

Meher Baba and the God-determined Step

By

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DEDICATION

With all my heart, I dedicate this "...venture is worth the trouble..." in his own words, that came to my notice a couple of hours before he suddenly breathed his last, on the 5th day of the 6th month in the 2nd year of Baba's

*New Life i.e.
Monday the 16th of
Zilquad - 1370 Hijri
and the 20th of August
1951 -*

*To
my friend and colleague*

Dr. SHAIKH ABDUL GHANI MUNSIFF

*Poet, Philosopher, Thinker &
Sufi-Teacher*

“My strongest and only advice to each one of you is to hold fast to your faith and love — at least in the same proportion as now, if not in greater.”

MEHER BABA — 28.6.1951

MEHER BABA
&
THE GOD-DETERMINED STEP

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Part I

BABA IN NEW LIFE

As announced in the meeting at Mahableshwar on October 16th 1950, the first day of the first New Year of Baba's New Life, Baba left Mahableshwar on October 21st. That tour round the four corners of India came to an end on the Western shores of the country when Baba, Baidul, Chhagan, Eruch, Gustadji and Pendu arrived in Bombay on November 25th.

Nariman's 'Ashiyana' on Warden Road, Breach Candy, was temporarily vacated in advance by his family members; and the neat, cosy flat was completely placed at Baba's disposal, during the twelve days that Baba and party stayed in Bombay, until they returned to Mahableshwar on December 6th.

Amongst a few others concerned with Baba's different works, the *arrangementwalas were also permitted by Baba to remain by his side (as and when it was possible and practical to do so) with a view to witness Baba give the finishing touches in Bombay, to his new type of Mast and Poor work, as well as to keep company with Baba for a few days, that were reserved for his rest and relaxation.

*This "Part" was first written in December 1950 for the information of the author's co-arrangementwalas of Baba, all of whom could not, then, join Baba at one and the same time.

I could manage to take advantage of the opportunity only for three days on 26th, 27th and 28th of November. I tried to snatch a day or two more for a further stay with Baba; but circumstances eventually did not allow me to succeed in that.

Since Baba's New Life started on 16th of October 1949, I already had a few occasions to be face to face with Baba. Those were instances, when Baba only met particular people for a particular purpose at a particular time and place. The stray and far-flung impressions of such fleeting meetings had so far left before my mind's eye, the picture of Baba to be his same old lively self, but surrounded by a rigid frame of his New Life restrictions.

On the one hand, the inimitable eyes of Baba did continue to remind one, as before, of an innocent deer at one moment and that of a full grown tiger at the next. On the other hand, 'thus far and no further' restrictions did make one also feel that in spite of being very much alive, Baba had, so to say, placed himself within a show-case of glass all round.

This was the first occasion for me to remain near Baba continually and constantly in the midst of his New Life environment. No relaxation or exception was allowed by Baba for anyone to make any direct or indirect reference to the Old-life matters and affairs of anyone. Except for this 'Curtain' that remained tightly drawn between the Old and the New, we were able to live with Baba as freely and intimately as we were accustomed to live with him from time to time, in the Old life.

Thus, all the apparent artificiality in the atmosphere round Baba melted away; and the feeling of being enga-

ged in 'balancing over the tight rope' was no longer there. The New Life with all its pains and pleasures, was found to be as much real and human as any other life, with one difference, viz. *the New Life refused point blank to take any notice of the past or make any blue prints for the future.* It was certainly free from all pretences whatsoever. It was an absolutely 'take it or leave it' business for all concerned.

For all the accompanying physical rigours, mental alertness and lack of any rosy prospects, those living with Baba, in the course of stray-talks amongst themselves and with the 'guests,' did unconsciously display a stainless-steel-touch of a really care-free attitude towards the daily 'whys and whats' of life.

As to Baba, he was the same Baba as before, in almost all respects. It would not be far wrong to say that to all appearances and in all characteristics, Baba was 99% what I knew him to be for nearly 28 years up to 7:30 p. m. on October 15th 1949, when I parted from him that evening at Pimpalgaon for the last time in the old life.

I do not mean thereby that Baba's personality had undergone a change of only 1%. I am a pauper in mathematics; and I have no mathematical precisions in view. I am merely trying to express my sense of proportion as it is felt by me at this moment over the contradictions involved in the dual aspect of Baba's PERSONALITY as Meher Baba-cum-Merwanji Sheriarji Irani.

In the old life, Baba used to assert his Mastery as Meher Baba so much that perhaps only 1% was left over for 'Merwanji' to place his signature as 'M.S. Irani' on letters, documents etc.

In the New Life, Baba is definitely trying to cold-storage the Mastery almost completely and to act in all

matters as M. S. Irani. He seems to have succeeded in this, with the result that he continues to remain 99% the inaccessible Meher Baba and 99% Merwanji in right earnest.

Perhaps the expected personal ‘disaster’ to Baba, if and when it happens, it might bring out the 100% Meher Baba and the 100% Merwanji at one and the same time. Beyond this speculation, I will leave the question of the great subtle difference of 1% to be answered by ‘time’ at the proper time.

Baba was all along found to be scrupulously careful and explicitly consistent in observing that cardinal point of NEWNESS of his New Life in all big things and small things that he did or say, voluntarily or involuntarily. If and when a slip was made, it did not take long for Baba to correct himself quite openly.

I have forgotten, the context, but once during those three days, I did definitely hear Baba refer to himself as an ordinary man.* It is no exaggeration to say that he plays that part freely and fearlessly without at the same time letting his people forget for a moment that he remains whatever else he may be.

Whenever an occasion arose for Baba to pass a remark about or comment upon any particular Mast as to the Mast’s spiritual achievements, he would often take care to add “I feel that to be the case,” meaning thereby that, it was just his opinion and that it should not necessarily be taken as a definite assertion of fact as we were expected to do in the Old life.

*Since then, I have not only frequently heard Baba, refer to himself as an ordinary man; but I have also learnt from him, again and again, that for the present, he honestly feels himself to be an ordinary man.

In one case, the discussion happened to lead to what one particular Muslim Saint of Bombay had once said of Baba in the Old life to the effect that Baba was the very acme of Divine Perfection; and Baba immediately asked Eruch to give a twist to Baba's ear, saying that he (Baba) ought not to have allowed the discussion to serve as a reminder to his own Old life Mastership.

On another occasion Baba criticized Baidul repeatedly for Baidul's failure in taking sufficient care in making certain approaches to the Masts, when he and Pendu attributed Baba's profuse expressions of dissatisfaction to his Old life habits of intractability and restlessness. Baba at once took notice of the challenging remarks and I could not help feeling that, that was the time to see if Baba was only acting or really living his new way of life. I know that Baba is a fine actor and an adept in changing expressions; but the situation had developed so suddenly and naturally that no acting could or would have served the purpose. We were almost crowded in the doorway between the living room and the vestibule of the 'Ashiyana,' with our respective faces only a few inches away from each other. It was during those few minutes that I saw the 'new' Baba. Even if Padri, with all his passion to catch Baba's facial expressions by his Camera, were ready at that moment for a snapshot, I doubt if he could have caught all the subtle transformation that came so serenely, so sweetly and so swiftly over Baba's features. The way he then gave expression to his protests was characterized by as much firmness as gentleness. What he actually said was something to this effect: "I am always trying not to lose my temper, but when I do so, I make no secret of it. You must, therefore, believe me now when I say that

Baidul did fail in doing all that was necessary and which all could have been done in this case.”

This reminds me of another discussion that happened to take shape over Baba’s silence, in the course of some stray conversations. Baba confirmed the impressions of those always living with him, that since he went into what the good old C. D. has rightly termed the “Great Seclusion,” Baba has been completely observing a soundless silence without ever letting out an “Ah” or a “Hoonh,” so much so that once at Mahableshtar, beads of perspiration had broken out on Dr. Nilu’s face, when something went wrong in the course of an injection that he was then giving to Baba. The needle got twisted; and although it made Baba writhe in agony he maintained his silence all the same. While referring to this occasion, Baba once remarked, “How I wish I could control all my old-life habits as well as I maintain my silence.”

As explained by Baba, both the aspects of his present work i.e. (1) Contacts with the Masts and (2) Contacts with the poor, are entirely *different* from his activities in the past of a similar nature.

Formerly none knew how he actually established the contacts with the Masts and what transpired on those occasions, because such meetings were invariably held out of sight of others and they were never fully described or explained by Baba.

This time, it was clearly as an ordinary man, with all possible humility and diffidence, that Baba was out to seek the blessings and good wishes, of anyone, who was, or supposed to be spiritually advanced and enlightened.

Previously in the course of his poor work, although Baba always preferred the really needy and poor to be served first, the approach was generally based upon people who appeared to be poor or under visibly straitened circumstances. During the present Mast and Poor tour, Baba was particularly keen to contact people in hopeless economical plights, irrespective of appearances.

Searching investigations used, therefore, to be made with great pains, in order to find out, from the different stratas of society in different parts of the country, cases, where people appeared to be well-to-do or people, who had the reputation of being rich and who were yet in great economic difficulties, known only to themselves, or suspected by the few, who happened to know them more intimately.

The party came across in x-x-x a family, who not long ago occupied such rich and important position in society as to have a special Railway Carriage at their disposal for their travels. At the time Baba contacted the head of the family, the gentleman was himself running fever and yet he was found to be moving about in order to obtain medicine and or other necessities of the daily life for his large family, which was under extremely difficult circumstances. Still it was a job to induce that family to agree to accept the help, offered to them by Baba.

The first thing, Baba did in Bombay, on the morning of the 26th of November, was to complete his Poor work. Four amongst his Old-life disciples and devotees, who had brought their difficulties to his notice, in the Mahableswhar meeting of October 16th, had been sent a word in advance, before Baba arrived in Bombay; and they were there at the 'Ashiyana' that morning.

Baba explained that while doing the service to the poor elsewhere, he was reminded of the difficulties nearer home and that he had, therefore, decided upon extending the same service to four of his old-life disciples and devotees. He had set aside four thousand rupees to be equally distributed amongst the four individuals, in exactly the same way, in which he had carried out the distribution of money, during the rest of the tour.

After describing the procedure in advance, Baba requested the four persons neither to fail nor to falter in the least, in allowing him to carry out that procedure freely and completely. The recipients were then requested to stand erect in a line with bare feet. Baba first washed their feet with his own hands and then touched the feet of each of them with his forehead. After that, a solemn declaration was addressed to the recipients, on behalf of Baba, as follows:— “This is neither charity nor favor done by me, The money is also not mine. It is part of the amount, given to me by loving hearts, to be used for helping the needy. I consider you to be in need of help; and I give this without any obligation upon you of any kind.”

At the end of the declaration, Baba passed on, with his own hands a thousand rupees to each of the four persons and returned to his seat, as unconcerned, as if he had just left it to wash his own hands.

The recipients did obey Baba silently, but their tearful eyes, twitching lips and general flinching and fumbling was as good as screaming and squealing; and it stunned the spectators into a greater silence. Had there been anything like a barometer of emotions near there, it would surely have registered a regular riot, for at least half an hour.

Baba was the first to break the ice by starting the topic of the latest tour. This set Eruch, Pendu and others to describe to us what each could remember at that moment about the salient features of a swift, big sweep over the Country in all directions up to Nepal in the North, Calcutta in the East, Hyderabad in the South and finally Bombay in the West;

It was almost a round-the-clock travelling, from one place to another, by the cheapest available means of transport. Once the work was finished to the satisfaction of Baba at any one place, they immediately moved on and on, without necessarily making a halt anywhere for food or sleep.

During the first fifteen days, in the midst of the frequent changes from one train into another, no one in the party must have, on an average slept for more than three hours per day and night. They would snatch at and munch things, as and when eatables could be available on the spot.

If one night, they rushed on in a flying express, the next day would find them crawling through the highways and byeways of one town or the other. Against squeezing in and out of over-crowded trains, they also travelled, huddled in the luggage in an open wagon over the Nepalese railway, where trains run leisurely and passengers have to provide their own lights, when it gets dark. Thus numerous cities, towns and villages were literally tooth-combed for the particular Masts and Poor that Baba was in a mighty big hurry to contact with.

As in the old, so in the new life, the element of inexplicability continues to shroud Baba's movements and actions, more particularly in the matter of the time-factor. If once in a while, subsequent developments do

explain the propriety of a particular action, that only smacks of just a coincidence or accident. For example, the recent trouble in Nepal just started after Baba had finished his last work there and left that unfortunate land of plenty, surrounded by scarcity.

The only place, where the party looked forward to enjoy a restful night, was when they unexpectedly succeeded in obtaining the necessary permission of the particular authority to occupy the sumptuous Guest House for the night at xxxx. It was a fine place, finely situated in almost ideal surroundings. But they had no rest at all that night. The part occupied by the party happened to be a haunted corner. In spite of the silence, which Gustadji is also observing since over two decades, his gestures in describing the queer movements and eerie noises heard and felt by everyone in the party, were eloquent enough to make one feel the presence of a bodiless existence, playing all sorts of pranks like going up and down the stairs, knocking at walls, opening and closing the doors and so on, without actually being seen at all.

After the four recipients were asked to return to their respective places, Baba spent about an hour with the arrangementwalas present, and settled the differences of opinion amongst them in respect of the instructions about his Copyrights, given in the last “arrangements” meeting at Mahableswar on October 15th; and then we all sat together with Baba for lunch.

After completing his Mast work in Bombay, just as he had finished his work for the poor that morning, Baba had at first intended to take rest and to relax in witnessing the un-official Test matches between the

Commonwealth and the all India Elevens, on and from November 30th. But when the lunch was over, Baba said that he would start upon the Mast work for three consecutive days from the 27th, and proposed to spend the rest of the day, 26th, to watch the match, which was then already in progress, between the Commonwealth and the Governor's teams.

As Meherji and Nariman had already arranged the required accommodation in the Brabourne Stadium of the, C. C. I., through one of the local Clubs for all the proposed matches from first to last, all that we had to do was to accompany Baba, jostling through the Sunday crowds of spectators, in order to reach the seats reserved for us in the Northern Wing of the public stand. At the time they selected the seats, Nari-Meher had been to the spot, in the earlier hours of the morning; and they thus happened to overlook the fact that, for the major portion of the day, the particular seats were more or less going to remain under the glare of the changing sunshine.

Thus, in spite of an excuse of a shelter stretched over our heads, the relaxation in the afternoon was also accompanied by turning and twisting over our seats in the heat-resisting, eye-straining and sun-screening struggles for about four hours. Because of the eyes-trouble, with which Baba had been suffering lately, the physical strain and discomfort to him was obviously all the greater. All the same, Baba continued to watch the play to the end with great interest. Now and then, he used to comment upon all good strokes made and bad catches missed by the players in the field. Baba would also often smile over the enthusiasm of the crowds and their witty and at times vulgar remarks that could be overheard in the midst of the wild cheering, indulged in the spirit of sport,

which can and does appreciate good play, irrespective of who plays and from what side.

The inconvenience, experienced that day on account of the 'sun-stroked' seats, proved very helpful to the arrangementwalas concerned, for obtaining better accommodation, in time for Baba's party for the regular daily visits, after the completion of the Mast work. And they did enjoy the regular Test matches from November 30th onwards except on December 5th. That was the day that the saint Arbindo Ghosh passed away early in the morning at about 1:30.

According to what Chhagan described to me afterwards, Baba came out that morning from his retirement in an absolutely miserable health. Baba complained and did look very ill and pulled down and declared that he would rest for the whole day and that they were not going to see the Cricket Match further.

By lunch time, as Chhagan said, they were very eager at least to hear the progress of the game over the Radio. But none dared to disturb Baba, when all of a sudden Baba himself asked them to switch on the radio, saying that he wanted to hear how the match was progressing. The very *first* thing they heard was the announcement of the passing away of Arbindo Ghosh. It was too shocking to believe; and Baba expressed his doubts if they all had caught the news properly. Meherji was asked to find out from the papers if it was a fact; and a special message was given to Nariman over the telephone to get the news confirmed by making further enquiries.

In short, in spite of a sudden inexplicable illness that cancelled his daily routine and which kept Baba all the time miserable indoors for the rest of the day, he in fact

continued to doubt the passing away of one, whom Baba in his old life use to associate with the achievement of the Sixth Plane of Cosmic Consciousness of a ‘Sant’ or a ‘Pir.’

Baba started contacting the Masts from the morning of the 27th and completed the work on the 3rd day on the 29th of Nov. As already stated by me, I could remain with Baba only up to the 28th. During those two days, I was given the duty of becoming the mouth piece of Baba in requesting the Masts for the blessings and good wishes, desired by Baba. I was to make the request in the case of those, who were known to be Muslims and to remain a silent spectator, when those contacted happened or appeared to be other than Muslims. In my absence on the 29th, the duty of repeating the request on behalf of Baba was passed on to Adi Senior; who was also all along instructed to note down and make a list of the names by which the Masts were known, their location and the actual date, on which each one of them was contacted with by Baba.

I will, therefore, restrict myself only to a general description of the salient features, remembered by me in this connection. Baba maintained a uniform method of approach to all those whom he contacted – to the leaders and the wayfarers on the Path as well as to those, who were believed by others to be spiritually advanced and enlightened

That approach was essentially one of great humility and submission. First of all, Baba used to be very careful and avoided causing the least disturbance or annoyance to the one approached. One of the “Phirta” Masts, i.e. those, who keep on roaming from place to place, without stick-

ing to any particular place or locality, was found lying on a foot-path near Mahim. The moment, the Mast was spotted, the car was stopped; and we all followed Baba quietly near the spot where the semi-naked Mast was lying huddled up on bare ground. In spite of the blazing afternoon sun, he was found fast asleep, without any shelter over him. After watching him for a few minutes Baba decided not to disturb him at all and said, “We shall take another chance, some other time”; and with that we moved on.

Although he would not seek actual permission in order to pay his respects, Baba would not make an advance, unless he was satisfied that it was not likely to be resisted. But once the contact was established, Baba would not leave the place without obtaining the express permission of the other party by word of mouth, nod of head or any other gesture of assent.

Once at Bandra, a Mast, who puts up in a very simple but neat little hut over a hill overlooking the sea, granted Baba’s prayer for the asking; but he added, “Kabhi kabhi aaya karo,” i. e., “Be visiting once in a while.” Baba at once stopped; he got the prayer repeated with the statement that he would like to go now and waited until he got a clear and unconditional assent of that Mast.

Unless and until Baba could touch his forehead upon the feet of the Mast and get an assent to his request from him, a contact was not supposed to be complete. It was while he placed his forehead on their feet that I generally used to repeat the prayer “Aap dua karayn kay inka ruhani kaam ho jai,” meaning thereby, “You will kindly pray that his (Baba’s) spiritual work is carried out.”

The response used to be received in various ways and words. The Salik (discerning) type, would say, "Insha-Allah ho jaiga" i.e. "God willing, that will be completed." Some would merely nod their heads. Some boldly asserted "Ho jaiga" i. e. "That shall be done." One queer type, at first did a lot of fencing by asking how he could dare interfere with the Will of God and the work of Masters. But when assured that all that was needed from him was his own blessings, he suddenly went into an ecstasy and began to give sharp raps on the back of Baba, four or five times, saying that the work shall be carried out. In one case, a Mast insisted upon receiving Rs. 3 and Annas 4, before he would say anything one way or the other. When Baba placed the amount in his hands an anna slipped through his fingers. The Mast re-counted and found out that one anna was short. Only when the desired amount was completed, did he give a twist of assent to his chin. I could not help remarking to Baba that the fellow was very careful in collecting his fees; and Baba smiled broadly.

The Masts were found in all sorts of places, settings, and circumstances, throughout the nooks and corners of Bombay from slums to palatial buildings, with clothes and surroundings clean as new pins or lying about in dirt and filth, attended to by loving hands or uncared for by anyone, in serene moods or nasty tempers, sticking to a particular place or roaming about from one place to another, near holy shrines or places adjoining the houses of prostitutes, on busy, thorough-fares or out-of-the-way places.

Nothing stopped Baba from carrying out his self-appointed pilgrimage with the briskness and thoroughness of an electioneering campaign.

Much as I would like to dwell over all, that I saw and witnessed, while racing, round Bombay in a powerful fear with Baba from morn to eve during those two days, I will, for the present, stop with describing the case of one, who, so to say, paid back Baba in his own coin. I would call him the Patiwala Baba — a short, robust, full-bearded, Arab or Pathan type of a Muslim “Patiwala” (Cooly). We had to go for him twice, once in the morning and the second time, late at night. He would not let people collect round him. So, the second time, Baba decided to approach him with only myself by his side. In the sweetest and most persuasive tones that I could adopt, I began to plead to him that we did not mean to disturb him, harass him, ask any boons, and pointing out to Baba, I said that he only wished to pay his respects. At last the ‘lion’ roared. With a gesture towards Baba he said something to this effect, “He may be God, may be Mohammed; but why not leave me alone.” Baba quietly touched the old man’s feet from a distance and beat an immediate retreat, asking me to leave him alone. “He is a fine fellow” repeated Baba more than once.

Part II

DECLARATION OF THE STEP

Baba's observance of his inimitably energetic *silence*, since July 10th 1925, is now running into the 27th year of its unbroken continuity. Baba is also keeping up the severe strictness of the silence as adopted by him from the beginning of his great seclusion, which eventually gave birth to his New Life on 16-10-1949.

All the same, Baba can and does express a lot by signs and gestures, and when very necessary, through occasional use of his alphabet board. Therefore the words that I have put in Baba's mouth here are not all his own as actually spelt by him on the board. Except for a few verbatim notes made on the spot, all this is being written by me from memory and according to my own impressions with the help of my scribbling in the diaries.

My immediate object is to let others hear in greater details about the great occasion of the declaration of the God-determined step by Baba, as well as to let the others share with me much of all that I saw, heard and remembered, during the 12 days that I enjoyed with Baba at Hyderabad, in the midst of the fullness and richness of a large and a representative gathering of Baba's Old life followers and New life friends from far and near.

"I like Hyderabad best," said Baba, the day he lead us for the second time to see the sights, "it is a very good place both materially and spiritually. The spiritual importance of Hyderabad is coming down from long past."

In the course of his Old and New Life activities, as a Perfect Master (Sahib-e-Mukkammil or Sadguru), and as an ordinary man, Baba has, during the last 30 years established more or less, some kind of direct contact with a very large number of places in most of the countries in the world. Baba has been as much attracted to the places of some type of importance, as he has been to the out-of-the-way nooks and corners of the rest of the world.

In 1929, Baba undertook a very hurried journey of nearly 5,000 miles by a motor-Bus mainly in order to locate a particular spot in the Himalayan ranges.

He remained in partial seclusion for some days at that pinpointed place upon a hill and a typical comment was then heard from Baba to the effect that because of an atmosphere of almost balancing spiritual and material influences at their best, the place was unique in the whole of the world. "Here," continued Baba, "the best of facilities are available for man's spiritual emancipation as well as for his material enjoyment." While going back through my old diary in order to confirm the above impression, what I did not expect to find was the fact, that on the return trip, Baba had insisted upon going much out of our way, in order to visit some particular places in the Hyderabad State, before the trip was brought to an end in Nasik.

Both as a Master and as an ordinary man, *Baba has consistently had a world of his own about him, which under all circumstances, is always swayed by the predominance of God and the lovers of God.* In this world of Baba, Hyderabad began to loom large from the fateful eve of the political independence for this sub-continent, which I

believe is the “heart of the world,” on the lines of Baba’s explanation (See Page 72 “Philosophy & Teachings – 1933”), according to which, out of the countless worlds in the cosmos, the earth is spiritually the most important one. For the major part of the memorable week of 10th–16th August 1947, Baba went through most of the length and breadth of the Hyderabad State, in the course of one of his whirlwind tours, for contacting the God-loving Masts.

In the “Gaisoo–Daraaz” (long-haired) pitch darkness of the confusion for Baba’s people over his New Life, it was again Hyderabad that provided the first break of the now fast-approaching, “Zar–bakhsh” (gold–giver) dawn. God determined the nature of the step, within Baba, at Hyderabad; and it was inevitable because of the complete success of Baba’s preceding unique seclusion of 100 days, which in turn largely resulted from the fulfilment of Baba’s then unfinished Mast and Poor work to his own entire satisfaction. As per supplement to Circular NL 20, issued on 11–1–1951, Baba selected Hyderabad and Bombay, in order to achieve the prerequisite conditions for the success of his 100 days seclusion.

Because of some share that I happened to have in Baba’s Mast work in Bombay in November 1950 as described under Part I, I was again invited to join Baba in Bombay by the end of January 1951, when Baba told me that I was expected to play an important part in the Mast work that Baba then desired to finish in Bombay and that, therefore, I should be fully prepared and ready to do my duty with all my heart in it. However, my first and foremost impression, on my arrival at Bombay, was to hear Baba say, “My work that I have just finished in Hyderabad, was most successful and abso-

lutely to my complete satisfaction. That and the work that I have now to carry out in Bombay, have 100% connection with the 100 days seclusion that I have planned to go through shortly. If the Bombay-work also proves to be as good as that done in Hyderabad, no power can then thwart the success that I desire to achieve through the 100 days seclusion. If all that is fulfilled, I feel that ‘Badhi vaatno nikaal aavi jasay’ (i.e. there will be an end to all the problems).”

Afterwards, according to what Baba told me, he was so much satisfied with his work in Bombay as to consider it to be completed 1000% while Baba’s own statement and its elucidation published under Circulars NL 25 and 25 A need no comments as to the results of the 100 days seclusion, for which *Baba strived so much, struggled so much and suffered so much.*

Both like and un-like many other cities and cantonments that bear a common name, Hyderabad and Secunderabad are for all practical purposes rolled into one. On the north-east Hyderabad City ends into its Secunderabad Cantonment area; and for a casual visitor it is difficult to draw a line between the two. On the North-west Hyderabad is extended right over the Jubilee Hills. Hyderabad proper is leisurely sprawled in the South with river Moosa flowing right through its heart, which is surrounded by the great Mecca Masjid, the famous Char-Minar (Four Minarets) and numerous other beautiful buildings, monuments, parks and well-planned broad and neat thoroughfares.

But for the palatial residences studded all over the Hills together with their well-kept lawns and gardens and fine-surfaced roads that link them with the City and the Cantonment, the Jubilee Hills are a part and parcel of

the boulder strewn country—side all round Hyderabad. At many points over the Hills, the skeleton rocks and boulders are piled into strange pyramids and grotesque forms like play—blocks of different shapes, arranged at the whim and fancy of a child in the nursery, who cares two pins for proportions and proper balancing. At times, one imagines how the big and small rocks will start chasing one another down the hill, if disturbed with enough force.

Like the Bombay—Central and Victoria Terminus, Hyderabad has two main railway Stations. The broad gauge station is popularly known as Nampalli; and it is more like a shunting-yard than a terminus. Trains run forward and backward on a common track for a few miles in order to touch Secunderabad. The meter gauge terminus called Kachi Guda is on the South-east, beyond the famous Osmania University; and the incoming trains first touch Secunderabad. Having preferred to travel over the meter gauge via Manmad, we detrained at Secunderabad Station, which almost directly faces the Jubilee Hills in the west at a distance of about seven miles.

I felt a touch of Poona, a dash from Bangalore, some semblance of Bombay's Malabar Hill; and with the additional loveliness of the prominent Hussain Sagar (Lake), our first ride through Secunderabad-Hyderabad created a sense of a pleasant and homely atmosphere. When the car swung through the inviting entrance of House No. G 2 / 529, to all appearances, we were in for a good time. This bungalow, which was specially hired for the meeting and for the guests to stay in, was formerly the residence of the late Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung (May God rest his mind in peace), himself an architect of great repute. It

is a miniature palace, finely planned and finely finished in the midst of attractive grounds, made all the more attractive by an artistic lay-out of the same, in a wave of circles to match with the curves of the buildings.

Although most of the guests were expected to arrive much later, the attendants engaged for the occasion were already alert on their duties; and it was a matter of second-for them to make us feel quite at home. I was not allowed to carry my own hand-luggage; and therefore while leisurely going up the shining, winding and colourful stair-case built round an indoor fountain and with only a walking stick in my hand, I smiled as my first tour with Baba to Mathura, Agra, Karachi and Quetta in 1924, flashed through my mind. At that time, besides carrying our own kits, we had to work as ordinary coolies in handling a mountain of luggage, consisting of big steel trunks and other huge packages and bundles on the railway stations and to and from the places where we used to stay. The consequent bodily aches and strains were nothing compared with the amusement and disdain that used to be expressed for us by fellow passengers and the enraged coolies on the spot.

Baba was expected to arrive at 3 p.m., but his presence had already begun to be felt, when we found that the smallest details were arranged under his personal supervision or with his express approval. The particular room allotted by Baba to the group, in which I was included, was attached with a sumptuous bath as well as a balcony that overlooked half of Hyderabad across the lake in the foreground. By the time we enjoyed a shower, tea was served to us; and thus, (contrary to the warning which had been sent to us in advance that we should be prepa-

red for a heavy and depressed atmosphere), everything pointed to a swell-time of our life with Baba. And that proved correct to the hilt. The “newest” Baba of the New Life was man to man, the “oldest” Baba of the Old Life.

In 1921, I began first to know Baba as a liberal friend and an enjoyable companion, with just a tolerable flair for philosophic discussions over spiritual points. As “X” is wont to say, the sugar-coating came off rather too soon, because for years together afterwards, like the Ring-Master in a Circus, who always appears too ready to crack the whip and thrust the rod in helping his ferocious tigers, stubborn mules, intelligent monkeys, slow moving elephants and fast trotting horses, to perform their different feats, Baba asserted his Mastery to the utmost in taming what he has often said, “My wonderful mandali.” The same Baba, who would not then care a bit whether you had a drop of water or not after having walked several miles straight from bed from 3 ‘o’ clock in the morning, now, once stopped our excursion-bus, of his own accord, in one of the busiest streets of Hyderabad and patiently saw that each one of us enjoyed a good cup of tea that day, between a rich break-fast that we had in the morning and an equally rich lunch that waited for us in the palatial dining rooms.

However, upto 3 p.m. that Wednesday, June 20th, the possibility of things proving otherwise was there, because of the warning, that we had already accepted as a condition precedent to our presence in Hyderabad. Everything, therefore, depended upon Baba, who at any time and in any capacity, *ordinary* or *divine*, is quite capable of turning hell into heaven and vice versa. The moment I heard that Baba had arrived, I ran out of the

rooms and saw him coming up the stairs. He was smiling and appeared to be very cheerful; but he was climbing the stairs too slowly for his usual springlike gait and did look ill at ease. Baba, in bad health, generally spells bad 'weather' for those, who stay by his side. After Baba took his seat in the hall, reserved for the meetings and individual interviews with him, the first question that Baba asked those who had gathered there, was "How do you find me?" According to previous experiences, that was something like the danger signal, that the Port authorities put up, when they expect a storm to, break out. With one voice, we all who were then present, agreed that Baba did look very much pulled down, weak and ill,

"That is a fact," said Baba, "I am feeling very ill. The piles trouble is still there more or less. I feel a continuous gnawing pain near my diaphragm, I can not sleep well. I do not possess the least appetite to eat anything, I have to force myself to eat a little, once every 24 hours; yet at that time the very sight of food is nauseating. I tried my best all these days to carry out the advice and instructions of the Doctors faithfully. I was particularly anxious to be free from such trouble, at least during the time that you all are here, so that I might enjoy your company as well as carry out all the work that I have to finish by the 1st of July, as cheerfully as possible. Apart from regaining the health, that I lost during the 100 days partial seclusion, there is no substantial improvement so far. Let us hope I do not get worse. In any case, I am determined to finish all that I have got to finish now. You all will have to help me more or less. You should be very careful about your own health. We shall try to do all that we have got to do with

as good cheer as we can, Except for the attention required for the work and for maintaining your health, I want you all to remain as care free and cheerful as you can.”

However, right upto the last moments of our departure on the morning of July 1st, Baha continued to remain in the best of his moods and spirits, in spite of his continued ill-health. These 12 days of 1951 have definitely surpassed any other 12 days of the initial period of “Shovq” (enthusiasm) of 1921, during which, without *feeling* himself to be an ordinary man, he merely *acted* as such, in order to catch hold of those, whom he had then selected to catch for good.

Excepting the period of a few hours of the meeting at Mahableshtar in October 1950, which, in his own words as heard from him later, was just something like the “Shiraalseth Raaj” i.e. sovereignty for a very limited period; I believe that since the 16th of October 1949, Baba has not only been trying his best merely to act but that he has also been *feeling like an ordinary man*. “IT IS NATURAL FOR ME IN MY NEW LIFE TO FEEL VOID OF ALL THAT IT WAS NATURAL FOR ME TO FEEL IN MY OLD LIFE” are Baba’s own words that I heard from him in Bombay on February 4th, 1951 and noted down then and there. So, this time, when I heard Baba refer freely to things like “400 lives” and “700 years” and so on, I once asked Baba as to how he, as an ordinary man, could make such statements. And Baba explained that, it was only to express the depths and the intensity of the points in the particular contexts as visualised by him as an ordinary Thinker and Philosopher. Apart from his words and only because of the way that Baba carried out the most serious

propositions in the lightest matter-of-fact manner throughout those 12 days, the least that must be admitted about Baba, is, that for the time being, he is indeed a very *extraordinarily ordinary man*.

“Now let us talk business,” said Baba, after exchanging various formal remarks with all those, who had arrived there so far, “I have got to do many, many things. I may for that reason, call any one of you individually or in particular groups, at any time for any period and as many times as I may find it necessary to do so for my work. Everyone must therefore, be ready to start upon work immediately and remain within my call, at any moment, all the time that I remain here. I will be here with you mostly from 8 to 11 in the morning and 2 to 6 in the evenings. No one should go out of the premises during these hours or the hours fixed for your meals. For the present, only simple food will be brought here from a hotel, with which arrangements have been made to prepare the same with pure butter. From, the time the others begin to arrive here within the next 3 or 4 days, arrangements have been made with a caterer for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals, to be prepared and served here on the premises according to the choice, which they have expressed. You will then begin to get regular breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. On the 28th and the 29th, none should go out at all, unless specially allowed by me to do so. Above all else, no one should have the TAVAKHO of (to expect by right) individual interviews with me for the sake of an interview. I may not send for one or the other at all. But, when called by me and on *my own initiative*, you should talk with me freely on the points initiated by me, even if they happen to be connected with the Old Life. At

all other times, none should ever refer to me any thing connected with the old life of anyone.”

The very next day (21st), in the presence of all others then present, Baba allowed “XX” to discuss with him a particular matter, which happened to be connected with Baba’s proposed work as well with certain events of his Old Life. Everything went well until unwittingly “XX” could not help referring to a personal matter. The moment Baba’s attention was drawn by Dr. Ghani to the lapse on the part of “XX,” Baba smiled broadly and said—

“He has committed the mistake in good faith. That particular sequence was inevitable and as such difficult to be avoided. All of you are no doubt now tired about such things; but you have no idea how sick I now myself feel about things like my silence, manifestation, etc. I am billions of times more fed up with everything than you all are. If you feel very keen to “see” me, then believe me, that I am all the more most eager to let you “see” me once for all. *If and when that happens, it quill happen quite unawares and all of a sudden, and yet it will be at the moment exactly fixed for that to happen. In the New Life, I have got to and I do stick to the principle of New Life.*”

For the first seven days from 20th to 26th June, Baba was mainly concerned with a number of adjustments and arrangements, both of which he desired to be completed definitely before undertaking to put the God-determined step into execution on October 16th, 1951. A gist of Baba’s words in that connection is as follows:

“I shall have to make certain definite adjustments to wipe out the traces of interference that I have experienced during the last two years of my New Life. I am

under no obligation of any kind to any one. When I say ‘I feel Boja’ I mean by it that I feel I have not done enough for the one, who associated himself with my life through the mutual bond of love. And unless and until I become conscious of a satisfaction that comes upto my expectations, I must do my best to remove that ‘Boja in one way or another”

On the 23rd several more guests arrived. While repeating the point of “Tavakho” about individual interviews, Baba added, in a lighter vein, that he will have to “talk” with ‘A’ for 5 minutes, with ‘B’ for 7 ½ minutes, with ‘C’ for 3 hours, with ‘D’ and ‘F’ for 7 hours each and with ‘G’ for the whole of the following day. Thus, in the midst of serious discussions, Baba invariably used to give a touch of his keen sense of humour to almost everything. “This is a committee of 3 heads and 1 ½ hearts” said Baba, after he nominated 3 particular individuals for a particular purpose on June 25th. Almost in the same breath, while referring to the question of giving up one’s life for one’s Master, Baba said, “Compared with the day to day carrying out of a Master’s instructions, through the thick and thin of one’s life, the giving up of life, on the emotion of the moment, is very cheap. Sometimes soldiers of very ordinary calibre can also perform acts of sacrifice and heroism, under particular circumstances and particular impulses of the moment.”

That same day when.....indirectly tried to draw Baba’s attention to the need for “Darshan” for the public at large, Baba said, “ Darshan is worth giving when for those whom it is meant, a Darshan is really the Darshan. The God–determined step is for that end in view. Whether there will be the Darshan or not is a matter that at the moment rests upon the Will of God.”

On the 26th Baba said, “I am going to see the Old Meher Baba or go blind. That is the only remedy for all my ‘Bimaries’ (illnesses) and the result of that remedy, will prove to be the remedy for all the ‘Bimaries’ of you all. You all here have helped me in carrying out so many important things. But you have no idea of the real importance of all the work that I have been doing these days. That can only be known as the result of the God-determined step that I am going to take on October 16th. According to what I feel at the moment, these seven days that you have passed with me are as good as having passed 700 years of your lives with me.”

From the 27th, all eyes were so to say turned to the Declaration, which was to be made the following morning. With the exception of those few, who had been typing and translating the same under the direct supervision of Baba, it continued to remain a sealed secret to the last moment.

However, that morning (27th) when we were having a general discussion with Baba, it was announced that ‘A’ had called in to see ‘AA’. After the former’s departure, the topic momentarily turned to ‘A’, who was said to be a man of considerable authority in Hyderabad, drawing also a princely salary. This led Baba to shed considerable light in advance, on what was at stake under the God-determined step. I present the following gist of Baba’s words as I could then gather them:

“Formerly, for the sake of the things, I desired to be carried out, I took into consideration such factors about people. Now, if in accordance with the God-determined step, my *work* is done, there will be no need at all for me to take into consideration such matters, for the simple reason that there will be nothing left to be done by

anyone for me. Similarly, I need not take into consideration the prestige and position of any individual, even if that work remains undone, because the result depends upon the Will of God, and when once that is manifested one way or the other, there will again remain nothing else to be done by me or for me.”

“For me now, ‘Jaan per bani hai’ (i.e. my life is at stake). But this expression does not even remotely express what is really at stake for me under the God-determined step.”

“Suppose that someone, who has leprosy from head to foot, is declared to be incurable and thus believes himself to be fast approaching an inevitable death, what else would he care for except the end itself, be it one way or the other, But then, death is no end to anything, although people commit suicide and give up their lives because of frustration etc. The following words of Hafiz give some idea of what I am trying to convey to you:

‘Ya jan rasad ba janan, ya jan zetan barayad’

i.e. either the soul has got to reach the Over-Soul or the soul has got to get out of the body.”

“Still that is not quite what I have to say. To take another example, suppose that I am suffering from physical disabilities and afflictions of a type that allow me to move very little, and yet I have decided to climb Mount Everest.”

“To stretch the simile to its utmost length, I might just as well say that I HAVE TO ATTAIN THE ZENITH OF STRENGTH AT A TIME WHEN I AM AT THE ZENITH OF WEAKNESS, in an impossibly short period,

impossible in the sense, that what could be achieved in 4 Crores of lives, is to be achieved in 4 months. Yet all this gives only an incomplete idea of what is really at stake for me now.”

In a meeting that same afternoon, Baba informed all those present and desired that 15 more individuals, who were expected to arrive in the evening, were also to be informed as follows:—

“Circulars were sent to *all my people*; but only you few have been invited to be present here.”

“The rest were asked not to come. You have been called here to bear witness to the Declaration that I am going to make tomorrow before God. That does not mean that you will be required to sign or seal any papers. I thereby want God to know that you all have been the witnesses to the Declaration.”

“There will be no individual interviews tomorrow. All must be present in the Hall here by 8 o’clock tomorrow morning. All must wash their hands and faces before that. Those, who might get a night-pollution, must take a bath before presenting themselves here.”

“Before I make the Declaration I will also call in my heart all the past, present and future Perfect Ones to bear witness to the Declaration.”

The morning of June 28th was something like I’d, Papeti, Divali and X’mas all rolled into one. A personification of “Papeti” was the first to wish me a happy “Id.” Although not everyone had been ordered by Baba to take a bath, I doubt whether there was even one, who had not completed his bath by seven that morning. In fact most of us were practically all up and about from the

hour of three. As far as possible, also, everyone had put on their best new clothes, so that the breakfast room was all the more lively and bright.

Long before the clock struck eight, everybody was seated round Baba in the Hall fixed for the meeting. Baba, also, had put on a new coat, and was serenely happy in spite of a serious air about him. He began by asking everyone to be “really present” there in the Hall — with all their hearts — and then left his seat to wash his own hands and face. Resuming his seat, he signalled to Dr. Ghani, who then read out the explanation to the Declaration, first in English, and then a translation of it in simple Hindustani. After that Dr. Deshmukh read out the explanation in Marathi. Both of them had prepared the translations beforehand, in accordance with special instructions already given to them by Baba.

The text of the original explanation is as follows:—

1. God has determined in my mind the irrevocable step that I am going to take on October 16th. The period required for the execution of this inevitable step will be from October 16th, 1951 to February 15th, 1952. During these 7 days, therefore, I have been talking to you all collectively and individually whenever necessary, regarding the arrangements to be made for the carrying out of this step. From July 1st to October 15th I will see to the actual arrangements in detail.

1. The step God wants me to take is one of complete and absolute annihilation. I am at this moment solely and entirely in the New Life, and it is purely from this New Life stand of an ordinary human being that I tell you about this annihilation. This step compels me to take on complete mental annihilation during the

process between October 16th and February 15th. That means that during this period of mental annihilation, I will, in the natural course of events, be facing physical annihilation as well, without my actually seeking it. By February 16th the result, as I see it, will be:

(a) I will gain complete annihilation and yet be alive physically, and this will mean that I will not only attain the old-life Meherbaba state, but also manifest it universally. It will also mean a super revolutionizing in the lives of all connected with me and even those not connected with me, as fundamentally I will then be connected with each and everyone; except that its effect will vary in accordance with the strength of their connection with me.

OR

(b) With mental annihilation my physical body might fall, and that would mean the end of everything and the beginning of everything. Then for those connected with me the same super change will occur, but without my personal individual manifestation.

OR

(c) Before mental annihilation is gained my physical body might fall, and that would mean we would all be where we were. In that case every one of you will be benefitted according to your connection with and your love and faith for me.

OR

(d) By the end of February mental annihilation might not be gained and physically I might be alive, and that would mean the end to all. Then, I would

free everyone from having any direct connection with me, leaving it to them to lead any kind of life they choose.

3. In any cases those directly and indirectly connected with me will not have loved me and served me all along in vain. Irrespective of what I was, am, and will be, God in His Infinite Justice will see to everything. My strongest and only advice to each one of you is to hold fast to your faith and love – at least in the same proportion as now, if not in greater.

4. God wants me to take this step and I am absolutely certain that He will help me gain this mental annihilation by Feb. 15th. With this inner conviction I will plunge deeply into the act of annihilation from the 16th October.

5. I ask God in all humility to help me achieve this desired end by Feb. 15th.

6. In the event of my physical death the arrangementwalas have to carry out the typed instructions I have given them, and Vishnu will carry out my instructions regarding the same.

7. I will be away from Hyderabad from October 16th to Feb. 15th. The women who are now with me will stay on in Hyderabad during my absence. Vishnu has been given his duty in connection with them from 1st July to 15th Feb.

8. During this period (from 16th of October to Feb. 15th) I want to be absolutely free from any kind of hindrance, free to die and free to live without any *boja* of any kind. Anyone who wants to go through this dying process with me can join me; but I want every one of you to fully understand the magnitude of your mental

preparation needed to stand by such a decision. I want you to bear in mind the difficulties accosted at the start of the New Life in 1949; the obstacles in your way and the hindrances in mine – and I want no repetition of that. If you choose to accompany me from niece emotional impulse on your part, it will prove disastrous. If you come with me it will actually be to face all kinds of untold difficulties and inconceivable hardships; hardships that might include starvation, going without sleep, sickness, disability and complete hopelessness and helplessness at their extreme heights. It might mean experiencing 400 deaths in 4 months. I will have absolutely no responsibility and might have no concern whatever for anyone accompanying me.

9. I order the Servants who are with me, to choose between two things: to join me in this hopeless task, or to stay at Hyderabad doing whatever duty I allot to them. In the latter case, they will be well provided for as regards foods clothing, and pocket money for 4 months. None of the arrangementwalas should offer to accompany me; as they have to carry out their responsibilities till the very end. Any one of my old life disciples may join me. If, by the grace of God, I gain my objective by 15th Feb., everything spiritual and material, (or only spiritual as the case may be) will be for my Servants and Old-life disciples and devotees.

10. And yet, before I take this step on 16th of October, I want to try and help materially certain of my old-life disciples and to adjust certain matters, for some of them, in order to be free from every kind of *boja*. From July 1st to Feb. 15th I might be available either to all, to a few, or to none. Occasions might also arise when I might be available to the masses. I will be free to decide about all these points as and when I like.

11. Even if there is only one of you accompanying me I shall be quite pleased and satisfied, and even if many choose to come with me I will not mind. But those accompanying me must be prepared to be able to stand everything and anything under all and every circumstances, implicitly obeying my every order, without hoping for any kind of reward, spiritual or material. They must expect no help of any kind from me, but on the contrary will be expected to help me.

12. Also, from amongst those offering to come with me, I will finally decide who is to accompany me and who is to stay.

13. During this period of annihilation (from Oct. 16 to Feb. 15) my actions and mode of living will be free from any binding conditions. I might wander about from place to place or settle down in one place – when and where I will decide between July and October. I might beg for anything, demand anything, accept anything or reject anything; or perhaps I might do none of these things. I will do anything ordinary or extraordinary, good or bad, as the occasion may demand of me, based on the will of God for this great Annihilation.”

We then all rose with Baba and the Declaration was formally read out most solemnly on behalf of Baba, by Dr. Donkin first in English, then Ghani (in Urdu) and Deshmukh (in Marathi). Baba stood erect during those few minutes, his hands folded in a devotional *Namaskar* (obeisance) to God —

In the presence of God, and bearing in my heart all the Perfect Ones of all times as witness, I declare that by the help and will of God, I will definitely take this step of annihilation on October

16th of this year. God helped me to do the seclusion work of the 100 days to my entire satisfaction, and I feel absolutely confident that God will help me to attain to the old Meher Baba state by February 16th 1952, and to manifest universally.

I want every one of you who is present here as witness to this declaration to fast for 24 hours on tea and water, on 16th of October, beginning from 8 o' clock in the morning of that day.

The declaration was followed by an interval during which all were allowed to disperse and relax for about 15 minutes.

If we correlate the various remarks and explanations that Baba has offered us from time to time, with this explanation to the Declaration, we are able, I believe, to deduce something of what lies in store for all concerned, and to achieve deeper understanding of the spiritual mystery of Baba's new life. Of the four corollaries (a), (b), (c) and (d), Baba has pointed out that any ONE of these four may eventually flow out of the God-determined step, in accordance with the *ultimate* Will of God.

This unconditional and absolute reliance upon God, and God alone, for the final result, is I believe the most important feature of the Declaration. To me it is now quite clear that the hope-lessness and the help-lessness of Baba's new life were definitely born out of a resolute determination to exert fully and at the same time, to submit completely to God's will.

Those twin features of the new phase of Baba's life, never had the remotest connection with frustration of any kind. It is equally clear also that the New Life was not adopted in order to shirk any exertions whatsoever. In a personal conversation with me on June 25th, Baba happened to tell me, "I feel pleased with the individual helplessness of.....that has immense possibilities, but you can have no idea of my present infinite helplessness." I therefore think that to make all out exertions, in spite of experiencing hopelessness and helplessness, is, not only the key to Baba's new life, but also the key to the problem of all problems, viz., "Destiny & Exertion."

If the clouds of the hopelessness and helplessness of the new life, have begun to give a glimpse of the rainbow of an inevitable end to all suspense, it is because of Baba's all out exertions in the course of the new life itself that have led Baba to the Declaration of the God-determined step – step that will be taken on the 2nd birthday of his New Life, October 16th 1951.

As soon as we all returned to the Hall after the recess, following the Declaration, this is how Baba began his discourse on Mano–Naash, "I know, God knows and you must also know about mental annihilation or Mano–Naash. I will explain it as an ordinary philosopher and you should all try to follow what I say. If you understand it properly, you will be benefitted, even if I do not remain alive after 15th February 1952." When by lunch time, he stopped moving a rapid finger over the alphabet board, the discourse was still incomplete. But before we actually dispersed, Baba who was then in an exceptionally happy mood, said, "The fact remains that for good or for bad, I am definitely going to take this God-

determined step.” After a short pause, he added, “It will be for the best, because, AT 3-30 THIS MORNING, GOD REVEALED TO ME, THAT I WAS GOING TO REGAIN THE STATE OF MEHER BABA IN THE OLD LIFE.”

He then also made a passing reference to the next thing to be done that day. “When we meet again this afternoon, “said Baba, “all those who want to, may decide to go with me and who will not. But after hearing your decisions I shall finally decide for myself as to who will go with me and who will not. Arrangementwalas should not offer to go with me because they have got to carry out the arrangements to the end.” Then after a sudden sweeping glance at the grave faces round him, he added, “For God’s sake don’t all of you decide to join me on the assumption that I shall say ‘No’ to all of you.”

This touch of humor with which Baba so suddenly capped his earlier serious words, made everybody burst out laughing – a happy ending to this most important meeting.

In the afternoon, when we again gathered before Baba, in order to hear the individual decisions of those who intended to remain by his side from the 16th of October, Baba said “This period of four months concerns me and those who might be thinking over offering themselves to accompany me should not consider the question as a question of merely going with me for so many months or just accompanying me on a tour.” Out of more than 70 men present only 21 offered to go with Baba, and yet he must have spent over two hours more in discussing about existing and remote commitments and responsibilities on the part of the individuals con-

cerned. Baba then closed the matter for the day as follows:—

“It is a fact that each one of you who has offered to join me, means it seriously and I feel very happy at the readiness with which you have decided to go with me I want everyone to feel equally happy at my own decision about each one of you, whatever that decision may be. God knows how infinitely serious the matter is for me, and there must not be the least possibility of any hindrance to me in carrying out this God-determined step. Last night, I even felt that it would be best to set out all by myself. I then remembered my limitations, such as my silence, my failing health, etc., that forced me admit that I must not fool myself and that it was really not possible for me to go alone. I therefore have to consider your offers very carefully, and I shall let you know my decisions later on.”

The next day (June 29th), at about 11 a.m. Baba declared that he had decided that 15 out of 21 should not join him. Of the remaining 6, Baba said that he had now decided that 4 of them should go with him but that he would decide by the 7th of September whether the other two should also join him.” (For names, see Circulars NL 26 of 9-7-1951 and NL 31 of 7-9-1951).

That same day, also Baba completed his discourse on Mano-Naash, and this discourse is given in full in the next chapter.

A few stray and interesting remarks that I recall well enough to be reproduced here are as follows:—

(1) June 28th—

“There are 99% chances for me to drop off my body but because of the 1% chance of achieving the



BABA
AND
SOME OF HIS PEOPLE

success desired by me, I feel 100% sure of achieving the same.”

(2) June 29th—

“I will live the whole of the New Life for me in four months and that I will thus end it for myself.”

(3) June 30th—

“Having made the declaration before God, in the presence of all the Perfect Ones of all times, I feel very happy. I hope you all shared my happiness. I also feel that in February, the happiness that knows no end will be achieved.” I

In response to the repeated requests of a number of his old life disciples and new life friends, Baba joined all those who had witnessed his declaration of the God- determined step and sat with them on the morning of June 30th for a group photograph, which is partly reproduced here.

Part III

MANO-NAASH

i.e.

ANNIHILATION OF MIND

or

KHAATIMA-E-NUFFS

The discourse on Mano-Naash begun soon after the Declaration and left incomplete by lunch time that day, was resumed again by Baba on the following day (June 29th). In order to complete the subject, Baba's finger must have kept dancing over the alphabet board, for more than three hours during those two days.

It was after a very long time that Baba was pleased to give a regular discourse. On such an occasion, Baba's face expresses an earnestness that commands one's attention. Besides following his words, as spelt out by him fast on the board, without any notes before him; it is a treat to follow the rapidly changing expressions on his face and in his eyes. Above all, his delicately chiselled finger, does not merely move mechanically on the alphabet board. In between, by a turn here and a twist there, Baba so to say, makes his fingers speak, as if to emphasize, over-ride or under-rate the points in question.

Much as I liked to take down the discourse verbatim, I could not help enjoying it more than preparing a faith

ful record of the same. All that I could therefore manage to do, was to take down, from time to time, particular points. However, before I left Hyderabad, I had an opportunity to re-touch my notes while I heard the verbatim reports read out by friends, who had taken down the original discourse in English as well as its on-the-spot translation in Hindi.

On a closer study, I find that, as it should have been, for the benefit of the listeners on the spot, the notes for both the days, when read together, contain repetitions of some of the ideas in different words.

In order to facilitate, with due interest, a proper study of the subject in print, I would first bring out in bold relief, *the point of difference, as repeatedly emphasized by Baba, as between a Mind and the Ego:*

“Every mind is limited and no mind is one in itself. The ego is unlimited and it is one by itself. A mind is false and it is always false. The ego is real and it is always real. *A mind is born once and it has to die once. The ego was never born and it never dies.* A mind is not transformable and it is never transformed. The ego is transformable and it does get transformed.”

“On the one hand, only the outlook of a mind is changed. The change in outlook, good or bad, is transitory. Mind remains mind, whether it is lifted up or it is pushed down, it is happy or it is un-happy.”

“On the other hand, when its false consciousness is transformed into real consciousness, the ego is transformed into REAL ‘I’ which is eternal; and it is only then that the ego ceases to believe itself to be a limited mind.”

“A mind is at rest in sound sleep, when it is 99% free of all its activities. The heavy breathing etc, goes on in sound sleep because of the mind’s remaining activities of 1%.”

“The ego is there even in sound sleep but here, it is temporarily stripped of its false consciousness.”

Let us now turn to the *‘story of the mind’ as told by Baba:*

“Mind existed when no *body* was there. It can and does exist, even when a body is not there. The birth of a mind takes place long before the stone–body stage, but let us start as from its age of stone.”

“The mind takes over a particular body in accordance with the impressions (Sanskars – Aamaals) gathered by it. It survives only because of desires and thoughts that spring out of the impressions gathered by the mind. The taking over of giving up of the body by the mind does neither amount to the death of the mind nor the transformation of the ego. It is something like the ‘impressions’ telling the mind ‘Take body in order to spend us’ and the ego has to bear witness to that.”

“Similarly, when a mind is temporarily at rest in sound sleep, and the ego is there momentarily shorn of its false consciousness, sooner or later the Ego has to witness the Sanskaras, calling up the mind ‘Wake up, come, come and spend us.’ That way, every day, there is a death and there is a birth for the body. In short, a mind is capable of and does create worlds, illusions and delusions.”

Here are *the contrasts as pointed out by Baba as between a mind and the ego:*

“Annihilation of a mind does not mean the extermination of the ego. To the contrary, as long as a mind is there, the ego can not be transformed. Therefore, for the transformation of the ego, a mind must go and eventually it has got to go.”

The following is a part of the *discourse in general*:

“The ‘I’ that each of us has, is now bound up with a mind in which are stored the false impressions, good and bad, rich and poor, beautiful and ugly and so on. It is because of the impressions stored in the mind that the REAL ‘I’ thinks itself to be a FALSE MIND and as such thinks ‘I am body, am young, am old, am man, am woman,’ etc. and never as ‘I am God.’ A mind might make one say ‘I am God’ but that can never make ANY mind FEEL, ‘I am God.’”

“You are infinite, you are all powerful but you do not feel so because of the store-house of your impressions (sanskars—Aamlaas) i.e. your mind. To the contrary you therefore feel ‘I am this’ and ‘I am that’, ‘I am good’ and ‘I am bad’ and so on. This is the magic about life.”

What the Masters thought and did, in order to do away with that magic, was then described by Baba as follows:—

“This in fact is the really impossible task, because a mind has got to destroy the mind. In other words, try to annihilate itself. That was why Hafiz said —

Tu khud hijaabe khudi, Hafiz, uz miyan burkheez.

i.e. Hafiz, get out, thou art the curtain between thyself and the ‘I’.”

“The impossibility lies in the fact that the very process of making any kind of attempt, for the annihilation

of a mind, forthwith creates impressions, which, contrary to the intention of destroying a mind, make it *live* all the more longer.”

In other words, here is a task, which is apt to be undone more and more, the more and more it is tried to be well done. Apart from actions, the very thoughts about an action create impressions.”

I can not help remembering here, Lord Zoroaster (Zarathushtra Sahib) and the very soul of his teachings, viz., “Maneshni – Gaveshni – Kuneshni” i.e., Good thoughts, good words and good deeds. For practical purposes, the great Kabir has expounded the same principle of intrinsic truth, when he said, “Mun gayaa toa janay dhay, mut janay dhay shareer,” e. g. if a mind goes, let it go; but do not let the body go.” Baba, who always feels himself to be in complete accord with all the Perfect Ones, had once said, “Kabir is right to emphasize upon not worrying at all over bad thoughts, if one cannot help getting them, and yet at the same time, to give an imperative warning against bodily actions or actual deeds. No amount of the deadliest poison would kill you, if you swallowed it in your thoughts for any number of times. But if you actually took even a fraction of an ounce of that poison, only once, then you should be ready forthwith for the ‘Kalma –e–Shabaadat’ (i.e. one of the articles of faith of a Muslim, which is also commonly repeated aloud frequently at Muslim Funerals).”

According to Baba’s old life terminology about the impressions, those that come into being on account of mere ‘thinking’ over things, they are very, very faint and as such equally easy to get wiped off as compared with the “PRINTING IN ALL CAPITALS” of the impressions,

which arise out of bodily actions and concrete deeds that need counter actions and contra deeds, in order for the “bold-type” of impressions to be used up.

I will now revert to the main theme, as it was continued further by Baba – “When the Masters saw this, that there was no escape from the vicious circle of the ‘Sanskaras’ feeding a mind and the mind leading to fresh ‘aamals,’ they thought over this problem of the impressions from very many angles and did chalk out various ways and means in order to help others to break through the magic.”

The main paths can be broadly divided into three kinds, viz. those that are based on, *Action, Meditation and Love*. More or less, sooner or later, in accordance with individual attitudes and aptitudes of the minds, all paths lead towards the achievement of one and the same goal, i.e. the final annihilation—naash—fanaa of a mind, in order for the ego, to realize its *eternally existing* immortality – advaita sakshatkar – baquaa. Thus the different ways and means, do eventually prove helpful towards the ultimate achievement of the Mano–Naash.”

“To act without the thought of performing the act, such as doing self-less service, there can be no doubt that, leads to *actions–without–reactions*, as intended to by the Masters but the practical difficulty is, about, doing such acts continuously i.e. always like that or in that way. However determined a mind may be to continue doing selfless service indefinitely, the ego would not allow a mind to do such a service 100% even for a moment. One is bound to be more or less aware of ‘I am serving,’ ‘I am helping,’ ‘I am uplifting’ and there you are caught. Similarly a 100% unflinching faith, can not be that, if there is even a momentary flash of doubt over the same.”

“If with the best of motives and without any self-interest, when the leaders ask others to make sacrifices, the reactions for the actions of the others, fall on the leaders.”

“While serving others, even the sense of feeling pity for the others, also should not be there.”

“In short, on the line of ‘actions – to kill – actions,’ the weakening of a mind does take place, by the ego abstaining from other actions; but it is impossible to carry out the process continuously and therefore it is also impossible to achieve completion of a Mano–Nash that way.”

“Some Masters have chalked out the way of defeating a mind through the mind itself, through meditation, concentration etc. When a mind is methodically concentrated; for the time being, the functions of a mind do get weakened and the impressions in the mind are led to ‘eat’ themselves, like a certain kind of earth–worms, which eat each others. But the achievement of a complete annihilation of a mind, is, again impossible because it is the habit of a mind to go on collecting impressions, and so, a mind is apt to feel frustrated soon, when it also gets desperate, and one of the three things is then bound to happen, i.e. either you feel fed up, become sleepy or get bad thoughts.”

“Even gaining and experiencing the state of a trance, a ‘Haal’ or a ‘Samadhi,’ cannot by itself achieve a complete Mano-Nash, because the effects of a trance etc., are, in a sense, like the effects of dope and drinking. As long as a ‘Haal’ or a ‘Samadhi’ lasts, a mind is slowed down and temporarily incapacitated from catching fresh serious impressions. The moment the ecstasy of a concentration or meditation ends, a mind is, as ready

to assert its nature, as it was, before the ego went into a trance, got into a ‘Haal’ or entered into a ‘Samadhi.’ In fact, the last thought which is uppermost in a mind, when one enters into a ‘Samadhi,’ turns up as the first thought, the moment, one ‘comes down’ from the same. Therefore if ‘money’ was the last predominant thought in a mind, at the time of going into a trance, ‘money’ will be the first thought to enter into the mind, no sooner when one comes out of a trance.”

“The method of diversion like diverting a mind from the ‘many’ to the ‘one,’ is something like a tug-of-war between two extreme ideas. It is a sort of hypocrisy for a man, who does not actually feel to be God, to say, that he is God and not man. As such, actionless-actions are equally impossible to be continued to be carried out this way. On the other hand, the diversion and the resultant tug-of-war in a mind leads to the drying up of one’s love for Truth.”

“Devotion and love, which are the very essence of all the religions, constitute a power that has got the greatest force to help a mind to forget and to bring about a forgetfulness of everything which is false. A mind can forget itself in this way, only if there is hundred per cent love and devotion; but this is impossible and as such therefore it is impossible for the ego to eschew a mind for good, which in fact, means the annihilation of a mind. Like other things, love and devotion have also got to be firmly established in continuous practice.”*

*In the Quraan-e-Shariff, God has again and again, emphasized the need, for “...Aquimussalata wa-aatuz-zakata,” which broadly means, a firm *establishment of the practice* of devotion and service, in the true sense of “Haque-ul-lah” and “Haque-ul-ibad” i.e. the duty to God and the duty to man.

“Mere mechanical actions, without real love and devotion, only lead to the formation of marks and scars, at one point of the body or another, according to the different practices of prayers of a Hindu, of a Muslim, of a Christian and of a Zoroastrian. It is therefore perfectly true that—

Yak nafas boodan ba-pishay avliya,

Behtar uz sud-sala zohde be-riya.

i.e. to be in the presence of the friends of God, even for a moment, is better than a hundred years of honest piety.”

“The denial of bodily actions for the mere satisfaction of desires, if carried out with hundred per cent sincerity, might lead the ego to actually see God and to enjoy a serene peace of mind; but even that does not mean the annihilation of a mind. EVEN THE PROPHETS AND AVATARS HAD TO HAVE THE HELP AND GRACE OF THE PERFECT ONES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE ANNIHILATION OF THEIR MINDS.”

“*We all are, the same one God; but we are misled by the ‘Be-Sharam’ (shameless) mind.* It is something like having been caught in a mire. The more you try to get out, the more you find going deeper into it. Have you any idea in your mind as to how you were actually born? No; that is because you were never born. On the death of a mind, the ego realizes *Reality*. If the shock of this *knowledge* is too strong, it might also lead to the body being separated from the ‘I’ as a result of a strong shock.”

“Call it Impressionless Mind, call it Real ‘I,’ call it Transformed Ego or call it Real Mind, it is one and the same Infinite Truth, beginningless and endless. You are all in all. All that you need is ‘Chhutkara’

(freedom) from all that is false which ('Tamara garama aavi gayuch') has fallen to your lot."

"I now think so. I am absolutely full of weaknesses in my new life. And in spite of my existing helplessness, I have got to achieve the annihilation of mind."

"ASK GOD FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART TO HELP ME IN ACHIEVING THE ANNIHILATION OF MIND AS I WANT IT TO BE ACHIEVED. I FEEL HUNDRED PER CENT CONFIDENT THAT GOD WILL HELP ME IN THIS."

When the discourse was thus ended by Baba, somebody asked, if others not present then, could also fast and pray, if so desired by them, and Baba said, "Anyone could, if so desired, observe the fast (for 24 hours on tea and water, on 16th of October 1951, beginning from 8 o'clock in the morning of that day) and once during the fast, to pray to God to give me the success in carrying out the God-determined step as desired by me."

It is a fact that before commencing the discourse on Mano-Nash, Baba did warn us all, not to ask him any questions over it and to remain contented with what we could gather and what we could follow.

Somehow I also happened to be one of the three individuals, who, inadvertently erred in referring to Baba one point or another of the discourse soon after it was brought to an end,

"Tarama jo akkal hotay (if you had the right sense)," Baba told me, "you would not have asked me anything." All the same, Baba was kind enough to let me gather from him a further explanation, and a gist of the same as follows:—

“It is as an ordinary man that I have tried to explain the Mano-Naash as to be achieved by an ordinary man. All are free to and should hold on to their faith in me and to their convictions and beliefs about me. One may interpret my words as one likes. When an earthquake takes place, it is possible for many other things to happen, like fires, floods, destructions etc., and it is equally possible for one interpretation or another to prove to be correct. ‘X’ asked me why and how I could achieve Mano–Naash because of the Mano-Naash believed by him to have been achieved by me, in my old life; but ‘X’ being my childhood chum, I have pardoned him for putting that question to me.”

Thus, the approaching consummation for Baba of his New Life, has now deepened it into a spiritual riddle i.e. mental annihilation of a Perfect One, who feels himself to be an ordinary man in his New Life. However, as long as one feels a Master to be one’s Master, one need not necessarily feel concerned with what He is and what He is not.

Walla–ho–aalum–bis–sawab

i.e. God knows better.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SOBS & THROBS

or

Some Spiritual Sidelights (1929)

MEHER BABA

His Philosophy & Teachings (1933)

New Phase

of

MEHER BABA'S LIFE (1949)

MEHER BABA

in

The Great Seclusion (1949)

(Jointly written with

Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph. D.)

[back cover]

“ MASTERY IN SERVITUDE ”

– *Meher Baba*, 1922

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**Register of Editorial Alterations for the Online Edition of
*Meher Baba and the God-determined Step***

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