

The Descent of the Dove, Hu Allah with Irfan

See the excerpt below, from Murshid SAM's Commentaries on Hazrat Inayat Khan's Gatha teachings, about the various meanings of the symbol of the dove.

Preparation:

Begin with breathing Towards the One, centering in the Heart, feeling the swing of the breath inwards, the brief pause at the top of the inhalation, the swing outwards, and the pause at the bottom of the exhalation.

Feel into the point of Unity (Ya Ahad) at the very center of Being on the inhale, and the complete Silence and Stillness of the pause. On the exhale let go into, relax into the surrounding container of Ever Becoming Oneness (Ya Samad) and the complete Silence and Stillness of the pause, the Divine Womb.

Gradually let the breath slow, gently deepening the inhale and exhale without any effort or strain, feeling it becoming more and more refined, opening more and more to the energy, the Prana that comes along with the breath.

Once you feel you've settled into this refined and relaxed space:

Inhale Hu, from Above downwards, bringing that refined breath through the Crown

Hear the sound of the breath as Hu, or H-h-h-h

Visualize the Dove descending from the heavens into the Crown center

Connect your breath with the Divine Spirit, the Spirit of Guidance,

the Holy Spirit (from the Christian Tradition), descending from the Inner

World, from the Highest Heaven, from the Heart of the Creator, the Heart

of the Divine Mother,

Feel the descent of the Dove, right down to and then through the Crown

Feel it coming more and more into full embodiment, within you

Bring it all the way down to the Heart

During the pause,

* Inscribe or trace the Name Allah in Light on your Heart, (* SEE LAST PAGE)

standing for Perfection within and without,

beyond our mind's ability to conceptualize it,

incomparably Great

Feel all of what you've inhaled being incorporated into your own

embodiment, into your own Heart, as you inscribe it with Allah

Feel it joining with and strengthening your own inner Light,

your own inner Love, your own inner Perfection

Feel the letters of the Name Allah being with this combined Light,

this combined Perfection, this Love, this Healing

Exhale Allah out through the Heart in all directions

Sending out the Love, the Light, the Perfection, the Healing with

the Name Allah radiating through it.

Feel your connection in your Breath with Source,

with the Divine Spirit, within and without,

Radiate the Essence,
Share the Bliss of your connection, with the outer world.

During the pause

Rest in the Stillness and the Silence of the Container,
the Divine Womb from which all arises and to which all returns
Know that at this point, for this moment, all Doing is finished,
Know that nothing remains but Being

And then the inhalation begins again.

**Gathas of Hazrat Inayat Khan
with commentary by Murshid Samuel Lewis
Naqshbandi (Symbology)
Series I Number 5: The Symbol of the Dove**

Gatha items are the words of Hazrat Inayat Khan,
Tasawwuf items are Murshid SAM's Commentaries,
Ryazat items are spiritual exercises or practices

GATHA: The bird represents the wayfarer of the sky, and at the same time it represents a being who belongs to the earth and is capable of dwelling in the skies.

TASAWWUF: In ancient times there were sacred birds in many lands. Thus we have the Eagle in the old Olympian religion, sacred to Jupiter and Zeus. The Egyptians revered the Hawk as the sky-bird and the Ibis dwelling below. In India the Goose or Swan was particularly sacred, due in part to the sounds which they gave. They were called hamsa-birds. Birds were also used as Messengers; the carrier pigeon is a messenger to this day. Both the Dove and Raven are mentioned in the story of Noah.

But the sound of the Dove was regarded as especially holy, for the Dove gave off the sound *Hu*, which is the sound of the Holy Spirit. And in the Jewish writings the phrase, "the sound of the turtle (turtle-dove)" represented the principle that the Divine Presence was manifest.

GATHA: The pigeon was used as a messenger, to carry a message from one place to another, and therefore the symbol of the Dove is a natural one to represent the Messenger from above (The Spirit of Guidance, The One Being Who speaks through all the Messengers, Masters, Saints, and Prophets).

TASAWWUF: We have it in the Christian teachings that the Holy Spirit descended as a Dove on the shoulders of Jesus, and it is certain that this sound can be heard. This is also taught in the "Mysticism of Sound." ...

GATHA: Spiritual bliss is such an experience that if a bird or animal were to have it, it would never return to its kind. But it is a credit due to humanity that after touching that point of great happiness and bliss, they come into the world of sorrows and disappointments and deliver their message.

RYAZAT: Concentration on the Dove helps to arouse ecstasy. This is true of all wings of all symbols. They help to raise one above the denseness of the earth. But the Dove is an emblem of return and it is also given to bring sobriety to those who are too ecstatic, and the same is true for those who take to drugs. It is not necessary to correct them. Right concentration on this symbol helps to restore balance....

GATHA: This quality can be seen in the Pigeon also; when the pigeon is sent it goes, but it comes back faithfully to the one who sent it.

RYAZAT: This symbol also helps to promote fidelity, to adherence to duty, and thus to concentration. It also builds up selflessness because the dove only thinks of its errand, its purpose, its mission.

GATHA: The spiritual beings perform this duty doubly. They reach higher than the human plane, touch the divine plane, and bring the message from the divine to the human plane. In this way instead of remaining on the divine plane, they arrive among their fellow beings, for their welfare, which is no small sacrifice.

TASAWWUF: This is the general mission or dharma of the Bodhisattvas, to live on earth, to dwell among people, to carry on earthly duties as if they were divine, and by not separating themselves from human-kind, to help others. Making differences is not the way to help others.

The Bodhisattva is able to function on all planes. As one great Sufi teacher, Abu Said ibn Abi'l Khayr put it, the Sufi lives like other people; works and plays, marries and begets children, does everything like everybody else but does not forget Allah for one instant. It is the constant Zikar which allows us to reach fullness, and then to withstand the conditions on all planes.

GATHA: But then again, they perform a duty to God, from Whom they bring God's Message that they deliver to human beings.

TASAWWUF: ...Jesus Christ repeated, "Ye are Gods." It is our work to restore this sanctity in ourselves and in our fellow beings. The restriction of holiness to a few people is one of the prime reasons for the decay of Dharma. It is our attunement to and our union with God that enables us to experience life on all planes and not be pulled down by a troublesome world. If the Message is interpreted to mean that only a few or a single person has this ability, this function, it is no Message. The purpose of the Message is to keep humanity in constant Zikar and therefore thankfulness.

GATHA: They live as human beings, subject to love, hate, praise, and blame, pass their life in the world of attachment and the life that binds with a thousand ties from all sides. Yet they do not forget the place from where they have come, and they constantly and eagerly look forward to reach the place for which they are bound.

TASAWWUF: Therefore on the Sufi path there are only certain periods for retirement,

called *khilvat* (spiritual retreat). The Sufi does not follow the Indian tradition of temporary withdrawal or the Buddhist practice of monkery (staying secluded from the world in a monastery). This makes a distinction and difference among humankind. No doubt there are periods wherein one seems encompassed by loneliness and there are periods in which one benefits from withdrawal.

RYAZAT: Practices such as Zikar and Fikar maintain for the mureed constant remembrance and awareness of Allah. The concentration on the Dove is helpful when one is pulled down too much by the denseness of the earth, when one feels harassment, sorrow, pain. One can also see it when there is strain in the face or countenance; to stimulate feeling then this concentration is very helpful.

GATHA: Therefore in both these journeys, from earth to Heaven and from Heaven to earth, the idea of the Dove proves to be more appropriate than any other idea in the world.

TASAWWUF: The Dove may thus be associated with all aspects of breathing; inhalation, retention, exhalation. When one appears to be too ecstatic or 'high' more attention should be given to the exhalation, to bring the consciousness downward. And when one is always too sober, more attention to drawing the energy from space. We do not have to derive from chemicals or vegetables essences that are in the space itself.

RYAZAT: Jesus has said, "Be ye wise as serpents and as harmless as Doves." Here the serpent represents more of Jalal (Power, Solar, Right Nostril, Pingala), no doubt, but both Wisdom and Harmlessness are part of Jamal (Beauty, Lunar, Left Nostril, Ida) temperament. If disciples are too quarrelsome, put on this discipline they will become more peaceful. If a person is too self-centered, giving them this concentration will help to balance their nature and functions. No one can understand the purport of Ryazat until they have had some experience....

