

Meher Baba

The
Compassionate
One

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MEHER BABA means "The Compassionate One"—it is the name given by a group of early disciples to their Master when, in the early 1920s, signs of his spiritual status first became apparent. To attempt to describe Meher Baba's life briefly creates a remarkable, if enigmatic, thumbnail sketch. For one thing, countless thousands of people of every major religious tradition recognize him as "God in human form"—the Christ, the Prophet, the Saviour, the Messiah of this Age. For another, for most of his life Meher Baba carried out all of his many and varied activities while keeping silence. For the forty-four years from 1925 until he dropped his physical form in 1969—whether training his disciples or working with lepers and the poor; providing free medical care to needy villagers, or giving spiritual instruction to the students of his unique "*prem* (love) ashram"; working intensely with the spiritually intoxicated "*masts*" (whom he described as the true lovers of God), or meeting the multitudes who flocked for his *darshan* (view) whenever he made himself publicly available; whether bringing fresh insight to every aspect of the spiritual quest through discourses and books, or providing individual guidance to followers around the world—*throughout these forty-four years, Meher Baba uttered no words*. He relied instead on other means to give out the messages he wished to convey, but most of all he communicated most compellingly through the language of his Love.

"Not only in this incarnation, but every time I come, I stress that love is the remedy."

Meher Baba has stated explicitly that he is the Ancient One, the Divine Incarnation or "God-Man" whose Advent has been anticipated in many of today's religious and spiritual traditions. Most commonly in India he is known as the "*Avatar*," a Sanscrit word literally meaning "Descent of God." Although the doctrines of some religions contend that such manifestations of God have occurred only once in history, through only one particular God-Man or another, the mystical teachings behind all the great religions of the world indicate that the appearance of the Avatar is far from a once-upon-a-time event. As a natural expression of Infinite Compassion and as an integral part of the Divine Plan, such Incarnations are the periodic revelations of God's Love and Truth—the same One

Reality—on earth. According to Meher Baba, these Avataric appearances unfailingly take place approximately every 700-1400 years, depending upon world circumstances and the spiritual needs of any given Age.

"I was Rama, I was Krishna, and I was this One and I was that One. Now I am Meher Baba—the very same Ancient One in flesh and blood—the very same One who is eternally worshipped and neglected, always remembered and forgotten.

"I am the Eternal Ancient One whose past is worshipped and remembered; whose present is ignored and forgotten; and whose future (Advent) is always anticipated with great fervor and longing."

In this light, all the great Divine Personalities—Jesus, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Mohammed and Zoroaster being among the best known—are regarded equally as Avatars: each has been the primary manifestation of God on earth for his respective era, living a perfect life of love and service to demonstrate anew the possibility of its attainment. However much the religions founded upon these Avataric appearances of God may differ as they stand today, Meher Baba holds that in each appearance the God-Man has always taught the same essential Truth:

"God has come again and again in various Forms, has spoken again and again in different words and languages, the same One Truth.... The outer life and habits of an Avatar reflect in some degree the habits and customs of the people of that time, and in his teachings he stresses the aspects that call for improvement. In essence, every Avatar embodies the same ideals of life."

Meher Baba's message and his appeal extend to people of every background. His followers include Protestants, Catholics and Jews in the West, Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Buddhists in the East, and even many who have considered themselves agnostics or atheists. In a word, Baba and what he teaches are universal. Although he can certainly be understood within the context of every broad religious tradition, he is nevertheless clear in pointing out that he belongs exclusively to none of them:



"All religions are equal to me. And all castes and creeds are dear to me. But though I appreciate all 'isms,' religions and political parties for the many good things they seek to achieve, I do not and cannot belong to any of these 'isms,' religions or political parties, for the Absolute Truth, while equally including them, transcends all of them and leaves no room for separative divisions which are all equally false."

"I am not come to establish any cult, society, or organization; nor even to establish a new religion. The religion that I shall give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many. The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart. I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string."

"I am equally approachable to one and all, big and small,

*To saints who rise and sinners who fall,
Through all the various Paths that give the Divine Call.
I am approachable alike to saint whom I adore
And to sinner whom I am for,
And equally through Sufism, Vedantism, Christianity,
Or Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and other 'isms'
of any kind,
And also directly through no medium of 'isms' at all...."*

Meher Baba came from a Zoroastrian family, his parents having previously emigrated from Persia to India. He was born in the city of Poona, a hilly, beautiful center of culture and education in central India, located about a hundred miles east of Bombay. His mother had two unusual dreams around the time of his birth, one of thousands of people of every race passing before her, awaiting the birth of her child with great anticipation and longing; and another dream of numerous *sari*-clad Indian women surrounding and worshipping her new-born son. At his birth—on the 25th of February, 1894—he was given the name Merwan Sheriar Irani, the surname indicating that his family was ‘from Iran.’

Merwan’s younger years were not, in most respects, out of the ordinary, yet all noticed that something quite intangible marked him as unique. Interested in poetry and literature—from Shakespeare to the Persian Perfect Master Hafiz—and adept at sports, he shone out as a boy of unusual character and rare attractiveness. Having attended a Roman Catholic high school, young Merwan then entered Deccan College, the most respected in West India. It was in his second year at college, at the age of nineteen, that Merwan had the experience which revealed to him his identity as the Avatar of the Age and inaugurated his spiritual mission in the world.

The unveiling of Merwan’s Godhood came through a kiss on the forehead from an ancient woman, Hazrat Babajan, who lived in Poona and was widely revered as fully enlightened. This white-haired *Sadguru* (Perfect Master), said to be over 120 years old at the time, was herself a living shrine in the city. Originally from Baluchistan, Babajan had come to Poona over twenty years earlier, eventually settling beneath a particular neem tree on the roadside. There she lived day and night, whatever the weather, receiving the thousands upon thousands of pilgrims, aspirants and ordinary people as well who came from every part of India to sit with her and take her blessing.

One evening, as Merwan was cycling by on his way home from the college, Babajan beckoned to him. He got down from his bicycle and walked over and sat with her in silence. At the end of their meeting, the ancient Perfect Master kissed Merwan on the forehead, and he rose and went immediately home. Many years later, Meher Baba described that time as follows:

"With just a kiss on the forehead, between the eyebrows, Babajan made me experience thrills of indescribable bliss which continued for about nine months. Then one night she made me realize in a flash the infinite bliss of self-realization (God-realization)."

"I am the Ancient One. When I say I am God, it is not because I have thought about it and concluded that I am God—I know it to be so. Many consider it blasphemy for one to say he is God; but in truth it would be blasphemous for me to say I am not God."

On various occasions when Merwan visited Babajan in the months that followed, she would point to him and say, "This child of mine will one day shake the world."

Each time God comes as Avatar, He "veils" His Infinite Consciousness in a purposeful descent into a human form chosen and prepared for His Work. The five Perfect Masters of the time are responsible for effecting the "descent of God (Reality)" into Illusion through this human form; and they are likewise responsible for "unveiling" Him to His own Infinite Consciousness when the time is right for the beginning of His ministry on earth.

Over a period of nearly seven years following Babajan's momentous kiss, Merwan was drawn to contact four other Masters in India who, like Babajan, had come to be recognized as spiritually perfect. Two of the best known of these Perfect Masters were the venerable old Sai Baba of Shirdi, revered as a Muslim saint, and Upasni Maharaj, a Hindu by birth. At different times in these early years, both of these Sadgurus of the Age publicly acknowledged Merwan to be the Avatar and sent disciples of their own to be with him.

"What I am, what I was and what I will be as the Ancient One is always due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age. During the Avataric periods, the five Perfect Masters make God incarnate as man."

"Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj are the five Perfect Masters of this Age for me. Of these five, Upasni Maharaj and Babajan directly played the main roles. Babajan, in less than a millionth of a second, made me realize my Ancient State—that I am God—and in the period of seven years, Upasni Maharaj gave me the knowledge that I am the

Avatar, the Ancient One. That is to say, he established me in that State.

"Sai Baba made me assert what I am.

Babajan made me feel what I am.

Upasni Maharaj made me know what I am.

Babajan gave me Divine Bliss.

Sai Baba gave me Divine Power.

Upasni Maharaj gave me Divine Knowledge.

I am Infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss.

I am the Ancient One, come to redeem the modern world."

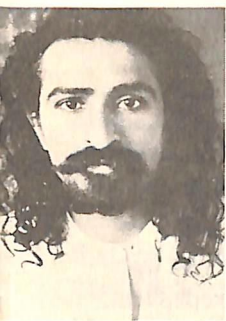
During the seven years following Babajan's kiss, Merwan came to be known as a 'Sadguru,' or Perfect Master, himself. A number of those who came into Merwan's acquaintance at this time—Hindus, Muslims and Zoroastrians alike, seekers of God as well as people with no apparent inclination toward spirituality—began to feel drawn to him and take him as their Master. It was these early followers and disciples who first began to refer to Merwan as "Meher Baba," because for them his given childhood name no longer seemed adequate for the one who had emerged as their heart-thawing Sun and their most loving and compassionate Lord.

In 1922, with a large group of dedicated followers, Meher Baba left Poona for Bombay. There he established a unique ashram which was called "*Manzil-e-Meem*," the "House of the Master" where these early disciples were initiated into a period of strict discipline and rigorous training. Baba himself was engrossed day and night in his own intense spiritual activity and took on terrific suffering during this time, as he began to develop the circle of disciples who would serve in his broader work for humanity and for all of Creation itself.

"I have to suffer for the whole universe. Unless I suffer for the universe, how can I ask you all to suffer for others?"

"I am in every one and in everything, and My work is for the spiritual awakening of all mankind."

Within a year Baba shifted his ashram from Bombay to a desolate village area near Ahmednagar, about 120 miles away in the heart of the Deccan plateau. At



this place he created "*Meherabad*," the site which would serve as headquarters for his work for the next quarter of a century. With the development of this new center of activity, Baba set an ever more strenuous pace for those who followed him. Periodically he set out on walking tours and train journeys covering enormous distances—throughout the surrounding Maharashtra State,

throughout western India to Karachi and Quetta (which would later become part of Pakistan), and eventually to Persia. On these trips Baba always traveled incognito, and in various villages and localities he would direct his men to gather the poor or the lepers there, or sometimes both, whom he would bathe and feed and clothe with his own hands. He generally distributed cloth or grain, or on some occasions a sum of money, to each of the needy persons assembled at such times, these being the only circumstances in which Meher Baba ever handled money at all.

Whether they were engaged in hard manual labor in their work at Meherabad or they were accompanying their Master in his travels, his disciples found that Baba demanded more and more from them in the way of endurance and readiness to serve. Many times, following an exhausting day which had begun before dawn and ended after midnight, he would arouse his men after barely two hours' sleep to indicate that it was time to set out for the next destination. Long journeys on foot, little sleep, scanty and irregular meals—for certain periods this was standard fare for Baba's close ones.

None exerted and none suffered, however, in comparison with Baba himself. It was he who set the pace, who not only directed the work but who led his disciples in it, often while fasting for weeks at a time, frequently while bearing singular illnesses which he indicated were solely the result of his internal spiritual work with the members of his circle. The varied spectrum of activities which Baba charted out seemed always designed to bear fruit in several directions at once: not only did he bring direct help and relief and the touch of love to many thousands of individuals, but he also initiated his "*mandali*," as Baba referred to his disciples, into a life of ever deeper selfless service. As

they lived with him and witnessed the unfolding of his work, Meher Baba's disciples eventually coined a common description for his life, a description which captured the perennial essence of the God-Man's life on earth: "Mastery in Servitude."

It is natural that one of the most common questions asked about Meher Baba is why he kept silent. When he first undertook his Silence, he stated that it was because of the heavy spiritual work which lay ahead for him, indicating a general increase in chaos and conflict in the world. Through the years that followed, Baba gave scores of further hints and explanations about the meaning of his Silence. Several times he cryptically declared that when he breaks his Silence, he will do so by uttering only "One Word":

"I have come to sow the seed of love in your hearts so that, in spite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of oneness, through love, is brought about amongst all the nations, creeds, sects and castes of the world."

"In order to bring this about, I am preparing to break my Silence. When I break my Silence, it will not be to fill your ears with spiritual lectures. I shall only speak One Word, and this Word will penetrate the hearts of all men and make even the sinner feel that he is meant to be a saint, while the saint will know that God is in the sinner as much as He is in himself."

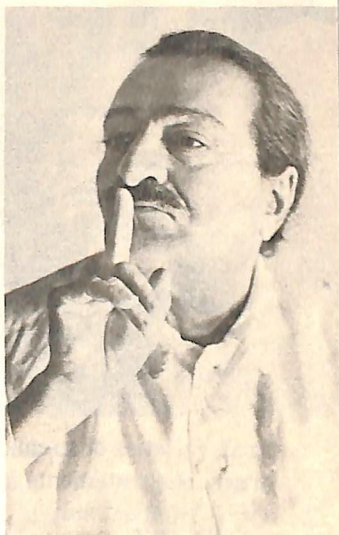
Meher Baba has indicated that the 'speaking of the Word' would in actuality be a release of immense spiritual energy and irresistible love, and that all persons and creatures will benefit from it. "...because all forms and words are from this Primal Sound or Original Word and are continuously connected with It and have their life from It, when It is uttered by me It will reverberate in all people and creatures, and all will know that I have broken my Silence and have uttered that Sound or Word."

"The effective force of this Word in individuals and their reactions to It will be in accordance with the magnitude and receptivity of each individual mind."

"The breaking of my Silence will create a spiritual upheaval and everyone will feel it in his heart."

Meher Baba stated repeatedly that he would speak only when the breaking of his Silence would have its most universal impact. His work, he said, *"can be compared to the amassing and arranging in a universal heap the accumulated rubbish of man's ignorance in illusion that enmeshes him in the false and prevents him from realizing his true identity."* Over and over he stressed that the question of when he will release the Word would depend entirely upon the proper timing from his perspective, in that he would wait for the most opportune time for the breaking of his Silence to achieve its desired effect. Baba indicated that such time would coincide with the point at which war and destruction are at their peak around the world, and humanity at its most desperate in its need for the release of this 'tide of Truth.'

Meher Baba also continually pointed to a strange and difficult time which would precede mankind's experience of the breaking of his Silence. He referred to a period of 'humiliation' which would precede his 'Manifestation,' in which the faith and love of his followers would be severely tried and when even his words would appear to go against him. Time and again he stressed that his Manifestation as the Avatar of the Age would be linked to the universal breaking of his Silence, and that this time would not come until the very height of chaos, confusion and conflict in the world.



"When I say that my Manifestation is connected with the breaking of my Silence, people should not expect an outpouring of verbosity. I will utter THE WORD OF WORDS that will irresistibly impart to those who are ready the "I-AM-GOD" state.... The Word that I will speak will go to the world as from God, not as from a philosopher—it will go straight to its heart."

At one point Baba even indicated that the preparation for the breaking of his Silence could lead to the dropping of his physical body.

Despite Meher Baba's verbal silence, he has clearly communicated a great deal. His means of communication varied over the years, but for the most part they revolved around the use of an alphabet board and gestures. The majority of Baba's discourses on love for God and the various states of consciousness and stages of the spiritual path have been dictated primarily through the use of an alphabet board, letter by letter. In 1954, however, Baba gave up using the alphabet board, and from then on he relied upon a unique and personal language of gestures for all verbal communication.



Although Meher Baba traveled widely during his lifetime and visited the West on no fewer than ten different occasions, it was not until he spoke out explicitly on the issue of the quest for expanded consciousness through drugs that he began to be known to the public at large. Soon after the first blooming of the psychedelic movement, a number of westerners inquired of Baba about the validity of drug experience, from marijuana

to all varieties of so-called 'consciousness-expanding' drugs. His statements in reply were disarmingly direct:

"If God can be found through the medium of any drug, God is not worthy of being God....No drug, whatever its great promise, can help one to attain the spiritual goal. There is no short-cut to the goal except through the grace of the Perfect Master, and drugs, LSD more than others, give only a semblance of 'spiritual experience,' a glimpse of a false reality....The experience is as far removed from Reality as is a mirage from water. No matter how much one pursues the mirage, one will never reach water, and the search for God through drugs must end in disillusionment."

As for organized religions, with their time-worn rituals and ceremonies, Baba compares them to the husk surrounding grain, the shell which covers the

kernel of true spirituality. *"When the mind expresses itself in patterns of formal rites and rigid ceremonies, it is nothing more than an empty echo of the habit of countless generations, performed automatically without 'heart'."* In reality, according to Baba, God responds only to love. *"He does not listen to the language of the mind and its routine meditations, concentrations and thoughts about God. He only listens to the language of the heart and its message of love, which needs no ceremony or show...."*

"Love is essentially self-communicative: those who do not have it catch it from those who have it....No amount of rites, rituals, ceremonies, worship, meditation, penance and remembrance can produce love in themselves. None of these is necessarily a sign of love. On the contrary, those who sigh loudly and weep and wail have yet to experience love. Love sets on fire the one who finds it. At the same time it seals his lips so that no smoke comes out."

Consequently, Meher Baba has given no rituals or ceremonies, no particular diets or exercises, no fixed form of meditation to his followers. There are no 'churches,' no designated teachers. There is no fee. True religion, in Baba's eyes, is not a card-carrying affair but rather a matter of the heart, a question of the degree to which one lives an honest and loving life. To Baba, the avowed atheist who faithfully carries out his work in the world is far more blest than the man who, claiming to be devoutly religious, shirks his practical everyday responsibilities. "The greatest sin," he said, "is hypocrisy."

"Religion, like worship, must be from the heart."

"True religion consists in developing the attitude of mind which should ultimately result in seeing One Infinite Existence prevailing in the universe;

when one could live in the world and yet be not of it, and at the same time be in harmony with everyone and everything;

when one could see the same divinity in art and science and experience the highest consciousness and indivisible bliss in everyday life."

"Follow any religion you like, but follow its innermost nucleus."

"My personal religion is my being the Ancient, Infinite One, and the religion I impart to all is love for God."

From the late 1920s until the end of his life on earth, Meher Baba turned from one unique phase of activity to another. Most of the 1930s consisted of a period of world travel. During these years Baba journeyed frequently to England, Europe and America, establishing contact with his first close group of Western disciples while working in general to arouse people around the globe to the quest for the experience of their own Infinite Reality.

"The world needs awakening, and not more verbal instructions."

"My only happiness lies in making people understand, not through mind but through experience, that God alone is the Beloved for whom we exist."

Toward the end of the thirties and for virtually the next decade, Baba turned his attention almost exclusively to his work with the "masts," spiritually advanced souls who are so intoxicated with their inner experiences of God as to appear to be mad. Despite their often unusual external appearances, however, Baba described such individuals as true lovers of God, and he worked arduously with certain of his disciples to contact hundreds of them—mostly throughout India and surrounding regions—simultaneously giving each a spiritual boost while coordinating their energies for his own work with humanity, like so many relay stations for the main power house.

Next, beginning on October 16th, 1949, followed the most enigmatic of all the many aspects of Meher Baba's work, the three years of his "New Life." In this radical departure not only from his "old life" but also from the normal routine of any established spiritual master, Baba and twenty hand-picked disciple-companions set out to live a life of complete "hopelessness, helplessness and aimlessness." Having given up all property and all but the barest clothing and possessions, everyone including Baba traveled about India absolutely incognito, without money, begging for their food, carrying out Baba's instructions and living in strict accordance with the "conditions of the New Life" in the face of tremendous exertion and fatigue. During this period Baba accomplished the work of the New Life to his utmost satisfaction, and through it his disciples were introduced to a more demanding—and at

the same time freer—way of life than they could ever have imagined:

“This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honor nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward; who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

“This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.”

Baba brought the wandering phase of the New Life to a close in 1952, when he once again took up residence at *Meherazad*, an isolated spot about nine miles outside the town of Ahmednagar. Located adjacent to a unique “Seclusion Hill” where Baba periodically carried out certain aspects of his seclusion work, Meherazad had been settled by Baba and a few resident disciples prior to the New Life, and it would now serve as his home for the remainder of his life on earth. According to his longstanding instructions, Meherabad—the small settlement fifteen miles away which had served as his earlier headquarters—would eventually become the site of Meher Baba’s last resting place.

No sooner had his final seclusion work of the New Life come to an end than Baba once again began a period of extensive travel both around the world as well as within India. In April, 1952, came the first of three more trips to the West, and the following month,



while traveling across the United States with a group of his disciples, Baba was severely injured in an automobile accident. The crash occurred in Oklahoma, near the center of the country, and it grimly fulfilled Baba's earlier cryptic statements regarding a "personal disaster" which would befall him. He later added that it had been divinely ordained that he must "spill his blood" in America.



A second, equally serious auto accident took place in India about four and a half years later, while Baba was riding from Poona to Satara, at the exact place where he had previously taken his men mandali for a day-long cricket game (Baba had alternately captained both sides, bringing the game to a dead-even draw). In the accident in America, besides numerous other injuries, Baba's left leg had been broken; and in the subsequent accident in India, his right hip joint was shattered. Yet the crushing effects of these accidents, and the suffering which Baba bore in total silence because of them, seemed only to intensify the power of his love and underscore his divine authority. Just two months after his second automobile accident, Meher Baba dictated the following words to the close ones who were with him at the time: "Baba got his physical bones broken so as to break the backbone of the material aspect of the machine age (*Kali Yuga*), while keeping intact its spiritual aspect."

Prior to his second accident—back in February, 1954, in a remote village in the interior of India—

Meher Baba had finally confirmed the open secret of his divinity, and throughout the period punctuated by his accidents, people by tens of thousands were drawn to him as to a magnet. Finally the multitude of his 'lovers'—Baba's term for his followers—knew what his closest ones had realized all along: that the lord of their hearts was in truth the Lord of the universe—not a saint or *mahatma*, not a *pir* or yogi, not a Friend of God or even Perfect Master, but veritably God Himself in human form. A call of "*Avatar Meher Baba ki jai*" ("Hail God-Man Meher Baba") spread truly like a wild-fire throughout the parts of India where he traveled,

and over a hundred thousand people would come to see him in a day when he made himself available.

“The true Messiah can arouse the highest ideals in men and touch the hearts of millions.”

“I want you to make me your constant companion. Think of me more than you think of yourself. Your duty is to keep me constantly with you in your thoughts, speech and action.”

*“Inscribe these words upon your heart:
Nothing is real but God.
Nothing matters but love for God.”*

“Only those who live the life of love, honesty and self-sacrifice can know me as the Ancient One.”

“Your love for yourself veils me; your love for me unveils me.”

“If you love me as St. Francis loved Jesus, then you will not only realize me, but you will also please me.”

“Surrender to the God-Man, in whom God reveals Himself in His full glory.”

In the West, too, it was a special time, for in anticipation of his travels during the 1950s to America and Australia, Meher Baba's followers established centers in both these countries—at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and near Woombye, Queensland—which Baba declared would one day become places of worldwide pilgrimage, along with Meherabad, in India, where his *Samadhi* (Tomb-Shrine) would be. In addition, in 1955, *God Speaks* was published, Baba's comprehensive book on the states of God, the planes of consciousness and the stages of the spiritual path, and Baba also gave out several messages during this time—“The Highest of the High,” “Meher Baba's Call” and “The Final Declaration”—which contained definitive statements concerning both his Avatarhood and the course of future events for humanity in general.

“Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, each and every creature, each and every human being, strives to assert individuality. When eventually man consciously experiences that he is Infinite, Eternal and Indivisible, he is fully conscious of his individuality as God, and is recognized as a Perfect Master, Sadguru or Qutub.

“When God manifests on earth in the form of man

and reveals his Divinity to mankind, he is recognized as the Avatar—thus God becomes Man....”

“The Avatar is always one and the same, because God is always One and the Same, the Eternal, Indivisible, Infinite One, who manifests Himself in the form of man as the Avatar, as the Messiah, as the Prophet, as the Ancient One—the Highest of the High. This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats his manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and free it from the bondage of delusions.”

“Of the most recognized and much worshipped manifestations of God as Avatar, that of Zoroaster is the earlier—having been before Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed. Thousands of years ago, he gave to the world the essence of Truth in the form of three fundamental precepts—Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. These precepts were and are constantly unfolded to humanity in one form or another, directly or indirectly in every cycle, by the Avatar of the Age, as he leads humanity toward the Truth. To put these precepts of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds into practice is not easily done, though it is not impossible. But to live up to these precepts honestly and literally is apparently as impossible as it is to practice a living death in the midst of life.”

“Know you all that if I am the Highest of the High, my role demands that I strip you of all your possessions and wants, consume all your desires and make you desireless rather than satisfy your desires. Sadhus, saints, yogis and walis can give you what you want; but I take away your wants and free you from attachments and liberate you from the bondage of ignorance. I am the one to take, not the one to give what you want or as you want.”

*“Age after age, when the wick of righteousness burns low, the Avatar comes yet once again to rekindle the torch of Love and Truth. Age after age, amidst the clamor of disruptions, wars, fear and chaos, rings the Avatar’s Call:
‘COME ALL UNTO ME.’*

“Although, because of the veil of illusion, this Call of the Ancient One may appear as a voice in the wilderness,

its echo and re-echo nevertheless pervade through time and space to rouse at first a few, and eventually millions, from their deep slumber of ignorance. And in the midst of illusion, as the Voice behind all voices, it awakens humanity to bear witness to the Manifestation of God amidst mankind.

"The time is come. I repeat the Call, and bid all come unto me."

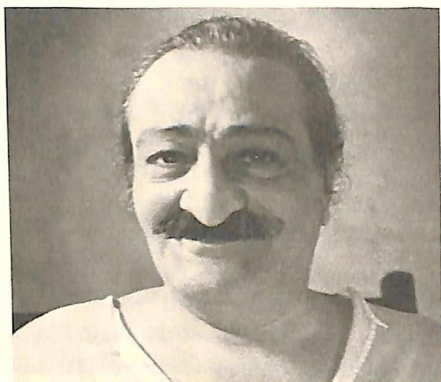
With his "Final Declaration," a message which makes specific references to the dropping of his body, Meher Baba provoked a furor of deep concern among many of his followers. In response to the numerous letters and cables which poured in, inquiring about the meaning of his statements about his physical death, Baba sent a circular letter of reassurance:

"There is no reason at all for any of you to worry. Baba was, Baba is and Baba will also be eternally existent. Severance of external relations does not mean the termination of internal connection....It is possible to establish the internal link by obeying Baba's orders. I give you all My blessings for strengthening these internal links."

To his close ones Baba often reiterated that in every Advent the Avatar remains accessible *as if physically present* for a minimum of 100 years following his physical death.

"Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite Love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false."

The last several years of Meher Baba's life represent still another phase in his work. Apart from a handful of mass gatherings with his followers and a very few individual meetings with newcomers, Baba spent these later years in relative seclusion. In contrast to earlier years, he traveled almost not at all. Instead, he spent hours each day completely undisturbed, absorbed intensely in what he called his "universal work." Day after day, over a period of years, Baba continued this internal spiritual work with methodical regularity, offering little explanation of its purpose except to emphasize that it was of paramount importance for all of mankind.



"You can only see what you see me doing outwardly, but I am continually working on all planes of consciousness at the same time. As my Manifestation time is closing in, the pressure of my Work is tremendous....None can have the least idea of the immensity of the Work that I am doing in this seclusion. The only hint I can give is that compared with the Work I do in seclusion, all the important work of the world put together is completely insignificant. Although for me the burden of my Work is crushing, the result of my Work will be intensely felt by all people in the world."

As his seclusion work progressed, Baba's health grew worse and worse. Late in 1968 his close disciples became increasingly concerned, and they begged Baba to be less neglectful of his health by slowing down the work. *"That would mean once again prolonging the date of its conclusion,"* he responded. *"If now I allow that to happen, it will indefinitely postpone the result and set it on a different course!"*

"God's Truth cannot be ignored; thus, by mankind's ignorance and weakness, a tremendous adverse reaction is produced—and the world finds itself in a cauldron of suffering through wars, hate, conflicting ideologies, and nature's rebellion in the form of floods, famines, earthquakes and other disasters. Ultimately, when the apex is reached, God manifests anew in human form to guide mankind in the destruction of its self-created evil, that it may be re-established in the Divine Truth."

"My Silence and the imminent breaking of my Silence is to save mankind from the monumental forces of ignorance and to fulfill the divine plan of universal unity. The breaking of my Silence will reveal to man the Universal Oneness of God, which will bring about the univer-

sal brotherhood of man. My Silence had to be. The breaking of my Silence has to be—soon.”

Baba continued to work without let-up, and only his close mandali witnessed the inconceivable suffering which accompanied his working. Finally, to his disciples' great relief, Baba announced that his work had been completed one hundred percent to his satisfaction and that the results of that work would soon begin to manifest. By this time, however, the state of his health had grown extremely grave—Baba stated matter-of-factly that the tremendous burden of the work of his last great seclusion had indeed “shattered” his health. As his close ones urged him to submit to further medical tests, he refused with the following words: *“My condition has no medical grounds at all; it is due purely to the strain of my Work.”*

Baba gave many veiled hints in the weeks that followed that he would soon drop his body. Although many times previously Baba's work had taken a severe toll on his health, this time he more than once declared, *“My time has come.”* While his resident disciples grew increasingly upset and depressed by the deterioration of his condition, Baba constantly reminded them to remain cheerful and not to worry. Just after noon on January 31st, 1969, after joking about the amount of medicine he was being given for his baffling ailment, Meher Baba passed away.

“I am never born. I never die. At every moment I take birth and undergo death.... Although I am present everywhere eternally in My formless infinite state, from time to time I take form, and the taking of the form and leaving it is termed My physical birth and death.

“In this sense, I am born and I die when My universal Work is finished.”

“Live not in ignorance. Do not waste your precious life-span in differentiating and judging your fellow men, but learn to long for the love of God. Even in the midst of your worldly activities, live only to find and realize your true identity with your Beloved God.

“Be pure and simple, and love all because all are one. Live a sincere life; be natural, and be honest with yourself.

“Honesty will guard you against false modesty and will give you the strength of true humility. Spare no pains to help others. Seek no other reward than the gift of

Divine Love. Yearn for this gift sincerely and intensely, and I promise in the name of My Divine Honesty that I will give you much more than you yearn for.

"I give you all My blessing that the spark of My Divine Love may implant in your hearts the deep longing for love of God."

"The breaking of My Silence—the signal for My public Manifestation—is not far off. I bring the greatest treasure which it is possible for man to receive—a treasure which includes all other treasures, which will endure forever, which increases when shared by others. Be ready to receive it."

"When the WORD of My Love breaks out of its Silence and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that that is the Real Word you have always been longing to hear."

"I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself."

Meher Baba's passing away brought yet another phase in his Advent. With the God-Man's physical death, external connections with him are no longer possible—not for another seven hundred years, as Baba often stated, until the Avatar comes again.

External connections, however, are not the purpose of the God-Man's work; they are only the means through which he sets it in motion. He comes on earth as Man to refresh the example of the highest ideals of human life, and to reawaken mankind to the possibility of establishing *internal connections* with God, the Divine Beloved in every heart.

Through the God-Man, God comes to love, and serve, and suffer, for in his unlimited universality, he alone can give to Creation the internal push required to true its course. In his lifetime on earth he sows the seeds of selfless love where they must inevitably blossom and flourish, and he leaves behind his message and his example: in this age, an unparalleled abundance of information about his life which stands as profound, compelling testimony to his Reality. Most important, he leaves behind the promise of his eternal presence within and the possibility of drawing ever closer to him and ultimately realizing him by remembering him with love and following the guidelines he has left for all seekers and lovers of God everywhere.

How to Love God

To love God in the most practical way is to love our fellow beings. If we feel for others in the same way as we feel for our own dear ones, we love God.

If, instead of seeing faults in others, we look within ourselves, we are loving God.

If, instead of robbing others to help ourselves, we rob ourselves to help others, we are loving God.

If we suffer in the sufferings of others and feel happy in the happiness of others, we are loving God.

If, instead of worrying over our own misfortunes, we think of ourselves more fortunate than many, many others, we are loving God.

If we endure our lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His Will, we are loving God.

If we understand and feel that the greatest act of devotion and worship to God is not to hurt or harm any of His beings, we are loving God.

To love God as He ought to be loved, we must live for God and die for God, knowing that the goal of life is to love God, and find Him as our own self.

Meher Baba

For further information and a booklist of literature by and about Avatar Meher Baba, contact Meher Baba Information, P.O. Box 1101, Berkeley, California 94701.

Books and other materials concerning Meher Baba may also be available through local bookstores, or through groups and centers devoted to Avatar Meher Baba.

The Seven Realities

Meher Baba gives no importance to creed, dogma, caste systems, and the performance of religious ceremonies and rites, but to the *understanding* of the following seven Realities:

1. The only REAL EXISTENCE is that of the One and only God, who is the Self in every (finite) self.
2. The only REAL LOVE is the love for this Infinity (God), which arouses an intense longing to see, know, and become one with its Truth (God).
3. The only REAL SACRIFICE is that in which, in pursuance of this love, all things, body, mind, position, welfare, and even life itself are sacrificed.
4. The only REAL RENUNCIATION is that which abandons, even in the midst of worldly duties, all selfish thoughts and desires.
5. The only REAL KNOWLEDGE is the knowledge that God is the inner dweller in good people and so-called bad, in saint and so-called sinner. This knowledge requires you to help all equally as circumstances demand, without expectation of reward, and when compelled to take part in a dispute, to act without the slightest trace of enmity or hatred; to try to make others happy with brotherly or sisterly feeling for each one; to harm no one in thought, word or deed, not even those who harm you.
6. The only REAL CONTROL is the discipline of the senses from indulgence in low desires, which alone ensures absolute purity of character.
7. The only REAL SURRENDER is that in which the poise is undisturbed by any adverse circumstances, and the individual, amidst every kind of hardship, is resigned with perfect calm to the Will of God.