

BE THE MASTER

OF YOUR OWN

DESTINY

BY

Avatar Meher Baba

Avatar Meher Baba's Message

on

His 41st

SILENCE ANNIVERSARY

God's first WORD was, 'Who am I ?'

God's last WORD is, 'I am God.'

And the WORD that I the God-Man
will utter soon will be the sound
of my infinite Silence.

—MEHER BABA.

ERRATA

Page 1, Para 1—
Line 6

Insert 'speak to' in between
the words to and him.

Page 7, Para 1—
Line 1 and 6

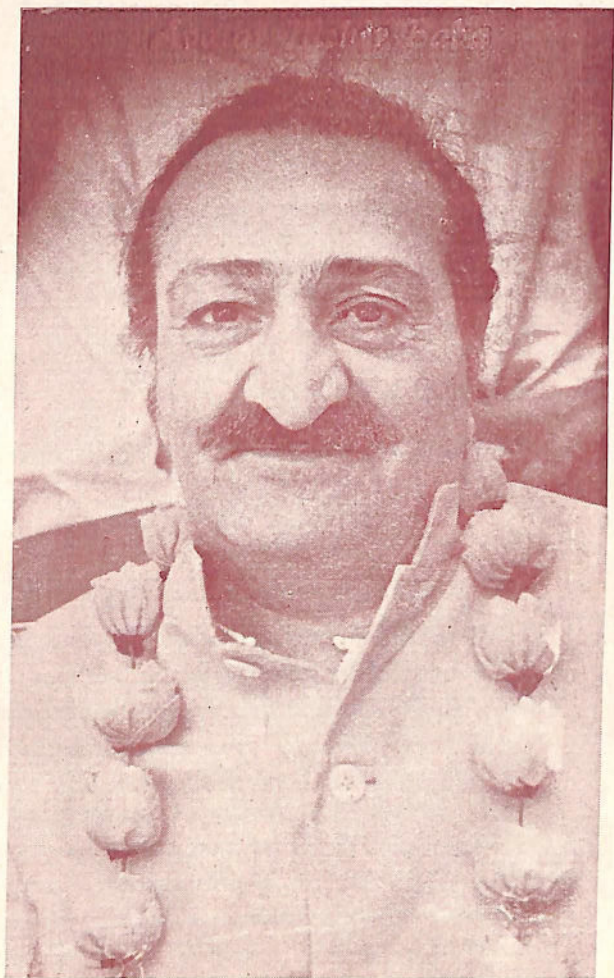
Delete the word 'also.'

Page 27, Para 1—
Line 12

Insert the word 'and' in
between the words
debts and to.

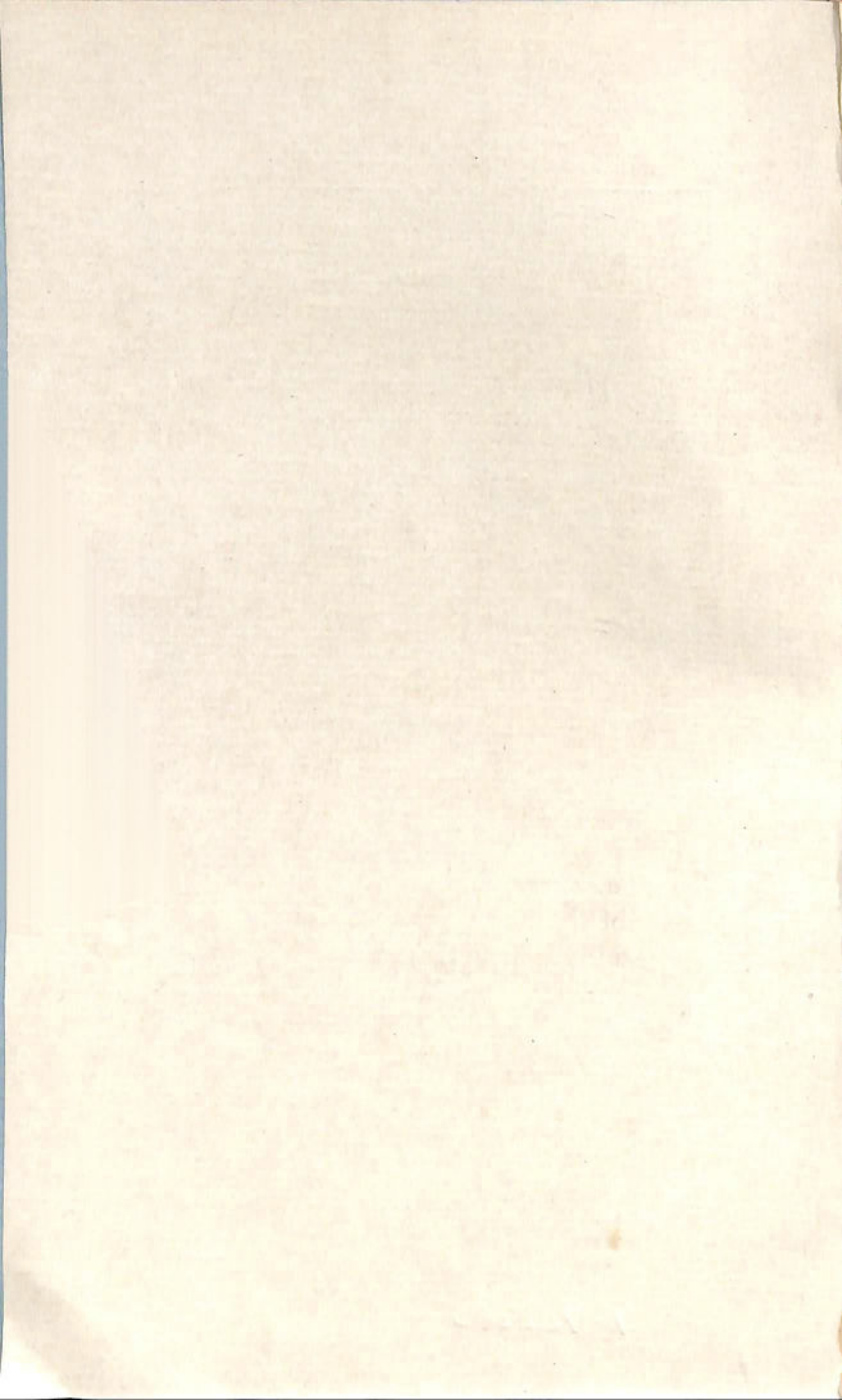
Page 29, Para 3—
Line 2

Delete the word experience
and substitute the words
'several lives'.



Avatar Meher Baba

1-700085



*Be the Master
of
Your Own Destiny*

—MEHER BABA

INTRODUCTION

HERE often arises in our contemplative mind many perplexing and agonising questions out of which, the prominent question, which stands uppermost, is the question about the "Significance of Death". Then follows a series of questions in its wake, viz. the question about "Hell and Heaven"; the question about "Re-incarnation"; the question about "Memory of past lives"; the question about "Sex and its role on human lives"; the question about "Justice in the World of Values"; the question about "Fate"; the question about "Ultimate Purpose of Life"; and so on and so forth.

ALL THESE vital but baffling questions have been answered in a very lucid manner, based on His own Authority, by AVATAR MEHER BABA long ago in His very long Discourse on "REINCARNATION AND KARMA", which was published in the Meher Baba Journal in seven parts since April 1942 issue. Subsequently, this and His other discourses were compiled in book-forms, known as "Discourses", "God to Man and Man to God" etc.

AN ATTEMPT has been made in this booklet on the occasion of 41st anniversary of AVATAR MEHER BABA'S GREAT SILENCE, to present as a love-offering to dear Baba-lovers, in a concise manner, of the above Discourse.

OUR EFFORT will have achieved its desired result if Baba-lovers discuss these questions with others who had so far no opportunity of going through Beloved Baba's "discourses", and, thereby, bring them in the indirect "contact" of MEHER BABA, the Living AVATAR of the present age.

—P. G. N.

MEHER BABA
on
Reincarnation and Karma

PART I

The Significance of Death

The worldly man completely identifies life with the manifestations and activities of the gross body; and for him, therefore the beginning and the end of bodily existence, are also the beginning and the end of the individualised soul. All his experience seems to him about the transitoriness of the physical body; and he has often witnessed the disintegration of those physical bodies, which were once vibrant with life. So he is naturally impelled to believe that life is conterminus with bodily existence.

The worldly man takes death to be the cessation of life itself, and he gives great importance to death, in his general outlook.

Death is among the happenings, which are the most dreaded and the most lamented. Thus, in the minds of most persons, death assumes an accentuated and overwhelming importance.

The overwhelming importance of death is derived from man's attachment to particular forms. In spite of the transitoriness of forms, and in fact, even in and through these forms, there is an unbroken continuity of life, discarding old forms and forging new ones for its habitation and expression. In spite of the unceasing activity of the hand of death, life is reborn in new forms, incessantly renewing and refreshing itself.

A sane attitude to death is possible only if life is considered impersonally and without any attachment to particular forms. What the worldly man craves for is a continuation of his own form and other particular forms, with which he has got entangled.

The sorrow of death, on closer analysis, turns out to be rooted in selfishness. The person, who loses his beloved may intellectually know that life, as a whole, has elsewhere compensated for the loss; but his only feeling is, 'what is that to me?' Death becomes a cause of unending sorrow, when a man looks at it from his own personal point of view; from the point of view of life in general, it is an episode of minor importance.

The implications of assuming of death to be the termination of individual existence run counter to the ineradicable expectations based upon rationalised intuition; thus, there usually arises a conflict between the claims of intuition and the deliverance of the impure intellect, which assumes death to be the termination of individual existence.

Death as an extinction of life can never be wholly acceptable to the spiritual aspirations of man; and therefore the belief in the immortality of the individualised soul is often accepted by the human mind without much resistance, even in the absence of direct super-sensible knowledge about the existence of life after death.

Immortality of the individualised soul is rendered possible by the fact that the individualised soul is not the same as the physical

body. The individualised soul continues to exist with all its sanskaras in the inner worlds through the medium of its mental and subtle bodies, even after it has discarded its gross body at the time of death. So life through the medium of the gross body is only a section of the continuous life of the individualised soul; the other sections of its life have their expression in the other worlds.

Ordinarily life in the physical body is terminated only when the sanskaras, which are released for expression in that incarnation, are all worked out. When, due to untimely death, the sanskaras released for fructification are withheld from expression, the discarnate soul remains subject to the propelling force of these sanskaras, even after the physical body has been discarded.

In such cases, the discarnate soul experiences irresistible impulsion towards the gross world and the soul craves for the gross objects so badly that it seeks gratification of its desires through the gross bodies of those souls, which are still incarnate.

Such souls are constantly waiting to meet and obsess some incarnate persons of similar sanskaras. In life after death, any lingering entanglement with the gross world is a serious hindrance to the natural flow of onward life of the soul.

In normal cases, death occurs when all the sanskaras seeking fructification are worked out. When the soul drops its physical body, it is

completely severed from all connections with the gross world though the ego and the mind are retained with all the impressions, which have been accumulated in the earthly career. Ordinary spirits soon acquiesce themselves in the limitations imposed by the changed conditions and sink into a state of subjectivity, in which there begins a new process of mentally going over the experiences of the earthly career by the revival of the sanskaras connected with them. Thus, death inaugurates a period of comparative rest consisting in a temporary withdrawal from the gross sphere of action; and it is the beginning of an interval between the last incarnation and the next.

PART II

Hell and Heaven

At the time of death, the soul drops its physical body. Therefore, after death, there is no consciousness of the gross world, since it is directly dependent on the physical body. The average man does not become aware of the subtle environment. He is wrapped up in complete subjectivity; and he is absorbed in living through the revived impressions.

• In life after death, the experiences of pain and pleasure become much more intense than what they were in the earthly life. And these subjective states of intensified suffering and joy are respectively called hell and heaven. **Hell and heaven are states of the mind;** they should not be looked upon as being places; and though, from the subjective point of view, they mean a great deal for the individual soul they are both illusions within the greater illusion of the phenomenal world.

In the hell-state as well as in the heaven-state, desires become much more intense, since they no longer require to be expressed through the gross medium; and like desires, the experiences of their fulfilment or non-fulfilment also become greatly intensified. During the habitation of the body, desires and experiences suffer deterioration of intensity; but when the habitation is given up, they undergo relative increment of intensity.

In the heaven-state, there are no obstacles between desires and their fulfilment; and the pleasure of self-fulfilment through thought or feeling is always at hand.

Some of the desires have a direct relation to the possession and assimilation of the gross objects through the gross body. The coarser desires of lust, gluttony or craving for drinking wine are of this type. These coarser desires contribute to the hell-state.

In contrast with the finer desires, the coarser desires place an infinitely heavier premium on mere sensations, quite independently of any intellectual meaning or æsthetic or moral value.

The organic sensations of the physical body play the greatest part in experiences connected with the coarser desires; and through them the individualised soul feels its own existence as the gross body, much more effectively and vividly than through the experience connected with finer desires. In the finer desires, the actual sensations play a subordinate role as compared with the other ideational aspects based upon sensations.

Since the gross object of the coarser desires is not available in the subtle world these desires are mostly the occasion for the intensified experience of the suffering of non-fulfilment. The revived experience in connection with coarser desires go to make the sufferings of the hell-state, just as the revived experience in connection with the finer desires go to make the pleasure of the heaven-state.

In the life after death also, the revived experiences in connection with these coarser desires, lead to a preponderating balance of suffering over pleasure, thus bringing into existence the hell-state. In the life after death also, the revived experiences in connection with the finer desires, lead to a preponderating balance of pleasure over suffering, thus bringing into existence the heaven-state.

But hell and heaven are both states of bondage subject to the limitations of the opposites of pleasure and pain. Time in the subtle world is not the same as time in the gross world, owing to the increased subjectivity of the states of consciousness.

The coarser sensual desires like lust and their emotional products like hate and anger, all contribute to the life of delusion and suffering, prevalent in the hell-state; and the finer desires like idealistic aspirations, æsthetic and scientific interests or good will towards neighbours and others, and their emotional products like personal love or fellow-feeling, contribute to the life of enlightenment and pleasure prevalent in the heaven-state. These states for most persons, consist in reliving through the experiences of the earthly life, by means of the vivification of the impressions left by them.

The hell-state as well as the heaven-state comes to a termination, after consciousness has traversed the imprints left by earthly life.

Consciousness, in these after-death states, is in a position to have a leisurely and effective survey of the animated record of earthly life;

and it can, through the intensification of experiences, attend to their nature with better facility and better results. On earth, the consciousness of most persons is predominantly objective and forward-looking and under the pressure of unspent *sanskaras*, it is mostly concerned with the possible fulfilment of *sanskaras* through the present or the future. But, in life after death, the consciousness of most persons is predominantly subjective and retrospective; and in the absence of forward-goading *sanskaras*, it is, as in reminiscences, mostly pre-occupied with reviewing and assessing the significance of the past.

The snap-shots of earthly life have all been taken on the cinematic film of the mind; and it is now time to study the original earthly life, through the magnified projections of the filmed record on the screen of subjectivised consciousness.

Thus the hell-state and the heaven-state become instrumental for the assimilation of experience, acquired in the earthly phase, so that the individualised soul can start its next incarnation in the physical body, with all the advantage of digested experience. The lessons, which are learnt by the soul, through much stock-taking and reflection, are by the power of their magnified suffering or happiness confirmed on the mind-body; and they become for the next incarnation part and parcel of the intuitive make-up of the active consciousness. The truths absorbed by the mind in the life after death become in the next incarnation a part of the inborn wisdom. Developed intuition is nothing but consolidated and compressed understanding, distilled through a multitude of diverse experience, gathered in previous lives.

Different souls start with different degrees of intuitive wisdom, which becomes their initial capital for the experiments and adventures of their earthly career. The experiences of earthly life as well as the reflective and consolidatory processes to which they are subjected in life after death, are both merely instrumental in gradually releasing to the surface the intuitive wisdom, which is already latent in the soul from the very beginning of creation.

PART III

The existence and the memory of past lives

The unbroken continuity of the life of the reincarnating soul is punctuated by the incidents of birth and death which are both comparable to the gateways of the stream of life, advancing from one type of existence to another type of existence. They are both equally necessary in the greater life of the soul; and the interval between death and birth is as necessary as the interval between birth and death.

Like those, who consider death to be the termination of individual existence, those who consider the birth of body to be its beginning, are also confronted with conflict between their false assumptions, and the claims of rationalised intuition. From the point of view of individualistic justice the uneven lot of the good and the bad in respect of material happiness or prosperity seems seriously to impugn the rationality and justification for the entire scheme of the universe.

Unless there is some deeper explanation, human mind is riddled with agonising perplexities that tend to embitter man's general outlook on life and foster a callous cynicism.

In spite of all appearances to the contrary, human mind has in it, an inborn tendency to try to restore to itself a deep and unshakable faith in the intrinsic sanity and value of life.

The memories of all past lives are stored and preserved in the mind-body of the individual soul; but they are not accessible to the consciousness of the ordinary persons, because a veil is drawn over them. When the soul changes its physical body, it gets a new brain, and its normal working consciousness functions in close association with the brain-processes.

Under ordinary circumstances, only the memories of the present life can appear in consciousness, because the new brain acts as a hindrance to the release of the memories of those experiences, which had to be gathered through the medium of other brains in past lives.

In rare cases, inspite of the resistance offered by the brain, some memories of past lives leak into the present life in the form of dreams, which are entirely unaccountable by means of the present life. The real memory of past lives is clear, steady and sure like the memory of the present life.

When consciousness is emancipated from the limitations imposed by the brain, it can recover and re-establish the memories of past lives, which are all stored in the mental body. This involves a degree of detachment and understanding which only the spiritually advanced persons can have.

For most purposes, knowledge about past lives is not at all necessary for the guidance of the onward course of spiritual evolution. Spiritual evolution consists in guiding life in the light of the highest values, perceived through intuition and not in allowing it to be determined by the past.

Life would be infinitely more complicated if one who is not spiritually advanced is burdened by the conscious memory of numberless past lives; and he would get dazed and unsettled by the diversity of settings in which persons would appear to him in the light of his memory.

But inspite of the actual influence of the past lives, the fact remains that, since he is shielded from the resurrection of conscious memory, his consciousness is not subjected to that confusion which would result, if the conscious memory of the past lives were to be among the data, which he has to consider for the purposes of determining his actions and responses.

Possessiveness of all types has to be purged from the mind, if the aspirant is to be spiritually prepared for withstanding the disturbing influence of the memory coming back from past lives.

When a man is spiritually prepared, he is completely desireless and full of impersonal love; all the entanglements of the personal ego have disappeared from his mind; he can look upon his old friends and enemies with the same equanimity.

It is only when the person is thus spiritually prepared that he is unaffected by the revived memory of past lives, and it is only then that it is worthwhile for him to have an access to it, for he can then have that cool and unerring judgement and pure and incorruptible love, which enable him to make right and wise use of the new knowledge.

This knowledge opens to him a great deal of information about his own incarnations and also about the incarnations of others, connected with him in the past lives; and it not only enables him to advance further on the path by conscious karmic adjustments, but also to help others on the path, by directing them, in the light of their past lives.

The obstacles as well as the facilities created by the past, are now in the reach of consciousness, and therefore are capable of intelligent and careful handling.

The Masters of Wisdom, who have become spiritually perfect, have no special interest in past incarnations. If they make any use of their knowledge of the past lives of a person, it is only for helping him onwards towards the eternal Truth. Their knowledge of the past places them in a special position of giving an aspirant, just that guidance which he needs. The details of the path are often determined by (i) the incidents of the past, (ii) the manner in which the aspirant has sought the highest truth in his past lives, and (iii) the obstacles or the facilities, which he has created for himself, through his past doings. All these things, which are hidden from the aspirant, are open to the unclouded perception of the Master, who uses his knowledge in order to accelerate the spiritual progress of the seeker of the Truth.

The Master leads the aspirant from the place in which he has landed himself, through the experimentation and search of several lives. In matters spiritual, as in matters mundane, greater and unerring knowledge means economy of energy and time.

PART IV

Specific conditions of an
incarnation

With the beginning of individualised soul, there is the beginning of duality and evolution, though the specific form of duality consisting in the distinction and attraction based upon sex, makes its appearance at a later stage of evolution. Sex is a specific kind of bodily attraction, which presupposes differentiation of forms, a specific kind of psychic entanglement with the forms, and specific expression of life and energy.

In the mineral kingdom, there is no sex. Plants and trees do not generate sex-consciousness, since the development of consciousness in plants and trees is rudimentary and its expressions are not influenced by these bodily differentiations.

In the evolution of sex duality, plants and trees stand midway between minerals, who have no sex and birds and animals, who have it, in its complete form. Reincarnation of the individualised soul through human forms, is preceded by its transmigration through the sub-human forms.

In the animals, sex not only expresses itself through the bodily differences and activities but is a deep-rooted factor, which affects consciousness. In the humans sex is so completely developed that it is no longer a matter merely of the

body, for it substantially modifies the psyche, which seeks its expression through the body, according to whether the form is male or female.

After attaining the human form, there is, as a rule, no reversion to animal forms; and the case of retrogression to sub-human forms comes under special and rare exceptions.

The female form has the special prerogative that even the Sadgurus and the Avatars have to be born through the female form; but the male form has the prerogative that the majority of the Sadgurus appear in a male form. Women can become saints and Sadgurus but the Avatar always appears in a male form.

The needs of the further development of the soul are relative to the nature of its accumulated sanskaras; and therefore it is these accumulated sanskaras, which really determine whether the soul takes its incarnation on the earth in the East or in the West, or whether it takes its incarnation in the male form or in the female form, or whether it takes its incarnation in one cycle of existence or another cycle of existence.

Roughly speaking, to-day, the East on the whole has developed more on spiritual lines, than on material lines, with the result that the Eastern mind has a spontaneous aspiration for God; and the West, on the whole has developed more on material lines than on spiritual lines, with the result that the Western mind has a spontaneous urge towards intellectual and artistic things. The soul has to experience the material as well as the spiritual aspects of life

before it is freed from the fetters of divided life; therefore the same soul has to incarnate in the East as well as in the West.

So, sometimes we have the European soul in an Indian form or an Indian soul in the European form.

The facilities afforded by male and female incarnations respectively are not rigidly invariable. They change according to the cycles of existence as well as according to whether the incarnation is in the East or in the West. In some ages, men are more active, energetic and materially minded than women, in some ages the reverse is true. In the past, the women of the East were brave and intellectual. But now, in the Eastern hemisphere, the average man has greater spiritual inclination than the average woman, just as, in the West, the average woman of to-day has greater spiritual inclination than the average man.

The joke is that, in comparison with the members of the opposite sex, the same soul shows varying degrees of superiority, inferiority, or equality with regard to spiritual or material matters, according to the cycle of existence, the sex of its body and the earthly sphere, in which it takes an incarnation.

PART V

The need for male and female incarnation

Though the facilities afforded by each sex are variable, according to the age and the place, in which the incarnation takes place, it still remains true that each sex affords special facilities for the development of experience along specific lines. **Men as a rule excel in the qualities of the head and will;** they are capable of sound judgment and steadfast purpose. **Women, as a rule, excel in the qualities of the heart;** they are capable of intense love, which makes them welcome any sacrifice for the loved one. The alternate development of specific spiritual qualities goes on through the alternation between the male and female forms, until the development is all sided.

The soul must go through male incarnations as well as female incarnations, if it is to have that richness of experience, which is a condition of attaining the realisation that, the soul, in itself, is beyond all forms of duality, including the accentuated duality based on sex.

The unity of the subject and the object of experience is unattainable as long as there is in the object any aspect or element, which is not fully covered by one's experience; and this applies particularly to sex-duality.

The psyche of the soul has in it the gathered experience of male incarnations as well as that

of female incarnations. Since the soul identifies itself with the body, the psychological tendencies which harmonise with the sex of the body, get a suitable medium for expression, and the psychological tendencies which are characteristic of the opposite sex, ordinarily get suppressed into the unconscious part of the psyche, because they do not harmonise with the sex of the body, and find the medium of expression obstructive.

Identification with the body, involves identification with the sex of the body. By getting entangled with the opposite sex, the buried part of psyche, which did not go well with the body, is seeking some kind of expression through another; from this point of view, sex attraction might be said to be a result of the effort, which the mind makes to unite with its own unconscious part.

Sex is a manifestation of the ignorant attempt which the conscious mind makes to compensate for the psychic fragmentariness entailed by identification with the sex of the body; but this attempt to compensate for fragmentariness is doomed to be futile, because it is itself not only based upon identification with the body, but actually accentuates it, by setting into opposition the body of the opposite sex and getting entangled with it, through attachment and possessiveness.

The form of the opposite sex prevents the true understanding of experience, associated with the opposite sex; and detachment to the form of the opposite sex facilitates the true understanding of the experience, associated with the opposite sex, because it removes the barrier created by sex-obsessed imagination.

When the inner understanding of the relevant experience is complete, they neither experience themselves as male alone nor as female alone, but as being beyond the distinction of sex. The experiences connected with the male and the female forms are both accessible and intelligible to the aspirant, who has transcended the sex distinction; and he retains unaffected by the limitations of either of them, just because through understanding he has freed himself from the limiting obsessions characteristic of sex-ridden imagination.

Reconciliation of the conscious and the unconscious mind is possible, not through sex attraction or through other forms of possessiveness, but through non-identification with the body and its sex.

The problem of sex-duality is a part of the problem of duality as such; and its complete solution comes, when the wider problem of all duality is solved through the Divine Love, in which there is neither 'I' nor 'You', neither man nor woman. **The purpose of male and female incarnations is the same as the purpose of evolution itself;** it is to enable man to arrive at his own undivided and indivisible existence.

PART VI

The operation of Karma through successive lives

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

Karma persists as a connecting link and determining factor, through the mental body, which remains a permanent and constant factor, through all the lives of the soul. The law of Karma and its manner of operation, cannot be fully intelligible as long as the gross body and the gross world are considered to be the only facts of existence. Karmic determination is made possible by the existence of subtle and mental bodies and worlds.

The plane on which one can possess physical consciousness is the gross world. The planes,

on which one can possess the consciousness of desires are the subtle world. And the planes, on which the soul can have mental consciousness are the mental world. The source of desire is to be found in the mind, which is on the mental planes. The mental body, which is the seat of the mind is often called Karana Sharira or the causal body, because it stores within itself the seeds or the causes of all desires. The mind retains all impressions and dispositions in a latent form. The limited 'I' or the ego is composed of these sanskaras. However, the actual manifestation of sanskaras in consciousness, as expressed through different mental processes, takes place in the subtle body.

The soul, which in reality is one and undifferentiated gets apparently individualised, through the limitations of the mental body, which is the seat of the ego-mind. The ego mind is formed by the accumulated impressions of past experiences and actions and it is this ego-mind, which constitutes the kernel of the existence of reincarnating individual. The ego-mind, as a reservoir of latent impressions is the state of mental body; the ego-mind, becoming spirit and experiencing activated and manifested impressions is the state of the subtle body; and the ego-mind as descended in the gross sphere for creative action, is the state of physical incarnation. Thus, the ego-mind, which is seated in the mental body is the entity, which has all the phases of continued existence as a separate individual.

The ego-mind which is seated in the mental body, takes lower bodies according to the impressions stored in it. These impressions deter-

mine whether a person will die young or old, whether he will experience health or illness or both, whether he will be beautiful or ugly, whether he will suffer from physical handicaps like blindness or will have general efficiency of the body, whether he will have a sharp or a dull intellect, whether he will be pure or impure of heart, fickle or steadfast in will, and whether he will be immersed in the pursuit of material gains or will seek the inner light of the spirit.

The ego-mind, in its turn, becomes modified through the deposited impressions of Karma (which includes not only gross and physical action, but thought and feeling), and the circumstances of each incarnation get adjusted to the composition and the needs of the ego-mind. Through the persistence of impressions the Karmic links, which have been forged in one incarnation, are carried on and developed in succeeding incarnations, so that those who have been closely associated with each other, through good or bad dealings, have tendency to have recurring contacts, and carry on the game of duality, far enough to gather so much experience of the opposites, that the soul out of the fullness of its experience eventually becomes ripe for dropping the ego-mind, and turning inwards for knowing itself as the oversoul.

If there has been a give and take between any persons, that forges Karmic and sanskaric ties between them and creates claims and counter-claims. That which a person gives with a selfish motive binds him just in the same way, as that, which takes with a sense of separateness.

The quick and unfailing responsiveness of souls, is expressed in the law that **hate begets hate, lust begets lust, and love begets love.** This law operates not only during a single life-time, but across several lives.

The law of Karma is the law exhibiting itself through continuously changing mutual adjustments, which must go on where there are several individual souls, who seek self-expression in a common world. It is an outcome of the responsiveness of ego-minds.

Before Karma is created, the individual has a sort of freedom to choose what it shall be; but after it has been accomplished it becomes a factor, which cannot be ignored and which has either to be expended through the results, which it invites or counteracted by the fresh and appropriate Karma.

The pleasure and the pain, experienced in the life on earth, the success or failure, which attend it, the attainments and obstacles, with which it is strewn, the friends and foes, which make their appearance in it, are all determined by the Karma of past lives. **Karmic determination is popularly designated as fate.** Fate however is not some foreign and oppressive principle. **Fate is man's own creation pursuing him from past lives** and just as it has been shaped by past Karma, it can also be modified, remoulded and even undone, through Karma in the present life.

It is in the arena of earthly existence that creative and effective Karma can take place, through the medium of the gross body.

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

Broadly speaking, Karma is of two kinds: there is the Karma which binds; and there is Karma, which helps towards emancipation and self-realisation. The good as well as bad Karma binds as long as it springs from the ego-mind and feeds it; but Karma becomes a power for emancipation, when it springs from right understanding. Right understanding in this respect, is best imparted by the masters, who know the soul, in its true nature and destiny, along with the complications created by Karmic laws.

The Karma which truly counts comes into evidence after the person has developed the sense of the distinction between good and bad. During the first seven years of childhood, the impressions, which are released for expression are very faint; and they also entail a consciousness of the world, which is correspondingly less responsive to the distinctions of the world. True and effective Karma, which moulds the ego-mind and its future, begins after the soul develops a sense of responsibility; and this sense of responsibility is dependent upon the sense for the distinction between good and bad, which usually dawns fully when the soul has spent the first few years of childhood.

The law of Karma is, in the world of values, the counter-part of the law of cause and effect, which operates in the physical world. If there is no law of cause and effect in the physical world there will be a chaos; and people would not know, which thing might be expected to follow which thing. In the same way, if there is no law of Karma, in the world of values, there will be an utter uncertainty of results in the world of values, which men cherish; and people would not know whether they are to expect good or bad results from their actions. In the world of physical events, there is the law of conservation of energy according to which no energy is ever lost; and in the world of values, there is the law that once Karma comes into existence, it does not mysteriously flitter away, without leading to its natural result, but persists until it bears its own fruits or is undone through counter-Karma. Good actions lead to good results; and bad actions lead to bad results.

It is through the systematic connection between cause and effect in the world of values, that moral order of the universe is sustained. If the law of Karma were to be subject to any relaxation, reversals or exceptions, and if it were not strictly applicable in the domain of values, there would be no moral order in the universe; and if there is no moral order in the universe, human existence would be precarious from the point of view of attainment of values. There cannot be any serious pursuit of values, if there is no assured connections between means and ends and if the law of Karma can be set aside. The inflexibility of the law of Karma is a condition of significant action; significant human action would be

utterly impossible if the law of Karma could be safely ignored or flouted.

In being inviolable, the law of Karma is like the other laws of nature. However the rigorousness of the operation of Karmic laws, does not come to the soul, as the oppressiveness of some external and blind power, but as something, which is involved in the rationality of the scheme of life. Karmic determination is the condition of true responsibility. It means that the man will reap as he sows. What a person gathers by way of his experience, is invariably connected with what he does.

If a person has done an evil turn to some one, he must receive the penalty for it and welcome the evil rebounding upon himself; and if he has done a good turn to some one, he must also receive the reward for it and enjoy the good rebounding upon himself. What he does for another, he has also done for himself, although it may take time for him to realise that this is exactly so. **The law of Karma might be said to be an expression of justice** or a reflection of the unity of life, in the world of duality.

PART VII

The destiny of the reincarnating individual

The series of incarnations, which the soul is impelled to take through Karmic determination, has a tendency to become endless. Through innumerable lives, the aspirant has come into contact with countless persons; and he has had all kinds of dealings of give and take with them. He is entangled in web of all sorts of debts to pay and dues to recover; and according to the Karmic law, he can neither avoid the debts nor the dues: since both have been the outcome of Karma, inspired by desire. He keeps incarnating in order to pay off his debts to recover his dues, but, even when he means to clear up the account, he is often unable to do so.

All persons, with whom a man has Karmic links of debts or dues, may not be in incarnation, when he has taken a body. When he is trying to clear up the accounts in relation to those, with whom he has past links, he cannot, in this very attempt, help creating fresh claims and counterclaims concerning them. A man goes on adding to his debts and dues, with the result that there is no getting out of his endlessly increasing and complex Karmic entanglements.

The carrying on of the yarn of Karmic debts and dues would have been endless, if there had been no provision for getting out of the Karmic entanglements, through the help of the Master, who can, not only initiate the aspirant into the

supreme art of unbinding Karma, but can directly become instrumental for freeing him from his Karmic entanglements. The Master has attained unity with God, whose cosmic and universal life includes all persons; and being one with all life, he can in his representative capacity, become, for the sake of the aspirant, the medium for the clearing up of all debts and dues, which have come into existence, through his dealings with countless persons, whom he has contacted in his incarnations.

When the good Karma of past lives has secured for the aspirant the benefit of having a Master, **the best thing that he can do is to surrender himself to the Master and to serve him.** Through surrenderance, the aspirant throws the burden of his Karma on the Master, who has to think out the ways and means of freeing him from it; and through service of the Master, he gets an opportunity to get clear of his Karmic entanglements. **The relation between the Master and the disciple is a relation, which is often carried on from one life to another for several reincarnations.** There is usually a long history to an apparently unaccountable devotion which the disciple feels for his Master; and the disciple is often beginning where he had left in the last incarnation.

When the disciple invites the attention and grace of a Master, it is not without reason. Sometimes, the Master seems to impart spirituality to a disciple, without there being any apparent effort or sacrifice on the part of the disciple; but these are always cases, where the disciple has earned the right to this favour by his association and endeavours in past lives.

It is through his own past unbinding Karma that a person invites the grace of the Master, just as it is through his own binding Karma that he invites upon himself the pleasure and the pain as well as the good and the evil, of which he is the recipient in this life.

As a rule, the person, who has entered the Path gradually advances on the Path, until he attains the goal; but, this does not apply to those, who have not definitely entered the Path or have no Master to guide. Through their chaotic pursuits of several lives, most persons are likely to go further away from the goal by the heaping up of binding sanskaras; so, spiritual progress cannot be said to be automatic, in the sense that it will come about without the active efforts of the person concerned.

Sooner or later the logic of experience gathered through experience drives every one to seek the highest goal and enter the Path; and once the aspirant enters the Path, he usually goes forward with steady progress. As he advances on the Path, he often develops certain latent capacities, which enable him not only to have conscious experience of the inner subtle and mental worlds, but also to manipulate the forces and powers, which are available on the higher planes. There are many pit-falls on the Path itself; and unless there is the assured guidance of a Master, the aspirant is in danger of falling back.

In some exceptional cases, the aspirant of the higher planes, may, through erroneous Karma, invite upon himself a fall that takes

him back, so far that it takes ages for him to come back to his first point of progress. The aspirant, who has such a fall is known as **yoga-bhrasta**. Even the yogis are subject to the unyielding law of Karma, which knows no exceptions, concessions or preferences. It is only when the aspirant has the advantage of the guidance of a Perfect Master, that the spiritual journey is rendered safe and steady; and it is only then that there is no possibility of a fall or retrogression. The Master wards him from erroneous Karma, in which he might otherwise have got involved.

The treading of the Spiritual Path is carried on for several incarnations before the aspirant attains the goal. Centuries of continued sacrifices, service, self-purification, suffering, and determined search have to roll on, if the aspirant is to be spiritually prepared for the final realisation of God. **God-realisation, which is the goal of the reincarnating individual**, is never an attainment of a single life; it always is the culmination of the continued endeavour, which he has put in through a succession of many lives. Unintelligent Karma of many lives has gone to create the bindings of the individual soul; and it has to be undone by the persistent creation of intelligent and unbinding Karma, which also has to be carried on for many lives.

When all forms of craving disappear, the impressions, which create and enliven the ego-mind, disappear and with the disappearance of these impressions, the ego-mind itself is shed, with the result that there is only the realisation of the one eternal, unchanging Over-soul or

God, who is the only reality. God-realisation is the end of the incarnations of the ego-mind because it is the end of its very existence; as long as the ego-mind exists in some form, there is an inevitable and irresistible urge for incarnations. When there is the cessation of the ego-mind, there is the cessation of incarnations, in the final fulfilment of self-realisation.

The life of the reincarnating individual has many events and phases. The wheel of life, makes its ceaseless rounds, lifting the individual to the heights or bringing him down from high positions; it thus contributes to the enrichment of his experience. Ideals left unattained in one life are pursued further in the next life; things left undone are finished. The accounts of give and take between persons, receive renewed adjustment by the repayment of Karmic dues. At last, out of the ripeness of experience, the soul, through the dissolution of the ego-mind, enters into the sole unity of Divine Life.

The drama of the continued life of the individual soul has many acts. From the point of view of the wordly existence of the soul, a curtain may be said to be drawn over its life after the closing of each act. The end of the act is not the end of the progressive theme. The actors disappear from the stage of earth only to reappear again in new capacities and new contexts.

The actors are so engrossed in their respective roles, that they treat them as being the be-all and end-all of all existence; and for the major part of their continued life (running into

innumerable incarnations) they are unconscious of the closely guarded truth that the author of the drama in his imaginative production, himself became all the actors and played the game of hide and seek, in order to come into full and conscious possession of his own creative infinity. The infinity has to go through the illusion of finiteness to know itself as infinity; and, the author has to go through the phases of the actors, to know himself as the author of the greatest detective story worked out through the cycles of creation.

*Be composed in the
Reality of My Love,
for all confusion and despair
is your own shadow
which will vanish
when I speak THE WORD.*

Meher Baba



Published by

R. P. Pankhraj

Secretary

Avatar Meher Baba Jabalpur Centre

Sundar Bhavan, Kachiyana,

Jabalpur (M. P.).

In commemoration of the

41st Silence Anniversary

of

Avatar Meher Baba

10th July 1966.

By permission from

Shri Adi. K. Irani,

Sole LICENSEE of

Avatar Meher Baba Copy Right,

and the copy right owner

Meher House Publications of

'The Everything & The Nothing'.

Printed by

V. K. Sheorey, M. A.

at the **ARYAN PRESS,**

Karamchand Square, Jabalpur.

Life does not end with death. Survival after death is as true as death after life. To live in order to die, or to die in order to survive, would be a poor proposition indeed. The death that follows life is not a lifelessness, nor is life after death a deathlessness. Life is a positive manifestation of the true Existence which negative death cannot extinguish.

—Meher Baba.