

Preface

Between 1925 and 1929, Meher Baba, the Avatar of the Age, carried out a major initiative in the education of the world's youth. It began in 1925 with the opening of the Hazrat Babajan School mostly for the children of Arangaon village. It continued with the establishment of the Hazrat Babajan High School and the Meher Ashram in 1927, and culminated in the emergence of the Prem Ashram in 1928, which posterity will always remember for the volcanic eruption of Divine Love that took place among the boys there. Just at the time that this "love-craze" was starting to happen, Meher Baba gave a series of thirty-four evening lectures on subjects of creation cosmology and the spiritual path. Previously unpublished until now, this extraordinary collection, for which Baba's disciple Ramjoo Abdulla suggested the title "Creation and its Causes," is what the Avatar Meher Baba Trust is pleased to present to the world in the form of this book.

Like *Discourses*, *Infinite Intelligence*, *Early Messages to the West*, *Tiffin Lectures*, and other books of Meher Baba's authorship published in critical editions over the last thirty or forty years, *Creation and its Causes* has been edited and is being released under the auspices of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust as one of its copyrights. This copyright comes to the Avatar Meher Baba Trust under the terms of Meher Baba's "Last Will and Testament," executed by him in 1967. As I explained in some detail in my preface to *Tiffin Lectures*, the Trust

takes the protection, preservation, and worldwide dissemination of Meher Baba's words as a sacred trust from the Avatar, and towards this purpose has established an editorial policy governing both the books and messages that Meher Baba had published during his lifetime and those others which were transcribed and preserved in the form of diaries and other such unpublished records.

In the case of Meher Baba's "published words," Trust editorial policy requires that these perennially be republished as they were without editorial revision, except for small changes of an essentially typographic order, such as in the correction of spelling mistakes or small grammatical errors. In the case of Meher Baba's messages and discourses surviving only in records noted down and written out by his close disciples sometimes in their own words, however, more than this is needed. In fact, Meher Baba himself indicated as much, both in the editorial practice that we find in the history of the compilation of his books, and in some of his own explicit comments on the subject. Particularly noteworthy is a comment that he made in August 1927, just a few months before giving his lectures to the Meher Ashram boys. "My explanations may be re-composed in forceful and stylish language," he said, "but the spirit and meaning must remain unchanged." *

Creation and its Causes is based on manuscripts descending to us from the Meherabad ashram of the 1920s and compiled by Meher Baba's close mandali. The prose text has been revised in the interests of readability by the Avatar Meher Baba Trust's editorial department, in keeping with Meher Baba's own tastes and comments on how this

* Recorded in the 7th August 1927 entry in "The Combined Diary," vol. 2, folio 355. Baba's remarks are reproduced in their entirety in Meher Baba, *Infinite Intelligence* (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina: Sheriar Foundation, 2005), p. 604.

should be done. For readers interested in such matters, some of the supplemental materials in this book provide a thorough review of the manuscripts drawn upon and the editorial practices brought into play; and the source manuscripts themselves can be read in digital facsimile on the Avatar Meher Baba Trust's website. But in summation, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, as the primary custodian of the Avatar's literary legacy, feels confident in presenting *Creation and its Causes* to the world as a faithful rendering of the talks which Meher Baba gave in 1927–28. We regard it as a work of Meher Baba's authorship and submit it for your perusal as such.

The release of *Creation and its Causes* completes the publication of a kind of trilogy in the early dispensation of the Avatar's message during the Meherabad period in the late 1920s. Yet unlike *Infinite Intelligence* and *Tiffin Lectures*, *Creation and its Causes* was addressed to the Meher Ashram and Prem Ashram boys, which is to say, representatives of the world's young people. We do not doubt that the strange visionary unveilings and the lustrous diamonds and emeralds and sapphires of spiritual truth that Meher Baba released through these lectures will help lay the foundation for what will become the general worldview and common understanding of a New Humanity in the centuries between now and the Avatar's return in 700 years.

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 Chairman of the Avatar Meher Baba P. P. C Trust
 31st January 2021

Introduction

Meher Baba's thirty-four lectures to the Meher Ashram boys in 1927–28, which comprise the heart and core of this book, give as visionary an account of the silent Master's "philosophy and teachings" as can be found anywhere in the body of his published writings. Broadly speaking, the subject matter is what Baba later called the "Divine Theme," that is, the story of the soul's journey from the moment of creation to God-realization. Yet the strange, vivid, poetic stream of Meher Baba's exposition proves the vehicle for many startling new ideas and perspectives that we do not find in *God Speaks* and other later books. Ramjoo Abdulla, a close disciple and witness to the original talks, recognized the significance of what he had seen and heard, and in his own book, *Sobs and Throbs* (1929), he penned an evocative description that vividly captures the flavor and essence of the experience. "It is all very novel, fantastic and fairy-tale-like," he wrote, referring to the "small booklet" of collected lectures that had evidently been compiled by that time. "Yet it is the most logical explanation of Divinity and the whole of the creation as far as the *reach of the intellect* allows, that has ever been brought to light in this way. The suns and the moons, the skies and the planes, the ethereal, mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, births, deaths, heaven and hell, the subtle and the mental worlds, Saints and Prophets, and the very source of all, the Soul of souls are described, explained and shown by the Master as one would

describe a city, explain the effects of wine, and show what is music after *actually seeing, drinking and hearing them all*. [Baba] would explain and elucidate points so very clearly and logically as would carry the hearers almost to the verge of subjective experience.”*

Without a doubt “Creation and its Causes” will claim a major place in the body of Meher Baba’s literary oeuvre. Yet as remarkable as the lectures themselves is the context in which they arose. For their audience was not comprised of seasoned disciples and mature students of Baba’s teachings, as the highly metaphysical character of these lectures might have led one to imagine. Rather, the recipients of this rarefied content were school boys, most of them in their early to middle teens. In the evening at about 7:30 p.m. on most nights between late November 1927 and the middle of January of the next year, Meher Baba regaled the approximately one hundred students of the Meher Ashram with accounts of the creation of the universe, the evolution of form and consciousness, cosmology and what we could call “mystical astronomy,” and the involutionary path to God. At first Baba gave these talks in what was then called the West Tank Room, currently the Museum in Meher Retreat on the crown of Meherabad Hill. But on 20th December Baba sequestered himself within the Crypt Cabin, now Meher Baba’s Tomb-Shrine, and he delivered his talks out of an east window to the boys seated on a platform that had been constructed there. Baba himself had been fasting since 10th November and did not eat solid food again until the following May. The Meher Ashram boys, for their part, had been largely shielded from contact with the outside world for several months. Located six miles south of the small Maharashtrian city of Ahmednagar and a half mile from the village of Arangaon, Meherabad

* *Sobs and Throbs: Some Spiritual Highlights* (Meherabad, Arangaon, near Ahmednagar: M. M. Satha, 1929), p. 15.

Hill after the onset of nightfall during these winter months would have been chilly and completely dark, but for the Petromax lanterns set in place by Baba's mandali and the stars shining brilliantly overhead. In this protected and surcharged environment, the Avatar's work with this representative selection from the world's youth began to take its effect.

And what an effect it was! From the outset Meher Baba's disciples were startled by the emergence of what they called a "love-craze" among the boys. This grew and grew until, in the opening days of 1928, it had swelled into a tsunami, overpowering the entire student body and precipitating in the form of uncontrolled mass weeping that went on for hours and even days at a time. After Baba's series of talks concluded in mid-January, this continued among a select cadre comprising the "Prem Ashram," as is related elsewhere in this book. Yet the lectures themselves, apart from the brief exhortation to "create prem" that concludes most of them, have little to say on love as a subject. To the contrary, they deal with high philosophy and strange, abstruse ideas, albeit in a language that is often colorful and poetic. One would not have expected material of this kind to have produced a love-torrent as its effect. Yet undeniably this happened. Evidently Meher Baba was engaged in some kind of special work that went far beyond the merely intellectual, engaging both the heart and the head and in the process transporting a few among these fortunate youngsters to the very brink of the direct vision of God.

Because these lectures are so extraordinary not only in themselves but in their relation to their historical setting and the part they evidently played in one of the major chapters of Meher Baba's life, we have found it desirable to include among the main materials of this book other content besides just the talks themselves. We open with a history of Baba's establishment of a series of schools during the early Meherabad period from 1925 through 1929. This included the founding of the

Hazrat Babajan School in 1925, the Hazrat Babajan High School and the Meher Ashram in March and May of 1927, and the Prem Ashram in the early months of the next year. With the closing of the Meher Ashram in January 1929, this phase of Baba's work started to wind down. The thirty-four lectures to the Meher Ashram boys, dated 2nd December 1927 through 14th January 1928, fall almost at the dead center of this early Meherabad period and comprise the book's second main part. Yet along with these talks to the boys, archival research has brought to light a group of six discourses that Baba gave, probably to the mandali, in November-December 1927, just as the Meher Ashram lecture series was getting under way; since they are plainly relevant to what Baba was doing at Meherabad during this time, these six "discourse-articles," as we have styled them, have been incorporated as this book's third part. This inclusion of supporting material in the first and third sections, however, should not obscure the fact that the thirty-four Meher Ashram lectures, for which Ramjoo himself proposed the title "Creation and its Causes," stand alone and apart from the rest as Avataric revelations of signal importance, and they are the reason for this book.

"Creation and its Causes" represents the culmination of an early phase in the history of Meher Baba's spiritual teaching that we could call the early Meherabad dispensation. This began soon after Meher Baba settled in at Meherabad in January 1925 at the outset of a twenty-two-month term of residency known as the First Long Stay. Three days after inaugurating his Silence on the 10th of July of that year, Baba embarked on the writing of a 300-page manuscript known as "The Book," a project that occupied him until November 1926. Although he said that it would become the new Avesta and Qur'an and Bible, Baba never allowed anyone to read it and gave out only a few hints as to its contents; and since his physical passing in 1969 the manuscript cannot

be found. A few pages in Baba's own handwriting, probably not from "The Book" but written nonetheless in 1925, have survived, and they were published in the year 2000 under the title *In God's Hand*. But during this same time Baba was discoursing prodigiously, and various among his mandali, especially his secretary Framroze Dadachanji (known as "Chanji"), took notes. A major body of this material, probably given out between March and June-July of 1926, has been published under the title *Infinite Intelligence* (2005); an extended treatise in high philosophy, it invites comparison with *God Speaks*, Meher Baba's metaphysical masterpiece. Meanwhile, from April 1926 through August 1927, Baba's discourses and explanations to his men mandali on a variety of topics were noted down and collected in a manuscript that has recently been published under the title *Tiffin Lectures* (2017).

But in the middle of 1927, the life of Meherabad underwent a sea change as Baba reoriented his activities around the newly founded boarding school, the Meher Ashram. The major body of discourse material descending from this new phase consists in the thirty-four lectures collected and typed up in a manuscript entitled "Shree's Explanations on Creation and the Universe" and published here as "Creation and its Causes." Such discourses as Baba may have given after this time—during the six months when the school was shifted from Meherabad to Toka, for example, in the second half of 1928—descend to us only in summary accounts, in the diaries of Baba's disciple Chhagan, for example; nothing in these diary records suggests that Baba ever again launched into a major lecture series to the boys on a scale such as he had done at the turn of the year 1927–28. In overview, then, the major compilations of Baba's discourse from the early Meherabad period, apart from "The Book" (which is still missing) and the thirty-nine handwritten pages of *In God's Hand*, are *Infinite*

Intelligence, *Tiffin Lectures*, and *Creation and its Causes*. This present volume completes the publication of this early content, and now we can see the full range of this early Avataric dispensation in its variegated splendor. And while *Infinite Intelligence* holds its place as a statement of primary metaphysical importance, *Creation and its Causes* emerges as perhaps the most mysterious and evocative and esoteric body of explanation that Meher Baba ever gave out.

Yet the story does not altogether end here, since “Creation and its Causes” had a kind of afterlife in the form of subsequent published and unpublished writings that drew upon it. In February 1929 Meher Baba presided over the formation of a committee of close disciples at Meherabad named “Divine Knowledge Publishers.” One of its members, K. J. Dastur, served as the editor of a monthly magazine, *Meher Message* (1929–31), which published several major series of articles whose authorship was attributed to Meher Baba. The series entitled “God, Creator and Creation,” released in nine installments between April and December 1929, seems in certain portions to have drawn heavily on “Creation and its Causes,” probably as an explicit source. This article series, abridged and edited by Ramjoo Abdulla, was incorporated into the fifth chapter of the booklet *Shree Meher Baba: His Philosophy and Teachings* (1933). This booklet was edited another time by Baba’s disciple Abdul Ghani and published as a seven-chapter series in *The Meher Baba Journal* between November 1941 and August 1942. Ghani reworked this material still again in the course of writing his (still unpublished) fourteen-chapter book manuscript in 1947–49, prompted by Baba’s own dictations and intended by Baba, one gathers, as an early draft of *God Speaks*. “Creation and its Causes” is complexly affiliated, in other words, with a significant body of literary material. The fact that this has gone largely unnoticed until

now is due, naturally, to the fact that “Creation and its Causes” itself was never published and the subsequent published literature has been out of print and mostly unavailable for the last half century.

All of this tangled literary history bears directly on the editing of this book. The sources that we have used in compiling the texts of Baba’s own words are reviewed in detail in the essay in the mid-section of the Supplement, esp. pp. 388–412. The six discourse-articles of Part Three take as their base texts two manuscripts, one in the handwriting of Ramjoo Abdulla and the other evidently a typed copy. In the case of “Creation and its Causes” in Part Two, the base text is a typed manuscript along with its two carbon copies that bears the title “Shree’s Explanations of Creation and the Universe.” These were probably written up on basis of an original diary of Chanji’s that has been lost. Yet other sources have come into play as well. Two manuscripts in Ramjoo Abdulla’s handwriting, probably dating from this same period and very possibly drawing directly on Chanji’s lost diary, supply missing diagrams as well as passages and readings of great evidentiary value. In addition, the line of derivative writings (from the *Meher Message* articles in 1929 to Abdul Ghani’s book manuscript written in 1947–49), while obviously they cannot count as “sources,” do give valuable testimony as to what some of Meher Baba’s closest disciples understood these often difficult discourses to mean and how they chose to render this content in their own later versions. Beyond this, important historical background information abounds in the copious diaries of Chanji and the books and chronicles of other disciples from the Meher Ashram period. All of these materials have been meticulously studied and drawn upon, and the renderings of Baba’s words that you will find in “Creation and its Causes” and the “Six Discourse-Articles” try to register and respond to this evidence.

Which brings us to the question: can the thirty-four lectures to the school boys and the six discourses to the mandali, as rendered in this book, be regarded as the products of Meher Baba's authorship? Readers should understand that the actual verbiage they find here did not literally flow from Meher Baba's own authorial pen or from the pens of disciples transcribing what he dictated word for word. Although no diary or other contemporary witness account relates to us how the live lectures that Baba gave in December-January 1927–28 got worked up into the typed manuscript that has served as our base text, the process probably ran something like this. During those winter months, first in the West Tank Room and later through an east window of the Crypt Cabin on Meherabad Hill, Baba dictated talks through the medium of his alphabet board, evidently in the English language, which one of his mandali read out to the assembled student audience. Baba's exposition would have commingled words literally spelled out with eloquent hand and body gestures and facial expressions in a total presentation that far transcended the bare verbal "text"; and presumably the mandali interpreter would have been responsive to this in his "reading out" to the student audience. These English-language live renderings would have been translated by other mandali into several other languages (probably Gujarati, Marathi, Persian, and Urdu) to the relevant sub-groupings among the listening student body. Baba's secretary Chanji took notes; and later he would have worked up a written version, progressing through various drafts and (when necessary) translating into English from Gujarati and other languages. His final (or semi-final) draft may have been read out to Baba for review and correction, though we have no evidence one way or the other as to whether this happened. The end product was the typed manuscript "Shree's Explanations on Creation and the Universe," which happily was preserved through the decades to serve as the base text for this present edition.

We can assert a literary process like this with some confidence since it seems to have been Baba's preferred style and method in giving out discourses and messages and other literary content, during the 1920s and afterwards. Baba's authorial practices are richly documented in the manuscript and diary sources for *Tiffin Lectures*; it is reasonable to assume that Baba worked in this same way in the creation of the source manuscript for *Infinite Intelligence* in 1926, and probably in the composition of *Discourses* (1938–43) and other later works. In answer to the question “are the discourses that we find in *Creation and its Causes* Baba's own words,” then, one can safely venture that words and phrases literally dictated by Baba on the alphabet board are consistently incorporated into the text of our source manuscripts; and probably non-verbal gestures that he made were transcribed in some way. The greater prose articulation—the grammatical form of sentences, for example, or the precise language in which the ideas in these sentences are couched—undoubtedly owes much to the mandali recorder-editor-writer, in this case probably Chanji. Yet the content that this prose garment clothes is wholly and entirely Baba's. Sometimes the amanuensis or editor may have recorded or written up what Baba said incompletely, or he may even have misunderstood or garbled it. Yet despite occasional flaws and lapses, the substantial content of *Creation and its Causes* was created by Meher Baba and no one else. He is its author.

Under the terms of Meher Baba's “Last Will and Testament,”* copyrights to books and messages of his authorship, except for a few named books whose copyrights he had already assigned elsewhere, were bequeathed to the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, whose headquarters

* Executed before witnesses by “M. S. Irani, otherwise known as Meher Baba” on 17th June 1967.

are in Ahmednagar, India. In accordance with Trust editorial policy, books and messages which Meher Baba authored but did not himself edit and publish during his lifetime are to be presented to the world in the form of critically edited texts. That is to say, the texts are to be compiled on basis of a meticulous and exhaustive study of all relevant sources. The prose can be revised for style and readability—as Meher Baba himself indicated that such discourses of his should be—but the “spirit and meaning” should be kept unchanged.* At the same time, information about sources and their use, textual cruxes and editorial determinations, general editorial practice, and other related matters is to be presented transparently both through tools within the editions themselves and through the internet. Over the last twenty years *Infinite Intelligence*, *Tiffin Lectures*, and several other minor works have been edited and published in this way. *Creation and its Causes* now joins their company.

Much of the shape of this book comes in fulfillment of this undertaking to present Meher Baba’s words in a reliable and authentic form. Baba’s words themselves, as you find them in “Creation and its Causes” and the “Six Discourse-Articles,” are presented with little editorial commentary, except for occasional introductions and footnotes when the content or context calls for special clarification. Most of the textual apparatus has been relegated to the Supplement in the back of this book, which opens with an extended essay (pp.359–437). This essay

* Commenting on the future editing of his “notes and lectures,” Meher Baba told his mandali that “My explanations may be re-composed in forceful and stylish language, but the spirit and meaning must remain unchanged.” This remark was recorded in the 7th August 1927 entry of “The Combined Diary,” a (still unpublished) 700-page record of Baba’s activities between 1924 and 1927, as compiled by five of his mandali. For a full quotation of this diary entry, see *Infinite Intelligence*, p. 604.

explains in a basic way some of the more esoteric philosophical and cosmological ideas, surveys the manuscript sources and later derivatives, and describes the book's editorial practices. The appendices offer further detailed information on sources and deal in greater depth with special problems and contradictions in certain passages, especially those concerned with evolution and astronomy. The "Notes on the Figures" identify the sources for the book's diagrams; and the "Endnotes" explicate the most important textual cruxes identified in the source manuscripts and explain how these problems have been dealt with editorially. The "Glossary" gives definitions and some etymological information about the book's non-English vocabulary—and one should note that most of these words were probably dictated directly by Baba himself; and it identifies some of the named people and places. All of this is comprised within the book itself; but carefully coordinated with this content, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust's website displays digital facsimiles of the major manuscript sources and offers other tools for researchers who want to access the original records of Meher Baba's dictations in their relation to the edited text presented here.

In its totality, *Creation and its Causes* fills an important space in the broader tapestry of Meher Baba's spiritual philosophy over the half century of his ministry. Following *Infinite Intelligence* and *Tiffin Lectures*, it completes the trilogy of major discourse compilations from the same early Meherabad period in which Meher Baba was writing "The Book." These three recently published volumes collectively give us a full rendering of what we could call the Avatar's early Meherabad dispensation. Yet *Creation and its Causes* can claim a special place on strength of its extraordinary metaphysical and cosmological revelations and the visionary manner in which these are expressed. Perhaps these

talks which the Avatar originally gave to an assemblage of teenage boys will have an effect on the world at large similar to what it had on them, in bringing together spiritual knowledge with the highest love and inspiring a New Humanity onward on the one great journey, ancient yet ever fresh, that all must eventually tread: the path to God.