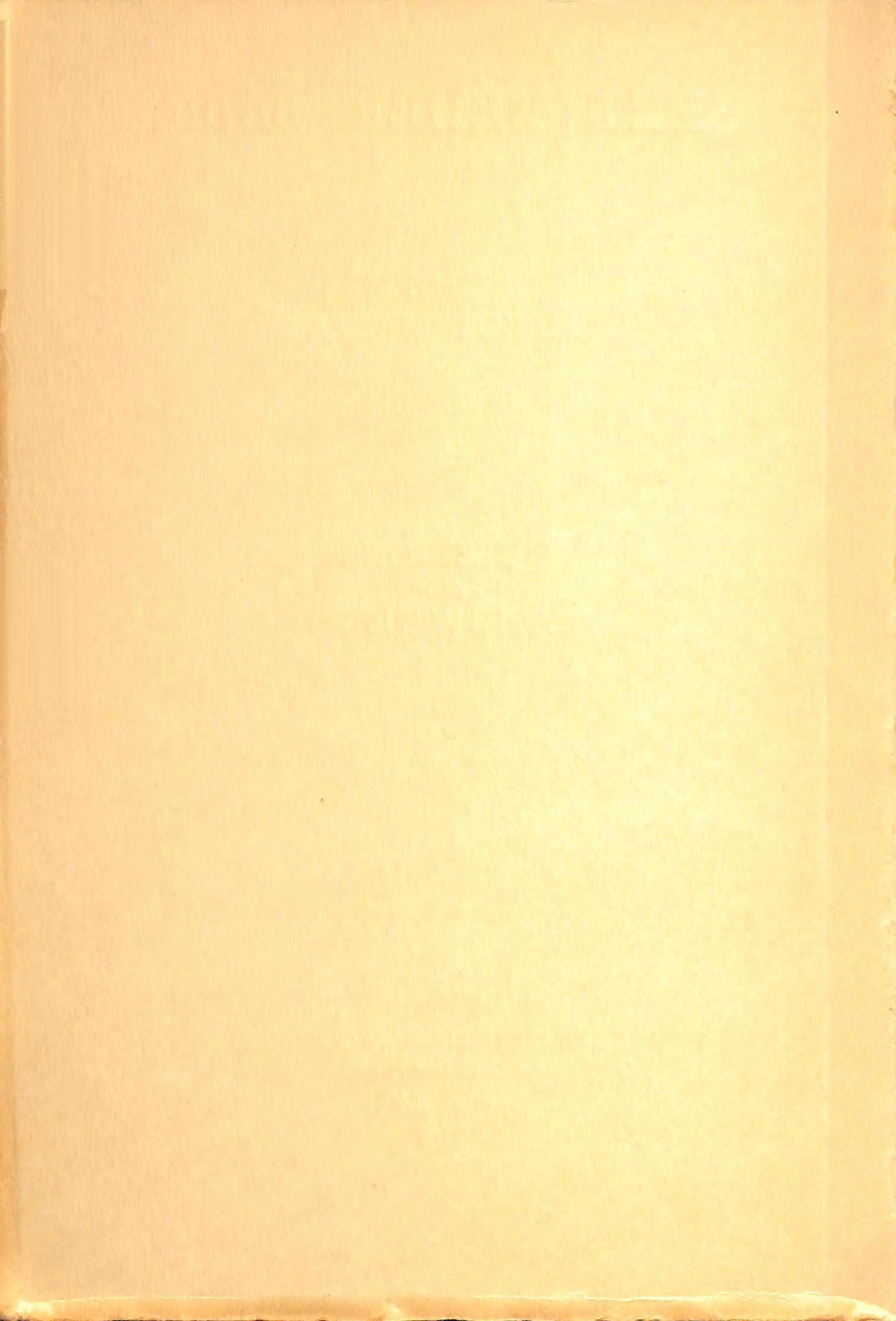


SHRI MEHER BABA

THE PERFECT MASTER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Published by
THE CIRCLE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
50 Charing Cross
London, S.W.1
1933



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

SHRI MEHER BABA¹

1-701211

¹ Shri is an Indian title of respect meaning saintly or holy; Meher means merciful or compassionate—in Persian Meher means light; Baba means father or friend.

Preface

SHRI MEHER BABA was born thirty-nine years ago of Persian parents in Poona, India. He is a Parsee Zoroastrian by birth, and is unmarried.

When he was nineteen years old he met a Moham-medan saint, Hazrat Baba Jan, and had a profound spiritual experience that made him aware of his high spiritual destiny. Then after years of close contact with a Hindu saint, Shri Upasni Maharaj, he consciously became "One with the Infinite." He began his spiritual work, and now has followers all over the world.

Since July 10, 1925, he has observed complete silence.

During the following two years he wrote a book on Spiritual Truths, but since 1927 he has stopped all writing. He reads and can speak five languages fluently. He now communicates by pointing to the roman letters and digits printed on a small board.

During the last two years he has visited the West five times and has travelled round the world. His eight years' silence is the prelude to his manifestation.

Many questions relating to Shri Meher Baba have been asked by Western people, and in this small book a number of these questions has been gathered together with the answers to them which Shri Meher Baba has himself given to enquirers. Since he neither speaks nor writes, his answers, usually in English, are spelt out letter by letter on the board. After watching his fingers the followers have to write down the words and sentences. The continuity that is required for good prose is thus interrupted.

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THE answers to Questions 10, 12, 26, 31, 35, 41, 49, 51 were previously given in his *Messages to London, New York, Hollywood, and India*.

The answers to Questions 27 and 49 were written in America, and the answer to Question 19 was suggested by an English writer.

ERRATA

Page 30, third line from the bottom: *omit* “, like him, to”.

„ 44, fourth line from the bottom: *for* “either unaware of” *read* “unaware of either”.

„ 54, line two: *insert* “purpose” *after* “primary”.

„ 58, *reverse* paragraphs (c) and (d).

I

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRIST

1. Will Shri Meher Baba explain Christ's words concerning the Second Coming ?
2. There have been and still are so many false Messiahs. How can we recognize the *true* Messiah?
3. Was Christ the only Son of God?
4. What is his opinion concerning the ritual or ceremonial observances of religion?
5. What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?

I

ANSWERS

1. *Will Shri Meher Baba explain Christ's words concerning the "Second Coming"? (St. Mark xiii. 21, 26, 27.)*

"And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not. . . ."

"But in those days, after that tribulation . . . then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

The gathering of the elect refers to the reincarnation and final assembling of His close disciples and followers at the time of His Second Coming. It is wrong to associate the Second Coming with the imprisonment of the Devil and a thousand years' peace, or with a literal interpretation of the Last Day of Judgment.

All the great mystics have understood the word "clouds" as a symbolic expression for states of consciousness or spiritual planes. When the Christ descends from the Infinite, i.e. Seventh Plane, He brings with Him to earth the Infinite Goodness, Wisdom, Power, and Love, and also the powers, signs, and experiences of the six lower planes. In the words of a great Sufi saint:

"Behold the sky, and clouds and the world:
First is God, then the planes, the last is earth;
but all three are linked."¹

¹ "*Asman o Abro dunya basta been
Avalin Haq bad manzil pus zamin.*"

We read in St. Mark ix. 2 and 7 that the Transfiguration of Jesus occurred when He ascended into a mountain: "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."

Brother Leo relates of the Vision of St. Francis in Mount Alvernia that he "saw coming down from Heaven a torch of flame exceeding beautiful and light, which, descending, rested on the head of St. Francis; and out of the flame there came a voice. . . ." St. Francis explains to Brother Leo: "Then was I in a light of contemplation, in which I saw the abyss of the infinite goodness and wisdom and power of God. . . . And in the flame that thou sawest was God, who also spake in such a manner unto me, even as in old time He had spoken unto Moses."

On Mount Sinai God appeared in a thick cloud and with fire.

Therefore we see that "clouds," "the house of clouds" (*manzil*), is a symbolic expression among mystics for "the six planes."

See page 21, note 2, "The Seven Planes."

2. *There have been and still are so many false Messiahs. How can we recognize the "true" Messiah?*

The feeling and inspiration for things sublime and the Divine Love are imparted by a *real* Messiah to anyone who comes in contact with Him. A *false* Messiah cannot do this.

Through His Divinity the *true* Messiah gradually attracts the world to Himself, and people come to know and feel that He is REAL. The knowledge and feeling of confidence in His words and works grow gradually into certainty, and masses follow Him, drawn by an irresistible force.

A mirage attracts the thirsty, but soon it is discovered to be an illusion and not the life-giving water. A *false* Messiah may attract the attention of the people through outward appearances, by force of personality, or by intellectual dissertations about spirituality, but he cannot do that which the *true* Messiah can do, i.e. arouse the highest ideals in men and touch the hearts of millions.

See also Question 21.

3. *Was Christ the only Son of God?*

Christ, and not Jesus, was the only Son of God.

By Christ is meant He who is at One with the Infinite, and so all those who come to realize the Ultimate Reality may be said to be in the "Christ State."

By Jesus is meant "the historical Man-God of Nazareth," who attained to the Christ Consciousness, i.e. who gained *perfection*.

See also Questions 14, 15, 20.

4. *What is his opinion concerning the ritual or ceremonial observances of religion?*

Dogmas, creeds, and conventional ideas of *heaven* and *hell* and of *sin* are perversions of Truth, and confuse and bewilder the mind.

Rituals and ceremonies, instituted by the priest-ridden Churches, have concentrated on outward forms,

and have ignored the essence of spiritual life. The elementary virtues—love, obedience, humility, and sincerity—are represented by allegorical statues, and the way to Eternal Life is forgotten in their sumptuous and magnificent temples. Man seeks life and is given a stone.

India is, at the moment, ridden with caste prejudices, innumerable cults and ceremonies, which ignore and contradict the spirit of their religious teachings. And this in a country which has wonderful spiritual traditions stretching back thousands of years!

See also Questions 7, 15, 16, 26, 54.

5. *What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"? In other words, How can we overcome or escape from our "Ego"?*

So much has been said and written about God-realization and "The higher Consciousness" that people are bewildered as to the right way to, and the immediate possibility of, its attainment. The *enquiring* mind, after wading laboriously through such mystical and theosophical literature, only succeeds in learning some pseudo-philosophical terms that confuse and puzzle it. The highest state of consciousness is latent in all. The Son of God is in every man; but He has to be manifested.

The best and the easiest way of overcoming the "Ego" and of attaining the "Divine or Christ Consciousness" is to purify and deepen our love, and

widen continually the circle of those we love, and to render selfless service to humanity in whatever circumstances we are placed. All the ethical and religious practices ultimately lead up to this. Our animal desires are gradually sublimated if we live more for others and less for ourselves; slowly our crude sense of "Ego" is transmuted. The "Ego" persists till the last stage of the Path. Not until the seventh stage of the Path, when the "God or Christ Conscious" state is reached, can the "Ego" be completely transmuted from finite to Infinite, reappearing again on the seventh plane as the Divine "I." This is that state of "Christ Consciousness" to which Jesus referred when He said, "I and my Father are one," and which implies living simultaneously in the Infinite and in the finite. This is the right way for the independent aspirant.

The shortest and the easiest way is that of the seeker, who has the good fortune (Karma) to be accepted as a disciple by a Perfect Master. Certain pitfalls are avoided by the Master's love and prevision.

It is absolutely impossible for the independent aspirant to pass from the sixth to the seventh plane without the help of a Perfect Master.

See page 21, note 2, "The Seven Planes."

II

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL PATH

6. What way of approach does Shri Meher Baba recommend for those who aspire to Perfection?
7. Which is the right way to attain "Wider Consciousness"? (Do religions help or hinder spiritual development?)
8. What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?
9. What discipline or qualification is necessary to enter the Path?
10. Do *intellectual* attainments help or hinder man's progress on the Spiritual Path? (Intellectual and Spiritual *understanding* compared.)
11. Does renunciation help a man's progress on the Spiritual Path?
12. (a) How does a Master help an aspirant and how does a Master help mankind?
(b) Why is it necessary to have the aid of a Perfect Master in order to attain Perfection?
13. Why is meditation on a Perfect Master the most effective form of meditation?

II

ANSWERS

6. *What way of approach does Shri Meher Baba recommend for those who aspire to Perfection?*

All ways: Divine Love, the various yogas, Religion, Science, Art, household duties. But after a certain point the usefulness of each ceases.

And then the aid of a Perfect Master is needed if further progress is to be made.

See also Question 13.

7. *Which is the right way to attain "Wider Consciousness"? (Do religions help or hinder spiritual development?)*

No general rule or process can be laid down for the attainment of the Ultimate Reality or, as you term it, the "Wider Consciousness."

Every individual has got to work out his or her own salvation, and for that end he himself has to create and choose the *path*, which is mostly determined by the total effect or momentum of impressions (called *sanskaras* in Sanskrit)¹ acquired in previous life. The panaceas the world hears about, the pseudo-religions for the guidance of humanity, do not go far towards solving the problem. As time goes on, the Founder, the One who supplied the motive force, is relegated more and more into the background of time and obscurity. The aftermath of his manifestation, usually a religion or an organization, gradually loses its

¹ See Question 58.

glamour and attractiveness. Finally, a mental revolt against the old order of things arises, and with it is felt a thirst for the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This thirst or demand has to be met, and will be met.

See also Questions 4, 15, 16, 26.

8. *What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?*

(See answer to Question 5.)

9. *What discipline or qualification is necessary to enter the Path?*

To say that decent living is the only requisite for attaining "Wider Consciousness" is but giving one side of the picture. What you are to-day is the result of both your decent and your indecent living in the past. Occult, religious, or spiritual training serves merely as means to an end, and is only the threshold to entering the Path.

But when you are accepted as a disciple by a "Perfect Master," no such disciplinary process is necessary. The only requirements then are complete surrender to his supreme will, perseverance, love, courage, and trust in the Master.

10. *Do intellectual attainments help or hinder man's progress on the Spiritual Path?*

(Intellectual and Spiritual "understanding" compared.)

It is impossible to reach Spiritual Truth and Realiza-

tion by talks, arguments, or by reading books. It can be reached by the *heart* alone; but that would be a very slow process. But when the *heart* and the *head* are equally developed and balanced, then man's progress is much quicker.

The man in whom the *head* (intellect) is more developed than the *heart* is liable to get fixed ideas, and he becomes attached to his own intellectual achievements.

The man with a warm *heart* is more likely to have faith, and for Love and Truth to give up all.

Intellect is the *lowest* form of *understanding*, and is developed by reading, listening, reasoning, and logic. These processes create an *illusion* of the real knowledge.

The *higher* form of *understanding* is "permanent illumination," through which one experiences and sees things *as they are*. In this state one feels in harmony with everyone and everything and realizes Divinity in every phase of life, and one is able to impart happiness to others. And although performing efficiently and intelligently all duties and material affairs, one feels mentally detached from the world. This is *true renunciation*.

The last and the *highest* state of *understanding* results from the merging of the soul into the limitless Ocean of Infinite Knowledge, Bliss, and Power. One who has himself attained to this can enable thousands to attain Perfection.

11. *Does renunciation help a man's progress on the Spiritual Path?*

Shri Meher Baba does *not* believe in *external* renunciation. For the West particularly, it is impracticable and inadvisable.

Renunciation should be mental. One should live in the world, perform all legitimate duties, and yet feel mentally detached from everything. One should be *in* the world, but *not of* it.

See also Questions 46, 53, 57.

12. (a) *How does a Master help an aspirant and how does a Master help mankind?*

As a rule, Masters help individually according to the temperament and preparedness of the aspirant. But this being the Avataric period, i.e. the end of the previous cycle and the beginning of the new one (it usually occurs every seven to eight hundred years), Shri Meher Baba's spiritual help to humanity will be both individual and collective. He rejuvenates and infuses new life into the old order of things, and imparts the highest state of spirituality—the state of Oneness with the Infinite Ocean of Bliss, Knowledge, and Power to his close disciples. He gives a general *spiritual push* to the whole universe.

See also Question 51.

12. (b) *Why is it necessary to have the aid of a Perfect Master in order to attain to Perfection?*

Only a Perfect Master, who is the veritable incarnation of Divinity, can awaken in the individual the fire of Divine Love, which consumes in its flames the lesser desires of the body, mind, and world, all of which must be completely relinquished before Perfection can be realized.

13. *Why is meditation on a Perfect Master the most effective form of meditation?*

By meditation on a Perfect Master, who is Divine and fully conscious of his Divinity, the individual who is divine but not fully conscious of his divinity is led into Divine Self-consciousness.

(There are two aspects of the Infinite One—Personal and Impersonal. The *Impersonal* aspect lies beyond the domain of creation and transcends even the mental plane. The *Personal* aspect of God is the Perfect Master who, having attained to the *Impersonal* aspect, lives in the world and helps others towards Truth.)

Editor's Note.—"The Perfect Master of the Age" is called by Hindus and Buddhists the Avatar; by Jews and Christians he would be called the Messiah. The terms "saint," or even "Mahatma," do not imply the absolute spiritual perfection or Christ Consciousness which is experienced continually by the Perfect Masters.

III

QUESTIONS ABOUT MESSIAH OR AVATAR

14. What is the theory of the manifestation of an Avatar?
15. Why, when so many inspired religions already existed, were additional revelations of God as Avatar required?
16. (a) Will the new Avatar replace existing organized religions by something else?
(b) Will any changes take place in the existing religions when Shri Meher Baba imparts the *spiritual push* to the world?
17. Will an Avatar ever appear in feminine form?
18. Will the West ever give birth to an Avatar?

Editor's Note.—(1) In several of these answers a knowledge of the doctrines of Reincarnation and of Karma is assumed: Reincarnation means rebirth of the Spirit in another physical body; Karma is that law of Cause and Effect which governs every detail of our present lives and also of our subsequent rebirths.

(2) The Seven Planes of Consciousness are often referred to. They are intellect, lower inspiration, intuition, insight, higher inspiration, illumination (the Sixth Plane which is only experienced by the greatest saints), and Christ Consciousness. The Seventh Plane is separated by a great gulf from the Sixth and no one can cross it and attain Christ Consciousness without the aid of a Perfect Master.

III

ANSWERS

14. *What is the theory of the manifestation of an Avatar?*

God-realized Masters always do exist on the physical as well as on other planes, but are not always known and seen physically. After cycles of years, when spirituality reaches its lowest ebb and materialism its highest point, when there is chaos and confusion everywhere, the impersonal aspect of Divinity assumes personality, and the world sees the physical manifestation of an Avatar.

It is the same Divine personality who manifested as Avatar in past times in different physical bodies and under different names. These Avatars (the world usually recognizes them as *prophets*), after completing their mission of giving a great *spiritual push* to humanity, abandon the physical body, and assume once more the original impersonal aspect of Divinity. But even in their impersonal aspect they remain always self-conscious of their Divinity.

See also Questions 15, 20.

15. *Why, when so many inspired religions already existed, were additional revelations of God as Avatar required?*

At the time of the manifestation of an Avatar the force of the new spiritual impulse is so tremendous that it creates quite a new awakening of consciousness.

This, combined with the teachings and activities of the Avatar on the physical plane during the life in which he manifests himself, is given outward form by his followers, who call it a new religion.

As the force of the *spiritual push* gradually weakens with the lapse of time, spirituality also recedes until it almost sinks into insignificance; religion, or rather the outward form of it, becomes like a dry crust, ready to crumble at any moment, and world conditions reach a climax. It is at this critical juncture that an Avatar appears, and manifests on the physical plane, to give once again the *spiritual impulse* that the world then requires. The force of this *spiritual push* is again adopted as a new outward religious form according to the existing circumstances. The Avatar, after completing his mission, abandons his physical body and assumes the impersonal aspect of Divinity as before, till he is compelled once more by force of circumstances to take the human form and reappear and manifest as an Avatar; and thus the process goes on and on.

This is why the contemporary religions have apparently different forms, owing to the different times and circumstances in which they were established, and they are known after the name of the Avatar of that particular period, though in essence they contain the same ideal of life taught over and over again by the same Divinity, who appeared and manifested on earth at different times and under different circumstances.

See also Question 20.

16. (a) *Will the new Avatar replace existing organized religions by something else?*

The new "awakening of the spirit" and the new "consciousness" that will accompany his manifestation will synthesize all existing sects, castes and creeds and religions, which will automatically find a new outward expression.

16. (b) *Will any changes take place in the existing religions when Shri Meher Baba imparts the "spiritual push" to the world?*

All collective movements and religions have hinged round one personality who supplied the motive force. Without this centrifugal force all movements are bound to fail. Societies and organizations have never succeeded in making people attain spiritual perfection.

See also Questions 26, 29.

17. *Will an Avatar ever appear in feminine form?*

Never has there been a female Avatar, nor will there ever be one. The Avatar has always possessed a male form and always will. Yet he comprises in himself both the male and female aspects.

18. *Will the West ever give birth to an Avatar?*

Asia is the "Garden of Eden," the starting-place of the evolution of the universe, and because of its direct link with the source of creation and on account of its geographical position it will always be the birthplace of the Divine personality as Avatar.

IV

QUESTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MASTERS

19. How may one recognize a Perfect Master?
20. What does Shri Meher Baba say about the Masters of the Past?
21. Are persons who can perform miracles necessarily spiritually perfect?
22. Why and when do Masters perform miracles?
23. If a Master is God Incarnate, why does he allow his disciples to be ill?
24. How is it that the Master, being superhuman, still has hunger, thirst, and the need of sleep?
25. Why, if he knows everything, does the Master ask questions?

IV

ANSWERS

19. *How may one recognize a Perfect Master?*

Kabir has rightly said:

“When you meet the true Guru, He will awaken
your heart;

He will reveal to you the secret of love and
detachment;

Then you will know indeed that He transcends this
universe.”

“He is the real Guru, who reveals the form
of the formless to the vision of these eyes:

Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him,
that is other than rites and 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.”

(From a translation by Rabindranath Tagore
of the fifteenth-century saint and poet Kabir.)

20. *What does Shri Meher Baba say about the Masters of the Past?*

Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Krishna,

and other Masters were all, in reality, the embodiment of the same Divine Self-consciousness, manifesting according to the needs of different periods and of different countries.

See also Questions 13, 14, 15, and footnote to Question 35.

21. Are persons who can perform miracles necessarily spiritually perfect?

In the West people are very interested in the problem of *miracles*.

Shri Meher Baba has explained that the ability to perform miracles does not necessarily imply high spirituality. Anyone who has attained perfection and enjoys the "Christ Consciousness" can perform miracles. Healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and even raising the dead are quite simple for a Perfect Master. Even those who have not become One with the Infinite, but who are only traversing the planes, can perform miracles and are able to make and unmake things.

22. Why and when do Masters perform miracles?

Spiritual Masters do not perform miracles to order, just to satisfy idle curiosity. Miracles were performed, and will be performed, according to the existing circumstances. Masters have sometimes performed miracles when they intended to give a universal spiritual push.

See also Question 40.

23. If a Master is God Incarnate, why does he allow his disciples to be ill?

Although spiritually the Master of everything, he never unnecessarily interferes with the Laws of Nature and of Karma—laws governing all existence, and which he himself established for the universe.

The terrible sufferings that the past Masters (who had of course the powers to avert these sufferings) and their disciples underwent were due, on the one hand, to these laws of nature, and on the other hand to the reason that by their vicarious sufferings they were able to help spiritually all humanity.

24. How is it that the Master, being superhuman, still has hunger, thirst, and the need of sleep?

The Master works on different planes—spiritual, mental, astral, and physical. And in order to work with different individuals at different stages of evolution he comes down to their level. Even when in the physical body he can aid highly advanced souls on the mental plane, less advanced souls on the astral plane, and ordinary human beings on the physical plane. He uses the appropriate body—spiritual, mental, subtle (astral), or physical—as the medium for his work on the required plane.¹

It is rightly said that the best teacher is he who can come down to the level of his student. The Master comes down to the level of this world for its upliftment.

¹ See Question 35—description of the different bodies.

This physical body, now his medium for work, has its physical needs—food and rest—which must usually be attended to physically. If necessary, he could live without food or water for weeks together.¹

The problem of the Divine and human elements in the God-man is difficult to comprehend, except for those who have had long personal contact with a Master. This attention to the requirements of the physical body of the Master, although outwardly similar, is inwardly different. It is not, as with ordinary men, actuated by any desire to satisfy hunger, thirst, or sleep, nor for the pleasure that gross men derive from eating, drinking, and other enjoyments. He tends to the physical needs of the body merely to preserve it as a medium for the great work that he has to do on this physical plane.

Similarly, people are puzzled by the everyday details of his material or physical life and activities; his natural, spontaneous manner; his appearance and dress; his long travels and frequent movements from place to place; his visits to theatres, cinemas, and places of amusement; and so on. Though he may seem to enjoy them for themselves, they are necessitated by his work. The Master has no desires, and can have none to gratify. His only desire, if it could rightly be called a desire, is to enable every human being to realize the "Self" and, like him, to drink of the well of everlasting life.

¹ Shri Meher Baba has often fasted for long periods.

25. *Why, if he knows everything, does the Master ask questions?*

The impressions of the experiences of the innumerable past lives of an individual remain in his mental body in the form of thoughts, which lie, like seeds, latent and unmanifested. When faced with suitable circumstances and environments, these thoughts are expressed in the subtle body as desires and emotions. And these, when expressed more fully, develop into the physical actions in the gross body.

The Master knows the expressed as well as the unexpressed thoughts of everyone. Yet he sometimes asks questions. While asking questions he acts, through his working on the inner planes, upon the expressed and unexpressed impressions of the individual or individuals with whom he is speaking, and renders them impotent while they are still in the mental body, so that they cannot develop and eventually be expressed in the form of desires and actions.

In short, the Master, through his subtle working, checks certain evil thoughts in their very growth, eradicates the unexpressed desires, and thus prevents them developing into the corresponding actions, which might cause harm to the individual and hinder his spiritual progress.

See also Questions 35, 58.

V

QUESTIONS ABOUT SHRI MEHER BABA'S MISSION

26. (a) What is it that Shri Meher Baba has come into the world to teach?
(b) What is his *object* in coming to the West?
(c) What is his *mission* ?
27. Does Shri Meher Baba claim to be the Avatar of the new dispensation?
28. Whence does he derive his authority? How does he know that he is God-realized?
29. (a) When will the *spiritual revival* take place?
(b) When does it usually occur?
(c) In what sphere of life will its effect be most obvious?
30. Why does he intend speaking in England instead of in America?
31. Will his work create opposition?
32. Will he bring peace and happiness to the world?
33. How can he bridge the gulf between East and West?

V

ANSWERS

26. (a) *What is it that Shri Meher Baba has come into the world to teach?*

Apparently his message pertains to Divine Love, Universal Brotherhood, right living, and the elimination of the motive of Self-interest.

But in reality Shri Meher Baba has not come to teach. He has come to awaken. By the power of the Divine Love, which flows from him continually, he transforms the consciousness of those who come to him for liberation, that they may know, through experience, what the philosophers have tried to teach theoretically through the ages.

26. (b) *What is his object in coming to the West?*

His coming to the West is not with the object of establishing new creeds or spiritual societies or organizations, but for the purpose of making people understand religion in its true sense.

He will revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string.

26. (c) *What is his mission?*

It is to make mankind realize, not only through

intellect, but by actual experience, the One Infinite Self which is in all.

Before we can attain to everlasting peace and experience constant joy, we must realize the God within ourselves and in everything we see and meet.

Shri Meher Baba has attained to that realization. The whole purpose of his incarnation is to help others to attain to a like realization.

See also Questions 4, 16.

27. Does Shri Meher Baba claim to be the Avatar of the new dispensation?

Such a claim would have no value until it were substantiated, and once it were substantiated there would be no need of claims. What Shri Meher Baba is, and the nature of his *mission*, will be abundantly demonstrated at the time of his public manifestation.

*Note.*¹—It may be said, however, that some of Shri Meher Baba's closest disciples have come to believe, not through words or explanations, but through deep inner experience, that Shri Meher Baba is such a Being as Jesus was, and that he has come into the world now to effect that transformation of consciousness which is a necessary prelude to the establishment of the new civilization.

It may also be said that to those with whom he lived during his recent visits to this country, Shri Meher Baba gave ample proofs of being able to extend the consciousness of other individuals at will.

¹ This article was written in America.

28. *Whence does Shri Meher Baba derive his authority? How does he know that he is God-realized?*

Just as an individual, from the actual experience that he has of being a human, can authoritatively say that he is a human being, so does he, from his own continuous conscious experience of Oneness with the Infinite, know of his Godhood.

29. (a) *When will the "spiritual revival" take place?*

(b) *When does it usually occur?*

(c) *In what sphere of life will its effect be most obvious?*

The *spiritual revival* that you ask about is not far off, and his approaching manifestation will be the signal. He will utilize the tremendous amount of energy—often misapplied—possessed by the West, particularly by America, for the purpose.

Such a spiritual outburst usually takes place every seven or eight hundred years, at the end or beginning of a cycle, and it is only the Perfect One who has reached the state of "Christ Consciousness" who can appeal to all and work universally.

Shri Meher Baba's *working* will embrace everything. It will penetrate into every phase of life. Perfection would fall far short of the ideal if it were to accept one thing and eschew another.

See also Question 51.

30. *Why does Shri Meher Baba intend speaking in England instead of in America?*

Owing to the postponement of his speaking and the change in circumstances, Europe is better suited for breaking his silence than America. Yet, as he has said before, America will be the centre of his great spiritual working in future, and will play a prominent part in the organization and development of his plans for the upliftment of humanity.

England has a special spiritual significance for many reasons: his first emissary to the West was sent there; the first Western disciples to come to him in India were English; his first visit to the West was to England; there his first Western Ashram or Spiritual Retreat was established; and in England the plans for his Western work were prepared.

This spiritual value, added to the changes in circumstances and time, makes England the more suitable place for the breaking of his silence. And since his first place of residence and association with his close disciples was in *London*, it will be there that his first public speech will be delivered.

31. *Will his work create opposition?*

His work will create both great enthusiasm and a certain amount of opposition. This is inevitable. But all spiritual work is eventually strengthened by opposition, and so it will be with his. It is like the shooting of an arrow from a bow: the more you pull the bow-string the farther the arrow flies.

32. *Will Shri Meher Baba bring "peace and happiness" to the world?*

There exists at the present moment a universal dissatisfaction and an indescribable longing for something that will end the terrible chaos and misery that overshadows the world just now. He is going to satisfy this longing, and will lead the world to *real happiness*.

The disorders in the world without are a reflection of the disorders within. Shri Meher Baba will enable mankind to solve their *inner* problems by awakening the Divine elements in them.

33. *How can he bridge the gulf between East and West?*

He is doing this in many ways, internally as well as externally.

Recently, he has travelled from East to West and from West to East. He has visited Europe five times, Italy four times, England thrice, America twice, Africa twice, China once, and he has encircled the globe. He has explained that these journeys were for the purpose of "laying *cables* between East and West."

He has taken some of the Eastern disciples to the West; has brought some of his Western disciples to the East. Thus the impressions of the East are brought to the West and vice versa.

This external or physical action of bringing together East and West has its personal side. Every one of his disciples looks upon the others, whether Eastern or Western, as "members of the same family, of which

the beloved and revered Master is at once the father, mother, friend, guide and Guru." And while this intimate feeling is now confined to the circle of his close devotees, the great gulf of religious and social differences will also be truly bridged, and a healthy and happy reunion of all brought about. For when he speaks and manifests his divinity, a world-wide transformation of consciousness will then cause all ideas of superiority and inferiority concerning race, colour, caste and creed to disappear.

The East has been the place of his birth, of his realization of Godhood from manhood, and thereafter of his long, silent activities for the upliftment of humanity. He has many times withdrawn to mountains and caves for his spiritual working. In India and Persia he has established Ashrams (spiritual retreats) to prepare and lead seekers after Truth towards their ideal.

And now he has decided to break his "vow of silence" in the West, which will be the scene of his manifestation and the principal centre of his activities for humanity. These will all help "to bridge the gulf" between East and West, and lead to a clearer mutual understanding.

His teachings are largely concerned with forming a lasting union of all existing races and religions into a harmonious whole.

VI

“PERSONAL” QUESTIONS

34. (a) What work has he done in this life to help humanity?
(b) What sort of work does he do in India?
(c) How does he work in the West?
35. What relation will his *speaking* have to the transformation of human consciousness, which has been predicted?
36. Why has he been silent for eight years?
37. Why does he keep changing his plans and postponing his promises of healing?
38. Who pays for all his travels? Has he money of his own?
39. Was he, during his boyhood, conscious of his own high spiritual destiny?
40. Will he perform miracles when he speaks?
41. In what religion does he believe?
42. Will his work, like Christ's, be missionary in character?
43. What sort of work will his followers do?
44. How can he have both Buddhic and Christ consciousness?
45. Is he interested in politics?
46. Why does he encourage vegetarianism?
47. Why does he not help his own country first?

VI

ANSWERS

34. (a) *What work has Shri Meher Baba done in this life to help humanity?*

Most of the people who came to him have benefited, some internally, some externally.

The *internal* benefits have been in the form of spiritual experiences, glimpses and visions of life beyond this material existence, which have transformed their lives and changed their outlook.

The *external* advantages of coming in contact with and having faith in him, too, have been many and varied; to some, in miraculous recoveries from diseases declared incurable by doctors; to others, in overcoming their personal troubles and solving their intricate problems in everyday life. Some of his disciples were saved from fatal accidents and actually owe their lives to him.

And but for the Master's dislike to attach any importance to what by many would be called *miracles*, the practical and subjective instances of these experiences would fill volumes.

Quite apart from these individual subjective experiences, his other *external* activities in the social and religious spheres of life have benefited the masses. Through the Ashrams (spiritual retreats) that he has established in India, he has brought about a wonderful unity of all races and religions, particularly that of the high-class Brahmins with the most depressed class,

who are called "untouchables" and are the *most neglected* class of people, and whose upliftment he has ever at heart.

This work was begun some years ago. Shri Meher Baba also maintained a boarding-school, where boys of all castes and creeds and races lived, studied, and played together under his personal guidance. Scholarships covering all expenses were even offered to enable English boys to attend this spiritual and educational school.

He also established a hospital, supervised by a Western trained doctor, to give free treatment to the poorest peasants of the neighbouring districts, who had never before had access to Western medical treatment, and to whom it was a blessing. With his own hands he washed lepers, and healed five of these afflicted persons.

Sincere seekers after Truth and Knowledge (no matter what their religious creed or agnostic attitude) have found in him their true guide and Guru who led them to the Light they had been trying to find. His benign grace and guidance on the spiritual path have helped many to advance towards Perfection. The lives of others who were on the verge of ruin and degradation have been redeemed by his timely advice and help.

34. (b) *What sort of work does Shri Meher Baba do in India?*

In whichever part of the world he may be, his *internal* working is one and the same; but his *external*

workings vary in accordance with the situation and needs of the place where he is.

In India, his external working is mainly devoted to the running of Ashrams (spiritual retreats); giving *darshana* (i.e. accepting homage and worship) to thousands of his devotees, who worship him as God-man, and who journey hundreds of miles in order to offer their homage and devotion.¹

¹ "I never wish to be called Redeemer, Saviour, Divine Majesty. The disciples through their love, faith, and enthusiasm give such titles; there are many who misunderstand me, who call me Satan, Devil, Anti-Christ; but to me it is all the same—I know who I am."—SHRI MEHER BABA.

34. (c) *How does he work in the West?*

In the West, his *external* working is chiefly concerned with teaching and explaining; giving answers to questions; issuing messages and statements concerning spiritual life.

Sometimes he gives private interviews and explains individually; at other times he explains to multitudes at receptions and meetings.

35. *What relation will his "speaking" have to the transformation of human consciousness, which has been predicted?*

Humanity, as at present constituted, uses three vehicles for the expression of thought, and experiences three states of consciousness. These three vehicles are:

- (1) The mental body, in which thoughts arise as

the result of impressions from past experiences. These thoughts may remain latent in the mental body as seeds, or they may be expressed. If they are expressed, they take first the form of *desires* and pass through:

(2) The subtle body, or desire body, which is composed of the five psychic senses. They may rest there, as in the case of dreams or unfulfilled desires, or they may be further expressed through:

(3) The physical body, with its five physical senses.

The three states of consciousness corresponding to the three vehicles mentioned above are:

(1) Unconsciousness, as in deep, dreamless sleep.

(2) Subconsciousness, as in the dreaming state, or obscure, unformed, unfulfilled desires. Everything is experienced through the subtle (astral) body.

(3) Waking consciousness, as in active daily life.

The process by which thought passes from mental through the subtle into physical expression may be called "the expression of human will."

In order for thought to be expressed effectively, all three of the vehicles used in its expression must be perfectly clear, and the interaction between them must be harmonious. The *head* and the *heart* must be united; intellect and feeling must be balanced; material expression must be understood as dependent on spiritual realization.

The God-man neither thinks nor desires. Through him the Divine Will flows inevitably into perfect manifestation, passing directly from the spiritual body

(which in the ordinary human being is not developed) into physical expression. For him the superconscious is the normal state of consciousness. From him there flows constantly Infinite Love, Wisdom, Joy, Peace, and Power.

In order to convey thought to others man uses speech, or writing, or some other physical means of expression; sometimes, as in telepathy, thought is transmitted and received through and by the subtle body.

The God-man does not convey thought, but Truth, which he either awakens in the individual whom he is helping, through a deep inner experience, or which he transmits directly from the superconscious to the conscious, from the spiritual to the physical, by means of either the physical eye, the physical touch, or "the spoken word."

Extract from Shri Meher Baba's Message to India

In the conscious (awake) state all that you experience by seeing, hearing, eating, walking, etc., is done through the gross body.

In the subconscious (dream) state, everything is experienced through the subtle body. In this state the mortal mind, with the help of the desire-body, may see past events recur, or may foresee future happenings, and sometimes past, present, and future events may appear together in confusion (this would be a nightmare). This all depends upon the impressions on the mind received through the physical body in accordance to the proportion of its attachments to gross activities.

In the unconscious (deep sleep) state you are either unaware of the physical or astral happenings, and so experience nothingness.

One who transcends these three states of consciousness and gains illumination experiences the superconscious state. This is

the Christ-Buddha-Krishna state, the God-man state, in which one attains to perfect manhood and perfect Divinity. To be one with the source of all Love, Knowledge, Power, Light, and Existence is to enjoy infinite bliss and feel in harmony with everyone and everything. Art, science, beauty, nature appear as one's own manifestation.

This is all well and good for the individual, but what about the multitudes? In the present state of world depression and economic strife the supreme thought of the people at large is about their daily bread. How can they think of or aspire to spiritual illumination? And it is self-interest (caused by low selfish desires) that is at the root of this universal condition of misery. Material desire is misery. When you want a thing, you crave for it until you get it—this is suffering. And when you do get it, you don't experience the happiness you expected—this is disappointment, which is also suffering.

And this self-interest cannot be eliminated by means of religious piety, not can sermons or the fear of heaven and hell help. Only when the atmosphere of selfless love and universal brotherhood prevails throughout the world will this self-interest be annihilated. Then only will people realize that the true aim of life is not merely to eat, drink, sleep, or seek for pleasure—in other words to gain material welfare—but to attain real happiness in every phase of life: material, social, and spiritual. And this time is drawing near.

See also Questions 24, 25, 56.

36. *Why has he been silent for eight years?*

When he speaks, Truth is *more powerfully* manifested than when he uses either sight or touch to convey it. For that reason Avatars usually observe a period of silence lasting for several years, breaking it to speak only when they wish to manifest the Truth to the entire universe.

So when Shri Meher Baba speaks he will manifest

the Divine Will, and a world-wide transformation of consciousness will result.

37. Why does he keep changing his plans and postponing his promises of healing?

Although he seems to change his plans, and apparently does not keep his promises about the dates of his speaking and healing, etc., in reality it is not so. For, as a Perfect Master and the Avatar of the age, he knows all that is to happen in future, and everything is planned and arranged by him beforehand. Although he really knows when he is destined to speak and heal, he postpones the dates from time to time in order to give greater force to his final workings, and in order also that all that he has planned during these past years will be revealed fully on the day of his manifestation.

38. Who pays for Shri Meher Baba's travels? Has he money of his own?

Amongst his numerous disciples, in the East as well as in the West, there are many who are rich and who voluntarily contribute money towards his cause, for the maintenance of Ashrams, and for the travels that his work necessitates. There are a few who have dedicated all their possessions, and even their lives, to him.

From the spiritual point of view it may be expressed in his own words: "The whole universe is mine."

From the material standpoint he is sometimes

wealthy and sometimes penniless, but always equally unattached.

See also Question 53.

39. *Was he, during his boyhood, conscious of his own high spiritual destiny?*

Yes, at certain times he had glimpses of his Divinity and of his future work and mission.

40. *Will he perform miracles when he speaks?*

He will perform miracles when the time and situation demand. He will perform them to draw towards him the sceptical, unbelieving people who would never believe in Truth unless it were proved by some extraordinary phenomena.

Miracles are not necessary for *understanding* persons because spiritual healing is by far the greatest healing, and this is Shri Meher Baba's real work. He will not perform miracles to satisfy mere idle curiosity.

See also Questions 21, 22.

41. *In what religion does he believe?*

He belongs to no religion in particular, and yet to every religion. Love is his principal agent.

The Infinite One can be attained only through Love and Selfless Service. Dogmas and doctrines, rites and ceremonies, do not constitute *true religion*. To realize

God in every phase of life—in art, science, beauty, nature—that is his religion.

This question is more fully answered in Questions 16, 20, 26.

42. *Will his work, like Christ's, be missionary in character ?*

He will establish no new religion, yet his work will embrace all religions in their essence and spirit, particularly in their *mystical* and *spiritual* aspects, and be absolutely unconcerned with their ceremonial side and dry dogmas. His work, therefore, will not be *missionary* in the narrowest sense of the word, but will permeate through all religions.

See also Questions 4, 15, 16, 26.

43. *What sort of work will his followers do ?*

The duties allotted to each of his disciples will vary in form and character according to the inner experiences of each.

A certain number will attain the realization of the One Divine Self, and a large number will have *illumination*.

Both groups will know inwardly what to do through the spiritual experiences that they in their highly advanced states will then have, and they will work spontaneously without further instructions.

And the duties of one and all his disciples, whether

in an advanced or in a normal state, will always concern the spiritual upliftment of humanity.

See also Question 33.

44. How can Shri Meher Baba have both the Buddhic and Christ Consciousness?

There is but one Divine Infinite "Consciousness," whether realized by Christ or experienced by Buddha, and the external expression of this Divine Consciousness varies according to the circumstances confronting (at the moment of historical time) the God-men who have attained to this superconscious state.

Once gained, the Cosmic Consciousness is gained for eternity, and is continually present either on the spiritual plane or as "The Word" made flesh for the upliftment of humanity.

See also Question 20.

45. Is he interested in politics?

Spirituality touches all the problems of religion, politics, sociology, and economics. It concerns each and every phase of life, and as Shri Meher Baba is spiritually perfect, he, directly or indirectly, is interested in *all* the various aspects of life.

46. Why does he encourage vegetarianism?

He advises vegetable food for spiritual reasons, and also for reasons of health. Animal food stimulates

excitement, lust, passion, and evil desires, which are all detrimental to spiritual progress. Vegetable food helps one to keep the feelings, emotions, and desires balanced and normal, and hence assists the aspirant on the spiritual path. Also it improves health, aids digestion, and is free from certain poisons contained in animal food.

47. Why does he not help his country first ?

The whole universe is his country and home, and he responds to the call of any part of the universe which he sees to be in need of his help.

VII

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS: WORLD PROBLEMS, PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

48. What, in his opinion, is the real meaning and purpose of life?
49. How will he be able, by speaking, to ease the world depression, to solve the problems of unemployment, prohibition, and crime?
50. Has he any solution for the problems of politics, economics, morals, and sex?
51. Which individuals and nations will benefit most by the new spiritual impulse?
52. What, in his opinion, is the characteristic mental attitude of the West?
53. What is his opinion concerning money?
54. How does he explain *good* and *evil*, *heaven* and *hell*?
55. How did evolution begin and work?
56. Does he deny *matter*?
57. What is his opinion about marriage and celibacy?
58. What are *sanskaras*?

VII

ANSWERS

48. *What, in his opinion, is the real meaning and purpose of life?*

It is to become identified with the Universal Self, and thus to experience Infinite Bliss, Power, and Knowledge; and finally, to be able to impart this experience to others, and make them see the One Indivisible Infinity existing in every phase of life.

49. *How will Shri Meher Baba be able, by speaking, to ease the world depression, to solve the problems of unemployment, prohibition, and crime?*¹

The root of all our difficulties, individual and social, is *self-interest*. It is this, for example, which causes corrupt politicians to accept bribes and betray the interests of those whom they have been elected to serve; which causes bootleggers to break, for their own profit, a law designed, whether wisely or not, to help the nation as a whole; which causes people to connive, for their pleasure, in the breaking of that law, thus causing disrespect for law in general and increasing crime tremendously; which causes the exploitation of great masses of humanity by individuals or groups of individuals seeking personal gain; which impedes the progress of civilization by shelving inventions which would contribute to the welfare of humanity at large,

¹ Written in United States of America, 1932.

simply because their use would mean the scrapping of present inferior equipment, which, when people are starving, causes wanton destruction of large quantities of food simply in order to maintain market prices; which causes the hoarding of large sums of gold when the welfare of the world demands its circulation.

These are only a few examples of the way *self-interest* operates to the detriment of human welfare. Eliminate *self-interest* and you will solve all your problems, individual and social.

But the elimination of *self-interest*, even granting a sincere desire on the part of the individual to accomplish it, is not easy, and is never completely achieved except by the aid of a Perfect Master, who has the power to convey Truth at will. For *self-interest* springs from a false idea of the true nature of the Self, and this idea must be eradicated and the Truth experienced before this elimination is possible.

Shri Meher Baba intends, when he speaks, to reveal the One Supreme Self (God) which is in all. This accomplished, the idea of the Self as a limited separate entity will disappear, and with it will vanish *self-interest*. Co-operation will replace competition; security will replace certainty; generosity will replace greed; exploitation will disappear.

Refer to footnote, Question 35 ("Message to India").

50. *Has Shri Meher Baba any solution for the problems of politics, economics, morals, and sex?*

In the general *spiritual push* that he will impart to

the world, the problems of politics, economics, and sex, although they are subsidiary to the primary, will automatically be solved and adjusted, and new values and significance will be attached to matters which appear to baffle solution at the present moment.

51. Which individuals and nations will benefit most by the new spiritual impulse?

Perfect Masters impart spirituality by personal contact and influence, and the benefit that will accrue to different nations when Shri Meher Baba brings about the spiritual upheaval will largely depend upon the amount of energy each possesses. The more the energy, however misapplied, the greater the response.

The Master merely directs the current into the right channels.

52. What, in his opinion, is the characteristic mental attitude of the West?

The West looks at life from the standpoint of reason and logic, and is sceptical about things which baffle the intellect. This trend of thought has brought about some great achievements: Political Ideals and a conception of Social Responsibility; Mathematics and Science. It has also led her towards *materialism*, which has brought about wars, political and economic crises.

Organized efforts such as a League of Nations, World Conferences, and Peace Pacts are made in the hope of solving the world problems which face all

nations to-day. But all such efforts have only a very partial success on account of the prevailing *materialism*, and because these efforts ignore the spiritual character and potentialities of man.

53. *What is his opinion concerning money?*

It entirely depends upon the way in which we use our money, whether it is good or bad. Money earned and utilized as a means of livelihood for oneself and for those who depend on one is *good*. Given as charity for the benefit of humanity, it is *better*. But to give anonymously and yet carefully for the intelligent service and spiritual upliftment of humanity, without dictating as to how it shall be administered or spent—this is the *best* use of money. But very, very few selfless souls can do that.

When money, gained by fair means or foul, is spent in order to gratify one's desire for pleasure and enjoyment, it makes the spender pleasure-loving and selfish. And if the same person suddenly loses that money, he naturally feels miserable and curses life and fate. Worse still is it when he wastes money, earned or inherited, in speculation and gambling, or on wine and women.

Whether it is good or bad for us to possess money depends entirely on the use we make of it. Fire can serve and warm man; fire can burn and destroy man.

54. *How does he explain "good" and "evil," "heaven" and "hell"?*

In the general sense of the word, *evil* is merely *perverted good*, a lower stage of the ladder of evolution, an obstacle the overcoming of which enables man to test and strengthen his character.

Looked at from the personal point of view, *evil* is the result of ignoring the Law of Karma and of indecision or weakness of the personal character.

The Master is beyond *good* and *evil*.

Virtue or goodness is the antithesis of evil or sin in an individual character. Virtue, then, is due to co-operation with the Karmic Law, and sin is due to conscious or unconscious failure to co-operate with the Karmic Law.

As separate worlds, or as separate planes, *heaven* and *hell* do not exist. They are states of mental peace or torture. The person who lives in accordance with the Law of Karma experiences happiness and may be said to be in the *heaven* state; while the person who ignores and disobeys the Law of Karma suffers spiritually, mentally, and physically, and may be said to be undergoing the tortures of *hell*.

The individual's possession of strength of mind or weakness of character, of the rudiments of *virtue* and *vice*, and the various experiences of *heaven* and *hell*, are all due to the past impressions (*sanskaras* as they are termed) of previous lives. And every human being must pass through the dual aspects of both *good* and *evil* before attaining to Perfection. The Master is beyond

good and evil. Removing past impressions by his Love, he can truly say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

See also Question 4.

55. *How did evolution begin and work?*

The fish lives in the sea without being aware of the sea, as it has never left the sea. So in the beginning, before *evolution* started, we were united with the Source of All, but *unconsciously*.

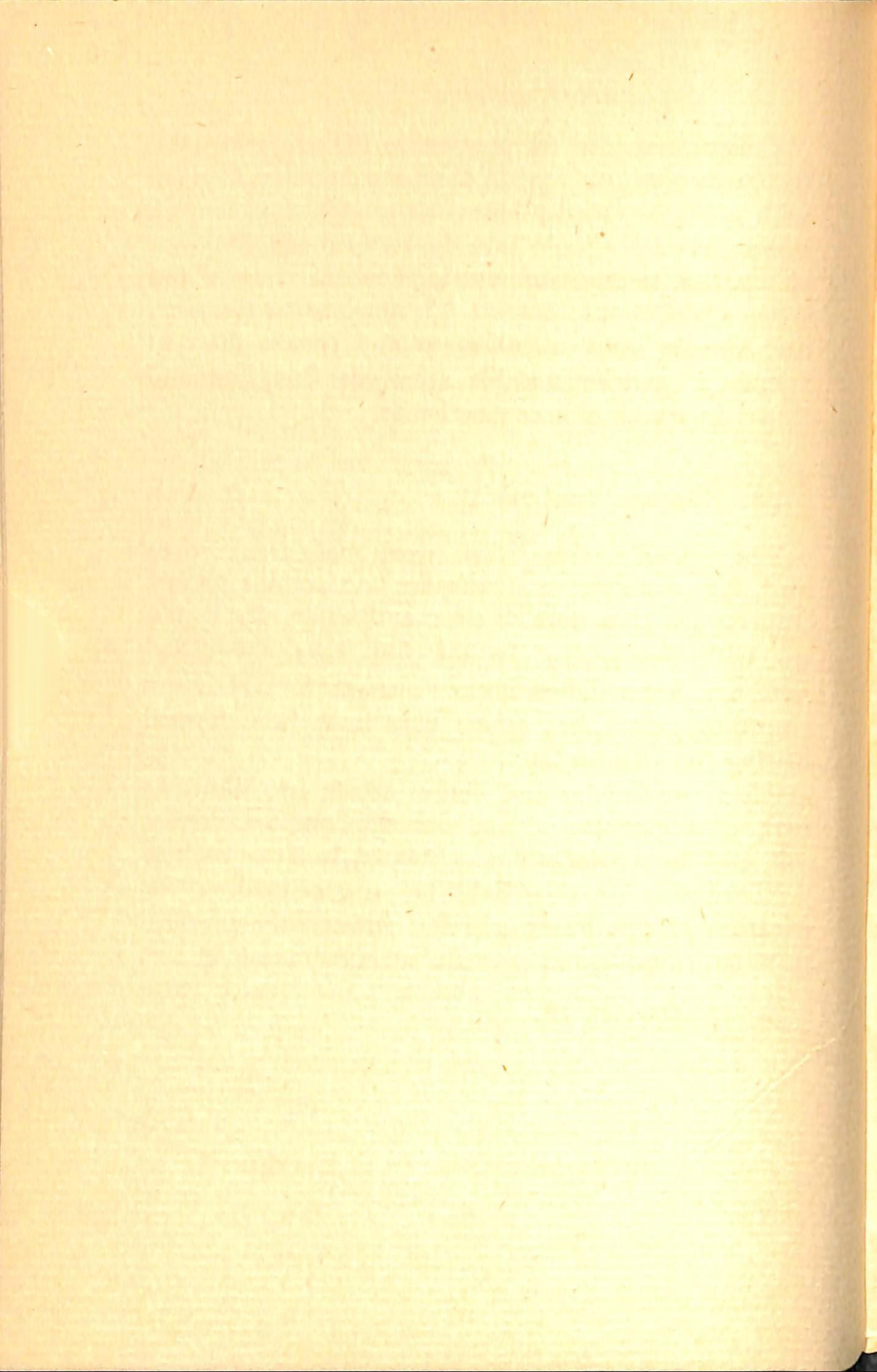
Evolution involved a separation from the source of all and a consequent longing to return to it through a succession of lives and forms. The conscious return to the source is possible only during physical incarnation, when consciousness becomes equilibrated in the gross matter. The unconscious soul, through evolution, gradually gains consciousness by means of successive related forms.

56. *Does Shri Meher Bāba deny "matter"?*

He denies nothing because for him *duality* does not exist. To a God-realized personality, matter and spirit seem both to be merged in the Ocean of Divinity. He sees the "Divine One" playing simultaneously the different rôles of the soul, spirit, mind, and body.

(a) The *soul* exists independently of nature and matter, it is infinite, everlasting, and pure.

(b) The *spirit*, though having the same Divine essence as the *soul*, differs in that it is attached to the



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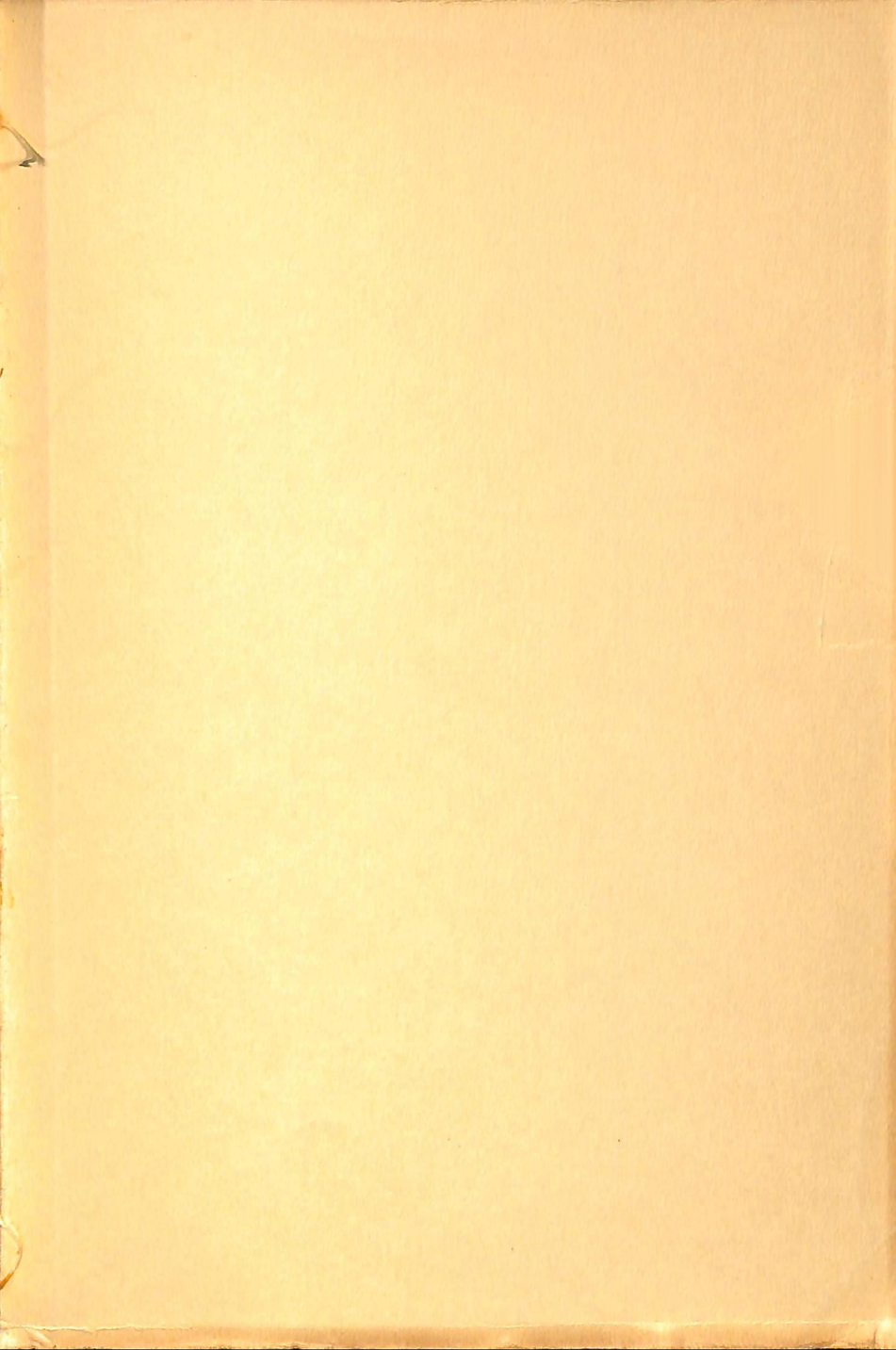
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