

JUST TO LOVE HIM

Talks & Essays about Meher Baba

Adi K. Irani

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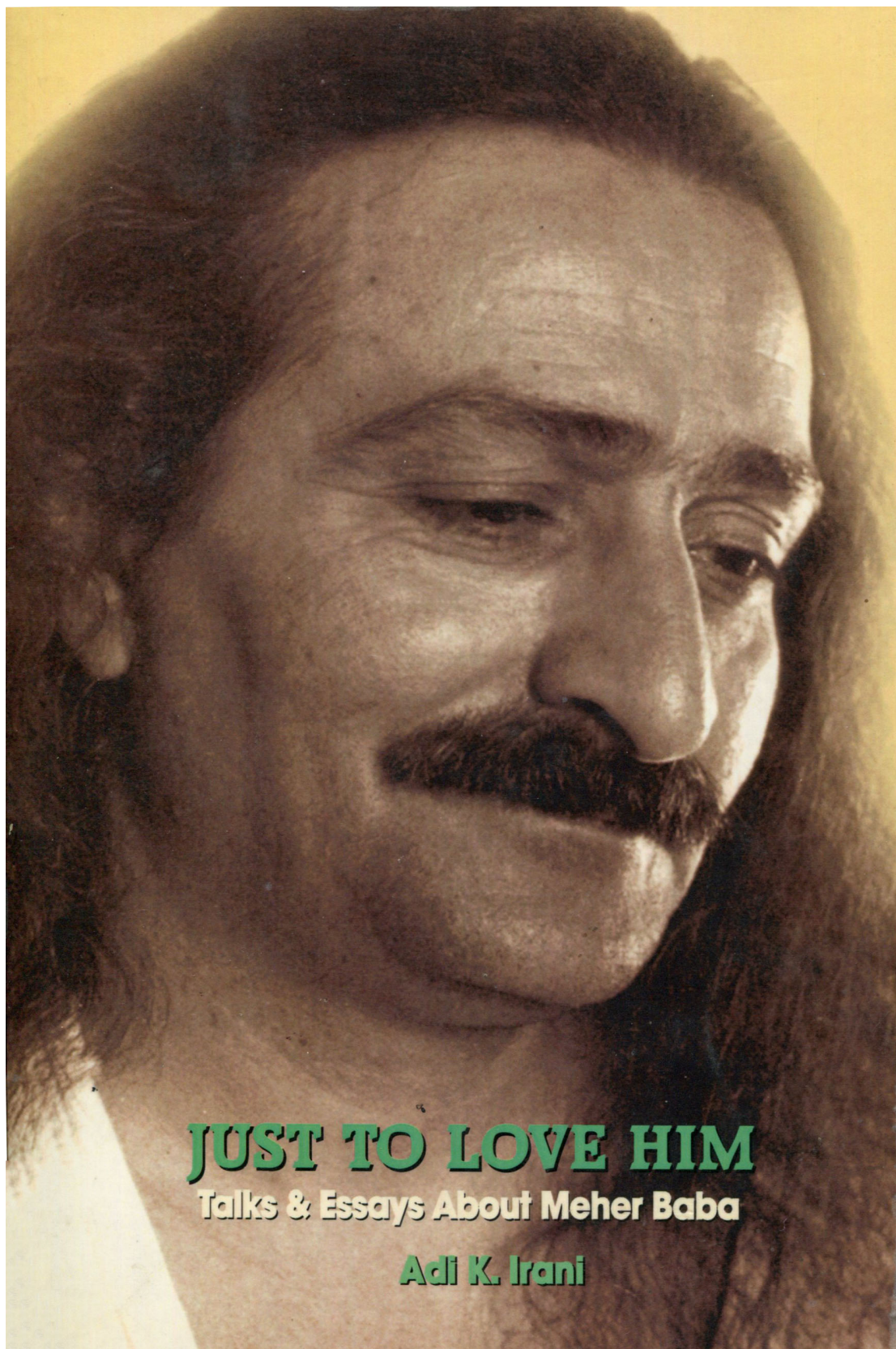
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Sheriar Foundation
2007

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ADI'S PRAYER

*Call yourself a lover
of Avatar Meher Baba,
but you must be willing
for your love of Baba to
suffer labors and sorrows,
vexations and anxieties
and lack of necessities,
sickness, injuries, reproof,
disgrace, humiliations,
shame, correction and
contempt. "Jai Baba"
will then be yours.*

—Adi K. Irani

PRAYER

Beloved Meher Baba!
Bless us all,
So that in the stress and strain of our daily life
And the fluctuations of our mind,
We learn to relax, wholly and wholeheartedly,
And float on the Ocean of Your Love,
And call for
Your breath of joy,
Your breeze of compassion,
And Your wind of strength,
To flood into
Every fiber of our body,
Every corner of our mind,
And every space of our heart,
To cleanse us of all our impurity
And make us worthy,
Of Your Love,
Of Your obedience,
Of Your service,
And above all, Your pleasure.

—*Adi K. Irani*
July, 1979

INTRODUCTION

This book is a collection of talks and writings by Adi K. Irani, one of Meher Baba's first mandali members, and His secretary from 1944 onward. Adi first met his Beloved Master in Ahmednagar, India in 1921 when he was only 18 years old. The rest of his life was given entirely in Avatar Meher Baba's service, and, in his capacity as Meher Baba's secretary, he corresponded widely with followers of Meher Baba all over the world. Adi accompanied Meher Baba on many of His journeys to the West, and after Meher Baba dropped His body on 31st January 1969, Adi made several speaking tours to the West and throughout India. He was a regular speaker at the Ahmednagar Meher Baba Center, continuing to fulfill the role Meher Baba designed for him as one of His most effective and inspiring speakers.

In early 1970, upon Adi's return from his first trip to the West after Baba dropped His body, Khorshed Irani (Adi's cousin and one of Baba's earliest women mandali) was surprised to hear how well Adi's public talks had been received, and how in private interviews in which people would tell Adi their personal problems and ask for his advice, Adi was able to respond helpfully to many questions asked of him.

Then she recalled an incident which took place in the early 1920s in the Manzil-e-Meern ashram in Bombay when Baba first planted in Adi the seeds of an ability to communicate His message to the public. One afternoon Baba called Adi and asked him, "Will you stay with Me for your whole life?" Adi answered, "Yes, Baba." Baba continued, "When I call you, will you come with Me for *bhiksha* (begging)?" Adi again answered, "Yes, Baba." Baba then asked, "Will you speak for Me as Vivekananda did for Ramakrishna? If so, I will give you My power to speak for Me just as Ramakrishna gave Vivekananda his power to speak for him. Will you do this for Me?" Adi again said, "Yes, Baba." Baba said, "Remember this."

When Khorshed reminded Adi of this incident, Adi at first couldn't recall it, but after a few moments the memory of it came to him. He exclaimed, "You were there? You remember all this?" Recalling this experience with Baba made Adi very happy and it made him even more enthusiastic to give talks about his Beloved. Adi felt fully confident that Baba had given him the ability to speak for Him and thereafter he began to give more and more talks about Baba.

Adi, in fact, did carry out Baba's order. During the New Life he went begging with Baba and later he played a role like that of Vivekananda in bringing an understanding of Meher Baba's stature and message to the West.

Although Baba foretold Adi's future, Adi's role as a speaker developed slowly and in stages. Adi began writing for Baba in the early years of his life with Him. Adi wrote articles for the *Meher Baba Journal* and other Baba periodicals including *The Awakener* and *The Glow*.

Throughout Adi's early years with Baba, he was no doubt being prepared by Baba in many ways for his later work as a public speaker in His cause. Adi was one of the most adept among the mandali in reading Baba's alphabet board, and he was frequently called upon by Baba to read out what Baba was conveying through the board.

In this way, Adi became intimately conversant with Baba's messages, explanations and discourses. Thereafter, even from the barest outline - just a few words or phrases - Adi was able to determine the entire thought that Baba wanted to communicate.

We can all think of instances of knowing another person so well that it is no longer necessary to completely spell out what one wishes to communicate. If two people have been in constant, close and loving contact and communication with each other for many years, eventually each may be able to understand, from small expressions or gestures, what the other means to say. This is especially true of people in love. And this was Adi's relationship with Baba.

But in spite of his ability to read the board, Adi did not feel able to speak extemporaneously about Baba and His message of Love and Truth. Baba would even encourage Adi to speak on His behalf, but Adi was reluctant. However, during Baba's visit to the West in 1956 (two years after Baba gave up the use

of the alphabet board) a dramatic change took place. One day in New York City Baba told Adi to act as His representative at a press conference which had been arranged by some of Baba's American lovers. Adi complained that he was afraid to do this - that there would be reporters from well-known papers and he would not know what to say.

Baba looked hard at Adi and frowned, and with His elbow motioned Adi in the direction of the press conference. After Adi began answering the reporters' questions, his previous fears and reticence to speak in public totally vanished, and he, in fact, handled all of the difficult questions posed by the reporters with a masterly touch. Adi came to feel that his Master was guiding his public speaking internally, just as He was guiding him externally in all his other activities. From that day, Adi found that he could speak fearlessly before any size audience. In fact, Adi would often say that the larger the audience the greater joy he felt in speaking. Next to experiencing Baba's Love personally, he felt Baba's Love most when he was serving as a channel for communicating His Love and Truth to others.

Adi also enjoyed being asked questions during his talks. The more difficult the questions the better he liked them, because then he would be forced to dive deep within his heart to find the answer. Adi himself sometimes marveled at the answers that came forth.

When Adi emphatically declared Baba's Divinity during his talks, some listeners may have been aware of only the intellectual meaning of what he said, but at the same time, on a much deeper level, the strength of Adi's personal conviction of Baba's Divinity came through. It was this conviction in Baba's status as the Avatar of the Age that was, at times, of immense benefit to others. During Adi's visits to the West in 1976, 1977 and 1979, he gave many personal interviews to Baba-lovers and people drawn to Baba. I was usually sitting outside his room with those who were waiting for their turn to speak with Adi. Occasionally, during these moments, they would start telling me their difficulties, some of which were quite serious and long-standing. Then they would go in for their private interview with Adi. When they came out they appeared greatly changed. All of the cares and worries they had expressed to me seemed to have melted away.

In time I realized that Adi's conviction in Baba's Divinity was allowing him to tap into the limitless ocean of Baba's Love. His soothing words to others came from this Source and thus his words were able to help them with their cares and worries.

This book is a result of the gift that Baba gave to Adi - his conviction that Meher Baba is the Avatar of the Age and his ability to communicate that conviction to others. The words in these pages are born out of that conviction and the life that Avatar Meher Baba molded in His love and service. Meher Baba has said that God's Love is a gift from God to man. So this book, containing Adi's expressions of the love he received from Meher Baba, is a gift of Divine Love from Avatar Meher Baba to our hearts.

Jack C. Small
July, 1984

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the coming centuries, many commentaries on the teachings of Avatar Meher Baba will be forthcoming by numerous authors. Most fortunate are we now to have a first hand account by one author, Adi K. Irani, to whom Meher Baba Himself entrusted many details of His work and on whom He relied extensively for more than four decades. The result of this long and close association is an intimate glimpse of the workings of the Avatar, masterfully told by one of Baba's most dynamic spokesmen. Indeed, Meher Baba stated in the 1920s that one day He would give Adi His power to speak for Him.

Adi's entire life was a living testimony to his understanding that, as he said, "Meher Baba is not a theory to be read, rather a life to be led". The force of Adi's poignant insights - based upon his unassailable conviction that Meher Baba is the Avatar of the Age - strikes a deep chord of Truth within one's heart.

For many years Jim Mistry tried to persuade Adi to produce a book for publication. Adi began to prepare some material with this in mind. In 1979 the editor began work with Adi in this undertaking. Selected talks from Adi's extensive tours became the primary source material for this book. Several of his written articles are also included.

Although fluent in a number of languages, English was not Adi's first language. Accordingly, some editing, has been necessary. The editor has endeavored to make only minimal changes in order to maintain the integrity and style of Adi's thoughts and words. The reader will therefore encounter some expressions which are not typical of the way English is spoken in the West, but since the thoughts were conveyed clearly, they were left intact. Additionally, Adi's style of speech was traditional in the sense that his frequent use of the term "he" referred to both genders.

Adi's engaging speaking style involved frequent digres-

sions in which he expounded on interesting sub-themes. This allowed him to touch on a veritable panorama of subjects during the course of a single talk. Some digressions have been omitted for the sake of content organization. Material which was used in more than one talk was deleted so as to avoid repetition. An exception to this was made when Adi developed the same idea in a new way.

Adi's virtual lifelong relationship with the God-Man gave him a profound familiarity with Meher Baba's messages. Because of this, Adi would often quote Meher Baba during the course of a talk. However, the message may not be exactly what Baba stated word for word.

I am grateful to those who aided so generously with the work involved in transcribing and proofing the material in preparation for this work. In particular, I would like to thank John Connor, Jim Mistry, Virginia Small, Jack Small, Kebi Boose, Ralph Brown, Martha Williams and Peter Booth. I am especially grateful to my wife Lynne Berry who did the lion's share of the work on this book. And I am most grateful to Adi for the opportunity to imbibe so deeply his message of Baba's Love and for his many helpful suggestions for the journey home to oneness with the Divine Beloved.

Stephen Berry
October 1984

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Economics of Meher Love

Love is everywhere, but it cannot be felt everywhere. The entire creation, with all its objects and beings, exists because of the cohesion created by love which is all-pervading. Yet we see so little love and so much bitterness around us.

Love, like water, exists in different forms and has different effects. All love cannot be of one caliber and quality. Varied are the grades of love and their expressions. There is love in man, animals, birds, fish and vegetation. Inanimate objects, like metal and stone, also have love. The way love exists in different entities and is expressed by them differs widely. In inanimate objects, love manifests as gravitation; in vegetation, fish and insects, it manifests as rudimentary sensation; and in birds and beasts, it manifests as developed sensation and instinct. In man, the expression of love is coupled with the faculty of discrimination and a will for the highest manifestation of love.

Human love has a greater or lesser proportion of selfishness mixed with it. Since man's life is grounded in his individual ego, he identifies with his mind, body and feelings and cannot be wholly unselfish. Yet man has the potential for manifesting Divine Love.

Divine Love in man is a continuous self-giving in an endeavor to become united with God the Beloved. For a man whose heart is ignited with the fire of Divine Love, there remains no self-interest in his life except a burning longing to consume himself in union with his Beloved.

As God, Beloved Meher Baba is the Ocean of Love. In

human form, He is the personification of God. He is both in One. Therefore, He has the power of attracting man to Himself with the objective of dissolving him in His Universal Self. Meher Baba appreciates deeply the helplessness of man and He comes as God in human form to express His Love for mankind, for Meher Baba has Love in measureless abundance. He is the gateway through which man, by his human love for God, can enter the pathway to God.

God as the Avatar appears to creation (*maya*) as the God-Man. At all times the Avatar lives and exists for creation. We may compare this to a tree and a seed. When a tree drops its form, it does not perish but perpetuates itself in the form of a seed. Thus, a tree becomes a seed and a seed becomes a tree. The tree does not lose its form but changes it. Likewise, when the Avatar drops His body, He comes again in another.

To expect the Avatar to demonstrate that His human body does not change or is not dropped off is to foolishly expect Him to change the law of nature. Law is created by God who is beyond law, and God in the form of the Avatar is both law-free and law-abiding. Nature is governed by law, and man is bound by nature whose law is change. The Avatar has to work through nature to redeem man from nature. He therefore becomes voluntarily bound by nature and subjects Himself to the changes of a human body.

Still there are those who expect the Avatar to maintain His physical form. Since the Avatar knows everything, He does not mind such an absurd thought by His lovers and others. He remains ever watchful to see that His lovers continue to love Him in faith and even in so-called faithlessness. He goes on doing His work uninterrupted for the good of humanity in the form of a human body when He appears on earth, and in the form of His Divine Being when He is not in the body. The cycles of His appearance in the gross world, and His veiled withdrawal behind it, occur once every seven hundred to fourteen hundred years. He perpetually lives God's life in creation and beyond, and is the only eternal link between God and man.

In light of Baba's revealing pronouncements, dare we insult our conviction (if we have one) by saying that Baba is "dead" when He is God? God is a permanent source of love-blessings to man by being Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha,

Christ, Mohammed and Meher Baba. His name is different but His being is the same.

All generalizations made by us such as thinking that a yogi, an advanced soul, a mahatma, a saint, a *satpurusha* (sixth plane saint), or for that matter a Perfect Master, are able to give their blessings to the world when not in a human body, are gross misunderstandings of the messages given to us by Avatar Meher Baba. All beings, except the Avatar and Perfect Masters, after dropping the human body, come back to the gross world to perfect themselves. A Perfect Master, after dropping His body, becomes disconnected with the entire illusion of creation.

Life with Meher Baba is an epic of love, but not without its economics. Baba wants all His lovers to love Him most, but not to neglect the share of love to be given to all with whom one comes in contact, either by blood relationship or friendship. Baba never wants us to waste our love in trying to fulfill our selfish desires. It is very difficult to demarcate selfish desires from higher desires. Selfish desires can range from pure necessities to wants and extravagant habits formed in life. Today's wants become tomorrow's habits and subsequently may seem like a necessity on the third day.

The human mind is very tricky. It works under the influence of *sanskaras* (impressions) born of *maya* which ever stands as a competitive opposer to the fulfillment of all that is good and great in human life. Despite the fact that Baba shows all the ways and means to overcome desires, He fully knows how difficult it is to do. Baba eventually comes down to fundamentals and points out that if principles cannot be lived by man, then he should continue to function as he has been, while adhering to certain basic precepts He has laid down. By so doing, man would neutralize the effect of all his misdeeds by Baba's grace and blessings.

How can we expect to be worthy of His blessings? Certainly we should develop good qualities, but His blessings are not achieved by being studious, meticulous or a die-hard of so-called virtuous living. The easiest alternative then, is to economize our love from all deviations and centralize it in Him. Our love will only become dissipated when we fulfill our lower or even our higher desires. Only by dedicating all our actions at the feet of Beloved Meher Baba can we make

ourselves worthy of His blessings.

This has to be done in honest humility and with an unswerving conviction that Baba is God and, as such, is the prime mover of all our thoughts and actions, and that to Him is due all our love and repentance. A complete dedication has no room for self-justification of wanton errors and repeated wrong actions. Baba does not want us to neglect the duties that come to us by birth, circumstance or commitment, but rather to fulfill them in all honesty and strength with the attitude, "It is Thy will, Meher Baba; all I do and have to do is please You, my Lord, no matter how much it displeases me or makes me suffer."

The love of Meher Baba is not a joke, although the entire play of *maya* is a huge joke for Him. What suffering Baba brings upon Himself to make us realize that, in fact, *maya* is a huge joke. God plays it upon Himself and God, in the form of the Avatar, has to bear it all.

Humanity has to take upon itself its share of suffering. The Avatar, besides undergoing vicarious suffering for the world, has His *Sat-Chit-Anand* (all-knowledge, all-power, all-bliss) state to rely upon. A human being has no such exalted experience on which to fall back. Why should a human being be made to suffer so much? Is it because God as the Avatar maintains His *Sat-Chit-Anand* state only when balanced against the sum total of man's suffering?

If that were the case, every man in his gross ignorance would rise up and revolt against the "selfishness" of God who enjoys the *Sat-Chit-Anand* state in the guise of the Avatar while leaving the world to its suffering. God could then be the greatest autocrat and the Avatar His mask. God in fact is an autocrat when it comes to materializing His will as planned by the Avatar. All that God does in His knowledge is the greatest mystery to man in his ignorance. God maintains perfect silence and balance; in so doing, He has to come down on earth again and again as the Avatar, undergoing universal suffering despite the universal power He has. He does this not for Himself, but so that man may eventually experience the same *Sat-Chit-Anand* state He enjoys. Toward this fulfillment, He does not spare Himself although He suffers more. He is most benevolent and His compassion has no parallel.

What is Meher Baba's love-blessing for man? What has

been gained by those who have been in His contact for a few or many years? What is it that man should call the highest gain in life? Is it the happiness of money, name, fame, sex or progeny? Is it a self-centered subjective experience of some higher sight, smell or sound? Is it some twinkling lights or the power to perform unnatural acts called miracles? Is it a fixated mind or a deadening of the heart causing insensitivity to the suffering of others?

All these so-called gains are of momentary value or of no value. They come and go. So-called higher spiritual experiences come and go. What comes and goes does not exist, and what exists does not go. Unchangeability is the attribute of God, and God's highest manifestation on earth is the Avatar. Avatar Meher Baba has given to His true lovers, who can claim to be so, two truths which do not change and will not change, no matter if His lovers live or die. The first is that God is, and the second is that Meher Baba is God. This is an unassailable conviction which is the love-blessing of Meher Baba. It can be put to the test at the point of a sword.

I am equally sure that a true Baba lover will never flinch, falter or flounder to own this conviction, even if he is challenged with the severance of his head. This is a conviction that angels would vie to earn. Angels have the love of God but not the burning longing to be united with Him. Man alone has the potential, and Meher Baba develops this to form a solid conviction. What an enlightening conviction for a Baba lover to receive, not in knowledge but in ignorance. For one who receives the light of knowledge, it is really great because he sees everything; but for one to have an unchanging certainty of the existence of Meher Baba as God while still in the darkness of ignorance is, in a way, a greater gift of God. Meher Baba alone can give it.

Since Baba dropped His body, some people feel they suffer from an absence of guidance and direction. It is true that Baba has given no authority to anyone to give guidance. He alone is our Father and Guide, and in Him we will find all our woes and conflicts dissolved.

Avatar Meher Baba, while physically present, invariably gave hints and advice to His lovers to look for Him in their hearts. It is in the heart alone that Baba can be felt and seen. The heart is a symbolic place which Baba pointed at as an

approach to Him, by looking within it. Baba is everywhere, but we cannot see Him everywhere. He can be felt in the heart which is so near to us, for the source of love and feeling is the heart.

How does one follow Baba's advice? It is as easy to see and feel Baba in the heart as it is difficult not to feel and see Him. But such a mood comes when one loves Him and loves Him intensely. We love Baba but we also love so many other things. Loving things other than Baba is not tabooed. There are many loves as well as objects of love. Which object do we love most and which love do we value most? This is a matter of our own choice, our own discretion and decision. Merely saying, "Baba, I love You most," will not help much. Words uttered can be placed as distant as an enemy while no words uttered can be as near to our hearts as a feeling of love for a close friend and benefactor. To persist in being what we are while expecting Baba to not only give us His love but also make us receive it is childish. Any love is a game between two individuals.

The greatest of all games is the love of God. It is to be played wholeheartedly with our lives, not with mere words or extraneous objects. When we love Baba to the exclusion of everything else, He then must come to us and brighten our hearts with His presence. We may feel or see Him in an ineffable peacefulness and love, or with the figure of His Being in the outline of His physical body, or just as an unseen presence of His oceanic love flooded with light. He can be experienced in many ways. Baba is infinite, multi-sided, multi-sighted, multi-feeling and multi-loving.

It is enough for us to catch Him any bit, any way, anywhere at any time; He is there ready to manifest to us. But small is our love, our thought and our sight, so His vastness may startle us or even shatter us. He has to be ever cautious not to override our capacity. Let us wait devotedly and patiently. Let us dwell upon Him - His figure, His greatness, His messages, His love, and anything and everything concerning Him - at all spare moments of the day or night. Let us make Him our constant companion and develop an inseparable companionship without which we cannot live. Let much of Him come to us and much of us disappear. Let all of Him fill us so that all of us can be purged and expunged.

Who is so fortunate to be filled with His love on all sides?

We are too narrow, too rigid, too dogmatic, too slow and too hard. Our angularities make us what we are. We abhor being talked about, criticized, advised and, much less, reprimanded. This is a great difficulty with us. Where our faults are concerned, we look upon them with an air of triumph. Where the faults of others are concerned, we look at them with an eye of derision. It should really be otherwise. But how can we change our view? It will change, but sometimes slowly and with hard experience. A delay in changing becomes expensive in terms of time, work and health. We suffer and Baba-work suffers. We cannot escape change and sit silently doing only that which suits us most. Nothing may suit us and everything may suit us. Who is to decide this? Should we change or expect others to change? The best answer is to ask ourselves this question: What would Baba have us do? The answer is given in His message if we read it and live up to it.

How to love Baba is a great question for one who is very sincere. How does one love his mother, a man or a woman, a friend or a son? I dare say none of us has asked the question how this happens. It is because such a love comes to us so naturally that we do not wonder about it. In the case of Meher Baba, the personification of God, a tall interrogative stands up overhead: How to love Him? The answer cannot be had by asking but by creating circumstances. We should give ourselves a chance to love Baba by creating circumstances. Any and all methods could be taken up: reading Baba-literature, listening to Baba-talks, listening to others' experiences about Baba and attending Baba-meetings. The most important thing in creating circumstances is to think of Him with love and devotion during every moment we can spare.

Avatar Meher Baba's Silence Anniversary

Meher Baba is a name, the name of that Being who is Reality. His Silence is the supreme aspect of His Reality. It is not a mere withdrawal from the expression of words, a silencing of the mind or a clogging of emotions. His Silence is the source of all activity, thought and energy. It is the power of creation, the joy of life and the all-pervading substance behind the existence of objects and beings.

What we see of Meher Baba's Silence is that He does not utter words by mouth. What we feel of His Silence is the peacefulness of His physical presence. What we think of His Silence is our imagination about the height of His consciousness. Beyond our perceptions of seeing, feeling and imagining, we do not know what His Silence really is. Before we try to know what His Silence is, let us try to know who He is.

He is the substance of every being and every thing in all aspects of their existences and functions. Such a Being in all His infinity, luminosity, power and knowledge comes down from His transcendent abode and gets, as it were, "bottled up" in the limitations of a human form. His life focalizes the infinitude of God in the material world and bridges the path from man to God.

The Avatar, by His descent, lays a new highway from man to God. In its very laying, He creates a unique opportunity for man to be drawn toward the way of life He directs. One has first to accept Him to accept the way of life He shows. Those who accept Him create no resistance for themselves. Those who rigidly and mechanically adhere to the past cannot grow

out of their habits. They refuse to be moved until a catastrophic change shakes them out of their slumber.

History has taught repeated lessons of how man defied the Avatars of the past during their lifetimes and later surrendered to their divine will and mercy. History again repeats itself as man repeats his error. But the oft-repeated hints given by Meher Baba portend a different possibility of circumstances. During His Manifestation He will be accepted as the Avatar of the Age by a large section of humanity.

The living Avatar does not change the texture of man's faith in God but reaffirms it by setting up a new civilization and culture. He is the same Ancient One who, at different times and places, takes different forms such as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed.

His activity is formulated by the impact of world events that are planned by His Will. Between the planning and execution, He hardly intervenes except during grave crises. Such intervention does not take place to neutralize or, much less, negate the working out of the Divine Plan. Rather, His intervention is to fulfill it. Being immensely compassionate, He has the entire plan worked out in a manner offering the least comparative suffering to humanity without diminishing its beneficial effect.

The all-pervading Silence that is personified in Meher Baba is activated by His living presence on earth. It is the descent from the Formless God into the form of man. It is the ageless age of life and the deathless birth of His Being. The Silence that He bears upon Himself is vicarious self-suffering absorbing the shocks the world experiences from its devastation by colossal weapons of self-destruction and the misuse of power by those men who seek to gain a shameless supremacy over the lives and property of others.

May His reign of love, peace and plenty shield the hearts and minds of mankind from hatred, greed and selfishness. May He continue to bless the world forever!

*Meher Baba Comes to Show Us
Who We Really Are*

Dear brothers and sisters: I am very happy indeed to have an opportunity to come here, and I bow down to your love for Meher Baba.

It is as easy to understand Meher Baba as it is difficult to understand Him. He is the Ocean of Truth, and He also manifests Himself in a drop of the ocean. We have been given the opportunity to know and love Him in the form of the Ocean or to love Him in our hearts as Meher Baba, the Perfect Human Being. The only thing that Meher Baba is interested in giving us - and has come down to show us - is the consciousness of who we are.

The great Persian poet Hafiz, a *sadguru*, says in effect, "I do not know what I was; I do not know why I have come here; I do not know where I'm going; I'm absolutely oblivious of myself and I do not know who I am." Baba says what a great fault and, tragedy it is when we study the whole world around us but do not study ourselves. We are too much in a hurry to become educated, to go to college, to earn money, to marry, to beget children, to get a pension and then, in a hurry to die.

When I went to America in 1970, I had a chance to ask a man a question. I said, "Please sir, show me who you are." He said, "I am this," pointing to his chest. I told him, "This is your chest; please show me who you are." He said, "I am this." I said, "These are your legs." He said, "I am the whole of it." I said, "This is your body, but you are something else." I folded my hands and said, "Please show me who you are." He could not answer. We cannot answer this simplest question of who we are. We study everything else, keeping ourselves in absolute

oblivion and darkness as to who we are.

What is the main work for which Meher Baba, God in human form, has come? It is to give us the consciousness of who we are. We are not our bodies, not our minds, not our feelings - not anything that is outside of ourselves. We are ourselves, alone; we are nobody but God. Baba says in effect, "You and I are one; you are God and I am God." Since Baba says that "you are God and I am God," then why cannot everyone call himself Meher Baba? Until man is conscious that he is God, he experiences himself as his body and not as his true self. Meher Baba has come to give us that experience and consciousness of God.

What a real joy it would be if we were fortunate enough to be colored by the love of Meher Baba. Why? We have nothing to lose. We all have relatives; we all have money; we all have our lives. Meher Baba does not ask us to give up anything physically. He asks us to lead a most practical life: to be honest, straightforward and be in the world as we are. Gone are the days when a man, for the sake of getting even intellectual knowledge, would take upon himself a life of renunciation, a life of *sannyas* (renunciation), excluding himself from all the activities of the world in order to go to a remote place and do *sadhanas* (spiritual disciplines) for a number of years. These difficulties have been removed now; they do not exist any more. When a man had to walk long distances because there were no trains, cars or airplanes, it took him a number of days to travel from one town to another. Now that God has endowed us with the knowledge of modern science, we can fly, motor from one place to another and go by train in a far shorter time than we could before. Distances and obstacles have been removed and Baba said that He has created a path most practical, and most simple. One needs only to make up his mind.

It is to our advantage when we are determined, are resolved, to love God. Everything else will work out, and eventually we will come to know who we are. He does not want anything from us - He does not want our money; He does not want our services. Baba says He only wants our pure, unadulterated, unselfish love, and nothing else.

Why does He ask us to give Him our love? He Himself is the Ocean of Love. I have been with Meher Baba for fifty years,

and I *know* that He is the very symbol, the very embodiment, of love. Why does that Ocean of Love desire small loves from an individual? It is not for Himself at all. But by drawing love from every individual, He is able to reach out and give His grace and blessings in return.

We should establish a link with Him. It may be just a small tube or pipeline running right from our hearts to the Ocean. Should we be rich or poor, educated or uneducated, talented or untalented, or the worst booby in the world, He does not bother about it. High birth or low, whatever nationality, whether man, woman or child, there is no difference whatsoever. With Meher Baba, there is one God. With Meher Baba, there is one love. With Meher Baba, there is one person. All the differences are on the surface. Meher Baba says that life is one. Differences are only born out of ignorance, nothing else. He makes it very easy. He encourages us to lead our own lives and follow our own religion. He also says He has not come to displace anything or take anything away from us. If we but establish a link with Him, we will see the results.

Our lives are really a *tamasha*. What is a *tamasha*? It is a play, a drama, like a film we see on the screen. Why do the poets call life a *tamasha*? Because it does not last. It comes and goes; it is a passing show.

Yesterday I was; today I am; tomorrow I am not going to be. Man is born, man lives, man dies. You see, life is not permanent. It is all moving, all shifting. Our lives are built on shifting sand.

Can anyone show me a single instance of anything that is permanent? Saints are born, sinners are born, the Avatar is born; even Meher Baba, who we look upon as the Avatar, has dropped His body. Everything is just a passing show and amounts to nothing. Meher Baba says we experience this as a passing show. Why? Because we do not know who we are. We only know ourselves as a body. Thoughts come to us, but we do not know the source of them. They come and pass through our minds, and we think. There are certain feelings that we feel, certain *bhawnas*, certain impressions we get, but we do not know their source.

We identify ourselves with our bodies, thoughts and feelings, and nothing beyond. God has endowed us with a human life. Is it worthwhile living for things that exist today

but not tomorrow? Suppose a man builds a house and collects a lot of wealth therein, knowing all along that tomorrow it will be stolen or destroyed. Of what avail is his interest in it? What is it going to get him after all? It will not stay with him.

The very body with which we live twenty-four hours a day is going to pass away; we are sure of it, and yet we cling to it and look upon it as though it were going to last forever. Yet Baba says that it is not for nothing that this body has been given to us. It is not for nothing that we have to study everything around us. We have to study - there is no doubt about it. Rather than waste our time, we should try to acquire the knowledge and understanding of who we are. This knowledge, once gained, is never lost. We are not required to undergo higher studies or be a talented person to gain this knowledge.

Baba shows the simplest path. Any man of calling, profession, nationality, standard or status may follow the path. It is equally beneficial for him to take it up, follow it, be serious about it, then see the results. It is so simple that any man who makes up his mind, makes a resolve, may take up what Baba says - which is just to love Him.

We come to our point again which began by asking, "Who am I?" We do not know. Meher Baba has come to give us the knowledge of who we really are. Baba said that in order to make a beginning, we should start by loving Him. He asks us to give Him our love, our unselfish love, not that kind of love that says, "I'll give You a bit of love, if You give me wealth," or "I'll give You a little more love, if You give me a beautiful child." Nothing of the sort. Love with no expectations, with no bargaining. Just pure love matters.

Meher Baba says if we really love Him with all our hearts and establish a link with Him, we will be able to draw all our strength from Him. If we establish our link with the Ocean - however small that pipeline may be from our hearts - it joins the Ocean! And out of the Ocean we can draw as much bliss, as much happiness, as much strength and as much knowledge as lies in it.

Let us go a little further and think about it. Suppose that from today onward one had decided to love Meher Baba. How does one begin this love? I have been asked this question many times. "How shall I begin to love Meher Baba? Show me the

way." And I ask, "What is the greatest expression of love in one's life?" It is to try to make our Beloved our constant companion. Think of Him, read about Him, let your mind run to Him every spare moment of your life, and try to make Him your own as much as possible.

For example, there is a young man who falls in love with a young girl. Of course, he wants to marry and be united with her, but no matter what the symptoms of that love are, he goes to school if he is a student; he attends to his profession if he has a job or business. He accomplishes the entire schedule of the day, but his mind flows toward the person he loves every spare moment he has.

In a greater sense, in a more intense sense, we should think of Meher Baba every spare moment of our lives - as we walk, as we talk, as we eat, as we move, as we do our work. It is something like a constant prayer. It is not very difficult. It is very easy, Remembrance should be so constant that it becomes second nature. Every spare moment our minds should turn to Him and begin loving Him. If we create the circumstances, within a short time we will see that our love for God is aflame within our hearts. We do not have to lose anything. We are not to sacrifice anything. If we are fortunate enough to make any sacrifice, it will be the sacrifice of our own ignorance about ourselves. We have His pictures, His books. We can think about Him. We can talk with the persons who have had long contact with Meher Baba. These are the small ways, the most practical ways, by which we create circumstances of loving Him.

I shall now end my little talk by telling you what I have heard from Baba from my long contact with Him. He told me in essence, "I do not perform any miracles, but My spiritual status is so high that if anyone, anywhere, in any difficulty at any time, remembers Me with all his heart, then the difficulty will immediately be solved."

I will give you an instance. Of course I will not give you the name, but I shall tell you the story very truthfully. There was once a government official who sent a messenger to Ahmednagar. Baba was in seclusion, and the messenger gave me a note from the minister addressed to Baba. It was my task to read it first. It was written: "Beloved Meher Baba, I am suffering very much. I do not know what I should do. I have a

high position. I do not lack status or money, but in my family there is a situation which is very painful to me. It is beyond my power to correct it and restore the happiness which I enjoyed before."

I asked the man to sit in my office while I took the letter to Meher Baba. Baba listened very carefully as I read it to Him. He said, "Tell this messenger who has come on behalf of the official that I do not perform miracles; I do not change circumstances. But there is one thing that is certain: My spiritual status is so high, so great, that if any man in any difficulty, in any corner of the world, at any time, remembers Me with all his heart, then the difficulty is immediately solved."

It is a distance of nine miles from Meherazad to my office. The messenger was eagerly waiting for me. I gave him Meher Baba's message. This messenger was a very intelligent man. The moment I gave him Meher Baba's message, he asked the first question. "Sir, what do you mean by remembering Meher Baba with all one's heart? Please explain." Baba had not told me how to explain the meaning of remembering Him with all one's heart. But I remembered something Baba had said before, and I explained it to the messenger in a very beautiful manner. I gave him the instance of a man swimming in the water who is about to be eaten by a big fish. He does not know what will happen in the next second. He is so frightened that he almost becomes unconscious. At that moment, He remembers God; he remembers Meher Baba. "Oh, Meher Baba! Save my life!" This is the meaning of remembering Him with all your heart. The messenger was very satisfied with this answer. He went home and, of course, told the whole story to the minister, and within fifteen days I got a letter that everything had been smoothed out.

I tell you, dear brothers and sisters, more than once I have gone through an experience wherein I was absolutely at the point of extinction, and immediately when I said "Meher Baba," the whole situation changed. I shall quote you an instance. I was driving from Bombay to Ahmednagar. Between Bombay and Poona there is a steep hill. I was going very fast as I was trying to pass the car in front of me. I did not know that another car was coming toward me at full speed until the last moment. When I shouted out "Meher Baba," both

cars stopped. The distance between our cars was just one or two inches! There would have been a head-on collision and I do not know if I would have come out alive. You may call it a coincidence, but it was not so in my case.

Not once, but a few times, I have saved myself in this way. There are similar instances also, as in my brother's case and in my cousin's case. I can quote dozens of them. I have correspondence with Meher Baba from people all over the world dating back the last fifty years. Such beautiful experiences are given, you cannot imagine. You would be absolutely wonder-struck to find out how these things could ever be. Impossible things have happened in the contact and love of Meher Baba.

I tell these stories for a simple reason. It is to awaken understanding and conviction of the fact that the great Ocean of power, knowledge and bliss is near at hand.

As Baba has said, "I do not change your destiny, but the one thing I do give you is inner strength, and by that inner strength you can fight the battle of life." He will not remove our difficulties. He wants us to fight our difficulties and He will give us the strength, like Arjuna, to fight our enemies. He wants us to become warriors in our lives - not to turn our faces away from life, not to do *sannyas* or go into seclusion.

We must each face our life in a very positive way. Baba is behind us. We can derive all the benefits from Him, provided we fulfill the condition of establishing our link with Him by virtue of unselfish, pure, unadulterated love. Meher Baba, the personification of God, is not attracted by anything; not our talents, our money, our beauty or even, I would say, our service, unless of course, that service is most unselfishly born out of pure love. Meher Baba is only attracted by our pure love and nothing else.

I am very happy to have been given the opportunity to come here and say a few words about Meher Baba. Many of us have known and seen Baba and many have not, but His Divinity is always present. The few thoughts I have placed before this audience are not merely imaginary thoughts. These thoughts are born out of my experience of fifty years with Meher Baba. Ever since I was eighteen years old I have been with Him. I was with Him until the last, until He dropped His body, and out of this experience I give you something which is really worthwhile for you to take up in your life: Life

is only worthwhile when you are loving God, and there is nothing greater than that. Meher Baba says in effect, "I am the personification of God. I am the form of God. If you love Me, you will know who you really are. You will find that you are nobody but God."

Intelligence and Love

Hafiz, the renowned God-realized poet of Persia of whom Meher Baba was so fond, says in one of his couplets:

*Janabe ishq ra dargah basi balater az agl ast,
Kasi un as tan busad ke jan dar astin darad.*

The abode of love enjoys that exalted position
which is much higher than the borderline of
intellect.

Whosoever aspires to kiss its threshold should
carry his life on his sleeve (meaning he should be
prepared to sacrifice anything).

Intelligence has a role to play in man's life. It is important indeed, but it should not be overrated, overplaced and overplayed. Compared to love, intelligence is of far less value. For example, in the structure of a human body the feet are important. One cannot afford to lose his feet. Without feet, no one can move about and earn a living by a profession that requires the use of his feet. Let us imagine that a crisis comes up in one's life and he is given a choice of either having to lose his feet or his heart. Which would he choose? If he loses his feet, his life will continue; but if he loses his heart, he will also lose his life. So he would rather lose his feet than his heart.

With respect to intellect and love, the feet represent intellect and the heart love. As much as intelligence is exercised and obeyed, it should not be allowed to overrule the heart. He who loves God more than his life can hope to reach Him and become conscious of Him.

God and the active side of God, the Avatar, whose being and qualities we acknowledge to be like a limitless ocean,

infinite and eternal, cannot be conceived of or contained by the human mind. To try to explore His qualities or His being with the yardstick of intelligence is like trying to see with our ears. The only means by which the Avatar can be approached is love. Love that is unhampered by any considerations of desire, self-interest or gain can pave the way to God.

Intelligence should not be allowed to stagnate, but one should have the right understanding of where the use of intelligence should be exercised and where the evoking of love is necessary.

Yoga and meditation cannot solve the problem of life. They may give you a temporary peace and good health, but the foundation of a real spiritual life is the transformation of the ego into egolessness. Meher Baba says, "You go and I come." This can hardly be achieved by yoga because its very practice, in general, adds to the sense of self-importance, thereby creating a position where a yogi is likely to cut himself off from receiving the Avatar's blessings.

Man, under the weight of his age-old *sanskaras*, is embedded in gross consciousness. Any yoga or meditation in general cannot uproot one from gross consciousness. The inner experiences that yoga or meditation give may be of the subtle or mental planes, but one experiences them from his unchanging base of gross consciousness or, at most, semi-gross consciousness. As such, these experiences cannot be called valid because the seer and the object seen, or the feeler and the object felt, are at variance with one another in their emplacement of consciousness. For example, the peaks of the Himalayas are visible from the foothills; however, an observer cannot be said to truly experience those peaks from his position far below. Although yoga and meditation in general may offer one a glimpse, they do not permanently alter one's gross consciousness.

Avatar Meher Baba is ever concerned with your love, your life and your character more than your views and opinions. All of you, no matter to what religion or political view you belong, can have an equal right to be blessed by Meher Baba without discrimination. Meher Baba lays a great stress upon a life of purity, honesty and love. To love God, to love your fellow man, and to covet not anyone's possessions or spouse, are the fundamental things to which Baba would always want you to adhere.

Illusion and Reality

Meher Baba has beautifully said this about illusion: "The life of an ordinary man is illusion, but the life of the Avatar in illusion is not an illusion because His life is embedded in the Truth." He comes down from His state of Godhood to the state of man in order to give you some understanding, give you His blessings and give you something substantial in your life. This is such a peculiar thing, this illusion. We very easily say, "This is illusion," but we hardly know what it is all about. What is this illusion; what is this Reality? We can think about Reality but we do not experience it, and until we do, it is not Reality for us.

When we say that there is knowledge, we use that term for any and all kinds of knowledge. Intellectual knowledge is one kind. The knowledge we get from sight and seeing is another, and then there is the higher inner knowledge resulting from our identification with something. We sweepingly use the same word for all these kinds of knowledge.

But when we are talking about spirituality, about God, about Meher Baba, about His love and about the inner stages, we cannot sweepingly speak about knowledge and mean anything and everything. We cannot do that without specifically trying to understand or explain what kind of knowledge it is. Is it intellectual knowledge? Is it perceptual knowledge? Or is it the final knowledge received from Reality? Meher Baba has roughly divided knowledge into these three aspects.* Really speaking, knowledge is all one. Everything is one, but

* The reader is referred to *The Everything and The Nothing*, Beguine Library, p. 37

the difficulty is that for us it is not one because we have been endowed with a mind that always divides things. The mind divides and the soul unites.

Intellectual knowledge is distinctly different from perceptual knowledge. Suppose you were sitting before me. I do not see you sitting before me but somebody tells me that you sat here at a certain time. He describes you and I conclude that you were present but I never saw you. Intellectual knowledge is based upon the data, the information we get from different sources. We put it all together, compare two or more things and arrive at a conclusion. But intellectual knowledge is never conclusive. It may be true or it may not be true.

Higher than that, Baba says, is the knowledge we acquire through sight and seeing. Suppose I see you sitting before me. If one thousand persons come and tell me that you are not here, then I would say, "No, I don't believe it because with my own eyes I see him sitting before me." It is a direct perception to me. I do not have to rationalize; I do not have to intellectualize; I do not have to infer. I do not have to take two or more things to compare and draw a conclusion because I see you before me. This second kind of knowledge comes from my own sight and seeing. Yet this kind of knowledge is not conclusive. When I see a mirage from a distance, I see it as a vast sheet of water. When I go near it, I am disillusioned because there is no water. Again I go a little farther and see water a little beyond me. I go near it and it turns out to be another mirage. That is to say that knowledge experienced from our sight cannot be conclusive either.

So what is conclusive knowledge? It is that knowledge which Baba has described as the only knowledge to be attained. It is the Truth-Reality. It is God. And that knowledge arrives through becoming one with the object.

I will give you a gross-plane illustration of this third kind of knowledge. Everybody has a physical body. Do I ever think that I have a physical body? When I talk, when I sleep, when I contemplate, do I ever think that I, Mr. Adi K. Irani, have a physical body? Do we do that? Yes or no? We do not do it. Why don't we do it? Because we are one with it. There is no necessity for me to think that I have a body; I am so identified with it that it does not create any doubt for me. So this indubitable knowledge precludes any mistakes. This is the knowledge

received when you become one with the object. And that is the knowledge obtained when you identify yourself with God. When you identify yourself with Reality, that is the final knowledge.

Of course these other types of knowledge - the intellectual and the inner or spiritual - are comparatively useful, but they are not conclusive knowledge. That is why Baba says that all we see is knowledge for us, but it is not Reality. It is an illusion.

How can I call this an illusion? Baba may see it as an illusion. Previous Avatars may have seen it as an illusion, but for me this is not an illusion because I feel this chair; I see you sitting before me. I walk and move and I have a body. I come into contact with physical objects, so for me this is not an illusion.

But Baba says this is an illusion. Sir, how would you prove that this is so? In effect Baba says, "Last night you slept. You had a dream and when you were dreaming you did not for a moment think that it was a dream." So my dream was reality for me; it was not a dream. But when I got up in the morning and remembered what I had dreamt last night, then I knew that it was a dream. Because I am in an awake state now, I can make out that it was a dream. Until then it was not a dream at all: it was reality for me.

Similarly, this is just a comparative existence. "The life we are leading now is absolutely an illusion," Meher Baba indicates. "When you have the real awakening, you will look back on this life - and all the lives that you have gone through, the millions of births and deaths - and know that it was all an illusion. Nothing ever really happened. It was a dream." But that experience comes only when we have the real awakening. And that is how Baba explains that this is an illusion.

Suppose I were to ask someone in his dream if he thought his dream were not a reality but merely a dream. Even if it were to happen, it would only occur momentarily. Only an experience in the awakened state is really constant. In the awakened state, at no fraction of time would I feel that this illusion is a dream because this is reality for me.

Sometimes while dreaming I get flashes of thought that this may be a dream. In a like manner, in my awakened state, I get flashes of thought that Meher Baba has said that this is a dream. Maybe this is a dream. But I do not experience it as a

dream. It is reality for me.

So the experience should be constant. It should be an unbroken experience, and then we can take into account that it is a valid one. Otherwise, it is not. We cannot base our conclusions on something exceptional. We have to take what happens as a rule and in general base our argument on that and come to a conclusion. So dreams we really take to be dreams. Our present reality appears to be real but it, too, will be experienced as a dream when we get into the real awakened state.

Now here is my dilemma. Meher Baba says this illusion is a dream. I say this illusion is reality. He also gives me the analogy that while dreaming I felt that my dream was reality. When I got up, I thought about it and I came to the conclusion that it was a dream. In a like manner, Meher Baba says that when I experience the real awakening I will feel it; I will know that this illusion was a dream. I can force my mind to see and to feel that this is an illusion, yet the fact remains that it is my reality. In such a position, what am I to do? I am a helpless man. Baba says one thing, and I feel another. Where are we to meet?

There is a point where you can meet. And that is your faith, your belief and your conviction. It is only via the medium of your conviction, faith and the belief that you can meet Him. This link of conviction becomes greatly fortified by your love. So Baba says love is the most important thing in our lives, and that love is the only liaison between man and God. There is nothing else in the world which links man with God. It is only your love, and if you ask me to give a description of that love, I would not be able to. Every moment or intermittently we may feel love for someone or something in the world, but we are not able to describe what that love is. At most, we may just give a description of the results of that love.

For example, I can love a person, feel attracted and go near him. I meet him and shake hands. I embrace the person. These are the effects of love. But if you ask me to describe and enumerate what this love is, it is very difficult. We do not know what it is. So we come to the conclusion that there is something in us which we call love, which we feel but do not see. Another conclusion, then, is that all of Reality is not just what we see. All that we see may be included in Reality, but Reality itself,

Reality comprehensibly, is not all that we see.

Scientists say we only believe what we see, but how about the many things we do not see and yet believe? Are we to go with the scientists or are we to go with Meher Baba when Meher Baba says that we have to be convinced, we have to have faith, and we have to have love? The conclusions arrived at by the scientists - however alluring, however attractive to the human mind - are not conclusive. But the whole world goes with scientists because almost everyone attaches greater importance to what they say - that whatever one sees is the truth.

One scientist invents one thing today, but tomorrow he wipes out the old discovery and brings in a new one; it goes on and on like this. Nothing is stable so long as discoveries are concerned. The principles and laws of their discoveries keep on changing, barring a few exceptions. But the things pertaining to God, pertaining to the Avatar, pertaining to love - which is the only link between man and God - never change.

People ask us the question, "What is something new that Meher Baba has taught us?" What is there new to teach you? Has Meher Baba to create a new God? If He had created a new God, I for one would not have any faith in Him because there is no new God. He is eternal. He always was, He is and He ever will be. He brings down to your level of understanding, in the most modern way acceptable to you, everything about God and God's qualities. God cannot be described but His qualities can. What quality of God can we really imbibe and own for ourselves? I am referring to that quality which is enduring, which is lasting, not that quality which today is with me and tomorrow is not.

For instance, I am fond of drinking beer today. I change my habit, and then become fond of smoking. Then I change my habit again. Everything changes in the world - there is nothing steady. All of our thoughts, all of our emotions, everything and every being in the entire world is in a constant state of flux. Nothing is stable. Nothing is enduring. Nothing is lasting. But there is something lasting that we talk about. What is it?

One says that it is God that is lasting. He was, He is, and He ever will be. Every Avatar has said this and every saint has said this. Meher Baba has definitely said that once you have

the experience of God, it is everlasting. It does not cease to exist.

Well, that may be the case, sir, but what about me? God is God on the seventh plane but I am on the gross plane. I hear all these things about God and I understand all the explanations, but when I start feeling hungry I forget everything and run to the canteen to have a drink or to have a bite or snack. So these explanations don't affect me. They are only thoughts that come to me. Someone has said, "Maybe I will contemplate the thought of God." But even when this occurs, which is rarely, the thought may stay for some time and then it goes away.

So what is that quality that I have to gain? What is it I have to get from Him and how? He says He is God. He says He is the Avatar, but what am I?

There was an old adherent of Baba who was not an educated man but who had a logical and scientific mind. Every explanation that Baba made, he would ask the question, "But how does it apply to me; how will I get it?"

From the time I was seven years old, I remember that everybody said that God is everywhere, but I did not believe that God was everywhere. What good is it to me? If I believe that God is everywhere and if somebody believes that God is nowhere, what is the difference? I do not think there is any, but kindly show me, out of all the abounding things that there are, that God is everywhere. Where is that place where I can find God? I started thinking that I knew enough, knowing that God is everywhere. But for me to simply go on hearing it takes me nowhere.

So I want to know where I can find and obtain God. That is all right. But is it easy to do? It may be most difficult, but I shall try and try. That is why Swami Vivekananda asked, "What is that thing which by knowing it, a man knows everything?" But more practically Meher Baba goes a step further and asks "Who is that Personage Whom by serving, you serve the whole universe?" I am not able to serve my own wife and children and family in the way they deserve, much less my relatives, much less my country, much less the whole nation and much less the whole world. And sometimes I pride myself that I have given service to the entire humanity, which is not the case. So Baba asks, "Who is the Personage Whom by serving, you serve the whole universe?" The Personage should

be so universal, that He is giving His services to the whole universe, so when I serve Him, my service, through Him, is diffused throughout the whole world. And that is the way to arrive at Reality.

Then again we go back to the question, "Where should I link myself with God or with Meher Baba?" Meher Baba very succinctly and clearly puts the answer before us, but even that escapes our attention ... He really blesses us with a certain quality in our contact and in our relationship with Him .

. There are only two things you have to gain, though really speaking they are one. They are two aspects of the same thing; they are the reverse sides of the same coin. One side is love and the other side is your faith and conviction. I will not say faith because faith changes, but conviction does not change. These are the qualities - but they are still not Reality. The original quality of Reality is near; it is what we call Love.

Christianity says God is Love and Love is God. Baba also says this. So we have to have Love, and that, once gotten, is never lost.

But again, the question comes, how to get it? It is easy to talk and easy to listen. It may not be as easy to contemplate. People may get some glimpses of understanding here and there, but it comes and goes. It never stays with one. What I want is something that once gotten is never lost, and that is the only thing Meher Baba has come to give us - something that once given is never lost.

There are many things in the world that people may think will last, even spiritualism. There is a great mix-up between spiritualism and spirituality, so we really have to pay attention. Spirituality is a path on which one has to travel to go from the state of man to the state of God. On the other hand, spiritualism is absolutely nothing; it is absolute humbug and trickery. It is the blackmailing of spirituality. People are very attracted to it because they want miracles to happen. Miracles do take place but they too come and go. They may create a sensational attraction for one; and that which creates a sensational attraction never lasts because our senses themselves do not last in our lives. It is only love that lasts. It is only love that outlives our lives. It is that love we have to acquire.

People have come to me and said "Sir, you are talking about love, but how do I get that love?" So I ask the question:

Where did you get the love for that girl when you winked at her and followed her? "Oh, it was really love. It was an attraction." But how did you get it? Why don't you ask yourself the question "From where did I get this love?" Why then, in the case of Meher Baba or God, do you ask me that question? It is there within you.

Love does not come from outside. It is revealed and disclosed within you, provided you give yourself an opportunity to find it. Otherwise, if you keep it pressed down under the debris of your own desires of the world, that flame of love will never come and flourish. You will never find it, and you will always say that the be-all and end-all of your life is only this world - following your senses, following your desires and leading a nice comfortable life. Then at the eleventh hour you'll become topsy-turvy, drop the body and pass away. That's all.

How shall I tell you, my friend, that a man has done a wonderful and glorious thing in his life? He graduated and got a job. Then he got a pension, and then what happened? He died.

That was all he did. A glorious thing indeed! Baba said that this is not all there is to life. These are the by-products of the real life we have to lead. And what is this real life? To set aflame that love within our hearts. But some say, "I was attracted by a girl. I was attracted by science. I was attracted by medicine. I was attracted by engineering. I was attracted by movies, by many novels and so on, but I am not attracted to Meher Baba - I do not have that love."

Meher Baba says He is the Ocean of Love. He is God, and is God going to kick me out? So what is my position? I say no, you are not going to be kicked out, but when the time comes Baba will kick you out of the world. He will turn your face and wean you away from the world and toward God. That is the kick He wants to give you. He does not kick you out of His orbit of love because Meher Baba says, "I love all. Saints and sinners are alike to Me." Saints do not have the authority to say that saints and sinners are both alike to them. It is only the Avatar who can say these words.

I will give you an instance. A plane is flying at a great height and a man is walking on the ground. A man walking on

the ground experiences the ups and downs of the rugged ground, but for the man flying in the plane it is all the same. He does not bother with the ups and downs. Likewise the height of the Avatar is so great that even saints cannot realize Him. That is why one Pakistani poet has beautifully said: "My inner eye which is supposed to see God is helpless to scale the height. I go to the top, but where the palace of Meher Baba is, I do not know." This does not mean that a man cannot realize God or cannot become God-conscious equal to the God-consciousness of the Avatar. It means the height of the palace is not realized even by saints. .

However often I may think about Meher Baba, about God, about the previous Avatars, my thoughts revolve back to: what about me? Where am I in the whole scheme of creation? I have a house; I have children; I have a bank account; I have everything, but I am not satisfied. There is something beyond that. I am always trying to get things. If I do not have money, I may get some. If I do not have a wife, I may get ten wives. There are kings who may have three hundred and fifty wives. I want this, I want that. There are so many things I get and yet my mind remains ever dissatisfied.

Why is this? How am I going to satisfy that longing within me and find that satisfaction, which once gotten, is never lost? That satisfaction we can have through love alone. But a man says, "What if I do not have love?" If that is true, there is another way you can go. It may be that you do not have love for Meher Baba though you may love hundreds of wives and women and many things of the world. But if you are not able to love Meher Baba, do not bother about it. But do two things: try to obey Him and be convinced of Who He is. That is the conviction, and that conviction cannot be gotten in a day.

There are differences in people. One man falls in love with someone at first sight, but another man has to go one hundred times to a woman before he falls in love. As with students in a class, one student reads the material once and remembers. Another student reads it five times before he remembers, whereas another needs to read it one hundred times to remember it. We differ very much in concentration. It also applies in the matter of our acquiring the conviction that Meher Baba is the Avatar - the Highest of the High, the God-man, the personification of God - and others at their first sight, get that

conviction. I got the conviction that Meher Baba is the Avatar after twenty years with Him.

There are three different instances in my life which contributed to giving me the conviction about His being the Avatar, the Highest of the High. But it did not come because I was indifferent about it. All the time I continued loving Him.

Now here comes a man who says, "I do not have love. What shall I do?" If you want to have conviction, obey Him. The point of contact He has given you must be lived up to, and, "Eventually," Meher Baba says, "it is I who give you love. You have your love in a small way. You have to exercise that love. Try to love Me in that small way to prepare yourself for the time when I shall give you My love in a big way. You should be prepared to receive My love. I am the One who gives you love." Will He give His love to the person who disobeys Him or to the person who obeys and pleases Him? If you obey Him one hundred percent, He will give you His love.

Going around the whole world, taking time to read through all the religious books - all the books of the Gita, the Koran, the Bible - and practicing all the yogas and other things does not really show us who we are. We come to the same conclusion as Hafiz who says: "I do not know where I was; I do not know why I have come here, and I am greatly distressed to find that I know so many things all around me, but I do not know who I am."

And that is exactly the case. Meher Baba has come to give you that experience of your real self. He says, "You and I are not we but one." So we are one in spirit - that is the thing to realize - and that alone can be realized by your effort to receive His blessings of love and by your obedience. Meher Baba says that obedience is even greater than love.

There are other kinds of persons who say, "We love Meher Baba very much but we can't obey Him." It is like a child who loves his mother very much; he cannot live without her for a second. The moment she goes away, the child weeps and cries, yet the child never obeys her. Certainly the child is not to be discarded. So what happens with the man who only loves and does not obey? Does Meher Baba kick him out? No. If He were to kick him out, how could He be all-generous? He could not be what He is. He is very considerate. He says, "I am the Ocean of Love."

In the Ocean of Love everything can be washed away. All my sins, all my commissions and omissions and all my *sanskaras* can be purified when I am dipped into the Ocean of Love. This will happen if I have love but do not obey. But one thing prompts me to ask a question, sir. If I really love Him and know one day I will be merged into the ocean of His love and become completely purified - would I want my dirty linen to be washed by Him? Would He want that? If I really want to please Him, and if I love Him, I would like to keep my linen very clean so that He will not be put to the trouble of washing it. He will do it eventually. But just because He will do it, shall I leave my linen very, very dirty? So we should have a little sense about this.

If I love a person, then I want to please him or her. Meher Baba says, "I will only be pleased if you obey Me." So if I love Him but cannot obey Him, then I should at least *try* to obey Him. And that is the only way to bridge the wide gap that exists between your flickering, ever unsteady mind and that ever steady one whom we call God. This is the only way to go to Him. There is no other way.

Meher Baba says that all the practices in the world eventually contribute to evoke love for God, love for the Avatar, in your heart. Two paths may appear to be different at the various radii of a circle but they converge at the same center. Absolutely the path is one; there are not two paths. But I see one way and someone else sees another way. Our vision is different; the path itself does not differ. God does not differ. The sun does not change. But my view from different angles and distances changes my perception. When I stand on the ground and look at the sun, it appears to be a certain size. When I go 200,000 miles nearer, the sun will appear much nearer. The sun has not changed at all, but it is the varying of my sight and seeing that changes the object. So in this changing atmosphere, onto what shall I hold?

There are small hand-grinding mills in the villages even today. These are made of two slabs of stone, one over the other, and there is a hole in the upper stone. Grain is put inside the stone, through the hole, to be ground. It is crushed between these two flat stones and turned into flour. All the grains that go into it become powdered. One exceptional grain sticks in the hole of the stone and is saved. So out of millions of grains,

only one may be saved. Likewise this applies to our personal efforts to save ourselves from the grinding effects of *maya*. But by His grace, many souls can be saved. We should try to expose ourselves to His grace.

Grace is like the sunshine. When we do not go out, we do not feel it, and then we shout to the whole world that we are suffering in darkness. But we are in darkness already because we are shut up in our minds and in our hearts. We do not want to open a single window when we know there is bright sunshine outside. So the grace and the blessings of the Avatar are equally for all. Even if we are standing outside, we do not get the full impact of the rays of the sun because we have created a big cloud over our heads. And so it is the same as darkness for us.

Eventually you may ask, "What shall I do?" It is very simple. But simple things are the most difficult for us. There are the complicated things to do and to be solved, but we neglect the simple things. Even in the matter of writing, it is difficult to write in simple language. People use bombastic, jaw-breaking words to show off their knowledge of reading and vocabulary. I have seen many authors do that. But to write simply is very difficult.

God is the simplest thing in the world. He is not confusing or complicated. But we see through the glasses of our confusion and say that God is confusing, that Meher Baba is confusing. The book that Meher Baba has written, *God Speaks*, is said by some to be confusing. No sir, your mind is confused; the book is not confusing. And you add your confusion to the book. The statements that Baba has made clearly speak the Truth, but we may not want to understand. Yet however complicated a detective movie may be, we decipher and understand it very clearly. Because this is something we see on the screen, it connects with our lives. Yet God appears far removed. That is the difficulty of it because we take illusion as real and God as unreal. It has to be reversed. We have to take God as real and take the world as illusion.

How shall I reverse myself? Hafiz gives us the solution and one man has utilized it. Hafiz says, "Between the lover and the Beloved, between man and God, there is no distance. The only thing that comes in between is you, yourself, so get yourself out of the way." This man heard the message and went

home and called two of his friends. He asked one friend to catch hold of his two legs and the other to catch hold of his two hands. Then he asked each one to pull from each end. He was trying to get out of himself! Another of his friends happened to come along, very luckily at that time, and asked him, "What are you doing?" "I am putting into practice what Hafiz says, 'Get yourself out of the way.'" He said, "You fool, he does not mean your body, you'll be killed! This man is pulling your two legs; the other is pulling your two hands. You will be pulled into pieces and your muscles will be strained and you will fall apart and die. What are you doing? Hafiz doesn't mean that. He means your 'you' has to be removed. You have to humble yourself; you have to deny yourself - that's what Hafiz means. He isn't referring to the body at all." And then the man came to his senses. So we ourselves are interfering but are not certain what to do.

Baba says that God is so much within us that we become, without knowing, indifferent to Him. Likewise a fish does not know the value of water until it is taken out of it. And when it is removed, it pines for the water. It cannot live without it. The time will come when we shall not be able to live without God. But He is so generous to us now that He exists within. Meher Baba says He is within our hearts all the time; He is there and we do not appreciate it.

To give a small example; your mother or any person who loves you very much may lavish all her love upon you, but instead of appreciating it you run after somebody else. It is something like this. God loves you very much. God is within you all the time, but you become indifferent to Him and run after your own desires.

Again, the question comes of how to get out of your self. If you ask me, the only thing to be done is to dedicate yourself to Meher Baba. Since we are not able to do this, we should allow Him to do it. For instance, I am not able to keep my house clean, but a person who really loves me wants to get in and clean it. But I do not allow him to clean it because I have grown so fond of the dirt and filth all around me. All this dirt represents the desires we have accumulated in our houses. And that is why Hafiz says, "If you want His presence in your heart, be not absent." Meher Baba says "I am present within you but you are not able to see and feel Me because you are not

present yourself. So the moment that you make yourself present, you will see and feel Me, and then you will know Me."

We may not have the experience, but if we are intellectually convinced that this world is an illusion and Meher Baba is God, then it will change our outlook on life. Anything we do in the world will then not be backed up by a false, fraudulent sense that it is an everlasting thing for us. We know that no one is going to live forever, that everyone is going to die. But still we feel that we will live forever. Because we delude ourselves into thinking that we are going to live forever, we do not live at all. And we only have to correct ourselves. If I am not able to correct myself, then let someone else correct me. But when somebody comes to correct me, I send him away; I do not want him.

Meher Baba comes to ask us to surrender to Him, to dedicate our lives to Him. Why should He do this? It is for our sake He asks.

There is a man who came and told me that Meher Baba said that He is the Ocean of Love and I am a drop of love. So why is He interested in my drop? He is a limitless quantity of water, the Ocean of Love. Will the quantity increase by the drop merging into it or the millionth drop going into the whole ocean? Not at all. Then why does He want the drop? Why does He attract this drop toward Him? And the answer, you fool, is the gist of what Meher Baba says, "It is not for Me but for you, the drop, to become the Ocean. I give you the chance to become the Ocean; I allow you to come to Me so that you may merge in My Ocean. And you will become the Ocean yourself."

A renowned Pakistani poet has written, "It is the delight of the drop to merge itself with the Ocean wide." But we do not allow it to happen because a little suffering comes along and we flinch and falter. We do not want that suffering. Suffering at its height becomes the remedy of the sufferer's plight. If I allow myself suffering from God - not self-created suffering which is of no purpose, but suffering that comes through no fault of my own - it should always be welcomed because it takes me nearer the Ocean all the time. But we never allow ourselves to suffer. We run here and there, and try to mend matters so that the suffering disappears. I am not referring to that suffering which we create ourselves by trying to follow our own low desires such as when we get a rebuff and suffer as

a result. Rather, I am referring to the suffering that is God-given.

Let me give you an example. Suppose I were driving and observing all the rules of traffic and somebody came and crashed into me, threw me out of the vehicle and I became a crippled man. Baba says you should welcome that suffering because it is God-given. It is a suffering bestowed upon you to come out of illusion. However, the suffering self-created by running after the fulfillment of, and the indulgence in, your own desires is the suffering that draws you into illusion. Sufferings appear to be the same, but in their formation and result they are different. That is where we lack understanding; we do not allow ourselves to bear the suffering. Our ego is straight like a tree that does not bear any fruit and stands withered, ever stuck-up and proud, whereas the tree that bears many fruits hangs down by their weight, very humbly. You see this analogy given in Indian literature. A tree which bears fruit is very, very humble, and the tree that does not bear any stands erect. So it is that our ego comes in the way and does not allow us to bear anything.

One day Meher Baba called for a letter, one from every lover of His from all over the world. He said, "Write everything you want to write to Me. It's a chance I give you to write Me a letter." I was the man who distributed the circular. I received many, many thousands of letters and the day came when I told Baba that I felt all the Baba-lovers had written their letters. Then He asked me, "Did you write a letter?" I said, "No, I haven't." "Do you look upon yourself to be so important that you do not want to write a letter? Do you take yourself to be an exception?" I said I was sorry. I did not deny it so I wrote that letter.

***Meher Baba Remains Ever Accessible
in Your Heart***

I would like to begin this talk with some thoughts about one's love for Meher Baba. You see, people are apt to think that because Meher Baba Himself claims to be on the seventh plane of consciousness that He is unapproachable. They think, "I am a small man on the surface of the earth. How am I going to reach Him or bring Him down to the earth's level?" So Baba says, "It is nothing of the kind. I am on your level. In fact I am everywhere." A normal person should not have any disappointment regarding reaching Meher Baba or benefitting from contact with Him, irrespective of his caste, creed, talent or education. Baba has drawn God from the temple, from the church, from the mosque, from the synagogue, from the fire temple, and He has accumulated the entire element of God into our hearts. Meher Baba says the only place you can experience God is in your own heart. And there are so many impurities in the heart that unless you purify yourself, you will not be able to see or experience God.

Your heart does not mean this physical cardia in your chest that pumps blood. No, it is not that. Your heart is a symbol. It represents the glory of God.

We can go on all the pilgrimages of the world and what are we going to find? Bricks and walls, stones and hills and everything else. We can go all the way to the top of the Himalayas but we cannot get away from our minds. What is the good of the man who stays at the top of the Himalayas and thinks in terms of the gutter? There is an enlightened man, a *mast*, with whom Meher Baba had frequent contact. He lives near the gutter, but his mind is very high. It is difficult to

assess who is what and who is where. So basically Baba says, "Don't be concerned. Don't go anywhere else. Don't go to any saint - including the Perfect Masters."

Baba has given long descriptions of the Perfect Masters in His discourses but He has never encouraged anyone to seek them. Meher Baba says "I am in your heart all the time. After My dropping the body, I will still reside in your heart." And He is there. There are so many examples of this. I have received letters that prove people have experienced His presence since His dropping of the body. Apart from the physical presence, they have experienced His *darshan* in their hearts. They have seen Meher Baba in their hearts.

So one's heart is his conscience. Meher Baba wants everyone to stand independently of anyone else. We can ask for brotherly advice. We can even ask for a brotherly decision from somebody else. But there should be no imposition, no power, no force. We are all sailing in the same boat. Of course, a man who has had long contact with Meher Baba has some authority. But one who has had the contact should not boast to the world, "I have had contact with Meher Baba for fifty years." It is up to the people to say good words about him. Leave it to them and be absolutely detached.

When Meher Baba left Bangalore - He lived there for six months - He entrusted me with all the property and various things there for the next three years. The whole of Bangalore was conversant with Baba's presence because of the huge programs that were held. And do you know, sir, that I was very hesitant to perform *arti* openly in my own house because people might have come in and given me importance, worshipping me as the foremost disciple of Meher Baba. That is how the mandali have been disciplined - to keep away from any homage. I could have become a very big guru, sir, with a black beard and robe, but gurus are not wanted in Baba's family. Baba never wanted any *sanyasins* (renunciates) in His family.

Meher Baba says, "Live in the world; take up all the responsibilities of your life, and play your honest part. Do not hesitate. Remember Me. Why? For your own good, not because I will change your destiny or remove your difficulties. But I will give you the inner strength to fight the battle of life."

If someone is confronted by a tiger, Baba will not come and perform the miracle of removing the tiger from his

presence. This is not Meher Baba's way. Baba says, "All creation has been set in motion by the will of God, and it must go on like this. What I will do is give you the inner strength to fight the tiger and overpower it."

Likewise with the problems we face in our life. Baba will not necessarily remove the problems, although He does sometimes. But what He will do is give the inner strength to confront the problem, face it and overcome it.

If Baba removes the problem, then you are free only until you have to again face the same problem. But if you avail of the strength He gives you and face the problem and overcome it, then you are free of the problem forever. This is the real miracle He performs in our lives, giving the strength to fight the battle of life.

Imagine you are confronted with a tiger and call out to Baba. You are naturally frightened when you call Him. If a hand comes out of heaven and removes the tiger, you are saved. But naturally your fear of tigers is still there. You think, "Well Baba saved me this time but will He do so if again I am confronted by a tiger?" This doubt is natural. But consider the other alternative. You call on Him, and instead of removing the tiger, He gives you the courage to defeat the tiger with your bare hands. You are really free then of the fear of tigers, because now you know that with His Grace, you always will have the strength to face tigers and defeat them.

Baba doesn't remove the problems of life, but He gives you the inner strength to fight the battle of life. This way, you are truly free, having the strength to face life knowing that with His help you can deal with whatever problem life confronts you.

For example, there are two persons. One is a disciple of Meher Baba, and the other is an ordinary man who does not know anything about Baba. In the destiny of these two persons, there is a similar motor car accident. The man who is an outsider, who is not connected with Meher Baba, meets with the accident and is thrown out of the car. He lies on the curbside for hours on end. Many trucks pass by, many cars pass by, but nobody pays any attention to him. Eventually, after three hours, somebody pities him and takes him to the hospital. It turns out that the doctor has gone out somewhere and there is nobody to look after him. He is then cared for by

the doctor's assistant who performs an operation. That man stays in the hospital for six months and comes out limping because his bones were not set right.

Now, the same thing is in the destiny of the Baba-lover. He meets with a similar accident and is also thrown out of his car. Immediately thereafter, a car comes by and the driver takes him to the hospital. The doctor in the hospital that day has very little work to do and is waiting for a patient to come in, so immediately the patient is admitted. The doctor does everything right and performs the operation correctly. Within a short time, the man is absolutely recovered.

So you see, the accident was not avoided. Baba did not perform a miracle but He did help the man. Meher Baba includes all the benefits for us - material, spiritual, mental and moral. But His ways are different, and we must become conversant with them. We should not expect miracles from Meher Baba; He Himself has disowned them and called it miracle mongering.

The nature of man is that he always asks for something better for himself. If a man were to have a beautiful suit made, would he like the highest quality or would he like a low quality? If he wants clothes, they should be very nice. If he gets shoes, they should be the best kind. If we seek something, it should be of the highest quality. Likewise, when seeking God and spirituality, seek the Highest. One Indian poet beautifully says in Urdu, "Oh man, intoxicated with your own ego, you are looking for God at different places - in the stone, in the tree. God is all-pervading and all-knowing, but you can't see Him. There are gods and gods. Which God do you really want?" So he means to say, if we want to seek, seek the Highest of the High. And Meher Baba said, "I am the Highest of the High."

Suppose for a certain purpose I have to go to Calcutta by way of Bombay. Calcutta is my destination and Poona my starting point. I must keep in mind that my destination is Calcutta whether I have to walk the distance, or go by train or vehicle. I do not get involved in the town in between. I must pass from station to station without getting off the train to reach my destination. If I fail to do that, I get involved somewhere else for only a little temporary benefit that it may offer. You see, it will be a great loss to me, sir, because I will never reach my destination. And that destination is nothing

else but the highest benefit that one could ever gain in one's life. So we must never allow ourselves to do something less. And in doing that, we have everything.

Every man suffers in his own way. If a Meher Baba-lover suffers, it is not such a great thing for him because he has a great backing and force all the time - Meher Baba is with him. Meher Baba indicated before He dropped His body, "I am within you all the time. But you are not present. You are running after your own desires and I can't find you. And when I do not find you I sleep. When I am asleep, it is in your hands to wake Me up. I am asleep in your heart every moment of your life. Tempt Me, remember Me, love Me, shout at Me, call Me, ask for My help, and the time will come when I will be awakened. Once I am awakened, I shall keep you awake forever." So again, I go to the point which is: do not think that because Meher Baba is the Highest of the High that you cannot reach Him or bring Him to you. He says that He is with you all the time in your heart.

The Effect of Love on Impressions

When one thinks and feels, he does not necessarily act; but when one acts, he necessarily thinks and feels simultaneously. An act is much more important and effective than only thinking and feeling because it carries with it the triple movement of body, mind and feeling. The resulting impressions are strong and potent for further actions that can be used to erase or neutralize all impressions in our bid to be united with God.

Some acts are helpful toward liberating man from impressions and some create bindings and deeper impressions. This is a mathematical relationship we hardly see or feel except indirectly to a small degree. The magnitude of their numbers, shades and interactions is too complicated for a clear understanding. Only Perfect Masters and the Avatar, because they are all-knowing, are fully conversant with them.

Avatar Meher Baba has made it very simple for us. He has reduced the entire problem to one that is solved through love. Love can permeate impressions, dissolve them and finally exceed them. For the ailment of man's suffering from binding impressions, Meher Baba has given us a positive remedy. It is not to be sought anywhere outside, but within us. Love functions within us as the very purpose of everything we do. From a sinner to a saint, this purpose or power motivates all our actions. No matter what the target we aim at - money, the opposite sex, power, fame or God - the propelling force is love. It is for the love of someone (including self) or for the love of something that we exert, we suffer, we enjoy, we live and we die.

Meher Baba wants us to lead a normal, natural, honest

and hard-working life, and in the very midst of this life, perform such acts of love that will loosen the binding effects of our multifarious other acts of good and bad that we did and we do.

An act of true love is that which is performed by a lover for his or her Beloved who is the personification of God. Although the Beloved is too high or too vast for us to truly reach Him or contain Him, there is a way of life given to us by Meher Baba which can take us to where He really is. That way is to love Him and serve Him.

Let us come together and perform acts of love for our Beloved. They may be prayers, *goshti*, *sahavas*, holding of gatherings, *melas*, distribution of literature, giving of monetary assistance, feeding the poor and many other things we can think out and plan, and in this way - through our talent, ability, industry, art, wit and generosity - express our love.

Meher Baba Centers all over the world are a standing manifestation of an infinitesimal part of Avatar Meher Baba's will which is beginning to show its light and force on the horizon of human suffering. The time is not far when the gigantic cloud of darkness will burst with a multi-atomic thunder, outpouring Avatar Meher Baba's love in a deluge of His blessing. Until this moment of moments arrives, the work - the preparing of human receptivity - should be our prime concern. An eventuality like this, coming once in about a thousand years or more, will be lost if we are caught napping. For after Meher Baba's Manifestation as the accepted Avatar of the Age by millions of people, we will have no room for work. There will be no need to work. Baba's message of love and truth will have stormed the world with a new bursting of light and a new awakening of God.

We call ourselves Baba-lovers, devotees and disciples. We must come forward and give with a stout heart and a sturdy hand what we are able to give - not floundering, not flinching, but going forth and giving anything we can afford - our time, talent, labor or wealth.

Make hay while God shines.

The Height and Depth of Doing Baba-Work

This convention, the first of its kind, was an occasion for all-India Baba-workers to come together and express their views on how one can best work for Meher Baba. Many speeches were given, but very little was expressed by way of actual difficulties experienced during the course of the work being done.

The different methods that were proposed have their value, often depending upon how practical they are in the immediate future. For instance, the greater the possibility of an early materialization of a proposition, the greater its value; and the longer it takes to materialize, the lesser its value. A brilliant proposition may be less practical and a mediocre one more practical. Of course this should not deter one from planning an elaborate and expensive course of action. But it should not be done like having the cart before the horse. The means for the work should be planned out first, just as the foundation of a building is laid before its superstructure is built.

We have often heard Baba indicate that there will be comparatively little struggle for work after His Manifestation. The work done before His Manifestation is of greater import. The sooner the work is done, the better it is. So we should be practical, in getting work done. It reminds me of what Baba has "said" concerning something much higher: "The greater the struggle before God-realization, the greater the power after it."

While doing Baba-work, a worker needs to develop a twofold quality of nature. One pertains to his relationship with

Baba, and the other to his attitude toward others. Love for Baba and faith in Him is basic, but this is not enough. This can qualify him only for work and evoke an urge to do the work. To be fully successful requires an adjustment toward others - a sympathetic understanding and a harmonious working out of aims and objectives.

A brilliant lover may be a poor worker and a poor lover may be a brilliant worker. With the height of love for Baba there should be the depth of understanding for others.

The best worker is he who is able to evoke love for Baba in others. To express one's love for Baba is easy because it implies one's own worthiness to work. To try to evoke love in others shows humility in a worker and the worthiness of the others' love for Baba. It is like a good writer who, instead of expressing his own emotions, is able to evoke emotions in his readers.

A worker having the authority to work should not be authoritative. He should be pleasingly firm, loving and accommodating. When it comes to a conflict between a worker's authority and a prospective lover's preconception or bias of understanding of a situation or argument, it is preferable to lose cognizance, for the moment, of one's authority than to lose the enthusiasm and love of a prospective lover.

Spiritual Advancement and Self-Effacement

Today I shall begin with a short prayer and a part of a *ghazal* which was written by Saheb Asmi, a poet from Pakistan who had Meher Baba's *darshan* twice in the 1950s. He wrote two books in Urdu on Baba which could not be published in Pakistan, so I had Baba's permission to bind and publish them here. This *ghazal* is from Saheb Asmi's book, *The Eternal Song*.

In the name of the Highest of the High, who lives in the hearts of all beings at all times, everywhere, and who resides as the nucleus of all things at all times, everywhere.

*Meher Baba Qutb-e-a'lam, mazhare nur-e-Khuda
Mard-e-Haq insan-e-kamil tajadare do sara.*

Meher Baba! You are the center or the hub of the world. You are the manifestation of the light of God. You are the man of God, perfect man and the emperor of the two worlds (inner and outer).

*Mehero mah pur noor tere jalva-e-rukhsarse
Do jahan roshan hai tere partawa-e-anwarse.*

The sun and the moon are full of light because of You. The two worlds are enlightened by the reflection of Your light.

*Meher Baba tu Khuda tujhme hai jalwagar Khuda
Meher Baba soorat-e-insan ho to haq numa.*

Meher Baba, You are God and in You God is manifest. What if you have the face of a man? Verily You are God.

*Tu hai Swami Ramatiratha, tu hai Nanak tu Kabir
Kursio loho kalam tere mohobbat ke aseer.*

You are Swami Ramatiratha, You are Nanak, You are Kabir. The chair, the tablet and the pen which God used to write the destiny of humanity would not have been if You did not exist.

*Tu Mohammed, tu Masiha, tu Suloman, tu Kaleem
God tu hai, Wahaguru tu, Rama tu hai, tu Raheem.*
You are Mohammed, You are Christ the Savior,
You are the just King Solomon and You are
Moses. You are the God of the Christians,
Wahaguru (of the Sikhs), You are Rama and
Raheem (of the Moslems).

*Ai Shahanshahe do aalam padashahe kaenat
TERE girde rah ho ja ne me muzmer hai ni jat.*
Oh King of the two worlds and the Emperor of the
entire creation. To come in Your contact is to gain
salvation.

*Mangata hai roshani tujhse ye Mehere tabedar
Ai ke tu mehro mohabbat ka hai bahare be kinar.*
I, Your humble servant, pray for You to give me a
little ray of light. Oh! You who are the unbounded
Ocean of mercy and love.

What is meant by this little ray? This ray is said to contain it all.
This poet so beautifully continues:

When I did not have the inner sight to see
That the whole Ocean came before me,
I looked upon it as a small drop.
But when my inner eye was opened
I could see the whole Ocean in a drop.

The same thing happened when Meher Baba, as the whole Ocean,
used to come before us and we looked at Him as His body - which was
such an attraction to us that we hardly thought of His Divinity. I feel now
that when the Ocean used to come to us we would feel that He was the
drop. But when He dropped His body, the time came for us to think about
His Divinity and His oceanic existence. Now we really concentrate on all
His messages. When He was in the body I for one had not even bothered
to go through His messages, nor did I read any of His books. But later on
after He dropped the body, the time came when I did go through His
messages and His books.

Physically He is gone. He could not have been expected to live in
His body for the pleasure of our looking at Him. Now is the time for
concentrating on His messages and seeing His

Divinity, the infinite and unbounded ocean of His love and mercy. It is to be experienced at this time when we do not see Him with our physical eyes.

One of the greatest points in Meher Baba's discourses is the subject of today's talk, and that is self-effacement. We call it in Urdu *Khudi-maran*. *Khudi* means ego; *maran* is to annihilate, efface, deny or remove. It is used in many senses; many words may be used for self-effacement. Really speaking, self-annihilation is not annihilation because the ego, although it exists in the helpless state of an individual, cannot be at any time annihilated. It is the individual aspect of the ego that is annihilated. This means the individual ego is fused into the universal ego, and that is why it is called annihilation. Every individual really has a universal ego but because of the many, many curtains of ignorance that intercede and intervene between us and God, between us and our Real Self, we find ourselves so helpless and individualized. This small ego then, has to vanish. It has to be fused into the universal ego. This is really the most important point on our way to becoming united with God.

Baba says there are only two things: God and man. So on the one hand there is God and on the other there is man. In between there are many, many stages that Baba has so beautifully described in His discourses. The domain of spirituality exists from the first state through the sixth. The seventh one is beyond, of course; it is unity with God. So spirituality is that which concerns the first through the sixth states of consciousness.

We have to pass through all the stages of consciousness. Of this there is no doubt. How can I ever reach New York unless I go to Bombay or Delhi? But *how* to pass through the stages is the question. Am I to take the risk of passing through and getting stuck somewhere at a wayside station? If I get down from the train or plane, go into town, mix with some people, take a woman or man and marry, go to a cinema show or occupy myself in some profession, I will get stranded and delay my course of travel to the destination. My aim is to reach my destination, and the sooner I do it, the better for me.

Avatar Meher Baba says, "I take you through all the stations, no doubt about it. But I take you blindfolded. I do not let you see any sight of the stations because there are so many

allurements along the way that you really cannot resist them." There are such enchanting sights on the physical plane. We get so attracted by beautiful music, by the beauty of human beings, by the beauty of nature and by the beauty of art here that we really cannot resist. On the inner stages of consciousness you become so much more attracted and entangled that you do not like to go forward. The time comes when you get so bogged down and entrapped in it that you feel that you have gone to the very highest plane - that you have no farther to go. So you remain there sometimes for a number of years, maybe a thousand years or maybe just a year, until the Avatar comes and gives you a kick, gets you out of the ditch and pushes you forward.

If you were given a choice, which would you choose: conscious advancement or self-effacement? Would you take the risk of going consciously, thinking, "I want to go consciously because I am a very inquisitive man, a very nosy man. I have a beautiful nose but it is very nosy, and it wants to see things on the way." But Baba indicates, "No, you should not see. I shall blindfold you, and I shall carry you to the very end. When you reach it you will open your eyes." That is universal knowledge. You will get to know all the things that exist on the stages from one through six.

It is up to me then, to decide whether I should take the course of conscious spiritual advancement or whether I should accept self-effacement as Baba has stressed. This would entail surrendering to Him, leaving the strings of my life and entire destiny in His hands, keeping patient and being guided by Him. It is for me to decide this, and it is really for everyone to decide. So there are two courses now. There is a conscious spiritual path, and there is what we call self-effacement.

Self-effacement contains spiritual advancement, but the spiritual path does not contain self-effacement. Even when a man goes up to the sixth plane of consciousness, he has his ego. The ego exists as long as man is entrenched and drowned in the ocean of duality.

A man on the sixth stage can be compared to a man of ordinary consciousness in that both are drowned in the ocean of illusion. There is a great difference between the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth planes, but everyone up to and including the sixth plane is drowned in the ocean of

illusion. The distinction that can be drawn between the man on the sixth plane and the ordinary man is that the man on the sixth plane is drowned two feet deep while the ordinary man is drowned in the ocean of illusion at 2,000 feet. A man can drown in two feet of water or he can drown in 2,000 feet of water. So far as the personal drowning goes, both are the same. But between the two, the ordinary man has to travel a distance of 2,000 feet to come up and out of illusion, whereas the man of the sixth plane has only to travel two feet. And that is a great difference, indeed. But the fact remains that even a man on the sixth plane, until he is united with God, has not reached the destination.

Spirituality is not bad, but self-effacement is better. You may not expect to be completely self-effaced by spirituality. It may help you, but to bring about the full effect of self-effacement, the domain of an ordinary life is needed - to be an ordinary human being with the consciousness of the physical world. The realm of self-effacement is easier and more suitable than the realm of the path because during every moment on the path one experiences something and gets entangled in it. What is the value of any pleasure drawn if it jeopardizes your position?

The same result can be said of sex. A man enjoys sex so he asserts himself and indulges. Where there is self-assertion, there is no self-effacement. When self-effacement is there, there cannot be self-assertion. They are opposed to each other.

Will I choose to go on the spiritual path this lifetime? Baba explained to us in the *Discourses* and *God Speaks* about the spiritual path and its stages from one to six - personally I heard them very often for three years - but never for a moment did Baba say that you should go into the planes, or practice this or practice that. On the other hand, by virtue of my own experience, I know a man who we used to visit before Baba came into our lives. This man was a saint, and you will find his tomb at Meherabad near the water well on the roadside. Meher Baba said he was a man on the fifth state of consciousness. Later Baba said that he went to the sixth plane of consciousness. But Baba also said, "Do not go to him." Again and again I quote this because these stages are really very alluring but so far as dealing with these stages is concerned,

we have to go by Baba's instructions which are the easiest and the best way for us.

Once this saint happened to pass by my gate in Meher Nazar Compound in Ahmednagar while Baba was standing on the veranda. This happened before Meherabad was established, and Baba and the mandali had come to stay here for one month. I was nineteen years old at the time. I was given instructions not to go and see this saint, but I was very young, and I did not understand the importance of Baba's instructions as I did much later on. So this saint was passing by, and from a distance he beckoned me to go with him. I was about to run to him when Meher Baba, who was standing nearby said, "Stop, what are you doing? Didn't I tell you not to go see him?" I said, "Yes, Baba, I am sorry; I forgot." Baba said, "Then do not go." So that is the thing: Baba said this saint was on the sixth plane of consciousness but not to go see him.

He says this for your own benefit. He does not want you to get mixed up because He chalks out a line on which he wants to take you blindfolded to reach the very destination without interruption. And that is why He does not want your attention to be diverted, to be deflected or to be digressed anywhere. The fact is we are not to bother about whether the man is a saint or a Perfect Master. But even if he is, Meher Baba's lover is not concerned with him.

Time and again it occurred to us that since Baba often described the spiritual stages of the path, why did He not take us on the path? Why did He not give us those experiences? As much as He said in *God Speaks*, the *Discourses* and other books, why has He not helped us or put us on the path? Every single mandali who has lived with Baba for many, many years, over four-and-a-half decades, can be asked if he has ever seen a light or ever heard a sound - I mean in an actual way. Actually they have heard and read many things Baba has said, but they did not have any experiences.

There are some outsiders who come and say, "I heard a sound," "I saw a light," this and that. Many times we asked Baba questions about this. The explanation was very short. He said, "You do what I tell you to do."

Now, the inference drawn after many, many years is why did He do that? There must be a reason. And what is the

reason? It is for our benefit. It makes it very easy for us to go on to our destination.

One day Upasni Maharaj was invited to our house and Baba also came. Baba was not known as Meher Baba then; He was known as the foremost disciple of Upasni Maharaj and was called Merwan. At that time I would go and pester Upasni Maharaj in the new house in town, a stone's distance from here. I would say, "Teach me yoga." Once I remember Upasni Maharaj having said to Meher Baba who was sitting nearby, "This boy wants me to teach him yoga, and what is the yoga I am going to show him?" Upasni Maharaj only gave me a line of prayers and asked me to recite them. So if a Perfect Master neither shows you any yoga nor encourages you to go consciously on the path, it is because there are many, many dangers on it. We have to be very careful.

After a very long experience, the distinction I have drawn is that one way is self-effacement and the other is the spiritual path or the spiritual stages. Which do you choose? On the spiritual path there are pleasures; on the line of self-effacement there is a lot of suffering. Nobody wants suffering in the world. Baba said He loved Saint Francis very much for the very fact that he always aspired for that suffering. He used to ask God to give him that suffering that Christ underwent. And because of that desire for suffering, Baba loved him the most. Baba said, "If you have that love for Me which Saint Francis had for Jesus, then not only will you realize Me but you will please Me."

You should know that pleasing the Avatar is far greater than even realizing Him. Pleasing the Avatar means not only that you will realize Him for yourself but also that you will get the power and the strength to give that God-realization to others. So pleasing Him is even greater than obeying Him or realizing Him. These are the conclusions I have drawn, and I do not think they are far from being right because they are drawn after much experience of hearing for a very, very long time the different types of explanations Meher Baba gave.

It is up to us to choose. But somebody says, "Why would I choose a life of suffering for myself? I want only pleasure." If you want the pleasures of life, then you will miss the joy of life. If you want the joy of life, you have to sacrifice the pleasures of life. But man hardly makes any distinction between the joy

and the pleasure, so I shall tell you the difference between them, All of the pleasure we get out of life walls us into illusion whereas real joy means unattached joy.

Suppose a very beautiful woman comes before me. I just look at her and enjoy her beauty. But if the least thought comes to me of possessing that woman, then I go down the drain, involving myself in illusion. So that is the pleasure. My desire to possess the woman is a pleasure. Just appreciating the beauty of the woman is a great joy. So this is the difference: joy takes you out of illusion and pleasure binds you into it. Both are very near each other; only a thin line of demarcation exists between the two.

We mix up things, and that is why one poet has so beautifully said, "Married man, you mix up lust with love and call lust love. You are throwing down into the dust what love is." Love helps you toward self-effacement, and lust helps you get more and more involved in illusion. But the difficulty is that we hardly make any distinction between joy and pleasure, lust and love; we just mix it all up together and very conveniently create a beautiful cocktail for ourselves. We pride ourselves that we are the great lovers of God while we continually go down into the dust of illusion.

We are not to worry about this so long as we are firmly established in our love for Meher Baba, the Avatar of the Age. Once that is there, we have to place the strings of our lives into His hands and obey Him, love Him and let Him look after us. A poet says, "Out of all my sincerity and love, I have placed my heart at Your feet. Now it is up to You to bless me any way You like. I am not concerned." My problem is over. I love You one hundred percent and am convinced about Your being the Highest of the High. I am not interested in probing into what You are going to do because I would be trying to sail in very hot water. I should do what I am able to and let You do what You will for me. I place my heart at Your feet with all my sincerity. It is in Your hands to bless me the way You like.

And with what will He bless us? If we place our hearts entirely at His feet, He will give us His Love. It is only He who gives us Love. We do not have Love really. But still we can love Him in our small way and try to prepare ourselves for the big day when He will give us His Love in a big way. We have to become deserving to win that Love. Baba says, "Love Me as I

ought to be loved." But this is not possible for us. We mandali have, for over four-and-a-half decades of our lives, tried to love Him. Of course we always hold Him foremost in our hearts, but still we fail to love Him the way He ought to be loved. In essence Meher Baba says, "Eventually it is in My hands to give you Love. It is in your hands to serve Me, to obey Me and to love Me in your own small way. And the great Love that I am going to give you will be My own gift to you."

The Avatar is Birthless and Deathless

Today we are celebrating the birthday of the One who is birthless and deathless; and yet He takes birth throughout time for the spiritual upliftment of the world. The birthlessness and deathlessness of Meher Baba is a fact. The inner life of the Avatar, or God-Man, is the fountain-head of all-Knowledge, all-Power and all-Bliss; it is never ending, never exhausting, ever green and ever existing. He has all the Knowledge, Power and Bliss of God; and He is the God of all Knowledge, Power and Bliss.

There is only one God-Man, or Avatar, for all time. He is the self-same personification of God taking birth at different times and places, speaking different languages, putting on different garments and giving messages in different ways on the one Truth and the one God. A poet says:

Yar mara har zaman namo nishane deegarest.

Our Beloved every time assumes a different
name and a different form.

In this advent, we know His birth to have taken place on the 25th of February, 1894, and His dropping of the body to have taken place on the 31st of January, 1969. Unless the God-Man comes down to the level of man - assumes his way of birth, life and death - how would it be possible for Him to help humankind and for human beings to receive His help and blessings in order to be liberated from illusion?

What is illusion? Illusion is a misleading appearance of Reality. When there is light, one can see Reality. When there is darkness, one cannot see Reality; Reality appears illusory. Light shows the knowledge of Reality whereas darkness

creates the ignorance of Reality. It could, therefore, be assumed that light is knowledge and darkness is ignorance. It is because of man's ignorance of the Reality of God that the illusion of God's Reality is perpetuated. As long as man is in ignorance of God's Reality, he is bound by illusion. One can get out from the binding effect of illusion through the grace of Meher Baba by loving Him above everyone and everything else, by serving Him and by obeying Him.

A father, when dealing with his child, has to come down to the level of the child to educate him and play with him, making it possible for the child to learn, keep happy, absorb an understanding of things and become enlightened about the responsibility of his life. The best example that the God-Man can create to impress upon the consciousness of man is to set an example by His own life on earth. But since the body of the God-Man, or Avatar, functions apparently like an ordinary man's and becomes lifeless after His span of life, a great misunderstanding of the perfection of the Avatar may come to a common man whose only basis for his opinion is his outward perception. By an ordinary or common man, I mean one who has no real knowledge of God. He may be an intellectual giant but simultaneously he could be a spiritual pigmy. It is man's ignorance and bindings that compel him to be born and to die. It is because of the God-Man's knowledge and freedom of will to help others that He takes a body, makes it function for the necessary period of time and renounces it.

Hafiz says:

Hargiz nameerad an ke dilas zinda shud ba ishq.

The One whose heart has lived with Love never dies.

We are speaking about Avatar Meher Baba, whose heart is not only awake but who is also the Ocean of Love Itself. His birthlessness and deathlessness are a matter of fact, not a theory. He continues to awaken thousands of hearts with love.

The God-Man is like a boundless ocean, but to the common man only the surface is visible. Observations made and conclusions drawn are mostly based on things and movements that are exposed to human eyes and intellect. The things of the inner life, the depths of the ocean, are not taken into account. So it is very likely that the conclusions fall short of the whole

truth. Meher Baba for all outward observations is a man, but inwardly He is God. A Pakistani poet Saheb Asmi says:

Meher Baba tu Khuda, tujme hai jalvagar Khuda.

Meher Baba Surat-e-Insan ho to huq-numa.

Meher Baba, You are God, and in You God is manifested.

What if You have the face of a man,

You are verily God!

Meher Baba lived a life of universality for others in all aspects of dress, food, friendship, help, service, love and blessings. There was never a time He lived for Himself. Barring a little time to attend to necessities of life, His entire occupation was for others. This was His outward life which was visible to us. His inner life was of such immensity of purpose and vastness of activity that we could hardly see anything of it, but we could feel it in glimpses of meaningful musings and contemplative cogitation.

Meher Baba is very loving yet demanding, logical yet spiritual, strict yet generous, practical yet introspective, forthright yet simple. He is as much human as divine. He is the Personage with a multi-sided personality who is able to meet each one at his own level of search for God. He balances the fullness of God-intoxication with the normalcy of human consciousness. His messages reveal these attributes, making them universally acceptable. The grandeur and simplicity of His writings are filled with the originality of knowledge and the richness of love of God and love of man that know no barriers of caste, religion, nationality or color.

For a time one of the main outward activities of Meher Baba was giving the messages which are now contained in publications such as *The Discourses*, *Life at its Best*, *Beams from Meher Baba on the Spiritual Panorama*, *The Everything and The Nothing*, *God Speaks* and *Listen, Humanity*. In these messages He gives a profound understanding and conviction of who God is, what the goal and aim of human life are, what love is and what the different aspects of God-consciousness are.

The chief message of Meher Baba is love. Meher Baba gives an appropriate sense of awakening love in human hearts. This love is to be used economically for all beings and objects of

human concern. The major and most substantial part of love is to be utilized toward self-enlightenment which is the finale of all human life and effort. Meher Baba's messages, if understood correctly and imbibed with a deserved feeling of seriousness and reverence, will liberate man from continued frustration and indulgence in the petty and grave matters of lust and greed.

Meher Baba has rejuvenated the meaning of the word love. He has given it a new dimension and a new life. Love is one; there are not two loves. Any difference in love is created by motivation and application.

Love is like water. Water in the form of vapor is pure and ethereal. This may be called Divine Love; it is untarnished by any color of selfishness. Distilled water is also pure, but is thicker in density than vapor. It may be called the highest human love. Next in grade could be almost pure drinking water which contains some salts. It is a high type of human love, but lower in grade than distilled water. It is basically unselfish love but is mixed with some selfishness. Then comes colored water. The different colors from light to dark represent different degrees of selfishness. The lowest grade of water is sewage water which is full of dirt and filth. This may be compared to sexual love outside of marriage and to love for committing criminal actions. Really speaking, there is only one love, absolutely pure, but from its source of Divine Love it changes into all the lower and lowest grades of love.

Love has the quality of taking interest in anything man chooses to do and accomplish. Love can be applied toward meditating, hard work, performing acts of great service, or studying science, art or music. Love exists everywhere; but it is focused in the human heart. Not the human heart that pumps blood, but the heart that feels and loves. The physical heart is the symbolic place of the center of our being, our real heart.

Jigar says:

*Ek labze mohabbat ka adna ye fasana hai,
Simte to dile ashak aur faile to zamana hai.*

If one word of love, so insignificant in expression
but so powerful in effect, is focused in the human
heart and released, it encompasses the whole world.

Meher Baba indicates that love - whether it exists in prayers for the praise of God, feelings between parents and children, love between a husband and wife, relatives and friends, love for the accomplishment of endeavors, great or small, love for academic pursuits, love for sexual gratification or gain in a monetary transaction, be it honest or dishonest - is the essence of all these activities. But the quality of love can be pure, impure or mixed, depending upon the degree of selfishness or selflessness it contains. The greater the purity or selflessness in love, the greater the joy in living and dying. The greater the impurity of selfishness in love, the greater the misery or suffering in life and death.

We are very fortunate in having come, or in expecting to come, with all our weaknesses and strengths, within the love-orbit of Meher Baba. How very fortunate indeed that we have come to love Him, or are expecting to love Him, and to know of Him in our limited way. The ocean of Meher Baba's Love cleanses all impurities poured into it by an act of prayer, service, sacrifice and loving surrender to Him. Meher Baba's love embrace is always open to the saint or sinner alike, the active or slow moving, the handsome or ugly, the healthy or ill, the intellectual or emotional type, the sharp witted or dunce and the educated or uneducated. His love flows out in equal measure to those of any caste, creed, religion, color or nationality. None is too bad for Him who cannot become good, and none is too good for Him who cannot become better and best.

He has not come to establish a new religion. If you choose to call it a religion, then it is a religion of light, life and love. Meher Baba wants everyone to retain his or her religion and be one-pointedly devoted to God.

Jigar says:

Na garza kisise na was ta, mujhe kam apnehi kamse.

Tere zikr se, teri fiqr se, teri yad se, tere nam se.

None do I need, with none am I concerned.

My object is my only concern:

To talk about You, to be anxious about You,

To remember You and to repeat Your Name,

my Beloved.

One pointed devotion to Meher Baba or His work does not imply that one should give up all other work and responsibilities of life. On the other hand, it means that one should be practical and devoted to doing all the things that one is required to do, including looking after his possessions and all those dependent on him. From the indications Meher Baba has given, it means that one should be attached to all things and beings conducive to a normal life of helpfulness, happiness and honesty. Let these attachments be skin-deep and attachment to Meher Baba heart-deep. All attachments, except to Meher Baba, one day or another, are to be given up whether one wants them or not. But the attachment to Meher Baba will outlive man's life and help him to cross the ocean of life and gain eternal bliss for himself.

Meher Baba places alternatives before you as a novice. His is a game of love with no ceremony of initiation, no lure of proselytizing, no coercion, no foisting, no forcing of ideas or injunctions. He just appeals to your heart and lets His words sink into your logical head - if it is logical and not prejudicial.

The pillars of all His *adesh* and *upadesh* (messages and discourses), His behests and His advice, are love of God and love of man, obedience, service and charity. Love is the most common possession of every man. It is the most precious thing of his life. All feel this love within themselves, but very few can rightly direct it toward their release from illusion. On the other hand, it is used, misused and abused in pursuit of sex and greed.

Miracles have no value in the domain of spirituality. Judging from the true standards of spirituality, miracles become obstacles for the advancement of a soul on the path. This is a recognized fact that can be read in the writings of men of spiritual authority. If an act of highest human morality is taken as a spiritual quality, then miracles could be reckoned as a dire immorality. For a soul striving for lasting happiness, miracles are a nuisance, obstructing the path of upliftment. A miracle is harmful to the one who performs it and misguides those who believe it to be true and helpful. A miracle is an anachronism, a misfit, in the scheme of life governed by natural law.

The ultimate Truth of God is far removed from mysteries or miracles. The Avatar is the personification of Truth, Power,

Knowledge and Bliss. While on earth, He makes these qualities applicable to human beings for their ultimate happiness. Almost all mysterious things and miracles attributed to the birth, life and passing away of the God-Man are creations of human imagination, either for a meaningful cause or for the fulfillment of a selfish desire.

It is true that under certain circumstances, brought about by the exigency of human behavior and its destructive effects on human life, God as the Avatar, performs miracles as in the life of Christ and other Avatars. As a rule, the Avatar does His inner universal work, transforming the heart of humanity by sowing a seed of God's love and making human beings deserving of eternal happiness. Contrarily, miracles only touch the superficial part of the human mind and have no far-reaching effects of purifying life. Miracles are sensational and not sanctifying.

Meher Baba's inner work belongs to the inner planes, and also to the highest plane. Baba made infrequent remarks about His inner work. We were fully convinced that it did exist; but because it is beyond the range of our senses and intellect, we could not understand what it was and how it functioned.

There are quite a few things in our lives of which we are convinced beyond a doubt, but we have not seen them. We may not perceive them through our sight, but we can get convinced by the perception of our feelings. When we fall in love, we do not see our love. When we get angry, we do not see our anger. But from the effects produced by love or anger on one's face or behavior, we are convinced that it is love or anger. The effects produced prove the existence of causes.

Let us see how a tiny part of His inner work can reach and benefit individuals. My personal experience and that of another will testify that His outward behavior led us to know the existence of His inner activity.

The story I am going to relate to you happened sometime in the 1920s in the month of April. I had made plans to drive a car from Ahmednagar to Mahabaleshwar, a distance of about 160 miles. I did not want to go, but three of my relatives prevailed upon me. Baba told me not to go, but I pleaded with Him that all the arrangements were made and it would be

awkward for me to refuse. Baba said nothing further, and so I pursued my plans.

At a small town called Shrival, about forty-five miles from Poona, I took a turn to the right and headed in the direction of the town of Wai which is at the bottom of Panchgani Hill. The distance to cover was some miles, and this stretch of the road was on a low-lying plain surrounded by hills.

As I was driving on the road, a cyclonic storm broke upon us with a fury. We were in a touring car rather than a sedan, so we and our luggage were totally drenched. In this tremendous downpour, the engine failed; the car stopped near a huge tree. Fortunately, the tree was on the left-hand side of the car and the wind, blowing furiously, was coming from the right. I could see the branches of the other trees falling and dancing across the road. This huge tree started creaking - the noise was frightening! But we could see that if the tree fell, it would fall away from us because of the direction of the wind.

For a full fifteen minutes we sat in this car that was being played with by the wind. At any moment it seemed the car would be blown away with us in it! We had no hope of survival; we were all terrified. One of my relatives, who was not a Baba-lover, began calling the name of God and the name of Meher Baba. I then told him that Baba did not want us to undertake this journey. He shouted I should have informed him before we started! I said that if I had done so, he would not have consented to forego the trip anyway. We then all began calling out to Baba for help.

After these very long fifteen minutes, the storm calmed down and finally the rain ceased. I was unsure of the car starting, but by Baba's grace it did. I proceeded slowly down the road. All of us were shivering with drenched bodies in the cold air.

At nearly half a dozen places I encountered huge branches of trees, blown off by the wind, lying right across the road. We had to get out of the car and move the branches off the road to make way. We were helped in doing this by many car drivers who, like ourselves, were stranded and wanted to pass through.

Finally when we reached the traveler's house at Wai, we found it occupied by a police superintendent. We were given a servant's room for the night. The room lights did not work, and we had to sleep without clothing because everything was wet

from the rain. The next morning we resumed our journey and managed to reach Mahabaleshwar safely.

This story is a very good example of how one in the world is indifferent to God as long as his life is going smoothly. It is only when a person has a problem he cannot solve that he calls out to God. My cousin was not interested in Baba although he knew about Baba, but when he was in trouble, he called out to Him. Baba is telling us to awake now, but if we persist to ignore this call, then it is our fault when the storms of life descend on us, as they inevitably will.

Another story also happened in the 1920s. My elder brother, Rustom, asked Baba whether he could drive a private bus accompanied by some friends to a district village some miles from Ahmednagar. Baba did not give His full approval, but Rustom was also in a situation where he had made all the arrangements for the trip, so he pursued his own plan.

While driving toward the village, he came across a rivulet without a bridge. Although it was the rainy season, the water level was fairly low, and he thought he could easily ford it with the bus. Near midstream the water level surprisingly started to rise and the engine failed. Rustom thought of jumping into the water and swimming to the other bank to get help from nearby villagers. But when he jumped into the water, he could hardly swim as he was being pulled away by the fast-flowing current. Luckily he caught hold of the bus fender, and those sitting on the bus reached for his hand and pulled him out of the water.

After some time, the water level started receding and coincidentally some villagers appeared on the bank of the river. These villagers called other villagers and all of them helped the bus out of the water with ropes.

Rustom told us the story on his return to Ahmednagar, informing us about the specific day and time when this occurred. At that time it was raining at Meherabad, and Baba was there. He appeared very restless, running from cottage to cottage, exhorting and admonishing the mandali for no apparent reason whatsoever. I was standing by the well at Lower Meherabad, and Baba caught hold of me and shook me a few times. I could not understand what it was all about. Some days later, Baba explained to both Rustom and me that He saved Rustom and all those traveling with him in the bus.

Any modification of an event or occurrence that Baba wanted to bring about to help anyone was done through inner work. Its existence was evidenced to us as Baba would become either preoccupied, restless, uneasy or immersed in seclusion.

The great inner work Meher Baba does for the upliftment of humanity is beyond our comprehension. I myself would ask Him about it and He would reply, "Be quiet; you cannot understand." This inner work endures beyond the physical life of the God-Man.

Meher Baba says to accept what you want; reject what you do not. But be assured that His love for you ever remains the same as indicated by His words. "I love you more than you can ever love yourself." You may accept Meher Baba as God or as man, good or bad. He loves you because you are a human being, and He says He is one with every human being. He is the Self of all, the Life of all, the Heart and Soul of all. Do not ever feel you are alone, as Baba assures you He is with you all the time.

Between you and He, ignorance stays.
Between He and you, nothing remains.
He is you; you don't comprehend.
But that you are He, He apprehends.
You and He, He and you,
Nothing is there that separates
But you, the I, you profess
And not the I that all possess.
All are I, but you don't feel.
You don't see and you don't deal.
When you will see and you will feel,
You will not be, and all will be He.
When the I you profess
Will go, comes the I all possess.
The I all have
Is the I He possesses.
Be humble, be ye nice.
Give up your I; that's your vice.
Pick up the I all possess
And not the I you profess.

Forget your I
And forget Him not.
Let His wish be your wish
And your wish, not your wish.
Keep your hold on His *daaman*.
It may slip off
And leave you alone.
He is Love, the Ocean of Love.
Miss Him not for a drop of love!
The drop you are,
The Ocean you will become,
And say, "Meher, Avatar of the Age!"

Could you afford to miss Him, the personification of mother's love, father's compassion, friends' good will, Master's guidance, and God's love and blessings? If you miss Him, you will have to wait seven hundred years to see Him come to this earth in human form on His next advent.

May you hail Him now, understand Him now, question Him now, embrace Him now and love Him now! If you cannot do any of these, then put Him to the test of your life - sincerely and honestly, not with a mind of doubt, deception or an eye for superficiality - and you will find that He is your constant companion to share your joys and sorrows, your health and illness, your life and death. Laugh not, judge not, doubt not, fret not, grudge not, fear not. Call Him, remember Him, think of Him, contemplate upon Him, read of Him, talk of Him, love Him, and you will come to feel His presence within you wherever you are and in whatever you think and do. If the Avatar is the God-Man, be ye a man of God and a man amongst men!

Hafiz says:

*Hafez to berao bandagiye Peere Mugan kun,
Bar daadaneu dast zano az haman buksel.*
O Hafiz! Arise and awake,
Offer your prayers to the Master Great.
Lay your hand on His *daaman* straight,
And detach yourself from everything else!

The Avatar

For man there is a limitation of time and space. For God there is no limitation of time and space because He is everywhere at all times. For the God-Man, or Avatar, there is no limitation of time and space as God; but as man He assumes the limitation of time and space to make man free of his limitations.

The Avatar is unique inasmuch as He is one with and conscious of everything and every being at all times. He is unique because He is commonly not understood yet most commonly lives in everything and every being. He is the Lord of all. He is the Master of Servitude of all.

He has a physical body, alternating His descent in different human forms on earth with the exigency of time and the needs of man. He has a subtle body to balance Universal Energy to the requirements of man. He has a mental body to focus the Universal Mind for the guidance of individual minds. He has a Universal Body to always maintain His link with the earth for a periodical descent on it in an individual body. He has the Universal Ego and the Universal Consciousness to sustain His individuality and consciousness of God.

What an all-comprehensive existence and life! Nothing is excluded from Him. Everything is included in Him. Even God, in His Beyond the Beyond state, fails to fulfill the condition of being God-and-illusion-conscious at one and the same time. God, having divested His consciousness to the state and authority of the Avatar, exists and lives consciously at all times as the Avatar.

For Avatar Meher Baba, His body was not for Himself but for others. The difference for us is between the joy of our looking at His face, at His inimitable smile, and the pain of our missing Him. We have to reconcile the Truth of His physical existence with His eternal life to which we owe a conviction - the conviction that has been given to us by Him in His oft-repeated message, "Hold on to My *daaman* till the very end."

What is the end? The end is not that of our body but of our desires and eventually of our minds. The death of the physical body is the life of the mind, and the death of the mind is God-consciousness.

The evolution of the latent consciousness in God was a necessary urge. The urge created an impression and the impression created a mind. The mind gave rise to a gross body as a medium of expression. Of course the mind outlasts the body. When millions of bodies are taken up and discarded from stone, metal and vegetation to fish, insect, bird, beast and man, the mind remains the same. It changes only in its texture, not in substance. It is born once and dies once. When the mind dies, pure consciousness remains, and that is God-consciousness.

The Avatar is at all times the sole balancing power between Absolute God and illusion. He ever resides in both and is in perfect identity with them.

Our prayers to God should be to bless us to exceed the limitations of our minds so that we can experience His true glory. Our prayers to God eventually are responded to by the Avatar in whom is vested the supreme command of creation. Then why not pray to the Avatar in a more direct way?

Crossing the ocean of Life

What is the relationship between spiritual advancement and self-effacement? The question of self-effacement came to me when I read about it in a letter which Mani (Meher Baba's sister) wrote. That word went so deeply inside me. I knew full well what great importance this word really holds, that it is more important than the spiritual path.

Meher Baba has talked so much about the path. He has explained it in the *Discourses* and *God Speaks*. The term self-effacement represents an idea which has been given much importance by Meher Baba; it has been sung by the Sufi poets in Persian and in Urdu all along. I say that self-effacement is really the substance, the crux, of spirituality. Even more than the crux, it is the beginning and end of spirituality.

One poet so beautifully says:

What have I gained, even if all the curtains
of ignorance are lifted away from me?
The great delight would have been if I
were not in between.
If I were removed between myself and my
Beloved God,
Then the problem would be completely solved.

The curtains of ignorance mean the curtains of the different spiritual stages. Once lifted, I am still in a state of duality - I cannot become united with God - so what have I gained? The great delight would be if I were completely self-effaced. I

would not have to think about the spiritual line because traversing the path may be done through self-effacement.

There are two ways to reach God. One way is to go consciously. We are very inquisitive people and the human mind is very nosy. So we want to become conscious of everything that happens, of every step that we go forward. And in doing that we get bogged down in our own progress. To go consciously is very dangerous.

To go unconsciously, the second way, is when you are guided by your Master, Meher Baba, who takes you blindfolded. Do not think that He does not help you because He asks you to remain in the dark all the time and to sacrifice all your inquisitiveness and nosiness about perceiving the different pictures, lights, sounds, fragrances or music. He gives you a great, great strength within yourself. How is it that we handful of mandali could have stayed with Meher Baba for fifty years with no spiritual experiences? How is it possible for us to have carried on with Meher Baba, not having had any spiritual experiences, unless He gave us an inner strength? So that is of importance in the process of self-effacement.

I shall explain to you very logically and pictorially how self-effacement makes you cross the whole ocean of life, all the stages, and takes you to God. How many aspects do we have? We have a physical body, we have our desires which are full of energy and which stem from our subtle body, we have our mind which Meher Baba says is the mental body, and we have a soul at the back of it all. The soul is absolutely detached from all this, but it has two aspects. The soul in relation to the mental body, the subtle body and the physical body, which we call a human being, has experiences; it is called the spirit. The other aspect of the soul, the real nature of the soul, is absolutely detached. This is the difference between the soul and the spirit, and I do not think anybody except Meher Baba has explained this. All the time we drive a horse and donkey with the same whip - we do not know the difference. Baba, however, has drawn the difference: the soul is absolutely detached from everything, but that aspect of the soul that comes in contact with our mental, subtle and physical bodies is called the spirit.

Experiences, then, are not really taken up by the soul. They are there because the soul is the background. Pictures

could not be formed without the background of the soul. These three bodies - the mental, subtle and physical - are all destructible. At the back of them and their experiences is a central thing which is called "I" or the ego. It is because of the ego that we think, see and feel. It is a useful thing indeed. If this ego were not there, we could not collect all our experiences to compare and contrast them in order to draw conclusions. So this ego is absolutely necessary, but there comes a time when we have to throw it away - and this is self-effacement.

But how obligated we are to this ego, you cannot imagine. It is because of the ego that we have consciousness. God as God was in a state of sound sleep. He evolved Himself to ego-consciousness. But what is helpful to the extent of consciousness later becomes a hindrance, a great obstruction for us. Once evolved, we are not able to give up this ego with which we are so familiar and so fond. Its purpose is completely served, but we have fallen in love with it. Though we are through with the ego, we do not eschew it; instead we eschew our consciousness and embrace the ego because we have become very familiar with it. The ego is the thing we are to get over, but we are not able to, not even on the spiritual path.

One poet has said that all the paraphernalia of the entire creation - the mental world, the physical world and the subtle world - came into being because God is hidden from us; He is behind the curtain (the ego). Suppose He had not hidden Himself, where would I have been? I would have been with Him all the time. So this ego, which has been very helpful to us in evolving consciousness, eventually has to be kicked out.

Churchill was the Prime Minister of England during the time of war. Everybody loved him very much. He was a great man who managed to win the war and give encouragement to the entire nation. But the moment the war was won, the populace of England threw him out. They felt that in the days of peace Churchill would not be useful. Similarly, after evolving consciousness, the ego is no longer useful and should be thrown out. But we are not able to do it. The only way is to submit ourselves to the procedure that Meher Baba lays down for us, which is to remain in so-called ignorance all the time and travel the path in absolute safety in His hands. For this He makes us efface our ego. Self-effacement or ego-effacement is easier in an ordinary state of consciousness than on the

spiritual path, because on the spiritual path we get many, many experiences; we assert ourselves. Wherever there is purposeful suffering, there is self-effacement. This is the law.

Meher Baba says in effect, "Be patient. I shall take you blindfolded, and I shall give you the inner strength to withstand the ups and downs of your mind and the ups and downs of the events of the world that have impact on your mind. Rely on Me only and I shall do your work." But for that you should have conviction which is even greater than faith.

Where will I get this conviction? Baba says learn to do nothing. You have been doing too many things. To try to do nothing is more difficult than doing everything. It is not possible for us to do nothing. But for us doing nothing means not doing anything by our own volition. Leave it to Him. Be guided by Him all the time. This does not mean that I do not use my free will, but I use it to remember Him and surrender to Him; then He does everything. And how shall I be guided by Him? I do not understand if the guidance comes from Meher Baba or if it is created by myself. For this situation, Meher Baba has given a message which is so beautiful, so simple and practical:

Think thoughts you would not hesitate to think in My
presence.

Speak words you would not hesitate to speak in My
presence.

And do things you would not hesitate to do in My
presence.

That is all - the problem is solved.

I should visualize Him before me. Then whatever thoughts I think, I can ask myself, "Would I ever think these thoughts when He is present before me?" I will get an answer. If my conscience alone tells me that this thought would be completely and fully endorsed by Meher Baba - that it will be liked by Him - then there is no objection in my thinking that thought as long as I want. There are certain thoughts, I am sure, that He would not like, so I do not think about them. Similarly with speech, I may utter a word and ask myself if He would like it. If He likes it, then I would go on saying it. If He would not like it, then I should give it up.

Most important are the actions. If I feel His presence before me, would I dare do this? If my conscience says no, then I can't do it. If it says yes, then I do it, whatever the action is.

The thought of good or bad should be relegated to the corner of your mind. Ask yourself a question most honestly, and if your heart really says yes, then do whatever it is. But you should be very honest in your asking and listening.

It all boils down to this: self-effacement contains the spiritual path but the spiritual path does not contain self-effacement. If we go through the spiritual path there are a lot of dangers, and we may not be able to go to the end of our journey. But if we go blindfolded under the guidance of our Master who is Perfect, and try our best to exercise self-effacement, then we are absolutely safe.

He gives the inner strength. And the inner strength and the inner conviction that Meher Baba gives us in the state of our ordinary consciousness is more powerful than what a man going on the spiritual path experiences of the higher states. This is because both the ordinary state of consciousness and all the stages of the inner path are drowned in the ocean of illusion. The aim of life is to get away from the state of duality and merge ourselves into unity. Even if one is on the sixth plane of consciousness, he is able to see the existence of God everywhere, but cannot unite with Him.

Many, many people who get stranded on the way are going through many types of practices, and they do not know the way. How could one really travel the path unless he knows the path himself? It is a leap in the dark. If I do not know where the next step lies and where I should take a jump, I could break my ankle, knee or backbone. This sort of progress is absolutely in the dark. But Meher Baba knows the path. That is why He asks you to be quiet, have patience, have faith, have conviction about Him, and love Him; and He will do all your work.

My only end and aim should be to do as one poet says, "Out of all my sincerity and love, I place my heart at Your feet. Now it is up to You to bless me any way You like; it is not in my hands." The things which are in His hands, I should let Him do. The things which are in my hands, I should do. But I should not try to overstep my knowledge or authority and poke my nose into things Meher Baba wants to do by asking Him the question, "When shall I get God-realization?" In the very asking of the

question, I doubt His knowledge.

If we really believe that Meher Baba has one hundred percent knowledge of everything, then does He not know when we are going to get God-realization? Must we ask Him the question? We should not place ourselves in this position in our relationship with Meher Baba. However, all are not equally gifted to be strong. There will be many, many persons who ask all these questions, and of course they eventually will come to know that it is very foolish on their part. They could ask these questions of other masters. Masters who are on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth or even sixth plane can advance one to their plane, but they can never take one out of illusion and unite one with God. So Meher Baba is not a half-way business.

Someone has asked if Meher Baba takes everybody blindfolded. For those who love Him, the answer is yes. But there are certain exceptions. Suppose a man is a yogi who has gone a long way on his own. Contrary to us who are on the path that Meher Baba has made for us to traverse blindfolded, this yogi has gone his own way. One day he comes in contact with Meher Baba who asks him to do something for Him. This yogi cannot take a jump from where he is to the right road that Meher Baba has established. He has to be brought down to start again. That is the difficulty. So for yogis or such persons who have gone through a lot of exercises in their lives, it is a different question which does not generally apply to us since we are whole-hearted lovers of Meher Baba. If I am a sincere Baba-lover, I do not bother about the path. What do I want? I want His Reality. Whether it is a path or a bath, I do not bother about it.

Followers of Meher Baba cannot be found by the millions or even thousands at a time. We do not find diamonds by the thousands or millions. Pebbles, on the other hand, do exist by the thousands, millions and billions. We can go on the dunes and find many pebbles, but are they diamonds? Certain pearls have a brightness, but it is an imitation brightness. They are not real pearls but cultured pearls. We are attracted by them and want to own them. Eventually we find that they are not real pearls. In real pearls, the true followers of Meher Baba, there is a real longing and a real love. That is why they are not commonly placed. Meher Baba is for all, but Meher Baba is also for those persons who have a real longing.

People have asked me the question, "Since Meher Baba is the Avatar and is so powerful, why aren't there millions of people running after Him?" Were there millions of people running after Christ? No, only a handful of fishermen. Look at the life of Krishna. Look at the life of Zoroaster. Look at the life of Buddha. They were shunned. They were molested by humanity, crucified by humanity. They were not yogis, but the Avatar. That name lives forever, for all time. Anyone who came in His contact was taken through blindfolded to the head of the path.

Again the question turns to Meher Baba, "What shall I do if I am too weak to remain in the darkness of my ignorance while clinging to that conviction and that love?" Meher Baba explains that it is all right, that He recognizes your weaknesses. He does not expect you to be a stalwart, to be very strong; but there is a way out if you listen to Him. You must be prepared to do one thing. Can you make a decision today, a wholehearted decision, that you shall obey Meher Baba and try to love Him as much as He wants? Do you want this? Then you have made a decision. Make it wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly. Do not try to fool yourself. But do not worry about your weaknesses. The decision is in your hands. If you want to get the degree of master of hearts, then you must make a wholehearted decision now whether or not to take up the course. Meher Baba says to decide now. In the vein of the Perfect Master Kabir, if you want to make a decision tomorrow, decide it today. And if you want to decide it today, then decide it at this moment. The time will pass out of your hands, and when are you going to do it?

There is a very simple, logical and practical thing within the means of any man. If you do not want this, then wait and just go on floating in the ocean of uncertainty in your life until you are able to decide.

When you really want to become 100% Meher Baba's, listen to Him and do what He wants you to do. You will still have weaknesses. Meher Baba knows it. But if you are staunch, if you are strong, if you are steady, if you are unchanging in your decision, then the weaknesses will not matter. If you make mistakes, then go before Meher Baba like a child, and in the style of Hafiz say to Him, "If You do not like me, if You do not like my actions, please pardon me and change my destiny. You call yourself the Avatar - why don't You do

it?" But you will have the claim to ask Him that question only when you wholeheartedly decide - not otherwise, sir. You cannot have it both ways.

You are not expected to be born a saint. Meher Baba knows all the weaknesses of every human being. They are there, but they should not take us away from making a firm, unchanging, wholehearted, most honest decision right now. Mistakes are all right. If you want to obey and love Meher Baba, then your heart will tell you that you should please Meher Baba in every way, in spite of your weaknesses. To please Him is to obey Him.

Honest mistakes can be made like a child's. If you displease Him, then ask His pardon, correct yourself and go forward. That is all. Do not brew and repent much over the mistakes that have taken place by your hand. But instead, use your energy to prevent repeating the mistakes in the future. That is exactly what Baba wants.

You may repent for awhile, but do not go on repenting all the time, forming a habit of it. Rather use your energy to make up your mind not to repeat the same mistake. That is all. It is as simple as the error, provided that you are motivated and want to improve.

If you want to do it, you will be able to do it. A man may say that he is too weak, that is not possible for him to do it. But I say, "You are not weak; rather you don't want to do it." We have seen many cases where people, who have formed habits for the last twenty, thirty or forty years, have given up their habit overnight, in a very short time. How could they do it? One man takes one day to do it, another man takes ten days, and another takes ten months. It depends on your sincerity and honesty of purpose.

Someone has asked about detachment or renunciation. Your detachment should not be born out of indifference to your ego. Rather your detachment should stem from knowing the importance of your ego and being aware of your attachment to it; and from this position you become detached.

Suppose I see a great treasure before me. I am very attracted to it because I know its value. Still I am not concerned; I remain detached. This renunciation is of great value to me. But if the same treasure is placed before a child who does not know its value, he cannot be said to be detached

from it. A man may say, "I renounce everything," but maybe he does not have anything to renounce! He may not have had a penny in his pocket. What is the value of this renunciation? One may say, "Oh, I am a great renunciate!" "What did you renounce?" "Nothing. I did not have anything." "But probably if you had something, you would stick to it very hard." One needs the chance of owning something first in order to be able to renounce it. So the renunciation can only come into prominence if one first knows the value of a certain possession that he has.

Becoming Desireless

Anyone who goes to Baba has a purpose in him - a hunger or thirst for something. It may be material food; it may be spiritual food. Some people go to Baba to be successful in their lives. Somebody else wants higher knowledge, while someone else wants God-realization. There is always a purpose at the back of it.

The perfection of the Avatar is so great that no matter with what intention, with what desire a man comes to Baba, at least he joins Him. He is prepared to obey for the fulfillment of whatever desire he may have in mind. As the link between him and the Avatar, by virtue of his love and sense of obedience, goes on becoming stronger, the original purpose for which he came to Baba disappears. Baba wipes it out.

Meher Baba gives such a profound understanding that eventually I can see beyond getting my desire fulfilled. I see in Him such perfection, such a great light. In the beginning I thought I would reach the moon, but now I see He is the sun. Why should I strive for the moon - the sun is so much brighter. Even the mandali had something in mind in coming to Baba, maybe a higher desire or maybe a material one, but it all vanished because Baba gave us the thoughts of spiritual advancement and God-realization. Then in equal measure He made us forget them. The precondition of God-realization is to become desireless. Even the desire for God-realization has to perish eventually if God-realization is to come.

What is your objective in coming to Meher Baba? What is it that you want of Meher Baba? I will give you an instance. Kaikobad was a very old man who Meher Baba had asked to recite God's name 100,000 times every day. He did this for a

number of years. Baba never told any of the other mandali to do this. The mandali were occupied in doing His work all the time.

One day Baba was sitting at Meherazad Hall with some outsiders who had come for His *darshan*. The mandali and Kaikobad were sitting there. Baba always had a fun way of saying things, and He said, "Look at these mandali. They have been with Me from very, very old times. But they do not see anything. And here is Kaikobad; he sees Me while the mandali are not able to."

That was a great encouragement to Kaikobad. I said, "May I ask you a question, Baba? Kaikobad sees You. Does he see You as You are or does he see You as he is able to see You?" (You understand the difference between the two?) Baba made a very wry face and I got my answer.

What is the aspect of Meher Baba that you want to see? I will give you another instance. I was a very jealous man when I came to Meher Baba. I loved Him intensely, and I did not like Him to love anybody as much as He loved me. I did not mind if He loved a woman, but if He loved a man, I became very jealous. I would inwardly boil, and Baba knew it well. I would build up all this anguish until a crisis would come. One day in Nasik - a town 100 miles from here - Meher Baba made me go sit in a room. To broach the subject He just lit a small match. I burst forth weeping, wailing, complaining and dashing my head against the ground! Baba was just quiet; He did not say anything. After a few minutes, I was also quiet. Then He asked me: "Is it all over?" I said, "Yes, Baba, it is over." "All right. Why do you do these things? What do you want in your life?" "I want you, Baba." "Oh, you want me? What is it that you want of me? Do you want this form or do you want My Reality?" Now what could I say? I was very fond of, I was in love with, His form. I did not like to relinquish that form for the sake of Reality. But I had a little knowledge that if I asked for Reality, His form was included in it. So I said, "I want your Reality." "You want My Reality? Then don't do these things. It is terribly wrong for you to do them." I said all right and I became very happy. I came out of the room just dancing and buoyant, very happy and joyous.

Over a period of six months my emotions built up again; another crisis came at Meherabad. Baba was up on the hill

talking with the women mandali. The women were not allowed to talk to the men, and we could not even look at Mehera's face. I was standing outside and would have to wait for one or two hours to drive Baba back to Meherazad. I was in a very nasty mood. I was brewing inside with anger and jealousy - a very peculiar mixture was burning in my blood. Then I sent a message inside to Baba and He came out to me. He did nothing; He said nothing; He asked me not to express what was brewing within me. He just embraced me. And the light I felt - at that time everything completely vanished and disappeared - for the moment. I wish that light had been sustained, but He did not want that. I would have gotten engrossed in it. He wanted me to live and serve Him as much as I could, you see. But at the time I positively remember that He did not talk to me, He did not allow me to talk, but He just embraced me and everything was finished - gone.

So you must know what it is of Baba that you want. If you want to have His Reality, then you have to sacrifice all the rest of the things. If you want the inner worlds, you have to sacrifice the outer world. If you want God-realization, you have to sacrifice the inner worlds. And if you want to become perfect in your renunciation, then you have to sacrifice even your desire for God-realization. And later on you have to renounce the sense of having renounced all this. Then your renunciation goes to that height which is perfection. So the question is, "What is it that you want of Meher Baba?"

Someone has asked if in giving up everything, are we eventually to give up the Avatar. As a poet says:

"Tarke dunya tarke uquaba tarke maula tarke tarke"

Give up this world,
Give up the inner world
And give up God.

It is not possible to renounce God. But it is possible to renounce the desire for God-realization. After having renounced this desire my renunciation is still not perfect because I feel great for having renounced the world, the inner worlds and the desire for God-realization. So I have to renounce the sense of having renounced all this.

There are men and women of a certain religion who observe celibacy for twelve years. They are then taken in a

procession through their town in honor of their celibacy. Now here with Baba are the old fogeys who have lived with him for forty or fifty years, and nobody is prepared to look at their faces. But that is greater indeed. What is the good of being celibate? To remain celibate is also an aspect of self-effacement because any pleasure that you derive out of your life is self-assertion. Any purposeful suffering you undergo is self-effacement. So these people go through self-effacement for a period of twelve years, remaining aloof from sex. But what do they gain by being taken in procession so that the ego is greatly heightened again? They have gained on the one hand and lost on the other. One has earned say, ten million dollars while creating a debt of twelve million.

That is why it is not easy to understand Meher Baba. After remaining celibate for forty or fifty years of one's life, no procession ever takes place. I only say that I am the servant of Meher Baba. We are all sailing in the same boat. Maybe I have a long contact with Meher Baba which should speak for itself, but there is no sort of self-assertion that I am this or I am that. There is no place for a person in the field of Meher Baba's work who tries to assert himself. If that were the case, He would have mentioned it. Show me a single line in all of His works that says such a thing. He has said much in His works about the inner path and the inner planes, but He has never said to go after them or study them. By studying them I mean to try to gain them or experience them, and nowhere has He ever said to do this. On the other hand, He has said to dedicate your whole life to Him faithfully, honestly, with all your love and with a sense of obedience. And nothing beyond that.

Really speaking you are not to worry about self-assertion or self-effacement. Self-effacement is most difficult. It is very powerful, but it is very difficult. But what does Meher Baba do? He acts in a most positive way. He does not ask you to efface yourself, but He diverts your attention from yourself to Himself.

With Meher Baba we are not to do much, but we are to undo so much. Shall I do this practice, this meditation, this concentration, this transcendental concentration or that transcontinental meditation? You do not have to do that. What should I do? Lead a normal life. You can take up normal exercises to keep the body fit, keep a regular diet and so forth.

But do not get too much involved with it. How worthy is this body of paying so much attention to it? If every minute I say this is protein, this is carbohydrate, this is this and this is that, then my whole life is lost over this. Do not neglect it by any means, but do not overdo it either.

One evening at Guruprasad before Baba was about to retire, He walked by the building where the mandali resided. He was en route to the small room where He would go for His night's rest. While passing, a question was brought up. At that time Baba said everything is done by the whim, that we do not do anything. I said, "Baba, all along You have been telling us that the Avatar does so much; He changes this and He does that. Now You say it is all the whim.

"Suppose Baba, for example, that the flow of the whim goes in a straight line. One man is here and another is there. The one man has been in penance of God, praying to Him for a number of years. The other man is one of the greatest rogues and scoundrels of the world. They are in their respective places. Can it happen, Baba, in the flow, in the blessings of the whim, that instead of covering this righteous man it covers the scoundrel and purifies him?" Baba said yes. I then asked about the men. Baba said, "You do not know, you fool." I then asked how I could account for that. He replied, "You only see the present life of the man who is a scoundrel whereas I see the millions of past lives of what he has done before. Perhaps the righteous man was the greatest scoundrel in his previous lives. So I have to explain that when the whim flows, it knows where to go and where not to go."

A final question has been asked about saying prayers to Baba. There is no hard and fast rule that Baba gave us about saying prayers, so we have to decide. It is indeed very good and excellent that you recite them every day. But there are persons who say they do not recite the prayers, yet they love Baba and contemplate Him very much. It depends on what you exactly want and what your need is. I would not say that if a man does not recite Baba's prayers, yet loves Him intensely, that he is not a Baba-lover. Not at all. And it does not hurt to ask a question either, and for me to give an answer.

The Nature of Baba-Work

There are two aspects of our relationship with Avatar Meher Baba. The first is our personal love for Him; it includes our devotion and our sense of service to Him. This is very personal and concerns the man who loves the Avatar and the Avatar Himself. It is not the concern of anybody else. This is one aspect of our life with Meher Baba.

The second aspect is Meher Baba's work. Meher Baba's work is something we are not able to do. Anything that we do for Meher Baba is really done for ourselves. The work is for the benefit of the man who does Meher Baba's work, for Baba can do His work alone.

In whatever way we are able to do Meher Baba's work, we should first try to know and understand the right way to work. This we should do in spite of the fact that we have known Meher Baba for many years.

Meher Baba is universal. All the previous Avatars were none else but Meher Baba Himself. At the times of their advents they taught different religions. But in the case of Meher Baba, the time and the circumstances have been so different that His work has not been along the conventional lines. His work is so universal, so vast, that it does not matter where a man is. He can be in any corner of the world, and whether he belongs to a center, whether he worships Meher Baba in his own house or whether he is only a single man worshipping Meher Baba in some remote village of India, it matters not. So long as honesty and sincerity of purpose are there, the work does not change in the least.

What is the work that we have been doing and are going to do for Meher Baba? Can you imagine, when you look upon Meher Baba as the Ocean of Love, that we could take a little water and pour it into the ocean and increase the quantity that the entire ocean contains? Can you really imagine that by your individual love you are going to add anything to the Ocean of Love? Or that the little service you are able to render is going to add to His universal service? Meher Baba works for all of humanity. Meher Baba creates opportunities for all of us to give our love and service to Him. For what? For our own advantage; for our own final release from maya. There is nothing else at the back of it. We are not able to do Meher Baba's work, and yet the little things we are able to do are really very, very important to us.

Now to come to the point of the nature of the work. It is not just the quantity but also the quality that matters. For if the quality were not there, the quantity would have no meaning. By the quality of work we mean doing Meher Baba's work first and foremost with honesty of purpose. And that has another meaning which I shall explain to you in a moment. Even though I divided our relationship with Meher Baba into two aspects, one which is love, the other which is service to Him, they mingle together. They are both one.

For us to do Meher Baba's work there is, first of all, a condition; and a big condition it is. Unless you fulfill that condition, I do not think you will have the strength to do His work. You must be convinced of the spiritual status of Meher Baba. Unless you are fully entrenched, unless you are fully embedded, unless you have full faith - not even faith but something beyond faith, a conviction - unless you are strong in your conviction, your words to the world about Meher Baba will carry no weight. What is the work that I am going to do for Meher Baba if I am not convinced, if I do not have the conviction that Meher Baba is the Avatar of the Age which He pronounced Himself to be?

Every Baba-lover first of all must feel, must be convinced, about His great spiritual stature as the Avatar, and then he can begin doing His work. We cannot afford to put the cart before the horse. The horse must be in front, and then it will work. So I do not mean to imply or suggest that all of you workers or most of the workers here in this center do not have

that conviction; but I say this especially for those persons who are newcomers, who may take up Meher Baba's work in the heat of their enthusiasm and begin it wrongly. They do not know what the work is. They first must be convinced of Meher Baba's Avatarhood; otherwise the work that they do will not last and will have no force whatsoever.

Conviction is the very basis of one's work. This conviction is like the alphabet of a language. If you do not know the alphabet and start learning the language, you will learn a few words here and there and try to put them together, but that language will always be half learned. You must first learn the entire alphabet. Start learning the language gradually, and then you will find you have learned the language the way it should be learned.

In doing Meher Baba's work, no strings should be attached. That is, anything that I desire, anything selfish that I want for myself - prominence or anything - needs to be left aside. But anything that comes naturally is perfectly all right. We are bound to take up that responsibility. But for me to crave it is wrong. I must crave doing Meher Baba's work selflessly. I should not hang on to my own desires. If you work properly, you will be able to turn out the quality of work that I have in mind.

Suppose a time comes when somebody puts me into a corner - a crisis comes into my life where I have to renounce this position of being a secretary or of even being called a disciple of Meher Baba. Do you mean to say for the sake of that position I should not go on doing Baba's service selflessly? If I do not do that, then I should be called a man hanging on to my position. I would be making my love and sense of service dependent on the position that I hold. That kind of service and love have no value. So our service should be entirely selfless in the sense that no strings should be attached to the service we render.

I tell you, anyone who takes up this service selflessly, keeping no strings attached for himself, gets everything. He gets name, fame and popularity. But you see, the prior condition is that you do not crave it. A Baba-lover should be absolutely unconcerned with position and name so far as his service and love for Baba are concerned. Baba used to tell us, "If it comes in a natural manner, accept it." Baba used to tell us

that we should keep ourselves absolutely aloof. We should not invite any homage from people, but if it comes in a natural manner, do not bother about it. If somebody unanimously appoints you a leader, take the position if you are able to fulfill the responsibility. By all means take it, but do not crave it.

Suppose somebody is to be made a leader and I want to crush him down and become the leader in his place. This state of mind is not permissible for a true Baba-lover and a lover who wants to give service to Baba. In Baba's family we do not want any gurus; we want Baba-lovers; we want Baba-servants; we want Baba-slaves to do His work. He is the Avatar of the Age for all time. Who are you? Who am I? We are just pawns on the board of His chess game, the game that He is playing with the whole world.

I may come forward tomorrow and claim myself to be someone very important - a God-realized man or a man to whom some power has been given by Baba - and go on to appoint my own successor. This is all absolutely false and untrue because my fifty years with Baba have taught me that Baba has no chargeman. It is Baba on one side and His universal work on the other. Baba comes once in a thousand years or so. He manages His own work. We are giving our services and love to Him for our own benefit - for our final release from *maya* in order to be united with God, Meher Baba.

Seek God Within

Meher Baba, because He is the Avatar, comes down into the lives of men. He has drawn a beautiful distinction between the Avatar and a Perfect Master. While they are both on the seventh plane of consciousness, the difference is that when the Avatar deals with *maya*, He identifies Himself with humanity. A Perfect Master acts; the Avatar becomes.

Suppose you are taking part in a concert or a play, acting the part of a king. You do not become a king; for the time being you act as a king. The moment you come out of the theater, you are just what you are. But in the case of the Avatar, it is not so. He veritably becomes man. That is why He suffers so much and the very reason He takes upon Himself the burden of every man's release from *maya*.

What I want to convey to you is that even though He may be on the seventh plane of consciousness, He is also in our

hearts. His Reality is in our hearts, not only on the seventh plane. He would not be perfect if He were not here and He were only there. He is everywhere. But we cannot see Him everywhere, so Baba says it is only in your heart that He can throw His reflection into you. You can see Him there, you can feel Him there, you can love Him through your heart. He is there all the time. He is nowhere else to be found.

Baba says it is an irony of fate that He exists in your heart all the time, twenty-four hours a day, but you are not present there. You are running after your desires, fulfilling your desires, going after money, the opposite sex, position, name, duty, and so forth. One should not neglect the matter of his necessities and not work or earn money. However, he should not be carried away with it so much that he does not keep Baba's presence in his heart.

Baba says that He is always waiting for us, but we do not come so He sleeps in our hearts. He says, "Let this man be drawn toward his own desires and let him go through the ups and downs of life. Let nature come and give him sound kicks, and let him realize that what he was running after with all his heart and soul was not worthy of his life or his love. Let him realize this; then he will come and try to awaken Me while I am asleep, in his heart. So let him realize this and let him come to Baba."

Infinity is there in your heart lying asleep. You have never bothered to see if He is there. He has been shouting at the top of His voice all of your life. You have been seeing His name spread around the world, but you run after your desires. Now you have to come back and retrace your steps, and when you become present in your heart, you find Him asleep. Then you have to wake Him up.

It is only through love that you can awaken Him. "Oh Baba, I'm so sorry. I did not know You were in my heart all the time. I have been reading Your books, I have been hearing about You, I have been taking Your *darshan* so many times, but Your real *darshan* I have never had. I do not know Your Reality. Baba, I fold my hands before You. I surrender my life to You. Please wake up. Please wake up." And go on shouting this to yourself every spare minute of your life.

Baba does not say that you should not look after your

duties. Baba does not want you to be indifferent to your relatives, to your friends, to your wife or to your children. We must not be indifferent in the least. Baba says that if you become indifferent to your material responsibility, then you have become indifferent to Him. You must carry out all your responsibilities, but He has a claim over your precious heart which belongs to you and no one else. He has been living in your heart all the time - and now you have come to know - so knock upon the door and wake Him up. Baba says, 'Once I am awakened in your heart, I will keep you awake all your life, even through eternity. I shall awaken you to the flame of that love in which you will always see My name; and Mine is nothing else but God the Highest.'

You do not have to seek God anywhere else. You need not undertake pilgrimages with all their expense of time and money. What do you get from going on pilgrimages? They are the old beaten paths. Baba has shown you the new path and created a highway for you. He has, during His lifetime, given you so much. Avail yourselves of this treasure; otherwise we will all become men of lost opportunity.

The Perfect Master Kabir has said, 'If you have to do something tomorrow, do it today. If you have to do it today, do it now. If you go on postponing, your whole lifetime will pass away and you will not be able to accomplish anything.' So make a resolve from today about what I have told you just now: that even though Meher Baba is everywhere, He is to be awakened in our hearts.

If I claim to be a Baba-lover and claim to do service to Baba, then I must realize Him; and if I do not realize Him, my life has gone to the dogs. Be patient. It is not as easy to do something as it is to talk about it. So be patient. Anything that you have to acquire always entails much of your time. A man does not become a graduate overnight. Rome was not built in a day. We have to pour our time, our blood, our sweat and our energy into realizing Meher Baba. And one day you will surely be His.

Meher Baba says, "I have come to give you the experience that once given is never lost, and that cannot be anything but the experience of the Highest of the High." And may Avatar Meher Baba bless you all.

Coming Together In Baba-Work

Dear brothers and sisters: today is not the day for making a long speech. It is a day for joining our hearts together. In the groundwork of our resolve and conviction, let us plow deeply and sow the seeds of mutual love and understanding.

Since Meher Baba is all-knowing and all-powerful, what need is there for His lovers to establish centers and propagate His message? Cannot we simply keep our love confined to our hearts and His message confined to our heads? This is true, in a way. Baba needs no one to look after His real work. His life and Love are self-evident and convincing. One who aspires to be benefitted receives His Love through Baba's will or draws it through his own love for Baba. On the other hand, for those who have neither aptitude nor concern, Baba has the power to extend His Love. So really, what need is there for anyone to strive to do something which he calls Baba-work and call himself a Baba-worker?

A mother loves her child and can teach him or her everything she knows; but Meher Baba has the whole family of humanity to look after. This may sound fantastic, but it is true.

From a reservoir water can flow to every nook and corner of a town, house, garden or street, but no one can make use of it unless the pipelines are laid and the required water-flow is channeled and directed. Likewise, the sense of doing Baba-work could be attributed to this need for a pipeline system.

Work can be done in many ways. Creating a center offers people a facility for coming together to sing, pray and discourse. This is one of the ways of doing Baba-work collectively.

There are some Baba-lovers who for years have been working and sacrificing silently and undemonstratively, giving all they can to uphold the truth of their love and conviction, which they accept as a gift from their Beloved Baba.

Everyone works in his or her own way. Some work comes to the view of others; other work may remain ever concealed, known only to the doer and the one for whom it is done. Such work has its own charm, strength and merit. It stays like unflamed fire, ever warm and potent.

Today is the birthday of Beloved Baba and the birth of a new house of Baba-work in Bombay. May this day also be an awakening for us to a new way of understanding, mutual kinship and help toward the development of Baba-work. It is always easy to talk of mutual adjustment, but so difficult to do it. A variety of views and voices creates a difference. A difference may create friction, but friction should not necessarily create a split. As long as we pledge ourselves to a spirit of give-and-take within reason and mutual regard and respect, then neither difference nor friction can undermine our amity and goodwill.

The Importance Of Meher Baba's Tomb

The mind is as helpful as it is destructive. It is the same game of love and hate that goes on with it all the time: it loves and hates; it constructs and destroys. So it is the mind that we have to tackle. Without it we cannot live or exist. Eventually, like a scaffolding of a building that is erected for constructing a wall, it has to be discarded. But even when the wall is constructed, we fall in love with the scaffolding and do not want to give it up. We embrace the scaffolding and eschew the wall.

Similarly, we eschew Reality and embrace our mind, with which we have been associated for who knows how long - millions of births and deaths. The mind eventually has to go, but we cannot try to force it out. I always said this mind is like a barking dog that follows the man. If you kick the dog, then it bites you. So we cannot afford to kick it or to be absolutely unresponsive to it. We have to respond. But the time comes when we have to disregard the promptings of the mind. Knowing that all the promptings the mind gives are not really helpful, we should not give great importance to it.

This mind is as important as it is unimportant, and these are the two things we must know. We must exercise a game of love and hate with this mind. We cannot do without it, but if we try to follow our mind to the bitter end of our lives, I think we would destroy ourselves.

I would like to ask you to ask questions - any question that may be burning the inner self. I think by exchanging a few thoughts we can come to a point where we can put our minds at

ease. To begin with I shall take up one question myself, "What is the good of my going to Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb?"

The Tomb is next in importance to the proximity of the physical presence of the Avatar. When He is actually in the body, that time is really very different and unique. But then He leaves behind the last remains of the body in which He lived for seventy-five years or so - the body which contains that fragrance which becomes of great benefit to humanity.

You will see among the Hindus in India that the dead invariably are cremated; they are not buried. But if a man happens to be a recognized saint, or even has saintly qualities, he is not cremated but buried. Why is he buried? It is because the Indians know the importance of the proximity of the tomb where that saint, Perfect Master or great spiritual man is buried.

"This is all right," you say. "The importance of the proximity of Baba's Tomb is there. But what about myself? How do I feel?" There are some who say they feel very peaceful when they go to the Tomb. Others say they get disturbed and do not want to go near it. I say after having spent your money and having come 10,000 miles, do not miss a chance to go to the Tomb.

I shall give a small analogy. The sun is shining and I want to take a sunbath. Then I get in a hell of a mood and do not want to take a sunbath. In spite of my mood, I do it anyway. I still get all the advantages of the sun - they are not missed. Likewise, all the advantages we get from the proximity of the Tomb are never lost. They are not dependent upon our moods.

Every moment my moods change; every second my thoughts change. Where is the stability of thoughts and emotions? If I were to catch hold of these thoughts and emotions, I do not know where I would lead myself. I must have a purpose in life. I should take a certain decision in my life and hold on to something. Meher Baba says, "Hold on to my *daaman*."

You should not make your going to the Tomb absolutely dependent upon how you feel or how you think. Do not miss the chance!

Somebody asked me, "Don't you think I should feel Meher Baba in my heart? Why should I go to His Tomb?" He is right. Eventually you are to feel Meher Baba in your heart; there is

no doubt about that. But where is the heart? Is that the cardia encased in my chest? The real heart means the soul. The outward expression or manifestation of the soul is symbolized by the heart.

I shall explain the great advantage of going to Meher Baba's Tomb. A man is composed of three bodies. Baba has explained this in the *Discourses* and *God Speaks*. They are the physical body, the subtle body and the mental body. I suppose all of you have read about them. If you want me to go deeper into it, it would take a long time; for the present I will not. Suffice it to say that we have three bodies. The physical we are able to see and touch; the subtle is full of energy; and the mental is the seat of thought. There are also three types of *sanskaras* - physical, subtle and mental - that are aligned with these three bodies. Physical *sanskaras* are the grossest and densest, and the more dense a *sanskara* is, the more difficult it is to be eradicated or destroyed.

I shall explain it to you by an analogy created by me. It has a basis and I shall explain how I arrived at this conclusion. Physical *sanskaras* are not easy to destroy. The destruction of physical *sanskaras* comes about by your proximity to the Tomb, by being near the love orbit of Meher Baba's last remains. This is the greatest advantage, so do not make your going dependent upon how you feel and think. If there is any confusion, let the confusion be there; let the feeling be there; let the emotions be there. But go and sit under the sunshine of the sun that always shines. You will get the sunbath at any cost, whether you are in a good mood or a filthy mood. It does not matter. This is of great importance.

To return to my analogy, I tell you Meher Baba has left a sort of machinery at His Tomb. What is the machinery in terms of the heart? My heart is a small heart. His heart is the Universal Heart. When I go to the Tomb with the effects of the commissions and omissions of the actions of my life, I carry impure blood. This is poured into the machinery of His Universal Heart. He draws it in, churns it, purifies it and gives it back. As I always say, when He gives you back that pure blood, He takes a little of it for His Universal Work, then most of it He gives back to you. The Tomb, then, is a source of great purification for your physical *sanskaras*. This is of great importance indeed.

I arrived at this conclusion based on an incident that occurred when we visited what is called the Valley of the Saints with Meher Baba. One of the most well-known Perfect Masters of India, a Moslem, is buried there. Millions of people go there for his *darshan*. His tomb is a source of spirituality for Moslems in India. Also, Sai Baba was connected with this Perfect Master. We do not know the origin of Sai Baba, from where he came. Baba once gave a hint that he came from there. So the spirituality of Sai Baba apparently emanates from that source as well.

There is a distinction between the Avatar and Perfect Masters. Baba was the God-Man; He was not Man-God. Perfect Masters are made, but the Avatar is born. The Avatar was the first Perfect Master. He did not need a Perfect Master to make Him become a Perfect Master - He was God Himself. He went through all the stages of evolution, incarnation and involution Himself, to arrive at a point where He realized the "I am God" state, and called Himself the Avatar. All subsequent Perfect Masters needed another Perfect Master to make them Perfect Masters. This is a great difference.

To continue my story, this Perfect Master's tomb where millions of people go, has a big hill behind it. The tomb of another Perfect Master is there at the top of that hill. When Meher Baba once took a few of us mandali there, He made us keep awake the whole night. He did not allow us to sleep, so we had to keep moving. The atmosphere was calm and cool. All the time we were feeling very, very sleepy. Baba went around the tomb and inside. At 3:00 in the morning He asked, "Do you know why I came here?" "Why, Baba?" we asked. He replied that this tomb was very, very old. People would come to bow down and throw away their impressions, but the tomb - its power having faded away - was not in a position to give a proper response to those pilgrims holding their impressions. So He explained that He came to put in order these impressions so that the response people would get would be very strong, and as beneficial as possible. Oh, I was astounded to hear this! I had never heard this before from Meher Baba. He had gone to put in order the impressions hovering around the tomb of this old Perfect Master so that a response could be given in a very perfect manner to the pilgrims who would come and bow their heads and pour their *sanskaras* on the

tomb of that Perfect Master. That was the very basis of my analogy.

Then I wondered why Baba built His Tomb so many years before He dropped His body. Why were constant instructions given to the mandali that wherever He dropped His body, it should be interred in this crypt? Why was it done, if it had no importance? Was Baba attached to His body? Why should the Avatar, the Universal Consciousness, give so much importance to His body? The importance is not for Himself. The importance is for others, to give benefit to others.

That is why I stress one thing - never miss a chance to go to Baba's Tomb. This leads to another question, "Would it matter if I go only once or twice? Why should I go all the time?" Suppose there are ten students in a class. One student imbibes everything by one reading; another student has to read it two times; the third student has to read it ten times; and the fourth has to read it fifty times. We, in our sanskaric existence, differ from one another as much as we differ in our faces and our external appearance, in our temper and in our way of thinking. I would not take the risk, but would go as many times as possible while here in India. Maybe I am able to imbibe the influence and Love of Meher Baba by the proximity of the Tomb the first time I go. But this is something that takes place within me, unseen and unperceived. So why take a risk when I do not know?

Another aspect of proximity with Meher Baba is *sahavas*. *Sahavas* means companionship and contact. Baba gave a greater importance, when many congregated, to having *sahavas*, than He did to giving a discourse, although He discoursed too. But through His discourses there was *sahavas*, this contact which is of great importance. How great it is we do not know.

Proximity to the Tomb is one of the aspects of *sahavas*. It is second only in importance to His physical presence.

Pleasing the Avatar

To answer another question, there are many useful practices in the *Discourses* and *God Speaks*. Out of the explanations and revelations of these inner stages that Meher Baba has given, we should try to have an understanding. But we should not try to practice it or gain it because Meher Baba says *all* we have to

do in our relationship with Him is love Him, serve Him and please Him. Pleasing Him is the greatest thing of our lives, for those of us who are lovers of Meher Baba. It is even greater than obeying Him, and I would say even than loving Him, because to please Him means to dance to the tune of His wish all the time. I can make a distinction between pleasing Him and obeying Him, and the distinction is this: as a result of pleasing Him, He shall make you like Himself. He is not interested only in turning you into gold. But He is interested in giving you that power, which when exercised, turns others into gold. That is what is called in an Indian language *parus*. *Parus* is an alchemy. If *parus* is touched to anything in the world - it may be a stone, it may be metal, anything at all - it is turned into gold. So Baba says He does not want merely for us to be turned into gold; rather He wants *us* to become *parus*, so that if we touch a thousand others, they will turn into gold. This is the meaning of pleasing Him.

Suppose I want God-realization. I will get it for my own satisfaction. I have love for Meher Baba, and He loves me; then I am satisfied. It is for myself. In the beginning we were so much engrossed in this. I love Meher Baba and He loves me; that was all.

Then when did the question for the mandali, at least for me, arise about taking an interest in the *Discourses*, to interpret them? A time came for me to think in terms of helping others feel the peace and joy that I felt. Given my love for Baba and His love for me, should I not share this with others? The thought comes naturally, which brings the question of how can I convince other people to go near Meher Baba to enjoy this peacefulness, this joy and this happiness. It was then I started reading the *Discourses*, taking an interest in them and interpreting many things.

It was a great help for me to say things about Baba, to convince others so that I could wean them away from the world and bring them to Baba. They need not lose the world. The world remains. The world is not dependent upon a renouncing of it or an attachment to it. The world ever goes on; it does not bother about me or you. It is my attachment or detachment to it that has a real effect on my life.

Meher Baba says to hold on to His *daaman* till the very end. So what is this end? The end is not when He dropped His

body. The end is not when I die in a hundred years or whenever. The end is when my mind is completely destroyed.

If we have to throw away our ego, how can we exist and how can we live in the world? It is the central ego, the mind, that brings all experience together, collects information so that we become cognizant. If the ego were not there, our experiences would be confused. They would have no meaning. As it is said, this ego has to be given up, eliminated.

One poet says:

Mere jan mujko kuch. aisa tera jadu ho jai

Duria mai mai nazar apralc tow he toe ho jai

Na aprak kai asheq mai samaju aseb

Gar khurdi apne mai tarden kuda me toe ho jai.

Cast a spell of magic upon me, O God. Please bless me in such a way that I am able to get over my ego.

Everything that I see is mine, mine, mine. You can turn it into Yours, Yours, Yours. This is an

understanding I have gotten from the things nearest my heart.

The poet is saying that from a source near his heart, he has an understanding that if he wants to realize God, he has to give up his ego completely. So he asks God to bless him so that he can get over it.

A great importance in the domain of spirituality is given to the elimination of the ego. This ego is so helpful yet so destructive. It has its own timing, and eventually it has to go. But how can I throw it out? This is almost an impossible thing to do. This is the exact work the Avatar does. What does He do? He asks you not to bother about your ego. The ego is there, good and bad thoughts are there, impurities are there, and weaknesses and strengths are there. You do not bother about them, but do one thing: turn your attention to Meher Baba. This is the positive way of doing it.

There are two ways of cleansing your mind. The mind is like a bathroom that is full of dirt. I can step into it, pick up and throw out every particle of dirt. My whole lifetime may not be long enough for me to cleanse the whole bathroom full of so many millions of particles of dirt. Baba says do not bother about it. Why not cleanse your mind in this manner: take a bucket full of water, of love for Meher Baba, and splash it in

the bathroom. It will wash it all away. If one bucket is not enough, use another. If another is not enough, then use a third one. Go on doing it every day - one bucket every day or ten buckets every day. A time will come when you will become completely clean.

The Trick of Renunciation

Somebody has asked me a question about something that Meher Baba said: at the last moment before one dies, if a person utters Meher Baba's name, then he goes to Him. What is the meaning of this? Should I really anticipate that any man who may have led any type of life in the world can, at the end of it, say "Meher Baba" and be released from illusion, this illusion that he has been entangled in for many, many years?

It is quite possible. That is to say, you become dedicated to Meher Baba by virtue of that moment, one which is very important in your life. A chance is given to you by nature to balance those impressions and get out of them and illusion. As Baba says, at the time of death all the *sanskaras* come up and you get a chance to balance them, work out the plus from the minus and get a release from illusion. But it hardly happens unless you are blessed by a master, a master like Meher Baba, the Avatar of the Age. Otherwise when they just come into balance, they again get disturbed and you have another birth after a little time in some other domain.

It is quite possible for one to get entirely released if he is blessed by Baba, if he remembers Baba's name. But it is not necessarily so that he will get released immediately from the rounds of birth and death.

This at least, is my interpretation - anybody may have another one. Mine is based on my experience with Baba.

What happens is that Meher Baba takes full charge of that man. He may get released entirely from illusion - no more births and deaths. Or if there are any more, Meher Baba may

give him births and deaths within the domain of His work, in order to work for Him until such time that He finds that this man should be completely released.

What is a release from illusion if I am able to help with Baba's work, the Universal Work of the Avatar? Should I really look for my own release, or should I look for a position where I would be made to work upon the universe for humanity, to give them service? I think this latter choice is even higher.

Once Baba said that after God-realization, a very high desire remains; you cannot even call it a desire - it is a longing, a wish, something which says, "O God, O Meher Baba, O Avatar, You have given me this God-realization. I am very happy for myself. But what about others? Let them have the same experience - the same bliss and the same qualities that I enjoy in this release from illusion. Why should others not have it? That desire ever remains with me."

Meher Baba's view, then, is not always to give one a release. It could be possible at any moment, but it is better to aspire to become His, to please Him. Indeed sir, pleasing Him is a far greater thing.

Meher Baba always said that pleasing the Avatar is the greatest thing one can achieve in his life. It is not really possible. To please Him means to dance to His tune. During His lifetime, He veritably made people dance. We were kept on tenterhooks! Every minute we are to obey the instructions He gives us. His instructions are difficult indeed, but not impossible, for He will always help us do them. But that is the life, Baba says, that a Baba-lover should aspire for, one that is better than one's own release from illusion. Everybody wants release from illusion - God-realization - but this is a higher desire.

One poet says so beautifully in a couplet that Baba liked so much:

*Give up this world,
Give up the inner world,
And give up God.*

Whenever Meher Baba mentioned anything to be given up, He never mentioned anything to be given up physically. Physically giving up anything really has no meaning; rather it

is the mental detachment, the detachment of our minds from an attachment to a certain thing, a certain person or a certain circumstance. This detachment is very necessary.

A man, as I have always said, may be sitting on top of the Himalaya Mountains while his mind is working in the gutter of Ahmednagar. Contrarily, a *mast* may stay in the gutter all his life, but his mind may be as high as the Himalaya Mountains. That makes one's world such that wherever one's mind is, he is. One is not necessarily wherever his body is.

Let a man experience the circumstances that are facing him, but all those experiences are for the mind, not the body. The body is only an instrument. The body comes and goes, but the mind does not go; it remains. This very damn mind, which is so helpful in so many ways, becomes such a great hindrance to human beings that it eventually has to be destroyed. This is really self-effacement. This is what Meher Baba calls *Man-o-Nash*. It is not easily achieved, but we do have to aspire for it.

So the poet says, "Give up this world." All right, the world is given up mentally. It will become detached as I am not much concerned with the world. I am in it, but not of it. I do not belong to the world.

There is a poet who so beautifully says, "I am born into the world. I pass the market but I don't buy anything." This means, I have a birth in this world, but as I go by the market, through life, I do not purchase anything at all - I am absolutely untouched. I have mentally turned away from the world, though I am in it all the time.

What is next? Meher Baba has said there are inner stages from the first to the sixth stages of consciousness, and there are varied experiences of lights, beauty, music and so forth. I am so enchanted and attracted by them, but I am to renounce them. They are the wayside stations, and I have to go further.

There was one Muslim who came to me and I recited the couplet before him: "Give up this world, give up the inner world and give up God." That man, you see, was so much awed by the very statement that I made, "Give up God" - it was blasphemous.

I said, "Sir, you have not understood. How can you give up God? You cannot give up God because He resides in your heart all the time. Meher Baba who is the personification of God said, 'I AM IN THE HEART ALL THE TIME.' Even if you

want to renounce Him, you cannot. You are not conscious He is there, but He is there. The meaning is that you renounce the desire for God-realization." Then it got into his head and he was all right.

So I will give up the desire of God-realization, and what then of my inner station? I have developed a greater ego of having given up this world, of having given up the inner world, of having given up even the desire for God. What a big renunciator I am! I have given up all these egos and developed a bigger and higher ego! This has to go. What does this mean? What shall I do? I have to renounce the sense of having renounced all this. I have to renounce that ego which has been developed. That is what I say.

Is it really possible, after all I said, to give up this ego? Is it really possible for a man to get over it? How could he literally do so? I challenge anybody to say that he has overcome his ego. It is not possible because it is in and through the ego we think, in and through the ego we feel, and in and through the ego we establish our relationships with the world. Without the ego, man cannot exist. It is a foundation on which he stands, and now you ask him to take it away and still keep standing! How is it possible for him to do this?

Maybe in a very rare case it is possible. As an alternative, Meher Baba has given a very easy way that can be followed in the simplest manner. Meher Baba says "Do not think about your ego; do not think about your weaknesses. Entrust everything to Me, become dedicated to Me, and love Me. If you love Me, what is going to happen? You won't have to kick out the rest of the things in your consciousness. They will fall, like the dead leaves of a tree. If the leaves turn dry and yellow, you don't have to shake the tree. They will fall of their own!"

Without a master the caliber of Meher Baba, the Avatar of the Age, this ego is very, very difficult. In spite of the fact that many poets have sung about giving up this ego, it really is not possible and we cannot achieve it.

Then what should we do? What should the ordinary man of the world do? There are many higher states of consciousness to which I can aspire. Through different exercises, through prayers, through many, many other ways of yoga and all, I can get into the higher states of consciousness. But looking toward all that Baba has said in the *Discourses* and *God Speaks*

regarding the states of consciousness, He has never - even by one sentence - asked us to practice this and get into those states of consciousness that He describes. They are not meant for Baba-lovers.

Why has Meher Baba given them? Lately we have come across a letter that Baba sent to Don Stevens, and in it is mentioned this very point.

In short, these higher states of consciousness are not meant to be sought, They are but wayside stations. The great danger to a traveler on the path is that when he gets into those states of consciousness, they become so enchanting, so gripping, he cannot come out of them. That means the end is lost in pursuit of the means.

There is an interesting story about a unique yogi who went to the sixth plane of consciousness without a guru, without a master. Only for a certain time did he have a master. Lastly it was Baba who gave him a push from the sixth plane of consciousness to the seventh plane. During my lifetime I never heard Meher Baba say anything about this saint. But when the saint's health failed, every day for three days Baba sat near the radio to hear about his condition. Baba also hung a picture of this saint right on the wall. He used to look at him and hear the news. For three days the body did not deteriorate, and on the fourth day the body started deteriorating, at which time it was placed in a crypt. Later on Baba explained that this saint was on the sixth plane of consciousness, and it was He who gave him a push.

Without a master, the highest master, one cannot cross the chasm that separates the sixth and the seventh planes. All are drowned in the ocean of illusion. But compared to Reality, even the sixth plane of consciousness is drowned in the ocean of illusion.

Meher Baba calls these inner stages the real illusion, while He calls the state we are in the false illusion. What is the real illusion? What is the false illusion? Both are illusion compared to Reality. Between them is a great difference. The ordinary man is drowned 2,000 feet deep and the man on the sixth plane is drowned two feet deep.

Meher Baba has never said that you should try to experience these stages. In this letter to Don, Baba says,

"Love and direct relatedness with the Avatar form

the high road of all roads of inner development, and while I am in the body and for sometime after I drop My body - the potential for Love and direct relationship is there and should be used.

"But one day as the Truth and the presence of the Avatar begin to diminish, then humanity will have to use lesser, secondary techniques. I must provide for that time, and so I have given out these extensive discourses on meditation.

"But do not mistake Me, because meanwhile, it is a distraction to use meditations."

These discourses and books are not meant to supplant the direct relationship Baba lovers have with Baba. Baba often said that He was going to come back after 700 years. If He comes back after 700 years, then the active effect of His work would last for 100 years. If Baba comes back after 1400 years, then the force of the work that He has done would last for 200 years.

These books are meant as a secondary line of defense or activity. After all the force that He has put into spirituality, it is to be used and absorbed for the benefit of humanity, and not to be wasted. Naturally when it is absorbed it fades away. How does it fade away? All the work that the Avatar does with the world is bound by the process of laws; it is not beyond them. It has to go through the process, and it lasts actively for 100 years. After 100 years all the writings He has given will be made use of by the world. That is a secondary line, a sort of worship or way to remember God and to achieve Him.

There are persons who ask questions, "Oh, the *Discourses* are not meant for us?" "Oh, *God Speaks* is only meant for the mandali?" During His lifetime, Baba never said to read the *Discourses*.

I will tell you a funny story. Kaikobad used to say to Dr. Nilu, "Have you read these *Discourses*? On page twenty-five it says this, and on page fifty it is this, on page seventy-five it is this...." Once or twice Nilu kept quiet - he gave him a quiet hearing. Then later Nilu said, "Kaikobad, why are you talking about the *Discourses*? They are not meant for you; they are not meant for us mandali." That old man was so much taken aback! "They are not meant for the mandali, and I am not a

mandali?" Nilu continued, "Why are you insisting on my reading the *Discourses* when Baba doesn't do it? Why should you do it? I don't understand." And from that time Kaikobad never mentioned them again. He used to say them all by heart, as if he would be lifted up through learning the *Discourses* by heart.

Baba even says that when you read the *Discourses* it is not going to lift you from the mundane to anything spiritual. It gives you a great understanding, of course, and that understanding gives you the capacity to give this understanding to others, to wean people away from the world in order to induce them to Baba. In this way it is useful. Of course during the time of our reading we are said to be meditating upon Baba, and that becomes helpful; but in itself, this reading and intellectual understanding do not take us any higher. This understanding is something you should have.

The states of consciousness are good for our understanding, but they are not good for our practice. How so? Because if I come to be a Baba-lover, I should not bother about them. They may be useful to some outsider who cannot really become a Meher Baba-lover; let him do what he likes. But they are not for me because I have a better source, infinitely better - the blessings of Meher Baba by which He says He takes me blindfolded to the other end. So I am not to worry.

I have given an example many times of how Meher Baba works with us. We carry around with us the millions of *sanskaras* from previous lives. Let us compare them to a skyscraper representing a human being with his individual human mind. The real Self is at the back of it; it is not seen. Only this portion of the mind and body is seen. The body automatically goes, but the mind does not go until it is completely destroyed. Until the mind goes through *Man-o-Nash* (annihilation of the mind), it is not possible to realize the higher self and know who you are.

Meher Baba has to work upon you so that your ego, which is represented by your mind - the ego is the very center of your mind - is completely eliminated. Then your consciousness, the spotlight of your entire consciousness, shines upon your real Self and you realize the "I am God" state.

Suppose all these stories upon stories of the skyscraper are to be destroyed. There are two ways of doing it. In one way

somebody goes to the top and removes the top story. Then he comes to the second story from the top and removes it. Then comes the third story down, and it is removed, and so on. As the stories are removed, there is a great change evidenced in the life of the person. Oh, he has become so spiritual! He looks very virtuous, he looks very spiritual and all that. This is one way of doing it, until you get to the bottom and remove the entire foundation. That means that the entire mind is removed and the problem of your life is solved.

But in the case of Meher Baba, it is not like this. There is a great danger in removing one story after another; it is not an easy thing to do. I compare the removal of one story after another to conscious advancement on the part of a man when he gets attracted by the inner stages and gets enchanted by them. Maybe he will get entrenched or bogged down in them and will not be able to go further. Meher Baba does not do it like that.

Every individual has a high skyscraper of his entire being, an accumulation of *sanskaras* of millions of previous lives. Meher Baba leaves the skyscraper standing as it is. He goes in like a termite into the foundation and carves it out, making the entire foundation hollow. Then He recedes. When the proper time comes, He passes over the whole structure and it topples down in a fraction of a second. No other agency is required to do it. He does it. He sows the seed and the latter result automatically follows.

During that time, the building stands as good or as bad as ever. People may say, "What is the change in this man who has been with Baba for fifty years? He looks as bad or as good as he was before." They are perfectly right; nothing changes at all. You see the man, his habits and his ways, but his inner relationship with Meher Baba and love is a different thing.

We are Baba-lovers and must develop that understanding of who He is, and what He has to say - only these two things. That understanding should be very proper and very right. If the understanding is not right, then the conviction that follows cannot be right. If the understanding is correct, if the concept is correct, then the conviction will be correct. All we have to do, according to me, is to develop that conviction and not bother about those inner stages of spirituality. It is a relationship of pure love and dedication, and of the lover wanting to please the Beloved. This is the whole crux of our lives with Meher Baba.

***Have Hope:
Attaining Freedom From One's Nature***

Time is long but life is short. Mind is fast but heart is slow. Anger is high but patience is low. Actions are strong but morals are weak. There is an abundance of thinking but a sad lack of thoughtfulness. What we mostly do is for immediate gain; what we mostly feel is eventually for ourselves; and what we invariably see is on the surface. We are hardly able to either rise above our nature or go deeply into it. As a result, all of our experience in thought, feeling and action becomes either one-sided or superficial. This is what we call our natural life. Whatever we think, feel and do, we take as best for ourselves and others because we consider these things as truth.

This so-called natural life is formed into habits of living. Such a trend of living has come to us from our distant past, and it is very difficult to get over it in the present or the near future. Perhaps even the distant future, after many reincarnations, would not be enough for us to get over it. We may put in all our effort, we may put in all our strength, and for a time find ourselves induced into a state of abandonment of our nature. But a reaction soon sets in and we are thrown back into the vortex of the same old habits. The release can only come from a Perfect Master or the Avatar.

Today is the birthday of our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. He is the personification of God. He is the One for whom the protagonists of most religions are waiting. He has come, but they know not that He is the One who is expected. They know not that He is the Ancient One. They know not that He is the living Avatar of the Age. This is perhaps because He comes in

a different body and with a different name. A change of name and body makes no change in His being the Ancient One.

Beloved Baba is pleased to give this message on His seventieth birthday, today:

The aim of life is to love God.

The goal of life is to become one with God.

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

I have suffered much and will have to suffer much more till I break My silence.

I give My love to My lovers.

Throughout the forty years of His Avataric work, Baba has unrestrainedly declared that love is the only resource and the last recourse of man for a permanent release from the limitations of his own nature, which is the root cause of all unhappiness and suffering in the world. The victory that one seeks to gain over the lives and properties of others is to be gained over one's self. This does not amount to giving up anything physically or materially. It is the attitude of mind and its application toward everyone and everything that needs to be transformed. This victory is achieved by dedicating all that we have - good and bad - at the altar of the feet of the Beloved.

To any and all - be he a businessman or hawker, a clerk or governor, a researcher or student, a king or beggar, no matter what his profession - the alchemy of love can keep each one untouched by extreme selfishness and self-gain made at the expense of others. In all our actions the feelings of love, sympathy and consideration of others should be our main incentive.

Love is not very difficult to understand. It is so deeply ingrained in us that we hardly try to become conscious of it. Love for our mothers, children, wives or friends is as easy to feel as the very breath of our lives. But there is many a slip between the cup of love and the lip of the lover. All sorts of self-distinctions of birth, position, riches, talents and religion obstruct the free flow of love from man to man.

It is difficult for those unassociated with Meher Baba to grasp the language of the heart which Meher Baba speaks. It is more difficult for them to understand the height of Baba's

spiritual status from where His utterances flow. As a result, His utterances go over their heads or are considered to be of little consequence.

I shall give you an instance. There was a surgeon, an expert in his field. He worked with a fervor and feeling that silenced many a vociferous and inquiring man and woman going to him as a patient, or as a friend or relative interested in a patient. The surgeon was known for talking less and working more. Those who knew him well preferred his talking less, had faith in him and relied on his work. Those who were newcomers pestered him with questions, but he knew that technical answers, if given, would go over their heads.

The silence of Avatar Meher Baba has been an integral part of His life for the benefit of humanity. It is based on the Truth with which He is One; all His pronouncements proceed from the Truth. Time, space and events live in what the human mind conceives in ignorance. Compared to Reality, these things have no independent existence and have only one significance: time, space and events comprise the enormous suffering Avatar Meher Baba bears upon Himself in order to relieve humanity from its bondage. May His will prevail.

Meher Baba's Messages In A Nutshell

My dear sisters and brothers - I find a great joy in being given an occasion to come here and see you all in such good numbers and at a place where the hall is so commodious. Of all the meetings we have had so far, I think this is one of the best, and I am very happy to share your love for Avatar Meher Baba this evening. I feel indeed a greater joy in finding so many persons who, though not having seen Baba in the physical form, have come. Of course, you will be able to see Baba today in the film. But it gives me greater joy to find that most of you, not having seen Baba, have come to love Him so much, and that there is so much interest to hear about Meher Baba.

Many of you may have read Baba's books. Many of you may not have read His books. So today I would just like to give you, in a nutshell, the main messages of Meher Baba. There is a wealth of literature given to us by Baba in the form of His messages. To read them would certainly take a fairly long time. To understand them would take still longer. Avatar Meher Baba is a personage who, I would say, includes everything; everything in the entire creation; everything in the entire universe - not only the universe that has been discovered by scientists, but also the infinite number of universes, as Baba says, that science has not yet discovered. He is all-pervading. Everything is included in Him. And, Baba says, He is beyond even that. He is in the pristine state of Godhood, in the Beyond Beyond state. He is in the state where creation is coming into being, which is called the Beyond state. In short, He is the entire Reality, existing as Reality and

existing in every particle and in every being in the whole world.

To really understand Him adequately, as I said, would take a long time. Today I will give you just the essence of His messages, an extract of the most important things that He wanted to convey to us. Many of you may think, "Meher Baba calls Himself the Avatar of the Age. He is in the seventh heaven, and I am an ordinary man. I do not know, in spite of His coming to earth in human form, whether I shall be able to understand Him really. He calls Himself so big and great, and I am but a small man on earth." But it is not so. I shall explain it to you, sir.

The very beauty of Baba's messages - His very presence has made things so simple in our lives - is such that we can grasp (at least intellectually) what Truth is in the light of the understanding that Baba has given to humanity. An Indian poet very beautifully says in Urdu, "It is only in the ups and downs of my thought that I am so involved. I have complicated matters to such an extent that I call God the most complicated Being. But it is not so. God is most simple. He's the simplest of the simple." Simple does not mean a fool, sir. All the complications exist within our minds. And through the spectrum, through the curtain of these complications, we try to see Reality which, as a result, appears complicated. Otherwise, God is most simple.

God eludes our attention. We are not able to understand Him. Even though we are thinking with our minds, through our logic, all the actions of our lives are really not always logical. There are many, many actions which are most illogical. We try to understand Meher Baba by applying the yardstick of our logic to measure His height and depth. We absolutely fail because logic cannot grasp the Truth. At most, it can give us a little intellectual understanding. But what actual Reality is can never be experienced by the mind.

Baba says that we need not do any *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). We need not do any yoga or *puja* (the path of attainment which usually emphasizes external observance of religious rituals). We do not have to exert ourselves in this manner at all to understand Him, feel Him and see Him. Baba says that He resides in our hearts twenty-four hours of the day,

and if we really want to see Him and feel Him - feel His presence - we can do it. ·

The poet Hafiz was a Perfect Master (*Sadguru*) from Iran. An idea that Hafiz expresses is that if you want to see the presence of God, the presence of the Avatar in your heart, you also must be present there; do not keep yourself absent from your own heart. Do not run after your desires. Do not go outside of your heart. Keep yourself present in your heart so that you will be able to see and feel Him there.

Our spiritual growth should unfold with no great labor in a most natural manner. I will give you an example. A child is born to parents, and he grows. We do not know how the child grows. The child at one time is a small baby, then he grows to two feet, three feet, four feet, six feet. How does he grow? In the most natural circumstances. The child doesn't need to do any *sadhana*, or yoga or *puja*, and yet he grows. We cannot observe how he does this, yet he grows in the most natural manner.

Meher Baba says, "I have instilled the growth of that soul in you, of that *atma* in you, of that spirituality in you, so that it unfolds in the most natural way. You need not do any acrobatics of the mind, any *sadhana*, nor undergo a long fast nor a long penance." You need not sit on top of the Himalaya Mountains to understand and feel Him. You need not go on any pilgrimages. You need not go to Nasik or Hardwar. You need not go to Kailas. What is left? God is everywhere. God is equally placed everywhere. He is as much in your house as in His Kailas. What is the importance of Kailas? Baba says, "I am in you, in your heart." Do not try to seek Him anywhere else except in your own heart.

Naturally you may ask the question, "Baba says that He resides in my heart, but how do I find Him? How do I know Him? How do I understand Him? How do I feel Him?" Shall I ask you a simple question? Do you love your child? Do you love your mother? Do you love your father? Does a husband love his wife? Do I love my friend? Do I love my teacher? This love is already there. Nobody has taught you how to love your father. I was never taught how to love my brother. A woman was never taught how to love her husband. The husband never had to be educated on how to love his wife. It is there already within you. You just have to make use of what already exists within you.

By loving Baba wholeheartedly, you can get everything. But don't ask! - then you will get everything. The Perfect Master Kabir - you may have heard his name - has said that if you do not ask and He gives it to you, what comes to you is something like pure milk. If you ask and He gives it to you, it is like water. And if you try to extract it from Him, pestering Him all the time, "Fulfill my desire!" "Give me this!" it is like blood. Have faith in Him. Does not a child have faith in his mother? A child is not able to look after himself. But the mother looks after the child. We must become a child before God, Meher Baba, and entrust ourselves to Him; then He will give us everything. Baba wants only our love - unselfish, pure, unadulterated, simple love - and nothing else.

Because of a relationship, you love all your friends, your parents, and so forth. So with Meher Baba, you have to establish your relationship, and then of course, you begin loving Him. And this relationship is established by creating circumstances in which you grow in love for Him. These very circumstances, this environment, are greatly responsible for evoking love in your heart. I shall give you an instance to that effect. A woman gives birth to a child. At the time of birth, the child is removed from the real mother and taken to another woman in whose charge the child is reared. By the circumstances created, the child begins loving the false mother as if she were the real mother, and when the real mother comes before the child, the child turns his face and says, "You're not my mother. I do not love you at all. She is my mother!" I am just giving an example of how circumstances are responsible for the growth of love.

Baba says, "I reside in your heart all the time, twenty-four hours, every minute of your life. I am there with every breath that you breathe. With every heartbeat, I am there. The only thing is for you to create the circumstances by which you will be able to love Me."

The next point arises: how shall you create the circumstances by which you will be able to love Baba? Baba says He is the Avatar of the Age. He says He is the personification of God, and He resides in your heart all the time. How is it possible for you to love Him? There are ways and methods which Baba has suggested. Baba says, "It is very easy. Think of Me, remember Me, read My literature." You may talk with the people who

have had long contact with Meher Baba. You may meditate upon Him. You may think about Him much of your time. You need not allot a fixed time of an hour or so in the morning or at night. But just as you sit, walk, or do your work, or put a morsel of food in your mouth, or before you fall asleep or after you arise, remember Him. It is very easy. It is not difficult at all.

A man can be working in his office. During the working hours he gets many spare moments. He gets a little tea time; he gets a little time to talk. Likewise, a woman at home can pay attention to every bit of the responsibility of her life. But every moment she can remember Him. When she takes a pitcher of water she can say, "Baba." When she lifts it up she can say, "Baba." When she opens the tap, she remembers Him. When she cooks food, she can remember Him. Before sleeping, she can remember Him. Perform all your duties very faithfully; do not neglect them. But every spare moment of the day, without mental exertion, without any strong *sadhana*, you can continue remembering Him and creating the circumstances whereby His love will be evoked in your heart. Baba says He likes you to pay attention to every bit of the responsibility of your life at work and at home.

You can also allot a little time and sit quietly. Baba has simplified it so much that as you live, work and grow, you grow with Him and begin loving Him. The previous Avatars and Perfect Masters have introduced a life which is not suitable to present day circumstances. This is the *Kali Yuga*, the age of darkness. So Baba has put it in such a way that while doing all your work, earning your money, looking after your family, God's love can grow in your heart.

A man can do it. A woman can do it. A student can do it. An old man can do it. Anybody can do it. It is so easy. It requires no money. It requires no talent. It requires no beauty. Anybody on the earth, in any corner or any place, in any profession, any service, is able to do it.

Baba says, "I am present in your heart." But why is it that you do not feel it? He says, "Because you do not love. Because you are not present there. That's why. I reside in your heart. When I see that you are not present, I go to sleep. I am asleep in your heart. You have to wake Me up. And the only thing that can awaken Baba in your heart is love, is constant remembrance, and nothing else."

Imagine that a mother and child are sleeping, and the child wakes up and wants milk. What does he do? He shouts, wails and perhaps pats his mother to wake her up so that she will feed him some milk. We have to be like a child and try to wake Him up. He is asleep. All along He has been asleep within us because we have paid no attention to Him. We should start right from this moment paying attention and trying to wake up Meher Baba, who is all-pervading and so much in our hearts. He says that we will be able to see Him and feel Him, and that once we awaken Him the result will be that we will enjoy all-knowledge, all-power and all-bliss. The *Sat-Chit-Anand* state which Meher Baba says He enjoys, will come to us. We will be able to experience it. We will be able to enjoy life, and there will be no fear of life here or hereafter - no fear of losing money, no fear of losing name, no fear of losing reputation, no fear of death. Death has to come, but without fear. It will be all joy and all bliss.

Baba says He is the Ocean of Love. He is the Ocean of everything. And when we wake Him up in our hearts by loving Him very much then His experience, which is that of the Ocean of Love, will be our destiny. We will be able to live as the Ocean and not as a drop, a helpless small man. Though in the same body, we will be inwardly all aflame with His Love. We shall even experience the same knowledge, the same power and the same bliss which He does.

Although Meher Baba calls Himself the Avatar of the Age, He has said that, "You and I are not we but one. You are as much God as I am. The only difference is that I am conscious that I am God. And you, being God yourself, are not conscious of it. So I have come to give you that consciousness of your real Self, which is nothing else but God."

Baba wants us to be most independent in our love for God and not rely upon anybody. And if we have to rely upon anyone, rely only on Meher Baba who says that He is the personification of God---He is the Avatar. No intermediary is necessary. The priests come and say, "I am your intermediary. I know the gate to God. You will not be able to enter unless you do this *pūja* and you pay me this money." There is nothing of this sort. We have a direct access to God, to Meher Baba.

Another of Meher Baba's messages is, "I have established Myself in your heart. I am there all the time. You need not take

anybody as an intermediary." Suppose even a person like me is responsible for giving you all the information about Meher Baba. Do not try to look upon me as your guru. Once your relationship is established with Meher Baba, look upon me as an ordinary man just as you are. Although I have spent fifty years of my life with Meher Baba, I still say that we are all one. It is heaven's right for any man to love God directly. No intermediary is necessary.

It is possible that somebody may have introduced me to Meher Baba. Somebody may have introduced you to Meher Baba. I may have introduced Meher Baba to you, but that does not mean that I should be an intermediary. Once I see that you and Meher Baba are brought together, it is your business and His business. You love Him and He responds to your love directly. After introducing you to Meher Baba or giving you the understanding of Him, suppose I tell you this: "I am very great; I am the only man holding an exalted position in the family of Meher Baba. You must respect me, fall at my feet, almost worship me and look upon me as half of Meher Baba or even all of Meher Baba." This is all false. It is selfishness. You should never submit to such an approach if I were to speak to you like that tomorrow.:

My fifty years of experience tells me, and Baba also has taught me, never to be hypocritical about anything, never to pose for what I am not.

Even if a person who has lived with Baba for fifty years comes before you and poses to be very great, it is false, bunkum and selfish; you should not believe him or give credence to what he says. God is all-powerful. Why can't we allow you to establish your direct relationship with Baba? If by coincidence I or anybody else were responsible for giving you a picture of Meher Baba or introducing you to Him, that does not mean that he or I should be a wedge between you as a lover and Meher Baba as your Beloved.

Meher Baba's spirituality is this. Every man has to be independent in his love for God, in his faith in God and in his conviction in God and in Meher Baba, who says that He is the personification of God. You see, if we get the conviction that God is, and that Meher Baba is the Avatar and personification of God, that conviction becomes so strong that it never changes. Everything else in our lives will change: our

thoughts change, our emotions change, the cells of our blood change. Man changes his body. He is born, he dies. Everything changes. But there is only one thing that does not change. Once we get that conviction, it outlives our lives. Even when the body deteriorates and dies, that conviction remains our eternal companion. And that conviction is nothing else but "God is".

I shall quote a small example which I myself have experienced about this conviction. I explained it to an American on my visit there with Meher Baba in 1956. Hundreds of people were coming and taking Meher Baba's *darshan*. One man stood at a little distance. He would not go away. He was standing and watching everything that was going on. So Baba asked me to go and have a talk with him. I went and asked him, "Sir, why have you come here?" He said, "What is going on? I don't believe in God. Who is this Meher Baba? Why does He claim to be God? I do not believe in any God. I do not believe in the God of Christianity." I said, "Sir, I admire the courage of your conviction. You are a very open-minded man, and I think Meher Baba would like you very much. Meher Baba welcomes you."

He said, "How can Meher Baba welcome me? I do not believe in God. And Meher Baba claims to be God Himself. How could He ever welcome me?" I said, "One of His messages is that you may not believe in God consciously but because you are a human being, have a human body and are alive, your very existence testifies to your unconscious faith in God."

He was a little moved. And then he further asked me, "But please, tell me what have you gained from being with Meher Baba for so many years?" I asked him a counter-question, "Sir, what is your profession?" He replied, "I am a scientist." I asked him, "How long have you been a scientist?" He said, "For many years." So I said, "Will you please explain to me what you have gained by being a scientist for many years?" "How can I tell you what I have gained during my period of twenty-five years?" "Then how can I tell you, sir, what I have gained with Meher Baba?" I continued, "How can I tell you of my thirty-seven years contact with Meher Baba in thirty seconds, thirty minutes, thirty hours, thirty days or thirty months? In spite of all that, I shall try to answer your question because you are a very sincere man, you have a desire to know, and I shall put it in a few words the best way I can. So let me tell you what I have gained from Meher Baba.

"I have gained two things. Eventually these two things merge into one. The first is that God is. Baba has really made me know, has given me the conviction, that God exists. And the second conviction is that Meher Baba is God. These two convictions are something like opposite sides of the same coin. This conviction which He has given me is so strong, so unassailable, so unceasing, that it has become more than a part and parcel of my life. It has given me great strength to know that only God is. Everything else changes."

Then he was a little more moved and said, "Of course, whatever Meher Baba is, I may not believe in Meher Baba as the Avatar of the Age; I may not believe even in God. But your description of what you have gained from Meher Baba - a conviction that does not change - is very acceptable. Everything changes in life. But that which does not change is the Truth, is God! That is a thing that does not change. And if Meher Baba could give me that conviction, don't you think that is the quality of God?" He said this and after that time he was in correspondence with me for quite a long time. So, dear sisters and brothers, a non-believer, even an atheist, by the grace of Meher Baba's love can change within a few minutes' talk. You are all lovers of Meher Baba, you are very interested in Him, and it really will not take much time to establish that peaceful, joyful existence of Meher Baba consciously in your hearts.

I would like to tell you a small instance when Baba was present. A man had come to Baba, a strange man. Baba asked him, "Will you do one thing I tell you?" He said, "I shall try to do it." Then Baba said, "Remember Me three times a day, morning, noon and evening." "I can't promise. I don't know if I shall be able to remember You three times a day." So Baba said, "It doesn't matter. Remember Me twice. At the time when you get up in the morning and before going to bed at night; remember Me only twice." He said, "No, Baba, I can't promise." So Baba said, "All right, remember Me once a day." He said, "No, Baba, I can't give you any promise whether I shall succeed or not, whether I shall remember or not; I can't remember You even once a day." Then Baba said, "All right, don't remember Me every day, but at least remember Me at the time of your death." The man thought to himself, "If I am not able to remember Him during my lifetime, how will it be possible to remember Him at the time of my death when I will

be suffering so much?" He went on remembering Baba often, every spare moment of his life. He wrote me letters and said, "There is nothing else but Meher Baba for me." So he did what Baba told him and it became so effective that it has become his whole way of life - nothing else but Meher Baba. And he has become very satisfied and joyful.

Now to end our little talk. You are all honest Baba-lovers. Maybe a few are not, but you will become so tomorrow. Conditions are really very favorable. For example, there is the man who flatly refused and then began remembering Baba a thousand times a day. Such a man, I don't think should have an advantage over you, because you are already half or fully established in the love of Meher Baba.

Questions and Answers

What did you write to Baba in your letter?

ADI: Ahh, that is a very good question.

If I had been given that chance much earlier in my life with Meher Baba, I would have said, "I want this, I want that, I want God-realization, I want to become an important man, I want to become your chargeman," and so forth. But later on Meher Baba made us forget all about those things, so we did not have those desires.

I wrote in my letter, "Dear Baba - I want to be born again and again in this world if I get a chance to be of service to You." That was all. He was very happy with it. You see, that is even greater than God-realization which one could want for himself. However high the aspiration for God-realization, it is a selfish one. The very condition of getting God-realization is to become desireless. Even if you have a desire for God-realization, it nullifies the condition for becoming God-realized.

In the old days we wanted God-realization and all that. But later on Baba made us understand that we should not desire it, but try to find out if we were deserving. Instead we went on desiring - we did not find out whether we were deserving - and it was something like putting the cart before the horse. It will not work. First be deserving, and then desire.

How can I be deserving? I think if I want to become a master I should first become the perfect servant. That is why Baba said that "Mastery in Servitude" is to be written on His tomb. If one wants to become a master without becoming a servant, it is not possible. There are persons who are very fond

of becoming masters, but there are very few who want to become servants.

In the book *The Everything and The Nothing*, Baba talks about the gifts of love. He says:

Love is a gift from God to man.

Obedience is a gift from Master to man.

Surrender is a gift from man to Master.

The same situation could exist between Meher Baba and me. Let me become a child with Him. I cannot conceive of anything more powerful than the innocence of a child. If a child commits a wrong deed, the law of the world cannot interfere; a judge or policeman will not do anything, even if the child, out of her innocence, kills another child. Nor does God do anything. That is why Baba says when the innocence of a child and the intelligence of an adult come together, God-realization results. But that does not happen very easily. When I develop my intelligence, I lose my innocence; when I have my innocence, my intelligence is not so developed. For both to come together is a very unique thing.

Be like a child within. Surrender sincerely and honestly, not for the purpose of getting anything served to you. Do not keep any strings attached. Remember the man who came to Meher Baba and said, "I sacrifice my wife and my children to You. Take them away; but Meher Baba, please do one thing; keep my bank account intact for me." Was it really a surrender? Or was it a weakness? He wanted to give Baba the responsibility of the family and keep the bank account for himself.

So that is the gift that we can offer Him, our surrender?

ADI: Yes, our surrender.

Baba says obedience is a gift from master to man. What thoughts do you have on that?

ADI: There are different grades. As I say, all are not able to surrender; all are not able to obey. Some may obey; some may surrender. But He gives a chance to all the different types of people.

When you try to obey, and you put in your 100 percent effort, sincerely and honestly, He helps you and blesses you. You cannot obey 100 percent on your own, but you must

definitely try. As Baba said, the clap of one hand will not create a sound; two hands are required to strike against each other. So a part of His blessing is your effort.

Then how do you know according to your type if you should love, surrender or obey?

ADI: You understand yourself already. Nobody needs to tell you what you feel. You know what your heart tells you and what your mind tells you. Do I not know what I feel? Do I not know that I want to do this work? Do I not know with whom I have fallen in love? You know. You can feel within yourself what you are able to do, what you are capable of doing, and then you should start doing it. If you try to aspire toward something very hard and find yourself incapable, but you still want it, make your best efforts and Baba will bless you. He will help you abundantly. It is said that if you give Him five percent of your service, He will benefit and help you fifty percent.

Were there any times with Meher Baba when you felt that you had surrendered entirely?

ADI: No, I always found myself deficient, sir. The will was there, and when the will is there, the mind helps you. I could do that to a great extent, but cannot claim to have done it 100 percent. I always felt that I could have done more and more and more.

Are there different ways that you can surrender?

ADI: Surrender means surrendering everything that you have, sir. Surrender means complete, mute silent obedience to His will. Surrender to His will means what? Our free will gets a chance to function, just like the free will of a child, but you have to entrust yourself completely to Him. Then every moment you have to find what it is that pleases Him, and what it is that does not please Him. The best message for that is to think thoughts that you will not hesitate to think before Him; speak words you will not hesitate to speak before Him, and do things you will not hesitate to do before Him. There it is: the problem is solved. Nothing remains to be explained. But we are to be very sincere and honest. I tried to deceive Baba once, but it was myself I deceived.

How did you try to deceive Him?

ADI: I told Him a lie. In Manzil-e-Meem He had us come for His *darshan* every Sunday. Dr. Ghani and I were supposed to sit near Him. There were all kinds of people who came for *darshan*: old people, young people, young boys, young beautiful girls and children.

Baba always had a way of asking us a question. At any time He would ask, "What are you thinking now?" and you had to unhesitatingly say the truth. Once a young, beautiful girl was bowing down before Baba's feet; standing behind her was her mother, and behind the mother stood the father. At that time Baba asked me, "What are you thinking?" I was thinking something which I did not like to tell Baba. But I said, "Oh, Baba, this is all right; very nice people come and take your *darshan*." I was really thinking something else. Baba said yes, it was all right.

I was staying with my Master who told me all the time that I should be telling the truth, and here I was lying to Him. But I asked myself why Baba should ask me this question in front of this girl and her mother and father. The thought was very different from the loving atmosphere of the *darshan*, and I wondered why should Baba have asked me like this? I searched within myself. I could not sleep at night. In the daytime Baba would tell me that I must tell Him the truth, I should not lie, and that He knows everything - every word that is said! His words went to my heart and pierced it.

This was not once, but quite a few times that I had told Him lies. This went on; people would come and He would ask exactly the same question of what my thoughts were. I was an eighteen-year-old boy at the time. One day Baba made Dr. Ghani and me sit down and said, "You two fools are lying to Me." I said, "Yes, Baba, we are telling lies." Then He said, "Shall I convince you that I know what you are thinking, that I know what you thought yesterday, that I know what you will think tomorrow?" Then, Baba elaborated on an event that He could not have known. It was in my old school days, several years before, when I was captain of the hockey team, that something happened. Baba gave me all the details, the exact time and place, and what happened. I was wonderstruck. I started weeping, for I had been lying.

Similarly in the case of Dr. Ghani, Baba told him some past incident of his life, and Dr. Ghani was 100 percent convinced that Baba knew. Baba then said, "Since you know that I know, why should you lie to me?" I said to Baba that from now on we would not tell Him lies. Then I continued, "But why do You ask this question when the girl is there with her mother and father?" Baba said not to impose this restriction on Him, that He could ask anything. He said otherwise I could leave the place - pack up my luggage and depart. I was frantic! I did not want to go. Likewise for Dr. Ghani. I said, "Baba, whatever happens, we will not lie to You; You can ask any question at any time."

On the next similar occasion, as a beautiful girl was bending down, I got the same thought of a typical eighteen-year-old boy. Baba asked me, "What are you thinking? Please tell Me your thought in My ear. Whisper into My ear so that nobody hears." How He adjusted beautifully. He did not say that He would not ask me that question in front of these beautiful girls. He stated that I could not impose anything upon Him, that He would ask a question at any time. But He adjusted and helped me by getting the answer through my whisper. There you are. The problem was solved. He helps you in His own way, but I expected the help to be given in my own way.

Another story of how Baba helped in His own way happened near the town of Panchgani. There is a cave there where Baba stayed for a number of days and nights. The cave is at a hilly place near Mahabaleshwar, which is twelve miles from Panchgani. Probably during the time that Baba stayed there is when this story took place. It concerns an old disciple of Meher Baba's who was appointed to watchman's duty for a number of nights. Once in the middle of the night he went a little distance away to urinate. Right in front of him he saw a tiger. When he saw it, he threw up his hands and his pants fell down to his ankles. He said nothing but "Baba!" Somehow or other the tiger disappeared. If I had happened to see a tiger like that, I would have expected that Meher Baba would extend the hand of His mercy from a long distance, lift up the tiger right before my eyes, and cast it aside.

Is this an imposition on Him to help you!

ADI: He may help you in a way other than you expect, in an imperceptible way. The night watchman was absolutely stunned on the spot because He did not know that the tiger slept there. He only said "Meher Baba." Meher Baba helps you, but in His own way.

Adi, were you able to totally surrender to Baba at the time you first came to Him?

ADI: Who? I! I was not surrendered, but I wanted to be. You see, there are two things. If the will is there, the way is there. If the will is not there, you cannot find the way. The will was always there. For any mistakes that occurred, Meher Baba pardoned me. I could not claim to have surrendered; it is not an easy thing. The will was always there, so that justified my intention of the real surrender. Maybe I was weak, I was not able to do it, but He helped me many, many times. The will is what is required.

I do not often say this because people may take it wrong or take advantage of this statement. A poet has said, "A sin committed with no intention of committing a sin, is not a sin." Baba has not said as much, but I know He has pardoned me and many others, which I really could not believe.

Innocently committing a sin, as a child does, Adi?

ADI: It could mean so much, sir. It could be as a child, out of some helplessness created by circumstances. But a man has to behave in a certain way in his life. He may not want to commit a sin, but he may not be able to prevent it.

Could you give an example?

ADI: Suppose you are a woman kidnapped by somebody and are put in a cell with a man. You imagine that you do not want to do anything, but he forces you. What would you do? This is not your fault. This is an instance. There may not be identical circumstances every time, but it may be your own circumstances in a way that force you to do it. This sin is not as hard a sin, though, as when you deliberately do it, knowing full well that it is a sin, and you go ahead and do it. You see, this is a statement which can be easily misused. I think it is only on very rare occasions that I say this.

Baba doesn't really talk about sin. What thoughts did He have about it?

ADI: What is a sin? First of all, Meher Baba does not call it a sin. He said at one place that it is a mistake, but a mistake may be more serious than a sin. Are they not just different words?

I was talking to a man once who said, "I don't believe in sin at all. God has created everything, and out of free will I can do anything." But I said, "Do you believe in mistakes?" "Yes, yes," he replied, "mistakes I don't mind."

"Then mistake is another word for sin. Shall I tell you something? Do you want bindings or do you want freedom?" He said he did not want bindings, he wanted freedom.

A sin or a mistake is a binding; no sin or no mistake is a freedom., When the words were made palatable to him, he accepted them. When I said there was either bindings or freedom he wanted freedom. But when I called it a sin, he would not accept the idea.

Meher Baba said if you do not want bindings, do not do these things. If you want freedom, do these things. That is all.

You can see the mentality of people. Different types of food are suitable to different persons: the English type does not suit me, the Indian type does not suit you. We are to cook up a certain message of Baba's, then, in the way that a person will understand, place it before him, and he will eat it. If you give a medicine which is bitter, he will not take it. But if you sugarcoat it, he will take hundreds of pills instead of one. This is the way it is worked out.

The Avatar has to come once every 700 or 1400 years just to do this with us. We have grown in our weaknesses and in our strengths, in our understanding and misunderstandings, we have developed ourselves in such a way that we do not know what we are doing. The Avatar comes, then, to tell us to do the right thing. We may not be prepared to accept it, so He tells us in the most modern way to make it palatable for us. He takes the bitter medicine, sugarcoats it, gives it in the form of a sweet tablet, and we take it. That is exactly the work the Avatar does and why He comes every time.

Why should He have to come so many times? One Avatar is enough for all of eternity; but because of our ignorance, our illusion, there are so many things we do not know. Instead we think that we are always right. From the spiritual point of

view, we do not know. Eventually, whoever we are, we arrive at the point where we contemplate how we can completely surrender ourselves to Him.

Meher Baba has said this concerning our surrender to Him: "I do not have a big storehouse or warehouse for the lives of the millions of people, the multitudes, who offer their lives to Me. Instead I give their lives back to them and say that this life you have given Me is no longer your life, but My life. You are now entrusted with it so be careful that you do not squander it away. In effect you have become a trustee of this life."

If it were my own life, I could do anything with it. But I do not like to do just anything because I have now dedicated it to Him; He has given it back, and I have become a trustee. I have to look after it and please Him. This is the whole thing in a nutshell, sir. If I become rich, Meher Baba has given me the riches. If I become poor, Meher Baba wants me to be poor. If I have a beautiful son, Meher Baba, it is Your wish. If tomorrow he dies, it is Your wish also; I have nothing to do with it. He is Yours, not mine. Why should I worry about what is not mine? It is His. He puts you in the position and that is why He takes all the worries upon Himself. He says, "Don't worry, be happy." But do we listen?

A poet says, "Everything is mine, mine and mine; and this is I. Baba, bless me so that all the mine and I will disappear, and You and Yours will come in their place. I got this knowledge from my heart, the knowledge that if I give up my ego, if I give up asserting myself, if I surrender to You then I will become God."

This is the most effective way, and all the ways eventually converge into this, which is the way out of self.

The great Perfect Master Tukaram said there is no way out except to catch hold of the Avatar. We should take the first step which is to hold onto His *daaman* - catch hold of His feet. We cannot reach the impersonal aspect of God without first going through the personal aspect. The personal aspect is the gateway through which we have to pass to get to the impersonal aspect. The impersonal aspect is universal and the personal aspect is individual. Both are fully represented in the Avatar, and that is why He is the God-Man. He is God and man at one and the same time. This is why He is able to help us.

People say, "Why should I surrender?" Do not surrender. You can go to hell or to anywhere you like. If you want to surrender you can do it. Otherwise, no. But eventually you have to come. You go round and round, round and round. You digress yourself, deflect yourself, defeat yourself, and then come to Baba. Digress, defeat and deflect - the three Ds There is a fourth D also. Jack Small knows, but he probably forgot.

JACK: Divorce.

ADI: Deviate, defeat, deflect and digress.

Once a man came to Baba and said, "Baba, I do not want anything in the world." Baba asked him question after question, and that man was found to want everything in the world. Contrarily he had said, "I don't want anything in the world." That is how, you see, our minds deceive us. The mind is a very tricky thing. I want to create an impression about myself that I am so high, when actually I am not. I do not want to practice it, but I want to just think about it all the time. This does not take me anywhere.

That is actually what happened at the time of Buddha. They say that Buddha did not speak about God. Why would He speak about God in those days when people were talking only about God, yet the lives they led were absolutely diverse from God? They led very vicious, rotten and sinful lives while all the time talking so highly about God. So Buddha said, "Do not talk about God. Lead the life." Some may say that He was an atheist or agnostic, but He was the perfect Avatar of the Age.

How can we transform Baba's word into our daily lives?

ADI: The only way I am able to do it is to try to love Him more and more. Once I am convinced that He is my Beloved, I should try to please Him. Pleasing Him means doing what He wants me to do.

I should not actually try to transform my life. That is the way for the world. For me, I want to remain as I am, but please Him and obey Him. That solves everything. Is it clear? There are two ways. Try to eliminate my ego, try to cultivate my life and character and this and that: no. Instead I feel the way that I want to dedicate my life to Him is to try to love Him more and more, honestly and truthfully, and I do it. It covers everything.

Are there spiritual things Baba does not want us to pursue?

ADI: There are certain things about which we should not bother. We can never succeed in understanding our *sanskaras*, nor can we succeed in trying to know the automatics of these *sanskaras* - trying to read past lives, or trying to put our noses into things which we will not be able to understand fully. It will be only a partial view of what exists that we shall get, and we shall confuse ourselves much more by reading past lives or practicing something occult.

A Baba-lover is not supposed to do anything of this sort. He should do exactly what is required, and that is to dedicate his life to love Baba above everything else, and please Him. It solves everything. I should not try to overdo my intellectual understanding. I should be knowledgeable because I can give understanding to others who can make use of it. Actually, we have very, very few things in our lives which are really essential to our relationship with Meher Baba.

Is there anybody else to ask any questions? This is the time to do it. Why I always ask for questions is that I myself get an opportunity to ponder them.

Baba has not described the whole functioning of *sanskaras*. He has given indications here and there. I may read a past life or millions of past lives; what of it? If you are fond of it, do it; get the information and be satisfied. But do not call it spirituality. What I want to say is that this is not the spirituality of Meher Baba. This is occultism. The reading of past lives and all that is some yogic function. If you have taken an interest, do it as a science; it is not spirituality. Even looking to Meher Baba and our relationship with Him as a spiritual exercise is not important. Spirituality is important to the one who takes it as very important.

For us, Meher Baba is the creator of spirituality. Why should we go after something spiritual? We have right on hand the Creator Himself, and can get everything from Him! But our minds are so fidgety. They want to know everything. We are very nosy, putting our noses here, putting our noses there. In a detached way you can do it. I would not mind if somebody came and did my horoscope or read my past, present and future lives, but I give it no importance.

Adi, I have a question about something you said earlier. I was

wondering if you could clarify the implications of the statement that Baba wrote the Discourses for the future and not for now. For example, the form that our Baba meetings take in Australia is one in which the Discourses are passed around and read.

ADI: Yes. But sir, let me tell you the condition under which they are meant for others and not for Baba-lovers. First of all, I call myself a Baba-lover. Am I one? I do not know. It is for Baba to decide.

The *Discourses* are not to be barred for our use. They are very useful, indeed. But in the real sense, if it comes to your real relationship with Meher Baba, what is the good of merely reading these *Discourses* and not loving Meher Baba, not serving Him and not obeying Him? What meaning and value will they have? Will they be enough for us? They are useful indeed - no doubt about it.

Once a person becomes a Baba-lover, does Baba look after everything?

ADI: A poet has said, "If You do not like me, change my destiny." Baba would say, "Yes, but there is one thing. I shall look after you 100 percent, but you should also make yourself deserving of being looked after." I shall have a claim for being looked after if, as I say, whatever the world says, I do not bother about it. I am not concerned with the world; I am only concerned with Him. If I am truthful and honest with myself, I will ask Baba and let Him give me an answer. That is all; why should I bother about anybody else? Meher Baba can do and undo anything and everything. He is the ocean, and I am a simple man of the world.

Dr. Ghani had once said to Baba:

*Mai sakar kar seah kar gunha kar ho magar
Mai sakar kar seah kar gunha kar ho magar
Kes ko baksha tera zahmat gunhakar na ho.
I'm the doer of mistakes; I'm the committer
of dark deeds. Sir, You call Yourself a great
and generous one. Where will Your generosity
go if a sinner like me did not exist?*

When I heard this I said, "Baba, this man is a very clever man; he tries to justify his actions." It was very humorous. Baba laughed. But then, too, when I say something to Meher

Baba I must have grounds to say it. I must prove myself in the eyes of Meher Baba, by virtue of my love. If not even obedience, let my love be 100 percent. Baba forgives you for everything, sir. But you have to be honest, 100 percent honest, with yourself.

Shall I tell that story again? Among the Moslems there is a day of judgment when the entire humanity, multitudes of humanity, gathers. God sees the virtues and sins, the virtues and vices, in every individual, and accordingly awards them with a term of heaven or hell. If the virtues exceed the vices, he is given the term to stay and reside in heaven. If the vices exceed the virtues, he has to go and live in hell.

God was sitting on a golden throne in a contemplative mood, with the multitudes of humanity before Him. A long distance away, a man who was occupied with himself stands up. "Sir!"

God says, "Who is this fellow? Who is interrupting Me? What is it?"

"Sir, I want to ask You something."

"Ask Me something at such a time?" God thought to Himself, what is the response I should give him? This fellow has disturbed Me at such a serious moment. I do not know how to dispose of the multitudes of humanity for their sins and virtues, and this man has caused a great interruption. But if I do not give consideration to this man's questioning, then he will say that God is very inconsiderate. I do not want to be called inconsiderate. "What do you have to say? Come closer." He came.

"Sir, I want to ask you a question."

"What is the question; come on, out with it."

"Please tell me whether Your sense of justice exceeds Your sense of generosity, or whether Your sense of generosity exceeds Your sense of justice."

God was senseless for the moment. What answer should He give? If He says His generosity is greater than His justice, the sense of justice suffers. If He says His sense of justice is greater, His generosity will suffer. For the moment He decided to say that His generosity is greater than His justice.

"Oh, sir, I'm very happy. I'm the most sinful man in the world."

Then God says, "You are pardoned."

The man was very happy and started dancing!

All the other human beings there started whispering into one another's ears. "Oh, this is a very good way to escape. We are all full of sins. We shall also perpetrate the same stunt and get away with our sins." They decided they should one after another ask God the same question and be pardoned.

One wise man came, saying, "You bloody fools. Don't try to do that, or you'll get a longer sentence in hell. This man, at the risk of his own life, came forward. Look at his courage. Are you prepared to do that? You only want to emulate and copy him. Because he did it, now you want to do it. This is a secondhand thing. You will never succeed. God will know definitely your own honesty about it. Please go the usual way, and it will be all right for you."

They listened to the words of this wise man. If they had tried their plan they may have been sent to hell; we do not know. What I want to say is that this man disobeyed because God did not want him to commit the sins he committed. But look at his love and courage. The conviction on the part of this man was such that he risked his life. Are you prepared to do it?

What is the best way for us to speak out to those who may not be receptive?

ADI: Do it your own way. Speak out in the sense when people come for advice, give them positive and definitive advice. There are two ways of saying something, the positive and the negative. Negative means to criticize and put down the man. Meher Baba never did that in His own life. He never said, "You are a bad man." I saw a man come to Meher Baba, the worst scoundrel, and Meher Baba said, "You are a very nice man, but try to be better and best." What would the man gain if Baba said that he was a bad man and so forth? We have to work positively, and the negative side we should not touch.

If he comes to you and asks specifically, then do you speak out?

ADI: Yes, then I have to speak out, definitely. There was a Baptist who came to Myrtle Beach. The Baptists are very firm in their beliefs, but he was a fairly open-minded man. I did not know. Kitty and Elizabeth gave me a hint that I had to be very careful in talking about Baba. Moreover, this man was a journalist. He could listen and write a very peculiar article

about Baba. They did not want this. So they gave me a hint. I said all right; I was thankful for the hint.

This man came and sat in the audience in the meeting hall in Myrtle Beach. I started talking about Christ, nothing but Christ. In my talk I said I look upon Christ as the personification of God, since the Christians are not prepared to give that honor to Meher Baba. I claimed to have a deep respect for Christ. He was very happy. Anyway, I just talked about Christ.

Then I took up Meher Baba in a way. I did not say Meher Baba is the personification of God. I did not say that Meher Baba is the God-Man. I did not say Meher Baba is the Avatar. But I took the qualities of Meher Baba and raised them, almost to the level of Christ, and left him to his free thinking.

This man was very shrewd. The meeting was terminated, and all were happy. Kitty and Elizabeth were congratulated. The next morning I took interviews, and this Baptist man came. "Mr. Adi Irani, I want to have an interview. But it will be a little long." I said, "I will be very happy; please come and take a chair." He came and sat. And the *first* question he asked me, "Does Meher Baba call Himself Christ?"

I said, "Yes."

"Christ?"

I said, "It's a Christ-consciousness."

"Oh, Christ-consciousness, yes."

"Don't you have the seat of a President here in America? Mr. Carter is there. Before that Mr. Ford was there; before that Mr. Nixon was there. Meher Baba says He experiences that Christ-consciousness all the time. In giving this analogy of the presidency, shall I tell you something? There is a little difference. The difference is actually very great, but I said let's have a little difference. The seat of the presidency is occupied by persons following one another; they are different persons. But the seat of the Christ-consciousness is the same One coming over and over again. That means Meher Baba is Christ."

He took it very beautifully. He did not contradict it; he took it very well. In fact, he embraced me. Later he wrote a very short, beautiful letter: "Mr. Irani, I am very thankful for having had such a long interview. Many things you said I did not understand, so I shall take time to ponder them." That was

the letter. I showed it to both Kitty and Elizabeth.

We have to use such tricks, you know. What else? It is not what I speak that matters. It is the effect of my speech on the minds of others that matters. When I get angry it might be easy for me to give a slap to a person. But that is not the thing I should do. I should consider what effect it will produce on the mind of that man. It is going to be useful or not? So I say, discretion is the better part of valor. But it does not end there, sir. Again, if you really feel you have to say it, say it. Then take the responsibility.

If I become egotistical doing Meher Baba's work, is it permissible for me to continue?

ADI: It is like this. Suppose a certain color, black, represents your ego whereas pure white water represents your good deeds or your love. When I am doing selfless work in the world, naturally my ego gets tickled and I try to give the importance to myself. It is right for me to do it? It all depends on the proportion. There is pure water on one hand and black ink on the other. You mix the two. If a little black is there, it can be dissolved in a lot of pure water. If the quantity of black increases, then it will become very dirty, more egotistical, which one should not do. Yes, you want to ask something?

What about giving oneself a suggestion that Baba is the doer. That's the way I try to get over it.

ADI: Ahh. But there is a great snag in this. Baba is the doer - that is quite true. Baba is the doer because He says He is the doer. But do I experience it? No. So I should not try to put Meher Baba's cap on my head and say that I experience it. You see, His experience is one thing, and my life is another.

I still feel there is something valid in giving oneself the suggestion.

ADI: It is very good, provided one is able to do it. You see, our mind is so deceptive and there are many things that are advantages to the mind; it keeps for itself many things that are disturbing. The responsibility is shoved off onto Baba. That should not be. That is not a very safe way of doing it. Attribute everything as coming from Baba. This is very good indeed, but provided we are able to do it 100 percent. It is very, very difficult to do that.

Well, if you can't do it 100 percent, isn't it better to do it some percent, even five percent?

ADI: Ahh. Only if you do not confuse yourself in it. The better way to do it is to understand this: Meher Baba said that everything proceeds from Him. So whatever I do proceeds from His will. But since I do not see that, I can only quote Meher Baba's statement that everything proceeds from His will. I am convinced that everything proceeds from His will. But then why has He given me a free will - one which I should judiciously exercise in my life? How do I account for that? How will I justify the functioning of my sense of discretion, the free will that He has given me? Eventually the responsibility is His for having given it to me. But the partial responsibility is mine.

Suppose I give an example of an automobile. The automobile is like our body, with our mind, our sense of discrimination and our free will. Everything is contained in the automobile. Also we understand the rules and regulations of the traffic. Suppose while driving the car you deliberately break all the rules and regulations, dash against some car, meet with an accident, break your leg and say, "Here, Meher Baba has broken my leg." It is not Meher Baba who has broken your leg. It is your own lawlessness. So for everything you cannot lay the responsibility on Him. It is not safe.

Another question arises concerning the ego one may develop while doing Meher Baba's work. Baba makes use of one's ego. Once I thought myself to be a very important man, and I had become actually very egotistical. That was not good for me, and Baba wanted to put me in my place. Gradually, He brought me down in such a beautiful way that I eventually came to feel it. So, I have been telling people, "Fortunate is the man who Baba has raised sky-high. But more fortunate is the man who, having been raised sky-high, is brought down again to his feet. He has the experience of both the heights and the depths." I myself have gone through both of these. It is not for nothing that I come and say that I am the servant and the slave of Meher Baba. We are all sailing in the same boat.

There is a man who claims to be a Perfect Master in Andhra State. You may have heard about him. I had gone last year to Andhra and was asked to give a talk. The question

arose about the Perfect Master. I said, "Sir, who is this Perfect Master? I have a claim to be a Perfect Master: I have stayed with Meher Baba for forty-seven years. Bring this man before me; let me ask him whether he ever stayed with Meher Baba for even forty-seven hours. I have the first claim.

"Please," I joked, "everybody say that Adi Irani is a Perfect Master. Come on, stand up and say this. But let me fold my hands before Baba and tell you that I am not. I am just a servant and a slave of Meher Baba. What is this Perfect Master business? This is not within the orbit of Meher Baba's work. Baba has never mentioned this anywhere."

Is Meher Baba the only Avatar? Are there other Avatars and saints?

ADI: There are many saints in the world. There are so-called avatars, but there is only one Avatar in the world. Once I was asked almost this identical question by a man who was previously the governor of Hyderabad. He was a very influential political man, a man of literature. He said, "Meher Baba calls Himself the Avatar. Aurobindo does also. Who can be the Avatar? I do not know whether to believe Ramana Maharshi is the Avatar, whether to believe Ramkrishna Paramahansa is the Avatar, or whether to believe Meher Baba is the Avatar."

Ramkrishna Paramahansa was a Perfect Master. The rest were all saints. But I told this gentleman that, of these, only Meher Baba has claimed to be the Avatar. Others may have called them the Avatar - this is quite different. Meher Baba has declared, "I AM THE AVATAR OF THE AGE".

I once asked Meher Baba, "Baba, why do You call Yourself the Avatar? If You would only say that You are a saint, You would have a very large following today. This is something which comes in the way of a man's belief, so why do You call Yourself the Avatar?" Baba said, "What else shall I call Myself? Do you want Me to be dishonest to Myself and say that I am not the Avatar? I am the Avatar. I do not mind if I have a following or not."

All the Avatars had a few followers in the beginning. Christ had only a handful of disciples, as did Ram, Krishna, Zoroaster and Mohammed. Not only that, but they were harassed. Mohammed's face was spat upon. Christ was crucified. Krishna had to fight many battles. Ram was sent into

exile. Zoroaster was killed by the stroke of a sword. They all had to suffer in their lives. But, for their own sake, they did not compromise their statements about their spiritual status.

Baba has said there are imitation saints and false perfect masters. You know if a seed is sown and grows into say a mango tree, then all around it many other plants come up too. They always grow and eventually have to be destroyed. So when the tree of real knowledge manifests itself in the form of the Avatar, many small, poisonous, good-for-nothing plants come up and try to assert themselves. They try to shine in the light - which they cannot get - or even in the shadow of the Avatar, and we have to be very cautious about them. It is up to us to see what is false and what is true. Unless there is darkness, the value of light cannot be appreciated. The contrast has to be there. Man is fully capable of seeing, experiencing and establishing the truth for himself. He has the power of discrimination. He has the power of his conviction. Eventually it involves trying to find out who the real Avatar of the Age is.

What is the difference between love and worship?

ADI: Baba has given a very beautiful message on the difference between love and devotion. Devotion is worship or *Bhakti* yoga and love is *Prem* yoga. You can call one's love for Baba *Prem* yoga, but not *Bhakti* yoga. A man who expresses *Bhakti* to the Beloved necessarily wants the Beloved to be present before him. But in the matter of love, whether the Beloved is there or not, whether his love is appreciated or not, or whether his love is responded to or not by the Beloved, he only knows to love and give to his Beloved. Love is higher than devotion because love does not demand anything, whereas devotion demands the presence of the Beloved. Love does not demand anything at all inasmuch as it is most unselfish; that is why if you call love for Baba a yoga, it is the yoga of *Prem* and not the worship or devotion of *Bhakti*.

Baba gave many dates for the breaking of His Silence. Why didn't He stick to His word?

ADI: Let me clarify it. I shall give you a very small example, sir, of our relationship with Meher Baba and the difference between His consciousness and our consciousness as ordinary

human beings. This small illustration will give you an idea as to where we stand and where He stands.

Suppose there is a father who has a small child. The father for a certain time plays with the child saying, "Ta, ba, ma" like this. But do you expect the father to speak in the language of the child all the time? Meher Baba is God. Meher Baba belongs to that highest consciousness, and we are poor insects, like ants, walking on the surface of the earth. He comes down to our level and talks to us. But would we expect Meher Baba to always talk in our language? This is too much for us to expect. In His Declaration in 1954, on the 30th of September at Meherabad, He gave certain clarifications. I think if anybody reads that, especially the person who has asked this question (I am glad he has asked it for his own clarification), the matter would become very clear.

The Perfect Master of Iran, Hafiz, in one of his verses says, "About what you hear from the Master, never say it is wrong because my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand Him." What is truth and untruth on our plane of consciousness where everything is so shifting? Truth is beyond this. And when Baba says something from the Beyond state that we do not understand, we stick to the date. Who knows? He has lots of dates. Our sense of time is quite different from that of the inner worlds. I will give you another small example.

A father had taken his child to a railway station. The engine came alongside the platform, and the child ran up to his father and said, "Please father, I want to own that engine." Can you conceive of a small child ever having that engine? Could the father bring the engine to his house? But what did the father say? "I shall get you an engine, don't worry. Let's go home and I'll give you a beautiful engine." He consoled the child in different ways. He had to tend to a lot of other things to keep the child satisfied. But if the child persisted, then the father had to go to a shop, buy a small toy engine and bring it to him. The child would play with it and forget the real engine that he saw earlier.

What is our sense of perfection? A date or no date? Before trying to understand whether Baba gives a date and cancels it or whether it does not come out to be true in that sense, you must try to understand who Baba is. The father tells the child that he will get him the engine. But he had to say that because

he knows that the child, as a child, will not be able to understand. So Meher Baba had to say certain things because we are all children, His children; we are in ignorance. He had to say certain things which we did not or do not understand. Whatever He says, or has said, is the absolute truth. We are going to have to admit our inability to understand what He says.

Baba has beautifully explained that He speaks in three languages. One language is His own. Another language is our language. And a third language is part of His own and part of our language put together. Baba says that when He speaks in His own language, we cannot understand. When He speaks in the mixed language, that part which belongs to Him we do not understand, and that part which belongs to us, we understand.

Do you expect the father to talk in the language of the child twenty-four hours a day? If he tries to do that, he will be wasting his time. He will not be able to keep his job. He will not be able to look after the child, the family, and carry out the responsibilities of life. If Baba had occupied Himself in speaking the language of humanity on the lowest plane all the time, when would He have had the time to do His spiritual and universal work, that Avataric work, for which He, God, came in a human body?

Another question arises when I say that before trying to analyze Baba's statements, try to understand who Meher Baba is. And if you cannot accept Him as the Avatar, ask questions as to whether He is the Avatar or not. It will be something like an uneducated man going to a graduate and saying, "Sir, are you a graduate? And please prove to me that you are a graduate." How on earth is this man going to prove to an uneducated man, who is not able to even read the alphabet of the language, that he is a graduate, sir? It only depends upon the experience itself. You have to be in contact with Meher Baba. You have to read about Him. You have to have faith in Him. You have to have conviction in Him. You have to have love for Him. And then all your doubts will be cleared up in no time.

You have said that the goal of Baba work is to do one thing, to bring somebody out of illusion. Could you expand on that?

ADI: Yes. If you really try to analyze what is Baba's work, the

final analysis would be that we should wean a man away from the world and bring him to Baba - evoke love of Baba in his heart. This is the work, really, we have to do. All our efforts in different directions - in literature, in our talks, in showing pictures, in selling books, whatever they are - eventually have to have the same aim and end: to bring a man from the world toward Meher Baba and help him to love Meher Baba.

This sense of our freedom, based on our imagination, is really illusory. We do not have the idea of real freedom. Our entire sense of freedom is based upon our ideas which are sustained by illusion. One poet says: ·

Kar kay khudi say mahayl thayhar ho gahay
Azad hoetay hoytay gariftar ho gahay ...

Having renounced myself, having gone through a process of self-effacement, I thought that I had really become free.

At the end of it he found that he was caught up in the thought that he was a great man, having effaced himself so much. Since he was caught up in that pride, it did not bring him freedom. So that is it. Anything that you try in illusion lands you eventually into illusion, and you will never be able to catch up to the real freedom. It is only by your dedication and service to a man who is out of illusion himself, as is Avatar Meher Baba, that you will be able to go where He Himself is stationed in the domain beyond illusion.

What is spirituality?

ADI: Spirituality only deals with the purification of your heart. The heart has to be purified. What spirituality is beyond this, I do not know. Should a man offer his prayers for half an hour or an hour and then go on committing as many things as he likes the rest of the day, things which are contrary to his religion? He may say that he is a follower of his own religion, but why he follows it, I do not know.

Meher Baba did not talk much about religion. He made us *live* the life of religion. People talk of their religion and divert their lives from it. Meher Baba made us lead a very religious life, a very simple life, but He did not talk about it much.

One has to have a practical viewpoint of things. Meher Baba is not a theory. He relates to your life, and not just this

life, but all your lives hereafter. Even a Perfect Master is not able to do that. Meher Baba is for all time. He says "KEEP YOUR HAND ON MY DAAMAN TILL THE VERY END."

What is the end? The end is when my *Man-o-Nash* takes place, when my mind is destroyed. Until that time, I do not know how many births I have to pass through; it is according to what He wishes, really, and *that* is my relationship with Him. Meher Baba is not a theory to be read - He is a life to be led.

If a man goes to a yogi, he will give him certain exercises. Then the next day when he returns, he will ask, "Have you done your exercises? Do you feel a peacefulness of mind?" "Yes, yes, I feel very peaceful." If you go to Meher Baba, He will not ask you these questions. He will ask you questions like, "Where did you sleep last night? What did you do last night? Were you sleeping in your own bed or in somebody else's bed?"

I witnessed a man who came before Baba in Myrtle Beach in 1952. Ivy Duce brought this man. He was giving a lot of talks on spirituality. He was very respected all over Europe, a very important man. I was the interpreter and was dumbfounded when Baba asked him the following question. I thought He would ask him a question about his work, about his understanding of the Avatar, or something else, but Baba asked him directly: "Are you involved with women?" He was a very truthful and honest man. He said, "Yes, Baba, I am." Then Baba said, "Then what is the good of your talking about spirituality? Will you do one thing?" He replied, "Yes, I shall try; I don't promise." "All right," Baba said, "try. Give up this business of bangles." (Bangles signified woman or women in Baba's gestures.) "I will try," the man said. That was in 1952. Baba went again in 1956; this man came also and saw Him again. Baba again asked him about this and he replied, "I am still very much in the world." Baba said, "What is the good of your giving talks? Give up this hypocrisy."

So this is the thing, sir. Baba actually goes directly into your life, into your heart. The transformation He brings about is the complete transformation of your life. He wants to make you God out of your being a man. *That* is Meher Baba.

One may understand Meher Baba or not understand Him, but how will he be able to do Meher Baba's work if he doesn't have a proper understanding? What is he going to say about

Him? First he has to be convinced himself. If he is not able to stand on his own conviction, how can he impart that conviction to anybody else?

Did you ever think of leaving Baba?

ADI: Sometimes I got so exhausted that I decided I would go away. Once we were at Belgaum, and I was very tired. We were given physical labor to do the whole day. I was not tired of working, but I was really fed up with Baba's attitude. He was not the same Baba I knew in Manzil-e-Meem in 1922 or before I went to college when He would make me take the very first bite of food, putting morsel after morsel of breakfast into my mouth. Now He was not prepared to talk to me. If I had to ask a question, I could not ask Him. He would turn His face away, which made me feel very bad. Because of the fact that we had been with Him so long, we understood that it was all meaningful. Yet our human feelings were there and His actions touched me very deeply.

What had happened was that Meherabad people would not come into town, and I was the only one who had to look after so many things. I hardly had time to prepare myself to go on the New Life. There was a warm tee-shirt or something like it that the rest of the mandali had, but I did not. At night I used to suffer so much from the cold. I could not tell anybody, including Baba. Night after night I used to freeze, and I did not know how to express myself. Of course I became very enraged and hurt. Once Baba was there, but I could not speak to Him or ask Him.

I decided that I would leave, disappear anywhere. I could not even go home. Then my mood vanished. All that cloud and cobweb I had woven in my mind completely disappeared, making me absolutely free. I just laughed as if nothing had happened. You see, this was the magic. This did not happen once, it happened many times.

The five Perfect Masters: where are they and who knows their names and whereabouts?

ADI: Be they where they are, the lovers of Avatar Meher Baba who have come within His love-orbit have not to seek a Perfect Master or Perfect Masters. Baba has time and again emphasized to hold on to His *daaman* till the very end. The end is not

of the physical body, but of the death of the mind, *Man-o-Nash*. The Perfect Masters are the executors of the will of the Avatar as planned and set forth by Him during His lifetime. Baba did give indications of such a planning. So a Baba-lover has to be mindful of holding on to His *daaman*. Why seek a vassal lord when the Emperor is at hand?

Meher Baba has not left behind any chargeman because the Avatar takes a human form every 700 to 1400 years. His work is for all things and beings in creation. Meher Baba is not a conventional guru. His five Perfect Masters were not the conventional type of gurus. They only prepared the ground for the advent of the Avatar. A Perfect Master, when he gives up his body, becomes completely disconnected from creation; whereas the Avatar, whether in a human body or not, is always linked with creation for the good of humanity, and especially for the good of those who love Him.

Now that Avatar Meher Baba has dropped His body, wouldn't it be proper to worship the impersonal aspect of God who is worshipped by the world?

ADI: One can worship any god. There are as many gods as a human mind can sketch out in its imagination, but the response would be anything but direct. During His lifetime, Baba explained that all the prayers that are offered to God on high eventually go to the Avatar, the other aspect of God who activates God's response by His own being. It is more effective, therefore, to offer prayers directly to the Avatar. Whether the Avatar is in a human body or without it, it makes no difference in the response one hopes to get from the compassion of the Avatar. The Avatar always maintains His universal ego.

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There are many books available by and about Meher Baba. For further information contact Sheriar Bookstore, 807 34th Avenue S., North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582 or visit Sheriar Books online at www.sheriarbooks.org.



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Register of Editorial Alterations

Page 28, para 4, line 7, aquiring changed to acquiring
Page 46, para 3, line 1, "So" changed to "So on"
Page 76, para 5, line 3, renounciation changed to renunciation
Page 101, para 6, line 1, skyscaper changed to skyscraper
Page 102, para 3, line 1, skyscaper changed to skyscraper
Page 106, para 1, line 3, commodius changed to commodious
Page 130, para 4, line 7, than changed to then
Page 137, para 2, line 5, lead changed to led
Page 138, para 3, line 2, Belgum changed to Belgaum
Page 139, para 1, line 1, *Man-0-Nash* changed to *Man-o-Nash*