

**IN QUEST OF TRUTH
Or
How I Came to Meher Baba**

By

Irene Conybeare

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In Quest Of Truth

Or

How I Came To Meher Baba

An Autobiography
by

IRENE CONYBEARE

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"I have come not to teach, but to awaken!"

- Meher Baba

**This book is humbly
and respectfully dedicated
to the Avatar Meher Baba.**

SPECIAL NOTE

Although Meher Baba has given (through gestures interpreted by certain of his disciples) some special features for this book, it should at the same time clearly be understood that the Master does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by the author. Meher Baba has always allowed full freedom of thought and expression to his followers.

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PREFACE

Some have asked me to rewrite my last book *Civilisation or Chaos?*^{*} in a language more suitable for the general public. I fear this is not possible, for to explain the World Crisis in the light of Eastern metaphysics is a task that is not easy. In that work I tried to diagnose the grave social maladies of our times in the light of the teachings of Meher Baba.[‡] I have also attempted to show that those who are fitted to guide mankind out of the present impasse are the Great Ones through whom the Christ or Buddha consciousness can be manifested.

I now feel that instead of rewriting that book, a personal narrative of my quest for Truth would be more to the point; so I have written this book in the form of a part autobiography, drawing on the former work where necessary. I feel that the autobiography shows a convincing series of events which led me eventually to Meher Baba, and enables

^{*} *Civilization or Chaos?* First edition 1955, second edition 1959, published by Chetana Ltd. Bombay. Abbreviated translations in Hindi, Marathi, Telegu and Gujerati, published by Adi K. Irani, Ahmednagar, 1956.

[‡] Meher Baba. See Appendix I.

me to answer some of the poignant and soul-searing questions of today; amongst others, will the sun go down and the stars come out over a dead world? Will our planet become another moon? For, are we not living in an apocalyptic and eschatological age?

The authorities write millions of words to diagnose the malady afflicting Homo Sapiens and to find the cause of the world unrest. Numerous national and international bodies exist to try to promote mutual sympathy and co-operation, since it must be ONE world or NONE! But who can give the right answer? One must look below the surface, into the inner truths and inner realities, into the laws that govern man and the universe. We are as ever the slaves of scientific materialism. It is not the collection of more and more facts that is wanted – interesting though they may be – it can be only the spiritual truths which can set us free. These are little studied, because they involve some knowledge of the ways of God and His laws.

Meanwhile, another war has come and gone, and now we are waiting for the final war, to end all wars! Many think our civilisation is doomed, not because of its over-industrialisation and artificiality, but because man's intellectual equipment has outstripped his moral and spiritual development. It is more than thirty years ago since I listened to my father* and his friends; they were agreed that our civilisation could not last, for misdirected scientific achievements would destroy it. But science cannot be blamed, for it is strife that annihilates. They felt, in fact, that if civilisation was to be saved, some form of spiritual compensation must take place.

Brought up in the rationalist school, I suffered from religious inhibitions, so was free from all sectarian bias. Later, however, I began to search for the spiritual compensation that must save humanity.

For, are we not being told on all sides that we need a change of heart to make a better-balanced mankind more

* The late Dr. F. C. Conybeare, M. A., LL. D., F. B. A., etc. The Oxford Patristic Scholar and Armenian expert.

capable of coping with the problems of the present day. But HOW could any change of heart come about? Would it not have to be a cosmic change of heart? And how could that happen except by the Grace of God? Some form of divine intervention? But how to believe in Omnipotence; for no ordinary human agency could help in a disaster of unlimited dimensions.

I have attempted to answer some of these paralysing questions in this book, or at least to give a lead to readers who are interested in such questions – for they can if they will – study this way of thought by following up the various sources alluded to and those who want testimony can start in search for the manifestation of the Divinity that exists in everything and is everywhere.

In these days of constantly recurring crises, of distorted values and ideological conflicts, more and more of us are looking for the peace of mind that can only be found in the inner truths and inner realities of existence.

Science, hitherto absorbed in the study of visible man and the visible universe, is now beginning to turn its attention to invisible man and the invisible universe. With the advance of parapsychology, radiesthesia, radionics and above all metaphysics, there are some of scientific persuasion who are beginning to realise that "a house, a star and a tree are not what they seem to be, but 'pointers' to a deeper reality which science can never reach."*

There is now a distinct suspicion that there may be super physical realities; that man has latent properties within him that cannot be weighed, measured, analysed, inducted and deducted.

This change of thinking from the more or less materialistic theories of the Victorian age is leading some to an unorthodox approach to ideas involving metaphysics, philosophy and religion. This new departure is very welcome to pioneers in their struggle for the emancipation of thought

* *Explanations in Science* by Waldemar Kaemffert. Science editor of *The New York Times*. Published by the N. Y. Viking Press, 1953.

from the hidebound traditions carried over from the Victorian era. But at the same time there is some anxiety lest the development of present trends carries us too far; for some searchers and investigators in their zeal imagine that further elaboration and elucidation of the spiritual verities of life may be assisted by means of clinical experiments, statistical and laboratory tests, and even the use of drugs is advocated. No doubt drugs can be very useful for psychological experiments, and as we know most remarkable work is being done on what might be called the chemistry of the mind. Drugs are taking the place of the straitjacket and padded room, but it should be understood that drugs cannot possibly affect the great transcendental cosmic experiences.*

Yet we have certain writers such as Aldous Huxley and E.S.P. students advocating a scientific enquiry into the nature of mysticism. In fact they go so far as to suggest that the spiritual aspirant in his search for God should seek the co-operation of pharmacology, parapsychology, psychiatry and psychology for the stimulation and clarification of mystical experience in the transcendental spheres of existence. Then again some theorists, who usually have no personal acquaintance with the elusive, mysterious and sometimes dangerous nature of such a quest, also think that the difficult practices indulged in by *fakirs* and *sadhus* of the East might be made to produce results without the long and arduous training by the adepts; as if such things could be done so easily and so hastily!

We know, so far as the problem of the study of the supernormal faculties of man go in the fields of psychic research, that, despite such painstaking work over many years, we have failed to produce much in the way of tangible results except for the definite assumption that *some* part of the personality survives death. The great insuperable mysteries of life and death, of the soul, and of man's ultimate spiritual destiny remain as ever unsolved; yet there are

* *Drugs and the Mind* by Robert S. de Ropp. Published by Golianez, 1958.

some so foolishly hazardous that they want to plunge us, by ill-considered methods, still farther into the uncertainty of the Unknown. Such people seem to be unaware of the necessity for certain essential qualities that go into the "make-up" of a spiritual aspirant.

Those acquainted with the techniques of spiritual training know that first of all, the mystic must have arrived at a certain stage of his spiritual evolution before he can even be ready for initiation. He must have certain characteristics, such as an intense urge to find Truth or God, and there must be a deliberate desire for the elimination of the ego. This can be helped only by means of self-purification, self-dedication and self-sacrifice. He should have a tendency to be selfless and to be imbued with a genuine love for humanity and his fellow creatures, the animals. He must, above all, be prepared to live a life of moral discipline if he is to find some detachment from the snares and illusions of ordinary mundane life, as detachment is the only form of lasting happiness. Such a training is easier to find within the precincts of the Church, Mosque or Temple. But now that growing interest is developing in the West for Eastern thought, we have more and more well-meaning metaphysical and occult schools sponsored generally by persons – with a few exceptions – who know not so very much more than their students. This may be dangerous when it comes to serious questions involving the physical and mental health of the novice; for there are practices which can lead to the awakening of powers beyond the individual's control, and these can lead to distressing mental breakdowns, thereby adding to the lists of inmates in our already overcrowded asylums. Our lack of spiritual preparedness for shouldering special responsibilities can lead to dire results, even though the motives may have been pure in the beginning.

This work does not profess to be an ontological treatise; it is merely for the reasons outlined above that I have ventured to try to clarify some of the issues involved and not because I have more knowledge or more authority, but I believe that a personal account of some of my experiences, when in search, could serve others who

have undergone the same difficulties as myself, though I must crave indulgence for being neither a scholar nor an authority on the profound subject matter of this book. I also apologise for writing in the first person, but there is no alternative since it is only by personal experience that one can profit. Theory without practice is useless, and we have too much book-knowledge as it is. The Path to Self-Realisation that the pilgrim has to tread is long, incredibly long, for the goal takes the toll of many, many lives before we can reach the Peace that passeth all understanding. The most that we can hope for, with very few exceptions, is for a push on the Path.

It is here that we need a *real* Master to help us. Unfortunately, the opportunities of meeting such Masters are not many as up to now they are only to be found in the East.

INTRODUCTION

Mysticism may be described as a form of direct perception of the Spirit that is unobtainable through the medium of intellect. Some people are born psychic, others are not; so some are born mystics and others are not. But it must always be understood that there is a great gulf between psychic experience and mystical experience, for the former belongs to lower spheres of mind, whereas mysticism belongs to higher spheres and can also be entirely independent of the mind. That great soul experiences cannot be formulated or described by the intellect has been asserted by the saints and mystics of all ages.

A seeker may sometimes start his search in the beginning through the realms of the semi-subtle spheres, as I did; but he will run the risk of becoming so absorbed within the fields of the astral world that he will go no farther. One might say that psychic research is the kindergarten that can ultimately lead to the schools of mysticism; but again please understand that I do not imply that this method is by any means necessary. Everything depends on the particular needs and disposition of the seeker. The great majority of real mystics owe their mystical inclinations to their spiritual progress in their

former lives, and need no incentive. The great mystics and saints also did not need the background of any particular religion or faith, for mystical experiences are more or less identical and belong to all ages and to all the religions.

An examination of the esoteric aspects of comparative religion reveals an underlying Principle that runs like a golden thread through all the ramifications of the hidden esoteric systems of thought, for we approach the fundamental laws that govern humanity and the universe. There is a voluminous literature relating to the different faiths, in which truths regarding the evolution of man have been misunderstood or lost, for unless we have the privilege of close association with a Perfect Master who is beyond the limitations of the mind, and has therefore transcended *Maya*,* or the Cosmic Illusion, we can at best get only a very partial and often incorrect view of the many-sided approaches to the Path to Self-Realisation.

I would like to stress the great difference between occultism and mysticism. Occultism is incomparably more dangerous, because in occult practices man seeks to control the forces of nature; whereas the way of mysticism is impersonal, in the sense that the mystic does not desire power for himself and his search is based on the urge to find Truth or God. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

But these subjects cover the hidden aspects of life and of the forces behind it, which are quite inaccessible for study in organised form. Those who teach occultism as a science may have some theoretical knowledge of the facts of immortality and reincarnation,† and of the laws governing evolution and the operation of *Karma*; but the Masters who guide the destinies of man behind the scenes do not encourage the spread of hidden Knowledge. At times seekers and investigators will be aware that a kind of iron curtain descends – Thus far and no farther!

* *Maya* – See Appendix 3.

† Reincarnations – See Appendix 4.

This is one of the reasons why well-established schools of occult thought in the West, which claim to interpret the mysteries of life, can be so disappointing. Then again we find these schools are so much at variance with each other and entertain so many conflicting views that the critical student and seeker wanders from one system to another as I did, becoming hopelessly confused, without any real satisfaction or enlightenment, for schools of thought within specific grooves keep the mind captive.

At the most, we can only get indirect knowledge and help from such teachers, because they themselves have not attained to the Perfection of All-Knowledge, such as can be found only in the God-Realised Masters who possess none of the failings of ordinary men and women. Even though the founders of some of these esoteric groups have been undoubtedly most remarkable personalities in their own right, they can *never* be regarded as perfect examples of humanity like the Great Masters. Both in the past and present, such men are seldom seen or even known outside their circles and the world does not recognise them till after their deaths. Here we have such examples as the saints and great initiates of all ages and of all countries. But in times of great historical crises, there is always One, the *Avatar*, who comes into the world, and his emergence creates a great landmark in religious history. I have explained, to the best of my ability in my former book '*Civilisation or Chaos?*' the work of an *Avatar* and his connection with our present age which is shortly coming to an end, for we are in the 'Last Days' of a civilisation which deserves to perish, so no need to go into the same details over again.

To return once more to the above mentioned esoteric associations, it is notorious that members are inclined to become caught up within the limitations of the groups they have espoused, with the result that they are often strangely unwilling to learn anything new or even to be receptive to prevailing ideas, solely because they do not happen to fit in with the teachings of the original founder of their particular school. I do not feel that I am exaggerating in thinking that bigotry and fanaticism penetrate the closed

doors of societies that think they alone have the Truth or most of it. We will always find inner cliques within groups who are inclined to adopt the "holier than thou" attitude which may beget what one can only call spiritual arrogance. True humility consists of a willingness to keep an open mind always prepared to learn something new.

On the subject of occultism it must be said that only in the hands of the spiritual Masters is occult power safe, for by them it is used sparingly and only for the good of humanity as a whole. It should never be used for helping humanity in its material needs. Here I will quote what Meher Baba says in his *Discourses*.^{*} "The introduction of an uncertain and incalculable factor which the free exercise of occult power would involve, is bound to create much confusion and disturbance in the ordinary pursuits of man, who must be left to his own limitations, resources and possibilities for the equal and uninterrupted working out of the Law of Karma."

The Masters use occult powers only for the purpose of promoting the purification of humanity and not to promote material ends nor to pander to the baser aspects of human nature. Advanced spiritual aspirants on the Path may develop occult powers, but, should they do so, they are just as much in need of help as ordinary people with no ambitions towards spiritual development. In such domains guidance of a Master is needed, and those who are content to follow themselves may come to grievous harm, unless they are well protected by unseen guides, in the semi-subtle spheres which unfortunately is not always the case. It is here that the example of a spiritual Master is so sorely needed and his protection in matters beyond one's comprehension. Most people attach undue importance to supernatural phenomena and to miracles, the tragedy being that these happenings have nothing to do with the spiritual Path and are only a

^{*} *Discourses by Meher Baba*. First published by Adi K. Irani, Ahmednagar, 1933, continuing publications every year. Also edited edition by C.B.Purdom, under the title *God to Man and Man to God*, published by Golianez, 1955. (Also see *Discourses*, Meher Baba, The Place of Occultism in Spiritual Life Part III, Occultism and Spirituality, p. 195. © Adi K. Irani, Ahmednagar, India, 1967.)

hindrance. It is because of the definite differences between occultism and mysticism and the failure to realise them, that we are led into so much danger and confusion.

I will again quote Meher Baba. "All miracles belong to the phenomenal world, which is the world of shadows. As phenomena, they are subject to change, and nothing that changes can have lasting value. Realisation of the eternal Truth is an initiation into the unchangeable Being which alone is the supreme Reality; and no acquaintance with the occult world or capacity to manipulate its forces can really amount to the realisation of the Truth. Occult phenomena are as much within the domain of false imagination as are ordinary phenomena of the gross world. From the spiritual point of view, the only important thing is to realise Divine Life and help others to realise it, by manifesting it in every-day life. To penetrate into the essence of all being and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing, in the world of forms, truth, love, purity and beauty. This is the sole aim which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents and attainments, can, in themselves, have no lasting importance."*

* Ibid. pp., 199-200

Chapter I

BEGINNING TO SEARCH

Although not apparently psychic in any way, I was all the same an unusually sensitive child. At the age of two, so I have been told, I would cry when my mother picked the flowers in the garden, declaring "it hurted them!" Because of an over sensitive nature, the miseries of my childhood were acute, and became more so as I grew up. To this day I remember the horror at finding a wounded bird in a wood, the victim of some autumn shoot. I could not understand how any civilised person could tolerate blood sports.

Even in childhood I was weighed down with a "guilt complex." When only about seven or perhaps it was a year later, my brother Jack and I were travelling in Italy with my parents, we stopped at some inn for a night and he complained of the spiders in his room! I would not allow them to be killed, so slept with the spiders and he was moved to another room. We had a wire haired fox terrier called Pink. He was white with a brown head. Half Pink was mine and half was Jack's; when hard up I would sell my half for a penny and when, as the result of some uncle's tip, I became affluent again, I

would buy back my half for six pence! I adored Pink and he adored me; sometimes having been naughty I would weep my heart out on my bed. Pink would be so distressed that he would jump up and lick my face and in his doggy way would try to comfort me. I was, so I understand, a somewhat difficult child. When about six I had scarlet fever which affected my hearing but not sufficiently to interfere with my education.

I was sent to a boarding school at Brighton at an early age. Children being often instinctively cruel and thoughtless, I was not happy to begin with. I was passionately fond of music and played the solo in the Brighton orchestra. I see myself now – a frightened little blue-eyed, fair-haired child in a white frock with a blue sash, compelled to play in the concerts. Such events always filled me with terror, for I had enough sense to know that I was not talented enough; but playing in an orchestra is one of the greatest joys in life.

Being a bit of an athlete I became Captain of the school. I think my passionate defence for the underdog started from those days.

My teen-age existence was entirely frivolous. Being keen on hockey I played for Oxford City and toured the country for matches. I also loved dancing and would go on dancing all night to the strains of *The Merry Widow* and *The Chocolate Soldier* up to breakfast time at the Commemoration Balls. As I look back I see myself as a somewhat spoilt and imperious girl accustomed to having her own way. But I remember there were always difficulties over "Mrs. Grundy."

I was not allowed to play golf with a young man, unless we had a middle-aged *chaperon* to accompany us round the golf course! One evening there was quite a to-do when my dear parents discovered that I had danced four times with the same young man! But even while amusing myself I always had the nagging thought at the back of my mind that I should be doing something for the underprivileged. My sin was all that I could and would not do.

The stirrings of independence for women were just beginning and I was whole-heartedly in the movement for I deeply resented the inequalities between the sexes. Nevertheless those were gracious days and I look back with a certain nostalgia for the charm and dignity of an age that prevailed in my youth, so noticeably absent now.

My father though preoccupied with religion all his life – since the study of Christian origins was his chief work – remained more or less an agnostic. Coming of a long line of Churchmen, I think he and his brothers suffered from a reaction during their generation, for although they were brought up in the proper Christian tradition with household prayers every morning, they all became agnostic in their outlook.

My brother and I had no religious instruction except at school. When children we were not allowed to read the Old Testament, but there was that horrified peep in which I discovered that Jehovah enjoyed the "sweet savour" and "burnt offerings" of sacrificial animals in much the same manner as the gods of present day

savages are supposed to be propitiated by the blood and reek of their victims.

Coming of a family of scholars for the last four hundred years, gave me, I suppose, an inherited intellectual outlook, but life seemed more and more without sense or significance in spite of the brilliant *milieu* of clever young men and savants. There was always something missing. Even in the midst of those care-free days, I had what Meher Baba calls "the disgust for life."

The men who turned my thoughts to deeper matters were Professor William MacDougall of Oxford and Harvard, who sponsored the Parapsychological Department at Duke University and Professor Canning Schiller, the Aristotelian scholar. But I owed most to my friendship with Dudley d'Auvergne Wright, F.R.C.S., the London surgeon who became famous for his use of the divining rod for diagnosing disease. He was a true *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*.

In 1913, shortly before the war started, I married a young army man and so shared with other young wives the pain and strain of separation during those dreadful war years. Although my husband was only a subaltern when the war began, he soon rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel within a few months of service in France, because his battalion was almost decimated during the Battle of the Somme. He was shot through both legs in the massacre of Delville Wood, where the German barrage was so intense that the trees were stripped of their leaves, standing stark and naked in the shambles.

A promising military career was cut short when he was eventually invalided out in 1922. The sadness and horror of the war and the loss of so many Oxford comrades, friends from childhood, cast a shadow over my young life. I could never forget those brilliant insouciant boys, nurtured in the security and prosperity of the Edwardian age. I, personally saw nothing of the war, except to hear machine gunning and zooming of planes overhead, and one night we saw a Zeppelin brought down in flames. But across the sea the constant booming of the guns in Flanders kept us in mind of what was going on all the time.

The shock of my father's sudden death in 1924 added to the gloom and gradually my attention was drawn to the deeper truths hitherto outside my ken.

In 1918, towards the termination of the war, I had a fall that must have injured my spine without my knowing it, for from that time life became a misery because of constant eye-strain. No doctor or oculist could explain these eye headaches, and it was not till 1934 that I heard of Wright and his divining rod. The rod pointed to the back of my neck, and it was explained that there was nothing wrong with my eyes as I imagined, but that the seat of the trouble was in the back of my neck!

Now that I realised that my spine was the cause of my trouble, I went to a chiropractor at Geneva who confirmed Wright's diagnosis by taking a full length film of my spine and it

showed that the coccyx had been damaged in the fall and there was a slight list in the spine up to the neck vertebrae and the head was not quite on its axis causing much congestion in the back at the neck! Why do not more of the medical profession make use of the divining rod, which can do many other things besides finding water? I was therefore able to get much relief from chiropractic treatment, but it was later in 1952 that I tried the Mathias Alexander technique for the release of tension which also greatly helped, and when in India, a friend showed me certain yogic postures which were of great benefit. The reason why I bore the reader with all these details is, in case somebody reading this book suffers the same way, he or she may benefit by my experience. I am sure, if only I had known about some of the Western schools of Yoga in my youth, I might have been cured instead of being only able to get a certain amount of relief at times, thus spending my life in a state of frustration, caused by perpetual eye-strain, unable to do any work satisfactorily or to accomplish properly anything that I set out to do.

Since I had always been the happiest amidst my books, this form of small martyrdom drove me eventually to study mental science theories, and later to an interest in the supernormal faculties. It was at about this time that I was staying in a London hotel (1934) when I met two young men who were responsive to experiments. One was an Austrian boy; when he was departing for Vienna he asked me to be sure and "treat" him

when he was crossing the Channel, as he feared the voyage. I promised to think of him when the boat left Dover at eight o'clock that evening. However, I happened to go out to dinner, and I forgot all about him remembering only on my return home late, long after the crossing was finished. A few days later, I got a most enthusiastic letter from Vienna telling me that I was "marvellous" and that he had been one of the few who was not sick as it had been an extremely rough crossing!

The other young man was a Hungarian, the son of a doctor. He suffered much from sciatica in our damp climate; since he was scientifically inclined I did not think to interest him in my ideas. But one night feeling distressed about him, I "treated" him without his knowing about it. The next morning he surprised me by saying, "Funny, but I woke up this morning feeling a different person with all the pain quite gone!" While I found I could do a little for others, I was quite unable to do anything for myself.

The year 1934 proved to be the turning point in my life, for the enquiry into the Unknown was starting and psychic research was the first step. Here Mr. Wright's advice and help proved to be invaluable. An interesting fact about my father should here be mentioned: irritated by the attacks of the Church – at the beginning of the century, on Darwin and Huxley and the new scientific approach, he wrote a book for the layman. This retaliatory work—

Myth, Magic and Morals * — which he gave to the Rationalist Press in 1909, was a most devastating attack on orthodox Christianity and played a very considerable part in influencing the mind of the younger generations towards materialistic trends.

During his lifetime my father was extremely sceptical, with no belief in supernormal phenomena or of personal survival after death. So the retaining of consciousness after his demise came as a complete surprise and he was obliged to overhaul many of his previous convictions. He also regretted the destructive tendencies of the book referred to above, and he was therefore anxious to establish communication with me and to prove his *post-mortem* existence. No doubt he influenced me subconsciously towards that end, for a friend after some difficulty managed to persuade me to visit a trance medium. In those days I had regarded spiritualism as pure charlatanry, and knowing nothing whatever about it, I was as bigoted as anybody could be.

Through her I established contact with my father's personality. To begin with, it was extremely difficult to accept his claim to survival, but there was so much evidence that I was unable to refute quite apart from his extremely convincing scholarly characteristics which none could imitate. He requested me to help him to prove his *post-mortem* existence to some of his Oxford colleagues, a request I could hardly refuse, difficult though I knew it would be. He

* This book has been republished under the title-heading *The Origins of Christianity*, by University Books, New York, 1958.

also prompted me to take up mental mediumship and in this study I had the help and cooperation of a professional medium who did automatic writing, the late Mrs. Hester Dowden,* a lady of the highest personal integrity, whose great psychic gifts were wellknown in London psychical circles. I owe her a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid.

However I should mention that in the first place I deemed it my duty to join the Society for Psychical Research – since quite a number of my father's former colleagues were on the committee, and doubtless they would be only too happy to help me to prove the survival of my father's personality. Hopefully I called to see the secretary, a most worthy and kind lady, who seeing that I was completely innocent of all the procedures that should accompany psychic research work, started straightaway to indoctrinate me on the subject of fraud. By the time she had finished with me, I was beginning to suspect Mrs. Dowden, my friends and above all myself!

Fortunately Mrs. Dowden's robust common sense gave me a proper sense of perspective, and it did not take me very long to come to the conclusion that most of the members of the Psychical Research Society were chiefly concerned with a lot of learned balderdash and that the last thing they really wanted to do was to prove anything! I also found that my father's former colleagues were not nearly as enthusiastic as I

* Her biography, *Far Horizons*, by Edmund Bentley, published by Rider and Co., London, 1951.

expected them to be. Disillusioned, I transferred my allegiance to the British College of Psychic Science to which institution I am greatly indebted.

With Mrs. Dowden's help I carried on a private battle royal for two years with some of my father's friends, and one result of this work was the eventual conversion of Dr. MacDougall and Dr. Schiller, as well as other personal friends.

In 1935 certain transatlantic experiments took place, Mrs. Dowden and myself in London and Dr. MacDougall and the trance medium Eileen Garrett at Duke University. In collaboration behind the scenes were my father and Duncan (the Professor's son who had been killed in a plane accident three years back). An account of this quite remarkable experiment was published in my article in *Light*,* in 1952.

With reference to Mrs. Garrett, whom I had never met, I was disappointed to find later that she could write a book[†] showing so little discernment and understanding of the matters she had set herself to judge, though, no doubt, her motive to protect innocent lambs from the wolves can be appreciated, particularly in a country like America. But if Mrs. Garrett had known more about Eastern metaphysics at the time I doubt she would have written so ill-naturedly about Meher Baba, whom she had never even seen.

* The London Journal of the British College of Psychic Science.

† *The Sense and Nonsense of Prophecy*: Published by the Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1951.

During these two years of intensive psychic work, I developed under Mrs. Dowden's guidance the most unexpected psychic faculties. Beginning with automatic writing and the ouija board, then clairvoyance, psychometry and finally telekinesis. (Movement of objects without contact). The latter phenomenon naturally created great interest. Mrs. Dowden was particularly thrilled for all her life she hoped to get the Traveller to move independently on the ouija board and never succeeded and now I had started to do it! Dr. MacDougall insisted that I must put a sheet of glass between my hand and the ouija board, but it is well known that glass has some way of impeding phenomena for when Sir William Barrett put glass round Mrs. Dowden's head, she found that her hand would not move to do automatic writing. Dr. Schiller came to tea one afternoon and I was able to give him a demonstration in making the "Traveller" move slightly on the ouija board. He was most excited about it and on reaching home had a heart attack from which he never really recovered. His wife blamed me for causing it. Now that I had started telekinesis my troubles really began. I quickly realised my fate would be sealed. For, the moment objective phenomena starts, suspicion enters into the arena. In fact it was beginning already for the then Secretary of the London Society for Psychical Research – whom I regarded as a possible *chevalier*, since he was psychic himself – took me out to lunch and to my boundless indignation started to insinuate that my dear little French maid might cheat!

She had been cooperating at some of my sittings, but later on, one afternoon when the Traveller moved unaided on the ouija board, she declared she saw a huge hand envelope mine and push the "Traveller." This frightened her so much that she did not cooperate any more. On that and some other occasions I distinctly felt as if some kind of etheric substance was oozing out of the palm of my hand as I held it some ten inches or so above the "Traveller." I wonder if photography might have shown an ectoplasmic rod.*

One of the saddest experiences was that some much loved Oxford boys who had been killed in the war, begged me (through automatic writing) to put them in touch with their relations, but unfortunately my efforts were indignantly repelled by their families.

Eventually I wrote a book on my psychic work and experiences as they seemed worth recording, but withdrew it from publication because Sir Oliver Lodge felt that the work was not quite suitable for the general public, since certain techniques were described that were not altogether suitable for novices to try. So the notes in question were given to Dr. Hereward Carrington for his American Institute of Psychic Research, at Los Angeles. He maintained that in two years I did more work than the average student does in ten; this was because I was psychic. All investigators should be psychic!

* I suppose throwing a handkerchief on the ground, then making it rise up stiff and straight by magnetising it with one's hand is a part of the same telekinetic process. This act is however only acquired by considerable training in certain yogic practice.

After much persistence with recalcitrant professors aided by the invaluable help of Mrs. Dowden, I came to the conclusion that a part of the ego undoubtedly survived death and we had to leave it at that.

There is no doubt that objective evidence is far more evidential than any amount of subjective evidence, but great materialisation mediums are very rare and one does not get much opportunity to see them. However, in 1955, I had the good fortune to be present at a séance given by Mrs. Helen Duncan of Edinburgh, who was one of the greatest British materialisation mediums of her day. This most remarkable woman was short and very stout; two women and myself were present when she prepared for the séance, we undressed her, and then she put on one piece of black garment and set a chair in the corner of the room, which had a thin curtain drawn across it. I sat right up against the wall and was so near that I could have touched her through the curtain.

That morning I had asked my father (mentally) to be sure and be present at the séance and that he must try to materialise himself. When the séance started we first heard a number of voices all talking together, then Mrs. Duncan's guide said very distinctly that "there was a gentleman present who had come to keep an appointment made by his daughter that morning."

My father then emerged from the curtain; he was clothed from head to foot in white ectoplasmic substance which also draped his head,

only his face showed through. I stood up and peered at him, trying to distinguish his features. I recognised his moustache, but his face was hardly recognisable. He kept on pointing to his mouth as if to indicate that he could not get his voice going. I was naturally very disappointed. Then my mother appeared draped in the same manner but she was much more recognisable, and she was able to whisper to me, but unfortunately I could not hear what she said. Then she burst into tears, crying "She can't hear me, she can't hear me!"

Then followed a number of figures who wanted to speak to various members in the audience, which consisted of about twenty people. They were of all shapes and sizes, and the little girl control "Peggy" was very much to the fore. The astonishing thing was to see the more or less solid figures dissolve and drop through the floor right before one's eyes, but some of them were able to go back behind the curtain. I have been told that the spirits when excited find it hard to keep their form and just vanish. The most remarkable appearance, which I shall never forget, was that of a young girl. Though covered with the ectoplasm like the others, her face was rosy and radiant, her eyes were bright and shining, it was undoubtedly a face of flesh and blood. She was so solid that she spoke to me asking me to get out of her way, as she wanted to pass between me and the wall and my chair had to be pulled back to allow her to pass, she then went right behind the last row to talk to her old parents who were now standing up having fully recognized

their daughter. She remained talking to her parents for quite a while, Mrs. Duncan's Guide meanwhile calling her from behind the curtain, that she must come back! So she walked slowly back all the time talking, opened the curtain, gave a last farewell and disappeared behind the curtain. Later her parents told me that she had passed over six months back, and that there was no doubt whatever in their minds that they had seen and talked with their daughter. They also said that the likeness in her face was absolutely as it should be. It was a most moving experience and never again could I doubt that the departed spirit had, at times, the power to materialise in physical form.

A day or two later I went to Mrs. Dowden and had a talk with my father (through her hand). On complaining that he had made "a poor show of it," he excused himself saying that he was unable to wrap himself up "properly in that stuff," in fact, he just could not manage it! Neither could he get his voice!

From what I have been told by experienced investigators some spirits are very successful and others are not. It appears that the spirit has to concentrate mentally on his form and to reproduce it as remembered by his relatives and friends. This needs a lot of practice so that first appearances are not always successful. One can just imagine the difficulties of holding one's thought on one's form and at the same time, when only having a limited interview, trying to say what one wants to say to one's often disbelieving friends and relations – to say nothing

of detached investigators with no understanding of the difficulties involved. For example, one man who had spent a life-time investigating materialisations and who had attended innumerable séances given by Mrs. Duncan, told me how on one occasion, a spirit friend of his had materialised perfectly but with *no* eyes! So he said to him: "You have forgotten your eyes, old chap!" "Oh! Have I?" and the next moment the spirit was *all* eyes and *no* body!

I am not going into the controversy relating to Mrs. Duncan having at times (like other materialisation mediums) produced "fraudulent phenomena." Readers interested can read Maurice Barbanell's book *The Trial of Helen Duncan*.*

Is not physical phenomena always accompanied by controversy? If I remember rightly Madame Blavatsky wrote in *The Veil of Isis* that materialisations were the work of mischievous entities! That certainly could explain much. One can just imagine the hordes of mischievous entities buzzing round the headquarters of the various Psychical Research Societies of the academic type taking advantage of members' weak points, such as the scientific superiority complex, or worse still the frank complex, to disrupt and confuse proceedings, in something of the same manner as do the hideous entities overshadowing lunatic asylums! It has always amazed me the way members of these Societies are apt to imagine that they are competent to

* Published by Jarrolds (London) Ltd., 1945.

investigate when they do not even understand the elementary principles of man's occult constitution, or even know the part that the medium's astral body may play!

I will now relate another kind of experience. End of August 1934, I went to Italy with Mrs. Dowden; we were enjoying a good holiday at Torri del Benaco on Lake Garda.

One night the moon was so bright that it kept me half-awake as it shone through the aperture of the wooden shutters. When I suddenly became aware that someone was in the room who seemed to be pinching me! I told myself that I must be dreaming and took no notice. But the groping hands continued 'till I could stand it no longer. I sat up in bed and looked around. I saw an elderly female figure clad in an old-fashioned night gown with frills round the neck. I immediately thought it must be Mrs. Dowden. Perhaps she was ill and needed me. I then realised that the figure was not in the least like Mrs. Dowden, neither did she wear such a nightgown. I spoke to it several times, but it took no notice and continued to run its hands over my arms and body as though it was searching for something that I had concealed. This was most unpleasant. The room was dark except for the bright shaft of light that fell across the middle of my bed, and though I could see the face of the person, I could not distinguish the features. Suddenly I became frightened thinking perhaps that a thief was in the room disguised as an old lady. I jumped out of bed, then it tried to put its arms round me, I pushed it away, and noticed

that it offered no resistance and seemed to fall away feebly as if it had little substance. Then the figure scuttled to the door, its feet *not* touching the ground and it disappeared! By now I should have realised that it was only a ghost, but I had completely lost my nerve. I dashed to the window, threw the shutters wide open, screaming "Huomo! Huomo! Nella mia camera!" (Man! Man! In my room!) Below, people were sitting round tables enjoying the beautiful night; the proprietor and another man rushed up to my room to find a dishevelled and half-demented Englishwoman clad only in her nightgown! They assured me that no one could have possibly entered the staircase leading up to my room, and that obviously I had had a nightmare. I was then escorted to Mrs. Dowden's room; on hearing my story, she remarked, "It must have been your mother!" Then of course I knew, since it was the kind of old-fashioned nightgown that she wore.

At that time my mother was in London and not too pleased over my holiday with Mrs. Dowden. The next morning I had a sitting and my father explained the situation to Mrs. Dowden as follows: "Irene had a visitation from her mother's thoughts; she is extremely suspicious at present chiefly because you and Irene are together. In Irene's state of half-sleep she gathered not only a message from her mother, but a *televismic** impression, probing and feeling her to discover what the position really was." It so happened that my father had warned me that she would not live another six months

* author's "coined" word

and that there was danger of her making an alteration in her will, not altogether in my interests. This is exactly what happened and I discovered after her death, by her will, that she had made the alterations just when I was in Italy with Mrs. Dowden. I was so feared that I might find out about it from my father!

In spite of the mass of circumstantial evidence and my father put up a brilliant defence and certainly succeeded in proving his post-mortem survival, not only to me but to others, I remained very dissatisfied, for I could not uncritically accept mediumistic communications at their face value – especially in the hurried work with professional mediums where one's time is strictly limited and circumscribed.

Shri Aurobindo has provided some answers to our questions in his work *The Life Divine*,* for he has given us some explanations, so far as anything can be explained about after-life conditions.

It does seem that there are many different aspects of the personality. To quote Aurobindo, "This ghost, which is mistakenly called the spirit, is sometimes a vital formation reproducing the man's characteristics, his surface life, mannerisms, sometimes a subtle physical prolongation, of the surface-form of the mind-shell; at best it is a sheath of the life-personality which still remains in the front for sometime after the departure of the body."

These remarks help me to understand the disappointments that come when it applies to

* Published by the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, South India.

careful corroboration of facts. Even though there was much that I could recognise and which was completely beyond dispute, at the same time there was always so much lacking. I am sure that the best evidence of after-life can only be obtained by those who are fortunate enough to be able to visit the other world in their astral bodies, but such people are rare and do not lend themselves for experimental work in laboratories.

For those who want the truth and nothing but the truth and are not willing to accept just what they may want to believe, we again turn to Aurobindo: * "Apart from those confusions, born of an after-life contact with discarded phantoms or remnants of the sheaths of the personality, the difficulty is due to our ignorance of the subliminal parts of our nature and the forms and powers of the conscious Being or *Purusha* which presides over their actions. Owing to this inexperience we can easily mistake something of the inner mind or vital self for the psyche. For as being is one yet multiple, so also the same law prevails in ourselves and our members; the Spirit, the *Purusha*, is One but it adapts itself to the formations of Nature. Over each grade of our being, a power of the Spirit presides; we have within us, and discover when we go deep enough inwards, a mind-self, a life-self, physical-self; there is a being of mind, a mental *Purusha*, expressing something of itself in the instincts, habits and formulated activities of our physical nature. These beings or part-selves of the self in us are powers of the

* Ibid.

Spirit, and therefore not limited by their temporary expression, for what is thus formulated is only a fragment of its possibilities."

As a student investigator and a medium all at the same time, I had rather an unusual position, but I tried always to remain as detached as possible, seeking only the evidence that mattered. I checked up all Mrs. Dowden's scripts, all my own, and also all sittings with other mediums, also my own sittings with my friends and when alone, with myself. In this manner I came to the conclusion that corroborative evidence between ourselves and the spirits was very difficult, and that one should not expect to average more than fifty-fifty in results. Only a mechanical medium eliminating the sub-conscious mind of both medium and sitter could really satisfy our requirements and even then perhaps only up to a point.

Such an instrument was found in the David Wilson machine invented before the First World War. I remember considerable interest was aroused at the time, but I believe the machine was not perfected for various reasons. It really looked as if the powers that be did not wish us to have a telephone between the two worlds! Details of this machine were published at that time in *Light* also in the *Occult Review*.^{*} My friend the Hon. Ralph Shirley, former senior partner of Hutchinsons (publishers), told me a story of how during the war the machine was confiscated by Scotland Yard, because it was

^{*} One of his books was on Reincarnation. *The Problem of Rebirth*, unfortunately out of print.

getting messages from dead Germans! I understand that the inventor of this machine, not being a spiritualist was embarrassed to such an extent that he destroyed it and so far as I know no one else has been able to put it together.

As I had no acquaintance with the teachings of the occult schools I knew, like most investigators in psychic research, nothing about the esoteric constitution of man. Yet the first step for students is to learn something of the teachings of these schools, so that many puzzling aspects of psychic phenomena may be more easily explained. Not that the knowledge of these schools is in any way infallible, but they know much more than ordinary enquirers about the hidden aspects of man's subtle bodies, also thought-forms.*

Unwillingness to learn from all directions is one of the reasons why so little progress has been made in this century on this subject, especially by those whose intellect is conditioned by scientific branches of learning, such as in the parapsychological departments of universities. It has always surprised me that those in search of evidence for personal survival do not begin with the study and practice of the supernormal faculties of man.

The French, with their mental clarity and capacity for following out a logical system of thought to a realistic conclusion, unhampered to the same extent by want of intellectual honesty as is sometimes the case with their American

* Thought-Forms. See Appendix V.

and British colleagues, did some very remarkable work at the beginning of this century, which so far as I know, has not been continued.

Charles Lancelin, a fearless investigator of the unknown, wrote a book, *L'Ame humaine*, which was published in Paris in 1918. This work was before its time, but is now of considerable importance to the psychologist. The author sought to prove the objective reality of the mind, in so far as its objective status could be proved, as in photography and clinical work. He began first of all by proving the objective reality of the "double", that is the astral body of the subject, or in other words, the theory of bi-location. From this hypothesis he went on to prove the existence of other finer ethereal bodies. Lancelin in his researches, by means of experimental studies in psychophysiology, sought to obtain data on the substance and properties of the mind, its organic biology, its anatomy, its material elements and general chemical and physical properties.

In this work he was assisted by Madame Lambert, a most remarkable "sensitive" whose daring self-sacrifice for the sake of science, puts her on the level of the greatest explorers into the unknown spheres of existence. She allowed Lancelin to magnetise her into her different bodies or forms, pushing her ever higher into the realms of super-consciousness. While in these trance-like conditions, she was able to describe to Lancelin what she saw. It seemed that differently formed lights symbolically marked each new ascent into a higher sphere.

Sometimes she would be almost blinded by the brilliance of the White Light, then she would become terribly afraid, and implore Lancelin to wake her up, and bring her back to normal consciousness. For she was always in great fear that during these expeditions to the higher levels of the Spirit, she might be unable to descend again to her normal physical vehicle, her body.

Lancelin's work therefore was of an exceedingly dangerous nature, for had he made the slightest mistake, he could have killed her. The "silver cord" attaching the subject to her various bodies might have become ruptured in the process. For as we know, death is always caused by the breaking of the "cord" that keeps the ego and its various bodies *en rapport* with one another.

Such hazardous and difficult work had never before been tried and Lancelin would sometimes find it exceedingly hard to "pull her down to earth," for once the spirit has risen so high, it is always loathe to come down again to its physical habitat.

On one occasion Lancelin asked Madame Lambert what would happen to her should he fail to reintegrate and reconstitute her back into her normal vehicle and home, the physical body? She replied that should the spirit refuse to return to its body, the physical vehicle would be bereft of control by the ego, and would take on the appearance of an idiot, and eventually die. In other words, she would be unable to get back into her body!

In these excursions she seems sometimes to have gone to the very limit, for when urged to go still farther, she would cry "Mais il n'y a plus rien, puisque nous sommes au bout de l'âme!" (But there is no more anything, we have come to the end of the soul!) On other occasions she would say that there was "rien que esprit!" (nothing but spirit!) Had she, like the initiates, traversed to the regions where pure spirit, freed from all material properties, began?

I have touched on the French investigator's amazing experiments, because Madame Lambert's remarks concerning the fate of her body and her fear of the spirit's refusal to come down again back into it, are in some manner analogous to the psychology of the *masts*.*

It would be interesting to know how far Madame Lambert did progress along the Path, with its forty-nine stages of Illumination. Meher Baba has stated that most pilgrims traverse the Way unconsciously and when a Master needs a disciple for practical daily work, he will draw him unconsciously through the various planes of spiritual existence.

While it is probably impossible for anyone to repeat the experimental work of Lancelin, it should not be difficult to make a special study of astral projection, like Hector Durville in his remarkable work *Phantôme des Vivants*, also published in Paris about the same time as *L'Âme Humaine*. In this book Durville gave accounts

* *masts*. See Appendix 10.

of some experiments and shows photographs of Madame Lambert's astral body. He would get her to seat her physical body in a chair, and then walk round the room in her astral body. Why cannot serious students of psychical research, do work along these lines, if they want objective proof?

There must be many who can travel in the astral body, since we all do in our sleep state. Then again there is the ability of the body to vanish physically, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily, but such cases are very rare, and there would be little scope for investigation in the West.

We have the well-known story of Appolonius* of Tyana, a very high initiate who lived when Jesus walked the earth. When hauled before his judges, he simply rose up in the air and disappeared, to be seen later several hundred miles from the scene. Legends have recorded such disappearances and there are also present-day stories, and there must be many mysterious disappearances not accounted for by the police because of their occult nature.

I always remember reading about the unfortunate London auctioneer who left his suburban home one morning in a hurry to catch his train. As he had forgotten his umbrella, the maid ran after him with it. When she got to the corner of the street, he had vanished! But she heard his voice above her head screaming

* The Church blackened the name of Appolonius, as they did not want to have any rivals to Jesus.

"Put me down you devils, put me down you devils!" Was he captured by Saucerians? I do not suppose his family sought psychic means to ascertain what had happened to him?

The friend I mentioned in the appendix on *Thought Forms** also had two experiences in which she was transported physically, not astrally. She told me how once when she went for a long walk, she was feeling tired and wished she was already at the top of the hill she wanted to climb. The next moment she was there! Beyond feeling a bit breathless and very astonished, she did not notice anything peculiar. She told me that she did not like to tell people about these experiences as they would not believe her, but she did later meet a man who told her of similar experiences.

With regard to ordinary astral travelling, it is known in the East that when an initiate wishes to withdraw from his physical vehicle and "travel" he will cover his head for the time being and become motionless.

There is an esoteric tradition stating that Jesus showed himself in twelve different places at once, and we all know the story of the mysterious Comte de St Germain, who appeared simultaneously at six of the gates of Paris.

There are also recorded instances of the phenomenon of bi-location in the lives of the saints. But then again astral travelling is not the prerogative of the initiates, and it is common knowledge that ordinary mortals can "travel." I have reason to believe that sensitives

* see Appendix V.

who can "travel" at will are sometimes employed by the police, as was in the case of Alice, the subject of Arthur Spray* the famous healer and hypnotist, a shoe-maker of Bexhill-on-Sea. I personally knew Spray, also Alice. She was such an expert that she used to inconvenience people by "following them about,"

On the occasion Spray came up to the London flat to give me some treatment, he told me that Alice would not know anything about it, because she was away on a holiday. It subsequently turned out that Alice took it into her head to visit London too, in her astral body! She was able to describe the contents of the flat, what we were doing and what we were talking about! Could one have better proof of bi-location than that?

If only the average psychiatrist understood a little more about the phenomenon of bi-location and realised that it is one of the natural facts, how much needless mental agony might be saved on the part of patients who have had "out-of-the-body" experiences, and were consequently much frightened, just because they did not understand. I remember a hospital nurse came to see me much worried about herself because one night she had awakened to find *two* of herself in the bed! It is fortunate that she did not tell a doctor and that I was able to reassure her as to the condition. Mr. Wright, thanks to his knowledge on this subject, was

* A book was written about Spray and his work, *The Mysterious Cobbler*. It is now out of print, and I forget the name of the publisher.

able to save patients who otherwise would have imagined themselves to be mental.

Once, when paying a week-end visit to Dr. MacDougall, I was trying to explain the mechanics and techniques of astral projection, his son, who had been listening intently, took me aside after the conversation. He confessed that he, too, had "out-of-body" experiences and had been amazed and frightened to find himself walking round the room while his body lay on his bed. He could not understand it, and feared that he was mad, and was afraid to tell his father. Yet Dr. MacDougall was one of the greatest living psychologists at that time! I helped to alter his former outlook by lending him books on the subject and he promised me that after his retirement from his Directorship at Duke, should they appoint him a Commissioner of the Lunacy Board, he would look into the subject. I had so much at heart, by encouraging specialists to study occult literature and the esoteric constitution of man, before they diagnosed mental diseases. Unfortunately for the advancement of our knowledge in these matters, Dr. MacDougall died and all my hopes and aspirations in that direction died with him.

Scientists fear to investigate super-normal phenomena because they are associated with magic and witchcraft, and so the subject is not respectable. Yet, these facts have been known from time immemorial. In Spain there is a certain cave in which frescoes reputed to be ten thousand years old depict witches on their flying broomsticks. There are also books written about

astral projection, one of the best being *Astral Projection*.* Dr. Carrington wrote to me that the book did not get any reviews "because of its horrific implications!"

One has only to read accounts of famous mediums in *the Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science*‡ to know the trials and tribulations they would go through in face of the cowardice and dishonesty of investigators unwilling to believe the evidence of their senses. The ordeals and difficulties of D. D. Home, the most marvellous physical medium of his time, are well worth reading. I remember my old friend Dr. Francis Woods, a distinguished medical practitioner of Harley St. London, telling me how he along with Lord Crawford and others saw Home float out through a window seventy feet above the ground and re-enter that same room by another window seven feet away. Sir William Crookes recorded (in the Quarterly Journal of Science. Jan. 1874), "On three separate occasions I have seen Home raised completely from the floor of the room. There are at least a hundred recorded instances of Home rising from the ground in the presence of as many separate persons, etc." Such levitation phenomena are very rare in the West, but a matter of fairly common knowledge in the East.

In those days there were few brave pioneers of the calibre of Sir William Crookes Richet

* By Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington. Published by Rider and Co., London, 1933.

‡ By Dr. Nandor Fodor. First published by Arthur's Press Ltd London, W. C., 1933

and Sir Oliver Lodge. Regarding my own work in 1934, I found there were few *chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche!*

But even now as I write more than twenty-five years later, I cannot see that the scientific attitude towards life has much changed. The majority of scientists are still hypnotised by what they consider to be "the methods of science." They still harp on "evolutionary humanism," they write about "adequate naturalistic belief systems" and keep on hoping that an eventual scientific restatement of religion will come that will explain everything. But it really does seem that Darwin's doctrine of Evolution by Natural Selection has had its day so far as the idea goes of a blind and purposeless evolution that has contributed so largely to modern atheistical thought. Man is more than a mere bundle of "conditioned reflexes" as some biologists would have us believe. But I see that the usual grandiose prophetic statements were made at the celebration of the Darwin centenary at the University of Chicago, January 1960. Sir Julian Huxley even went so far as to declare that man would no longer "take refuge from his loneliness in the arms of a divinized father-figure whom he has himself created."

Now science is faced with more startling facts than ever before, I refer to the U.F.O. (Unidentified Flying Objects). As I write now I find that there are over a hundred books written in various languages on these mysterious objects, to say nothing of all the U.F.O.

societies that have sprung up and so why is this momentous subject ignored in official quarters? Again we have the facts-that-do-not-fit. In 1959 near Cape Town, I was sitting in the garden and happened to look up at the sky and suddenly saw about fourteen or more saucers speeding across the sky in V-shaped formation. They made no noise and passed over at a great height in a few seconds. From what I understand from books written about them, the speed of these strange craft has been clocked up to 20,000 miles per hour. Nothing will ever persuade me that the flying objects I saw come from *our* planet. U.F.O. phenomena seem to belong to the 4th Dimension, a state at present still unrecognised by orthodox opinion. The lack of official interest is always a striking example of the inertia of the human mind and its resistance to innovation, for innovation is a threat to academic authority.

To return to the subject of mediumistic work, one of the obstacles to investigation may be fraud; no doubt there will always be tricksters, but it should always be remembered that fraud is in itself often a form of dissociation that accompanies genuine phenomena. So there is no reason to get fraud on the brain. Also surely the importance of having honest and courageous investigators cannot be overestimated? Hence the difficulties when people neither understand nor want to understand anything of the psychological "make up" of the medium's personality. Again it should be noted that in cases of hypnotic trance, the operator

works on the subject from his own world, whereas in mediumistic trance the medium is controlled by a disembodied intelligence belonging to the Unseen World whom sitters cannot see. The trouble sometimes with those of scientific persuasion is that they may have so little comprehension of the phenomena they are witnessing that they sometimes do not cooperate to provide the sympathetic atmosphere so vitally important for the production of satisfactory results. Then again on no account should anyone ever risk molesting a medium in trance. A certain London physician showed me, with great pride, a bottle in his laboratory that contained ectoplasm. He explained that he had "cut it off" at a séance. The result was that he had his unfortunate victim dangerously ill with an internal haemorrhage for several weeks in a hospital.

It is not possible to go into more details concerning life in the *Hereafter**. Many books have been already written by competent writers who have spent a lifetime on this subject.

But one fact stands out clear to those who think, viz., that we are enabled to realise how much the priesthoods, which should be the custodians of our spiritual welfare, have so far failed to exercise their duties. We are prepared for heaven and hell without realising that such states of mind are but illusory thought-forms of the "false ego" which has not yet been replaced by the Real Self and transcended the domain of ignorance which is *Maya*!

* *Hereafter*. Appendix 6.

Chapter II

THE FLOWER GIRL

I cannot finish with psychic experiences without some reference to my adventures with Hylda Lewis, the famous Flower Medium. (Here it is suggested that the reader who is unacquainted with apport mediumship, should look up apport phenomena in the Encyclopaedia already mentioned.) The history of Hylda's case shows one of the worst bungled investigations in the annals of psychic research. In fact it is difficult to understand how there could have been so much bungling, unless we take into considerations the ordinary failings of human nature. Also remember the mysterious Powers behind the scenes!

Hylda was first discovered in 1934, when about twenty-two years of age, a Londoner of humble origin, her amazing feats brought her to the notice of eminent persons. She began to give séances at what is now called the British College of Psychic Science. Even men of scientific standing were invited to see her. I remember Julian Huxley when present at one of her séances, remarked that if her phenomena were genuine he would be obliged to overhaul his previous notions of physics. He did not pursue

investigations and has not been obliged to overhaul any of his previous convictions!

The first I knew about Hylda was from reading articles about her in the newspapers, then a friend brought her to see me, also Lord Charles Hope had spoken about her several times. His contention was that she must be a fraud because she produced roses that had *no* thorns! He spent, so he told me, some four hundred pounds on having her trailed by detectives. Later Professor Fraser-Harris gave me more information. One afternoon he came in very distressed because the Flower Medium, as she was called, had been "exposed." He told me a tale of how four little bunches of flowers had been found in her suitcase prior to a séance. This would naturally appear extremely suspicious to any person with no knowledge or understanding of the complexities of mediumship. But what did the flowers matter, as long as she was not allowed to produce them at the séance?

Then quite unexpectedly, on August 10th, I received a very agitated telephone call to the effect that Hylda had again been "exposed," this time by some spiritualists, at a séance the night before, where she had been forced to make a written confession that she was incapable of any genuine phenomena. The shock of this last "exposure" had made her ill and she was now in a state bordering on collapse and incapable of looking after herself, and could I help? The confession, which was published in most of the psychic papers, had obviously been extracted under duress; the girl needed looking after and

taking care of till her health was restored. Taking it for granted that my informant was more or less satisfied with the actual *bona fides* of the medium, I offered hospitality.

The little girl, for she was small and slight, was brought to the London flat, obviously suffering from severe shock. Her personality was distinctly dissociated, also her body was covered with blisters and brown marks which looked like burns from a hot instrument. They were, as I knew "psychic burns" which may appear on a medium's body, when molested during trance conditions. It is really extraordinary that those spiritualists did not know better than to man-handle a medium in deep trance.

I took Hylda down to my brother's hospital, but he was away, so I saw another doctor who was most puzzled. I thought it advisable not to explain that she was a trance medium, otherwise he would have been still more mystified. He thought she was obviously a case of having been assaulted, and that I should consult solicitors. Meanwhile I managed to silence the big newspapers with a little tactful persuasion.

Two nights later, while I was sitting near her bed, she had revived and was at the time in a fairly normal condition. I noticed from the movements of her hands that she seemed to be shaping something, but there was nothing in her hands, so I asked her what she was doing and she replied that she thought "something was coming". Then to my astonishment I saw the sudden appearance of a large pear.

I was now very much on the alert wondering how on earth she had managed to smuggle fruit into the flat, for knowing of her propensity for scattering fruit and flowers about wherever she went, even large objects like pineapples and bunches of grapes, I had taken special precaution to do all my own shopping and I knew exactly what fruit there was in the flat and certainly there were no pears. Then I ate the pear to convince myself of its reality! A few minutes later I observed that Hylda looked as if she was dozing, as her eyes were shut and her hands were still, but in the same cup-shaped position as before when the pear had arrived. Was she asleep? But I felt that something further was going to happen, because she had murmured shortly before the name of St. Theresa with a look of reverence on her face, also she had looked over her shoulder as if she thought the saint was standing behind her. (St. Theresa of Lisieux was famous because of the flowers she apportured in the Convent.)

Meanwhile I did not take my eyes off Hylda's hands for a "psychic wind" in my face and cold shivers down my spine warned me to expect supernatural phenomena in the process of manifesting. In short, another pear arrived! I took it gently out of her hands which still never moved, retaining the same cup-like position as before. Again another pear! Before I had recovered from my astonishment, Hylda began to speak and then I realised that it was not Hylda but her control "Robin" who was speaking, for she was now in deep trance and *quite*

unconscious. The control was, so I understood from those who were acquainted with her phenomena – a small child who apparently presided over her psychic activities. "Robin" was in tears like an upset child, but "he" thanked me for all I had done for his Medie, and seemed very pleased over the pears, which proved so "he" said that "his" Medie was not "broken" by the people who had so shockingly manhandled her.

Meanwhile, an acrimonious correspondence was being waged in the psychic press by those for and against Hylda. There is no doubt that Lord Charles Hope's detective work on the girl proved conclusively that she sometimes bought flowers before a séance. As if that mattered in the least, provided they were taken from her before the séance actually began since she was always searched well in advance. But then again, Lord Charles Hope, like other investigators who are psychic and so have little understanding of the technique of mediumship, understood nothing of the psychological aspects of Hylda's case. I discussed this point with "Robin" who explained that "he" could not always build up the phenomena of her materialised flowers without first of all working on the aura of ordinary flowers, hence Hylda's unfortunate habit of sometimes buying flowers before the séance.

It is, so I understand, known to some well acquainted with the mechanics of mediumship, that the spirits cannot produce materialisations out of nothing in their astral laboratories and

that they will "build up" from the aura of the object required. But we ordinary mortals, understand nothing of whatever goes on in the Unseen World and so are not in a position to judge or to dogmatise on matters quite beyond our ken.

I took up the cudgels in Hylda's defence and contented myself with the argument that I was not interested in the medium's moral character, but only with her phenomena, which were genuine so far as I knew. Mr. Stanley de Brath, in answer to my appeal for supporters gallantly came to the rescue and Mr. Dudley Parsons with true legal skill pulled to pieces the incriminating evidence regarding the medium's "exposure and confessions."

Another point I discovered was that the medium's guides worked very badly on *time*. That is to say, they often brought about materialisations of fruit, flowers, and other objects, even coins, just at the moment when such phenomena were least wanted or appreciated, thereby giving rise to suspicious situations, sometimes in perfectly innocent circumstances. Then again objects might sometimes arrive just prior to the séance, or worse still, even at the moment of the search before the séance which may be taking place, the most incriminating situation of all, almost impossible to explain to doubting and inexperienced investigators, with absolutely no appreciation of the difficulties and complexities of physical phenomena, and who are often more concerned to quarrel than to investigate.

During the time that Hylda was with me (about two weeks) she even produced flowers in the presence of her astonished doctor, and I, myself, witnessed the most unusual phenomena, mental as well as physical. It would take a whole book to give all I learned about psychic matters from this amazing little girl, whose slight figure could hardly have concealed anything.

Later, Dr. Fraser-Harris paid me another visit; when I asked him how it was that he was unable to make up his mind about her after some thirty séances, he excused himself on the grounds that she would not conform to his conditions before a séance. One of them was that she should get into a bath of water up to the neck before a committee of ladies. When I asked whatever for, it seemed, according to him, that she "might have a second membraneous skin under which the flowers were hidden!" This was from a man of scientific standing!

I even went so far as to challenge the Society for Psychical Research to allow Hylda and myself to stay locked up in their laboratory for an indefinite number of days, till they obtained phenomena under the strictest fraud-proof conditions, but my challenge was not accepted. In short, nobody with any reputation to lose dared to follow up a full and impartial enquiry.

Hylda was also suspected of conjuring feats far exceeding the capacity of the greatest professional jugglers. "Conjuring tricks" are always

a stock excuse for explaining away phenomena which could never be conjured!

A man with an international standing in the medical world wrote and asked me if Hylda would give a demonstration at his hospital. Hylda agreed to do so providing my conditions were accepted, viz. that she should first of all be fully examined by four of the Sisters of the hospital and then walk about fifty yards or so before them, to insure that the flowers would not be hidden in her vagina – another stock excuse –! She was then to sit in the middle of a circle of doctors, clad only in her bathing dress and a little jacket. The jacket to be examined beforehand. Finally, I wanted a paper to be signed to the effect that the séance would proceed under fraud-proof conditions.

I received a reply back calling the séance off because the sponsor felt that he would be unable to believe the evidence of his senses!

About this time a well-known publisher asked me to write a little book about her, because so he said "it would sell like hot cakes!" So great was the interest taken at the time. However, I never got around to it.

My impression of Hylda during her stay in the flat and later on was that her mind resembled a vessel open to whatever influences were about at the time. In many ways she seemed to have a sweet and generous disposition, but her personality undoubtedly fluctuated between her "controls" and herself. I came to the conclusion that "Robin" was a somewhat mischievous if not evil entity, who certainly managed to

make a lot of mischief in pitting Hylda's supporters against one another. He also did not appear to be at all competent to protect her or to direct her phenomena; indeed those on the other side, seemed to bungle her case as much as those on our side! It was all a most strangely puzzling affair. One of the most extraordinary facts about her was that she had no normal natural functions, no bowel actions!

When I questioned her about this, she was embarrassed and uncomfortable at being considered abnormal. She thought the reason for her inability to function normally was due to the excrement being in some way transmuted into her flowers. Other people who knew her also informed me about this aspect. I arranged for her to have a colonic douche from two well-known Harley St. doctors but they got no proper results. This most unusual physical characteristic should have been properly investigated, for it suggests that she was an elemental and not a normal human being. I have discussed her case with occultists and they say that since no normal human being could live without natural functions that she *must* be an elemental.* The mysterious lights sometimes seen in the region of her solar plexus also suggest elemental origin.

Both Sir Alexander Cannon and Mr. Wright gave me remarkable evidence of her supernormal phenomena and Mr. Wright even witnessed

* Dion Fortune in her remarkable book *Psychic Self-Defense* republished in 1952 by the Aquarian Press; gives some interesting observations on the elementals.

spirit materialisations, he told me his mother materialised.

To get back to her roses and other flowers the most noticeable charge against her was that her roses were always thornless. But there were never any scars on the stems to show that they had been removed. I pointed this out to Julian Huxley and others. I was in fact the only person to take the trouble to ascertain from Kew Gardens that there was only *one* thornless rose in existence, at that time, which was a climbing Rambler and certainly never sold in the flower shops. But no one paid any attention to this fact.

Dr. MacDougall was really one of the few fair-minded enquirers and he did ask me to bring her to Duke University, if I could arrange matters satisfactorily, where I have no doubt that she would have been properly treated. Unfortunately, however, poor Hylda had had about enough of investigations from unimpartial tribunals; also the increasing strain of so much controversy and hostility was affecting her health.

It is impossible for me to tell all the wonderful stories I have heard connected with her, but I feel that I should give in detail Miss Moffat's account, of what happened the last time she saw Hylda. Her father was the well-known actor and she is now the President of the Cape Town Psychic Club. To quote Miss Winifred Moffat's letter as follows: "On May 2nd, 1936, my parents and I sailed for South Africa, and we spent our last night in England at the home

of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Watson. Like my father, Mr. Watson was on the Committee of the Reading Psychic College. When we arrived at the Watsons' house in the late afternoon we found that, as a surprise for us, they had invited Hylda Lewis to supper and she had arrived just shortly before us and we were all sitting round the fire in the lounge chatting before supper. Hylda was sitting in an easy chair and there was no suggestion of anything in the nature of a séance taking place, when suddenly Hylda called out 'Oh! Look! and in her lap lay a large ripe pear. She handed it to Mrs. Watson and immediately another pear came. This went on until there were five or six large juicy pears, one for each of us. Then a pineapple appeared in her lap and then a second one! This all happened in a good light and Hylda was sitting quietly in the chair with her hands on her knees. As far as I can remember she was wearing a costume suit and it would have been impossible for her to conceal so much fruit about her person or in the chair. She was moving quite naturally about the room before we all sat down and the chair was just like the others in the room and there was nothing on it that could possibly conceal so much fruit. We had it for supper and it was delicious. Mrs. Watson told us that Hylda was carrying nothing when she arrived and the fruit was *not* already in the house. I remember Miss Parsons (sister of the president of the Psychic College at Reading) telling me that while Hylda was staying with her she kept the whole household supplied with

fruit and sometimes vegetables in the same mysterious way. One minute there was no fruit and the next minute the fruit was there, which is reminiscent of the tales of Aladdin and his wonderful Lamp. I do not often tell people about this extraordinary experience with Hylda Lewis and the pears and pineapples because it is too fantastic for most people to believe, even if they believe the miracle of the loaves and fishes in the Bible. Nevertheless, it is true and happened as I have said in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Watson and my father and mother and myself."

Before closing this account of Hylda, I must give the remarkable dialogue enacted between her and my uncle Grant Conybeare. He was the only one of my father's brothers who was not an intellectual in any sense of the word. His interests were engineering. This incident might be described as an example of Hylda's "Rescue Work."

One day while she was in bed at the flat, to distract her attention, I gave her some paper and a pencil, asking her if she could do automatic writing. She said she would have a try. Meanwhile, I was busy in the room writing letters and not paying any attention to her. Then she suddenly asked if I knew of anybody with the name of Grant Conybeare, she had written the name down properly spelt. I replied that he was my uncle (here I should point out that she did not know my maiden name of Conybeare, only that of Hervey, my husband's name). Since I was also a complete

stranger to her there was no reason why she should know in any case.

Apparently she wrote down the words "Grant Conybeare" getting at the same time a vision of an old man bent over the steering wheel of his car. She also had a sharp pain in her heart at that moment. The vision then disappeared and she heard a voice saying, "Young woman will you please help me out of my car." Hylda with her knowledge and insight into the astral world, immediately guessed what had happened to my uncle, namely that he was dead and not in his car at all, for she had knowledge of "earth-bound conditions." She then replied to him that he was not in his car and that he was dead! My uncle – who during his life-time was a sceptic with no knowledge of or interest in spiritualism – retorted that he was not dead! And that if he were, he "wouldn't know it, and wouldn't see!" This might well be the sort of typical remark he would have made in such circumstances. He also went on to say "You just can't make a man of my age believe that sort of thing, you please just help me out of my car!" But Hylda just continued to argue with him gently that he was dead, and that he didn't understand where he was; but he was most obstinate, replying that he was just the same and as much alive as she was, and wouldn't she go and get someone to help a poor old man out of his car. "But you are not in your car!" She continued patiently, he then interrupted, "but I am on my way to the Bench!" (He was a J. P. and was on the way

to the Chelmsford Bench when he had heart seizure and died instantaneously in the car which happened to be going very slowly at the moment and ran up the pavement of the street.) Again Hylde pointed out that he was really dead as the result of heart seizure.

He then asked her who she was, and she explained that she was alive in this world and was a medium, and that was how it came about that she could get in touch with him and help him. He again retorted, "Young lady, I don't believe in this sort of thing; you just help a poor old man out of his car." Meanwhile Hylde kept on patiently repeating to him that he was dead; whether he believed it or not did not matter, for these things just happened, and death was a natural fact just as birth was. My uncle then wanted to know what he was to do about it anyway, and whether anyone else could see him as she could?

She then asked him if he knew what date of the year today was. He replied that it was February 7th, 1931. Whereupon Hylde told him he was wrong, that it was now 1935 and *not* 1931, and that was four years ago, namely the date of his death that he must have given her. Then he immediately asked her, if that was four years ago, and what had been happening to him all that time and what had he been doing? Hylde then told him that he had been what is called "earth-bound," and that he had not understood anything about death during his life-time, but now that she had been able to

make him realise his condition some one would come along to help him farther.

Here Grant excitedly said that he could see his brother in the distance but could not make him hear. "Try now," commanded Hylde, "and he will hear you." Then again my ever-obstinate little uncle retorted "Why?" She explained again that he had been surrounded by earth barriers during his lifetime, barriers of skepticism and atheism, that the people on his Side were now very much upset about him, and, that the only way they had been able to reach him was to get a medium to help break down his earthbound conditions.

At this point Grant interrupted, "I see my brother and Mary* coming along!" "Speak to them" urged Hylde. She then heard something in the distance which sounded like "At last! At last!" As though my uncle had managed to get out of his car, and she felt a cold touch on her forehead and that was the end.

While this was taking place I was writing at my bureau and was not aware of what was happening, but when I went back to her and asked her how she was getting on, she again asked me who Grant Conybeare was, and had he died on his way to the Bench, giving me the date, which I wrote down, as I did not remember. Later, I looked up the exact date of his death, and found that it was February 21st 1931, not the 7th. On telling Hylde the mistake on

* Mary Maxmuller was the daughter of the late Professor Maxmuller who wrote the life of Ramakrishna, and my father's first wife.

her part she remarked it was curious that she was a fortnight out, and explained that the difference in the dates was a most interesting and important point, as people who have had a shock before death causing amnesia, often could not remember the shock that had caused the death. So the reason why my uncle was a fortnight out on the date he had given was because he could not recollect what had happened just before he died!

The following night Hylda had a visit from my father who thanked her for all she had done in rescuing his brother. She was frightened to begin with, when she noticed his feet did not touch the floor.*

I feel I should record my last meeting with Hylda. I had paid about two weeks visit to Plymouth where she had gone to escape from phenomena hunting investigators.

On my last morning there I woke up very early and as I lay in bed, I was somewhat gloomily meditating on the difficulties of dealing with poor little Hylda, though I was so anxious to help her, for when down in Cornwall she did not seem at all interested that I should try to do any more for her; in fact she did not seem the least concerned about being defended. Also, her gift for romancing was something to contend with, because she had a way of telling people a different story every time so that one never quite knew where one was. As I was wondering whether it was worthwhile to go on bothering

* I understand the feet of spirits do not touch the floor.

myself about her affairs, I suddenly became aware of something cold and hard in my right hand which was under the bedclothes. Puzzled, I looked and there was a lovely little red rosebud! On getting up I found that several things in the room had been displaced and my clock was under my bed. So "Robin" had been up to his pranks again. Nobody could possibly have put that rose into my hand; also I was awake when it happened.

It was now time to leave and I had to catch the morning train back to London; Hylda came up and I gave her a parcel to wrap up and went on with my packing, when suddenly I heard "Ullo!" I looked up and saw that Hylda was in trance and that her little Cockney control was speaking. Her face wore such an expression of cunning that I drew back with an involuntary shudder of disgust.

I had quite a long conversation with "him" in the course of which "he" told me of an address that my father had given "him" for me. It happened that I had lost this address and could not remember it and was worried about it! "Robin" also told me a great deal about the private affairs of "his" or rather Hylda's enemies, which showed "his" malicious characteristics. At last I persuaded "him" to go, saying I had to finish my packing and did not want to miss the train. I was also very nervous lest the landlady might come up and see Hylda in this condition, for when she turns into "Robin," she behaves exactly like a small child.

Hylde, her companion and I then drove to the station, but we were rather too early, and about half an hour to wait. I was walking up and down the platform with her friend, when I missed Hylde, and turning to see where she was, I saw her walking a bit behind us in the oddest fashion. She had again turned into "Robin" and the few passengers about were gaping at her strange antics. "Robin" was a most embarrassing companion in this public place. The friend apologised and assured me that "Robin" was usually "most careful" as to Hylde's whereabouts when "he" made "his" appearances, but I did not feel "he" was being careful now. I hastily shepherded Hylde into the waiting room which was fortunately empty. "Robin" was in a bad mood and actually threatened me. "He" suspected that I now intended to try to find out something of Hylde's background by getting in touch with her family. In the end I persuaded "him" to go, which "he" only did just as the train drew into the station, so Hylde was able to come back to herself and say goodbye.

I sat down in the train with considerable relief. I felt that I had quite enough of the spirits for the time being. But I did contact Hylde's family later, and found that they were just as mystified about her as I was. Eventually Hylde gave up all psychic work and retired into private life and has married twice.

On looking back now I can well realise that the only explanation for the muddle over poor little Hylde's amazing mediumship was that the "powers that be" watching behind the scenes

simply did not intend that her mediumship should continue. Do not the everlasting frustrations and perplexities of psychic research clearly indicate that we are just not meant to get too far, and that as long as we remain ordinary mortals who have not transcended *Maya*, the astral world must remain for us as ever an insolvable mystery?

We should here note what Meher Baba has to say on the place of occultism in spiritual life; * "Many of the Psychical Research Societies of modern times consider occult knowledge with the same attitude which characterises other forms of knowledge; because, in principle, there seems no reason why it should not be looked upon as being either less valuable or more valuable than other forms of theoretical knowledge. We find these societies trying to pursue occult knowledge in an organised and co-operative form. The Masters also have, at times, deemed it desirable to reveal to the generality of mankind some theoretical knowledge about certain important features of the occult world like the facts of immortality and reincarnation, the existence of different bodies and planes and the laws concerning evolution and the operation of karma, because such knowledge gives the right sort of background for spiritual aspiration and effort and brings the perspective of the average man as near to the truth as is possible under the circumstances. But, with the exception of general knowledge about fundamentals, the Masters have consistently preferred to

* *Discourses*, by Meher Baba, Vol. III. P. 25.

attach minimum importance to the spread of detailed knowledge about occult realities and have even scrupulously withheld information in respect of those points which are likely to have vital bearing upon occultism as an art."

Meanwhile psychic research and mediumship combined were ruining my health and my character. I had become highly excitable, contentious, and with true missionary zeal I was intolerant of those who could not share my opinions. I could not understand why people should not have the courage of their convictions. In days past we were burnt for our opinions and principles, but now we did not have to risk anything so terrible as the stake!

In psychic research one had to be either very big, like Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Richet and other courageous pioneers, or else very small like myself. But between these was a middle section, neither big nor small: people with professional and academic standing; why could they not be more courageous?

I had become so disgusted that I lost my respect for the academic mind, for I found that learned men could become learned fools; also that they simply would not face up to the facts-that-do-not-fit.

I felt that should I take up mediumship seriously and further develop along unusual lines that I, too, would have to run the gauntlet of detractors, and I did not wish to enter the arena of psychic politics. Is it any wonder that there is a shortage of good mediums and there is so much risk of having one's health and one's

reputation ruined? Then again my husband was getting worried, although up to now he had preserved a benevolent neutrality.

Everything settled down unexpectedly by my losing my psychic faculties as quickly as they had come. As a matter of fact my father had warned my mother that if such work proved to be too much for my health, I should not be allowed to continue it. Meanwhile, he assiduously sought to turn my attention to spiritual matters as there is nothing spiritual about spiritualism!

He obviously regretted the rationalistic upbringing of his children and now sought to make amends. In that eventful year of 1936, one day my hand had written automatically under the guidance of my father: "We want you to write a book on Christ's teachings in relation to modern thought!" Astonished, I had protested that he should find a theologian to do such work, for at that time I was quite incompetent to write on religion, also took no interest in it. Then the answer came back, "No! You are a suitable medium for the coming revelations to mankind!"

It was also at about this time that my father intimated that I would belong to an entirely new movement coming on earth and we had to prepare for spiritual revelations hitherto unrevealed in this age. Beyond taking down the usual notes of all that transpired in our communications, I thought no more about this strange and to me, absurd request. Neither did it appear to be the least possible or practicable

that I should ever write a book of such a nature. It was not 'till more than twenty years later that I wrote *Civilisation or Chaos?* * That book does help to bring Christ's teachings in relation with modern thought, since it explains the avataric role of the Avatars, also Meher Baba's avataric mission in our age and his presumed connections in the past with the former Avatars of recorded religious history.

* *Civilization or Chaos* by Irene Conybeare, 1st Ed., 1955; 2nd Ed., 1959. Chetana Ltd. Mumbai, India.

Chapter III

INITIATIONS

I must warn the reader not to expect some spectacular or grandiose revelations, otherwise he will be disappointed. I am only putting on record some little psychic and mystical adventures which should illustrate one of the ways we may go in search of Truth. Then again, I must ask my reader not to attach any undue importance to these personal experiences because it is not suggested that they are at all necessary for the great majority of those who are following the Path. Also, really advanced souls probably do not need any such initiations. In my particular case, it was necessary for me to have some form of awakening, otherwise, I would have gone no further in my search.

It was one day in 1934 when the first initiation took place. I was walking along a quiet road in a suburb of London when suddenly a voice spoke right in my ear; it was loud and clear and words were: "This is not Reality." Startled, I looked round, but there was nobody! Though momentarily disconcerted, I soon dismissed the incident as an hallucination. Not being versed in Eastern metaphysics and knowing nothing of *Maya* or the Cosmic Illusion, i. e.,

the essential unreality of the universe—the purport of the message was lost. It was some years later that I was to discover that those words were a signpost along the way to inner development.

Some weeks later, I was resting in my room, thinking of nothing in particular, when I became aware of a Presence: it was Divinity in essence, divine rays of Love—a Love we ordinary mortals know not on earth,—were pouring down, enveloping and caressing. Caught up in the rapture of a Substance unknown, I wondered: had a corner of heaven been lifted? Was my father perhaps with me? Had he brought some angels with him? This was a glimpse of the Divine Love the saints know, so sorely needed by our poor troubled earth. It was some years later that the significance of these two messages dawned on me. I was unaware at the time that Meher Baba was in London, for in those days I knew him not, and it appears that I had passed the house of one of his disciples in which he was passing a few days. So this message was from him when I heard the voice speaking in my ear!

It was during the early spring of 1936 that my attention turned to more important matters. I was staying in a quiet spot on the Mediterranean and was studying a book on Christian Mysticism. This remarkable work, "*Man's Highest Purpose*,"* by Karel Weinfurter of Prague, made a deep impression. As I had never

* Translation by Professor Arnold Capleton and Karl Unger, Published by Rider & Co., London, 1934.

read anything of this nature, the book opened up new avenues of thought.

I had hardly finished the first chapter when I noticed a peculiar buzzing in the ears; I wondered vaguely if I should have to visit an ear specialist on my return to London. The buzzing continued intermittently, and by the time I had reached a subsequent chapter I found a reference from *The Serpent Power** by Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe) which the author had quoted. It seemed that this peculiar buzzing was known as the "Lute and the Bees" or the "Purring of the Cosmic Motor." It referred to the awakening of *Kundalini*‡ and its ascent through the *chakras*. It is the awakening of certain senses at the entrance to the Path which leads to Self-Knowledge, for our lives are but the fleeting earth-experiences of our soul on its journey through Creation. So there comes a time when certain spiritual experiences may begin at the threshold of the Path.

This awakening is identified with the soul's faint recollections of its inherent divinity when it has reached the turning-point of its homeward journey to the Oversoul from whence it originally sprang.

There are, to begin with, three distinct initiations which take the form of hearing, smelling and seeing. For details I suggest the reader should read the chapters relating to the various stages on the Path, by Meher Baba in his *Discourses* for I can dwell only on my own little

* Published by Nadies Ganesh & Co., Bombay.

‡ Kundalini, See Yoga, Appendix 7.

personal experiences. It should also always be borne in mind that mystical or Path-experiences bear no relation whatever to the ordinary psychic manifestations of the semi-subtle spheres.

It was about this time, one day, on returning to my hotel bedroom that I noticed a very strong scent of flowers, like violets; but I could see no trace of any flowers, only the line of eucalyptus trees that stretched down the avenue toward the sunlit sea. Beyond thinking it odd, I thought no more about it. But this was an initiation! Later I was staying in Geneva. I woke up in the middle of the night—the clock was striking twelve. I saw a cube-shaped shaft of light above my head. It was so blinding in its whiteness that I knew I must be seeing it with my inner eye. What does that mean? I asked, and a silent voice within answered, "This is your passage from the material world to the spiritual world!" This was the initiation of the White Light.

Meanwhile, some weeks later, I was finishing Weinfurter's book in a village high up in the Rhone Alps. In a certain chapter it was said that we must meditate on the nature of the Divinity. I had gone for a long walk up the mountain side, a winding path through tall pine trees, and was now at a height of some nine thousand feet. Perhaps for the first time I was meditating. What was the nature of the Divinity? How could I meditate on the Divinity when I had never decided what the Divinity was! What was God? They say, "He is all around us." Here I had reached an open glade;

the little village was far below,—it looked like a collection of doll's houses. For the first time in my life I was thinking about God! ... Not having been brought up in any religious faith, I only felt a deep curiosity as to the meaning and purpose of life and regarded the idea of God as too remote to think about. As I asked myself again, what is God, I noticed a peculiar stillness in the air: it seemed not a leaf stirred, not a flower nodded; as I stood and listened, a faint sound seemed to come from the far distance. It made me think of the faint piping of a flute. The Pipes of Pan? Or was it the winding of a hunting horn? Could it be Krishna's flute? The music grew and swelled. The air was now vibrating with heavenly chords. The only music on earth that faintly resembled it was Wagner in his most ecstatic moments. Chords of celestial harmonies, an angelic orchestra, deep rolling notes of a cosmic organ, high wind instruments, tones of colour and beauty unsurpassed by anything on earth. As the music soared I stood — caught up in a mystic vortex of harmonies which did not belong to this world, in a bliss entrancing and divine. So this was the answer to the question, WHAT IS GOD?

It was only later that I learned this was the well-known initiation of "The Music of the Spheres." It was impossible to stay up in the mountains all night; I thought of the hullabaloo in the hotel when my absence was noted. I had to turn and retrace my steps down the mountain side, the sun was going down in a golden haze

and the music followed me, dying away gradually till all that was left of it was the faint fluting of Krishna's flute. Years afterwards I read somewhere that Krishna's flute was symbolical of the irresistible urge and drawing power of the soul in quest of God. Pictures of Krishna in India nearly always show his flute.

That night in the quiet of my bedroom, thinking over this revelation of the Spirit, I remembered those words: "*This is not Reality!*" which had so startled me in London. Something had happened to me outside the material world of forms. So this was the answer to my query, that GOD IS HARMONY! According to esoteric teaching the entire world is a musical instrument and the purpose of the Seven great spiritual Planes or Spheres that man has to ascend before he achieves Self-knowledge is to feel the Divine Pattern or Rhythm of the Universe, which is dependent on the vibrational quality and power of the cosmic tone; this again depending on the mind of man. Meher Baba has said: "One who really hears the Music of God in his heart—this is the wonderful music,—for it is the *original* music—loses his bodily consciousness and sees God."

But my experience was only the merest glimpse, the beginning of a "touch of cosmic consciousness." I will now make a digression: a friend once told me how, in a dream, she found herself to be a soul waiting to be born. She was nothing but a "flame," then she heard God speak, and was in ecstasy with the strains of celestial music. According to esoteric tradition,

the soul coming back for another earth-life, falls through the spheres to the accompaniment of the cosmic orchestra. This helps to illustrate the idea that God is vibrational energy, the Harmony of Divine Love.

Is the world not in need of Harmony today? All the great religions have taught the essential unity of life, and that harmony between men spells Harmony within the universe. Those who transgress the laws of Harmony spell out their ultimate defeat, for, as we transgress Cosmic Law, the balanced forces of nature break down and cosmic disasters ensue, as we see today. Unless we have a universal reconciliation amongst mankind, the whole structure and pattern of our present world will collapse. Is it any wonder that we need some form of Divine intervention? Another Divine manifestation on earth to readjust our values and standards for a better mode of life?

Again, another month later, another experience took place. This time I had gone for a walk on the slopes behind Lausanne. It was even-tide, the sun was beginning to go down over the Lake of Geneva, the scene was hazy like a Turner picture, indescribably peaceful. I noticed the sudden "click"—the buzzing had started—some sort of depersonalisation was again taking place. I heard the distant music, but it was different. Soon the whole sky seemed to be rocking—the impression was sinister and awe-inspiring, impossible to describe in words; I thought of the tramp of armed hosts. Did this mean another war was

coming? There was a distinct menace in the air, a motif I could not understand, a thudding, rocking reverberation, ominous and sullen with some meaning I could not fathom. I held my ground. What was this all about? What did it mean? What was the message? The air was full of sound, musically discordant, raging, menacing and terrifying, – the cosmic orchestra was angry, charged with doom. Uneasily I stood; the curious thudding motif was coming nearer and nearer and louder and louder. I was frightened. The nearest resemblance that I could think of was the thudding of hooves of polo ponies, for had I not heard something like that when horses thundered down a wet polo field? Yes, it was unmistakably the thudding of horses' hooves on soft turf. There was no mistaking the pounding of the horses!

I was to learn later that I had heard the well-known initiation of "The Centaurs' Hooves," otherwise called the "Revolt of the Animal Soul." As we know in Greek mythology, the centaur has the face of a man, and the human head stands for the Divine Soul and its ultimate Perfection; while the body of the animal stands for man's lower nature. The struggle had begun!

Now I was thoroughly mystified and confused knowing that cosmic forces over which I had no control were being awakened. If matters continued like this, would I not be carried somewhere out of reach of my normal consciousness? I felt that this awakening must be stopped at all costs. I confided in our dear old friend Dr. L. P.

Jacks (former editor of the Hibbert Journal), but he seemed somewhat alarmed, so I felt it was useless to speak about such experiences. I thought of the psychiatrists and the mistakes they could make, with their analysis of human conduct based so often on ordinary psychological grounds. Although we know that analytical psychology hopes to explore the depths of man's soul, that hope can never be realised, for the ordinary psychologist has little insight into spiritual realities, and the present day materialistic trends do not help to fathom the secrets of the soul's expansion in human consciousness. So I determined to put an end to these awe-inspiring revelations, wonderful though they be. I had always led a normal life and not even in psychic work had I ever allowed myself to lose control of my conscious faculties.

Each time later when the buzzing started, I refused to relax, to pay attention, actively interesting myself in something else, suppressing all further inclinations. But there was just one more experience which I will relate, so gentle that I accepted it. This time I was sitting at home in London. The music had started; but it was so very soft and friendly that I allowed it to continue—the same gentle familiar strains of the celestial spheres—then suddenly they stopped. My mind had become a complete blank! It was, in fact, a void. Not an idea would come through. It is said we must still the mind to hear the voice of God, but I had never practiced any form of meditation, yet the mind was empty, not a single thought came through. Then

came a vision; it was of a large and handsome sunflower, similar to one I had often admired in a Swiss garden which came up year after year. Then I heard a word spoken silently from within. It said, "Sunflower! Sunflower!" There was nothing more; that was all.

Meanwhile I had been able to get in touch with the man who had translated into English *Man's Highest Purpose*. Though he was a Jew he became a Christian mystic, he was Austrian and lived in Prague and he had already explained to me the previous initiations and what they stood for. He had written that I had been a mystic in a former life and that was why these experiences came so naturally and easily. So I wrote to him about the sunflowers, for I did not understand the symbolical language, not even in so simple a message as that. My new friend wrote, "Surely you can understand that? It means that the sunflower always turns its face to the Sun, to God. It means that you at last are turning your face to God!"

All through the ages man has received messages from sources outside his usual self; some have been misleading, but others have been genuine divine revelations from his Higher Self,—for the Supreme Mind does and can express itself: sometimes symbolically and at other times directly. This man explained many things to me later when I met him in Prague in 1937.

He told me that a New Dispensation was coming, that the age-old drama was being rehearsed. That Christ and the Apostles were

again on earth preparing for their new mission. But he did not know where they were, but thought they were in India. He went on to tell me how every living creature would get some form of spiritual rebirth in proportion to the degree of its spiritual development. He even said what I would do in the New Awakening to come. When I protested, he retorted sardonically, "Ah! But you do not know what the Spirit can do, the Spirit can change even you!" The actions of God take place through men who are instruments necessary for whatever change may be impending. So, I was destined to go to India to meet the man whom I believe to be the reincarnation of Jesus, and his men holding the same offices as the apostles of yore.

Before concluding this chapter I feel that I should warn readers that so far as my opinion is concerned, I feel that mystical adventures may be dangerous, because the recipient may attach too much importance to them. There are quite a number of sad stories known where men have walked out of their homes at the behest of the "Spirit" whom they believe to be "God."

When in America, I made the acquaintance of a dear old man in Hollywood. He was looked upon as a bit of a sage, and a few people would visit him for spiritual advice. He told me his pathetic story, how one day at San Francisco a voice claiming to be God, spoke to him. He was ordered to leave his home and depart. (Fortunately, he first of all made over his estate to his wife, leaving her in comfortable circumstances.) He was told to go to Los Angeles,

taking only one hundred dollars and one change of clothing. He was then about sixty; however he was able to obtain a job as a janitor at a Hollywood Bank. There he remained a considerable time, and the "voice of God" advised him in judicious investments of his salary. So much so, that he was able to leave and establish himself in a one-room flat on the famous Hollywood Boulevard.

There he sat waiting for his "call." I could not quite make out what the "call" was to do but I understood it would give him some form of awakening that would enable him to render great service to mankind. He sat and waited there for many years with nothing happening. When I was leaving America I went to say goodbye to my poor old friend; he was then over eighty, and still the "call" had not come! I found him very dejected, and also disillusioned; he had grown tired of waiting! As he had heard nothing from his family for over twenty years, it was too late for him to try to go back to them. Such a sad case of self-deception.

It is also sometimes dangerous to associate with people who imagine themselves to be in direct touch with God. One of my mystically advanced friends from Central Europe had come to London for three months to do some research work at the British Museum. I do not know what happened, whether he picked up some ghost there, but one evening he came to me very distracted, saying that "the devil had been following" him all day, and was trying to get hold of his manuscript! He asked if he

might leave it with me for safety. Of course I consented to take it. Late that night on going to bed, I became aware of a long evil-looking face frowning at me. So K. had left his devil behind in the flat! I was all alone, my husband being away at the time. This was a most uncomfortable moment! However, I managed to brace myself, up and spoke out loud and boldly, "I do not believe in devils, I do not believe in devils!...." I also repeated the Lord's Prayer and went to bed with no disagreeable results.

I have in fact had some really dangerous experiences which I can not go into here, and I have always been very thankful for my training in mediumistic work and psychic research, as I was enabled to take a more balanced viewpoint than the average person who has no knowledge of mediumistic techniques so is more easily liable to be victimised by spirits masquerading as "God." I think also I must have been very well protected by unseen guardians.

Chapter IV

PAUL BRUNTON'S VIEWS ON MEHER BABA

I certainly had some interesting experiences, amongst them how in 1934 I met Rafael Hirsch alias Paul Brunton, in London. It was about this time that I was interested in a particular trance medium. Her spirit control was a personality who called himself "Abdul Latif" and he claimed to have lived at the time of Saladin. He also was supposed to be Eileen Garrett's leading "control," and helped with the Duke experiments mentioned in the last chapter.

At one particular seance, "Abdul Latif" had intrigued me by saying he wanted me to meet one "Paul Brunt" or "Paul Brent" – he could not quite get the name through his medium; but he asked me after the séance to inquire at the office of the British College of Psychic Science for the address of a certain Mr. X, stating that Mr. X was a friend of Paul, and that in this manner I could get acquainted with him. I wrote to Mr. X. Two days later I had a phone call from Mr. Brunton. I asked him to lunch and he gave me instructions how his food should be prepared. Never having heard of this

man before, but being interested, since "Abdul Latif" had declared that we should both be working in the future to bring East and West together, I amused myself by trying to get some information about him. My hand wrote automatically a penetrating analysis of this man's character. However, I found Mr. Brunton an agreeable little man of Jewish origin though his speech was somewhat marred by a strong Cockney accent. After lunch I showed him what I had written. He was most astonished and said it was absolutely true and asked me to do him the favour on no account to publish it. He was also surprised that I had not heard of him, nor of his book: *A Search in Secret India* * which had just been published and was attracting considerable attention in London at that time. This book enabled him to jump from the position of an ordinary journalist into a certain amount of fame.

I remember he came to see me nearly every day for about two or three months shortly before leaving for India, as we were doing some experimental work together. I did not see him again till some three years later when we met at Prague. I expected that he, after sitting at the feet of the great saint Ramana Maharshi, might be able to teach me something of an illuminating nature, but he had nothing much to say, was worried about his health and wondered if it was advisable to go to Carlsbad, or to go straight to America to give some lectures, for America has ever been a Mecca for lecturers who have to

* First published by Rider & Co., London, 1933.

"keep the pot boiling." Certainly he has succeeded—through a happy knack of stringing words together, which do not command deep thinking on the reading public,—in making a fairly successful niche as a writer on Eastern metaphysics so far as the West is concerned. But in the East such books have no real worth, for Mr. Brunton is but a novice in spiritual matters when it comes to the hidden knowledge pertaining to the ways of the Secret Hierarchy. This is obvious from his first book, which throughout, displays little profundity or understanding of Secret India. But it really is astonishing that after two short visits in 1933 he should have presumed to criticise and to analyse the character of Meher Baba. He thereby shows his profound ignorance of the dynamics of the Path and the ways of the God-realised Masters. Mr. Brunton did not know that such men with the highest spiritual status in the world cannot be judged by ordinary human standards, since the ways of the God-men are unfathomable.

On page 32 of his book he begins straightaway to condemn a Master whose divine nature he cannot comprehend, impudently writing: "He is destined, had I but known it, to flash like a meteorite across the Western sky and to arouse the curiosity of millions of people in Europe and America. However, like a meteorite, he will fall ingloriously to earth." It is a very long time since Mr. Brunton made this absurd prophecy, and now Meher Baba is a Star of the First Magnitude, with no sign of falling!

Mr. Brunton complains that we are "brain-stupefied followers" because the Master expects complete obedience. He does not understand that no real Master accepts a disciple except on such conditions; for those who are occupied with the hidden and secret direction of world affairs could not have time for any but those willing to accept strictest discipline and carry out orders; and orders, of which they may not understand the significance nor the reasons for which they were given.

Mr. Brunton should read the words of Hafiz, a Perfect Master of his time – "Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without question of 'why' and 'what.' About what you hear of the Master, never say it is wrong; because, my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand him!"

Mr. Brunton speaks of the "frail" physique of the Master; but how can he judge by appearances? As a matter of fact, in those days Meher Baba was well known for his extraordinary feats of physical strength, as witnessed by those who knew him, in the natural course of their stay with him. If he did not want to move, none could make him budge, not even the strength of forty men. Even now I have witnessed his uncanny strength which bears no relation to his fragile appearance. Also he is famous for enduring ordeals which no ordinary man would stand; for example, on one occasion long ago Baba's birthday was being celebrated by a big *darshan* to the poor. The Master had been weakened by a forty days' fast which was broken only the

night before the *darshan* was to take place. Some ten thousand derelicts, the blind, the maimed and destitute filed past Baba, as in a parade. He stood all day long bending to touch the feet of every individual beggar passing, giving him or her a packet of sweets and a bundle of clothing with his own hands. How many could bend continuously to ten thousand persons all in one day? Also remember it was after a forty days' fast!

Then again, Mr. Brunton is horrified that the Master should have struck a blow at one of his men which incapacitated him for quite a while. Here again the author demonstrates his complete ignorance of the essentials of the spiritual laws that govern the universe. For should the disciple be fortunate enough to receive hurt from the Master, he is spiritually benefitted because the expenditure of his *sanskaras** is speeded up. Other Masters sometimes act similarly.

Mr. Brunton also disparages other Masters such as Upasni Maharaj. His subsequent behaviour to Ramana Maharshi caused considerable comment in India. I cannot waste any more time on Mr. Brunton, but I feel I should mention that in 1941 I wrote to him from India, warning him that he would eventually find he had been completely mistaken in his opinion of Meher Baba; and I suggested that he should endeavour to overhaul his statements, retract or make some form of recantation before it was too late, and his own reputation was thereby injured. However, Mr. Brunton, so far as I know has remained unrepentant.

* Sanskaras: Impressions pertaining to past and present life; see description in Meher Baba's *Discourses*.

Chapter V

ILLUMINATION AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

I would like to emphasize that the little spiritual experiences in Chapter III are nothing compared with the awe-inspiring revelations of the Path, such as when a man finds himself standing out in space watching the planets whirling by. It is only in these tremendous cosmic illuminations that a man is conscious of his essential *Oneness* with the universe.

Once a man has experienced even a glimpse of the Infinite Spirit and the peace that passeth all understanding, he will live but with the aim to make such a state of illumination permanent. There is the story told by Bhagwan Hamsa in *The Holy Mountain* * in which he tells of his pilgrimage to see the Lord (unite with the Divine Soul) or die. He climbed up to the frozen lake of Gaurikund, twenty thousand feet above the sea; there he remained for three nights and three days. It was to be death or Realisation for him. He was without food or shelter in the icy snow-covered wilderness. The initiation of the Self, the Infinite Self, took place. Bhagwan wrote of it: "I found myself reflected everywhere in

* Translated by Shri Purochit Swami, published by Macmillan (London), 1934.

the whole Universe! It was one harmony...full of Wisdom, Infinite Love perennial, and Bliss Eternal!"

The aspirant, whether he is consciously or unconsciously aware, will get what he requires for his advancement according to his disposition and propensities. Path experiences are the same everywhere, no matter what faith we may belong to, or when or where we live. Eastern and Western mysticism have always taught the ultimate union of man with his Divine Soul: that part of him which belongs to the Oversoul or Infinite Spirit; but it is not generally recognised that Self-Realisation can only be attained *within* the trammels of the flesh. According to Meher Baba's teaching only on *our* planet and *in* our physical body can we arrive at Ultimate Union with the Oversoul or God.

An examination of the esoteric teachings in comparative religion reveals a common substratum; for the laws of life that govern man and creation must be the same, in everything and everywhere. It is astonishing to note that members of different religions do not comprehend the fundamental structure and basis of all life. Unfortunately bigotry and fanaticism take the place of reason and logic as the years go by, and the inner truths and inner realities are forgotten, or become perverted or misrepresented.

I cannot leave this subject without describing what I understand to be the greatest of all the initiations, the "I AM GOD" initiation. Here I will quote directly from my book *Civilisation or Chaos*. A friend—who is an American—told

me about this tremendous spiritual event. He is a highly advanced man probably nearing the end of his journey through Creation.

"...The initiation lasted three days and three nights and very nearly killed him, for his physical vehicle had not been "stepped up" to the high rate of frequency required for such a state of cosmic awareness or as the Masters say: "The time was not yet ripe for the final consummation." He told me that it was the most marvellous but at the same time the most terrifying initiation of his life. He felt that at any moment his body might be torn asunder, bursting with the cosmic strain imposed upon it; it felt as if it were being pulled out in all directions, being stretched out to the uttermost, as if it could not contain the life and rush of the Spirit. In this greatest of all initiations, bordering on Self-Realisation, (which according to Meher Baba cannot be fully accomplished without the aid of a Perfect Master) my friend knew that he SUSTAINED everything, that he was IN everything, that HE GAVE LIFE to everything, and that he LOVED everything. He felt that the sun, the moon, planets and stars were all coming out of him and that REALITY was neither good nor bad, but EXISTENCE! He saw the whole immense universe dwindle like a speck on his being. It was as if he could put his finger on it and wipe it out."

When a man reaches this cosmic state of illumination and is transcending creation, he then knows the universe to be but an illusion or *Maya*, and it vanishes as the morning mist.

My friend might easily have died; but now provided he meets a Perfect Master, he should in all probability become Self-Realised in the coming Awakening of the Spirit. In Meher Baba's *Discourses* it is explained that the whole universe is in the self, and springs into existence from a *tiny point* in the self which is referred to as "OM." But the self has become habituated to gathering experiences through one medium or other and therefore it comes to experience the universe as a formidable rival, *other than itself*. Those who have realised God, and regained consciousness of the universe (*Sadguru* or Perfect Master) can see it constantly as springing from the "OM" point, *which is in everyone....*"

Those who have had the "I AM GOD" initiation in all its fullness and completeness and at the same time are able to retain the gross or earth-consciousness, have the authority to call themselves God. That is why Meher Baba's Moslem Master, Babajan, would call herself God. The constant affirmation that she was God and the Source of everything, so enraged some orthodox soldiery of a Baluchi Regiment that they buried her alive. She used supernormal powers to effect her escape, and the same soldiers were astonished some years later to find her safe and well, holding court amongst her devotees at Poona.

I do not feel I can end this chapter without some comments on some of Aldous Huxley's writings. It is indeed very strange that the author of *The Perennial Philosophy** should have so

* Published by Chatto & Windus, London. 1946.

little comprehension of the subject of his little book *Heaven and Hell** especially as he helped to found the Californian Vedanta group under the aegis of Swami Prabhavananda. Yet in this book Mr. Huxley is preoccupied with the idea that perception can be the same as Revelation.

No doubt psychic power can be stimulated under certain conditions by hypnotism, the stroboscopic lamp and drugs; and the medium in question may find himself at what Mr. Huxley calls the "Antipodes" of his normal consciousness. It is also obvious that this "other world" may take on the conventional characteristics of the traditional Biblical Heaven and Hell; and it is also well-known that these visions or thought-forms can change in a flash to the opposite results if negative emotions should arise.

But the astral worlds of which Mr. Huxley writes only belong to the lower semi-subtle spheres of consciousness and bear no relation whatever to the transcendental states in the higher realms of soul experience, which are *completely unaffected* by drugs or any other forms of excitation. He also seems to understand nothing of the nature of thought-forms. I cannot go into fuller details of the misleading impression which this book conveys, but if the reader is interested he will find some of the issues partially clarified in the appendices of my book. However, the most serious aspect of all is

* Published by Chatto & Windus, London, 1956.

Mr.Huxley's irresponsible suggestions that aspiring mystics should try drugs, etc., for stimulation in spiritual perception. As if we do not have enough of drug addiction in our times! It is indeed difficult to reconcile this ideal with Mr. Huxley's ethical preoccupations. He seems bent on defeating what one thought was his main interest in furthering the spiritual qualities of man as an antidote to the prevailing materialistic tendencies of our day.

If one turns to Mr. Huxley's previous little book *The Doors of Perception*,* which has also been much criticised, one finds that as a literary *tour-de-force* it is superb; but again the poverty of his comprehension is evident. He does not seem to be able to realise that his experiences of heightened visual impressions after taking mescaline bear no relation whatever to genuine mystical experiences. In fact, it is not difficult for a good sensitive to feel what he did, without the aid of mescaline. Yet he has the temerity to compare his interesting little sensations with what he thinks Adam saw "on the morning of his creation." There, again Mr. Huxley shows no understanding of Adam's transcendental experience when he became God-Realised. From the Bible we glean that Adam was not the "First Man"—he was only called the First Man because he was a God-Realised man. For, after his attainment of Self-Realisation he became "I AM GOD" thus realising the great mystery of life, the Great Secret, that heaven

* Published by Chatto & Windus, London, 1954.

and earth are one. Though disunited objectively and consciously, they are nevertheless united subjectively and unconsciously. For the human form is the highest evolved physical form, just as human consciousness is the highest evolved consciousness, which needs to be turned away from Duality to Unity or Oneness in order to achieve Self-Realisation.

Yet, Mr. Huxley seems to think that just a few drops of mescaline could help him to reach near to the Ultimate Goal! To my mind, the most revealing bit in his book is when, on being asked to look into his head, that is to say to find out what was going on in his own mind, Mr. Huxley admits that the inner landscape is "curiously unrewarding" and he finds only cheap structures of stuff looking like enamelled tin and plastics. In fact, he found the contents of his mind "cheap" and "trivial," like the articles displayed in a "Five and Dime" store! I wonder if Mr. Huxley's Higher Self was endeavouring to register disappointment that his personal contributions to the higher metaphysics of our spiritual being had been so fruitless!

Yet, again Mr. Huxley claims that (under the influence of mescaline) he had known contemplation at "its height," but admittedly not its "fullness," These words are so staggering in their implications that I can only refer again to the poverty of the author's mind, so graphically described by himself.* According to certain traditions, man has to go through eight million

* If the reader is interested in this subject he might read Professor Zaehner's comments on Mr. Huxley in his work, *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*, published by the Oxford University Press, 1957.

and four hundred thousand lives in his evolved physical form before he can attain to Self-Realisation which then again can only be achieved through the Grace of One who is already Self-Realised.*

* Again I suggest that the reader should peruse the *Discourses* by Meher Baba for some clarification of the dynamics of the Path.

Chapter VI

DREAMING INTO THE FUTURE

The year 1937 was an anxious one. Hitler was growing continuously in strength, and we were beginning to fear that another war was on its way. It was early that year when I had the following dreams regarding the import of our future. In the first, Gerald and I were standing outside our house looking up into the sky above a London park. Away, up in the blue heavens, an enormous angry-looking storm cloud was massed in cumulative waves above us. Out of it pointed the long black muzzles of four great guns: two to the East and two to the West. I thought, "This means war!" In great distress I began to cry, for had we not come through the First World War? Then a voice spoke: "GOD HAS BEEN BLASPHEMED! HE IS ANGRY! HE IS NOW GOING TO SPEAK!" Much perturbed, I ran into the house. On coming out again, I thought perhaps God might be going to give a lecture! Turning to my husband I asked, "Well, what did God say?" It seemed he was going to explain when I woke up!

The following night before falling asleep I meditated on the dream; it was a warning, a presage of the world catastrophe to

come. What was the Voice of God? This question was age-old and always difficult to answer, for we really do not know, with our limited mind the danger of deception is ever present. But, if according to the dream, God was going to speak, then there must be some cosmic revelation coming. There were many who thought that another war might be the War of Wars; Armageddon had yet to take place and apart from Biblical prophecies, there had been many others through the ages foretelling that stupendous events would close the Twentieth Century. Was the Word again to be made flesh? Would there be some form of Divine Intervention to stop man's total destruction of himself and his planet? Was that why God would have to speak? The Word again made flesh as in the coming of Christ?

The following night I prayed: "Dear Lord! Please give me another dream! When and where?" The answer came that *same* night! This time I was walking quietly along the bank of a wide and peaceful river. I noticed on my path a clump of unusual white flowers; outstanding in their beauty and quality of texture, strange flowers I had never before seen. The landscape was at rest and all seemed peaceful. I saw a few people walking about unconcernedly. Suddenly the atmosphere changed ... I turned round and saw something gleaming white down the reach of the river. It was the crest of a huge tidal wave coming very slowly up stream. Good gracious! I thought, we shall all be drowned! For now I could well see that this slowly advancing

crest would in time flood all the ground that spread out in a flat expanse to the far horizon—the plains of civilisation! As I searched for a means of escape, I noticed that the path symbolising the Mystic Path wound away across the plain and in the distance was a pyramid-shaped hill. "We must all make for that hill! I must warn the people!" As I shouted I woke up. (In 1952, when I first visited Meher Baba's Retreat at Pimpalgaon, there I saw the pyramid-shaped hill of my dream, standing up close to the Retreat.)

So, these two dreams plainly indicated the catastrophe that would slowly overwhelm our present civilisation. But at the same time, I understood nothing of their symbolism, especially the pyramid signifying the mystical triangle which stands for the soul's journey through creation, back to its Divine Self, or the Oversoul. For as we know, the soul in itself is not part of creation, but is as much inside it as outside it, in the sense that creation is but an illusion and not Reality. The white flowers on the Path stood for purity, the only way that leads to the necessary purification of our consciousness if we are eventually to progress to the Ultimate Goal, which is our Divine Self.

Neither had I heard of the Silent Master of India, nor of his message to the world—that when he broke his silence, the New Dispensation would come into being! To save the world, there had to be a descent of the Christ-Consciousness or Buddha-Consciousness, a new awakening of the Spirit, to replenish and rejuvenate

our poor, tired, tortured earth. Thus, the Word would again become flesh.

The Second World War started in 1939. It was in the spring of 1940 that I met one of Meher Baba's disciples in London. He heard about my dreams and other experiences and explained their connections with his Master. It was with great interest that I listened, that Meher Baba was the Avatar of our age, and of the new revelations which were to come. Greatly impressed, I reflected deeply as I walked homewards across the park. It was empty, not a soul was about, for the children had already been evacuated in anticipation of the coming "blitz." Thinking about this man I had recently met, I was wondering if he was not a little ... I tapped my own forehead; it was difficult to believe anything, he was surely quite bemused over this Master of his! Could Meher Baba *really* be the Messiah—Lord of the Second Advent? It seemed incredible; but did we not need a new dispensation with so many living under the shadow of fear, hatred and oppression? Millions were groaning under the totalitarian sway of dictatorship. How would this war end? How could we free these hapless people? Yet we were all to blame for the wars that scourged the earth. Was this Meher Baba genuine or just another fake Messiah? Had not Jesus said there would be Anti—Christs?

As I mused I became aware of a strange, warm glow. It seemed to have descended from the air,—or perhaps it came from within: I do

not know. This seems a prosaic description, but words are not adequate. This divine radiance grew and grew, and warmed me through and through. I was caught up in what might be described as an intense mystical experience, for was I not being bathed in rays of Divine Love, warm, palpitating vibrations pouring down from Heaven?

It was a much greater and more intensified experience, but similar to the initiation which took place in 1934, when I imagined that perhaps my father had brought some angels with him. So this was the direct answer to my query—straight from India!

Some time later, on seeing my new friend again, I told him what had happened and how the initiation had changed my whole life, and he remarked: "This is very interesting; you had experienced indirectly what some experience when they meet Meher Baba in person for the first time!" For several months after, there were moments when this warm loving current seemed to pass through me on to others. It did not belong to me, but came from an outside source; I was but a channel. I have not felt it since, but I know for certain that this divine energy of Love Essence is going to change the world! What else could bring about the universal Awakening of the Heart, so sorely needed if humanity is to survive its present impasse?

Chapter VII

INDIA

The concept of the Avatar or Messiah returning again and again for the redemption of man is by no means universal in Hindu philosophy, and the belief amongst Meher Baba's followers that he is the Avatar of our times cannot be proved or disproved. Only time will show, posterity will know and decide, for as we remember, the Avatars are never fully recognised in their lifetime.

This is, therefore, a very controversial subject, but the domain of popular mythology strengthens the belief that there are periods of readjusting the standards of the times.

Why should not legends and folklore be evidence of real folk memory? As I pointed out in my previous book (Chapter IV on *Cycles and Circles*) Professor C. G. Jung, whose authority is unquestioned, emphasizes that in myths and religious symbols in different epochs and amongst different peoples, it is to be remarked that the same type of hero often appears; and the idea of an All-Powerful Being is recognised everywhere. In fact, Dr. Jung's findings suggest a Supreme Universal Consciousness behind all things.

That it may be possible for the Supreme Universal Consciousness to incarnate in human form has been assumed in all religious thought throughout the ages, but the difficulty is how to recognise a divine incarnation except through faith and belief.

In ritual drama there remains a common basis in these different legends of past heroes, who sometimes do not appear to have died in the ordinary sense, the body not being buried—so far as we know—nevertheless various holy sepulchres or places remain as testimony to the great Being who has passed away. Every nation has legends of great heroes, also they are to be found in prehistoric antiquity. One interesting point is that while it seemed quite possible for culture heroes to have become gods, it appears to have been comparatively rare that the gods *became* culture heroes. Does not this suggest avataric periods of manifestation? For the prehistoric past is thick with legends of Flood heroes* from different parts of the world and why should we not surmise that some of the Flood heroes may have been Avatars? Again as stated in my previous book (Chapter X, *Karma*) a Universal Divine Manifestation always coincides with the spiritual renaissance of man, and does not humanity today need a spiritual rebirth? The whole world is in travail and appears to be suffering from the agony of an approaching cosmic change.

* See *Flood Myths and History* by Hugh Soar, in the Journal of Research, Atlantis, July 1953. Published by Markhan House Press Ltd., London; S.A.

Convinced as I now was of having received a message direct from India, the desire to leave for that country became overwhelming. Not that I had the slightest hope of ever getting there in the midst of a world war, but it so happened that it had been settled that I should go to South Africa to arrange for the evacuation of some young relatives. So I thought I might just as well try to get a visa for India, in case it might ever be possible later on to go from Cape Town to India. So I tried the Passport Office for the necessary papers; the man looked at me curiously, for apparently nobody could get a visa for India unless for some special reason. That country was going through a dangerous crisis and unattached Englishwomen roaming round were certainly not wanted. Seeing the way blocked, I obtained an introduction to an important official in the India Office. When he asked me what I wanted to go to India for, I said boldly that I was a disciple of Meher Baba! "Oh," he remarked, "We do not have much to do with the Saints, they can be very touchy!" However, he told me to return and in a few days—to my surprise—all was settled.

I then caught the boat to Cape Town; the day I left, the Germans were over Southampton and a little later our London flat was badly bombed. On arrival at Cape Town, I was shocked to receive a letter from Mrs. Smuts informing me that my aunt had been murdered on her farm by a strange native. General and Mrs. Smuts were her neighbours at Irene, Pretoria. My aunt's

husband had been killed in the First War, and her son in the Second, so she was trying to carry on alone. In the end the children never arrived, as so many ships were being sunk that the Government stopped sending children, and their mothers did not want to risk the voyage. So that problem had resolved itself and now I found myself free to go to India should it be possible to get there, for I had waited nearly a year for my husband to join me. He had been invalided out in the last war. I was sure that the War Office would not want his services. After a long wait the War Office eventually decided that they did not require him. Meanwhile the famous Battle of Britain was on. The shattered British Army was being withdrawn from Belgium; it seemed almost impossible that England could be saved. Gerald was glad to find he could be of use in welfare work amongst the troops and so postponed his departure. Then later, the Government stopped all men under sixty from leaving the country, so there was no longer any question of his being able to join me. As it was also impossible for me to return, I decided to try and get to India.

While waiting at Cape Town I met an elderly Englishwoman who was clairvoyant. She astonished me by saying that she saw a beautiful Indian spirit behind me and said that his aura was pink and blue, the colours—so I understood—of very advanced men. She also told me that his name was Ramakrishna. This was very odd as she knew nothing at all about India and its saints, and Ramakrishna was said to

have been a God-Realised man. This would have puzzled me, only I remembered later the connection with Ramakrishna through my father's father-in-law, Professor Maxmuller.

However there is a mistake somewhere, for I have since asked Baba about the aura, and he has explained that a God-Realised man has *no* aura, only a halo; therefore it was not possible that the old lady saw Ramakrishna, since he was God-Realised. Meanwhile Baba has kindly given me a long explanation of the difference between auras and haloes, which I have been privileged to make use of in Appendix 8.*

It was not till the spring of 1941 that I managed to get the last boat from Cape Town carrying civilians to India. Steaming along the Ganges in the hottest season of the year was far from pleasant, but it was in Calcutta that I got my first impression of India. I can never forget the horror on stepping out of the hotel in the evening to find that I had to dodge the sleeping forms that encumbered the pavements. Have things improved since? The average Westerner, the moment he lands on Indian shores, is appalled by the sight of so much suffering and privation. Most animals and human beings live in a permanent state of semi-starvation. The innumerable stray emaciated dogs and poor little skeleton-like puppies looking for homes are a pathetic sight; but worse still, so many beggars, blind and hideously deformed—also lepers. But the average Indian,

* Aura and Haloes – See Appendix 8.

born and bred amidst the sores of his country, seems to foreigners quite hardened and indifferent. Can he really help it? The difficult economic situation and problems of overpopulation are so overwhelming. Many a time when I have indignantly questioned about something or other, my friends have said apologetically that they are used to it, that they do not notice it; or else, that however much they felt about it, the problem was so vast. What could one do about it?

Nevertheless, the Hindus in general, those who adhere to their religion, will never kill anything, the animals know this, for they are extraordinarily tame, also the birds and even the reptiles. When I was living at Satara, a large toad would come into the house and hop up the stairs to my bedroom. Even though I would catch him and put him back in the garden, he would come again.

To see cruelty in its most hideous forms, one must go to the Moslem countries, the Arab States, where conditions are far worse, not only for animals, but for men. Justice is so primitive and violent that a thief may be punished by having his hand cut off.

Something must happen to awaken the consciousness of the people of the East, that their hearts may be changed and touched by the sight of so much suffering around them. The present conditions are a disgrace and Indians and Asians should endeavour to change them. Here should be mentioned a letter of protest from a South African Indian (*Times of India*,

9th May, 1957). He writes:—"The sight of the thousands of persons living on the pavements and alleyways ekeing out a bare existence left me wretched, but it reached its climax when I saw an elderly starving man lying on the pavement near St. George's Hospital. He was almost dying and not a single soul took notice of him."

But why should I criticize the East when we know what can happen in the West? Under the Hitler regime in Germany, six million innocent men, women and children were done to death by suffocation in gas chambers.

Since I wrote the above, Baba has kindly given me some explanation and I have been allowed to incorporate this in an appendix 9.* What is needed is a new form of education that aims at developing the qualities of the heart, instead of only the head, not only in India but everywhere. Here I must mention the work done along such lines by the Mira Movement. The Mira schools were founded by that great humanitarian scholar, Shri T. L. Vaswani. He states:—"Sympathy is the key to education; intellect has been developed—but aggressively—and so has strengthened the modern cult of separation. A new education of the heart is India's piteous need."

And yet, I must admit that in all my varied travels in the past I have never met in the West such whole-hearted search for God. To explain what I mean, there is an illustration of this point by quoting from an article written by Shri

* Explanation by Meher Baba. See Appendix 9.

Vaswani's nephew, Jashan Vaswani.* Jashan writes that as a college student he had an exceptionally good opinion of himself, for that is what modern education so often does to one. In those young days he recognised none as wiser than himself, till he met a man who changed his life. To follow Jashan's own words: "He looked like a simple villager. His clothes were of coarse handspun *khadar*. His hair was dishevelled, grey. But there was something in his large luminous eyes and in the smile which played upon his lips that drew me irresistibly to him. And, stopping in my tracks, I gazed and gazed and continued to gaze at his illumined face. An influence flowed out of him; it enveloped me, and I felt like one spellbound.

Then it was that, for the first time, I knew what it was to feel humble in presence of another. Unconsciously—almost mechanically—I bowed down to touch his feet.

"Never do that, my child!" he said. And, lifting me up, he enfolded me in a warm embrace. His voice was musical as the song of a flute; his embrace claimed me as his own. It was an embrace whose bond will never be broken in this life or the next.

After that, I met him, again and again. If on a particular day, I could not see him, I no longer gave much time to my studies. The thought of him claimed all the attention of my

* *Mira* (East and West) June 1959. Journal of St. Mira's High School, Poona. Published by Gita Publishing House, Poona, India.

waking hours. And, not unoften, he visited me, at night, in my dreaming.

"Who are you?" I asked him, one day. And he answered: "I am a wayfarer, a pilgrim to the Beloved's shrine. I am a seeker on the Road to Love!"

"Whom do you seek?"

"I seek Him who rejoices in playing the game of hide and seek with those who love Him. He is the Ever-revealed and the Ever-hidden One!"

One day, as we were walking through the marketplace of the town, he said to me, "Look! men are buying and selling things which are no better than trash! And they look so wise! Alas! They are forgetful of the richest treasures of life, the diamonds of the Life Divine."

On another occasion he said to me: "He amongst men is a fool who does not realise the value of human birth. We have been born as men not without a purpose."

"What is that purpose?" I asked.

"To seek God" he answered. "To seek Him by day and by night, to seek Him without ceasing! In your silence and songs, in your work and worship, seek Him, without whom life is a meaningless muddle. If you go to the marketplace, seek Him. If you enter a tea-shop, seek Him. If death comes to claim your body, do not give up your seeking, but say to him; 'Brother Death, Do your work; I shall do mine.' If you stay in a slum, let not the discomfort stand in the way of your seeking. If you have to dwell in a palace, let not its luxuries lure you away

from seeking. Though you are offered the kingship of all the world, refuse to have it, if it will not lead you on in your seeking!"

"How may I seek Him?" I asked.

"He may not be sought by the senses," he answered. "He may not be reached by the mind—as smell may not be reached by hearing nor colour by touch! Beyond the senses and beyond the intellect you must go. The senses must be withdrawn: the mind must be silenced. The clamour of desires and appetites must depart. Then may you make progress on the Way of seeking!"

One day, I brought him a copy of my Bhagavat Gita and requested him to write a few simple words which may be to me a guide to living. And this is what he wrote:

"Arise! Awake!
And walk the Homeward Way."

To return to my journey towards Meher Baba, I had to proceed to Dehra Dun, a pleasant semi-hill station at the foot of the Himalayas where Baba happened to be at the time of my arrival, for in those days he was constantly moving round India. The train meandered through the scorched and dreary plain, stopping at nearside villages, where the peasants clustered round to stare at this curious lone white woman.

At any rate I was decently clad. If only American and English women could realise how much they have done to ruin the prestige of the Western world by their lack of modesty and decency. How badly they compare with the dignity, poise, and shy beauty of the Eastern

girls. Why must stout elderly women with awful figures deck themselves out in the shortest of shorts? If they could only realise how utterly ridiculous they look. It is the looseness of our morals and the vulgarity of our mode of life that has contributed so much to the general disintegration of Western social life. I was astonished to see white women and girls in Indian hotels and on the golf course disporting themselves, a manner particularly repugnant to Easterners, especially in Moslem countries.

After what seemed an interminable journey in the oven-like compartment, for it was in the hottest season, we at last arrived at Dehra Dun. As I looked out on to the platform I saw two Western women. They were American disciples who had come to meet me. Strange to say, for no accountable reason my heart sank! But they were most charming and took me to a hotel where to my surprise they informed me that Baba could not see me for the present but wanted to know if I would go to America! "But," I exclaimed, "Baba has not even seen me, he does not know me!" "Baba does not have to see you to know you!" came the reply. I felt very reluctant at the idea of going to America, fearing to be stranded and without funds owing to currency restrictions; it would be a risky undertaking in any case. However, in the end after sometime in Dehra Dun, I was persuaded. After all a free trip to America and back again would be a most unexpected treat and not likely to be offered again, also I had in the meantime heard from Mrs. Roosevelt that she might be

able to do something for the children since I had been unable to get them to South Africa, so there was a good personal reason for me to go to America apart from Baba's wishes in the matter.

While waiting at the hotel in Dehra Dun, I had a curious dream; I found myself sitting on the Master's knees. He took my head and bent it slowly back till it touched the ground. Then he remarked "That is enough for now!" Later I asked one of Baba's disciples for an explanation. "Baba is changing your consciousness!" Even before meeting the Master he may be at work on one's consciousness!

After getting my papers in order for America, I proceeded to Ajmeer, to which place Meher Baba had in the meantime moved. Here I was driven out to a large unfurnished house in the environs of the town. The house faced a muddy looking lake where some cows were standing and a few women doing the washing. On being shown into a small room, bare of all furniture except for two chairs, I saw Baba, who was seated on one. He was in the traditional white sadra and his hair fell neatly on his shoulders. I had the curious sense of having arrived at the end of my destination, my quest for Truth, and felt that I was in the presence of a great spiritual being; it was an indefinable sensation. Before entering the room I had been warned on no account to touch the Master when greeting him. I learned later that this was not the general rule, but there were periods, lasting from a few hours to many months, when Baba does not allow visitors to touch him or

even to bow down according to the traditional Indian custom of greeting spiritual personages. Baba does not himself explain the reason for this, perhaps because we would not understand the spiritual import that signifies a Perfect Master's least outward action. But I feel we can be afforded a clue by referring to the "shock" experience of one of Baba's *mandali* recorded in *The Wayfarers** which I will now quote: "Baba has never, as far as I know, explained why, when he sits with a *mast*†, he insists upon the rigid exclusion of anyone else. It is, however, possible, from an experience related by Eruch (a close disciple) during the period of Chatti Baba's stay at Bangalore, that there is a tangible, physical danger in interrupting him at such a time.

The two were closeted in silence in Baba's room for about two hours, and at the end of that period, Eruch hearing Baba's movements to open the door, got up and released the clasp from the outside. Chatti Baba then emerged and brushed past him on the way to his own room. As he went past, Eruch tells how he felt a palpable and excruciating shock pass through his body, similar, he says, to an electric shock. There are many traditions in India about the danger of interrupting saints in a transcendental state of consciousness, and perhaps this experience was a sip of the dregs of

* *The Wayfarers* by William Donkin. Published by Adi K. Irani, 1948.

† *Mast* See Appendix 10.

the power that had been at its highest potential while the two were in conference.

Chatti Baba was a very famous Sixth Plane *mast* and had a considerable following of his own since many recognised his high spiritual status.

At the time of my visit (1941), Baba was in very close seclusion and was no doubt working hard in the inner spheres of consciousness in connection with the war. For, so I have been given to understand, the Avatar of the age is always the Axis of the Hierarchy and therefore has the spiritual direction of world affairs and events to come. The short interview with Baba only lasted about five minutes! I felt no emotional instability but I knew I was in the presence of no ordinary man. He is small and slight,—one wonders how his body can contain such a Force. His hands are strong and supple with the long delicate fingers denoting sensibility and spirituality, more commonly seen in the East than in the West. At that time his hair fell neatly on his shoulders, but now-a-days he generally wears it in a plait hidden behind his collar. I was surprised at the freshness of his complexion, but then many Zoroastrians are fair skinned.* His dark luminous eyes distinguish him from ordinary men. His nose is the outstanding feature of a remarkable and strong face (a face that can never be forgotten); it is long and aquiline, curving over his moustache and

* The Persians are said to have originally come from Scandinavia. This would account for the fact that the Parsis are a light-skinned race in India.

giving him a decidedly Jewish profile, such as Jesus might have had. The features and appearance indicated a man of tremendous authority, such as one might expect of some very famous general. Also, there was that flawless dignity and serenity that is a characteristic of all the saints and marks them from other men.

I am told that Baba in his youth had a quite unusual beauty of face and form; that in fact he resembled Jesus. It appears that Baba's hair was the same deep auburn colour. I have photographs of Baba when a young man with a beard and on showing them to strangers have heard the remark, "He looks just like Jesus!" If we read a description of Jesus given by Publius Lentullus, President of Judea, when writing an epistle to the Roman Senate, we see that his hair was the colour of "the chestnut, full ripe, plain to his ears, whence downwards it is more oriented to and curling and wavering about his shoulders." This might have described Baba as a young man when he wore his hair in the same fashion as Jesus.

Baba tapped out on his letter-board that he was happy to see me and that his spiritual connection with me was not of this life, and that I should soon be aware of this connection and not only would I know, but that I would be convinced. Nor was it necessary for me to tell him anything, because he knew me.

He then proceeded to give me instructions to the effect that I should accept N's advice on spiritual matters. This woman, a close disciple, was a naturalised American and one of the

three women obliged to return to the States because of the war. While I found her a most entertaining companion, I had already discovered that I could not agree with much regarding some of her views, so that it came as quite a shock to have Baba tell me to accept her as a kind of spiritual mentor. I protested quite vigorously, but Baba went on to explain that it was only in spiritual matters, in other matters, I could follow my own judgement! Anyway the prospect was not too pleasing and I also did not like Baba's extremely mischievous smile which closed our interview. Oh dear! I thought, whatever is going to happen to me in America. Again my heart sank, even more so as when my train drew into Dehra-Dun station. I had in fact a most uncomfortable premonition that things might not turn out too well in America. I left Baba's presence feeling rather confused and certainly frustrated. To have come all this way just for this! It had been somehow quite a different interview from what I had expected. I had also hoped to ask some important questions which were worrying me, but the Master had anticipated them and forbidden all questions to be asked before the meeting took place.

Ignorant and uninitiated Westerners like my unworthy self are often under the impression that should we have the opportunity to see a Master, we should attempt to profit accordingly, by asking questions. The stupendous conceit of the finite mind which is utterly unable to comprehend the all-embracing Infinite Mind!

Why cannot we be content, like Easterners with their age-old affinity and understanding of the eternal verities, to sit in silent contemplation and adoration when in the presence of Divinity?

Kabir warns us:

"Ask not and ye shall be given milk,
Ask and ye shall have but water,
Extract and ye shall but draw blood!"

My stay in India was short on that occasion; nevertheless I was to learn certain truths. That Dunne was right when he pointed out in his famous work, *An Experiment in Time*,* that only the mind separates the past from the future and the world of Time and Space is but a series of vanishing impressions. The Real is that Eternal World of unchanging Reality. The Real is not that which vanishes, but that which remains.

Once or twice, perhaps thrice, in my early life, I had been aware of a curious impalpable sensation—a kind of awareness of my soul. A sense that deep within, I had knowledge—quite different from the surface mind I knew. This would come when I was standing on a great height, such as a mountain top, an indefinable feeling, this something that could not be formulated, since it was outside the mind and so impossible of expression. But it told me that *this* was not Reality, for I would have a curious sense of the unreality of my world, in fact of the universe. It seemed as if the endless patience of

* Published by Faber and Faber, London. 1939.

the Infinite Mind had whispered to the finite mind: "You will not have to wait long, some day you will know." And all this took place long before I had ever heard of *Maya* or the Cosmic Illusion, or of Meher Baba!

There are many remarkable stories associated with Baba and all those close to him have stories to tell. I will relate just two of these. As I was now leaving for America and all my expenses were being arranged for, and since the visit to the States was to last four months, it seemed suitable—in fact I felt it incumbent—to make some small contribution for the purpose of the upkeep of Baba's charities, asylums, dispensaries, gifts to the poor etc., also for his travelling expenses, since Baba has no money and never handles it except on certain occasions as when giving to the poor. It so happened that I had an English cheque and also some odd cash of exactly eighty-three rupees. I therefore asked N. to give this to the Master. She took the rupees and the cheque to Baba, who gave instructions that the rupees were to be given back to me as I might need some pocket money while waiting for the ship at Bombay. Here N., as I was later told, interrupted Baba, remarking that I was very extravagant—for had I not paid for an air-conditioned room at Calcutta? Baba cut her short saying "She will have fifty rupees left!"

Owing to war-time restrictions, the American liner was much delayed and we were two weeks waiting at Bombay. Since all my expenses were paid from the day I left Baba's

presence, there was no need to spend any money except on the beggars that thronged the streets and I had been told not to waste my rupees.

The day before we were due to leave Bombay, N. came and asked me whether I had any rupees left; if so, she would put them in the bank, since henceforth, we would only need dollars. I emptied my purse, and, on counting the change observed, "I have just fifty rupees left." Here N. gave a start of surprise: "Why, that is exactly what Baba said you would have left." Needless to say, I knew nothing of this and was just as astonished as she. So the Master in his terrifying omniscience knew in advance down to the smallest detail even about a little personal matter of insignificant consequence!

Just as we were leaving Bombay for New York, I wrote a letter to Baba. It was hardly the letter of a novice to a Master but more like that of a daughter to a father. I remember that letter was somewhat querulous, for Baba had stirred me up most uncomfortably and I was now looking forward to the American trip with very mixed feelings.

N. was somewhat emotional, with all the ebullience of her Latin origin. She was disappointed with my lack of enthusiasm, nonchalant manner, and in short, that irritating British phlegm. As she looked upon herself as my spiritual mentor and seemed to think that the interview with Baba, short as it was, should have produced some transformation for the better, she was disappointed with me, for according to her, everybody meeting Meher Baba for the first time, should have some

form of illumination. Why had I not had any illumination? What had I felt? To which I would reply glumly, "Nothing at all!" She worried me quite a little, so when I wrote to Baba I took my revenge, making the request, "Please give me a speck of illumination to keep N. quiet!"

A few days later I was standing on the deck thinking of nothing in particular and looking across the Indian Ocean, when suddenly without warning, my eyes were filled with an inner radiance! It can only be described as the colour of Mother-of-pearl. It was all over in a flash, but I knew I had had my "speck of illumination!" As Mother-of-pearl contains all the colours of the spectrum, it was of a special significance to me.

The reader might well ask why was I sent to America? I can only reply that I really have no idea why I was sent and given a free trip to the States; maybe Baba decided that he wanted me to learn something of life the hard way, or perhaps he knew that I was not likely to appreciate being cooped up in the women's Ashram; since the men and women were always kept strictly separate and on the whole, I preferred the society of men.

Baba never discloses his purposes and never gives any explanations. Yet, before I left India I was told that he—when mentioning me to the women—remarked amongst other things: "She will do beautiful work for me in America!" To this day I have not the slightest idea what it could have been. But I am told that Baba sometimes makes use of us in some strange occult manner, while we remain quite unaware of what he may be doing.

Chapter VIII

AMERICA

As the ship drew into New York harbour, I stared with goggle-eyed wonder at the towering skyscrapers that soared across the afternoon sky. The New World! Was it not said that America was "God's Last Hope?" The only land which had a really classless society in which opportunities were equal and even the newspaper boy could dream of becoming a President of the United States! There stood the Statue of Liberty. When the French presented that great figure it is said that Madame Blavatsky, who happened to be in New York at that time, asked where they would put it. Told that it would be placed on a rock in the harbour, she murmured, "What a pity; it will go under the sea!" It is difficult to say now what she meant or what she foresaw. Did she see the coming upheaval?

Within a few days of landing, I found there was no hope to get the children to America, for the Yankee Clipper was booked up eighteen months in advance. So there was nothing that Mrs. Roosevelt could do. Meanwhile I discovered that we would not be able to return to India as all the shipping had become completely

disorganised, for ships were being sunk daily outside New York harbour, though America was not yet in the war. All sailings were now cancelled and the arrangement was that I should stay four months in the States and then return to India! What was I going to do? I was very worried, for it already looked as if I was going to be left stranded. The British Consulate had already informed me I would have to go to Ellis Island. This was a prospect I did not relish, for I had heard unpleasant stories about that place. England was now at bay and almost alone. It seemed almost impossible that she could survive. I felt that I should return, but my home had been bombed and London was in flames. There was also no way to get back at that time. The British Consulate said I might have to wait a year or more and nobody knew what was going to happen.

I was sharing a house with two of the Americans; the third had her own home in New York. We had been in New York a week; frankly I felt disappointed with the City, though the nights were wonderful with the illuminated skyscrapers and multi-coloured lights in the streets.

One afternoon feeling tired I was resting on my bed. A photograph of Gerald reposed on the chest opposite. I was feeling frightfully depressed and anxious. How was he standing up to the war—for in Kent, where he was, there were almost daily air raids. As he had shell shock in the First War, I felt that the strain of it all would be terrible. In fact I wondered if I should

ever see him again; his chances of survival seemed remote.

Then I suddenly perceived that a golden haze encircled the photo to a depth of some two feet. I looked again—this was strange! Glancing at the window I saw there was no sunlight; the sky was overcast. I wondered if my liver was out of order; certainly my digestion had not been too good in New York. Later, getting up and going out, I thought no more about it. When I returned home tired after losing myself, N. rushed up exclaiming excitedly, "What do you think, Irene, happened today? Baba came through the house!" Knowing her tendency to romance I replied cautiously, "Indeed. How do you know?" She replied that after lunch when resting in her room she had "seen" Baba! I then remembered about my curious little "vision." On my relating this, she explained that obviously Baba had passed into my room, read my thoughts, and put the golden aura round the photograph to show that Gerald was protected and would come through the war safely. And so he did! Later, when relating this story to a German-American friend, she told me how in the First World War one of her friends, a certain Baron X, always knew who amongst his comrades in the German Air Force would return safely to headquarters after a combat fight. Those who would not had a grey aura round their heads, and those who were to come back safely had a golden one, yellow being the colour of protection. I have heard other stories to the same effect.

N. regarded me as a child in spiritual matters, for at that time I understood nothing of Hindu metaphysics and having been brought up on the normal Christian principles regarding the Good, the Beautiful and the True, I was quite unable to make sense of what she called "the long spiritual view-point." I was shocked; she upset all my previous values. I certainly needed shaking up but it was too strong meat for me. I jumped to the conclusion from what she tried to explain, that Baba must be some sort of an Anti-Christ! Had I made a wild goose chase all over the world for nothing? I wandered miserably around New York with a pain in my heart. Fortunately, I became friendly with a charming and intelligent girl who had heard of me from Professor Rhine during the time of my experiments with Professor MacDougall; and through her own work with Rhine she had done some very interesting work in the visualisation of symbols. She, too, was interested in Meher Baba, but she had already come to the same conclusion as myself and was just as worried as I was. However, she was calm about it all and went into a long meditation on the Master to try to ascertain his spiritual status. She came to me afterwards, and it seemed that she had been well rewarded—for Baba appeared to her in a vision with three haloes round his head, such as are seen in certain pictures of the Buddha. Never again would she judge the Master by any of devotees, for—as we know—Baba uses all sorts of instruments for his work and all sorts of ways we cannot fathom.

To get back to my problems, I wanted to return to South Africa, but owing to war conditions my papers were not in order, so it seemed wiser to make for Australia and in the meantime, I could not get away. I had the idea of going to a friend in California on whom I could depend, and from there I hoped to get to Australia, for in that country I could get all my funds—not allowed in America because of currency restrictions.

First of all, I decided to take advantage of an invitation to the dear little town of Glens Falls, and see something of the lovely state of New York. My hosts, the Shaws, were devotees of Baba, but people with very small means; yet they were incredibly generous, offering to keep me for the "duration."

This I could not accept, for how long would the duration of the war last? Nobody knew. But I can never forget the comfort of those parting words, "If you don't get along in California, come straight back to Mom."

My friend in California had been my governess at Oxford, and her daughter was now a film star in Hollywood, so I thought I should have no difficulty in finding them. On the way I stopped in Washington, D.C., for when in New York, I had already received a kind letter from Mrs. Roosevelt in which she had said she would not be able to come and see me after all, as she had changed her plans for the time being. I should mention I had a letter of introduction to the White House, given me by my old friend, Mrs. Dora Forbes, the President's aunt. The latter

knew that I always wanted to go to America and, being an old lady, she thought perhaps that when the time for my visit came, she might be dead. This was the case, as she died in New York some months before I arrived in the States. However, I was hoping to see her sister, old Mrs. James Roosevelt, and to tell her my troubles, for she had written that she would be in New York in the Fall. Then one evening coming out in the streets of New York, I saw placards everywhere announcing: the death of the President's mother! This cut off my one source of help, so I thought the only thing to do was to see the First Lady in Washington, D.C. I walked up and down outside the White House, trying to summon up courage to speak to the big man who guarded the gates. Should I tell him, and would he help me to see Mrs. Roosevelt? He had smiled benignly and I felt he would be sympathetic, but somehow my courage failed me and I let the opportunity slip.

I was now *en route* for Hollywood, the one solution to a perfectly intractable situation. In fact I began to think of suicide as the only alternative unless I could find my friend, for it was obvious I could not continue much longer as I was, with no friends and no money. As the big greyhound bus sped quietly and smoothly along endless wide-stretching roads criss crossing this immense and magnificent continent, in which each State had its own characteristics, my thoughts harmonised in their dreariness with the depressing unsightliness of the flat Middle West, where soil erosion had created

great dust bowls, a mute testimony to the rapacity of man. Apparently, in the whole of America there were only a few big cities with character and personality of their own—New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and New Orleans—the latter because of its French heritage), and we must not forget Boston. Others, excepting for a few isolated portions with magnificent public buildings and colleges, seemed to have grown up without design or imaginative planning of any kind. We saw unsightly processions of miscellaneous structures, unused, untidy plots of waste land alongside presentable and unpresentable houses, petrol pump stations and shops. Few parks or gardens or squares for the children to play in or the aged or infirm to sit.

But Virginia was a fascinating State suggesting aristocratic lineage in its architecture. In the "Great American Desert" of Arizona, (a sea in a former age), we caught glimpses of mysterious canyons and windswept mesas. Prickly cacti with distorted shapes fringed the routes. One sensed the immensity of America, its huge distances! I felt engulfed by it all, a homeless stranger traversing an entire continent in search of a friend whose address I did not know. I had not heard of her for ages. She might be dead? Never can I forget the utter misery of it all! I might have been in the Sahara looking for water as looking for a friend in California. I wondered if the Conquistadors had felt this isolation—they, who had no roads or modern means of transport. Some of the Franciscan friars built their monasteries along

the shores of the blue Pacific, the only artistic signs of Spanish culture left from former times, when life was leisurely and unhurried. We stopped at night at Memphis—how hideous and utterly unlike its namesake!

On the last lap of the journey we reached El Paso. The money was getting less and less; I remembered the warning of a dear old man who was temporarily on the bus. He had been born in England so I told him my story. He gave me some food and told me on no account to mention to anybody that I had no money! My meals for weeks had been as scanty as I had dared to make them. The great need of the hour was how to make my money last till I reached my destination. But what would I do when I got there? It was imperative to have enough to stay in some lodging 'till I could find my old governess and friend Molly.

I was appalled with my first impressions of Los Angeles, the vulgarity of life, the great sprawling masses of endless mean habitations sprung up like mushrooms with no green setting, parks or planned construction of any kind—all grown up in too great a hurry. While I did not expect to see Tudor Castles, Gothic Cathedrals or Palladian Bridges, or anything for that matter which pertained to Old World charm, nevertheless I did not expect to find such utter materialistic hideousness in the wealthiest and now the most influential nation on earth today. Certainly it was the land of the Almighty Dollar!

The bus drew into Hollywood station in the morning, a lovely warm soft December morning. So here was I, lonely and friendless, in the wickedest place in the world! The first thing I did was to go to the telephone booth in the station in order to look up Molly's address. It was not there! I froze. Could it be possible that after all she was dead? In my innocence it had not occurred to me that the film world kept its addresses unpublished, and that, in fact, it would be about as difficult for a stranger to find a movie star as to find a needle in a haystack! I now had just forty dollars left; the problem was to find somewhere to lay my head. I walked over to the little rooming-house opposite and was able to rent a room for a week, money payable in advance. The manager, a young man, looked at me with gimlet-like eyes that seemed to go right through me. Maybe odd characters would book rooms at this place. Wondering uneasily if he saw the secret of my poverty and abandonment, I looked searchingly into the mirror of my room to find a wan haggard face, hardly recognisable. I was wearing a black coat and skirt, usually becoming to a fair skin, but in Hollywood where men and women wore every colour of the rainbow, the costume looked distinctly drab and dingy, heightening my generally forlorn appearance.

I had never been interested in the movies: so few films worth seeing; now I racked my brains to think of anybody I knew in that industry. I remembered that Lawrence Olivier was a distant cousin, but I had never thought

to meet him and now it was a bit late in the day to claim acquaintanceship, and poor relations were never popular. I did, however, write to a very famous star, whose brother, also a film star, was a good friend of mine and who was fighting somewhere in France. My letter remained unanswered; it did not occur to me at the time that the secretary had probably consigned it to the wastepaper basket, for no doubt she was inundated with begging letters.

There was now nothing to do but to walk from one studio to another to see if I could get information of Molly's daughter, only to learn at last that she was acting in New York! This was the last straw, for no one would give me her address. I had even walked into a beauty parlour where they had her private phone number, but were not allowed to give it to anyone. I was now down to twenty-five dollars, with a room paid up for one week. Time was getting very precious; what did one do if one hadn't any money? I thought of the British Consulate but, like the British Embassy, which I visited in Washington, D.C., they would be very short of money themselves and they must have plenty of other stranded English nationals on their hands. Also I did not want the whole miserable story to come out; that would never do! At all costs I must try to keep away. I was, above all, terrified of my plight getting into the papers. Meanwhile, in spite of my writing cheerful optimistic letters home, my relations were getting worried and suspected that the real facts of the situation were being concealed.

Also I found because of the war that there was no way to get to Australia as I had hoped.

Being near to collapse, utterly sick and weary with frustration, I went to the police station—surely they could find Molly for me? No! They knew nothing about the film people and were surprised that I should expect them to. They in no way resembled our dear fatherly English police. But one officer more sympathetic than the others, kindly suggested that I should go to a tourist agency, where trips can be taken to see the homes of the stars, and in this manner I might be able to obtain the information I was seeking. But I had no money to spare for trips. I walked along in despair and gazed into the windows of Hollywood's appetising little restaurants on the famous Boulevard. The odours of good cooking pervaded my nostrils, and made me hungrier than ever. To be starving and to have no money for food was indeed an adventure. Was that what Baba wanted? Had I not often wondered what it meant to be down and out—to belong to the dregs of society? Though my plight was nothing compared with that of people who had, as refugees in Europe, lost everything,—homes, farms, and possessions in flight before the advancing enemy; still I was sick with apprehension. I also had a curious pain in the solar plexus. Should I go to the Salvation Army? Were they not noted for their compassion? Unable to repress my hunger any longer, I entered a small unpretentious restaurant and ordered some spaghetti. A kind faded-looking

woman was sitting opposite at my table. In my despair I told her something of my troubles. She suggested that I should go to Aimee MacPherson, to the Temple. It appeared that no genuine case was ever refused help there. That was an idea; I would go next morning.

Out on the streets again, we were confronted with placards—the Pearl Harbour bombings! So America would have to come into the war after all! And, England would be saved! Provided she could carry on during the long years of preparation before America could put a force in the field. At that time the States scarcely possessed any Air Force to speak of. We never saw a plane in the sky. My hopes rose; perhaps now I might be able to obtain work of some kind. But what could I do? I had been brought up to be an ordinary social parasite. Then again, being slightly deaf and suffering always from eye-strain, it would be difficult to get suitable employment; also an alien in America on a visit was *not* allowed to work.

The next morning while wondering whether to try the Salvation Army or the Temple, to my astonishment and delight I noticed the sign of the Red Cross. The British Red Cross! Entering the building I asked to see the Director. Oh yes! She knew my brother, Sir John Conybeare,* in London. Can I never forget the relief and joy at being personally identified, to be no longer a vagrant, an unknown and perhaps unscrupulous adventuress! She also knew my

* Author of *Conybeare's Textbook of Medicine* and other works.

friend Molly, who was working in another department. Heavens! It was all too good to be true! Molly was only a little farther up the Boulevard. I would get there by taking the bus, she would be there, no need to phone. I took the bus, I could afford those few cents now. Going into the building I asked for Mrs. A. She came. "Molly!" "Irene!" We embraced and I sank into a chair in a flood of tears. My reserve had completely broken down. We had not seen each other for over ten years!

To find Molly was like finding water in a desert. In considerable perturbation she left her work and took me in her car back to her charming little house,—old china, antique silver, all the familiar touches of an artistic English home. Before a fire, cup of tea in hand, I poured out the whole bitter story. Her grey curls shook with dismay, and her dark eyes were black with anger. How could I ever have got mixed up with such people? Now the question was, what to do next? Molly had no spare room and, though the most generous of people, her resources were small. She also had her financial troubles owing to the war. Now nobody knew what was going to happen, with Japan in the War. Already people were leaving California and making for the East, for there was no reason whatever why the Japanese planes should not come over and bomb the country to pieces, since there was nothing to prevent them.

I decided that the only thing I could do was to go into domestic service; the Government could hardly object to my having a roof over

my head. "Oh, my dear!" exclaimed Molly, "you will never do it!" Domestic service in America was a great deal harder work than in England. However, I insisted that I must find some kind of a light domestic job. After a month's wonderful rest, in which Molly gave me hints for cooking and how to behave like a good maid, we answered an advertisement in the papers; a family in Altadena wanted a "Mother's help." We drove over for the interview and were both delighted; an agreeable little house nice and high near the mountains; the young couple had three children and the mother was very tired and in need of "help" for the time being. I agreed to be paid five dollars a week. I did not consider I was worth more than that for I was still very run down and hoped for an easy situation. Since from the time I landed at New York I had tried to economise on food and my constitution was weakened.

Alas, in a few days it looked as if I was not going to be a success. It was considered that I should be taking the children out for a walk in the afternoons, just when I wanted to lie on my bed, almost too exhausted to move. It seemed that I did not have "a way with children" ...I certainly did not like the children, they were so cheeky and difficult, anyway American children are a byword, and I could see why.*

* For that matter one might say that the children of all Western civilization suffer from want of poise and discipline. In India I marveled at the obedience of children.

Then again owing to America's intervention in the war, the husband's financial affairs did not appear to be in good order, money seemed very short, and I did not even get my wages, and the shortness showed itself too in the housekeeping; there was little to eat, and by the time the family had finished there seemed nothing left for me. I felt they did not consider I was worth my keep and were probably starting to look for someone else. The position grew increasingly uncomfortable and I was feeling utterly worn out. When I walked I felt as if I was wading through a heavy sea,—such was the effort to keep going. What ever would happen now if they got rid of me? I had nowhere to go and felt too ashamed to descend on poor Molly again, after she had kept and fed me for over a month to get me into better condition.

Then I remembered my father's old friend whom I had managed to meet just before leaving New York who had lent me twenty-five dollars, I did not by any means fully explain my predicament, other wise I am sure she would have lent me more, for I had given her the impression that I would be all right once I got to California. She had also given me a few introductions and there was one to two people who lived nearby at Pasadena, so I wrote stating the difficulties of my position. The two ladies called almost immediately. Meanwhile, my employer wanted me to leave for she had found a more suitable woman who 'understood children.' These good Samaritans came to the rescue, literally picking me up and transporting me

to a nice little hotel at Pasadena, because their spare room was occupied. I was given a nice room with bathroom and everything I could need, all paid up a week in advance, and dollar bills were pressed into my hands, which were to be spent on meals, and good meals at that, when I was not eating with them. I spent many happy hours at their beautiful place revelling in the views and scenery. In the evening there were myriad coloured lights spread over the plain, but they told me they were nothing compared with peace-time illuminations. Yet, it seemed a veritable fairyland of wonder and beauty at night.

Meanwhile, Mrs. N. who was a person of much energy and good heart, had telephoned round to her friends and in a short time had raised a handsome subscription for the "stranded Englishwoman." Pouring the collection into my lap, she explained that there was now enough for me to be able to get away from the States, since I always had a passage booked on a boat for Cape Town, sailing the following April. I have to confess that, though grateful beyond words, and much relieved at the time, I felt ashamed and humiliated. It was as if the cup of mortification had been drunk to the dregs. So this was the way, I thought bitterly, that Baba sheared the devotees of their pride and arrogance!

England was now receiving punishment for her Victorian prosperity; her pride and complacency were being crushed, and I—as an individual—was getting my share, light enough

when compared with what the folks at home were suffering, for had not London been bombed sixty-seven nights consecutively! The City of London, the clearing house of the world, was now a charred mass. But all that did not make my plight, as a recipient of charity, any better. I remembered Baba's mischievous smile at Ajmer and how uncomfortable he had made me feel. It seemed at the time that he was saying, "You will have a hard time of it, my girl, if you follow me."

Then the worst happened; the boat that I hoped would take me back to Cape Town was commandeered by the Government, so there was no longer any question of being able to get away. I just had to stay where I was.

Back again to poor Molly! There was a rest of about two months; then it was decided that I should go to work again, this time as a domestic servant since I had been found wanting as a mother's help. Without telling Molly, who was always against my trying domestic service, I searched the advertisements and found a situation that seemed promising and went and got myself engaged "on approval" for the time being. The little house was modern with every convenience. The husband had a little market and the wife worked in a big store in Los Angeles; there were two school children, so that I did have the place to myself for most of the day.

It was not a happy family, for the mother and son did not get along together; he suffered from "arrested development;" although eighteen

years old, he was in some way more like a child of fourteen. However, we got along well together, except when he came back from school with such information as "they say the British are cowards,"etc. Because of the continuous upheavals in the house I suggested that the boy should go to a psychiatrist. Unfortunately the psychiatrist had had a close association with Freud, and made the boy much worse by telling him his defects were the fault of his parents.

Sometimes when I was bending over the stove preparing the evening meal, I had to duck to avoid utensils flying over my head, so violently did the family quarrel at times. One night the police were called in to stop a dispute. This decided me to try and get away. Although I had been engaged at thirty dollars a month, I simply could not cope with the family washing for four, so they beat me down to twenty dollars a month, so that I was getting less than in my last place. During those uneasy months—I stayed six in all—I would talk to Baba, mentally. I asked him to find me a more suitable place and I visualised in my mind a cultured old American lady who had been in Europe and whose house would have Persian rugs and old Masters and all the signs of European culture. I wanted also a nice garden and a good view. It was about this time that I received two hundred dollars, indirectly from Baba, and was able to leave and go back to Molly; for now I could have a few weeks rest and search for a more suitable situation.

Molly studied the advertisements; there was one from a lady who needed a "housekeeper." We drove round to the address. Curiously enough this lovely place was only fifteen minutes walk from my last place! A charming house on a ridge, with a beautiful view of the range of mountains and the Mount Wilson Observatory. The garden was laid out in formal Italian style. A lovely and elegant old lady opened the door. The house had Persian rugs, lovely antique furniture, which would be a pleasure to dust; and Della Robbias and Old Masters were on the walls. I could not have seen myself in a more perfect setting. The telephone was going incessantly and my prospective employer had already received seventy-five applications for the post. What chance had I? Molly and I sat down and I was interviewed. She told me she lived alone and could I look after the house and could I cook? I replied honestly, " No, but I can try."

The end of the story is that she engaged me, obviously because she was sorry for me and liked the British. Her last maid had been with her twelve years and had left to make more money in a war factory. I cannot describe my happiness and how kind she was, and what a relief it was to find myself with a cultured person, for so many American houses look more like club rooms, devoid of charm or personality. The mere idea of living in any of them had depressed me. I feel sure on this occasion that Baba had heard my call.

I stayed with her for a long time and then went up to San Francisco, as I wished to see

something of America before I left and she had the gardener's wife to look after her, and really did not need me. She packed a luncheon basket for me, and when I opened it in the train, there was a note "If they don't treat you right, come back to Mom." I was allowed to keep her home as my headquarters, but naturally not wishing to sponge too much on her generosity, I would take jobs from time to time, for none knew when the war would end; it was imperative to make a little money to send food to England.

We will now draw a veil over my experiences as a domestic servant, euphemistically called housekeeper. Some were happy, others were not. Fortunately, I did have a flair for cooking and this really saved the situation as I did not make a very good maid. How much I learned in those days; how much more capable and adaptable I had become. But due to the spinal trouble and my weak back from time to time, I would collapse. However, some helping hand always came to the rescue and in my most desperate moments the clouds would turn to sunshine.

From the experiences of others closely associated with Meher Baba, it appears that no matter how much a close follower is made to suffer from uncertainty, suspense and lack of security, "the water" as the Indian saying goes, "may reach the level of the chin but would never rise above the nose."

I had never known what it meant to have no bank balance; and for the first time I was learning how "the other half lived." I had

often wondered how monthly and weekly wage earners felt; the sense of precariousness that must haunt all those with responsibilities. To be a servant was to be a machine, a "help" must never be ill, always cheerful and happy under no matter what circumstances; a Jack-of-all-trades. I now fully understood why it was always so difficult to get servants in England, for the girls no longer went into domestic service, for one never finished; and working in a factory, one had fixed hours and liberty after the work was done. My attitude towards life was now different; I understood better the problem of labour and management; that workers should not be treated like cogs in a machine. The whole trouble with industrial relations all over the world is the lack of a sympathetic outlook, where the extension of group control holds sway. Again, we need spiritual values as in everything else.

I also learned a few things about Hollywood, the happy hunting ground of playboys and exhibitionists, empty-headed women who seemed to have nothing to think about except their looks, and their promiscuous sex relations. The fact that such women can command high prices for their memoirs only shows the deplorable low standards of journalism and the appalling taste of the general public. In India I was much struck by the high quality and standards of Indian journalism as compared with the cheap, sensational press of the Western World.

While there are always great souls to be found in the film industry, the majority appear

to think of nothing but careers and box office receipts. The marvellous possibilities for educational and cultural influences appear to have been sacrificed for a base commercialisation in which all true values and ideals have become completely destroyed. I was indeed pleased to find later that in India, a good British film could command a packed house, whereas the average cheap American production was practically ignored, which suggests that the average Indian mind is more adult than that of the Westerner.

Looking back on the four years that I was stranded in America without funds, I can realise what a most valuable education I underwent, for I found a new set of values and a fresh sympathy and understanding.

I do not think I can close this personal narrative without mentioning Mrs. Roosevelt's great kindness of heart. It was not till 1942, when happily settled at Los Angeles, that I wrote to her, explaining my circumstances and that I was well and happy, but I did hope that I might meet some university people before leaving the States, for at that time I had no social intercourse except with the milkman and the baker! Unknown to me, Mrs. Roosevelt was at that time on a visit to Los Angeles, but her secretary, who must have received at least two thousand letters a day at the White House, contrived to pick mine out and send it direct to her. However, she was just leaving when she received it, so wrote to say that she would put me in touch with someone and a few days later I received a most courteous letter from the

President of one of the colleges asking if he might call on me. Being a bit shy in my apron and cap and at the thought of perhaps having to entertain him in the kitchen, I arranged to go to him instead. We found we had mutual friends and as I was telling him my experiences, I noted that he was writing down every thing I said. On asking why, he explained that "Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to know all about it!"

Several people were most kind and especially Mr. Aldous Huxley, who on hearing I was stranded, immediately sent me a very big cheque, which fortunately I was able to repay fairly soon after, as my funds unexpectedly turned up at last, the Bank of England suddenly deciding to release some money for me.

At various stages while stranded in the States, I had proof of Baba's loving care. When in Washington and not able to see Mrs. Roosevelt I had sent a despairing telegram to India, and two days later, when sitting disconsolately on the divan bed of my room with my back to the window, suddenly I felt what seemed to be warm pulsating rays of sunshine striking my back. Turning round, I saw the sky was overcast. Then I realised that Baba must have got the cable. It was sometime later that he arranged for me to have some money and, as I have related, it came at a critical time enabling me to leave that most unsuitable situation and take a rest. On several occasions I had been told by people with clairvoyant faculties that they saw a great Indian Master standing behind

me. Also, from time to time, I would unexpectedly sense his influence in a feeling of all encompassing love, as if he were near me. It is impossible to describe the ebb and flow of that love, but all those close to Baba feel and know it at times.

On looking back I can see that I was being watched over and protected. The remarkable thing is that in 1945, just after receiving funds from England, my health broke down completely and serious spinal trouble developed. In fact it looked as if I might never walk again, for the middle vertebrae had become so porous that there was danger of the spine breaking in two. There was consultation about removing bone from one of my shins to bolster up the vertebrae. I decided to write to Baba explaining the situation but had no reply, but some time later I had an extremely vivid dream in which I saw Baba standing before me, he was all in white; I fell on my knees and hid my head in his robes. "You will recover!" he said. I was so cheered by this dream that later I asked my surgeon if he believed in miracles. He replied that in the course of his profession he had not come across any, to which I answered, "Well, believe me or not, I shall soon be walking as well as ever!"

Fortunately, my husband was able to come out for six months, but could not stay longer owing to currency restrictions, so was obliged to leave me in a sanatorium, where I made a complete recovery. The next time the X-rays were taken, some months later, all trace of the

disease in the pelvis, spine and elsewhere had disappeared, and I was able to walk as well as before.

Before concluding this chapter let me mention one remarkable incident. It was in October 1941, in New York, that I woke up one morning with a voice speaking in my ear. It said: "Remember, when you wake up, that Baba will speak on November 11th!" ... I was, however, not told what year! I can give no explanation for this, except that I heard later on that the number eleven plays an important part in numerology and is said by some to be a Master number. Somehow I think it was the same voice that had startled me in 1934, when it said "This is not Reality!"

It is worth remembering that interesting fact, namely that the First World War ended in England on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year!

Chapter IX

HOMEWARDS

It was now 1947 and I was strong enough to leave America and return home; however my husband suggested that we should meet in Australia as he wanted change from the long war years in England. As the plane soared into the evening sky, winging its way to the other side of the world, I watched the twinkling lights of Los Angeles. As they faded out, I felt an overwhelming sense of loneliness. I was leaving so many good friends and I had grown to love America. Was she not the hope of the New Age to come? For she was not hindered by the hampering traditions of the Old World; also presumably because of her mixed parentage she has such dynamic and tremendous vitality. How Americans work! How they get things done! It is work, not the resources, that has made America such a great nation in so short a time; the people are not tired as in so many other countries ravaged by constant wars. What I appreciated was the dignity of labour and the absence of class snobbishness. I was in the States for nearly seven years and I do not remember having seen any beggars.

The American social system has proved the hollowness of the Marxian theory, that high

industrialisation is always a case of the rich grinding the faces of the poor. America has achieved the remarkable feat of amalgamating different European races into a unity of language, country and economy, without internal barriers, except in the Southern States, which for economic reasons, still try to keep the American Negro in subjection, but that also is changing.

One thing that saddened me was that I quite often had to fight Britain's battles. It seemed petty in view of the fact that she was at the time fighting as usual with her back to the wall. In the First World War, America did not come in 'till 1917, the very end. In the Second World War, she was also very tardy. Would she have come in now at all had it not been for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour? I was frankly astonished at the part that historic memory still plays in the States; that is to say the errors of George III. It is the American history textbook that causes the mischief; the British look upon their own history as a valuable contribution towards the liberty of the individual and this makes it a little difficult to understand the American mentality. But just because we speak a common language, it does not mean we have common interests; on the contrary, they often conflict. The rapid decline of Western civilisation in America causes gloomy forebodings; one has only to read the views of Lippmann, Sorokin, Toynbee and Angele. How can it be otherwise in our present unregenerate state? Democracy, even at its best, contains the seeds of its own destruction. Do not the records of

history show that the collapse of civilisation is due to lack of moral values, caused by too much pursuit of ease and pleasure?

I was not long in Australia to find that life there would be altogether too difficult. The question of accommodation was quite hopeless; the country was very much congested, refugees had poured in through its hospitable gates, but not so hospitable after all, as some of these unfortunate people later found out—there being some merciless legislation, whereby refugees were compelled to do manual labour for the first two years of their stay. There was no proper discrimination in this matter; I heard some shocking tales; one of a Hungarian pianist who was condemned to go to Alice, an out of the way spot in Central Australia, where he was put to work with a pickaxe and his hands were irretrievably ruined for his profession as a musician. Later when in Tasmania, I tried to help a Bulgarian professor of philosophy from Belgrade, who was made to work in a flour mill, and injured his back carrying heavy flour bags; he was small and delicate, he was scandalously treated for one would have thought his knowledge of Russian might have been of some considerable use in Australia, but he was condemned to be a *navvy** instead. I heard many heartbreaking stories from other refugees.

In Sydney, it was impossible to stay in a hotel for more than three weeks. Then one had to move somewhere else, a kind of general post going on. So I was obliged to postpone my husband's arrival.

* unskilled laborer

How I missed California and the Californian smile! One day seated in the tram going round one of Sydney's indescribably lovely blue days, I had a curious experience fraught with significance, though the reader might think it is too trivial to be recorded. I noticed a shabby-looking man seated opposite me. He was regarding me with a pleased half-smile of recognition. He knew me! I wondered who he was. There was a compelling quality of the eyes that aroused my curiosity; they certainly were very unusual eyes and hardly to be expected in this seemingly unimportant stranger. The thought came to me, could he be one of Baba's agents? Was he? Could he be? I stared anew at him; as I debated whether or not I should lean forward and ask him if he was Baba's agent, he got up hastily and left the tram and my opportunity was lost! He had, I feel sure, read my thoughts. With regards to Baba's agents, I suggest that the reader should consult Dr. Donkin's already mentioned book *The Wayfarers*. The mysterious man I saw in the tram was, I feel, one of those unknown individuals who execute the plans of the Hierarchy.

My thoughts again turned to South Africa, but I was unable to get a passage. For several years after the war, the ships were being used for returning troops, so there was no accommodation for civilians. Being in need of a roof to cover my head, I went to Tasmania and stayed on a sheep farm. My hostess was a sick woman and in need of an operation; also domestic help—as is usual in Australia—was practically nil.

I overdid it trying to help and went down with a slipped disc causing sciatica and for eighteen months was in hospitals and convalescent homes. While a year in a Hobart convalescent home I made the acquaintance of an interesting woman who used to visit me. She told me of some of her astral adventures already mentioned in Chapter I, and in the appendix on *Thought-Forms*. She was interested to hear about Baba, but insisted that he was neglecting me because he did not cure my sciatica. I tried to explain that Baba expected us to transcend our limitations and he could not always be depended upon to help us except in spiritual matters—for as in the Christian faith, suffering was necessary for our redemption, but she was not convinced. A week or two passed and one afternoon she was sitting in the sun-room of her house about a mile away from the home where I was. Suddenly the room was filled with such a brightness and radiance that she looked up to see the cause of it. To her astonishment she saw Baba framed in the doorway; he looked as if he had come quickly, for his hair was slightly blown. She recognised him from the photographs I had shown her; immediately she thought of my crippled condition and gazed at him reproachfully. She told me that the more she frowned at him for not curing my pain and distress, the more his smile grew broader and broader. It was a testing smile, but at the same time she felt the Christ-Love behind it and spent the rest of the day in an exalted state that lasted until the next morning. The reader may ask why did

Baba go to her and not to me? One cannot fathom the mind of a God-Realised man, but I was greatly encouraged, having had little contact since leaving India in 1941. Baba so often says: "I am always with you!" But in our ignorance we do not always appreciate his all-pervading presence.

Many have had visions of Meher Baba. Shortly before leaving America, I had an enthusiastic letter from a Chinese friend. He knew nothing of the Master except what I had told him, and he had seen his photograph. He was sad at my departure and needed cheering up; he wrote that one night he had been working so late that he thinks he fell half asleep. Suddenly, he saw Baba standing before him! He wrote that Baba had the kindest smile that he had ever beheld on the face of any man and now he knew for certain who Baba was. The Master can be "seen" all over the world; there is nothing unusual about these visions, for the Universal Consciousness can be manifested anywhere at one and the same time.

One of the most curious stories I have heard was that of a devout Hindu, who was engaged in his prayers to Ram. It appears that Ram suddenly materialised to the devotee and told him to go to Meher Baba. As the man had never heard of the Master, he had to make enquiries. I can only surmise that on this occasion Baba took the form of Ram, for if he had appeared as himself, he would not have been recognised, so he used this way to draw the

man to himself. Other Masters have used much the same technique.

At last well enough to leave Australia, I was undecided whether to go back straight to England or to South Africa. I really wanted to return home via India in the hopes of seeing Baba again, although I knew he was as usual, in deep seclusion and had cut himself off from his followers. However, I decided to send a cable proposing to go to Bombay. Also I had no idea where the Master might be and I knew the cable might take a week to reach its destination, since Baba attends to no correspondence, which is in the hands of his *mandali*. The following night I had a dream, it was singularly vivid. It was Babas answer to my cable, which he had not yet received! I became aware that the Master was sitting on the world as it were, deeply absorbed in intense concentration; I could feel the concentration and his absorption in whatever it was that he was doing. But at the same time the dream gave me a wonderful sense of his love and protection. I was sitting with him—though he did not appear to be taking any notice of me, yet he had one arm round my neck—as if to imply that he was taking care of me and that there was no need to worry. I woke with a complete understanding of the situation, namely, that he was too occupied in the particular work he was doing in seclusion and that he did not want me to come to India. Later, I had the answer to go to South Africa.

As usual there was the difficulty of obtaining a passage and I was very lucky to get one

through some cancellation. So in 1950 I met my husband again after ten years of separation, with the exception of his one short visit to the States.

We were not long together when we made the sad discovery that we had drifted apart. This was really surprising because we had never been well matched, since we did not share the same interests. India was beckoning and I knew that sooner or later I must return there. Meanwhile my husband –who still loved me–had become very attached to Violet, a dear and old friend who had helped him through the war. So how to end the dilemma? I came to the conclusion the happiest solution for us all was that I should go my own sad, lonely way.

It was not till 1950 that I eventually reached my own war-scarred country. Oh! To be in England when spring is there! The primroses in the copse were the same, the blue-bells under the beech trees were the same and so were the daffodils. The Dresden china figures regarded me serenely; the antiques there and the few Old Masters and ancestors looked down complacently; in fact all the treasures were there. Even though the London flat had been badly bombed, we had fortunately stored all our things of value, just before. It was in many ways a sad homecoming after eleven long years; so many relatives and friends had either been killed or had passed away. The war had changed everything; tragedies haunted most homes; women who had lost their husbands in the First World War,

now lost their sons in the Second World War. It was distressing to notice certain changes for the worse, above all, the tremendous increase in juvenile delinquency, as also in America and other countries. The people seemed tired and this was to be expected after the horrors of modern warfare and the trials of rationing and scarcity of food. I could not help noticing the contrast after America, when I watched the men working; two on a job where one would suffice. As one man told me, the moment a man tries to put in a good day's work, he gets into trouble with his mates and is penalised. The short-sighted policy of the trade unions, a State within a State, aiming at bringing human endeavour down to the lowest level of self-interest, threatens to ruin the country.

I noticed as in America, there is the same lack of self-restraint, the same dissipation and looseness in social life, all dominated by a vicious pornographic press and salacious literature, which for commercial reasons exploits all that is squalid and sexually degenerate. Even distinguished authors seem to vie with one another to produce "dirty" books, helping in their way also to lower the general tone of morality.

The decadent democratic countries suffering from the evils of too much freedom and too much license could certainly learn from the virtues of the communist countries where sexual degeneracy and sex crimes are comparatively unknown. So far as that particular aspect of Russian life goes, why is it that there is so little sexual misbehaviour? The only

explanation lies in the fact that there is no commercialisation of sex, therefore no undue stressing, no exaggeration or emphasis on sex in Russian literature, art or film. Therefore, the Russians are not abnormally interested in sex as we are.

When I think of our spoilt youngsters, these Angry Young Men, these rebels without a cause, who can make nothing of life, I wish that they could experience detention in some of the Soviet correction or prison camps. The two articles published in London's Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, Feb. 7th 1954, written by Brigitte Gerland, should have been published all over the world; for they give us a glimpse of what life means in Russia. This lady is a Berlin journalist who was freed, amongst other German civilian prisoners, in August, 1953, as part of the Soviet effort to reconcile German opinion after the June uprising in the East German "People's Republic."

She was sentenced to imprisonment as a "British spy" and was finally transferred to the Soviet prison camp at Vorkuta in 1948. In the first of the two articles she writes: "The train stopped. We had reached our destination, Vorkuta, the metropolis of Arctic Russia. Icy cold took my breath away and brought tears to my eyes, and as we entered one of the strangest towns in the world, I saw nothing but an endless plain glittering in bluish-white. Here and there towers rose dark against this background, most of them close to ugly-shaped hills which looked like Japanese silhouettes; they turned out to be

the coal heaps of fifty pits for the sake of which Vorkuta had been called into existence.

Here half a million prisoners were supposed to live—but where? I looked around—snow, nothing but snow, and every few steps a strange wooden box resting high upon four strong pillars with fabulous tent-like beings leaning from their windows—the guards wrapped in their thick furs. Only these *vishky* (watch-towers) showed that we were passing a camp, one of the sixty which make up Vorkuta town, for the fence and huts were deeply embedded in the white vastness, indistinguishable from snow heaps.

We stopped in front of a wall of snow. It opened, and I felt I was entering a magic mountain from which there is no return. In the dark I stumbled over blocks of ice and sunk into the snow. Somebody took me by the hand and led me along a narrow sloping path. Suddenly light hit me, then warmth and a confusion of voices.

The hut, which was large, was full of people, men and women together. But as I looked, they sorted themselves out into separate and self-contained groups. Kneeling in the middle of the floor a group of women dressed in black were holding a sort of prayer meeting, oblivious of their surroundings. Against one of the walls were a number of quite young girls in colourful embroidered blouses singing the sad, long drawn-out songs of their homeland, the Ukraine. And detached from everybody else, a group of young men and women were conducting an impassioned debate, for all the world as if they were in some European café."

Needless to say the debaters, though allowed to debate, got no papers or information whatsoever from the outside world, apart from what the Soviet considers good for them. For the rest of their lives they may remain where they were, and these young people were students from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev or Odessa. Outstanding amongst them, Brigitte Gerland found the children of the generation of "37," their parents, once leading figures in the party, army and government, had fallen victims to Stalin's great purge. It is true, so they told her, that they were not being maltreated or starved, but the real torture was in their "work." They spent their lives "digging snow or carrying bricks for twelve or even fourteen hours a day at a temperature of forty degrees Centigrade below Zero." It can be imagined that such a life could quickly kill, and that those who survived would be turned into dull robots, intelligence and vitality having disappeared.

The author also tells amongst other things of "the secret order of believers." Those Christians who dare to believe in the Gospel and hide a New Testament. Such good people can get as much as fifteen years forced labour because of their endeavour to help one another with the comforting words of Christ. This is considered to be "religious agitation!"

I understand that since the death of Stalin, Vorkuta and some of the other camps have been abolished, but there must still be many, many millions of people living in much the same fashion as described above. How otherwise would

it be possible to feed the slave economy of Russia? We do not hear much about China, but what we do hear does not seem any better. I know there is a tendency on the part of some journalists to pretend that conditions are so much better than they were. On the surface that may be so, but if they look below the surface they find that the terror regime operates just the same, and that it is still a crime to be bourgeois or to come from bourgeois stock. If things have really improved, why the endless stream of refugees? And as we know, it is extremely difficult to escape the police-ridden totalitarian countries with their network of informers and hidden microphones, even in the walls of the embassies.

Is life worth living if one is conditioned from the cradle to the grave by force? To have one's thinking, even one's conscience ordered for one? Not allowed to live where one likes or to go where one likes. All patterned and conditioned by the ruthless power of dictators.

On the other hand in the so-called Free countries, we have too much freedom with all its attendant vices. How to find a happy way between the two extremes of today? The only answer is a *spiritual* solution and Meher Baba has given the answer.

When wandering round the British Museum, I was disconcerted to find subsidised communist bookshops. I found it hard to understand why the country should be flooded with communist propaganda. I do not know why it is, but so often the British will refuse to face facts

till they have their backs to the wall. I also had the strong impression that society as in America—was disintegrating for lack of self-discipline. In the last election, the people were told that they had never had it so good. The Romans also never had it so good before the barbarians came.

Toll for the brave! Is that what they died for? Well, we shall see what happens. Whether England will be reduced to a third-rate power in an overcrowded small island, persistently clinging to a standard of living that is artificial and not economically sound for a country that cannot feed half her own population; or whether she remains a great power with all her inherited tradition of wisdom, tolerance, endurance, humanity and above all—valour—such as when she stood practically alone in 1940.

As I wandered round the streets of London and saw the gaping holes in the flattened-out spaces round St. Paul's Cathedral, I found it awe-inspiring to see the majesty of that great building standing out proudly as ever. That the great church should have escaped was certainly a miracle. She seemed symbolical of Britain's survival. To think that so few had held back so many in the famous Battle of Britain! As I looked, the words of Kipling came back to mind:

"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine,

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

At the time of the "Miracle of Dunkirk," when England was in her greatest danger, Baba (in India) indicated the following words on his letter-board:

"England must win the war. Shorn of her pride and complacency she will be senior partner in a Commonwealth of Nations!"

The reader with no knowledge of the Occult Powers of the Masters who directed the events to come, will no doubt be amazed at Baba's remarks. But if he studies the history of World War One and remembers how utterly unprepared Britain was, will he not concede that her escape was indeed miraculous? Remember the retreat from Mons, and how some of our hard pressed soldiers saw angels in the air fighting beside them, from which experience came the legend of "The Angels of Mons." There must have been many miracles during those terrible times.

Then again, what happened in the early part of the Second World War? Are we ungrateful enough to maintain that we did not have divine intervention in the form of the "Miracle of Dunkirk?" Certainly in the last war we were still more scandalously and shockingly unprepared, and our Government and some of our high military authorities, along with the French, were completely out of date and appeared to have learned nothing from the lessons of the First World War. Also, for six long years we did not heed the warnings of Winston Churchill.

We have only to read *The Turn of the Tide** based on the War Diaries of Field Marshall Viscount Alanbrooke to realise that Britain would never have won the war without the help of the most amazing luck, which always served her in the nick of time. That "luck," however, was not just sheer chance, but ordained by the 'powers that be' behind the scenes, the Hierarchy.

Students of history have often speculated on the strategic blunders of Hitler. Why, after the Dunkirk debacle did he not immediately invade England, before America could re-equip our shattered forces? Instead Hitler overran France, and did not concentrate on England when he had her at her mercy. Why, also, did he not invade Turkey before sending his troops to Russia? Why did not Japan follow up her initiative after Pearl Harbour, by bombing and destroying the defenceless American cities, for at that time America had practically no aircraft. These missed opportunities can only suggest that the solution to these riddles is a spiritual one. History has ever shown the designing finger of God.

Baba's English devotees, therefore, knew that England would come through, and again in the coming catastrophe she will survive, for it has been ordained by the Masters. Before leaving India in 1957, I reminded Baba of that 1930 remark and asked if it still held. He replied that it did.

* By Arthur Bryant, published by Collins, London, 1957.

Chapter X

RETURN TO INDIA

I did not remain long in England; the urge to return to India was strong, though owing to Meher Baba's seclusion all correspondence between East and West had been stopped for some time. However, I felt that sooner or later, I must again meet the Master. So after eleven years, I went again to India and I did see him, but only for 15 minutes! It was not 'till the following year, 1952, that I had the privilege of seeing more of him, for I accompanied the Master on the first days after he came out of his long seclusion. He was giving a *darshan* at Hamirpur, the first public *darshan* after fifteen years.

I was sent ahead from Bombay with one of his men and travelled first class. The journey took about thirty hours to Kanpur, a very dirty, large manufacturing city in the North. We spent the night at the station rest rooms, as we had to meet Baba's train early next morning. It was distinctly chilly at night, though not during the day's sun. The station was crowded, as every place is crowded with humanity in this densely overpopulated country. The people wore the scantiest clothing, and most of the women only had cotton saris. I wondered at the resilience of their constitution.

At last Baba arrived with 24 of his men; the train was late; the party had travelled third-class and were grimy and tired. Third class in an Indian train is an ordeal at any time; but life with Baba is no sinecure, and the men closely associated with the Master's routine work have to live the hardest and simplest lives. Baba came up to the rest rooms, and I was surprised that his first words to me were a reassuring answer to an unspoken question that had been at the back of my mind during the train journey to the North! I will explain. Although I had been greatly looking forward to the tour, I was the only woman; Baba generally travels either with a few women and a few men, or else his party are all men. I had been a little worried at the prospect of possible complications when I wanted to visit the toilet. So on the long journey to Kanpur, this uncomfortable thought had been at the back of my mind. Imagine my astonishment and delight then when Baba said, "If you want to go to the toilet, you have only to tell me!" He had deliberately picked out the one thought that threatened to mar what was otherwise a most interesting journey. I have mentioned this story as an example of the meticulous care taken by the Master where strangers are concerned.

After some rest for Baba, we were to proceed to Hamirpur, a small and very isolated township, which is entirely cut off during the monsoon. It was at a distance of about forty miles.

The men went ahead in a bus, while we waited for a car, which was delayed and took a long time to arrive. I sat silently with Baba on a station seat, for he was preoccupied and "working"—so I presumed from the movement of his hands. But M. read some of the news to him from the paper (I should mention here that while Baba never reads anything himself, he nevertheless always takes an interest in the newspapers, which are carefully read to him). I was glad no one appeared to recognise the Master as we sat there; but a woman *sadhu* earlier in the morning had seen him, and immediately came up and questioned me.

The drive to Hamirpur was pleasant, the countryside being cheerful with cultivated green crops, quite unlike the barren waste around Ahmednagar, Meher Baba's headquarters, which is a famine district. The Master pointed out details, remarking that I was seeing "the real India." Just before we came to the great Jumna River, we stopped at the village to enquire. It seemed that the people had succeeded in finishing the temporary pontoon bridge in time for Baba's arrival, and our car was the first to go over it. I noticed that men and women raised their hands in homage, as if they recognised him, for they had been apprised in advance of his coming.

On arrival at Hamirpur, after a rest and lunch, I joined Baba, since he was going to give a mass *darshan* in a large enclosure, open at both ends, to allow for the overflow, as many were expected; for the people had been waiting for a long

time to see the Master, who had been in strict seclusion for so many years. He began first in a small enclosed part washing the feet of seven men and women—not saints or beggars, but just "good people." He afterwards bowed down to them and distributed *prasad*. We then went into the large *pandal*, a kind of hall open at the sides. There was a raised dais for him, and a chair alongside for me, with the *mandali* posted around us. Because of my close proximity to Baba some of the people imagined I was some sort of a white saint!

They were mostly sitting cross-legged on the ground, as is the custom, and I was much struck by the general order and self-restraint shown, considering the great excitement of this auspicious occasion. The local authorities had been entrusted with all the arrangements. To begin with, a message from Baba was given over the microphone, and there was the singing of *Bhajans* accompanied by the plaintive Indian music, which somehow stirs the heart. From time to time there were shouts of "Avatar Meher Baba, Ki Jai."

Suddenly, without warning, a strange, wild-looking man appeared—right in front of Baba. He was triumphantly waving—with rhythmic action—a bowl with a flame in it, performing *arti*. My impression was that the man must be a *mast*. To my surprise Baba embraced him very warmly. I was told afterwards that this man had "rolled" twenty-seven miles to pay homage to the Master! "Rolling" is a rare act of homage occasionally made by devotees; for it

is an effort of great physical endurance, which I imagine very few would care to undertake. Baba broke the man's fast by giving him some fruit.

Surveying the people, I felt strange, yet I had a curious sense of familiarity with the scenes before me, as if some lost chord in my memory of time had been touched. There were also moments of some anxiety, when the crowds, beginning to file past Baba, were pressing in their enthusiasm on the dais, which several times shook so much that I feared the canopy might collapse on Baba's head! After it was all over, we visited a house in the town and the streets were lined all the way! It was difficult to make a passage for the car. Baba gave several more *darshans* next day.

After this trip I returned to Poona, to a hotel, where I was quite ill, having contracted some kind of bronchial trouble since my lungs do not tolerate the all-pervading dust. In any case I am one of those unfortunate Westerners who does not stand up to the Indian climate. I do not like the heat and always feel hot, sticky and irritable. I was, therefore, a little upset when later I received a letter instructing me to proceed by plane to Nagpur in a few days, where Baba was giving more *darshans*.

It so happened that the young son of one of Baba's Poona followers came in; I told him it was impossible for me to go to Nagpur as my health would not permit it. "But of course you must go!" he retorted. Somewhat peevishly I went on to say that my doctor would not allow

it. The boy declared that Baba's orders must always be obeyed, and even if I thought I was dying I would have to go! So I dragged myself wearily down to Bombay and caught the plane as directed to Nagpur. I can only say that the nearer I got to Nagpur, the better I felt. Nor did I disgrace myself with those awful paroxysms of coughing; on the contrary, I made a complete recovery. Many close to Baba can testify to the same experience of being physically benefitted and stimulated to such a degree that they were enabled to carry on when they were on the verge of collapse. This happens time and again, for how could we not benefit by the proximity of such a celestial Power House? An outsider might well find it difficult to imagine this silent unimaginable power, from whom stream channels of force, radiating all over the world.

While we were waiting for the Master's arrival at the large *pandal* in the city where the ceremony was to be performed, I noticed a dear old *sadhu* holding forth over the microphone. Naturally I understood nothing and was startled when one of the people standing near me remarked, "He is talking about you!" "Good gracious! What ever is he saying?" I protested. "He is saying, although you are white, you are just the same as they are!"

An extraordinary incident took place at this particular *darshan*. While the ceremony was proceeding, without warning a *mast* appeared, as if from nowhere. He was a little old man, quite naked except for a thin loin-cloth;

he carried nothing but a staff and an old tin. He seemed quite oblivious of his surroundings for he had dropped down right in the middle of the roped off fairway in front of Baba. There he sat with his head buried in his knees. There was some whispered consultation with Baba, and one of the *mandali* squatted down beside the *mast* and asked him to remove himself, but the old man paid not the slightest attention, remaining where he was. I was on tenterhooks, knowing that the Master never allowed a *mast* to be disturbed, and wondering what would happen next, when the people got up and began to file past to pay their homage, for the *mast* was right in the way! After what seemed to me an endless interval the *mast*, to my great relief, got up and disappeared as quickly as he had come, without apparently taking the slightest notice of Baba; but I had the strong impression that he had come for a definite purpose and had transmitted some message.

On the few occasions when Baba emerges into publicity by giving *darshan*, there are no oratorical outbursts—only a few simple messages over the microphone. Silence reigns among the masses. What is this influence which will make the untutored peasant walk great distances under the burning sun from scattered hamlets, and bring all classes, rich and poor, to see him? Brahmins and Untouchables will be side by side, all caste distinctions being submerged for the time being. It is a revelation and an inspiration that moves people to tears to see so many thousands gathered together. Their demonstrations of devotion and spiritual yearning

are something that can never be forgotten and afford an overwhelming proof of the extraordinary spiritual influence that Meher Baba wields. Considering that he does not speak, it is all the more amazing; in fact, as his *mandali* would say, "His silence speaks!"

In India the people are proud of the saints and Masters. But are the saints and Masters proud of them? I hear the angels weep, for the soul of India is asleep. Only a tremendous out-pouring of divine love will arouse India and enable her to fulfill her role in this age. There is little outward transformation in the people who have seen saints and Masters. But the Masters do not reform outwardly, the reform is a hidden and a gradual process in the inner realms of the spirit of man. It has to come little by little, 'till the human soul has been conditioned sufficiently for the great Awakening. Certainly, to travel with Baba when he is on tour is an experience and a very exhausting one—for it is like travelling with royalty, with none of the advantages of the protection given by soldiery and police to enforce discipline and to keep the crowds back. But at the same time, it is a wonderful testimony to the restraint and orderliness of the people, when one thinks of what might happen in similar circumstances in the West.

I returned to Poona again. The hotel was very empty and I found myself alone in the annex. After a couple of nights, I woke up in the early morning to see a figure in my room,

but when it vanished quickly I surmised it was a ghost. Several nights later I woke up suddenly with my heart pounding; there was a sense of danger; I opened my eyes cautiously and saw a man bending over my bedside table. I wondered if he was a burglar and closed my eyes, hoping that he would take my wristwatch and go away. Unable to bear the suspense I opened my eyes again and then he vanished. Since I was not used to ghosts, and had rarely seen them, I wrote to Baba asking if it was now a part of the progress for me to see ghosts! The reply came back to put the Master's photo under my pillow. This I did and was no more troubled.

Now to describe Baba's headquarters at Meherazad in Pimpalgaon, I feel this is the place to mention that one of the outstanding characteristics of Meher Baba's life is his simplicity in all things. Amongst other traits is his devotion to animals and his inimitable sense of humour; Baba leads a life somewhat similar to that of Jesus. Certainly to be with the Master is—on occasion—to find oneself back in Gospel days.

I often wish some of the Master's detractors could see the life he and his men lead, the self-sacrifice, the self-abnegation and the austerity. He usually has one meal a day of rice and dahl; every frugality is practised with no luxuries of any kind, and many a time the *mandali* have not enough to eat and their clothes cannot be renewed; they have just to be patched and made to last 'till quite worn out. If only the critics knew how Baba and his men live would not they be overcome with shame for spreading misleading

statements without a shadow of foundation? How many Westerners could lead such a life?

But it has ever been the same; history always repeats itself. Did not Jesus suffer at the hands of the Pharisees? Did not they seek to kill Mohammed? Buddha, Krishna, Rama and Zoroaster all had their enemies. It has always been so; it will always be so.

Baba's headquarters are small and unpretentious, as primitive and simple as could be imagined in these days of material comfort. No electricity, no fans, no amenities of any kind. For Westerners the climate is none too suitable, being hot and uncomfortable except in the winter months, and there is often a shortage of water.

I feel that a word of appreciation is due to Baba's intimate group. The men *mandali* in general have but one meal a day also of rice and dal. They work from dawn to dusk, and some of them continue again from dusk to midnight. They all clean their own rooms and do their own washing, and sometimes sleep on the floor, their quarters are indeed most primitive judging from my standard of comfort.

The women *mandali* too, have their own duties, which are not light; and all must be prepared to move at any time, travelling under conditions of hardship and uncertainty for Baba changes his place of residence from time to time and therefore he and his close group seldom stay in one spot for a long period.

When devotees sigh and envy the members of that close group—and wish they could take

their place—it should be understood that very few could live such a disciplined life. It is not a case of sitting at the Master's feet imbibing knowledge. It is only unceasing work. When I stay there and gaze in wonder at all they have to do, I ask myself, could I stand up to it? The answer is, "I do not think I could, indefinitely."

If we want an example to follow we cannot do better than to note that these men and women are entirely lacking in any form of self-esteem. Their main characteristic is one of humility. Neither are they lotus-eating dreamers.

For Westerners far away from Baba's counteracting influence, in our relationships with others we may ambitiously "play up" to them, exposing not our real self but what we want them to think we are. Just because we happen to have the luck to be able to do some special work for Baba, that is no excuse to flatter ourselves, to adopt an arrogant and over-bearing attitude. There is no doubt that Baba does—at times—stir up latent weaknesses and followers may behave badly in the most unexpected ways, but it is the way of salvation, for faults to appear so that they may be dealt with, and Baba sometimes gives us enough rope to hang ourselves.

In most societies and groups of no matter what persuasion, megalomaniacal tendencies may appear amongst egoistical individuals with a passion for dominating others. Baba has made it very clear that he does not like "bossing" as he calls it, and certainly there is no bossing amongst his intimates. So the attempt to dominate others in Baba's name, and to go

so far even as to expect devotees to "obey" us, is a sin of the first magnitude!

The reason why I stress on tendencies to dominate others is because I was dominated in the name of Baba, so I know what it means! Also I received a letter from a devotee, who in mentioning a certain person, stated:" As Baba's representative, he has to be obeyed." Also devotees have even asked me if they "had to obey him." There is only *one* person whom we must obey, and that is Baba!

Then again I had another letter in which the writer claimed that she and another were to attain to the Sixth Plane when Baba breaks his Silence! This may or may not be so, but I do know from personal experience that Baba will at times put the carrot before the donkey. But I think best to quote Ruskin's words: "Man's concentration on himself is unhealthy, whether his heavenly interests or his worldly interests matters not!" In India Baba's intimates certainly do not concentrate on themselves and are not interested in their spiritual status, whatever that might be. In fact from what I know they could not care less about ideas on spiritual self-advancement. There is *no* spiritual snobbery!

All those who love Baba represent him, and as people will judge Baba by his followers, the best we can do, is to try, no matter how difficult it may be, to model ourselves along the lines of Baba's famous Rajahmundry address (1954), which was quoted at length in my previous book. Baba exhorted his devotees as follows:

"...I feel that you have not clearly understood how my work should be approached. It is natural that amongst workers of any cause, be it political, social or spiritual, there are bound to be differences of opinion and feelings of competition and jealousy leading to the breakdown of the very basis of the work ..."

Baba went on to say that it was the *life* that his devotees lead that counts. Let them show that *they* are centres for Baba, through their love for him. Let them forget their differences with one another and bear in mind that it is not necessary to have centres or offices.

In Baba's work, special separate organisations do not help, as members are always liable to be caught up in the limitations of such. With Baba there is no need for "representatives," for directors or subordinates, no need for officiousness and group forming, and it is wrong to try to identify Baba with any particular sect. All can share in his work: high or low, few or many, only by trying, no matter how hard it may be, to lead a life of selfless detachment, humility and love, such as described by Baba. Then only might we be able to help a little, and only a little, in the cause to lift man's consciousness to a higher level. This is very very difficult, but we can at least try and feel like Browning: "What I aspired to be, and was not comforts!"

I always hope that some day one of Baba's *mandali* will write a detailed account of one of the oddest periods in the Master's career. The "New Life" some ten years back. How he left Meherabad one stormy wet morning with a few

of his close *mandali* on a most extraordinary adventure on foot through India. All had to walk with pack animals carrying their scanty belongings. The women did have a small caravan to sleep in at night, but the men and Baba, who was of course incognito—slept in disused barns or stables; rarely did they have a proper shelter and often only trees to sleep under, with little protection from biting wind and heavy dew. Since none was allowed to carry money, the men had to beg their way for food. As most of them looked undeniably respectable, they would sometimes be turned away with jibes, and naturally it was impossible to explain the purpose of this odd pilgrimage. However, the generosity of the villagers was really amazing; they gave the pilgrims coarse native bread, lentils and spiced vegetables, which were most thankfully received, since our pilgrims often went very hungry. The story of the few, the Master chose to take with him on this eventful journey of almost incredible hardships has only been very briefly described in two brochures.*

Needless to say, Baba has never explained the object of that journey. Was it some Franciscan drama reenacted from a by-gone life? In the simple days when St. Francis lived, he and his friars would beg their way for sustenance and shelter and they went through shocking privations, sometimes being brutally beaten when spurned from the door. St. Francis once, so we read, when commenting on their trials

* *The New Phase of Meher Baba's Life and Meher Baba in the Great Seclusion*.
Published by Adi K. Irani, Ahmednagar, 1950.

said to his beloved disciple: "Finally, hear the conclusion, Brother Leo, above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Christ hath given to His friends is that of conquering oneself and suffering for the love of Christ, all pain, ill-usage, opprobrium and calamity; because of all other gifts of God we can glory in none, seeing they are not ours, but God's. But in the cross of tribulation and affliction we may glory, for these are ours."

It should be mentioned that Baba has not had a large *ashram* for many years, so there is no proper accommodation for visitors who wish to see him. Then again the Master is constantly travelling or in seclusion. But although he does not satisfy idle curiosity, all genuine seekers may meet him.

Fairly recently I heard of a young Englishman who came across Meher Baba's *Discourses* * in London. He was so impressed that he took the first ship to Bombay without knowing even where Baba was. He, however, made enquiries on arrival and ascertained that Baba was in seclusion at Satara. Baba kept him one day and sent him back to England!

At Meherazad there are a few women and servants to look after the household, and some men *mandali* who attend to the innumerable duties connected with Baba's work. No questions are asked as to what the meaning of the Master's orders may be and those nearest to him know no more of his hidden designs than

* *God to Man and Man to God*. Edited by C. B. Purdom and Published by Gollanez, London, 1955.

those farthest away. All they know is that he works on many planes of consciousness at one and the same time. In fact, Baba may be doing a dozen things at once; and although one may think that one is holding his attention one is really getting only a very small part of it. The truth is that he is working constantly and universally for the good of humanity.

Meherazad would look from the air like a small green oasis in a desert, because of its clumps of trees; but at the time of that particular visit there were no flowers or vegetables in the garden, for no water from the well could be spared, owing to the drought. Except at monsoon time the shortage of water is always particularly acute in this district, but the trees, shrubs and plants in pots were refreshing to eyes tired of the parched landscape. In the evenings, a transformation takes place with the closing of the day; the varying colours, lights and shades of the sky take on an ethereal beauty, bringing a strange and wonderful atmosphere. One feels that one is on hallowed ground of great spiritual import, which posterity will one day recognise. For no matter where the Master goes, that place becomes impregnated with his divine presence.

All that those around Baba know is that he is tirelessly, continuously "working." Sometimes he will be sitting quietly engaged in conversation, when he will rise and start marching up and down the verandah, his hands moving mysteriously. This means that the Master is doing his "universal work." And although he is undoubtedly working all day long—for we cannot but be

aware of this strange remoteness and preoccupation, which does not concern us—there are times when he may be working more intensely than usual. It is well-known to Meher Baba's followers that after a period of intense working, away in an empty house or a place where he is in deep seclusion, sometimes startling world events will follow his coming out again and resuming his ordinary activities. This suggests to the Master's intimates that a crisis or tension of some sort in world affairs has been tempered by the Hierarchy with whom, undoubtedly, the Master is unceasingly in contact.

Those who have been associated with other Perfect Masters, such as Babajan and Upasni Maharaj, have told me that all these Masters made curious movements with their hands and were obviously preoccupied with the unseen world around them. The same applies to the technique of the saints; thus there is nothing unusual about Meher Baba's mysterious ways.

I have asked—but have obtained no reply—whether the Master's work is more intense at night, which might well be the case. He retires early at about six o'clock as a rule, and there must always be a man who keeps awake in his room, till another comes at about midnight or at a predetermined time. In fact, for reasons best known to himself, Baba is never alone at any time, except when in strict seclusion when guards are posted outside. It seems that he rests little and is—if we may presume from his gestures and preoccupation—engaged as usual with his universal work. It is difficult for us

ordinary mortals to have the faintest conception of what the Master does, but none of us doubts that he keeps a ceaseless vigil, that he rarely relaxes, if ever. Indeed it is well-known that the Masters never sleep in the sense that we do. Sometimes there is grim expression on his face as if he is executing justice or giving orders in unseen spheres. I cannot be so presumptuous as to attempt further explanations; for I am as ignorant as those who are always with him. Also we are not encouraged to speculate, for of what use is it for our limited mortal minds to attempt to fathom the unlimited mind of the God-man? Of what use would it be for the Master to explain the smallest detail, for we would not understand?

Baba's Retreat this time was looking just the same as the prepreceding year, when I went to see him a few days before he came out of his *Mano-nash* Seclusion, ending his "New Life Phase" and starting the dawn of fresh activities. That year, 1953, Baba was celebrating his birthday privately and was taking a much needed rest before going south on further strenuous *darshan* tours. So there were no visitors, only the regular inhabitants of the place.

It is but natural for devotees to express their love for the Master in the form of gifts to him and to those living with him. Baba accepts these offerings with love, for they are given in love. This, however, is to please the devotees rather than himself, for often these presents are of a luxury that is out of tune with the simplicity that is the keynote of daily living for

himself and his close group. I feel strongly – and the men and women *mandali* agree with me – that the best and most useful gift is a donation, however small, which the Master can use for his work with the poor and the *masts*, (prominent aspect of his work through the years) as also for the daily expenses of the *ashram* and the individuals and families dependent on him. Fortunes have been put at the feet of the Master and refused. Baba desires the treasures of the heart, not the treasures of possessions; for we give little if we give only our wealth. The treasure of the heart means the eventual annihilation of the ego: and how many of us are willing to part with our egos?

As Meher Baba was born at 5 o'clock in the morning, in India his birthday is celebrated at that hour, so we all got up extra early. The women *mandali* were looking lovely in beautiful but simple saris. After we had garlanded the Master, we all stood to attention on the porch while the men *mandali*, exactly at the "hour" called out from over the compound wall, the name of God in seven different languages. Later in the morning, Baba took me round the men's quarters, as he was going to wash the feet of Mahars, gathered together from neighbouring villages. Those untouchables lead a miserable semi-starved existence, and it is an important part of Baba's work to raise their status and break down caste distinctions. There are, so I understand, some fifty or more millions of these people, and Baba tells me that no amount of legislation will make much difference: it is the

people of India who must change their age-old habitual attitude towards them.*

I stood by Baba since I wanted to study the Mahars or Harijans, that is to say, their reactions. Their faces somehow reminded me of weather-beaten boards, as if they had suffered so much that emotions were exhausted. The first to come forward was a feeble little old man; he had to be helped onto the stone seat round the large tree where Baba's ministrations were to take place. He was pitifully aware of the inadequacy of his attire, and gave several little tugs at his old shirt in the vain attempt to lengthen it. I felt I wanted to pat him on the back and tell him that God loved him more than he did those who despised him. I think Baba felt the same way, for he gave the poor old man a reassuring pat on the chin. The women came after men—as is the Indian custom—for comparatively women have a inferior status in India. I noticed that some of them were quite overcome with emotion. I wondered how much they could understand of the spiritual significance of Baba's work. It was a most poignant occasion for me.

In Pimpalgaon there was now the unexpected opportunity to ask questions, for Baba was quite alone, without any visitors. "Baba! How old is Adam?" Baba smiled, "If I answer that the first man came on this earth

* *The Times of India*, Sept. 10, 1956. Nasik, Sept. 8th. "Ten thousand sadhus gathered here for the Sinhasta Fair, refused to accept a gift from the Harijan merchant of Bombay. It was Rs. 20,000 for a feast. The Sadhus spurned the offer because the donor was an Untouchable."

84 million years ago ... what would that mean to you?"

For my part, I have never been able to understand why man should not be immeasurably old. Quite apart from the Ice Ages there is always the constantly changing pattern of the earth's crust due to cosmic upheavals, which surely could effectively blot out traces of thousands of past civilisations. They may all be at the bottom of the sea? Even now scientists constantly put the age of the earth back.

To return to Baba's statement,* he continued: "But if the whole explanation makes you understand how the first man evolved, and how this first evolved man has been repeatedly, millions of times, appearing not only on this earth but on millions of earths, and so is ageless, timeless ...but this has all to be explained properly. The book which I have personally written when I had just stopped speaking and which I wrote in one year, and which now lies in the bank, to be touched only when I order, explains this point clearly. It is important for

* Please note that Baba does not make a statement, he merely asks a question. Now we see that the latest discovery, regarding the age of man is to be found in the skeleton *Oreopithecus* discovered in Tuscany which seems to prove that man, or somebody like him, existed ten million years ago, and in this find, there is no connection between the ape and man, hence no "missing link". Now perhaps science will get away from the former idea that man is quite a newcomer to our planet, in which case he will assume the dignified status that goes with ancient lineage and a long cultural history so revolutionising previous anthropological theories. But then again it must be pointed out that this latest find, which may only be the latest as I write now, does not fit in with existing discoveries, so it is always possible that this may remain an isolated case for a very long time before further investigations take place.

the world and the scientists to know, and therefore I have explained about cycles, about the position of the earth for Realisation; about the earth dying, and the simultaneous evolution of another earth (not any other planet); when the first human being was evolved; when was the first Realised Being; whether egg came first or chicken...all has been written in detail, in 1926, in that book."

Baba has also, in this epoch-making work, written many other details from the spiritual and metaphysical standpoints. This will be, needless to say, the greatest book of the age, since it is written by one who, in all fullness, knows as well as feels Himself to be the one and the Many at one and the same time, from the beginningless Beginning to the endless End. As the Master, Maulana Niaz Ahmed, says: "Every time my Beloved bears a different name, and manifests in a different garb, yet ever the same Face assumes a different form of beauty and grandeur."

One may well read many philosophical accounts but still remain ignorant, for Illumination is necessary to realise that creation may be likened to an immense panorama and that one is in it, and yet not in it; inside and yet outside it all.

When a few, in the coming Awakening and general push in spiritual consciousness, are made Perfect and given all knowledge, they will be able to look back in time to the days of Adam; and before that, to when they were strange apelike men; and before that, to when they were

amphibious reptiles, and before that—they may be able to see the millions of Christs! Like Guru Nanak, they will sing:

"At His throne a million prophets,
And millions upon millions of Ramas,
And millions of Wayfarers, each clad in a different garb,
He, the Lord of all, is One, the Chief of all Lords!
He is the Creator of all that is.
He is beyond conception and speech,
His qualities are unnumbered and endless!"

Chapter XI

MEHER BABA

It is not necessary to go into important details concerning the early life of the Master. They have been written elsewhere, also in my previous book *Civilisation or Chaos?*, and some information has been given in Appendix I. According to Meher Baba, there are always Five Perfect Masters or *Sadgurus* in the world at all times. But in avataric periods such as now, these Masters prepare the way for the Avatar's Divine Manifestation.

Of these Five who are connected with Meher Baba's spiritual unfoldment the most important were Babajan, Sai Baba and Upasni Maharaj.* The latter is well known in India as the spiritual successor of his famous master, Sai Baba. It was at the end of December 1921, that the boy Merwan (Meher Baba) was restored by Upsani Maharaj to his normal consciousness as a God-Realised man. At that momentous event the great *Sadguru*, in deferring to Merwan's future career, declared in the presence of some of his

* His disciple Godavari Mata directs his *asharam* at Sakori. Her spiritual connection with Meher Baba is close, since the Master has stated that in a former life Godavari was his Yashoda Mai when he was Krishna!

disciples: "I have given my Charge to Merwan. He is the holder of my key!" Sometime later he stated, "This boy will move the world, humanity at large will be benefited at his hands." A few days later he sent for his close disciple, Gustadji Hansotia (App. IX) and said, "I have made Merwan perfect. Hold onto him through thick and thin." Upasni Maharaj gave expression to his love and reverence when he declared, "An *Avatar* is born in your person, Merwan."

It was after the final and greatest of all initiations of God-Realisation that Merwan became known as Meher Baba and to his followers as the *Avatar* of our Age.

In a superstitious country like India, a man has only to sit under a tree or in a cave and he will collect a following; but if he is to keep his following he will have to do something more than that. Meher Baba neither sits under a tree nor in a cave, and people ask "Why not?" They say, in fact, "How can he be a great Master if he does not do all the things that Masters are expected to do?"

Then again, the saints are generally inclined to stay in one place, where the devotees can gather and visit them, so that gradually a big centre is formed.

Meher Baba, since the beginning of his mission, has always lived the life of a more or less normal man in normal circumstances. Only those near him and in constant touch with him can have any idea of his spiritual status.

For this reason, persons who have little knowledge of the ways of the great Masters and

those whose intuition of the finer things of life has become blunted by the materialism of our age will question and criticise. They will say, "How can he be a great saint when he does not follow the mode of life customary to a saint? Why is he moving about continuously; why is he rarely seen and difficult to approach? Then again, how is it that he lives like an ordinary man? He does not ride on tigers or allow snakes to entwine his body, nor do any of the spectacular wonders that sometimes are expected by the ignorant, of men who are believed to have attained to a certain spiritual status." On the contrary, Baba lived,—so far as outside observers can see— "like an ordinary man;" that is to say he lives in ordinary dwelling places amongst ordinary people; also he has the limitations of an ordinary man; he can suffer pain, be sick and have accidents; in other words, he keeps within the Law.

In any case, it is not possible for anyone to judge the Masters; they can not be fitted into categories. Ramjoo Abdulla, who has had considerable experience of Masters in this epoch, in writing of the problem of men and Masters in *Meher Baba in the Great Seclusion* , * says: "It is indeed difficult for men to appreciate fully all that the great spiritual Masters say and do. In fact, granting that there is a definite plan behind all life capable of a distinct fulfillment, many things the Masters have said and done so far, are as much a bundle of contradictions and anomalies

* Published by Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, 1950.

as is the history of mankind to date. Man is still engaged today in a life and death struggle between beautiful ideals to be achieved on the one hand, and dangerously ugly situations to be avoided on the other; nevertheless, according to Baba, the realisation of God is the One Plan that every individual has an equal right to achieve and everyone does possess equal opportunities to achieve it." Following these remarks, I suggest that readers should read *The Incredible Sai Baba** for this little volume gives considerable insight into the strange ways of the great spiritual Masters and their extraordinary eccentricities. For when in the ambiance of a Master who operates in different states of consciousness, in fact in different worlds, (whereas we ordinary mortals only know one world), it means that devotees cannot but notice the curious and wonderful events that always happen. The author states that it was believed by some close to Sai Baba that he belonged to a hidden spiritual Hierarchy. The village schoolmaster who lived in a little mud-walled schoolroom just behind the mosque that the Master inhabited reported that he often heard conversations going on at night in strange languages, not only Indian languages but in English also, of which language Sai Baba knew nothing, yet physically the Master never left Shirdi! Many are the startling facts recorded of this great Master. Meher Baba has certainly confirmed the fact that Sai Baba belonged to a hidden

* By Arthur Osborne, Published by Orient Longmans, 1957.

Hierarchy; for he avers that Sai Baba was the Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy of his time and therefore had the spiritual direction of the First World War and events to follow.

It is only Meher Baba's close circle, those who manage his household and attend to his needs and activities, who get daily opportunities of seeing a divine personality in human form. Baba is that consummate paradox, the human and divine at one and the same time. Being the Avatar of this Age his work is with the universe as well as with the world. But what do his intimates see of his "working?" As has already been said in the preceding chapter, they know little more than those who are not with him. Sometimes they will see Baba walking up and down in deep concentration, his fingers moving strangely in short brisk movements as though drumming. Beyond the fact he is "busy" and must on no account be disturbed, they know little else, and as has been suggested, his most important work sometimes appears to be done when he remains quite alone in deep seclusion in some empty house, and very occasionally in a cave—but of course we do not know. No one is allowed to approach him on occasions and his food, if he is not tasting, is just handed in when asked for, by his *mandali* on guard who remains outside. Then there are moments even amongst his daily activities, when Baba will cover his head and face in a shawl and for a while remain immobile. It is assumed that he has gone "somewhere," and is probably in consultation with members of

the Unseen Hierarchy, who function behind the scenes. For such Beings possess the consciousness and are not fettered by time and space, as we ordinary mortals are.

Hard indeed it is to realise on acquaintance that Meher Baba is considered by his followers to be the *Avatar* of this Age. But nevertheless, those near him can testify in a multitude of ways to the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of their Master and the universal scope of his mission.

It is impossible to describe my own personal relationship to Baba. Sometimes I think of "*The Hound of Heaven*", one of the greatest lyrical poems ever written in the English language. From its opening:

"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet –
All things betray thee, who betrayest me!"

(down to the great ending)

"But just thou might'st seek it in My arms,
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand outstretched caressingly?
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou cravest love from thee, who cravest Me."

Francis Thompson,* the author, was a mystic and his spiritual stature was eventually recognised by his intimates, of whom one wrote "Thompson cared nothing for the world's comment, and though he could talk with radiant interest on many things, it was always with a certain sunny separateness, as though he issued out of unseen chambers of thought, requiring nothing, but able to and willing to interest himself in the things to which his attention was drawn."

With Meher Baba one is aware all the time that he is immersed in what might be described as thousands of "chambers of thought;" those who are the Master's intimates cannot but feel that strange remoteness that separates us all

* Francis Thompson (1859-1907). Poet and writer of Prose.

from him, though he will be, by his manner, just as human as are we all.

That it is possible for God to periodically take on human form and manifest on earth is widely believed in the East, nurtured in the mystery of man's divinity and Godhood. But such an idea is generally difficult to accept in Christian countries, since orthodox Christians believe Jesus to have been the *only* Son of God, therefore, a *unique* divine manifestation that has *never* happened before. This belief is continuously emphasized in the churches, which would and could never accept the Eastern concept of man's innate divinity and ultimate Godhood as a Master on earth. As for people's opinion Baba says: "He who knows everything, displaces nothing; to each one I appear to be what he thinks I am."

Only those who have been in contact with a Perfect Master, and are aware that such men have All-Knowledge, All-Wisdom and All-Power, can have a glimpse of the tremendous disparity between a Self-Realised man and one who is not. It is tragic in the West that while thinking men and scientists can appreciate the fact that all human knowledge is inexact, partial, transitory and illusory, yet they do not know that nevertheless, there *always* exist men who have transcended *all* the limitations of the human mind! If this outstanding and most important of all facts relating to human destiny were widely and generally known and accepted, what a tremendous change would take place in human values!

Hero-worship is instinctive in man; he knows, though hardly consciously, that he is immortal and divine and for this reason he is ready to worship himself in some apparently infallible personality. But in Avataric cycles man is more uncertain, more ignorant of his own true nature, and of spiritual realities in general, than he is at other periods. Also the stress and strain of modern life, as it is today, with all its frustrations and complexities, entices him more easily to pin his hopes on some limited human being who promises to right his wrongs and lead him into an earthly paradise the short way. The poor simpleton is soon disillusioned, for had he any real understanding at all, he would know that utopias on earth are not possible. Life is but a school and a preparation for his journey through creation to the ultimate goal, which is the recognition of his own divinity and Godhood. Therefore, a man serves his best interests if he worships a Perfect Man, who can help him in his spiritual pilgrimage, instead of running after false gods in the form of demagogues and dictators.

How can we describe the personality of Meher Baba? It is impossible to describe the personality of the Man-God or *Sadguru* for he is one who has finished the round of births and deaths, transcended *Maya* and attained to union with the Oversoul or God, and who when he drops his body remains God for evermore; then how to describe the personality of a God-man—God descended in human form, who returns again and again at each Avataric manifestation in a new body and a new personality, in order to redeem mankind?

It must be remembered that the Master discarded his letter-board in 1954, so that his *mandali* have to interpret the Master's commands, messages and discourses through the medium of his signs and gestures. To watch the fleeting impressions registered on his sensitive countenance is to marvel that one face can express so much and so many things; it is a truly unforgettable experience. Painters, in the past, who have hoped to obtain portraits of the Master, have given up in despair, for they could never retain the impression long enough to register it on the canvas. And in photographs it is sometimes difficult to know that the two likenesses are of the same man, so different may they be.

God as man takes on the limitations of the flesh and lives much as a normal human being would, but those who are near can perceive divine authority in all he does; though they do not understand him, yet at the same time they acknowledge the fact that he is Divinity in essence. To walk with a God-man, to eat with a God-man, to be with a God-man are experiences that rarely come within the compass of an individual.

Such intimacy can only be won through past contacts in former lives. They do not occur in haphazard fashion. There is a deep significance and meaning behind all such personal associations. Yet, in some life or other, every one of us has had to come in contact with a

Man-God and sometimes the Avatar, or God-man, before attaining to the Goal of life and ending our everlasting round of earth-experience.

I may have given the misleading impression that those in daily attendance on Meher Baba are nearer to him than those who are perhaps thousands of miles away, and may have only seen him once—or not at all. So, I must explain that Baba has made it quite clear, that, distance being no barrier to him, those nearest to him are not necessarily his closest associates.

Like all *Avatars*, he has an inner circle of Twelve—but nobody knows who participates in the circle—for Baba has never specified them; we do not even know who will be his successor for every Avatar leaves a "Chargeman" to carry on his spiritual duties after he drops the body.* However, let me give a few accounts of contacts with the Master from certain people in America—quoting from their letters—for they give an idea of the tremendous impact that he can have on the consciousness of those who are physically a long way off.

One of Baba's American devotees, when she was a little girl of about six years of age, would try in her childish way to visualise God and His appearance. One night she went to sleep thinking intently of Him, and in her dream she saw a face, with long curly hair. She knew intuitively that the face was that of God! For some years the same face reappeared to her off and on—mostly in dreams and often during the day. Whenever she thought of God strongly, it came back to her.

* This statement has been deemed inaccurate.

It was not till many years later, in 1932, that she read a news account of Meher Baba and found he was staying at the Knickerbocker Hotel (in New York). She called and missed him—he had already left. But from that time on she tried to get in touch with some of his disciples, though she failed to make any direct contact. One day when walking past a bookstall, she saw a book about Baba and on its cover was the face of her dreams! It was not, however, till the summer of 1956, when Baba made a round-the-world tour, lasting one month only, that she saw him and recognised that her connection with him was a *karmic* tie, due to past lives.

Another of Meher Baba's devotees in the States, before she had even heard of Meher Baba, was attending a lecture given by a student of Theosophy. She told him afterwards that she had a feeling some master was trying to reach her. He named several, but she said "No" to them all. Then the next morning she awoke with "Baba! Baba!" on her lips. Some time after that, she saw advertised the talk that one of the Master's disciples was to give at the Steinway Hall, New York. This was after the disciple's return from India, when he had attended the 1954 meeting at Ahmednagar, to which Baba had invited some of his Western followers. She was able to attend this talk and through the lecturer made her contact with her Master.

Another devotee of Meher Baba says that the very first time she looked at a photo of the Master, she saw the following words written in

white light over Baba's head: "I am He who always was and always will be." The following night she dreamt that Baba came to her home and sat in a chair in her living room listening while she played the piano for him. In the dream he was barefooted and there was dust on the floor and she noticed that his feet made imprints in the dust. The next morning on awakening she went into the living room and behold there was an actual pattern of footprints in front of the chair in which she saw the Master sitting as described in her dream!

That the Master makes a tremendous impact on some people goes without saying, but the effect differs according to the disposition of the devotee. An American I met in America, in 1947 after I had told her about Baba, had an experience almost impossible to describe. She writes: "I saw him everywhere for a few days, everyone had his face and it seemed to be imprinted on the ground, on bushes, on doors, on walls—it was everywhere. When I was meditating on the 'heart centre' it was he that I saw and the universe was full of nothing but Baba. I was very blissful in those days, but I made the common mistake of telling people and they talked me out of it by saying it was an imagination, etc.

I guess it is hard for anyone to understand that there can be a bond that is not a physical one and that can be reached through consciousness alone, and not through the usual physical senses of hearing, speaking, etc. It seemed quite reasonable and logical to me that anyone who could function

in a universal consciousness could contact mentally anyone he chose, anywhere, for where do time and space enter into consciousness?

Every time I have had a real broadening and lifting of consciousness, there has not been any world of form there at all: the universe into pure being. You cannot tell me that God *has* to be something, I can not even call pure consciousness by name; it is nothing, but for some reason with me, it is always formless bliss, an ocean of bliss and love that simply fills all so-called space and permeates everything like water permeates a sponge. That is the closest I can describe the wonderful experience I had in 1947, but the universe was not there, I was only aware of this tremendous blissful being that was our real consciousness—I suppose the Krishna-Self; I do not mean that it was me; it was 'all consciousness,' and I, individually, was lost in it as was any other form. Only the tremendous bliss and love remained. I have had that wonderful state four times since then—once it lasted all night, and although, of course, I did not sleep physically, there was no fatigue and when I got back to physical consciousness again, I could go right ahead with my work without feeling the least bit tired. That is the consciousness that the Western schools and churches do not seem to know to exist. That wonderful bliss that had everything included in it—but how can you call it God, for we are It and It is us? I think the most perfect description of it is in the Gita: "I pervade all space with a fragment of Myself, and I remain."

It is extraordinary that a Westerner who had not even met Baba and who had so little knowledge of him should have had such an illuminating experience. But if we read the lives of the Masters and the saints, we will find remarkable accounts of a similar nature.

For that matter, a new acquaintance here tells me that once in the evening when looking at the stars, she was filled with the most ineffable bliss, similar she says to what I have just described. Yet she knew nothing whatever about esoteric matters!

In reading stories of the saints and Masters of India, we are always struck by the remarkable acts of devotion performed by Eastern devotees. In fact, such stories could hardly obtain credence in the West. I heard one concerning a young boy of fourteen, who comes from the village of Arangaon, near Meher Baba's headquarters at Meherabad. He performed *puja* at the time of the Master's big meeting in 1954. The boy was so exalted at being in Baba's presence that he held the burning camphor in his naked hand till it had burnt itself out. Some days later Meher Baba by chance, happened to see him and asked him what was the matter with his hand. Then the boy explained and Meher Baba smiled and embraced him. Recently at the age of seventeen this same boy, because of his devotion, underwent a fast lasting one month, in which he took no solid or liquid food—nothing except water twice a day. He lately visited one of the *mandali* in Ahmednagar and explained that he was looking for

employment but did not wish to take a job till he could see Baba. So one of Baba's men brought him to the Master, who was very happy to learn of the fast. He gave the boy two alternatives, one being to seek employment with a devotee in Bombay, the other to renounce the world and travel all over India for twelve years. He was never to touch money, never to beg for anything but food, and that just enough to keep himself alive. If he should choose this spiritual vocation then he was to come back to Meher Baba after twelve years. The master explained at the time that whatever choice he made, it was the same to him, and the boy could do as he liked. As I write, I learn that he has decided to work for the devotee in Bombay. I saw him and was struck by his unusual face. I imagine that he has some *karmic* connection with Baba.

One of the most extraordinary stories that I have heard is the one published in *Meher Pukar*, a monthly Hindu journal devoted to Baba. I have the translation in English. It is as follows: "Baburam Vyas, a schoolmaster and resident of the small village of Muskara (in North India) is a Baba lover and worker. His fifty-five year old mother Jagranidevi also loves Baba devotedly.

Early one morning, the 4th May (1960), Jagranidevi went out to cut and fetch grass for her goats and cattle. While returning with a large bundle of it on her head, she encountered a man of about thirty with a stout stick in his hand, who approached her and asked

her if she knew him. She replied "No son, I don't know you." Whereupon he bent down catching hold of her ankles and yanked her off her feet. The woman fell on her face and broke two of her teeth. But she sat up and berated him for his cowardly attack. He ordered her to remove and give him the gold and silver ornaments on her person. She replied boldly that she would not give him one bit of her gold and silver. He then caught her by the legs and dragged her towards a nullah (dry river bed) a short distance away. Realising her life was in danger, she cried out, "Baba! Beloved Baba! Meher Baba! Save me! If my love is sincere and you are verily God Incarnate, save me!" The man laughed, retorting, "You cry in vain. There is not any Baba here, or anyone else to help you. I shall kill you and remove your ornaments and leave you in the nullah and no one will know!"

When they reached the nullah—she was still screaming "Baba" at the top of her voice and from the bottom of her heart—he raised his stick to beat her to death, when at that exact moment three cows seemingly from nowhere, appeared at the scene at a quick trot and, the russet-coloured one, mooing fiercely, rushed at the man and attacked him with her horns, throwing him to the ground. He got up and defended himself with his stick. Jagranidevi took the opportunity to get up and run, but her assailant caught up with her and dragged her back towards the nullah. But again the cow charged the man and however much he defended

himself with his stick, she kept dodging him and continued to attack, mooing loudly all the time. In the meantime the two white cows stood beside the nullah, guarding it as if to protect the woman and at the same time helping the other cow by butting in at the right moment. Jagranidevi was, by this time, so exhausted and frightened that she could do nothing but keep on repeating Baba's name. The fight was at its height, when a bullock cart was heard rumbling towards them on the path towards the village. At this the thug gave up the fight and fled. Help was promptly given and the people of the village took Jagranidevi home, the three cows accompanying the group for about two furlongs. Next day, the villagers went in search of the scoundrel, following his tracks and he was finally caught and given into custody.

Baba on hearing about the above incident, remarked: "God is omnipresent, and the one who calls out sincerely to Him never fails to be heard and to receive His help."

There are, naturally, many stories told by devotees of miraculous interventions in which they have been saved, some even from death, while either Baba has been seen at the time, (although physically nowhere near) or else an agent. It is said that there are innumerable agents in different parts of the world who carry out Baba's orders in the twinkling of an eye. One of the most interesting of such incidents was narrated to me by the persons concerned.

I will borrow this story from my book, *Civilisation or Chaos?* It happened in California.

N. and E., devotees of the Master, were motoring in the U.S.A. and had gone for a long drive in an Indian reserve. They were climbing a lonely mountain side, and the car was unable to progress further, being stopped by a row of large stones drawn across the road. Obviously it was dangerous to proceed. A landslide perhaps? E., the driver, looked round and noticed that there was a detour up to the bridge above, the track going across the dried river bed at their left. As she drove the car across, a voice suddenly called out, "Halt!" Startled, she looked round to see an old Ford car standing at the very place they had just left. E., feeling compelled to do so, reversed the car and went back. There was a man sitting in the Ford. Without waiting for them, he called out. "Follow me!" and proceeded down the mountain side with E. meekly following. As the car wound away in front of them, N. turned round to have a last look at the bridge they had hoped to reach, and noticed, looking at it from a different angle, that there was a large gaping hole in the middle. So, if they had not been intercepted, they would have fallen through to their death!

Suddenly, without a word of warning, the car in front "went up in smoke, disappearing before their eyes. It simply vanished! Disconcerted and terrified, they now knew that something of a supernatural order had occurred. On arrival home they immediately went to Baba,

who was staying in the vicinity, and related their adventure. He replied on the letter-board with these words: "You were just about to be killed. One of the agents came to the rescue!"

Those who expect something for nothing will be disappointed, and this is illustrated by the wonderful story of Pleader, one of Meher Baba's Parsi disciples.

Pleader met the Master in the early days of his mission and on hearing a discourse one day on the subject of spiritual liberation, he asked Baba if he could give him "liberation." Baba replied that he would, provided Pleader was willing to carry out his orders and directions. After a short stay at the Ashram, then at Meherabad, he was instructed to eat nothing, only to drink milk. He was also to observe complete silence and to see no one except the man who attended to his daily requirements. He was to read nothing, neither was he allowed to write. His lodging was changed once a year, but he continued to see no one, save the *mandali* who had to attend to him, and Baba, who visited him once yearly. After three long years of this incredibly rigorous discipline, Baba had Pleader sent to Rishikesh to contact one of his agents, a sixth-plane saint, well known in those parts. On finding the saint, Pleader showed him his Master's picture by way of introduction, and was immediately taken into his cave—to the stupefaction of the holy man's devotees, who had never been permitted to set foot in the saint's abode. The saint then proceeded to ridicule Pleader's silence and his milk diet. "How do

you expect to help humanity" he questioned, "if you do not speak, and just how do you expect to get milk in this rugged part of the world?"

To this Pleader replied with his letterboard that, in observing silence and partaking only of milk, he was obeying his Master's orders. The saint asked if he had any great spiritual experiences at the hands of his Master; to which he replied that he had not. Then the holy man's attitude warmed and changed, he smiled and declared: "But your Master has perfectly prepared the ground. At a touch from him you will become Perfect, even as he is. You will do well to serve such a Master. You can have no idea of the infinite scope of his activities. Even I, with my spiritual knowledge, can fathom only a fraction of his depths."

Meher Baba has explained that at the final stage the gulf is so great between the Sixth and the Seventh Planes that the difference in the states of consciousness may be likened to the difference between the consciousness of an ant and that of a human being! Many saints who have arrived at the Sixth Plane of consciousness may deceive themselves into believing that they have reached the Ultimate Reality, the Final Goal; whereas they still have an infinite abyss to cross. Also, it should be remembered that Meher Baba has explained that no Sixth-Plane saint can attain to the Seventh Plane or Union with God, i. e., the Oversoul, or Universal Consciousness, *without the help of a Perfect Master*.

This fact is not generally known, not even to all the great saints who have reached the Sixth Plane. But if we can appreciate what Meher Baba affirms about this tremendous distinction in the final stage of the Path, it will be easier for us to understand why there are so many saints who believe, along with their followers, that they have already attained to Liberation! Few there be, like this Sixth-Plane Saint, who explained to Pleader that he could fathom only a fraction of Meher Baba's depth; but that was because as Meher Baba says, one who has "reached" the other shore of the vast ocean of imagination has realised that this Last Truth is The Only Truth, and that all other stages on the Path were entirely illusory. For he has arrived at his Final Destination. But this is an intensely difficult and complicated subject, far beyond my power to explain, and I suggest that if the reader needs clarification on these points he should read *God Speaks*.*

When scholars write about the historical personalities of great spiritual leaders of history, they are inclined to think that their followers had more blind devotion than discernment, not realising that there may be much truth behind the marvels and miracles credited to such Masters. Such narratives are not necessarily unhistorical; it is because scholars, with all their learning and all their wit, seldom have any knowledge of the fundamental laws that govern creation, and incidentally man.

* Dictated by Meher Baba. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1955.

That is why they are unable to appreciate how or why the *Avatars* have sometimes sprung from a lowly heritage with no cultural background. Krishna was a prince who lived amongst the cowherds in concealment from his vengeful uncle Kansa. But later he sprang from such a position to one of the highest spiritual eminence, as proven in the Gita. Scholars think there were several Krishnas. The Krishna cowherd-god Mathura-Bindravan; Krishna the tribal God of Ahiras, Gujars and Jats; the Krishna Gopal of the early Tamil anthologies; the Krishna Devakiputra of the Chhandogya Upanishad; the Kshatriya warrior of the Yadava clan who played the leading role in the Mahabharata; and Krishna, the king of Dwarka. It is often asked were they all one and the same character? But we know that erudite writers have gone even so far in their ingenious theories as to prove that the historic names of prophets and spiritual teachers of the distant past, including Jesus, may be merely variations of ancient cults and myths, the originators of which probably never existed at all, or have had their personalities merged with others. But scholars as a rule, particularly of the West, know nothing of the powers and the hidden life of the saints and Masters and their relation to the secret Hierarchy behind the scenes. Hence all the mystification when scholars seek to delve into the lives of such great beings of the past. It is naturally incredible to them that any one man can play so many different roles.

Few scholars understand the nature of Jesus and his spiritual career and the reason for the tremendous influence he has exerted on future generations, though he was of humble origin and only the son of a carpenter. Undoubtedly he must have been trained by John the Baptist since it was John who made him Perfect in the baptismal regeneration in the Jordan. We understand from the esoteric traditions in India that Jesus went there and that after the Crucifixion his body was taken to India and buried near Shrinagar. We know nothing about Mohammed's inner development and spiritual training. It was kept a secret. It appears he had no unusual descent for he was a desert business man, but some of his relatives appear to have been notables of Mecca and he himself belonged to the Quraishi clan.

Meher Baba is an exception and some of his spiritual training has been revealed, for having been born in this sophisticated age, it was appropriate that information regarding his spiritual life should be given. Also, he went to school and college, so was educated in a normal fashion. This was necessary, since he has a worldwide mission.

We know that Buddha's teachings began only after he had attained to Enlightenment. There is a story of the Buddha, that when he came out from under the *Bodhi* tree his five disciples had been waiting for him with the word, "Brother!" "Call me not Brother!" exclaimed the Buddha; for his true spiritual status was now Perfect Master, so that they

could no longer regard him as an equal. The past *Avatars* did not have unquestionable authority 'till after they had attained to the same heights as the Buddha. It has been the same with Meher Baba. Baba has gone through various phases during his spiritual career and, as so much has already been written on this subject, there is no need here to go over this ground again. From what we can glean from the world's sacred books, it appears that all *Avatars* conducted their missions with unquestionable authority, with a dignity and certainty of their divine status that has always stamped its imprint on the religions that followed. As we know, from the beginning of historical time, religions and civilisations have been intertwined, and all civilisations have been influenced by the personality of the *Avatar* of the Age, so how could these be just ordinary men? It should be recognised that though religions are undoubtedly influenced by the great spiritual figures of their time, nevertheless the *Avatars* remain conspicuous exemplars of the impersonal stand. But unfortunately, as the ages roll by, the essence of the teachings is eventually lost. Also, a religion always loses its efficacy and influence when it becomes encumbered traditionally and officially, even though outward observances are always necessary for the uninitiated and for ordinary social life. But, at the same time, the inner and essential truths should not be forgotten or suppressed, which is often the case. The professional philosopher who knows nothing but the theoretical aspects of the subject he studies can be

likened, as by the Buddha to a herdsman of other men's cows or, as by Mohammed, to a donkey bearing a load of books. Even so great a thinker as Albert Schweitzer understands little of the esoteric constitution of man, since he believes that no mind exists or could exist that could comprehend the Universe. He understands nothing of the role of Jesus as an *Avatar*, who, unknown except to his chosen few, was directing the world affairs of his time. Men pay homage to Jesus as a divine being while at the same time they understand nothing of what constitutes divinity. Schweitzer, like all critically minded thinkers, was also troubled by the conflicting accounts of Jesus given in the Gospels.

Krishna declared that he was Lord of the Universe; Jesus said he was the Light and the Way; Mohammed claimed to be the Prophet of God and declared that he was the City of Knowledge—in other words—that he had the Universal consciousness, which all those who have realised God, possess. Meher Baba states that he is Master of the Universe; and all the Avatars have expressed the same truths differently, according to the times they lived in, but in spite of contradictions, nevertheless, their teachings are intrinsically the same, for hidden knowledge cannot be imparted to the *hoi polloi** but only to initiates.

Buddha had trouble in his time with the orthodox teachings. He probably was not opposed to Vedic orthodoxy but would have regarded its preoccupations as worldly and

* the masses (Gk).

therefore to be transcended. His standpoint is well expressed in his own words as follows: "I, monks, do not dispute with this World, but the World disputes with me. No one who professes *dharma*, monks, disputes with the world. Whatever the learned in the world agree upon as 'It is not' I too, monks, say of that, 'it is not.' Whatever the learned in the world agree upon as 'It is,' I too, monks, say of that 'it is.' " Might we not regard the "learned" as applying to the real initiates, not to the pundits who only understand the letter and not the spirit? Jesus certainly had trouble with the Pharisees and even some of the followers of John the Baptist appear to have criticised him; though, the Perfect Master, who enabled Jesus to realise his Avatarhood, said of him, "But one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." For he knew Jesus to be the Supreme Master or Qut'b of his age. Meher Baba today ignores all creeds, rituals and ceremonies, but still says that we should not change our religion but stay in it and revivify it.

In these days of universal education and great advance of technology and science, Baba naturally adapts his philosophy of life to the trends of the times, so he can say frankly, "I am God!" But he also says, "You are God!" The great difference is that Baba knows he has union with God, whereas we do not know that we are God; but in some life or other we have to awaken to the reality of our own divinity. For that is our highest purpose, the aim and

object of our existence, even though we may not be aware of it.

But should we come in contact with a perfect Master, we instinctively arrive at a quickening of our spiritual consciousness and no matter how slight may be our association with divinity in human form, our future lives will be minimised and we will be further on the Path to Liberation.

Here I might mention one of Baba's close devotees, an elderly Parsi gentleman who belongs to the Zoroastrian priest class. As he has had such outstanding experiences I asked him one day if he could write some down for my book. He protested, "But I have no mind!" For such illuminations are beyond the scope of the mind. He constantly repeats Baba's name and he has glimpses of Baba's divinity. He has said that at such moments even a dark room can be full of light, incomparably brilliant and in it he sees Baba.

One point should be made quite clear, Baba does not ask those in search of God to give up the world and go into seclusion. On the contrary, he tells us to be in the world and not of it at the same time. That is to say, we must keep God first and foremost enthroned in our hearts. Another point of importance is that Baba does not encourage his devotees to practice any form of yoga or to go in for "experiences." Baba's yoga is love and service. Man's excessive concentration on his material affairs or his spiritual affairs matters not. What Baba seeks is the elimination of the ego of his

devotees and he may eliminate it the hard way and in a manner quite unexpected and even unacceptable to the devotee in question. For instance when Baba says, "I will help you," his "help" may be something not appreciated by the recipient who knows not his past, present and future in the sense that Baba does, nor knows how best he can be spiritually benefited.

It is often asked if Meher Baba performs miracles, for the uninitiated invariably connect miracles with a saint or Master. We might here remember what the Buddha is said to have stated: "I see danger in the practice of miracles and so-called supernormal wonders and loathe and abhor them and I am ashamed of them." But this statement might be a little misleading as it does not fit into any such generalisation, or correspond at all with modern notions on the subject. The Buddha regarded the power to work miracles as a natural and excellent thing that invariably came to those on the Path; but should not be exhibited for the curiosity or amusement of the vulgar. He himself on several occasions vanquished his adversaries by their own means, as did Moses the magicians of Pharaoh.

Meher Baba does not like miracles and when he is told of one having taken place he will always say that it has nothing to do with him, but is due to the love and faith of the beneficiary. Also, Baba does not like to have miracles attributed to him, for miracles have nothing to do with spirituality and are merely happenings that belong to the subtle spheres

and thus unimportant in the eyes of the Masters. Jesus is chiefly remembered by his miracles but we have to take into account the primitive times he lived in—with no hospitals and modern means of alleviating human suffering. Then again, Jesus, for the sake of humanity, had to sacrifice himself, and the unorthodoxy of his healings served to arouse the ire of the Jews.

Nevertheless, we have to remember that there are Masters who have performed many miracles of healing during their lifetimes as in the case of Meher Baba's two Masters, Babajan and Sai Baba.

In fact, Sai Baba used to say—according to the translation: "I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them!"

I will here touch on some of the personal aspects of the great *Avatars*. For example, when a Master gives food and clothing to the needy, the result will be that the world will gain in economic and material welfare. When a Master washes the untouchables, the insane and the lepers with his own hands, they will be spiritually and sometimes physically benefited and their future lives will be minimised. If a Master fasts, the result of fasting is felt by the whole universe spiritually, for a Master's work is always for a spiritual end. If he observes silence, the same result is brought about; for the Universal Mind has infinite ways in its universal work. Whatever work a Master is doing reverberates throughout the universe and produces a reflex action. All the outward

actions of a Master are, therefore, inspired by some spiritual need in the universe. It is perhaps difficult to understand this, but a Master's most important work is in the manipulation of *Maya*; for *Maya* is the dominating factor in our illusory world, and a Master's peculiarities are intimately associated with his handling or "tricking" of *Maya*.

The attitude that Meher Baba's followers have might be well expressed in the following French quotation; I am afraid I do not remember who wrote it: "*Je ne sais lequel est le meilleur ou le pire en toutes choses , car ca depasse la force des hommes et de s anges et reste parmi les secrets de notre Providence que j'adore et que je ne veux pas approfondir.*"

I am often moved by their whole-hearted and unquestioning devotion but was it not the same in the time of Jesus? Did he not say: "He who loveth wife or children, or lands, more than Me is not worthy of Me."

Baba always stresses to his followers that he is the One and the Same Avataric Soul through the ages. He maintains that from the beginning of every Cycle to the end of every Cycle of time, the avataric scope of work gains relative force. He also affirms that the *Avatar*, in the period ending a Cycle, has in Him all the accumulated strength of the previous *Avatars* of the Cycle and is a balanced mixture of all their characteristics and, as well, He carries the increasing capacity of undergoing Universal Suffering with all its universal strength and weakness.

One might say that Baba—like most of the great teachers does not encourage intellectualism. As Ramana Maharshi opined: "It is the unlearned who are saved, rather than those whose ego has not subsided despite their learning. The unlearned are saved from the unrelenting grip of self-infatuation, from the malady of a myriad whirling thoughts, from the endless pursuit of (mental) wealth; it is not from one ill alone that they are saved." (*Forty Verses*).

The flood of books on the market dealing with spiritual philosophy becomes very confusing to those who read too much. One would do better to read less and to attach oneself—if circumstances permit—to some teacher in whom one finds an adequate guide for one's needs. For as we are within the grip of *Maya*, we will always remain confused.

Some people complain of Meher Baba's uncertainty in his movements, and of the fact that he is continually changing his mind. It is impossible to excuse or to explain the Master's eccentricities, any more than we can throw light on the peculiarities of other Masters; I can only repeat that it should always be borne in mind that a *Sadguru* or an *Avatar* is working for infinite ends, whereas ordinary persons work for finite ends; therefore, the scope and manner of a Master's working must necessarily be different. This is obvious if we compare Baba's puzzling actions with the riddles of Jesus, Krishna and other *Avatars*.

One of the oddest characteristics of the Master is his habit of making dramatic

pronouncements, for instance that he is going to break his silence at such and such a time; or that certain events will take place at a given date. Then nothing at all seems to happen—that is, so far as we know, from the viewpoint of external world happenings. We have noticed that when Baba does issue some momentous declaration, his immediate circle does not always appear to be particularly concerned—but to outsiders it is always a problem to explain the Master's contradictions. The Master's technique of "tricking *Maya*" cannot be understood either by intimates or outsiders. But it does appear that he makes use of the energy engendered in the emotions of his followers for some purpose of his own, in connection with the inner spheres of consciousness.

The most Baba has explained about himself, is to say: "The world is against spirituality and so against me, as I have often told you. Do not be hasty in forming opinions regarding my words or deeds. My words will prove to be true, but I alone know how, when and where. You will not understand them, because, to understand my mystical statements, supernatural intelligence is required."

As I have already said, in ordinary life, Baba is friendly, intimate and easy-going. In fact, one of his characteristics is to show that all men are equal. In India it is the custom to show great veneration to saints, such as prostrating oneself on the ground before them when first ushered into their presence. But Baba will have none of this. He greets a visitor like any

ordinary individual. In fact, when facing great crowds of people gathered to render homage it is *he* who does the bowing, *he* who renders the homage—since *he* recognises the divinity in everyone of us, no matter how humble we may be. He teaches, in fact, that there is no difference between us and him: only he *knows* he is a God-man, whereas we do not know our own spiritual status. But we shall know some time or other!

The Masters have all taught the value of silence. In non-Christian books from Moslem and Hindu sources, Jesus is reported to have stressed the value of silence. Even today there are Eastern and Western orders that practice silence.

Father Seraphin of the Russian Orthodox Church was silent for 35 years. He lived in a monastery several hundred miles from Moscow and the faithful believe that he was instrumental—through his powers—in saving Russia when Napoleon marched on Moscow.

Sai Baba was noted for speaking rarely to visitors, and it is a characteristic of the saints to be very silent. Meher Baba has remarked when once asked why he does not speak: "If you were to ask me why I do not speak, I would say I am not silent and that I speak more eloquently through gestures and the alphabet board.... If you were to ask me why I do not talk, I would say mostly for three reasons. Firstly, I feel that through you all I am talking eternally through your forms. Secondly, to relieve the boredom of talking incessantly through your forms, I keep silence in my personal physical form.

And thirdly, because all talk in itself is idle talk; lectures, messages, statements and discourses of any kind, spiritual or otherwise, imparted through utterances or writings, are just idle talk when not acted upon or lived up to. If you were to ask me when I will break my silence I would say when I feel like uttering the only real WORD that was spoken in the beginningless beginning. So, that Word is alone worth uttering. The time for the breaking of my outward silence and to utter that WORD is getting near."

Chapter XII

MEHER BABA'S TEACHINGS

People in India, as everywhere else, are hopelessly bewildered at the chaotic world situation, which appears to have so little genuine co-operation and so much animosity and rancour. They wonder also how it is that India with her wonderful spiritual heritage in the form of so many saints and masters should have sunk so low. Many modern Indian thinkers, and particularly politicians, believe that the Hindu religion is at the root of the lack of sincerity, degradation, inactivity, callousness and want of interest in progress as a whole.

At this moment there is hardly a state in India that is not quarrelling with another state, hardly a community that does not seem to be disputing about something or other, and the linguistic disputes seem never ending. India appears to have become a veritable Babel of warring tongues, all because English is no longer allowed to be the one and only unifying tongue. For it was the English language that had the effect of bringing people together in the past.

Nevertheless, India, in spite of her faults and deficiencies, is the great source of spiritual energy from which man's regeneration and

inspiration for the New Age must flow. She, of all countries is the most fitted to lead humanity out of its present impasse into a real Brotherhood of Man. But because India is the centre of spiritual gravity, and because of the tremendous regenerating power of the forces round the *Avatar*, there is always tension.

These remarks somehow remind me that, when in California, I had the opportunity of several talks with a certain famous Indian sage. I remember how horrified he was at the time of the Stalin purge and how he lamented the prevailing wickedness of our age. Trying to console him, I remarked that everything would be changed when Meher Baba broke his silence; which his followers believe will be the divine manifestation that will give a spiritual push to the whole world and start the New Dispensation.

The sage turned on me somewhat heatedly and asked "How can any man's speaking change the face of the world?" "But," I retorted, "Baba is not a man, he is God! That is, if you accept the theory of man's journey through creation and his ultimate perfecting in human form, when he becomes a man-God or a God-man. In that case then, may it not be so difficult to believe what God can do, and that Baba *can* change the world for the better?" I continued; "Do you believe in this theory?" Of course, I might have retorted that whatever bad mess there appeared to be was merely the reflection of the intellect of the day.

He hesitated for a few minutes, saying he did not know, and then added, "But all I can

say is that if the Masters *do* exist, then they have made a pretty bad mess of it!"

I have to admit that, though India is as ever full of advanced souls, saints and Masters, and also that I believe an *Avatar* has been born in Meher Baba's person, yet it is difficult for Westerners to see any signs of spiritual regeneration. This question must be answered by the Masters themselves; we can only wait and see. I am sometimes asked by both Westerners and Easterners why the teachings of the great spiritual leaders of mankind should vary so much to the point of contradiction. In fact, it almost seems that they have no unity or pattern of expression. For instance, Buddha virtually ignored the idea of God and taught that there was no permanent self. Whereas, we know that Krishna taught quite the opposite, namely that the Self is permanent and taintless. Then again, we have Mohammed, who categorically denied he was an Incarnation.

Such contradictions go too deep to be reconciled on any presumption other than their protagonists all spoke from the same spiritual level of consciousness. We can only comfort ourselves by trying to realise that once we can accept that all true spiritual teaching is of the inexpressible, such points are irrelevant to the Ultimate Truth which does not come and go and is far beyond *Maya* and the limitations of the human mind. It is our own error of perspective that gives these contradictions too much prominence.

I have heard lecturers on Buddhism preface their introductory remarks by the statement "There is no God!" However, it appears that the Buddha did not really teach that there is no God. Passages which appear authentic could also be quoted to show that he made no hard-fast rule of the view that there is no Self. But since contrary passages to the latter could equally well be quoted and since this affirmation gives its radical shape to whatever antithesis we have to make between Hinduism and Buddhism, it might be best to say that the idea of God with a capital G was virtually ignored in India of Buddha's times—and even in the India of today. But the Buddha makes mention of the gods, and even of *Brahma*, the Creator, in passages, sometimes of a stunning irony, which represent the purest of Hindu view. To quote from Sir Charles Eliot's masterly *Hinduism and Buddhism*: "Thus in the *Kevaddha Sutta* he (Gotam) relates how a monk who was puzzled by a metaphysical problem applied to various gods and finally accosted *Brahma* himself in the presence of all his retinue. After the question, which was: "Where do the elements cease and leave no trace behind?" *Brahma* replies, "I am the Great, the Supreme, the Mighty, the All-seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of all, the Controller, the Creator, the Chief of all, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of days, the Father of all that are and are to be." "But," said the monk, "I did not ask you, Friend, whether you were indeed all you now say, but I ask you where the four elements cease and leave no trace." Then

the Great *Brahma* took him by the arm and led him aside and said "These gods think I know and understand everything. Therefore, I give no answer in their presence. But I do not know the answer to your question and you had better go and ask the Buddha!"

Meanwhile, we should remember that a tradition firmly established in the ultimate position is found only in Hinduism and there are various schools of thought, nevertheless, in the Mother of all religions. But we have to accept that to our own limited judgement most of the acknowledged great teachers appear to fall short of the traditional teachings in varying degrees. It is, therefore, useless to try to bring together such diversity of thought, especially as we know that following the death of a great Master, his followers may build superstructures of dogma and ritual in which the inner realities become forgotten, vitiated and lost. This has certainly happened in the case of Christianity, as revealed by research into Christian origins by the patristic scholars of this century.

We know that it was as early as the second and third centuries that the original Gnostic interpretation of the baptism in the Jordan became openly condemned as heretical by Rome and finally all the Gnostic teachings (which were the *real* teachings of Jesus) became supplanted by the Virgin Birth legend. For the early Church Councils wanted to make Christianity essentially a Western religion, dominated and sponsored by Rome; it was, therefore, necessary to suppress all Eastern concepts,

although the esoteric teachings of Jesus came from the East.

Then again how can we believe, for instance, that Jesus—a God-realised man could have been capable of the vindictive sayings attributed to him such as are to be found in the New Testament? Surely they were introduced by early Church Councils for the express purpose of frightening the people? There is no reason to suppose that the Church could not have stooped to alter and misconstrue texts for her own political convenience— especially as patristic research discovered that the Gospels were not written down before 70-120 A.D. and that original texts have been changed over and over again. As we know in those days manuscripts were laboriously written and each example had to be copied afresh, the result being that copies soon departed from their originals, being added to, rewritten and recast by further writers who had no objection to what we, today, would call plagiarism.

Nevertheless, though Bertrand Russell and his ilk must know of the unreliability of parts of the Gospels, they contrive to capitalise on unfortunate sayings and question the virtue of Jesus and his teachings as a whole, in their attack on Christianity.

This type of intellectual iconoclast never troubles to go to the root of the matter or to keep an open mind. His conceit is so great that he dares not investigate for fear of losing his authority. He has no real intellectual

honesty and makes a living out of destroying all that is sacred for other people.

No doubt readers can in the main agree that the *Sadguru*, i.e. Man-become-God in the proper sense, does not "come back" for he has established—through his initiation of God-realisation or Union with the Self, his identity with the Unborn, the Permanent, with That in which there is no coming or going.

But when it comes to the thesis that the *Avatar*, i.e. God-become-man, comes again and again for the redemption of mankind, there is, so I understand, much in some aspects of Hinduism, which disagrees with such a concept. If we read *The Message of Krishna* we are comforted to find that the author A.S.Wadia writes: "Hindu scriptures are filled with disquisitions on the doctrine of the *Avatar*; all their systems of philosophy and religion recognise the periodical involution and dissolution of world-process as representing the systole and diastole of the One Universal heart, which is ever active and yet ever at rest. Though the Universal Heart lives and beats in all, it lives and beats in a special degree in the Rishis, and the Buddhas, the Prophets and the Messiahs.

When the downward materialistic tendency holds sway over the lives and ideals of men, these great souls appear on the scene, and redress the balance and thereby restore peace and righteousness on earth.

On the point of the Descent of the Lord, Krishnaic Hinduism is broadly at one with Trinitarian Christianity, the only difference

between the two being that while the Hindus believe that Krishna for the time being was the one, immediate and complete manifestation of immanent *Brahma* on earth, the Trinitarian Christians aver that Christ was the only one of three co-equal manifestations of God."

Not being a scholar and incapable of arguing the various pros and cons, I am content to accept what Mr. Wadia writes, which agrees with my own views—such as they are.

We should, however, remember that there are Western writers today who seek notoriety by debunking Eastern spirituality. Such writers are always superficial and quite unacquainted with the inner teachings of Eastern mysticism and *yoga*. Arthur Koestler is one of these superficial writers. His recent book, *The Lotus and the Robot* * from what I have read of it from reviews, suggests that he is still a communist at heart, and uses the main tenets (or tactics) as perpetrated by communists, who work for the defamation and degradation of all religious ideas and ideals such as are held sacred by non-communists.

We just have to ignore such destructive writers and try to remember that the essential is to understand that the real teaching is—as always—of the Inexpressible, which does not admit of any disagreement, while all other teachings only lead up to this end, and being strictly *ad hominem* ‡ do not call for agreement.

A teacher may make diametrically opposite

* Published by Hutchinson, 1960.

‡ † to the person (L).

statements to different disciples—with the same intention of taking him beyond words and thought, or, indeed, to the same disciple on different occasions. A classical example of both cases is found in Prajapati's teachings to the gods, and to the Asuras as described in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*.

As to the Hindus in general, whether they believe in avataric manifestations or whether they do not, it may be observed that they are often very matter-of-fact in discussing their most sacred texts; only in so far as these patently serve to take one beyond the phenomenal, have they indisputable authority.

So, we shall have to leave it at that, but the most important teaching of all, in which all the Masters have concurred, is the influence of divine love. They give out an all-embracing love to humanity and are the most selfless beings of their day. They all teach that comfort, wealth, possessions, pain and pleasure are but the fleeting impressions of a mind immersed in *Maya*. They saw their own selves embodied in all. They felt the happiness and unhappiness of all—not only of men—but of the subhuman species as well, because of their realisation that the Divine Self is imminent in all.

There is a delightful little volume *Little Flowers*,* an anthology of *Atmavidya* or Life in the Spirit, compiled by Shri T. L. Vaswani which shows how thoughts and sayings, gathered like flowers from the gardens of the Masters,

* Published by Gita Publishing House, Poona, 1958.

are intrinsically the same—whether they be from Mohammed, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster or others. In them, we discover the truths that take us beyond any individual teachings.

Such God-men started the New Dispensation of their times in a flood of divine love. A descent of the Christ-consciousness always takes place from time to time, when the planet has "run down" and needs refueling with God's energy of Love. As we are now at the end of a cycle, tremendous changes must come before our tired and tortured earth becomes replenished with the divine energy that will and must start a New Dispensation to bring in the Golden Age to be.

This brings me again to Hindu metaphysics, and I feel that I can best express what India stands for by paraphrasing a part of one of S. Dikshit's editorials in that admirable little periodical, Chetana* devoted to the enlightenment of mankind.

To understand the mission of India we must think of her in the context of the world today and not as a rather isolated geographical and political entity. One might say that India has a way of life that cuts across all frontiers and embraces the whole of humanity at a certain level of consciousness. In fact her religion, philosophy and culture in their widest sense represent the universality of all that is good in man, and teach that he has limitless consciousness

* Published by Chetana, Bombay.

and is not a finite creature. The keystone of Indian thought can be described in the term *Sat-chit-ananda*, which means "All-powerful Existence, Knowledge and Bliss." India stands for the complete identification of the true and the beautiful with subjective knowledge, the sequence of *karma*, which is purely ethical in nature. Indian thought, therefore, in its totality, is not only the most harmonious combination, but also a noble culmination of all the eternal verities of life.

Indian thought postulates man as the symbol of the Supreme Divinity. It discovers the infinite and thus rejects the differences between man and man as only phenomenal and artificial and not ultimately real. The *Vedanta* philosophy asserts that the final enlightenment leads to transcendental knowledge, the expression of the Ultimate Reality, which is basically one and the same everywhere and at all times.

Recognition of phenomena leads to differentiations, denials and disputes. Phenomenalism in thought is analytical negativism. Recognition of the Ultimate Reality as the basis of all is a positive attitude that leads to synthesis, to absolute reality. Therefore, what is here and there, now and then, this and that *all at the same time*, is the supreme Reality. In other words, Reality, of its very nature, must transcend phenomena, i.e., all differences, denials and disputes. Advanced Vedantic thought goes a step further and postulates phenomenal existence as hallucinatory and *mithya*

(*Maya*). The essence of this postulation is not a denial of the material existence that we experience from day to day in practical life, but an intellectual endeavour for the correct understanding of the true nature of Reality. It is an endeavour to synthesize the differences in the apparent multiplicity. It is the glorification of the phenomenal into the abstract Ultimate Reality.

Thus the foundation of Indian thought transcends all phenomenal differentiation, and on it is built the superstructure of a universal unity between man and man, and even man and beasts and birds and things.

The above is completely in accord with Meher Baba's teachings and to establish this all embracing unity of thought is the mission of the Master, and it is India that has to fulfil this sacred role—for she is more fitted than any other country by her lofty aspirations ensouled in her ancient life which will be worked out through the awakening of men to a higher state of consciousness, a new vibration bringing harmony, rather than discord, into our relation with one another.

We are in good company with Professor Toynbee* in his insistence that the restoration of religion is the greatest need of the hour.* He has made it clear that religion is the pivot of documental history and that true culture is the essence of civilisation. He deplores the spiritual vacuum in the West and condemns the

* See *An Historian's Approach to Religion*. Published by the Oxford University Press, 1956.

exclusive-mindedness of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He extols the Hindu religion's spirit for its catholicity, universalism and many-sidedness, for, according to Dr. Toynbee, exclusive-minded religions breed self-centeredness and result in the growth of a collective ego which, as we see in the world of today, is the source of all strife. Unless self-centredness is overcome, man cannot attain his full spiritual stature, and no religion that does not efface, or at least curb, the self-centredness can claim to be truly spiritual in the widest, deepest and loftiest sense. Dr. Toynbee's concluding remark states: "The missions of the higher religions are not competitive; they are complementary. We can believe in our own religion without having to feel that it is the sole repository of truth. We can love it without having to feel that it is the sole means of salvation..."

All the great world religions today are expecting the imminent return of their founders. The idea of a New Spiritual Dispensation, or Second Advent, is not peculiar to the Christian Faith—but at the same time there is no proper understanding of this belief. For, if the religious authorities of no matter what faith, are called upon to explain just what they mean by the expected return of their Founder and how they will recognise Him, they will be unable to give an intelligible reply. Of all the official religions in this age, only Krishnaic Hinduism openly acknowledges and recognises the part played by the *Avatars* (God-men) and the *Sadgurus* (men-Gods) in the hidden direction of world affairs.

So how can people be expected to appreciate Meher Baba's proclamation that he is the *Avatar*—such a concept being entirely foreign to their philosophical and religious outlook. We must leave the vindication of Baba's mission to posterity. He has said that in fifty to sixty years time the whole world will have recognised him—so there is not long to wait; our children and grandchildren will know.

It is difficult really to know what the hidden teachings of the great Masters were—for they have become lost and misinterpreted with the passage of time, but we know that Jesus taught that there was only one God, whom he called Father. He taught that by service to our fellow creatures we could learn that we were all One with the Father and that we all had to become Perfect. Jesus certainly never taught that He was the only Son of God. It is here that the Christian missionaries make such a mistake, alienating their hearers—who would otherwise be more sympathetic to the great and self-less work that they do, in India and elsewhere.

One might say that the marvel of Christianity is, that in spite of continuous distortions created by men of the Church, who were far from being God-Realised beings, the belief in the immanence of God has persisted and all true devotees of Christ can discern the living presence of God.

Would that we Christians were as tolerant as the Great Mogul, Akbar, a great scholar and the same time an illiterate—for he could neither read nor write. In the sixteenth century,

at a time of religious strife in Europe, the Moslem conqueror of India built a city named Fatehpur Sikri, the city of Victory. Over the great portals of the mosque was inscribed: "So said Jesus, upon whom be peace: "The world is a bridge; pass over it, and build no house upon it."

Baba teaches that, irrespective of what religion a man believes in, provided he has sufficient faith, he will attain to knowledge of God, if not in his present life, then in another.

Jesus knew when he said: "Seek and ye shall find." Hafiz said: "Ask, ask, and ask again, and you shall not wish in vain. Keep on asking and I swear to you by God, that even though you ask for God Himself, you will have Him."

This is not the place for an outline of Meher Baba's philosophy, for the scope of this book forbids it, but I may recall his oft-repeated declaration that he ... "has come not to teach but to awaken." The teachings, as already indicated, can be found in full detail in the Master's *Discourses*; also in that already mentioned unique work dictated by Meher Baba, *God Speaks*.^{*} No other Teacher in our time or in any known past age so minutely analysed consciousness; so this great book is of paramount importance at all stages to all thinkers interested in the spiritual evolution of man.

As Baba says, this "I AM" of the ego-self continues from the beginning of evolution, as the soul (with ever-increasing consciousness) identifies itself with each different form adopted

^{*} Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1955.

in the course of its progress towards Self-Realisation. For the Ultimate and Supreme Consciousness of the Soul's "I Amness" is reached when it becomes One with the Oversoul—this Self-identification being the final Goal of its existence.

This brings to mind the late Dr. Pierre le Comte de Nouy, the distinguished French biologist, whose book *Human Destiny** created such widespread interest. He declared that a scientific interpretation arrives at the idea of God as a logical necessity, and so helps to pave the way for a future reconciliation between natural science and metaphysical religion. He writes: "But we must remember that we ignore, and probably shall always ignore, everything of the relations between the mysterious and hypothetical universe created by our logic and genius, with the help of the elements furnished by the deforming mirror of our senses, and the real silent, colourless universe." With all respect to the Professor, I venture to say that this statement applies to imperfect man who has a clear and underformed mirror of the senses.

Until we can regard Realty as non-sensate, non-material Eternal Being and life, and the ego as an illusion or false conditioning which has to be transcended, we can never appreciate the true nature of man, or how he was made according to the Bible in God's image and likeness, and given dominion over all things. But when he has transcended the limitations of

* Published by Longmans Green & Co., Ltd. London, 1947.

the human mind, which belong to his illusory consciousness or "false ego" and has become Self or God-Realised, or God-conscious, he will not ignore his relations with the Universe, but will *know* it!

A man who has attained Self -Realisation, or union with the Oversoul, and after that, has regained human consciousness, knows that time is a limited concept belonging to his objective or evolutionary consciousness. Such a God-plus-man-conscious state as has just been depicted, can only be faintly reflected in the phantasmagoria of Creation. It is this ignorance of the Infinite Self within and without that constitutes *Maya*. It may be described as the belief in one's false, or illusory ego, as opposed to the Universal and Infinite Life of our Divine Ego. When the "false ego" is itself annihilated, or, better to say, when the false ego is transformed into the God-consciousness-real-I, then all earthly and heavenly dwellings are not vacated, they simply cease to exist, even as illusion, for we cannot measure the immeasurable. "The unreal hath no being, the real never ceaseth to be. The truth of both can be seen by the seers of the Essence." (Bhagavad Gita II, 16). The "seers" are Perfect Masters, or God-Realised Beings. One cannot think of any divisions in the Soul, since the spirit is indivisible, for the Spirit is in everything, and is God, and whatever He may be or what He may not be, He is always infinitely indivisible, and thus we have to justify the reality of the world and at the same time the

illusion of the world as compared with the Ultimate Reality.

A Perfect Master, *Sadguru* or Qut'b as he is known in the East, is one who, by virtue of the evolution of the consciousness of his Soul has attained Perfection or Liberation from the round of births and deaths to which ordinary man is subject. But the *Avatar*, out of compassion for humanity, reincarnates again and again, in his work of perfecting the human race. A *Sadguru* is one, like the *Avatar*, who has also transcended *Maya*; that is, One who has finished with the limitations of his false or limited ego and, in being One with the consciousness of the Oversoul, enjoys all its attributes, such as Wisdom, Power, Knowledge, Bliss and Divine Love, but he does *not* reincarnate again but remains forever immersed in God, the Oversoul.

Meher Baba once, when explaining his state of God-consciousness, said: "Just as matter does not exist in your dreams, so it does not exist for me when I am awake. What you experience in your sound sleep with regard to matter, a God-Realised man experiences in the waking state. My waking state is real, yours is false. When you realise God you will see this for yourself, provided you regain consciousness of the gross world."

Meher Baba has explained the above statement in his *Discourses* from which the following may be quoted: "In the case of the Perfect Master, the conquest of the unconscious by the conscious is final and permanent, and therefore his state of Self-knowledge is continuous and

unbroken, and remains the same at all times without diminution. From this you can see that the Perfect Master never sleeps, in the ordinary sense of the word. When he rests his body he experiences no gap in his consciousness.

In the state of Perfection, full consciousness becomes consummate by the disappearance of all obstacles to Illumination. He becomes Illumination itself. As long as a person remains under the sway of duality and looks on the manifestations of experience as being true or final, he has not traversed the domain of ignorance. In the state of final understanding, a person realises that the Infinite, which is one without a second, is the only reality.

The Infinite pervades and includes all existence, leaving nothing as its rival. The person who has such realization has attained the highest state of full consciousness, which is the fruit of evolution, is retained, but the limitation of *samskaras* and desires is completely transcended. The limited individuality, which is the creation of ignorance, is transformed into the Divine individuality, which is unlimited.

The illimitable consciousness of the Universal Soul becomes individualized in this focus without giving rise to any form of illusion. The person is free from all self-centered desires, and he becomes the medium for the spontaneous flow of the supreme and Universal Will, which expresses divinity.

Individuality becomes limitless by the disappearance of ignorance; as it is unimpaired by the separateness of *Maya* and unentangled in its duality, it enjoys the state of Liberation, in which there is objectless awareness, pure being, and unclouded joy. Such a person has no longer any of the illusions that perplex and bewilder man. In one sense he is dead. The personal ego, which is the source of the sense of separateness, has been for ever annihilated, but, in another sense, he is alive forevermore with unconquerable love and eternal bliss. He has infinite power and wisdom, and the whole universe is to him a field for his spiritual work of perfecting mankind."

In the world today there are millions of Christians, as also there are of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. But how many follow the code of Christ's teaching? How many Muslims can truly claim to be followers of Mohammed's precept to "hold God above everything else." How many Zoroastrians can claim to be living the three gems that compose Zoroastrianism: "Think Truly, Speak Truly, Act Truly." One might say that Meher Baba teaches the Yoga of Love. He does not ask his followers to give up the religions they hold or were born in. All he says is, "Follow any religion you like but follow its innermost nucleus. Do not make a mockery of it by adopting the conventional husk of religion and ignoring the underlying Truth. Religion should not be a convenience to be indulged in but words of Truth to be lived." Baba himself says: "I belong to no religion. Every religion belongs to Me. My personal religion I impart to all is Love for God, which is the Truth of all religions.

This love can belong to all, high and low, sick and poor. Every one, of every caste and creed, can love God. The one and only God, who resides equally in all, is approachable by each one through love. Religion, like worship, must be from the heart. If instead of erecting churches, fire temples, mandirs and mosques, people were to establish the House of God in their hearts for the Beloved God to dwell supreme, My work will have been done.

If instead of mechanically performing ceremonies and rituals as age-old customs, people were to serve their fellow-beings with the selflessness of love, taking God to be equally residing in one and all and knowing that by serving others they are serving Him, My work will have been fulfilled."

One of the answers given by Baba in a swift round-the-world-in-one-month trip in 1956 was as follows:

Q. "Why should misery perpetually exist on earth, in spite of God's Infinite Love and Mercy?"

A. "The source of Eternal Bliss is the Self in all and the cause of perpetual misery is the selfishness of all. As long as satisfaction is derived through selfish pursuits, misery will always exist. Only because of the Infinite Love and Mercy of God can man learn to realise, through the lesson of misery on earth, that inherent in him is the source of Infinite Bliss and that all suffering is his labour of Love to unveil his Infinite Self."

Meher Baba, when speaking of Divine Love, has said: "Divine love is qualitatively different from human love. Human Love is for the many in the One and Divine Love is for the One in the many. Human love leads to innumerable complications and tangles; but Divine Love leads to integration and freedom. In Divine Love, the personal and the impersonal aspects are equally balanced; but in human love the two aspects are in alternating ascendancy. Human love in its personal and impersonal aspects is limited; but Divine love with its fusion of the personal and the impersonal aspects is infinite in being and expression."

Let us remember always, as Baba incessantly teaches, that there is only one Soul, the Oversoul which is God; that we come from God and that we go back to God; and that therefore, in the intervening time, we are always a part of that Soul, or Infinite God, though unconscious of Him on our earthly pilgrimage through Creation. Let us always be conscious of the fact that within us is the spark of God. Let us keep it bright by nourishing it and warming it by deeds of selflessness and love to all living things, which in time must grow to such a big flame as will unite us with the universal flame of God.

The burden of Baba's refrain is Love God! Love God! LOVE GOD! But the sophisticated mind will say: How can I love God when I do not know what God is? The answer is: You are part of God. You came out of God and you will go back to God, therefore, you—in between—are also a part of God! But you are unconscious

of your Divine status, therefore Creation had to come into being to enable you consciously to recognise your own divinity. For how can one know God except by being God? Thus, in some life or other you will know God and be God. Meanwhile Love God! Love God! LOVE GOD!

Meher Baba in his Universal Message after his return from a short trip to America and Australia (June 1958) states: "Throughout eternity I have laid down principles and precepts but mankind has ignored them. Man's inability to live God's words makes the *Avatar's* teachings a mockery. Instead of practising the compassion He taught, man has waged crusades in His name. Instead of living the humility, purity and truth of His words, man has given way to hatred, greed and violence.

Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric form I observe Silence. You have asked for and been given enough words—it is now time to live them. To get nearer and nearer to God, you have to get further and further away from 'I,' 'my,' 'me' and 'mine.' You have not to renounce anything but your own self. It is as simple as that, though found almost impossible. It is possible for you to renounce your limited self by My Grace. I have come to release that Grace.

I repeat, I lay down no precepts. When I release the tide of Truth which I have come to give, men's daily lives will be the living precept. The words I have not spoken will come to life in them."

Chapter XIII

RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA

In 1956, while staying at that pleasant semi-hill station, Satara, for Baba had established himself there for the time being, for he has a close affinity with Satara, and in the past he has moved around India a great deal, but lately has stayed within the proximity of Poona, I woke up one morning with the most incredible sense of sorrow and desolation. This was very strange for I could in no way account for the extraordinary depression. But there was a dream connected with this, for I had seen two great doors, heavily barred and bolted, I knew there was some message for me, and that some great tragedy must have happened which was somehow indirectly connected with me.

For several days I felt depressed and anxious wondering what the dream had in store for me and what it meant. Then several weeks later, one morning sitting quietly alone in my room, Violet appeared to me! I might say I saw her with my "inner eye," for it was a psychic impression. She was looking radiant and so much younger. She always had beautiful eyes, and she was looking at me in an appealing fashion, obviously she was trying to impress my consciousness and

to give me some urgent message, but I was quite unable to explain her presence or what it was she desired of me.

I therefore decided to write to our family lawyer and ask for her address, as I did not know where she was, and was shocked to hear that she had died very suddenly in South Africa. It was now clear to me what the dream had signified. Wishing to forget Gerald and her, I had closed the doors on them both, in fact ending that particular chapter of my life, wishing to forget.

So she had passed on and wanted me to help Gerald, poor old boy, what a state he must be in! I immediately wrote to him, and it appeared that he had written to me, but I never received his letter. A correspondence started which worried me, there seemed so many difficulties he had to contend with, for he was an old man, and very far from strong. It was imperative that some responsible person should be found to look after him, for the general domestic situation was very unsatisfactory and he could not struggle on alone with an inefficient staff.

The end of it was that I left India in 1957 for South Africa and arrived just in time to adjust a very difficult situation. Once more it should be said how much I owed to my interests in spiritualism, for I was able to comfort him and make him realise that his beloved was ever with him and had in fact called me to come and take care of him. I was also, able to give him messages from her, which helped to conquer his fear of death, and realise that he would be going

to join her in a beautiful world, where the trials and tribulations of this life do not enter therein.

Although I am in no way qualified to write about South Africa, I feel that a few observations must be made about this lovely flower-strewn land which has all the amenities of a paradise on earth, if only its white inhabitants would let it be.

So much has been written and said about the problems of this unhappy country, which is not a nation but a conglomeration of warring factions that there is no need to go into much detail beyond emphasizing a few points, as it would take another book to show how the forces of disintegration and disruption are at work.

The *karma* of South Africa is very ominous for the bad *samskaras* of this land have to be eliminated in preparation for the New Era to come, and the whole of the African continent is in a ferment. So we must expect tremendous adjustments in social and economic life, and these as in some other parts of Africa— will be accompanied by much suffering and chaos.

I have tried to do a little fact finding but facts in this country seem to depend largely on the emotional and political attitudes of the people questioned. It is really hard to get at what may be approximately the truth, but I am putting down my conclusions regarding what all really reasonable people must admit is a perfectly impossible situation.

During the last twelve years of the present regime in South Africa, one cannot help but

notice the increasing racial disputes and difficulties, also the increasing political divisions amongst the white English-speaking South Africans and the white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans bringing much bitterness and hatred between the two white sections of the population. Then again, there is increasing hostility towards the whites in general, for the coloured and native races cannot fail to feel rationalistic influences of the many African States coming into being. The slogans of freedom and independence are much in the air, although often there is little sense attached to them.

But again in all fairness to the present government, readers should be reminded that long before the present regime came to power, the British were responsible for some aspects of *Apartheid*. This reminds me how in 1926 when sailing on a French boat from Marseilles to Mombasa, I made the acquaintance of a charming Indian diplomat. We played chess together and towards the end of the voyage, I suggested that he should pay my husband and me a visit in Kenya, and was startled when he explained that in East Africa, it would not be possible for him to enter a white hotel! On my indignant enquiry, an English settler friend remarked "Well, if you *do* invite him to stay with you, it means that you will be boycotted in East Africa!" Yet, my Indian friend was in the Aga Khan's Secretariat and had been received into the best society in England!

Anyone arriving in South Africa for the first time must be amazed to see offensive notices,

"Whites only" and "Non-whites only" stuck up everywhere, on the benches, railway compartments, post offices, etc. Distinguished and undistinguished non-whites visiting, will find themselves barred from some of the ordinary amenities of life. I was here in 1940 and again in 1950, as well as now for the last four years, so have noticed the progressive deterioration of racial relations, in fact all relations. Let us take for instance some of the present legislation that seems expressly designed to cause as much irritation as possible, namely taxi *Apartheid*. Sometime back I wanted to send a taxi to meet my coloured maid, but there was no licensed coloured taxi to fetch her, and no white taxi could carry her! The result of this particular restriction has caused much needless suffering also ruin in some cases for coloured taxi drivers, since most of their clients are whites. I even saw in the papers that on one occasion a white ambulance had refused to pick up a critically injured African or even to give him a blanket!

It should be explained that the word "coloured" in South Africa has not the same meaning as in England. It applies to those who have got mixed ancestry, and since marriage between whites and coloureds did not become illegal till 1950, there is a large and growing population of coloureds in the country. Under the Population Registration Act, there was and is a most shocking inquisitorial enquiry into the ancestry of South African families, which must have brought about a tremendous amount of dislocation and suffering. White families

finding that they had been classified as Non-Whites, and even families broken up, and husbands and wives, brothers and sisters no longer being allowed to live under the same roof.

One of the worst stories that I have heard is that told by Alan Paton, the well-known writer and leader of the Liberal Party. He stated at a public meeting that a white man coming back from business one day was confronted by two Government officials, who informed him that he had African blood. His wife immediately denounced him and now he and his three children have been classified as Non-White. One can just imagine the amount of blackmail that must be going on with informers spying on helpless and innocent families. One wonders how many today are living in a state of anxious foreboding never knowing when the official hand of doom may descend on them.

One of the latest edicts is that coloured people will no longer be allowed to frequent the big public libraries. This means that coloured research students will no longer be able to carry on their studies.

Here to give an example of what is going on, I quote at length from the Cape Times, Nov. 22nd, 1961.

"Pretoria:— A family who were classed officially as White ten years ago appealed to the Supreme Court in Pretoria yesterday against a recent finding by the Race Classification Board that they were Coloured. Mr. Justice Snyman ordered that the names of the appellants should not be used.

According to the record handed in at the hearing, the family, consisting of father, mother and six children, was classified as White in the census of 1951.

The Judge looked at the children in the case yesterday. According to counsel for the appellants, Mr. H. F. Junod, they were accepted as White, as were the father and mother, who were in court. The Judge said that they looked White, although it had put him in an invidious position to have to give such an opinion...

Mr. Junod said that the Race Classification Board had misdirected itself on several aspects when it classified the family. It had put the onus on the family to prove that they were White, it had been prejudiced because it prejudged that the family had been Coloured and had tried to pass for White.

It had also looked at the family as a group when it made its decision instead of treating them as individuals.

Mr. Junod said that the Board had rejected evidence that when father and mother married some 16 years ago, they were described by the marriage officer as White."

This case continues and as my book is soon going to press I cannot await the outcome of the trial. But needless to say for every case appearing in the papers there must be many that do not appear at all in the press. One can just imagine the misery and apprehension of many families who "pass for white."

In a protest in Parliament from Senator Leslie Rubin against the Group Areas Act,

which he avers is causing more and more racial friction, he stated: "Well-to-do Coloured men who have lived in the area all their lives told me that if and when they were ordered to move they would fight back with the only weapon left to them, the denunciation of all their European relatives and all Europeans who they could prove had Coloured blood."

Job Reservation is another great source of misery and frustration for the Coloured and Native peoples. So many being prevented from getting suitable employment, and making more difficulties from the business standpoint, for employers and industrialists cannot get the necessary efficient White workers and bottlenecks in industry are caused by White men whom, because of job reservation, are given occupations beyond their standards or intelligence.

Needless to say this state of affairs is making this country the happy hunting ground for communists, and stories are told of Russian submarines landing saboteurs and agitators to complicate still further the issues at stake.

The general lack of unity in South Africa does not really arise out of consideration of constitutional systems, it arises out of the differences of attitudes of mind concerning ethical and basic Christian concepts and principles. These differences are so tremendous that one cannot see any reconciliation or peace ahead, for there is no doubt that the discriminatory policy of *apartheid* is creating a dangerously explosive situation that is bound to have still

more world-wide repercussions in the forms of boycotts and sanctions. Therefore, sound and prosperous foundation of the country's economy is being ruined by the ideological fanaticism of those in power.

There does not seem to be much justice in South Africa because primarily the laws of the country are no longer just, and judges—no matter how honest or sympathetic—are powerless in the circumstances, though several members of the Bar have set fine examples in attempting to defend individuals and groups victimised by the application of present legislation.

It is indeed very difficult for visitors to understand the mentality of some of the White South Africans who will not realise that they cannot put the clock back in a rapidly changing world. Whether we like it or not, it is not possible that three million over-fed, over-privileged Whites will be able to batten forever on the underfed and under-privileged millions who constitute the Union of South Africa. But we must remember there are a few who are not afraid to lift their voices up against the present government; such gallant groups of people like the Black Sash organisation, the Liberal and Progressive Parties; such men and women are willing to sacrifice their comfort, their careers and their fortunes to fight for the principles at stake, but alas they are too few at present, and there are too many who have not got the courage of their convictions. The present Parliamentary Opposition, the United Party, remains feeble and uncertain in its aims. But

again I want to remind my readers that I am not qualified to criticise.

Now we will have a look at the other side of the story. In three years I had as many as a dozen different maids! In no country have I ever come across such inefficient and stupid women! But can they be blamed, it is their background, the hopeless way they have been brought up, never given a chance. Here I would remind my readers that I am not too incompetent as a housekeeper, for did I not have a good apprenticeship in America!

Now we must deal with the question of the African races. It must be realised that there are innumerable races all going through various stages of evolution, so that social relations are fraught with many difficulties and it will take a long time, if not several generations, before the Africans are ready to govern themselves, at least along democratic principles which are hardly suitable for primitive peoples, in any case.

While living in Kenya in 1927, I can never forget the horror of discovering that it was the custom amongst the natives not to allow the sick and old to die peacefully in their huts. They would be dragged out into the bush, to be finished off by the jackals. I have no doubt that such barbaric methods may be still perpetrated in many parts of Africa. It should be realised that the mentality of the primitive African is quite different from ours; there is a story told by a friend of mine, the wife of a former manager of a Johannesburg gold-mine. She said how on one occasion they were expecting trouble on the

Rand, and how she remarked to her favourite servant: "Jackie! You would not kill me, would you?" The boy protested "No Mam, no Mam! I go next door. I kill Mrs. H. Her boy, he come and kill you."

As a warning, we have the fate of Sister Aidan. This lady, a nun and a medical member of a religious order, had devoted her life to ministering to the sick of the location natives of East London. For some reason or other, the mob had been stirred up and was demonstrating against the municipality. Sister Aidan was on her rounds, doing her errands of mercy, when she was surrounded by an infuriated crowd of natives. They overturned her car, set fire to it and she was burnt to death. It is said that her charred flesh was eaten by the rioters. Yet these natives were urbanised Africans, not savages, as might be supposed. This did not happen long ago and can happen again any time.

Such incidents show the inherent difficulties in dealing with primitive peoples and the urbanised African is living in a kind of spiritual vacuum, so it is useless to look at the problems connected with his development through rose-coloured spectacles.

But brutality is no monopoly of Africans. What about the so-called civilised Whites? Having lived in Kenya, I learned quite a lot about the general callousness of settlers and their children. Their attitude towards wild life horrified Gerald and me. In fact we could not stand up to the savagery of life in Kenya and left.

As for the Big Game hunters, tourists from America and England would arrive who hardly knew how to hold a rifle. They would take a professional White hunter with them on safari and massacre game without taking any risks of their own. In fact, they will even shoot from motor cars and planes. These hunters would return to their homes with their stuffed trophies and brag about their exploits.

While on this subject I hope readers will know Joy Adamson's wonderful book *Born Free* and its counterpart, *Living Free*.^{*} Mr. and Mrs. Adamson, a Kenya game warden and his wife, are not the first Europeans to raise lion cubs to maturity, but they are the first to have been able to return a full grown lioness to a natural wild life and at the same time to retain their intimacy with her. They made periodic visits to the area where Elsa lived, and she comes out of the jungle—almost at call—to renew her companionship of cub days with her "Pride." This astonishing story of the bridging of two worlds is vouched for by hundreds of remarkable photographs. Elsa now has cubs of her own and would bring them to visit the Adamsons as well. Mrs. Adamson in one of her letters to me writes—"Elsa possesses far more tact, consideration and fairness than most people I know. She has achieved that her very jealous cubs are on a friendly tolerating truce with us, whenever we visit them or they come to the camp with Elsa, and also Elsa misses no

^{*} Published by Collins, London, S. W.

opportunity to show me her affection, but carefully chooses moments when the cubs do not watch us." In another letter Mrs. Adamson asks "Animals inspire the best in us—but do we inspire the best in animals? Does our vanity, greed and self-importance give us the right to exterminate them as we are trying to do—only seeing our point of view? Our life would be very poor without animals, let alone the whole ecology of not only wild life but also civilised life. How close one feels, still united to wild life and Nature in the biggest meaning of the word—is perhaps the only way to keep balanced and in proportion with one's religious, ethical and material needs."

The wonderful love and devotion shown by Elsa to the Adamsons is far greater than that of many human beings towards their parents!

But to return to a less pleasant subject, namely events in Africa. The shocking bloody fiasco of Congo's Independence illustrates only too sadly how impossible parliamentary institutions are for savages who have not been in any way prepared or educated up to civilised standards of conduct.

If we could but realise that we shape our destiny by the actions of our past and present lives; that "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" and "turning the other cheek" apply equally to the laws that govern life. According to *karma* or the Law of Cause and Effect, if a man commits a murder in one incarnation, his victim will probably kill him in his next incarnation.

One wonders what karmic debt the Congo has, also what the white man will have to pay for his past and present misdeeds in Africa, and not only in Africa but elsewhere, for we know how the Americans treated the Red Indians and how the Australians treated their Aborigines, and really it seems that New Zealand has the only clean slate, for there the Whites from the beginning treated the Maoris justly and humanely. When in Australia, I was horrified to hear about the plight of the Aborigines who have survived, and few seemed to care.

As for South Africa, I confess I see nothing to hope for, unless the change of heart that Baba has promised us takes place here, but maybe this end of the great continent of Africa may be totally submerged in the coming catastrophe, which might perhaps be the best solution for what now seems to be a quite intractable problem.

"Whom the Gods destroy, they first make mad!"

Chapter XIV

NEED FOR THE AVATAR

"Whenever virtue is on the decline , and evil and injustice spread abroad in the world , I take on human form. For the establishment of righteousness and the destruction of the evildoer, I am born from age to age."

–The Lord's Song

On all sides we hear the people crying out for peace as more and more nuclear missiles and other weapons of war multiply and increase. New strategic positions are being taken up and every preparation is being made for the final show-down which has already begun.

As we watch the international chessboard and see the nations moving their pawns, we know that, at the same time, peoples and governments are desperately searching for the means of escape from a nuclear war that would annihilate humanity and poison our planet. Nobody wants war, not even those whose fanaticism aims at world conquest, yet there is war and rumours of war everywhere. We all know that in modern warfare there is no victor and no vanquished. Meanwhile the peoples of all countries are being drained of their strength and wealth because of fighting and keeping up a suicidal arms race. Life has become a nightmare while hundreds of thousands of refugees drift helplessly like flotsam and jetsam on the turbulent waters of this world, and how many of us ever give

these helpless beings a thought? In the study of our being, Western history can give us nothing but the superficial outlines of past societies, constructed to fit the particular ideas of the historian. There seems to be little pattern, as it were, of God's design amongst men—largely because the historian does not look for this. But we have exceptions, like Toynbee. Does not the History of Western Philosophy also indicate the individual ideas of philosophers with little understanding of the laws and principles that govern life? Yet, by their intellectual brilliance, these historians and philosophers are able to dominate the minds of the general public, even though their theories are those of "men of straw." Only occasionally do we get thinkers who are untrammelled by the encasing walls of their colleges.

Neither historians nor philosophers can help us to grapple with the dynamic factors of modern technical civilisation which confront us today. We are now faced with systems of thought which deny the innate spiritual heritage of man. While these systems seek to emancipate individuals from religious disciplines, they offer no compensation for man's loss of spiritual values. Hence the decline of civilisation under dialectical materialism.

Clearly, the only understanding of the present world conflict that we can get will be from the study of spiritual values; but not from the

Western approach. So far we are obliged to turn to the age-old Eastern thought which can help us. We must know that the world is passing through an avataric period, the sign of which is universal unrest and dissatisfaction with present-day life. Man has to accept the truth that – underlying the realities of life – there are fundamental laws and spiritual principles that cannot be violated or ignored. Only if these principles are respected can humanity rebuild on a broader and more equitable basis. What sound economic and political structure can there be without an enduring ethical foundation? The conflicting conceptions of life and differing social and ideological experiments of our age have done nothing but bring about more wars and enhance the general misery of mankind. How can the present welter of confused ideas produce that inner and outer harmony in human relations indispensable for cooperation in ordered and peaceful progress?

A divided attitude on ethical problems is characteristic of Governments and international bodies of this age, where conscience in regard to Human Rights plays no part. I notice this particularly in South Africa, where the gap between words and actions has never been so great;– hardly ever do precepts seem to be put into practice! Is not the prevailing characteristic of modern man the decay of his conscience? I remember in my youth how my father took a leading part in the defence of Dreyfus by the book he wrote on the case. Dreyfus was a French Jew and an officer in the French Army.

He was accused of passing military secrets to the Germans, convicted and sent to the Penal Settlement at Devil's Island. Zola and other prominent Frenchmen took up the innocent man's cause. The case lasted twelve years, for French Government itself was involved in the disgrace of it all. The case aroused the conscience of the whole of Europe, including Russia, before belated justice was done. Today, the most monstrous crimes take place behind the Iron Curtain. Men are promised safe conduct by their governments, and are then kidnapped, murdered or executed with or without after a mock trial. Atrocities of all kinds take place with comparatively little protest from the Free Countries. Human rights are being continually ignored: M. Spaack, the Belgian Foreign Minister, said some time back, "In the present United Nations setup, everything short of war is allowed. Treaties may be violated, promises can be broken, a nation licensed to menace its neighbours, or to perpetuate any kind of trick upon it, just as long as there is no actual war." It is not double-think and double-talk with the totalitarian regimes only; we have it elsewhere, too.

It has been said already, the answer is that we must be taught to perceive spiritual values. There is only One Reality, there is only One Truth, which can unify the heart and produce love and harmony in our relations with one another. That Reality is God. We see our world falling apart. How can we make a new world, unless we have men to make it, and how can we have new men without new hearts? We

surely need a New Order, in which politicians do not stand alone, but are guided by saints and sages!

During the last two thousand years there have been many prophecies of some great impending change at the end of this century. We know that many seers in different ages have predicted stupendous upheavals and vast metamorphoses of every kind in preparation for the new Era. The world has reached a point in its development where the same forces that caused the great Atlantean island continent to sink beneath the waves are once more active.*

It is interesting to note that *The Observer* towards the end of 1954, had a short story competition. It was set for a story relating to the year A. D. 2500. There were from two to three thousand entries. Needless to say the story offered a theme providing wide scope for imaginative variations. But the most remarkable feature of the entries was the sombre note to be heard, like a sort of ground base, in a very high proportion of them. Nearly eighty percent of the competitors, at the rough estimate, assumed that the people of A. D. 2500, were living *after some kind of catastrophe* , generally an atomic war, which had devastated most of the earth!

Wherever we look we see chaos and strife. The papers in every country except the totalitarian states, where free opinion is suppressed, are filled with personal, national and

* Research on the subject of Atlantis is being carried out by the Atlantis Research Centre, sponsors of the *Atlantis Journal*, published by Markham House Ltd., 31, King's Road, London, S. W. 3.

international strife. As we look there is a sense of helplessness, as if an inexorable destiny was driving us to our doom. The only redeeming feature of the present worldwide insanity of governments and peoples is that we are at the very end of the last days of the Old Dispensation.

Since a Universal Divine Manifestation always coincides with the spiritual renaissance of man, the period nearing this stupendous event is invariably one in which humanity suffers the agony of approaching rebirth. It is not sufficiently realised what is the internal and external significance of such a cosmic spring-cleaning. Amongst other things, the Manifestation reacts not only to the good and bad *sanskaras* (impressions left on the mind by past and present actions, desires or thoughts) of individuals, but also to the collective *karma* or destiny of a country or nation. The direct divine influence can bring about great changes in world affairs, causing the rise and fall of nations and of economic systems, in keeping with their *karma*, as best suits the Divine plan conceived as a whole. Towards this goal, statesmen, politicians and great men in public life are more directly though unconsciously influenced to bring about the adjustments of social and economic life. All human suffering, whether individual or collective, caused by wars or great natural catastrophes, is neither accidental nor coincidental, for man *has* to conform to the Law which governs the Universe.

The Universe is built upon God's eternal and immutable Law, and when man puts himself

in opposition to God and His Law, he has created opposition to his own Higher Self and Divine Nature. It is then, when wholesale violation of His Laws takes place, as is happening today, that God again descends from the infinite to take on human form as a recurring Divine Manifestation on earth, to win back man to Himself.

Such a divine Manifestation is an *Avatar* or Messiah. It is not commonly known that there are always men on earth who are Truth-Incarnate and, therefore, the fountain-heads of all spiritual wisdom, being themselves All-wisdom, All-Power and Divine Love. Such men after their death are hailed as saviours of mankind; but during their lives they are invariably misunderstood, and often persecuted with inconceivable malignity. These men mostly live and work in silence, unheard and unsung; but at a time of deep crisis in human affairs there is always One, the *Avatar* who comes out into the world and, in emerging, creates a great landmark in spiritual history.

Such, in the comparatively recent historical past, were Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed, and there must have been many more in bye-gone ages.

According to Meher Baba, Zoroaster lived thousands of years ago and came before Rama and Krishna. Solomon of Hdal (A. D. 1250) talks of the tradition of a special fountain of water, called Gloscha of Horin, by the side of which Zoroaster predicted to his disciples the coming of the Messiah, Jesus.*

* *Zoroaster* by Professor William Jackson, of Columbia University, published by Columbia University Press.

Even the Apocryphal New Testament in one passage says that Zoroaster prophesied the coming of Christ.

Moses foretold the advent of Jesus; Mohammed and Jesus alike indicated that they, or one like them, would come again. The followers of Mohammed are now expecting the return of the Mahdi, and the Hindus are watching for the Tenth, or *Kalki Avatar*, while Christians look for the Second Advent.

Today the Buddhists are gathering together in expectation of the return of the Buddha; for did not Gautama say: "There have been Buddhas after Me."

Indeed, he predicted that the greatest of all would bear the name of Maitreya. He also stated: "Two thousand and five hundred years after Me, my law will have known its End. Another Buddha, the greatest of them all, will come into the world. He will regenerate it and establish the New Law."

It is important to note that the word "Maitreya" means "Friend," and Meher Baba's prevailing characteristic is his friendliness. People are made to feel that he is their Friend, and that his divinity is no bar to camaraderie and ordinary social intercourse; he will joke and laugh with us as if we were his equals. In fact the word "Friend" suits and describes the Master perfectly.

In speaking of the Buddha one is reminded of how Meher Baba once, referring to his childhood, remarked, "Yet one day, when a friend gave me a small booklet on the Buddha, I opened

the book at the place that told about the Second Coming of the Buddha, as Maitreya. Then I realised all of a sudden, I am that! Actually! And I felt it deep within me. Then I forgot about it and years passed by."

The Second Advent is now universally expected, but on what form? Meher Baba has explained the influence of the Saviour in the *Discourses*.^{*} He says that the *Avatar* appears in different forms, under different names in different times and in different parts of the world. His reappearance always coincides with an age of upheaval such as we are passing through now. Since the *Avatar* is God-descended into human form, he adjusts the standards of human values which are in need of readjustment. Since he is beyond duality and the play of opposites, the smallest detail may command his sympathy and the greatest catastrophe leave him comparatively unmoved. Furthermore, he knows that all these things are but illusions which he has transcended and which others likewise transcend. He knows that we are bound by our ignorance and has come to enlighten us and release us from our bondage. He is not concerned with death, for he knows that we do not cease to exist thereafter. He is not concerned with destruction since he knows this has to precede construction. He knows all and forgives all.

It was in October, 1945, when Baba had undergone one of his periods of seclusion, that he referred directly to the coming catastrophe, though he has given many indications from the beginning of his mission, of what we

^{*} *Discourses*, Adi K. Irani, Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, India.

are to expect in the near future. A passage from *The Wayfarers** is appropriate here: "On one of these latter days Baba emerged, after having sat for many hours in complete seclusion, his face more drawn and weary than Adi‡ ever remembered having seen it, and said that a gigantic disaster would overwhelm the world and wipe out three-quarters of mankind. Adi was deeply stirred, not only by the anguish on Baba's face but also because he spontaneously dictated these words immediately on emerging from his seclusion, as if the work done during that seclusion had been specifically related to the world passion of which he spoke." Nine years later, in September 1954, Baba describing his death (which must be violent) stating: "Before I break my silence, or immediately after it, three-fourths of the world will be destroyed."

Here I might mention a letter from India, in which was enclosed an account of the last stay of the *mast* Nilkanth with Baba. On previous visits the *mast* in question had always preserved silence. But this time on that momentous date, the 10th July, 1958 (it is the date celebrated annually by Baba's followers, since it is the date when the Master first became silent in 1925) the *mast* on this occasion began to talk, meaningless talk for the most part, in which his listeners could understand little, except odd words here and there spoken in English, Hindi, Bengali and Urdu languages. Then from the mutterings to himself, the following

* *The Wayfarers* by William Donkin, Dodd, Mead and Co., New York 1965.

‡ Adi K. Irani, of Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, India.

remarks have been elicited and translated from Hindi as follows: "The earth will split, men will become helpless and shelterless, like beasts roaming on a plateau. Men will die in large numbers and will take birth again quickly. Due to forced circumstances men will be compelled to eat grass and leaves. Old human habitations will be wiped out and new ones will be established. The use of the indigenous languages like Hindi will be replaced by the English tongue. Rites, rituals and ceremonies will be eliminated. A very big cloud will appear."*

It is difficult for us to understand how such a cosmic catastrophe can take place. From what we are able to glean through folklore, mythology and legends, some now confirmed by recent geological research, there is ample evidence to show that great catastrophes, changing the surface of the earth, have always happened and will always happen, in which only a few of mankind are left to carry on the human race. We see that the records in the Bible begin with Noah and the Flood, for nothing is mentioned prior to that event.

Established orthodox ideas in science are always difficult to uproot until new ideas, considered

* As we know similar prophetic remarks have been made by some of Baba's other *masts* quite apart from the current prophecies relating to the speedy end of our world. We know that if a hydrogen bomb should drop on the oily depths of the Pacific Ocean, it is quite possible that the American continent might split into two. Max Heindel, who founded the Rosicrucians Fellowship in Southern California, foretold in 1917 that so great an explosion would occur between 1950 and the end of this century, that America would split into two, and he knew nothing of the hydrogen bomb!

heretical at the time, come along and prove so strong that previous established notions lose their hold. The old ideas that the universe was governed by the principle of stability, along with the theory of uniformity, and the Darwinian conception of evolution through continuity, are giving way before recently discovered facts that conflict with these hypotheses. Geological and archaeological discoveries suggest that the axis of the earth has been repeatedly changed over and over again, even within the life time of historical man. The reason why our history goes back so very short a time may be that the constant changes in the earth's crust obliterate all but the comparatively recent traces of man's occupation of the earth.

The works of Velikovsky, like those of the archaeologist Claude Schaeffer and others, have clearly shown that repeated transformation of the earth's surface have never been the work of man but are due to gigantic catastrophes, which have changed the crust of the planet and which happen suddenly following upon external cosmic disturbances.

Another gigantic catastrophe has to come. It will not be caused by the hydrogen bomb, but may come from the celestial spheres. Indeed, can it be otherwise? Our planet is hopelessly overcrowded, and if, nuclear explosions are allowed to persist much longer, then surely the whole atmosphere will be poisoned? As it is, we know now that there are enough nuclear weapons and bombs stacked up in the various countries to blow up the whole world in a few hours.

Surely something *has* to happen, and soon, to stop the present destructive trend? Man can not be allowed to commit slow suicide by the gradual poisoning of himself and his planet, for his journey through creation is not yet finished. So, some form of divine intervention has to take place to put an end to our present chaotic civilisation and bring in the New World Order.

No matter what we may believe, it is obvious that our world is now passing through the most critical phase of its known history; and the trend is towards an explosive climax, for unrelieved world tensions can not continue for ever.

There is a theory that disturbances on a cosmic scale are caused by the planet being out of joint, having lost its equilibrium. This state of unbalance is being caused by a world lack of mental and spiritual poise. Such disharmony is not in accord with the Divine pattern, or rhythm of the Universe, which is dependent on the vibrational quality and power of the cosmic tone, which again depends on the mind of man. Thus we need a new vibration, a new tuning of our consciousness, if we are to have another Dispensation of the one and only Truth, that GOD IS LOVE.

Meher Baba has also made it very clear that when he breaks his silence and utters the One Word, or sound vibration, he will lay the foundation for that which is to take place during the next seven hundred years, and that when he comes again as the *Avatar*, seven hundred years hence, the evolution of consciousness will have

reached a certain peak, so that the materialistic tendencies of today will have disappeared and the world will be united in a real brotherhood of Love and Truth, and this will be the longed for Golden age.

Did not my dreams tell of the slowly advancing wave of destruction which has to engulf our civilisation? Was I not told that God was now going to SPEAK; also that there was no way of escape from the oncoming doom except through the pyramid-shaped hill of our higher consciousness? Let us turn to the Redeemer in our higher consciousness! Let us turn to the Redeemer in our hour of need. Remember also, when there was doubt, the answer came straight from heaven, the divine rays of a Love we know not on earth.

Those who understand the esoteric signification of Christ's death on the cross know that when Jesus cried out the creative Word of God, the Avataric Spirit gushed forth in the Saviour's blood, redeeming and regenerating the whole of Creation. Thus the foundation of the Christian Dispensation came into being and the chosen ones were illumined with the Glory of the Father; and every living creature partook of the divine upliftment.

When the Saviour was preparing for the crucifixion, He was no doubt thinking that his work on earth for humanity was drawing to its close, and that he would again be himself in the impersonal aspect of Divinity, when he prayed: "Glorify Thou me with Thine own self,

with glory which I had with Thee before the World was."

The *Avatars* were all "before the world was." They are Beings enshrouded in impenetrable mystery. The *Avatar* could say to His chosen few: "Even the Perfect Ones and the saints understand Me not. Then how can ye fathom Me?" The holder of the present title of *Avatar* became Perfect when God became "I AM GOD!" Thus the *Avatar* achieved the Universal Mind as the master Master.

In the Bible we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." The "Word" made flesh is the reincarnation of the *Avatar*. Krishna explains: *

Albeit I be
Unborn, undying, indestructible,
The Lord of all things living; not the less
By Maya, by my magic which I stamp
On floating Nature-forms, the Primal vast
I come, and go and come.
I make and unmake this Universe;
Than Me there is no other Master, Prince!
No other Maker! All these hang on Me.
As hangs a row of pearls upon its string.
I am the fresh taste of the water; I
The silver of the moon, the gold of the sun,
The word of worship in the Veda, the thrill
That passeth in the ether, and the strength
Of man's shed seed. I am the good sweet smell
Of the moistened earth. I am the fire's red light,

* Bhagavad Gita, IV, 6.

Undying, whence hath sprung whatever is.
Hard it is
To pierce that veil divine of various shows
Which hideth Me, they who worship Me
Pierce it and pass beyond.*

The old Dispensation is nearing its end and a New Dispensation again comes into being. The Manifestation of the present *Avatar* will redeem and regenerate our tired and tortured world. For God's recurring creative Impulse will again repeat and assert the Word.

In the Bible it says: "And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams."

When the Redeemer Meher Baba utters his divine cry, the WORD, the creation will move, and the chosen ones will be illumined with the Glory of the Father (Self-Realisation) and every creature will partake of the cosmic outpouring of the Spirit. "And all things shall be made new" ... "And the heavens will be removed as a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island moved out of their places."

This final chapter may be concluded by quoting what Meher Baba has to say on the "Travail of the New World Order" in the *Discourses*:

"The world storm, which has been gathering momentum, is now having its greatest outburst, and in reaching its climax, it will work universal disaster. In the struggle for material

* Ibid, VII (Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, *The Song Celestial*)

well-being, all grievances have assumed fantastic proportions; and the diverse differences of human interest have been so accentuated that they have precipitated distinctive conflicts. Humanity has failed to solve its individual and social problems; and the evidence for this failure is but too plain. The incapacity of men to deal with their problems constructively and creatively reveals a tragic deficiency in the right understanding of the basic nature of man and the true purpose of Life.

The world is witnessing an acute conflict between the Forces of Light and the Forces of Darkness. On the one hand, there are selfish persons who seek their happiness blindly through lust for power, unbridled greed, and unrelieved hatred. Ignorant of the real purpose of life, they have sunk to the lowest level of civilization; and they bury their higher selves in the wreckage of crumbling forms that linger on from the dead past. Bound by material interests and limited conceptions, they are forgetful of their divine destiny. They have lost their way; and their hearts are torn by the ravages of hate and rancor. On the other hand, there are persons who unveil their inherent higher selves, through the endurance of pain and deprivation and through noble acts of bravery and self-sacrifice.

The disease of selfishness in mankind will need a cure, which is not only universal in its application but drastic in nature. It is so deep-rooted that it can be up-rooted only if it is knocked down from all sides. Real peace and happiness will dawn spontaneously when there

is a purging of selfishness. The peace and happiness which come from self-giving love are permanent. Even the worst sinners can become great saints if they have the courage and sincerity to invite a drastic and complete change of heart.

The present chaos and destruction will engulf the whole world, but this will be followed by a very long period in which there shall be no war. The passing sufferings and miseries of our times will be worth enduring for the sake of the long period of happiness which is to follow. What will the present chaos lead to? How will it end? It can only end in one way. Mankind will be sick of it all. Man will be sick of wanting and sick of fighting out of hatred. Greed and hate will reach such intensity that every one will become weary of them. The way out of the dead-lock will be found through selflessness. The only alternative which will bring a solution will be to stop hating and to love; to stop wanting and to give; to stop dominating and to serve.

Great suffering shall awaken great understanding. Supreme suffering fulfills its purpose and yields its true significance when it awakens exhausted humanity and stirs within it a genuine longing for real understanding. Unprecedented suffering leads to an unprecedented spiritual outcome; it contributes to the construction of life on the unshakable foundation of the Truth. It is now time that universal suffering should hasten humanity to the turning point in its spiritual history; it is now time that the very

agonies of our times should become a medium for the bringing in of a real understanding of human relationship. It is now time for humanity to face squarely the true causes of the catastrophe which has overtaken it; it is time to seek a new experience of Reality.

To know that life is real and eternal is to inherit unfading bliss. It is time that men had this realization by being unified with their own selves.

Through unification with the Higher Self, man perceives the Infinite Self in all selves; and he becomes free by outgrowing and discarding the limitations of the ego-life. The individual soul has to realize its identity with the universal Soul with full consciousness. Men shall have a reorientation of life in the light of this ancient Truth; and they will readjust their attitude toward their neighbours in everyday life. To perceive the spiritual value of *oneness* is to produce real unity and co-operation; brotherhood then becomes a spontaneous outcome of true perception. The new life which is based upon spiritual understanding is an affirmation of the Truth; it is not something which belongs to utopia but is completely practical. Now that humanity is thrown into continuous bloody conflicts, it is, through immense anguish, experiencing the utter instability and futility of life which is based upon purely material conceptions. The hour is near when men, in their eager longing for real happiness, will seek the true source of happiness.

The time is also ripe when men will ardently seek to contact the embodiment of Truth in the form of the God-Man, through whom they can be inspired and lifted into spiritual understanding. They will accept the guidance which comes from Divine Authority, for only the outpouring of Divine Love can bring about spiritual awakening. In this critical time of universal suffering, men are becoming ready to turn towards the Higher Self and to fulfill the Will of God. Divine Love will perform the supreme miracle of bringing God into the hearts of men and of getting them established in lasting and true happiness; it will satisfy the greatest need and longing of mankind. Divine Love will make people selfless and helpful in their mutual relations, and it will bring about the final solution of all problems. The new brotherhood on earth shall be a fulfilled fact and nations will be united in the fraternity of Love and Truth..."

In another message Meher Baba goes on to state: "The present world crisis, chaos and the universal suffering are absolutely necessary for the eventual spiritual upliftment and for a new world, wherein peace, love and divine aspiration will reign supreme. None should therefore feel perplexed and dismayed, bearing in mind the certainty of the bright future.

From the spiritual point of view of Reality, the words national and foreign, killed and killer, war and peace, success and defeat, have no existence and are "imaginary dreams," and

the present universal chaos is just a universal nightmare necessary for universal awakening.

Body forms and minds are innumerable and of infinite variety, but souls are all originally and eternally one. In fact only one Infinite Reality exists and that is God. So this apparent world catastrophe is, by Divine Will, essential for a Divine Manifestation of love and real peace, in the near future, in which I have to play the greatest part...

Those who are spiritually awake have been aware for some time that the world is at present in the midst of a period such as always precedes Avataric manifestations. Even unawakened men and women are becoming aware of it. From their darkness they are reaching out for light; in their sorrow they are longing for comfort; from the midst of the strife into which they have found themselves plunged, they are praying for peace and deliverance.

For the moment, they must be patient. The wave of destruction must rise still further. But when, from the depths of his heart, man desires something more lasting than wealth, something more real than material power, the wave will recede. Then peace will come, joy will come, light will come.

The breaking of My silence—the signal for My public manifestation—is not far off. I bring the greatest treasure which is possible for man to receive, a treasure which includes all other treasures, which will endure for ever,

which increases when shared with others. Be ready to receive it.

My existence is for Love and Truth; and to suffering humanity I say: Have hope. I have come to help you in surrendering yourselves to the Cause of God and in accepting His grace of Love and Truth. I have come to help you in winning the one Victory of all victories – to win yourself."

Appendix 1

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MEHER BABA

Merwan Irani is a Zoroastrian and was born of Persian parents at Poona, India, in 1894. His father, Sheriar Irani, was a real seeker of God. Merwan attended school and college at Poona. His spiritual life began with his momentous visit to a Moslem lady, Hazrat Babajan, a spiritually Perfect Master, when he was 19, and still a student at Deccan College. This meeting brought about a spiritual transformation of his consciousness, and made him aware of his divine mission.

In 1914 Merwan's absorption in God-consciousness led to his being completely unconscious of the things of the world; and he remained in this transcendental state for nine months. After this period, he visited Sai Baba, who greeted him as "*Parvardigar*"* and sent him to Upasni Maharaj, who became his second spiritual Master, and helped him to come down to his normal consciousness during seven years of close contact.

In 1921, while retaining God-consciousness, Merwan completely recovered his gross-consciousness i.e. his consciousness of the physical world and the universe. This is the state of the

* God as the Preserver and Sustainer; (S).

Perfect Master or *Sadguru* for he is One who has transcended all limitations and attained to Perfection, or Liberation, and possesses the Universal Consciousness. After this, Merwan was called Meher Baba which means compassionate friend or Master.

Such a being is called a *Sadguru* i.e., Man-become-God. But Meher Baba is more than a *Sadguru*, for I understand he is the *Avatar*, i.e., God-become-Man, and therefore the Supreme Master of the Universe. It is impossible to go into details of the development of the spiritual consciousness of man in this little book; readers who wish for detailed explanation will find the information in *God Speaks*, dictated by Meher Baba and published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1955.

The early period of Meher Baba's life as a Spiritual Master can be conveniently divided into three parts, according to the places where he lived: 1. The hut on Ferguson College Road, Poona, where he gathered together his first close men-disciples. 2. "Manzil-e-Meem" (The house of the Master) Bungalow at Dadar, Bombay, which was chiefly devoted to the training of his close men-disciples (the *mandali*) for an arduous spiritual life. 3. Meherabad, Ahmednagar, which has been his headquarters ever since. Here a new colony was established, where the disciples put into practice, under the Master's guidance, their training in selfless service.

The interesting activities of the Meherabad Colony included (a) The Hazrat Babajan High

School, where the students received free instruction; (b) a Dharmashala, or free shelter for the emigrant poor, and (c) The Meher Charitable Hospital and Dispensary. Meher Baba also took a personal interest in the upliftment of the depressed classes. In all the institutions no distinction was made between Brahmin and Untouchables, who mingled in common fellowship. His disciples of the colony were of different creeds, and caste distinctions came to be abolished among the Hindu disciples.

The Meher Ashram, a free boarding-school open to boys of all creeds and nationalities, was the second phase of Meher Baba's activities on an elaborately organised basis at Meherabad. One particular branch of this was for the spiritual awakening of a few chosen youngsters, who then began to have rare inner experiences ordinarily achieved with great difficulty by men, after the struggle of a lifetime. This phase is described in detail by Ramjoo Abdullah in a book entitled "*Sobs and Throbs* " published in 1928 by Meher Publications, Ahmednagar.

From July 10th, 1925, Meher Baba began to observe SILENCE: the use of his alphabet board, by which he pointed to the Roman letters and digits for communication, came later, in 1927. His silence for spiritual reasons, as a prelude to his manifestation as *Avatar*, continues to this day.

During the year 1926, Meher Baba wrote an account of his divine experience. This work has not been read by anyone, and we do not

know when it will be published. Meher Baba often says that divine experience is beyond words since it is beyond the domain of intellect and therefore most spiritual secrets are and shall ever remain beyond the reach of ordinary human beings. But he says that there are certain spiritual secrets that can also be explained in words by a Perfect Master and that he has explained some of these in this work.

Upon completing the manuscript, he laid down his pen, and has written nothing since, beyond his signature. Meher Baba's subsequent works were dictated through the medium of his alphabet board. He has now since 1954, stopped the alphabet board and communicates only through gestures. He is well versed in six languages, including English.

Another characteristic of Meher Baba's life is that he frequently observes long fasts and periods of seclusion for intense spiritual working on the higher planes of cosmic consciousness, for the good of humanity. Whatever work is done by One who has the Universal Mind and Infinite Consciousness affects the whole universe spiritually, as it reverberates throughout the universe and produces a reflex action on all planes. Alternating with these periods of complete retirement, Meher Baba leads a dynamic life of activity.

In 1931, Meher Baba first toured the West, visiting principally England and America; and it was at this time that he first contacted many of his Western disciples. Since that date he has visited the West many times; and has encircled

the globe several times. His disciples today are of many nationalities, classes and creeds; for the Truth underlying every religion is the emblem of Meher Baba's teaching.

For about ten years, up to 1948, the lion's share of Meher Baba's external activities was utilised in his two-fold work of comforting the mad from amongst uncared-for and destitute people; and tending the *masts*—the God-mad and God-intoxicated spiritually advanced and illumined souls. In order to find the *masts* (see Appendix 10) it was necessary to visit all sorts of odd nooks and corners of the country, and during such journeys Meher Baba must have travelled about a hundred thousand miles with next to no consideration for his own and his *Mandali's* daily needs during these journeys and in the course of organising and maintaining a number of mad and *mast* ashrams (homes), for varying periods in different parts of India.

In 1949 Meher Baba launched upon what is known as his New Life, disassociating himself completely from owning and maintaining any kind of property, ashrams or organisations. For about two years he kept moving from place to place with a small group of men and women followers without any advance preparations or provision for day-to-day requirements, so that at times they even went begging for food, shelter and transport. Except under unavoidable circumstances, Baba and group maintained no contact or communications with others during the course of the New Life phase, which ended in 1952.

From 1952 till today, continuing to keep himself disassociated from all organisations and possessions, Meher Baba has only a small group of men and women living near him, and he spends most of his time either in total or partial seclusion, or in giving his "*Sahavas*" (company) to selected groups of followers, or "*Darshan*"* (public appearance) to the masses in different parts of the country. The mass "*Darshan*" programmes are always open to all, and at them Meher Baba invariably establishes a personal contact by distributing "*Prasad*" (sweets or fruits) with his own hands to as many as possible. It is known that on many occasions he has thus distributed "*Prasad*" to about twenty thousand at a time. In this manner spiritual contacts with the people are made.

* the act of seeing; public veneration; (V.)

Appendix 2

Dr. F. C. CONYBEARE, M. A., FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

Although my father gave the book, *Myth, Magic and Morals* to the Rationalist Press, I feel it is expedient to quote the following words from the French biography of my father by Louise Maries, compiled after my father's death, which took place in 1924; p. 304:

"Messrs. Watts and Co. are the publishers of the books which issue from the Rationalist Press Association. It was fitting that they should become the publishers of the books which deny the historical existence of Our Lord. They publish Mr. J. M. Robertson's two books, *Pagan Christs* and *Christianity and Mythology*; they publish Mr. W. B. Smith's *Ecce Deus*; and they publish the English translation of *Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, by Professor Arthur Drews. It does not seem so fitting that Messrs. Watts should publish a book by Dr. F. C. Conybeare. It is true that Dr. Conybeare is radical, as radical a critic as it is possible for a scholar to be. But then he *is* a scholar. The other men whose books Messrs. Watts publish are not. When his *Myth, Magic and Morals* appeared in the same advertisement as the books

of Mr. J. M. Robertson and the rest, it was understood that Dr. Conybeare, Honorary Fellow of University College, Oxford; Honorary LL. D. of the University of St. Andrew's; Honorary Doctor of Theology of Giessen; Member of the British Academy, and Member of the Armenian Academy of Venice, etc., had gone over to the materialists and for the sake of companionship in his utter radicalism had cast in his lot with the unlearned and the ignorant who belong to the Rationalist Press Association. But Messrs. Watts have *Historical Christ* (3s. 6d. net). Dr. Conybeare is not comfortable in his present company. In this book he turns [on] the three men who have obtained some glory by denying the historical existence of Jesus—Mr. J. M. Robertson, Dr. Arthur Drews, and Professor W. B. Smith—and makes an exposure of their ignorance and incompetence the like of which has not been seen in our day."

Undoubtedly, my father, with his strong historical sense, saw clearly that the Jesuits and the Christists could not have any object in hoaxing their own and all subsequent generations, and in building up a lasting cult and church on what they knew to be fables.

It is interesting that he applied an equally unprejudiced acumen to his defence of the *Historical Christ* as he did to his general attack on orthodox Christianity in *Myth, Magic and Morals*.

Appendix 3

MAYA

By Meher Baba

Everything, from the least significant to the most momentous, is here within us. The spiritual planes with their indescribably divine splendour, and the gross plane of immeasurable space together with its innumerable gross universes, are all within us. That is because God is in us and we are in God. God is indivisibly, uncompromisingly, infinitely and eternally One in His impeccable oneness.

The apparently endless differences in the experiences of animate and inanimate beings and things are due to the varying degrees of consciousness on the different planes, and the ability and inability to apply that consciousness adequately. Achievement of full human consciousness is a great spiritual achievement. Greater still, is to be able to recognise illusion and face all illusory things. The greatest achievement of man is to become God-conscious, which is to become truly Self or Soul conscious.

For example, let us presume that the difference between a spiritually enlightened and an unenlightened man is as the difference between

a man who has ordinary normal faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting, and another man who is born blind and deaf and without even the faculties of smell and taste. Now, if the two happen to be present at one and the same time in a garden full of colours, singing birds, streams and fountains, where delicious fruits and fragrant flowers are equally available to both men, there is bound to be a world of difference between the scope, nature and capacity of their consciousness, awareness and experience. For the enlightened one, the world would be experienced as one full of music, full of light and full of beauty. For the unenlightened or "blind" one, the same world would be merely a black monotonous, nothingness.

If we stretch the above simile further and imagine that a miracle happens by which the unenlightened one begins to have one after another the faculties of smell, hearing, sight and taste, we can have some idea of how man's consciousness begins to be transported through the different planes of the Path towards God-consciousness. The man then begins to realise that all the differences amount simply to a difference in his own state of consciousness, which experiences inner truths more and more as it is freed increasingly from external illusions.

The force that keeps a man spiritually blind, deaf, etc. is his own ignorance, which is governed by the principle of cosmic ignorance generally known as MAYA.

To understand Maya is to understand half the universe. All false values and false belief

are due to the grip of *Maya*. Intellect in particular plays into the hands of *Maya*, for intellect is not capable of that consciousness which realises that God is Truth. Truth can only be known after one transcends the Cosmic Illusion, which appears as real owing to *Maya*.

The principle of ignorance, i.e. *Maya*, can only be transcended when the spiritual aspirant is able to realise that *Maya* is God's shadow and as such is nothing. The enigma of *Maya* solves itself only after Self-Realisation.

All the great philosophers who are not bound by their materialistic prejudices have had glimpses of Reality, and have recognised the principle of ignorance as being responsible for making all illusory and transient things appear as lasting and real. Scientists naturally have difficulty in accepting mystical conclusions relating to the transitory world and cosmos, since metaphysical perceptions cannot be reached by methods acceptable to the experimental rules of science. The main difficulty in grasping such a concept in its totality is that it would necessitate a full knowledge of the cosmic scheme. It is not possible even for a Master to explain that which is beyond the limits of the human mind! He can only make one realise it by means of His Grace and by Enlightenment.

Appendix 4

REINCARNATION

For a dissertation on Reincarnation it is suggested that the reader should study the *Discourses**. If we are able to believe that we survive death, then it is reasonable to believe that we can also precede birth. But the theory of reincarnation without some understanding of *karma* or the Law of Cause and Effect would be difficult to deal with and again the many points are too complicated for one who is not competent to explain them.

But we do know that children sometimes have strong recollections of a former life, though in the West no heed is paid to their "fairy tales," In India, China and Buddhist countries they are listened to, and there are many famous and authenticated stories connected with them. In the West people can sometimes believe they have existed before from experiences in dreams where they have glimpses into past experiences, hypnosis seems to have been successful in confirming knowledge of pre-existence through data subsequently checked from official records. But such cases must be very rare.

Socrates said that "all knowledge is only remembering." Some of the Greek philosophers

* *Discourses*, Adi K. Irani, Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, India.

regarded the belief as a self-evident truth. At one time it was widely accepted amongst the Jews; and certainly the early Christians held the view 'till later the Church pronounced such beliefs to be heretical, after it had instituted the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in the Second and Third century. In the year 553 A. D., the Church Council of Constantinople pronounced: "Whoever shall support the mythical doctrine of pre-existence of the soul and the consequent wonderful opinion of its return, let him be anathema."

Jesus was always telling us that we had to be born again: He meant it in a literal as well as a symbolical sense. He said: "Before Abraham was I am!" etc. Such statements enraged the Pharisees of the time. It is well known that when He asked His disciples who men thought he was, they replied: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias and other Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." (Matthew XVI, 14.)

Some of the Early Fathers certainly believed in this theory, notable Origen, A.D. 125, who wrote "every soul has existed from the beginning and comes into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life... Its work in this world determines its place in the world which is to follow this."

Meher Baba tells us that everything and everyone in the universe is constrained to move along a path which is perforce prescribed by its past.

"There is an inexorable 'MUST' that reigns over all things, big or small. Whether one is male or female, rich or poor, strong or weak, beautiful or ugly, intelligent or dull, one can not escape being such because one must necessarily be so, due to the impressions of the past.

The freedom, which man seems to enjoy, is itself subject to inner impressional compulsions; and the environmental pressure that limits the scope of reactions that mould the reacting self is itself subject to the inexorable 'MUST' which is perennially operative in the past, present and future.

Man has his name, his sex, his personality, his colour, his nationality, his characteristics, his pain and pleasure, and all that he may possess just because he *must* have all these.

The overpowering compulsion is exercised by the sheer force of innumerable impressions gathered in the past. These accumulated impressions cloud the consciousness of the 'self' at every stage in every incarnation of the future which, in one's lifetime, is part and portion of one's living present.

The rule of this inexorable 'MUST' governs and reshapes the so called destiny of men in every incarnation, as long as the self of man remains conscious of impressions. This rule of 'MUST' which overrides human plans of other living beings is based on Divine Law, which both adjusts and gets adjusted by the evolutionary impressions. It is only the Divine Will that can supersede the Divine Law."

Meher Baba also tells us that: "The so many deaths during the one whole life, beginning from the evolution of consciousness to the end of the involution of consciousness are like so many sleeps during one lifetime."

"One who lives for himself is truly dead and one who dies for God is truly alive."*

* See *God Speaks*.

Appendix 5

THOUGHT-FORMS

I am not competent to write on this subject so can only make some general observations of what I have gathered from various sources.

"Si jeunesse savait! Si vieillesse pouvait! " These sad lines have often haunted me. If youth could but know the Power of Thought! Would we not then have a world-wide transformation? It is an axiom that "Thoughts are things" also that "Nature follows man's thoughts."

The power of thought is fully demonstrated in miracles. The faith behind thought has the energising power to heal broken bones instantaneously, and to cure cancer and all manner of diseases. We have only to investigate such cases, healed by the prayers of no matter what faith, church or school of thought, to see what can be done and what has been done.

Thought-forms, as observed by sensitives, show the tangible substance of which they are made; and we know that scientists have photographed thought, and its oscillations can be produced on graphs. These mental impressions leave their imprint, good or bad in the semi-subtle regions. A friend once told me of some

astral journeys he had made in which he had encountered some appalling shapes, which appeared to be floating aimlessly in the air. And alas, not always so aimlessly, for such is the power of thought that it can become externalised into good as well as bad entities that bring harm on their progenitors and humanity at large. Thus, the evil thought-forms of hate and violence in the last two world wars have hastened the disintegration of civilisation at large. When we meet an individual, whether we know it or not, we contact his "field of consciousness" and he also feels ours; therefore, victims and persecutors alike can react on one another individually and collectively as well. We build up our own thought-forms, so are responsible for them. If we think harmoniously and constructively, our mental activities work *en rapport* with us in the right direction; but if we think destructively, then disharmony rules the air, for we have created evil entities who react adversely on ourselves and our environment. "As above, so below." And indeed we know that the earth is much disturbed by the unspiritual reactions of our civilisation. Some think that this is due to nuclear explosions and this may well be so, but the physical climate is also conditioned by our mental climate.

It is not generally known, however, that the substance of thought is so tangible and so plastic that it can create its own conventional heavens and hells. Max Heindel, founder of the Rosicrucian Fellowship of Southern California, in describing journeys taken with a guide in the

astral worlds, mentions in one of his books that in one journey, he was taken to a large temple filled with ethereal people saying, "This is God's Holy City." Heindel, being puzzled, asked his guide the meaning of all this, and where he was and why there were gates and walls of crystal round the city, why in fact, was everything made of crystal. He received the following reply: "It is one of the peculiarities of the desire astral world, that it is extremely plastic and moulded by thought. In the twinkling of an eye, it takes the most different shapes, according to the thought that ensouls it, and where many people upon earth think along similar lines, all their thoughts mass themselves and form a grand whole.

Thus in the lower regions of the desire world, the thoughts of people who believe in a fiery, furnace-like hell, make of the desire-stuff there, a place of torture. There we may see devils with horns, hooves and tails, prodding the unhappy sinners with pitchforks, and often when people pass out at death, after having lived in that belief, they are in a sad state of fear of beholding the place they have helped to create.

There is also in the higher realms of the desire world, a city much as you describe, a New Jerusalem with pearly gates, with a sea of glass and its great white throne, upon which is seated the thought-form of God, created by these people and appearing like an old man. It is probable that you visited this place, which is a permanent feature of the desire world,

and will remain so, as long as people continue to think of the New Jerusalem in this way, for the forms have no life apart from the sustained thoughts of mankind, and in time when Christian humanity will have outgrown that faith, the city created by their thoughts will cease to exist. Its crystal-like appearance is due to the exceeding brilliance of the desire stuff of which it is built. The old alchemists called the desire worlds 'astral' or 'starry' on that account."

We know that the Bible has given a similar account of the New Jerusalem and is responsible for the building up of this particular thought-scheme. Then again Christian fanatics, or those who wished to dominate others, created the hell, to which so many go, not always because they deserved it, but because they believed in such a place. In Latin countries when out walking, I have often passed little shrines with people depicted wriggling in hell flames. When we realise the effect on an illiterate mentality, it would not be surprising that hell as depicted should last a long time.

One has only to read *Un Appel a l'Amour*, (Published by the Roman Catholic Church) to realise the reality of hell in the Christian faith, through this history of that little nun Josefa, who died some years back. When this little saint—for what else could she be?—went into trance, she would descend into hell to rescue souls; and the Superiors and the nuns around her witnessed the burns on her body, which lasted till her death; her undergarments were burnt and have been kept as relics at La Maison

des Feuillants near Poitiers. Also those with Josefa during her ordeals could smell the sulphur and fetid odours of hell, which seemed to remain with her for quite a while after she came out of her trance state.

In this Convent of the Sacred Heart, this humble and courageous little nun also went through terrible sufferings in her struggles with the devil, who persecuted her for making atonement for the sins of the world and for rescuing souls from his grasp.

Josefa also had meetings and conversations with Jesus, who appeared to her. From the accounts in this book, the personality of Jesus resembled a conventional thought-form, for his actions and sayings bear no relation to modern life. He was always beseeching Josefa to go down into hell for him, to rescue souls from "eternal torment" and the power of the devil.

This book has inspired thousands of Catholics and brought many back to the fold of the Church. It is a striking example of the Thought-Form world built up by the Church; and such ideas will persist as long as people believe in such phenomena.

One of my friends who "travels in her astral body" when asleep at night and comes back with recollections in the morning of where she has been and has told me of some of her experiences, very similar to those of Max Heindel. On one occasion her guide took her to an immense building, in which she saw numbers of recumbent forms looking as if they had been turned into stone; they were lying on couches.

When she asked her guide for the meaning of this, he explained: "they were people who were waiting for the Last Trumpet!" He added, "Nothing will wake them up!"

On another occasion she saw soldiers fighting battles. On asking the reason, it was explained that many soldiers killed in action do not realise that they are dead and go on fighting for a time.

I trust the reader will not conclude from some of these remarks, which only touch on the fringe of this incomprehensible and confusing subject, that man is going to escape wrong-doing. By karmic law, he will have to pay, and pay to the uttermost farthing for all he should not have done during his earth life, though perhaps not always in the way he expects. But it does seem that people will go to the places they expect to go to, or will be located on the spots to which their propensities or passions draw them. Having lost the blunting physical body, their astral senses are infinitely more acute, so that they feel intensely, whether it be pleasure or pain. Those who have had low and criminal tastes before death follow their inclinations after death. Inebriates remain earthbound and frequent drinking saloons where, unable to satisfy their thirst, they will egg on living persons, increasing their thirst. Gamblers will go to gambling halls, etc. The so-called tortures that follow are due to the gnawing and insatiable cravings of the fetters forged by earth life from which they are unable to escape until they can work out their *samskaras*.

Appendix 6

HEREAFTER

This book is not the place for a detailed discussion, but death does not end the life of the ego which persists till its next incarnation. Much of the "borderland" troubles of psychiatry can be explained easily enough—because many who have in no way prepared themselves for a continued existence after death are often unaware of their transition from the earth sphere, and are liable to get into difficulties owing to the fact that their consciousness cannot adapt itself to the new surroundings of the ego.

It is known to very few in the medical profession that acute causes of mania can be due to the patient being "possessed" by a spirit who had not realised his transition to the astral spheres. Therefore, he can become entangled in the aura of a living person. The late Dr. Carl Wickland, M. D., of Los Angeles, did spectacular cures by accepting this spirit thesis. Unfortunately the majority of psychiatric medicos are too orthodox to accept the theory of the survival of personality after death. But great work has been done in Brazil in the Hospital Espirata, Porto Allegro, where "Spirit Therapy" is

used in conjunction with official medical treatment. This hospital has been operating since 1926 and is famous all over Brazil. For those in England who want more information on these questions, I recommended the British Psychic College, London, SW7. I was greatly indebted to the College for advice and guidance in the past. But let me now quote from the *Discourses* (by Meher Baba):

"Under certain conditions it is possible to use the physical senses consciously in such a way that we contact the semi-subtle spheres, that is to say, the link between the physical or the gross world, and the subtle, or mental, plane. Thus we can communicate with the spirits of the dead.

The spirits of all human beings (except those who have progressed so far as to be beyond the fourth plane) come to this semi-subtle sphere. In accordance with their *samskaras* (their impressions gathered during earth life) they return to the semi-subtle plane for a time. These spirits that are, as it were, in the waiting room of the semi-subtle sphere may be contacted by spirit communication. The semi-subtle sphere, and heaven and hell and their respective experiences are NOT real; they are subtle enjoyments and miseries experienced through the subtle organs of the subtle body. Some of the descriptions after death are partly true, but little importance should be attributed to them. During the interval between the two incarnations, the consciousness of the soul is turned towards the *samskaras*, or impressions, with the result that

there is a revival and magnification of corresponding experiences. The average man does not become aware of the subtle environment. He is wrapped up in his state of subjectivity and is absorbed in living through the revived *samskaras*. In this state the experiences of pain and pleasure become much more intense than they were in the earthly life. And these subjective states of intensified joy or suffering are called respectively heaven or hell, which are illusions within the greater illusion of the phenomenal world."

In Meher Baba's recent book, *Listen Humanity*—narrated and edited by Don Stevens, published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1957, there is some interesting information on this subject.

Appendix 7

KUNDALINI (YOGA)

I am not competent to write on this subject, but we know that the ultimate aim of Yoga is for the aspirant to attain union with his Divine Self, though it must always be understood that only a Perfect Master can bestow the Seventh Plane consciousness that is genuine God-Realisation. A *Yogi* can attain to a very high level of consciousness, in fact up to the sixth plane, and may possess tremendous powers, but he is unable to effect final union with the Self unless assisted by a God-realised Master.

Masters do not encourage their devotees to follow the popular forms of Yoga, as they have no need for these in such exalted company. They teach that man should be IN the world, but OUT of it at the same time and he should attend to all the duties that he has to do. He will be assisted on his journey back to the Homeland or Oversoul by His Master, who will draw him unconsciously along the Path, and across the various planes of inner existence, so that he will not be exposed to their perils. The disciple's love for his Master finally burns up the ego, and brings him to the ultimate union with the Beloved. In this manner, through his

services to humanity and his devotion for the Perfect One, he achieves ALL that others, through the complicated practices of yoga, aspire to. The ultimate success is due to Love. Some *Yogis*, though attaining to great heights and with considerable powers, may still be without the love necessary for the final union. Meher Baba has in fact said that there are *Yogis*, constantly immersed in a state of *Samadhi*, who do not possess a spark of the Divine Love that is universal and unconditional and essential for the final union.

In some forms of Yoga the object of the practice is to awaken the *Kundalini* Fire. I do not profess to know what *Kundalini* is, beyond the fact that it is the Vital Force and has interconnections with *Shabda Brahman*. *Shabda* means the Word or Sound. Those interested in this question can find books written on the subject. Some call *Kundalini* the symbolical expression of the Divine Soul, but there are so many aspects of *Kundalini* that it would be impossible here to elaborate or explain her different manifestations and functions.

The *Kundalini* Fire, or the Serpent symbolically coiled at the base of the spine, on being disturbed, will begin to uncoil or rise through the interior of the spinal cord. The seven *Chakras*, or Centres of Force, will become impregnated with the Fire of the Serpent, on its journey to the top of the head, where the Crown Chakra, or "thousand petalled lotus" resides. The head-dress in the representations of some Buddhas represents this Seventh Chakra, as also

do the Crowns in Christian symbology or again the halo round the head of a saint.

In some Yogic exercises not under the direct control of a Yoga Master, or at least under the direction of a competent disciple, the great danger is that perhaps *Kundalini* may turn downwards with the most unimaginably frightful consequences. The late C. W. Leadbeater gives grave warning on this subject in his Monograph of *The Chakras*, published by the Theosophical Publishing House.

There are Western Schools of Yoga that teach simple breathing exercises and postures, such as standing on one's head. These are not dangerous and could be most beneficial. It is a great pity that Western systems of education do not consider the importance of such methods in their gymnasiums.

Appendix 8

AURA AND THE HALO

By Meher Baba

"The aura and the halo are two different things and people are unable to distinguish between the two. Few people know that an aura and a halo are quite different in their respective natures, despite their close interconnection. No man can ever possess both aura and halo completely developed at one and the same time.

Like their respective shadows, every man, woman, child and baby has an aura, but only a very few individuals have a halo in any of the varying phases of its development, and still fewer possess a full halo. An aura is the reflection of the emotions of an individual mind, just as any physical thing possesses its shadow on the physical plane. The halo begins to appear when the aura begins to disappear.

The difference between a mental reflection (aura) and a physical shadow is tremendous. Shadows depend upon their physical forms, but an individual aura remains unaffected, even when the person concerned drops his physical body. This is because, in spite of physical death, the individual continues to possess the

mind and the impression in it, as well as a subtle body, which has a direct connection with the aura.

Every action, significant or insignificant, intentional or unintentional on the part of any person, creates relative impressions (*Samskaras*) which get imprinted on the mind of the individual, just as sound is preserved on a gramophone record and images of light and shade are caught on photographic plates. As thought is the first direct medium of expression of all impressions, a deep connection is established between the thoughts and impressions of an individual.

An aura, therefore, is the mental reflection of the aggregate impressions of thoughts and actions gathered by and stored in an individual mind. As long as the impressions are there an aura is always there, as an envelope of very fine atmosphere comprising of seven colours which remain more or less prominent according to the nature of each individual's impressions.

No two men are alike in all respects and yet all have common physical features. Similarly, the aggregate of individual impressions differ from one another, both quantitatively and qualitatively, yet every aura is comprised of seven colours common to all. These seven colours of an individual's aura represent the seven principal categories, corresponding to the aggregate impressions of each.

Thus, every individual aura is the image of a circle of seven colours and each aura differs from the other in proportion to the amount of each of the seven colours, according to the

individual's prominent impressions. For example, red would be the most prominent colour in the aura of a man whose impressions are predominantly made up of lustful actions. Likewise, each aura also differs in the colour formation on the borders between every two prominent colours in it.

The halo begins to develop and an aura begins to disappear only after an individual starts advancing on the Path to God-realisation. When the aura begins to get more and more faint, the halo commences to shine, more and more, getting brighter in proportion to the progress of the individual's consciousness on the Path. The halo becomes very bright only after an individual aura is on the point of disappearing. This happens in the case of one who wakes up fully conscious in the sixth plane of complete mental illumination.

In the seventh plane of Reality, the God-realised One is, once and for all, entirely free from each and every impression because the very storehouse of impressions itself, the individual mind, is then annihilated and there remains neither aura nor halo. The Reality of God alone reigns supreme in Self-consciousness of Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss, with all illusion ceasing to remain as illusion.

When One who is God-realised is able to return with his God-consciousness simultaneously to all the planes of illusion as a Perfect Master or *Sadguru*, his halo is the most bright and infinitely brighter than all the suns of the

universe put together. It is out of question for anyone, other than those who have attained the consciousness of the sixth plane, to behold the divine effulgence of the Master's halo.

In all other cases, the halo is an expression of individual advancement on the Path and a sign of the dwindling of the individual's *Samskaras* or impressions. In such cases, the halo is like a growing bright circle of the mental atmosphere of illumination; colourless throughout and yet, in every phase of its manifestation, far, far richer in spiritual splendour than any combination of colours can ever be.

If, due to love for his Master, a man happens to see what appears to him as the halo of the Master, it is not actually the halo but a part of his own aura as is temporarily reflected by the effulgence of the halo of an illumined one or of a Perfect Master.

Without necessarily being consciously advanced on the Path, and merely as a result of deep and sublime emotions, the aspirant may have from time to time glimpses of the reflections of inner sights, reverberations of the echoes of inner sounds, redolences of the inner fragrance and distant shades of the inner ecstasies. All of these are but trivialities connected with the higher illusions of the Path. There are also many techniques and natural causes for the manifestations of such phenomena, which are beyond the faculties of an ordinary man. A volume could be written, especially regarding their potentialities and repercussions, both high and low.

All illusory phenomena—gross, subtle and mental—are not only dream-stuff, but everything termed in the table* as "false-illusion" is made up of dream-into-dream stuff, which has no value at all unless it helps man to awaken to Reality.

God is the only Reality and all else is Illusion. The whole of the gross universe is but a part of the huge cosmic illusion containing higher illusions of the spiritual planes of man's consciousness.

* Attached herewith, simplifying the subject matter (Page 297)

Aura and the Halo

Individual	Plane	Nature	Aura of 7 colours		Materialistic influence	Halo of Light	Spiritual Benefit	
			More or less prominent number of colours	Number of colours most faint			Indirect	Direct
Ordinary	Gross	False Illusion	Aura of 7 Colours	Nil	100%	Nil	Spiritual Benefit	Nil
Advanced	1 st Subtle	Beginning of Real Illusion	More or less prominent number of colours	Number of colours most faint	Materialistic Influence	Halo of Light	Indirect *	Direct **
More Advanced	2 nd Subtle	Real Illusion				Light Dim	5%	Nil
							7%	
	3 rd Subtle	Real Illusion	7 4	Nil 3	100%	Fair	Nil 10%	Nil
Most Advanced	1 st Subtle	Beginning of Real Illusion	6	1	80%	Faint	5%	Nil
Dangling	4 th Subtle	Dangerous Real Illusion	5 3	2 4	65%	Unsteady Dim	7% 50%	Nil
	2 nd Subtle & mental		Very bright red & blue					
	3 rd Subtle	Real Illusion High		3	55%	Fair	10%	Nil
Illumined	5 th Mental	Real Illusion Higher	2	5	30%	Bright	25%	25%
Most Illumined	6 th Mental	Real Illusion Highest	1 (Blue-Pink)	6	15%	Very Bright	50%	50%
God-Realised	7 th Reality	<i>Real</i>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	100%	Nil
Perfect Master	7 th Perfection (Reality plus one and all planes)	<i>Real</i>	Nil	Nil	100%	Most Bright	100%	100%

Note: Percentages shown above are not actual but symbolic of a sense of proportion in ordinary terms.

*According to the efforts of seeker.

**Given consciously with full force.

*** 50% possibility of harm instead of benefit

Appendix 9

EXPLANATION FROM MEHER BABA (at the express request of the author)

Points communicated by means of gestures

COMPASSION: From the Material Point of View

It is a fallacy to imagine that Easterners are less compassionate than Westerners; for a lack of the expression of compassion does not necessarily mean a lack of the spirit of compassion. Such questions are relative. In the East there are not many organised relief centres, but that can be explained on economic grounds. We also have to remember that the privations and sufferings that the masses in India have to undergo, naturally blunt the edge of compassion. One cannot expect a man in agony to notice the agony of others.

In the majority of Eastern countries, the people rarely get one good meal every day and are mostly illiterate, so it is hardly reasonable to expect them to share the same degree of concern for animals as Westerners, who are in all respects comparatively far better off individually and collectively.

It should also be understood that the majority of stray animals wandering about are not

always 'stray,' but belong to people who live in a state of perpetual semi-starvation and in improvised shelters. So how can they afford to keep their animals better fed?

The reason why unwanted animals are not put to death, as is the recognised custom in the West, is due to religious beliefs. For Hinduism teaches that the evolution of consciousness of the soul from the stone stage upwards, throughout the various forms, including those of the snake, dog, cow and monkey, permits of a reverence for life that the West lacks. In fact, the latter forms of animals mentioned are worshipped to this day, for they are important signposts on the evolutionary Path.

The general ignorance and superstition prevailing all over India undoubtedly contributes to the general apathy and apparent callousness of the people. But then again, as has been said above, it is the economic situation more than the distortion of religious values that is responsible for the great cleavage in practice between East and West on the matter of consideration for animal and human kind.

But it is due to the influence of the spiritual Masters and to Hindu and Buddhist doctrines that those who follow these religions can not even dream of any organised destruction of animals, even on the grounds of compassion, for they have been taught that interference with life is equivalent to contravening or taking the Law of *Karma* into their own hands. In spite of the misery and want in India, some villages and towns try to maintain "Panjrappols"—

(Rest Homes for Dumb Friends), which is quite remarkable when we consider the difficulties these poor people must have, to be able to afford any relief.

It is a curious paradox that, though the average Westerner may be described as more humane than his Eastern brother, nevertheless the West has been the cause of untold suffering, as a result of the recent world wars in the struggle for political and economic supremacy, in a manner quite contrary to the teachings of Christ. But even on that account the Easterner would not be justified in thinking that the Westerner is by nature more inhuman than his Eastern brothers. We might say that it is all wheels within wheels, so we now turn to Meher Baba's explanation from the spiritual point of view.

COMPASSION: From the Spiritual Point of View

Spiritually speaking, according to the Laws of Evolution and *Karma*, the more an individual suffers, the more he benefits spiritually, for this is a means of helping him to emancipate himself from the bondage of *Maya*. Pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, are but illusory experience, like pleasant and unpleasant dreams. To be awakened from a dream, it is sometimes necessary to have some disturbing factor. For example, in order to wake up from a happy dream, an experience of unhappiness in the dream may be helpful. Similarly in life, the opposite experiences of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, compassion and cruelty are all essential factors in the development of consciousness, which is eventually transmuted into God-consciousness.

The absence of equilibrium between opposite experiences such as compassion and cruelty, happiness and misery is the cardinal factor that by itself sustains and promotes duality throughout the domain of illusion.

Right from the first glimmer of consciousness in stone form to full consciousness in human form, the individualised soul has never once experienced a complete balancing of the opposite experiences of duality. But when the balance is arrived at, the soul recognises its own divinity and the individual becomes Self-realised or God-conscious.

It is due to the lack of balance or equilibrium that happiness is felt in our life of illusion, and this is due to its contrast with our misery. For if we experience no misery, we will be unaware of happiness. So, in a sense, when experiencing misery we are experiencing happiness at its lowest degree.

If we did not have these contrasts then there would be no progress and we would continue forever in our life of illusion. For example, if a dog always had happy and comfortable lives, he would not progress in the field of evolution through ever higher forms of life.

Our progress in our evolutionary life from stone to human form, needs opposite experiences and this will ever be so, otherwise the Divine Plan of life could never be fulfilled. If there were no Divine Purpose, no upward Path to Self-realisation, then the consciousness of the human soul would oscillate eternally from one

opposite experience to another and there would be no eventual conquest of *Maya*, which has to be transcended before man can realise his eventual union with God, who is for ever eternally All-merciful and compassionate. The real saints know consciously, from their own personal experience, that everywhere at all times, everything manifests God's infinite mercy and compassion in action under all circumstances.

The question of opposite reactions of cruelty and compassion, like all other experiences in this life of illusion or *Maya*, can best be explained or understood by a study of the essential working of the Law of Cause and Effect. For this Law is the outward expression of the underlying force of the individual's *samskaras*, which have been born out of opposite experiences, or reactions to life.

Even when one feels compassion for others or finds a lack of compassion in others, this is due to one's own *samskaras* expressed in accordance with the Law of Cause and Effect.

Like everything else within the domain of illusion, even the sense of right and wrong depends upon the relative *samskaras* of the individuals in question.* Therefore, the East and

* As the question of *samskaras* is such an abstract and difficult subject and may we infer that Good and Evil are entirely relative, I hope the reader will study the *Discourses* by Meher Baba, which give us an enlightening and broad understanding of the peculiarities of the complicated human mental apparatus, which even the most brilliant psychologist is unable to explain. One point is made clear: that by reason of our animal heritage we have to accumulate more good *samskaras* than bad *samskaras*. Thus we go from good to God, before the ultimate reckoning can take place (The Day of Judgement in Christian and Moslem parlance). All life is a gradual progress along the Path to our ultimate Salvation or Liberation from the Law of *Karma*, which is the eventual triumph of God. (I. C.)

the West can both be equally right and equally wrong about each other. For example, when a man considers himself to be right, it is due to the subconscious propulsion of his own *samskaras*. Though he feels the other man is wrong, he fails to understand that this feeling is due to the influence of his own *samskaras*: these compel him to justify himself at the expense of the other man. Rightly or wrongly, as the case may be, he will insist that the other man is mistaken. Although we cannot realise it, it is our *samskaras* which influence our reasoning and understanding to the extent of shaping our character and our intellectual outlook. Only a Master of Consciousness is able to fathom the reasons for our illogicalities and unreasonable behaviour at times, whereas we remain, as always, puzzled and distressed over the contrariness of human nature, which seems to have assumed alarming proportions as we survey the world's troubles.

It is by a curious irony of fate that, in a country like India where we find special temples and places of pilgrimage dedicated to animals, and where that destructive animal, the monkey, remains a pampered and protected creature (which apparently, under no circumstances, may be destroyed), we at the same time find our distant cousins are being, for commercial profit, exported in large quantities to the West for the purpose of medical research which is being done, not for gain, but for the alleviation of human suffering. This curious contradiction of human behaviour, although we cannot see the reasons

involved, is due to the action and reaction of the Law of Cause and Effect, born of individual and collective *samskaras*.

To turn back again to Meher Baba's remarks at the beginning of this article: according to individual aptitudes and prevailing circumstances, a lack of the expression of compassion on the part of a person may not necessarily always mean a lack of the innate spirit of compassion because we do not see it. For example, suppose an experienced and skillful surgeon finds that his patient has suddenly collapsed in the midst of a major operation; he may feel that the only hope is an immediate massage of the heart necessitating a further drastic operation, causing the patient still more suffering before he attains to his recovery.

COMPASSION: From the Point of View of Divinity

From the standpoint of a Master, a lack of the expression of compassion is real compassion, though by the uninitiated, such compassion may not be understood or appreciated.

For example, Sai Baba of Shirdi, who was the Qutub-e-Irshad (Leading Perfect Master or *Sadguru* amongst the five Perfect Masters of his time) would often take all the money of his devotees who came to see him and to serve him. At the end of the day he would distribute the proceeds amongst those who were not always really worthy, since they had only come to see the Master in the hope of gaining some fleeting material benefit. One man, who was then living at Shirdi, would receive as much as a hundred rupees daily, so was able to live well and sumptuously

with his large family; whereas Gustadji Hansotia, who was one of the Master's chief devotees and who served him devotedly day and night, was treated in a very different manner. He was deprived directly and indirectly of his money, and even had to go without food and the amenities of daily life, such as clothing and blankets. In fact Gustadji was not treated with the slightest consideration. But there is always a purpose, from the standpoint of divinity, and Gustadji benefited greatly, though not in the way the ordinary outsider might have expected. This devotee was eventually directed by Sai Baba to Upasni Maharaj, one of the Perfect Masters mentioned above. Then later Maharaj handed over Gustadji to Meher Baba, with the command never to leave the *Avatar*. Gustadji, at Baba's orders, observed silence for thirty years. Thus this man had the inestimable privilege of serving three Perfect Masters. When he died, in October 1957, Baba said: "He has realised Me!"

When we sometimes hear of the strange doings of the Masters or saints, we must always remember that they are "above the Law" and cannot be judged by ordinary human standards, for whatever they may or may not do, they are working for the ultimate good of not only the individual, but for the spiritual benefit of the world at large. So we must never presume to judge or criticise, for these great spiritual beings have the spiritual viewpoint of God, which is always inaccessible to our limited minds.

Although we can recognise the fact that a code of ethics provides us with the necessary standards of conduct and behaviour, and acts as a line of demarcation between the opposites, such as good and bad, right and wrong; at the same time we should appreciate that, from the spiritual aspect, ethics are but stepping-stones towards the eventual unfoldment of our spiritual consciousness. For ultimately we have to transcend the limitations of our mind with its constant play of opposites and the duality of our transitory and illusory world.

Only when we have reached the divine state of Liberation or Enlightenment can we recognise the Truth that has hitherto been hidden within us. For it is our ignorance of the Infinite Self within and without that constitutes *Maya* or the Cosmic Illusion. Only when our false ego has been transformed into God-consciousness can we know the Wisdom and Glory of the Masters and that all life is One in the realm of Truth.

Appendix 10

MASTS

The subject of the *masts* is exceedingly difficult and complex. Dr. Donkin, an English medical man, has been the first to write a book* about them, and his work is a classic for all those interested in human psychology.

The aspirants to God range in varying degree, from the *sadhu*, in his saffron robe, to the great *Muktas* and *Majzoobs* of the Seventh Plane. The most unusual of all these pilgrims on the Path are the *masts*. The Westerner who is interested in the Real or Secret India has heard vaguely of these peculiar beings, the God-mad, the God-intoxicated. God gives out His love to mankind in divers ways. His expression needs the purest channels and what purer channels are there than the great *masts*? For they, in losing their egos in their love for God have transcended the limitations of the flesh.

During his ascent towards God-consciousness, a *mast* has, in his contemplation of Eternal Being, become oblivious of the phenomenal

* *The Wayfarers*. Published by Adi K. Irani, Ahmednagar, is an account of the work of Meher Baba with the God-intoxicated and also with advanced souls, Sadhus, and the Poor; fully illustrated with many photographs and maps.

world of forms, which, for him, has become but the domain of *Maya*. The Spirit having risen so high becomes free from its bondage of the flesh and designs not to descend again to the valley of shadows, the physical plane. In such an instance the body of the aspirant takes on the appearance of a madman or a peculiar person.

These *masts*, therefore, may be described as human dynamos of what can only be called "God-essence." Here I will digress for a moment to ask, what is God-essence? The dictionary definition of Spirit tells us that "Spirit is life or intelligence, conceived of as entirely apart from physical embodiment. It is vital essence, force, energy, as distinct from matter."

There is no doubt that the *mast*, who has attained to the higher spheres of consciousness, has entered a region that is the domain of energy. Matter being a solidification of energy, it follows that when a man has transcended the physical form of energy and entered into the realm of spiritual energy he enters a state in which his consciousness consists of vibrating spiritual energy. His entire life becomes a powerful organ for the production of spiritual energy.

I presume that the reason why Meher Baba is so occupied with his "work" with the *masts*—about which incidentally I know nothing—is because he is making use of this force for his universal work on humanity, and that he is canalising this energy into one great channel for the upliftment of mankind in the coming

awakening of the heart in the New Dispensation. But we must bear in mind that Meher Baba tells us nothing, except that his work with the *masts* is a matter between him and them. So we cannot really conjecture.

The *masts* are entirely absorbed in and concentrated on God; thus they become perfect channels through which the Master can work. These beings are closely linked with the spiritual life of humanity. Many a city in India has a *mast* who acts as "spiritual chargeman" for that particular area.

The spiritual chargeman of Poona is Joshi Buwa, a Sixth Plane *mast* and therefore of considerable importance in the spiritual world. I have visited him. He was sitting almost naked in a corner of one of Poona's marketplaces. I was impressed with his fine physique and dignified bearing. He greeted my companion—one of Baba's close men—graciously and accepted our homage. We offered him cake and coffee, which he ate and drank with the manner of a cultured man; he had been a well-known lawyer before he became a God-addict. He always sat at the same spot, surrounded with rags. The *mast* offered my friend one to sit on, but happily I was able to accommodate myself on a doorstep. I sensed the spiritual radiance that enveloped him. I could see from his expression that he was in a state of concentrated preoccupation with the Holy Grail of his desire, and had attained a bliss that I could not even aspire to. Since I saw him, he has been removed to an asylum where he can be better looked after.

Once when on a visit to an army friend in Delhi Cantt, I met the local *mast*. One evening I had walked into the Colonel's room and was surprised to see a strange figure wrapped in a blanket squatting in a corner. He took no notice of me and was absorbed in contemplation. I suggested that we should show him a photo of Meher Baba. On doing so, the *mast* gave a jump as if he had sustained an electric shock! He clasped the picture to his breast and refused to part with it. We could not get it back! Later the *mast* went to sleep in the garden and the Colonel managed to take it away, while substituting another of Baba. The next morning the *mast* seemed puzzled but went away happily with the other photo in his possession. This *mast* seldom spoke but occasionally prophesied great disaster coming upon the world.

Some of these *masts* are well-known in the localities in which they live; they also have circles of devotees. At Delhi there used to be a very famous *mast*, Hafizji Nabeena. This man was the spiritual chargeman of Delhi. About him let me quote verbatim from the supplement to the book already mentioned.

"He was quite blind and quite naked, but despite his blindness he would walk over the old city of Delhi. There is a strange story in connection with his nakedness. It seems that certain influential residents of Delhi told the police that the man, walking about the streets quite naked, was indecent. So the police brought him to the police station. There he was told that he would be taken to the court

and charged, and he demanded to be taken in a palanquin. Seeing he was blind and already held in some respect by many people, this request was agreed to, but when the palanquin reached the magistrate's court and its curtains were opened all they found was a stone lying on the floor of the palanquin. The police returned to the station, their ears smarting with the reprimands of their superiors and sought out Hafizji again from the streets of Delhi. This time they begged him to come with them to the court, since they themselves were getting into trouble because of him. So he came and appeared in court, and was duly convicted and locked in a prison cell. The same night, however, some policemen found Hafizji again free in the town, and, knowing he had that day been locked up, reported the matter to the police station. Investigation showed that Hafizji's cell was quite empty, though the locks on the gates of the cell were intact, closed, and apparently untampered with. So, from that day forth, the fame of Hafizji became greatly spread throughout the city, and he was allowed to move freely as and where he liked. Hafizji passed away on the 6th July, 1941, and his fame was so great that reports of his death were published even in "*The Times of India*," Bombay.

Errata

Introduction

- p. 14, para 3, 1.3, – limitations, not limitatations

- p. 5, para 3, 1.5 – occulist, not occultist
- p. 9, para 3, 1.2 – sense, not sence
- p. 11, para 1, 1.24 – Now, not new
- p. 12, para 1, 1.5 – push, not puch
- p. 12, para 2, 1.5 – unfortunately, not unfortnnately
- p. 17, para 3, 1.6 – I must be, not I must do
- p. 25, para 1, 1.4 rien, not risen
- p. 25, para 3, 1.7 – unconsciously, not unconsciously
- p. 34, para 2, 1.3 – origin, not oringin
- p. 37, para 1, 1.9 – ate, not eat
- p. 42, para 2, 1. 17 – omit repetition of ‘be an elemental’
- p. 63, para 1, 1.18 – horses, not houses
- p. 67, para 3, 1.8 – to, not into
- p. 68, para 1, 1.4 – frowning, not frawning
- p. 69, para 1, 1.3 – Hirsch, not Hiresch
- p. 70, para 1, 1.10 – accent, not accept
- p. 72, para 3, 1.3 – Meher, not Mehe
- p. 89, para 1, 1.7 – South, not Suth
- p. 89, para 2, 1.7 – were, not weer
- p. 92, para 4, 1.3 – touched, not touchee
- p. 93, para 2, 1.5 – suffocation, not affocation
- p. 97, para 2, 1.12 – exclaimed, not excled
- p. 114, para 2, 1.8 – scanty, not scantly
- p. 124, para 2, 1.2 – preparing, not prepering
- p. 128, para 1, 1.4 – base, not based
- p. 130, para 2, 1.16 – recover, not rever
- p. 131, para 2, 1.11 – same, not sam
- p. 151, para 2, 1.3 – restraint, not resteraint
- p. 152, para 3, 1.2 – hotel, not hotle
- p. 172, para 5, 1.4 – near, not dear
- p. 176, para 1, 1.2 – possess, not posses
- p. 189, para 2, 1.20 – wound, not would
- p. 201, para 2, 1.7 – que j’adore, not qae j’adore
- p. 203, para 2, 1.2 – spirituality, not spiritually
- p. 204, para 3, 1.1 – Orthodox, not Outhodox
- p. 218, para 1, 1.14 – religions, not religious
- p. 219, para 3, 1.5 – imminence, not immanence

- p. 240, para 2, 1.2 – Born, not Bron
- p. 241, para 2, 1.2 – that of many, not than many
- p. 249, para..... – (page) 249, not 49
- p. 257, para 2, 1.2 – enshrouded in impenetrable, not enshrouded
impenetrable
- p. 259, para 2, 1.7 – sunk, not sung
- p. 261, para 1, 1.5 – it is time, not if is time
- p. 263, para 3, 1.8 – which they have, not which have
- p. 274, para 1, 1.2 – tasting, not testing
- p. 275, para 2, 1.4 – as such, not as much
- p. 300, para 1, 1.1 – Dumb, not Dum
- p. 307, para 2, 1.13 – limitations not limitions
- p. 309, para 3, 1.20 – bliss, not blies
- p. 311, para 1, 1.14 – palanquin, not planquin

REGISTER OF EDITORIAL ALTERATIONS

p. 2 "I Have" changed to "I have"

PREFACE

p. 8 Para 4, line 3, comma added after "parapsychology" and para 6, line 2, "Victorian" capitalized

p. 11 Para 1, line 9, comma added after "exceptions"

INTRODUCTION

p. 13 Para 2, line 7, spelling of "privilege" corrected

p. 15 Para 3, lines 2-3, "not to promote material ends and pandering to" changed to "not to promote material ends nor to pander to", and line 5, first "in" deleted from the original which read, "they are in just as much in need of help", and line 12, the semi-colon after "miracles" was changed to a comma.

CHAPTER 1

[Note: Page numbering restarts here, following the Preface and Introduction (corrections above), with page 1 at the beginning of Chapter 1 (corrections below).]

p. 5 Para 3, line , "occultist" was changed to "oculist" (see Author's Errata)

p. 7 Para 2 , line 1, changed a comma after "doctor" to a period, making a new sentence, starting with "He"

p. 8 Para 2, line 5, "refered" changed to "referred"

p. 9 Para 3, line 1, "sence" changed to "sense"

p. 11 "New that...." was changed to "Now that...." and "phenomena starts" changed to "phenomena start"

p. 12 Para 1, line 3, "puch" changed to "push", and para 2, line 3, "unfortnnately" changed to "unfortunately"

p. 16 Para 3, "Is not..." changed to "Are not...."

- p. 17 Para 3, line 6, " I must do dreaming" changed to "I must be dreaming" and line 24 "disused" changed to "disguised"
- p. 19 Para 1, line 1, "danger or" changed to "danger of", and Para 3, line 2, "*the Life Divine*" changed to "*The Life Divine*"
- p. 22 Para 4, line 3, "unhamperd" changed to "unhampered"
- p. 23 Para 3, line 9, "trance, like conditions" changed to "trance-like conditions"
- p. 24 Para 4, line 7, "benefit of control" changed to "bereft of control"
- p. 25 Para 1, line 4, "risen" changed to "rien", and line 5, "unconsciously" changed to "unconsciously"
- p. 28 Para 3, line 5, "on the past of" changed to "on the part of"
- p. 34 Para 2, line 2, "oringin" changed to "origin"
- p. 37 Para 1, line 9, "I eat the pear" changed to "I ate the pear"
- p. 40 Para 1, line 7, "from, this" changed to "from this"
- p. 42 Para 2, lines 16 and 17, "be an elemental.* be an elemental." changed to "be an elemental.*" (Duplication removed.)
- p. 48 Para 3, lines 3 and 7, extraneous quotation marks removed.
- p. 50 Para 3, line 2, "I happened" changed to "It happened"
- p. 59 Para 3, line 4, "mediate" changed to "meditate"
- p. 60 Para 1, line 4, "curiosity" changed to "curiosity"
- p. 62 Para 3, line 3, "go-down" changed to "go down"
- p. 63 Para 1, line 12, "houses" changed to "horses"
- p. 64 Para 2, line 2, "I refuse" changed to "I refused"
- p. 67 Para 3, line 6, "into me" changed to "to me" (see Author's Errata)

- p. 68 Para 1, line 3, "frawning" changed to "frowning"
- p. 69 Para 1, line 1, "experience amongst" changed to "experiences, amongst" and line 2, "Rafael Hiresh" changed to "Rafael Hirsch" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 70 Para 1, line 9, "Cockney accept" changed to "Cockney accent"
- p. 72 Para 2, line 6, "in own" changed to "in your own" and Para 3, line 2, "Mehe" changed to "Meher" and Para 3, line 7, "bears on relation" changed to "bears no relation"
- p. 73 Para 2, line 6, "expenditure of his *sanskaras* are speeded" changed to "expenditure of his *sanskaras* is speeded"
- p. 83 Para 1, line 8, "world" changed to "Word" and line 10, "planate" changed to "planet"
- p. 84 Para 2, line 1, "plainy" changed to "plainly" and Para 3, line 1, "heard" changed to "heard" and line 3, "save world" changed to "save the world" and line 4, "Buddha-consciousness" changed to "Buddha-Consciousness"
- p. 85 Para 1, line 1, "World" changed to "Word" [Note: This change and the one on page 83 were made because elsewhere in these paragraphs the author uses "Word" herself in this context of the "Word made flesh."]
- p. 88 Para 2, line 11, "way" changed to "why"
- p. 89 *Para 1, line 4, "Suth Africa" changed to "South Africa" and Para 2, line 5, "weer" changed to "were"
- p. 92 Para 1, line 2, "buite" changed to "quite" and Para 4, line 3, "touchee" changed to "touched"
- p. 93 *Para 2, line 3, "affocation" changed to "suffocation" (see Author's Errata)
- pp. 94-96 Customary quote within quote marks were inserted where they had been omitted.
- p. 97 Para 2, line 8, "exclcd" changed to "exclaimed" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 100 Para 2, line 1, "was very" changed to "was a very"

- p. 101 Para 2, line 6, "when writting" changed to "when writing" and line 7, "Senates" changed to "Senate"
- p. 102 Para 1, line 7, "and also" changed to "and I also"
- p. 105 Para 3, line 6, "uncomfortable" changed to "uncomfortably"
- p. 106 Para 1, line 4, "request,:" changed to "request," and Para 3, line 7, "Womens" changed to "Women's"
- p. 113 Para 2, line 4, "mess" changed to "mesas"
- p. 114 Para 2, line 5, "scantly" changed to "scanty"
- p. 115 Para 1, line 4, "Mooly's" changed to "Molly's" and line 17, "wore. Every colour" changed to "wore every colour"
- p. 117 Para 2, line 8, "trip" changed to "trips"
- p. 118 Para 1, line 1, "tabe" changed to "table"
- p. 119 Para 1, line 3, "he" changed to "she" and Para 2, line 12, "places" changed to "pieces"
- p. 123 Para 1, line 3, "sixtyseven" changed to "sixty-seven"
- p. 124 Para 2, line 2, "prepering" changed to "preparing"
- p. 128 Para 1, line 1, "marvellous" changed to "marvelous" and line 2, "based" changed to "base"
- p. 129 Para 3, line 3, "dispairing" changed to "despairing"
- p. 130 Para 2, line 10, "rever" changed to "recover" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 131 Para 2, line 7, "sam" changed to "same"
- p. 133 Para 2, line 11, "Just" changed to "just" and line 15, comma inserted after "Lippmann"
- p. 134 Para 2, line 16, "navy" changed to "navvy"

p.139 Para 2, line 2, "realy" changed to "really" and line 7, "dilema" changed to "dilemma"

p. 140 Para 2, line 1, "is same lack" changed to "is the same lack"

p. 142 Para 2, line 7, "embeded" changed to "embedded", and para 4, line 6, "long-drawn out" changed to "long drawn-out"

p. 144 Para 3, line 1, "socalled" changed to "so-called" and para 4, line 2, "book-shops" changed to "bookshops"

p. 145 Para 2, line 6, comma added after "tolerance"

p. 146 Para 4, line 6, "air-fighting" changed to "air fighting"

p. 150 Para 2, line 7, "our was" changed to "our car was"

p. 151 Para 1, line 6, "Beause" changed to "Because" and Para 2, line 2, "resteraint" changed to "restraint"

p.152 Para 3, line 1, "hotle" changed to "hotel"

p. 156 Para 2, line 4, comma changed to semi-colon after "humour"

p. 158 Para 1, line 5, period added after "indefinitely"

p. 159 Para 3, line 6, "donkey: But" changed to "donkey. But"

p. 160 Para 1, line 2, "be in" changed to "be it" and Para 3, line 1, "seperate" changed to "separate" and line 9, "had" changed to "hard"

p. 161 Para 1, line 4, "in cognito" changed to "incognito" and line 6, "none were" changed to "none was" and line 11, "amazing," changed to "amazing;"

p. 162 Para 1, line 6, period after "ours" moved to inside of quotation mark, and footnote, "Purdon" changed to "Purdom"

p. 164 Para 3, line 8, inserted dash after "preoccupation"

p. 167 Para 2, line 12, "notice" changed to "noticed"

- p. 169 Para 2, line 6, beginning quotation mark inserted before "Every" and line 8, "forms" changed to "form" and Para 3, line 4, "out side" changed to "outside"
- p. 170 Para 2, line 3, "Wayfares" changed to "Wayfarers"
- p. 171 Para 1, line 7, "Manifestion" changed to "Manifestation"
- p. 172 Para 3, line 4, question mark moved to inside of quotation marks and Para 5, line 3, "dear" changed to "near"
- p. 173, Para 1, line 5, added end quotation mark after "approach?" and Para 2, line 7, "fulfilment" changed to "fulfillment"
- p. 174 Para 1, line 6, "it," changed to "it." and line 20, "Master," changed to "Master."
- p. 175 Para 1, line 1, removed comma after "only" and line 4, changed comma to period after "form" and line 7, "with universe" changed to "with the universe"
- p. 176 Para 1, line 2, "posses" changed to "possess" and "unsciousness" changed to "consciousness", and last Para, last line, "that" changed to "than"
- p. 179 Para 2, line 4, "countries;" changed to "countries," and line 6, "Godman" changed to "God-man"
- p. 186 Para 3, line 1, initial quote added to continue from previous paragraph
- p. 189 Para 2, line 12, "would" changed to "wound" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 192 Para 1, line 2, "Sixth-Plane" changed to "Sixth Plane"
- p. 193 Para 1, line 12, "so far ingenious" changed to "so far in their ingenious"
- p. 194 Para 1, line 11, "appear to have notables" changed to "appear to have been notables" and Para 3, line 3, "disciples who had been waiting" changed to "disciples had been waiting" and line 4, second exclamation mark moved from outside to inside the quotation mark.

- p. 197 Para 1, line 5, 'it is not. changed to 'it is not.' and line 6, 'it is'" changed to 'it is.'" and line 9, "Baptist, appear" changed to "Baptist appear"
- p. 201 Para 2, line 5, "*qae j'adore*" changed to "*que j'adore*"
- p. 202, Para 1, line 2, "opined;" changed to "opined:"
- p. 203, Para 1, lines 5 and 6, "does no always" changed to "does not always" and Para 2, line 2, "spiritually" changed to "spirituality"
- p. 204 Para 2, line 1, "non-christian" changed to "non-Christian" and Para 3, line 1, "Outhodox" changed to "Orthodox", and line 3, beginning quotation mark added before "If"
- p. 205 Para 1, line 8, period ending the paragraph moved inside the quotation mark
- p. 207 Para 3, line 3, eliminated extra end quotation after "God!", and line 5, question mark changed to period after "God-man", and "it may not" changed to "may it not"
- p. 209 Para 1, line 3, "Passage" changed to "Passages", and line 13 onward through the end of the paragraph on p. 210, single quotes inserted, replacing double quotes, to mark the conversation within the quoted passage.
- P. 212 Para 2, line 4, semi-colon after "Permanent" changed to a comma
- p. 213 Para 1, line 4, period moved to inside of quotation mark
- p. 218 Para 1, line 2, "religious" change to "religion's" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 219, Para 3, line 3, "immanence" changed to "imminence" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 222 Para 2, line 13, "truth of both been seen" changed to "truth of both can be seen" and line 17, "what – He" changed to "what He"
- p. 223 Para 4, line 3, quotation mark inserted before "In"
- p. 225 Para 2, line 1, removed initial quote before "In"

- p. 226 Para 2, line 2, "ageold" changed to "age-old"
- p. 227 Para 1, line 4, colon changed to semi-colon after "tangles"
- p. 229 Para 1, line 8, "know" changed to "knew"
- p. 231 Para 4, line 1, "*Karm*" changed to "*Karma*", and line 2, "*samskars*" changed to "*samskaras*"
- p. 239 Para 4, line 1, "socalled" changed to "so-called" and line 4, "stand up the" changed to "stand up to the"
- p. 240 Para 2, line 2, "*Bron*" changed to "*Born*"
- p. 241 Para 2, line 2, "that many" changed to "that of many"
- p. 243 Opening quote, "distruction" changed to "destruction"
- p. 244 Para 1, line 6, "men; largely" changed to "men – largely"
- p. 246 Para 1, line 2, "*Panal" change to "Penal"
- p. 249 page number changed from 49 to 249
- p. 251 Para 1, line 3, period moved inside quotation mark, and Para 2, line 2, "*The Discourses*" changed to "the *Discourses*"
- p. 252 Para 1, line 1, "*The wayfarers*" changed to "*The Wayfarers*", and line 4, "that" changed to "than"
- p. 253 Para 2, line 6, "We look" changed to "We see"
- p. 254 Para 1, line 7, "repeatly" changed to "repeatedly"
- p. 256 Para 2, line 4, question mark after second "consciousness" changed to exclamation mark
- p. 257 Para 2, line 2, "enshrouded impenetrable" changed to "enshrouded in impenetrable", and line 3, "Saint" changed to "Saints" and line 3-4, "how ye" changed to "how can ye" and Para 3, line 2, "of *Avatar*" changed to "of the *Avatar*"
- p. 258 Para 2, line 2, "preset" changed to "present" and Para 3, line 1 "Bibal" changed to "Bible"

- p. 259 Para 2, line 1, comma after "acute" removed and line 5, "sung" changed to "sunk" (see Author's Errata)
- p. 261 Para 1, line 3, "if is time" changed to "it is time", and Para 3, line 2, colon after "selves" changed to semi-colon
- p. 263 Para 3, line 6, "which have" changed to "which they have"
- p. 265 and following, instances of Meher Baba's childhood name given in the text as "Meherwan" have been changed to "Merwan"
- p. 268 Para 1, line 2, "beyond domain" changed to "beyond the domain"
- p. 269 Para 3, line 1, "what known" changed to "what is known"
- p. 273 Para 3, line 2, "sipiritually" changed to "spiritually"
- p. 274 Para 1, line 2, "testing" changed to "tasting"
- p. 275 Para 2, line 3, "as much" changed to "as such"
- p. 276 Para 1, line 2, "*The Discourses*" changed to "the *Discourses*"
- p. 277 Para 1, line 2, "held view" changed to "held the view"
- p. 280 Para 2, line 1, "*Si jeunesse savait! Si vieillesse pouvait!*" changed to "*Si jeunesse savait! Si vieillesse pouvait!*"
- p. 287 Para 1 line 5, "*The Discourses*" changed to "the *Discourses*" and Para 2, line 4, "mentle" changed to "mental" and Para 3, line 2, "forth" changed to "fourth"
- p. 292 Para 2, line 3, "verying" changed to "varying"
- p. 293 Para 2, line 5, "thoughts" changed to "thought"
- p. 300 Para 1, line 1, "Dum" changed to "Dumb"
- p. 302 footnote line 3, "*The Discourses*" changed to "the *Discourses*"
- p. 304 Para 5, line 1, "Qutuab" changed to "Qutub" and line 8, "sumptously" changed to "sumptuously"

p. 305 Para 1, line 6, "silghtest" changed to "slightest"

p. 307 Para 1, line 2, "been" changed to "has been", and para 2, line 8, "limitations" changed to "limitations"

p. 309 Para 4, line 13, "blies" changed to "bliss"

p. 311 Para 1, line 3, "planquin" changed to "palanquin"