

THE
MOVING FINGER
WRITES.....

PART II

MEHER BABA

To

Our dear sister Mani

With lots of Baba love

From

Dolly + Adi

1967

H A P P Y

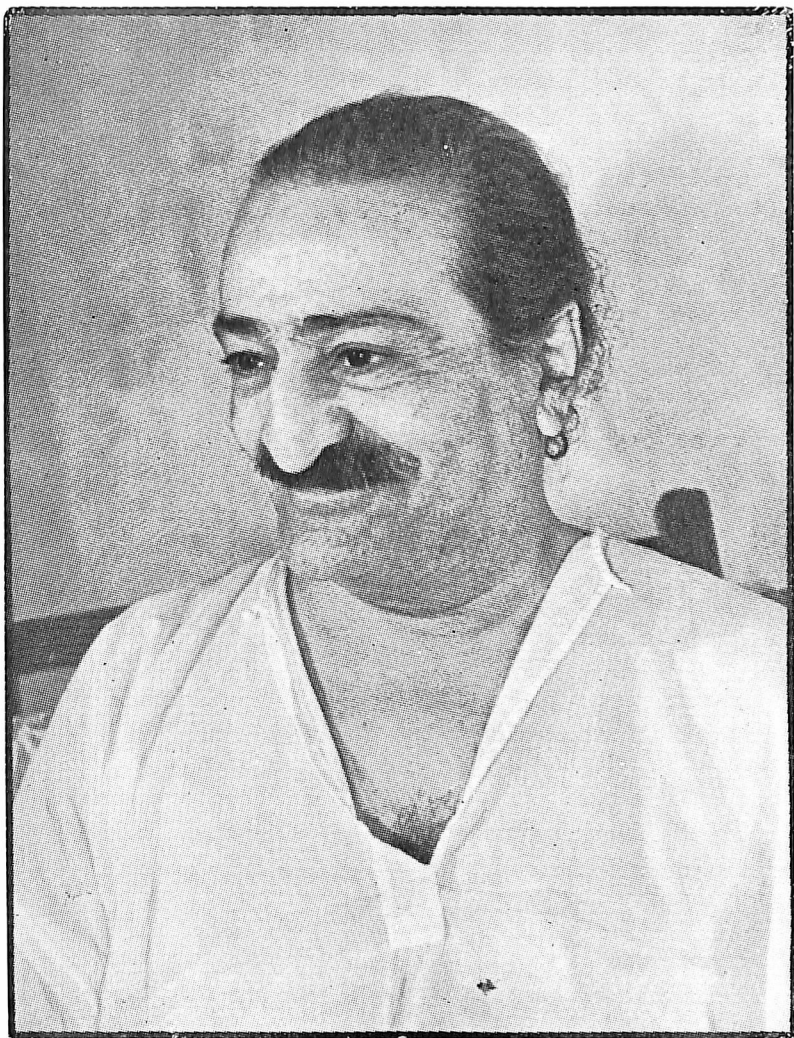
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M E H E R Y E A R
S E V E N T Y F O U R

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"I have only one message to give, and I repeat it age after age to one and all : LOVE GOD."

MEHER BABA

HOW TO LOVE GOD

IF, instead of seeing faults in others, we look within ourselves, we are loving God.

If, instead of robbing others to help ourselves, we rob ourselves to help others, we are loving God.

If we suffer in the sufferings of others and feel happy in the happiness of others, we are loving God.

If, instead of worrying over our own misfortunes, we think of ourselves as more fortunate than many, many others, we are loving God.

If we endure our lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His will, we are loving God.

If we understand that the greatest act of devotion towards God is not to harm any of His beings, we are loving God.

To love God as He ought to be loved we must live for God and die for God, knowing that the goal of all life is to love God and find Him as our own self.

Therefore let us become the soldiers of God. Let us struggle for the truth. Let us live not for ourselves, but for others. Let us speak truly, think truly and act truly. Let us be honest as God is infinite honesty. Let us return love for hatred and win others over to God. Let the world know that above everything the most dear to our hearts is God—the supreme reality.

Besides keeping God before ourselves in our daily lives and loving Him by loving our fellow men, we can love God by surrendering to the Sad-guru or Perfect Master who is God's personal manifestation, or to the God-man, who is God descended directly into form. To surrender to any of these is to surrender to God Himself.

The final way to realize God is to love Him and to lose oneself in Him through intense longing for union with Him. To love God whole-heartedly is to lose oneself eventually in the Beloved and enter the eternal life of God.

Like a tree, such love has branches—branches of whole-hearted devotion, perfect selfless service, self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-renunciation, self-annihilation and truth.

When one truly loves God, that love is based on the desire to give up one's whole being to the Beloved. When one loves a Perfect Master, one

longs to serve him, to surrender to his will, to obey him whole-heartedly. Thus pure, real love longs to give and does not ask for anything in return.

Trust God completely and He will solve all difficulties. Faithfully leave everything to Him and He will see to everything. Love God sincerely and He will reveal Himself. And as you love, your heart must love so that even your mind is not aware of it. As you love God whole-heartedly and honestly, sacrificing everything at the altar of this supreme love, you will realize the Beloved within you.

MEHER BABA

God is everywhere and does everything.
God is within us and knows everything.
God is without us and sees everything.
God is beyond us and Is everything.

God cannot be theorised.
God cannot be discussed.
God cannot be argued about.
God cannot be explained.
God cannot be understood.
God can only be lived by losing ourselves in Him
through Love.

MEHER BABA.

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PREFACE

There is so much sorrow and destruction on this earth on which we live that almost everybody at some period of his life is prompted to ask questions such as : What am I? Why am I here ?

All great religions provide answers to these questions and have systems of philosophy that afford light to forlorn travellers, and specify methods of enjoying sweet repose in the omnipotent Creator. Nevertheless, we are still confused and dissatisfied, and there is a growing realization to find the Truth at any cost.

Here is a collection of extracts from the Spiritual Discourses of Avatar Meher Baba who has been completely silent for the last forty-two years and who has not written a word for more than forty years. These discourses were dictated by Him by means of a Roman Alphabet Board and through hand signs.

This small booklet will give the reader the answers to his life long questions. The path to be trodden in order to reach the Goal of Life of God-realization has been set forth by the Silent Master very plainly and in a lucid manner. It is upto the reader to make use of the method advocated in entering and realizing the Goal of Life while still living in the human body.

Dacca
5th November 1967.

Amy A. Arjani
Adi K. Arjani

FOREWORD

I have been commissioned to write a foreword to this book which provides sustenance to the soul and spirit. I do so with profound admiration for its great writer, whose benevolence to humanity is unwearied and whose evangelical verities are widely acknowledged. His name has echoed across the globe as a figure which redeems the soul of humanity from mortality and decadence. This is Meher Baba, whose name is Merwan Sheriar Irani. He was born in Poona, in February 25, 1894. His father, who was an Iranian Zoroastrian and a seeker of light, was called Sheriar Irani. He first came into contact, while yet in College, with a Muslim woman and saint by the name of Hazrat Babajan, who predicted : "This child of mine will, after some years, create a great sensation in the world and do immense good to humanity". In his life time he has passed into immortality.

Meher Baba, as the author is popularly known, has also come in contact with other great saints of various religious faith. In July 1925, Meher Baba imposed upon himself a voluntary silence which has not yet been broken. He has transmitted these messages to humanity through an eloquence of silence. In the beginning, he employed gestures and, thereafter, he would convey his thoughts by alphabets written on a board. He has

subsequently confined himself only to gestures which are well-understood by those who are close to him. In the following pages, the reader will find more than a dozen soul-stirring theses, which have stored the honey of the soul gathered from its yearnings for eternity. Herein is a light which plays upon the symmetry of things.

It is said that only the eternal rests in eternity. In this sense Meher Baba's mind, poised on its serenity, is all-loving, all-inclusive and as clear as mid-day sun, a mind for ever voyaging through strange seas of ever-moving thoughts.

Meher Baba's great name has stood like a happy star upon this benighted orb. He is a sanctuary of protection to seekers of knowledge and a beacon-light for guidance, whose daily prayers are as many as the earth has saints. His thoughts, once formed and expressed, can never expire. They are as firm as the pillars of heaven.

Man finds himself lodged in this earth of mud and dust and yet he rises beyond the planets and brings them under his feet. When nature made man she made him blessed. He is neither a map of misery nor a god in ruins. He reflects the goodness of godliness. Human life is in a state of probation and faith comes to man from a belief in the immortality of the soul and the spirit. It is thus that he catches a glimpse of the universal sea which brought him here on this earth.

There is one mind, omnipresent, absolute, giving mentality to all things. It marches towards timelessness as it embraces the universe created by God. The main theme of these pronouncements is Love, that great impulse which propels the universe. It reveals and transforms everything with a light which breaks from heaven. Consummate in its birth, it is impervious to decay and separates life from the inconstant and impure. The sea works, the heavens move, the fire burns. Even so the heart never rests, sleeping or waking. It is the end of life and its only errand.

These ears of corn, gathered and rubbed in my hands, I offer to my fellowmen. It contains the essence of roses, distilled by the soul-elevating revelations of the author. Longer epics could not have furnished more food for thought than these self-evident verities. They are but preludes to the eternal hallelujah. There is sweetness in these dissertations, which direct the mind towards the eternal design. They can hardly fail to attract and benefit the reader. Truth is our heritage and it is worth more than heaven and earth. Meher Baba's ethereal figure stretches out its hands, from beneath the shade of a rock, and offers a vase full of the water of life. The caravan resumes its march with uplifted heads.

Here is an asylum, beneath whose loving shelter, the sick and wearied becomes healed in restfulness ; here is a soul informed by divine ideas ; here is a mind which is a unit and measure of things visible and invisible ; here is a thinker whose thoughts tread reverently among

the splendid mysteries of the universe. Indeed, a loving heart is the truest wisdom.

It has been truly said that one of the chief events of life is the day when we encounter a mind that leaves an abiding impression on us. I commend the reader to such an encounter as would lead the soul to what is eternally good. This volume of messages teaches us to venerate ourselves as men.

Complete as an epic, and as immortal as it is complete, stands this grand saga, insulated in its own glory, emitting a light whose effulgence can never grow dim. It silently serves the soul and is laden with instruction. It passes from itself and hovers over the soul until the memory is possessed by a benevolent spirit. As pilgrims rejoice in beholding their native land, so would the readers rejoice after reading these meaningful pages. I now leave them to this rare volume which belongs to the curate state of a treasured store.

Dacca
5-11-1967.

S. M. Murshed
Mr. Justice Syed Mahbub Murshed,
Chief Justice,
E. Pakistan.

THE MASTER'S PRAYER

THIS PRAYER was dictated by MEHER BABA, and during the twenty-one days of BABA'S special work (the thirteenth of August to the second of September, 1953) it was recited every day by one of the Mandali in BABA'S presence. The Gujarati translation of the Prayer was also read out, by another of the Mandali.

○ PARVARDIGAR, the Preserver and Protector of All,
You are without Beginning, and without
End ;

Non-dual, beyond Comparison ; and none can measure
You.

You are without color, without expression, without form,
and without attributes.

You are unlimited and unfathomable, beyond imagination
and conception ; eternal and imperishable.

You are indivisible ; and none can see You, but with eyes
Divine.

You always were, You always are, and You always
will be ;

You are everywhere, You are in everything ; and You are
also beyond everywhere and beyond everything.

You are in the firmament and in the depths, You are manifest and unmanifest ; on all planes, and beyond all planes.

You are in the three worlds, and also beyond the three worlds ;

You are imperceptible and independent.

You are the Creator, the Lord of Lords, the Knower of all minds and hearts ; You are Omnipotent and Omnipresent.

You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite, and Bliss Infinite.

You are the Ocean of Knowledge, All-Knowing, Infinitely-Knowing ; the Knower of the past, the present and the future, and You are Knowledge itself.

You are All-merciful and eternally benevolent ;

You are the Soul of souls, the One with infinite attributes ;

You are the Trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss ;

You are the Source of Truth, the Ocean of Love ;

You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High ;

You are Prabhu and Parameshwar ; You are the Beyond-God, and the Beyond-Beyond-God also ;

You are Parabrahma ; Allah ; Elahi ; Yezdan ; Ahuramazda ; and God the Beloved.

You are named Ezad : i.e., the only One worthy of worship.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MEHER BABA

Merwan Sheriar Irani commonly known as Meher Baba, was born in Poona, India, on February 25, 1894, of Persian parents. His father, Sheriar Irani, was of Zoroastrian faith and a true seeker of God. Merwan went to a Christian high school in Poona and later attended the Deccan College. In 1913 while still in college, a momentous event occurred in his life.....the meeting with Hazrat Babajan, an ancient Mohammedan woman and one of the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Babajan gave him God-Realization and made him aware of his high spiritual destiny. She later declared, "This child of mine will after some years create a great sensation in the world and do immense good to humanity."

Years later, Meher Baba identified Hazrat Babajan and four other holy men—Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj—with whom he subsequently came into contact, as the Perfect or God-Realized Ones, whose function was to 'unveil' the super consciousness in him. Babajan, he said, gave him God-Realization—the complete merging of his consciousness in the Infinite Ocean of Divine Love, Knowledge and Bliss—enabling him to realize by his actual experience, the Infinite Existence.

However, it was at the end of December 1921, that Upasni Maharaj, one of the five Perfect Masters

mentioned above, returned Meher Baba completely to normal consciousness of the world with full retention of his God-Realization, and said, "Merwan, you are the Avatar and I salute you".

Whatever may have transpired during Meher Baba's relationship with the five individuals mentioned, the fact remains that it was plain to many who came into contact with Meher Baba thereafter, that at the very least, He possessed an unusual understanding of the spiritual life, and a deep and rare insight.

As a result, He drew disciples to Himself very readily whom He trained for an arduous life of selfless service through moral discipline, love for God and spiritual understanding. It was some of these early disciples who gave Him the name "Meher Baba" which means "Compassionate Father".

After some years of intensive training of His disciples, Meher Baba established a colony near Ahmednagar, India, that is called Meherabad. Here, His work embraced a free school, where spiritual training was stressed, a free hospital and dispensary and shelters for the poor. No distinction was made between individuals, and all mingled in common fellowship through the inspiration of the Master. At Meherabad many of His Eastern and Western disciples who were of different backgrounds, received their training under His personal guidance.

Meher Baba has travelled extensively throughout India. He has also travelled many times to the Western world and has visited several countries.

In spite of all this activity, Meher Baba has consistently maintained, that His work is neither to teach nor to found a new religion, but to awaken the sleeping soul of man to a higher state of consciousness of man's Real Self, which is God.

He is therefore committed to no 'ism', whether of religion or of politics. He has pointed out that while He appreciates all 'isms' for the many good things they seek to achieve, Truth, while equally including them, transcends all of them and leaves no room for separative divisions, which are all equally false. For the unity of life is integral and indivisible, and it will remain unassailable and inviolable, in spite of all conceivable ideological differences.

What is so impressive about Baba, as His disciples and followers call Him, is the LOVE, which radiates from Him, and permeates through all of His activities. It is through the power of Love, which is utterly selfless, that He awakens in those who come to Him a new, deeper and far more beautiful understanding of life whose purpose He says, is, that the individual should realize the Godhood inherent in himself.

Meher Baba became silent on 10th July 1925, three and a half years after realizing Himself, when He was thirty-one years old. He then used a pencil and slate or paper for communication ; in another 18 months, on 2nd January 1927, He ceased to write.

At first, He employed gestures, but soon took to the use of an alphabet board in Roman lettering. The board

was a ready method of communication, making conversation with Him easy. He pointed to the letters and used a variety of signs and gestures. Normally, the board would be 'read' by one of the mandali when He received visitors or addressed groups of people or meetings. This continued for more than twenty-nine years, until on 7th October 1954, He discarded the board. Thereafter, He communicated by means of gestures with which those around Him became familiar. The interpretation of these gestures by some of the mandali is remarkably well done. When statements of great importance have to be made, the alphabet is spoken and Baba indicates the letters to make up the words He wants. His silence for Spiritual reasons continues until this day. It is a prelude to His manifestation.

In India as many as one hundred thousand people have come in one day to seek His Darshan, or blessing from all over the world ; there are those who journey to spend a few days, even a single day, in His presence.

An important part of Meher Baba's work through the years has been to personally contact and to serve, hundreds of those known in India as 'masts'. These are advanced pilgrims on the spiritual path who have become spiritually intoxicated from direct awareness of God. For this work He has travelled many thousands of miles to remote places throughout India and Ceylon. Other vital work has been the washing of the lepers, the washing of the feet of thousands of poor and the distribution of grain and cloth to the destitute.

Other characteristics of Meher Baba's life are that He frequently retires into seclusion and observes long fasts. These periods of seclusion are periods of intensive spiritual working on the higher planes of cosmic consciousness for the good of all humanity. Alternating with periods of complete retirements, Meher Baba leads a dynamic life of activity.

Meher Baba asserts that He is the same Ancient One, come again to redeem man from his bondage of ignorance and to guide him to realize his true Self which is God.

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THE DECLARATION

"I have not come to establish anything new—I have come to put life into the old. I have not come to establish retreats or ashrams. I create them for the purpose of my universal work, only to repeatedly dissolve them once that purpose has been served.

"When my universal religion of love is on the verge of fading into insignificance, I come to breathe life into it and to do away with the farce of dogmas that defile it in the name of religions and stifle it with ceremonies and rituals."

MEHER BABA'S UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

I have come not to teach but to awaken. Understand therefore that I lay down no precepts.

Throughout eternity I have laid down principles and precepts, but mankind has ignored them. Man's inability to live God's words makes the Avatar's teaching a mockery. Instead of practising the compassion He taught, man has waged crusades in His name. Instead of living the humility, purity and truth of His words, man has given way to hatred, greed and violence.

Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric Form I observe Silence. You have asked for and been given enough words—it is now time to live them. To get nearer and nearer to God you have to get further and further away from "I", "my", "me" and "mine". You have not to renounce anything but your own self. It is as simple as that, though found to be almost impossible. It is possible for you to renounce your limited self by my Grace. I have come to release that Grace.

I repeat, I lay down no precepts. When I release the tide of Truth which I have come to give, men's daily lives will be the living precept. The words I have not spoken will come to life in them.

I veil myself from man by his own curtain of ignorance, and manifest my Glory to a few. My present Avataric Form is the last Incarnation of this cycle of time, hence my Manifestation will be the greatest. When I break my Silence, the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive of it. It will help every individual to break himself free from his own bondage in his own way. I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself. The breaking of my Silence will help you to help yourself in knowing your real Self.

All this world confusion and chaos was inevitable and no one is to blame. What had to happen has happened ; and what has to happen will happen. There was and is no way out except through my coming in your midst. I had to come, and I have come. I am the Ancient One.

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MY MISSION

“I am not come to establish any cult, society or organization ; nor even to establish a new religion. The religion that I shall give teaches the Knowledge of the One behind the many. The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart. I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string.”

THE SEARCH FOR GOD

Most people do not even suspect the existence of God. Others, through early upbringing or the influence of tradition, belong to some faith and acquire belief in God's existence from education and their surroundings : their faith keeps them bound to rituals, ceremonies or formal beliefs but rarely brings about a radical change in their lives. There are others, philosophically minded, who have an inclination to believe in the existence of God, either because of their own speculations or because of the assertions of others ; for them, God is a probable hypothesis or an intellectual idea. They do not, however, know God from personal knowledge, and God is not to them an object of intense desire.

A genuine aspirant to the knowledge of God is not content with spiritual information based on hearsay, neither is he satisfied with inferential knowledge. He searches for direct knowledge.

God either exists or does not exist : if he exists, search for him is justified ; even if he does not exist, there is nothing to lose by seeking him. But man does not usually turn to the search for God as a voluntary and joyous enterprise ; he has to be driven to this search by a disillusionment about worldly things from which he cannot detach his mind. Ordinarily, man is engrossed in activities concerning the material world, and lives

through its experiences of joys and sorrows without suspecting the existence of a deeper Reality ; he aims at the pleasures of the senses and avoids suffering. "Eat, drink and be merry" is his philosophy. But he cannot entirely avoid suffering, and even when he succeeds in having pleasures he becomes satiated. While he thus goes through the daily round of experiences, there arise occasions when he asks himself, "What is the end of this ?" Such an occasion may present itself in some happening for which he is not mentally prepared ; it may be disappointment in some confident expectations, or an important change in his situation demanding radical readjustment and the giving up of cherished habits. Usually such occasions arise from the frustration of some deep craving of which he is possessed. If that craving has no chance of being satisfied, the psyche receives a shock that may cause it no longer to accept the life that hitherto has been lived without question.

Under such circumstances a person may be driven to despair. Desperateness can only work destruction. But the desperateness of a thoughtful person under similar circumstances is altogether different because the energy released is intelligently harnessed and directed towards a purpose. In the moment of such divine desperateness, a man may take the important decision of discovering the aim of life. There thus comes into his life the search for lasting values. Henceforth, the question that refuses to be silenced is, "What does my life lead to ?"

When the psychic energy of man is centred upon finding the goal of life, he is using the power of desperateness creatively. He is no longer content with the fleeting things of this life and is sceptical about the values he has so far accepted. His desire is to find the Truth at any cost and he does not rest satisfied with anything short of it. Divine desperateness is the beginning of spiritual awakening because it gives rise to the aspiration for God-realization. In the moment of divine desperateness, when everything seems to give way, a man may decide to take any risk for realizing the possible significance of his life. This man turns to God.

Since there is no obvious access to this hidden reality, he looks upon his experiences as a possible avenue to an explanation, and thus goes back to those experiences with the purpose of gathering light upon them. He tries to fathom its spiritual significance; he is not concerned merely with what it is but with what it means in relation to this hidden goal. And this revaluation of experience results in gaining an insight which could not have come to him before. Revaluation of experience amounts to the acquisition of wisdom, and each addition to spiritual wisdom brings about a modification of the general attitude to life.

With the clear and tranquil vision of the real nature and worth of life, he realizes that God, whom he has been seeking, is no stranger. He is the Reality itself—the Reality in which he has had his being, and with which he is identified. The spiritual journey does not consist in gaining what a person did not have, but in the

dissipation of ignorance concerning himself and life, and the growth of understanding which begins with spiritual awakening. To find God is to come to one's own self.

To arrive at self knowledge is to arrive at God-realization. God-realization is different from all other states of consciousness because they are experienced through the medium of the individual mind, whereas God-consciousness is not dependent upon the individual mind. To know the self as it is, consciousness has to be freed from the limitation of the individual mind. In other words, the individual mind has to disappear while consciousness is retained.

The limited mind is the soil in which the ego is rooted ; and the ego perpetuates ignorance through the many illusions in which it is caught. The ego prevents the manifestation of infinite knowledge already latent in the soul, and is the most formidable obstacle in the attainment of God.

The ego is the centre of human activity, and the attempts of the ego to secure its own extinction may be compared with the attempt of a man to stand on his own shoulders. Just as the eye cannot see itself, the ego is unable to end its own existence. All that it does to bring about self-annihilation only adds to its existence, for it flourishes on the very efforts directed against itself. Thus it is unable to vanish through its own activity, though it succeeds in transforming its nature. The vanishing of the ego is conditioned by the melting away of the limited mind which is its seat.

God-realization is the emancipation of consciousness from the limitations of the mind. When the individual mind is dissolved, the related universe vanishes, and consciousness is no longer tied to it. Consciousness then becomes unclouded and is illumined by the Infinite Reality.

The Infinite Reality in the God-realized soul has the knowledge of its own Infinity; but such knowledge does not belong to the unrealized soul, still subject to the illusion of the universe. If God-realization were not a personal attainment, the entire universe would come to an end as soon as one man attained God-realization. This does not happen, because God-realization is a personal state of consciousness belonging to the one who has transcended the domain of the mind. Others continue to remain in bondage, and can attain it only by freeing their consciousness from the burden of the ego and the limitations of the individual mind. Thus God-realization has a direct significance only for the one who has emerged from the time-process.

After the attainment of God-realization, the soul discovers that it has always been the Infinite Reality, and that its looking upon itself as finite during the period of evolution and spiritual advancement was an illusion. The soul also finds that the infinite knowledge and bliss that it enjoys have been latent in the Infinite Reality from the beginning of time and that it became manifest at the moment of realization. Thus the God-realized person does not become different from what he was

before realization. He remains what he was : the difference that realization makes in him is that while previously he did not consciously know his true nature, he now knows it. He knows that he has never been anything other than what he now knows himself to be, and that he has been through a process of self-discovery.

The world of shadows is at an end and the curtain of illusion is for ever drawn. The distress of the pursuits of limited consciousness is replaced by the tranquillity and bliss of truth-consciousness and the restlessness of temporal existence is swallowed up in the peace of eternity.

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THE FINAL ACCOUNT

“When the goal of life is attained, one achieves the reparation of all wrongs, the healing of all wounds, the righting of all failures, the sweetening of all sufferings, the relaxation of all strivings, the harmonizing of all strife, the unraveling of all enigmas, and the real and full meaning of all life—past, present and future.”

BHAKTI (WORSHIP)

Out of a number of practices which lead to the ultimate goal of humanity—God-Realization—Bhakti is one of the most important. Almost the whole of humanity is concerned with Bhakti, which, in simple words, means the art of worship. But it must be understood in all its true aspects, and not merely in a narrow and shallow sense, in which the term is commonly used and interpreted.

The profound worship based on the high ideals of philosophy and spirituality, prompted by divine love, doubtless constitutes true Bhakti. It follows then that the various ceremonies, rituals, which are part and parcel of every creed or the "*shariat*" of every "religion," constitute only its shadow. Nevertheless, it may be said that the ritualistic worship, which the masses of humanity confuse with religion, is Bhakti in its incipient or initial stage. A number of the ceremonies performed by the followers of every creed are doubtless useless, but those ceremonies and modes of offering prayers, which are essentially based on the principle of conveying or evoking worship, may be said to constitute elementary Bhakti.

Although Bhakti cannot be divided into separate, watertight compartments, it may be said to have three

principal stages. The first stage, which is elementary, concerns itself with ritualistic worship. The *Namaz* of the Muslims, the *Tal-Bhajan* and the *Sandhya-Pujas* of the Hindus, the *Kusti* and *Bhantars* of the Zoroastrians, the prayers of the Christians, etc., are no doubt Bhakti—worship in rudimentary stages. The first stage of Bhakti is therefore general, and almost everyone is concerned with it and can practice it.

The second stage, which is intermediate, concerns itself with the constant remembrance of God. The worshipper, through constant mental or physical repetitions (*Nam-Smaran* or *Zikra*) of any one name of God, achieves the fixity of thought on God, without the medium of any ceremony. In other words, when a person's thoughts are always directed towards God, throughout the waking state, even while eating or talking, he may be said to be in the second stage of Bhakti.

This kind of constant remembrance of God must not be confounded with meditation. In meditation, one makes an attempt to achieve fixity of thought; whereas one who has reached the second stage of Bhakti already possesses the one sole and single thought for God, and therefore has no more need of organized thinking. Just as a variety of thoughts come to an ordinary man, even without the intention on his part to have them, the Bhakti in the second stage simply cannot help thinking about the Lord, wherever and however he may be. This fixity of thought on God is higher Bhakti or worship.

The third stage, which is advanced, concerns itself with divine love and longing of a high order. The higher Bhakti of the second stage ultimately leads the aspirant to this third or highest stage of Bhakti; in other words, to the highest Bhakti and to the true love. The one in this stage can be called the true lover of God. For him there is no question of fixity of thought. He is beyond thought. His thoughts, so to say, have got melted into the blazing and all-consuming fire of an intense longing for the Beloved—God. So much so, that far from thinking about his physical needs, the aspirant in this stage of Bhakti or love, is almost incognizant of his very corporality.

From this survey of the three stages of Bhakti, it is quite evident that for householders, men of busy avocations, in short, for the masses, the practice of worship is possible only up to the first stage. The average man should follow his creed, whatever it may be, in all sincerity, regardless of the rewards to come, and with the only aim and object of—"I want nothing but You-God."

But when I say "following one's own creed," I mean that everybody should be free to base his worship on the religious ideas and methods that appeal to him most, and not that one should stop dead at believing or disbelieving certain statements of a particular scripture, about subjects that are generally beyond the sphere of intellect. It is the act of worship from the heart, and not thoughts and beliefs, that counts in the religious province.

Thus, for a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Parsi, the best Bhakti is the performance of the *Puja*, the

Namaz, the prayers, and the *Kusti* ceremony, respectively. But the performance must be from the very depths of the heart, and with the only object of "I want nothing but You (God)." Otherwise, a religion, however beautiful be its teachings, however grand be its philosophy, becomes nothing but a mere farce, which people indulge in generally more through force of habit and fear of society than through any idea of true devotion and worship.

Unless there is the will to worship, no number of ceremonies and no amount of lip-prayer will ever serve the true purpose of religion. It is one thing to learn by heart the whole of a scripture ; it is quite another thing to repeat a single sentence of it from the heart. A Hindu may have the *Shastras* at his fingertips, but if he lacks in devotion from the heart, he is no better than a typewriter or a calculating machine.

A Muslim may laugh at so-called idol-worship ; but he becomes guilty of stray-thought worship, if, while placing his forehead down in a *Sijda* in the course of his *Namaz*, without being prompted by the will to worship, he is attacked by objectionable thoughts, for it means that he is at that time paying homage, not to the Almighty, but to those very thoughts. For instance, if a Muslim gets the thought of any man or woman, while doing the *Sijda*, it amounts to having offered the *Sijda* to that man or woman, and thus the *Namaz* turns into a farce.

To sum up, it is possible for everyone, belonging to any creed and to any station in life, to practice Bhakti or the true art of worship in its first stage. The act of worship should spring from the heart. Let it be

borne in mind that worship from the heart presupposes great efforts. It cannot be evoked with a mere wish. If one decides upon practicing true Bhakti, one has to make heroic efforts in order to achieve fixity of mind, for contrary thoughts are very likely to disturb one's mind. It is because the average person's frame of mind is averse to remaining unchanged for any considerable period of time, that the repeated efforts to evoke deep devotion are essential ; and in fact are the turning point in such practices that distinguish the right sense of religion from the shallow show of a mere routine.

Some persons may be so constituted that they can readily take to the second stage of Bhakti, without having passed through the first stage. But whether the devotee has or has not passed through the first stage, in the beginning of the second stage, he has to make vigorous efforts in thinking about the Almighty as much and as often as possible. The efforts must be continued until he becomes above efforts ; and he becomes above efforts only when worship from the heart becomes his second nature. He who can naturally worship from the heart without finding it necessary to make artificial efforts, may justifiably be said to have attained to higher Bhakti.

Let it be noted that it is not necessary for a man to stop carrying out his worldly duties and obligations, to achieve or to practice this higher Bhakti. He may conduct his business or follow his profession, he may lead the family life and look after all his necessary external requirements ; but amidst all his worldly engagements he should ever be alert on the Lord. The more

he can remember the object of the heart-worship, along with the routine work of his everyday life, the better for him. Besides reiterating the name of the Almighty in the ordinary manner, the seeker of the subjective, spiritual sidelights in the second, more advanced stage of Bhakti should make it a rule to retire into a dark room all alone for about a couple of hours every night. During this period of retirement he must try to avoid all thoughts save that of "I want You, O Lord," and repeat continuously any one of the names of the Almighty which he has adopted for the purpose of *Nam-Smaran*.

This is the best course open for those who neither feel satisfied with objective worship, nor can afford to renounce all for God. If sincerely followed, this intermediate practice is bound to bear fruit sooner or later and provide the aspirant with the subjective "glimpses" of the great Reality in some way or another. For instance, one may be able to see or hear without using the gross organs of sight and sound ; or perhaps even get established on the Path itself.

But for the few who insist, from the very depth of their souls and from the innermost core of their heart, on seeing the Reality actually face to face at all costs and consequences, there is but one way. And that is complete renunciation. Such heroes must not only possess the indomitable courage of renouncing the world, forsaking all possessions and properties, tearing up all external connections, but also of practicing internal renunciation, which means giving up all desires and passions, but entertaining the aspiration for God-realization.

GOD ALONE IS

Infinite consciousness is infinite. Thus it can never lessen at any point in time or space. Infinite consciousness, being infinite, includes every aspect of consciousness. Unconsciousness is one of the aspects of infinite consciousness. Thus infinite consciousness includes unconsciousness. It sustains, covers, pierces through, and provides an end to, unconsciousness—which flows from and is consumed by infinite consciousness.

In order to assert infinite consciousness unequivocally, I declare that I have infinite consciousness ; and I can do this most emphatically because I *am* infinite consciousness. I am everything and I am beyond, beyond everything.

I am ever conscious that I am in you, while you are never conscious that I am in you. Daily I support you and share your consciousness. Now I want you to uphold Me and share My consciousness one day.

Man being unconscious of actually possessing the never-ending continuously conscious experience that God is everything and *all else* is nothing, for him “everything” is everything : Air is. Water is. Fire is. Earth is. Light is. Darkness is. Stone is. Iron is. Vegetation is. Insect is. Fish is. Bird is. Beast is. Man is. Good is. Bad is. Pain is. Pleasure is—and thus there is no end

to what all else is, until he arrives at "nothing is" and instantaneously he realizes "God Is".

It is not easy for man to accept and keep on accepting under all circumstances that God is. Even after his firm acceptance that God is, it is supremely difficult though not impossible for him to realize what he has firmly accepted. And realization means that instead of being fully conscious that he is man, man becomes fully conscious that he is God, was God, has always been God and will ever remain God.

Knowingly or unknowingly, man is ever seeking the Goal, which is to realize his true Self. The very nearest and innermost to man is his Soul, but the fun of it is that he feels far, far away from It. There appears no end to his journeys towards the Goal through the numberless high ways and by-ways of life and death, although in fact there is no distance at all to cover. Having achieved full consciousness as man, he has already arrived at his destination, and now possesses the capacity to become fully conscious of his Soul. Still he is unable to realize this divine destiny because his consciousness remains completely focussed on his perverted, limited, finite self—the Mind—which ironically has been the medium of achieving consciousness.

Before he can know Who he is, man has to un-learn the mass of illusory knowledge he has burdened himself with on the interminable journey from unconsciousness to consciousness. It is only through love that you can begin to unlearn, thus eventually putting an end to all

that you do not know. God-love penetrates all illusion, while no amount of illusion can penetrate God-love. Start learning to love God by beginning to love those whom you cannot. You will find that in serving others you are serving yourself. The more you remember others with kindness and generosity, the less you remember yourself; and the less you remember yourself the more you forget yourself. And when you completely forget yourself, you find Me as the Source of all Love.

Give up parrotry in all its aspects. Start practising whatever you truly feel to be true and justly to be just. Do not make a show of your faith and beliefs. You have not to give up your religion, but to give up clinging to the outer husk of mere ritual and ceremonies. To get to the fundamental core of Truth underlying all religions, reach beyond religion.

Through endless time God's greatest gift is continuously given in silence. But when mankind becomes completely deaf to the thunder of His Silence, God incarnates as Man. The Unlimited assumes the Limited, to shake Maya-drugged humanity to a consciousness of its true destiny and to give a spiritual push to the world by His physical Presence on earth. He uses the Body for His universal work, to be discarded in final sacrifice as soon as it has served Its purpose.

God has come again and again in various Forms, has spoken again and again in different words and different languages the Same one Truth—but how many are there that live upto it? Instead of making Truth the vital

breath of his life, man compromises by making over and over again a mechanical religion of it—as a handy staff to lean on in times of adversity, as a soothing balm for his conscience or as a tradition to be followed in the footsteps of the past. Man's inability to live God's words, makes them a mockery. How many Christians follow Christ's teaching to 'turn the other cheek' or 'to love thy neighbour as thyself' ? How many Muslims follow Mohammed's precept to 'hold God above everything else' ? How many Hindus 'bear the torch of righteousness at all cost' ? How many Buddhists live the 'life of pure compassion' expounded by Buddha ? How many Zoroastrians 'think truly, speak truly, act truly' ? God's Truth cannot be ignored ; and thus by mankind's ignorance and weakness a tremendous adverse reaction is produced—and the world finds itself in a cauldron of suffering through wars, hate, conflicting ideologies, and nature's rebellion in the form of floods, famines, earthquakes, and other disasters. Ultimately when the apex is reached, God manifests anew in human form to guide mankind to the destruction of its self-created evil, that it may be re-established in the Divine Truth.

My Silence and the imminent breaking of my Silence is to save mankind from the monumental forces of ignorance, and to fulfil the divine Plan of universal unity. The breaking of my Silence will reveal to man the universal oneness of God, which will bring about the universal brotherhood of man. My Silence had to be. The breaking of my Silence has to be—soon.

WHO AM I ?

Christ and his inner circle and the Christian mystics, all stressed purity of heart. Muhammad and his Imams also stressed purity of heart. So did Zoroaster and the Magis, so did Krishna and his companions, and the Vedantists. So does Meher Baba stress purity of heart. We shall see what this means—what the heart is—what the mind is. Is it only the physical organ that is meant, or something deeper ? A Sufi said : ‘The abode of love is infinitely higher than the domain of mind. He alone, out of the millions and billions of people, can touch and kiss the threshold of the Beloved who carries his life in his sleeves.’ This is a literal translation. What it means is that if you want to see your beloved God, you must go before him with your head in the palm of your hand. It means that the mind can never attain to the One who transcends the mind. So we now understand that God cannot be understood. He is not visible, because he is infinitely visible to that eye which has no veil of desires or ego over it. The mind has a dual function. The first function is that of thinking. The impressions that lie dormant have to be worked out, and appear as thoughts. This thinking function of mind is known to the Vedantists as *mun*. The second function

of mind includes all feelings and emotions. This is called antahkarana. That means the heart. So what is known as the heart is actually the second functioning of the mind itself. The impressions called sanskaras are spent through both thinking and feeling. In the first functioning of the mind are thoughts of all kinds. In the second functioning of the mind, that is the heart, are all feelings and desires—feelings of joy, pain, disappointment, happiness, shock, belong to this antahkarana.

In sound sleep, the impressions registered in the mind lie in a latent, dormant state. What wakes you up from sound sleep ? The impressions of actions done, and these impressions are spent first by thoughts, then by desires, then by actions. So Krishna, in his Gita, said something to the effect that 'impressions should be spent only through thoughts.' Then no new impressions will be formed. If you cannot do this, then let the impressions be spent through desires, longings, feelings not through actions. Then new impressions will be formed, but they will not be so deep. If impressions lead to action, then new and stronger impressions are bound to be formed. This means that the first functioning of the mind is not important in so far as spending impressions is concerned. It is natural. But the second functioning of the mind, which is generally called the heart, is important because it is the seat of desires, and unless the heart is void of desires and feelings, unless the heart is pure and naked, God who is your innermost Self, cannot reveal himself.

God is your innermost Self. That means that behind this limited body, you have within you energy, and mind with both its functions. You as you—the ego—are also there. Behind all this, imagine God as infinite in space. Try to grasp what this means. You have this idea of yourself as body ; you feel happy, depressed, hungry. You, you, you—this you think to be yourself ; but behind this you, there is something that cannot be got rid of, even if the body is not there. If both your hands or legs were cut off, you would still exist as you. That means that you are not this body. In sound sleep, you are unconscious of your body, but you still exist ; so you are not this body. Who then is this you ? This you is your innermost Self. We must find, in our own self, this important 'I'.

Who am I ? I am not this body. Then who am I ? 'I' might be energy ; but when I do not move, do not act—when I am unconscious—energy does not manifest itself ; yet I still exist. So I am not energy.

'I' might be mind. But the same applies here. When I am unconscious, in sound sleep, and the mind is still, the mind is not functioning, but I still exist ; so I am also not mind. Then who am I ? Try to grasp this. Let us try to understand what cannot be understood. I am that which is not body, not energy, not mind.

In sound sleep, what do you experience ? Nothing. That is you. Why ? If I am not body, energy, mind, then I am that which has no body, energy, mind ; and only sound sleep means that. Only sound sleep answers

the question. In sound sleep you are not body, not energy, not mind, yet the body is there, energy is there, mind is there. Only the consciousness of body, of energy, of mind is not there.

The original state of the beginningless Beginning was the infinite sound-sleep state of the Infinite One. In the beginningless Beginning, when there was no creation, no universe—not even nothing—there was only the Is state of ‘god’.

Then started the Ten States of God. During the processes of evolution and reincarnation, impressions were gathered; body, energy and mind developed, and the soul, in spite of its infinite state, experienced itself as the finite body, as energy, and as mind, due to these impressions.

In sound sleep, Malcolm is not conscious of body, energy, mind, and only Malcolm as real Malcolm exists. The important point is that Malcolm in the sound-sleep state exists as ‘I am Malcolm’ and is unconscious of this ‘I-ness’. The ego in the sound-sleep or absolute-unconscious state is called ‘the natural ego’. There are three kinds of ego; the first is the natural ego.

What wakes you up from sound sleep? The impressions that lie on your mind. They say, ‘Malcolm, wake up! We want to be spent’. So Malcolm wakes up and spends the impressions through thinking, desiring, acting. And Malcolm, while spending the impressions, thinks ‘I am this body’. This ‘I’ is called the ‘false ego’.

Malcolm, who really is Malcolm, and not this body, according to impressions takes one form after another, and goes on spending new impressions.

While spending old impressions, new impressions are formed, which also need spending ; so, ever new forms are taken, according to good and bad impressions—man, woman, beautiful, ugly, rich, poor, strong, weak, and so forth. They are like different clothes, which you alternately wear and discard, and all along, this false ego persists.

Then comes a time when the impressions grow fainter and fainter, scarcer and scarcer. Eventually they become so faint that they fade away completely, and when impressions are not there, mind's functioning is stopped. The heart is now naked and pure, because there are no desires, no longings, no feelings ; yet you are still there. Then the 'I' void of all impressions, has no bindings, no limits. It now experiences that state which is above mind, the mind is no longer there. It experiences the Infinite Original State of Real 'I'-ness. This ego is called the Real Ego, and just as with the false ego, Malcolm said, 'I am this body—or I am this energy—or I am this mind'—now Malcolm says, 'I am God'.

THE FORMATION, FUNCTION AND REMOVAL OF SANSKARAS.

There are two aspects of human experience—the subjective and objective : the mental processes which contain the essential elements of experience, and the objects to which they refer. The mental processes are dependent partly upon the immediate objective situation and partly upon the functioning of the accumulated sanskaras or impressions of previous experience. The human mind thus finds itself between past sanskaras and the objective world.

Human actions are based upon the operation of the impressions stored in the mind through previous experience. Every thought emotion and act is grounded in groups of impressions, which are modifications of the mind stuff of man. These impressions are deposits of previous experience, and become the most important factors in determining the course of present and future experience. The mind is constantly creating and gathering them. When occupied with the physical objects of this world, such as the body and nature, the mind is, so to say, externalized, and creates physical impressions ; and when it is busy with its own subjective mental processes it creates subtle and mental impressions.

The question whether these impressions (or sanskaras) or experience come first is like the question whether the hen was first or the egg. Both are conditions of each other and develop simultaneously. The problem of understanding the significance of human experience, therefore, turns upon the problem of understanding the formation and function of sanskaras.

The sanskaras are of two main types—natural and the so-called non-natural—according to the manner in which they come into existence. The sanskaras gathered during the period of organic evolution are natural. They gather round the soul as it successively takes up and abandons the various sub-human forms, passing from the apparently inanimate stone to metal, vegetable, fish, birds, animal and finally the man, where there is full development of consciousness. All the sanskaras which cluster round the soul before attaining the human form are the product of natural evolution, and are therefore, referred to as natural sanskaras. They should be distinguished from the sanskaras cultivated by the soul after the attainment of the human form, treated under the moral freedom of consciousness with its responsibility of choice between good and evil. They are, therefore, referred to as non-natural sanskaras. For, though these post-human sanskaras are directly dependent upon the natural sanskaras, they are created under fundamentally different conditions. The difference in the length of the periods through which they have been gathered and the conditions under which they are formed is responsible for the difference in the degree of firmness

with which the natural and non-natural sanskaras are attached to the soul. The non-natural sanskaras, are not as difficult to eradicate as the natural sanskaras, which have an ancient heritage, and are more firmly rooted. The obliteration of the natural sanskaras is practically impossible unless the neophyte is the recipient of the grace of a Master.

An important question is, "Why should the manifested life at the different stages of evolution emerge out of the Absolute Reality, which is infinite?" The answer is that manifested life arises out of the impetus in the Absolute to become conscious of itself. The progressive manifestation of life through evolution is ultimately brought about by the will-to-be-conscious inherent in the Infinite. In order to understand creation in terms of thought, it is necessary to imagine this will-to-be-conscious in the Absolute prior to the act of manifestation.

It would be a mistake to imagine that some real change takes place in the Absolute when the impulse of the involved will-to-be-conscious brings into existence the world of manifestation. There can be no act of involution or evolution within the being of the Absolute ; and nothing real can be born from the Absolute. The change implied in the creation of the manifested world is not an ontological change or a change in the being of the Absolute Reality, it is an apparent change. The manifoldness of creation and the separateness of individuals exist only in imagination. The existence of

creation or the world of manifestation is grounded in illusion, so that, in spite of the manifestation of numberless individuals, the Absolute remains the same without any real expansion or contraction, increment or decrement. But though the Absolute undergoes no modification there comes into existence its apparent differentiation into many individuals.

The original illusion marks the beginning of the formation of sanskaras, which starts in the finite centre which becomes the first focus for the manifestation of individuality. In the physical sphere, this first focus of manifestation is represented by the tridimensional and inert stone, which has rudimentary and partial consciousness sufficient only to illumine its own shape and form. Whatever illumination exists in the stone phase is derived from the Absolute, not from the body of the stone. But consciousness is unable to enlarge its scope independently of the body of the stone, because the Absolute is first identified with consciousness and through it to the stone. And as all further development of consciousness is arrested in the body of the stone, evolution of the higher forms of manifestation becomes indispensable. The development of consciousness has to proceed with the evolution of the body by which it is conditioned. Therefore, the will-to-be-conscious which is inherent in the Absolute seeks by divine determination a progressive evolution of the vehicles of expression.

The Absolute forges for itself a new vehicle of expression in the metal form, in which it becomes more

intensified ; but remains rudimentary. It has to get transferred to forms of vegetation in which there is an appreciable advance in the development of consciousness through the maintenance of the vital processes of growth, decay and reproduction. Emergence of a still more developed form of consciousness becomes possible when the Absolute seeks manifestation through the instinctive life of insects, birds and animals, which are aware of their bodies and respective surroundings, which develop a sense of self-protection, and aim at establishing mastery over their environment. In the higher animals mind or thought appears, but its working is limited by such instincts as those of self-protection and the care and preservation of the young. So even in animals, consciousness has not its full development, with the result that it is unable to serve the purpose of the Absolute to attain self-illumination.

The Absolute finally takes the human form in which self-consciousness appears. At this stage the capacity of reasoning develops, the scope of which is unlimited, but as human consciousness is identified with the physical body, this consciousness does not serve the purpose of illuminating the nature of the Absolute. However, in the human form, consciousness has the potentiality for self-realization, and detachment from the body and its environment, and the will-to-be-conscious with which evolution started becomes fructified in the Masters or Man-Gods.

The Absolute cannot reach self-knowledge through ordinary human consciousness, because that conscious-

ness is enveloped in a multitude of sanskaras. As consciousness passes from the apparently inanimate state of stone or metal to vegetative life, then to the instinctive state of insects, birds and animals, and finally to the consciousness of man, it is continually creating new sanskaras and getting enveloped in them. These natural sanskaras get added to after the human state is attained by the creation of non-natural sanskaras, through human experience. Thus the acquisition of sanskaras is unceasing during the process of evolution as well as during the later period of human activities.

The sanskaras constantly created in human life are due to the various objects and ideas with which consciousness finds itself confronted, and the thoughts and actions that follow; these sanskaras bring about important transformations in the various states of consciousness.

The power and effect of impressions can hardly be over estimated. An impression is hardened, and its inertness makes it durable. It can become so engraved upon the mind that despite a sincere desire to have it eradicated it works itself into action directly or indirectly. The mind contains many heterogeneous sanskaras, and, while seeking expression in consciousness, they often clash with each other. The clash of sanskaras is experienced in consciousness as a mental conflict. Experience is bound to be chaotic and enigmatic, full of oscillations, confusion and tangles, until consciousness is freed from sanskaras—good and bad. Experience

can become truly harmonious only when consciousness is emancipated from subjection to impressions.

Sanskaras can be classified, as of three kinds :—

1. Physical sanskaras, which enable the individual to experience the physical world through the physical medium and compel it to identify itself with the physical body.

2. Subtle sanskaras, which enable the individual to experience the subtle world through the subtle medium and to identify itself with the subtle body.

3. Mental sanskaras, which enable the individual to experience the mental world through the mental medium and compel it to identify itself with the mental body.

The self-conscious individuals experience the Absolute through the medium of the self, whereas other individuals experience only their bodies and the corresponding worlds. This difference is due to the fact that whereas the consciousness of others is conditioned by some kind of sanskaras, the consciousness of self-conscious individuals is free from sanskaras. It is only when consciousness is unobscured and unconditioned by sanskaras that the infinity and indivisible unity of the Absolute is consciously realized. The problem of deconditioning the mind through the removal of sanskaras is, therefore, extremely important.

Five ways of release from sanskaras.

1. To cease creating new sanskaras by putting an end to those unconscious activities that form them. If the formation of sanskaras is compared to the winding of a string round a stick, this step amounts to the stopping of the further winding of the string.

2. The wearing out of old sanskaras. If sanskaras are withheld from expressing themselves in action and experience, they are gradually worn out.

3. The unwinding of past sanskaras. This process consists in annulling past sanskaras by mentally reversing the process which leads to their formation.

4. The dispersion and exhaustion of some sanskaras. If the psychic energy which is locked up in sanskaras is sublimated and diverted to other channels, they get dispersed and disappear.

5. The wiping out of sanskaras. This consists in completely annihilating sanskaras. In the analogy of the string, this is comparable to the cutting of the string. The wiping out of sanskaras can be effected only by the grace of a Perfect Master.

If the mind is to be freed from the bondage of accumulating sanskaras it is necessary that there should be an end to the creation of new ones. New sanskaras can be stopped through renunciation. Renunciation may be external or internal. External or physical renunciation consists in giving up everything to which the mind is attached, viz., home, parents, wife, children,

friends, wealth, comforts and enjoyments. Internal or mental renunciation consists in giving up all cravings, feelings of self-importance, opinions, habits and attitudes. Spiritual freedom consists in internal renunciation, but external renunciation is an aid in achieving internal renunciation. The person who renounces his possessions disconnects himself from a potent source of fresh sanskaras. With the renouncing of everything he also renounces his past bindings. The old sanskaras connected with his possessions get detached from his mind, and since they are withheld from expressing themselves, they get worn out.

Two important forms of external renunciation that have special spiritual value are (1) solitude and (2) fasting. Withdrawal of oneself from worldly activities and occasional retirement into solitude are valuable for wearing out the sanskaras. Fasting is physical when food is not taken despite the craving for the enjoyment of eating ; it is mental when food is taken not for its delights but for the survival of the body. If, however, external fasting is undertaken in moderation and for spiritual purposes it facilitates the achievement of internal fasting ; and when external and internal fasting are whole-hearted, they bring about the unwinding of the sanskaras connected with the craving for food.

The unwinding of many sanskaras can be brought about through penance. This consists in augmenting the feeling of remorse when one has done wrong. Penance is facilitated by remaining vulnerable during periods of emotional outbursts, or by deliberate efforts

to recall the past with deep disapproval. Such penance unwinds the sanskaras which are responsible for the action. Self-condemnation, accompanied by deep feeling, can negate the sanskaras of anger, greed and lust. When penance is carefully nourished and practised, it inevitably results in the psychic revocation of undesirable modes of thought and conduct and brings a man into a life of purity and service. Penance should not be the everyday regret that follows everyday weaknesses. Sincere penance does not consist in perpetuating grief for wrongs one has done but in resolving to avoid them in future. The wearing out and the unwinding of sanskaras can also be effected by denying to desires their expression and fulfilment. Those in whom desires arise with strong impulse are often unable to curb them at their source, but they can refrain from seeking their fulfilment through action. On the other hand, if a man translates his desires into action, he may exhaust some impressions but will create fresh impressions, thus sowing seeds for future desires, which, in their turn, demand satisfaction.

Rejection of desires is a preparation for desirelessness which alone brings freedom. Wanting is binding, whether fulfilled or not. Wanting is a state of disturbed equilibrium of mind, and non-wanting a state of poise. The poise of non-wanting can be maintained only by a disentanglement from all stimuli, whether pleasant or painful, agreeable or disagreeable. To remain unmoved by the joys and sorrows of this world, the mind must be completely detached from external and internal stimuli.

It is useless to try to coerce the mind to a life of asceticism. Any forcible adjustment of life in the ascetic way is likely to stunt the growth of good qualities. When the healthy qualities of human nature are allowed to develop slowly, they unfold knowledge of relative values, and thereby pave the way for a spontaneous life of asceticism, but any attempt to force them will invite reaction.

The negative assertion of “no”, “no”, is the way of unwinding the positive sanskaras gathered through evolution and human lives. But though this process destroys the positive sanskaras, it results in the formation of negative sanskaras, which also condition the mind and create new problems. The assertion of “no”, “no”, has to be sufficiently powerful to effect the eradication of the physical, subtle and mental sanskaras ; but after it has served its purpose it must be abandoned. Spiritual experience does not consist of negation. A negative attitude is equivalent to an intellectual concept, used to condition the mind, but it must be renounced. Thought has sometimes to be used to overcome limitations set up by its own movement, but when this has been done, it has itself to be given up. This is the process of going beyond the mind, which becomes possible through non-identification with the mind and its desires. To look upon the body as well as all thoughts and impulses, objectively, is to get established in detachment and to negate the sanskaras. This means freeing the soul from its self-imposed illusions such as “I am the body”, “I am the mind” or “I am desire” and gaining ground

towards the enlightened state of "I am God", "Anel Haque", or "Aham Brahmasmi".

Those methods of removing sanskaras are based upon the control of the body and mind. The control of the habitual tendencies of the mind is much more difficult than the control of physical actions.

Control is a conscious activity and involves effort as long as the mind attempts to recondition itself through the removal of sanskaras ; but after release from the sanskaras the activity is spontaneous, because the mind is functioning in freedom. Such control is born of strength of character and health of mind, and brings with it immense peace. The control that has spiritual value does not consist in the repression of thoughts and desires, but is the restraint exercised by the perception of positive values discovered during experience. Control is essentially, therefore, not merely negative.

Creative control is possible because the source of light is within, and though self-illumination is prevented by the veil of sanskaras, there is not, even within the boundaries of ordinary human consciousness, complete darkness. The ray of light which leads the individual onward is the sense of true values, which guides with varying degrees of clarity according to the thickness of the veil of sanskaras. The process of the replacing lower by higher values is the process of sublimation, which consists in diverting the psychic energy locked up in sanskaras towards creative and spiritual ends. When the psychic energy is thus diverted those sanskaras get dispersed.

The method of sublimation has the special advantage of having an unfailing interest for the aspirant at all stages. The method of negation without substitution, though necessary, is likely to be boring, and may seem to lead to vacuity. But the method of sublimation is at every stage of absorbing interest, bringing an ever-increasing sense of fulfilment. Psychic energy can be sublimated into spiritual channels through (1) meditation (2) selfless service of humanity, and (3) devotion.

1. Meditation is deep and constant concentration upon an ideal object and the path that the individual makes for himself while trying to get beyond the limitations of the mind.

2. While meditation on the personal and impersonal aspects of God requires withdrawal of consciousness into the sanctuary of one's own heart, concentration on the universal aspect of God is best achieved through the selfless service of humanity. When the mind is absorbed in the service of humanity, it is oblivious of its body and mind and their functions as in meditation, and therefore new sanskaras are not formed. Further the old sanskaras which bind the mind are shattered and dispersed. Selfless service is accomplished when there is no thought of reward or result. You are willing to sacrifice everything for the well-being of others. Their comfort is your convenience, their health your delight, and their happiness your joy. You will find your life in losing it in theirs. You live in their hearts, and your heart becomes their shelter. Thus through living for

others your own life finds its expansion. The person who leads a life of selfless service is, however, never self-conscious in serving. He does not make those he serves feel that they are under any obligation to him.

3. Love is characterized by self-sacrifice and happiness. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that in whole-hearted offering to the Beloved there is no diversion of psychic energy, and concentration is complete. In love the physical, vital and mental energies are made available for the cause of the beloved and become dynamic power. The tension of true love is so great that any feeling which might intervene is at once eliminated. Thus there is no parallel to the expulsive and purifying efficacy of love.

There is nothing artificial about it for love subsists from the beginning of evolution. At the organic stage it is expressed in the form of cohesion or attraction. It is the natural affinity that keeps things together and draws them to each other. The gravitational pull exercised by the heavenly bodies upon each other is an expression of love. At the organic stage love becomes self-illuminated and self-appreciative, even from the amoeba to the most evolved human beings. When love is self-illuminated, its value is in conscious sacrifice.

The sacrifice of love is complete and ungrudging. The more it gives the more it wants to give, and the less it is conscious of having given. Ever increasing and never failing it seeks to please the Beloved. It welcomes suffering to satisfy a single wish of the Beloved

or to relieve the Beloved of the slightest neglect. It would gladly die for the Beloved. The lover breaks through his limitations and loses himself in the being of the Beloved.

Such deep and intense love is called Bhakti or devotion. In its initial stages devotion is expressed through worship, through ritual before the deities, and reverence to the revealed scriptures, or through the pursuit of the Highest in abstract thinking. In its more advanced stages, devotion expresses itself in the form of interest in human welfare and the service of humanity, love and reverence for saints and allegiance and obedience to the Spiritual Master. These stages have their relative values and relative results. Love for a living Master is a unique stage in devotion, for it gets transformed into Parabhakti or divine love.

Para-bhakti begins where Bhakti ends. At the stage of Para-bhakti, devotion is accompanied by extreme restlessness of the heart and a ceaseless longing to unite with the Beloved. This is followed by lack of interest in one's own body and its care, isolation from one's own surroundings and utter disregard for appearances or criticism, while the divine impulses of attraction to the Beloved become more frequent. This highest phase of love is most fruitful, because it has as its object a person who is love incarnate, and who can, as the Supreme Beloved, respond to the lover most completely. The purity, sweetness and efficacy of the love which the lover receives from the Master contributes to the insuperable spiritual value of this highest phase of love.

KARMA

In successive incarnations there is not only a thread of continuity and identity (as manifested in the personal memory revived in advanced souls), but there is uninterrupted reign of the law of cause and effect, through the persistence and operation of Karma. The successive incarnations, with all their particulars, are closely and unfailingly determined by a rational law, so that it becomes possible for the individual soul to mould its future through intelligent action. The actions of past lives determine the conditions and circumstances of the present life ; and the actions of the present life have their share in determining the conditions and circumstances of future lives. The successive incarnations yield their full significance, only in the light of the operation of the law of Karma.

Incarnations in the physical world are only apparently disconnected. Karma persists as a connecting link and determining factor through the mental body, which remains a permanent and constant factor through all the lives of the soul. The law of Karma and its manner of operation cannot be fully intelligible as long as the physical body and the physical world are considered to be the only facts of existence. Karmic determination

is made possible by the existence of subtle and mental bodies and worlds.

The plane on which one possesses physical consciousness is the physical world. The planes on which one possesses consciousness of desires are the subtle world. And the planes on which one has mental consciousness are the mental world. The source of desire is in the mind, which is on the mental planes. Here, the seed of desire is attached to the mind ; the desire exists here in an involved form, in the same way as the tree is latent in the seed. The mental body, which is the seat of the mind, is often called Karana Sharira or the causal body, because it stores within itself the seeds or the causes of all desires. The mind retains all impressions and dispositions in a latent form. The limited "I" or the ego is composed of these sanskaras. However, the actual manifestation of sanskaras in consciousness, as expressed through different mental processes, takes place in the subtle body.

The self which is one and undifferentiated, gets apparently individualized through the limitations of the mental body, which is the seat of the ego-mind. The ego-mind is formed by the accumulated impressions of past experiences and actions ; and it is this ego-mind that constitutes the kernel of the existence of the reincarnating individual. The ego-mind as a reservoir of latent impressions is the state of the mental body ; the ego-mind experiencing activated and manifested impressions is the state of the subtle body ; and the ego-

mind as descended in the gross sphere for creative action is the state of a physical incarnation. Thus, the ego-mind, which is seated in the mental body, is the entity that has all the phases of continued existence as a separate individual.

The ego-mind takes lower bodies according to the impressions stored in it. These impressions determine whether a person will die young or old, whether he will experience health, illness or both, whether he will be beautiful or ugly, whether he will suffer from physical handicaps such as blindness, or will have bodily efficiency, whether he will have a sharp or dull intellect, whether he will be pure or impure of heart, fickle or steadfast in will, and whether he will be immersed in the pursuit of material gains or will seek the inner light of the spirit.

The ego-mind in its turn becomes modified through the deposited impressions of Karma (which include not only gross and physical action, but thought and feeling), and the circumstances of each incarnation get adjusted to the composition and the needs of the ego-mind. Thus, if a person has developed certain special capacities or tendencies in one incarnation he carries them on to the succeeding incarnations ; and things that have been left incomplete in one incarnation get completed in the incarnations that follow. Through the persistence of impressions the Karmic links, which have been forged in one incarnation, are carried on and developed in succeeding incarnations, so that those who have been closely associated with each other, through good

or bad dealings, have a tendency to have recurring contacts and to carry on the game of duality far enough to gather so much experience of the opposites that the soul, out of the fullness of its experience, eventually becomes ripe for dropping the ego-mind, and turning inwards to know itself as the Eternal Self.

Give and take between persons forges Karmic and sanskaric ties between them and creates claims and counter-claims. They have to come together to meet these claims and counter-claims. That which a person gives with a selfish motive binds him as much as what he takes with a sense of separateness. Give or take which thus binds need not be purely on the material plane ; it may consist of the exchange of views or feelings.

The quick and unfailing responsiveness of souls is expressed in the law that hate begets hate, lust begets lust, and love begets love. This law operates not only during a single life-time, but through several lives. A man feels impelled to hate or fear an enemy of past lives, although his present life may not have provided any apparent reason for this attitude : and in the same way, without any apparent reason, he is impelled to love and help a friend of past lives. The person may not be aware of the reason for his attitude, which does not mean that there is no reason for it. Many things that seem to be inexplicable become intelligible when they are considered in the light of the Karmic links from past lives.

The law of Karma is the law exhibiting itself through

continuously changing mutual adjustments in the individual souls that seek self-expression in a common world. It is an outcome of the responsiveness of ego-minds. The rhythm on which two souls start relationship tends to perpetuate itself, unless the soul through fresh Karma changes the rhythm and raises it to a higher level.

As a rule accumulated Karma has a certain inertia ; it does not change its momentum unless there is a special reason for it. Before Karma is created, the individual has freedom to choose what it shall be, then Karma becomes a factor that cannot be ignored ; it has either to be expended through its results, or counteracted by fresh Karma.

Pleasure or pain experienced in life on earth, the success or failure which attend it, the attainments and obstacles with which it is strewn, the friends and foes that make their appearance in it, are determined by the Karma of past lives. Karmic determination is called fate. Fate, however, is not an oppressive principle. It is man's own creation pursuing him from past lives : shaped by past Karma, it can also be modified, remoulded and even undone through Karma in the present life.

If Karma on earth is determined by the impressions stored in the ego-mind, the impressions stored in the ego-mind are, in their turn, determined by the Karma in earthly life. The impressions in the ego-mind and the nature of Karma are interdependent. The Karma on earth plays an important part in shaping and reshaping

the impressions in the ego-mind and giving it momentum, which decides the future destiny of the individual. It is in the arena of earthly existence that creative and effective Karma can take place through the medium of the physical body.

The proper understanding and use of the law of Karma enables man to become master of his own destiny. Each person has become what he is through his own accumulated actions ; and it is through his actions that he can mould himself according to the pattern of his heart, or finally emancipate himself from the reign of Karmic determination.

In a general sense, Karma is of two kinds : there is the Karma that binds, and the Karma that helps towards emancipation and self-realization. The good as well as the bad Karma binds so long as it springs from the ego-mind and feeds it ; but Karma becomes a means of emancipation when it springs from right understanding. Right understanding in this respect is best imparted by the Masters, who know the soul as the self in its true nature and destiny, along with the complications created by Karmic laws.

The Karma that counts comes into existence after the person has developed the sense of the distinction between good and bad. During the first seven years of childhood, the impressions that are released for expression are very faint, accompanied by consciousness that is correspondingly less responsive to the distinctions of the world. Therefore, the actions of children under

seven years, do not leave strong impressions on the ego-mind, and do not play any important part in shaping their future. Effective Karma, which moulds the ego-mind and its future, begins after the soul develops a sense of responsibility, which is dependent upon the sense of distinction between good and bad, which dawns after the age of seven.

The law of Karma is the counterpart of the law of cause and effect, which operates in the physical world. If there were no law of cause and effect in the physical world there would be chaos. In the same way, if there were no law of Karma in the world of values, there would be uncertainty in values, and people would not know whether they were to expect good or bad from their actions. In the physical world there is the law of conservation of energy, and in the world of values, there is the law that once Karma comes into existence, it persists until it bears its own fruit or is undone through counter-Karma.

The series of incarnations that the soul is impelled to take through Karmic determination has a tendency to become endless. Through innumerable lives the aspirant has come into contact with countless persons. He is entangled in a web of debts to pay and dues to recover, and according to the Karmic law he can neither avoid the debts nor the dues, since both are the outcome of desire. He keeps incarnating to pay off his debts and to recover his dues, but even when he means to clear up the account he is often unable to do so.

The carrying on of Karmic debts and dues would be endless were there no provision for release from them through the help of the Master, who can not only initiate the aspirant into the art of unbinding Karma, but can directly become instrumental in freeing him from his Karmic entanglements. The Master has attained unity with God, whose cosmic and universal life includes all persons, and he can in his representative capacity become for the sake of the aspirant the medium for clearing up the debts and dues he has incurred in his incarnations.

When the good Karma has secured for the aspirant the benefit of contacting a Master, he should surrender himself to the Master and serve him. Through surrender the aspirant throws the burden of his Karma on the Master, and through service of the Master he gets an opportunity to get clear. The relation between Master and disciple may be carried on from one life to another for several reincarnations. If the Master who has given instruction and help to a group of disciples takes an incarnation for his work he usually brings them with him as his group of disciples to help them further on their Path. Those who have been connected with him in past lives are drawn to him by an unconscious magnetism. There is usually a long history to the unaccountable devotion that a disciple feels for his Master ; the disciple is often beginning where he had left off in the last incarnation.

When the disciple invites the grace of a Master it is not without reason. Sometimes the Master seems to

impart spirituality to a disciple without any apparent effort or sacrifice on the part of the disciple, but the right to this favour has been earned by his endeavours in past lives. The love and devotion felt for the Master through past lives have formed a deep connection between him and the Master, so that the awakening of spiritual longing has its counterpart in the grace which flows from the Master. It is through his own past unbinding Karma that a person invites the grace of the Master, just as it is through his own binding Karma that he invites upon himself the pleasure and pain as well as the good and evil of which he is the recipient.

Sooner or later the logic of experience drives every one to seek the highest goal and enter the Path. There are many pit-falls on the Path, and without the guidance of a Master, the aspirant is in danger of falling back.

The power that keeps the individual soul bound to the wheel of life and death is its thirst for separate existence, which is craving, connected with the objects of the world of duality. It is for the fulfilment of cravings, that the ego-mind incarnates itself. When craving disappears the impressions, which create and enliven the ego-mind, disappear ; and with the disappearance of these impressions, the ego-mind itself is shed, with the result that there is the realization of the one eternal, unchanging Oversoul or God, the only reality. God-realization is the end of the incarnations of the ego-mind because it is the end of its very existence ; as long as the ego-mind exists, there is an irresistible urge

for incarnations. When there is the cessation of the ego-mind, there is the cessation of incarnations.

The life of the reincarnating individual has many phases. The wheel of life makes its ceaseless rounds, lifting the individual to the heights or bringing him down ; it thus contributes to the enrichment of his experience. Ideals left unattained in one life are pursued in the next ; things left undone are finished ; the edges left by incomplete endeavour are rounded off ; wrongs are set right. The give and take between persons receives adjustment by the repayment of Karmic debts and the recovery of Karmic dues. In the end, out of the ripeness of experience, the soul through the dissolution of the ego-mind enters into the unity of Divine Life. In this Divine Life, there is neither the binding of giving nor the binding of taking, because the soul has completely transcended the consciousness of separateness or duality.

The drama of the continued life of the individual soul has many acts. From the point of view of the worldly existence of the soul, a curtain may be said to be drawn over its life after the closing of each act. But no act yields its real significance if regarded as complete ; it has to be taken in a wider context as a link between the acts that have passed and the acts that are still to come ; its meaning is in the theme of the whole drama, of which it is a part. The end of the act is not the end of the theme. The actors disappear from the stage of earth only to reappear again in new capacities and new contexts.

The actors are so engrossed in their respective roles that they treat them as the be-all and end-all of existence, and for the major part of their continued life (running into innumerable incarnations) they are unconscious of the truth that the author of the drama, in his imaginative production, himself became all the actors and played the game of hide and seek, so as to enter into full and conscious possession of his own creative infinity. The author has to play the parts of the actors to know himself in the great drama worked out through the cycles of creation.

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“Begin to love God by loving your fellow-beings. Begin to see God by seeing Him in all beings and things. Give without thought of return, serve without thought of reward. God is everywhere, in everything. Most of all He is right within yourself. You do not exist for the world-the world exists for you.”

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“All talk about the Path and the Goal is as a lantern carried by a blind man. A blind man needs a staff in his hand ; the seeker needs his hand in God-Man’s.”

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEATH

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—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.

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. 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, 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.

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. 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. 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 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 hand-maiden 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 ?" The 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.

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 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 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 role 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.

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. Death gives 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. 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 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. The aspirant now has a chance under fresh circumstances to remodel

the entire pattern of his life in line with his spiritual aspirations.

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, 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. But 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.

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 sanskaric 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.

When the individual is ready for reincarnation he is automatically drawn to his future parents by sanskaric links. Occasionally the strongest sanskaric 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.

Death is like throwing away clothes which have become useless through wear and tear. Just as a traveler 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 sanskaras.

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 sanskaric 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 sanskaric imprints retained after death, but they may unroll unhampered in the life after death.

As the sanskaric 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 sans-

karas 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 counterbalance 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 sanskaric 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 predominate. 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 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 sanskaric 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.

You are first a child, then grow old and drop the body, but you never die and never were born. In the East, Vedantists believe in reincarnation, in innumerable births and deaths until one attains Godhood. The Moslems believe in one birth only and one death only. The Christians and the Zoroastrians do the same. All are right. But Jesus, Buddha, Mohamed, Zoroaster, all meant what I mean by real birth and real death. I say you are born once and die once.

All the so-called births and deaths are only sleeps and wakings. The difference between sleep and death is that when you sleep you awake and find yourself in the same body ; but after death you awake in a different body. You never die. Only the blessed ones die and become one with God

THE SEVENFOLD VEIL

KABIR was a Perfect Master as well as a poet. Kabirwani, his book of poems, is therefore the more unique because of his lucid expositions on God, love for God, the divine path and illusory creation. Being a Perfect Master, Kabir has said things as much for the man in the street as for the initiate. He does not hesitate to disclose, both allegorically as well as in plain words, some of the spiritual secrets which, though within the grasp of ordinary man, are yet known only to the spiritually illumined ones who alone truly understand the deeper meaning underlying most of his sayings.

There are yogis (those who practice a systematic course of esoteric knowledge) who can of themselves suspend their physical bodies in mid-air during the time they are in a temporary Samadhi (trance). There are some who can bodily walk on water or fly in the air without the aid of external means, and yet all this is no sign or proof of their having experienced divine love. Weighed on spiritual scales these miracles have no value whatsoever. In fact, miracle mongering by the average yogi is not only poles apart from the spiritual path, but is actually a hindrance to the individual's evolution towards spiritual progress. The following incident in

the life of a Hindu Master shows the disregard in which it is held by Perfect Masters, who are Truth personified : The Master was one day by the river's edge waiting for one of the little ferry boats that take passengers across the stream for the diminutive fare of one anna. A yogi seeing him thus waiting, came up to him, literally walked across the river and back, and said, "That was much easier, was it not ?" The Master smilingly replied, "Yes, and had less value than that of the boat fare—one anna."

The ability to exercise constant control over one's low desires is no mean achievement. Success in establishing a lasting sublimation of all desires is indeed a greater one. But the greatest is the burning away of all one's desires once and for all, which divine love alone can do, as there is never any show about divine love. This "burning" in love is always without "smoke", i.e. without show. There are times when an outward expression of God-love may amount to heroism, but to make at any time a mere show of one's love for God, for the sake of show, amounts to an insult to God. That is why Kabir says that in the act of meditation when one assumes an Asan (posture) to meditate upon God, one should at that time learn to avoid making any display such as the swaying motion of one's body, even if it is only for one's own gratification.

As compared with dreams, the physical life is indeed a reality. Similarly, compared with the reality of the path, the world and all worldly life is vacant dreaming on the part of man. But as the world and all of its

experiences are illusory, so is the spiritual path that leads to Reality. The former may be termed false illusion and the latter real illusion. Nevertheless, despite the vast difference between them, they are both illusions, for God alone is the Only Reality.

When Knowledge is gained, ignorance is banished, but for ignorance to go, Knowledge must be gained. On the one hand, God, and the capacity of man to see and become one with God, are always there. On the other hand, Truth remains hidden from man until he actually arrives upon the path or realizes God. This apparent anomaly is due to two different factors : man's ignorance of Truth, and the fact that Truth is beyond the faculty of reason and far, far above the sphere of intellect. The fact remains that man has become God and man can become God for the simple reason that, knowingly or unknowingly, man is God. Only so long as man's ignorance lasts will there seem to be no end to the plural diversity of illusory things. When divine knowledge is gained he realizes that there is no end to the indivisible oneness of God. Under the illusion of cosmic duality the apparent separation between man and God is invariably referred to by masters in terms of the convenient "Veil" and "Curtain". Hafiz, who was a Perfect Master as well as a great poet, says :

Miyane ashiquo m'ashuq hich hayal nist ;
Tu khud hejabe khudi. Hafiz, az miyan barkhiz
"There is no barrier between the lover and the Beloved ;
Hafiz lift yourself aside, you are yourself the covering
over Self."

Kabir, referring to the removal of the seven folds of the Veil, says :

Tere ghunghat ke pat khol, tujhe Ram milega

“Open the folds of your Veil, and you shall find God.”

The ghunghat literally means the covering that a woman extends over her head and face in a number of folds ; in spiritual parlance it represents the heavy folds of ignorance that keep man hidden from his real identity. The lifting of it, fold by fold, corresponds to the stage by stage journey of a pilgrim from the first through the fifth plane of the divine path.

The “Veil” that separates a man-in-ignorance from God Who is All Knowledge, is so subtle that even the highest and finest thought cannot pierce through it. This veil consists of seven folds of seven different, deep colours. Each fold is tied with a separate knot ; thus there are seven knots to the seven folds. The seven colours represent the seven root desires, corresponding to the seven fundamental impressions, i.e., lust, greed, anger, etc., connected with the seven openings of sensation in the face, viz. (1) mouth, (2) right nostril, (3) left nostril, (4) right ear, (5) left ear, (6) right eye, (7) left eye.

In Reality and as the only Reality, the soul is always God without beginning and without end. False illusion begins with the descent of the soul in seven material stages and real illusion ends with the ascent of the soul to the seventh spiritual plane.

God is a macrocosm, God is a microcosm and God is also always beyond both. Knowingly man is body and man is mind, but unknowingly, as in deep sleep, man is also beyond both.

Analogically it is true that man is made in the image of God. The top of his head represents the Vidnyan-Bhumika, Arshe-Ala, the Highest Spiritual State, or the seat of Brahma. The forehead is equal to the entrance to divinity. The centre of the forehead, just above the two external eyes, is the seat of the inner or third eye. When the "veil" with all its seven folds is finally removed, man is then able, through the third eye, to see God face to face and sees Him more actually and naturally than what he is ordinarily able to see of his body and the world through the two external eyes. In order to arrive at the divine entrance situated in the forehead, man has to pass through the seven doors as represented by the seven physical openings in the face.

When an initiate succeeds in actually entering the divine path it is for him a single seven-in-one achievement, and it applies to the first of the seven folds of the veil, viz. (1) unfastening of the first knot, (2) disappearance of the first fold, (3) crushing out of the first root desires, (4) wiping out of the relative fundamental impressions, (5) doing away with the first of the seven deep, dark colours, (6) entrance through the first door (as represented by the mouth), and (7) arriving on the first plane in the subtle sphere, the Pran-Bhumika or the Alam-e-Malakut.

In dreams, an ordinary man is able to make partial use of his subtle body with subtle consciousness, but only in respect to gross experience and concerning only gross objects. Just as he experiences the gross world with full gross consciousness through his gross body, so the initiate on the first plane begins to experience the subtle world with subtle consciousness through his subtle body.

If the initiate is able to proceed further and manages to maintain progress, he continues in the subtle sphere up to the fourth plane. This progress involves the second and third successive single seven-in-one achievements that parallel the sevenfold results achieved in the first. This passing through the second and third doors (represented by the right and left nostrils) brings a still greater intensification of the real illusion, i.e. higher consciousness of the path. After going through the second door, the initiate realizes even more the wonderful things of the subtle world and at the same time begins to run the risk of being lost in the maze of wonderment. The mystical enchantments of the path beyond the third door are still greater, and so also are the chances of becoming spellbound by them. Just as those with gross consciousness take the gross sphere and its illusory experiences to be real, so the pilgrims in the subtle sphere, while absorbed in the wonder of the plane on which they are, may mistake it for the ultimate Reality. Hence a pilgrim often gets stuck on a plane, deluded by its raptures into accepting it as the Goal, until a Perfect Master and even mental-conscious souls help him by

pushing him on to the next plane.

The fourth seven-in-one achievement is a double achievement because at one and the same time (1) the fourth and fifth knots are unfastened, (2) the fourth and fifth folds disappear, (3) the fourth and fifth root desires are crushed, (4) the fourth and fifth deep, dark colours vanish, (5) the fourth and fifth relative fundamental impressions are wiped out, (6) the fourth and fifth doors (as represented by the right and left ears) are passed through, and (7) the pilgrim arrives on the highest plane of the subtle sphere, the fourth plane.

As said before, the fourth plane is the plane of spiritual splendour and of divine powers (Anwar-otajalliyat or Siddhis). Pilgrims advanced this far can, among many other things, even raise the dead. They run a very grave risk of misusing these powers, thereby inviting disaster, and only a very few can independently cross these dizzy heights safely without the aid of a Perfect Master. It is of them that Hafiz says :

Dar astane janan az asman biyandish
Kaz auje sar bulandi ufti be khake pasti.

“On the threshold of the Beloved, beware of the allurements of the heavens, lest you bring about your fall from the heights of progress and greatness to the depths of degradation and ruin.”

In such case, a man is not only deprived of the spiritual progress he has made on the path, but is thrown

back from the position that he had achieved through physiological evolution to the state of the stone-form.

Just as anything may happen to a man travelling over an unknown path in the pitch blackness of the night, so anything may happen to one who must pass through the fourth plane without the guiding hand of a Perfect Master. That is why, for all its dazzling splendour and power, the period of going through the fourth plane is termed in Christian mysticism, the Dark Night of the Soul.

If the advanced pilgrim is at all able to resist the allurements and treacheries of "the dark night of the soul" he enters the mental sphere (Mana-Bhumika or the Alam-e-Jabrut) by the fifth and final double seven-in-one achievement which occurs on the same lines as the fourth. All the folds of the veil are removed together with the relative knots, desires, colours and impressions; the sixth and seventh doors (as represented by the right and left eyes) are crossed and the fifth plane of light and love is reached.

Those who have safely arrived on the fifth plane are the Wali-Allah (literally meaning "friends of God"). Their inner sight, or the third eye, is now fully developed, but even though all the seven folds of the veil have disappeared, the veil itself is still there. The pilgrim is therefore not yet face to face with God and cannot see the Beloved.

Because of their pure love for God, unadulterated

by the false ego, the position of these pilgrims on the fifth plane is secure, and there is no possibility of retrogression. Without any harm to themselves they can and do give, consciously or unconsciously, immense help to others in the subtle and gross spheres.

With rare exceptions further progress on one's own is now impossible. By the help or grace of a Perfect Master one is able to remove the veil entirely and thereby arrive on the sixth plane, the highest plane of the mental sphere, the plane of "Divine Sight", the entrance to divinity (as represented by the forehead) where one is able actually to see God face to face, everywhere and in everything. This is known as conviction by sight.

Those on the gross sphere who believe in the existence of God have their conviction (yaqin) based on their pure and simple faith and belief. This conviction is not necessarily lasting and is not to be confused with the distinctive convictions that follow : (1) conviction by intellectual and intuitive knowledge (Ilmul yaqin) ; (2) conviction by sight (A'inul yaqin) ; (3) conviction by actual experience (Haqqul yaqin).

Those on the path, up through the fifth plane, know there is God, with a definite intellectual and intuitive certainty (Ilmul-yaqin) ; their conviction is based on sure knowledge. Those on the sixth plane see God everywhere ; theirs is conviction by actual sight. Those on the seventh plane, having become One with God, have conviction by actual experience.

The highly advanced pilgrim on the sixth plane is still within the domain of duality. Although face to face with God, the "See-er" and the "Seen" remain separated by a deep, fathomless valley which can be spanned only by the touch of a Perfect Master. Whereas the first five achievements are possible for man to obtain independently, the actual removal of the veil on the fifth plane is usually accomplished by the grace of a Perfect Master's guidance. The JUMP from illusion of the sixth plane to Reality on the seventh plane is, however, impossible on one's own and entirely dependent upon the direct touch of a Perfect One or a Perfect Master (Sadguru).

On the seventh plane, the plane of infinite knowledge, power and bliss, the individual merges into God and becomes God, a Perfect One for all time and beyond all time. It is then immaterial whether the physical body remains or drops. As a rule, the gross shell falls within a short time after realization, but in some cases the physical body holds on for a long time. These God-realized Ones are known as Majzoobs or Brahmi-Bhoots.

Again, only by the direct and personal help of a Perfect Master does one from among those God-realized Ones return to the level of ordinary man, regaining consciousness of all the spheres (gross, subtle and mental) yet retaining at the same time full God-consciousness. He is then the Man-God, the Perfect Master, Sadguru or Qutub.

Where there is Light, darkness is no more. Where

there is Knowledge, ignorance is absent. And, as the folds, the veil and the valley of separation are all in the domain of ignorance, a Perfect Master—who is the “Sun” of all Knowledge—can, in the twinkling of an eye, impart God-realization to any one He chooses.

God alone is Real, and as we are permanently lodged in the Divine Beloved, we are all One.

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LOVE CAN MAKE YOU :

1. Unlearn all you have learned intellectually. Not remember the past, forget the present, and not think of the future.
2. Renounce everything and everyone including your own self.
3. Escape from all that is illusory and take refuge in Reality.
4. Burn all your desires and longings and kindle the one and only desire and longing - union with the Divine Beloved.
5. Become God, live God's life make others God unto yourself.
6. To be worthy of the Divine gift of this Love, let all your thoughts, words and deeds be controlled by the constant remembrance of God.

FORGIVE AND FORGET

People ask God for forgiveness. But since God is everything and everyone, who is there for Him to forgive? Forgiveness of the created was already there in His act of creation. But still people ask God's forgiveness, and He forgives them. But they, instead of forgetting that for which they asked forgiveness, forget that God has forgiven them, and, instead, remember the things they were forgiven—and so nourish the seed of wrong-doing, and it bears its fruit again. Again and again they plead for forgiveness, and again and again the Master says, I forgive.

But it is impossible for men to forget their wrong-doings and the wrongs done to them by others. And since they cannot forget, they find it hard to forgive. But forgiveness is the best charity. (It is easy to give the poor money and goods when one has plenty, but to forgive is hard; but it is the best thing if one can do it.)

Instead of men trying to forgive one another they fight. Once they fought with their hands and with clubs. Then with spears and bows and arrows. Then with guns and cannon. Then they invented bombs and carriers for them. Now they have developed missiles that can destroy millions of other men thousands of miles away, and they are prepared to use them. The weapons used change, but the aggressive pattern of man remains the same.

Now men are planning to go to the moon. And the first to get there will plant his nation's flag on it, and that nation will say, It is mine. But another nation will dispute the claim and they will fight here on this earth for possession of that moon. And whoever goes there, what will he find ? Nothing but himself. And if people go on the Venus they will still find nothing but themselves. Whether men soar to outer space or dive to the bottom of the deepest ocean they will find themselves as they are, unchanged, because they will not have forgotten themselves nor remembered to exercise the charity of forgiveness.

Supremacy over others will never cause a man to find a change in himself : the greater his conquests the stronger is his confirmation of what his mind tells him—that there is no God other than his own power. And he remains separated from God, the Absolute Power.

But when the same mind tells him that there is *something* which may be called God, and, further, when it prompts him to search for God that he may see Him face to face, he begins to forget himself and to forgive others for whatever he has suffered from them.

And when he has forgiven everyone and has completely forgotten himself, he finds that God has forgiven him everything, and he remembers Who, in reality, he is.

AVATAR

Consciously or unconsciously, every living creature seeks one thing. In the lower forms of life and in less advanced human beings, the quest is unconscious ; it is conscious in advanced human beings. The object of the quest is called happiness, peace, freedom, truth, love, perfection, self-realization, God-realization or union with God. Essentially it is a search for all of these, for all are aspects of one thing. Everyone has moments of happiness, glimpses of truth, fleeting experiences of union with God. Everyone wants to make these moments, or glimpses, or experiences, permanent, so that he may have abiding reality in the midst of change.

This search is based on a memory, dim or clear, as the individual's evolution may be low or high, of his unity with God ; for every living thing is a manifestation of God, conditioned by lack of knowledge of its true nature. The entire process of evolution is from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, a process in which God himself, eternal and unchangeable, assumes an infinite variety of forms, enjoys an infinite variety of experiences, and transcends an infinite variety of self-imposed limitations. Evolution, from the standpoint of divinity is a divine sport, in which the Unconditioned

tests the infinitude of his absolute knowledge, power and bliss in the midst of all conditions. But evolution, from the standpoint of the creature, with limited knowledge, limited power, limited capacity for bliss, is an epic of alternating rest and struggle, joy and sorrow, love and hate, until, in the perfected man, God balances the opposites and transcends duality. Then creature and Creator recognize themselves as one ; changelessness is established in the midst of change, eternity is experienced in the midst of time. God knows himself as God, unchangeable in essence, infinite in manifestation, ever experiencing the supreme bliss of Self-realization in continually fresh awareness of himself by himself.

This realization takes place only in the midst of life, for only in the midst of life can limitation be experienced and transcended, and subsequent freedom from limitation enjoyed. This freedom from limitation assumes three forms.

Most God-realized souls leave the body at once, and forever, and remain eternally merged in the unmanifest aspect of God. They are conscious only of the bliss of union. Creation no longer exists for them. Their round of births and deaths is ended. This is known as mukti or liberation.

Those God-realized souls who retain the body for a time, but are not conscious either of their bodies or of creation, experience the infinite bliss, power and knowledge of God, but they cannot consciously use them in creation or help others to attain to liberation.

That particular type of liberation is called videh-mukti or liberation with the body.

Those God-realized souls who keep the body, yet are conscious of themselves as God in both his unmanifest and his manifest aspects, experience themselves as God apart from creation, as God the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of creation, and as God who has accepted and transcended the limitations of creation. They enjoy to the full the divine sport of creation. Knowing themselves as God in everything, they are able to help everything spiritually, and to make other souls realize God, either as Muktas or Majzubs, as they themselves are called.

The God-realized ones though one in consciousness are different in function. For the most part, they live and work apart from and unknown to the general public, but there are always five, who act (in a sense) as a directing body, work in public, and attain public prominence and importance. In Avataric periods, the Avatar, as a supreme God-realized one, takes his place as the head of this body and of the spiritual hierarchy as a whole.

Avataric periods are the spring-tide of creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life—not merely for a few, but for all. Qualities of energy and awareness, which had been used and enjoyed by only a few advanced souls, are then made available for all humanity. Life, as a whole, is lifted to a higher level of consciousness

and geared to a new rate of energy. The transition from sensation to reason was one such step ; the transition from reason to intuition will be another. In intuition the opposites are resolved.

This influx of the creative impulse through the medium of a divine personality is an incarnation of God in a special sense and called Avatar. This Avatar was the first individual soul to emerge from the evolutionary process, and is the only Avatar who has ever manifested or will ever manifest. Through him, God first completed the journey from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, in him he first unconsciously became man in order consciously to become God. Through him, periodically, God consciously becomes man for the liberation of mankind.

The Avatar appears in different forms under different names, at different times, in different parts of the world. As his appearance always coincides with the spiritual birth of man, so the period immediately preceding his manifestation is one in which humanity suffers from the pangs of the approaching birth. When man seems more than ever enslaved by desire, more than ever driven by greed, held by fear, swept by anger, when more than ever the strong dominate the weak, the rich oppress the poor, and large masses of people are exploited for the benefit of the few in power, when individual man finds no peace or rest and seeks to forget himself in excitement ; when immorality increases, crime flourishes, religion is ridiculed, when corruption spreads throughout

the social order, class and national hatreds are aroused and fostered, when wars break out, and humanity grows desperate, when there seems to be no possibility of stemming the tide of destruction—at this moment the Avatar appears. Being the manifestation of God in human form, he is a gauge against which man measures what he is and what he may become. He corrects the standards of human values by interpreting them in terms of divine-human life.

The Avatar is interested in everything, but not concerned about anything. The slightest mishap commands his sympathy; the greatest tragedy does not upset him. He is beyond the alternations of pain and pleasure, desire and satisfaction, rest and struggle, life and death, for to him, they are equally illusions from which he has come to free those who are bound. He uses every circumstance as a means to lead others towards the realization of the Truth.

He knows that men do not cease to exist when they die, and therefore, is not concerned with death. He knows that destruction must precede construction; that out of suffering is born peace and bliss; that out of struggle comes liberation from the bonds of action. He is concerned only about unconcern.

In those who contact him he awakens a love that consumes selfish desires in the flame of the one desire to serve him. Those who consecrate their lives to him become identified with him in consciousness. Little

by little their humanity is absorbed into divinity, and they become free.

Those who are closest to him are known as his Circle. Every Master has an intimate circle of twelve disciples, who, in realization, are made equal to the Master himself, though they differ from him in function and authority. In Avataric periods, the Avatar has a Circle of one hundred and twenty disciples, all of whom experience realization, and work for the liberation of others. Their work is not only for contemporary humanity, but for posterity. The unfoldment of life and consciousness for the whole Avataric cycle, mapped in the creative world before the Avatar took form, is endorsed and fixed in the formative and material worlds during the Avatar's life on earth.

The Avatar awakens contemporary humanity to a realization of its spiritual nature, gives liberation to those who are ready and quickens the life of the spirit in his time. To posterity is left the stimulating power of his divinely human example, the nobility of life supremely lived, of love unmingled with desire, of power unused except for others, of peace untroubled by ambition, of knowledge undimmed by illusion. He has demonstrated the possibility of the divine life of humanity, the heavenly life on earth. Those who have the necessary courage and integrity follow when they will. Those who are spiritually awake have been aware for some time that the world is at present in the midst of a period such as precedes Avataric manifestations. Even un-

awakened men and women are becoming aware of it. From their darkness they are reaching for light, in sorrow they are longing for comfort, from the midst of the strife into which they have found themselves they are praying for peace and deliverance. Yet they must be patient. The wave of destruction must rise still higher and spread still further. But when, from the depths of his heart, man desires what is more lasting than wealth, more real than material power, the wave will recede. Then peace, joy, light will come.

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CONTROL

Keep your mind quiet, steady and firm. Do not submit to desires, but try to control them. One who cannot restrain his tongue cannot restrain his mind ; one who cannot restrain his mind cannot restrain his action ; one who cannot restrain his actions cannot restrain himself ; and one who cannot restrain himself cannot attain his real Infinite Self.

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Avatar : by Jean Adriel.
The Wayfarers : by William Donkin.
Civilisation or Chaos : by I.H. Conybeare.
What Am I Doing Here : by Ivy Oneita Duce.

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*When mind soars in pursuit of
the things conceived in space,
it pursues emptiness;
But when man dives deep within himself,
he experiences the fullness
of existence.*

Meher Baba