

GOD IN A PILL?

MEHER BABA
on
L.S.D.
and
THE HIGH ROADS

"Alas, alas, I pity those who compare
a glass bead to a pearl."

Hafiz

© 1966 Sufism Reoriented, Inc.
1290 Sutter Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94109
U.S.A.

1-701834

Many of those drawn to the use of LSD and other mind-changing drugs are prompted by the need to find out whether some enduring reality and purpose is to be found in life. The ideal is to experience such a sense of reality and purpose for oneself, if it is to be had. Many of those who have taken LSD trips are deeply affected by their experiences, regarding the use of psychedelics not only as a means of developing key insights into their own problems, but into the nature and purpose of creation as well. Certain individuals have become pioneers and in a sense prophets of the movement, largely as a result of the religious and even mystic implications that appear to flow from use of the drugs.

In this connection it is imperative to search for corroboration or refutation of these implications from persons credited with a high state of spiritual development through other disciplines. Meher Baba, of Ahmednagar, India, is such a one. Revered by millions throughout the world as a God-realized being and as Avatar of the age, he is doubtless the best non-acid authority available to compare the results of chemical stimulation of the deeper layers of being with those produced by techniques known and used throughout time by spiritual teachers.

Through an unusual series of events, Meher Baba has captured the devotion and imagination of a number of young thinkers and experimentalists who have been in the early forefront of the psychedelic movement. Recognizing the authority of his statements concerning internal realization (inner experience of Truth), they have received oral and written descriptions from Meher Baba comparing the effects of psychedelics with the enduring states* of consciousness generated through inner development.

It has seemed desirable to collect these statements by Meher Baba for their obvious value to all those intrigued by the effects of psychedelics, particularly those who read into their experiences an interpretation of spiritual significance. We quote now from Meher Baba:

"In an age when individual liberty is prized above all achievements, the fast-increasing number of drug addicts forms an appalling chain of self-sought bondage! Even as these drugs hold out an invitation to a fleeting sense of ecstasy, freedom or escape,

*Meher Baba has described these states in great detail in his God Speaks, Dodd, Mead 1955, and in Dr. William Donkin's The Wayfarers, Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India, 1948.

they enslave the individual in greater binding. LSD, a highly potent 'mind-changing' drug differing from the opium derivatives and being used in the research of mental science, is said to 'expand consciousness and alter one's personality for the better'. In America it has become tragically popular among the young, used indiscriminately by any and many. They must be persuaded to desist from taking drugs, for they are harmful—physically, mentally and spiritually.

"All so-called spiritual experiences generated by taking 'mind-changing' drugs such as LSD, mescaline and psilocybin are superficial and add enormously to one's addiction to the deceptions of illusion which is but the shadow of Reality.

"No drug, whatever its great promise, can help one to attain the spiritual goal. There is no short-cut to the goal except through the grace of the Perfect Master,** and drugs, LSD more than others, give only a semblance of 'spiritual experience', a glimpse of a false Reality.

** The Perfect Master is the God-realized being who has completed the cycle of evolution and involution through which consciousness is developed, matured and perfected, and who subsequently elects to return to active participation in creation in order to help other souls perfect consciousness.

"The experience of a semblance of freedom that these drugs may temporarily give to one is in actuality a millstone round the aspirant's neck in his efforts towards emancipation from the rounds of birth and death.

"The experience is as far removed from Reality as is a mirage from water. No matter how much one pursues the mirage one will never reach water and the search for God through drugs must end in disillusionment. One who knows the Way, who is the Way, cannot approve the continued pursuance of a method that not only must prove fruitless but leads away from the Path that leads to Reality.

"Experiences gained through LSD are, in some cases, experiences of the shadows of the subtle (emotion, energy) plane in the gross (physical) world. These experiences have nothing at all to do with spiritual advancement.

"The user of LSD can never reach subtle consciousness in this incarnation despite its repeated use. To experience real spiritual consciousness, surrenderance to a Perfect Master is necessary.

"It is human, and therefore necessarily wrongsighted, to view the result of the drug by its immediate relative effects - to calculate its end result is beyond human knowledge, and only the true Guide can point the way."

Meher Baba makes a fundamental point in this last observation which deserves amplification. If something is to be measured, a measuring standard should be used. The varied experiences of daily life provide a small part of the yardstick, but the greater part—the ultimate spiritual experience—is not readily available to most. Thus the psychedelic experimentalist must use an incomplete standard of measurement. Beyond the psychedelic experience he has only a few hints to be found in books on religious and mystic disciplines.

The honest seeker will recognize from this the inadequacy of his basis for judging his experiences through psychedelic media. Meher Baba has given several comments on this troublesome aspect of trying to judge the profundity of psychedelic experience.

"The experiences derived through the drugs are experiences by one in the gross world of the shadows of the subtle planes and are not continuous. The experiences of the subtle sphere by one on the subtle planes are continuous, but even these experiences are of illusion, for Reality is beyond them. And so, though LSD may lead one to feel a better man personally, the feeling of having had a glimpse of Reality may not only lull one into a false security but also will in the end derange one's mind. Although LSD is not an addiction-forming drug one can become attached to the experiences arising from its use and one gets tempted to use it in increasing doses, again and again, in the hope of deeper and deeper experiences. But eventually this causes madness or death.

"An example of experiences that are shadows of the subtle plane encountered in the gross world is that of a yogi who taught his 150 students to go into trance. When the students came out of the trance they were asked by the yogi to describe their experiences. Their accounts would be amazing to a man in the street, for in their state of trance they saw lights and colours galore—dazzling lights in colours and in circles and in different designs. They felt all things around them pulsating with life and felt themselves separate from their own bodies and become witness to all things.

"Even such experiences as these are but the shadows of the subtle plane experienced in the gross world, for they are not continuous. However, these are NOT spiritually harmful, but neither are they spiritually beneficial. But experiences induced through the use of drugs are harmful physically.

"Even actual experiences of the subtle planes in the subtle sphere (which are always continuous) are likened to the pleasure of children playing with toys. However, these experiences are spiritually beneficial since they create a longing in the aspirant for further advancement. But union with God is impossible without the grace of the Perfect Master.

"Consciousness is fully evolved and complete as soon as the soul identifies itself with the human form. This consciousness neither increases nor decreases; only the experiences of consciousness increase. Hence the states of sub-sub super consciousness, sub-super consciousness, super consciousness and God consciousness. This in other words is gross consciousness, subtle consciousness, mental consciousness and God consciousness. The lighter the burden of impressions (sanskaras) the higher the experiences of consciousness.

"There is also a state of perverted consciousness. It is a state in which consciousness indulges in induced experiences such as those gotten from the use of drugs; and even the most fantastic experiences thus induced are only the shadows of the subtle plane experienced in the gross world.

"Only the One who knows and experiences Reality, who is Reality, has the ability and authority to point out the false from the Real. The only Real experience is to continuously see God within oneself as the infinite effulgent ocean of Truth and then to become one with this infinite ocean and continuously experience infinite knowledge, power, and bliss."

Some persons have commented to Meher Baba on their sense of having become a better man or woman through psychedelics, and have speculated on the possible future role of these materials in an enlightened society. While deeply sensitive to the need of the individual for an ideal, and for a sense of motion in relation to that ideal, Meher Baba has carefully dissected the maximum result achievable through drugs from the exacting requirements of what must be done.

"To a few sincere seekers, LSD may have served as a means to arouse that spiritual longing which has brought them into my

contact, but once that purpose is served further ingestion would not only be harmful but have no point or purpose. The longing for Reality cannot be sustained by further use of drugs but only by the love for the Perfect Master which is a reflection of his love for the seeker.

"An individual may feel LSD has made a 'better' man of him socially and personally. But one will be a better man through Love than one can ever be through drugs or any other artificial aid. And the best man is he who has surrendered himself to the Perfect Master irrespective of his personal or social standing.

"As for possible use of the drug by an enlightened society for spiritual purposes—an enlightened society would never dream of using it!

"All the experiences even of spiritual aspirants on the Path to God-realization (gotten in the natural course of involution of consciousness) are of the domain of Illusion and are ephemeral and absolutely unimportant; how much more illusory and distracting are the experiences through substances compounded in a laboratory which have the semblance of those of the aspirant on the Spiritual Path! The one and only true experience is the experience of the Truth, the Reality; for once the realization of God is attained it remains a continual and never-ending experience.

"The all-pervading effulgence of God the Reality can only be experienced by an aspirant who keeps himself scrupulously above all illusory experimentations and humbly takes refuge in love of God.

"God can only be realized by loving Him with all the love at one's command—pure, simple and unadulterated love. When one's love for God, and God alone, is at its zenith true longing for union with God is greatest, and the aspirant's ego assertion is then at its lowest point.

"The aspirant at this stage is in the sixth plane of consciousness (vide "God Speaks") and 'sees' God face to face in all His glory. The aspirant experiences this without fear of fluctuation in his continual and never-ending experiencing of 'seeing' the glory of God. Even this most sublime experience of 'seeing' God face to face falls short of the only true experience—union with God the Reality.

"It is absolutely essential for a spiritual aspirant who genuinely longs for union with God—the Reality—to shun experiments

with the effects of certain drugs. These things do not uplift the aspirant nor draw him out of the rut of Illusion. Experiences born of these practices wear off as soon as the aspirant withdraws from or is thrown out of the orbit of the effect produced by the technique employed.

"But there is no drug that can promote the aspirant's progress—nor ever alleviate the sufferings of separation from his beloved God. LOVE is the only propeller and the only remedy. The aspirant should love God with all his heart till he forgets himself and recognizes his beloved God in himself and others.

"Even the experiences of the planes of consciousness are only another kind of an illusion! Experiences of the planes are 'Real Illusion', whereas those derived from the use of drugs are illusion into 'False Illusion'. This mundane life and the experiences thereof are a 'dream into a dream'; whereas the traversing of the spiritual Path by the seekers who gain experiences of planes of consciousness is a 'dream'."

While there is no room from the above for misconstruing Meher Baba's evaluation of the effects of psychedelics on the spiritual and social facets of the individual, some questions have been put to him on the medical use of these drugs. Here again his views are clear:

"Medically there are legitimate uses of LSD. It can be used beneficially for chronic alcoholism, for severe and serious cases of depression and for relief in mental illnesses. Use of LSD other than for specific medical purposes is harmful physically, mentally and spiritually.

"Any drug when used medically for diseases, under the direct supervision of a medical practitioner, is not impermissible and cannot be classed with individual usage of a drug for what one can get out of it—or hope to get out of it—whether thrills, forgetfulness, or a delusion of spiritual experience.

"LSD and other psychedelic drugs should never be used except when prescribed by a professional medical practitioner in the case of serious mental disorder under his direct supervision"

"In short, LSD can be used beneficially for specific medical purposes, but for spiritual progress it is not only useless but positively harmful.

"If the student world continues to indulge in the use of LSD, the best of its intellectual potential will be lost to the nation.

"Use of LSD produces hallucinations, and prolonged use of this drug will lead to mental derangement, which even the medical use of LSD would fail to cure."

There is some indication that one should regard the action of LSD as specific to the individual. One individual may be harmed more by using it one time than another individual who uses it thirty times. It must then be concluded that it is not safe nor advantageous to plan to use LSD two or three times for the experience it produces.

LSD apparently stimulates certain centers of the brain which are usually activated only as a by-product of the development of the spiritual seeker. In such a case activation is a normal process, and the seeker has then developed the capability to exercise safeguards. If these centers are artificially stimulated, the result is something like the forcing of a locked door. Then one is not certain that the door can be properly closed again.

Meher Baba summarizes his statements on LSD:

"Taking LSD is harmful physically, mentally and spiritually. But if you take me into your heart and love me as your real Self, you will find me in you as the infinite Ocean of Love. And this experience will remain continuously throughout eternity."

* * * * *

If these then are the facts—physical, social, spiritual—associated with the use of LSD, what is the safe path leading to enduring experience of the Self?*** Meher Baba has given out precise descriptions of such a path in a variety of books and pamphlets issued over the past thirty years. Some of his key statements on following pages indicate the way he charts for the seeker.

* * * * *

***The Self is something slightly different to each of the great disciplines—religious, mystic, psychiatric, psychoanalytic—but to all it is that inner kernel of reality which, when tapped, recognizes itself as the key to freedom from all insecurity, fear, uncertainty and doubt. It is the soul stripped of the ego-mind.

"God cannot be explained, He cannot be argued about, He cannot be theorized, nor can He be discussed and understood. God can only be lived...

"To understand the infinite, eternal Reality is not the goal of individualized beings in the illusion of Creation, because the Reality can never be understood; it is to be realized by conscious experience.

"Therefore, the goal is to realize the Reality and attain the 'I Am God' * state in human form."

"There is no creature which is not destined for the supreme goal, as there is no river which is not winding its way towards the sea. But only in the human form is consciousness so developed that it is capable of expressing the perfection of its own true self, which is the Self of all.

"However, even in the human form the soul is prevented from realizing its birthright of joy and fulfillment because of the burden of sanskaras (impressions, desires, habits) which it has accumulated as a by-product of its arduous development of consciousness. Like the dust that accumulates on the shoes of a traveler on foot, these sanskaras are gathered by the pilgrim as he treads the evolutionary path.

"In the human form, which is the crowning product of evolution, the divine life is enmeshed in the sanskaric deposits of the mind. The expression of the divine life is therefore curtailed and distorted by the distractions of the sanskaras, which weld consciousness instead to the fascinations of the false-phenomenal.

"One by one the many colored attachments to the false must be relinquished. Bit by bit the sanskaric tinder feeding the deceptive flames of the separative ego must be replaced by the imperative evidence of the unquenchable flame of truth. Only in this manner can man ascend to the height of divine attainment: the endless beginning of life eternal.

* Meher Baba describes in "God Speaks" the process by which the individual "drop-soul" regards itself as separate in order to develop consciousness--the purpose of all creation--and the manner in which each drop-soul gradually strips itself of the illusion of separateness until one day it realizes itself for what it always was: one with All, or God.

"The life in eternity knows no bondage, decay or sorrow. It is the everlasting and ever renewing self-affirmation of conscious, illimitable divinity. My mission is to help you inherit this hidden treasure of the Self."²

"The most essential condition of spiritual advancement is the lowering down of egoism to its minimum. It is most necessary for the aspirant to keep free from the idea 'I do this, and I do that.' He is (however) caught up in the dilemma that if he keeps inactive, he does nothing towards breaking through the prison of his ego-life; and, if he takes to a life of action, he (faces) the possibility of his ego being transferred to these new acts.

"To avoid inaction on the one hand and the pride of action on the other, it is necessary for the aspirant to construct a provisional and working ego which will be entirely subservient to the Master. Before beginning a thing, the aspirant thinks that it is not he who is doing it, that it is the Master who is getting it done through him; and, after doing it, he does not tarry to claim the results of action or enjoy them, but becomes free of them by offering them to the Master. (Thus) he succeeds in creating a new ego which is a source of that confidence, feeling, enthusiasm and 'go' which true action must express. But, this new ego is spiritually harmless, and when the time comes, can be thrown away, like a garment."³

"The easiest and safest way to lose one's finite ego is by surrendering completely to the Perfect Master or the Avatar,† who is consciously one with Truth. In them the past, present and future of the individual are drowned and during his implicit obedience to the master he is no longer bound by those actions, good and bad. Such complete surrenderance is in itself complete freedom.

"Of all the high roads which take the pilgrim directly to his divine destination, the quickest lies through the Avatar. The path through the (Avatar) is available to all those who approach Him in complete surrenderance and unwavering faith.

"To the one who has unfaltering love for the (Avatar) the way to abiding truth is clear and safe. Such a one must waste no time playing with things that do not matter. Loyalty to the unchangeable truth, guided by enduring love, is the simple way that leads to God and abiding peace...

† Avatar is the equivalent of Messenger, Messiah, Christ, Buddha.

"Complete surrenderance to the (Avatar) is not possible for one and all. When this is not possible, the other high roads which can eventually win the grace of God are:

- (1) Loving obedience to and remembrance of the (Avatar) to one's ability;
- (2) Love for God and intense longing to see Him and to be united with Him;
- (3) Being in constant company with the saints and lovers of God and rendering them whole-hearted service;
- (4) Avoiding lust, greed, anger, hatred and the temptations of power, fame and faultfinding;
- (5) Leaving everyone and everything in complete external renunciation and, in solitude, devoting oneself to fasting, prayer and meditation;
- (6) Carrying on all worldly duties with a pure heart and clean mind and with equal acceptance of success or failure, while remaining detached in the midst of intense activity; and
- (7) Selfless service of humanity, without thought of gain or reward.

"...The high roads are important because they take the pilgrim directly to his divine destination."⁴

"The best of all forces, which can overcome all difficulties on the way, is the love that knows how to give without need to bargain for a return. Pure love is matchless in majesty; it has no parallel in power, and there is no darkness it cannot dispel. God only listens to the language of the heart and its message of love, which needs no ceremony or show, only silent devotion for the Beloved."⁵ "God is not understood in His essence until he is also understood as Infinite Love."⁶ "Divine Love is unlimited in essence and expression, because it is experienced by the soul through the soul itself. The sojourn of the soul is a thrilling divine romance, in which the lover, who in the beginning is conscious of nothing but emptiness, frustration, superficiality and the gnawing chains of bondage, gradually attains an increasingly fuller and freer expression of love and ultimately disappears and merges into the Divine Beloved to realize the unity of the lover and the Beloved in the supreme and eternal fact of God as infinite love."⁷

REFERENCES

1. God Speaks, Meher Baba, page 176 (Dodd, Mead 1955)
2. Listen Humanity, Meher Baba, page xiii (Dodd, Mead 1957)
3. Discourses, Meher Baba, Vol. V, pp.22-23 (Adi K. Irani 1955)
4. Listen Humanity, pp. 163-166
5. Ibid, pp. 186-187
6. Discourses, Vol. V page 101
7. Ibid, pp. 105-106

Other books by Meher Baba as suggested reading:

Life at its Best

The Everything and the Nothing

Beams on the Spiritual Panorama

"If God can be found through the medium
of any drug, God is not worthy of being
God. "

Meher Baba