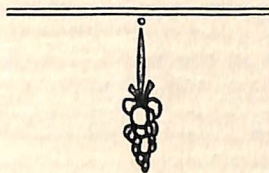


JOURNEY WITH GOD

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1-700525

Printed in Australia by Luxton & Hooper, 336 Kent Street, Sydney,
for Beacon Hill Publishing Co., Beacon Hill, N.S.W., Australia.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally recognized that when one wishes to learn something, whether it be knowledge of a science, practise of a musical instrument, speaking of another language, the building of a house (or even obtaining a street direction), the easiest way is to go to someone who not only *knows* about it, but can *do* it, whether that someone is an individual, or a school or university.

It is also recognized that in any department of knowledge and practise there are outstanding teachers and schools; and sometimes it becomes generally known that in a particular field there is one person who stands above all the rest in that particular knowledge, and in his ability to transmit his knowledge to others.

Success in the acquisition of a knowledge and practise depends on three things:

1. Inherent ability;
2. Finding that teacher who can draw out that inherent ability into actual practicality;
3. Industry and honesty.

Of these three things, the teacher is the most important, because a real teacher can draw out those things in a pupil which would appear to be not in the pupil. And he can fire the pupil to industry which he never before knew he was capable of, and inspire a greater honesty in him than he had before exhibited.

The relationship between the real teachers and the serious students is what is called discipleship, and according to those who have experienced this relationship, whether it has been in science, or art, or the path of Self-Realization, there is no other relationship in this world which can compare with it. In its highest degree it contains all other relationships and, at the same time, transcends them all. It was of this relationship that Jesus was speaking when He said, "Give up all and follow me"; and was, of course, only spoken to those who had arrived at this stage. (It was not intended for the generality.)

The teacher-pupil relationship functions on all levels of activity. On the lower levels, such as acquiring a lot of money, the bond between the teacher and pupil is very slight. On the higher levels, as in the finer aspects of art and science, the bond may last through an entire lifetime. It is purely relative to the extent of involvement of the two personalities concerned. On the level of real pupilship in Self-Knowledge the bond is only dissolved in the final realization of the oneness of Master and disciple.

I have explained these points as a necessary prelude or introduction to certain events which follow; events which were the logical outcome of the principles above outlined.

On the 26th February this year, I received a cable from Mahabaleshwar, India, inviting me to come to India for a fortnight's work. Signed, Meher Baba.

I had met Meher Baba nearly two years before at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This meeting was the culmination of ten years of spiritual study and search for that ideal Guide in whom I could unreservedly place my confidence; that man who, I felt, had mastered every difficulty and obstacle which still confronted me. During the previous ten years, I had studied the methods and practices of the great Sufi schools and had read fairly widely in Vedanta, Buddhism and other systems, including Taoism and Confucianism. In Meher Baba I found that person who not merely *knew* these things, but was the living embodiment of all these systems and knowledges. In other words, he was a man who had reached the summit of Truth; in religious terms, was God-Realized.

Of course, I knew that Baba, as everyone affectionately calls him, had been saying for many years that he was God-Realized, was, in fact, an incarnation of Godhead, a God-man (in the same meaning as Christ is believed to be by the Christians, Mohammed by the Mohammedans, Buddha by the Buddhists, etc.); and I knew that the Sufis and thousands of people everywhere had recognized this claim, but as with Thomas, I had to see for myself.

Well, I had seen; and the cry of the deepest parts of my consciousness had been answered. I was satisfied that if ever it was possible to "see" God on this earth, I had seen Him. And as time went on, the proof that this had not been merely some emotional conversion was shown by the simple fact that a true creativity began in me a few days after this meeting and has continued ever since.

And now, within a few weeks, I would be seeing this man again.

JOURNEY WITH GOD.

Passage to India, passage
to more than India.

Walt Whitman.

I.

The Flight.

We left Sydney 9.30 p.m., and with the lights out
In the 'plane, crossed over the city, a sea and ribbons
Of light. Then the black gulf of the harbour; and the North Shore
Lights thinning out into a final blank night
Below us. The chart shows a straight line
Through Dubbo, Bourke, Cloncurry, Darwin; a pure
Flight-line.

Arriving at Darwin in the dark
Of the morning — dark heat rising from the tarmac;
And took off again at sun-up, sun-green of foliage,
And rose over the sea which was crinkled oxide of chromium
On canvas, until, as one watched closely,
Small white flecks of waves crawled infinitesimal
Steps over the green.—And sailed on high
Above the snow plateau of clouds.

And climbed to 14,000 feet, and the sea now,
Tint of warm cerulean, a fathomless eye
Shot at the edges of beach of Roti
Timor and Lombok with green light; and the occasional land
Checked in forested mountains and parcelled fields
Of cultivation. And on
Into this warm cerulean emptiness —

God's pure eye —
Where sky and sea would be indistinguishable, except
For the broken bar line of cloud at the furthest
Point of vision, and their just green and gold.

Then blue of sea again which, on the map, shows
As the Bay of Bengal. Emptiness of light; and expectancy
In my heart quietly audible over the level engine-drone.
And then Ganges Delta, grey-blue, slate-black fertility,
Laced with ribbon-streams of life — INDIA.

II.

God at Poona

Poona. And from the balcony of my room
A full moon rising through the trees. Poona:
Home of the Word; of the purest Word; that Word,
Which translated into speech, became
Namadev's song. Round here also, the song
Was Bhanudas, Tukaram, Ramdas, and the rest,
Singing for God's ears the song which pleases Him. —
"My beloved sons with whom —" the same sons
Who shouted together in the shout which was creation;
Which shattered the Darkness into that first lyric song
Called Morning.

Here was Baba born; and here, Babajan
Of woman's form, ancient in years, with one kiss
Awoke him while yet a youth to his glory in God;
And Upasni Maharaj, with a stone's singing flight,
Brought him down again from God to work for Man:
A Christ, perfect in glory, infinite and supreme;
Perfect in detailed craft of service.

In the courtyard under my window
A man squats on the ground under the sleek
Black hulk of a buffalo, and starts milking her.
And the climbing moon now above the tops of the trees. —
Tomorrow will rise the causal Sun of all moons
And earths and lives — and my eyes
Are expected to bear his gentle beams.
Each love I have gathered, I will lay at his pure feet.

And now, 'tis dawn. Another first morning:
With the trees crowded with bird-song; voices
In the street; a train whistle and the other engine noises;
And a bullock-cart with its tinkle of little bells:
From earth's hive God sends out His pollen and honey gatherers.

Passage to more than India — Passage
To the very heart-fibres of my own soul;
To the Soul of my soul, the Eye of the sun
Who turns the earth and awakens each teeming day;
Whose sweet Name parches my throat, and heaps fire
Upon my already burning skull of iron of head,
Cauldron of rivers of sweet cooling tears.

WHOM

I now met again, seated on the platform
Of Poona railway station, radiant and garlanded,
Receiving the teared-bright devotion of his devotees.
I too, by some strange fortune, his sweet embrace.

III.

Andhra-Paradiso.

Then he with forty of his disciples
(and myself somewhere) entrained for Bezwada
State of Andhra, passing through Sivaji's country —
Sivaji, that amazing combination of endurance
Courage and clear thinking, who, blessed by Ramdas,
Topped Aurangzeb on his throne. — At one place
(possibly) one of his forts on top of a stone dome
Of a mountain. And on through Hyderabad
Of white buildings and gardens.

At each train-stop,
Even right through the night, were crowds
Eager for sight of their Beloved. And God
Slept not, but also eagerly awaited his lovers.
Even the "cha-wala", with his kettle of sweet tea

In one hand and a bucket of cups in the other,
Would break off his song inviting refreshment, and peer
Tip-toed over the heads of the crowd, disturbed
And curious.

At one place, as we approached the station,
A small pack came padding over the dry paddocks
At a quick trot; and the Guard held up the train
So that their thirst might be satisfied. And so.
And always as the train pulled out, the cry:
AVATAR MEHER BABA KI, JAI! Or, Hail,
Living Christ.

And so all through a day
And a night and another day, the train wound on
Across dry earth awaiting the rains to bring
Its hidden greenness into crops and sustenance,
Bearing east God and his circle of workers, and myself
Nowhere to be seen except within his heart,
And in the careful hands of these his hands
Who served his slightest sign in selfless joy.
And arrived at Bezwada, where the crowd
Surged forward with a great shout of joy,
And swept us from the platform, through narrow streets
To an open place which had been prepared,
Where he was welcomed with music of drums
And flutes.

And the silver platter bearing fruits
And lighted camphor was waved before him.
And the song of light was sung by the disciples,
Full-throated and rich in pure intensity:
The same song which the morning stars and these same men
Had sung in the Beginning, as they circled in joy
Around the first Christ on his first descent to earth.
And there was a cry in my breast as the first notes
Of my own song struggled chrysalis-like
From its agelong encasing, and spread its wings
Eagerly for flight.

Next morning

We arose in the still cool dark, bathed
And breakfasted, and took to the roads in buses.
And so for two weeks — stopping at towns,
And remote villages where people had come
Travelling all day by bullock-cart and on foot;
Visiting houses, cottages and huts of business-executives
Congressmen and labourers.

At Gunter

There were 5,000. At Elure, 12,000 had assembled.
At Tadapalligudem, where Baba celebrated
His birth this time on earth, 20,000
Waited to pass in file before him
To receive his gift of fruit, and to enjoy
The fireworks at night. Gopalapuram
Mustered 15,000. Korrvu and Rajahmundry
On the banks of the river Godavari, 16,000
Between them. Amalapuram, Razole and Kathapati
Had 5,000 each. And the seaport Kakinada,
12,000 all told.

And at each place

God sat down and rolled up his sleeves
To do a job of work. Baskets piled high
With bananas were placed by his side;
And the people, brought into file by ropes
Or the linked hands of his workers, filed by,
Each to receive a fruit from Baba's hands.
And with each gift of fruit, a hidden seed
Of blessing for future fruiting.

And in simple words taught them:

"Those who only see this form of Mine,
Do not see Me. Search in your hearts,
And through your hands' pure work, to find My truth.
And know that in every service served in honesty,
And every act of love where you are not,
I am. I am the Ancient One, Highest of high.

Fortunate are those who serve and love Me.”
Sometimes even in the midst of this, he
Would glance up and flash a smile at me,
Just as he had previously, as Buddha,
Smiled on a barber who asked him whether
One of such a lowly trade could follow in his Way.
Kabir sang: “Every night is for the married woman,
But I have no husband.” Not only am I
Unmarried, but also homeless — an exile
In two countries. Yet he took time to flash
a smile at me!

Who can describe the smile of the Beloved?
Dante’s: “What She appears when She smiles a little,”
Faintly describes it, “so sweet and strange
A miracle it is.” How can I,
Of stubborn and unlettered mind, say more?

Andhra is water: Godavari, blessed by Rama,
And lines of saints who wandered its wooded banks,
Bathed in its streams, and sent pregnantly
The breath of their spirit upon its waters.

Andhra is water: Godavari channelled
Over naturally rich land by hands which are
Extensions of heart, not wringing the neck of the land
In exploitation.

(Australia also,
When we stop wasting water into cities
And the sea; when we have outgrown our childish
Vocabulary of work, consumer goods, stockpiling

SECURITY.

— ALL WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT THOUGHT OF
OF GOD AS BELOVED

Is designs in sand, signatures
on water. —

Australia also

when God, in one of His
Inexplicable moods of mercy, sets
His white feet upon these golden shores.

Andhra is water bearing upon its surface
Clusters of lotuses called villages,
Where the speech of the people is small waters
Rippling over stones, and where children
Strongly moulded in delicate form, play
As one would imagine the children of God
Should play.

The road followed always along the canal banks
Of Godavari water — always beside
These placid singing streams.

Along this road
We met a man dressed in the rags of this world
Seated before God's throne.

Along this road,
A youth, hot with love's fire, his eyes melting
In streams of light, sang in sweet tones his own
Sweet song of light.

Where another danced
For two hours to a small tinkling percussion
Accompaniment.

Where a young girl,
Delicately as Radha poised in love,
Sighed with her eyes and hands and feet again for Krishna.

It was on this road that a boy, a mere child in years,
Improvised songs for the Beloved; and
Wept, and harangued us to love God.
I fold my hands before all on this road.

Andhra-paradiso —
With no fall, and no expulsion from the Garden:
But again with the seal of God's feet upon her earth.

Now had the last day of our tour arrived.
In the morning, sixteen houses visited.
At each the light was lit, and the song of light,
Full throated and rich in pure intensity, arose —
The song of praise of God in human form.

And Baba blessed the people in each house,
Unsealing their hearts so that the streams of living water
Could flow through their lives; unfolding
The faces of the children into singing flowers.

And we departed each to his own place and work. —
Each with the kiss of God's glance within his eyes.
I, the furthest, to my island home in the Southern Seas.

NOTE ON "THE GOD-MAN."

A God-man simply means a man in whom the totality of divinity (Godhood) is manifest. The Indian word for such a person is Avatar; in Arabic, it is Râssoul; and in English, Christ. In the Hindu Scripture, the Bhagavat-Gita, there is the statement, 'Whenever the spiritual law has been lost sight of, and materiality has become rampant, I come.' In the Koran occurs the sentence, "We (God) have sent our Messengers into every corner of the earth, so that there is no-one who has not heard of Us." Jesus said, "Before Abraham was I am"; and intimated that he would come again in a future time. The North American Indians, the Maoris and the Polynesians also held the idea of a divine Incarnation, or God-man.

The function of the God-man is held to be the establishment of a "way of life" which brings man into harmony with himself and with the physical laws of life. Now, while the Christian and Moslem each believe that Christ and Mohammed respectively, was the last manifestation, the Hindus have always had, and still have, the tradition of continuance, namely, that the God-man re-appears from time to time.

The latter view certainly appeals more to reason, because it is evident that neither Christ nor Mohammed *established*, once and for all time, such a "way of life" for all men and women. It is true that each of these men knew the way, lived it and demonstrated it, and taught the principles underlying it. But it is also apparent that neither the effects of the example, nor the teaching pertaining to it, survived beyond a certain time; and men reverted again to inharmony and confusion.

The contention that the Book which the God-man leaves behind is, in itself, sufficient guide for those who will listen, is proved to be false by the fact that the custodians of each Book cannot agree amongst themselves as to what the Book means! There are whole libraries of interpretation.

There now arises the all-important point: Has Divine Incarnation any basis in fact? Or is it merely a belief rooted in superstition and the desire to escape from the burden imposed by the processes of living? Everyone is aware of how, under pressure of this burden, we so often wish, and even try, to shift the responsibility of action onto someone imagined to have all power of forgiveness of "sin", and all power of carrying one's burden, *e.g.*, a doctor or psychologist. Is this the basis of belief in Divine Incarnation? Evidence and consideration do not support this view.

Initially, we must accept that the theory of evolution of form and mental functions becomes meaningless, unless there is a possible culminating point of perfection to which one can evolve. Although it is obvious that humanity as a whole has not achieved this evolutionary goal, it is apparent from the study of their lives that men like Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed possessed *something* more than can be implied by the use of the term "genius". In other words, even from the evidence of observation, a few men have achieved a perfection of human qualities far above that level which characterises "genius". We might well call life irrational if a few could achieve a state of being permanently denied the rest of humanity.

The processes and struggle which is called life either has meaning and purpose, or it has not. The frightening insecurity which an intensive materialism has engendered, has generated a pessimism which, however, is denied by the fact of our continued activity: the simple fact remains that we are still continuing to work and dream and plan. If for no purpose, why? The eat, drink and be merry idea is absurd, because we can't get enough to eat and drink; and we are not merry. The philosophy of a planned economy that will distribute the world's goods equably, as being in itself sufficient goal, does not explain why we are still writing music and poetry, painting and making love. When the perfect economy has been wrought, men will still be troubled by a sunset, a sweep of mountain, and the amazing blooming of a flower.

In short, men will never be satisfied with less than their

dream of perfection. Vision of something beyond his present self, is the very motivating force of every lover, inventor, artist or scientist.

It is also manifestly true than man has learnt alone from man, not from any outside agency — that his unfoldment of knowledge has been an unfoldment of his own consciousness; and that the qualities of humanity such as love, courage, endurance, forgiveness, etc., have come from nowhere but from within himself. In fact, the researches in physical science are aimed at nothing other than the Greek "Man Know Thyself" and the Hindu "Thou Art That." If there is any purpose in life it can only be the continued unfoldment of the qualities of humanity, the complete unfoldment of which is called divinity or God.

Christship is the direct devolvement of God into a man for the purpose of demonstrating to all men and women the possibility of attaining the same condition of Christ-consciousness or conscious¹ perfection; in the same way as a man who has attained mastership of some science or some musical instrument returns to the level of his pupils in order to assist them in fulfilling their desire for a similar standard. As Shankar puts it, "having crossed over they return to help others to make the crossing."

The extent to which each of us is prepared to accept someone's claim to Christship is purely an individual matter; and while we may know intellectually that we have freedom of choice in this as in any other matter, we are also only too well aware from experience of the difficulty of accepting anything that suggests a radical change in outlook and approach to life. Pressure has so often been exerted in our formative years to follow one creed or another, and to subscribe to this or that particular ideology or dogma, that our natural reaction is simply a desire for freedom.

One thing is certain, and that is, if any one can help us to gain that freedom (which we feel is our birthright) it can only be one who not only says he has won it himself, but demonstrates his claim in his actual day-to-day living. That one alone can help us to touch the depths of ourselves, who first touches our depths.

¹) Conscious, not unconscious.

Whether Meher Baba is the totality of Godhood or not, I have personally no way of knowing — I can only measure to my own degree. But to that degree, he is the embodiment of that ideal which I call God. Since Beauty and knowledge has been the only God I have ever worshipped or pursued, and since this man appeals to my eyes as the very embodiment and manifestation of beauty and knowledge, I call him God. Not only the all-forgivingness and humour in his eyes, but the very movements of his hands and body, have unlocked regions within me which were unknown to me before. No man or woman, no flight of thought, no aesthetic experience, no sublimity of nature, has touched the depths of me as this man has. I have met no-one, or experienced no experience, which has melted my heart or sharpened my intellect as he has.

So it was that when the people of Andhra in their thousands folded their hands before him in devotion, I, in each one of them, folded my hands and bowed in my heart before the purity and completeness of his beauty. My own goal is that in that purity I become annihilate.

That man is the God-man who makes the path easy —
Nay, who wipes out the path altogether,
Goes straight to the heart of the matter
And gives one realization of the one Self.

In the foregoing I have attempted to record something of my experience of Baba. The following is a selection of Baba's own words from messages he gave out. The September message contains the very basic challenge that Baba is or is not the God-man — a challenge which, I feel, few thinking men and women who are concerned about the world picture today, and their personal position in it, can afford to disdain completely.

For behind our irritation and sense of despair at the continued breakdown of our local and international conferences, committees, sub-committees, or what you will, whether we are artists or artisans, labourers or executives — proletarians in the true sense of the word, or parasites in the inclusive sense of dishonest workers as well as those who rob the community by obtaining their subsistence without contributing labour in some form, there is the as yet rather unformulated question gnawing at the root of our betrayal by pseudo science¹ and sham material promise — the question which organized religion has attempted so naively to contain in statements such as "Why not turn to God?" or "Why not let God do something about it?" But it is not a question at all of letting God do something about it, *but whether He has manifested in that form in which He can do something about it.*²

There is the further implied challenge that if one, after the deepest consideration is convinced that he, Baba, is just this, whether one is still going to be content to do the business of "dying to oneself" in dribs and drabs, or take it as the major affair in the processes called life, and hand it over to him to step up and get it over with.

¹) Pseudo-science — activity conducted in the name of science, but which is based on national selfishness and prejudice, or harnessed to personal profit, and so is productive of greater misery instead of ameliorating it, which was its avowed first principle.

²) If it was not for the tradition that Jesus was the one and only and last Christ (or Mohammed or Buddha, etc.) it would not be necessary to here point out that it is just as impossible for God to work on this earth without an adequate form — a human form — as it is impossible for electricity to give light without wires and a bulb. To make a house, God manifests in the form of a carpenter; to change a wholesale drift in human affairs, He becomes Avatar, or Christ.

(Note: The footnotes to the Messages are my own. I alone am responsible for any error in translation or comment.—F.B.)

MESSAGES OF MEHER BABA

DEHRA DUN,
7th September, 1953.

On the morning of the 7th of September, it being the anniversary of Zoroaster's birth, Meher Baba said:

Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, each and every creature, each and every human being — in one form or the other — strives to assert individuality. But when eventually man consciously experiences that he is Infinite, Eternal and Indivisible, then he is fully conscious of his individuality as God, and as such, experiences Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. Thus Man becomes God, and is recognized as a Perfect Master, Sadguru or Kutub. To worship this Man is to worship God.

When God manifests on earth in the form of man and reveals His Divinity to mankind, He is recognized as the Avatar — the Messiah, the Prophet. Thus God becomes Man.

And so Infinite God, age after age, throughout all cycles, wills through His Infinite Mercy, to effect His presence amidst mankind by stooping down to human level in the human form, but His physical presence amidst mankind not being apprehended, He is looked upon as an ordinary man of the world. When He asserts, however, His Divinity on earth by proclaiming Himself, the Avatar of the age, He is worshipped by some who accept Him as God; and glorified by a few who know Him as God on Earth. But it invariably falls to the lot of the rest of humanity to condemn Him, while He is physically in their midst.

Thus it is that God as man, proclaiming Himself as the Avatar, suffers Himself to be persecuted and tortured, to be humiliated and condemned by humanity for whose sake His Infinite Love has made Him stoop so low, in order that humanity, by its very act of condemning God's manifestation in the form of Avatar should, however indirectly, assert the existence of God in His Infinite Eternal state.

The Avatar is always One and the Same, because God is always One and the Same, the Eternal, Indivisible, Infinite One, who manifests Himself in the form of man as the Avatar, as the

Messiah, as the Prophet, as the Ancient One — the Highest of the High. This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats His manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and help free it from the bondage of delusions.

In the world there are countless Sadhus,³ Mahatmas, Mahapurushas, Saints, Yogis and Walis, though the number of genuine ones is very, very limited. The few genuine ones are, according to their spiritual status, in a category of their own, which is neither on a level with the ordinary human being nor on a level with the state of the Highest of the High.

I am neither a Mahatma nor a Mahapurusha, neither a Sadhu nor a Saint, neither a Yogi nor a Wali. Those who approach Me with the desire to gain wealth or to retain their possessions, those who seek through Me relief from distress and suffering, those who ask My help to fulfil and satisfy mundane desires, to them I once again declare that, as I am not a Sadhu, a Saint or a Mahatma, Mahapurusha or Yogi, to seek these things through Me is but to court utter disappointment, though only apparently; for eventually this disappointment is itself invariably instrumental in bringing about the complete transformation of mundane wants and desires.

The Sadhus, Saints, Yogis, Walis and such others who are on the *via media*, can and do perform miracles and satisfy the transient material needs of individuals who approach them for help and relief.

The question therefore arises that if I am not a Sadhu, not a Saint, not a Yogi, not a Mahapurusha or a Wali, then what am I? The natural assumption would be that I am either just an ordinary human being, or I am the Highest of the High. But one thing I say definitely, and that is, that I can never be included amongst those having the intermediary status of these real Sadhus, Saints, Yogis and such others.

Now, if I am just an ordinary man, my capabilities and powers are limited — I am no better or different from an ordinary human being. If people take Me as such, then they should not expect any supernatural help from Me in the form of miracles or spiritual guidance; and to approach Me to fulfil their desires would also be absolutely futile.

On the other hand, if I am beyond the level of an ordinary human being, and much beyond the level of saints and yogis, then I must be the Highest of the High. In which case, to judge Me with your human intellect and limited mind and to approach Me with mundane desires would not only be the height of folly, but sheer ignorance as well, because no amount of intellectual gymnastics could ever understand My ways or judge My Infinite State.

If I am the Highest of the High, My will is law, My wish governs the law, and My Love sustains the Universe. Whatever your apparent calamities and transient sufferings, they are but the outcome of My Love for the ultimate good. Therefore, to approach Me for deliverance from your predicaments, to expect Me to satisfy your worldly desires, would be asking Me to do the impossible — to undo what I have already ordained.

If you truly and in all faith accept your Baba as the Highest of the High, it behoves you to lay down your life at His feet, rather than to crave the fulfilment of your desires. Not your one life, but your millions of lives would be but a small sacrifice to place at the feet of One such as Baba, who is the Highest of the High, for Baba's unbounded love is the only sure and unfailing guide to lead you safely through the innumerable blind alleys of your transient life.

They cannot obligate Me who, surrendering their all—body, mind, possessions — which perforce they must discard one day, surrender with a motive; surrender because they understand that to gain the everlasting treasure of Bliss, they must relinquish ephemeral possessions. This desire for greater gain is still clinging behind their surrender, and as such, the surrender cannot be complete.

Know you all that if I am the Highest of the High, My role demands that I strip you of all your possessions and wants, consume all your desires and make you desireless rather than satisfy your desire. Sadhus, Saints, Yogis and Walis can give you what you want; but I take away your wants and free you from attachments and liberate you from the bondage of ignorance. I am the One to take, not the One to give what you want or as you want.

Mere intellectuals can never understand Me through their intellect. If I am the Highest of the High, it becomes impossible for the intellect to gauge Me nor is it possible for My ways to be fathomed by the limited human mind.

I am not to be attained by those who, loving Me, stand reverentially by, in rapt admiration. I am not for those who ridicule Me and point at Me with contempt. To have a crowd of tens of millions flocking around Me is not what I am for. I am for the selected few, who, scattered amongst the crowd, silently and unostentatiously surrender their all—body, mind and possessions to Me. I am still more for those, who, after surrendering their all, never give another thought to their surrender. They are all Mine who are prepared to renounce even the very thought of their renunciation and who, keeping constant vigil in the midst of intense activity, await their turn to lay down their lives for the cause of Truth at a glance or sign from Me. Those who have indomitable courage to face willingly and cheerfully the worst calamities, who have unshakable faith in Me, eager to fulfil My slightest wish at the cost of their happiness and comfort, they, indeed, truly love Me.

From my point of view, far blessed is the atheist who confidently discharges his worldly responsibilities accepting them as his honourable duty, than the man who presumes he is a devout believer in God, yet shirks the responsibilities apportioned to him through Divine Law and runs after Sadhus, Saints and Yogis, seeking relief from the suffering which ultimately would have pronounced his eternal liberation.

To have one eye glued on the enchanting pleasures of the flesh, and with the other, expect to see a spark of Eternal Bliss is not only impossible but the height of hypocrisy.

I cannot expect you to understand all at once what I want you to know. It is for Me to awaken you from time to time throughout the ages, sowing the seed in your limited minds, which must in due course and with proper heed and care on your part, germinate, flourish and bear the fruit of that True Knowledge which is inherently yours to gain.

If, on the other hand, led by your ignorance, you persist in going your own way, none can stop you in your choice of progress; for that, too, is progress which, however slow and painful, eventually and after innumerable incarnations, is bound to make you realize that which I want you to know now. To save yourself from further entanglement in the maze of Delusion and self-created suffering which owes its magnitude to the extent of your ignorance of the true Goal, *awake now*. Pay heed and strive for Freedom by experiencing ignorance in its true perspective. Be honest with yourself and God. One may fool the world and one's neighbours; but one can never escape from the knowledge of the Omniscient — such is the Divine Law.

I declare to all of you who approach Me, and to those of you who desire to approach Me accepting Me as the Highest of the High, that you must never come with the desire in your heart which craves for wealth and worldly gain, but only with the fervent longing to give your all—body, mind and possessions—with all their attachments. Seek Me not to extricate you from your predicaments, but find Me in order to surrender yourself wholeheartedly to My will. Cling to Me not for worldly happiness and short-lived comforts, but adhere to Me, through thick and thin, sacrificing your own happiness and comforts at My feet. Let My happiness be your cheer and My comforts your rest. Do not ask Me to bless you with a good job; but desire to serve Me more diligently and honestly without expectation of reward. Never beg of Me to save your life or the lives of your dear ones, but beg of Me to accept you and permit you to lay down your life for Me. Never expect Me to cure you of your bodily afflictions but beseech Me to cure you of your ignorance. Never stretch out your hands to receive anything from Me, but hold them high in praise of Me whom you have approached as the Highest of the High.

If I am the Highest of the High, nothing is then impossible to Me; and though I do not perform miracles to satisfy individual needs, the satisfaction of which would result in entangling the individual more and more into the net of ephemeral existence — yet time and again at certain periods I manifest the Infinite Power in the form of miracles, but only for the spiritual upliftment and benefit of humanity and all creatures.

However, miraculous experiences have often been experienced by individuals who love Me and have unswerving faith in Me, and these have been attributed to My *nazar* or Grace on them. But I want all to know that it does not befit My lovers to attribute such individual miraculous experiences to My state of the Highest of the High. If I am the Highest of the High, I am above these illusory plays of Maya in the course of the Divine Law. Therefore, whatever miraculous experiences are experienced by My lovers who recognize Me as such, or by those who love Me unknowingly through other channels, they are but the outcome of their own firm faith in Me. Their unshakable faith often superseding the course of the play of Maya gives them those experiences which they call miracles.

Such experiences derived through firm Faith eventually do good and do not entangle the individuals who experience them into further and greater bindings of Illusion.

If I am the Highest of the High, then a wish of My Universal Will is sufficient to give, in an instant, God Realization to one and all, and thus free every creature in creation from the shackles of ignorance; but blessed is Knowledge that is gained through the experience of ignorance in accordance with the Divine Law. This Knowledge is made possible for you to attain in the midst of ignorance by the guidance of Perfect Master and surrenderance to the Highest of the High.

1) Sadhus — those who practise a sadhana or a particular method of Self or God-realization. Mahatmas — great-souls. Mahapurushas — similar to Mahatmas; purusha being in Sanskrit the active agent, as against prakriti, the acted upon. Yogis — those practising one of the methods of Yoga, or mental control through prescribed exercises. Walis — saints (Arabic). It should be remembered that Yoga is not particularly Indian. The Sanskrit root of the word is to be yoked. Cf. Jesus, "My yoke is light." It also has its forms in Chinese and Christian mysticism. St. Francis or St. John of the Cross could quite well be called Bhakta-Yogis, or ones who had become yoked to God through love. Since there have

been quite a number of books, written by authors totally devoid of actual spiritual *experience*, or even of any real intellectual knowledge of the subject, pointing out at great length that the "Easterner" and the "Westerner" are totally differently constituted mentally and psychically, and, one would gather, even physiologically, and so any "Eastern" practise is totally unsuited to the West and, therefore, the West must forge its own techniques; it should here be emphasised that a genuine Sadhu, Mahatma, Mahapurusha, Saint, Yogi or Wali would meet on completely equal terms, and understand each other perfectly. What is much more pertinent is that different techniques have special applications at different times, although the same result is always to be achieved, i.e., realization that God alone is real, and that one's real self is Him: "Atman is Brahman." In this present age Baba prescribes service and love as the best path. "This realization must, and does, take place in the midst of life, for it is only in the midst of life that limitation can be experienced and transcended, and that subsequent freedom from limitation can be enjoyed."—*Discourses*, Vol. 1, Meher Baba.

I want you to feel that I am one of you and that is why I am now sitting here on the ground with you all. I am on the level of each one of you. Whether poor, rich, small, big, I am like each of you, but I am approachable only to those who love me.

Only those who can lose themselves in my love will find themselves in me. This is not an idle talk, but an authoritative statement that eternally I have been, and will be, always the slave of my lovers.

Bezwada (Andhra)

about 4 p.m., 21/2/'54.

I will say what I want to say in very few words. I love children and never feel more happy than to be amongst them. I would prefer to have time to play with them rather than have all this garlanding, Puja, Arti,¹ etc., specially because I am expert in playing marbles. Ages ago, when I woke up, I began to play marbles with the Universe.

I would feel specially happy if you pupils one day become Masters of the art of Divine Love and be torch-bearers of Truth that is Baba.

Eluru (Andhra)

about 3.30 p.m., 24/2/'54.

¹) These two words can be briefly rendered adoration.

This message was given at a boys' school.

Modesty is weakness but humility is strength. A world of difference, therefore, exists between the two. The moment you say, "I say in all humility," the very expression is the expression of the ego in you. Even if in your mind, you feel that you are humble, you are feeling egotism.

The difficulty does not end even if with true honesty you try to express true humility. An obstacle, like the thought as to what others may think of your expression of humility is bound to come.

In modesty, you are constantly pestered with thoughts about your correct behaviour to such an extent that an inferiority complex is self-created in you, and that is not strength but weakness.

No sooner humility is given an expression, it is no longer humility. It is humbug to give deliberate expression to humility. The life of humility is to be lived spontaneously and it should not give rise to any thoughts either about humility or about modesty. For example, suppose you undertake to clean a latrine, but when you actually begin to do so, you cannot help getting the stink, whereas a sweeper who cleans them all his life will remain unaffected with the same. Similarly, the person who parades humility is like the one who feels the stink when cleaning a latrine, whereas the person who lives the life of humility, is like the sweeper who is not only immune to the stink but who also remains absolutely unmindful about what others think about him and his job because he actually lives the life of a sweeper.

To have to try to be humble is also humbug. You must be so natural that your life becomes humility personified, which is then all strength, free from any weaknesses.

Only God and the Perfect Masters can live such a life. They are the only ones who are *really humble*. So what you are, you are to express it unmindful of public opinion or the reaction of others.

Be natural. If you are dishonest, do not try to hide yourself behind the curtain of honesty. That, however, does not mean that you should be dishonest. What I want to say is, that you must be most natural rather than be the least hypocrite.

Tadepalligudem (Andhra)

about 3 p.m., 25/2/'54.

In the spiritual path, these messages and addresses mean nothing. Without actual *experience*, all philosophical statements are idle talk and all the ceremonial phenomenon is further addition to the existing illusion.

If, instead of erecting Churches, Fire-temples, Mandirs and Mosques, people were to establish the house of God in their hearts for their Beloved God, my work will have been done.

If, instead of performing ceremonies and rituals mechanically as age-old customs, people were to serve their fellow-beings with the selflessness of love, taking God to be *equally* residing in one and all, and that by so serving others they are serving God, my work will have been fulfilled.

I give you all my blessings so that, if not all, some of you, few of you or one of you, could love God honestly and find me in everyone and everything.

Now I will give my Prasad¹ of love, which you accept with love. No one should bow down to me or offer fruits and flowers. Only take with love, what I give with love.

Rajahmundry (Andhra)

about 4.30 p.m., 27/2/'54.

¹) A gift, usually of food, from a spiritual Master. In this case, bananas. (See section describing tour.)

Love for God can be expressed in so many ways because He has infinite aspects. The three aspects of Power, Knowledge and Bliss are well known, but infinite honesty and infinite goodness are also His main aspects, and goodness means where there is no thought of self.

When you serve your fellow-beings with selflessness, you serve God, but this term "selflessness" is so very loosely used that, in its very use, its purpose is lost. Selfless service mean that it has to be so very natural that even the thought that you have served should be absent.

What God's aspect of honesty means is that you serve others in order to make them happy at the cost of your own happiness. Honesty demands that no show and no fuss is made of your service, and you treat others as you treat your own dear ones.

Amalapuram (Andhra)

Afternoon, 28/2/'54.

I belong to no religion. Every religion belongs to me. My own personal religion is of my being the Ancient Infinite One and the religion I teach to all is of love for God.

This love can be practised by any one, high, low, rich, poor, and every one of every caste and creed can love God.

The one God who resides equally in us all is approachable to every one through love. So I give my blessings that at least some of you would love God as He is to be loved.

Amalapuram (Andhra)
about 4 p.m., 28/2/'54.

All these messages, writings and lectures mean nothing. For the common man, the most practical way of loving God is to help others lovingly. God is in every one, so if you try to love others, help others, make others happy, you are then loving God. So even attending to your everyday life duties, you can still love God.

If at least some of you try to love God, my coming here will be worth the purpose.

Amalapuram (Andhra)
about 4.30 p.m., 28/2/'54.

I am the one so many seek and so few find. No amount of intellect can fathom me. No amount of austerity can attain me. Only when one loves me and loses one's self in me, I am found.

This love must be so honest that not only others should not know it, but you yourself should not be aware of it.

One of the Divine aspects is infinite goodness, and so, do good but without expecting any appreciation for the same from any quarter.

Baba gives his blessings to all.

Thapeshwaram (Andhra)
about 2 p.m., 2/3/'54.

Existence is Eternal, whereas Life is perishable.

Comparatively, Existence is what his body is to man and Life is as the cloth that covers the body. The same body changes clothes according to the seasons, time and circumstances, just as the One and Eternal Existence is always there throughout the countless and varied aspects of Life.

Shrouded beyond recognition by the cloak of life with its multifarious folds and colours, is Existence Unchangeable. It is the garb of Life with its veils of mind, energy and gross forms that 'shadows' and superimposes Existence, presenting the eternal, indivisible and unchangeable Existence as transient, varied and ever-changing.

Existence is all-pervading and is the underlying essence of all things, whether animate or inanimate, real or unreal, varied in species or uniform in forms, collective or individual, abstract or substantial.

In the eternity of Existence there is no time. There is no Past and no Future; only the everlasting Present. In Eternity nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen. Everything is happening in the unending NOW.

Existence is God; whereas Life is illusion.

Existence is Reality; whereas Life is imagination.

Existence is Everlasting; whereas Life is ephemeral.

Existence is Unchangeable; whereas Life is ever-changing.

Existence is Freedom; whereas Life is a binding.

Existence is Indivisible; whereas Life is multiple.

Existence is Imperceptible; whereas Life is deceptive.

Existence is Independent; whereas Life is dependent on mind, energy and gross forms.

Existence *is*; whereas Life *appears to be*.

Existence, therefore, is not Life.

Birth and death do not mark the beginning or end of Life. Whereas the numerous stages and states of Life which constitute the so-called births and deaths are governed by the laws of evolution and re-incarnation, Life comes into being *only once* with the advent of the first dim ray of limited consciousness and succumbs to death *only once* on attaining the Unlimited Consciousness of Infinite Existence. Life as such has no re-incarnation.

Existence, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-present God, is beyond cause and effect, beyond time and space, beyond all actions.

Existence touches all, all shadows and all things. Nothing can ever touch Existence. Even the very fact of its being does not touch Existence.

For Existence to assert itself as "existing", Life must be shed; this means, realising Existence Consciously. It is Life that endows limitations to the Unlimited Self. Life of the limited self is sustained by the mind creating impressions; by energy supplying the impetus to accumulate and dissipate these impressions through expressions; and by gross forms and bodies functioning as the instruments through which these impression are spent, reinforced and eventually exhausted, through ACTIONS.

Life is thickly linked with actions. Life is lived through actions. Life is valued through actions. Life's survival is actions. Life cognizant is actions — actions opposite in nature, actions affirmative and negative, actions constructive and destructive.

Therefore, to let Life succumb to its ultimate death is to let all actions end.

When actions end completely, Life of the limited self spontaneously experiences itself as Existence of the Unlimited Self. Existence being realized, evolution and involution of consciousness is complete, illusion vanishes and the law of reincarnation no longer binds.

Simply to desist from committing actions will never put an end to actions. It would merely mean putting into action yet another action — that of inactivity.

To escape from actions is not the remedy for the uprooting of actions. Rather, this would give scope to the limited self to get more involved in the very act of escaping, thus creating more action.

Actions, both good and bad, are like knots in the tangled thread of life. The more persistent the efforts to undo the knots of actions, the firmer become the knots and greater the entanglement.

Only actions can nullify actions in the same way that poison can counteract the effects of poison. A deeply embedded thorn may be extricated by the use of another thorn or any sharp object resembling it, such as a needle, used with skill and precaution. Similarly, actions are totally uprooted by other actions when they are committed by some activating agent other than the 'self'.

Karma Yoga, Dhyan Yoga, Raj Yoga and Bhakti Yoga¹ serve the purpose of being prominent sign-posts on the Path of Truth directing the Seeker towards the Goal of Eternal Existence. But the hold of Life, fed by actions, is so tight on the aspirant that even with the help of these inspiring sign-posts he fails to be guided in the right direction. As long as the 'self' is bound by actions, the aspirant or even the pilgrim on the path towards Truth is sure to go astray through self-deception.

Throughout all ages, Sadhus and seekers, Sages and Saints, Munis and monks, tapasvis and sanyasis, yogis, sufis and talibs have struggled during their lifetime, undergoing untold hardships in their efforts to extricate themselves from the maze of actions and to realize the Eternal Existence by overcoming Life.

They fail in their attempts because the more they struggled with their 'self', the firmer the 'self' becomes gripped by Life through actions intensified by austerities and penances, by seclusion and pilgrimages, by meditation and concentration, by assertive utterances and silent contemplations, by intense activity and inactivity by silence and verbosity, by 'japs' and 'taps'², and by all types of Yogas and '*Chillas*'.

¹) Karma, Dhyan, Raj and Bhakti — Action, Meditation, Control and Devotion.

²) Japs — repetitions. Taps — austerities.

Emancipation from the grip of Life and freedom from the labyrinths of actions is made possible for all and attained by a few, when a Perfect Master—Sadguru, or Kutub—is approached and His grace and guidance are invoked. The Perfect Master's invariable counsel is complete surrender to him. Those few who do surrender their all—mind, body, possessions—so that with their complete surrender they also surrender consciously their own 'self' to the Perfect Master, have yet their very being left conscious to commit actions activated now only by the dictates of the Master.

Such actions, after the surrender of one's 'self' are no longer one's own actions. Therefore, these actions are capable of uprooting all other actions which feed and sustain Life. Life then becomes gradually lifeless and eventually succumbs, by the grace of the Perfect Master, to its final death. Life, which once debarred the persevering aspirant from realizing Perpetual Existence, can now no longer work its own deception.

I have emphasized in the past, I tell you now, and I shall age after age for evermore repeat, that you shed your cloak of Life and realize Existence which is eternally yours.

To realize this Truth of Unchangeable, Indivisible, All-pervading Existence, the simplest way is to surrender to Me *completely*; so completely that you are not even conscious of your surrender, conscious only to obey Me and to act as, and when, I order you.

If you seek to live perpetually, then crave for the death of your 'deceptive self' at the hands of 'Complete Surrender' to me. This Yoga is the Essence of all yogas in one.

At Kovvur, Baba said:

Make me your constant companion.

Think of me more than you think of your own self.

The more you think of me, the more you will realise my love for you.

Your duty is to keep me constantly with you throughout your thoughts, speech and actions.

They do their duty who, sincere in their faith and love, surrender to me, guided by the implicit belief in my Divinity as Baba.

They too do their duty who speak ill of me and condemn me through their writings, urged by their genuine conviction that Baba is a fraud.

But they are the hypocrites who, not knowing their own minds, are constantly doubting; they are at times, through false emotions, inclined to believe in me; and at other times, to indulge in slanderous gossip against me.

No amount of slander can ever affect or change me; nor any amount of admiration and praise enhance or glorify my Divinity.

At Rajahmundry, on February 25th, he also gave the following Birthday Message:

I am never born. I never die. Yet every moment I take birth and undergo death. The countless illusory births and deaths are necessary landmarks in the progression of man's consciousness to Truth—a prelude to the Real Death and Real Birth. The Real Death is when one dies to self; and the Real Birth is when, dying to self, one is born in God to live for ever His Eternal Life consciously.

I give you all my Love and Blessings for the Real Death and the Real Birth.

And at Kakinada, his last message of the tour:

It has been possible through Love for man to become God; and when God becomes man, it is due to His love for His beings.

If people were to ask me "Have you seen God?" I would reply "What else is there to see?" If they were to ask me "Are you God?" I would reply "Who else would I be?" If they were to ask me "Are you Avatar?" I would reply "Why else have I taken this human form?"

So, the only message I could give, and have ever been giving is "Love God"; and you will find that your own self is nothing but God."

