

Meher Baba

By His Eastern & Western Disciples

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A PERFECT MASTER.	
<i>Charles B. Purdom</i>	1
THE NEED OF A TEACHER.	
<i>Charles B. Purdom</i>	6
MORE ABOUT THE PERFECT MASTER.	
<i>Charles B. Purdom</i>	9
SHRI MEHER BABA'S TEACHING AS THE KERNEL OF UPANISHADIC WISDOM.	
<i>Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D.</i> ..	14
HAZRAT MEHER BABA FROM A SUFISTIC STANDPOINT.	
<i>Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff</i>	23
LIGHT FROM THE EAST UPON THE WESTERN GOSPELS.	
<i>Will Backett</i>	33
PARALLELS BETWEEN THE TEACHINGS OF LORD BUDDHA AND MEHER BABA.	
<i>Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D.</i> ..	51

This small brochure contains reprints from a series of articles written by Mr. Charles B. Purdom of London as Editor of the magazine *Everyman*, in which they appeared during the period of Meher Baba's first two visits to the West in 1931 and 1932.

It also contains re-printed articles from the *Meher Baba Journal*, 1939, which explain Meher Baba's teachings from four different view-points—

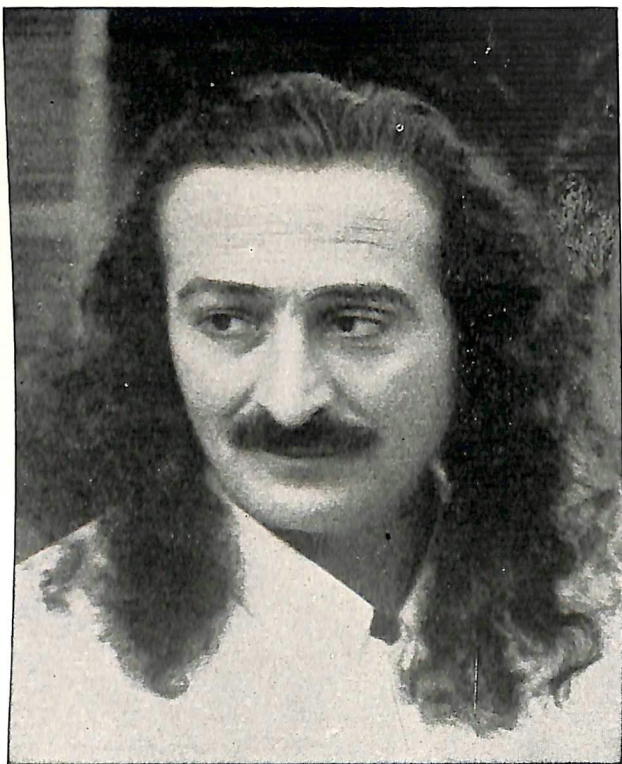
Vedantic : by Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D.

Sufistic : by Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff.

Christian : by Mr. Will Backett of London.

Buddhistic : by Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D.

1-700707



MEHER BABA

"I have come not to teach but to awaken"

A PERFECT MASTER*

By C. B. PURDOM

I INTERRUPT the sequence of these articles to relate something of importance. My object in this series has been to give an outline of practical thought and action that would be of use to those who desire to get rid of the aimlessness of their lives. For that reason I have considered the individual in relation to the actual circumstances of life to-day and have avoided generalizations as much as possible. When I started, I proposed to draw on my own experience, using also the knowledge I had of what the philosophers have said and what religion has taught us. I had not, however, been in personal contact with a great Teacher. I did not know where such a Teacher was to be found. There were the books, of course, of Scripture and poetry, and the wise things that some people of our own time had written; but there was no one to whom I could have gone, or could have recommended others to go, for wisdom. Now, quite unexpectedly, and partly as a consequence of what I have already written, I have actually met a Teacher, and it is about him that I wish to write this week.

What we want, all we modern men and women, is not sound advice or original ideas or profound thought, but experience. We want what will help us to live. We do not want someone who can help us to think more clearly or even one who can tell us what to do. We want something done. We want, exhibited as a reality, the life that we are deeply conscious ours ought to be. We want, that is to say, not an intellectual demonstration of the truth, but the truth itself. We know what science teaches, or can get that knowledge, and we know what the sages say. We do not need to know any more. We want the evidence of knowledge put into practice.

It is here that the need of a teacher is felt. Only someone with a consciousness greater than ours can take us the necessary step further. The world has always had

* "Literature and Life: A Plan of Life," *Everyman*, London, September 24, 1931.

its teachers, of that we can be sure. What the poets and philosophers have said and the great men of action have done have not sprung simply from nothing. Our greatest Master in the West has been Christ. He was more than a teacher, and I do not dispute that; but a teacher He was. There have been other lesser teachers among us since. In the East, which is God-conscious to an extent that is completely foreign to the West, there has been a number of great teachers. Buddha was one. There have been others, most of them unknown. For the Perfect Masters of the spiritual life do not always show themselves to the world. Their work is done in secret.

I have been brought by what seemed to be chance, but no doubt deserves some other name, into personal contact with a Perfect Master from the East. He has come to Europe because of the grave troubles of the time, and because he has something to do in the crisis upon which we have just entered. He knows that we are ready for a great spiritual outburst. I said a moment ago that we do not need more knowledge; but there is one knowledge that we do need. That is knowledge of God or the ultimate reality. In that knowledge everything else is contained. If we had it, our lives would be lifted to their highest level. The Perfect Masters have that knowledge. The Perfect Master of whom I speak has that knowledge. He is a Perfect Master because he is united with the Unconscious—that is with God. He has conscious knowledge of God. He has come to the West, leaving his seclusion in India to get men and women to turn their minds in these times of great anxiety from the outer world of material things to the inner world of the spirit, where all problems of the material world are solved. This Perfect Master arrived in England quietly twelve days ago and went to an isolated place in the country where only a few people know of his presence. The driver of the taxi which took him through London, said to the friend who accompanied him as he received his fare, "That was a remarkable gentleman. I felt it was a privilege to drive him." Yet Shri Sadguru Meher Baba, for that is this Perfect Master's name, had not spoken a word. In fact, he has not spoken a word for seven years and does not propose to speak now.

Meher Baba has not come to this country with a "message" or to give lectures, or to found a new sect or a new religion. There is too much talking, he says, and there are plenty of religions. He has come to impart his knowledge of God to those who wish to receive it. His method is simple. He says to the inquirer, "What I am, you are." This seems nothing at all; but coming from him with the unmistakable spiritual certainty that he possesses, it comes as a shock. What he does is to get the seeker after truth to look into his own heart to find it. And, what is more significant, he gives him the power to find it. For from Meher Baba there flows power. He has no startling things to say. All that he does say is communicated by signs and pointing to letters on a board. It is sufficient to be in his presence to know the truth. He does not need to speak: he has the power of truth in him.

In appearance, Meher Baba is rather under medium height, his skin is not very dark, he has dark brown hair, which he wears long, and a full moustache. He is thirty-eight years old. His eyes are large and beaming, lighting up his face, which irradiates happiness. He has a great sense of fun, and is said to be a first-rate cricketer. He combines the simplicity of a child with the wisdom of the ages.

He is willing at present to receive anyone who comes to him with a sincere mind; but he does not care to exhibit himself. It is not to be thought that he is an impracticable mystic, out of touch with everyday affairs. His knowledge includes even the concerns of ordinary men and women. He is one who brings into the conscious world of commonplace things, experience of the Unconscious. He has, that is to say, a balanced existence.

I have had several "conversations" with him. But as I have said, to talk with him is not the important matter. It is sufficient to be in the same place. He asked me if I knew the poems of Kabir, the fifteenth-century Mohomedan mystic. I was able to tell him that I did, and I quote from Rabindranath Tagore's translation of one of the poems, the description of a Perfect Master:

He is the real Sadguru, who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes.

Who teaches the single way of attaining them, that is other than rites or ceremonies.

Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and renounce the world:

Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind attaches itself.

Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.

Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.

The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere in earth, water, sky, and air:

Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established above the void.

He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.

That describes Meher Baba better than anything I, or perhaps anyone else, could write.

He makes no demands on anyone, but those who come to him for help have to be prepared to do what he says, which may be severe. The way to truth is simple but it is very hard; for the way to know God, is to know oneself, to face oneself in one's own inner consciousness, and then, renouncing everything, to let God flood the soul. Meher Baba is master of one knowledge, which is God, but that knowledge includes everything else. The rules that he gives, so far as he gives any at all, are meditation, selfless service and pure intention. He does not ask the Christian to cease being a Christian, but to be a true follower of Christ, that is, to do what Christ said. He does not ask the sceptical man or woman of to-day to accept any dogma, but in the spirit of humility to obey the God in his heart. What Meher Baba says, the mystics of the Western world have said: he also lives it. What he says, the psychologists of the West have also said in part; but he interprets their theories in practical life.

It may be strange to find a great spiritual teacher from the East speaking in terms that belong to our scientific text-books; but it is stranger still, and this is the overwhelming fact about Meher Baba, that he is one whose word is alive with the spirit.

In my articles continuing "A Plan of Life," I shall explain what I have learned from him.

This article forms part of a series "A Plan of Life," which started on July 9. The succeeding articles were: "Everyman asks, Who am I?" on July 16; "What do We Mean by God?" on July 23; "The Task of Man," on July 30; "A First Sketch Plan," on August 6; "Morals, or How to Behave," on August 13; "The Value of Ambition," on August 20; "Work, or the Economics of Living," on August 27; "Joy in Work," on September 3; "Play and Leisure," on September 10; "Society, or Relations with Others," on September 17. Copies of EVERYMAN containing these articles may be obtained from the Publisher (3d. each, including postage), EVERYMAN, 67-68, Chandos Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

THE NEED OF A TEACHER*

By C. B. PURDOM

I INTENDED to return this week to the discussion of literature in its relation to life, which is my proper work on this page. But there is one subject referred to in passing in the articles on a Plan of Life to which, judging from letters I have received, I must give further attention. That is the question of teachers or masters in the art of life. There is no doubt that people feel the need of teachers. Are they really necessary? If so, how can we recognize them, and what should be our relation to them?

The history of man is that of his adaptation to his material environment. Man has had to discover how to live on the earth and how to create civilization. He has not fully solved the problem, we know; but he is, no doubt, getting nearer to it. Man learns by doing what has to be done. He learns by trial and error, and practice in the workshop. He learns best when under the direction of one who knows

* "Literature and Life," *Everyman*, London, February 11, 1932.

—that is, a teacher. As Robert Bridges said in his *Testament of Beauty*:

*Hence cometh all the need and fame of Teachers,
men of inborn nobility, call'd Prophets of God,
Saviours of society, Seers of the promised land
the loved and loveable whose names live evermore,
the sainted pioneers of salvation, unto whom
all wisdom won and all man's further hope is due*

A great deal of our living is instinctive; but much of the life of man—his life in all those regions which we call spiritual or psychic—is by its nature not instinctive. In those regions man moves away from instinct and approaches more and more towards consciousness, until in the highest man consciousness replaces instinct. It is in these regions of our life that we need a teacher most, and where the difficulty of finding one is greatest. People know where to find a master of carpentering or painting; but where is there a master of life?

At one time people found what they wanted in the churches, which showed them how to live. To-day the majority of people have turned away from the churches; but they have found no substitute. In this age, people want truth at first hand. They are doubtful of all reports or records of truth. They want personal experience, not talk or dogmas. As they cannot get it, they prefer to be sceptical and live honestly, rather than try to accept truth at second hand, though that means living on a lower level than their real desires.

There is in consequence widespread dissatisfaction. People are uneasy and unhappy, without any real confidence in life. There are few ideals that really possess their hearts. Everything is held lightly and cynically. There is a cleavage between thought and life. This is the most striking fact about intelligent men and women to-day. They are prepared to accept nothing. They desire the truth, but they challenge everything. The age is characterised by extreme frankness.

The greatest visible social power among us is still example. To behold in another the realization of our ideals, or of what we wish were our ideals, is what impresses us most. The teacher that the age wants is a living example

of what all may become. It is the power of the lived or experienced truth that we look for, not the mere utterance of the truth. The poets give us flashes of truth, but there are few poets who can lift us into the regions out of which their poetry springs. The poets are in contact with "the Muses who know all things," but they cannot bring us into their company. Therefore the only teacher that we can accept is one who has experienced God, or whatever we like to call the Ultimate Reality. He must be one who has consciously bridged the gulf between time and eternity and can show others how to do likewise.

The teacher we desire must have achieved complete self-mastery, and have reconciled and transcended the opposites that divide the life of man. He will seek nothing for himself, and will be unaffected by sex, money or fame. He will be child-like, yet wise; joyous but profound; humble yet authoritative. A man, but having the gentleness of a woman.

In psychological terms, a teacher is one who throws light upon the unconscious—he is a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious mind. He is able to show how repressed energies may be released for creative purposes. He does this not by argument, but by mere association with himself.

That, indeed, is how a teacher is recognized. He enables us to discover ourselves, to help ourselves, to understand ourselves by his presence, simply by our awareness of him. We get through him a change of heart. He has the power to transmit grace, kindle love and bestow illumination. Above all he has abounding life. In him the idea has not only become thought as in philosophers, or inspiration as in poets, but flesh and blood. He is a living work of art. In such a teacher, God in the heart becomes conscious. He can, therefore, awaken God in others. A sleeper cannot awaken another sleeper; but one who is himself awake can awaken those that sleep.

There is an old saying that "when the pupil is ready the Master appears," which means that even if you meet a teacher, he cannot help you unless you are ready and want to be helped. There must be an open mind and humility, in other words, a disposition to learn. Those who recognize

him are the humble, the single-hearted, the despairing and the aspiring. The self-satisfied or the proud will not recognize him. "Who walks in singleness of heart shall be my companion—I will reveal myself to him by ways the learned understand not."

It is not necessary that a teacher of life should satisfy the intellect by answering the questions that call to be satisfied. It is sufficient that his presence should cause a change of heart, resulting in a new life. To quote Edward Carpenter again:

He will not bring a new revelation; he will not at first make any reply to the eager questions about death and immortality; he will present no stainless perfection;

But he will do better: he will present something absolute, primal—the living rock—something necessary and at first hand, and men will cling to him therefore.

He will restore the true balance; he will not condemn, but he will be absolute in himself.

He will be the terrible judge to whom every one will run;

He will be the lover and the judge in one.

The teacher is above low desires and vulgar motives. He is known by his serenity. Perception will silently emanate from his presence. He will be recognized by the heart. His mere appearance will convince those who seek him of his spiritual integrity. It does not matter what people say or think about him. We must each judge him by his effect on us personally. The relation between pupil and teacher should be that of love. We should obey him intelligently from love, because we want to do so, not from fear. He will not expect us to act against our conscience. He will not compel, but inspire. A bond is established which nothing can break. When we find a teacher, we must expect opposition from others because nothing creates greater resentment and antagonism in the world than the disinterested service of mankind when allied with spiritual power. Men of the world do not easily forgive those whose lives and utterances are a reproach to the pride of life. Our relations to a teacher must be characterized by complete frankness, by humility, and willingness to learn, and by readiness to put the knowledge gained into practice.

There are imperfect teachers who know a little, we meet them often; but the perfect teacher is met with rarely. It is the turning point in one's life when such a meeting takes place, and it does not happen to everyone. We can meet teachers in books; but it is better to meet them in the flesh. The difficulty is that they do not often let themselves be seen.

MORE ABOUT THE PERFECT MASTER*

By C. B. PURDOM

DURING the past few days, the newspapers have been publishing sensational accounts of an Indian "Messiah" who has lately come to this country. The subject of those accounts is the Perfect Master about whom I wrote in these pages a little more than six months ago. I promised then to write more about him, and many readers have reminded me of that promise. If in fulfilling it, I tell a rather different story from that which has appeared in the newspapers, the reader can be sure that I have verified facts.

It will be as well if I start by giving a brief outline of his history. Shri Sadguru Meher Baba is a Persian, born in Poona, South India, on February 25, 1894. His father, Irani Sheriar, was a spiritually-minded man, who from boyhood until he was a grown man, spent his life wandering in the jungle in search of spiritual experience. At the age of thirty-five, he was told that he should resume a normal existence. This he did; he married and had six children. Meher Baba was the second son.

His father is a Zoroastrian, and Meher Baba was brought up in that religion. He went to school and college in Poona. When he was seventeen, he was met by Hazrat Babajan, an ancient woman, as a result of which Meher Baba entered a super-consciousness state, in which he remained for nine months entirely oblivious of earthly life.

* "Literature and Life," *Everyman*, London, April 21, 1932.

It took seven years before he regained normal human consciousness. During the whole of that time, he had to be taken care of. His return to normal consciousness was brought about by meeting Shri Sadguru Upasani Maharaj in 1921.

He spent the first two years after that experience in writing an account of what happened to him. This book has not been seen by anyone. He was never married; nor did he ever engage in any trade or occupation, for he was still at college when the experience I have mentioned came to him.

His time has been spent during the past eleven years in travelling throughout India, alternating with periods of complete retirement. He visited the West for the first time last September, when he spent about three weeks in England, and afterwards went to America for a few weeks. He returned to England from India a fortnight ago, and at the beginning of next month, intends to go back to America for an extended period. His reason for visiting America, he says, that America being most deeply engrossed in material things, and suffering most in consequence, is the soil in which a new spiritual re-birth will first take place. He declares that America requires only the guiding hand of a Perfect Master to redirect its material powers to the heights of spirituality.

On his first visit to this country, he saw a few people who came to him in London. He also saw Mr. Gandhi. On the present occasion, however, the news of his coming was spread from India, and he was met on arrival with the full blast of British newspaper publicity.

It would be easy to write a sensational story upon this remarkable being, though he is himself the least sensational of men. It would not be difficult to make the most exaggerated claims for him. I should like the reader to get a picture of him as he is,—a quiet, simple, happy man. He does not shrink from contact with others, though he seeks to withdraw himself as much as he can. In appearance, he is under middle height, delicately built, with a light brown skin, gentle brown eyes, long brown hair, strong features, and a serene expression. Perception silently emanates from his presence. He wears Eastern dress in the house, but in

the street usually wears ordinary European clothes. He is not an ascetic, and does not advocate asceticism. He lives, of course, in utter simplicity. He has not spoken for more than seven years, and communicates with others by signs, and by pointing to Roman letters painted on a small board. This silence is not the result of a vow, but is undertaken for spiritual reasons. He says that he will break it soon in America.

He understands English perfectly, and long conversations can be held with him, either with the aid of one of his attendants reading from the board or by following oneself his spelling of words on the board. The latter is not as difficult as it may seem.

What Meher Baba is people must discover for themselves. His authority must convince without argument. He must be recognized by the heart. His mere appearance convinces seekers of his spiritual integrity. One recognizes in him a spiritual Master—or one does not. I see in him the Teacher about whom I wrote in *EVERYMAN* on February 11. He differs from other teachers I have met because he has power. This power is not magnetism or personality, much less is it any sort of hypnotism. It is a feeling of confidence that he has achieved complete self-mastery and can help the rest of us to do the same. He teaches what he is. "The wise man is a Divine mercy to created beings," said a mediæval Persian poet. That is what I find in Meher Baba.

He has no doctrine; he is a living truth. Therefore it is not what he says that matters. That is why the fact that he does not speak seems of such small consequence. Always it is the power of the realized truth that convinces, not the mere utterance of the truth. I have never before met a man of whom I could say that with such certainty. In his presence I feel that I know the answers to the questions that have hitherto perplexed me. Indeed, since I first met him six months ago, I have realized that the difficulty is not to get questions answered, but to act upon what one knows.

A Perfect Master does not merely answer questions but he gives the ability to do what is required, because he has arrived where we want to go. He is a guide who can point out the way and help to bring us there. This is important,

for it is not mere advice that we want. There are plenty of people who can tell us what to do: we need something more than that. We need something more, too, than momentary inspiration. We look for permanent realization of the ultimate reality. We have those who write poetry; we want one who lives it.

If it is dangerous to ascend a difficult mountain without a guide, it is even more dangerous to attempt to disintegrate and reintegrate our personality without the help of a skilled teacher. The many failures of psycho-analysis have made this abundantly clear. A Perfect Master helps to break down our personality, because he helps us to get rid of the ego; but he also enables us to build it up again. I find Meher Baba to be above all practical. He is concerned with everyday life. He does not invite people to leave the world, but to make use of it, to raise it to spiritual values. We should live in the world, he says, and yet be not of it, attend to all worldly duties and yet be completely detached from their results.

He does not seek to convert men to anything; certainly he does not attempt to change their religion. All religions are revelations of God. What he does say is that whatever religion one has should become experience. It should transform life. Until it does that it is a dead religion. If a man has no religion believing that all religions are outworn, he does not argue with him, but tells him to act on his own highest ideals. What matters is character. Opinions do not matter. It is what you are that counts.

Meher Baba dictated the following statement when he arrived in England, in view of the many questions that had been asked of him, which I print here for the first time:

"My coming to the West is not with the object of establishing a new creed or spiritual society or organization, but is intended to make people understand religion in its true sense. True religion consists of developing that attitude of mind which ultimately results in seeing one Infinite Existence prevailing throughout the Universe, thus finding the same Divinity in Art and Science and experiencing the Highest Consciousness and Indivisible Bliss in everyday life.

The West is inclined towards the material side of things, which has from untold ages brought in its wake wars, pestilences and financial crises. It should not be understood that I discard and hate materialism. I mean that materialism should not be considered an end in itself but a means to the end.

Organized efforts such as the League of Nations are being made to solve world problems and to bring about the Millennium. In some parts of the West, particularly in America, intellectual understanding of Truth and Reality is attempted but without the true Spirit of Religion. This is like groping in the dark.

I intend to bring together all religions and cults like beads on one string and revitalize them for individual and collective needs. This is my mission to the West."

He does not bring Eastern ideas for us to act upon, but intends to help us to act upon what we already know. He revivifies unused knowledge. He does more than that, of course, for he shows us the necessity for a change of heart and enables us to gain real knowledge through experience. Above all, he unites the mind and heart, so that we need no longer be divided personalities, but can live as entire men.

SHRI MEHER BABA'S TEACHING AS THE KERNEL OF UPANISHADIC WISDOM

By Dr. C. D. DESHMUKH, M.A., Ph.D.

I

OF the *Bhagavadgita* it is said that its teaching is the milk gathered from the cows in the form of the Upanishads. We can also say about Shri Meher Baba's Teaching, that it represents the kernel of Upanishadic Wisdom. Shri Meher Baba is the Ancient One and his Teaching reveals the Truth which is as old as the cosmos. The spiritual wisdom which he brings has had its echoes even in the hoary past of the Upanishadic times. The superficial trend in modernism would seem to require that the truth should be new. But truth does not change from time to time like the fashions of the day. The unspeakable grandeur with which it is hallowed does not fade with the rolling of years. That which is eternal cannot become stale with time. In Shri Meher Baba's Teaching the kernel of the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads is being presented to the world again, with Divine Authority.

India is a land of Philosophers and Seers and the place of the Upanishads in Indian Philosophy is unique. From the historical point of view the brilliant and imposing systems of the later periods had their roots in the Upanishads and almost all of them derive their inspiration from the wisdom treasured in them. The important position which the Upanishads have in Indian Philosophy and also in the philosophical thought of the world is due to the fact that they are a fruit of an age which is vibrant with the most earnest and critical search for the Truth. They are not the product of arm-chair speculation. The sages and the seers of the Upanishads are wrestling with problems which are as real to them as the problem of bread is to the masses in modern times. We have striking examples of wisdom-loving Kings like Janak who were willing to sacrifice all their possessions for the sake of the highest knowledge. Even ladies had

caught the enthusiasm for philosophy as is shown by the example of Gargi and Maitreyee. Further the spirit of the period is not dogmatic but rational. No philosopher could hope to receive recognition or become pre-eminent without answering the criticism of rival thinkers. He had to give the exposition of his views in assemblies which were resonant with keen controversies.

The Upanishadic thinkers have seriously tried all the avenues of the Truth. There are questions which cannot be conclusively decided except by means of the scientific method. For example, knowledge about pre-existence or re-incarnation or about the conditions of existence in life after death, can be based not on speculation but on direct information or inference from the facts of experience. In this connection the method of Psychical Research which is essentially scientific in spirit was not unknown to the Upanishadic thinkers. Attempt to establish contact with the other world through mediums is referred to in the *Brihadaranyaka* in the story of the lady possessed by a *Gandharva*.

Such problems were attacked through the scientific method. For many persons, acceptance of the testimony of experts can be the only available method in certain fields. As Shri Meher Baba once told his disciples, the knowledge of the hidden side of life has to be gathered by "believing those who know the secrets of life and death". Unless there is a general unfoldment of occult powers the testimony of experts will have to be accepted as the best scientific data available.

While problems of the nature and the laws of the other world are to be tackled through the scientific method there are many metaphysical and ontological problems which require to be approached through methods which are essentially philosophic. In Upanishads, these important problems are attacked along four distinct lines: (1) Speculative, (2) Ethical, (3) Psychological, and (4) Religious.

There are two main speculative queries in the Upanishadic literature: (1) What is the innermost principle in man? (2) What is the ultimate nature of Reality? With regard to the first query they soon came to the conclusion that the soul is neither the body nor the mind but some

principle which transcends both. Those who in modern psychology identify the soul with the mind will be startled by the penetration of their initial question, "By whose inspiration does the incited mind go to its object?" (*Kena*). And in reply to this question the ultimate principle in human life is described as "something which incomprehensible to the mind but which at the same time comprehends the mind" (*Kena*). The second query was about that primary and unitary principle of the cosmos by knowing which everything else which is not known becomes known, just as by knowing the earth in one earthen pot we know the essence of all the earthen pots since earth is the only true substance and its various forms are merely distinctions of speech (*Chandogya*). The conclusion of the second query that the "pure being alone existed in the beginning, one without the second", and that the world with its multiplicity and differentiation came into existence because "it desired to create itself and become many" (*Chandogya*). The source of individuation is thus not to be found in any other foreign principle. It is in the original principle itself.

The next important question which naturally confronted the Upanishadic thinkers was, 'What exactly is the relation of this cosmic principle to the Innermost principle in Man?' And it is at this point that they have taken the boldest and the most unique step of identifying the two principles. "O Child! All creations are rooted in the Truth. The Truth is their home and in the Truth they abide. *That Truth, that Atman Thou art—O Shwetaketo!*" (*Chandogya*). This basic Truth is given to the world in a new form when Shri Meher Baba proclaims that "You not only possess but actually are Soul, which is but one Paramatman" or when he declares that "*To realize the Supreme Being as your own self is to realise the Truth*"¹

The question of explaining the nature of the identity between the individual soul and Universal Atman is not capable of being tackled through the intellect alone. At this critical point the Upanishadic sages deliberately give up ratiocination and have no shadow of regret in doing so. The human soul seems to have a separate and self-sufficient unity

¹ Sayings.

and independence of its own. How exactly is it merged or swallowed up in the Absolute? Here the Upanishadic thinkers openly and clearly give up the attempt to explain the fact by means of ratiocinative thought. All that we get from them as an aid to our imagination is a few brilliant analogies. Just as all the juices of flowers lose their distinctiveness in the honey stored by the bees in the honeycomb, and the rivers have no separate existence when they pour themselves in the ocean, the creatures in the Absolute can have no private and limited self-consciousness. And this all-devouring Absolute Truth is not merely transcendent or isolated from the creation, but is immanent in it like the vital juice which nourishes the leaves, the branches, the fruit and the flower of a living tree, or like the salt which when dissolved in water pervades it in all the parts (*Chandogya*).

The Upanishads clearly and openly recognize that there are many inevitable and insuperable difficulties in the attempt to understand the Infinite Atman through the mind. Shri Meher Baba brings out this point unambiguously when he says that "Intellect is the lowest form of understanding..."² and that therefore "You must surrender yourself to a Sadguru if you want God-realization."³ We find this doctrine anticipated by the Upanishadic Seer when he says, "This knowledge cannot be obtained through reasoning. O Beloved one! *Only when it is told by another is it really understood*" (*Katha*). The master of Wisdom is thus indispensable for arriving at this supreme understanding. Hence the clarion call of the sages is, "*Arise! Awaken! Obtain understanding by approaching the Supreme Teachers!*" The wise men say that the Path is difficult like walking on the edge of a knife" (*Katha*).

Before however the disciple can derive any benefit from the Master he has to undergo certain moral discipline. As emphasised by Shri Meher Baba, the way to realization is "*from God to God*".⁴ The Upanishadic sages also required moral preparation of the aspirant before they considered him

² Message, 1932.

³ Sayings.

⁴ *My Master and His Teaching*, p. 23.

fit for highest knowledge. At times they enjoined celibacy as a precondition of the supreme knowledge of the Atman. Sometimes moral precepts are given to the disciples, e.g., "Speak the Truth. Follow religion. Do not be negligent in your studies" (*Taittiriya*). This was their clear commandment. A high degree of moral attainment is according to them absolutely necessary to make a person fit for receiving the knowledge of the Atman. Thus in *Katha Upanishad* the God of Death tests Nachiketa by making him tempting offers and congratulates him for choosing the Good in preference to the Tempting, and says, "The courageous one accepts the Good rather than the Tempting" (*Katha*).

The moral life in itself is not sufficient. It has to be further supplemented by a life of psychological discipline and religious devotion. In his discourse on repeating God's name Shri Meher Baba says, "Concentrate your mind on the repetition alone, and breathe regularly while doing so." He often indicates for his disciples different forms of meditation, and in his pamphlet on Meditation recommends concentration on "the mere form of a God-man, or some simple formula such as 'I am neither *Sharir* (gross body), nor *Prana* (the subtle body, which is the seat of desires and vital forces), nor *Manas* (mental body, which is the seat of the mind): I am *Atman* (Soul)'".

This emphasis on the need for a life of meditation and constant search is prominent in the Upanishadic philosophy as will be seen from the enjoyment, "The Atman should be seen, heard of, thought about and meditated upon" (*Brihadaranyaka*). The psychological discipline is not to be looked upon as a kind of mechanical psychic exercise on the analogy of physical exercise which is wholesome for physical culture, but it is meant to bring out and illumine the hidden possibilities in the human heart. Thus we are gradually led to the life of religion as a necessary supplement for the other approaches to the Truth.

II

In Upanishads, philosophy is not divorced from religion. A story in *Katha Upanishad* brings out effectively how the earlier forms of Nature Worship and polytheism were

superseded by philosophical Monism. The Gods had won a victory over the demons by virtue of the power which they really derived from the Brahman; but they thought that, it was their own greatness. So the Brahman appeared before the Gods in order to free them from this illusion. The Gods deputed Fire and Wind to find out the strength of what had appeared to them. The Brahman presented them with some straw; but Fire could not burn it, and Wind could not blow it away. But when Indra who knew the greatness of the Brahman approached it, it vanished from sight. So the story posits an all-powerful and unitary cosmic principle which is *beyond* the elements or the gods. But polytheism is not merely negated. The element of truth in it has been absorbed in the doctrine of the immanence of the divine life in all creation. We thus find that the *Isha-wasya* Upanishad begins with the following assertion: "All that has life is pervaded by the Divine Life" (*Isha*).

The great regard for truth, in whichever form it may be, keeps the Upanishadic Sages free from sectarian bias even at the cost of apparent inconsistencies. Thus when Vidagdha, the son of Shakala, asks Yagnyavalkya: "How many Gods there are?", he says in the same breath: "Three and three hundred; three and three thousand." He even says that the Gods might also be said to be *one and a half* and cites in this connection the example of the wind which perceptibly increases in volume thus becoming more than one but remaining less than two entities. But he explains the position by saying that all these are Vibhuties, *i.e.*, manifestations of Divinity and affirms that *God is really one*. One who realizes God transcends the manifold nature of the world. "The Seer goes beyond duality and becomes one. This is his ultimate goal" (*Brihadaranyaka*).

As Shri Meher Baba puts it, "God-consciousness means to be mentally, emotionally, and spiritually conscious of the One self at all times and in all places."⁵

Shri Meher Baba does not put forth the idea of the Atman as some bloodless category which would merely help to solve the problems of intellectual knowledge. It is true that the ideal of a comprehensive and unified knowledge,

⁵ Sayings.

though it is merely intellectual, requires the assumption of a basic unity in Reality; but the Atman is much more than this. Shri Meher Baba has depicted it as "the real Beloved". We find that this way of looking at reality has a parallel in the Upanishads, where the Atman is described as a life principle and regarded as the Beloved. "It should be worshipped as the Beloved" (*Brihadaranyaka*).

In fact even ordinary love of wife, son, husband, wealth, animals, people, gods, etc., is in the last analysis found to be for the sake of the Atman and not for their own sake. "Not for the sake of the beings are beings dear, but for the sake of the Atman are beings dear" (*Brihadaranyaka*). In this passage the word Atman is sometimes translated as one's own self; but such selfish hedonism is far from being consistent with the later contexts where Atman is described as the object of Search. What the sage means is that although we may not always be conscious of the fact, our love for another is ultimately based in our fundamental unity with the other in the Universal Atman. The natural conclusion is that the true object of love is the Atman and not its manifestations taken in isolation. The forms are fleeting and elusive; but the Atman is eternal. Just as the sounds of the drum cannot be caught but only the drum, the forms of the Atman cannot be grasped but only the Atman. Atman is therefore the Supreme Beloved. The philosophical monism of the Upanishads is not so rigid as not to allow room for *Bhakti* or love.

The *Mundak* Upanishad describes the individual soul and the universal soul as two birds sitting on the same tree; the former is attached to the fruit of the tree, while the latter is merely a detached observer. Caught up in the bewildering and tempting multiplicity of the world, the individual soul goes through many joys and sorrows. But it also has the idea of liberation howsoever vague and it expresses itself as the following prayer: "Lead me from the unreal to the Real. Lead me from darkness to Light. Lead me from death to Immortality" (*Brihadaranyaka*). The life of prayer is essential. "The Atman can be obtained only through the Atman itself which is the object of prayer" (*Katha*).

After attaining the Atman the individual soul knows

itself to be identical with the Universal soul, and acquires not only highest knowledge but also highest bliss. On one occasion Shri Meher Baba has said, "If you realize only a portion of what I call the highest knowledge, you will experience great bliss. It will bring down heaven into your heart."⁶ The Upanishads state that the bliss of a realized person is many times greater than the happiness of a man who is the lord of others and has at his disposal all the pleasures of life. Further, he attains to freedom from fear, for fear is rooted in duality. "Only in Brahman is there freedom from fear" (*Brihadaranyaka*).

The religion of the Upanishads is far more rationalised and evolved than the earlier Nature worship, polytheism or the religion of rituals and sacrifices. The Brahman is looked upon as a principle which is both immanent and transcendent; and this truth is made a basis of a very interesting type of intellectual and emotional mysticism. But this mysticism of the Upanishads is in no way indifferent to the mundane aspect of life. It goes hand in hand with active interest in the social problems. The Upanishadic Pantheism is the background of a moral philosophy according to which the highest type of action is in the spirit of an offering to God. The interest in the social good is also predominant. We have for example the following prayer in *Katha Upanishad*: "Let us join together, enjoy together, reinforce our mutual strength and shine through our learning. Let us not hate each other" (*Katha*). The individual is not thinking in terms of any private or selfish salvation for himself alone but joins in a collective prayer for social well-being.

We find this active interest in the collective good of the whole mankind equally pronounced in the life and the teaching of Shri Meher Baba. His prospectus for the Universal Ashram announces that one of its sections "Will prepare *mystics of the practical type*" and that "These mystics will inspire others to have a life in which there will be complete detachment side by side with intense creative action". In the same prospectus another section of the Universal Ashram is described as being meant "to be a training ground for

⁶ *The Perfect Master*, p. 288.

a band of selfless workers who will learn how to render real and effective service". This clearly brings out how the teaching of Shri Meher Baba is not meant to propagate some barren form of mysticism; his teaching, like that of the Upanishads, is essentially practical and humanitarian in its effects and objective.

Thus in the teaching of Shri Meher Baba, as in the main current of Upanishadic philosophy the mundane and social aspects of life receive full recognition and attention; but these aspects of life are not looked upon as all-in-all and are shown to be ultimately grounded in the Atman which gives to them a deeper sanctity and meaning. The Upanishads recognize the realization of the Atman as the final goal of life and the search for this Ultimate Reality is varied and many-sided. The speculative approach is superseded by the moral approach. The moral approach is superseded by the psychological approach; the psychological approach is carried on side by side by the religious approach of Devotion or Love; and at the end of this long and varied search the individual arrives at his original home, which is the "Truth of truths". Shri Meher Baba has come to bring the world closer to this Truth which is infinite: for in Infinity alone is their final bliss and peace, and freedom from fear; and in Infinity alone is to be found the final destiny of human life.

HAZRAT MEHER BABA FROM A SUFISTIC STANDPOINT

By Dr. ABDUL GHANI MUNSIF

*Some realize after great research
Some find Him without seeking;
Some long for Him with no response
With some He ignores dealing.*

THE Sufis classify saints into two main categories, namely *Kasbi* (self-acquired) and *Wahbi* (Divinely ordained), as described in the first two lines of the above quatrain. This division is rather arbitrary and is not the whole truth. It implies injustice and favouritism by God. This viewpoint is the result of Islamic belief in predestination and the absolute *will* of God. Although well conversant with the law of cause and effect and the spiritual fact that nothing goes to the undeserving, the early Sufis under the ægis of a disciplinary church, could think of no better way of escape than fall into line with the orthodox mentality. They endorsed the latter's theory of Divine grace, with regard to saints suddenly lifted to spiritual heights irrespective of their previous form and life record.

Evidently Hazrat Meher Baba belongs to the second category. Looking to the early part of his life as a student in Deccan College, no one would have marked him out for a spiritual career. Undeniably really great events in one's life do happen when least expected. And the unexpected in the case of Meher Baba, was his memorable meeting with Hazrat Babajan (a lady saint of Poona) in the year 1913. One kiss on the forehead by the venerable old lady gave him God-realization (*mushahida-e-zat*) and the rest of the work, the return to normal consciousness (*mushahida-e-sifat*) was completed by Sadguru Upasani Maharaj of Sakori. Hazrat Meher Baba, judged from the spiritual preparedness of this life of his, may be classed as *Wahbi* (Divinely ordained) but those who understand spirituality

can see in him but a triumphant culmination of a long extended evolutionary struggle through many births and deaths—yet another crest of a wave in the sea of Cosmic consciousness.

Hazrat Meher Baba, a Persian Zoroastrian as far as can be ascertained, is the only non-Muslim saint of the present century except Upasani Maharaj who has attained spiritual perfection, from a Muslim saint. As if they would be anywhere near to judging the standard of his saintliness, the Muslims very often inquire, "Has Meher Baba accepted the Muslim faith?" "Is he *Bashara* (conformist) or *Bayshara* (non-conformist)?" In this small symposium, answering silly and sectarian questions like the above born of ignorance would be to no purpose.

The fillip to orthodoxy is unmistakably afforded by the Sufi poet Akber of Allahabad, in his interpretation of religion and its significance in human life when he says:

"What is religion? It's a social and political make-shift.

It can be no criterion to judge of a man's heresy or saintliness.

In truth every religion has its saints and its heretics.

These are words connoting deep insight into things, Don't brush them aside lightly."

If these words pregnant with spiritual possibilities do not set people a thinking, it is nobody's fault. For such a class of people blissful ignorance would certainly be of more spiritual benefit than any frivolous and insincere attempt on their part to become wise in such matters, as it would react by making them lose faith in what they are already believing and doing.

However, the intellectuals and the so-called Sufis amongst Muslims who ought to know better than give an air of finality to what they already know, need a different approach and in fairness to them they cannot altogether be ignored. Their healthy inquisitiveness in the domain of spirituality deserves a rational satisfaction and to such the study of Hazrat Meher Baba's saintliness from the highest Sufistic standpoint would be illuminating and worthwhile.

There is no measure as yet evolved by which the spirituality of a person can be gauged. The only material

available is the record of the ecstatic and inspired utterances of saints, that furnishes a clue to seeking minds, for determining the particular state and stage of their spiritual experience. Very often it happens that there are conflicting statements coming from the same spiritual personage or between different Masters discussing a common subject or experience. The reason for a saint contradicting himself, is a sign of his outgrowing that particular spiritual experience embodied in his utterance. Similarly saints, giving a different version of the same subject, is due to their different angle of experience, as a result of their different stages. For instance, an astronomer, studying the sun, from an observatory, would describe it in a certain way. This description would materially differ if the astronomer were to study the sun, by stationing himself a million miles nearer to it. Again the difference in experience would be greatly accentuated if the distance be decreased by ten million miles. The sun is the same, but the various stages of approach, have caused all the apparent contradiction.

It is on this account that a few perfect masters have kept mum over the problem of reincarnation and evolution, actuated perhaps by expediency and the then existing circumstances; while others have expounded these theories very boldly from pulpit and platform, perhaps deeming this method of approach as best suited to the genius of the people with whom they were concerned. Muslims need not unnecessarily get scared at the mere mention of the words reincarnation and evolution. They ought to know that ignorance of a certain thing need not in every case presuppose an absence of that thing. It would interest the Muslim world to know that not all the Sufis have discarded these theories wholesale as being heathenic. Mansoor bin Hallaj, Abu Muslim Khorasani, Ahmed-ibne-Sabit, Shaikh-ul-Ishraq were avowed reincarnationists. Omar Khayyam not only expounded reincarnation (*Naskh*), but even admitted retrograde reincarnation (*Maskh*), while Jalaluddin Rumi openly preached evolution (*Irteqa*). In the memoirs of Hazrat Nizamuddin of Delhi, written by Amir Khusroo, the saint is said to have referred to a statement (Hadis) emanating from the Arabian Prophet himself to the effect saying, "Till the day of judgment retrograde reincarnation (*Maskh*) will

not operate with my followers." This statement of the Prophet does not rule out the possibility of retrograde re-incarnation operating with others. Hazrat Meher Baba affirms that belief or non-belief in reincarnation and evolution, does not in any way stand in the way of man's spiritual progress.

It would reassure the Muslim world in particular to know that the gnosis (*Irfan*) of Meher Baba has never been found to be in conflict with the teachings of the Perfect Masters the world has already known. The amplification or suppression of a certain fact is presumably determined by the capacity of an aspirant to receive. Hence one should not jump to hasty conclusions if a certain line of action or utterance is beyond him to approach or grasp. To such the mystical Hafiz says:

*"When you hear the words of sages, do not say they
are wrong;
The fault lies with you, you have yet to rise to those
heights."*

The gnosis of self-realization however, is never self-contradictory. Spiritual Perfection delivering itself, in any language and through any person can rarely be missed. It is therefore the highest Sufistic standpoint that affords a rational approach to the understanding of Hazrat Meher Baba and his spirituality.

Al-Quran, the first and the last text-book on Sufism, in the opening verse, clearly enjoins upon the Sufis to believe that the Lord of the universe has provided equally, all peoples of the earth, not only means of material and physical sustenance, but also He has bestowed on all equal opportunities of spiritual unfoldment and growth. It is unthinkable for a Sufi to imagine for a moment that the Almighty God has favoured one particular race or class of people to the exclusion of all others. The Quran says: "There was no nation but had its teacher". Again it says, "A Divine Messenger was sent to every class of men", also "Every nation has been blessed with a guide" (XXXV 24 and X 47). Hence on the authority of Quran itself, all Prophets and Teachers of mankind belonging to any creed and country, have a spiritual status which must be recognized. Is the

attitude then of the average Muslim and the so-called Sufis, quite in keeping with the spirit of the above Quranic texts? Do they really recognize all teachers of mankind, besides the names mentioned in the Quran, as Prophets and Messengers? The Muslim World computes the number of Prophets sent for guidance of man by Divine Providence, near about one lac and twenty-four thousand. Tackle any Muslim, well-informed in Islamic mythology and he would find it impossible to enumerate and name Prophets from Adam to the present day, aggregating to more than fifty. Such illustrious names like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster would never occur to them, as being idolators and *Mushrik* (dualists). Even if they do, the Muslims would maintain that the culmination of all Messengers of God, is the final and perfect manifestation of Prophet Mahomed.

The Sufis however aver, that the terminus of Prophet-hood does not necessarily mean the end of spirituality. If Islam, after the demise of the Arabian Prophet, has produced Saints of a high spiritual calibre, other races too have amongst them perfectly illumined souls. It is the free lance amongst Sufis, who have outgrown the devotional and ascetic stage and have developed a pantheistic experience, that have dared to utter the truth to those, who desire to know and assimilate without being shocked. Syed Mohomed Husain—a disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz, when questioned about the spirituality (*Fakiri*) of Hindus and Muslims said, "There is no difference whatsoever in the spirituality of the two; the apparent difference is only in the terminology". A visitor once asked Ghaosali Shah Qalander, "Sire, I have heard it said that no other race besides Muslims, produces Masters charged with spiritual duty (*Ahle-Khidmat*)". The Saint replied, "True, the Muslims think that way but other races also claim this monopoly. The truth is, all races more or less produce spiritual chargemen. The works of God do not depend on any single race or religion exclusively."

Hazrat Meher Baba does not conform to the external form of any religion, not even the religion of his birth. The Zoroastrian world is indifferent towards his activities for personally discarding the external signs and symbols of their religion. The Muslim very condescendingly, would guarantee Meher Baba spiritual perfection, if only he

accepts the Islamic faith. If the Muslims are told that the Perfect Masters of the present century, Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur, Sai Baba of Shirdi and Babajan of Poona, were all non-conformists (*Bayshara*), they would say, that the said saints were at least born Muslims and as *Qalanders* (an order of unconventional saints), they are held excused from religious formalism. Hazrat Meher Baba says, "Religion is for man, but man is not for religion. I have become one with Truth. All religions are my religions and I have no religion". Bearing on this assertion, some ecstatic but irreligiously bold utterances (*Shathiyat*) of Perfect Sufis are worth recording:

"One who is eternally in prayers (Realization) has no need of external prayers".—FAZIL AYAZ.

"Ordinary people have to abstain from sin. I abstain from uttering '*La-ilaha-illallah*' (there is no other God but God)".—BUALI SINDHI.

"One who has seen God, has overstepped the limits of religion (*Shara*) and one who has become God, has overstepped duality implied in seeing God".—YASIN BIN HUSAIN RAZI.

"One who is not for realizing God in this life, God occupies him in prayers and worship. Not finding such an one fit for Knowledge of Him (Gnosis), God includes him in the common crowd".—ABUL HUSAIN MUZEEN.

"Our primary duty (*Farz*) is to be God; our optional duty (*Sunnat*) is to be Rasul (Mohomed)".—AHMED GHAZALI.

"One who enjoys worship, is a worshipper of worship and not of God".—ABDUR REHMAN JAMI.

"Abstinence from prayers due to alcoholic intoxication is respect for religion; abstinence from prayers on account of Divine intoxication is respect for Truth and Reality".—MULLA SHAH, Spiritual Master of Darashakoh.

The next question that automatically follows is with regard to the quality of spirituality attained by Hazrat Meher Baba. Muslim Sufis would straight off class Hazrat Baba as a *Mawahid* (one who has realized Divine unity), and according to this viewpoint generally all non-Muslims who have reached the unitarian state are styled as such. In *Tasawwuf* (Islamic theosophy) there are two types of

Mawahid (unitarians); one is called a *Mawahid-Haneef* (informal unitarian) and the other *Mawahid-Tabay* (formal unitarian). The former attain *Taoheed* unitarian state without the intermediation of Prophets. To them, compliance to external form of prayer and behaviour laid down by such Prophets is optional, although at heart they acknowledge their messengership on earth. This class comprises of both Muslim and non-Muslims. *Mawahid-Tabay* (formal unitarians) consists of all Muslims who conform in all details to the external law (*Shariat*) of Mohomed the Prophet.

The above classification is rather vague and far fetched and evidently dictated by expedience. Not a few Perfect Sufis maintain that all those attaining *Taoheed* (Divine unity) through the grace and mediation of a Perfect Master, cannot but recognize and experience the spiritual state called *Haqiqat-e-Mohomedi* (the reality of Mohomed) the counterpart of which is termed *Vishnupad* in Vedantism. This *Haqiqat-e-Mohomedi* is the name of a state or stage and not the name of a person, and this stage is open to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Those stationing themselves in the stage of *Haqiqat-e-Mohomedi* after realizing *Taoheed* (Divine unity) are termed *Ahle-maratib* (men of grades) and from these, *Ahle-khidmat* (Men of duty) on the earthly plane are recruited.

Strictly speaking, a *Mawahid* (Unitarian) is one who acknowledges and desires for no intermediary between him and God; no Prophet, not even a Master. Such instances are very rare and usually to be found amongst *yogis*.

There have been some Sufis of a very extreme type, who from the standpoint of Absolute State of Unity (*Taoheed-e-Tanzihi*) consider even gradations, connoting authority and duty born of *Haqiqat-e-Mahomedi* as falling short of the mark and not true *Fakiri* (spirituality). To them prophethood and duty seem an encumbrance, which they would feign do without and the following are a few quotations illustrative of this attitude.

"My banner of *Huyat* (absolute oneness with God) is much more exalted and high than that of Mohomed".—
BAYAZID.

"In the path of Truth pay no consideration to Mohomed Abraham or Moses. By all means reverence them, as they represent God devolving into man. Beyond this, attach no more importance to them".—ABUBAKER.

"*La-ilaha-illalah* (there is no other God but God) is *Shirke-Khafi* (latent duality) and *Mohomed-Rassulallah* (Mohomed—the messenger of God) is *Shirke-Jali* (manifest duality)".—FARIDUDDIN ATTAR.

"In the prayers of Mohomed, the archangel Gabriel has no place; in my retirement within, there is no room for Mohomed".—ANIUL-QAZAT HAMDANI.

"If after experiencing *Zat* (absolute oneness) one returns to *Sifat* (relative manyness), one does not know the *Zat*".—ABU ABBAS SAYYARI.

"After seeing the light of Mohomed all the *Momin* (believers) became *Kafirs* (infidels)".—ANIUL-QAZAT HAMDANI.

Now it goes without saying that if non-Muslims can attain spiritual perfection they can also make others spiritually perfect. For those who are interested in matters spiritual, they will find many instances of non-Muslim saints imparting spirituality to Muslims and *vice versa*. Ghausali Shah Qalander (1804–80) had contacted nineteen *Murshids* (spiritual Masters), out of them eleven were Muslims and eight Hindus. Hazrat Babajan had two spiritual Masters, a Hindu and a Muslim. Sai Baba gave his spiritual charge to Upasani Maharaj and Hazrat Meher Baba derives perfection from Hazrat Babajan and Upasani Maharaj. It is thus patent that God and Truth is the heritage of the eligible and not the exclusive preserve of a sect or creed, as sung by the Sufi poet Jami:—

"Love's devotee oh Jami, has no caste or pedigree
No special status has this Path, for parentage and piety".
The wailing prayer of Dr. Iqbal "The Spiritual Taverns of India have remained closed for more than three hundred years and oh *Saqi* (cup bearer), bless the world once again by your Divine Manifestation" evidently calls upon a Muslim manifestation. Like the generality of orthodox Muslims, he forgot to associate Spiritual Perfection with the Qalander type Masters of the century like Sai Baba, Baba Tajudin and Hazrat Babajan and other non-Muslims. Anyone taking

pains to study the evolution of Islamic theosophy, would be confronted with the knowledge that there is never a dearth of Spiritual Masters and neither any decline and deterioration in Spirituality. 'Seek and ye shall find' is foreign to the make-up of the present age which believes largely in sectarian saintliness. According to Sufis, the end of the hierarchy of Saints functioning on the earthly planes will synchronise with the end of the world.

It may be stated without fear of contradiction that Hazrat Meher Baba's teachings are more in conformity with the Sufistic cult than with any other. He lays great emphasis on *Love* which according to him is the surest and shortest road to God-realization. He attributes the quality production of saints in Islam, mainly to the development of this method of approach to Divinity.

He does not encourage asceticism (*Rahbaniyat*). He demands mental renunciation rather than physical renunciation of the world. The spiritual dictum "Be in the world but not of the world" finds favour with him.

In the matter of practising *Riyaz* (austerities) the best he would recommend is the company of saints if attainable. Once attained, the company of saints completely and fully atones for all types of self-imposed austerities and Yoga practices put together.

He warns aspirants of the path against attaching too much importance to miracles as they are likely to side-track a novitiate from reaching the Goal. All the same, his spiritual interest in the life of his devotees has given rise to numerous miraculous experiences for them.

He is a living embodiment of selfless service. It's a sight to see him personally attending to the physical needs of the mad and a few God-intoxicated inmates of his *Ashram* in the matter of bathing and feeding, even to the extent of cleansing their lavatories.

His self-imposed silence extending over a period of nearly fifteen years is undertaken after God-realization and not for any personal spiritual attainment as is sometimes misunderstood by people. According to Meher Baba his silence is meant for the spiritual uplift of humanity at large. It has neither the tension of a vow nor the tenacity of penance behind it. It is crucifixion for the salvation of mankind.

Sufi Inayatkhan has said, "Blessed are those whose lips are sealed, for through them shall be spoken the words of life."

His scheme for a Universal Spiritual Centre shortly to be inaugurated in the Mysore State, is nothing but an enlarged edition of the Muslim *khanqas*, Christian monasteries and Hindu *maths* all rolled into one. This is in keeping with his universal outlook as regards inviting all and sundry to drink at the fountain-head of his own spirituality which according to him is going to deluge the whole world in the near future.

The fact is, the present age from the Spiritual viewpoint is the Qalandari Age characterised by irreligiousness. It is common knowledge that all the religions at the present time are experiencing a wave of irreligiosity and the present Spiritual Masters according to the law of causation are the natural outcome of the prevalent atmosphere. The spiritual economy also is governed by the principle of supply being in accordance with the demand. It is thus evident, the world would miss the spiritual Millennium, if it were to look for it through sectarian glasses. Hazrat Meher Baba, the Perfect Qalander, on all counts, is the spiritual index of the time and if looked at dispassionately is assuredly what the world needs at the moment, the common denominator, who can be approached and claimed by all, without loss of prestige—cultural and religious. The avowed spiritual mission in life of Hazrat Meher Baba, the Perfect Sufi, can best be described in his own words:

"I have come not to teach but to awaken."

LIGHT FROM THE EAST UPON THE WESTERN GOSPELS

By WILL BACKETT (London)

SHRI MEHER BABA'S explanations of some of the obscure passages in the Gospels, have thrown new light upon the life of Jesus, whom He describes as the particular *Avatar* of Nazareth. "Christ" is the "Son of God" state, and thus these two names indicate His unique office and identity with God.

It is the life of a Master that quickens the understanding of those who share it with him, and some of Shri Meher Baba's disciples in the West have had their early faith in Jesus revived and intensified by contact with him. There are also many instances which the disciples have witnessed, which illumine the story of Jesus, so familiar since childhood, and his power in reaching the heart of his audience and knowledge of their lives, enhance what we know of the founder of the Western religion.

Shri Meher Baba has indicated the scope of his own work, in his world message of 1933, and diagnosed the ills of the world. He said in the first portion: "Self-interest caused by low selfish desire, is the root cause of contemporary world chaos and individual misery. My manifestation will embrace the religious, economic, social and political aspects of life. It will spiritualize all human activities in art, science, music, stage and cinema."

Both John Baptist and Jesus, called the people to repentance, and to-day a change of heart is as essential. Baba has shown how a Master effects this, inwardly, by the removal of *sanskaras* that prevent the mind from reflecting the true nature of man. The words of Jesus to the sick of the palsy, forgiving the man's sins, accomplished his spiritual healing, this Baba says is a Master's real work in the removal of *sanskaras*. Jesus also restored health of body, as a testimony to the Sadducees who doubted his status to forgive sins, and as a reward to the sick

man and his friends for their faith in removing the house roof to come into the Master's presence. Baba has explained on other occasions that, a Master combines his work of healing outwardly, as in this case with inner work for whole types of humanity, similarly affected, and for that also faith and devotion are important.

This work of the Divine Love, described in the Gospels, touched every aspect of the people's lives in Palestine, and Baba, in this later age of mental activity and material progress, uses modern methods in his own way—some times unexpected. Jesus disturbed the outlook of his audiences and their cherished prejudices.

The West has not maintained the unbroken tradition of the Masters of Perfection, and of the successive appearances of the *Avatar*, carrying out His eternal work. In the person of Jesus, the Church preserved the triune aspect of deity, the Source, the Divine Son, and His Eternal Spirit, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost; in the *Avatar*, these are seen to be One. The Church affirms His union with the Father and His Grace manifests eternally. Jesus, speaking of Himself, declared: "Before Abraham was, I am!" Moses said: "I Am hath sent me." In those early Jewish records preserved in our Western Bible, may be found references to the lives of the *Avatar* in the past, and some of the names and places where He manifested.

The *Avatar's* work for the Race, includes His help for individual aspirants along the Path. Jesus pointed the rich young man who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, first to the Commandments which the young man said he had kept from his youth up; then pouring out the Divine Love, He showed him the way to become perfect by selling all and following Him. Baba has emphasised that it is impossible for the pilgrim on the spiritual path to attain the *Infinite consciousness*, which is the Christ, the "Son of God" state, without the help of a Perfect Master, and in the case of the rich young man, Jesus required external renunciation and complete surrender. On other occasions, He spoke of Himself as "The Way, the Truth and the Life," and also of the "Mansions" in the Father's house, terms connected with the Path familiar to mystics of all faiths.

Western children are very familiar with the story of

Jesus in the temple at the age of 12, expounding the Law to the learned Doctors, much to His parents' astonishment. Later in His life, the people attending the synagogue wondered at His gracious words, and asked each other "Whence hath this man letters, having never learned?" Baba has said that the Master's knowledge is innate, and not acquired; thus Jesus "spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes". One of the earliest critics of Jesus objected to His treatment of the Pharisees and other opponents as evidence against His own teaching of Love, seeing that in the exposure of their methods and character, there is no trace of Love in His words. There could be no greater condemnation than the words of Jesus so often repeated: "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites".

Abuse by a Master is one of His greatest blessings to others, for by so doing He is attracting the deepest *sanskaras* from him whom He reviles, to Himself for their removal. Those present with Baba on 27th February 1929 at Dongergan near Ahmednagar, will remember their surprise when Baba suddenly commenced to abuse five of His absent disciples, for no apparent reason. Again and again He said: "Do they mean to die?" Unknown to the others, those disciples were in grave physical peril; in a moment of foolhardy bravado, they had climbed a hill 1,000 feet high by its most dangerous approach, and were then attempting its descent by the same route, which is much more dangerous than the ascent. After a short distance, they realized they could neither turn back, nor remain still, and in this time of extreme peril, they called on Baba for help, as never before, while continuing the descent, eventually arriving without the slightest harm. It was only on their return, that those who had been with the Master, learned of their peril and realized why Baba had so acted, removing the dangerous *sanskaras* and thus protecting them.

Baba has also explained the significance of the use of violence by a Master, in removing the deep-seated *sanskaras* which need that special form of energy to be manifested outwardly by Him. The drastic cleansing of the temple of its money-changers and merchants by Jesus, with the whips of small cords, is thus explained: Perhaps it extended beyond those who were there in person to the whole

history of the place, around which clustered the Jewish Mosaic tradition and its connection with ancient Egypt; the Master's anger must not be confused with the ordinary emotions of people whose feelings are out of control and subject to disturbances in their minds, and Jesus' words to Peter, "Get thee behind Me Satan," have this inner aspect.

Shri Meher Baba has also been known to use violence. When He first told the Brahmin boys of His school to sit with the untouchable boys, they did not hesitate, but some of His adult Brahmin followers who were present, could not restrain their emotion, and one in particular was deeply moved. Baba, with fire in His eyes, reproved them sternly, and giving His body a slight blow, added: "I have put on this body with a view to destroying the whole fabric of the caste system, and destroy it I will, despite the opposition of the bigoted Brahmins. The caste system is as absurd as it is tyrannous. It has nothing to do with religion in the true sense of the word."

Every word and act of the Master has its significance, and in striking His own body, it may perhaps be seen that through its sufferings, the emancipation of the people will be secured.

Baba has explained that a Master's visits to certain centres, have significance in His inner work. Jesus by His presence in the temple, would link His own work with those who preceded Him, something far more potent than the national aspirations that centre round Solomon's Temple. Its mystic and occult symbols picture the stages of man's search for Truth, which the Master *lives* before humanity and then the symbol, useful in its own perspective, ceases to be of value. The Master is in each heart, *One* with the Infinite Life in all, and He brings that experience in the degree best suited to the capacity of each.

Baba has explained that a Master transmits by His spoken word, the greatest spiritual power. Thus the words of Jesus in the temple, when He cleared away the traders and money changers, have deeper significance than they imply outwardly. In identifying Himself with the Father when saying: "My House shall be called of all nations the House of prayer", He utilized the intense aspirations of the Jews for long generations, as a power-house of spiritual

energy released by His Divine Love, to serve as a focus for all humanity to realize the One God and Father of All. It is true, the temple was destroyed by the Romans soon after, but the real Temple of the Spirit, in which God may be experienced completely, is the human form, as Baba has explained in connection with the evolution of form from the stone to its highest manifestation in man.

Jesus was forever pointing the people to the Kingdom of Heaven within the heart, the abode of the spirit that the temple of Solomon symbolises. The new wine of the spirit that He brings cannot be confined in outworn creeds and rituals and ideas which have had their day.

It must have been a time when spirituality was at a very low ebb, for a ruler of the Jews to be as ignorant as Nicodemus was, of the Spiritual re-birth which Jesus explained to Him through the simile of the wind of which none could tell its source or see its course. With the outcast too, He was as patient; seated with the woman at Samaria at the well, athirst and weary from His journey, He listened to her own limited ideas of religion, which she had learned since childhood, forgetting His own physical need for the water while giving her of the water of Life, and at last revealing to her that He was the Messiah of her own hopes. No wonder that she could be the vehicle of His grace for her townsfolk accepted Him from her witness. To both her and the returning disciples, amazed at seeing them together, He pointed the way from their national prejudices, to the brotherhood of the human race in love of God and man.

JESUS AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE

The economic and social aspect of life in Palestine was very closely interwoven and the needs of the people, both material and spiritual, were ever His concern. Baba has explained to us that when He distributes food and clothing to the poor, He is at the same time dealing interiorly with the economic question of the lives of those who need access to the fruits of nature which are essential to material well-being. This same aspect of Jesus' work throws a flood of light upon His inner activities for future generations, and mankind. We observe the course of evolution in ideas, scientific

discoveries and changes in the institutions of the people, but are in complete ignorance of the work of the Master in the inner planes wherein are sown the seeds of such developments during His life on earth. Jesus was found also at the feasts to which the crowds flocked, at a village wedding, and as guest of the Pharisee as well as at Bethany at the house of Mary and Martha, and from His parables and other utterances it is clear that He had a practical knowledge of the people's occupations.

JESUS AND POLITICS

The political organization in the life of the nation under the Romans involved the payment of tribute, through which the opponents of the Master endeavoured to trap Him by the question: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or no?" One may perhaps detect a subtle humour in Jesus' method of dealing with this in His request to see the tribute money, which they brought and His own question to them: "Whose is this image and superscription?" Their answer: "Cæsar's", enabled His final words to carry its full force: "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's". It must also be remembered that such simple actions as bringing the piece of money, and concentrating on the Master's question and awaiting His answers and further questions give opportunities for the Master's internal work. The Master will take infinite pains to deal with an apparently simple situation, in order to drive home a special lesson, outwardly, as well as use the occasion for His inner work.

Early in His ministry, Jesus contacted the Roman Authorities in the person of the Centurion, whose faith exceeded all He had found in Israel, and it was another Centurion who witnessed to His divine nature, when on the Cross. Before the Roman Governor, Pilate, Jesus also appeared, and as His time was come, before which His enemies had been powerless, He was handed over to the priests to judge; although Pilate declared Him guiltless, as he would have been compromised had he refused the plea of the priests, and in spite of his wife's dream and message "that he should have nothing to do with that just man," he washed his hands of all responsibility in the matter.

Baba has pointed out that instead of invoking the aid of His superhuman powers, Jesus met the indignities heaped upon Him and a cruel death, with Love; that Love has survived the Empire of that day and effected the *upliftment of humanity* that the unifying but external sway of the Roman was a preparation for.

So little is known of the preparatory work of Jesus before His manifestation, that it is hardly possible to compare it with Shri Meher Baba's work, which we are to-day witnessing. He also contacts the various aspects of the world's activities, economic, social and religious, although His work is not directly connected with them. In His travels, His presence often coincides with important public events, quite independently of His outer plans, and the proximity of a Perfect Master and His inner work, which never ceases, affects the spiritual outcome of happenings on the material plane, as the Life of Jesus undoubtedly did. Baba's visits to the throbbing centres of material life in the capitals of Europe, in New York, and His interest in the film world with visits to Hollywood, as well as centres of spirituality in the West and East, which would be events of ordinary nature for other people, are vehicles for His own special work, which require His physical presence to be effective. The concluding portion of His world message, already quoted from, shows the ultimate issue, and is a reminder of the culmination in the work of Jesus, to which He continually referred His own disciples and those who opposed Him. Baba says: "In the near future, a great *universal divine drama* will be enacted, the theme of which will be pure love, selfless service. I will play the leading role in this world-awakening drama."

The physical crucifixion of the Master, is an aspect of His continuous spiritual agony, for through His *Universal Consciousness*, He is experiencing the travail of the world in its separation from the Divine Love, while having the bliss of Union with the Divine, undisturbed—both infinite suffering and infinite joy. The agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, which His physical body showed so unmistakably, is an instance of the Master's Love transmuting the *sanskaras* of the world. It must be obvious, that the Master is using His spiritual powers for His work for

humanity, although His outer Life is also so inspiring and transcendent.

The Gospel story of the temptation of Jesus, and the account of His transfiguration on the Mount, indicate aspects of His work on the inner planes. The mystical aspect of the "wilderness" where the temptation occurred, is a state of inner consciousness, where egotism and self-aggrandisement are paramount. The devil is represented as tempting the Master to make bread out of stones which is a mistake of power on the subtle plane, that can be acquired without *spiritual* development. He also showed the Master, "all the kingdoms of the world is a moment of time", over which power can be exercised by those who have entered the consciousness of the mental "world" by the direct exercise of "mind" faculties independent of the physical and subtle senses, and to function thus is not necessarily a sign of spiritual development. In Baba's serial on the successive planes of consciousness which the pilgrim passes from the mundane to the superconscious which is the goal, He places the faculty of seeing throughout space at one and the same moment, as an attribute of the fifth plane of *cosmic consciousness*, which is the first of the mental planes. Thus the temptation to which Jesus submitted, is in the form of a parable of the perils of spiritual pride, which are a terrible pitfall to those in whom egotism is allowed to sway the unfolding vistas of the heaven "worlds" in the inner spheres, which seeks not only material power, but domination over the emotional and mind natures without the intervention of physical means. It was part of the work of the Master to deal with this sphere of the lower consciousness, and so He submitted Himself to its conditions, as He did afterwards on the physical plane to the same forces in material manifestation. Thus He accomplished His work on the inner spheres first and then completed it on the physical. Baba has said that perfect work is only accomplished when it is carried through on all planes with complete consciousness of the whole, and to the Master the whole, is God, to whom all else is a passing and ever changing illusion.

Mystics also understand the Mount of transfiguration as a high state of consciousness, in which the Master is fully conscious, whereas Peter, James and John were dazed,

and finally swooned. Their meeting with Moses and Elias linked the new and the old dispensations, on the inner planes, whereby the Master created an inner harmony in that sphere, and had access to those centres of energy which the ancient Jewish religious worship undoubtedly embodied. Its relationship with Egypt, is but one indication of its connection with earlier aspects of humanity's approach to the Divine.

It is possible that the apparent contradiction in the words of the Christ, after the Last Supper and before His Crucifixion, and while He was on the Cross, when on each occasion He said, "my work is finished", is explained by the fact that when Judas went out to take his final step to betray, the Master had fully accomplished His work on the inner planes, whereas on the Cross, He finished His outer work.

Despite the treatment of the Master by the Jews, there was a widespread longing for their Messiah in the minds and hearts of all, and this atmosphere of expectancy pervades the whole world to-day. Of India, it was written over 20 years ago:—

"All the thousands of peasants' huts that I visited, were not huts, but Shrines of God.

Every home had its worship and even-song.

Each man believed beyond argument, that His soul was immortal.

And one and all held that the New Avatar of the Kingdom of Righteousness was impending."

Baba has explained that the Master gathers around Him a circle of close disciples, through whom He works for others as well as for their own spiritual advancement, and that their training by Himself is very important. During the early stages, Jesus encouraged them by the miracle of the miraculous draft of fishes. The disciples had toiled all night without success, and Jesus came to them and commanded them to let their nets down on the other side of their boat, and they were so laden that another boat was needed to deal with the haul. The inner work of the Master, proceeding simultaneously, affected Peter and he became very conscious of his own shortcomings and unworthy to be in His Presence. There is an aspect of humour

in the situation, as one would expect Peter to have withdrawn, but he besought the Master to leave Him, so confused was he, but that also was eloquent of his distress.

When Baba was passing through London on an early visit, being swiftly driven in a car, He suddenly gazed up at a tall building, leaning forward to do so, and His companions asked what He was looking at so intently. He merely continued looking, when one of them remembered, and said, "We used to live up their," an event so unimportant to them as to be hardly worth mentioning, for they did not know Him then. "That is why I was looking," He replied, thus showing that He was familiar with even minor happenings in their lives, and so awakening in them the realization of His inner connection with them, at the very outset of their meeting Him. Limitations of time and space do not affect the Master; once when in Persia, Baba appeared in Bombay and saved the life of a dying child; on His recent journey to Jubbulpore, He was recognized by a well-known holy man, who had seen Him when on pilgrimage to Hardwar, crossing a bridge, although Baba was thousands of miles away physically. He explained to His disciples, who were present, that though He was with them then, He was also in many other places at the same time.

Vivekananda has explained how a Master works through happenings, and this may be seen in the sequence of events in the Gospel story, and also by those who are closely associated with Baba. After spending an hour with Him at the house of some Indian followers in London, we took a short journey with Him on the Underground Railway costing a penny fare, but that everyday occurrence became a means of receiving a powerful demonstration of a vital principle in discipleship, all the more vivid and lasting because connected with an actual event. This intimate and infinite wisdom of a Master pervades all His words and actions and in St. John's gospel, Chapters 13-17 is disclosed the inner relationship between the close circle of disciples and Jesus. In those tense days at the end of His life with them, their final test for which He had been preparing them, when all seemed lost, they could remember how close they were to Him even in those far distant early days when they first heard His voice and left all to follow Him. The

excited crowds, drawn by His miracles and Love, which they remembered as if yesterday, and then the time apart in the Mount with Him, when they heard of the inner Kingdom within the heart, wherein justice reigns and love arises to comfort the mourner and satisfy those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, ruled by the poor in spirit, and bringing happiness out of suffering borne of Him. All their strivings for pre-eminence in His Kingdom had gone, and they remembered the little child through whom He showed them the essential quality of humility in discipleship. How difficult had been that lesson amidst the crowds that flocked to Him again and again, and the miracle of the healing of the absent servant of the Centurion, the leper, and Peter's wife's mother, coming together, had made them feel that the day of outer triumph was surely come.

During one of Baba's visits to Persia, He healed the absent son of a distressed hotel servant, found by one of His followers and brought to Him for help. Baba listened to the man's story of the boy at death's door, and telling him not to worry, handed him a cardamom to give to him, saying, "Give this to your son and make him eat it and he will be alright". The father dashed home, his joy unbounded, and the boy, on taking the cardamom, "seemed snatched from the jaws of death" the narrator continues, and much to the surprise of his relatives, was quite recovered and got up from his bed. The crowds that came to Baba after this, and other events at the houses to which He was invited, are reminders of the scenes witnessed by the disciples in Palestine, though for Baba's own disciples, the journey was full of difficulties and tests of endurance.

An unexpected test of faith came to those who were fishermen and had faced the sudden tempests on the Sea of Galilee all their lives. Jesus was asleep in the boat with them, and they awoke Him in terror at the storm, which He rebuked and brought calm to them and the elements, also rebuking their lack of faith, but with no word for disturbing His rest.

It may be that the disciples rendered more sensitive by being with Him, were actually feeling the effect of His work on the inner planes, for Baba has explained that the Master's work does not cease when He lays aside His physical body.

The effect of this on their minds and in Nature without, and His subsequent calming of both, would be the means of His manifesting on the outer planes what He was accomplishing on the inner, first, for the benefit of humanity, thus completing the work through their presence with Him in the boat.

After landing, they witnessed His power over mental storm, in the healing of two maniacs, who terrorised the countryside. These recognized the Master and testified to His Divine Nature before leaving those whom they obsessed, at His word. Perhaps the people in that district needed some special awakening, but they were to have a shock, when they saw the distant herd of swine dashing to its death, and though they were delivered from the fear of the maniacs, who were now harmless, they besought Jesus to leave them. He had allowed the obsessing influences to enter the swine, with which they must have had some affinity, and thus the Master used their *karma* to emphasise some aspects of His work that is not disclosed.

Baba's methods and work for the God-mad are significant for themselves as well as the world which needs to regain its poise and harmony through the powers available for humanity, but so little appreciated in their use. In this great work, His *mandali* have been tested, seeking out and bringing them to Him under baffling conditions and attending to their needs. In England too, we have seen His work for others mentally afflicted, brought into touch with Him by disciples, though not always to His physical presence.

The succession of events in the lives of the disciples of Jesus, including His healing the man with the palsy, and the discomfiture of the scribes who doubted the status of the Master to forgive his sins, was followed by their greatest test up to that time, when He sent them away to strange cities, to tell others His message. Giving them detailed instructions for the journey He reminded them that they would be as lambs amongst wolves, but He would be ever with them. They had already given up all, for Him, and now they were to be denied His physical presence. Traveling thus, with no thought for the morrow, they realised His presence in all hearts, so that every home they entered became their own, with the Master enshrined, and they thus

received more than the hundredfold reward He had promised those who gave up their homes and kindred for His sake, and the gospels! This was the foretaste of realizing the Kingdom of Heaven, uninterruptedly, which He reminded them on their return, was a more valuable possession spirituality, than the power over the devils they had cast out through His Grace.

Their return to His side with the beloved accustomed daily contact, was no sooner accomplished, than there came the terrible news of John Baptist's death in prison, to remind them of their Master's impending sufferings and the persecution of His followers. But Jesus went on with His work, undisturbed, for "The Master is not concerned with death, as He knows that men do not cease to exist when they die".* With His disciples and the multitude that followed Him, He went into the desert and all were hungry. Thinking, perhaps of His rest, they wanted Him to have the people sent to the villages to buy their food, but Jesus countered their plan by saying, "Give ye them to eat," knowing full well they had hardly enough for themselves. It was no small task to arrange the people in 100 companies of 50, expecting a good meal, when all were so tired and there was nothing there for them. But the Master blessed what they had, and it was sufficient for all needs, physical and spiritual, as they distributed His gifts to the expectant crowds.

Jesus Himself dispersed them to their homes, tenderly taking leave of His guests as the little families or lonely men and women departed, for He had sent the disciples away, their work being done. Many may have turned to gaze at His lonely figure against the night sky, filled with the awe and wonder that the Master's loving service inspires, until He became lost to view, and they were left with the memory of that never to be forgotten time.

From the mountain heights, the Master saw the peril of His disciples on the distant lake in the storm, and came to their aid, walking on the waters, ever at their side to meet their needs. His own life in them, and they in Him.

There are those in England and other parts of Europe

* November 1938 issue of the *Journal*, Meher Baba's article on "Avatar".

and the West, who have experienced Baba's presence and His power to calm their storm tossed hearts, as vividly as did those early followers of Jesus. Some of His Indian disciples were also faced with the problem of food for guests they had not anticipated, who had arrived in such large numbers that their supplies could not cope with, and they went to Baba in consternation, but He just told them to continue their preparations and not to worry, and all would be well. And so it was; everyone ate heartily and was satisfied, and those who before had been so concerned, saw that Baba had met their need in His own way.

Such events bring back the outstanding events in the life of Jesus with an intensity that His disciples experienced at the time. An insuperable difficulty, the sudden act of faith in carrying out the Master's word, and the realization of His Grace within and without, are events without a parallel.

Baba's birthday celebrations at Nasik in 1937, amidst the crowds who gathered in thousands to receive His Grace and gifts of food or *prasad*, and passed before Him all day while He took the dust from their feet to His own forehead, were another instance to remind those present in the East for the first time, of the life of Jesus. In the evening, after the fatigue and strain of dealing with such a mass of people, in whom the Master sees His Self as well as their own limited ego. His white clad figure could be seen under the Indian night sky, passing silently down the garden, ever ready to bless the waiting soul by His side, as He had already done for the multitude. It was a superhuman work and Baba had been fasting for weeks beforehand. While taking the dust from their feet He took also their *sanskaras* as the servant of all, as well as Master of all.

Jesus took the role of servant, when washing His disciples' feet, and at the baptism, the disciple John recognized that the position should have been reversed, but performed his part at the Master's word, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness".

Ever mindful of the humblest, Jesus saw the poor widow, whose gift of her all, a single mite, would have been unnoticed but for Him amidst the grand ostentatious offerings of the rich; and there is the parallel of Baba with a poor

widow in London, one of 70 persons whom we brought to Him at our office during a short afternoon. As she entered the room wonderingly, for she had only just heard of Him, Baba wrote on His board, "What a wonderful soul", and well we who knew her long life of selfless service, and how during the crisis in the life of her mistress, she had given all of her life's savings, could have endorsed His words. She just gazed at His face, silently, and left with His blessing, but three years after, He sent her this message from India: "Think of Me more. Cheer others. I know how she feels and will help her always onwards." Often one of Baba's people would go to her lonely tenement dwelling in the poorest part of London, and speak of that visit, and her awakening through the Master was the crown of a life of pious unwavering selflessness.

Another instance in which Baba's work recalls the effect of Jesus upon the social outcast brought to Him whose love transformed her life, whereas the Law would enforce stoning for her but not her partner in misfortune, occurred in the North of India, during a great religious festival. Two women, whose manner of living was well known, seeing the Master, were drawn to follow Him, and turning to them He invited them to enter the house where He was staying. Weeping, they soon declared they could never again return to their old life, and with His Grace, they went out again into the world to face life afresh. Baba has said, "When one is meant for spiritual advancement, one has either love or lust to the extreme. This lust must be converted into love. What is lust but a craving for the physical senses, and love is the craving of the soul."

Seeing that the perils on the Path are so insidious, especially as the pilgrim advances through the inner planes which the temptation of Jesus deals with, the Masters always emphasise the importance of obedience to their instructions during the training of those whom they accept for advancement in spirituality. In that perspective, Baba has said that obedience is of more importance than devotion—a hard proposition for the Western or modern mind that has had to battle for freedom from superstition and outworn creeds. Jesus said, "Not everyone that sayeth unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom, but He that doeth the Will of My

Father” Martha, the sister of Lazarus, questioned the Master’s command to roll away the stone from her brother’s grave, drawing from Him the rebuke that He had she should see the glory of God, if she would believe. Her earnest affirmation which the evangelist records, preceded their arrival at the sepulchre, when she had acclaimed Jesus as the Christ, perfectly sincere as it was, at the time, needed the Master’s Grace to transform her mental attitude into unshakable loyalty and obedience, which she anticipated, after the body of her brother had been in the grave for three days.

There are indications in the Gospel story of some of the surprises the Spiritual Master has in store for those who would join in His company. Jesus said to His disciples: “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth but I go that I may awake him out of sleep”, immediately afterwards He added as they did not understand “Lazarus is dead”, a puzzling combination which the evangelist endeavours to explain. Sometimes He asked them questions, though He knew that in their hearts and minds, in a way that must remind readers of the Jataka tales of Buddha of how the Enlightened One, perceiving that He could use the discussion of His disciples for their instruction, would suddenly enter their room, and ask what they were talking about. Baba has explained that while a Master is asking the question, He is dealing with the latent *sanskaras* or tendencies in their minds through His subtle working, which might otherwise retard progress.

Some critics have objected to alterations in a Master’s plans, as a sign of indecision or weakness, but Baba has explained that His work on the physical plane serves as a scaffolding to a building, for the Spiritual Master’s work is on the inner planes, and when completed there, the outer “scaffold” is removed as unnecessary. He may administer some shock to awaken the mind of one whose rigid mentality is an obstacle to further progress. Interpolated in the Gospels are passages which some critics have recognised by comparing our version with the earliest MSS. Jesus had sent His disciples to the feast at Jerusalem and said, “I go not up to the feast” but afterwards He went up another way. This is the earliest version from which contemporary critics argued against Him. In our present text the word “now” appears after “not”, which removes the objection raised by

those opponents. Even if their version were correct and Jesus had acted as indicated, it was for His own purposes; He was expected by the people and some were on the alert to trap Him again. Baba explains the way a Sadguru works in the world, by the simile of a child, reaching out for a sweetmeat, and becoming wedged in the aperture where it was concealed. The Sadguru, who is free and unconditioned, uses a sweetmeat (Maya) also, but in such a way as to attract the child's attention to the dainty morsel so as to continue his struggles, through which He effects the child's release.

Jesus used the Pharisees' condemnation of the woman taken in adultery, to confute them. "Let him who is without sin amongst you, cast the first stone." After they had gone out one by one, it was through her own reply to His next question that she won her acquittal:

"Where are now thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" And she said:

"No man Lord", words uttered from a heart that already was responding to the outpouring of the Divine Love that feeds the soul of man. In His final words, the Master gave her the seal of forgiveness:

"Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

In this case Jesus had paused, to write something on the ground in the dust. Sometimes He used some outer material expression for His inner spiritual work, as in the case of the man born blind, when He made clay with His spittle, for the eyes. It is interesting in that instance of healing, to observe how the mental perception of the man, when healed, was awakened, and he was able to tackle the learned upholders of religion, and refute them from their own arguments against the Master, clearly through the inspiration of His power. When they had cast him out of the synagogue, Jesus found him again and revealed His own divine nature to him, so that the man's spiritual healing was attained, and he believed in the Master.

Of those who oppose or speak ill of Him, Baba said: "They should not be hated. As I oft say, they too are unconsciously serving my cause. Just as you (His disciples standing by) are keeping connection with Me, so they too oft think of Me" The hypocrisy of the Pharisees, whose sin, called

for the severest rebukes of Jesus, which He said consisted not in being blind, but while blind, saying "I see". On the Cross, when they had in ignorance of the full import of what they had done in providing the opposition essential to the deepest manifestation of Divine Love, Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Jesus had commanded all to love their enemies, and the essence of His life, and His teaching to His disciples, the masses and the rulers, is the same, varied according to their capacity in the variety of His ways of the presentation of the same fact.

To an enquirer in Zurich, Baba said, "Jesus taught what religion is.... to find God within.... through Love, and that is the message of the Master to this age and the meaning of His Life."

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE TEACHINGS OF LORD BUDDHA AND MEHER BABA

By Dr. C. D. DESHMUKH, M.A., Ph.D.

IT is one of the most tragic ironies of history that Buddhism should have been all but extirpated from the land where it first came into existence. It is needless for us to go into the various causes of the decay of Buddhism in India. But we may be sure that the causes of the decay of Buddhism were mostly connected with the vast and complicated superstructure of Buddhistic society and the network of beliefs which came to be built up during the centuries that followed the original Teachings of Lord Buddha. *Every religion tends to become corrupt and gets mixed up with a heap of irrelevant and inessential details* as time rolls on until at last the followers lose their grip upon the original vision of its founder.

The truth contained in the original Teachings of Lord Buddha is eternal and therefore incapable of being shaken by the storms which the course of time brings in its train. It will be my endeavour to *disentangle the truth in Buddhism from the various inessentials* with which it got mixed up during the centuries that followed, and to draw *parallels* between the Teaching of Lord Buddha and the new dispensation of the Truth which we are having through the Teaching of Shri Meher Baba.

It is not possible for us to appreciate the full significance of the Teachings of Lord Buddha except in the light of the wonderful life which he led. Those critics of Buddhism, who describe it as the philosophy of those who have failed in this life will do well to remember that Lord Buddha came from a royal family and was in his youth *surrounded by every pleasure which this world can give*. He had around him all the power and prestige, wealth and fame, comforts and luxuries, which a prince could command; and he was very happily married to Yashodhara

who was one of the finest flowers of humanity. In his palace he was all the time surrounded by music and dance. But one day when he was going to his pleasure garden, in his chariot, for the first time in his life, he came into contact with the sufferings of this life. He saw an old man crippled with age. He was on the way to death and the sight of this person was enough to set him thinking about the *sufferings* of life. Again on another occasion, he saw a sick man who was coursing his way to death with slow but sure steps. And on the third occasion he actually saw a dead body, which was being carried for funeral on a bier. These sights of sufferings impressed upon him very strongly two stern *truths* about life: (1) *Sarvam kshanikam*—everything is transitory, and (2) *sarvam dukkham*—everywhere there is suffering. He therefore set his mind to the discovery of the *cause of suffering* and to the search after the *real meaning of life*. It became now impossible for him to lull his mind into stupor by drowning it in the delights of his palace and one day (in his 29th year) he quietly renounced his abode of pleasure at midnight in order to go out in the world in search of understanding.

After leaving his home he made many experiments with life in order to have the final solution of the problems of life. He tried all the existing systems, not excluding extreme asceticism. But he found all these methods futile. Then he turned back upon his own inner resources and spent years in the earnest search for the Truth. Before attaining understanding he had to conquer all the *temptations of Mara* (who symbolises the forces of darkness) who opposed him with his three sons (1) Confusion, (2) Gaiety and (3) Pride and his three daughters (1) Lust, (2) Delight and (3) Thirst. But he resolutely freed his mind from the influence of *Mara* and ultimately attained, in his highest state of meditation, *Enlightenment*.

Enlightenment attained, he came back to the world and began to turn the wheel of *Dharma* (Law). And the years of his *ministry* are one of the most marvellous periods, which the world's history has seen. It is said of Napoleon that wherever he went crowns and thrones came crashing down. The same was the case with Lord Buddha.

Wherever he went to announce his Noble Teaching, not only the vast multitude of common people but even kings and princes, as well as, the most learned people came to his feet in order to receive the dispensation of the Truth.

Before we can fully appreciate the significance of the Teachings of Lord Buddha it is necessary for us to understand the *atmosphere* which was prevalent in his time. The intellectual atmosphere of his time, as in our own, was full of barren Metaphysical quibbles. The Great Pandits of his day were pre-occupied with fruitless wranglings and hair-splitting debates about things that did not matter, for that was the legacy which corrupt Brahmanism had left for his age. The Pandits of his day were *more concerned with the interpretation of the sacred scriptures than with the search after the Truth*. For them the most vital question was not life but the interpretation of the *Shastras*. It was therefore no wonder that a multitude of Schools of Philosophy came into existence in order to afford for these Pandits opportunities to display their extensive learning and intellectual skill. These schools always identified themselves with a set of unrelated and unimportant beliefs and dogmas. And they tried to secure following not so much by any appeal to their intrinsic claims for our acceptance, as by drawing upon strings of quotations from the *Shastras*. And as a result of the conflict of the diverse traditional systems of philosophy the spirit of general scepticism was in the air.

As in our own time, the social atmosphere which was prevalent at the time of Lord Buddha was also full of confusion. The Hindu society was, as it is to-day, divided into numberless castes and creeds. And religion was mostly a matter of observing certain prescribed ceremonials and performing superstitious rituals with the hope of gaining some reward in the life after death. One of the most wicked rituals was the practice of sacrificing animals in religious functions. And the mind of the age had been so much deadened by the weight of age-long traditions that people had become incapable of realising the appalling cruelty and stupidity involved in such religious practices.

It was in such an intellectual and social atmosphere that Lord Buddha made his appearance in the world, and he became a great and an unsurpassed reformer in both

fields. He vehemently *denounced the existing caste-system* and showed to the people how the distinctions based upon birth alone are not only ridiculous but pernicious. He equally vehemently *denounced distinctions based upon race* and the pride which was usually associated with it. When after his enlightenment he came back to the city of his father in the garb of a Monk, with a begging bowl in his hand, his father reminded him that he belonged to the Solar race in order to put him to shame. But his answer was that he refused to take any pride in his race or extraction because he now belonged to the race of the Buddhas. Nor did he recognise any superiority of one sex over the other. The traditional Hinduism did not recognise any salvation for women and as a rule, convention prevented them from reading the scriptures or taking to renunciation. The privileges of becoming a *Sanyasin* was reserved only for men. As against this unfair discrimination *Lord Buddha stood for the emancipation of women and threw his Order open to them.* He fully recognised their right to attain the highest spiritual value.

Like Lord Buddha, Shri Meher Baba is a great reformer who throws *an uncompromising challenge to the entire existing social order.* And on the whole, he takes a similar attitude with regard to the intellectual tendencies of our age. He is never tired of proclaiming the *futility of barren metaphysical discussions* divorced from life and experience. *He throws the whole weight of his magnetic personality against the tendency to separate Philosophy from life* and invites the attention of our age to the vital issues of life.

Lord Buddha's general attitude to barren Metaphysical problems may be illustrated by his attitude to the problems of (i) *the existence of God* and (ii) *the existence of the individual soul.* He is said to have refused to answer the question, 'Does God exist or not?' Even when he was repeatedly asked that question, he scrupulously maintained inviolable silence on that point, because for the Pandits of his age God was merely an idea to *play* with. They had encountered upon some descriptions of God in their extensive study and they had turned these descriptions into tools for carrying on their unending controversies. God was for

them not a living reality, but merely a possible hypothesis. And although they played with the idea they did not have any genuine desire for knowing him. It is true that the *Upanishads* had declared that God was unapproachable through the intellect alone. In spite of these declarations these Pandits wanted to prove or disprove the existence of God merely through intellectual debates. Whenever, therefore, Lord Buddha was invited to give his opinion about God he emphatically said that the belief or disbelief in the existence of God is of very little importance so long as the everyday life of man remains unchanged.

The mind of our age is similarly caught up in the *craving for intellectual gymnastics* from which it has to be emancipated before it can be persuaded to seek the Truth. Shri Meher Baba once asked one of his *Mandali* the question, "Where is God?" And when he said that "One should first form a conception of God and then reply", he gave the following discourse: "All these talks are cut and dry. Pandits babble it everywhere, for years, without finding any clue, till they die babbling. The orthodox section of all communities listen to these innumerable dissertations by religious students and scriptural scholars, and forms various pet beliefs about God and His existence somewhere in the skies or in the best things, and not in others, and clings to these erroneous ideas tenaciously without the least effort at enlightenment or to go beyond the four walls. They refuse even to talk or listen to the fact of having actual experience, and consider it blasphemy even to think of it. It is only these talks and philosophies that appeal to them, and they are quite satisfied with these. That is why I say it is all philosophy and of no use without experience. One must try not only to learn and know, but to feel and experience."¹

With regard to the existence of the individual soul Lord Buddha took a definite attitude. He emphatically declared that the soul as an entity does not exist. By common acceptance the term 'soul' had come to signify the Ego or the self-conscious individual entity. And he denied the existence of any such entity which would justify

¹ *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. I, No. 11, p. 64-65.

belief in a separate and isolated consciousness. For him, the Ego is only a convenient way of referring to a bundle of *memories* or *Sankharas* (*Sanskaras*). Shri Meher Baba also exhibits this true nature of the Ego when he, in one of his messages, says that it is "*Composed of fulfilled and unfulfilled desires.*" Egoism expresses itself in various self-centred cravings and the collection of these cravings is for the sake of convenience referred to as the ego. But the ego is not any permanent entity, because consciousness can be free from egoism or the idea of a separate "I". In short, according to him, the "I"-consciousness is born of ignorance and is completely annihilated with the attainment of understanding.

In so far as the very reality of the separate soul was denied by Lord Buddha the question about its continuation after death naturally became comparatively unimportant. He, therefore, strongly discouraged the craving for knowing something about the nature of the soul, its pre-existence or survival, as expressed in the following queries: "Have I verily been in bygone times or have I not been? What have I been in those bygone times? How have I been in bygone times? Shall I verily be in far-off days to come or shall I not be? What shall I be in those far-off days to come? Am I now or am I not? And if I am, what am I and in what way?" According to him, all such ponderings express *craving for existence* and no amount of such ponderings will be really helpful for attaining *Nibbana* which is the highest fulfilment of life. It is true that he proclaimed the doctrine of Re-incarnation; but he denounced uncompromisingly all craving for continued existence as a separate self. And above everything, he *discouraged idle speculation and invited transformation of practical life.*

Like Lord Buddha, Shri Meher Baba ignores purely Metaphysical problems and *emphasises the need for seeking the Truth, not through arm-chair philosophies or unending intellectual debates, but through practical life.* And this intensely practical search for the Truth is the dominant note of the teaching of Shri Meher Baba.

The essence of Lord Buddha's Teaching is that in order to remove suffering from life we must eradicate the cause

of suffering. And the universal cause of suffering, he declares, in *Jammi Tanha*, i.e., wretched craving. And this truth he declares on the sole authority of Reason. It does not derive its validity from any superstitious or unintelligible quarters. Lord Buddha is a thorough-going *Rationalist*. In fact he was accused by his enemies as being nothing more than a Rationalist. Once Sariputta told the Holy One that Sunakkhatta, the Licchavi prince was, out of desire to defame him, proclaiming to all that his Teaching was not based on any superior insight, "the pith of it all being that if only a man thinks and ponders enough, he will arrive at the ending of suffering." To this charge, the answer of the Enlightened One was, "Sariputta, a commendation of the Accomplished One it is, when any one proclaims that 'the pith of the doctrine preached by ascetic Gotama is this, that if only a man will think and ponder sufficiently, he will be led to the final ending of suffering.'" We thus see that he was a thorough-going Rationalist and did not want to be anything else.

Shri Meher Baba also repeatedly points out that craving is necessarily the cause of suffering. And this conclusion is arrived at by a searching psychological analysis of the experience of suffering. He says, "It is your right to be happy and yet you create your own unhappiness by wanting things. Wanting is the source of perpetual restlessness. If you do not get the thing you wanted, you are disappointed. And if you get it, you want more and more of it and become unhappy. Say 'I do not want anything', and be happy."²

With the arising of craving in the human mind there arises in it a restlessness, a sense of emptiness, a *void*; and this in itself is a state of suffering. And as a consequence of the arising of craving there also arise *fear*, *anxiety*, *worry*, etc., which complicate and intensify the experience of suffering. Further, after the arising of craving in consciousness it can only end in one of the following two ways: (i) It might be frustrated, or (ii) it might be fulfilled. Of these two alternatives, frustrated craving always leads to the experience of suffering. And even the

² *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 4.

second alternative of fulfilled craving more often than not leads to suffering because the object of craving often proves in attainment much less than what it was in anticipation. In this case the experience of disappointment in attainment often leads to the arising of another craving for some other object and thus to a fresh chain of suffering.

Thus craving leads to another craving *ad infinitum* and sustains an unending chain of sufferings unless the chain is broken at some point by the deliberate eradication of craving. But most people refrain from taking this step dictated by reason because their mind is caught up in the delusion or wrong belief that craving *may* lead to pleasure. This delusion is sustained by the fact that occasionally the second alternative of fulfilled craving does lead to a certain amount of pleasure or a sense of relief and the mind ignores the fact that the pleasure or relief is only intermittent and transitory. It is momentary, unstable and insecure, and in itself it does not bring to a man any lasting or real satisfaction. But it brings about a pseudo-fulfilment of life and merely serves as *bait* for entertaining craving. And the mind is deluded by these baits because it is moved by craving. Thus craving leads to delusion and delusion in its turn leads to craving. And a man is caught up in this vicious circle with the result that there is no end to his suffering.

The clear perception that craving must in the long run and on the whole lead to suffering and nothing else, does not readily arise in deluded minds because when they have any experience of suffering they do not attempt to understand its real cause which is craving. But instead of facing the experience of suffering and discovering its root cause they seek an *escape* from that suffering by allowing their minds to be caught up in some other fresh craving. The deluded mind deceives itself by the unconscious belief that if *this* craving does not lead to happiness some *other* craving will. But a person who has begun to understand experience by submitting it to the critical application of reason frees himself from delusion and clearly sees that *craving is always the cause of suffering*. And having seen this truth about the cause of suffering he gradually emancipates himself from the chains of craving until he attains

final Peace. This, therefore, is the exhortation of Lord Buddha: "Lighten, O disciples, this heavy ship. When it is emptied, then will it bear you easily away. When ye are free from hates and lusts, then shall ye fare swiftly towards *Nibbana*."

There is no security in the world of changing forms as long as the mind is clinging to them. Only through the utter ending of craving can one attain Supreme Security. We have seen that according to both the Seers, the cause of the suffering of the individual is craving. And they both declare that we have to look to that very cause in order to account for social disharmony. It is because of craving that an individual or group of individuals try to dominate another individual or group of individuals. We thus have private and organised exploitation. Then again, obstructed or frustrated craving leads to hate and anger and these in their turn lead to conflicts, wars and mutual destruction. The ending of craving will, therefore, also put an end to social chaos.

The problem of securing social harmony is of course more urgent than the problem of ending craving in the minds of the individual. And it cannot be ignored until every individual attains *Nibbana*. Lord Buddha perceived this and therefore gave to his disciples an uncompromising commandment to renounce hatred under all circumstances. Lord Buddha was an uncompromising Pacifist and exposed the fallacy of the belief that hatred can be conquered through hatred. This erroneous belief constitutes the unconscious philosophy of those modern nations who believe in armaments. The principal tenet of this philosophy is as follows: "In order to avoid war, be prepared for war." But Lord Buddha clearly saw that preparation for war can never be preparation for peace. He declares:—

*"Na hi verena verani sammattidha kadachana
Averena cha sammatti esha dhammo sanatano."*

"Never can hatred be vanquished through hatred, but only through non-hatred; this is the eternal law." He does not allow any exception to his commandment for renouncing hate. He even goes further and requires that the disciples

shall instead, fill their minds with thoughts of positive love even towards those who do harm to them.

We thus find Lord Buddha giving the following injunction in the *Parable of the Saw*: "Ye disciples, even if highway robbers with a two-handed saw should take and dismember you limb by limb, whoso grew darkened in mind thereby would not be fulfilling my injunctions. Even then, disciples, thus must you school yourselves, 'Unsullied shall our minds remain, neither shall evil word escape our lips. Kind and compassionate ever, we will abide loving of heart nor harbour secret hate. And those robbers will we permeate with stream of loving thought unailing; and forth from them proceeding enfold and permeate the whole wide world with constant thoughts of loving kindness, ample, expanding, measureless, free from enmity, free from all ill-will.'"

Shri Meher Baba also has clearly brought out the tremendous importance of cultivating unailing and unrestricted love. He says: "The life of the spirit is an unceasing manifestation of Divine Love and spiritual understanding, and both these aspects of Divinity are unrestricted in their universality and unchallengeable in their inclusiveness. If there is lack of happiness or beauty or goodness in those by whom the Master is surrounded, these very things become for him the opportunity to shower his Divine Love on them, and to redeem them from the state of material or spiritual poverty. So his every-day responses to his worldly environment become expressions of dynamic and creative divinity which spreads itself and spiritualises everything in which he puts his mind."³

Lord Buddha has not given to us much *positive* and detailed information about *Nibbana*. Negatively it is emancipation from bondage and ignorance. But it is not, as it has sometimes been misunderstood to mean, extinction or a state of Nothingness. *Mere extinction or nothingness cannot be the final goal of life*. It is most definitely a positive value the realisation of which surpasses all other attainments. But as it must remain unintelligible to those who are still in bondage positive descriptions are impossible.

³ *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. I, No. 10, pp. 7-8.

It is indescribable but it can be realised by every one for himself. Moreover, Lord Buddha avoided detailed and positive description of *Nibbana* for the very reasons which made him remain silent on the question about the existence of God. A purely theoretical curiosity on the subject does not help anybody on the Path. And *what matters is getting on to the goal not merely whiling away our time in fruitless and unending guessings*. We shall know about it when we get there. The Path has been clearly laid down by Reason itself. In the meanwhile it is enough for us to have faith that there is a goal where we shall one day reach. "This principle of *Nibbana*, O King, with its fullness of peace and blessedness IS. And if thou askest: 'What are the signs of *Nibbana*?' I answer: 'Freedom from danger and distress; confidence, peace, quietude, happiness, blessedness, delicacy, purity, spiritual refreshment.'"

From the above account it becomes clear that *Nibbana*, as depicted by Lord Buddha, is not nothing although it is certainly not a *thing*. It is a positive state of consciousness. Further it is not a static condition of consciousness. It is characterised by "spiritual refreshment." It does not become stale. It is dynamic and creative. Shri Meher Baba brings out this positive aspect of spiritual perfection quite unambiguously when he says: "When there is a happy and a conscious blending of the Finite and the Infinite, we have perfection. Then we have the Infinite revealing itself through the Finite without getting limited thereby; and we have the Finite transcending its sense of limitation in the full knowledge of its really being the revelation of the Infinite."⁴

The recognition of the possibility of *Nibbana* leaves no room for our regarding Buddhism as a pessimistic religion merely because it recognises the existence of suffering in life. It is essentially an optimistic outlook on life because it declares that there is a way out of this suffering and there is the possibility of *Nibbana*. Nor can its Teaching be criticised on the ground that it does not add to the material comforts and luxuries of life. Such a criticism can be most fittingly answered in the following words of Lord

⁴ *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. I, No. 9, p. 7.

Buddha: "The gift of the Truth exceeds all other gifts. The savour of the Truth excels all other savours. The delight of the Truth surpasses all other delights. The desire after emancipation overmasters every sorrow." Shri Meher Baba also brings to us the Message of Hope concerning the ultimate destiny of life, which, he declares, is to enjoy eternally the "Infinite Existence, Knowledge and Bliss".

MEHER BABA JOURNAL

This monthly publication on spiritual subjects, has the outstanding and unique feature that it contains articles personally dictated by a living Perfect Master on important matters of Spiritual Knowledge.

It is the aim of the **Meher Baba Journal** to publish facts tending to demonstrate the Master's Divine Love, his direct influence in the unfoldment of life on the Path, his guidance in the ordinary lives of people, his psychological help and physical healings, besides his philosophy and teaching.

Also published are the past and present impressions and diaries of Meher Baba's followers in the East and West containing their experiences in contact with the Master. Originality is found in their variety of expression ranging from the mystical, poetical, philosophical, scientific to the light narrative style.

Furthermore are included the lives of past Saints written with a view to bringing out in bold relief, the modern application and parallel characteristics in the life, training and teaching of the Master of this age. It is affirmed that all great Spiritual Teachers had the same divine theme, though adopted to the needs of their times.

Meher Baba will establish no new religion, yet his work will embrace all religions in their essence and spirit.

Application for subscriptions should be made to—

THE MEHER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

4, Palace Road, BANGALORE (S. India)

Annual Subscription Rs. 3

(Coupon overleaf)

Subscription Coupon

MEHER BABA JOURNAL

To

MEHER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE,
4, PALACE ROAD, BANGALORE.

Please enlist the following name as annual Subscriber
to the *Meher Baba Journal*.

Name

Address

State or Province

I am sending Postal Money Order for Rs.

I am sending my cheque for Rs.

Please send by V.P.P.

Date

Signature.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Twelve months Rs. 3.

Single Copies As. 6.

(Including postage)

Postal money orders and cheques should be made payable
to : ADI K. IRANI, *Treasurer*.

BOOKS AVAILABLE

DISCOURSES OF MEHER BABA VOL. 1

Rs. A. P.

Reprints of the twelve articles by the Master which have appeared in the *Meher Baba Journal* from November 1938 to October 1939.

Bound in a volume of blue cloth .. 1 0 0

“ The Perfect Master ” *Life of Shri Meher Baba* .. 5 0 0
By C. B. Purdom (London)

“ Shri Meher Baba—Questions & Answers ” .. 0 6 0

“ The Sayings of Shri Meher Baba ” .. 0 3 0

“ Shri Meher Baba—His Philosophy & Teachings ” 0 12 0
By A. K. Abdulla

“ My Master and His Teaching ” (Second Edition) .. 0 8 0
By Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D.
Foreword : By Princess Norina Matchabelli

(Postage Extra)

Can be obtained from—

Publication Committee
for MEHER BABA
Universal Spiritual Centre
4, Palace Road
BANGALORE

**MEHER BABA
UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL CENTRE**

FOUNDED BY

THE MASTER

ON SUNDAY, THE 17TH DECEMBER 1939

AT THE NEWLY ACQUIRED PROPERTY

**BYRAMANGALA RESERVOIR, NEAR BIDADI RY. STATION
(BANGALORE—MYSORE ROUTE)**

For Information about the Centre

Address :

**PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
for MEHER BABA**

**Universal Spiritual Centre
4, Palace Road
BANGALORE**

AS. 2