

BE FREE

from the fear

of

DEATH

By **MEHER BABA**

Published by

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107/5, Range Hills, Kirkee, Poona 3.

Printed by

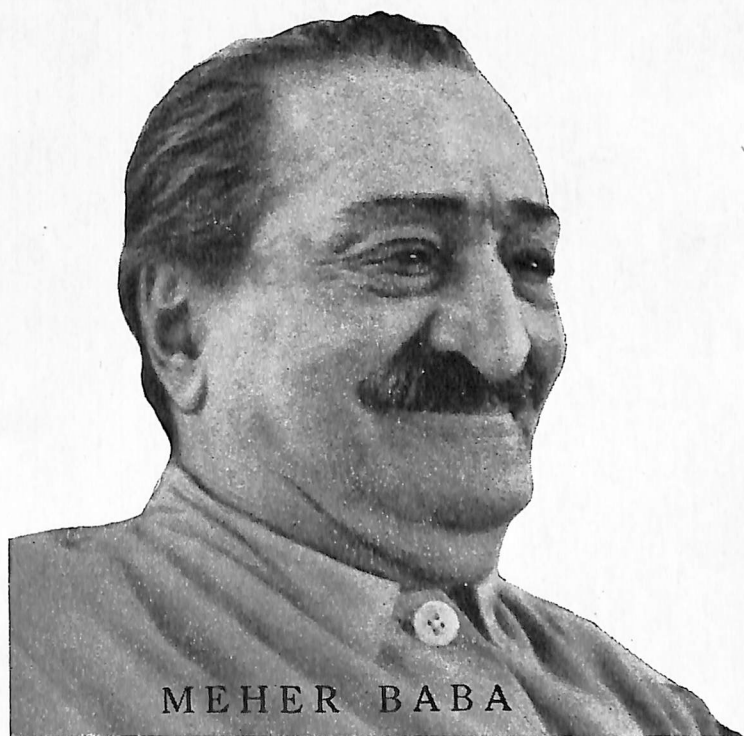
D. D. Gangal, Lokasangraha Press,
1786, Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2.

*In Commemoration of
the 70th Birthday of
Avatar Meher Baba,
25th February 1964.*

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MEHER BABA

THE AVATAR OF THE AGE

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet, a reprint of Part II, Chapter I of *Listen, Humanity* is to commemorate the 70th Birthday of Avatar Meher Baba.

At first thought one wonders why a discourse on Death to commemorate God-Man's birth? Then one remembers that death is not a negation of birth, but a rest from, and a sorting out of, the experiences of life; and a preparation for another birth. Birth; death; birth; until the final death and the Real Birth from which there is no more death.

So it is well that after the love-intoxication of the Celebration on 25th February, we give this Discourse some sober study. For when Avatar Meher Baba breaks His Silence with the word of words there will be quite a deal of return tickets for Here-There-Here handed out. And knowledge now is better than ignorance *then*. Amen. Amen.

Meherazad
9-2-1964 }

Francis Brabazon

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

(Extract from " Listen, Humanity.")

The immersion of the individual in the routine of life causes him to be seriously disturbed by the sudden experience of death, particularly when it takes away someone who has been near and dear to him. When the sight of death becomes too frequent, as in time of war or during an epidemic, the individual's mind tends to protect itself by retiring within a shell of habit and routine. Familiar actions, faces and surroundings, which require no thought or adjustment, become at such times a buttress to his emotional balance.

But even this wall of cultivated indifference crumbles when the hand of death snatches away someone who has entered deeply into his inner life—someone who perhaps acted as the pivotal point upon which his emotions turned. At such a time his unquestioning attitude towards life is disturbed and his mind becomes deeply preoccupied with an intensive search for lasting values.

The life of each person is deeply enmeshed in this mystery of death. But it is a mystery which accents thought instead of dulling it, for if anything makes man think intensely about the true nature of life, it is the recurrent theme of death.

As the tale of life is told it pauses frequently to contemplate the gaping holes left by death. There is no way to avoid the thought-provoking impact of that inescapable presence.

Although none escapes the intensive search for the hidden secret to the meaning of death, few can lift the veil and unravel the mystery. For most it remains a soul-

searing enigma which causes deep restlessness; for some it offers a wide field for imaginative speculation; for the few, it yields its secret.

Many refuse to accept death as the simple, final extinction of the individual, but this reaction is more often a form of unreasoned wish than a matter of unshakable conviction. Even so, this instinctive rebellion should not be lightly dismissed, for much of the vigor of this blind protest against the seeming fact of death springs from an obscured but still functioning intuition. However, this intuitive reaction does not approach the more secure position achieved through reasoned belief based on faith in the authority of a seer, or on the direct perception of those who know.

When a sensitive individual is first faced by a death of deep significance in his circle of close friends, he is usually struck by the transitory nature of all forms of life. Confronted by the undeniable impermanence of the body, yet unfortified by knowledge of some sustaining permanent principle, he often falls into a mood of deep despair or supercilious cynicism.

If life is inexorably doomed to extinction, he reasons, there can be little meaning in frantic efforts to achieve. In turn, this thought leaves him in a vacuum of purpose which may lead him either to a state of supine inaction, or may precipitate him into reckless rebellion. To him, existence seems to be conditional, intermittent and vanishing, while extinction appears to be unqualified, inescapable and permanent.

When such a grim conclusion has been reached, whether consciously or unconsciously, the individual is tempted to rain death and destruction upon others, or to invite it upon himself, merely because death appears to be more lasting than life. The recklessly destructive desperado and the determined suicide belong to this type. They

cannot accept life as having any real value, because their initial, unthinking faith in the value of life has been uprooted by the rude shock of death.

If death is accepted as real, and longer in duration than life, then life is degraded below meaninglessness. Even then, such values in life as truth, beauty, goodness and love can claim some intrinsic worth despite their fleeting existence. But in practical fact, all keenness for the pursuit of even these momentary values is gradually replaced by a sense of hopeless apathy, for one hears constantly a background whisper which says that they too are doomed to vanish one day.

If the cat, while stealthily drinking milk, knows that someone is waiting outside the door with a club, she can hardly relish the flavor of her surreptitious meal. Similarly, a man who comes to know that all his achievements must soon be brought to naught, can hardly have his heart in his efforts. If he stops to reflect that all the people he loves are earmarked for early conversion to dust, then his spontaneous enthusiasm gradually dries up and he is forced to consider what he is striving for. If he tries to cling to these loved ones despite his new awareness, all the desperateness of his ensuing efforts becomes only a sacrifice to vanity.

In order to avoid the pain which he is bound to feel at the inevitable loss of his dear ones, he may try to avoid life by adopting the viewpoint that the living are no more than on a par with the dead. The success of such a game depends upon an exact equation, for if he holds the slightest preference for the living, he will be gravely affected when the living become the dead.

He is forced finally to face the fact that if death means the extinguishing of his beloved brothers in a blind vacuum of eternity, then the entire game of life is a meaningless

tragedy. All courage, sacrifice and loyalty to ideals become a farce, and all vital seeking takes on the cast of empty endeavor, of much effort without purpose. Fear of loss treads closely upon all earnest attempts to appropriate and inherit the significance of life, depriving it of all sweetness.

In short, if death is looked upon as mere extinction, man tends to lose his balance and is plunged into perpetual gloom. All his dreams of the enduring reality of truth, beauty and love are refuted and seem by hindsight to have been a blind groping after illusion. His previous ideal of eternal and inexhaustible sweetness, instead of filling him with hope and enthusiasm, now reproaches him with the utter senselessness of all earthly values.

Thus death, when not understood, vitiates the whole of life, and the first impulsive answer of inaction or cynicism, which the individual usually forges to meet the question, strands him in a thoroughly desiccated universe of unrelieved weariness. Nevertheless, this gradually prepares him for another attempt to find a more vital answer to the inescapable query.

The human mind cannot endure such a stalemate for long, as there is an internal force which insists that the inner nature be in motion. Eventually the pressure for such motion breaks through the rigidity of such a negative concept of death. A great flood of new interrogation and discovery often breaks out, and in it the key question now posed by death becomes "What is life?"

The answers supplied are countless, and depend upon the passing moods which spring from the deeply rooted ignorance of the interrogator. The first instinctive answer is "Life is that which is terminated by death". This answer too is still completely inadequate, as it involves no positive principle on which a fruitful life can be based, nor can the

individual's need for development be met. Such an answer explains neither death nor life. The individual is driven to try to understand life and death along new lines.

Instead of looking upon death as the opposite of life, he now inevitably comes to look upon it as the handmaiden of life.

He begins to affirm intuitively the reality and the eternality of life. Instead of interpreting life in terms of death, man seeks to interpret death in terms of life. Slowly, event by event, he learns to take life again in all earnestness, with a deeper affirming consciousness. As he does so, he is able to give a more constructive response to the recurring sight of death. The challenge of death is now not only accepted and absorbed by life, but is met by a counter-challenge : "What is death ?" It is now death's turn to submit itself to critical scrutiny.

The most unsophisticated answer to this counter-question is "Death is only an incident in life." This simple and profoundly true declaration terminates the unendurable chaos precipitated by regarding death as the extinction of life. Soon it is clearly seen that it is futile to try to understand death without first understanding life.

As consciousness gradually settles into this balanced approach to the problem, it takes on a healthy tone which makes it receptive to the truth concerning both life and death. Direct, undimmed knowledge of such truth is available only to spiritually advanced souls. The seers of all times have had direct access to the truth about life and death, and they have repeatedly given a suffering and groping humanity useful information on this point.

Their explanations are important because they protect man's mind from erroneous and harmful attitudes towards life and death, and prepare him for perception of the truth. Although direct knowledge of truth requires

considerable spiritual perception, nevertheless even correct intellectual understanding of the relationships of life and death plays an important part in restoring mankind to a healthy outlook.

Above incarnate life in birth and beyond discarnate life after death, the soul is one indivisible, eternal existence. The gestation of individualization of the soul begins with the evolution of its consciousness. Consciousness begins to evolve in incarnate life, and its evolution becomes complete only in incarnate life.

Simultaneously with the evolution of consciousness through the evolution of forms (bodies), *sanskaras** begin to accumulate. The evolution of form and of consciousness (and with it individualization of the human ego-mind) is complete when the soul attains the human form for the first time. But because of the accumulated *sanskaras*, the fully evolved consciousness of the soul remains entrapped in illusion and therefore is not directed towards the soul's self-realization (God-realization).

For self-realization, all *sanskaras* must be completely wiped out to enable the soul, as the individualized ego, to be transmuted into the individualized soul in the conscious state of God. Further, the *sanskaras* that began to accumulate in an incarnate life, have to be wiped out in an incarnate life. In order to be wiped out in toto, *sanskaras* must be annulled or cancelled through the process of exact-equalization or perfect qualitative and quantitative balancing of *all* opposite *sanskaras*, whether good or bad. This is extremely difficult, for the *sanskaras* have a

* *Sanskaras* are the habit patterns and the unconscious motivations remaining from previous actions in this and in past lives. They are the propelling forces which so largely determine the actions of the individual, and leave him so little opportunity for positive action aimed at progressive understanding and development of his own nature.

natural tendency towards preponderance of one opposite over the other.

While unbalance of the opposite *sanskaras* reaches its maximum in an incarnate life, *near* balancing is achieved after death during a period of discarnate life, through the intense subjective pleasure or suffering in the states known as heaven and hell. Each incarnate life is an opportunity for the realization of one's true self. Each death or discarnate life is an opportunity for achieving a semblance of balance to start another birth, with its further chance at self-realization. If the opportunity were fully taken, *one* incarnate life could be sufficient to make the individual realize this goal; but it is well-nigh impossible to attain the initiative and longing to do so without getting involved in the illusory maze of innumerable opposite experiences. The contact of a Perfect Master is invaluable in calling a halt to the dizzy gyrations of incarnate and discarnate lives in illusion, and awakening the individual to the real knowledge of self.

From the psychological point of view, death entails no slightest curtailment of individual existence. This does not mean that the surviving mind remains unaffected by the *kind* of death which severed the individual from the body. Both the condition of the mind as well as its capability to progress further in the life-after-death are often substantially determined by the conditions surrounding the death.

From the standpoint of its psychic after-effects, death can be classified into three broad types : (1) normal, (2) abnormal and (3) supernormal. Normal death follows an illness which ultimately renders the physiological functioning of the body impossible. Generally it involves some kind of warning to the individual, for, if the illness is severe, he often anticipates that death is at hand. Although

by no means true of all deaths caused by illness, when the individual has some anticipation of impending death he usually has a chance to tie up loose ends and prepare his mind for this new crisis.

The second or abnormal type of death is that which results from accidents, murder, war and suicide. In accidents and murder there is generally no anticipation of impending death. Being unexpected, death involves in such instances a shock which can shatter the very roots of the *sanskaras* seeking expression through the physical incarnation of the individual.

In unanticipated accidental death, the ordinary ego-mind has a moderate tendency to gravitate towards the gross sphere and cling to it because of the ego-mind's attachment to the gross world.

In anticipated (abnormal) death, when resulting from murder or war, the ego-mind can become bound to the gross world by the chains of unfulfilled revenge. There is less tendency for such binding to occur in death due to war, than in that resulting from murder. In war the combatants on both sides are often impersonal in their actions, and aware that they are fighting for some cause, rather than through personal enmity. If this awareness is clear and steady, death in war does not yield the mental reaction of revenge.

Among abnormal kinds of death, suicide deserves special attention. Suicide may be divided into four grades: (1) lowest, (2) low, (3) high and (4) highest.

The lowest type is a last measure in escaping punishment or ignominy or utter frustration after the individual has tried unscrupulously to satisfy his own selfish desires. Thus one who has committed murder for lust or power may commit suicide when he is caught. Even after leaving the body, such a person does not succeed in severing his link

with the gross world for hundreds of years. These individuals live literally as ghosts in the semi-subtle sphere, which lies between the gross and the subtle world. They experience agonizing suffering because of their unfulfilled desires. Due to the link which they preserve with the gross world, they continue to desire various gross objects keenly, a desire which can never be fulfilled. This suffering is even more acute than the intense sufferings in the hell-state* that the individual experiences after he severs his connection with the gross world.

A somewhat less acute class of suffering in imagination is experienced in the hell-state by suicides who have been slightly better motivated, but who are still classified as "low". In this group are those motivated by sheer disgust with life. Thus a person suffering from bad health, or stricken by a loathsome disease, or one who is poverty-stricken and ashamed of being a burden on others, might put an end to his life through lack of will to live.

Since the cause of such a suicide is revulsion from earthly life, the ego-mind does not continue to maintain any enduring link with the gross world beyond the normal three or four days following death. After that normal period, the link is snapped and the ego-mind then begins to experience the intense suffering of its bad *sanskaras*, usually termed the hell-state.

Although a ghost caught in the semi-subtle sphere suffers even more acutely than does the ego-mind "experiencing" the hell-state, the latter achieves some exhaustion of evil *sanskaras* while the former does not. Further, the sufferings of the ghosts who maintain their link with the earthly life are more tantalizing, because the link constantly

* Neither hell nor heaven should be regarded as places. They are mental states, and imaginary in the same sense that the world of duality also exists in the realm of illusion. See below.

holds before them the prospect of fulfillment of gross desires, without actual means for their satisfaction.

The general belief that suicide is bad is due to the fact that it is usually the result of low motives or a cowardly attitude towards life. When suicide is employed as an escape from dilemmas brought on by failure to cope with the needs of life, it is not only ignoble, but far-reaching as well in its demoralizing effects upon the victim.

The third or high type of suicide is in no way rooted in inferior motives and is therefore free of their deteriorating effects. It is inspired by altruistic motives alone and is a sacrifice made to secure the material or spiritual well-being of others. One who meets death through, e. g. a hunger strike, in order to better the welfare of the masses, is a suicide of this high type.

The motives of such a suicide are not far different from those of martyrs who lay down their lives on the battlefield for country, society or religion. The total absence of base motives in this high type of suicide makes it entirely different from the lower grades. As in other noble acts of self-effacement, such highly motivated action entitles the departed individual to the privileges and pleasures of the heavenly state, and also constitutes a definite asset in his spiritual ongoing.

A suicide inspired by ordinary altruistic motives is not the highest type. The fourth or highest class results from intense desire to see God or to unite with Him; this is an extremely rare occurrence. In most cases in which suicide is believed to have been committed for the sake of God, there is an admixture of other motivating factors, such as dissatisfaction with conditions in earthly life.

If and when suicide is embraced purely for the sake of attaining God, it can have the effect of achieving liberation, or *Mukti*. The masters have always warned aspirants against

resorting to suicide in the intensity of their longing for union with God, for there is too great room for self-deception and inadvertent admixture of inferior unconscious motivation.

Regardless of the abnormality of the circumstances which may lie back of it, no type of death can really damn the individual forever. It is never more than an incident in his long spiritual journey.

The third or supernormal type of death consists in leaving the body voluntarily. This is done by the advanced yogis who wind up their earthly careers after fulfilling their mission, much as the student locks up his text books after passing his examination. The supernormal or voluntary death of the advanced yogi is definitely anticipated and willed, but is entirely different from suicide insofar as motives, results and manner of leaving the body are concerned.

Friends and relatives of a departed one often are seriously upset by his death, because the dissolution of the form may seem to them to be the extinction of life itself. All of their attachments had been related to the *form*. It was because of the *form* that they had contact with the soul, and it was through the *form* that their various physical and emotional needs were fulfilled. The disappearance of the body that had acted as the vehicle of the soul is therefore often interpreted by them as the annihilation of the individual himself.

From the purely physical point of view, death does not involve annihilation of even the body, but physiologically it has become unfit to be the continued dwelling place of the spirit, and has therefore lost all importance.

From the point of view of the individualized soul as mind, death does not involve any loss whatsoever, as the mind and all its *sanskaras* remain intact. The individual in essence is thus in no way different. He has only cast

off his external coat. Nevertheless this severance from the physical body is fraught with two important consequences. It is a means of introducing the individual to a new type of existence, and it is also in itself an incident of the utmost importance because of side effects of the greatest practical consequence.

When others die, the individual loses only one or at most a few friends who have played an important rôle in his earthly existence. But when *he* dies he loses at one stroke all the persons who had entered intimately into his own life. He also loses all his possessions and is broken away from the achievements on which he had built the very foundations of his sense of accomplishment in life.

As the crowning touch, he must also leave behind the very physical body with which he had identified himself so completely that he was rarely capable of imagining himself as anything but that physical body. This complete annihilation of the entire structure of the individual's earthly existence is therefore a crisis without parallel in his life.

This critical turning point, which occurs at death, is attended by both advantages and disadvantages. The greatest disadvantage lies in the fact that the individual must leave incomplete all the undertakings of his earthly life; he must leave the entire chessboard without taking any further interest in it. The scene of his life is blotted out and the chain of his mundane interests is hacked apart.

From the standpoint of objective achievement, the continuity of his undertaking has undergone an abrupt break. Advancement of the projects he has left behind must come from his previous associates, and can no longer be his concern. It is rare for the individual to be drawn back through a *sanskritic* linking to the identical task which he had begun in a past incarnation, to develop it on from the point where his successors had left it.

It would be a mistake to think that death brings nothing but disadvantages. Death also brings about a general weakening of attachments by shattering all the *sanskaras* which were fed by the earthly objects, because the mind is now torn away from them. While it is true that many of the *sadhanas** undertaken by the individual during earthly life have the effect of unwinding previous *sanskaras*, still it is only in extremely rare instances that he succeeds in completely erasing the present and future effects of these *sanskaras*. This erasure is effected within certain well-defined limits by the sudden transplanting of the individual that occurs at death.

If the lessons inherent in a single death were to be thoroughly assimilated by the individual, he would benefit by the equivalent of several lifetimes of patient spiritual effort. Unfortunately this does not happen in most cases, because after death the individual usually tries to revive his accumulated *sanskaras*. Through these revived *sanskaras* he recaptures the experiences through which he has already lived. The period immediately following death usually becomes therefore an occasion for the repetition of all that has previously been lived through, rather than a period of emancipation through understanding all that has been lived out.

Regardless of these shortcomings, death does give a severe shaking to the tree of *sanskaras*—root, trunk and branch—and this impels the mind to revise its attitude towards the objective universe. Death also facilitates a certain amount of disentanglement from the attractive world of form. The individual is never able to go back to earth without some modification of his approach to life.

Life in a new physical body must conform to lines determined by the individual's *sanskaras*. Thus there is

* Devotional and disciplinary practices.

often a close resemblance to the past life on earth, but it is not a literal repetition of the past. *It is a new experiment.*

This readjustment of outlook, which is facilitated by the abrupt reorientation involved in death, is particularly helpful when it occurs after spiritual aspiration has been awakened in the individual. In such cases the loosening of all attachment which occurs at death is very conducive to the further flowering of spiritual aspiration. The aspirant now has a chance under fresh circumstances to remodel the entire pattern of his life in line with his spiritual aspirations.

Because of these special opportunities which death offers, the aspirant does not regret his own death. For him, death is not a cloud without its silver lining. The Perfect Master Jalalu'l-Din Rumi has said that he always progressed through frequent deaths. But this cannot justify anyone, and even less a spiritual aspirant, in seeking death for its own sake. To seek death in this manner is to put a false premium upon it. Such seeking of death springs from fear of life and from failure to cope with it, and inevitably must defeat its own purpose.

If death has any value, it is to teach the individual the true art of life. It would be wrong for the aspirant to seek death with the hope of making further progress thereby. On the other hand he should not fear death when it overtakes him. A true aspirant neither seeks death nor fears it, and when death comes to him he converts it into a stepping stone to the higher life.

Some people are particularly afraid of the exact moment of death because they anticipate unbearable pain at that instant. In reality, all physical suffering experienced during illness or just before death terminates at the moment of death. The process of the actual dropping of the body is quite painless, contrary to the superstition that a person experiences indescribable agonies in death.

However the severing of the individual's emotional entanglement in the gross world is not found to be easy. The various religious rites observed after a death have primarily the purpose of helping the departing individual disentangle himself from these ties.

For instance, the repetition of the name of God or of scriptures, often practiced after the death of a person, has a wholesome effect both on those who have been left behind as well as on the one who has passed away, because they help to free both parties of their mutual *sanskritic* attachment to form. On the other hand the lamentation and wailing that is often observed has a degrading and depressing effect both on those left behind as well as on the person who has passed away, for it tends to strengthen mutual attachment to form.

The thought or wish the dying individual holds at the moment of death has special importance in determining his future destiny. If the last thought is of God or the master, the individual achieves liberation.

It is quite common for an individual not to have any specific thought at the moment of death. Even if he has had thoughts or wishes before death, he will tend to forget them at the time of death. At that moment some people hope they may not return to earthly life, but they are not exempted from rebirth by mere wishing. They are reborn, but exhibit a pronounced disgust for life, and tend to lead the lives of ascetics or recluses.

If the good* and evil *sanskrits* of the individual are almost balanced at the time of death, he may take on a new physical body almost immediately. He may even

* "Good" actions leave *sanskritic* residues in the individual's subconscious as surely as do "bad" actions. Therefore the individual may be bound just as surely by the "golden chains forged by good actions" as by the "iron chains of bad actions."

enter a new incarnation as early as the fourth day after death. In such urgent cases of rebirth the individual can enliven a ready foetus any time between the sixth and seventh months of embryological development. It is important to note that both father and mother give only *prana* or vital energy to the foetus. In addition to receiving *prana*, it must be enlivened by some individualized soul. Ordinarily this takes place during the later stages of embryological development.

When the individual is ready for reincarnation he is automatically drawn to his future parents by *sanskritic* links. The parents act as a magnet due to their previous connections with the reincarnating individual. Occasionally the strongest *sanskritic* or *karmic* link which the reincarnating individual has with incarnate individuals is not with the parents, but with a brother or sister. It is this link, then, that determines the family in which he takes birth.

In times of emergency, as in wars or epidemics, when thousands of individuals may seek immediate reincarnation, it is not always possible for all to be born into families having strong previous links with them. But if the *sanskritic* status of the individual is precipitating him towards incarnation, his taking on of a body is not postponed merely because parents are not available to provide a suitable previous link. It is possible through the intervention of the Masters to make infinite adjustments through mutual exchanges.

Death is like throwing away clothes which have become useless through wear and tear. Just as a traveller may stop at different places, and at each halt may change clothes according to his needs, so the individual goes on changing his bodies according to the needs of his *sanskritas*.

Death may also be compared to sleep. When a man goes to sleep, he wakes up in the same physical body. When

he drops his physical body at death, he wakes up in another physical body.

For most persons the period between death and birth is one of absorption in subjectivity. As mentioned before, after death the ego-mind of the individual normally retains its tie with the remnants of the physical body for three or four days. After this period the connection is completely severed and the individual then exists entirely in the subjectivity of his mental states. This subjective phase is brought about by the resurrection of all the *sanskaras* which the ego-mind has brought along with it after death.

The sudden transplanting of the ego-mind from one sphere to another does wear out the scars of the *sanskaras* to some extent, but for the greater part they remain intact. If death had resulted in the complete wiping out of all the *sanskritic* scars on the mind it would have resulted in emancipation of the individual from all limitation. But this does not happen. Not only are the *sanskritic* imprints retained after death, but they may unroll unhampered in the life after death.

As the *sanskritic* sheet is unwound, the individual experiences in the hell-or heaven-state the sufferings or pleasures embodied in the bad and good *sanskaras*. Every individual has both classes in his store, and his mental state in the life after death is determined by which of these preponderates.

The intensity of the sufferings or pleasures which the individual experiences through these revived *sanskaras* is so great that a greater exhaustion of these *sanskaras* is brought about during a relatively short period than is possible in hundreds of years of suffering or pleasure in the earthly life. It is these posthumous mental states of intense suffering and pleasure which are respectively known in religious literature as hell and heaven. In popular belief they are

incorrectly regarded as places or spheres. It is more appropriate to speak of a *hell-state* or *heaven-state*, rather than places.

When there is a preponderance of evil *sanskaras* at death, the individual gradually exhausts the bad *sanskaras* through suffering in the hell-state. The result is that the evil *sanskaras* eventually tend to strike a balance with the good *sanskaras*. It is as if a huge block of ice were placed on one pan of a balance, causing it to sink because of its excess over a smaller weight contained on the counter-balance pan. As the great block of ice is gradually melted and the water spills, there is a tendency for the two pans to come into balance.

Similarly, as the mass of evil *sanskaras* becomes attenuated through suffering, their preponderance begins to vanish and they *almost* come into balance with the good *sanskaras*. This moment, when the two opposite types of *sanskaras* are almost in a state of balance, is the moment when the after-life of the individual terminates and he finds himself precipitating into a new physical incarnation on earth. He is precipitated into a new physical body because no further purpose is served by continuation of his subjective absorption in the discarnate life. He is ripe to accumulate fresh experience in another gross body, and for this purpose he must adopt a vehicle which is suitable for the working out of his unexhausted *sanskaras*.

If the individual soul has been exhausting an excess of evil *sanskaras* and has therefore been undergoing a hell-state, he may jump into a new incarnation in which good *sanskaras* tend to dominate. The cause of this unexpected reversal is to be found in the strength of flow of the *sanskritic* currents. At the time he incarnates, the individual had already been relieved of the excess of his evil *sanskaras*, and the strong tide of his good *sanskaras* was about to predomi-

nate. Consequently it is the vigorous current of the good *sanskaras* which motivates him in his new incarnation. Thus a man who had been a profligate in his last life might begin his new incarnation with a marked inclination towards asceticism.

Conversely, a swing over can occur from good to bad when one jumps into an incarnation from a heaven-state in which the preponderance of good *sanskaras* had been exhausted through intense imaginative pleasure. The moment of incarnation into a new physical body is precipitated when the good and the bad *sanskaras* have *almost* balanced each other and the tide of the bad *sanskaras* is about to predominate.

A change over at incarnation from good to bad or from bad to good should not be taken as a universal law. Reversal of individual nature is frequent, but cases are also quite common in which the individual remains persistently good or bad for several incarnations. In such cases incarnation occurs before the opposite type of *sanskara* has built up a sufficient current of flow to result in its predominance.

The beginning of the true existence of the individual self * occurs at the moment when consciousness in the course of its evolution adopts its *first* human form. This also represents the terminal step in its *evolutionary* development. This is the moment when the limited individuality is crystallized as the "I" that exhibits the basic characteristic of "self-consciousness". This is the true birth of the individual.

The true death of the individual occurs at that moment when he transcends his limited individuality or separative

* Not to be confused with the manifestation of the individual soul, which occurred at the very beginning of the long evolutive process through the various sub-gaseous, gaseous, stone, metal, vegetable, fish and animal forms. See *God speaks*, Meher Baba.

consciousness by being taken up in the truth-consciousness of the unlimited and undivided being of God. The true death of the individual consists in the complete disappearance of the limiting ego-mind that has created the *sanskritic* veil of ignorance. True death is a far more difficult process than physical death, but when it occurs through the grace of the master it takes no longer than the twinkling of an eye. This dissolution of the ego-mind and the freeing of the soul from the illusion of separative limited individuality are known as liberation.

The *sanskara*-ridden ego-mind can never attain any real poise. It vacillates in constant rhythm to the alternating dominant *sanskaras*. Consciousness can attain true poise only when the ego-mind with all its attendant *sanskaras* terminates. This is effected through the emergence of the unlimited and ultra-*sanskritic* individuality that comes into its own upon the inheriting of conscious, eternal existence, which is true immortality.

The infinite poise of consciousness in realization should not be confused with the semblance of *sanskritic* equilibration that is approached by the limited ego-mind in discarnate life in the hell-or heaven-state. Such ineffable poise is unapproachable by the full consciousness in man as long as it remains clouded by the slightest traces of the limiting ego-mind.

At the time of taking on a new physical body, the good and the bad *sanskaras* of the individual are *almost* in balance. However there is always a slight ascendance at this time of either the good or bad *sanskaras*. They are never in perfect balance, nor do they in any manner overlap or cancel one another. Complete poise can exist only when the two opposite classes of *sanskaras* are so qualitatively and quantitatively opposed that they exactly cancel one another.

When opposite *sanskaras* are not only equal in strength but are also in exact qualitative opposition, they cancel each other and can no longer act as semi-automatic subjective propelling forces, but are transmuted into consummate understanding that is free from opposing reactions to life. This is the state of liberation.

The seeming balance that is approximated by the individual before each birth may be compared to a tug-of-war in which opposite forces are active, although neither may predominate. The matching of forces then has only to be slightly disturbed and the entire situation becomes subject to change. In the same manner, the pseudo-poise of *sanskaras* present at the time of birth has only to be slightly disturbed in order to imprint the *sanskritic* pattern for the individual life.

In the state of realization the opposite types of *sanskaras* interpenetrate each other in such a manner that they cease to exist as opposing forces. The resultant is not a state of *sanskritic* tension, but a state of complete internal neutralization in which the *sanskaras* have ceased to exist as propulsive elements. This is not a mere state of exact mathematical equalization of opposites, but a state beyond the opposites—of true poise rooted in unbroken consciousness of infinite unity.

During the entire long period preceding realization, the mind acts in each single circumstance according to the dictates of the preponderant *sanskaras*. As in a tug-of-war, there is movement in the direction of the greater pull, but that motion represents only a small proportion of the total energy spent, for most of it was used up in the opposition of forces.

In realization there is an entire disappearance or cancellation of the *sanskaras* such as would occur in a tug-of-war when the opposing parties finished the game and

stopped pulling in opposite directions. On the other hand, in near equalization of *sanskritic* tension there is only a temporary arrest of express activity. Then, when some new or outside factor upsets this equilibrium, reactions occur which show that the situation had been quiet not because of lack of propelling forces, but rather because they had temporarily cancelled one another.*

With the annulment of the *sanskritas*, the individual is freed permanently from all *sanskritic* determination. As a consequence, for the first time the individual's life can express itself without latent or patent inhibitions, for it functions in the limitless understanding of truth.

This true poise of realization, which admits no further possibility of disturbance through resurrection of any limiting tendencies, can only be attained while the individual has a physical body. It can never come through the speeding-up processes of one-sided *sanskritic* exhaustion

* This analysis has the greatest possible practical significance in considering the adjustment of the individual to his environment. It often happens that balancing forces in environment tend to bring a very difficult personal situation into temporary equilibrium. At this point the individual tends to regard the situation as solved, because he is no longer aware of any intense localized pressure.

However, eventually those balancing forces will shift, and once more the situation will seem to fly out of control. This is usually very discouraging because the sequence may be repeated several times without apparent improvement. The individual then often asks himself why he should continue to try, as he never seems to find a lasting solution to his problems.

But the poise originally established was due only to a happy combination of forces (*Sanskritas*) that almost cancelled each other. Final release comes as the basic motivating forces are dissolved and resorbed in the process of ultimate realization.

This may seem a discouragingly remote solution to the pressing problem of the moment, but in such a final solution the answer is complete and the poise absolute, because the forces themselves have been annihilated and lost.

that take place in the hell-state or heaven-state. This is the all-important reason why every individual has to come back to the gross world again and again in physical incarnation, until self-realization is attained.

The alternating links of the continuous chain of individual existence consist of incarnate and discarnate lives, forged from periods of birth to death and death to birth. Only in God-realization can life be freed from the shackles of limited individuality. Only in God-realization does the tenacious chain of recurrent incarnations reach final fulfillment and termination. It is a state of eternal existence, free from birth or death. It is true immortality or deathlessness, by virtue of the fact that it is *above* the birth and death of the body.

True immortality is not the survival of the limited individual in the period following the death of the physical body. It is true that the ego-mind persists unscathed through death, but the individual cannot and does not thereupon attain to final freedom from birth and death. *Survival* should not be confused with deathlessness—which is true immortality. The chain of alternating incarnate and discarnate life is only a survival of consciousness-plus-ignorance, and ignorance makes true life impossible.

Life in ignorance is the very negation of existence in truth. It is so basic a curtailment of true existence that, when judged by the standards of the true existence in eternity, it had best be termed a continuous death. Only in realization is consciousness emancipated from the tyranny of this continuous death which nullifies the true life in eternity. And only in liberation can consciousness arrive at that true immortality which lies beyond all curtailment and obscurity.

The individual who has achieved realization of the truth is initiated into eternal and unlimited life, for the

limiting ego-mind with all its attendant *sanskaras* has undergone a death that is final. In this process the limited individuality is shed and the soul is invested with unlimited, divine individuality. This may be termed a journey of the soul, but it is by no means the first journey.

The first journey consisted in the evolving of consciousness through the evolutionary process, starting in the most rudimentary subgaseous forms and ending in the attainment of full consciousness in the human form. This journey extends from initial attainment of consciousness by the individual soul to birth of the limited human individuality, in which full consciousness has been achieved, but a consciousness still clouded and ridden with *sanskaras*.

The second journey of the soul consists in the involution of the now fully evolved consciousness through the removal of the clouds of *sanskaras*. The removal requires the effort of numberless lifetimes and lasts from the birth of the limited human individuality to its termination in the unlimited truth. This second journey brings the individual to the unlimited and untrammelled state of infinite existence or immortality and is considered in great detail in Chapter VI of "LISTEN, HUMANITY" by Meher Baba. The terminus of this Journey is known in Sufi literature as *Fana-fillah*, the final annihilation of the limited ego in the conscious state of God.

At the end of the first journey, the soul becomes conscious of *maya*, or the illusion of duality. This domain of *maya* has only imaginary existence. The entire universe thus in reality is only a zero, but this zero exists for the fully evolved consciousness of the individual human being.

Maya gives to the life of the individual all the meaning that it has, and the imaginary universe of *maya* continues to have a semblance of reality and significance until the

wayfarer arrives at the terminus of the second journey, or *Fana-fillah*.

In the state of *Fana-fillah* the universe disappears and has neither existence nor value. This is the true and final terminus point of the great journey. It is reached when the ego-mind has met its total and final death, from which no resurrection is possible. Then only God exists as the supreme and sole reality, and the universe has become a true zero without existence even in imagination.

At this terminus the individual's consciousness is endowed with divine individuality and he is known as a *Majzooob-e-kamil*. At the time of the extinction of the ego-mind (or limited individuality) and the conscious union of the soul in the Over-Soul, consciousness is withdrawn completely from the physical, subtle and mental bodies and these are usually dropped within four days. When the *Majzooob's* body, which for him does not exist, does not actually drop, it is sustained by the devotees or "lovers" who have been attached to him through that body.

When the *Majzooob* was a wayfarer during the second journey he may have had several friends who loved him and expected spiritual guidance from him. The *sanskritic* links thus formed by such friends to the physical body of the wayfarer now cause the body of the *Majzooob* to go on living, even though he is no longer linked in any way with it.

The *Bhaktas* or devotees of the *Majzooob* provide sustenance for his physical body, which keeps on functioning automatically, and by their link with it the devotees derive much spiritual benefit. But all this activity of the body is completely automatic and involves no conscious interest on the part of the *Majzooob*. After the purpose of the *sanskritic* link formed by the *Bhaktas* to the physical form of the

Majzoob has been fulfilled, the body of the *Majzoob* ceases to function and is dropped.

When the body of one who has arrived at unlimited truth is automatically dropped at the end of four days, or is dropped after its link to the devotees has been fulfilled, the event can be properly termed neither death nor a journey. It cannot be said to be death, because at the time the body is dropped it has no connection with the consciousness of the person who was once attached to it. The link with the soul has already been snapped and the body continues only on the universal flow of divine benevolence. Death is a severance of the connection between consciousness and the physical body, and since in the two cases just described the body retains no connection with consciousness, they are not properly cases of death.

Nor is it at all suitable to call such deaths "journeys of the consciousness", for the dropping of the physical body makes no difference to the consciousness that was once attached to it. With or without the body, consciousness remains what it had become upon the complete vanishing of separative individuality: abidingly illumined and infinitely absorbed in truth.

If, as occurs in rare cases, truth-realized consciousness returns to normal consciousness of the body and of the universe (without diminution or curtailment of realization), this event is properly described as the third journey. This third journey is undertaken only by the Perfect Masters (*Sadgurus*, *Qutubs*) who, upon returning to consciousness of body and universe, establish their divine and unlimited individuality in the apparent world of duality. This state of affirmation of unbounded truth in and through the universe of *maya* is known in Sufi terminology as *Baqabillah*, or abiding simultaneously in God and in illusion.

The apparent universe now has existence for the

divine individuality, but at this terminus of the third journey the universe is realized as being nothing and having absolutely no value. The only thing that has real value is God, and the *Sadguru* sees that the entire universe has no reality in itself and exists only as the apparent manifestation of God.

If zeros are placed after the number one (e. g. 100000), each zero assumes value not because it has value in itself, but because it is placed after the number one. In the *maya*-ridden state, the relative status of the zeros and the number one are not realized. The two are confused together so that the zeros which constitute the physical universe are taken to have both existence and value in themselves.

In the *Fana-fillah* state of truth-absorption, all the zeros of the entire universe that had been added onto the number one are cut out.

Only the one (e. g. 100000) exists.

In the *Baga* or *Sadguru* state of truth-affirmation in the universe, all the zeros of the universe reappear, but they are placed from a mathematical standpoint before the number one (e. g. 000001). In this manner of reinstatement, the zeros have existence but no value, regardless of how many there are.

In this last case any increase in the number of zeros neither adds numerical value nor alters in any way the value of the number one. The value neither increases nor decreases.

A Perfect Master can perform any miracle. This does not involve any breaking of the law, because he is beyond the domain of *maya* and its laws. Among those who enjoy the *Sadguru* state, the Avatar has unique consciousness. The *Sadguru* experiences the state of "I am God and God is everything", while the Avatar experiences

the state of "I am God and I am everything." Man as God (*i. e. Sadguru*) sees God in everything, but God as man (*i. e. Avatar*) sees what God as God sees : Himself in everything. In fact the Avatar not only sees Himself in everything but sees Himself *as* everything : not only as being in the many, but as *being* the many in exactly the same manner that He is the One.

When the Avatar or the *Sadguru* drops his body after finishing his spiritual task in the imaginary universe of duality, he retains the God-consciousness that is his continuous eternal state. This fourth and last journey of the Avatar and Perfect Masters is the same as the second journey of the *Majzoob-e-kamil*. Their unlimited individualities suffer no extinction in spite of the fact that they are now removed entirely beyond the world of forms. Their individualities persist because their divine unlimited consciousness abidingly remains as the very inalienable nature of the soul, which requires no form for its *locus standi*.

Sanskaras or the *sanskritic* ego-mind can subsist only by attaching itself to some form, but no expressive medium of form is in any way necessary for the existence of divine consciousness. This, the very nature of the soul, is self-sustained.

The dropping of the physical body by the Avatar or by the *Sadguru* is not death, for even while he uses the body he is in no way attached to it and has no *sanskritic* link with it. Nor does the dropping of the body in these instances involve the usual survival of a limited individuality or ego-mind, for these are simply non-existent in the *Sadguru* and Avatar.

Their dropping of the body also differs from the death of advanced yogis who may voluntarily drop their physical body after completing their work. The advanced yogis cannot discard their ego-mind or limited individuality

which clings fast to them even after severance of their connection with the physical body, but the *Majzoob-e-kamil*, the *Sadguru* and the Avatar embark upon a unique and direct "journey" to the unbounded and indivisible ocean of divinity.



THE AIM & GOAL OF LIFE

The aim of life is to Love God.

The goal of life is to become one with God.

The surest and quickest way to achieve this goal is to hold on to my daaman by loving me more and more.

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Meher Baba

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