

# THIS MAN OF LOVE

An Introduction to  
Avatar Meher Baba (1894-1969)



1-702319

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WHEN THE futility of a way of life based on the notion that the world exists without a superior cause and purpose is finally established in the human mind, a persistent search for the Truth begins. This search focusses on a direct experience of God, the very foundation of every established religion whose pious paraphernalia, however, never succeed in attracting and holding sincere seekers.

For many young people today, the question of finding a meaningful path that was thought in the riotous sixties to be offered by drugs and some meditative techniques peddled by spiritual merchants, settled on a direct spiritual approach through Meher Baba.

It was easier for people to accept Meher Baba's spiritual authority because his method of rendering assistance was practical, universal and in complete harmony with the best spiritual traditions. It was also free. Furthermore, Meher Baba who for years had been accepted by many as the Christ or Avatar of the present age - the very personification of love - had the ability to awaken seekers to an inner awareness and a personal relationship with him. This in turn became the highroad to a new spiritual life - the beginning of a journey comprising an adventure in love, selfless service and true devotion to God.

Meher Baba was born on February 25, 1894 in Poona, India, and was raised as a normal youth in a simple Zoroastrian home. His leadership qualities were evident while he was still in school, but not even his parents were prepared to recognize at first what happened to him in May 1913 with his initial contact with the great Mohammedan woman Saint, Hazrat Babajan. The details of the subsequent unveiling of the superconsciousness that finally established him in the Office of the Avatar, is described in Naosherwan Anzar's biography of Meher Baba, *The Beloved*.

In his twenties and thirties his appearance was that of a man toughened by living outdoors, walking long distances, sleeping on the bare earth and enduring inclement weather. Later, as he attended to the responsibilities of his universal work of awakening and enriching souls on the spiritual path, his physical body began to show the ravages of his travel which brought in its wake, two very severe automobile accidents that he indicated were not by chance. However, in spite of the intense suffering which followed, his appeal and personal magnetism grew even greater as increasing numbers of thousands sought him out.

On his travels to the West, Meher Baba did not stint in making himself available to those who were interested in him, and a handful of very fortunate ones were chosen to become disciples who returned to India with him for training. This training, like serving the poor, was consistently unostentatious and devoid of any fanfare. He rarely emphasized esoteric exercises, meditation, diet or other techniques, yet many incidents occurred in his presence that often brought about deep and beneficial changes in those who came to him.

Whether or not a physical meeting was involved, it was the heart that drew and still draws people to Meher Baba. Among the thousands of reports of internal transformation resulting from Meher Baba's contact, the most common experience is that of love. Many who have had physical or mental contact with him, report special moments of inner peace during which they experienced an encompassing abundance of unconditional love. A typical reaction of one who met Meher Baba for the first time illustrates this: "We sat for several minutes in silence and I was aware of a great feeling of love and peace emanating from him; also a curious feeling of recognition came to me, as if I had found a long lost friend."

Another doubting Thomas who wanted to 'see' for himself before he accepted Meher Baba as God-Man, wrote, "I am satisfied that if ever it was possible to see God on this earth, I have seen Him." An Australian writer and poet who later lived and served Meher Baba as a close disciple, stated, "Whether Meher Baba is the totality of Godhead or not, I personally have no way of knowing - I can only measure to my own degree. But to that degree, he is the embodiment of that ideal which I call God. No man or woman, no flight of thought, no aesthetic experience, no sublimity of nature has touched my depths as Meher Baba has. I have met no one or experienced no experience which has melted my heart or sharpened my intellect as he has."

Meher Baba knew how hard it was for humanity to accept God when he manifests as the Avatar of Christ. He said, "It is difficult for the Western mind to accept the concept of God in human form. Though none of you understand me externally in my physical form, I am within you - within everybody. I am God undoubtedly. If you cannot accept me as God, that should not worry you; accept me as a true friend."

Whatever the form of acceptance, whether friend of Master, Father or companion, so strong and grand was this man of love that he could make the most hard-boiled individual melt under the sway of his compassion that was conveyed through his hand gestures, for he had chosen not to speak since July 10, 1925. Truly it was only such a man who could attract followers by promising them a life of sacrifice,

suffering and surrender - sometimes even a life of hopelessness and helplessness. "All I give is God," he said repeatedly. "All I want is love."

Meher Baba unlike many spiritual teachers, did not promise instant bliss. He was the awakener of the sleeping soul of man to the God within and so one of his most appealing traits was his wide range of sociability. He was accessible to all kinds of people - the villagers from the hamlets of India, philosophers from the West who came with questioning minds, lepers whom he bathed and fed, and saints and holy men, all of whom eagerly sought his companionship. The Indian political leader, Mohandas Gandhi, met Meher Baba several times seeking both spiritual and political advice, and only Meher Baba could elicit from the lips of such a man this tribute: "I am not equivalent to the dirt of his nails. If he desires, he can make the sun rise in the West and set in the East", or from a London taxi-driver in whose cab Meher Baba was a passenger: "That was a remarkable gentleman. I felt it was a privilege to drive him."

At gatherings, Meher Baba expressed love for God in a simple, direct manner, free of lofty rhetoric. Once an ordained Christian priest who wished to lead a perfect life of love and service in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, expressed a keen desire for Meher Baba's guidance. "I want to behold a vision of Jesus and to follow his life of love and service, but I am worried because I am unable to do it," lamented the priest.

Meher Baba replied, "Were you really to have that belief in him, would there be any need for you to worry about how you should carry out the teachings of Christ? Search your heart for the answer!"

Meher Baba then continued, "You crave for a vision of Christ. It would no doubt help you to some extent to lead a life of love and service, but would it be enough by itself to help you attain the perfect life you yearn for? You are imperfect and you want to be perfect so as to lead a perfect life, but all aspirants would want what you want and who would not want a vision of Christ? Only you do not know that within yourself you already have what you want. Then why is it that you do not get what you want? If you look deep within yourself with complete honesty, you will find that you do not really want what you think and say you want.

"You own so many things and you feel you want to be rid of them and be free. If you really want to get rid of them, you can do so in an instant, for what binds you? It is your own self not really wanting to do so! If you want to be free, free you are, but you do not really want to be free and therefore you continue to feel yourself bound. You want to lead a

perfect life of love and service? When you really have that want, you will not need to worry how to lead the life - you will live it.

"Jesus wanted all his followers to want what they really ought to have wanted but none, including the twelve apostles, could really want the real want. It is very difficult, so very difficult, but not impossible.

"Very rarely, one among a million can establish the real want. Only a Man of God can dare want what one ought to want.

"What you must long for is the Real Want and this Real Want alone must be your perennial want. Once this is established, the time comes when you are freed even from this singular Want and attain the Freedom that is not bound by freedom itself."

Approaching Meher Baba and accepting him with conviction is equated with surrenderance to him - the culmination of loving and obeying the Master. There are three interrelated factors in the aspirant's attempts to surrender to Meher Baba. The very first is simply to make one's best efforts and leave the results to him. This includes complete trust in Meher Baba - a confidence that all events, positive or negative, can be helpful for spiritual growth. Meher Baba offered this reassurance: "I want you to remain undisturbed and unshaken by the force of life's currents, for whatever the circumstances, they too will be of my own creation. If you endure your lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His Will, you are loving God."

Another process involves making Meher Baba the focus of one's activities - adopting the attitude of doing things for Baba and not for oneself. The purpose is to diminish the ego, not inflate it. "Do not ask me," Meher Baba said, "to bless you with a good job, but desire to serve me diligently and honestly without expectation of reward. Never beg me to save your life or the lives of your dear ones, but beg of me to accept you and permit you to lay down your life for me. Never expect me to cure you of your bodily afflictions, but beseech me to cure you of your ignorance."

The third aspect comprising total and complete surrender to Meher Baba, is achieved by the constant practice of internal dependence on him as one's real self.

Meher Baba accepted all who came to him without precondition. To the simple and the unlettered he exhorted love; for intellectual seekers he explained the theme of creation and its purpose, and to humanity in general he stated that "the world will soon realize that cults, creeds, dogmas, religious ceremonies, lectures and sermons can never bring about real happiness. Only selfless love and universal brotherhood can do it." To a group of priests who practiced class distinction, he chided, "Where God

and His laws are concerned, there is no question of caste, creed or country. Where there is love, there is Oneness, and there can be no question of any particular religion or caste or system, superiority or inferiority."

When press representatives in New York City asked him whether he was a healer, Meher Baba replied, "What really matters is the state of Christ Consciousness that I eternally enjoy and towards which I shall lead all who come to me. Spiritual healing is by far the greatest healing, and this is what I intend to give."

During his travels in the East and West, Meher Baba repeatedly mentioned the coming of the new world order and prophesised that the new brotherhood on earth would be a fulfilled fact and that nations would be united in a fraternity of love and truth. He assured that the coming civilization of the New Humanity will be ensouled not by dry intellectual doctrines, but by living spiritual experience. Meher Baba asked humanity to listen and bear testimony to his words: "The New Humanity will come into existence through a release of love in measureless abundance. Love has to spring spontaneously from within; it is in no way amenable to any forms of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together, but while love cannot be forced upon anyone, it can be awakened through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative. Those who do not have it catch it from those who have it."

Meher Baba, the God-Man of the present age, repeatedly assured mankind that the New Humanity would learn the art of co-operative and harmonious life through divine love alone. "True love," he said, "will not only establish peace, harmony and happiness in social, national and international spheres, but it will shine in its own purity and beauty."

Meher Baba never established any religious organization, but encouraged all to remain in the religion of their birth because Truth was at the heart of all the great religions. Thus when his spiritual mission began at the age of twenty-seven, he drew together a group of close disciples of different castes and religious traditions to whom he gave training in moral discipline, love for God, spiritual understanding and selfless service. After some years of intensive training of these disciples, he established a colony called Meherabad, about 200 miles south-east of Bombay and here at various times he set up a free hospital and dispensary, shelters for the poor, and a free school where spiritual training was stressed.

Once to a group of people who came for his blessings, Meher Baba said, "The period of my glorification shall witness the fulfillment of the things I have been referring to. Those who now disbelieve

in my divinity and are suspicious of it, will then be convinced about it." He then narrated the following story: "A robust young man with a mission in life took a vow of celibacy for a score of years. However, to satisfy the wishes of his old parents, he took a wife in marriage, making it clear at the same time that in no way would he compromise his vow. Years passed with no issue to the marriage and the scandal-mongers of the town called him impotent and humiliated him. However, the man remained silent in the face of their jeers and continued to engage in his noble mission. When the stipulated period was over, he was blessed with many lovely children and the backbiters were now forced to swallow their cruel words."

To the above parable, Meher Baba added the following: "When I drop this body, people will hear many loving and astounding things about my life. But now to have one-pointed faith in me and to love me as the Ancient One is the simple way of realizing me, the Way and Goal of all for all times."

Once when a paralyzed workman approached Meher Baba for divine help, he embraced the man and said, "It is not the paralysis of the body that matters, but of the mind that retards the soul." And when another bent with age handed over a written statement to Meher Baba listing his sins, Meher Baba replied, "Never think that you have fallen so low as not to rise again."

Shortly before Meher Baba began his silence in 1925, he told his disciples that they would not hear his voice for a long time, but none suspected he would not utter another word for the rest of his life. His silence, however, was no handicap to his work for he dictated books, held meetings, gave discourses and interviews and travelled much. To the curious he indicated that his silence was not a spiritual discipline for himself, but a feature of his inner work and, being a humorous man, he added that it was to compensate for so much unnecessary talk in the world.

He communicated at first by using a roman alphabet board over which his fingers flew with electrifying speed, then from October 1954 he used a system of hand signs devised by himself. So impressive was his personality that no one ever felt they were in the presence of a man who was observing silence.

Meher Baba travelled to the Western world several times, visiting America for the first time in 1931 and on his last three visits to this country in 1952, 1956 and 1958, he stayed at the Center named after him at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Today there is a constant stream of visitors to this Center as well as to his Tomb at Meherabad, India, which he predicted will eventually become a great

place of pilgrimage. During his visits to the West Meher Baba constantly advocated elimination of self-interest to all who came to see him. To a sculptor who asked whether 'happiness' was the goal of life, Meher Baba replied, "The true aim of life is to attain real happiness and it does not matter through what medium it is attained, but it depends on one thing, forgetting oneself. For those who have no self-interest, even hell is heaven."

A woman who had reams of pages on the subject of evolution, asked Meher Baba, "Would you help me to understand the process of evolution?" Meher Baba smiled and gave this answer: "It is the process through which a soul has to pass to attain the human form in order to realize the Truth. And human beings have also to experience suffering to realize God which is the goal of humanity and eternal happiness."

When a Hollywood celebrity called Meher Baba for his help, the Beloved replied, "All the help, internal as well as external that at times amazes you, comes to you through my inner working and guidance. Of this help you must always be rest assured. I will not let you down spiritually whatever happens even if you in your moments of desperation, leave me or turn against me. My love for you will *never* fail."

It was to those who might slip while traversing the spiritual path that Meher Baba said, "Hold fast to me so that I will take you where I go, otherwise you will be lost."

Meher Baba put considerable emphasis on the need for a guide on the spiritual path though he cautioned that following a false or imperfect master presented hazards that were often insurmountable. The worst examples of imperfect masters are the spiritual pretenders, those who pose as being spiritually advanced. It was against such false teachers that Meher Baba warned: "To entrust your spiritual development to the guidance of an imperfect teacher is like having a mad man sit on your chest with a sharp instrument in his hand."

Seekers often pursue all forms of psychic, occult or esoteric practices, hoping to enhance their life in some way. Some feel that these efforts will aid their spiritual development while others look upon or use paranormal or mystical experiences as a measure of their progress. In the same way, young seekers ingested drugs as they equated psychedelic experiences with glimpses of reality. In a strong response to this, Meher Baba said, "Indulgence in drugs is harmful physically, mentally and spiritually and people should stop taking them. It is absolutely essential for a spiritual aspirant who genuinely longs for union with God, the one and only Reality, to shun experiments with drugs."

An important part of Meher Baba's work throughout the years was to personally contact and serve hundreds of those known in India as 'masts' (pronounced) 'musts'). These were special categories of spiritually advanced pilgrims who had become stagnated on their plane of development, and for the purpose of contacting them, Meher Baba endured severe hardships and thousands of miles of the most arduous travel.

To the Western mind this unique aspect of Meher Baba's work is at once both fascinating and perplexing. To the eye of the ordinary beholder the mast is a madman or derelict. However, he is not mad though from his actions he appears to be so. His mind does not function as the mind of an ordinary human being and oftentimes he has no consciousness of his body, yet his mind is not a blank for it is filled with intense love and longing for God. The end result is that though he is in the world, he does not belong to it. Meher Baba once referred to the state of the mast mind in this masterly summation of mysticism: "Mind stopped (thinking) is God. / Mind working is man. / Mind slowed down is mast. / Mind working fast is mad."

The masts whom only Meher Baba could identify, were frequently found in sordid surroundings, in a state of neglect and even filth, yet one of Meher Baba's disciples borrowed from the poet William Wordsworth to convey the impression he received from one of them: "Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie thy soul's immensity." One mast pleaded to Meher Baba, "You are the ocean. Give me a few drops from it to drink" and another when brought to Meher Baba, uttered, "We have come to the Garden of Paradise."

Meher Baba once stated the broad purpose of his work among masts. "A mast," he said, "by virtue of his station on the higher planes of consciousness, is in contact with a far greater number of souls than is possible for an ordinary person. Therefore a mast can be a more effective agent for spiritual work than the most able persons of the gross world." And he added succinctly, "The masts alone know how they love me and I alone know how I love them. I work for the masts and knowingly or unknowingly, they work for me."

Other vital work of Meher Baba consisted of the bathing of the lepers whom he described as 'beautiful birds caught in an ugly cage', washing of the feet of thousands of poor and destitute, and the distribution of grain, cloth and money to them. These were the only occasions when he handled money.

Meher Baba asserted that he was the same Ancient One who had come again to redeem humanity from its bondage of ignorance and to guide humanity to realize its true self which is God. "I am

that Ancient One," he said, "whose past is worshipped and remembered, whose present is ignored and forgotten and whose future (Advent) is anticipated with great fervour and longing." And his advice to all was, "Love God and become God. I have come to receive your love and give you mine. The divine Beloved is always with you, in you and around you."

Once when Meher Baba was visiting a village whose inhabitants were noted for their love for him, he referred to himself in this way: "People call me the Lord of the Universe, but I am actually the Servant of the Universe. I am the Washerman who has come to clean the dirty clothing of humanity."

On another occasion a very old and feeble Muslim visited Meher Baba for his blessing and while there he mentioned to Meher Baba that he had never visited Mecca and that it was now plain that his longing to circumambulate the Kaaba would remain unfulfilled. At this Meher Baba requested the man's companions to support him and bade them walk seven times around the chair on which Meher Baba was seated. When this was done, Meher Baba told the old Muslim, "Now there is no need for you to go to Mecca. Your haj (pilgrimage) is complete!"

Meher Baba's emphasis on love was synonymous with life itself. "Where there is life, there is love," he said, and his message, as pure love itself, has no parallel in power: "God does not listen to the language of the tongue. He does not listen to the language of the mind and its routine meditations, concentrations and thoughts about God. He only listens to the language of the heart and its message of love which needs no ceremony or show, only silent devotion to the Beloved."

Meher Baba said that "this love can be expressed in various ways, all of which ultimately result in union with God. The practical way for the average man to express love is to speak lovingly, think lovingly and act lovingly towards all mankind, feeling God to be present in everyone."

His message to mankind emerged loud and clear: "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 wholeheartedly and honestly, sacrificing everything at the altar of this supreme love, you will realize the Beloved within you."

On July 31, 1968 Meher Baba announced to his disciples that his universal work has been completed one hundred percent to his satisfaction. Shortly before he died six months later on January 31, 1969, Meher Baba brought up the matter of his Avatarhood for the last time by requesting a disciple to read aloud for those assembled before him, two couplets from

Hafiz, the Persian mystical poet, that hung on the walls of his meeting room. They ran:

Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what.

About what you hear from the Master, never say it is wrong because my dear, the fault lies in your own capacity to understand Him.

It was his way, too, of reminding humanity that God and God's ways are not attainable by the intellect, but that obedience based on love and faith in the Master is the most tangible approach to God.

As the Avatar of the age, Meher Baba's message is "Love me", and it is this universal call that is heard even by those who have not seen him in the physical form, taking comfort in his words that as the SELF in all selves, all were equally in him and that he resided in each always.

Truly Meher Baba was a man of love, come to spread the gospel of love and it is as the Eternal Beloved that posterity will love and remember him.

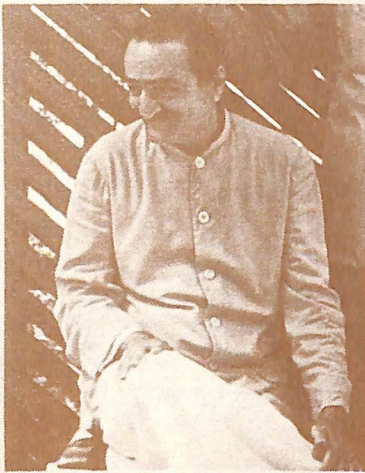
"I give you all my Blessing that the spark of my divine love may implant in your hearts the deep longing for love of God."

Meher Baba

**THIS MAN OF LOVE** is available on cassette for \$5. For further information on the life and work of Meher Baba, please write to: The Meher Baba Work, P.O. Box 10, New York, N.Y. 10185.

FEBRUARY 1979

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