

WHY MEHER BABA?



E. LAKSHMINATHA RAO

“I am that Ancient One whose past is worshipped and remembered, whose present is ignored and forgotten, and whose future (advent) is anticipated with great fervour and longing”.

— *Meher Baba*

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1. Prologue

In essaying an account of the impact of Avatār Meher Baba, the author has depended on his experiences primarily; but he has found that his experiences have been widely shared by lovers belonging to all races and climes, as witnessed in their recorded writings, and he is heartened to feel that what he writes is authentic and true.

God is, with most people, a belief which they have embraced from the environment in which they were brought up, and they make use of the belief for invoking God's support for the fruition of their worldly desires or for relief from the round of earthly sufferings. Either way it is a self-centered way of life that seems to sustain the belief. But outside the belief and the self-centred way of life of most people, does God exist and, if He exists, how could one know Him?

These are questions which press for an answer in the minds of sensitive souls. People who suffer from desires may not want anything more from life than the fulfilment and satisfaction of their desires. They may not want to know what life means and what lies behind it. But it can not be so with seekers of truth who experience a longing to know the meaning of life and the truth of life.

Even with superficial understanding, one knows that life cannot be lived fully if it is 'cribbed, cabined, and confined' to sensuousness and selfishness. And every one suffers from qualms of conscience when one gives way to selfishness and ignores the urge to be selfless. But such qualms of conscience are not powerful enough to modify one's tenor of life or remake the man in the image of goodness and love for others.

Every one has, at least theoretically speaking, some perception of what one has to be. One has to be good, one must be intelligent and knowing, one should not be selfish, one must be alertly aware of what is happening in one's environment to get adjusted and to live in peace, harmony, and happiness.

One has to be good and not want to be good; one has to be virtuous and not want to be

virtuous. This brings to light the hidden conflicts and hypocrisies in human nature; a mere intellectual understanding of what one is and what one wants to be cannot bring about the transformation of one's nature. It has to be a spiritual awakening – an awakening to the spirit in man which makes the man a good, loving, adjusted, harmonious, and integrated individual finding happiness in giving happiness to others.

Meher Baba is an ocean of love. The measureless abundance of love which flows from Him awakens love in our hearts. It is pure love untainted by the feeling of *you* and *me*. In its consummate phases, it flows equally to all things and to all beings, and bridges all divisions and differences as aspects of an infinite unity.

One has to experience God or that infinite unity. One cannot know of it through scriptures, sermons, or discourses. One has to contact a spiritual personality, like Meher Baba, not necessarily through physical *darshan*, but, more importantly, through pure uncalculating love from the heart. A spiritual personality has crossed the barrier of the mind which is at the back of the separateness the soul in the individual experiences and who lives in the living and eternal consciousness of God.

To love Him is to love God the infinite consciousness that man is, was, and ever will be when he breaks through the blinding veil of illusion or *māya* of the separate and individualized consciousness.

To live for all and not for the little 'I' is the life of the spirit, and Meher Baba unties the locked consciousness of man to get free and unbound to live the life of the spirit.

2. Man in Search of Happiness

Man is in continuous search of happiness. He wants one thing or another to feel happy. Thus he wants riches, position, power, or name. Mostly he is unhappy because one want or another is always there remaining unfulfilled, waiting to be fulfilled, or not fulfilled at all in spite of strenuous exertions on his part. Even those which have been fulfilled do not give the happiness that was hoped for and the happiness is also not lasting. Such is the quality of happiness which gets based on worldly desires that it does not last and is therefore not real, and it dwindles even at the moment it is achieved, and, what is worst of all, that its experience is and must always be followed by the experience of its opposite namely unhappiness not from this want, though, but some other want which is equally desired. Man's worldly life is a mixed fare of happiness and unhappiness, and, because of the uncertainty

of either, during a man's unfolding endeavours to find success, he becomes subject to fear, suspense, and worry which eat away much of the happiness he hopes to realise. In the life of many persons, there is a preponderance of suffering over happiness.

3. Man's Helplessness Against Surging Desires

One might think, therefore, that the way to happiness is desirelessness which indeed has been emphasized by spiritual personalities and sages of all ages and of all races and from all climes as the *sine qua non* of real and abiding happiness.

And if one imagines one can shed desires by an act of will, one realizes how restless one becomes and how acutely distressed when one sets out to resist the pressures and compulsions of surging desires. It is not possible to stem against them by an effort of the will.

Intellectually also one feels that life becomes non-living and inert when the passion for living is checked and brought to a halt by ceasing to live without the desires which lie at the source of actions.

4. Man's Invocation of God's Help

Most people have a bringing-up in the religious tradition of one faith or another. The worship of God is part of tradition, and although people do not trouble to get engaged in critical enquiries regarding the existence of God, they accept the belief that God exists and He must be prayed to for help not only for betterment of one's prospects in life but also make smooth one's journey through life and particularly for deliverance from adversities and sufferings. Man is acutely conscious of his insufficiencies of vision, intellectual and emotional awareness, and moral strength to vie with the difficulties confronting the path of his endeavours for success in his worldly aspiration and desires; and so he gives himself to prayer to God in one way or another for help. It does not matter to what form of God the prayer is addressed as long as there is an implicit belief that God exists as the supreme power

that helps. But not knowing God by personal experience, his belief lacks the sincerity and integrity of a living faith and, in times of crisis, prayers, made with misgiving and doubt, remain far from being an ideal solution when he could have done better by relying on his own resource and judgement by detachment from anxieties and personal entanglement.

Detachment holds the key to man's ability to handle the problems of life and surmount them. But detachment is just what most men find difficult to achieve when one gets weighed down by sorrows and sufferings of life.

5. The Ego

Man lives constantly under the sway of the 'I' consciousness of the ego. It is the constant of every feeling, thought, and action which he consciously experiences. It is the consciousness which makes one experience separateness from others. The expressions, *I, You, he, they*, and so on, are born out of each human individual consciously or unconsciously owning a state of separateness.

The desire soul is the ego for, when there is a state of desirelessness, one finds oneness with all other forms of life. The root cause of separateness is the desires which make up the desire soul or the ego.

The desires are a source of much suffering to the soul for, when fulfilled, they do not offer lasting happiness and, when unfulfilled, they cause dismay and suffering.

The separateness which a man experiences through his ego puts a veil on the indwelling universal soul called *Paramātmā* in which the individual soul lives, moves, and has its being. The ego is, therefore, a factor which stands for the fundamental ignorance of man; for, by being bound to it, he fails to get to the whole, the immanent or the indwelling reality, the universal soul or the *Paramātmā*. And what is worse, he gets limited in consciousness in his intellectual and emotional awarenences and therefore in the capacities of fulfilling actions. Although heir to infinite consciousness, unlimited knowledge and power, belonging to that infinite consciousness, the weight of the ego makes one severely limited and restricted in inner faculties as well as the capacities of outer action. The ego is aptly compared in an old Persian saying with a rock placed on fire. The rock obstructs the fire from rising into flames; so does the ego which acts like a heavy weight on the personality, narrowing and restricting the play of its powers and its consciousness to the limited interests and affinities the ego calls *mine*. The limiting consciousness is rivetted on the world outside in search of happiness through the desires of the ego, and the troubles and travails of the world stem from the limitations, insufficiencies of character, power, and functions of the persona-

lity spelt by the separatist ego. The powers and consciousness are indeed unlimited and infinite. Yet they are experienced as limited and finite because of the ego. The ego that is the consciousness of separateness that each one experiences is a fetter on the soul which breeds self-enclosure and self-limitation. When the ego goes, all self-limitations are transcended and one rises to the realization of the Real Self - the Self of all selves which the prophets describe as God with infinite consciousness, infinite knowledge, and infinite power.

6. The Elimination of the Ego

The problem of human improvement turns on this problem of finding rescue or freedom from the ego. It is there before every human personality, no matter whether it is of the East or the West, it is black or white, or it is of this religion or that religion.

But this ego cannot be overcome by one's own efforts. The 'I' consciousness cannot transcend the 'I' consciousness. It is, as Meher Baba had said, like jumping over one self. One has only the 'I' consciousness to work with.

One must cognize that 'I' consciousness as a factor of impediment to the growth and flowering of the faculties and consciousness of the personality and one must long, therefore, for a life which can be lived above the ego. Unless the longing is there, the love that helps life to

be lived above it cannot and will not be embraced.

Most persons live the life of ego with its joys and sorrows as though it were the most natural thing to do. They cannot know the higher life and they do not long for it either. In the absence of longing, nothing happens even with factors and forces which can make the ego get dissolved.

To live above the ego means to live a life of detachment from the self; that is a life without self-seeking and without desires.

Intellectual detachment one can readily attain and, indeed, has been attained by man in his study and acquisition of knowledge concerning the material world. But intellectual detachment is not to be mistaken for detachment from the desire self or the ego which man has to reach to realize the infinite consciousness and the power and knowledge which belongs to the universal self in man, and it is this detachment that man finds impossible to achieve by himself.

7. Meher Baba's Impact

Meher Baba's impact is an awakening into love, pure love. Those who have had the blessed fortune of being drawn by Him or drawn into the orbit of His love have experienced the refreshment of love being born in their hearts, love for Him and love for all that live. It is not love that comes and goes or that happens to be tethered to particular forms and conditioned by personal relationships. Human love is conditioned and limited but Baba's love is unlimited and untainted and flows equally to all irrespective of the labels that are worn as being of this nationality, race, caste, or creed or that nationality, race, caste, or creed. Truly it is universal love.

When such love is born in one's heart, one does not get transfigured into the universal man that he is potentially. It has to contend with

the limitations that have made the limited ego of the man. The values that the ego has prized, such as security, worldly possessions, name, etc., cannot stand for long against the promptings of love which truly reflect the unity of the soul in all and which give true happiness. The citadels of illusion, in all the forms of worldliness which the false self of man has embraced and reared, are found to be nothing in a vast ocean of nothingness before the growing consciousness of true love and the value of love for others it nourishes as the expression of the spiritual truth of life.

Love is an internal power; it may not be visible to outside observation; yet, in effect, it is the greatest power which subdues the ego and makes the man rise consciously to the unused powers of awareness and knowledge in him. Slowly, but steadily, and with increasing momentum, love remakes man into the divinity that he is intrinsically.

What love does internally cannot be known or described in external terms. In fact one cannot envisage its working from outside. It has to be known internally and cherished internally. But the services it offers and the sacrifices it can cheerfully face and sustain are writ

large in the life story of Baba. Baba is God in human form and his endurance of hardships and difficulties might not add to the glory that Baba is. But life with Baba has never been a cosy path of ease and comfort. It was, on the contrary, a life of unceasing physical toil, bare physical nourishment, and uneven and insecure periods of rest. As if this ordeal is not enough, Baba was known to make sudden changes of plans entailing or calling for a resilient mind to adjust to a fast changing scene of outer life. The habit of conforming to a fixed routine of life is the greatest obstacle to keeping the mind fluid to meet any situation and any change which life may bring, and the really astonishing part of the story is that in spite of such painful and grievous ordeals, the lovers - the *Mandali* they are called, who have elected to live with Him and serve Him in every wish of His, have stubbornly stuck to Him for the love they received from Baba which was far more precious than the worst severities which their bodies or their appetites might have had to endure; and they belonged to all religions and have been drawn from well-to-do families living a life of indulgence and comfort. And Baba mentioned in His discourses that such love is not tasted by the mother who gives her all for the happiness of her child, including her life, nor by the martyr who pays

the supreme penalty of losing his life for the love of his country or his nation.

Love is the way of Baba, love is the way of life eternal by loosening and dissolving the ties that bind life to finiteness and impermanence. It is the way of knowledge, bliss, and power which finds the worldly things of life empty and futile.

The impact of Baba is profound and lasting, incomparable in its results on man and society.

8. Baba's Divinity

Baba proclaimed His divinity that He was God in human form who came to offer a fresh dispensation of the spiritual truth to man to give him deliverance from illusion and falseness.

He gave it out that His divinity had to be experienced through the evolving ascent of love in one's heart and not through miracles which most people seek and which he refused to exhibit because miracles betray a cheap form of divinity and draw people deeper into the dragnet of illusion instead of providing deliverance from it. And worst of all, divinity, expressed through external evidence, makes it alien to man who might respect it, worship it, pay homage to it, and not claim it as one's own, and which becomes unveiled when one gets freed from one's illusory self and its stupid desires. In fact God is one's own when one loves God and becomes

one with the truth. And Baba's entire *Avatāric* mission was to sow the seeds of love in man's life so that, through love, man threads his way out of illusion into the reality that is God.

Any showing which would make God another to man would have falsified the whole mission of Baba. He was most often most sparing in the use of occult media for bringing revelation of his divinity to man.

However, He made a matter of fact announcement of his divinity to make man realize that divinity is not something extraneous or away from man but which is basically and intrinsically his and which he can know and realize through love for Baba that Baba is the same that his own intuitions and intimations reveal of his higher self.

The intimations of Baba's divinity come through the call of love which was Baba's voice heard through His immaculate silence and lived through in lovers' life with love for you and me and every one. It needed not an external testimony save love which only love can and give God is love above everything else He is or was or ever will be.

While Baba disowned and rejected conscious association with miracles in individual lives, Baba lovers uniformly report miraculous happenings in their lives which have tended to give relief from stresses and strains of life. The happenings bear the stamp of miracles because they go so far out of the way of normal human expectations and Baba would say, and indeed had said, that they were the outcome of one's love and faith for Baba and should be welcomed because they reinforced the love for Baba and did not add to the bindings. Love and love alone counts for human consciousness to transcend its bindings and evolve into the unlimited bliss of divine consciousness. It is the supreme miracle that Baba has come to perform and which divinity alone can perform not for just one individual or a few individuals but for the entire humanity. The sun does not shine just for some but for all. Even so the spiritual radiations of love from Baba, although the preparedness of the recipient restricts the amount of love that is received and how long the love takes to bloom into perfection.

9. Baba Lovers and Others

Baba's love is pouring on all equally; yet it is found to fructify in some and not in others. Those in whom Baba's love fructifies are those who have found the response of love for His divinity and a lasting devotion and obedience and a self-giving surrender to His call. But those who have not found the response are a legion; they are everywhere. It does not require a prophet to identify that among them are they that are moved emotionally by worldly wants and desires. They also seek God in temples, mosques, or churches to satisfy their worldly longings and aspirations, supplicate to Him, pray to Him, and perform *pūja* or worship according to the prescribed rituals, not so much for God Himself as for the help He can give. Their heart is given not to God but to their worldly longings and desires.

There are those who are given away to modes of religious life based on renunciation, meditation, and service but with attention focussed on specific human forms which have manifested divinity in bygone ages or bygone times. Such concentration, based as it is on mental or intellectual appreciation of the ideal of divine life, might afford a mental freedom from the idea of self but not the freedom growing from love. This is not to say that such persons have no love for the divine personalities they worship; but the dominant element is mental and the mind gets bogged in identifying divinity through love which Baba is. There were sages and saints of acknowledged spiritual stature who have acknowledged and accepted the divinity of Baba, like Sai Baba of Shirdi, Upasani Baba of Sakori, and Baba Jan of Poona, all of whom had taken a share in unveiling the attributes of divinity to Baba's perceptual consciousness. The Masts who are in a state of constant absorption in God consciousness and who are in an advanced state of spiritual development are known to have averred Baba's unfathomable divinity. One cannot know God unless one becomes God.

Are Baba lovers then so near to God realization that they realize what many fail to realize namely the divinity of Baba? Baba lovers are,

as a rule, not conscious of their degree or status in spiritual advancement and are least bothered about it. Having tasted love of Baba, their only concern is how to keep loving Him more and more. They have found their love to be at the very source of happiness and bliss they experience in life. For such happiness, they have experienced Baba is and has been God to them. Baba lives in their hearts and Baba is everything to them; they are nothing to themselves. If they are asked whether they longed for God realization, they would say they live in Baba and they live for Baba and they do not long for anything else than love for Baba. When one ceases to live for oneself, one lives in God and Baba lovers find sufficiency, completeness, and contentment of inaction in the very dynamic living they live in Baba and for the love of Baba. Such is the actionless action which love of God inspires and the same actionless action Baba lovers perform out of their fullness of love for Baba. The foregoing account is of Baba lovers who have attained a maturity in their love of Baba; that is those whose egos have been consumed in their love of Baba and who, in their personal lives, offer living examples of humility, renunciation, and glowing service and sacrifice for others. They do not show themselves off and are content to live in obscurity unknown to others. It is

only when others contact them and experience their personal association that they realize the heroism of unknownness which only a genuine love of god can inspire and support.

Baba lovers do not all at once reach this high zenith of love for Baba. But even a little love, when it is born in the heart, puts its unmistakable stamp of truth on the personality which is drawn to it as iron is drawn to the magnet. With growing conscious experience of life and the relations it brings, consciousness veers more and more towards love and truth rather than towards the little things of life which ego considers necessary and important. This giving up of things, like the so-called good things of life, good food, good comforts, and good in everything which please the senses, give rise to pain; but the joy of love and the values it nourishes are felt precious and life-giving. And, therefore, in fullness of time, the promptings of ego are rejected for the more precious, life-giving joy of love and its values. With progress of experience, love becomes the dominant motive force of life to the exclusion of ego and the pleasures that it craves for.

10. Baba and Religions

Has Baba come to give a new religion to humanity ?

God is one; all religions acknowledge and to make man God-conscious in his every day living, to make him righteous, loving, and honest is the theme and substance of every religion. Worship of God is ordained by every religion as a means of making man God-conscious and since God is without form and attributes and is thus beyond imagination and conception, every religion provides an *Avataric* manifestation like Rama and Krishna for Hindus, Jesus for Christians, Buddha for Buddhists, Zoroaster for Zoroastrians or Parsis with a name and a form for making the worship imaginative and purposeful. Mohammedans may not worship prophet Mohammed; they make their prayers to the one and only God whom they call Allah. They may

disclaim any intent to worship God with a form but turning towards Mecca when offering *Namaz* is indicative of the prophet entering into the prayers in a form accepted as vital to the prayers. All these are spiritual personalities or manifestation of God in human form who came on the human scene at different times, in different countries, and in different forms embodying the same spiritual consciousness or God-consciousness to teach the mankind the same spiritual truth of God as the one indivisible, infinite, and eternal truth behind the manyness of forms of life to redeem man from sin and suffering to which he gets condemned when he is alienated from God and gives himself to the selfish pursuit of power, self, and pride in total disregard of righteousness, compassion, and forgiveness. They preach the same gospel of love for reaching the haven of blessedness and eternal life that God is. It is the same one spiritual truth and the same one infinite spiritual consciousness which dispensed it to suffering humanity to give it deliverance and freedom from suffering. Yet the divisive tendencies of the egoistic consciousness of the followers, blinded by passion and prejudice, carved apparently different religions based on the differentiated forms of the personalities bequeathing the spiritual messages and truths. Judging with a discriminating eye the

essentials, taught by the Messiahs and Avatars, there is nothing to suggest a difference between the teachings of one and the teachings of another. While Christians hold that the Kingdom of Heaven could be realized through Christ, Mohammedans with the same or greater fervour hold that *Al Quoran*, the holy book, containing the teachings of Mohammed is the last word for reaching the life of the spirit or the life ever lasting. It is a difference without a distinction and all religions are true for reaching the light of God. Meher Baba, with his spiritual insight and understanding, focussed the truth on the primary functional mission of religion and affirmed the validity of every religion to take man to God. It is the egotism of followers that makes separate religions of the same one identical truth of God because of the external difference of form which God's incarnation wore for giving the truth to the humanity. Krishna is one with Christ or Buddha or Mohammed in the infinite consciousness of His personality. When worship is offered to any one of these personalities, it is their infinite consciousness, the egoless divinity that is worshipped for man's life in illusion and limited consciousness to go or to transcend them so that man could realize the infinite consciousness of God.

Unhappily the egoistic and gross perceptions of the average man take the human form of the *Avatārs* as the truth and cling to the form to the exclusion of the *Avatāric* consciousness or God consciousness which lies behind the form, and claims separateness, uniqueness, and, worst of all, exclusiveness that the prophet or *Avatār* he elects to follow or accept – in fact the acceptance is not a choice between different religions but what one imbibes from one's upbringing in a particular religious tradition – is the only prophet or *Avatār* who can deliver the spiritual goods for man. If man's religious belonging is motivated by a real aspiration to realize the indwelling Godhood that is there within every living form; the idea of *my* and *mine* is given up, all religions are seen to be pathways to realize God and all prophets and Messiahs are human manifestations of the indivisible divine consciousness of God, the one and only Reality. The apparent differences are dictated by the social circumstances and social infirmities of the times and the country in which the *Avatār* did the work and gave vent to His teachings and His denunciations of the social perversions of the age. But these do not affect the spiritual truth of oneness which lies behind the manifold manifestation of variant body forms, and in the case of human beings of variant minds in responding and articulating

differently to situations. Meher Baba expressed in His own piquant and incisive way these bare truths of religions which are in keeping with our deepest intuitions.

All religions are one in the truth of God they dispense, and the so-called differences in creed and ritual hang on the surface only and do not affect the main issue that religions are intended to focus on the spiritual regeneration of man. Their differentiation obscures that vital issue and they have served to make God an instrument for the demanding egotism and worldliness of man. God is no God, whether one worships Him through Christ or Mohammed or Krishna, when one cannot transcend clannishness and sectarian leanings and prejudices. The decay of the spiritual man has led to the growth of unhampered selfishness which gave rein to all kinds of inhumanities and even barbarities, fostered confusions and chaos in social ranks, and, not infrequently, precipitated the stupid and merciless arbitrament of war.

Meher Baba's advent was to bring home to mankind the spiritual truth of oneness and thus bring man back to the peace, harmony, and love of God or Truth. It is precisely the function of religion to perform this duty by mankind and

when religion has lost itself in religions and man's soul could not be rescued from the clutches of selfishness forged by desires, God had to come and God has come in the human form of Meher Baba to awaken the life of spirit or God in man. Meher Baba said He did not come to establish a new religion nor to displace the religions which were already there, but to breathe life into them and revitalize them so that they could hang together like beads strung together on a common thread by reviving their spiritual basis of love for God. His followers or lovers, particularly those who elected to live with him, were persons drawn from all religious denominations; and they lived their life in the faith in which they were born and their bringing up and they found their faiths revitalized and strengthened by the image of pure and unhindered love which Baba continuously poured on them. That is as Baba affirmed He had come to do.

11. Baba's Advent

Baba's advent as divinity in human form has taken place at a time and in circumstances which seemed to leave man in his individual and social situation no option except to be carried helplessly on the tide of rivalries and hatreds bred by self enclosing egotisms and greeds on the scenes of individual and collective life.

There has been a bewildering progress in the knowledge of his material and social environment, and the progress shows no signs of interruption or abatement because of its world wide support by the banded efforts of scientists.

Communication has become easy and facile and countries and cultures which earlier grew in isolation and independence have been drawn together into close and interwoven neighbourliness thanks to the instruments which science

and scientific inventions have forged for making communication and travel not only easy, but instructive and refreshing as well to people.

But this has not helped to break the emotional barriers of separatist loyalties cherished by people who continue to live their old identities as belonging to a nation, country, community, race, religion, creed, and so on.

This communication gap bred by sectarian loyalties has not been bridged by the advancing knowledge of science and the communications it has opened up between different parts and different peoples of the globe. Such knowledge is, on the contrary, adding edge to the self-consciousness of people and aggravating the rivalries and feuds inherited from the past.

The world was engulfed in two global wars during the present century engulfing the warring factions in an orgy of slaughter and destruction never witnessed before. Science has given knowledge and the knowledge has been used for hatreds to work upon and invent deadlier and still deadlier weapons of raining death and destruction on enemy ranks while the enemy power, taking recourse to the same scientific knowledge, made bid to forge barriers of protection and, at

the same time, still deadlier weapons of destruction in a mad frenzy of counteraction.

It is a vicious circle; man trying to destroy man through fanning the fires of competition and hatred and neither hatred nor its more ugly manifestation of violence and wars can ever bring happiness to man. His intellect, which has been at the source of all the scientific knowledge he has so meticulously and painstakingly built up, has not helped to bestow enlightenment and vision to unveil the path to true happiness. Man does not live by bread alone and man cannot live by egoistic knowledge and power either as the miserable predicament of the modern man shows as he leads a nightmarish existence torn between pride and anxiety, security and fear-exaltation, and self-abasement. The modern man is precariously perched between entrenched loyalties inherited from the past which more intellectual knowledge with its power of reasoning could do nothing to subdue or banish and the peace which he so fervently craves for and on which his hold is daily becoming more and more precarious. He is unhappy; he has truly lost his way and he is unable to recover the lost balance of life which offers true happiness to life. Religion which puts the accent on freedom from passion and prejudice has failed to give man the stimulus of

life which alone offers detachment and redemption from self-limiting outlook and the ravages of hatred and greed.

Science with its emphasis on the intellectual power of apprehending truth belonging to the material sphere has been unable to reach the universal spirit of man. Despite much that man has learnt through it in the way of bringing the material environment to meet his expanding needs, such, as more food, more industry, and more and improved production of goods and so on, it has not helped to make man good; with all his vaunted advancement of scientific knowledge, he remains the small, selfish, pettifogging, and miserable individual he has ever been reacting to situations and challenges that life presented with the narrow eyes of self-seeking interests and not from the point of view of the interests of all or how such interests might be served.

Indeed the state of human affairs not here or there but the world over have reached a state of crisis proportions where anything may happen any where and at any time plunging the whole humanity into the danger of total physical annihilation what with the nuclear bombs and nuclear weapons held in the leash now the

fighting powers may not long withhold from using and it might well mean the end of civilization of his science and religion and of the man himself. Man finds himself individually and collectively helpless to stem against the tide of impending danger which a wild wave of collective passion may anytime spark into action.

The grave disorders of the times and the threat they hold out for the future of man is a telling commentary on man turning to be his own enemy when he cannot govern himself and falls a prey to his thirsts and passions of selfishness. His intellect may be of help for the conquest of the outside environment but is absolutely valueless to govern himself. It is a spiritual process in the sense of man knowing himself to be the all knowing and all powerful spirit which is beyond mind and matter. He is thickly overlaid with the sense that he is matter or body or that he is mind so much so he is unable, on his own, to ascend to the universal light of the spirit by transcending both matter and mind.

God is the universal spirit, and because man is deaf to His call from within He had to come in a human form and He has come as Meher Baba to awaken man to his inherent and native status as the universal and immortal spirit and

tide over his problems and sufferings with self-giving love and the wisdom born of such love.

Meher Baba's advent has been to a world humanity unlike the advent of Christ or Mohammed which was to a tribal people primitive and superstitious and yet such is the livingness of the truths of their teachings that they are treasured today as precious to spiritual enlightenment as they were before. They spoke in parables and allegories which needed spiritual understanding to penetrate to their inner meaning. But Baba faced a highly intellectualized community which needed to be spoken to in the accents of intellect and reasoning. But intellect and reasoning, unless purified from the ego, cannot show the way to the kingdom of the Spirit in which one really lives but of which clouded by ego, one remains ignorant.

Love is the way, the means, and the goal of the egoless divine and Baba's way was and is the way of pure love, pouring it out in measureless abundance to waken the ego-bound and illusory selves of humanity to their inherent status of the divine.

No reasoning, no intellect can unveil this divine. They conceal the divine by the shrouding veils of the ego, which animates them.

The impact of Baba's spiritual or divine consciousness on humanity is not a sudden and spectacular outburst like an earthquake or a devastating flood. It is mostly silent and slow because love is silent and the spiritual transformation it brings about is also silent and gradual. One cannot know of it from outside. One has to taste it, experience it to know how basically, vitally, and radically one gets changed in every aspect of living consciousness and energy. Love brings into the being a release of power and consciousness, freedom from fear and inner repression and differentiation, and an awareness of others as one's own to work for and serve with the zeal of unselfishness.

Some have known and experienced love for Baba. They are Baba lovers, the great majority have not consciously found it. But it does not mean that Baba's self-transcending love and the infinite consciousness which goes with it have not been making an impact. people's minds are undergoing a silent change towards abiding values like love and truth from the fleeting things like riches and power and fame. People who have not known Baba are eagerly hearkening to His messages of love and truth, and there has been a rapid accession to the numbers of lovers who are consciously drawn to the love of Baba. Love and

truth are eternal elements of life and none can stand against them, however much one gets mis-carried into the ways of ignorance and selfishness. Men will turn and men must turn to God that Baba is, who is love and truth and the living spirit embodied in human form.

12. Baba's Method

Man is spiritually one with all other human beings and in fact with all forms of life but is ignorant of the fact and treats himself as separate and independent. The ignorance stems from the possession of a separate body and a separate mind with which man identifies himself and the ignorance makes him a self-centred and self-seeking individual. This lower self in which the man dwells is a state of conflict and repression and curtailment of his being and its powers and consciousness; indeed if he can rise to the consciousness of the spirit, he attains unlimited knowledge, power, and bliss.

Man's seeking things of the world is all in that ignorance which envelops him and makes him run after the fleeting sense enjoyments or for power and fame.

It is when one realizes the spiritual self that one becomes truly selfless and finds the sense of separateness an illusion of the mind and the source of all limitation, sorrow, and suffering. He now becomes limitless in consciousness, knowledge, power, and bliss.

Meher Baba, through the love he pours out in measureless abundance, awakens the pure love in the heart of the aspirant which carries him through the innumerable alleys of life and its responsibilities with feeling of self-assurance and fulfilment and joy and happiness for all. Love cannot be forced. It can never be the product of coercion. But it can be awakened through love. The love of the lover is the response of love to the love of God who came on the human scene in human form as Meher Baba.

It is pure love; that is love unlimited and not love tied to the self-centredness or ego of the man. Such love is uninhibited and flows freely to every one and everything and inspires universal consciousness.

The ego consciousness cannot readily turn into love because of its ancient origin and long duration extending right through the entire process of the evolution of consciousness. The

love the aspirant consciously experiences, grows, and develops with time, and many cravings which have loomed large in the egoistic mind of the aspirant are found by the eye of love to be fleeting and flippant; such, for example, are the pleasure of the senses, or the lusts for possessions or fame or publicity. In themselves they are effects and cannot for long survive the understanding which love inspires and the joys it gives. The life of self-giving which love stands for is an incomparable blessing before which the littleness of life in the ego, laden with misery, fear, and uncertainty, pales into meaninglessness and much-ado-about nothing.

Many disciplines for mind to gain awareness and experience of the divine or God have been coming down the ages such as discipline of meditation and knowledge or the discipline of selfless action called *Karma yoga*. All these disciplines are straining applications of the mind to get implanted into the eternal and the infinite from its moorings to the fleeting and evanescent self called the ego. These are born of determination and lack the grace and spontaneity of love.

Baba's method of implanting love in the hearts of the aspirants is the method par excell-

ance to take them speedily to the goal of the spirit by emancipation from the dead weight of the ego. Love is the resurrection of life from its bondage to the ego. It is the means and it is goal. When such love is born in the heart, it is always a gift from a perfect master or an *Avatar* who is perennially at the source of the flow of such love.

No man, however infirm or weak in the head or the heart, is alien to the reception of such love. If the heart is too full of worldly cravings and is closed to the longings of love and compassion, then it may remain immune to the spiritual radiations of love from the *Avatar* or the great Masters of life. But the *Avatars* and the great Masters do not discriminate to whom to give and to whom not to give their love like sun light which shines on the sinners and the saints alike; so also the love from the Masters and *Avatars*. But the love bears fruit only in hearts which have been rendered fertile by longing for love.

The love that is thus received may take long - several life times to grow to maturity and attain its fruition in divine life. The length of time makes little difference since the journey of the soul with the blessings of love is throughout attended with joy.

This pure love is the love of God or Truth; it is love of life in its myriad manifestations. Where love of God is, there is love of fellow men. Attendance at churches or mosques or temples is not love of God. It is a fetish or ritual which is nourished by the egoistic mind of man and not pure love of God and man.

What man needs now and always is the vitalising breath of pure love to solve the problem of attachments and cravings to live the full power of life which alone affords enduring happiness and joy.

Meher Baba and the life in love which He kindles are the only and true panacea that heals all the ills and especially the misery and fears to which man is subject individually and collectively by life lived in the ego.

This pure love is the love of God or Father
 It is love of life in the world of mortal things
 When love of God is there is love of Father
 When Attendance at church is the love of
 man is not love of God. If it is love
 of God which is associated by the earthly mind of
 man and not pure love of God and Father.

What man needs now and always is the
 Christian birth of pure love to reach the pro-
 portion of attachment and service to his Father
 power of life which alone allows entrance
 into the Kingdom of God.

Man's love and the life in love which is
 the only and true path to the Kingdom of God
 is the only way to the Father and Son
 which man is subject to and which is
 by the love in the eye.

13. Baba Centres

Avatar Meher Baba centres have been established at many places, big and small, by Baba lovers to propagate His message of love and truth and to foster a way of life in love and truth.

Baba exercised such a strong fascination because his being was an infinite expanse of love and truth in their native hues of unconditioned and absolute freedom. His contact was the contact of life in its unlimited truth. He has ceased to live to our physical eyes, so to live in our being to enliven it with the absoluteness of intrinsic truth and love.

These Baba centres and the Baba lovers therein have to be alive and pulsating with that love and truth and make their thrust in thought, word, and deed to be taken notice of by tehr. When Baba affirmed at the famous meeting at

Rajahmundry that the hearts of Baba lovers were His real centres, He must have meant just that.

We have a habit of reducing our Gods to idols and making a pretence of worship which is centred in the thoughts of worldly advancement. Our worship does not involve us in any expansiveness of either our being or our consciousness to transcend the limitations which beset them in their unregenerate condition. If that habit should assail our relation with Baba, then we are lost and Baba is lost.

The condition of our love for Baba must be our active love for all of mankind and for all of creation. Baba himself had provided the tests to test our love of God which is the same thing as our love of Baba. They are well known to Baba lovers; yet they are so important that they can bear being reiterated here.

To love God in the most practical way is to love our fellow beings. If we feel for others in the same way as we feel for our dear ones we love God.

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

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

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

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

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

If we understand and feel that the greatest act of devotion and worship to God is not to hurt or harm any of His beings, we are loving God.

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

If then we can attain to a detachment from ourselves and examine our attitudes and dispositions, our thoughts, our impulses, and our actions in the light of the foregoing tests, we

can know whether our being is restructuring itself in the image of our genuine love for God or for Baba.

Sankīrthan and *Satsang* which figure at the gatherings held at the centres are helpful if we can tune our being to the thought of God and His remembrance. If on the other, we go on with our usual thoughts and pretend to participate in the gatherings for thinking that we get engaged in some pious activity which we have no feeling for, except for our presence, we find ourselves dead to the essential purpose of such gatherings and to the Baba centre. Consciousness is the essential attribute of our being. It is ordinarily involved in illusions which our worldly life expresses. If our love for Baba gets charged into consciousness, and we feel drawn to reinforce that consciousness by participation in the activities of Baba centres, by contacts with similar consciousness of fellow Baba lovers, then and only then would we find these centres to be rewarding to our march to God-consciousness. If on the other we get bound to these activities mechanically and out of fear that we fail in our loyalty to Baba unless we keep up a pretence of activity at the Baba centres, we become instruments for their ultimate decay. As Baba had declared, organisations do not bring

us nearer the truth. The Baba lovers in their self-giving love must find entry into consciousness which, in the constant remembrance of Baba, must find its deliverance from the corrupting evils of worldly desires and make the centres genuine centres of Light, Love, and Bliss.

14. Epilogue

It may be thought that the addition of the life story of Baba could fittingly go with this account of His impact for the efflorescence of individual and collective life of mankind. It should be remembered that Baba's life and His messages were meant for giving awakenment to the whole mankind to the life of the eternal spirit.

If this account generates enough interest in the readers to know more of Baba and His life story, excellent books are available in English written by authors of established name and renown. Such well-written books are set forth in the bibliography. The addition of the life story of Baba to this account, however brief, is not going to fill the bill because many of the activities of Baba lie outside the intellectual understanding of most people who seek such understanding and live with it.

Take, for example, his periodical seclusions and fasts for inner work which even His *Maṇḍali* have no understanding of. Their faith in His divinity was so deep and so implicit that they accepted that whatever Baba did was for the highest good of all and their part was only to give Him immediate and unquestioning obedience to every wish of His without even trying to know what His inner work was all about.

Throughout His spiritual ministry, lasting over five decades or more, Baba, choosing to work in the open, such as giving *darshan*, meeting people, and communing with *Maṇḍali* through discourse on spiritual themes, had used less time than seclusions and fasts at odd places and for extended periods. What is perhaps not less remarkable about these seclusions was the fasts that Baba observed, taking no food at all or taking some liquid, like coffee or tea or Horlicks in small measured quantities each day, and emerging not only unscathed but replenished and refreshed with a vibrant look and a radiant glow playing on the face. Those who have had the *darshan* of Baba have uniformly marked the halo surrounding Baba which enabled Baba and the features of His countenance to be perceived with clarity even from a long distance, while others with Him or near Him could not be so identified.

His work with the God-intoxicated souls whom He called *Masts* was as mystifying as His inner work performed with fasting or near fasting in the privacy of seclusion from all contacts. He would sit in silence with the *masts* and commune with them towards what end, none could know. He went in search of these *masts* and performed long and arduous journeys over the length and breadth of the land to far nooks and corners, enduring unspeakable hardships and toils, without food many times and sleep and a place where to rest the weary limbs. Baba was God and the difficulties might not have meant at least so serious a strain as they must have been to the *Manḍali* members who accompanied Him in such travels. But the *Manḍali* members measured up to the ordeals with extraordinary tenacity and fortitude and the strength of character they displayed was an expression of what their love for Baba could offer and what it could withstand.

These mystic elements expressed 'the work' Baba did to what end or with what results none had any idea of, not even they who threw themselves over heart and soul to serve His faintest wish.

His silence which was not of the mind but which emanated from the soul cannot be that

difficult to understand because the ineffable soul experience which was love was past all knowledge, thinkings, and speech and could only be conveyed through the actionless action of love and silence. To be in Baba's presence is an immeasurable experience of selfless love and selfless awareness. It is an experience of such exquisite joy that Baba lovers long for it and have been known to fall for it whenever the opportunity was given for Baba's physical *darshan*. Lovers are known to cross continents and high seas for the joy of being in His physical presence even for a short while. He was truly the beloved of His lovers drawing them by the bliss of love. The self-effacement which Baba's love worked was at the source of the bliss. The ego-self weighs it down and thwarts its emergence into consciousness and experience. When, through the impact of love from Baba, the strangle-hold of the ego gets lifted, there is nameless experience of the joy that Baba offers.

Pure love is pure joy. It is unwilled and spontaneous, unconditioned and selfless.

The allegiance people offer to *sādhus* and saints is not unconditioned. It stems from the mundane interests of the self. Pure love can never be the outcome of calculating selfishness.

Baba is God; Baba is divine because only God gives pure love and evokes the same love from human hearts. One has, of course, to be alive to such love to receive it and respond to it. But if the heart happens to be closed by self and its restless desires, it cannot be affected by love.

Baba has made declarations of His divinity and many people, particularly those who are in perpetual search of intellectual understanding, are scared by it and contend that such self-affirmations are out of keeping with dignities of modesty and self-restraint. Man with the limitations of understanding can not gauge the depths of divinity and perfection of God in human form. But God, in human form, in His self-awareness, knows it and has to declare it so that man might have before him not an abstract ideal of perfection but a living example of it so that he might know what he becomes by shedding the limitedness of understanding, consciousness, and power. Man has to reach the God state. That is the prime purpose of his existence in the world. He knows it when he becomes disburdened of his limited life in illusion.

Meher Baba is crucial to man's life because He does not teach. He awakens unlike the teachers whom religions have made familiar to

man who teach but have not experienced what they teach. Experience is primary to make man know spiritual life and Meher Baba gives it if one finds love for Him.

Meher Baba is no more now in bodily form. But His universal *Avataric* consciousness lives in its infinite invisible state. His lovers experience His love with more ardour and find Him more living than before. Persons who have never known Him in physical form are finding the response of love when they look at His picture with eager longing for truth or when they invoke His name and His egoless divine state. The universal consciousness of love is still at work and they that want to benefit from it can seek its love and its awakenment. Baba was the embodiment of that consciousness and, without the weight and veil of the body, its impact is direct and more real. "The lion was caged" as Baba used to say and it is now free.

The *sadhana* of love that Baba gives is self-sustaining and self-expensive. It feeds on itself and grows unconditioning itself from the limiting factors which bedevil the mind with *me* and *mine*. Its sacrifices are ungrudging and spontaneous and, in its perfection, it takes the soul to self-knowledge and self-realization. It is the

beginning, the middle, and the end without the austerities and the strains of the other paths which also need the inspiration of love to make them successful.

With Christ one might say Baba is life, Baba is the way, and Baba is the goal of eternal and awake life.

beginning, the middle, and the end without the
 assistance of the organs of the body which
 which also need the inspiration of love to make
 them successful in their work.

With Christ one might say that in the
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Meher Baba Information, Box 1101. Berkely, California 94701. Sufism Reoriented Center, 1300, Boulevard Way, Walnut Creek, California, 94595.

Meher Baba Bookstore, 393, East Green Street. Pasadena, California 91101.

England :

The Meher Baba Association, 3A Eccleston Square, London S.W.1. Mr. and Mrs. Adi S. Irani, 61, Elmbank Gds. Barnes, London S.W. 13. Delia De Leon, 280, Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey Oceanic, 24 The Embankment, Twickenham, Middlesex.

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Mr. and Mrs. Leland Delong, P.O. 125, Cassadaga, Florida 32706.

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Previous Contributions of the Author

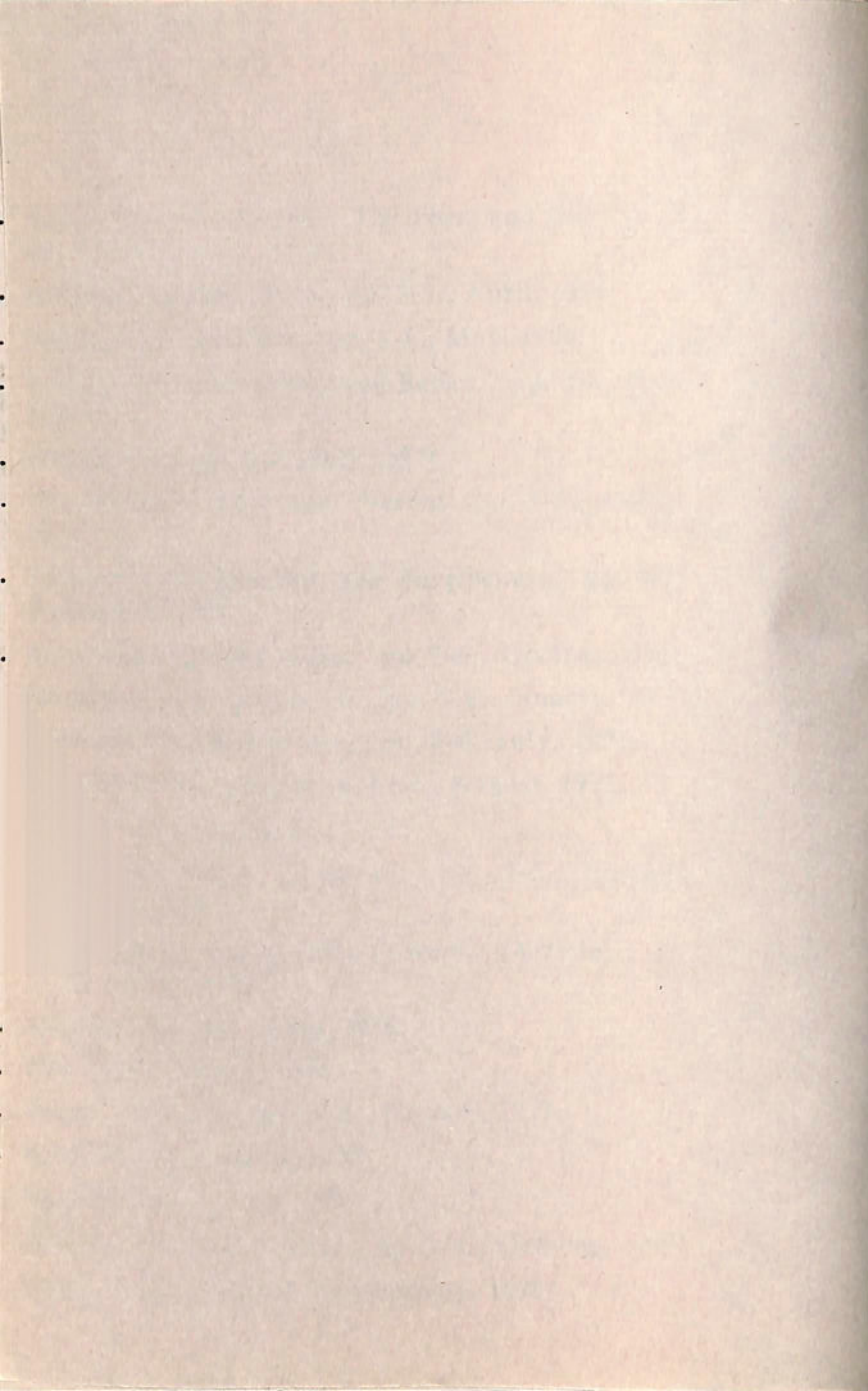
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"I have come to sow the seed of love in your hearts so that, inspite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of *Oneness* through *Love* is brought about amongst all nations, creeds, sects, and castes of the *World*".

— *Meher Baba*

WHY MEHER BABA ?

The brochure contains an account of the spiritual impact which Avatar Meher Baba has made on the author and which others, drawn to Him by the bond of love, and belonging to all countries of the East and the West, have shared as evidenced in their recorded writings.

The impact, in its ultimate issue, is a tremendously vital one since it is found to remake the character and outlook of the one experiencing it into the freshness, purity, and truth of unconditioned and universal love.

Of course, the change is not and cannot be a sudden eruption but a gradual evolutionary development which is consciously experienced within oneself by the progressively subdued reaction of the ego-centred self and the increasingly compelling reaction, inspired by love and universal value, to outside events and happenings.

Love and Truth are Integral elements of life which reveal themselves when the cloak of separateness, worn by the ego-self, is cast off.