiences in meditation, particularly some of Hazrat Inayat Khan's bold futuristic views.

Moreover, our purpose is to explore what light the views, realizations, and attunements of the prophets, masters, saints and great beings project upon our human problems in our day and age. Hazrat Inayat Khan opened our perspective to this broad, cosmic, ageless perennial spectrum. His universal message offers an all-encompassing embrace which integrates the sometimes antinomous points of view of these great beings followed by their consequences in terms of popular beliefs in a cosmic symposium. Therefore in

the universal perspective, while having the incentive to select a prophet, master or saint who is particularly close to our heart, we could brainstorm a dialogue between this holy being and a holy being of another religion to broaden our outreach, if we consider it important to keep abreast with the evolution of the prow of the thinking of humanity as it advances towards a unified world-view.

The collective working of several minds and the activity of the whole world in one direction are governed by the intelligence of the planet….There is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every being has had.

This invites us to harness the realizations revealed to us during our meditations, highlighting an alternate assessment of our life situations as viewed from the perspective of wise beings.

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

It consists in accessing knowledge through beings.

A mystic does not look at reasons as everybody else does, because he sees that the first reason that comes to his mind is only a cover over another reason which is hidden behind it. **(The Path of Initiation.)** ***He does not see things through the reason he has learned from the world, but he begins to see the reason of all reasons, the reason which is covered by ordinary reasoning.*** **(In an Eastern Rose Garden)**

For us to reach these perspectives and resonate with those lofty attunements, we need to try to shift our consciousness into theirs and see ourselves from their vantage point. This calls upon us to endeavor to familiarize ourselves with these beings.

In reality, there are no things, they are all beings. It is simply a gradual awakening from the witnessing aspect to the recognizing aspect. **(Gatha I, Insight, the Glance)**

It involves a sustained apprenticeship. To learn this, we need to first develop a clear grasp of the basis of their teachings – each very different from the other. Then we need to familiarize ourselves with these beings (as far as it goes) based upon the traditional chronicles of history; in a third step we try to reverse

our consciousness by inverting it into that of the being we have selected to inspire us (and incidentally by the same token guide us).

The same reality can look different according to the vantage point from which you look at it.

This later step is facilitated by getting into the consciousness of the chosen master, saint or prophet while repeating the *dhikr.* Moreover, one could select an inspiring being for each *wazifa.* In a future installment, we shall be working with the effect that concentrating on a 'quality' has upon the form of our subtle body.

The first step is called *Tassawuri Murshid*, imagining how that being looked in the past (the role of imagination).

***One may see faces never seen before that have once existed in the world….* (Githas)**

In the second step called *Tawajjeh*, one imagines how it would be to see things from their vantage point and attune to their emotional attunement.

The glance of a sage has the power to open every object and to see through it.

We prepare ourselves by first earmarking a friend, then a person whom one resents (if it be the case). Then an acquaintance whom one admires or a role figure we have heard about. Then earmark a wise or great person. It is a gradual process leading to the point of really getting into the consciousness of the great prophets, masters and saints; ultimately, through these, into the divine consciousness. It requires of one to achieve precisely what all religions teach, downplaying one's self-image, *fana*, in order to discover the divinity of one's true being as a "condition of God" (Hazrat Inayat Khan). This is called *baqa.*

It is not his true self which is limited; what is limited is what he holds, not himself.* (Alchemy.) *The ego itself is never destroyed. In the knowledge of the ego there is the secret of immortality. If you dived deep enough in yourself, you would discover your real ego.* (Cosmic Language.) *Where are you to find God if not in the God-conscious…. It is in man that divinity is awakened, that God is awakened, that God can be seen…. Not knowing that God experiences this life through us, one is seeking for Him somewhere else. Man in the flowering of his personality expresses

***the personality of God*. (The Unity of Religious Ideals)**

Hence the motto: *fana fi Sheikh, fana fi Rasul, fana fi Allah*; leading to *baqi bi'l Allah*. Thus through trying to see things from the point of view of the prophets, masters and saints, one reaches into God consciousness.

No doubt, as Hazrat Inayat Khan says, "All is God but man has a body and mind of his own," but in comparison with the cosmic and transcendent outreach of the divine consciousness, our thought, albeit customizing that thinking, pales in comparison. Our emotions do likewise in comparison with divine emotion.

***So far there has only been a belief in God. God exists in people's imagination as an ideal. Believing is the first step. By this process the God within is awakened and made living. It is in those who are God conscious that God becomes a reality so that He is no longer an imagination…. The first thing a believer does is to imagine. He imagines that God is the Creator, and tries to believe that God is the Sustainer, and he makes an effort to think that God is a Friend. But do not forget that God is beneath all, beyond all, within all, and without all things, the sum total of all that exists and which is knowable, but also what lies beyond man's knowledge.* (Esoteric Papers/ Sangitha I.) *But if this imagination is to become a reality, exactly as one feels for one's earthly beloved (the emotions of) sympathy, love and attachment, so one must feel the same for God*. (The Way of Illumination)**

In this study we will proceed systematically through the levels of consciousness according to the Sufis while pointing out the parallels with other esoteric schools.

I am appending here an improved topography of levels, including the relevant chakras.

YOGA	CHAKRA	SUFISM	BUDDHISM	KABBALA	SUFI-LATA'IF
9 (unity) Asamprajnata	SAHASRARA	Hahut (eternal)	Cessation of determined (non-become)	KETHER	Haqiya
8 Sarbija	AJNA	Lahut (treasury of archetypes, everlasting)	Beyond consciousness & non-consciousness (peri-samsaric matrix; very subtle mind)	CHOCHMA	Khafiya
7 Asmita	VISHUDA	Jabarut (revealed)	Beyond consciousness (subtle mind)	BINA	Ruhiya
6 Ananda	WHEEL OF FIRE	Malakut (celestial)	Beyond existence and non-existence (body of bliss)	DAATH	
5	ANAHATA		Infinity of consciousness	CHESED / DIN	Sirriya
4 Nirvekara	MANIPURAKA	Mithal (creativity)	Beyond the mind	TIPHERETH	Qalbiya
3 Nirvetarka	HARA	Khayal	Infinity of mind	HOD / NETSACH	Nafsiya
2 Savikara	SVADISTHANA	Arwah (subtle)	Infinity of ether (emanation body)	YESOD	Qalabiya
1 Savitarka	MULADHARA	Nasut (matter)	Infinity of space	MALKUTH	

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LESSON 11

NASUT: WORKING WITH THE BODY

PREAMBLE

What does it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and lose his own soul. **(Cf. Mathew)**

When man has to choose between his spiritual and his material profit, then he shows whether his treasure is on earth or in heaven**. (The Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

Renounce the world before it renounces you.…It depends upon your discrimination whether to renounce things momentarily precious for everlasting things or everlasting things for things momentarily precious*.* **(Social Gathekas.)**

Things that people take to heart will seem of little importance, and he finds that all his life he has given his thoughts to something which does not last, which does not even exist.…So long as you have a longing to obtain any particular object, you cannot go further than that object*.* **(The Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

Here lies the wager: is the surreptitious motivation spurring the perennial adventure of the human mind in seeking knowledge - assuming power?

If that power covertly coveted is personal power, then the consequences to humanity and the planet – actually to the universe - can inevitably but prove catastrophic and precipitate untold cruelty and suffering. On the other hand, however much scientists may be authentically motivated in their exploration of matter to help humanity and upgrade the environment, they inexorably slip into the pending bind: is there any way to avoid that knowledge should open the lid

of the Pandora' s box of terrors? Is there any way to avoid that their findings will be exploited by the ruthless for selfish purposes at the cost of the well-being of the innocent victims of their greed?

Damage to the environment recently worsened, the effects on weather by tampering with the ozone layers, acid rain, endangered species, tampering with recombinant DNA, myxomatosis, the mad cow disease, food pollution, the decadence in standards, drugs, the computer virus, the threat involved in cloning, etc., the appalling cruelty wreaked upon victims by crime, all evidence the challenge to our wisdom and social responsibility triggered by the momentous advance of our high technologies.

The same bloated ego can and does escalate at a global scale into power plays and ideological feuds between nations, as in the terror in the Second World War, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, or lead to the devastating follies of genocides as in the case of Nazism, the Slavonik mass murder, etc.

Both Fermi and Oppenheimer were tormented by the use that could and indeed would be made by mass human destruction from their discovery of splitting the atom. Although Fermi contributed in Los Alamos to the research on the super H-bomb (1000 times more destructive than the Hiroshima bomb), which could escalate at an inhuman scale to the point of mass suicide, he would consider its use only at the last resort as a deterrent, and feared that it could side-track falling back on conventional warfare. When it was discovered that the Soviets had wrested the secret, and predicted that they could harness it within 5 years (confirmed by the explosion in Siberia on August 29th 1949) and that it could be aimed against the very Government (USA) that fostered it, Oppenheimer's uncompromising, unconditional opposition to pursue further research on the H-bomb was considered by FBI Hoover as suspected collusion with the enemy. It averred itself, however, that it was Fuchs who betrayed the secret to the Soviets. Oppenheimer wished for the Allies in the Second World War to arrive at a convention with the Soviet government to halt further research on fusion-fission and forego the use of the H-bomb.

Here is a clear demonstration of how one can slip into the horns of the dilemma:

could knowledge of high tech know-how act as a deterrent for wanton reciprocal suicidal extermination? Bernard Shaw: "Dare you wage war against war for the sake of peace?"

In the Bhagavad Githa, Krishna instructs Arjuna to fight as a knight to uphold right over wrong.

Action imprisons the world unless it is done by sacrifice, freed from attachment. **(Stanzas 8, 9. Tr. Barbara Steller Muller, Bantam)**

Whereas Gandhi advocates non-violence, as, indeed, does Christ.

Those who take up the sword perish by the sword. **(Matthew 26-5)**

This was precisely the dilemma that my sister Noor and I were faced with as we heard the din of the advancing Nazi troops bracing to invade Paris in 1939. We had been preaching the message honoring all religions and races. Was this just lip-service to a cosmic ideology? Now we are faced with the question: what are we prepare to do to sustain it? How can we participate in upholding righteousness against evil, in honoring all the achievements of our great civilizations, without killing?

No sacrifice can be too great a sacrifice for one's ideal.

Man gives his life when occasion arises to defend his nation, the dignity, the honor, the freedom of his people. **(Smiling Forehead)**

This meant volunteering for the most dangerous positions without killing.

It is the sense of honor that teaches man self respect. **(Esoteric Papers)**

For a Sufi the sense of honor is not for his personality, he does not give his person a greater place than dust and the central theme of his life is simplicity and his moral is humility. Yet remember that the Sufi breathes the breath of God, so he is conscious of the honor of God.

It is not by the servility of those around him that the king is exalted; it is in the

honor in which they hold him that his kingship exists. **Gayan**

Knowledge can benefit humanity in the hands of the magnanimous wise and destroy humanity in the grips of the egotist or despot. The power of money through the know-how to deal with and juggle it offers the temptation, if abused (as is unfortunately often the case), of subjecting people to one's will or fancy, or oppressing people and constraining their freedom making them dependent .

One sees a constant striving in the life of the adepts to make themselves independent of outside things as much as possible. **(The Art of Personality)**

The issue at stake here is what we mean by spirituality. Is even our quest for awakening one more temptation for the personal ego?

This ubiquitous quandary lies at the crux of the human venture and affects the lives of all of us, and indeed the feasibility of the survival of our global civilization.

It flashed to our dim collective unconscious in the primeval myth of the tree of knowledge wrested by Adam when finding completion in encountering his twin-soul Eve, the legendary Sophia. It erupted forcibly in the Faustian paradoxes. Spurred by the antics of a celebrated sorcerer who claimed that he owed the miracles he conjured to having sold his soul to the devil, the German poet Goethe suggested that magic (divulging and applying the secrets of the divine strategy) could lead to disrupting that very programming, albeit freedom was a divine gratuity notwithstanding its trail of untold devastation and suffering.

The Sufi Niffari had warned of the danger of divulging the clue to the secret treasure.

God warned me: Thou mayest not, and again thou mayest not, and again seventy times: thou mayest not describe how thou seest Me, nor how thou enterest My treasury, nor how thou takest from it My seals through My power, nor how thou seekest the knowledge of one letter from another letter through the Might of My magnificence. **(1935, p. 174)**

And Hallaj was accused by Shibli of revealing that secret because it was sacred. All genuine spiritual revelation is at that price.

The decisive criterion as to deciphering the divine code is therefore the motivation: if for selfishness or for service.

The whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. It is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because although motive has a power, at the same time motive limits power. **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

The purity of one's motivation from the concern about personal gain opens the door to the revelation of the divine intention in contrast with the pursuit of acquired knowledge where the personal ego is spurring the mind unawares.

Ibn 'Arabi:

When your soul has been purified and its mirror has been polished, do not consider the world as it appears in that mirror, but turn your soul towards the dignity of the Essence in its purity in the perspective of the cognizance that it has of itself. **(cf. Valsan, ET 4-5/1952, p.129)**

'Ayn ul-Quzat Hamadhani:

When the esoteric nature indicated by a man's inclinations and faculties has become pure, he contemplates therein whatever is of the same nature in the macrocosm. **(Corbin, 1978, p. 69)**

The clue to that is in whether one identifies with the personal dimension of one's being or one's divine dimension – in other words: God consciousness.

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LESSON 12

IN PURSUIT OF THE SUBLIME AND MEANINGFULNESS IN REAL LIFE SITUATIONS

Many of us are bracing for the journey through the spheres (Nazut, Mithal, Malakut, etc.) whose dimensions we plan to explore in the Curriculum, concretized in practices. However, I feel that before we venture aloft, we need to make sure that we have a clear sense of what our ultimate objective is and to be wary of wishful thinking.

The acid test is to see in what way hoisting our consciousness beyond commonplace perspectives will ultimately help us to include alternate vantage points in an encompassing perspective. This is 'awakening in life' rather than 'beyond the beyond.' One might describe it as seeing back-stage together with seeing what is happening on the stage. Hence Hazrat Inayat Khan distinguishes between waking and awakening:

God lost in the manifestation is the state which we call waking. The manifestation lost in God is realization. In my language I would call the latter awakening and the former a dream. **(Sufi Teachings)**

Therefore, rather than conducting the classical retreat, I have made an attempt at sustaining, yet adapting, the perspectives and attunements adopted in our prescribed retreats in the midst of the hustle-bustle of a real-life scene. My objective was to put myself to a test and apply strictly the guidelines given by Hazrat Inayat Khan.

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to Earth and has

realized there its spiritual being. **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

***The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world….The purpose of life is fulfilled in rising to the greatest heights and in diving to the deepest depths of life, in widening one's horizons, in penetrating life in all its spheres, in losing oneself, and in finding oneself in the end*.(The Way of Illumination, The Inner Life)**

As I did this, it became increasingly clear that Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching is about awakening in life but it requires including the perspectives of the higher levels in one's vantage point. Obviously this means not simply slipping into the commonplace 'here and now,' but not discounting it either, since it is here that the Divine programming of the Universe, is to be found, not 'up there.' It means

to live in heaven and to live on the earth at the same time. **(The Unity of Religious Ideals, The Spiritual Hierarchy, Attunement of the Prophet)**

The challenge was to maintain God-consciousness while observing the world.

It is in man that divinity is awakened, that God is awakened, that God can be seen. **(The Unity of Religious Ideals, The Spiritual Hierarchy)**

The power of the spiritual man lasts as long as he is conscious of the spiritual spheres. No sooner does his consciousness become reflected with the earth than his power ceases to work and he falls flat on the ground. **(Esoteric Papers, Sangitha II)**

The purpose of every soul is that for which the whole creation has been striving; and it is the fulfillment of that purpose which is called God consciousness. **(Esoteric Papers, Sangatha I)**

Where are you to find God if not in the God-conscious. ... The Creator is hidden in His creation.

What does God-consciousness mean? Would it be helpful to see that we are the

product of the proliferation of the One and only being?

Spiritual attainment is to be conscious of the Perfect One who is formed in the heart. **(The Complete Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, 591)**

It became clear that our sense of identity (whether personal or transpersonal) determines our insight. Therefore if I wished to observe the world from a transpersonal vantage point, I needed to explore further my identity and shift my identity from my ordinary self-image.

The spirit of limitation is always a hindrance to realizing the spirit of mastery and practicing it. The experience of being powerless is man's ignorance of the power within him. ... The outlook becomes wide, as wide as the divine eye. **(Soul Whence and Whither, Manifestation)**

It follows that if, to observe the world in an awakened stage, I need to be God-conscious, I need to discover my divine inheritance which neither means that I identify with God nor that I am a discrete individual observer. Rather, my consciousness could be likened to a beam of light in which the light of the cosmos has been focalized through a lens.

A person needs to analyze himself and see, "Where does 'I' stand? Does it stand as a remote exclusive being**…." (Mysticism of Sound and Music, The Cosmic Language, The Ego)**

What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul, so that it may lose the false conception of identification and identify itself with the true self instead of the false self. **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

When the soul goes further on the path of knowledge, it begins to recognize the feeling of 'I-ness' and see how it identifies with what is not itself**. (The Soul Whence and Whither)**

The thought of any person is the thought of the entire human race and so the intelligence of the whole planet has an effect upon all those living on the planet…**(Spiritual Liberty)**

Here lies the paradox, the test as to whether I am up to practicing Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching in real-life rather than absconding in the ambiguity of a delusive would-be semblance of wishful thinking purported to be *samadhi*. It, however, certainly requires a different way of thinking to the usual one. Consequently, in order to grasp what is being enacted behind the enigmatic drama played by these unknown people passing each other (or in clusters) like ships in the night on the pavement of the Champs Elysees, I am called upon to apply the holistic view of scientists to my sense of identity.

Man is a condition of God like a wave is a condition of the sea.

To investigate this further I had to see that while the psychological genes that we inherit include those of the universe (what Christ calls our divine inheritance), some of these are active and others have been curbed (in biology: recessive and dominant) in the course of our inheritance from each of our ancestors. With the consequence that that divine perfection that we have inherited gets processed, hence limited, albeit it remains virtual and can be aroused by one's will.

The soul changes its own identity with the change of its constantly changing vision. **(Spiritual Liberty)**

One finds a kind of universe in oneself. **(The Alchemy of Happiness)**

Now I could see the advantage of this constraint upon our cosmic dimension, because, thanks to the interfacing and interaction between each of us as fragments of the Totality in which the bounty of the Totality is virtually present, we enrich each other reciprocally. And consequently the overall code is enriched by the feedback of its fragments, like variation on a theme of music.

There is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every living being has had. No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. It all accumulates and collects in that mind as an eternal reservoir - the divine mind. **(Healing and the Mind World, Mental Purification)**

So in this case we can willfully arouse these genes by overcoming that in our

own self, which stands as an obstacle to activating the divine inheritance.

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

The smartness of the programming is evidenced in the delegation of responsibility; what is more, in the fact that the programming is elaborated in its implementation in existence; it is not 'up there.'

The divine mind is made of His own creation. The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. **(The Unity of Religious Ideals)**

Sitting here on the Champs Elysees, trying to maintain Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's consciousness, which could be described as a bird's eye view, one really does have some indication as to what people are motivating or motivated by. However, while this scenario offers us an alternative range to our 'storms in our tea-cups,' it is not an interactive situation (unless we involve ourselves in it, in which case the chances of losing our objectivity are at least as great as when confronting our ordinary problems). Consequently we are in the seat of the observer.

In spiritual awakening the first thing that comes to man is the lifting of a veil and this is the lifting of an apparent condition. Then a person does not see every condition as it appears to be, but sees behind every condition its deeper meaning.

So the daunting question prods one: what is it all about? Actually, one is not just the observer, but one seeks to grasp the divine programming behind what one observes.

It is simply a gradual awakening from the witnessing aspect to the recognizing aspect. **(The Alchemy of Happiness, The Meaning of Life)**

Awakening in life must signify trying to see purposefulness and meaningfulness in this lively scene deployed before my eyes.

And the sign of that awakening is that upon every person and upon every object the wakened person throws a light, a light of his soul, and sees that object, that

condition, in that light. It is his own soul that becomes a torch in his hand, it is his own light that illuminates his path. It is just like throwing a searchlight upon dark corners which one did not see before, and the corners become clear and illuminated again. It is like throwing light upon problems that one did not understand first. It is like seeing with x-rays persons who were a riddle before. **(Social Gathekas, The Awakening of the Soul)**

Wherever his glance falls – on nature, on characters – he reads their history, he sees their future. He sees the cause behind the faults people have. While an ordinary person can see the action of another, the seer can see the reason of the action also, and if his sight is still keener, he can see the reason of the person. He knows why an event comes, whence it comes, what is behind it, what is the cause of it, and behind the seeming cause, the hidden cause. And if he wishes to trace the cause behind the cause, he could trace it back to the primal cause, for the inner life is lived by living with the primal cause.

Every person he meets, he begins to communicate with his soul. Every person and every object stand before him as an open book.

What strikes me first is that most people seem to be caught in their own personal trips like puppets oblivious of the threads that move them.

It is ignorance when it takes this experience to be real. It does so because it cannot see itself; as the eye sees all things, but not itself. Therefore the soul identifies itself with all things that it sees, and changes its own identity with the change of its constantly changing vision. ... But as the soul cannot see itself, it thinks, by the help of the ego: I am sad, I am glad, I remember, I have forgotten. **(Spiritual Liberty)**

Most people seem so obviously convinced that they are what they think they are!

Striving in the spiritual path is breaking away from the false conception that we have made of ourselves, coming out of it, it is realizing our true being and becoming conscious of it. **(Sufi Teachings, Health and Order of Body and Mind)**

At the cost of being judgmental, the values pursued by so many seem trivial or trifle. It looks as though many are pursuing a furtive chimera, to be entertained by a moment of pleasure that can never be utterly satisfied - wanting more and more self-satisfaction.

***To seek to do these things is to give pearls to buy pebbles*. (In an Eastern Rose Garden)**

When man has to choose between his spiritual and his material profit, then he shows whether his treasure is on earth or in heaven.

***Whether to renounce things momentarily precious for everlasting things or everlasting things for things momentarily precious.* (Social and Religious Gathekas, Social Gathekas, Renunciation)**

What is more, getting into the consciousness of so many, one sees that obviously most people

***…are acting with the idea in mind of what would be to their interest; what would bring them an advantage.* (The Alchemy of Happiness)**

Moreover this selfishness will lead to being unjust and may escalate into cruelty, which can sometimes be detected in someone's face.

Immediately a note of caution struck my memory of Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan's words:

***Unhappy is he who looks with contempt at the world, who hates human beings and thinks he is superior to them; the one who loves them thinks only that they are going through the same process that he has gone through.* (The Way of Illumination, The Inner Life)**

Besides:

***Remember: we can never claim to be unselfish; but if we are selfish, it is just as well to be wisely selfish. The wise selfish person will obtain money in order that he can express his generosity with what he has collected*.**

Then my attention was drawn to take advantage of this opportunity of watching others, to see a likeness of these within myself. Furthermore,

…the world, busy with its selfish, unimportant occupations, will surely drag you towards itself. **(Sufi Teachings)**

You must find your ideal in yourself; no ideal in life will prove lasting and true except the one you yourself make. **(The Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Gayan)**

Interestingly, no sooner than one ceases to be judgmental, one discovers oneself for having seen oneself in another.

…and when this light is thrown within one's self, then the self will be revealed to a person; he will become enlightened as to his own nature and his own character. **(The Mysticism of Sound and Music)**

Looking at the moving scene of beings of all walks of life in their stupendous diversity, most people seem to be caught in their personal concerns regardless of the way that the overwhelming intention sparking life affects their personal life. Scanning their motivations from the transpersonal perspective rather than the personal vantage point, one sees splendor and meaningfulness trying to blossom and awaken in the midst of defilement and ignorance.

Love must be absolutely free from selfishness, otherwise it does not produce proper illumination. **(Spiritual Liberty)**

It appears as though only a few are aware of the force impelling people to socialize. People impelled by the attraction of the opposite sex seem to be oblivious of the cosmic programming behind their attraction, that they are fulfilling a cosmic intention to ensure the perpetuation of form – that is what has been gained by the configuration of thought into matter registered as form. Where this completion of one's being by the power of affinity occurs, the fulfillment of this cosmic magic is optimized. Otherwise one wonders to what confinement a fortuitous spell, fancy, fantasy or whimsical fad may lead. In general, one sees people unfolding, being enriched by the completion gained by

the mutual enhancement of their psyches, wisdom, know-how, or attunement.

In fact ifone can be inspired and enriched by the wisdom and attunement of another person, it is because they have become incorporated in one's psyche so that we can find them in ourselves. There is an osmosis between beings at the level of the psyche. For this one must not think of them as located in space or just recall meeting them in time. Communication can be triggered off by simply reading the words of a person or seeing their portrait. As we have seen form has value because it configures a state of being.

The persons whom we admire are our gurus. We can reach them in ourselves, because if we admire qualities in them it is because they resonate with latent qualities in ourselves that they thereby arouse.

Here again we encounter a paradox:

There are two aspects of fullness: completion and perfection. Every new experience, a thought, an imagination, a principle, an ideal add to one's knowledge that makes man complete. At the same time by trying to be self-sufficient within oneself, perfection is obtained.

There comes another step in awakening when a man does not even see the cause, but comes to the realization of the adjustment of things: how every activity of life, whether it appears to be wrong or right, adjusts itself.

Amongst such diversity, in the moving scene, one espies in many people beauty, sensitivity, a sense of responsibility and concern, idealism, sparkling joy in the marvel of life, the sortilege of love.

Jami:

From all eternity, the Beloved unveiled His beauty in the solitude of the unseen; He held up the mirror to His own Face, He displayed His loveliness to Himself, He was both the Spectator and the spectacle. ... Although He beheld His attributes and qualities as a perfect whole in His Essence, yet He desired that they should be displayed to Him in another mirror, and that each of His eternal

attributes should become manifest accordingly in a diverse form. Therefore He created the verdant fields of time and space, and the life-giving garden of the world, that every branch and leaf and fruit might show forth His various perfections. **(Nicholson, 1975, pp 80-81)**

The manifest beauty displays one's attunement.

One's grade of evolution depends upon the pitch one has attained that makes one conscious of a certain phase of life. ... There is a stage at which, by touching a particular phase of existence, one feels raised above the limitations of life. At that moment of supreme exaltation, one is not only united with the source of all being, but dissolved in it for one discovers that that source is one's very self. **(Healing and the Mind World)**

Consciousness has become so light and so liberated and free that it can raise itself and dive and touch the depth of one's being. **(Healing and the Mind World)**

All that man considers beautiful, precious and good is not necessarily in the thing or the being, it is in his ideal; the thing or being causes him to create the beauty, value and goodness in his own mind**. (The Way of Illumination)**

In rare instances one can perceive splendor breaking through in a flurry of superb beauty for an ephemeral outburst - a moment of glory as if suspended at the apex of the curve of evolution - then melt away. This could be illustrated by the life cycle of a desert succulent. It can take years for the sugars from the environment to build up until that magical moment when it erupts in a supremely beautiful iridescent flower. Within a few hours, it has paled and faded yet not without having sown seeds that are the replica of the very seed in which it had been embedded.

You may think of yourself as a plant in which only a little bounty latent in the seed is manifest. Yet in you the seed that caused the whole existence - God - is to be found. The seed out of which the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are made arises again at the end of the cycle. The same God so little of whose perfection manifested in the plant arises again and again in its pursuit of excellence trying to emerge as perfectly as possible in the midst of human

imperfection.

It would prove ideal if that state would lead to further valuable attainments instead of being simply recycled in the seed. This repetitive recurrent rebirthing is precisely what Buddha illustrated by the samsaric wheel. To eschew this, one needs to call upon a peri-samsaric dimension of one's inheritance that is not of the nature of becoming. This precisely what Hazrat Inayat Khan means by honoring our divine inheritance.

Man is the product of all planes spiritual and material….in him alone shines forth that primal intelligence that caused the whole. **(Sangatha I)**

It would be a feature of simplistic thinking (evidenced by the commonplace mode of thinking in terms of duality) to assume that that beauty was pre-established – that the splendor of the heavens manifest as beauty on the earth already exists in the divine programming. In the way of thinking in the emergent paradigms announcing the spirituality of the future, and which corroborates the perspective arrived at by physics as it has been advancing over the decades, that congruity and 'elegance' (a term now current amongst physicists) is self-organized. For example, when all the niches in the orbitals of an atom are occupied by electrons, if a further electron is incorporated in the atom, that electron creates a new orbit. In contrast, while a car follows an already existing pathway or road, an airplane blazes its own trail, one that was not pre-existent.

While one might suppose that the seed needs an adequate environmental support system in which to unfurl, paradoxically, colorful flowers can sometimes bloom in the most unfriendly circumstances, as for example in a wedge in a rock. It looks as though, since the seed is transforming the environment into a plant, its success is a function of the degree to which the environment lends itself to be thus configured, as against the fact that the seed is meeting obstacles in the disposure of the environment to its transformation as a plant. An aware person needs therefore to modify psychological and physical circumstances in order that they may lend themselves to be processed in the person.

But it is not only in the adequacy of environmental conditions that resistance to the self-organizing process is to be found, but also in one's own being. Persons differ in the degree to which they actualize this splendor and realization. It depends upon how important and significant it is for them.

To highlight crucial points already stated, I repeat these words of Pir o Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Man is the product of all planes spiritual and material. In him alone shines forth that primal intelligence that caused the whole.

The divine mind is made of His own creation. The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation.

Man is a condition of God like a wave is a condition of the sea.

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

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Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON THIRTEEN

AWAKENING DORMANT FACULTIES

PREAMBLE

Normally we only use a few of our faculties. What are the 'dormant faculties' that Hazrat Inayat Khan declares we can arouse by awakening them? Are they physical? Or psychic? Scanning Hazrat Inayat Khan's teachings, they are both.

It would be a simplistic assumption to reduce these in the physical realm to magnetism and in the realm of the psyche to intuition. But these are working propositions to start with. Actually Hazrat Inayat Khan points out to the interrelatedness and inter-connection between both.

In matter life unfolds, discovers and realizes the consciousness that has been so to speak buried in it for thousands of years.

PRACTICE:

Imagine that consciousness, the Universe, is conscious of itself. And that you're consciousness is part of that consciousness. And that consciousness tends to awaken in matter, that is, in your body.

As you exhale, if you expand the outreach of your consciousness, you'll feel that the consciousness of the Universe seems to flow into your consciousness as, for example, the sea flows into the waves. That will give you a sense of vastness, of immensity. These are conditions that tend to make you lose the sense of your individuality. That is the way of the ascetic.

As you inhale, just imagine that in fact you are absorbing the Universe, not only in your body but also in your consciousness, and at all levels. You have a sense of

convergence of the Universe as you, of the cognizance with the holistic paradigm: every fraction of the totality carries within it, potentially, the totality.

Imagine that, because there is so much bounty, one would not be able to take in all the bounty. To start with, think of the galaxies and that your body started at the time of the big bang. It was like an explosion of radiance and the planets were formed. Eventually your body was fashioned out of the fabric of the planet. Somehow the past of the Universe is there in your body. The consciousness of the Universe is trying to awaken in you, as you.

Dr. David Bohm (physicist):

If we go to infinite depths of matter, we may reach something that is very close to what we reach in the depth of the mind. (Unfolding Meaning, p 90.) *Perhaps something analogous to mind might exist in matter. The mental and material are two sides of one reality.* (ibid p 20)

Since consciousness awakens in matter by arousing dormant physical faculties, we need to discover, study and arouse these. And since matter and body functions are within the expertise of physics and biology, we need to inquire in what way our meditative practices affect our body functions. [see: Addendum]

BODINESS

What then are the body functions that we are not using and could arouse? What influence do they exercise upon our mind, our sense of meaningfulness, 'awakening?'

One could list a few that come to one's mind: hibernation (triggering off *samadhi*); the ability to enhance body heat (*tumo*); the ability to enhance the configuration of cell structures by an electro-magnetic coil (the research of Dr. Becker); fashioning our subtle bodies, including the aura, by the impact of mind upon body; developing magnetism by working with the *chakras* (Dr. Motoyama); body radiation (i.e. the Kirlian corona), most importantly, our body magnetism and bioluminescence. These are often ascribed to higher bodies (the subtle body and the aura).

According to physics, magnetism is a condition of matter, and so is light. However, in

our experience there are degrees of energy ranging from the 'telluric' (earth magnetism) to what we call spirit. And since scientists acquiesce that all that they know of light is the way it interacts with the laboratory equipment or the way the experiment is devised and therefore do not know how light is if we are not perceiving it or experimenting with it, our question is whether we are, in our meditative explorations, stalking light beyond its physical expression. This means that we, in our meditation cells, are exploring levels of reality (perhaps including subliminal levels) that complement the area explored by scientists in their laboratories.

PRACTICE:

Let us try to become aware of the magnetic field of our body. Remember having poured metal filings around a magnet at school? A beautiful, complex pattern is seen surrounding the magnet. If we could see inside the magnet, we would ascertain that a complementary structure is in place within the magnet.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Man is constituted of three aspects of body: a gross aspect of the body, a finer aspect, and a causal body – or a controlling body, which directs activities…. I do not only exist as a physical body which I always see myself to be, but I also exist as a magnetism, an energy by the touch of which the body lives. (Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism: Self-knowledge)

Now try to 'feel' this magnetic field around your arms, shoulders, back and head. If you 'feel' your magnetic field, you will notice that it does not have a boundary and consequently overlaps and intermeshes with other magnetic fields to form what physicists call a 'wave-interference pattern.' Dr. David Bohm distinguishes this perspective which he calls the 'implicate state' from the usual one in which the world is seen as fragmented – made of 'discrete' objects (the 'explicate state').

In a further step, notice different centers in your life field, which correspond to the plexi of the autonomic nervous system.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The mechanism of the body shows the nervous system as principle battery in which magnetism is prepared by the action of breath.

There are inner and finer parts of the physical mechanism which the mystics have called centers. When these centers are not used for many years, they become blunted.

Try to 'feel' the magnetism radiating from your heart *chakra,* (the cardiac plexus). Compare it with the way magnetism is resorbed in the void through that gate: the solar plexus, and renewed in the heart *chakra*. Now try to 'feel' the magnetism of the *Hara* (a *chakra* connected with the adrenal glands often concentrated upon by Zen masters). Now try to 'feel' the magnetism of your third eye (pineal gland), and even the magnetism overarching your head whose center is the pituitary gland.

The intensity of the magnetism of each *chakra* has been measured by Dr. Motoyama who has ascertained that by being aware of one's magnetic field, and more particularly by concentrating upon exploring the magnetism of each *chakra*, one enhances its power. This effect confirms the 'mind-body' impact.

The real existence of these chakras and meridians was made clear by myself in a series of physiological experiments using an electro-encephalograph.…The data (measurement of the electrical potential and frequency) recorded in the case of electrodes placed in proximity to a chakra easily emitting energy through the subject's will were remarkably different from those data obtained when the electrodes were placed near a chakra not readily emitting energy through the will of the subject. (Cf. Future Science, Doubleday, New York, 1977, p 444, seq.)

To nurture the realization of our inter-connection with the entire cosmos, as you meditate, in a first step, represent to yourself that your body is made, basically, of the fabric of the stars and galaxies and therefore is a fabric that existed since the beginning of time.

Yet if you look deeper, you will learn that the fabric of the stars made a radical quantum leap at some dramatic moment in cosmic history to evolve into biological matter as our bodies. Suddenly, the crystalline inorganic macro-molecules that duplicate each other like frescoes begin to vary so as to be able to cooperate as

organic matter, providing consciousness with a much more efficient infrastructure in order to foster the evolution of the awakening of consciousness in matter that had been incubated in the course of the eons of times, as Hazrat Inayat Khan pointed out.

The fabric of our body is a more evolved stuff than that of which the stars are made, as Schroedinger points out:

The difference in structure is of the same kind as that between an ordinary wall paper in which the same pattern is repeated again and again in regular periodicity and a masterpiece of embroidery, say a Raphael tapestry which shows no dull repetition, but an elaborate, coherent, meaningful design traced by the great master. (What is Life? Mind and Matter,Cambridge University Press, 1944, p 5)

To be truly self-organizing, the Universe needs to explore unforeseen possibilities; and likewise ourselves.

Eric Jantsch:

In an evolutionary spirit, creative processes ought to be permitted to interact freely and to find their own order of evolutionary structures. Dunn calls this approach "evolutionary experimentation." (The Self-Organizing Universe, Pergamon Press, 1980, p 271)

Chuang Tzu:

He who wants to have right without wrong,
Order without disorder,
does not understand the principles
of heaven and earth.
He does not know how things hang together
(The Great and Small)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

All activities of life are connected with one another, and if one thing is put in order another goes wrong. (Social Gathekas)

Teilhard de Chardin:

Then at a given moment, after a sufficient lapse of time, those same waters here and there must unquestionably have been writhing with minute creatures. And from that initial proliferation stemmed the amazing profusion of matter whose matted complexity came to form the last but one of the envelopes of the Planet: the biosphere. (The Phenomenon of Man, Harper & Row, 1965, p 78)

But we must not stop here. The evolutionary advance marches further to serve the awakening of the consciousness of the universe (called the divine consciousness in Sufism): the deployment of the noosphere.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

As matter evolves, it shows signs of intelligence. When one studies the growing evolution of the natural world, one will find that at each step of evolution the natural world has shown itself to be more intelligent, reaching its height in the human race. But this is only the predisposition of matter which is manifested in the end. Everything in nature, even in the vegetable world is the seed of which the root is the evidence. Thus intelligence which is the effect is also the cause.

Teilhard de Chardin attributes this further quantum leap in the evolutionary advance to:

…the power acquired by a consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own consistence and value: no longer merely to know, but to know oneself….

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

In man this consciousness of being reaches its culmination. (Manifestation)

Now in the same sentence without a transit, Teilhard's mind itself makes a quantum leap anticipating the next step:

…no longer to know, but to know that one knows.

Compare Jami:

…to be aware that one is aware.

This corresponds precisely to the 4th *Satipathana* of Buddhism; Buddha expresses it thus: *Having dismissed the "illusory 'I',"* (p 175)*, the meditator reaches "the point where consciousness can no more be the consciousness of an 'I'.* (Cf. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, Luzac, 1951, p 189)

It is not an I…. He looks at himself again and again before performing an action, saying a word, harboring a thought….(ibid p. 171)

Baghavad Githa:

*He "sees the self in the self." (*VI 20 – 23)

This takes place by freeing the mind from sensations, *vitarka,* and representations, *vikara.*

This does not simply announce the advent of *homo sapiens,* but clearly marks the leap towards realization – the ultimate step in the evolutionary advance.

Here we distinguish two steps in meditation: (i) to reconnoiter dormant physical faculties and arouse them, (ii) to watch your consciousness reconnoitering body functions and awakening them.

Addendum

Some observations about the relation between meditation and science by a physicist Dr. Michael-David Clarkson who is practicing our meditations:

Since some of the points of view arrived at by meditators fall within the purview of the research of physicists and biologists, an in-depth study of the domains where there is an overlap is warranted. We have reached a point where networking the know-how obtained in various fields of human endeavor has proven mutually enriching; perhaps what the scientist and the mystic have most in common is the importance they attach to experience. In fact, scientists and contemplatives share a common set of values in

the sense that the ultimate test in both cases is that of experience; the difference is that the physicist manipulates matter and matches it with his experience of events outside himself, whereas the mystic works by triggering off physiological processes in his or her body, which require of the mind to explore unfamiliar territory.

A meditator in our day and age, conversant with some of the publications about the update in physics, biology and psychology, is bound to be enthused by reading in these parallels with his/her own views attained in the meditative state. Indeed we are interested in knowing whether what we are experiencing in our bodies, or about our bodies, is corroborated by or corroborates the findings of scientists. However the contemplative experience stands on its own ground and need not be validated by science, just as scientists would not seek validation for their findings in the utterances of mystics. Science provides invaluable models that may be called upon to make some sense of the unusual, sometimes paradoxical experiences of contemplatives practicing their meditations.

As meditators, we are interested in understanding the phenomena that we encounter when modulating our consciousness in our contemplative practices. On the other hand, valuable information as to the nature of our thinking, culled from exploring the impact of experience upon our consciousness as we modulate the field and level of our consciousness, may open some clues to physicists, biologists and psychotherapists in their efforts to account for phenomena. By the same token, by providing us with a topography of the uncharted reaches of the psyche, these findings facilitate and encourage our meditative practices.

While scientists are manipulating matter to answer specific questions, contemplatives are modifying their perspective of the environment and their self-image by modulating consciousness and altering some physiological functions.

There is a parallel between the mystic and the physicist in that progress is made by uncovering modes of thinking that are not yet known. Both are challenged into exploring the nature of our thinking, and extend it beyond the commonplace middle range in order to make sense of the observations thus acquired beyond what was considered acceptable in the past. The role of such fundamental qualities of our universe such as locality, causality and reality are currently being very carefully scrutinized (D'Espagnat), and perhaps we might even ask if contemplatives might

have a contribution to make to this kind of thinking as we all try to create an "imago mundi." Perhaps this is not so surprising: these are precisely what we encounter in meditation, i.e. non-locality or ubiquity, the acausal, synchronicity, vacuity, the non-determined, negentropy.

Professor Motoyama measured the energy emanating from the chakras of a meditator as compared with a person who does not practice meditation.

The data (measurement of the electric potential and frequency) recorded in the case of electrodes placed in proximity to a fully awakened chakra easily emitting energy through the subject's will were remarkably different from those obtained when the electrodes were placed near a chakra not readily emitting energy through the will of the subject. There was also a marked contrast in the data when the subject was in a quiescent state. (Cf. Future Science, Anchor Books, Double Day, 1977, p 445)

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LESSON FOURTEEN

MODES OF THINKING

This and the next lesson of the meditation course are intended to serve as an overview of the stages fostering the awakening of dormant faculties. They thus present a preview of the more detailed studies that will follow in later installments.

To ensure clarity in our way of thinking, with its consequences regarding our self- creativity by the unfurling of our potentialities in our psyche and the ensuing ability to accomplish our life's purpose, it is relevant to distinguish between our different modes of thinking. Moreover, the knowledge of these perspectives will furnish us with clues to apply them as meditation themes in a progressive sequence.

We may distinguish between five modes of thinking:

1) the commonplace mode
2) the dichotomous mode
3) the proto-critic mode
4) the archetypal mode
5) the transcendental mode

The first three modes of thinking are triggered off by three corresponding levels of identity. Beyond that point our identity is transpersonal.

THE COMMONPLACE MODE

This stage corresponds to what the Sufis call the level of *Nasut,* and to what in Yoga is called *Savitarka Samadhi.*

At this stage, according to the Qur'an:

God reveals Himself to us through signs (ayat) in the physical realm and in our souls (psyche: our idiosyncrasies).

Reality is inferred from actuality.

We identify with our body and concurrently perceive the environment in our usual perspective of the physical world as made of distinct discrete entities.

The mode of thinking corresponding to this level of identity is what the Sufis call *Khayal* and in Yoga *NirvetarkaSamadhi:*

(i) our thinking is likewise fragmented in discrete thoughts – categories of reason, syllogistic logic; we are using static words, nouns like 'thoughts,' instead of dynamic words, verbs like 'thinking,' 'feelings' instead of 'feeling,' an 'act' instead of 'action,' an 'event' or 'occurrence' instead of 'processing,' etc.

(ii) our thinking is biased by our personal vantage point as the spectator.

(iii) we can simply discern the consequence of our past actions, and those of others, upon ourselves and our circumstances at present – causality.

(iv) our motivation is selfish – pursuit of material gain, possessions, dominating others, recognition, appreciation, being loved (rather than loving).

(v) we fail to see from another person's point of view, or sense or validate another's grievances.

(vi) we entertain resentment for people's abuses wreaked upon us – which generates a wish for revenge, intolerance, unkindness, violence and cruelty, with its trail of suffering, misery, crime, the terror of murder, the sheer insanity of the mass destruction of life, and the wanton vandalism by pillaging and ransacking the fruits of the achievements of great civilizations in war.

THINKING IN THE MODE OF POLARITY, COMPLEMENTARITY, DICHOTOMY, ANTINOMY – THE TWO FACES OF JANUS

This stage corresponds to the level of identity called *asman* by the Sufis and *Savikara Samadhi* in Yoga.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

***What is meant by concentration is the change of identification of the soul.* (The Alchemy of Happiness/The Inner Life and Self Realization)**

If we identify with our subtle body (our magnetic field – with no boundary or profile), we see ourselves as part of the environment, overlapping with what seemed to be 'other,' we resonate with the environment instead of perceiving it.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

All things and beings on the surface seem separate from another, beneath the surface they approach nearer to each other, and in the innermost plane they all become one….

This perspective is clinched by turning within, reversing consciousness so that we grasp "that which transpires through that which appears," for example the glance of a person instead of the features of his or her face. These are also 'signs' in which God reveals Himself to us by implication, as those referred to in the commonplace mode.

To shift our consciousness into this mode we need to:

(i) *Place* a *blind in front of the mirror; consciousness will turn within. To turn within, the Sufi closes the door through which the soul is accustomed to look out, and as it finds the doors of its experience closed, a time comes when it turns its back to the external world.* (Private Papers) *You will find a kind of universe in yourself.* Hazrat Inayat Khan

(ii) Then we learn to toggle (oscillate) consciousness from the outer perspective to the inner and vice-versa.

PRACTICE:

As you exhale, perceive the physical environment. As you inhale, close your eyes and identify with your subtle body. Now instead of your eyes passively receiving light reflected by the objects, identify with your glance as emitting light and casting it upon the objects. Now try to grasp "that which transpires through that which appears."

Now we can do the same considering our problems and what is enacted behind our problems.

(iii) In a further step, we learn to extrapolate between these two perspectives.

We can reconcile two complementary points of view rather than discounting one at the cost of another, while in the previous state we would consider these propositions as contradictory and hence irreconcilable.

Kharras:

Sufism is validating antinomic propositions.

St. Augustine:

Conjunctio oppositorum.

This has relevance in terms of our identity: we can grasp that while being a part of the Total being, we carry the Totality in our being.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

God is in man and man is in God, yet God is God and man is man. We are a condition of God.

The mode of thinking corresponding to this level of identity is what the Sufis call *Mithal* and in Yoga *NirvekaraSamadhi.*

In this mode of thinking, we learn to gauge the two sides of a problem: the disadvantage of an advantage, the advantage outweighing the disadvantage.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The defeat that avers itself to be a victory; the victory that turns out to be a drawback.

We can unmask where we pride ourselves in a stance of humility and therefore reconcile

The greatest pride with the greatest humility; the aristocracy of the soul with the democracy of the ego. **Hazrat Inayat Khan**

(I) our thinking is extended to grasp the context of a situation or of our problems rather than their content.

(II) we can shift our consciousness into the vantage point of another, resonate with the attunement of another, even grasp a sense of his or her opinion of us.

(III) we can see how the very problem with which we are involved looks from the point of view of another, in particular our opponent.

(IV) on a cosmic scale, we can about-turn our personal perspective grasping how the cosmos thinks and feels.

(V) furthermore, we discover the cosmos in ourselves,

(VI) and intuit how we look from the vantage of the cosmos in an infinite embrace.

As St. Francis said:

I thought I was looking at the world but I discovered the world looking at me.

In this mode of thinking, one does not consider one's problems as one's problems, but as a specific case of the problems of humanity, ultimately of the universe. Consequently our involvement in our problems is one of the manners in which we are inextricably linked and intermeshed with the whole of humanity and further the whole universe.

Furthermore, in this mode of thinking, rather than relegating one's problems to circumstances, one envisions oneself and one's problems as an indivisible

whole however polarized between the impact of the circumstances upon oneself and the impact of oneself upon the circumstances.

PRACTICE:

Recollect the whole curve of your life. First earmark how events and circumstances shaped and kept modifying your psyche. Then recollect how your idiosyncracies and values played a role the programming of the circumstances.

In this mode, we see how mind and matter are related as the two poles of the same reality.

Dr. David Bohm:

If we look deeply into matter, we find something that is of the nature of mind.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

There is a gradual awakening of matter to become conscious. In matter life unfolds, discovers and realizes the consciousness that has been, so to speak, buried in it for thousands of years*. (The Smiling Forehead). *Through the awakening of matter to increased consciousness, matter becomes fully intelligent in man.

We also see how our subtle body, eventually our body, is shaped by our thinking and attunement.

Evola:

***Rendering states of consciousness corporeal.* (The Doctrine of Awakening)**

Geshe Gyatzu:

***the cause for your future achievement of an actual illusory body in the form of your personal deity (not seen by everyone).* (The Clear Light of Bliss)**

We now see the impact of our thinking and attunement as they customize the thinking and attunement of the universe upon our psyche. The attunement sparks the thought.

These are now modes of creativity. Knowledge thereof will furnish us with clues as how to enhance our creativity. Creativity is actuating a thought or an attunement into an image or a form.

Ibn 'Arabi:

***He never manifests Himself to His creatures except within a form, and his forms are diverse.* (cf Chittick)**

Reacting to circumstances or the thoughts of others is not creativity, it is conditioning. Circumstances however operate as catalysts to arouse and awaken personal thoughts and emotions. The secret is in plunging blind-foldedly into the void inside which is actually a plenum of potentialities lying in wait in subliminal areas of the universe customized as our potentialities unbeknown to ourselves, then actuating them in our psyche and, if one is an artist, in a masterpiece. Therefore the secret is relating inside with outside.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

This plane of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is in the inner dimension; and what exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in the three dimensional space.

Creativity is free-wheeling, spontaneous, the actuation of latent potentials and resources by awakening one's awareness of them by arousing them and arousing them by awakening one's awareness of them.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

In man is awakened that spirit by which the whole universe was created.

Ibn 'Arabi calls this process: "begetting the possible in the actual."

If you watch carefully what happens in this process, you will observe that, at first, your incentive is passive with regard to the formative process operating in your psyche at the subliminal level whereby the universe is self-organizing itself as you.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

One finds a kind of universe in oneself. If man dived deep enough within himself he would reach a point of his ego where it lives an unlimited life.

***The planet has culminated into human beings*. (Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism/Philosophy/ Intelligence)*. The whole universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today*. (Spiritual Liberty). *The collective working of many minds as one single idea and the activity of the whole world are governed by the intelligence of the planet*. (The Message of Spiritual Liberty). *The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind.* (Unity of Religious Ideals).**

As the qualities surfacing in the new birthing pass the threshold between the unconscious and the conscious, your will needs to customize the emerging plethora of cosmic qualities in accordance with your personal wish. (Incidentally, this rebirthing is moreover paralleled by a surge of new energy, rather than simply restoring what was damaged to the state prior to the debilitation of pristine energy.)

Ibn 'Arabi:

When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them. He does not determine our properties except through us; or rather we determine our own properties through ourselves though through Him. (Chittick, p. 299)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

All is God, but man has a body and mind of his own.

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

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Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 15

PLUGGING INTO THE UNIVERSE TO FASHION OUR BEING

Our objective: To converge the totality of the universe in our personality we need to explore the cosmic outreaches of our being, and on the other hand the subliminal roots of our psyche.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The purpose of life is fulfilled in rising to the greatest heights and in diving to the deepest depths of life, in widening one's horizons, in penetrating life in all its spheres, in losing oneself, and in finding oneself in the end. (The Way of Illumination; The Inner Life)

We will find that each one of us does this in a unique way because this diversification of the totality enriches the totality by the interface of the fragments of the whole.

Men differing in education and belief feel today closer thanks to a passion for that double truth that there is a unity of being and they are its living and active parcels. (L'avenir de l'Homme Seuil p. 32)

Moreover we are embarking on a journey across the transpersonal dimensions and outreaches of our being by transfiguring form and converting the transient into everlastingness.

Consequently what is gained by individuation is fed back into the comic code and integrated into the programming of the universe by undergoing a process of transmutation.

Our ability to achieve what we so wish to accomplish is poised precariously upon our self-esteem, and our self-esteem is constrained by our self-image, which is a sliver of who we are. Consequently the unfurling of the bounty of who we are potentially is blocked by our refusal to recognize all the dimensions of our being.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Most men can only see the limitations of his human life, and can never probe the heights of his divinity; comparatively few can do this. (Unity of Religious Ideals; The Messenger)

PRACTICE:

You wish to call a halt to the stress and disarray of the rat race in which you are inevitably embroiled. You sit down to meditate, seeking tranquility and composure.

Notwithstanding, your mind is idling apparently randomly, even turbulently, agitated by undisclosed emotions that evade scrutiny. Notice that your thinking meanders in subliminal, imponderable, and unsounded recesses called the unconscious only to surface sometimes by erupting into assessments of your problems that prove in the end unreliable. Observe that the albeit unwieldy outreach of our unconscious is awkwardly squeezed into the narrow purview of our personal bias. Is it not surprising that Yoga devalidates that mode of thinking as misleading (*maya*)? These constructs of our commonplace mind cannot make sense of the wide context of what is implied behind what we try to explain to ourselves. If we watch them carefully, we will realize that they are ambiguous, do not fit into a coherent pattern. Consequently our mind toggles between one way of looking at the problem then another, then perhaps still another. Hence the aimless erring of our thoughts when we try to make them orderly.

Behind this display of incoherent thoughts are the emotions that spur them. Surreptitiously our psyche is irrevocably part of the problem - with the suffering, joy, personal satisfaction it incurs. Bear in mind that your psyche is precariously poised upon your vulnerable self esteem.

THE IMPACT OF THE SITUATIONS UPON OUR BEING AND THE IMPACT OF OUR BEING ON THE SITUATIONS

If you now turn your attention toward yourself rather than the problems at their face-value, that is, observe the impact of the problems (earmark first one problem) upon your emotions, that which will at first strike you is an emotion of frustration. Of course blessedly it might be satisfaction (but most probably more rarely than frustration).

The possibility lies ahead that, blocking the way to your perfunctory resolve to take action, you may discover drawbacks, even insurmountable hurdles. You may have to admit to yourself that your plans are unrealistic, built like 'castles in Spain' upon injudicious wishful thinking.

Alternately you may entertain an 'aha' hunch: why did I not think of this option before? It may occur to you that while the situation is blocked, you need not be stymied because you have the possibility of changing yourself by enhancing qualities that were not yet up to the challenge. The impact of your qualities upon the situation has dawned upon you, rather than the impact of the situation upon your psyche. Lamenting the blockage in the situation has proven counterproductive.

WORKING WITH THE QUALITIES OF YOUR PSYCHE

Ask yourself what is the quality I need to reinforce in my being in order to meet the challenge that I am faced with. However you need to bear in mind that the drawback in figuring out the relevant quality is owing to basing our judgment upon the face value of the problems rather than what is enacted behind them. The flaw is that we are assessing ourselves on the basis of our self- image instead of who we really are.

It now becomes clear that our ability to deal with our problems is a function of the qualities that we activate in our psyche, and it is our self image (which is not our self but our false notion of ourselves) that blocks the unfurling of these qualities by our refusal to acknowledge who we are in all its dimensions, resourcefulness and flaws.

PERSONAL VERSUS TRANSPERSONAL ASSESSMENTS

However let us not dismiss our personal assessment altogether, granted it is biased, therefore relative, yet as we have seen something is gained in the totality by the diversification and hence individuation of the Totality.

Here we are faced with a basic antinomy in our logic: (i) the Hindu view that personal judgment is deceptive (*maya*) with (ii) the Islamic view that the apparent carries signs conveying clues to the intention in the programming of events. To glean an exhaustive picture, we need to reconcile these seemingly irreconciliable principles.

We encounter the criterion upon which the realization proposed by Sufism is based: strive to see things from the antipodal point of view, which the Sufis call the divine point of view, to your personal vantage point.

Jami:

The world is an illusion but eternally reality manifests through it. (1982, p. 125)

Qur'an:

We will show them our Signs in the furthest regions of the earth and in their own souls. (Qur'an 41: 53, tr Yusuf Ali)

Ibn 'Arabi:

The signs alert us to what they manifest, what they reveal. He is known through the things. (Chittick, 1989, p. 225)

Ibn 'Arabi:

One may see the Real behind the veil of things. (cf. Chittick, 1989, p. 228) *Things are like curtains over the Real. When they are raised, unveiling takes place….* (ibid, p. 225)

We learn in Sufism to always look at things from two complementary antithetical points of view: our personal view and the divine point of view.

But how can we know the divine point of view (the all-encompassing grasp of the universe of itself)?

Hadith (saying) of the Prophet:

Man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa Rabbahu. Whomsoever knows himself knows the Lord.

Ibn 'Arabi:

Since the ephemeral being manifests the form of the eternal, it is by the contemplation of the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself. (1975, p. 15)

However the ephemeral is not conceivable as such, that is in its ephemeral and relative nature, except in relation to a principle from which it derives its possibility, so that it has no being in itself, but derives it from another to whom it is tied by its dependence (1975, p. 15)

For man is incapable of appropriating the divine knowledge which is applied to those archetypes in their state of non-existence….However the essence only reveals itself in the form of the disposition of the individual who receives this revelation. (ibid, p. 23)

Meditation could also be considered as the skill to upgrade our thinking beyond the commonplace, middle range of thinking.

Just like non-Euclidian geometry or Gödel's paradoxical structures that flummox our commonplace minds.

D'Espagnat:

One needs to surpass familiar concepts because one cannot account for the world or for our rapport with the old by relying upon them.

(La physique Quantique, Cf. L'homme Face a la Science)

As our understanding progresses, we learn to reconcile the view that "all is one," including ourselves, and of God as 'other.'

It takes a shift from our commonplace logic to a more advanced logic formulated by 'and' instead of 'or.'

We learn to toggle between our personal vantage point and the transpersonal one, and may eventually be able to extrapolate between these two perspectives.

Al Kharraz:

God can only be known by the synthesis of antinomic affirmations. (Ibn 'Arabi, 1975, p. 36)

Mahon:

Is God immanent or transcendent, composed or compassionate? Like the question whether the atom is wave or particle. (cf. The Hand of God, p. 139)

Jili:

The quality of Unity unites the contrasts such as the eternal and the ephemeral, God and the creature, or existence and non-existence. (ibid, p. 18)

There is a propensity of human thought and emotion to always seek further into the far reaches in infinite regress.

Henri Poincarre, the French mathematician, (paraphrased by the author):

Infinity consists in our ability to imagine a larger number than that envisioned so far, or a space farther than we can imagine, or a time beyond our grasp.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul which gives the soul a longing for the unattainable. (The Unity of Religious Ideals)

Carl Sagan:

We belong to something that is greater than ourselves. (p. 36)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Oneself, as one knows self, is a limited part of Being like a bubble in the sea, which

has no existence of its own. It is only a temporary condition, and so is the conception of self which man has.

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LESSON 16

RELATIONSHIP VERSUS IDENTITY

our relationship with God as not 'other' than our higher self

What we have basically learned from the previous lesson is this: our ability to become a beautiful person by unfurling the legacy of our bountiful potentials and resourcefulness from the whole universe (which we call God), and thus make sense of the purpose of our lives, gravitates upon our relationship with that totality. That is what spirituality is about.

It is crucial here to spot the reason why it works so rarely. It is because we are so used to thinking of God (let us consider the universe as the existential dimension of what we mean by God) as 'other.' In one's ordinary logic one envisions that relationship is a connection between two different entities. It is difficult for our minds to reconcile our relationship with the totality of the universe with the realization that the totality is the transcendent dimension of ourselves because in our commonplace thinking relationship means the rapport between two things or ideas - that is relationship is based upon a sense of 'otherness.' Our sense of personal identity is mostly stronger than our sense of the totality of which we are an intrinsic part, which gets relegated into a belief rather than a realization.

Our simplistic minds are stymied by paradox. When we observe what painful consequences this simplistic thinking has had in causing religious conflicts, not only between different religions, but also within the same religion where mystics have overcome dogmatic thinking of the fundamentalists, we see the urgency of unmasking the hoax of this dilemma.

What stands in the way of so doing is our commonplace way of thinking. Ordinarily our thinking is based upon what Martin Buber calls the I-It relationship; we assume

that we are the spectator perceiving and cognizing the environment, events, circumstances, reality, the cosmos, the universe, God as 'other' than ourselves, as the object. But actually we, our bodies, our psyche, our thoughts, conceptions and emotions are those of that totality we call the universe or ascribe to God - not like the portions of an orange, but as a fragment of a crystal which behaves (but less well) like the whole of which it is a fragment, not simply as a truncated portion thereof. This basic way of envisioning reality, the holisitic paradigm of science, applies to us and alters dramatically how we think ofourselves in our relationship to God or the universe.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

People wish to know something that they cannot understand; they are very pleased to be told something that their reason cannot understand. (Alchemy of Happiness; The Intoxication of Life)

GOD AS CREATOR

It is an easily foregone conclusion to infer that the world was created by a being other than itself. It is the consecrated theological view.

Psalm 192:

The sky proclaims God's handiwork.

Gustav Flaubert, the French romantic, ventures:

What is this hand that propels them? (Cf. The Hand of God, Templeton Press, p. 48)

Dr. Sleus:

There must be someone on top of that small speck of dust. (Ibid. p. 31)

John Glenn, astronaut:

I don't think you can be up here and look out of the window and see the earth from this vantage point, to look at this kind of creation, and not believe in God. (Ibid. p. 123)

Surprisingly we find it amongst scientists!

What with scientists poised at the frontier between science and spirituality, contemporary physicists are encroaching upon the realm that used to be reserved for spirituality.

Werner van Braun:

As science explains more of the intriguing mysteries of life and the universe, its realms expand into those areas which previously were either unknown or accepted solelyby faith. (Cf. The Hand of God)

Robert Jastrow:

He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries. (Ibid.)

Scientists past, and some even now, and, of course, the majority of the human population of the world think that it was created by a transcendent Being 'up there' who sometimes discloses to us His/Her intention, intervenes in our destiny, and might even reveal some clues as to His/Her being.

Paul Davies:

It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe….The impression of design is overwhelming. (The Cosmic Blue-Print)

Hazrat Inayat Khan retorts:

Man is not created by God as wood is carved by the carpenter, for the carpenter is different from the wood, but man is created out of the self of God. (Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)

Wary of anthropomorphism, since physicists discovered such meticulous planning, some refer to an impersonal principle.

Sir Fred Hoyle sees this impersonal force as a "super intellect."

Hazrat Inayat Khan points out that by reducing God to a principle, we are depriving God of manifesting in the existential realm as the human, which is the very marvel of creation.

People ask: "If all is God, then God is not a person." The answer: though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower, and therefore the flower already existed in the seed. No doubt itwould be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God…. (Vol. 9, The Unity of Religious Ideals, The God Ideal)

Hazrat Inayat Khan concedes that one needs to start with a conceptualization:

It is necessary first to have a conception of God in order to reach that stage at which one realizes Him. (Vol. 12, Vision of God and Man.) *The limitless God cannot be made more intelligible to our limited self unless He was first made limited. That limited ideal becomes as an instrument, as a medium of God Who is perfect and Who is limitless.* (Unity of Religious Ideals.) *It is owing to our limitation that we cannot see the whole being.* (The Mysticism of Sound)

Jane Goodall calls this limitation a *"tiny peephole."* (Ibid., p. 146)

Conceptualizing tends to gel into a sclerosed world-view unless one keeps questioning it, reappraising it and updating it.

Einstein:

The important thing is to not stop questioning.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Belief is like a staircase. Each step takes one higher, but when one remains standing on a certain step of the staircase one does not progress. Belief may nail the feet to the ground and keep one there…they only know how to remain standing on a certain spot on a staircase. (Vol. 12, The Vision of God and Man)

The same reality can look different according to the vantage point from which you look at it….There are two awakenings: man awakening in the divine perspective and God awakening into human perspective.

Niffari distinguishes two perspectives, above the veil and below:

When thou perceivest, thou seest limitation openly, and thou seest me at the back of the unseen; when thou art with me thou seest the opposites. (Mawakif 15, p. 50)

Ibn 'Arabi:

If you witness creation, you will not see the Real and if you witness the Real you will not witness creation. (Cf. Chittick)

Ibn 'Arabi testifies to how things look differently according to one's state of consciousness.

Looking at things as viewed from above (as it were) the threshold between transcendence and immanence he says:

Thou art not thou; thou art He, without thou, not He entering into thee, nor thou entering into Him (1976, p. 4)

Then when looking from the other side of the threshold, acquiescing that one needs to account for the personal vantage point:

However know by what you are God and by what you are other than God. (1975, p. 64)

Hazrat Inayat Khan reconciles the two antinomic points of view in a single statement:

We are a condition of God.

Here we encounter the criterion upon which the realization proposed by Sufism is based: strive to see things from the antipodal point of view to your personal vantage point which the Sufis call the divine point of view while acquiescing to the relative validity of the contribution of your personal point of view to the transpersonal one.

If we do not do this, we are trapped in a biased vantage point. Here precisely lies the stumbling block in the full compass of our creativity!

It is this crucial issue which was at stake in the drama that erupted at the very heart of Sufism, God as 'other.' The difficulty of the finite mode of thinking is to see duality in unity, *wahdaniat*, versus the experiential realization of the mystic who is able to free his/her mind from the constraint of commonplace logic.

Al Hallaj:

Ana'l-Haqq. I am the Truth! I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I. (Cf. Massignon, Passion)

Junaid:

Unification is the separation of the eternal from that which is from that which originated in time. (Cf. Kalabadhi p. 91)

Al Hallaj:

The first step in unification tawhid is the abandonment of separation [isolation] *tafrid.*

In unity, *wahdaniat*, it is not possible to affirm other than God.

Kalabadhi makes a difference between renunciation of the world *tajrid* and self-abnegation *tafrid.* Hallaj says the first step towards t*awhid* (unification) is to give up isolation so that it is God who elects you to be incorporated *infirad and ifrad* in his unity.

Junaid:

Nothing of his attributes is mingled with you.

Ibn 'Arabi says the opposite:
Thou seest thy attributes to be His attributes, and thine essence to be His essence without thou becoming Him or Him becoming thee.

Junaid:
Return to the state in which you were before you were engaged in the process of becoming.

Al Hallaj:
Oh God why didst Thou create this body if it does not have a purpose?

It is this same dualistic view held by Junaid that spurred Yogis to deport their consciousness beyond the existential realm, parat param, 'beyond the beyond,' in asamprajnata samadhi and prompted Buddha to declare "this become does not lead to the non-become." It leads to an unbridgeable hiatus demanding the contemplative to make a quantum leap.

Shankaracharya saw this, and highlighted Advaita, the monistic view which was already announced in the Vedic adage formulated in the Chandoya Upanishad: *'Tat twam asi'* (Thou art That) as opposed to the dualism of Yoga, differentiating between *prakriti*, that which is transient, from *purusha*, that which transcendental.

The two horns of this dilemma are articulated in the two terms transcendent and transcendental. By transcending the transient existential state, one reaches out in infinite regress towards that 'unattainable' coined as transcendent; whereas one cannot reach the transcendental except by losing one's self in the blackout, the 'dark cloud of unknowing,' *al ama*, so that one is not there to reach it. That is why Hallaj said: *"it is enough if God alone testifies to His Oneness and the contemplative is no more there."* (Cf. Massignon)

Mystics, touched by a genuine ineffable experience are hard pressed to convey it within the constraint of commonplace logic.

Ibn 'Arabi:

How can I know Thee since Thou art the 'hidden.' And how could I not know Thee, since Thou art the 'apparent!' (Cf. Etudes Traditionelles, Editions Chacornac, 1949, p. 257*)*

And those unaware of the progress of the information theories distort their experience

in the process of trying to explain it in the accepted idiom.

Edgar Mitchell, the astronaut who walked on the moon, concedes that the experience cannot be one that fits into our rational mode of thinking:

Instead of a rational search, suddenly there was a non-rational way of understanding. (Cf. 67)

As in Vedanta, we learn of the efforts of Sufis to clarify this antinomy: God versus man. Hazrat Inayat Khan dispels thinking in terms of duality by taking the next step in logic: 'and' instead of 'or.' He calls it 'the reason of reason.'

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The mystic does not stop at the first reason, the mystic sees that behind that reason there is another but he wishes to see the reason behind them all. (Vol. 10, The Path of Initiation, Sufi Mysticism)

The mathematician Ouspensky had already foreseen this:

There is no reason…for hoping that in the world of causes, relations can be logical from our point of view. Everything logical is only phenomenal…we cannot orient ourselves there with our logic…the axioms of logic and mathematics are deduced by us from the observation of phenomena and represent a certain incorrectness necessary for the recognition of the unreal subjective world. (Ouspensky, Tertium Organum, First Vintage Books, March 1982, pp. 214 & 209)

Scientists are beginning to see this:

One needs to surpass familiar concepts because one cannot account for the world or for our rapport with the old by relying upon them. (D'Espagnat, La physique Quantique, Cf. L'homme face a la Science)

Instead of picturing God as a medieval monarch on a marble throne, imagine God as the living awareness in the space between the atoms, empty space that makes up 99% of the universe. Thinking of God that way gets us past some of the great divides of the past. Is God immanent or transcendent, internal or external, composed or

compassionate? Like the question of whether the atom is wave or particle, the answer is yes. (Tom Mahon, The Spirit in Technology, Cf. Hand of God, p. 139)

Indeed in view of the fundamental maxim: *La ilaha illa 'llah*, the Sufis always espy the unity behind the appearance of duality: *Wahdat* or the multiplicity inherent in unity and *Wahdaniat* the unity overarching multiplicity.

To summarize again: The crux of the whole issue at stake here is in including the divine pole of our being God as 'other.'

At an advanced stage our concept of God is not determined by our knowledge of ourselves but by reaching into the antipodal dimension; therefore envisioning that God discovers aspects of Him/Herself in us who are extensions of Him/Herself, and what is more by including our knowledge of Him/Her in the clues in ourselves to His/Her knowledge of Him/Herself through us.

Ibn'Arabi:

You know yourself with another knowledge, different from that which you had when you knew your Lord by the knowledge you had of yourself. (Corbin, 1970, p. 133)

Challenging realizations announcing the spirituality of the future come through Murshid's bold announcements:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind. (Unity of Religious Ideals)

While forms and names multiply upon earth, their manifold impressions are retained and absorbed by the spiritual spheres, as the souls return and pass through them. Semitic tradition has sometimes explained this by teaching that first was the world, and after the world the heavens were created. (Sangatha I)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way by regaining its original freedom, in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world. (Vol. 1, The Way of Illumination)

Hazrat Inayat Khan sees the need to eschew dismissing or devalidating the personal point of view. It is relative, but when paired with the transpersonal point of view, the apparent irreconciliables aver themselves to be complementary.

Wisdom is born out of the meeting of the knowledge of the heavens and the knowledge of the earth. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom. The guidance from the outer knowledge and the guidance from the inner intelligence are both necessary. If the inner light were enough, then man would never have been created; he would have been an angel. (Hazrat Inayat Khan, Class for Murids)

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LESSON 17

LAUGH THERAPY:

The Smiling Forehead

What makes my feeling heart to laugh and to cry?

Hazrat Inayat Khan

Some Hindu sanyasins, Buddhist lamas and nuns, Christian monks and nuns, schedule half an hour or one hour a day to simply laugh for no apparent reason. Similarly, some updated doctors and psychotherapists have been convoking their patients for routine therapeutic laughter every morning.

Scientific research has demonstrated the physical effect of laughter on the hormones administered by the endocrine glands down the axis: pituitary, thyroid, cardiac, solar plexus, sub-renal and reproductive system glands. Our mind then has a choice in determining whether the outburst of energy thus catalyzed by our wit or realization will lead to action, help us deal with overstress, challenge ourselves to accept the unacceptable, and whether we are able to process this boost to both our psyche and body in exploring higher levels of thinking and realization.

PRACTICE:

In order to relax - as a preparation for your morning meditation by dismissing afflicting or angry emotions - choose a different joke to read every day. There is a fair store of these in magazines like *"Reader's Digest"* (although all are not that funny!)

Norman Cousins gained remission of cancer, leaving the hospital and spending his time watching Laurel and Hardy and the like. (I cannot say they would amuse me.) But he died a few years later of a heart attack. Could it be owing to an overdose of laughter while denying psychological pain?

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***Should one laugh all the time? When there is a time proper to it, then you talk and chum and laugh and joke. And then there is another time, then you are in that attitude which is due to that time.*** **(Sangatha II)**

The Hassidim spark laughter in their witticisms. The Sufis in their Nazruddin tall stories (the subtlety of whose wit is mostly questionable) expose incongruity.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***One can know the grade of a person's evolution by knowing what causes him to laugh and what causes him to cry. Every person is tuned to a certain pitch, and that which causes a person to laugh or weep must be in some way in accordance with his pitch. Therefore, that which makes a silly person laugh does not always cause laughter in others, and what makes a simple person weep does not make the slightest effect upon the wise.*** **(Sangatha I)**

PRACTICE:

> **Better still: try to invent a funny story yourself. For example, practice telling a hilarious bed-time story to your children (or grandchildren) by plunging into their thinking. The unconcerned joy of youth hands one the key to laugh therapy as one grows up, as concerns build up and thwart that youthful spontaneity.**

Many a jester is a sage who can reach into the minds of people that a guru could not reach and make a point digestible by spinning a riddle.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***The person who has wit and a keen perception, who can express himself well, who understands quickly, that is the person who attracts others around him and is liked by everyone.*** **(Healing and the Mind World.)** ***Humor is the reflection of that divine life and sun which makes life like the day. And a person who reflects divine wisdom and divine joy, adds to the expression of his thought when he expresses his ideas with mirth.*** **(Path of Initiation.)** ***Humor is the sign of light; when the light from above touches the mind it tickles the mind, and it is the tickling of mind which produces humor.*** **(Supplementary Papers.)** ***The mentality of the witty person can be called a dancing mind, and to have a witty mind is a wonderful manifestation of nature; it is a great quality. A witty person can make words dance; his phrases can give us the joy of a symphony.*** **(Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism)**

However one does not have to depend for one's joy on a joke, particularly as one rarely finds the joke (including one's own) particularly brilliant. But if one laughs for no reason then it does not matter if the joke is brilliant or not. In fact does one need to have a reason? It seems so stupid to laugh without reason that it is itself a banter upon one's ego, not taking oneself too seriously to laugh all the same.

PRACTICE:

> **Try to practice laughing for a few moments every day without reason, however stupid it may seem - even deriding yourself at that very stupidity.**

One can laugh in resonance with the laughter of another even though one does not find the thought funny.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***We sometimes laugh without reason seeing the intensity of another person's laughter.*** **(Spiritual Liberty)**

Sometimes the sheer unawareness in people's behavior, and more so, realizing one's own incongruities, stirs one's mirth.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***Once I saw a Madzub, a man who pretends to be insane, who though living in the world does not wish to be of the world, standing in the street of a large city, laughing. I stood there, feeling curious to know what made him laugh at that moment. And I understood that it was the sight of so many drunken men, each one having had his particular wine.*** **(The Path of Initiation; Sufi Poetry.)** ***Everything made him laugh, the rushing of the people, so absorbed and involved in their little fancies and interests in life, the great importance that every person gave to the little things of life which amount to very little in the end, and to see them so excited and so absorbed in their little fancies, that was enough for the Madzub to laugh and amuse himself. Anyone tuned to the pitch, seeing from there how it looks, before him it was a doll's play.*** **(Sangatha III.)**
>
> ***Was it not laughable? Every person thinking his particular point of view to be the most important, pushing others away because he finds his action the most important!***

Our humor is titillated when our minds grasp the absurdity of a situation, ridiculous inappropriateness or pertinent violation of congruity that is normally taken for granted, for example, in a pun where similarities prove to be incompatible and the mind is trying to force itself to reconcile ideas whose congruence is misleadingly spurious. An example would be mixed metaphors: trying to make a fact fit into a fictitious metaphysical framework.

One could say that laughter is spotting and debunking contradictions, ridiculing flaws in consistency in which people fool others or themselves. It is unmasking the hoax that is precisely what is meant by *maya*. Its magic is in revealing the truth that we had concealed or failed to grasp. That magical moment is described as the instant when the penny drops. In fact it is this that defines

awakening. The password is "aha;" that is the *mantram* of the future.

PRACTICE:

> **Try to espy the contradictions in what a person says and does. This will put you on the spurs of incongruities that try to escape detection. If you are able to dismiss your ego sufficiently to flash the beam of your insight into unavowed reaches or your own unconscious, you may uncover covert, concealed contradictions undiscovered so far. No sooner you have reconnoitered them, you will exult in a most wonderful sense of freedom from something that had been bugging you up to this crucial moment of truth. You are enjoying a foretaste of awakening.**

What is more serious is that a large percentage of jokes are satires: deriding others. Some people pride themselves in scoffing at others and their inconsistencies and naivety. It is unkind to wreak derision in a smirk on fellow beings awkwardly trying to validate themselves in a way that verges on the ridiculous. Moreover, beware of slipping into frivolity or facetiousness. An example given in Nazruddin Sufi stories is cutting the branch of a tree on which one is sitting, or lying on a branch the whole night whereas the ground is only a few feet underneath one. Sneering at others for one's own ego-satisfaction is not the most savory humor. It is called cynicism; in fact it is sadism, insidious cruelty.

Laughter is a physiological response to a strong emotion triggered by judgment. However, if one laughs and still respects one's fellow beings, one can be aware of their inconsistencies without being judgmental because one recognizes the selfsame incongruities in oneself.

PRACTICE:

> **This is really important to do every day as a meditation theme. Recognize the flaws and inconsistencies of people around you without being judgmental of them.**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***This does not mean that the sage becomes critical, that he sneers at life. No, he sees the funny side of things because the sneering world is always ready to laugh at what it does not understand.*** **(Social Gathekas.)** ***Then he becomes as a little child, eager to play, ready to laugh, happy among children; he shows in his personality childlike traits, especially that look one sees in children.*** **(The Way of Illumination.)** ***If we do not attach ourselves seriously to things then those things laugh at us.*** **(Healing and the Mind World)**

It is difficult to enjoy carefree joy while being aware of the sufferings of thousands of people in the world being incarcerated and tortured today in concentration camps, sometimes owing to a miscarriage of justice, or considering the plight of refugees, millions suffering from starvation, misery, or mental aberrations, or hearing of women and children abused or murdered for lust - unbelievable barbaric brutality in atrocities beyond the pale.

Most people carry a wound in their heart, some more painful, some less, perhaps together with a modicum of joy. Some are in despair for having to put up with unbearable situations from which there is no escape. Some are tormented because they feel that they have failed to fulfill the purpose of their lives. There are numerous causes for the wounds of the heart.

I keep on continually thinking of that beautiful, noble, idealistic being, Noor, my sister, our little mother when my mother was ill. She played the harp, wrote children's stories, and planned to create a magazine called *"Nouvel Age"* (New Age) shortly before we heard Hitler's voice on the radio saying, "My patience is exhausted. I am declaring war."

Can you imagine how terrified you would be finding a Nazi hiding in your room, waiting to arrest you, drag you away with manacles, trap you in prison in chains - alienated from your friends, starved, without heating, then tortured to death - all of this because you had compassion for the Jews who were subjected to outrageous atrocities?

As I get older, I increasingly put myself in Noor's place and relive more details of her ordeal. If I am hungry I can eat; I imagine her being given a bowl of soup a day made of potato peel that burnt her stomach. When I walk, I imagine her trying to walk dragging her chains. If I have pain, I can take a painkiller; she could not. I can have a warm bath, she had a cold faucet and no heating in the cold winter. I can communicate with people, loved ones; she was isolated in a cell. In the concentration camp at Dachau, she had to sleep lying on the concrete floor in the cold without cover. The Gauleiter kept on kicking her with his boots. Then she was shot in the head and was still moving when she was thrown in the furnace.

Today there are many political prisoners subjected to like cruelty.

I have been reasoned with many times: she is now liberated and exulting in a world of light. But the unconscious does not fit into reason when one carries a wound in one's heart.

Admittedly, to relive those horrors seems like a counter-productive thought, while one can well imagine that she has overcome it. The wounds in one' psyche need to be dealt with painstakingly. Extreme grief is one of the causes of cancer. (I hope you will forgive me for bringing up something so acutely personal. I am talking from personal experience since my dealing with cancer is real, not pedantic theory, and may prove significant for others.)

Can laugh therapy heal in this case? Can one enjoy bliss when all around people are suffering?

Why have I been resisting laughter, particularly when it seems facetious? Actually I found that I could joke for the sake of giving joy to others but found it difficult to apply it to myself. The answer flung up: because it seemed to be disloyal to my mourning for Noor and my mother (and the tragedies of my own life).

Yet even the slightest flash of joy is a safety buoy from the darkness of despair.

Gandhi:

Divine guidance often comes when the horizon is the blackest.

Suleiman Grosslight:

Against the dark wrapping the finger-prints may appear luminous!

It is just like when a beam of sunshine breaks through the clouds. This is the message that came through in Dachau when, sharing with Ophiel, I was conducting the B-Minor Mass of Bach. The picture of Noor was right in front of me. I asked myself whether she is aware of what we are doing. In fact, the question whether one survives death was rife in the soul-searching of many minds. I thought, "If only you would give us a sign!" The effigy on the picture seemed to me to move into a Mona Lisa smile. I cautioned myself whether this could be wishful thinking. "Please give a more tangible sign irrespective of my personal bias so that everyone can witness it!" This was just as I was conducting the Resurrexit of the Mass. It was a grey day. All of a sudden a beam of light flashed through, breaking through the clouds, just for a short while.

The secret is to bring a glimpse of heaven in hell.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***It*** **[the outlook on life]** ***can turn hell into heaven, it can turn sorrow into joy.*** **(Social and Religious Gathekas).** ***The condition of the soul can turn any place into heaven. Not only the earth but even hell could be turned into heaven.*** **(Spiritual Liberty)**

Bringing heaven into hell happened when a priest celebrated mass in a concentration camp, was beaten up by the Nazis and, crawling back wounded, maimed, continued celebrating the mass with even more fervor. It is here that the helping hand - the therapy - is to be found.

Are there limits to suffering and distress? We may assume that we have reached limits in our own pain or suffering. But can we have any idea of the suffering of a person who is tortured in prison? Our thoughts are filled with horror. However, there is a threshold where suffering is released into ecstasy

that one could only experience for having reached those excesses of horror and terror.

I met a lady who had met Noor during the resistance, and who was so badly battered by a Gauleiter - her skull trepanated - that she was thought dead and thrown in a morgue. Here she was smiling as she talked to me, the happiest person I have ever met in my life. She said: You look at your torturer from another dimension and think, how stupid you are that you think you can hurt me by torturing me. Islam says: They thought they killed Christ, but they only grabbed his body. One has turned the tables on despair and pain has sparked joy.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***Ecstasy is freedom from one's dependence upon one's bodiness, one's ordinary thinking, one's personal emotions and one's identity.***
>
> ***When I laugh then I cry.*** **(Nirtan)**

One might equally say: Joy is my saving grace when the sunshine of a smile erupts through my tears.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***A person who is able to cry and not able to laugh - that person does not know mastery. The mystic rises beyond the tears after shedding enough.***

Pain may aver itself to be the catalyst that triggers off joy.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***The cry of agony which comes from the depth of the heart may be a sound of the greatest beauty…. There are moments of intense feeling when pain and joy meet, and one cannot distinguish where one ends and the other begins; they have their meeting place in***

> ***the heart of man. Pain is like the herb in the hands of the great Transmuter, the divine Alchemist; falling on the melted silver of the heart it turns it into the purest gold, and renders the heart of man more fitting to be the altar of God.*** **(Sufi Teachings; Spiritual Healing)**

Do we realize that the beauty of the mountains is born out of dramatic convulsions, the heaving of the earth in its travail, and that the splendor of the galaxies is born out of incredible disturbances, collisions of galaxies, humongous space-ranges defying our mind. We are born out of the cosmic drama and often discover beauty emerging out of the pangs of childbirth. So it is with our psyche that can become beautiful through stress and unfavorable circumstances or could alternately become bitter if one does not realize the importance of stress and distress.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Death is my live, indeed, when I live, then I die. **(Nirtan)**

One could equally say, "When I die to my illusory self and when I unmask the illusion that causes my self-pity, that is when I live for the first time." When one has overcome one's self-pity, one has turned the tables on despair. Now one can laugh with abandon. Pain in sympathetic resonance with suffering of another purifies the heart. Self-pity can make one bitter, resentful, cantankerous.

***PRACTICE*:**

> **Cross-examine yourself. If you can judge that people are behaving badly, selfishly, unscrupulously, can you ascertain that no matter how they behave you handle things beautifully.**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***If somebody behaves selfishly towards one, one may take it naturally, because it is human nature to be selfish, and so one is***

> ***not disappointed; but if one appears oneself to be selfish, one should take oneself to task and try to improve.***

THE ULTIMATE THERAPY

Now, once on the laugh azimuth, spurs into further horizons of laughter lie open. The therapeutic laugh is to realize how stupid one has oneself been. The fine point of wit is to laugh at one's own stupidity, naivety, and inconsistencies. Please excuse the forthcoming upfront witticism - no offense - we are stalking laugh-therapy.

PRACTICE:

> **This is the ultimate test on one's ego. Have you overcome your ego sufficiently to have the courage to do this? Keep uncovering those situations in one's life where one handled situations in a way that reveals how inconsistent one was. Now one can laugh at oneself instead of others.**

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

> ***If one does not attach oneself seriously to things, then those things laugh at us.*** **(Healing and the Mind World).**

How could one know that one was stupid unless one had been stupid? Therefore it is even more stupid to regret one's stupidity; rather one should rejoice that it was one's stupidity that sparked one's realization!

The trouble is that in one's jubilation at discovering how stupid one has been (which bodes well for reforming one' s ways in the future), there is a catch 22, because the ultimate stupidity is to assume that, having realized how stupid one has been, one presumes that one is not stupid anymore! Acknowledging how ludicrous and counterproductive were one's inappropriate handlings of situations in the past does not guarantee one will be aware of the same in the future. That is why Zen masters declaim as the ultimate, utmost stupidity, claiming to have attained illumination.

PS. It is intriguing that in the process of stalking humor, for the purpose of therapy, an uncalled for choice joked to spark my laughter, urging me to really apply the laugh therapy that has snuck into the wheels: when reading the text on Laugh Therapy dictated to my secretary, I noticed that she typed ‘Love Therapy’ instead of ‘Laugh Therapy!!!’

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LESSON 18

IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY

Part 1: Turning Within

Man, with the maturity of his soul, desires to probe the depths of life. He desires to discover the power latent within him, he longs to know the source and goal of his life, he yearns to understand the aim and meaning of life, he wishes to understand the inner significance of things, and he wants to uncover all that is covered by form and name; he seeks for insight into cause and effect, he wants to touch the mystery of Time and Space, and he wishes to find the missing link between God and man--where man ends, where God begins. Hazrat Inayat Khan, Unity of Religious Ideals

N.B.
a) Some of the quotes may have appeared in earlier installments; but since they are so very enriching to our thinking, it is good that they become imprinted in our unconscious memory through repetition.
b) Unless the name of the author quoted is mentioned, we are quoting a saying of Hazrat Inayat Khan.
c) These quotes have sometimes been over-edited, besides in some cases I have taken the liberty to paraphrase them where appropriate.

We are exploring here meditation practices which we hope will prove effective. These are based upon the teachings of different traditional esoteric schools of different religions. Many are from Sufism because of its search for awakening in life, and are particularly based upon the bold insights of that pioneer of the spirituality of the future, Hazrat Inayat Khan.

I) THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF OUR BEING.

Our ability to achieve what we so wish to accomplish is poised precariously upon our self-esteem, and our self-esteem is constrained by our self-image which is a sliver of who we are. Consequently the unfurling of the bounty of who we are potentially is blocked by our refusal to recognize all the dimensions of our being.

Jane Goodall:
The unitive world-view emerges when we shift our identity from our personal dimension to its cosmic and transcendent dimension.

We are so preoccupied grappling with the interaction between our narrow self-image and our unreliable assessment of our immediate psychological and physical environment, that we fail to grasp our connection with the vast outreach of the cosmos of which we are a spin-off (though only relatively autonomous - irretrievably interconnected with the whole) and consequently fail to muster the whole bounty of resourcefulness latent in our personality.

What stands in the way of our perspicacity is our commonplace way of thinking. Ordinarily our thinking is based upon our assumption that we are the spectator perceiving and cognizing the environment, events, circumstances, reality, the cosmos, the universe - God as 'other' than ourselves, as the object. Martin Buber calls this sense of 'otherness' the 'I-It relationship.' The difficulty of determining to what extent we enjoy free-will and to what extent we are embedded in and conditioned by the totality of which we are a part (wholistically) reflects both the commonplace views about God as 'other' ('up there') and the views of the Sufis. It challenges our commonplace logic which attempts to reconcile the irreconciliable.

Ibn 'Arabi (in a high state):
Thou art not thou, thou art He without thou…Not He entering into thee nor thou entering Him, nor thou proceeding from Him, nor Him proceeding from thee.

Ibn 'Arabi (in the consciousness awake in life):
Understand whereby you are He and whereby you are other than He.

In a flash of insight, Hazrat Inayat Khan bridges the horns of the dilemma:
We are a condition of God as a wave is a condition of the sea.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to explore experientially, rather than theoretically, the practical steps to become cognizant of the (i) subliminal, (ii) cosmic and (iii) transpersonal dimensions of our identity. Then we seek to actualize those potentialities and resources lying in wait in our being, to work creatively with our being, by awakening dormant faculties in the mind/body relationship. To achieve this we need to converge the totality of the universe in our personality as a unique actuation of all that is invested in it, as a variation on a theme that, while latent in the theme, nevertheless enriches the theme. This, then, is (iv) self-transcendence.

With this objective in view, we treat each dimension in turn while bearing in mind the levels of thinking of the developmental stages in our evolutionary progress.

They are: (i) Nazut, the physical state, (ii) Arwah, the subtle body (the magnetic field or, more generally, the life-field including the light aura), (iii) Mithal, the realm of metaphor (form regardless of whether actuated in matter; creative imagination), (iv) Malakut, the celestial attunement (rather than an actual sphere - beyond existence), (v) Jabarut, the mode of thinking beyond the act of consciousness (inherent, revealed knowledge rather than acquired knowledge, the reason behind reason), (vi) Lahut, the grasp of the cosmic code and the way we customize it (including the feedback of existential experience in the planning of the universe - everlastingness, immortality, resurrection), (vii) Hahut, awakening beyond life (seeing the unity behind multiplicity; reality beyond manifestation), (viii) Tawhid, awakening in life (grasping the way that the divine intention is actualized; seeing meaningfulness masked by incongruity; reconnoitering splendor transpiring through beauty; love rather than aloofness, indifference).

I suggest being very clear from the start as to the difference between looking at and assessing situations from our personal vantage point - that could be illustrated by the effect of a convex lens upon our sight which occurs when we identify (as is the usual way) with our personal self-image, and, alternately, looking at and assessing situations from an all-encompassing vantage point - which emerges when we identify with, in addition to our perfunctory self-image:
(i) our subliminal (that is not yet actuated potentials below the threshold of our

ordinary consciousness); (ii) our life-field (magnetism, light aura); and, ultimately, (iii) the transpersonal dimension of our entire self.

For the Sufis, the personal assessment is not to be discarded. It has a relative validity. The great art of meditation is to extrapolate between the peri-personal and transpersonal vantage point's assessment, and the personal one.

(N.B. The term 'peri-personal,' in contrast with transpersonal, is offered by Dr. Stanislav Grof to distinguish between on the one hand the cosmic and also the subliminal dimensions of our being, and on the other that dimension which transcends our individuality - now called transpersonal.)

Furthermore, to discover how things look as one turns within, one does not only need to change one's vantage point, but one needs to clearly identify with the subliminal dimension of one's being, that is the bounty latent in the seed bed of one's being.

Revelation is the disclosing of the inner self. The consciousness throughout manifestation facing toward the surface turns its back to the world within, the sight of which is therefore lost to it. But when it begins to look within, the world unseen is disclosed.

How do we proceed to become aware of dimensions of our being of which we are not normally aware? How can we really manage to identify with these cryptic components of our being that in our day to day consciousness elude our grasp? I propose to start first by learning to turn within before reaching out or hoisting our consciousness into lofty heights. Let us start from scratch.

PRACTICE:

When you wish to call a halt to the disarray, the rat race, and you feel overstressed by vying with the Jones and protecting yourself from the ego trips of others, seek a peaceful break from continuous activity, solace from pent-up emotions, freedom from the prison you may have built for yourself and sit in as quiet a place as you can find.

Unless you are an experienced meditator, you will find that your mind is assailed by a surge of random thoughts. Unless you have practiced mastery at different levels of

your being, you cannot expect to control them with your will.

Normally our thoughts are monitored by the need to take action. No sooner we suspend activity, our mind has difficulty organizing itself. This is precisely what we learn in meditation.

II) HOW DOES ONE TURN WITHIN?

In order to attain to inner knowledge the Sufi covers the other side of the soul, so that its mirror part may face the spirit instead of the outer world. Spiritual Liberty.

Place a blind in front of the mirror; consciousness will turn within....Close the door through which your soul is accustomed to look out, and as you find the doors of its experience closed, a time comes when your soul turns its back to the external world on finding the doors closed for its experience. It is just like changing place for the soul. It sees before it a different sphere altogether, a sphere that has been within it.

The Yogi says, "In order to see what is before you, you must see within yourself." And that means that within yourself there is a mirror and it is that mirror which may be called the inner world, the inner life. It is in this mirror that all that is before you is reflected. When the eyes are looking outside, then one has turned one’s back to the mirror which is inside, but when the eyes are turned inside, then one sees in this mirror all that is outside reflected. Social Gathekas

No sooner do you turn within, you will find that the physical environment seems remote - your consciousness is offset. To perceive it again, you will need to get your consciousness back into focus.

This space of three dimensions is reflected in the space that is in the inner dimension. The inner dimension is different, it does not belong to the objective world, but what exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in the three dimensional space. Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism.

For the mystic everything is connected. There is no condition that is detached from another condition. A mechanism is always running in relation to another mechanism, however different and disconnected they may seem. To gain insight the mystic enters

into the depth of the whole mechanism of the universe.

All things and beings on the surface seem separate from another, beneath the surface they approach nearer to each other and in the innermost plane they all become one.

The one who tunes himself toward inside is able to enjoy in the seed that fragrance and beauty that delights one in the rose. Likewise, he so to speak touches the soul of a thought. Thus things unknown and unseen are known and seen by the mystic. This is called revelation.

This process takes place in two directions: outwardly by being one with all we see and inwardly by being in touch with that one Life which is everlasting - by dissolving into it and by being conscious of that one Spirit being the existence, the only existence.

III) WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS.

PRACTICE:

Watch your thoughts.

These thoughts may be so jumbled, shifting from one to another unaccountably (sometimes by a sheer process of association) that they appear helter-skelter, rather like some dreams.

As soon as a thought comes from within, the activity of the mind makes it go to another thought, and thus the mind believes it has thought of one idea while in reality it has gone on to another idea.

Notwithstanding, your mind is idling, apparently randomly, even turbulently, agitated by undisclosed emotions that evade scrutiny.

PRACTICE, continued:

Notice that your thinking meanders in subliminal, imponderable and unsounded recesses called the unconscious, only to surface sometimes by erupting into assessments of your problems that prove in the end unreliable.

Observe that the, albeit unwieldy, outreach of our unconscious is awkwardly squeezed into the narrow purview of our personal bias.

It is not surprising that Yoga devalidates that mode of thinking as deceptive, misleading (maya). These constructs of our commonplace mind cannot make sense of the wide context of what is implied behind what we try to explain to ourselves. If we watch our thoughts carefully, we will realize that they are ambiguous. They do not fit into a coherent pattern. Consequently our mind toggles between one way of looking at a problem, then another, then perhaps still another. Hence, the aimless erring of our apparently random, though self-exploratory, thoughts.

This is where the art of meditation aims at training the mind in an orderly and meaningful way.

After contemplation a person is able to realize a certain idea more clearly than if that idea had only passed through his mind. One sees the whole trend of mind. How the mind began, how the mind went through a certain track, how it moved and how it came back.

(IV) IMPRESSIONS FROM OUTSIDE.

You will notice that the first thing that happens when you try to meditate is that impressions from the physical and psychological environment continue to live inside in your memory, inset in your psyche, and crowd into your mind beyond control. What we had experienced outside is now inside, but jumbled.

In the physical world, you are here, and everything is without you, you are contained in space; in the dream everything is contained within you.

This could be illustrated by the way that wave-interference patterns of radio-waves are simplified by our radios so that we can make sense of them. Likewise, our minds simplify the complex bounty of reality to fit into our mind’s limited capacity to extrapolate between a plethora of perspectives.

According to Dr. David Bohm what we ordinarily experience in what he calls the explicate state is only the way we can make sense of the implied reality which he calls

the implicate state. When we turn within, in our meditations, we are plunging into the implicate state which challenges our logic and consequently our assessment of our problems.

PRACTICE:

Recollect the more significant events in your life.

Try to earmark the impact of situations upon your personality; how they have aroused a quality that was not actuated up to that time in your personality - how you have progressed thanks to what you have learned when dealing with situations.

For example, after an accident you became more cautious. After being deceived you have developed more character recognition of people and only trust a person if he or she has proven trustworthy. Having been inspired by something beautiful your ideal has proven real - you are now on the lookout for what you value in life.

Try to earmark the impact of your being upon situations and ascertain how, as you evolved, you called the situations in which you found yourself by your own initiative and acted upon your situations increasingly instead of reacting to your situations.

For example, if you had been then what you are now, a situation might not have arisen which now you cannot change anymore.

Now try to reconnoiter what were the motivations behind your decisions and actions in the past.

Soul searching, try to ascertain what are the values you hold in esteem.

Now, armed with bona fide sincerity ask yourself:

Are you upholding these values in your motivations that trigger off actions? Or are these values simply utopic representations that make you feel good?

Are they imaginary ideals that one does not have the courage to actuate in one’s life? Or are there obstacles in one’s life that make it impossible to actuate them?

Try to acknowledge, to ‘own,’ your mistakes, and give yourself credit for any excellent decisions that have proven helpful and meaningful.

Check yourself from slipping into justifications to protect your self image, thereby deceiving yourself and others.

One needs to distinguish between mistakes committed from:
inadvertently having failed to take precautions,
mis-assessing a situation,
making a decision to foster what one believes is in one’s interest at the cost of another regardless of the distress it can inflict,
willfully harming another or putting spanners in his or her wheels out of resentment, revenge, jealously, or hatred,
deceiving another and even oneself by justifying acts of bad faith on false pretences.

APPLYING MEDITATION TECHNIQUES TO SEE CLEARLY.

Now we wish to apply the techniques of meditation to ascertain how well-grounded our assessment of these impressions is. Instead of considering things from the outside as they look from our personal vantage point, we turn within.

As you turn within, while being unaware of the surroundings, remember the physical world; likewise your assessment of your situations and problems.

Remember personal perspective as you awaken from it, but see its illusion. Bikhu Geshe Gyatzu, The Clear Light of Bliss.

Yogis caution that if (or since) situations are not what we think they are, their hallmark in our psyche will distort our psyche. The distortion is due to the bias of our personal vantage point and self-image.

As you meditate your vantage point is offset and your self-image includes the sub-liminal, peri-personal and transpersonal dimensions of your being. You will assess things differently. In this perspective, you can correct your assessments in your memory, which will clear your psyche of those distortions

Each atom of this universe, conscious of its sickness, procures for itself from within or

without a means for its restoration. Sangatha

We blame others for our sorrows and misfortunes, not perceiving that we ourselves are the creators of our world; that our world has an influence upon our life within as well as upon our life without. Eastern Rose Garden

One’s past decisions, values and actions have a way of catching up on us often obstructing our freedom.

That which strikes first is an emotion of frustration. Of course, blessedly, it might be satisfaction (but probably more rarely than frustration).

The possibility lies ahead that you may discover drawbacks, even insurmountable hurdles, blocking the way to your resolve to take action. You may have to admit to yourself that your plans are unrealistic, built like castles in Spain upon injudicious wishful thinking.

Alternately you may entertain an ‘aha’ hunch: why did I not think of this option before? It may occur to you that while the situation is blocked, you need not be stymied, because you have the possibility of changing yourself by enhancing qualities that were not yet up to the challenge. The impact of your qualities upon the situation has dawned upon you rather than the impact of the situation upon your psyche; lamenting the blockage in the situation has proven counterproductive.

Instead of discarding the impressions from outside and rather than destroying these features of our being, Hazrat Inayat Khan advocates harnessing them and using them as catalysts to awaken the dormant qualities in our personality, just as a yachtsperson harnesses the prevailing wind but directs its thrust where desired.

…the ego (Nafs) is not destroyed, but harnessed. Githa II

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LESSON 19

IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY

Cosmic / Peri-Personal Dimension

As we have seen in the previous lesson, our efficacy in achieving our purpose is precariously suspended upon our self-esteem, and our self-esteem is suspended upon our self-image which is an insufficient estimation of who we are.

One's self image is what is called the ego. The word ego means me, I, myself, who I am. Hazrat Inayat Khan considers our usual notion of ourselves as a faulty representation of who we really are - our real ego. He calls this notion of ourselves the false ego.

Oneself as one knows oneself is a limited part of one's being. Sangitha I

The false ego is one has wrongly conceived as oneself. The Mysticism of Sound and Music

It is not one's true self that is limited; what is limited is what one holds to be oneself. The Alchemy of Happiness

PRACTICE:

Question yourself as to whether who you think you are (your self-image) is just a notion that does not include your whole being and gives you a sense of limitation, even inadequacy (what one calls a poor self-image).

A poor self-image could likened to a two dimensional photograph which is a diminished representation of a three dimensional panorama. The lens of a camera reduces much of the detail of a landscape in order to figure it on to a two dimensional

photograph. By the fact that the consciousness of the universe is focalized in our consciousness the grasp of our ordinary perfunctory consciousness is extremely poor and inadequate.

The pure consciousness has gradually limited itself more and more by entering into the external vehicles such as the mind and body in order to be conscious of something. Spiritual Liberty

Most men can only see the limitations of his human life and can never probe the heights of his divinity; comparatively few can do this. The Unity of Religious Ideals

Schopenhauer:
Everyone takes the limits of his own vision to be the limits of the world.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
We are as great as our spirit, we are as wide as our spirit, we are as low as our spirit, we are as small as our spirit. Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism

The world of one individual is as tiny as a grain of lentil, and that of another as large as the whole world. Healing and the Mind World

PRACTICE:

Having questioned the validity of your self-image, the chances are that you might try to grasp your wider self. The key to doing this is expanding your consciousness and lifting your consciousness.

Jane Goodall: The unitive world-view emerges when we shift our identity from our personal dimension to its cosmic and transcendent dimensions.

Our self-image is a feature of slipping into a limited sense of our bountiful identity. If we identify with our personal nature, we fail to account for the fact that our being cannot be segregated from the totality which is its seedbed, and of which it is a manifestation and a unique actuation as each of us.

If you dived deep enough in yourself, you would discover your real ego, you would

reach a point where your ego lives an unlimited life. Gatha I

The ego itself is never destroyed. It is the one thing that lives. And this is the sign of the eternal life. In the knowledge of the ego there is the secret of immortality. The Mysticism of Sound and Music

How do you do this?

Hazrat Inayat Khan
By losing the false sense of identification and identify[ing] itself with its real self. The Alchemy of Happiness

How can one discover one's real ego?

By attempting to make a definite change in oneself. And that change is a kind of struggle with one's false self. The Alchemy of Happiness

The way to achieve this is to create attunements that are favorable to discovering one's true self. This change in oneself would require one to overcome what may be ascribed to the false ego: one's selfishness, resentment, hatred, unkindness.

PRACTICE:

We tend to justify attitudes in ourselves that are triggered off by our false ego.
(i) In a first step reconnoiter your false ego. To do this, confront your motivations and dismiss denial or justifications. But be careful not to denigrate yourself. Realize that if you really wish to change, you can.

(ii) In a second step, counter your false ego by realizing that it stands in the way of identifying yourself with who you really are.

(iii) In a third step, having removed the obstacle incurred by the non-comprehensive notion of yourself, make an attempt to identify with the bountiful potential of your being.

By rising above this limited self, the false ego is broken and you will rise over the

limitations of life on all planes of existence, and your soul will break all boundaries and will experience that freedom which its deepest longing. Volume I, The Inner Life

When broken, the false ego needs to be replaced by the real ego. This is why in Sufism fana, the annihilation of the false self, is always compensated by baqa, reinstatement.

Ibn ‘Arabi:
It is not their existence that ceases but their notion of themselves.

Consequently our being extends into its seed-bed. We need to consider this wider outreach of our being as the cosmic or peri-personal dimension of our being. Dr. Grof’s word peri-personal does not mean around or outside; one might say it is the area of one’s being that overlaps and is co-extensive with the universe. (Let us note: I am using the word universe instead of God, because the universe is that aspect of God that is existentiated and therefore God cannot be limited to that aspect alone).

The difficulty for most people is that our minds have been conditioned by the belief systems of exoteric religion to represent God as ‘other.’ Obviously, for our finite minds, the alternative: that we are God, is untenable.

Ibn ‘Arabi juggles with this quandary. In a high state he says:
You are not other than God.

Then back into his ordinary perspective, he says:
Know whereby you are God and whereby you are not God.

Hazrat Inayat Khan gives the key:
Man is a condition of God like a wave is a condition of the sea.

In our ordinary thinking even if we acquiesce that we are part of the totality of the universe, which is what we mean by God, we would think that being a part of it is like being a section of an orange. Whereas to understand the way mystics formulate their experience we need to call upon a more advanced mode of thinking - the holistic mode: each fraction of the whole (Dr. David Bohm uses the word sub-whole) carries, potentially, the whole.

Is it not then drunkenness on the part of man when he claims to be an individual standing separate from all others thinking of himself as an individual being separate from all others. Sangitha II

In fact meditation could be looked upon as the art of modulating consciousness from its usual local and middle-range setting.

This could be illustrated thus: each cell of our body is governed by the DNA of the whole body. (Paradoxically, it may be governed by the DNA of the universe.) Yet in each cell certain genes of the body's DNA are active while others are recessive. This makes for the diversity of the cells so that they may cooperate to serve our intelligence, rather than the uniformity that would result if they repeated each other like patterns on frescoes or wallpaper do. Likewise while the peri-personal dimension of our self is ultimately co-extensive with the universe, only a fraction of its bounty is actuated in our personality. These are the virtual resources of our being waiting to be awakened and aroused. The good news is the more we discover the qualities adorning this wider area of our being, the richer our personality becomes. The secret of discovering this is to acquiesce that it is 'me,' rather than thinking that it is 'other.' This is the way of thinking that we find in the esoteric rather than exoteric traditional religious thinking. It is based upon experience rather than belief and is to be found in the testimonies of the mystics of all the world religions.

For example, Meister Eckhart was placed on the index by saying, "There is something in me that is increatus (uncreated) and increabile (uncreatable)," which means not other than God.

Another example is that of a vortex. A whirlpool, for example, is a formation within the lake that does not have a boundary. All the water of the lake gets drawn into its swirl. It is likewise with our personality in which our total being converges. In the same vein our consciousness is the focalization of the consciousness of the universe like a light can be focused into a beam by a concave lens.

PRACTICE:

Think of your being as not having boundaries so that the divine qualities (the qualities of the universe) may flow, may converge, as it. Can you see that the personal

dimension of your being merges into the peri-personal dimension of your being and that the personal dimension of your being converges your total being? They are not two separate realities but correlated. Just think that the whole universe emerges as you as the whole ocean erupts as a wave.

The bubble is small as compared with the ocean, but it is not any other element than the ocean. The Unity of the Religious Ideal

God is the horizon, and one can neither touch the horizon, nor God. The horizon is as far as one can see, and even further, and so is God. The Complete Sayings

The key to grasping this wider, cosmic dimension of our being is being God-conscious.

The Sufi therefore tries to expand as he progresses; for it is the largeness of the soul which will accommodate all experiences and in the end become God conscious and all-embracing. Volume I, The Inner Life

Where are you to find God if not in the God-conscious? Supplementary Papers

Divinity resides in humanity; it is also the outcome of humanity.

The dervish is a king within a palace or in a shack. In an Eastern Rose Garden

Hazrat Inayat Khan warns against megalomania or sanctimoniousness by reconciling the poles of the puzzling antinomy of our identity.

The aristocracy of the soul together with the democracy of the ego. Sufi Teachings

The greatest pride in one’s divine inheritance (one’s real ego) together with humility for one’s iniquities (one’s false ego); authority together with the unpretentious touch.

PRACTICE:

At the end of your morning meditation, survey those areas in your life for which you are responsible. This will close in to the concrete things you need to do. The area for

which you assume responsibility is a measure of the stature of your being.

Ever soul has a domain in life consisting of all it possesses and all who belong to it. This domain is as wide as the width of the soul's influence. Healing and the Mind World

EXPANDING THE NOTION OF ONE'S IDENTITY BY EXPANDING CONSCIOUSNESS

Our sense of identity is function of the outreach of our consciousness. Therefore to encompass the vastness of your being, it is helpful to expand the outreach of your glance.

We occupy as much horizon as is within our consciousness, or as much as we are conscious of. Healing and the Mind World

PRACTICE:

With this in mind, represent to yourself your glance.

As you inhale, imagine that you are reading a text. In fact read this text!

Now as you exhale look through the window or with eyes closed imagine a vast panorama. Better still gaze at the stars at night or with eyes closed imagine the starry sky. Ponder upon how vast is the outreach of your glance - light years!

The eye is the representative of the soul. If the eye can accommodate so much space, how much more can the soul accommodate. It can accommodate the whole universe. The Unity of Religious Ideals

You will thus confirm that widening the outreach of your glance has the effect of expanding your consciousness, and expanding your consciousness has the effect of expanding your sense of identity.

In a second step, reach outside from within.

The soul of man who seems so small a being is incomparably great, its space being within. Supplementary Papers

There are some beings who are in themselves the universe. Outwardly man sees their small earthly form, but within they are as vast as the universe. Supplementary Papers

With closed eyes, as you inhale, turn within.

Now as you exhale, imagine that you can reach outside from within. So now you feel as though you are connected with the whole universe from within while before you thought that you were connected with outside.

For example, you were swimming amongst water lilies, each a separate flower. But now you swim under the surface and see the water lilies from underneath. They are manifestations of a single infrastructure: the network of roots. Multiplicity is emerging out of unity.

Usually our consciousness is conditioned by our commonplace concerns; but when it comes to evaluating the implications of a situation or in general the meaningfulness of our lives in a wider context, our ordinary thinking fails to make sense of these.

PRACTICE:

If you stretch your consciousness, you will find that you can assess situations in their implications in a wider context.

WHO WE ARE BECOMING RATHER THAN WHO WE ARE

There is a whole further dimension of our being that we need to account for. Who we are is only a static cross-section of a dynamic process: how our personality unfurls in time. Rather than identifying with who we are, we need to account for who we are becoming.

Actually the whole ocean emerges as each wave. Although they overlap, each wave displays its own specific configuration.

PRACTICE:

As you exhale expand your consciousness with the effect of expanding your sense of identity beyond the personal dimension.

As you inhale, while still representing to yourself that the whole universe manifests itself as your being, draw your attention to the unique way it manifests itself in each of us - hence in yourself.

As you hold your breath reconnoiter the idiosyncrasies of your personality - the hallmark of your being.

You are actually processing in your personality the infinite wealth of qualities, the potentialities, of the entire universe in a unique way. You are not just the convergence, confluence, conjugation of all those ingredients that have actuated themselves into the confection of your being, but you are the congruence of that whole process. You are the goal of the universe thus composing itself as you. You are not just the albeit unpredictable outcome of that inexorable process whereby the universe is exploring its potentialities, but the objective of that process.

Avicenna:
His knowledge is not a consequence of the things known…for His knowledge of things is the reason for their having being. Arberry, 1951, p. 35

What is more you act not only upon the environment, but upon the very formative process that configures you, affecting it as it forms you thus participating by your incentive in your creativity.

God’s creativity is perfected where man participates in his creativity.

In man the Creator has finished, so to speak, nature, but at the same time the creative faculty is still working through man. Social and Religious Gathekas

The mind is not only the treasure-house of all one learns, but it is creative by nature. The mind improvises upon what it learns, and creates not only in imagination, but it

finishes its task when the imagination becomes materialized. Volume I, The Inner Life

Therefore, while encompassing the cosmic dimension of our being, Hazrat Inayat Khan also draws our attention to our personal dimension.

The soul of man is God, but man has a mind and body of his own.

Ibn ‘Arabi:
When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them. He does not determine our properties except through us; or rather we determine our own properties through ourselves though through Him. (Chittick, p. 299; the sufi path of knowledge?)

For the Sufis the personal point of view is not to be discarded. It has a relative validity. Granted our personal assessment of situations is biased. If you look at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris from one vantage point you get a limited representation of Notre Dame as compared with looking at it from all 360 angles simultaneously. But your partial view could not be questioned; it has a relative validity.

The confluence of vantage points in the universe, owing to the multiplication, proliferation, and diversification of the One Being in a plethora of ‘sub-wholes,’ by being integrated contributes an enriched encompassing grasp to the Whole. To wit: the advantage in the cosmic programming of the individuation of the Totality we call God.

SHUNTING OUR CONSCIOUNESS INTO THE VANTAGE POINT OF ANOTHER

Having encompassed the peri-personal perspective, you can now, while being centered in your personal identity, shift your consciousness into that of another person. You will find that you can acquire some sense of how things look from the point of view of another person.

If one is able to expand oneself to the consciousness of another person, one's consciousness becomes as large as two persons'. And so it can be as large as a

thousand persons' when one accustoms oneself to try and see what others think. Healing and the Mind World

See how the same situation that you are involved in with that person is seen differently from the vantage point of that person. This will alter your assessment of the situation dramatically. You can now acknowledge that your assessment was limited by the personal bias of your vantage point (just like the inconclusive way in which Notre Dame looks from one angle alone).

One may distinguish two steps:
(i) I see that person through his/her eyes;
(ii) I see myself through the eyes of that person.

Now you can see that the chances are that that person's assessment of the situation was faulty, biased by, not only his/her vantage point, but his/her misassessment of who you are. This nevertheless does not imply that who you think you are is right or that his/hers opinion is right. The reason why these views conflict is that both are biased. But if you include the opinions of more and more people, then you get a many-faceted outlook which approaches more and more to reality. (Incidentally we have been learning in the process which we have been going through in this lesson to evaluate in an all-encompassing perspective who we are). Now you understand better why that person is doing to you what you resent. You see this has a paramount contribution to psychotherapy. It is therapy for resentment through understanding rather just dressing the wounds.
There is a further stage: you do not have to shunt your consciousness into that of another because that person's psyche is somehow intermeshed within your psyche. There is osmosis amongst beings. We can find people who we thought were 'out there' within our own psyche. You learn to know yourself through others, and to know others through yourself.
You can discover yourself mirrored in another person and the other person mirrored in you.
The reflection from his mind is mirrored upon their minds. Healing and the Mind World
" The hearts are like mirrors and therefore the condition of another person is mirrored upon your soul." Sangatha III
Now we can reverse our vantage point. Saint Francis of Assisi said: "I thought I was

looking at the world, but the world is looking at me.” This is why the Sufis make a difference between ya Basit and ya Wasi.

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One needs however to bear in mind that if the mirror is distorted, the impression that has been mirrored is deceptive. Therefore the Sufis persistently enjoin upon one to clear the mirror of the soul.
According to the Sufis God sees Himself through our eyes. Consequently we can only see Him/Her through His/Her eyes.
God speaking: It is through My eyes that you see Me and see yourself. (Ibn al ‘Arabi)
Cf. H. Corbin, Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn al ‘ Arabi.
To see Himself through or rather as us, God assumes a form gradually evolving to ever more adequately discover His Being by manifesting to us His/Her Being.
Consequently we see ourselves through the measure in which we manifest the divinity invested in our being: that which is trying to transpire through that which appears.
God describes Himself to us through ourselves. Ibn al ‘Arabi
Ibn al ‘Arabi:
The Necessary Being whose pure essence is incompatible with all form is nevertheless manifest in a form. Corbin, 1970, p. 197
Archetypal notions descend into perceptual forms. Etudes Traditionelles, 8/9 nr. 242, p. 406
When meanings are embodied and become manifest in shapes and measures they assume forms, since withessing takes place through sight. Chittick, 1989, p. 354
Whenever the Real discloses Himself to you, within the mirror of your heart, your mirror will make Him manifest to you in the measure of its constitution and in the form of its shape. Chittick, 1989, p.352
Know that mirrors are diverse in shape and that they modify the object seen by the observer. Chittick, 1989, p. 351

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PRACTICE:

As you exhale, stretch your consciousness. That is let it be defocalized, decentered. Simultaneously you will acquire a sense of being impersonal, cosmic. Now imagine

that you are looking at yourself from the vantage point of the stars and galaxies, through the immensity of space-time.
As you inhale envision that it is the universe that is looking at itself through your eyes.
To do this, one needs to turn within.
It is in this mirror that all that is before you is reflected. But when the eyes are looking outside, then one has turned his back to the mirror which is inside, but when the eyes are turned inside, then one sees in this mirror all that is outside reflected. Therefore all seeing by this process is so clear and manifests to such fullness that in comparison the vision that one has before one's eyes is a blurred or confused vision. The Alchemy of Happiness
Then more and more people are mirroring each other until you find yourself wandering in what the Sufis call Aina Khana, the palace of mirrors.
This world is a house of mirrors, the reflection of one is mirrored upon another. In this world where so many things seem hidden, in reality nothing remains hidden; everything some time or other rises to the surface and manifests itself to view. The Art of Personality

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 20

HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM UNDESIRABLE IMPRESSIONS?

You wish to call a halt to the stress and disarray of the rat race in which you are inevitably embroiled. You feel overstressed by vying with the Jones and wish to protect yourself from the ego trips of would-be friends. You seek a peaceful break from continuous activity, solace from pent-up emotions, freedom from the prison you may have built for yourself. You sit in as quiet a place as you can find. You sit down to meditate, seeking tranquility and composure.

Normally our thoughts are monitored by the need to take action. No sooner we suspend activity, our mind has difficulty organizing itself. This is precisely what we learn in meditation.

Notwithstanding, your mind is idling, apparently randomly, even turbulently, agitated by undisclosed emotions that evade scrutiny.

PRACTICE:

Notice that your thinking meanders in subliminal, imponderable and unsounded recesses called the unconscious only to surface sometimes by erupting into assessments of your problems that in the end prove unreliable. Observe that the, albeit, unwieldy outreach of our unconscious is awkwardly squeezed into the narrow purview of our personal bias.

Is it not surprising that Yoga devalidates that mode of thinking as misleading (maya)? These constructs of our commonplace mind cannot make sense of the wide context of

what is implied behind what we try to explain. If we watch them carefully, we will realize that they are ambiguous, do not fit into a coherent pattern. Consequently our mind toggles between one way of looking at the problem then another, then perhaps still another. Hence the aimless erring of our thoughts when we try to make them orderly.

PRACTICE:

Notice how impressions (including the good news and lovely impressions) are imprinted on your mind. They take root in your psyche, become part of your being, sometimes leave a mark in your consciousness and might even die hard in your unconscious.

Observe how the thoughts of people sneak into your own thinking without your noticing the difference. As a first step, spot people's thoughts confused with yours.

They can no longer distinguish between their own thoughts and feelings and those of someone else. But as soon as a man begins to say, "I think like this, but I do not know why," or "I feel like this, but I do not want to feel so," then he has gone down one step below the normal state of mind. Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism

Now distinguish those impressions that are disturbing from those that are enriching.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM DISTURBING IMPRESSONS?

Let us distinguish two steps:

1) DISMISSING UNDESIRABLE IMPRESSIONS AS ALIEN BY AFFIRMING 'WHO I AM.'

PRACTICE:

In a first step as you turn within, notice whether what you had experienced when turned outside continues to live inside in your memory, inset in your psyche.

Instead of finding it within he always wants to find it without. Social Gathekas

Observe that those impressions are not you, but ascertain that they exercise an impact on your personality. They are always there although they are mostly unnoticed. Therefore, in some manner, they are part of this ‘me’ - intermeshed with this ‘me’ - although we ordinarily think that they are the object of our consciousness, the perceiving and conceiving subject. In meditation you can spot them.

We carry impressions with us, maybe throughout our lives, unless by the insight gained in meditation we are able to find them and correct them if they are flawed.

Each atom of this universe, conscious of its sickness, procures for itself from within or without a means for its restoration. Sangatha I

The criterion delineating how desirable impressions are selected is based upon whether they resonate with ‘who you are.’

PRACTICE:

You can mark the keynote of ‘who you are’ by asking yourself what are the values that you stand by which you preempt before other values.

It depends upon your discrimination whether to renounce things momentarily precious for everlasting things or everlasting things for things momentarily precious. (Social Gathekas.) When man has to choose between his spiritual and his material profit, then he shows whether his treasure is on earth or in heaven. (The Complete Sayings)

The criterion defining the metaphoric sentinel in you is your sense of ‘me or not me’ (as the immune system in our body rejects a transplant that does not conform to our DNA). It is a strong sense of your identity, your values, your motivations that will help you reject any thought, impression or emotion that is incompatible or obstructive. Otherwise we suffer from an indigestion of impressions which we cannot deal with.

PRACTICE:

To get a better sense of who you are, observe when perceiving impressions from the physical or psychological environment whether you feel in resonance with them or whether they are not in keeping with what you value.

COMPLETION BY DISCOVERING AFFINITY

There is a totally other dimension of who we are, of our identity, in addition to the personal, peri-personal (or cosmic), subliminal and transcendental dimensions of our identity. Actually, who we think we are is only half of our total being. Whether we know it or not (generally not) our complete person includes that elusive ‘other half.’ Our complete person is called a syzygy - two in one: animus, anima. Even the stars, the electrons exist as interdependent pairs.

Two is a part on one, growing out of one.

The other half is what is commonly called our twin soul; he or she may be known to the half we normally think we are, or we may never have met in this world, or he or she may not be incarnated. The encounter on earth (ever so rare as in the cases of Romeo and Juliet or Leila and Majnun or Abelard and Eloise) is of course dramatic and ecstatic for one’s soul and heart. Even body functions aroused are sublimated. Consequently the search for the twin soul on earth or in the higher spheres.

Unfortunately in these and most cases the relationship with the twin soul does not fit into conventional boundaries and is condemned by conservatives and conformists.

Every channel it takes must necessarily be but a limited expression of it.

Asif, Mir Mahbud Ali Khan:
When shall the mocking world withhold its blame,
When shall men cease to darken thus my name,
Calling the love which is my pride, my shame?
The joy of love no heart can feel alone,
The fire of love at first unseen, unknown,
In flames of love from either side is blown.
O, Asif, tread thy pathway carefully

Across this difficult world; for canst thou see,
A further journey is awaiting thee.

We may distinguish two prototypes of relationships: (i) where our characteristics differ and, ideally, complete each other; (ii) where we find ourselves in sync with a person similar to ourselves - this is affinity. Discovering oneself in ‘another oneself’ helps one to know oneself. That is why one is continually in search of oneself in a person who is better able to actualize who one is potentially than oneself. On the other hand, one is enriched by finding in a person different from oneself characteristics that one does not have, or has insufficiently. These are the forces that draw people together. There are, of course, degrees of affinity or completion, but this attractive force reaches its optimum point in the unique case of the twin soul.

In most cases people settle for a relationship (for convenience - or not so convenient) that satisfies perfunctory needs. But the more sensitive and idealistic a person becomes, the more crucial the need for affinity or completion through complementarity. It becomes desperate.

COMPLETION THROUGH ‘OTHER’

PRACTICE:

Notice that as you become more open to people, more tolerant, you will be able to ascribe some value to beings or things that at first seemed out of sync with your being. Normally to protect yourself you would try to reject those impressions that are not in harmony with your being precisely as one would reject as food the shell of a walnut or something too bitter to eat. However the more you are able to integrate impressions that are alien to your being, in an all-encompassing purview, the more cosmic you will become. These will enrich one’s being. Hazrat Inayat Khan distinguishes self-sufficiency from completion.

There are two aspects of fullness: completion and perfection. Every new experience, thought, imagination, principle, ideal, adds to one’s knowledge that makes man complete. At the same time, by trying to be self-sufficient within oneself, void of all things outside, perfection is attained.

That which is gathered from outside is a concretization of an inherent (proto-critic) knowledge that lies virtually in the subliminal depths of our psyche. For example, how do you know that a round table is round or an orange is spherical? Because roundness is implicit regardless of tables and a sphere is an innate notion irrespective of oranges or planets. By arousing these inherent notions, one discovers a bountiful underpinning of what we call reality.

Hazrat Inayat Khan points out that the actualization of the divine archetypes in the exemplars adds something to the state prior to existence.

The divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. The creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the divine mind. The Unity of Religious Ideals

However he points out that grasping the sense of archetypal principles accedes to a higher sense of meaningfulness.

At the same time, by trying to be self-sufficient within oneself, void of all things outside, perfection is attained. Sangitha I

The psychological function that fosters completion parallels the second physical immune system. For example one imbibes food that does not conform to one's DNA. To do this, one needs to transmute the amino-acid chains to conform to one's DNA.

2) HOW DOES ONE DEAL WITH THE DISTURBING IMPRESSIONS?

An example is found in that our DNA genes evolve further to adapt to new infections. A storm or a psychological confrontation may clear a blocked situation. While at first disturbing, these impressions prove enriching if one practices mastery.

The entire system of the yogis is based upon making themselves acquainted with something their nature revolts against. The will can be strengthened by practicing it, by exerting it to overcome obstacles without and within, by acting contrary to our inclination, by holding impulses in check, not allowing them to go to the full length of their swing, by refraining from any action or expression to which we may be inclined, by not allowing ourselves to be overcome by a fit of anger, of laughter, of tears, by

extreme joy or sorrow or whatever mood, and either changing the emotion to its opposite, anger to mildness, laughter to sorrow, tears to joy; by checking the emotion and effacing it, or by, while letting it have its course, yet holding it in our control. Supplementary Papers

The T-cells of our body destroy the anti-genes by absorbing them, then disintegrating them. How can undesirable thoughts be destroyed? Must this always be done by the person who created them?

Yes, it is the creator of the thought who must destroy it, and it is not in every person's power to do it. Yet the mind which has reached mastery, which can create as it wishes, this same mind can destroy. (Mysticism of Sound and Music.) A man who is helpless before his own mind is helpless before everything in the world. (Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism.) Those whose minds are working mechanically like a machine are just reflecting the activity of those around them. (In an Eastern Rose Garden.) The disturbing thoughts which crowd into the mind during concentration can only be dispersed by the power of the will; otherwise the mind will become occupied with agreeable or disagreeable impressions from the external world against our desire. (Sufi Teachings.) The purpose of life is to attain to mastery; this is the motive of the spirit, and it is through this motive at the back of it that the whole universe is created. (Healing and the Mind World)

PRACTICE:

You will find that to control your thoughts you need to configure them in a meaningful, coherent, congruent way. This is similar to how one can train a horse or an elephant to obey better if they perceive a sense of orderliness. Keep training your will to control your thoughts to organize themselves in an orderly way. If your thoughts stray, bring them back just like you would restrain a horse from grazing grass on the side of the road.

One must develop that mental strength, that will-power which will keep all thoughts away which come into one's mind during concentration and take one's mind away from the object on which one focuses it. (Sufi Teachings.) And therefore the great mastery is to stand before one's own mind and make it think what one wishes it to

think, and make it feel what one wishes it to feel. (Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism)

Observe that your motivation about being creative of your personality will confer a definite orientation to your thoughts thereby strengthening your concentration. Concentrate on a thought that is meaningful to your unfoldment; you will notice that this will dismiss thoughts that detract one from one's objective.

Hazrat Inayat Khan draws our attention to the fact that we are endowed with the divine power. It is buried in our free will and can be aroused by discovering our divine inheritance.

Realize that you have a power which is greater than any other and that power is your will. (Supplementary Papers.) It is this spark which may be called the divine heritage of man, in which he sees the divine power of God, the soul of man. (Healing and the Mind World.) The soul has in it a potentiality, a creative power as its divine heritage. (The Alchemy of Happiness.) The immense power that the soul-magnetism gives shows that it is divine magnetism. (Healing and the Mind World.) On coming to earth, man, who is the instrument of God, loses connection with that divine power whose instrument he is, thus keeping not only himself but even God from helping His will to be done. (The Alchemy of Happiness.)

DELEGATING THE DIVINE WILL

Hazrat Inayat Khan is saying that divine will is delegated by discovering in our identity our divine inheritance. One may ask: how does this tally with his statement:

The soul is God but man has a mind and body of his own.

Hazrat Inayat Khan sees how the divine will and human will are connected.

Now coming too the question of the will of man as opposed to the will of God: which is which? We understand the difference when we perceive that the nature of willpower differs only according to whether it exists in its fullness, or whether it is limited. The willpower in its fullness is divine power; the willpower in its limited state is the individual will. (In an Eastern Rose Garden.) It is not a human power, it is a divine power in man. (Mysticism of Sound and Music.) We each have our free will; and that

free will gives us the power to work to some extent within the activity of the whole. (The Alchemy of Happiness)

What stands in our way is our identifying with our commonplace self-image that is incomplete and falls short of who we are.

Free will is the mighty power, the God power hidden in man, and it is ignorance which keeps man from his divine heritage. The spirit of limitation is always a hindrance to realizing the spirit of mastery and practicing it. Man is powerless in spite of the power which is hidden in him. The powerlessness, the experience of being powerless, is his ignorance of the power within him. One asks can a limited man be conscious of perfection? The answer is that the limited man has limited himself; he is limited because he is conscious of his limitation. It is not his true self which is limited; what is limited is what he holds, not himself. (The Alchemy of Happiness.) That a soul is born on earth helpless, and out of this helplessness it grows and then learns to help itself. (Supplementary Papers)

PRACTICE:

Accounting for your awareness of your divine inheritance funneled into your individual uniqueness, while representing the divine will as overarching your individual will, can you figure out what it would mean in your life to, as Hazrat Inayat Khan said, ‘work to some extent within the activity of the whole’?

Our ego obstructs us from delegating the divine will.

Now the question is, “How can one get in touch with that Almighty Power?” As long as one’s little personality stands before one, as long as one cannot get rid of it, as long as one’s own person and all that is connected with it interests one, one will always find limitations. (Volume I.) The sages in the East have, therefore, mastered concentration, that by its help they might be able to wipe off all that is undesirable, since it is human to err. But one arrives at this power by collecting all the good one can in the mind, so that evil may be naturally repulsed. By constantly doing so one acquires mastery. (Spiritual Liberty.) All the things that are accomplished in this world are accomplished by the power of mind. It is not till a person has gained mastery over his mind, till he is

above this activity, that he is a ruling power, a true person. (In an Eastern Rose Garden)

In order to stand firm against the disharmony that comes from without, one must first practice to stand firm against all that comes from within, from one's own self. (Social and Religious Gathekas.) By the gratification of the ego man falls from kingship into slavery, and in the end his own life becomes a burden to himself. And in order to gain his own kingdom he must destroy the illusion that in satisfying his ego he shows his power. (Gatha I.) Man is inferior in his selfishness; when he rises above self, he is superior. Therefore the right to develop will power is the right of the superior man. (Gatha II)

THE OUTCOME

The divine manner becomes manifest through man. Where does this power come from? I would answer, "The Divine Spirit is hidden in the heart of man, and the more the heart is disclosed, the more the Divine Spirit finds the chance of rising to its fullness."

When man arrives at this conviction that he himself and God are not two, and if God is the sun that his soul is the ray, and if God is the root that he is the fruit. Githa III

If he knew to what little extent he is free he would be frightened. But then there is one consolation, and that is that in man there is a spark somewhere hidden in his heart which alone can be called a source of free will. If this spark is tended a person has greater vitality, greater energy, greater power. All he thinks will come true, all he says will make an impression, all he does will have effect. What does a mystic do? He blows this spark in order to bring it to a flame till it comes to a blaze. This gives him the inspiration, the power which enables him to live in this world the life of free will. Healing and the Mind World

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER INTERNATIONAL

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
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Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 21

IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY

THE COSMIC OR PERI-PERSONAL DIMENSION: COMPARISONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND SUFISM

INTRODUCTION

At a time when Buddhism has gained so much acquiescence in the public eye, and Sufism increasingly intrigues the serious amateurs in quest of the unknown, an inquiry into their differences and similarities seems called for. Hence the following study that is, even so, simply a cursory attempt.

Shall we contrive to consider that which at first seemed contradictory as complementary? Moreover dare we, in the all-encompassing trend of our day-and-age, extrapolate between these apparently antipodal views and shape an integrated picture?

It is heartening to recognize where the Buddhist and Sufi views corroborate each other, and, challenging our minds, to acknowledge where they are complementary rather than contradictory.

Sitting under the banyan tree opposite the Bodhi tree at night I tried to imagine Buddha sitting there. I tried to imagine how he felt - his thoughts, his emotions, his very special way of thinking and feeling. His thinking pushed beyond its limits into the imponderable, cosmic ecstasy beyond human emotion. His consciousness defied the gravity pull of the existential condition, scanning sublime spheres, matched by transcendent modes of awareness, awakening in deep sleep. Space seemed to be infinite but empty, and time, eternal. I imagined the shattering of Buddha's notion of himself faced with the cosmic tide of realization daunting him further and further into

unknown reaches of awakening! The nobility of his attunement!

To understand Buddhism, we must take into account that while in his childhood Buddha was enclosed in the luxurious environment of his palace. His father, the king, prevented him from seeing suffering in the real world. As a young adult he insisted on visiting the town. Although his father had ordered that any ill persons, old persons or funerals should be removed from his path, it could not be prevented: this is precisely what he now saw. The sudden discovery of suffering came upon him as a shock. He was devastated. He resolved to find a solution to this terrible scourge. This was the leitmotif of his whole life's quest. He saw that most people are trapped by their desires which he considered as intoxication. He remarked that in their ignorance they do not see that the fulfillment of their wishes can be a cause of suffering for themselves and others and by the same token a frustration of their desires. He saw that this situation was due to the fact that people are conditioned and do not realize it. They are thus caught in a vicious circle which he likened to a wheel aimlessly idling: the samsaric wheel. Consequently he considered that the solution was disintoxication by an attitude of indifference. He knew that this could be found amongst the ascetics and therefore left his palace to live as an ascetic. After several retreats (one which we know was in a cave in Sarnath) he sat under the banyan tree at Bodhgaya, by day and by night, undaunted, braving suffocating heat and shivering cold, the threat of wild animals, the attacks of hornets, spiders and other beasties of God. He was covered in vermin from festering wounds. At the termination of his 40 day retreat he had to crawl on all fours for quite a distance to get water to drink and wash.

He was determined to find a solution for suffering.

To this end he explored the steps that led to being involved in the existential state. He tried to ascertain the force that lures one into being inveigled in the vicious circle resulting in suffering, desire, craving and the ignorance of the fact that it is precisely this that traps one into the affliction of suffering.

Buddha warned that slipping into the notion of our personal identity (which he considered as illusory) lured one into the vicious circle of the samsaric wheel of repetitive existence and therefore sought the non-become (the eternal) rather than the process of becoming (the everlasting).

PRACTICE:

Can you see that one easily slips into identifying oneself as a discrete individual, oblivious that we are part of the whole (universe). Just as Hazrat Inayat Khan points out, a wave has no existence on its own, it is a condition of the sea, so likewise we are a condition of the Totality of the universe (God).

Then he proceeded in the reverse direction, reversing the causal chain (paticca samuppada), hoisting his mind beyond its commonplace range, embracing the existential level of reality, exploring the no-man's land of the far reaches of the human mind. This led to regaining the realization that had been lost by slipping into the course of the descent into the existential perspective which bids ignorance, avijja.

The Sufis confirm indeed that it is desire that turns our conciousness toward perceiving and becoming involved in the existential state. What is the point of having been born in the realm of existence if one seeks to escape it? Our purpose is therefore to improve conditions on earth accepting to pay the price of suffering to build a beautiful world of beautiful people.

Hazrat Inayat:
Go through the phases of life without losing yourself.

This is, to the Sufi, the divine desire, ishk Allah, God wishing to know Himself by manifesting as us, so that we know ourselves through our knowledge of His knowledge of Himself as us. Besides this, beyond knowing, God descending from the state of Unity, knowing Himself in the principles, and predicating His Being out of love for the possibility of us (you).

Ibn Arabi:
What He created was for you. (xxcf. Valsan, ET 4/1952, p. 27) The One who enjoys this independence and has manifested the world did not manifest it by necessity, but He created beings so that they may enjoy existence in order to free them from the solitude of the void and to give them the possibility of acquiring the divine attributes and to make them His vice-regents. All of this was done by dint of altruism, because He chose not to remain the only holder of those things that He gave. (xx cf. Valsan, La Station de la Futuwwah et des secrets, Chapter 146 of Futuhat al-Makkya, p. 19)

Rather than place a blind between our consciousness and the existential world (thereby dismissing our perception of the physical world and representation of psychological situations as illusory, misleading) Buddhist meditation points out that the illusion is not in the object but in the subject. The illusion is in ascribing our identifying with our body-ness or meaningfulness to our notion of our personal identity. Buddha considers our personal “I” as a notion taxed with voidness.

THE TRANSPERSONAL, COSMIC DIMENSION OF OUR IDENTITY.

In an all-encompassing outreach, faced with the bounty of one’s real being, the notion of the personal dimension of one’s multi-dimensional identity pales to the point of melting away.

Buddha:
Sabbe dhamma anatta ‘ti. Sunnan idam attena va attaniyena va ti.
All things are without individuality or substance. Dhamamada, 277, 279.

This view is corroborated in Sufism:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
Is it not then drunkenness on the part of man when he claims to be an individual standing separate from all others, thinking himself to be a single entity when he is already many within himself? Sangitha II
This cosmic outreach of buddism is corrorasted by hik
Dive deep within yourself that you may be able to touch the Unity of the whole Being. One finds a kind of universe within oneself. As God comprehends the whole universe within Himself, being one, so man contains within himself the whole universe as His miniature. Spiritual Liberty

Here we may indeed see some resonance between the thinking of Sufis and of Buddha.

HONOR THE PERSONAL DIMENSION OF YOUR IDENTITY

On the other hand, while encompassing the cosmic dimension of our being, Hazrat Inayat Khan also draws our attention to our personal dimension. The Sufis do not

discard our personality as illusory, it has a relative validity, but always relate the personal dimension of our being to its impersonal, cosmic ground.

PRACTICE:

(i) Identify with the cosmic, all-encompassing and transpersonal dimension of your identity which percolates through your sense of ‘me,’ the personal dimension of your identity in which the transpersonal dimension is actualized in a unique way.

(ii) Now try to grasp the interaction between your personal self-image, the totality of the universe - with which the transpersonal dimension of your identity is co-extensive - and your personality as an albeit unique actuation. This is where each one of us customizes the whole (the being of God) in a unique way.

(iii) You will find that this can be done best by envisioning your qualities as inadequate, ephemeral exemplars of their eternal, perfect archetypes.

(iv) Now turn within: your potentialities, and impending thoughts and emotions are lying in wait in the subliminal underpinning of your psyche. Though they escape your scrutiny you can become progressively aware of them, arousing them by dint of your personal creativity.

The whole sea surfaces as a wave. However while each wave succeeds the previous one in the process of becoming (which is just one of the dimensions of time that one might plot as a horizontal vector) one needs to account for a transcendent dimension of time (which one might plot as a vertical vector). Buddha considers it (the wave, the personality) as ephemeral. Here Sufism differs from Buddhism because whatever has occurred at the existential level will continue to play its part at all levels by being transmuted and thus fed back into the cosmic code.

PRACTICE:

Now try to envision that while the transpersonal dimension of your being is eternal, immutable, your individuality is recurrently changing.

Jami:
That which is conditioned by finitude will be everlasting.

Rumi:
For tonight the umpteem stars give birth to the life everlasting.

Hazrat Inayat:
No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. `It all accumulates and collects in the divine mind - an eternal reservoir. There is a spirit that collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every human being has had. Healing and the Mind World

ETERNAL VERSUS EVERLASTING

Hazrat Inayat Khan points to the difference between eternal and everlasting. Everlasting is that which has a beginning but continues to live.

That which is eternal (Ya Samad) is not subject to the procession of time - of becoming. It therefore does not have a beginning or an end, and exists in a trans-existential state, beyond the state of becoming.

We find this distinction in Thomas of Aquinas:
God is both static [changeless] and dynamic [evolves].

PRACTICE:

Consider that, however ephemeral therefore perishable your personal self may seem to you, it will continue to exist. It overpasses its ephemeral status by transmuting it.

A flower outwits the disbanding of its substance by becoming perfume.

Hazrat Inayat:
The Sufi practices that process whereby he is able to touch upon that part of life in himself that is not subject to death by rising above his earthly condition. The Alchemy of Happiness

Qur’an
Everything is perishing except his face. Qur'an

Ibn ‘Arabi:

Once a thing is created it is impossible to return to the previous state. He may however replace a face by another face. Etudes Traditionelles

Once having occurred it will play its part by being fed back into the cosmic code.

But this requires that it undergoes a process of transmutation. For that which occurs at a moment in the procession of becoming, to be preserved everlastingly, needs to be transfigured.

Ibn ‘Arabi
The interpreter operates a transposition from the form perceived by the dreamer to the real “form” of the implied reality (1975, p.59). The wise transpose the form into the reality it configures…Thoughts shift from the perception of the senses to the creative imagination. The inside face cannot be effaced. However the external face can.

PRACTICE:

How does one transmute one’s personality?

One envisions one’s personality as a composition of qualities which one possesses but which are not perfect in the least!

One envisions the transpersonal dimension of one’s being as predicating the impersonal archetypes of those qualities.

This could be illustrated thus: a rose is the exemplification of rose-hood. There may be several roses. Imagine that a rose could see itself as the exemplification of rose-hood by grasping its connection with the archetype of which it is the exemplar. It would see in rose-hood a far greater bounty of qualities than it had hitherto actualized and therefore try to approximate more and more its archetype.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:
The one who tunes himself not only to the external but to the inner being and to the essence of all things gets an insight into the essence of the whole being; and therefore he can to the same extent find and enjoy even in the seed the fragrance and beauty that delights him in a rose. The Mysticism of Sound and Music
He so to speak touches the soul of the thought. It is just as by seeing the plant one

may get an idea of the root. Githa III

TWO MODES OF PROGRAMMING

Consequently the Sufis distinguish between (i) the level of the programming of the Universe that is permanent and (ii) the programming of the cosmos that is continually updated by the feedback from the existential actuality.

Muqadem signifies the establishment of the principles eternally as archetypes beyond the process of becoming - in the trans-existential time, therefore permanent and not subject to change.

Corbin:
Man is aspiring eternally to know the Principle which eternally initiates him and yearning once more to be beyond His revealed being. Creative Imagination, p. 115

Mubdi signifies the ever-recurring resetting of the cosmic code.

Corbin:
There is that [aspect of God which establishes (installs)] which is beyond being, which is the Theos Agnostos the unknowable and unpredictable God. And there is the revealed God, dues revelatus [that aspect of God that originates in time] His Nous who thinks and acts, who maintains the divine attributes and is capable of relation. Creative Imagination, p. 112

We find this distinction in Meister Eckhart:
Gott wird und entwirt (old German: becomes and un-becomes) while Gottheit remains unchanged.

It is in the individual arising out of the fragmentation of the One, the Universe as a whole, that the door to diversification opened and allowed that the bountiful virtual potentialities of its programming could be actuated as an experiential existential reality as us, each in our own way. This enrichment could be illustrated in music in variations on a theme. By bringing out latent potentials embedded in the theme, the theme is enriched.

Corbin:
It is these latent individualities who from all eternity have aspired to concrete being. Creative Imagination, p. 115

Hazrat Inayat
The soul of man is God but man has a mind of his own.

The Creator's mind is made of His own creation.

The Divine Mind becomes completed after manifestation.

The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind. The Unity of Religious Ideals

Ibn 'Arabi:
When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them. He does not determine our properties except through us; or rather we determine our own properties through ourselves though through Him. Chittick, p. 299

FUTURE THINKING

In the Satipathana practices, at least until the last step, one identifies oneself with the observer whereas the observed is considered as impersonal and therefore not oneself. Buddha downplays our individuality. He eschews ascribing 'I-ness' to the observed, which is considered as an ephemeral perishable underpinning elaborated by the whole universe irrespective of our person, of our participation. The consequence would be that our body, thinking, emotion and personality cannot be transformed by our will.

The importance of the role of the personal in contrast with the impersonal can be ascertained as follows:

For example our body is not just the matter of the planet - the galaxies programmed by the universe (called God). It can be modified by our personal will. Although many body functions are conditioned (to wit our autonomic nervous system, our digestion, our breathing, our immune system), we can move our body as we will. We can control

our breath. We can decide what we eat. There is in us a mind/body connection. Our personal will can act upon our adrenal glands (for example by our frustration or enthusiasm.)

The consequence is that (imagine) the cosmic code is mutated by our personal incentive.

It is dynamic.

Thomas of Aquinas:
God is both static and dynamic.

(i) This way of looking at things has far reaching implications. The personal decision involves conscience. Whereas, for example, with regard to matter, the impersonal involves the awakening of consciousness in our body which is applied in Buddhism in highlighting ‘mindfulness.’

Moreover it has its implications in the realm of the institutionalization of spirituality exemplified in the traditional guru-disciple relationship. As we progress we are more and more of the opinion that the disciple must not follow the teacher’s instructions if they violate what he or she can in his/her conscience totally agree with. The notion of ‘obedience’ that governs in traditional religious groups, which makes for the spiritual dictatorship of many religious authorities, is at stake.

However, we need to acquiesce that the disciple may not be up to comprehending the teacher’s realization. This is illustrated by the Sufis in the story of Khidr who explains to Moses why a certain man must die. This is the ‘reason behind reason’ to which Hazrat Inayat refers.

This was not the case where Saint John of the Cross was condemned and imprisoned for refusing to conform to the prescriptions of the authorities of the Order to which he belonged.

Islam does not formally impose an institutionalized authority whose decisions are to be considered as infallible failing with which one is excommunicated. It does not have a Council legislating dogma as the Vatican - although some people considered as

authoritative in the teaching of Islam profess to legislate what one is supposed to believe.

This comes clearly in a Surat of the Qu'ran which might even be an injunction for the Prophet himself and certainly for an authoritative person or a group of authoritative persons doing just that

You are not assigned to intervene in human affairs.

The Fatwas represent simply the opinion of a person or group of persons considered an authority on Islam. That is why al Hallaj required of Junaid to change his Sufi robe to that of a judge in order to condemn him.

(ii) The self-same principle has its implications in politics. Dictatorship is founded upon unquestionable obedience of the military personnel to the autocratic arrogance of a despot with its trail of disastrous consequences of cruelty and misery. Obedience results in concentration camps. Anyone challenging obedience to the dictator is tortured.

(iii) It is digression from current patterns that enlists innovations in music, art, architecture, design and style. These deviations from past patterns foster new modes of thought and emotional attunement. Contemporary composers cannot compose in the gentle style of Mozart reflecting the posh salons of his time. We are living in a harder world. Contemporary music, architecture, theater reflect the increased challenge upon our emotions and sense of meaningfulness and is reflected in the compositions of Stravinsky, Arvo Part and Takamitzu.

One is conditioned by one's habituation to custom. Therefore to be creative one needs to be open to the unfamiliar.

The software of the cosmos is, of necessity, updated, actually upgraded, by this evolutionary mutation. If it were not for the innovative vision of the individual that sets the new trend, the world would be locked into the constraint of the past.
The risk is that by prospecting new patterns, one may find that some of them are less excellent than past ones. (It is difficult to surpass Bach or Beethoven.) In fact portents of decadence and degeneration are afflicting our creativity in our day and age.

To be creative, one anticipates the future, which is not there, by exploring unknown patterns through trial and error. Likewise does the Universe proceed. One inevitable consequence is the experience of blind alleys. The advantage is that one is inventing the future by coming upon perspectives that open new dimensions of meaningfulness.

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LESSON 22
IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY
COMPARISONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND SUFISM
WATCHING OUR BODY, OUR MIND AND OUR EMOTIONS

THE SATIPATHANA PRACTICES

In a series of steps outlined in the Satipathana practices, Buddha enjoins upon us to objectively watch ourselves in several stages: (i) our body, (ii) our thinking, (iii) our emotions, (iv) our psyche, (v) eventually our consciousness.

These practices corroborate Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching; rather than discarding the existential scenario as in yogic Samadhi, they orient one to awakening in life.

You are yourself the object of your realization; for the secret of all knowledge that one acquires in the world whether worldly or spiritual is the knowledge of the self. Social Gathekas

PRACTICE:

See whether you can observe your body, your mind, your emotions and your personality while identifying with them. Admittedly it is easier if one thinks of them as 'other' than oneself. You may notice that in your usual thinking whenever you use the word 'I', you unwittingly are not clear as to whether you mean your psyche, your personality or even your body, or whether you mean you as the observer, that is, your consciousness.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE STAGES:

THE FIRST STAGE: WATCH YOUR BODY

Consider your body as a transient formation, irrespective of your conscious or volitional participation, without identifying with it. That is, consider your body…

Evola:

…as a function of the impersonal forces of the world which follow their laws with complete indifference to our person. The Doctrine of Awakening, 1951, p. 165

PRACTICE:

Can you envision your body as made of flesh, bone, muscles, nerves, mucous, hair, etc.? Can you feel your heart, liver and pancreas? One cannot feel one's body cells, but can you feel a prodigious jiggling of vibrations, of sparkling and of activity in your body that eludes your observation and that is obviously determined by a programming outside of your control? Quite understandably one has difficulty ascribing a sense of 'me' to these organs of one's body.

The Sufi View:

Realize that, however inadequate and illusory your notion of yourself is, your involvement with the matter of the cosmos – of the galaxies in your body-ness – is important. It is by dint of experiencing it and through your involvement with it that reality has accrued to you and has proven enriching. It has become part of you. Consequently, discounting your body as not being you would not honor that aspect of you that has accrued through your involvement with the fabric of the universe.

Buddhism tends to downplay our personal 'I', but although many body functions are conditioned (to wit our autonomic nervous system, our digestion, our breathing, our immune system) we can influence them. We can move our body as we will, we can control our breath and we can decide what we eat. Our personal will can act upon our adrenal glands. Our frustration or enthusiasm will trigger off the activity of the adrenal glands which are conditioned. There is in us a mind/body connection.

THE SECOND STAGE: WATCH YOUR MIND

PRACTICE:

Watch your thoughts objectively. Catch them as they arise or recede. They are often provoked by a process of association. More generally they are conditioned by our ancestry, culture, upbringing and social environment.

PRACTICE:

Differentiate amongst:

1) Thoughts that may be ascribed to your psyche's regurgitation of impressions accruing from the environment;

2) Thoughts that represent your psyche's reacting to thoughts communicated to you from other people;

3) Thoughts in which you reflect your own soul-searchings; sometimes reverie. (Notice whether new vistas emerge.);

4) Thoughts which seem to arise purely spontaneously, or are perhaps triggered off by covert impressions or preoccupations, but cannot simply be considered to be reactions to these;

5) Notice that you cannot truly own your thoughts. Sufis call them the divine thoughts. You will notice that they span archetypal and factual meanings. Sufis consider that in our thinking we impinge upon a whole super-existential level of reality that they ascribe to the world of metaphor (*alam al mithal*);

6) At the extreme limit, you may feel that a sudden insight is revealed to you that you could not possibly have figured out. Notice that it is not articulated in the form of thoughts, but is a sudden awakening to a sense of intense meaningfulness accompanied by an intense ecstatic sensitivity to sheer beauty.

Buddha considers the mind as a formation programmed by the universe, just like the body, irrespective of any ‘I-ness’ whatsoever. Since the personal dimension of our being is dismissed, *anatta*: there is no individuality. Our thoughts are conditioned.

The Sufi View:

Granted, many of our thoughts are predictable, therefore conditioned, by a programming outside our control, irrespective of our will or initiative. But these thoughts, which are isomorphic with the thinking of the universe, are customized by our identity as an individual.

PRACTICE:

Attempt to espy the thinking of the universe as it percolates through your thinking. You will find that it is revealed to you in the measure to which you downplay your personal bias or wishful thinking.

However, the thinking of the universe coming through us is limited by the human scope within which we constrain it. We often distort and even defile it.

The Sufis concur with Buddha in that one creates an inadequate assessment by limiting one's thinking to that portion of the thinking of our transpersonal level that emerges at the personal level like the tip of an iceberg.

THE THIRD STAGE: WATCHING OUR EMOTIONS

MUSIC: Rudra Vina

PRACTICE:

Watch your feelings without identifying with them. Watch how they arise, escalate, fade away and are replaced by new feelings. Watch how pleasant, neutral and unpleasant feelings are associated with perception (see the role of form) with covetousness, with craving.

MUSIC: Bach, St. John's Passion, Lamentation (Bach, Johannes-Passion, Ensemble Vanitas, Diego Fasolis, ARTS – disc II)

Can you see that what Buddha refers to as contact (actually perception) with something that arouses covetousness touches off desire? Buddha calls it craving,*tanha*, which he considers as a mania, *asava*, an intoxication.

Buddha warns that slipping into our notion of our personal identity (which he considers

as illusory) lures one into the vicious circle of the samsaric wheel of repetitive existence. Certainly, our concupiscence does lure our being into the existential world. Therefore he seeks the non-become (the eternal) rather than the process of becoming (the everlasting).

PRACTICE:

Can you see that one easily slips into identifying oneself as a discrete individual, oblivious that we are part of the whole (universe): but, just as Hazrat Inayat Khan points out: a wave has no existence on its own, it is a condition of the sea; likewise we are a condition of the Totality of the universe (God).

Can you see that attachment makes one emotionally dependent? By robbing one of one's freedom it constitutes an emotional constraint that can trigger off pain.

Contacts wound…the primitive anguish which lies at the base of samsaric existence and which produces attachment. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, p. 173.

PRACTICE:

You will be able to ascertain that in many instances one's desires, including noble ones, are frustrated resulting in suffering. Actually the most desperate frustration is accepting that one cannot turn the clock back and that there is no way of coming back on any action that proved harmful to a fellow being.

MUSIC: Kolnidrei, Capricio Italiano, n 6 (Capriccio italien, Orchestral favourites, DECCA)

There can be no doubt as to the number of cases of psychological distress that are due to the frustration of one's desires. Consequently Buddha enjoins his disciple monks to…

…*Watch over the door of the senses*. Majjh XXVIII

Buddha considers that craving results from ignorance and begets ignorance, whereas liberation from attachment to 'contact' of the world sparks realization and enlightenment.

Hence detachment sparks realization.

The ascetic has given up worldly craving. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, p. 176.

The ascetic causes the awakening of mindfulness derived from detachment. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, p. 177.

PRACTICE:

Can you envision that, owing to your birth in the existential world, you have lost your pre-existential omniscience and slipped into a state of ignorance, not realizing that your desire has lured you into a situation that begets suffering?

Moreover Buddha considers that involvement in the state of becoming is due to identifying with our body or psyche by succumbing to conditioning.

PRACTICE:

Identify with your body. Now identify with your personality (in contrast with your trans-personal identity). Can you see that both of these experience desire which entails engagement in the ephemeral condition of the existential world?

Detachment would result in:

Buddha:

Upon perceiving a form the ascetic conceives no inclination. Digha, II 64.

The ascetic causes the awakening of mindfulness derived from detachment. Majjh, LXXVII

PRACTICE:

That eschewing desire would spare one of the disappointments which beget pain is a foregone conclusion. However, I presume that you will, as I do, judge disinterest in the miracle of life whereby thoughts, emotions and the intention behind the divine programming are manifested by means of forms in the existential world as nihilism.

No doubt to eschew being inveigled in the rat race one is protected by the imperturbility furnished by detachment.

MUSIC: Arvo Part – Tabula Rasa – number 1 Fratres

Buddha seeks disintoxication to heal the wounds of attachment.

The Sufi View:

Disintoxication would prove (as we have said) an anesthetic to preserve one from pain. But there is also joy in attachment.

MUSIC: Brahms, 4th Symphony

Would detachment not alienate one from the fulfillment enjoyed by involvement in life – with all its hopes and disappointments, its challenges and hard lessons, its bewonderment and soul-searching, its fervor and misgivings, its zeal and toil, its passion and compassion, its stress and distress, its joy and despair?

While Hazrat Inaazrat Inayat Khan does concur with Buddha that indifference conveys freedom:

Hazrat Inayat:

The real proof of one's progress in the spiritual path can be realized by testing in every situation in life how indifferent one is. Sangitha I

All that produces longing in the heart deprives it of its freedom. The Gayan

If you do not rise above the things of this world, they will rise above you. Volume 1

However, Hazrat Inayat Khan cautions:

He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest really attains the blessed state. Spiritual Liberty

How can one reconcile these two objectives pulling one in opposite directions?

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, yet at the same time motive limits power. Yet it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. The Alchemy of Happiness

So long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object. Bowl of Saki

Both Buddhism and Sufism see desire as the prime mover leading towards existence. But whereas in Buddhism desire is considered pejorative while liberation from the existential state is coveted, in Sufism our desire understood to embody the divine nostalgia to actualize those potentialities in Him/Her that are what becomes us.e/ZShe becomes as us.b

Sufism distinguishes between craving (which is personal) and nostalgia whereby one is giving an, albeit personal, expression to the cosmic emotion sparking the whole process of existence – according to the Sufis *Ishq Allah*. The very foundation of Sufism, based upon the famous Hadith Qudsi, earmarks *ishq* (variously translated by desire, love, nostalgia) as the motivation behind the great achievements of our civilizations.

The Sufis consider divine nostalgia as the catalyst of knowing…

Hadith:

I was a secret treasure and loved to be known[by knowing myself]…

…which triggers off a descent from the original state in which God knows Him/Herself in the principles of HHis/Her being to witness how they are implemented when applied in the existential state, in you. But, in addition, they consider divine nostalgia as a catalyst of love – love for the possibility of you who blessedly make the application of the originating principles possible.

Rumi:

If there had not been a desire and hope of the fruit, why did the gardener plant the tree? Chittick, 1983, 67.

The branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.

Ibn Arabi:

What He created was for you. cf. Valsan, ET 4/1952, p. 27

The One who enjoys this independence and has manifested the world did not manifest it by necessity, but He created beings so that they may enjoy existence in order to free them from the solitude of the void and to give them the possibility of acquiring the divine attributes and to make them His vice-regents. All of this was done by dint of altruism, because He chose not to remain the only holder of those things that He gave. cf. Valsan, La Station de la Futuwwah et ses secrets, chapter 146 of Futuhat al-Makkya, p. 19

The existential state must have a purpose other than just offering a leg-up for awakening beyond it. What a loss of an opportunity to escape from it and thereby neglect all the enrichment that it offers!

The soul reaches a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes to him one sublime vision of the immanence of God. Sufi Teachings

The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man. Supplementary Papers

Manifestation is the self of God; but a self that is limited - a self that makes His perfection known when He compares Himself with the limited self we call nature. Unity of the Religious Ideal

MUSIC: Bach, Preludes and fugues, G. Gould

PRACTICE:

Can you earmark in yourself an enthusiasm, an appreciation, for the bounty that the

whole of life offers you: the flowers, the crystals, a sunrise seen from mountains, the stars, music, beautiful monuments, lovely people, ingenious technological inventions, research into meaningfulness.

For the Sufis the existential world is the fulfillment of the divine desire to manifest and actuate the potentialities latent as principles or archetypes in the cosmic code.

For the Sufis realization in life is attained by fulfilling the purpose of life which is actuating the splendor behind the existential level in "building a beautiful world of beautiful people."

In the course of accomplishment new horizons of meaningfulness reveal themselves.

For Ibn 'Arabi, by cloistering oneself from the world, one misses out on the divine revelation. If one can espy what transpires behind what appears, one will, at least at the first stage, earmark in the existential realm signs, *ayat*, giving clues to the "intention" behind the human drama. In a second step one notes clues as to the perfection of the divine archetypal attributes exemplified, albeit imperfectly, in our very human nature. The exemplar gives a clue as to the archetype. Therefore the key is to see clearly the relationship between the two poles of this dichotomy.

Ibn ‘Arabi.

Since the ephemeral conditions manifest the form of the eternal, it is by contemplating the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself. 1975, p. 15

Buddha is seeking freedom – awakening beyond life, while the Sufis enlist our nostalgia to awaken in life and see what is enacted in the human drama.

MUSIC: Nathan and Joseph. We Shall Be Healed

Buddha found that since detachment from desire (itself a conditioning) sparks freedom, it is only when one is free from conditioning that one can awaken from ignorance.

One would miss out on the sense of attainment gained by the venture of commitment to one's fellow beings – struggling in the drama of life, sharing similar fates, being

subjected to the same dangers, trying to live up to one’s values, struggling for self-esteem, confronting iniquity, experiencing solidarity with those who are victims of erring, feeling humility stemming from repentance and pride from steadfastness, discovering sacredness amongst the poor in spirit, upholding belief in an ultimate meaningfulness and goodness despite proof of the contrary.

Moreover, one would lose the privilege of sharing all that has been gained by the bounty of our civilizations – the legacy of our temples, palaces, cathedrals, symphonies, technology, inventions, our inroads into the sub-atomic and outer space, medicine, our social institutions, the inexorable advance of our understanding in wresting the intelligence behind the marvel of our universe, and our chance of contributing further to our pioneering and creative spirit by putting ourselves on the line!

Indeed, how could we avail the universe of the bounty lying in wait in the deep strata of our being unless we put it to the test of the tune, rhythm, consonances and dissonances of the symphony of life?

However, the concurrence with Buddhism comes to light when one sees how easily one gets oneself involved in the proverbial "tempest in a tea-cup." Furthermore, we react rather than acting out of an awareness of the ideals of our deeper self. Perhaps the clue is in the discrimination between the quest for joy and the quest for felicity. The Sufi dervishes do practice *rida*, equanimity (which is often paralleled with the Buddhist *samatha vipassana*, imperturbility), *adab*, nobility in emotional sensitivity, and *akhlaq Allah*, the divine manner, as the conditions conducive to manifesting *ishq Allah*, divine love.

The difference lies in the fact that the Sufis unfailingly ascribe emotion to their source, divine emotion, and consider that the divine emotion is constrained, defiled and distorted at the scale of the individual. One is always seeing, experiencing and feeling things from the diametrically opposite vantage point to one's own.

But is this not what Buddhists do when consciousness is no longer the consciousness of an "I?" Is this not found in Buddha’s teaching where he refers to "uncoupling" the central aspect of one's being, illustrated by the stump of the tree, from the samsaric aspect of one's being, illustrated by that part of the tree that appears above the

ground?

According to the Sufis the emotion which one limits within the confines of the scope of one's consciousness is the personal dimension of divine emotion at a cosmic scale. The mystic encompasses this overwhelming emotion when carried beyond him/herself by divine ecstasy.

Divinity is the exaltation of the human soul. (Nirtan)

MUSIC: Bach Magnificat , Fecit potentiam

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER INTERNATIONAL

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan
Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 23
IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY
COMPARISONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND SUFISM
SATIPATHANA: WATCHING OUR PERSONALITY

PRACTICE:

Watch your personality.

Observe your personality without identification,

as though it could be the personality of another person. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, Luzac 1951

As in a mirror, he looks at himself again and again…Majjh LXI

It will now appear to you as a compound of idiosyncrasies inherited from the whole universe, albeit limited by being transmitted by dint of your ancestral heredity. You limit your identity to being the observer, while ultimately God is the witness.

This composition of idiosyncrasies appears as a transient formation fortuitously offered to you by the universe, irrespective of your "I," as are your body and your mind. Your personality also is obviously conditioned.

However the personal dimension of our identity can trigger off the unfurling of resources latent in the transpersonal dimensions of our identity.

To undergo transformation one needs to make three steps:

i) free oneself from one’s self image;

ii) dis-assemble the construct of the idiosyncrasies one's personality;

iii) restructure a totally new configuration of one's qualities by calling upon one's transpersonal resourcefulness.

STAGE ONE: WHO WE THINK WE ARE

It is one's self image that constrains one in the personal dimension of one's identity. It is deceptive.

Bastami:

"Ya Khada! Ya Khada!" Hoax, hoax! "Ya Muakhir!" Deceiver! O deceiver! O leader astray! When God reveals Himself to the sages, in an initial stage, he shows them a market in which only effigies of men and women are on sale; and those who venture in this market will never visit God. Oh God beguiles thee not only in this market, but also in that of the next world. Massignon, 1975, Vol. III, p.175

PRACTICE:

Notice that normally you assume, perfunctorily, that you are what you think you are: your self-image. Take heed of the fact that the representation that you make of yourself is only an incomplete, incomprehensive portrayal of who you are.

PICTURE OF BUDDHA

MUSIC: TIBETAN MANTRAMS

For Buddha, our personality, in most cases, is defiled by our craving, our covetousness. This is due to our slipping into a state of ignorance (*avvidya*), in the samsaric "vicious circle."

The ascetic has given up worldly craving. Digha, II, p. 68

This is the way of the ascetic alienated from the world.

Sufis concede that the divine emotion is constrained, defiled and distorted at the scale

of the individual.

PRACTICE:

Reconnoiter your desires. Discriminate amongst them and dismiss those that are demeaning in your estimation.

Honoring and actuating one's real being requires a catharsis.

‘Ayn ul-Qudat Hamadhani:

When the subtle nature owing to man’s inclinations has become pure, he contemplates within himself whatever is of the same nature in the cosmos. Corbin, 1978.

MUSIC: Weber, Requiem, Miserere, Pie Jesus

PRACTICE:

You might ask yourself: since one could never countenance that one is without faults, is there any hope to attain a transformed personality?

The Sufis counter one’s scruples.

PICTURE OF RUMI

Rumi:

Do you not see that the Absolute appears in the attributes of contingent beings and thus gives knowledge about Himself, and that He even appears in the attributes of imperfection and blame? Chittick, 1974, 43

PICTURE OF HAZRAT INAYAT

Hazrat Inayat:

What a great treasure it is when a man has realized that in him are to be found all the merits and all the faults which exist in the world, and that he can cultivate all that he

wishes to cultivate, and cut away all that should be removed! It is like rooting out the weeds and sowing the seed of flowers and fruits. Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism

Shabistari:

Behold the world is entirely comprised in yourself. The world is man and man is a world. 1880, 15. *Behold the world mingled together: angels with demons, Satan with the archangel; all mingled like unto seed and fruit…together and gathered in the point of the present.* 1987, 80

Hazrat Inayat:

Man does not know that there is nothing that is not in him. A person who says to himself: "I do not possess that faculty" shows his lack of understanding what he is. Most men can only see the limitations of his human life, and can never probe the heights of his divinity; comparatively few can do this. Unity of Religious Ideals

The flaw here is that when one says, "I do not possess that faculty," one is identifying with one's personal identity.

Surveying the links in the causal ~~the~~ chain (*pattica samupadha*) leading to the suffering attendant upon existential conditions, Buddha infers that it is due to craving (*asava*) normally rendered by desire ignorance is begotten, whereas liberation from attachment to "contact" of the world sparks realization and enlightenment. He considered suffering as due to involvement in the vicious circle of becoming – identifying with our body or thinking or psyche by succumbing to conditioning – and searched for freedom from conditioning which leads to the detachment and aloofness of the ascetic.

Suffering is triggered off by contact.

Watch over the door of the senses. Majjh XXVIII

Evola:

Contacts wound – the primitive anguish which lies at the base of samsaric existence and which produces attachment. Ibid, p. 173

PRACTICE:

You will be able to ascertain that in many instances one's desires, including noble ones, are frustrated, resulting in suffering.

Attachment is an intoxication. Buddha finds that the cure from the wounds in our psyche calls for disintoxication. That is: freedom from attachment.

Upon perceiving a form the ascetic conceives no inclination. Digha, II, p. 64

The ascetic causes the awakening of mindfulness derived from detachment. Majjh, LXXVII

PRACTICE:

I presume that you will, as I do, judge this disinterest in the miracle of life whereby thoughts, emotions and the intention behind the divine programming are manifested by means of forms in the existential world, as nihilism.

Of course, no doubt, to eschew being inveigled in the rat race, one is protected by the imperturbability furnished by detachment.

Recalling thoughts from the previous lesson:

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The real proof of one's progress in the spiritual path can be realized by testing in every situation in life how indifferent one is. Sangitha I

However Hazrat Inayat Khan cautions:

He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest really attains the blessed state. Spiritual Liberty

How can one reconcile these two objectives pulling one in opposite directions?

Indifference gives great power; but the whole manifestation is a phenomenon of interest. All this world that man has made, where has it come from? It has come from the power of interest. The whole creation and all that is in it are the products of the Creator's interest. But at the same time the power of indifference is a greater one still, because, although motive has a power, yet at the same time motive limits power. Yet it is motive that gives man the power to accomplish things. The Alchemy of Happiness

So long as a man has a longing to obtain any particular object, he cannot go further than that object. Bowl of Saki

The soul reaches a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes to him one sublime vision of the immanence of God. Sufi Teachings

The fulfillment of this whole creation is to be found in man. Supplementary Papers

Manifestation is the self of God; but a self that is limited - a self that makes His perfection known when He compares Himself with the limited self we call nature. The Unity of Religious Ideals

Let us once more compare the craving regarding which Buddha warns us which inevitably leads to frustration of one's desires and consequently suffering.

Buddha is seeking freedom – awakening beyond life, while the Sufis enlist our nostalgia to awaken in life and see what is enacted in the human drama.

Sufism distinguishes between craving (which is personal) and nostalgia whereby one is giving an, albeit personal, expression to the cosmic emotion sparking the whole process of existence – according to the Sufis *Ishq Allan.* The very foundation of Sufism, based upon the famous Hadith Qudsi, earmarks *ishq* (variously translated by desire, love, nostalgia) as the motivation behind the great achievements of our civilizations.

The existential state must have a purpose other than just offering a leg-up for awakening beyond it. What a loss of an opportunity to escape from it and thereby neglect all the enrichment that it offers!

MUSIC: Bach, Preludes et fugues, G. Gould

PRACTICE:

Can you earmark in yourself an enthusiasm, an appreciation for the bounty that the whole of life offers you: the flowers, the crystals, a sunrise seen from mountains, the stars, music, beautiful moments, beautiful monuments, lovely people, ingenious technological inventions, research into meaningfulness.

For the Sufis the existential world is the fulfillment of the divine desire to manifest and actuate the potentialities latent as principles or archetypes in the cosmic code.

For the Sufis, realization in life is attained by fulfilling the purpose of life which is actuating the splendor behind the existential level in "building a beautiful world of beautiful people."

In the course of accomplishment new horizons of meaningfulness reveal themselves.

STAGE TWO: DISINTEGRATING THE AGGREGATES OF OUR PERSONALITY

Now for the next step: before constructing one's personality, one needs to first dissociate the aggregates that make up the individual dimension of one's being,

…overcome the bond of personality… Evola, ibid, p. 153

According to Buddha it is identification with our personal 'I' that is the cement holding the fortuitous configuration of the aggregates of our commonplace personality together. Hence he enjoins upon us to liberate ourselves from the notion of 'I' (ajjhatam vimoka). Samyutt, XII, 32

This is corroborated by Hazrat Inayat:

The highest perception of freedom comes when a person has freed himself from the false ego. In an Eastern Rose Garden

PRACTICE:

Question yourself whether your usual sense of who you are, based on your idiosyncrasies, is really you. Now try to reconnoiter your real being which lurks as a

potentiality behind that commonplace projection in which we slip into surreptitiously.

THE BREAKDOWN THAT MUST LEAD TO A BREAKTHROUGH

For a radical metamorphosis to occur in one’s personality, one needs to submit to a breakdown of one’s personality structure, which is the condition for a miraculous breakthrough.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

To some persons it comes in a moment's time—by a blow, by a disappointment, or because their heart has broken

First comes the dark night of understanding:

He finds that all he has hitherto known is useless… everything appears the opposite to its previous appearance. Supplementary Papers

MUSIC: Gregorian Chant

Saint John of the Cross found that it was in the obliteration of our equivocal understanding, as though the mind were blindfolded in total obscurity, that one finds freedom in one’s thinking. He illustrated this by the fact that it was thanks to the darkness that he was able to flee from prison.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The outlook becomes quite different. The Path of Initiation

As one teeters into still deeper darkness, the deepest phase in the dark night, Saint John points out that one’s sense of identity breaks down – one’s personality breaks down. This is what he called the dark night of the soul.

MUSIC: Jewish Women Wailing

This is a dangerous condition which could (and does in some cases) lead to a psychopathic collapse unless countered right away by a shift in one’s identity, by

identifying with the transpersonal dimension of one's identity. It is this light at the end of the tunnel that is luring Saint John out of the darkness, that rescues one from dangerous collapse. It is that which does not change, maintaining itself in the midst of that impermanency that Buddha keeps referring to, which keeps one afloat.

This is impersonal sense of identity that Buddha prescribes. It is, indeed, precisely corroborated by Hazrat Inayat Khan.

PRACTICE:

One needs to be cautious before engaging oneself in this hazardous drastic psychological operation.

However we all to a larger or lesser extent struggle with the impending breakdown of our most basic sense of whom we are which always lurks threateningly when we confront, cross- examine, evaluate, judge and censure ourselves eschewing justifications.

It could lead, in the extreme, to self-hate or demoting oneself in one's personal self-esteem. When caught in this perspective, one easily forgets that one is assessing a sliver of who one is. Therefore the answer is to remember:

i) the peri-personal;

ii) the potential, subliminal;

iii) and the transpersonal, extra-samsaric

dimensions included in our being.

STAGE THREE: RECONSTRUCTING THE SELF

Having dismissed your perfunctory notion of yourself, the sense of your real being will start announcing itself.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

a dim sense of ‘me’…

When the false self is gone from before us then all other selves can come, then illumination comes; then, when the individual self disappears, the spiritual self appears. Only the illusion is lost; the self is not lost, but the beginning is annihilation. Sufi Teachings

It is the annihilation of the false self, which gives rise to the true self. Annihilation (fana) is equivalent to 'losing the false self (nafs)' which again culminates in what is called Eternal Life (baqa). The Unity of Religious Ideals

For Hazrat Inayat Khan, it is not the ego that is annihilated, but the notion of ‘me’ alienated from its cosmic ground.

This is what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls ‘God-consciousness’ (on condition that we do not consider God as ‘other’). This cosmic dimension of your identity is what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls your real ego – I am – of which your being is a unique expression. If one is oblivious of this (as one generally is) one identifies with what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls: “what one has wrongly conceived as being one’s real being – one’s false ego.” One fails to actualize all the resourcefulness incorporated in one’s personality.

Ibn Arabi:

Most of those who seek to know God make a ceasing of existence and a ceasing of that ceasing as a condition of attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight. 1976, p. 5*. It is not thy existence that ceases but thy ignorance.* Ibid., p. 9

If there is any possibility for the soul to attain perfection, that perfection lies in realizing the universe in us.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Realize the self by unveiling it from its numberless covers which make the false ego. The Soul Whence and Whither.

When his soul is awakened, he becomes in one moment a different person. The Path

of Initiation

According to Buddhism, having removed the obstacle to realization, owing to one's ignorance, *avjja*, inveigled in the vicious circle of the samsaric hoax, that is thanks to awakening,

…there might arise in the samsaric consciousness an extra-samsaric force and vocation a will that overcomes the normal will and arrests the flux; a vision that can now discern what is noble and what is common. Evola, ibid, p. 230

…the extra samsaric element appearing in the personality is gradually integrated. Ibid, p. 147

MUSIC: Allegri Miserere

Monks, there is an unborn, a non-become, non compounded , non perishable. And if it were not for this non-become, there would be no escape from all of this. Udana, VIII, 1-3

It would be like identifying oneself with the stump of a tree. If the trunk is sawn off it may grow again. It looks similar yet not exactly as it was. Is it the same tree or another tree?

This surprising notion of an extra-samsaric dimension of our being (called in Buddhism *panna* and in Sanskrit *prajna*) that may permeate our commonplace samsaric personality does parallel the Sufi call upon one's divine inheritance.

You will notice that it is God who inherits that which showed forth in man of His attributes. They are two poles of the same reality.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

He remains totally unaware of the spark which continually shines in his heart and which may be called his divine inheritance.

This is paralleled with the Buddhist's highlight of our trans-personal identity.

One who has entered the current has transformed the root from which he sprang into life: in the current of which he is made, we now find the element 'bodhi,' something that is extra-samsaric, which is destined to determine a new line of heredity. We can now think of a super-individual matrix or root, no more exclusively samsaric, of existences, which tends towards liberation. Evola, ibid., p. 247

This could be illustrated by the difference between the forward march of evolution (the samsaric wheel is not just rotating around its hub, but advancing) and escaping the rotation of the wheel (on a tangent which nevertheless acts as an attractor upon the wheel).

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul which gives the soul a longing for the unattainable, and if the soul does not take that direction, then it certainly misses something in life for which is its innate longing and in which lies its ultimate satisfaction. This craving for the attainment of what is unattainable, gives the soul a longing to reach life's utmost heights. It is the nature of the soul to try and discover what is behind the veil; it is the soul's constant longing to climb heights which are beyond his power; it is the desire of the soul to see something that it has never seen; it is the constant longing of the soul to know something it has never known. But the most wonderful thing about it is that the soul already knows there is something behind this veil, the veil of perplexity.

MUSIC: Bach organ Pasacaille

PRACTICE:

i) Can you spot a quality that, although latent in the seed-bed of your personality, has at some point in your life actualized itself in your personality in a positive way? It was always there (*Ya Muqaddem*) but latent (*Ya Batin*). At some point as you advanced in your developmental stages, it became manifest (*Ya Zahir*) for having been actualized in the existential (*Ya Mawjud*) dimension of your identity and is now there for good.

ii) Can you see that it affects the entire programming of your life? If you had actualized this quality before, you would have dealt with challenges in your life differently

consequently what happened would not have taken place. Now, having consolidated this quality, circumstances are going to change.

iii) Can you now espy a level of your identity which is not subject to change?

PRACTICE:

This is not the same as trying to improve one's personality. If you try to improve your personality, while identifying with your personal identity, your self-image, you will notice that your habit of identifying with your self-image resists change. Whereas, if you identify with your transpersonal identity, which is eternal and therefore not subject to change ("this becoming does not lead to the non-become"), it transfigures your personality dramatically.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The ego itself is never destroyed. It is the one thing that lives, and this is the sign of eternal life. In the knowledge of the ego there is the secret of immortality. The Mysticism of Sound and Music

The highest ideal of man is to realize the unlimited, the immortal self within. …when man holds this ideal in his vision, he expands and becomes all he wants to be. Spiritual Liberty

The life one recognizes is only the mortal aspect of life. Very few have ever seen or been conscious of the immortal aspect at all. Once one has realized life, that which one has hitherto called life is found to be only a glimpse or shadow of the real life that is beyond comprehension. To understand it one will have to raise one's light high from under the cover that is hiding it like a bushel. This cover is man's identification with his mind and body; it is a cover that keeps the light active on the world of things and beings. In an Eastern Rose Garden

Evola:

Bodhi, the wisdom that liberates, is illustrated by Buddha as lightning, vajra, because of its extra-temporal character Cf. Angutt, III, 25

Illumination is the flash in which, beyond all time, the eternally present without a past is apprehended. Evola, ibid., p. 241

Consequently it could be attributed to a so-to-speak vertical rather than horizontal vector of time.

Music: Bach Overture of Saint John's Passion

As in Buddhism Hazrat Inayat Khan highlights our transpersonal identity over our personal identity. Here lies the secret.

However the Sufis still are aware of our personal identity provided that it is apprehended as a function of the transpersonal. Hazrat Inayat Khan suggests interpolating those two poles of the same reality.

Buddha does not say the 'I' does not exist; but rather that nothing belonging to samsaric existence and personality has the nature of the 'I.' Evola, ibid., p. 98, Cf. Majjh, XXII

The Sufis concur that, optimally, the fashioning of our personality is intrinsically linked with the whole formative process of the universe.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

In reality in the making of the personality it is God who completes His divine art. The Art of Personality

Therefore in reconstructing oneself, one needs to link the idiosyncrasies of one's personality with their archetypes, which the Sufis consider as the divine attributes, earmarking the traces of God's being in yourself.

PRACTICE:

The key to doing this is to give vent to your validation for the miracle of life – of your being in the universe! This arouses one to engage in an act of glorification (which is actually the most gratifying meditation). To glorify, one imagines God by projecting upon Him/Her qualities known to one, particularly one's idiosyncrasies predicating

one’s personality, but representing them as perfect as one possibly can.

Ibn’Arabi:

Since all that we know of Him is through ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we know of ourselves.

A Hadith of Prophet Mohammed:

Man arafa nafsahu faqad ‘arafa rabahu: whomsoever knows himself knows his lord.

Music: Call to Prayer

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

So far there has only been a belief in God. God exists in people’s imagination as an ideal. Believing is the first step. By this process the God within is awakened and made living. It is in those who are God- conscious that God becomes a reality so that He is no longer an imagination…If there is any sign of God to be seen, it is in the God-conscious… Make God as great and as perfect as your imagination can. By making God great we ourselves arrive at a certain greatness. The Unity of the Religious Ideal

The consequence is that the qualities of your personality are thereby upgraded.

How can we know these attributes that we are supposed to model ourselves upon?

Qur’an:

God shows His signs in nature and in yourself.

Jami:

*From all eternity, the Beloved unveiled His beauty in the solitude of the unseen; He held up the mirror to His own Face, He displayed His loveliness to Himself, He was both the Spectator and the spectacle*lthough He beheld His attributes and qualities as a perfect whole in His Essence….Yet He desired that they should be displayed to Him*

in another mirror, and that each of His eternal Attributes should become manifest accordingly in a diverse form. Therefore He created the verdant fields of time and space, and the life-giving garden of the world, that every branch and leaf and fruit might show forth His various perfections. Nicholson, 1975, p. 80-81

Music. Bach, Sonates and Partitas, Milstein, track 8 (EMI)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

When we consider the whole manifestation as a plant and God as the seed we find that the final thing was the bringing out of man.Man in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God.People ask: "If all is God, then God is not a person." The answer: though the seed does not show the flower in it, yet the seed culminates in the flower, and therefore the flower already existed in the seed. No doubt it would be a great mistake to call God a personality, but it is a still greater mistake when man denies the personality of God…. It is not wrong to make God in one's imagination the God of all beauty, for by that imagination he is drawn nearer and nearer every moment of his life to that Divine Ideal which is the seeking of his soul….Man in the flowering of his personality expresses the personality of God. The Unity of Religious Ideals

Hallaj:

O God, do away with my human idiosyncrasies (Nasutiyat) so that they may be replaced by Thy divine attributes (Lahutiyat).

Qur'an:

I emanated upon you a force of love that you may be fashioned by my glance. XX 39

Hallaj:

God, the most high wished to see this attribute which expressed the desire. He entertained in the solitude of trans-eternity, manifested as a form. He therefore drew out of the trans-eternal state a form in which he manifested the bounty of His attributes and within it He spirited the human person.

Then God elected the human person as the chosen One. "Dhu'l-Jalal wa'l-Ikram! Thou becomest in man at the end of time, in infinite regress: the Lord of majesty and splendor! Ya Malik ul-Mulk."

Thereupon, God glorified Himself. He glorified His attributes, and magnified His names, for these were forms within His Essence.

Continuing, Hallaj says:

And God saluted this effigy of Himself: man.

Imagine that, having earmarked something magnificent in your essence, you rejoice in this discovery.

Bastami:

My attributes were annihilated in His. And He invested me with His own attributes. And God said: "Go forth with My attributes to My creatures that I may see My selfhood in thy selfhood so that whosoever sees thee sees Me." Zaehner, 1960, p. 207

Then Bastami responded:

May I not be there, only Thee.

Music Bach Magnificat, Fecit potentiam

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER INTERNATIONAL

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan
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Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 24

SATIPATHANA: WATCHING OUR CONSCIOUSNESS
A COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH TO SATIPATHANA
EMPHASIZING PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS

In the first stages of the Satipathanas described by Buddha you have observed your body, thinking, emotion and personality without identifying with them. Now, in the fourth Satipathana, watch your consciousness without identifying with it.

Place the memory of yourself before yourself (Digha, XXII, 2)…

…while carrying your consciousness beyond the point where it is functioning as the witness.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

You are yourself the object of your observation.

PRACTICE:

Dwell in your body, watching your body without thinking any thought connected with your body.

Dwell in your feelings, watching your feelings without thinking any thought connected with your feelings.

Dwell in your mind, watching your mind without thinking any thought connected with your mind.

Dwell in your consciousness watching your consciousness without thinking any thought connected with your consciousness. (Majjh. CXXV)

Now we deal with the most difficult stage.

You say, “I am not my body, I’m not my mind and I’m not my personality. What am I? I must be my consciousness because I perceive this, I realize this and I remember that. What do I mean by ‘I’? Of course, I mean my consciousness. I am that which is aware. The body, and even my character, are that of which I am aware, but I am that which is aware. I am the subject.”

Even that has to go by the board as the most basic of all illusions.

Buddha explains it this way. He says, *onsciousness is like a flame. A flame depends upon the combustible. As long as there is the log, well then there is a flame. But if you ran out of logs, there would be no more flame.”

Further, he questions, is the flame the same that burns first one log and then another? When the fire is extinguished, and then relit, is the second flame another flame or the same flame?

How can you say I am this consciousness or that consciousness? You start realizing there is just consciousness which emerges when a formation has been built up, like a plant or a crystal. Consciousness flows in the plant or in a cell or in a crystal. But you can’t say this is the consciousness of the crystal; it is the consciousness that flows through the crystal. Or in the same way, if you could get into the consciousness of an ant in an ant nest you would realize that the ant is so conscious of the kind of will of the ant nest that the consciousness of the ant nest is much stronger than the consciousness of the individual ant. It does the things that the ant nest wants to do.

Then you become aware of the total consciousness of the universe. Consciousness, which you thought was really at least the epitome of me, is totally implicated in all consciousness of the universe.

Often I find that people have trouble with this practice because they are watching their thoughts, or their breath, from the vantage point of their personal consciousness rather than, as Buddha suggests, from a vantage point where consciousness is carried beyond its functioning as a personal witness. Consequently people err by engaging in introspection. Therefore having proceeded through the three previous

Satipathanas and having arrived at the fourth, one needs now, once more, to proceed watching one's body, mind emotions and personality from the vantage point attained in the fourth Satipathana.

PRACTICE:

Buddha enjoins upon us to observe: this is my body composed of flesh, bones and blood. It is a formation configured by cosmic forces regardless of my will…

...as a function of the impersonal forces which follow their course with complete indifference to our person. Opus. Cit. p. 165

Moreover, Buddha declares that considering the inevitable decay of the body results in dis-identification with the body and consequently confers upon the ascetic a sense of deathlessness (in Sanskrit *amrita*.)

Likewise are my thoughts and my personality so configured.

In the days of Buddha little was known of physics. Through this study we find that already during one's lifetime the molecules of our body cells are ionized: all that remains is electromagnetic charge. Matter is transmuted into energy. This energy field will be the infrastructure, the support system, for our body during 'life after life' that we call death.

Buddha affirmed, admittedly initially, that one's body and personality are conditioned by one's ancestral inheritance. This corresponds to the presence of the past, as Sheldrake postulates, where determinism sets in.

However, in addition, one recognizes that - I enjoy free will by my personal incentive. I can alter my body by my diet, by jogging, by awakening dormant faculties, by monitoring the endocrine glands; and I do and can alter my personality by unfurling potential qualities.

If living systems were predetermined, they would be locked into sclerosis.

Instead of being predetermined as Leibnitz suggests, quantum physics points out the role of randomness to foster the way evolution proceeds by trial and error. Further,

Prigogine introduces in his theories of dissipative structures not only the “undeterminate” in science, but also randomness as opening the chance for systems to explore unforeseen patterns by trial and error, thereby self-organizing themselves to foster creativity.

Buddha discounts the personal incentive. But who seeks for freedom from conditioning if not the individual? Conditioning is not the act of the individual!

The Sufis consider the personal dimension of our identity as the customizing of the global Being uniquely in each human being. This makes for a bounty of possibilities since the factors in the cosmic code are infinite. For the Sufis this bespeaks of the divine magnanimity.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

The One who enjoys this independence and has manifested the world did not manifest it by necessity, but He created beings so that they may enjoy existence in order to free them from the solitude of the void. This was done by dint of altruism, because He chose not to remain the only holder of those things that He gave. Futuhat al-Makkya, Chapter 146, p 19

When God sent Himself down to the waystations of His servants, their properties exercised their influence over Him. Hence He only determines their properties through them. He does not determine our properties except through us. Or rather we determine our own properties through ourselves though within Him. He only will according to the situation. Futuhat al-Makkya, Chapter 146, p 19

Werner von Braun:

Man is the observer of the universe, the experimenter, the searcher for truth, but he is not spectator alone. He is a participant in the continuing process of creation. All Believers are Brothers

PRACTICE:

Take advantage of the objective observation of your body to render the state of consciousness ‘corporeal.’

The consequence is that one acts nobly. One acts with decorum, maintaining a high standard in everything that one does.

WATCH YOUR EMOTIONS

One must cultivate an attitude of absolute objectivity with regard to one's psychological and emotional soul-searching.

PRACTICE:

Observe objectively "this feeling arises."

Now inquire: what were the circumstances or thoughts which triggered off this feeling?

Discern clearly that this sensation or thought had this effect upon my feelings.

Observe that by exercising detachment, the feeling subsides.

The clue to exercising detachment is outwitting the forces that result from identifying with the personal dimension of one's being.

Here lies the secret of one's wounds provoked, even exasperated. One is aroused by the incoming emotion triggered off by not only a disturbing event or thought, but frustration at the obstacles standing in the way of the fulfillment of one's desires: covetousness, concupiscence, jealousy, hate, anger, pride, doubt, the primordial anguish, wavering, the need for attention or recognition, winning an argument, agitation, restlessness.

Usually we confuse that aspect of ourselves that is the observer with our psyche. Distinguishing between these proves most useful to psychotherapists in their efforts to alleviate the despair of patients by teaching them to identify with the observing self while pointing out that it is the psyche that is distressed, not the observer.

Pain, distress, anguish, despair, frustration, a broken heart, self-pity are right there lurking in our personal identity; in our transpersonal identity there is the self-assurance that begets peace and sovereignty. To make this transit, overcoming desire requires a lot of maturity, of discernment as to values, and of mastery.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Man seeks freedom and pursues captivity. In an Eastern Rose Garden

The moment a person feels that he will no longer remain in prison, the prison bars must break instantly of themselves.

It depends upon your discrimination: what to renounce and for what; whether to renounce things momentarily precious for everlasting things or everlasting things for things momentarily precious. Social and Religious Gathekas

Buddha:

He remains vigilant over the eyes and the ears. Watch over the doors of perception. He remains vigilant over the mind. (cf,. opus cit p 174)

PRACTICE:

Place sentinels at the doors of perception. Impressions are arrested at the periphery by an attitude of detachment before they reach and trigger off one's emotional reaction.

Since the frustration of one's craving or aversion is the cause of suffering, Buddha advocates curbing any inclination or attraction for what the world offers you which draws you into the samsaric "vicious circle" and robs you of your freedom. In doing this one is isolating oneself in splendid isolation which is the way of the ascetic, not that of valuing life with all its joys and pains and challenges which is the way of the Sufi. But Buddha lays the ultimate value in freedom. It is desire that avers itself to be the impediment whereby one is conditioned that robs one of one's freedom.

This detachment is sparked by girding oneself with silence.

Buddha:

Between the world and me there is now a zone of silence.

You will find that you will reduce the period of sleep and promote deep sleep

(orthodox sleep) rather than sleep with dreams (paradoxal sleep).

PRACTICE:

To appreciate the serenity arrived at by detachment, perform the Yogic practice of Yoni Mudra. Like the popular statuette of the monkeys obstructing perception, place fingers on eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

Here we are reconnoitering precisely the deep ground for resentment. Therefore Buddha is tackling one of the most fundamental of all psychological problems and therefore it is a pointer for psychotherapists: the healing of wounds by dis-intoxification.

SCRUTINIZING THE MIND

A we have seen when studying yoga, particularly *nirvetarka samadhi*, the Yogi frees his mind from the limitation due to labeling a thought, for example one's representation of a quality by a name, by defining it and thereby limiting its outreach.

Buddha:

That part of this aggregate that is gross and material is form, and that part that is subtle is name, and between the two there is an independent relationship. Milindapandha, 49

It is in the perspective of our individual consciousness that we segregate objects and thoughts by labels.

Evola:

Thought and form condition each other. Opus cit, 59

This should caution us about "vain repetition" of which Christ warns us. The error lies in trying to develop a quality in our self without maintaining the representation of that quality in its perfection predicated to God as the archetype of which the coveted quality in our personality is the exemplar.

Al Jili:

There is access to the knowledge of God only through the intermediary of His names and His qualities. But he who breaks the seal, transpiercing thus quality and name, is with God through the essence without the divine quality being veiled from him. He becomes the mirror of the divine name so that he himself and the name are like two mirrors confronting each other and being reflected the one in the other. Insaan al Kamil

No doubt the signs, the *ayat*, of which the Qur'an speaks in their bounty scatter our thoughts in thought associations. To this Buddha opposes the state of nirvana: emptiness, "the sign-less." In a further step, in *nirvecara Samadhi*, the Yogi frees herself from thought associations.

CURRICULUM OF THE SUFI ORDER INTERNATIONAL

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LESSON 25
IN SEARCH OF THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR IDENTITY
COMPARISONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND SUFISM
THE JHANAS

THE JHANAS

Amongst the Buddhist practices one could list three steps: (i) the Satipathanas, (ii) the Jhanas, (iii) the Arupa Jhanas.

So far in the Satipathanas we have been observing the different constituents of ourselves objectively, but now in this next step, the Jhanas, we observe other than ourselves (the world) while unswervingly holding onto the consciousness of our consciousness, *"bodhi,"* in daily life.

Caution yourself by this thought: this is the way the world appears within the constraint imposed by the focalization of consciousness due to my notion of myself as an individual.

The breakthrough is fired when you realize that the personal focal center of your consciousness, previously the observer, is now that which is observed. The personal vantage point has merged with the consciousness of the universe.

The consequence is that in the awakened state, the objects, scenes, and events you remember having perceived in the scenario of life through the personal vantage point now appear as they would through a lens; that is, as a distortion of the way they are viewed from the impersonal, all-encompassing vantage point.

PRACTICE:

Rather than identifying with your consciousness as the witness, push your consciousness to its limits where it is functioning beyond the point where it is a personal vantage point. It merges with the transpersonal dimension of consciousness. You watch your consciousness as it watches an object, your body, a thought, etc. The witness is impersonal. One does not identify with it.

Sufism does corroborate Buddhism in that, for the Sufis the observer is not the person – God is the observer.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

By Himself He sees Himself and by Himself He knows Himself.

He is not only the Perceiver but also the one through whom He perceives.

He does not require a creature nor a subject because He is the Creator and the created. Futuhat al-Makkya, p. 13

The difference is that Buddha would never formulate an assumption, which is a dogma. His teaching is based upon experience. Yet he does declare a credo:

Monks there is a non-become, non-formed, non-perishing. If it were not for the non-become, non-formed, non-perishing there would be no refuge from all of this.

EXPLORING DEEPER ZONES OF YOUR BEING

The Jhanas aim at disengaging the central principle of one’s being standing apart from all of this.

…to unclutch the root, as it were, of one’s being…reaching into deeper layers of one’s being from its unfoldment in one’s congenital identity. Evola, The Doctrine of Awakening, Luzac, London, 1951, p. 162.

We grasp a deeper stratum of reality, which, according to Sufis, is “that which transpires behind that which appears.”

To life Buddhism opposes that which is beyond life. Samyutt., XXII , 57

This perspective can be applied to psychotherapy: we may grasp the issues behind facts and circumstances.

Consciousness is free from perceptions and images. Consciousness maintains itself without resting upon psychical functions, perceptions, images, thoughts or emotions. p. 186

Dismiss the supports of consciousness (*vitarka* and *vikara*) without passing into the subconscious or into sleep.

How does matter, how do events, how do the thoughts of other people, how do the emotions of other people, how does the personality of another person, how does the consciousness of another person appear from the vantage point of consciousness carried beyond the point where it is functioning as a personal consciousness? That is in a state of awakening, "*bojhanga*?"

PRACTICE:

In order to achieve this you need liberate yourself from habitual faculties. Moreover you need to not only avoid your usual identification but even identification with the super-sensible dimension of your identity. An example of how one is able to maintain the overview holding on to the vantage point of the consciousness of your consciousness: ask yourself when walking,

"Who is walking? Who is breathing?" Digha p. 357

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

True exaltation of the spirit resides in the fact that it has come to Earth and has realized there its spiritual existence. The Alchemy of Happiness

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in the world. The Way of Illumination; The Soul Whence and Whither; Vol. 1

The purpose of life is fulfilled in rising to the greatest heights and in diving to the

deepest depths of life, in widening one's horizons, in penetrating life in all its spheres, in losing oneself, and in finding oneself in the end. The Way of Illumination; Vol. 1

I. Matter will now appear to you as actuating the mind.

Bohm:

The more you explore matter the more you discover something of the nature of the mind. Unfurling Meaning

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Consciousness awakens in matter where it was so to speak buried for thousands of years.

II. How does the thinking of people appear when consciousness has extended beyond the point where it is functioning as an individual consciousness?

The ascetic causes the awakening of mindfulness derived from detachment, from dispassion, derived from ceasing to involve oneself in the flux of becoming, ending in renunciation. He causes the awakening of investigation, of enthusiasm, of equanimity, of concentration. Majjh. LXX VII

This should be considered as realization, bodhi, rather than cognizance. – the great awakening, piti sambojhhang. Majjh CXXV

Abu Bakr al Warraq:

Knowledge is of things with regard to their forms or characteristics, whereas realization is of things in their deeper reality, haqa'iq. Cf. Kalabadhi, 1981, p. 68

You will discover that there is disparity between the real world and our representation of it – our theorems. This is the very foundation of *maya.*

Bastami:

God deludes you in the markets of this world and will delude you in the next. Zaehner

God's guile encompasses them in a way they do not understand. Zaehner, appendix p 223

I saw the tree of oneness. Then I looked and I knew that all this was deceit. Zaehner, 1960, p. 95

Ibn 'Arabi:

The signs alert us to what they manifest, what they reveal. He is known through the things. Chittick, 1989, p. 225

Qur'an:

We will show them our Signs in the furthest regions of the earth and in your own souls. Qur'an 41: 53, tr. Yusuf Ali

Ibn 'Arabi:

So there is a real and a created representation. If you witness your representation, you will not see the real; and if you witness the real, you will discard your representation thereof….

Ibn 'Arabi:

He is known through the things. Things are like curtains over the real. When they are raised, unveiling takes place. Chittick, 1989, p. 225

Our consciousness does not grasp the real; it is veiled by our representation of it. Ibn 'Arabi: *Knowledge is a veil on the known.*In his quest for reality Bastami goes through a deep process:

Then He annihilated me from my own existence and showed me His Selfhood unhampered by my existence.

Finally came the moment of truth.

Bastami:

Thou art my sight in my eye, and my knowledge in my ignorance. Be Thyself Thine own light that Thou mayest be seen by Thyself. There is no God but Thee. Zaehner, 1960, p. 206

III. How does the consciousness of people appear when consciousness has extended beyond the point where it is functioning as a personal vantage point?We are unaware that we do know the real. We are not conscious of this knowing – it is apprised by our intelligence.

Diana Robertson:

We may explore the universe and find ourselves or we may explore ourselves and find the universe. Sharon Begly, Inside the Mind of God, Templeton Foundation Press, Lionheart Books, 2002, p. 29

Abdullah Ansari:

I searched for God and found myself and I searched for myself and I found God.

Jean-Paul Richter:

The unconscious is really the largest realm in our minds. And just on account of this unconscious, its unknown boundaries may extend far away. Why should everything come to consciousness that lies in the mind since, for example, that of which it has already been aware, the whole great realm of memory, only appears in it in small areas, while the entire remaining world stays invisible in the shadow? And may there not be a second half world of our mental moon which never turns towards consciousness? Arthur Koetler, The Act of Creation, Picador, Pan Handbooks, 1970, p. 151

What Richter is saying is that we store cognizance in the unconscious of which we are not aware, but it is acquired unbeknown to us. It is an acquired knowledge that accumulates in our unconscious memory and therefore is not to be confused with protocritic knowledge though it does affect our knowing implicitly.

If you could grasp reality you would be shattered.

Niffari: *Why seek for the known when you could know the Knower?*

Ibn ‘Arabi:

Thou knowest this world in the degree of which one can know the shadows; and thou art ignorant of it in the degree of thy ignorance of the person on whom the shadows depend. Chittick, 1975, p. 63

This is the clue to awakening.One espies the manifesting as the existential world, but more importantly, the intention behind the blueprint.

At a certain level of our thinking, our psyche touches upon a level prior to causality.

Andreas Speiser:

It is an initial state which is not governed by mechanistic law, but is the preconditioning of law, the chance substrate upon which law is built. Uber die Freiheit, Basler Unversitaetsreden, 28, Basel, 1950, p. 18

How is this possible? Perhaps the greatest miracle is that our brain, configuring the fabric of the stars, serves as a transducer to grasp the software that manifests as the stars. Actually the fabric of our bodies is more sophisticated than that of the stars, because in the course of the evolutionary process the inorganic matter of the stars has organized itself as organic matter.THE PERSPECTIVE OF ASTRONAUTSThe perspective of astronauts has opened up a completely new horizon fostering the upgrading of our thinking. Viewing Planet Earth from outer space leads us earthlings into an overview from the moment that we are apprised of their perspective. The overview of the astronauts overarches our commonplace point of view. Since contemplating Planet Earth and, more so, since plunging into the galaxies and discovering themselves as part of that maelstrom has had the consequence of altering the astronauts’ thinking, entering into their thinking has the effect of altering ours.

Michael Collins:

I liked that feeling, being a part of the universe instead of part of the Solar System. USA, 54

Julian Janes:

It is something about understanding the totality of existence, the essential defining reality of things, the entire universe and man's place in it. It is a groping among stars for final answers, a wandering the infinitesimal for the infinitely general, a deeper and deeper pilgrimage into the unknown. The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind.

Brian Swimme:

We are the first humans to look into the night sky and see the birth of stars, the birth of galaxies, the birth of the cosmos as a whole. Our future as a species will be forged within this new story of the world. Sharon Begly, Inside the Mind of God, Templeton Foundation Press Lionheart Books, 2002, p. 156

Our intelligence sparkles when, plunging with our minds into the unfathomable depth and outreach of the choreography of the stars, it resonates with the intelligence motivating the galaxies, discovering its commonality therewith.This way of thinking opens the perspective for a further step in our human thinking and in the future of spirituality. In fact, just as species mutate, the thinking of humanity advances. Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The collective working of many minds as one single idea and the activity of the whole world are governed by the intelligence of the Planet. The whole Universe has contributed to the way humanity thinks today. Spiritual Liberty

Kevin W. Kelley:

It is the golden thread that runs through all these expressions of individual experience that is the magic of life.

Just as it takes a lot of molecules to produce a brain that can serve intelligence, so it takes many minds to illuminate our thinking. And what is more, instead of adding to each other, paramount thoughts multiply and can upgrade our thinking exponentially by updating it in infinite regress, like a logarithm. What are we doing in our life? The whole universe is inviting us to participate in its evolution by updating our

understanding.

Murchie:

Why should I stir from my accustomed ways for the risks and trials of space?

I have come here with open eyes to see the unseen. I have come with open mind to listen to the music of the spheres.

You and I have been appointed to a greater consciousness than our own.

Man has become a cell of the consciousness of the whole time-space universe. It behooves him to enlarge his view, to accept life's new dimension when it is offered – to adopt the perspective of space.

UNIVERSEL: A COURSE OF MEDITATION

The teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan

Presented and paraphrased by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Including parallels with the ancient Sufis

LESSON 26

COMPARING SUFISM AND BUDDHISM:

ADVANCED MEDITATIONS

for

UPGRADING CONSCIOUSNESS

PREAMBLE

We ask once more the question how does:

- your consciousness and that of people;
- matter;
- the thinking of people;
- the emotion of people and your own;
- the programming of the Universe;

appear when consciousness has been carried beyond our personal consciousness.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Man, with the maturity of his soul, desires to probe the depths of life. He desires to discover the power latent within him, he longs to know the source and goal of his life, he yearns to understand the aim and meaning of life, he wishes to understand the inner significance of things, and he wants to uncover all that is covered by form and name: he seeks for insight into cause and effect, he wants to touch the mystery of Time and Space, and he wishes to find the missing link between God and man--where man ends, where God begins . The Unity of the Religious Ideal

Meditation is diving deep within oneself, and soaring upwards into the higher spheres, expanding wider than the universe. Healing and the Mind World; Mental Purification

WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS?

The Elementary Level:

In our commonplace experience we assume that we are the spectator experiencing matter which we take for granted is the real word. Also at this level our consciousness functions as the spectator that apprehends people's thoughts which are articulated by language. In this perspective Hazrat Inayat Khan points out that the consciousness of the universe becomes limited in the personal consciousness of the individual.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

That consciousness, which is divine or universal consciousness, has become limited. Healing and the Mind World; Expansion of Consciousness

…the real reason which is within…is suppressed beneath all the outer reasoning, and man seeks - more than the animal kingdom does - to get back something that has been lost. Supplementary Papers

We never perceive the real world of matter. What we perceive is impressions of light and sound. These serve as clues that we interpret as being reality.

Karl Pribham (paraphrased):

All that we perceive from the real world is the impressions of the senses from which we infer the real world. Article in Science et Conscience France-Culture / Colloque de Cordoue, Stock 1980 p. 393 Esprit, cerveau et conscience.

The Sufis describe this elementary level of consciousness based on a saying in the Qur'an (paraphrased):

God makes Himself known by clues, ayat , in the physical world and in your psyche.

PRACTICE:

This first stage could be illustrated by sitting looking in the mountains, looking into a wonderful panorama, or going into a church and listening to the organ playing, or

going to a wonderful service where candles are lit on the altar, or looking into the eyes of a baby, or witnessing a beautiful act of love or generosity. You can expand your consciousness. If God is making Himself known to you through the ayat , the signs that the physical universe is made of, it is like learning something about the bear through its pug marks, its signs. (Aug. 11, 1995)

Ibn ‘Arabi:

He is known through the things. Fut. ll, 507, 30.

He does not know of God except he infers God's being through his being. 1975, p.13.

All that we know of Him is through ourselves...Thou seest thy attributes to be His attributes. Since we know Him by ourselves, we attribute to Him all that we attribute to ourselves. 1975, p. 16.

At this level, to find the reality inferred by the clue, one needs to follow the clue – ta'wil.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

The signs alert us to what they manifest, what they reveal. The hidden treasure transpires through that which appears.

It is by the contemplation of the ephemeral that God communicates to us the knowledge of Himself. 1975, p. 15.

On the other hand the ephemeral is not conceivable as such except in its relation to a principle from which it derives its own possibility. 1975, p. 15.

According to a Hadith which is founded on the basis of unveiling, but not by way of transmission, God said something like this: “I was a treasure but was not known, so I loved to be known and I created the creatures and made Myself known to them. Then they came to know Me, so He knew Himself through witnessing in the manifest.” p. 31, iii 429, 4.

But He knows that He could be known in respect of His transcendence (Huwiva) – in

respect that He knows Himself in the principle of His Being. That which is revealed is not the world. One the Supreme Knowledge, 1982, 4.

Consequently the knowledge of itself [ourselves] *through the divine perspective, insofar as its form appears to one as a form in God* (Cf. Fus p. 42 *), is by necessity limited by our ability to grasp it through thyself* [ourselves]*. The perspective of unity is lost.* p. 58.

More importantly these clues also apply to our understanding of ourselves and of others.

PRACTICE:

One does project one's psyche into the world. It is particularly true in the case of one's problems. The first state in Yoga is to recognize that one doesn't experience the world such as it is, but such as it appears to one from a personal vantage point. We think that we are trying to assess our problems. What we are doing is grappling with our impressions of our problems and not really our problems.

The first thing is to know that you have to somehow not limit yourself to your vantage point because that sets a bias upon what you experience.

You can expand your consciousness by getting into the consciousness of another person, like someone who is countering you in a situation. See how things look from the point of view of that person. Can you see from two different points of view at the same time?

The Sufis say, “I see through his/her eyes.” It is a complementary perspective to your perspective. It goes even further, “I see him/her, I see myself, through his or her eyes.” Then you understand why the person is treating you the way they are because they assume you are what they think you are. Their assessment of you is not any better than your assessment of yourself. They are both incorrect, but at least you have an expanded view.

If you were to extend this view more and more, then you would have this fantastic situation like you find in Khalil Gibran's book, Jesus the Man, where Jesus is

described by people who knew him at the time. It is all fiction, of course. The views are totally different, but somehow together they build an image of Jesus.

The consequence is that you are not that impressed by the standpoint of people because you see it is totally incongruent. What people think of you is not reliable. You have freed yourself from the opinions people have of you. (Aug. 11, 1995)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

It is the situation we are in that makes us believe we are this or that.

There is a discrepancy, a disparity between the way our familiar concepts interpret our everyday experience and the real world. For example, responding to persons unfamiliar with quantum physics who need to imagine what an atom is like, some physicists have contrived to propose a three-dimensional space-time model of an atom. But reality, particularly at the atomic and sub-atomic level, cannot possibly fit in a model founded upon familiar concepts satisfying our common sense.

This is the profound meaning of maya, illusion, delusion.

Bastami:

“Khada! Khada!” Hoax, hoax!

“Ya Muakhir!” Deceiver! O deceiver! Oh leader astray! When God reveals Himself to the sages, in an initial stage, he shows them a market in which only effigies of men and women are on sale; and those who venture in this market will never visit God. Oh God beguiles thee not only in this market, but also in that of the next world.

We take those “effigies of men and women that God shows you in the markets of the world” to be what the persons we meet really are, but they are only the shadows of the reality that they feature.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

God reveals Himself to the potentialities of His being by projecting His shadow. Hikmat un Nuriya

But reality manifests itself in the forms that appear in the shadow. Shadows only exist where there is light. God then withdraws the shadow. Fusus al Hikam, Chapter on Joseph, tr. Burckhardt. Beshara 1975.

You may see the Real behind the veil of things. Unveiling conveys knowledge of the Real in the things. Things are like curtains over the Real. When they are lifted, unveiling takes place.

When your soul has been purified and its mirror has been polished, do not consider the world to receive in it the picture of the world, but turn your soul towards the dignity of the Essence in its purity in the perspective of the cognizance that it has of itself. Etudes, 1952, Mai-June, p. 129.

Yoga aims at eschewing the constraint in our grasp of meaningfulness. Constraint results from the way meaningfulness is diminished as it descends through the passageway in our psyche intersecting the compass of reality beyond our outreach. The interpretation of meaningfulness – that we try to fit inadequately into the simplistic logic of our commonplace thinking by cross-examining our thinking – is precisely what is meant by maya . Yoga reverses that process, proceeding from our commonplace interpretation of reality upwards, as it were, by dint of enlisting more sophisticated modes of logic.

As Ouspensky showed: syllogistic logic is just one case of more encompassing modes of logic: for example ‘and' instead of ‘or.' Cf. Tertium Organum and A New Model for the Universe

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The seekers of this never cast even a glance toward illusionary existence. Supplementary Papers: IIlusion and Reality

What does Buddha mean – expanding our consciousness to the vast compass of the consciousness of the universe? Or does he mean hoisting our consciousness into the transcendental perspective of the universe?

If you carry consciousness beyond the point where it is operating from a personal

vantage point, matter, the thinking of people, their emotional motivations, and the modulations of the setting of their consciousness are seen in an encompassing perspective rather than being constrained by our commonplace, middle range view.

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LESSON 27

RUPA JHANAS

HOW DOES THE WORLD LOOK WHEN IT IS CARRIED BEYOND THE POINT WHERE IT IS OPERATING AS A PERSONAL VANTAGE POINT?

Assessing situations and people from our personal vantage point, which is limited, is flawed and misleading, and results in afflicting people with pain that could have been avoided. It is this kind of mis-assessment that triggers off wars. However, if adumbrated by our transpersonal perspective, the insight of the personal view adds a further dimension to our transpersonal perspective.

Buddha cautions against the personal view, which is conditioned. Hazrat Inayat Khan validates the psychological multidimensional insight gained when both the personal and transpersonal perspectives are extrapolated. These views will affect our way of handling problems in the perturbed world in which we are involved.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom. Healing and the Mind World

Our purpose is to explore in what way we may enhance our insight in order to deal with not just our own problems but world situations in which we are inevitably involved. For this we are studying methods of meditation according to:

- the Rupa Jhanas of Buddhism and
- Sufism, as updated by Hazrat Inayat Khan to correspond with the thinking of our time.

How does the world appear when you contemplate it from:

(i) a personal vantage point?
(ii) a transpersonal vantage point?

The Buddhist Satipathana practices, was the first step where we observed our self (our body, mind, emotion, personality) from a vantage point carried beyond the personal perspective.

Now in the Jhanas , the second step in Buddhist practices, we observe other than ourself: the world, matter, the thinking, the emotions and the personality of others.

PRACTICE:

(i) Ascertain that indeed you are convinced that the physical world is as it appears: events or occurrences are as they seem; your assessment of what the world conveys to your understanding from your personal vantage point is correct; your image is what you are. Furthermore, you believe that an occurrence is the cause of another occurrence - its consequence by dint of the law of causality.

Note that that viewpoint of the world that is knowable to you is constrained within the frameworks of three-dimensional space and one-dimensional time. We grasp the world through a window that is relentlessly moving like that of a train.

(ii) In contradistinction thereto, expand your consciousness. If you expand the outreach of your consciousness while envisioning your being as extending beyond your skin you will be discovering your magnetic field. You will now see occurrences that you had envisioned within the limits of the frame of time and space in their context rather than content.

This means that you will not limit your assessment of your problems to the effects of a cause in the past, but you will envision what you thought were your problems as the manifestations of a condition of the whole universe experienced in the occurrences in your personal life situations.

(iii) If you turn within, plunging into subliminal levels of your mind, you will find that the world appears as the unfurling of infinite potentialities that are only known when

actualized in the existential universe.

Corbin:

God knows Himself through us. God becomes in us the object of His knowledge. God describes Himself through ourselves. (ibid. p 114)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The purpose of life is that God discovers Himself through us.

(iv) Now hoist your consciousness into its transcendent vantage point – the consciousness of your consciousness (advocated by Buddha). You will we see that there is a disparity, an incoherence, between the real world and your representation of it.

Seeing things from a transpersonal point of view throws new light on what may be crucial issues. It is seeing things from the antipodal standpoint to one's personal viewpoint: the divine point of view.

For example, physicists try to describe what one logically infers from experiments to be atoms or sub-atomic particles. To explain to the public their views on matter based upon their experiments, physicists are trying to project models that make sense as a physical reality to our commonplace minds. But the pictures or representations which they use cannot in any way fit into what we represent as physical reality. Rather, they are clues luring our minds beyond their commonplace thinking as, indeed, scientists have so trained their minds to do.

Karl Pribham, for example, shows that what we think is the real world is mediated by sounds and ocular electrical impulses that we interpret as the real world. (Vide Revision)

Our ordinary assessment of the world is illusory, precisely what yogis call maya .

Granted that the world and events and our beings are not what we think they are accounts for a perfunctory rendering of the Yogic theory of maya that posits that our representation of the world is illusory and hence deceptive. Of what use saying, “ Neti,

neti (it is not), ” thus abdicating from sustaining a sliver of hope of making some sense of life.

There must be clues to the programming enacted by physical and psychological events. Reconnoitering these is what both meditation and science are about.

Bedil:

If thou once happenest to be here thou wilt enjoy the lifting of the veil from thy illusionary prison so much, that thou shalt never more desire to return to the same illusion .

Outwitting the hoax of maya, the Qur'an declares:

God reveals Himself through signs (ayat) in the physical world and in your psyche.

Jami:

The world is an illusion but eternally reality manifests through it. (1983 p. 33)

But let us not jump to conclusions when passing judgement about maya .

Actually, in contradistinction to popular understanding, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras proceed in showing how one can reverse illusion owing to mis-assessment from the perspective of our commonplace mental constructs.

In our previous studies, we have already worked with these steps: Sarvitarka, Nirvitarka, Savicara, Nirvecara, Ananda Nugata, Asmita, Sarbija, Nirbija, Asamprajnata Samad.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

According to a Hadith which is sound on the basis of unveiling, but not by way of transmission, God said something like this: I was a treasure but was not known, so I loved to be known and I created the creatures and made Myself known to them. Then they came to know Me. So He knew Himself through witnessing in the manifest. But He knows that He could not be known in respect of His transcendence (Huwiyyah) –

in respect that He knows Himself in the principle of His Being. (cf. Chittick, 1989, pp 131-2)

However one does have access to a direct appraisal of meaningfulness not mediated by clues.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

At an advanced stage, one learns to grasp God as He is in Himself rather than by the knowledge gleaned of Him.

Knowledge based on experience is a concretization in the real world of an inherent sense of meaningfulness (in philosophy called *protocritic*). This is realization rather than cognizance. It is what is meant in Yoga and Buddhism as *Bodhi.* For example, how do we know that a table is round? Or that 2 plus 2 is 4, or a rose is a flower? Roundness or arithmetic is in the cosmic code. It follows that that inherent cognizance is based upon what Newton says, “We think as God thinks,” but less well, just as a fraction of a crystal behaves like the whole crystal, but less well.

Einstein:

All our thoughts and concepts are called by sense experience and have meaning only in reference to these sense experiences. On the other hand, however, they are products of the spontaneous activity of our minds. They are thus in no wise logical consequences of the content of these sense-experiences. We must therefore investigate how they are related to the experience.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

There is a way of looking upon the earth rather than perceiving it through the senses. One contemplates its eternal model in one's soul. (Cf. Corbin, opus cit.)

Pagels:

The theorist cannot rationally deduce the absolute postulate from experience, since it transcends experience. “For the creation of a theory the mere collection of recorded phenomena never suffices – there must always be added a free invention of the

human mind that attacks the heart of the matter.” (The Cosmic Code)

Unknown:

The only real voyage or discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. (The Hand of God, p. 29)

Actually we are not conscious of what we know.

Jean–Paul Richter:

The unconscious is really the largest realm in our minds. And just on account of this unconscious, its unknown boundaries may extend far away, why should everything come to consciousness that lies in the mind, since for example that of which it has already been aware, the whole great realm of memory, only appears in it in small areas, while the entire remaining world stays invisible in the shadow? And may there not be a second half world of our mental moon which never turns towards consciousness?

(Cf, Arthur Koetler, The Act of Creation, Picador, Pan Handbooks, 1970, p 151)

As we noted before, what Richter is saying is that we store cognizance in the unconscious of which we are not aware, but it is acquired unbeknown to us. This includes, in addition, protocritic knowledge that we have acquired in our experience of the existential world.

This is understandable because our consciousness is picking up information from the existential world, whereas intelligence throws light on that which is perceived or assessed from experience.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

When consciousness is not conscious of anything it is pure intelligence. It is intelligence when there is nothing before it to be conscious of. When there is something intelligible before it the same intelligence becomes consciousness. Intelligence confined to knowledge becomes limited, but when it is free from all knowledge then it experiences its own essence. (1973, p. 162)

Mircea Eliade:

Yogic meditation is penetrating into the essence of the object perceived. (Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, Bollington Foundation, NY, 1969, p. 72)

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

One touches upon the essence of things and beings by reaching outside from inside.

In the Arupa Jhanas, Buddha calls this the state ‘beyond consciousness'.

Aranyaka Upanishad:

Where there is duality one sees the other…but where all is one, of what kind of knowledge are we speaking?

One cross-examines the interpretation of experience which mediates between experience and its assessment. Instead of operating in the dualistic mode, subject/object, opposing the observer and the observed, one arrives step by step at a communion or conjunction between subject and object reaching into unity. These practices aim at discovering a super-rational state of our being that is not limited by the act of cognizance and awakens without the mediation of mental constructs.

THE ROLE OF CREATIVE IMAGINATION

You will notice that the clues so named in the Qur'an are not only forms in the physical world, that is the forms configuring substances, but include our idiosyncrasies, which the Sufis consider as non-substantial forms.

If you observe the world from the transpersonal vantage point, the world appears as the way the thought or emotion of a person, or the thinking of the cosmic code becomes known to us through a form . For example a musical composition is a form through which the composer conveys his/her thought to the listener. This is the act of imagination: projecting an image.

Shakespeare:

As imagination bodies forth, the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them into shapes and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. A Midsummer Night's Dream

Ibn ‘Arabi:

Imagination embodies meanings and subtilizes the sensory object. Thoughts shift from the perception of the senses to the creative imagination; then the intelligible thoughts will descend upon you in the form of perceptions.

Ibn ‘Arabi:

Knowledge is a veil on the known.

Qur'an:

We shall lift the veil from thine eyes and thy sight shall be keen.

Niffari:

Why seek the known if you could know the Knower!

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LESSON 28

WORKING WITH LIGHT – ILLUMINATION

Part 1 of 4

Hail to the company of all who have become mad and drunk with desire for the world of Light, with their passionate love for the majesty of the Light of Lights, and who, in their ecstasy, have become like the Seven Poles of the world. (Corbin, 1977, 134). Shihab ud-Din Suhrawardi

We have now reached a point where we are ready to work with light, starting with our own body. Draw your attention around your body. Instead of focussing on the magnetic field of your body, or subtle body, can you sense the glow, the effulgence radiating all around you?

Imagine that you are looking into a gorgeous sunrise in the mountains. Now draw your attention to your eyes. Do you notice that as soon as you draw attention to the light in your eyes, your eyes sparkle?

1) Identify yourself with the light counterpart of the fabric of your body.

Our bodies draw light from the environmental light, resorb it into our body cells and radiate it out in the environment. By being aware of it, you will absorb more light.

PRACTICE:

A good technique in meditation consists in drawing in light as you inhale, concentrating on the way your body cells jiggle when nurtured with light as you hold your breath. Then willfully radiate a lot of light as you exhale. Think that that light hurtles through space at probably more than 186,000 miles a second into outer space; it might even bombard the stars.

If you meditate at night, you will become aware of your relationship with the stars. You will realize that our aura is the light of the cosmos converged as us. When you sense the light surrounding your body, think that, “What I call my aura is the same as the light of the stars.” Our body does absorb light whether of the sun, the stars, a candle or electric light.

On the other hand, light crystallizes as matter – photons can convert into electrons and visa versa. A crystal absorbs light but it is itself light that has gelled. In physics waves can consolidate as ‘solitans.' There are reasons to believe that the template configuring our embryo is a magnetic field. Light is of the nature of a magnetic field. Maybe we, already as embryos, draw the light of the stars in our mother's womb.

Exalt in the captivating thought that this is the world to which you belong, that you are in exile on earth and that behind the image of your body, you are a being of light.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

It is by this process that man becomes like a luminous star.

THE LIGHT WITHIN

2) Identify yourself with the light counterpart of not your body but your subtle body at all levels.

If you concentrate intensely on light in the environment and then draw your attention to the light surrounding your body, you will discover yourself as an effigy of light of great beauty, and your physical face will now appear as a mask, through which albeit your real being is trying to transpire. It seems like a scintillating kaleidoscopic array of pure effulgence, or the glow of a flame, or the awakening from the perspective of the human dimension of your being. One step will lead to a further one.

If you consider your consciousness as a focal point in space, light seems to radiate from a point located in space: the sun, the stars, a candle, an electric bulb. But when you turn within in your meditation, as your consciousness gets inverted, it is diffused, and consequently your representation of light has shifted; it is dispersed in an inverted space. Pir o Murshid Inayat Khan calls it “all-pervading light.” We need to clearly

distinguish between the all-pervading nature of light as we turn within and the radiant light.

We find the same in the words of Ibn ‘Arabi:

Remember that light is of two kinds: a light having no rays, and radiant light. As for the light that has no rays, it is the light within in which self-disclosure takes place.

Suhrawardi:

I saw the robe of light altogether in me and I was altogether in it. (Corbin, 1978, 23)

When you turn within, notice that you sense what seems to be a different kind of light to the light you perceive through your eyes. It could be illustrated by the light in a white hole in outer space which surfaces from subliminal levels of physical reality that we ordinarily call the void as a new-born star.

You will have noticed that the inner light does not radiate like a lamp for example, but is like a web where everything is intermeshed with everything else, like radio waves.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Originally the all-pervading light pulled itself together in a center. Then it shoots its ray, dividing itself as it proceeds towards manifestation.

PRACTICE:

As you inhale, draw your attention to yourself absorbing light from the stars. Then hold your breath, turn within, concentrating and identifying with the all-pervading light. As you exhale, think that you are converting the all-pervading light into radiant light as your aura.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

By concentrating on that light, you can be instrumental to making this all-pervading light manifest as radiant light.

Concentrating on this inner light will enable you to discover yourself rather than perceive the environmental world. Ibn ‘Arabi calls this vision, to visualize, whereas perception is called witnessing.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

It is its own light which shows it to us, and that light is its soul. Spiritual Liberty, Akibat

Najm ud-Din Razi:

I saw myself through the light which things carry in their essence – not through an extraneous light. (cf. Corbin, The Man of Light)

GLANCE

3) Identify yourself with your glance.

After turning within, cast the inner light, the all-pervading light, forward through your eyes.

PRACTICE:

As you inhale turn within. Holding the breath concentrate on and identify with the all-pervading light. As you exhale the inner light is cast forward through your eyes.

Hazrat Inayat Khan:

As the sense of sight is situated in the head, it then perceives the light when it is turned within; the brain and the sight, so charged with the light from within, sees through life so deeply when turned on to the life without. Sangatha III

Ibn ‘Arabi:

When ambient light is stronger than the light of sight, man perceives it but he does not perceive through it. Hence unveiling only takes place through a light which is the light of sight.

[Note by Kaivan: This lesson together with the last dispensations of the

Curriculum, also named as WORKING WITH LIGHT - ILLUMINATION, is just a repetition of Lesson 6 which was splitted into parts by the American editor.]