

THE EAST-WEST GATHERING

By

Francis Brabazon

An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook

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The East-West Gathering

by Francis Brabazon

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eBook

July 2010

THE EAST-WEST GATHERING

By the same author

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EARLY POEMS
PROLETARIANS-TRANSITION
JOURNEY WITH GOD
7 STARS TO MORNING
CANTOS OF WANDERING
SINGING THRESHOLD
STAY WITH GOD
LET US THE PEOPLE SING

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THE
EAST-WEST
GATHERING



FRANCIS BRABAZON

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To
MEHER BABA
who
Knowing everything of the East & West
& North & South
brought together
the East and the West
in his love

PREFACE



This is the song-story of an event unique in history; yet it is an event for which men have long prayed and worked — the coming together of people from many parts of the world in the Name of Love and Truth.

The countless international political and cultural and scientific conferences and conventions have been the expression of nothing but the earnest desire of men to overcome differences and separations — to promote understanding among peoples (an elementary form of Love), and to work together in research and discovery and to establish in constructive use the knowledge gained (believing such knowledge to be towards Truth).

But since none of the delegates has experienced Love and Truth, their desire for unity has necessarily expressed itself as bargaining, and their research and discovery has been into, and of, the forms of living and the mechanics of matter — and so, for the most part, the millions of words delivered on these occasions have been water turning turbines unconnected to generators; and the delegates have usually returned to their countries more perplexed than when they set out.

Periodically, pure, infinite Being, touched by the infinite muddle men get their affairs in, directly incarnates, and as a Man expresses All-love, All-knowledge and All-power in the world of men; and by such expression 'redeems' men, i.e. gathers them from the labyrinthine ways they have wandered into and sets their faces again towards their true goal which is Perfection.

Every action of this God-Man (Whole-God-Perfect-Man), stemming as it does from All-love, All-knowledge and All-power, is an act of this gathering and turning. Whether as Jesus he feeds five

thousand people with a few loaves and fishes, or as Meher Baba brings five thousand people to enjoy his company for a few days, the effect of those associations will be felt at some time by the whole world.

After the East-West Gathering, the time will come when men will not go to conference-tables and convention-platforms to bargain, or exchange futile views on the problems of poetry or idle ideas on the shortest route to the stars — for Meher Baba has told us that all things, including the stars, are within us — but they will gather for Love's sake only; and from *such* association return to their daily tasks enriched and strengthened — for the main item on the 'agenda' will have been Song-stories on the Life of God-Man.

THE EAST-WEST GATHERING



MEHER BABA



Hark! hark! my song at Meher's gate
Suppliant at his knees;
There men may not pass, but must wait
Until my Love they please:
 May wait a thousand centuries
 Until my Love they please.

This is the Gate that all men seek
And hold as life's high prize;
Yet none may enter save whose cheek
Is lily-pale through sighs:
 Who has lost sight of both his eyes
 And is lily-pale through sighs.

Hark! hark! my song awakes the dawn
And dawn reveals Love's face.
So though the stubborn my song scorn,
His mercy gives it place:
 His mercy is his shadowed Grace
 And gives my song a place.

His mercy is his attribute
Which to true song replies —
For it reflects his lovely flute
In echo-melodies:
 And being so my Love they please,
 My Love they surely please.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
the Sun which had become a last quarter moon broken to
pieces by clouds
again became itself in brightness.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
the River which had become a chain of waterholes
again brimmed its banks.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
the Vintner who had scrawled across his shop-window 'No
further stocks'
again opened his door and beamed on his customers.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
the Singer who had shut himself in his room
again went to the theatre and sang his divine songs.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
there was laughter and weeping from clear-seeing across
heart-scapes
and whispered love-talk through the narrow streets of the
City of Love.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
thousands of nightingales sang to one Rose
and that Flower multiplied itself into thousands of blossoms
in order to satisfy the possessiveness of love.

On the First of November Nineteensixtytwo
Thousands of hearts to God-man flew
And nested at his feet — and each knew
One moment can a whole lifetime undo.

For, some three months before the First of November
Nineteensixtytwo, God-Man Meher Baba had sent out
invitations to more than three thousand* of his lovers to come
to Poona and enjoy his company for four days.

*Note: This number does not include the nearly two thousand lovers
resident in Poona and surrounding districts.

Across the Indian hills and plains,
Along the trackless aerial lanes
To distant lands, God's word had sped
To those who lived in banishment —
And banished, were among the dead.

The dead rose up, their shrouds they rent
And danced in the dust of cement
That was round heart; sent messages
Silent and swift as light that crowds
Love's glance; and booked their passages.

The dead rose up and shed their shrouds —
And pent feelings like sudden clouds
Broke, and tears' rains were released
That washed away the years of grief,
And promise brightened as hope ceased.

What a torrent of tongues was released! Friends were calling
on friends: Have you heard the news? Have you heard the
news? they were babbling to one another.

Have you heard the news
Have you heard the news,
I'll have to get me a new pair of shoes?
 Black or tan, cloth or suede —
 I don't care much how they're made —
For Baba's sent an Invitation
To every civilized nation,
To each one of *some* love-relation,
 To come and visit him.

Have you heard that
Have you heard that
I'll have to get me a brand new hat?
 Tall as a chimney, flat as a bun,
 Plain, or as whimsical as a pun —

For Baba has sent word to us
To come by plane or ship or bus,
Without worry or fret or fuss.
 To spend four days with him.

Have you heard the news
The news that's beaut,
I'll have to get me a nice new suit?
 I don't care whether it's tailor-done
 Or in the Orkney Islands spun—
For Baba's sent his Invitation
To city and to outback station,
To all who've made love's affirmation,
 To come and visit him.

Have you heard the news
Have you heard the news,
I must get someone tighten me head-screws?
 I don't care in what manner —
 Use screw-driver or spanner —
For Baba has sent his dear word
To us — isn't it absurd?
It seems screw-loose heads are preferred
 To stay four days with him.

But many, if not most, had to talk themselves into the possibility of the trip to Poona. From where to get the money? What to do with their businesses or farms? How to get time off from work, and still have a job to come back to? Those coming from Australia by ship would be away for two months.

But they scrounged around and got the dough,
Sold things they no longer wanted;
And with the flat statement, 'I have to go,'
Their bewildered bosses fronted.
And those who, above what they needed, had more,
Shared with the have-nots their surplus store.

*O Paddy dear did you hear
the news that's goin' roun'?*
*Meher Baba invites us to
meet him in Poona town.*

*How good beloved Baba is
to call us to give us his Kiss.
Before the dawn of that dread day
of missiles flyin' roun'.*

*Now Paddy dear you must hear,
I'm goin' for him to see —
you too had best take time from work
and come along with me.*

*Work, like the poor, is always
with us for all our bloomin' days —
but if we miss seeing God-Man now
a great loss that will be.*

*So Paddy dear let us not fear
but go and see our boss—
and if he chucks us in the street
indeed 'twill be no loss.*

*For loss can be the bestest gain
when with it we lose fear's pain —
and rich we'll be, tho' all we lose,
when God is kind to us.*

It should not be inferred from the mention of missiles that dread of doom drove people to Meher Baba; love alone took them to embrace his knees and be lifted up by his kiss. But the condition of the world was certainly in the back of their minds as a considerable question mark. Years ago Meher Baba had said that three fourths of the world would be destroyed.

With the greatest nations on the earth threatening each other and everybody else with total liquidation, and the little countries cowed into alignments with the big ones, it only required somebody to press a button to announce Armageddon. Baba's lovers shared the general 'When?' of every-body. But their 'When?' was

without fear and panic. So, as the news-channels day after day record another atomic blast, they take his Name and go on with their jobs.

*When a body meets a body
comin' thro' the rye,
says a body, see the mushrooms
growin' in the sky.*

*Time there was they grew on ground
look at them today!
And each one costs a million pound —
time folk began to pray.*

*When a body meets a body
comin' thro' the rye,
says a body, see the mushrooms
how they grow so high.*

*They were small and flat and round
look at them today!
Each one can raze a city to the ground —
time folk learnt Love's way.*

*There'll be no escape on mountains
or in concrete caves
when the mushroom spore goes floatin'
round the world in waves.*

*No good calling on God then
you've put Him way back in the sky —
a body should have spoke Him when
He was comin' thro' the rye.*

*Still there is a chance for a body
if one takes his Name
and cries, Jaya!* jaya Baba!
How glad I am you came:*

*Not for my own mere salvation
that's not worth one sigh —
but because you came down to my station
and kissed me comin' thro' the rye.*

*Jaya: Victory to —

The affairs of the world belong to the One who created it. Men strive to mould it nearer to their hearts' desire — without first examining the condition of their hearts. The One who created it makes the little men — the Prime Ministers and the Presidents — strut on the stage and wave their arms and shout, putting their lines into their mouths. The same One sits in the audience with the rest of us, pretending surprise as the scenes and acts unfold. Presently, as the Play reaches its surrealist climax, God-Man will suddenly appear in the midst of the players and sing his *Song of Awakening*, an item which, he has given us to understand, will be quite astonishing — so astonishing that some will shout in abandoned joy, some will fall flat on their faces and some will lose control of their bowels. 'He has the whole world in His hand' — or rather, spinning on the tip of his little finger. We just try and hang on throughout the whiz. It is called holding on to the garment of Truth. (God help those of us who think we are holding on — for at that moment we are clutching a life-belt round our own shadow, not holding on to the material of Reality.)

It's a long way to Tipperary, even though sometimes we are emotionally right there. One thing we have learnt from Meher Baba and that is, Truth is not just beyond the horizon or beyond any number of horizons, and Reality is not just round the next bend in the road or round any number of bends; all journeying unfolds but variations in pattern of the same earthscape (world without end). Journey's end is in the dust of obedience at the feet of the Perfect Master. Only from pure dust without a trace of humus is there no possibility of the further putting forth of the green shoots of desire when the rain falls.

To resume the story — Meher Baba's calling his lovers for a four-day stay with him:

They picked up the tune of God-Man's flute:
'Come! O come, and don't hold back,
For the Vine hangs heavy with purple fruit
Which I crush for wine each palate to suit —
Wine that makes the lame take the mountain track
And the talkative to become mute.

'Come! O come, for the time is short
To the hour, the moment, for which you have fought
Through a million lives and your blood has bought
In the million times of your city's sack —
The city of body, the city of thought —
So come, O come, and don't hold back.

'Come, my dear ones, and don't hold back,
Leave, for my House, the world's drab shack.
Harappa, Troy and Samarkand
Are buried beneath the shifting sand —
But in eternal Truth I stand,
Come! O my lovers one and all,
Obey with joy my timeless Call.'

And none demurred, each up and stirred
The pot of his luck and sniffed its savour
And added some love-tears for more flavour
And skipped and danced — if to pass you'd chanced
You would have wondered at such behaviour.

Then each went out with cash, or nought
But faith, to book a berth on train
Or long-hulled ship of airy plane
To see his face, have his embrace,
For love's sake and its holy pain.

They came from a hundred different places,
And all had different sorts of faces,
And all were different shapes and sizes
(The world is bigger than one realizes!)
Some were dark and some were pale,
Some were fat, some thin as a nail —
All shouted, Jaya! which means Hail!

They came of all conceivable ages
And walks of life and states and stages,
From buds to blown-flowers through Time's rages:
The young and the fair, the old and the white —
And white's a delight when it's ninetytwo
And its name is Ruth, a soldier true.

*More exactly, Victory.

They settled down like a swarm of bees
In cluster from the Master's knees
And there they hung and in love's breeze swung,
And hummed in five different sorts of tongue—
English, Hindi and Marathi,
Telegu and Gujarati.

They hummed and droned and sipped the wine
Of God-Man's love and truth divine,
And time stood still (though it still went by),
And one tear fell from every eye
That was a pearl that Baba strung
On the garland that from his neck hung,
And the thread of it was his Sigh.

In Attar's story thirty birds
set out for Mt. Kaf;
To Poona came three thousand odd
to weep and laugh.

The thirty on arrival were
lean and featherless;
The three thousand were worn and wan
but smiling nevertheless.

The thirty birds became One Bird —
for births' sands had out run;
For each of the three thousand odd
a new round had begun.

To him who craves for soul's Release,
Good luck! but I say this,
Better alive serving God-Man
than dead enjoying Bliss.

They had set out for the Garden of Love, but they found they
had arrived at the Sea-shore;
They had come to admire the Rose, but they found
themselves gazing at the illimitable Ocean.

*In the depths of the Ocean is a Pearl,
will you, bold swimmer, bring it in your hand?
It is yours by right of heritage —
the Pearl of Kingship over all the land.
Do you remember? Do you understand?*

The soul exulted, With you, Ocean, I belong.
But the heart replied. Why do you long for death?
The soul said, I will set sail.
The heart inquired. Where is your sea-worthy ship?
The soul said, I will buy one.
The heart asked. What will you use for money?
The soul said, The price of all my other desires.
The heart cautioned, Have you studied navigation?

The soul replied, Better to be shipwrecked and drown in one's own element, than to remain land-rooted forever.

The heart said, Have your own way, but you go alone; I know where my comfort is.

*The Ocean, level and unending;
the Wave curls up, threatening, extending;
before the Wave, the swirl of bubbles —
and bubbles is but toils and troubles.*

*The drop back towards the Ocean yearns,
its rainbow is its silent cry —
a seven-toned name in which it burns —
and burning, singing, longs to die.*

*The Wave is Ocean's Whim out-shaking
galactic drops, each ever aching;
the aching thrives on toils and troubles —
that's why the drops dress up as bubbles.*

*The drop back towards the Ocean yearns,
its rainbow is its silent cry —
a seven-toned flame in which it burn —
and burning, singing, longs to die.*

*The Ocean's heart all-comprehending
reckons the time of drops' back-blending,
into Itself, drops minus bubbles —
the end at last of toils and troubles.*

*The drop back towards the Ocean yearned,
its rainbow was its silent cry —
a seven-toned flame in which it burned —
and burning, singing, learnt to die.*

After giving them a glimpse of the Ocean, God-Man in his kindness brought them up from the seashore; and they sat down in the shadow of his feet; and he sang his bright love into their hearts.

My Beloved is that One who by his singing created the suns
and the earths, and this Earth for men.
The thunder and the storm and the pounding surf are but faint
distracted echoes of his Song,
Yet his voice is so soft it scarcely disturbs the reeds of his
lovers' hearts;
He lets them sleep along the banks of the River of Love until it
is morning.
The night is his wakefulness; but the morning will be his time
of rest.

He sent us forth out of Eden
Wrapped in the seamless garment of his Song.
He told us to earn the bread of singing
in the sweat of our faces,
And to cultivate the vine of melody
with our two hands.
A lifetime of labour would produce one phrase,
And many lives would make a complete song.

The shadow of his feet is the field of the sky
On which he has left the sickle of the moon
To remind us of the time of reaping.

The shadow of his feet is cool and pleasant;
But so is the shade of the mill-house
Where the wheat is taken for grinding.
He has warned us that many songs do not make one song,
And that the journey of stone is to dust.

The mornings were for Westerners alone
To sit and pour their love out at his feet,
For they had journeyed furthest Love to meet;
Had scraped the flesh of purses to the bone
To feed the metal birds that shrilly drone
Across the skies, in return for a seat;
Or turn the turbines of ships huge and fleet
That cut across the sea's eternal moan.
On afternoons the West and East assembled
Within the silence of love's golden Sound
From which the world began when the sun-stars trembled
Out from the mouth of God. Each lover found
That in God's company distinctions ceased —
Each was from tribal prejudice released.

They sat down in the shadow of his feet, and their hearts sang
of the pilgrimage ended:

*Baba, now we greet you on this lovely morning
when joy's petals open in brightness for you;
for now as we meet you a new Day is dawning
across our heart-skies where before darkness grew.*

*Sing! hearts, Jaya, jaya Baba,
Ring, hearts, Jaya, jaya Baba —
after weary travel we have reached our Goal.
After storm-tossed journey we anchor in the harbour
of your dear feet's shelter, and ended is toil.*

*The sight of your face, Baba, is all our pleasure,
for from your love-glancing the sun each day starts.
At your feet, Baba, we place all of our treasure—
and that is this song which we sing in our hearts.
Sing! hearts, Jaya, jaya Baba,
Ring, hearts, Jaya, jaya Baba —
sing and ring each singly and all in accord.
For after long journey we have reached safe harbour,
for you are our dear Friend and most loving Lord.*

Such was the sort of song in which rejoiced
Heart homing to Ark amidst the waste of seas
Where is no land to give its spirit ease;
Land grugged, and violent winds that mauled and bruised
The sensibilities, nosed and noised
Along the lane-ways of heart's secrecies
Where, by right, only purest empathies
Should go with naked feet, love-eyed, soft-voiced.
Homing to God-Man's heart each lover came
To safety and the brightness of love's flame
That burns therein and throws its light without
Across the waste of reasoning and doubt.
There when the wind-wanderer enters in
He sees that One which the world centres in.

The bird of the soul with outstretched wings
Flies in ever tightening rings
Of death; then rises again in birth
And a new foolish heedless song begins.

It flies with two wings — virtue and vice;
Clip one — it flutters with mad noise,
'Behold my goodness —' 'Ah, wretched me —'
Clip two — it praises Self with voiceless voice.

This silent song soul's Soul approves,
'Become now stone, then dust that moves
At my Whim's breath adoringly.
Seeks naught nor ever even knows it loves.'

But both wings only may be clipped
And singing soul become closed-lipped
When it flies to the Ark of Love
In which God-Man on the world's flood has shipped.

So it is that our Beloved has said to us:

*Obey me and ask me for no thing;
to ask is to make me your plaything.
Be brave — and accept yourself as
but one drop of my Ocean's spray-fling.*

*Stop craving now for so and so thing —
just leave it to me — and all day sing
my Name — and with brave heart accept
your drop-ness of my Ocean's spray-fling.*

*Mark how the bright stars at night low swing
on their way up to man — thus obeying
the Word of my love — for they too
are all drops of my Ocean's spray-fling.*

*I speak my fair words for your knowing,
drop-lover of mine — I the way sing
so that you yourself one day will
become the Ocean and its spray-fling.*

Well has love been pictured as an Eye, an Arrow, and a departing Laugh. But better are the stories of the mischievous Child who steals from his mother's kitchen, and when she would punish him, shows her it is not butter that he has in his mouth, but the entire universe; and when he grows up, maddens all the girls of the district with his beauty and charm and his marvellous flute-playing.

But best of all figures for the Person of love is that of the debonair Tavern keeper who fills every heart-cup held out to him along with a small coin of devotion. Such was Meher Baba during the four days of the Gathering—the Vintner filling the

cups to the brim so that they run over in heart-tunes of praise.

But behind the smiles and the greetings was the unspoken, I give you this wine now so that you will develop a thirst for another vintage I have. But I warn you, he who dares drink that wine becomes an outcast from society, and his people mourn him as one dead.

But although nothing was said about these things, there was none who did not feel that there was more to this matter of love than the immediate beauty of the Beloved and the snapped stems of empty wine-glasses after the pledge of faithfulness.

*D'ye ken the Call at the break-o'-day
in your young young hearts so strong and gay?
It is Baba calling, 'Don't delay
for I'm off a-hunting this morning.*

*'I will take two or three, or maybe a score,
or perhaps twenty-one, or a lot, lot more —
for I love young hearts that are brave and braw
and want to come hunting this morning.*

*'We will hunt for a fox, the fox of your soul
that's hiding in the scrub or in a dark hole,
and we won't give up till we've reached the Goal
of our hunting on this fine morning.'*

*Now he plays a note on his golden horn —
the same that rang out on the First-most Morn,
and from which the whole bloomin' world was born
when Baba went hunting that morning.*

*So lads and girls don't dally and delay —
the Huntsman's come, and he won't for long stay:
see him in his bright pink coat so gay!
And he's going a-hunting this morning.*

Everyone present was ready for the hunt. But it is no joke to ride with one who ranges through the thickets of heart and across the hills and valleys of mind on the best of horses and never gives

up until the quarry is caught — especially when one has never thrown leg over any sort of horse. Even though you think you hear his horn, remain busy about the stables where you belong and don't go chasing disaster under the low-hanging branches and in the boulder-strewn gullies.

Let us first become good workers in the Master's work and sweet singers of his praise. This much is difficult enough and will take many lives to accomplish; for we are born into times that are stiff-necked in courtesy and tight-lipped of lovely speech — for the rivers of rhyme and stately flow disappeared long ago into the sands of materialism.

Forgive us. Beloved, that we have forgotten how to think and speak and act according to your will and the custom of the great singers who were your lovers in the days of song; for the difference between Man and Animal is that of loving service and sweet song.

Give our hands skill in servanthship and loosen our tongues in praise. Teach us to build fair temples of heart and decorate their walls with the texts of your Name — places in which you will feel comfortable and so will enjoy visiting sometimes.

Let each temple be a life-stone on the long road to the dust of your feet where even song will lose itself in the silence and wonder of WHO YOU ARE.

But without your gift of love how can we build any place delightful to your eye, or sing any song pleasing to your ear?

We have toiled in quarries and set stone upon stone in seeming proportion, and when the house was finished, called our friends together for the dedication feast. But you did not enter in and accept the seat set for you; and soon after, the armies of our own greed and lust and anger razed it to the ground.

We have laboured with words, compiling books of knowledge and wisdom. But their publication was not sealed by your touch; and soon the flames of our own hatred reduced them to ash. The history of man is in stone and books reduced to dust and ash.

We can endure all things, Beloved, even the ash of countless lives, so long as some day you breathe on that ash and from it arises a nightingale of pure praise.

Embers are cinders after the pain of burning
Is ended. And ash is cold after rain.

There was music and laughter in the early night,
But music and stars both die in the morning light.

Hope extended is a net drawing dead fishes,
And the exultant wave embraces barren beaches.

Religion is singing; but since song dies, who can prove
That his God is the greater truth, his Beloved the fairer love?

In the end one can lay down only one ethic:
Love abhors hypocrisy in poet, banker or beatnik.

The lights dim, and the dance ends always on a half-close;
Oh, that from the dawn-ash the Nightingale begins its song
to the Rose!

Love is the gift of the Master; it became in the billow:
The Rose is God's lips left on the Bride's snowy pillow.

*The dawn-light breaks against my grief of stubborn days,
the world awakes, each thing to sing your praise:
and I alone stir not as though it still were night —
as a dull stone, though sun shines, gives no light.*

*Meher, Meher — all things reflect your face so fair,
in each that sings, you of yourself are aware:
but though I see your winning beauty everywhere —
unless you give me love, what is all this to me?*

*The dawn-light sings up from the wells of lovers' eyes,
and gladness springs in wild new melodies:
and I alone remain unmoved by all around —
as a dull stone, though struck, gives out no sound.*

*Meher, Meher — all forms your lovely image bear,
and all voices your perfect truth declare:
but though I see your winning beauty everywhere —
unless you give me love, what is all this to me?*

*The dawn-light blooms within each heart, and nightingales
their songs resume which tell love's sweet sad tales:
and I alone hidden in darkest night remain —
as a dull stone, though broken, knows no pain.*

*Meher, Meher — all things reflect your beauty rare,
in every sweet song you alone are there:
but though I see your winning beauty everywhere —
unless you give me love, what is all this to me?*

The East-West Gathering was at Guruprasad, a bungalow belonging to Shantadevi, ex-Queen of Baroda who, since coming into the shelter of Meher Baba's love, has kept the place ready for his use whenever he comes to Poona. It is back citywards about half a mile from Bund Garden where is the giant mango tree under which God-Babajan often used to sit.

Over an area of 300' x 90' which had been levelled at the back of the house, a bright-coloured cotton awning had been stretched for the meeting-place; and at the house end a platform raised for beloved Baba so that he could be seen by everyone. A smaller awning had been stretched at one side of the entrance drive as a shelter for the Easterners who, because of distance from their lodgings and limited buses, started to arrive some hours before the afternoon session. Under this awning was also a bookstall and a photo-gallery. On the other side of the drive a first-aid tent was pitched. Besides these preparations, hotel and lodging-house accommodation was booked in the city and cantonment for all the lovers coming from outside Poona, and buses were chartered to bring them to the Gathering each day and take them back, and to take the Westerners to some of the places of significance in Meher Baba's life. Also, much help was given to lovers from distant places in their travel arrangements. All these things were done by a committee of Poona lovers headed by K. K.

Ramakrishnan. Other lovers in Poona and from other places were detailed to every hotel and lodging-house to help the visitors in all their needs, and to conduct them to and from Guruprasad each day and on their sight-seeing. The morning Gathering was from nine to twelve, and the afternoon from two to six.

No man, except the perfect saints, sees God. We live in the darkness of the sun; and even that is too bright for us face to face.

So the Beloved covers his Truth with seventy thousand veils — and our most-seeing is the folds of the outer-most veil delineating volume and plane which we call lovely Form. And he talks in rhymes and riddles about That which is behind the inner-most veil — exasperating everyone round him, or setting them head-nodding as though they knew what he is talking about!

To the disciple who blurts out: I am sick of hints and promises, I am fed up with the long-windedness of the tale; coyness is all right at the beginning of courtship, but at some point soul must become naked to soul. Of course, I am not such a barbarian as to suggest this between you and me — but two or three veils less should not offend your modesty, and it would be an encouragement to me.

To this earnest but reckless disciple the Master says, If I brought the sun a million miles nearer you would die of its heat; if I brought my Reality nearer by two veils' thickness you would be reduced to a heap of ash.

So God-Man Meher Baba took off only one veil — and we all lost our heads.

*Take, O take my eyes away,
memory be erasing —
or myself I'll surely slay
by on Meher gazing.
He came for our sake, you say,
God with Manhood blending —
but I call him Break-of-Day
where night has its ending.*

*Take, O take my ears away
that his words are hearing —
as myself I cannot stay
if his love I'm bearing.
He is Peace and Love, you say,
Godhood to Man bending —
dawn is fair, let it delay —
or what of Sun's ascending?*

The veils of the Beloved are mirrors to the lover. What is seen in a mirror is not reality, but a reflection of one's own desire. But since the lover is drunk he takes the reflection of his desire as the reality of the Beloved.

The beauty of the Beloved is according to the lover's desire. The light of the Beloved's beauty searches through the lover's heart illuminating the shapes that his eye has painted upon its walls. When the lover is pleased with what is revealed he asks for more skill that he may realize his concepts more fully. When he is disconcerted and vexed with what he sees he prays for a new box of paints so that he can cover the old pictures with new compositions. The Beloved satisfies both sorts of lover, for his patience and compassion are inexhaustible. But for the few who are weary and disgusted with all picture-making, he burns the paint off the walls — nay, he demolishes the house itself so that in the vacancy created longing has room to grow, and separation may become complete.

The shadow of Creation, 69,999 thicknesses of it, was across the face of the Sun of Truth. The shadow was contained by a thread of light, and the shadow gave the light its form. And that form was adorable, and the light of it dazzled our eyes. (God help us when the Word of the Sun tears off a couple more folds of shadow and reveals its veil of glory. Only those who have become blind through love will be able to keep turned towards it and bravely hold on to the dress of its Name. The rest of us will be flat on our faces clawing up dirt to cover the flesh of our spirits from the burning.)

The eternal Beloved who created all things, the Ancient-ever-new-One, was sitting before us — and we only saw the outer-

most-but-one shadow of his Reality, with the light of his smile playing across it. But those who lived with him had seen also the Shape of his suffering; and so, although they too knew nothing of his Reality, they knew that his radiance was only his divine response to his lovers' love.

They remembered that this Form which now was a fountain of affirmations, only a few weeks ago moved scarcely more than breathing stone; that these eyes which now were mirrors glancing bright love, were slate shutters against pain's escape.

He had covered the Shape of suffering with a veil of radiance so that his lovers would have gladness to take away with them. He had not touched his infinite Bliss, nor drawn on his infinite Power. These he will enjoy only when from the last depths of Humiliation, he utters his Oceanic Word of Power and rises in glory.

The Rose was glorifying the garden with its brightness, but the cry of its perfume was locked in its heart because the garden was surrounded by steel helmets shading muzzles of eyes in lead faces.

The Vintner was pouring out wine, but he did not move freely among the customers for his feet were nailed to the floor.

The Bridegroom was talking to the wedding-guests, but he did not kiss the Bride because his hands were manacled behind his back.

*On the top of the hill stands the King's Castle.
Leaning up towards it are battalions of flowers weeping —
for the King is in a dungeon sleeping.*

*On the top of the hill the Castle seems to be dreaming —
dreaming of the King's past lordship and his future glory
when in each heart is sung his matchless story.*

*On the top of the hill the Castle sparkles like a jewel.
Its dream and the flowers' grief is broken —
For the King is preparing to speak the Word that is to be spoken.*

The professional singers banged their instruments and unwound a long tale of lovers' meeting and nearness and

separation. But what had we, the backyard kids, to do with gossip about the sitting-room courtship of our grown-up sister? One day we will grow up and will have to go through this love-business, we suppose. For now we play games and go to school.

Sometimes Father calls us and gives us sweets and tells us to play fairly and be happy and sends us out again. He laughs heartily (we are never sure why) when we tell him of our adventures; but if one of us has some trouble, or if any of us have quarrelled, he looks very serious for a moment and then laughs again, pinches our cheeks and waves towards the door and we all run off laughing and shouting.

When Father doesn't call us for a long time we start to fret a bit, but it doesn't keep us from our play. But when big Sister's young man goes away for a few days on business, she can't eat or sleep. What a terrible thing it is to grow up!

Beloved Baba likes the sort of songs the professional singers sang — songs about the trials of the lover on the long, long road to the house of the Beloved; and of meeting and nearness and separation. He puts his head to this side and that, spreads out a hand and sighs, or looks surprised, at the turns of the verses. Being himself Love, the Lover and the Beloved, he enjoys the the subtlety of the poet's appreciation of the delicate situations in his own love-play — the backdrop for which he stretched out the universe at the beginning of time — and he enjoys the singer's apt choice of tune and trained delivery. And it seems to ease his burden for awhile.

You do well, Singer, to entertain the Lord of Song with your singing, and unknowingly lighten for a moment that burden, an eyelash weight of which, none of us could bear. He has covered his suffering with a veil of brightness to which you address your songs. But what would you have sung before the God at Meherazad who breathed scarcely more than stone?

Would you in grief have split an infinitive so wide that Song fell apart and God was forced there and then to re-utter the Primal Sound so that Song should not die?

Or would you have been able to resolve Song's wildest cry into a tonic chord of such terrible grandeur that God was forced to be merciful to God?

Easy effort is eulogy on the Grace of the Perfect Master —
But what would you, Singer, have sung at the Meherazad Disaster
When God-Man's body was the world's broken and frozen in
plaster.

But alive within to every pain of hell?

Would you have dared utter complaint and love's tale tell
In the Ear that holds the roar of the world's tears' ebb and swell,
And the tongue of God hanging in the night's great glass bell —
To shatter it when it the Silence breaks?

Would you, Singer, have been begging a bride's boon when the
stakes
Are so high that God has bet himself against the Fire that makes
Ashes of poetry and love, against the Wind of the Fire that rakes
Faces and flowers into compost heaps?

And that *night* when he sings his *Song of God-Man*, and the lion of his
Word breaks the cage of his mouth and ranges the countryside—will you
stick to your post and exalt man-song to pinnacles of praise, or will you bolt
your door against the disaster of melody?

That *night* when even stone
Loses its grip on God's skirt
And the cities crash back
Into the sleep of the dream that built them.
Who will be able to see in the Lion's flashing eyes
The love-glances of the Beloved?
And in its sweeping mane, his curls?
Who will take drops of his blood
As it pours out over the earth
And form them into the notes of a New Song?

Take it easy, Singer — the sighs and the tears will well keep
Till God has won his battle and has retired to his well-earned
sleep
Of seven hundred years. Be still, but poised — ready to leap
At the shout of his Word: amazed at its glory and sweep.

The singers sang; and the lovers were entranced by the sweet noise of the words because of the metaphors of the Beloved's smile.

But the Shape of suffering is beneath the veil of radiance, and is that much nearer the reality of the Beloved. The Beloved had not *taken off* his outermost veil, but had *put back on* his next-outermost — covering his Shape of suffering with a sheen of light so that the lovers would take gladness away with them. Those who have seen the next-inner veil from the next-outermost, desire now only to see one other Baba — He-the-Singer of the Firstmost-Song in his veil of glory; for that will be the end of his suffering.

*What's this gay scene to me?
I saw him there.
Though you say, him I see,
not him, I swear.*

*What you see is your own
image of him
cut in a block of stone
by your eyes' whim.*

*What's this love warm as rain
on all being shed?
Under a hill of pain
he's buried.*

*What you see is your own
begotten smile
cut as a flower of stone
that blooms awhile.*

*What's this bright throng to me
without his Song?
Though you say, him I see,
I say you're wrong.*

*What you see is your own
reflecting tear
cut as a precious stone
you dare to wear.*

But all talk is idle — veils before Knowledge. What is, is because God alone is, and everything else is Nothing — Nothing spawning nothings, and them resolving back into Nothing — Ocean, and wave-foam boiling bubbles chattering well-pleased with bubble-shapes and colours; and the Drops within them longing for the silent depths of the Ocean.

When God-Man utters the Primal Sound, he will break Silence into new sound and dissolve old sounds back into Silence; and shedding all veils of beauty and shapes of love, return to his Bliss-rest for seven hundred years. And our eyes will open one more infinitesimal fraction of their Opening.

For the moment we are enjoying four days in God's Roadhouse. Where our road leads from here? To the next roadhouse seven hundred years along the road.

All talk is idle. Only singing has sense — and it is where the Song is. And the professional singers were, after all, only a counterpoint of diversion to the Melody of Wine accompanied by the clink of glances.

Behold the beloved Lord of Love seated on a throne of hearts, garlanded with kisses and his feet washed with the foam of flowers, pouring out the bright wine of love. Listen to his-Ocean's silent Song:

I AM — AND YOU ARE THAT TOO;
POUR YOUR DROP INTO MY OCEAN
AND BECOME THE OCEAN
WHICH IN REALITY YOU ARE.

Listen to the drop-songs of his lovers exultant for a moment on the crest of his love-wave. What is your 'good works' with its attendant ceremonies and rituals (theistic or atheistic or merely effete agnostic) compared to one song from the lover's heart?

Remember the story of Moses on his way to Mt. Sinai to talk over some work points with God, and the pious man asking him to check up his passport, and the drunkard asking him to find out if there was any hope for him at all. And Moses coming back and saying to the pious man, Yes, okayed and stamped.

And the pious man saying, As it should be. And God Saying, Okayed, and stamped, yes — to hell. And Moses saying to the drunk, Sorry, old man, God told me he had been thinking about you, but you've been a sinner too long. And the drunk springing singing, to his feet and singing,

My God, my Beloved — to think
I have spent my days in forgetfulness and drink,
And you were *thinking* of me!

And God saying, Come in, my son; for your song has entered the ear of my compassion and triggered the spring of my Grace.

Listen to the songs of his lovers who are drops flying in the spray off the divine Ocean of Meher — drops with hearts full of holes through which the breath of God sighs telling himself of their love.

They are brave songs; but, as anyone with half an ear would know, Song's stream is muddied with a hundred inflows of customs and conditions. The sentiment is raw, the metres clumsy and the tunes are threads of other songs teased into tenuous textures of declaration. We are unlettered, and we sing to a Beloved who is but a Veil of Radiance speaking a soft word as he passes through the nursery at night. But in a hundred years we will be making good songs, and in seven hundred years God will be well-pleased with our singing.

Now there are eight sorts of lovers: Desirers, Workers, Resigners, Builders, Simple-praisers, Quiet-dwellers, Proclaimers and Servers.

The Desirers are the general populace of the City of Love. They live in the suburbs of peace. They feel safe. They cheer when the King rides through the streets. His beauty is a courser along the veins of their sighs; but their surrender to his embrace (should he offer it) would be amidst the clamour of alarm-bells in their breast. They do no work.

*O Man, who are you singing songs at night
outside my window?
Bidding me leave all in shameless flight
and you to follow.*

*If you love me do not bring me sorrow,
but ask my father for my hand tomorrow.*

*O Man, who are you lighting up my room
with your bright face
wondrous as some golden lily bloom
sculptured in grace?*

*If you love me do not bring me sorrow,
but ask my father for my hand tomorrow.*

*O Man, who are you having won my kiss
and now would leave me
saying that the dawn is here — is this
the way to grieve me?*

*If you love me do not bring me sorrow,
but ask my father for my hand tomorrow.*

The Workers love working for their King. They are also desirers, but only to the extent of desiring his praise. They greet the rising sun as its rays glance from the roof of the Palace like golden arrows. They tend the gardens and keep the wide avenues of trees. They build arbours and shrines. They welcome visitors and encourage them to remain and live in the city, promising them a glimpse of the King one day. They hold great Conventions, at which they read reports of work done and outline future plans. They call one another 'Important Worker' and 'Great Lover'. This is only because they are over-serious. They are serious as children at play — and, as children, they quarrel a lot, and sing sweetly together in simple unison.

*Meher Baba now is here,
loud sing his praise!
Heart, she starteth, spirit laugheth —
sing all his days.
Sing! sing his days.*

*Now again is time of cheer
and friendship's ways.
His eye glances, each heart dances,
footing his praise.
Sing! sing his days.*

*His blossom-words gladden ear,
tongue speaks his praise.
Seed he soweth, crop it groweth
green, green always.
Sing! sing his days.*

The Resigners desire nothing whatsoever from their King. When he shows himself through the city they are happy; when he remains in the Palace they are equally happy. Their pleasure is in whatever the King does. Desiring nothing, work and idleness are equal to them; they never seek work, but if a worker comes and takes one of them along to some job he works happily until it is done, but it is only a time-pass. They would go to the end of the world with their King if he asked them to.

*The moon was low
a silver sickle on a field of blue
when I met you
and loved you with a love I could not know
would break my heart.
All I knew was that I would go
with you to world's end,
for I was your shadow.*

*The night was clear
your eyes were stars within two drops of dew
when I met you
and loved you with a love that had no fear
though it broke my heart.
All I knew was I had to bear
journey to world's end
should you so choose to steer.*

Meher, my love. Meher, my love.

The Builders see the world as cities of suffering. They sleep in the King's city and each morning march out in companies with a will and a swing to the day's work. They tear down slums of unlove and in their place build fair houses, from the tops of which floats the King's Flag. The buildings support their limbs and the flags exalt their spirit. They do not know that every seven years hordes swarm down from the cold Northlands bringing a new barbaric civilization; by then they have moved on to a new area.

*Meher, Joy of our desiring,
listen to our happy choiring,
to our song that you're inspiring —
Meher, Lord and Friend.*

*Truth beyond all our inquiring,
loveliness beyond admiring,
love that is ever untiring —
our broken hearts to mend.*

*Love that is but love requiring,
soul for whom we are suspiring,
hear our song before retiring —
hard-earned rest to spend.*

The Simple-praisers suffer a continual sweet suffering. They spend their days on the seashore tracing in the sand the King's Name in poems and pictures in low and high relief. They see the King's beauty wrapped in its veil of suffering, but they never have sight of his glory. Every evening each one offers in prayer himself and his day's work to the King and asks for light so that his praise may become pure, and every morning returns to the beach which the night tide has made shining and virgin, and on which he again begets lovely form.

*O glorious, eternal Ancient One
your face is a bright, transcendental sun —
lighten this dark world and the tears I weep;
my heart, Meher, I give to you to keep.*

*Creator, yet creationless you are —
Truth and Truth's Body, divine Avatar
who, through compassion the three worlds maintains —
destroy this Ignorance that life sustains.*

*These five lights are the whirling spokes of breath
of the world-wheel that bears me on to death
unless you, who are infinitely kind
break the wheel's hub which is conditioned mind.*

*This incense is my love, these fruits my art
which to please you I have shaped from my heart;
accept them as you would a simple flower
that has no use beyond its shining hour.*

*You are my Self. I sing to you in praise
and beg your love to bear me through the days
till you, the Everliving Perfect One,
illumine my darkness with your shining Sun.*

The Quiet-dwellers are the gentlest of all the lovers. They live in a secluded part of the City in fine houses amidst gardens. They rest indoors during the day and at night wander alone through the gardens which are lit perpetually by a harvest-moon. They think of no one or nothing but the King and they feel for him a selfless ardency coupled with an eternal gratitude.

*When Israel was in misery
and Lord Moses broke Egypt's yoke,
he did no more than you for me
when you, Meher, in kindness spoke.
Meher, you are my soul's delight,
my water-brooks and pastures ever green;
I feed among your lilies through the night
until the dawn, the rosy dawn, is seen.*

*When Prahlad was to pillar bound
and Lord Narayan set him free,
he did no more than I have found
that you, Meher, have done for me.*

*I feed among the lilies white
that borrow from your cheek their lovely sheen,
while you, Meher, are ever in my sight,
for in this place, my heart, no foe is seen.*

*When Abraham in fire was thrown
and the Master gave him a charm,
his love was no more than you've shown,
Meher, in keeping me from harm.*

*The only sound heard through the night
is that of water's gentle murmuring keen
in counter-melody to my delight
that praises your Beauty and Truth serene.*

The Proclaimers are the King's knights who ride out alone and challenge the citadels of unbelief. Their shields are love and their lances are intellect which the light adores, singing from their points like thousands of angels. Some of these were born in the City and when they grew up were chosen by the King; some were knights errant who heard of the King as they rode and came to him and pledged him their arms.

*I rose at daybreak and went on my way.
The dawn breeze whispered, and I heard it say:
Meher Baba, my Lord and Friend sweet,
with my perfumed breath I worship your Feet.*

*Then presently I heard as I rode along
the birds sing in gladness, and this was their song:
Meher Baba, our dear Friend and Lord,
with our simple songs we praise your great Word.*

*And then soon up came the great shining sun
who scatters the dream-mists that night has spun:
Meher Baba, he cried in huge delight,
I proclaim and adore your holy Might.*

*I said, Meher Baba — and who might that be?
They said, The One Person who embodies Three —
Love, Knowledge and Power, each absolute,
creation's Creator and its Perfect Fruit.*

*I asked, Where is he — how may he be found?
To meet him I'd measure my length on the ground.
He is, as I see it, the truly great King
for whom a knight bold always should ride and sing.*

*They said, He lives in the fair land called Heart —
but you for another have kept him apart.
He is the true King for that one so bold
who with his two hands his dear Feet would hold.*

*Your lady is fairest in all the wide land,
go now to her father and seek her white hand;
make her your dear bride and loving wife
but always for God-Man ride out and seek strife.*

*God-Man is the true Man, the Perfect, the Pure,
the Light and the Love that shall always endure —
the Same as was Jesus, the Root and the Bough,
but Meher Baba is He called by men now.*

*Meher Baba, Friend and Brother of all,
the Ocean of Mercy to whom all things call —
the worm in its blindness, the saint with sight sure,
yourself when you sing of your lady pure.*

*These sayings enthralled me and filled me with bliss
more than had ever my sweet lady's kiss.
I prayed for a vision of Baba's dear Feet,
and in dream he told me his Name to repeat.*

I repeated his Name wherever I went
and then came the day when a Message he sent:
come, dear one to me and have my embrace—
then go forth and tell men of my Truth and Grace.

Now ever I journey the same road I came,
and on my bright shield is written his Name.
And either you accept Him whom I proclaim,
or suffer defeat and depart in shame.

The Servers are the men and women of the Inner Court. Some wait upon the King's person and sleep in rooms near about the Great Room where the King works and rests. (It is said that he never sleeps, but for two or three hours each night withdraws his mind from the affairs of the kingdom and rests within himself.) Some of the Servers live in separate apartments in the palace. They seldom see the King, but keep themselves always alert for his summons and their apartments ever ready for his visit. Many of them have been with him since childhood. They are the highest among the lovers — they are exalted almost to dust. Consequently it is impossible to express directly their thoughts and feelings — all that can be said is that they know unequivocally that he is the Supreme King; that through many lives they have been coming to this intimacy, and along many roads of search they have travelled to the final shelter of his feet.

As a thirsty sheep in summer
wanders with head hung and bleating,
so I sought, Beloved, the stream
of fair friendship's smile and greeting;
now I know that only in dust
at your feet is true friends' meeting.

As a goat upon the mountain
seeks sweet herbs in highest places,
so I sought, Beloved, your form
in shy beauty's shadow faces;
now I know that only in the shape
of your footprints love's grace is.

*As a hare across the paddock
avoids death by dodging, swerving,
so I sought, Beloved, safety
from time's sickle shining, curving;
now I know that safety only
is in your feet's shelter serving.*

Meher Baba spoke to us as the Father
Of Creation — worlds and human-kind —
Who has taken birth as Man to gather
His lovers from the tyranny of mind;
To again tell all people that they should
Live as his children, as one human race
Unseparate; in this is their highest Good —
The Good which in the end leads to his Grace.
Although all are his children, they ignore
Truth's beauty and grand simplicity,
Preferring hatreds and their expression, war,
That divides One Man in tribal enmity.
But when he speaks his Word of Words, its rod
Will break fear's back, and men will live in God.

Baba then addressed his Worker-children,
As a kind and loving father will when
His sons diminish, through their foolish ways,
His honour among men even though they praise
Him. Restrain, he said, mind, in heart be still — then
My light will shine through you as sun through rays,
And you in manhood will live out your days.
True children of one father do not carry
One heart smiling on lips when they embrace,
One, grudgeful, which behind their eyes they bury.
Rather their brother's true well-being they place
Before their own; in dear regard efface
Themselves; and heart with heart enlace —
Knotting a net to catch their father's grace.

Unless there is a brotherly feeling in your hearts, all the words that you speak or print in my name are hollow; all the miles that you travel in my cause are zero; all organizations for my work are but appearances of activity; all buildings to contain me are empty places and all statues that you make to embody me are of someone else.

Unless there is brotherly feeling in the heart.
Your words are horses hitched behind your cart.

Unless your heart is a sphere vast and hollow,
Your eagle-journeys are those of a sparrow.

Unless your heart is your mind's architect.
Organizational plans of work reject.

Unless your heart becomes a finely-cut stone,
No building in my name will I ever own.

Unless your heart is selfless as a mother's,
All statues made of me are those of others.

I have been patient and indulgent over the way you have been doing these things, because you have been very young children in my love, and children must have some sort of games to play. But now you are older and are beginning to realize that there is a greater work ahead of you than what you have been doing. And you have been searching your minds and hearts as to what this work might be.

I have been patient with you and indulgent
Because you have been children at a game;
And patience is my universal solvent
For all things Not-self that encrust my name.
But being older now, you are surmising
There is a greater work for realizing.

It is not a different work to what you have been doing — it is the same work done in a different way. And that way is the way of effacement; which means the more you work for me the less

important you feel in yourself. You must always remember that I alone do my work. Although only the one who has become One with God can serve and work for all, I allow you to work for me so that you have the opportunity to use your talents and capacities selflessly and so draw closer to me. You should never think that in your work for me you are benefiting others, for by being instrumental in bringing others to me you are benefiting yourself.

I alone do every work that's done.
By my pure Word creation was begun.
That Word's transcendent light hid in the sun —
Threw out planets and Earth and made them run
Their course. From Earth, Man my beloved son
I brought forth, and from love I spun
Garments to cover him gloriously. This done
I taught him next the downward-path to shun;
To love, to toil, till he from me has won
My perfect Grace — and all my work is done.

My work is your opportunity. But when you allow yourself to intervene between you and my work, you are allowing the work to take you away from me. When you put my work before yourself the work will go right, although not necessarily smoothly. And when the work does not go right it means you have put yourself between it and its accomplishment. .

My work is your opportunity
To partake in my dance;
Angels' immunity
From work denies them the chance.
The Knowledge-tree's fruit
Is in a single sideways glance
As I play my Flute.

The way of my work is the way of effacement, which is the way of strength, not of weakness; and through it you become mature in love. At this stage you cannot know what real love is,

but through working for me as you should work for me you will arrive at that ripeness where, in a moment, I can give you That which you have been seeking for millions of years.

*I am Truth, I am Love, and to you I say:
I will keep your hearts till their Break-o'-Day;
will you love me true, will you love always,
for I have loved you since the First Morning.*

*Will you follow me aye, and not repine,
will you drink my Cup for auld lang syne
be it vinegar or the sweetest wine,
for I've cherished you since the First Morning.*

*That Morning when I woke and started to sing
and put the universe on my finger as a ring,
and I sent you forth as the buds of spring
on the first and most glorious Morning.*

*And you went with a shout and you went with a cheer —
but my heart was torn because you were so dear,
and I knew it would be a good million year
before there even dawned your own Morning.*

*I wrapped you with love and I wrapped you with care
for the long, long trail from Here to There —
where we'd meet again in your hearts so fair
as they opened like flowers in that Morning.*

*Now the Day is here and the Dawn has spread
across the wide sky the Rose that bled
from your hearts; and there's no more trail to tread —
only singing in me in this Morning.*

Meher Baba explained the Four Journeys of the Soul from Man-state to Itself-God, from fragment to Whole: the Journeys which began when the suns leapt from God's mouth as bubbles from a cauldron's lip in sudden birth.

Evolution up to man-body: Consciousness's eye
fully opened — measuring suns, trapping stars in a sigh;
will-wandering anywhither to most remote
islands of mind, storm-lash outriding in frailest boat.

(Present lives also as bubbles from a cauldron's lip —
each bubble being for One-soul a sea-worthy ship
in which to cross life's terrible conditioned ocean
— the boiling cauldron — but, fitted to explore mind-notion.)

God's eye fully opened to hold in it the immensity
of beyond-space — but hardening space-wash into density.

Man-so. Self-the-wheel, Self-the-hub to Self-axle splined;
small self sprocketed to small self, mind meshed with mind.
Man-so. But suns were poured for Earth, and Earth moulded for
Man;
and between Man and white suns God stretched a space-fan
so that men cool-sitting could contemplate Love's face
and sing for Love's ears the song that urges Love's Whim's Grace.

Men are born on Earth, come from other earths to this Earth,
to cool-sit-contemplate; to discriminate real worth
from rainbowed bubbles' faces — sea gold
shaped by surf's hammers, and to birth-longers sold —
discriminate garments' seemingness; under Love's goad
find in dust Love's gate, and pass through along the song-road.

Man-so are men for countless lives — until fortune and fate
conjoin to bring about the Perfect Master's Grace-date.

Thus Soul completes the First Journey, and passes away
into God: as a brick city levels back to clay;
or, as a drop of water suspended in motion
falls, merges into, and becomes the shining ocean.
Soul becomes God — enjoys infinite Power, Knowledge, Bliss;
and world and Man-state vanish like a sigh ending a kiss.

The Second Journey is instant:* Consciousness shaken from Absorption into Abiding; Soul re-awakened to individuality; Man-state again known — but not as reaper reaping harvests he has sown.

Sowing and reaping utterly vanished with the Night that weaves the dream into a beggar's coat, or cloth-of-light, which men put on and jauntily strut, or whining, creep through the scenes of the play — which means, from sleep to sleep.

The Third Journey is for those whose lot it is to bear the world-burden; to direct with infinite care the seasons of souls and of suns; to hide and protect, to strip and lay bare what should be; to choose, to reject what should be; to glorify through valiant arms, to beautify through peace what should be; to calm storms, to stir still waters into trouble.

They precipitate
God-Man's Advent; toss him his world for his Word to re-date.

They are the Axis of creation, life, death and birth; they are God and the actions of God in the earth.

They, and the Abiders, pass on, to return no more: the shoreless, Fathomless Ocean washes not our shore.

These Four Journeys are never journeyed — for God nowhere may journey: he is Existence which has no Here and There.

How beautiful is our Beloved. At one moment his glance is a paddock of wheat in December; at another it is moonlight over waters making a track to eternity.

*This does not imply that all who accomplish the First Journey, go on to the Second. Very few do; the completion of the First Journey is the Goal of most men.

Across the dew-diamonded fields of his eyes
Heroes stride with never a backward glance.
From the ocean of them straight-limbed girls come up through
the surf
And leap along the beach, their bodies glistening in the sun.
In the rooms of them mothers lean over cradles
And their babes sleep in safety;
And old men with folded hands make ready for glad death.
They are the black velvet backdrop for all the plays of the world.
His eyelashes are the flags of all nations on tall flag-poles;
They are forests through which poets vainly hunt new metaphor.
His eyelids are the gates of dawn.
His eyes are oceans of love in which are drowned ages of
ignorance.
They are the day of healing of the nations of their wrath,
And the fields of night of the sickle-moon's reaping.

How beautiful is our Beloved. His glance is the seed of
creation and the harvest of love. In one moment it wrote all the
scriptures and in the same moment thousands of years later it
consumes them to ash. If only one could acquire the humility of
water which always seeks the lowest place; if only one could
the honesty of flame which always rises above smoke.

*Now longs the heart for nakedness
and longs the soul to die
and as the least and finest dust
under your feet to lie.
For heart tires of its gaudy dress,
and soul has no reply
to your sweet love and sweeter trust
than beneath your feet to lie.*

*Now longs the heart for emptiness
and soul it would deny
itself forever as it must
under your feet to lie.*

*Then heart will mightily rejoice
and soul with gladness sigh
at the impress of your feet just
as you are passing by.*

Go on Singer singing — for that is your occupation.
And remember that the song is heard only by your Beloved and
yourself.

If your song contains your Beloved's Name
It breaks the locks on the prison-gate of life
And you go forth into the singing silence of Self-existence;
If not, it knocks on the door of another womb
Begging another body.

Your Beloved hears your song —
But do not expect it to move him. At most
A raised eye-brow and a spread hand, saying,
Ho! my little singer, how bold you have become!
But when you are bold enough to have become dust
I will pour wine into the dust's mouth,
And then how its tongue will sing!

See our Beloved seated there on a throne of hearts,
His neck garlanded with kisses
And his feet washed with the foam of flowers.
He listens smilingly to our singing,
But he is whetting the urge to sing his own Song.
Beware! he is plotting a mischief
Such as never before has been done in the world.

Oh, but how tired he looks — how weary he seems.
The Horsemen of Destruction gallop along the roads of his veins
Towards the villages of his love:
Yet he must restrain the gates of his mercy that would burst open,
And suffer the outrage in his own flesh . . .
Lend me, my sister, your virgin veil for the night
That I may invite his head on my breast.

*Rest, Beloved, where flowers are sleeping —
my breast kept for yourself alone.
Rest, give your pain into my keeping,
give me one short night as my own.*

*There is no sound of the world's weeping
amidst the lilies of my breast
whose fragrant freshness I've been keeping
against the time of your sweet rest.*

*The fanning of the ocean-breezes
disturbs with love his ringlets now;
my soul from prison, heart releases
to dream upon his lovely brow.*

*Even the night gazes in wonder
with all its eyes upon his face.
Sleep till the time, Love, of the thunder
of your great Word's bestowing Grace.*

The days passed as in a radiant, cool dream that contains all fulfilments — a dream that lasts but a moment, yet encompasses the history of song.

God-Man is the supreme Reality; but what we experience of that Reality is its Man-shape because of compassion — man-shape, but not man-stuff that believes shapes are real. A suspended drop cannot know the ocean; it can only experience a reflection of ocean in the mirror of its bubble.

Being in God-Man's presence is still a dreaming — but a better part of the dream than our self-absorption. It is a dreaming that wears thin the Dream which is the texture of Nothingness tightened into material appearances, and brings nearer that moment of his Grace which causes the Dream to vanish for ever.

After the consciousness of Presence-dreaming during the day, most of the lovers returned to the unconsciousness of Reality in deep sleep; but some continued dreaming in wakefulness through the night.

*The world is but a seeming,
a sea-gull's wind-blown cry —
and I all day on you Meher am dreaming;
at night awake I lie.
And I all day on you Meher am dreaming;
and all night long I sigh.*

*The world is but a shining,
a dewdrop soon to die —
and I all day for you Meher am pining;
and all night long I sigh.
And I all day for you Meher am pining;
all night the stars wheel by.*

The days passed in a dream of radiance — Man-radiance of God returning his own image to himself from the thousands of little mirrors of his lovers' eyes.

The commotion was great, but orderly, as surf breaking on a white beach and running up over it and washing back again; or as flocks of migrating birds settling on a great tree on an empty plain; or as children of a large family remembering their mother's birthday and bringing her gifts and loving wishes. And as the beach not only remains untroubled by the lacy waters veiling it, but glistens freshly because of them, and its level expanse seems extended; or as the tree not only is undisturbed by the sudden burden on its branches, but a brightness is added to its serenity; or as the mother is not only undismayed by the crowd of arms and babble of voices, but her eyes and cheeks glow with a new beauty; so was God-Man Meher Baba throughout each day. He left his seat only for a short rest and light food about midday; and even then he was not alone, for many of his close ones who live away from him took this opportunity of intimacy.

The fourth day began at half past six in the morning, for many of the Indian lovers had not yet had beloved Baba's embrace, and it went on to seven o'clock at night. During the afternoon

many thousands of the general public were allowed to approach God-Man and touch his feet and receive his gift of sweets.

Throughout the night the Easterners, except those who lived in Poona or were volunteer-workers from other places, departed for their homes. The next morning Baba saw the Westerners and gave each one his farewell embrace.

Remember that embrace on your voyage home, lovers!
Remember it when you take up your jobs again
And you pause on the edge of a sudden vacancy
Between the typewriter keys, or the two tallest buildings,
Or that drops away behind the horizon in the evening.
Remember that God embraced you. Spit
Into the void, and watch the bubbles float, float
And then burst.

So much

Is the world and our hopes from it —
A wheel of bubbles like a snake with its tail in its mouth
Whirling, glistening.
Then remember that embrace. Remember
Those eyes that promised you eternal Reality
If you will but wait a little while.

Except the Australians who had come by ship and had arrived late, the Westerners had been taken, before the Gathering began, to the Places in Poona connected with Meher Baba's life: his parents' home, the hospital where he was born, the school and college he attended, the neem-tree under which the Perfect Master Babajan had sat and called him and kissed him with the kiss that rent the man-veil enveloping him, so that he knew his God-state; and the stone in a tiny cabin in the backyard of his parents' house on which he had beat his head during his spiritual agony after his knowledge that he was God.

On the 6th November all were taken out in buses to Meherazad and Meherabad, which Places only a few had seen.

At Meherazad which is 9 miles out from Ahmednagar and is where Meher Baba now lives they were welcomed by Kaka Baria who looks after the Place alone during Baba's absences and of

whom they had read in William Donkin's great book *The Wayfarers*. Kaka showed them the Meeting-hall where Baba spends his days with the men who are with him, and where he receives visitors, the sitting-room where he spends his evenings with the women, and the room where he spends his nights alone except for a watchman, and the separate men's and women's quarters. They saw the Blue Bus in which he with a number of women disciples had travelled over most of India in 1938-39 and in which he had kept the seclusion of 1949 which has been generally known as the Great Seclusion. They saw the Caravan that a couple of bullocks had pulled halfway through the New Life in 1949-50, sheltering the four women who entered that life with him. They saw the Cabin that had been put up on the top of the Hill behind Meherabad in which he had secluded himself after the New Life, and which afterwards was brought down and re-erected in the men's quarters. They saw the large garden (full of flowers at that time) that his beloved Mehera has established despite shallow soil and sparse rainfall.

The lovers were taken then to Sarosh Irani's house in Ahmednagar for lunch, and on to Meherabad 6 miles out the other way. Here Padri (Feredoon Driver), who manages this Place, and Don (William Donkin) received them and showed them round. At lower Meherabad they were shown the Meeting-hall, and the two stone cabins in which Baba had once lived, and in one of which now lives Mohammed, one of Baba's favourite *masts* during the great Mast-work period; the 7' x 5' x 4' Box by the road which was Baba's 'house' for nearly a year; the Fire-place close by that has become sacred to many since the time the people of some villages came and prayed to Baba to break a long drought, and he lit a fire at that spot, and minutes later heavy rain fell. Here also are the graves of Ali Shah (Bapjee), another of the favourite *masts*, and some of Baba's men who died in his service.

About half a mile away, across the Dhond-Ahmednagar road and railway line, and on a small rise on the plain, is the Tomb that Baba has had built for him and in which he lived once for a period, and to one side of which are the graves of his father and mother and some of his first Western women disciples. There is also a large building, the foundations of which are an old stone

water tank, which was a women's dormitory in the teeming, early days of the Place. Some of the men lovers had stayed here at Meherabad for two weeks in 1954 when Meher Baba had held a great meeting at which he explained phases of his work. But to the other lovers it was all new.

*We took them out for many a mile
for a gink* and a dekho† at the Baba places —
you should have seen their happy faces —
though we took them by bus regular tourist style
and many by now were cot-cases.*

*To where God-Man was born, where he went to school
and coaxed and thrashed learning's stubborn mule,
led the other boys in their games and sports,
was judge and counsel and law in torts
and example in chivalrous deeds, words and thoughts.*

*Took them to the spot where God-Babajan
had kissed his brow, and in a moment's span
had given him God-self; which state alone
he desired, and he beat his head on a stone
as 'the Five' held him from escape from Man.*

*Took them across the plains unfertile
(with a gink and a dekho only once a mile)
to Meherazad where Baba now lives
and Mehera keeps her hard-kept garden,
and Kaka Baria is its warden.*

*Here beloved Baba stays in seclusion
and plays out the end-game with Illusion,‡
and sometimes bathes lepers and feeds the poor
(though as Jesus said there are always more),
and suffers his great Humiliation.*

*gink (g as in get): (slang) A look.

†dekho (slang) A look. From Hindi *dekho*, imperative of *dekhna* to look.

‡Strictly speaking: with Maya the Principle of Ignorance. Illusion is the effect of Maya.

*Then to Sarosh for lunch, then to Meherabad
which Padri caretakes (and he does it hard)
where Baba founded his great Ashram
that set the pattern for the world to come
and the face of Maya considerably marred.*

Most of the Americans and two or three Australians left for their countries the next day, 7th. Those who remained were taken up the hills terraced by careful soil-loving farmers to see the cave off the road at Panchgani where their Beloved had secluded himself years ago; and on to places round Mahableshtar where he had stayed and worked. Here there is a rock called Arthur's Seat that juts out over the watershed of the Savitri and Krishna rivers. The Savitri flows west and reaches the ocean in eighty miles, and the Krishna winds eastward for over two thousand miles. Baba has used this watershed and the two rivers as a figure of the Short Path through the Grace of the Perfect Master and the Long Path of self-endeavour. On the way back to Poona they were shown the spot of Meher Baba's Second Body-breaking on the Poona-Satara road at Udtara.

On the morning of the 10th November beloved Baba left Poona and returned to Meherabad. The Westerners who remained, the volunteer-workers and the Poona families, came to the Mango tree at Bund Garden to farewell their Beloved. The workers spread a cotton covering over the ground under the tree for lovers to sit on, and placed a seat for Baba.

He came at 8 o'clock. The sadness of this farewell for the Westerners cannot be described. None expected to ever see their Beloved again; yet the sadness was made shining, for the Sun of his love was in their heart-skies and would remain there through deaths and births till they were absorbed into its Reality forever.

The Arati* was sung and he got back into his car. But the lovers would not let the car move. They pressed round it for a last look at their Beloved's golden face and a last touch of his white hand. Imperceptibly the car moved forward, stopped, and moved on again. In the time that it takes a man to walk a mile

*Arati: An original song of personal dedication. In the present context, one such composition that had become popular and was sung in chorus.

it moved a hundred yards. At last it reached the road and the lovers gave up their attempts to grasp and hold Eternity in their small hands and they fell back, and the car gathered speed, crossed the bridge and disappeared, snapping the threads of their eyes which streamed after beloved God to bind and bring him back.

*I found a white Dove, as white as the foam
on the blue Pacific wave;
I made him a golden cage for his home
so that he would never leave.*

*A golden cage for my Dove white as foam
on the blue Pacific wave,
a beautiful cage so he would not roam
and I his dear sight should have.*

*My lovely white Dove his bright feathers shed
and sang his sweet song no more;
my Joy and my Love fell and lay as one dead,
and so I opened the door.*

*My lovely white Dove fell and lay as one dead
because he was wounded sore;
his breast was crimson from where his heart bled,
and so I opened the door.*

*My lovely white Dove arose with a cry
and sped like a shaft of light;
O beautiful Dove return from the sky
and comfort me with your sight.*

*Return, O return, my Love from the sky,
for you are my whole delight;
return, O return, with your sweet glad cry
and comfort me in my night.*

*Return, O my Dove, and pluck out the dart
of love, or else I must die;
return, O my Love, for I've made my heart
pure space in which you can fly.*

*Return, O my Love — for to be apart
means I must surely die;
return, O my Dove to the sky of my heart —
there you can in freedom fly.*

O Meher, my Love, my Soul.

But now the resolution to live God-Man's Message and spread it throughout their countries sprang in their hearts and straightened their backs against grief and their return to the world. And the sap of his love coursed up the spines of their spirits.

And the power of love is greater than the power of the uncoiled Serpent which the yogis seek: for the latter blossoms in a single flower of personal glory, but love becomes a stout tree giving shade and fruit for many along the dusty road of the world.

*Sing! O sing Meher's Name;
ring, heart-bells, his boundless fame.
He is God and he is Man,
at his Nod the world began.
He is Truth and All-beauty,
he is true Infinity.*

*Cling! O cling to Meher's Name;
spring soul lightly in his game.
He is Giver, he is Friend;
love's great River, Journey's-end;
divine Sun that shines for all,
the Same One for great and small.*

*Swing! O swing on Meher's Name;
fling away all praise and blame.*

*He is love's immortal Flower
that illumines the lover's hour;
he is the proud Nightingale
listening to his own sweet tale.*

*Bring! O bring Meher's Name;
sling in It the halt and lame.*

*He is Journey, he is Goal,
sweet Companion to the soul;
he his banner has unfurled,
it floats over all the world.*

*Wing! O wing on Meher's Name;
string the jewels of his fame.*

*He is Grace and Compassion,
his face shines on each station;
he is Power, Knowledge, Bliss,
he can give Truth with one Kiss.*

