

DISCOURSES
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By

Meher Baba

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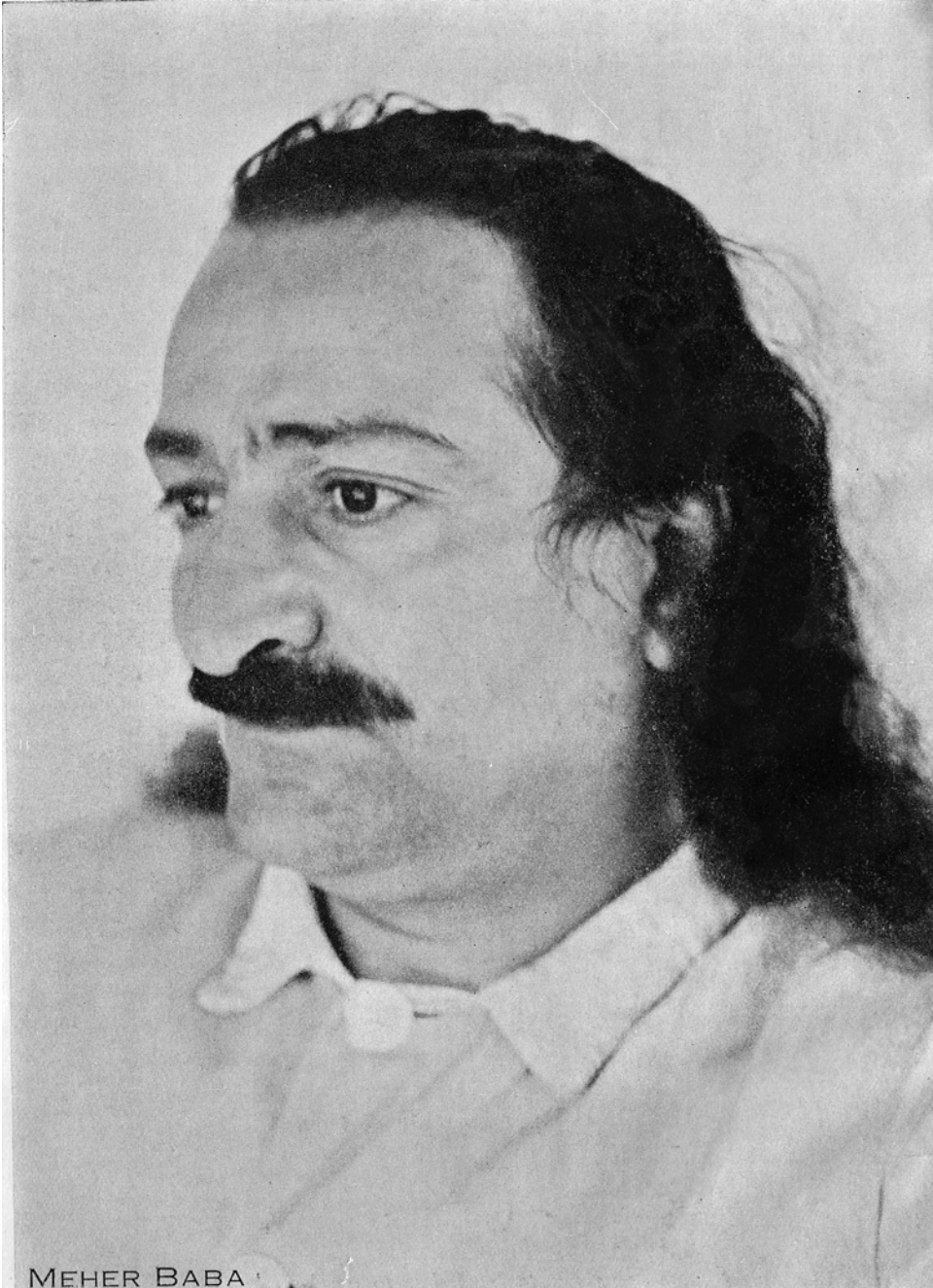
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"I have come not to teach but to awaken"



MEHER BABA

DISCOURSES

BY

MEHER BABA

Vol. IV

1941-42

We have a great pleasure in presenting this to the readers Meher Baba's twelve spiritual discourses in one volume. These discourses have been taken from the issues of the MEHER BABA JOURNAL (Nov. 1941 to Oct. 1942).

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Meher Baba

on

The God-Man

Part I

ASPIRANTS AND GOD-REALISED BEINGS

EVEN before God-realisation, the advanced aspirants pass through states of consciousness, which in some ways, are akin to the state of God-realisation. For example, *the Mad-*

The Joy of God-Intoxication

Masts and saints of the higher planes are completely desireless and immersed in the joy of God-intoxication. Since their only concern is God, they become the recipients of the unique happiness, which is characteristic of the God-state. They have no Beloved except God; and they have no longing except for God. For them, God is not only the only Beloved, but also the only reality that counts. They are unattached to everything except God and remain unaffected by the pleasures and the pains, to which the worldly persons are subject; and, they are happy because they are always face to face with the Divine Beloved, who is the very ocean of happiness.

The advanced aspirants not only participate in some of the privileges of the Divine State, but also wield great occult

powers and *Siddhis*. From the point of view of the powers, Which they yield, the aspirants belong to different types according to the kind of powers, which they yield. For example, even on the first plane, the aspirant begins to see the lights and colours, smell beautiful perfumes and hear the music of the subtle world. Those, who advance further, can see and hear things at any distance. Some aspirants see the whole gross world as mirage. Some advanced aspirants can take a new body immediately after their death. Some agents of perfect Masters have such control over the gross world that they can change their bodies at will; they are called. *Abdals*, in Sufi tradition. But all these achievements of the aspirants pertain to the phenomenal world; the field of their powers is itself a domain of illusion; and the miracles which they perform do not necessarily mean that they are any way nearer to the God-state.

From the point of view of *consciousness*, also, the aspirants belong to various types according to the line on which they have advanced and according to their approximation towards the God-state. There are some who intoxicated with their extraordinary powers and in the temptation of using them, have a long pause in their Godward march; they get stuck up in the consciousness of the intermediate planes. There are some, who get dazed, confused and even self-deluded. There are some, who get caught up in a coma. There are some, who with difficulty, try to come down to the gross consciousness by repeating some physical action or by repeating an identical sentence a number of times. There are some, who, in their God-intoxication, are so indifferent to the life of the gross world, that to all appearances. their external behaviour is like that of mad persons; and there are some who cross the path while performing their worldly duties.

Owing to their exalted states of consciousness, some of the advanced aspirants are adorable; but, they are, in no way

comparable to the God-realised persons, either in respect of the spiritual beauty and perfection of the **Unmatta State** inward state of consciousness, or in respect in of their powers. All aspirants, right up to the sixth plane, are limited by finite consciousness; and they are all in the domain of duality and illusion. The aspirants are mostly happy: it is derived from their contact and communion with God. For some, the joy of inward companionship of the Divine Beloved is so great that they are unbalanced in their behaviour, with the result that they might, in their *unsubdued state of God-intoxication*, abuse people, throw stones at them and behave exactly like ghosts. Their state is often described as that of the *Unmatta*. *Owing to the exuberance of the uncontrolled joy, of inward contact with the Divine Beloved, they are utterly regardless of the worldly standards or values*: and owing to the utter fearlessness, which comes to them through complete detachment they often allow themselves such self-expression, as would be easily mistaken for untoward idiosyncrasies and immoderate unruliness.

It is only when the soul attains God-realisation on the seventh plane, that the soul gets full control over its *joy; the unlimited happiness, which is eternally his, does not, in any way, unbalance him because he is now permanently established in the poise of non-duality*. No longer for him is the extravagance of newly found love and joy; the occasional unsettlement owing to the on-flow of increasing joy at the closer proximity of God is also over, because he is now inseparably united with Him. He is lost in the Divine Beloved and merged into Him, so that he becomes one with God; he becomes the infinite ocean of unbounded happiness.

The happiness of the God-realised person is unconditioned self-sustained; and it is therefore eternally the same, not admitting of ebb and flow; he has arrived at unqualified

finality and unassailable equanimity. *The happiness of the saints is born of increasing proximity and closer intimacy with the Divine Beloved, which, however, remains an externalized another; but the happiness of the God-realised is an inalienable aspect of the God-state, in which there is no duality. The happiness of the saints is derivative; but the happiness of the God-realised is self-grounded.* The happiness of the saints comes into existence due to the increasing installations of the Divine Grace; but the happiness of the God-realised merely IS.

When a person attains God-realisation, he has infinite power, knowledge and bliss; and these intrinsic characteristics of inner realization are the same in all God-realised persons, irrespective of some minor

Differences in Relation to the Universe

side differences to certain distinguishable types of God-realised persons. These differences between the God-realised are purely extrinsic. They pertain not to their relation with God, but to their relation with the universe; and, they are from the point of view of the Truth, so unimportant that they do not create any degrees of spiritual status, between the God-realised, who are all perfect. In fact, these differences exist only from the point of view of an external observer; they do not exist for the God-realised persons themselves, who are not only one with each other, but one with all life and existence.

From the point of view of the creation, however, these differences between the different types of God-realised persons are not only definite but worth noting. After God-realisation, some souls *drop all their*

Some God-realised Beings drop their Bodies

bodies and remain eternally immersed in God-consciousness. For them, God is the only reality and the entire universe is a zero. They are so completely identified with the impersonal aspect of the Truth that they have no direct link with the world of

Some God-realised souls retain their gross, subtle and mental bodies; but they are, in their absorption of God-consciousness, totally unconscious of the very existence of their bodies. Other souls, in the creation, might continue to see their bodies, and treat them as persons incarnate; but these bodies exist only from the point of view of the observer. Such God-realized persons are called *Majzubs*, in Sufi terminology. The *Majzubs* do not use their bodies consciously, because their consciousness is wholly directed towards God and is not turned towards the bodies or the universe. For them, their own bodies as well as the world of forms have no existence; so there can be no question of their using the bodies in relation to the world of forms. However, though the *Majzubs* do not use their bodies consciously, their bodies are necessarily the centres for the radiation of the unpremeditated and constant overflow of the Infinite Bliss, knowledge and love, which they enjoy: and those, who worship their bodies, derive great spiritual benefit from this spontaneous radiation of divinity.

Some God-realised persons have in addition to the consciousness of God, the awareness of the existence of other souls, who are in bondage. But they know these souls to be all really forms of the *Parmatman* and also know that they are all one day destined to have emancipation and God-realisation: and being established in this knowledge, they remain indifferent to the provisional and changing lots of the souls, who are in bondage. These God-realised souls know that just as they have themselves realised God, others also will realise God at some time. They are in no hurry to speed up the God-realisation of those, who are in bondage; and *they do not take any active interest in the time-processes of the creation.*

Some God-realised souls not only possess God-consciousness, but are also conscious of the creation and their own

bodies. They take active interest in the souls who are in bondage; and *they use their own bodies consciously, for working in the creation, in order to help other souls, in their God-ward march.* Such God-realised soul is called *Salik, Sadguru* or the *God-man*. The Salik or Sadguru finds himself in the centre of the entire universe; and every one high or low, good or bad, is at the same distance from him. In the Sufi tradition, this *centre* is called *Kutub*. Kutub controls the whole universe, through its agents.

The Sadguru who first emerged through evolution as the God-man, and helped and helps other souls in bondage, is known as the Avatar. There is another difference between ordinary Sadguru and the Avatar. When the Sadguru is not working for the universe, his mind is included towards the Infinite again; and he finds it very difficult to keep down. At such times, he has to compel his mind to come towards material things and activities. On such occasions, some Sadgurus ask for food or pull their hair or slap themselves, in order to remain [in] the body: some such physical activity is necessary to keep them down. The Avatar has no difficulty in retaining his normal consciousness even when he might not have been engaged in any special work in relation to the creation. *He does not have to resort to physical activities in order to keep down.*

From the point of view of the fundamental characteristics of consciousness and the nature of the work in creation, the Avatar is like other Sadgurus or God-men. Neither the Avatar nor the Sadguru has a finite and limited mind, because after merging in the Infinite, the mind becomes universal. The Salik. or Sadguru or God-man as well as the Avatar do not lose their God-consciousness, even for a moment, although they might be engaged in all sorts of activities in relation to the creation; and both *work through the universal mind, which is theirs, when they desire to help other souls.*

Meher Baba

on

The Travail of the New World Order

THE world-storm, which has been gathering momentum, is now having its greatest outburst; and in reaching its climax, it will work universal disaster. In the struggle for material well-being, all grievances have assumed fantastic proportions; and the diverse differences of human interest have been so accentuated that they have precipitated distinctive conflict. Humanity has failed to solve its individual and social problems; and the evidence for this failure is but too plain. The incapacity of men to deal with their problems constructively and creatively reveals *tragic deficiency in the right understanding of the basic nature of man and the true purpose of life.*

The world is witnessing an acute *conflict between the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness.* On the one hand, there are selfish persons, who seek their happiness blindly through lust for power, unbridled greed and unrelieved hatred. Ignorant of the real purpose of life, they have sunk down to the lowest level of culture; and they bury their higher selves in the wreckage of crumbling forms which linger on from the dead past. Bound by material interests and limited conceptions, they are *forgetful of their divine destiny.* They have lost their way; and their hearts are torn by the ravages of hate and rancour. On the other hand, there are persons, who unveil their inherent higher self through the endurance of pain and deprivation and through the noble acts of bravery and self-sacrifice. The present war is teaching man to be brave, to be able to suffer, to understand and to sacrifice.

The disease of selfishness in mankind will need a cure, which is not only universal in its application but is drastic in its nature. It is so deep-rooted that it can be up-rooted only if it is knocked from all sides.

Need for a Drastic Cure of Selfishness

Real peace and happiness will dawn spontaneously when there is the purging of selfishness. The peace and happiness, which come from self-giving love, are permanent. Even the worst sinners can become great saints if they, have the courage and sincerity to invite a drastic and complete change of heart.

The present chaos and destruction will engulf the whole world; but this will be followed by a very long period, in which there shall be no war. The passing sufferings and miseries of our times would be worth enduring for the sake of the long period of happiness, which is to follow.

Man will be Sick of wanting, Greed and Hate

What will the present chaos lead to? How will it all end? It can only end in one way. Mankind will be sick of it all. Men will be sick of wanting and sick of fighting out of hatred. Greed and hatred will reach such intensity that every one will become weary of them. The way out of the deadlock will be found through selflessness. *The only alternative which will bring solution will be to stop hating and to love, to stop wanting and to give, to stop domination and to serve.*

Great suffering shall awaken great understanding. Supreme suffering fulfils its purpose and yields its true significance, when it awakens exhausted humanity and stirs within it a genuine longing for real understanding.

Suffering shall generate Understanding

Unprecedented suffering leads to unprecedented spiritual outcome; it contributes to the construction of life on the unshakable foundation of the Truth. It is now high time that universal suffering should hasten humanity to the turning point in its spiritual history; it is now high time that the very agonies of our times should become a medium for the bringing of a real understanding of human relationship. It is now high

time for humanity to face squarely the true causes of the catastrophe which has overtaken it; it is now high time to seek, a new experience of Reality. To know that life is real and eternal is to inherit unfading bliss. It is time that men had this realisation by being unified with their own selves.

Through unification with the higher self man perceives the Infinite Self in all selves; and he becomes free by outgrowing and discarding the limitations of the ego-life. *The individual soul has to realize its identity*

Affirmation of the Truth of Oneness

with the Supreme Universal Soul with full consciousness. Men shall have re-

orientation of life in the light of this Ancient Truth; and they will readjust their attitude towards their neighbours in everyday life. To perceive the spiritual value of *oneness* is to promote real unity and co-operation; brotherhood then becomes a spontaneous outcome of true perception. *The new life which is based upon spiritual understanding is an affirmation of the Truth*, it is not something which belongs to utopia, but is completely practical. Now that humanity is thrown into the fire of bloody conflicts, it is, through immense anguish, experiencing the utter instability and futility of the life, which is based upon purely material conceptions. The hour is near when men, in their eager longing for real happiness, will seek the true source of happiness.

The time is also ripe when men will ardently seek to contact the embodiment of the Truth in the form of a God-man, through whom they can be inspired and lifted into spiri-

Inherent Divine Love through the God-Man

tual understanding. They will accept the guidance which comes from Divine authority. Only the out-

pouring of Divine Love can bring about spiritual awakening. In this critical time of universal suffering, men are becoming ready to turn towards their Higher Self and to fulfil the will of God. Divine Love will perform the supreme miracle of bringing God into the hearts of men and of getting them established in lasting and true happiness; it will satisfy the

greatest need and longing of mankind. Divine Love will make men selfless and helpful in their mutual relations; and it will bring about the final solution of all problems. *The new brotherhood on earth shall be a fulfilled fact and nations will be united in the fraternity of Love and Truth.*

My existence is for this Love and this Truth: and to suffering humanity I say:

"Have hope. I have come to help you in surrendering yourselves to the cause of God and in accepting His grace of Love and Truth. I have come to help you in winning the one Victory of all victories—to win yourself."

Meher Baba

on

The God-Man

Part II

THE STATE OF THE GOD-MAN

OF all the objects of human knowledge, God is the best object of study. But purely theoretical study of God does not take the aspirant very far towards the real purpose of human life, though it is always better to study God than to be completely ignorant about his existence. He, who seeks God, intellectually, is infinitely better than a person who is merely a sceptic or an agnostic. But it is decidedly better to feel God than to study Him through the intellect, though even the feeling for God is less important than the actual experience of God. However, even the experience of God does not yield, the true nature of divinity, because God, as the object of the experience, remains different from, and external to, the aspirant. The true nature of God in its entirety is known to the aspirant only when he attains unity with God, by losing himself into His Being. Thus, *it is better to study God than to be ignorant about Him; it is better to feel God than to study Him; it is better to experience*

**Realizing God is
Different from
Intellectual Know-
ledge of God**

God than to feel God; and it is better to become God than to experience Him.

The state of God-realisation is unmarred by the cropping up of the diverse doubts, which cloud the minds of those who are in bondage. Those, who are in bondage, are in a constant state of uncertainty about their "whence" and "whither":

The Supreme Certainty the God-realised, on the other hand, are at the very heart of the creation, where the source and the end of creation are known. The God-realised person knows himself to be God as surely as ordinary man knows himself to be a man and not a dog. It is not for him a matter of doubt, belief, self-delusion or guess-work: it is a matter of supreme and unshakable certainty, which needs no external corroborations and remains unaffected by the contradiction of others, because it is based upon continuous self-knowledge. His spiritual certainty is incapable of being challenged by anyone or anything. He cannot think of himself as anything but God, just in the same way as ordinary man cannot think of himself as anything except man. But the man thinks himself to be what he is not in reality; and the God-realised knows himself to be what he is in reality.

God-realisation is the very goal of all creation. All earthly pleasure, howsoever great, is but a fleeting shadow of the Eternal Bliss of God-realisation; all mundane knowledge, howsoever comprehensive, is but a distorted reflection of the Absolute Truth of God-realisation; all human might, howsoever imposing, is but a fragment of the Infinite Power of God-realisation. *All that is noble, beautiful and lovely, all that is great and good and inspiring in the universe is just an infinitesimal fraction of the Unfading and Unspeakable Glory of God-realisation.*

The Eternal Bliss, the Absolute Truth, the Infinite Power, and the Unfading Glory of God-realisation, are not to be had

for nothing. The individualised soul has to go through all the travail of the pain and struggle of evolution (and reincarnations) before it can inherit this Treasure, which is hidden at the heart of creation: and the price which it has to pay for coming into possession of this Treasure is its own existence as a separate ego. The limited individuality must disappear entirely if there is to be an entrance into the Unlimited State of God-hood. In the ordinary man of the world the limited individuality, which is identified with a finite name and form, predominates and creates a veil of ignorance on the God within: and if this ignorance is to disappear the limited individual has to surrender its own limited existence. When he goes from the scene without leaving a vestige of his limited life, what remains is God. *The surrenderance of limited existence is the surrenderance of a firmly rooted delusion of having a separate existence. It is not the surrenderance of anything real: it is the surrenderance of the false and the inheritance of the Truth.*

When a person is crossing the inner planes and is going towards God-realisation, he becomes successively unconscious of the gross, subtle and mental worlds as well

Two Aspects of the God-man as his own gross, subtle and mental bodies. But after God-realisation, some souls again descend or come down and become conscious of the whole creation as well as their gross, subtle and mental bodies, without in any way jeopardising their God-consciousness. They are known as God-men. *God as God alone is not consciously man; and man as man alone is not consciously God: the God-man is consciously God as well as man.*

By becoming conscious of the creation, the God-man does not suffer the slightest deterioration of his spiritual status. What is spiritually disastrous

The God-man is not Caught up in the Creation is not *mere consciousness of the creation*, but the fact that the consciousness is *caught up* in the creation because of the sanskaras and is consequently covered with ignorance, which prevents the realisation of

the Divinity within. In the same way, what is spiritually disastrous is not the mere consciousness of the bodies but *identification* with them owing to the sanskaras, which prevent the realisation of the Infinite Soul, which is the Ultimate Reality and the ground of all creation and in which alone is to be found the final meaning of the entire creation.

The soul [in] bondage, is tied to the worlds of forms by the chain of sanskaras, which create the illusion consisting in the identification of the soul with the bodies. *The disharmony within consciousness and the perversions in the expression of the will arise out of the sanskaric identification with the bodies and, not merely due to the consciousness of the bodies.* Since the God-man is free from all sanskaras, he is constantly conscious of being different from bodies, and uses them harmoniously as mere *instruments* for the expression of the Divine Will, in its Purity. His bodies are to the God-man, what the wig is to the bald man. The bald man puts on his wig when he goes to work during the day; and he takes it off when he is retiring at night: so, the God-man uses his bodies when he needs them for his work; but he is free from them, when he does not need them and knows them to be utterly different from his true being as God.

The God-man knows himself to be Infinite and beyond all forms, and can, therefore, with complete detachment, remain conscious of the creation, without being caught up in it. The falseness of the phenomenal world consists in its not being understood properly, *i.e.*, as being an illusory expression of the Infinite Spirit. Ignorance consists in taking the form as complete in itself, without any reference to the Infinite Spirit, of which it is the expression. *The God-man realises the Truth. He is conscious of the true nature of God, as well as the true nature of creation, and yet this does not involve for him any consciousness of duality, because for him, creation does not exist*

**The Changing
Shadow of God
cannot Affect God-
Consciousness**

as anything but the changing shadow of God, Who is the only Eternal and Real Existence, and Who is at the heart of creation. The God-man can, therefore, remain conscious of creation without involving himself in any deficit of God-consciousness; and he continues to work in the world of forms for the furtherance of the primary purpose of creation, which is to create full self-knowledge or God-realisation in every soul.

When the God-man descends into the world of forms from the impersonal aspect of God, he gets universal mind; and he knows, feels and works through this universal mind.

**The God-Man
Works through the
Universal Mind**

No longer for him is the limited life of finite mind; no longer for him are the pains and the pleasures of duality; no longer for him is the emptiness and the vanity of separative ego. He is consciously one with all life. *Through his universal mind, he not only experiences the happiness of all minds but also their suffering:* and since due to ignorance, most minds have a great preponderance of suffering over happiness, the suffering, which thus comes to the God-man because of the condition of others, is infinitely greater than happiness. The suffering of the God-man is great: but the infinite bliss of the God-state, which he constantly and effortlessly enjoys, supports him in all the suffering which comes to him, with the result that he remains unmoved and unaffected by it.

The individualised soul has no access to the infinite bliss of the God-state; and he is seriously moved and affected by his sanskaric happiness and suffering because

**The God-Man
Drops His Universal
Mind after His
Mission**

of his ignorant identification with the limited mind. But the God-man does not identify himself even with the universal mind, which he gets while coming down for the world. He has taken the universal mind only for his mission in the world; and since he merely uses it for his work without self-identification with it, he remains unaffected by the suffering or the happiness which

come to him through it. He drops the universal mind after his work is done; but, *even when he is working in the world, through his universal mind, he knows himself to be the eternal and only God and not the universal mind.*

The union, which the God-man has with God, is perfect: and even when he has come down in duality for his universal work, he is not aloof from God even for a second.

The God - Man is not Affected by Suffering

In his normal state as man, he has to be on the level of all and eat, drink and suffer like others; but since, he retains his God-hood, even while he does all these things, he has constant experience of peace, bliss and power. For example, Christ did suffer on the cross; but He was not affected by it, because, in the continuous knowledge, which His conscious God-hood gave Him, He at the same time, knew that everything in the world of duality is illusion and was sustained by the bliss of union with God.

As God, the God-man sees all souls as his own; he sees himself in everything and his universal mind includes all the minds in its scope. The God-man knows himself to be one with all the other souls in bondage.

Crucifixion *Although he knows himself to be identical with God and is thus eternally free, he also knows himself to be one with the other souls in bondage and is thus vicariously bound: and though he constantly experiences the eternal Bliss of God-realisation, he also vicariously experiences suffering owing to the bondage of other souls, whom he knows to be his own forms. This is the meaning of Christ's Crucifixion.* The God-man is, as it were, continuously being crucified: and he is continuously taking birth. In the God-man, the purpose of creation has been completely realised; and he has nothing to obtain for himself by remaining in the world: yet he retains his bodies and continues to use them for emancipating other souls from bondage and helping them to attain God-consciousness.

Even while working in the world of duality, the God-man is in no way limited by duality. In his God-state, the duality of 'I' and 'You' is swallowed up in the all-embracing Divine Love. *The state of perfection, in which the God-man dwells is beyond all forms of duality and opposites; it is a state of unlimited freedom and unimpaired completeness, immortal sweetness, and undying happiness, untarnished divinity and unhampered creativity. The God-man is inseparably united with God for ever and dwells in a state of non-duality in the very midst of duality: and he not only knows himself to be one with all, but also knows himself to be the only one.* He consciously descended from the state of seeing nothing but God, to the state of seeing God in every thing: and therefore, his dealings in the world of duality, not only do not bind him, but reflect the pristine glory of the sole reality, which is God, and contribute towards the freeing others from their state of bondage.

Meher Baba

on

The God-Man

Part III

THE WORK OF THE GOD-MAN

GOD-REALISATION is the endless end of creation, and the timeless consummation and fructification of intelligent and and unbinding Karma. If the soul takes an incarnation, after

**The Descent of the
God-Man is Not
Subject to Karmic
Determination**

god-realisation, it is not as an ego-mind, but as the embodiment of the universal mind; he is not, like the re-incarnating ego-mind, subject to the bondage of Karma. Ordinary man takes an incarnation under the irresistible impulsion of creating but the God-man comes back by a *free and spontaneous arising of Compassion for those, who are still in the world of illusion and bondage.* The descent of a God-realised soul is fundamentally different from the incarnation of the souls, which are in bondage.

The souls, who have not realised God, are still in the domain of duality; and their dealings of mutual give and take in different fields create the chains of *Karmic* debts and dues, from which there is no escape.

Free and Unbinding Give and Take But the God-man dwells in the consciousness of unity; and all that he does, not only does not bind him, but contributes towards the emancipation of others, who are still in ignorance. For the God-man, there is none, who is excluded from his own being; he sees himself in every one; and, *since, all that he does springs from the consciousness of non-duality, he can freely give and freely take without creating a binding for himself or others.*

If a person accepts, without reserve, from the bounty, which the God-man showers, he creates a link, which will stand by him until he attains the goal of freedom and God-

Contact with the God-Man is beneficial to All realisation: and if a person serves the God-man, offering all his life and possessions, in his service, he creates a link, which will augment his spiritual progress, by inviting upon himself the grace and the help of the God-man. In fact, *even opposition to the work of the God-man, often turns out to be a beginning of a development, which imperceptibly leads a person God-ward,* because while opposing the work of the God-man, the soul is establishing a link and a contact with him. Thus, every one who voluntarily or involuntarily comes into the orbit of his activities, becomes, in some way, the recipient of a spiritual push.

The work of the God-man in the universe is fundamentally different from the kind of thing, on which most of the priests, set their hearts. Most of the priests of established religions attach too much impor-

God-Man and Priests tance to external forms, rituals and conformity; and since they are not themselves free from selfishness, narrowness or ignorance, they exploit the weak and the credulous by holding before them the fear of hell or the hope

of heaven. The God-man, on the other hand, has entered for ever into the eternal life of love, purity, universality and understanding; and he is, therefore, concerned only with the things that really matter and which eventually bring about the inner unfoldment of the spirit, in all whom he helps. Those, who are themselves, in ignorance, may out of self-delusion or deliberate selfishness, use the same language as that of the God-man; and they might try to imitate the God-man, in many of the external things, associated with the life of the God-man. But, they cannot by the very nature of their spiritual limitations, really imitate the God-man, in possessing perfect understanding, experiencing infinite bliss, or wielding unlimited power; these attributes which belong to the God-man, by virtue of his having attained unity with God-man.

Those who are, in ignorance, lack fundamental traits of the God-man: and if, out of self-delusion or hypocrisy, they try to pose as the God-man, their self-delusion or pre-

Self-Delusion and Hypocrisy

tence is invariably exposed at some time. If a person gets committed to a line of life, out of self-delusion, it is an unfortunate case; he believes himself to be what he is not and thinks that he knows, when he actually does not know: but, since he is sincere in all that he thinks or does, he is not to be blamed, though he can become a source of danger to others, to a limited extent. The hypocrite knows that he does not know and pretends to be what he is not for selfish reasons: but, in doing so, he creates a serious *Karmic* binding for himself; and though he is a source of considerable danger to the weak and the credulous, he cannot go on indefinitely with his wilful deceit, for, in the course of time, he gets automatically exposed for a claim, which he is unable to substantiate.

In the performance of his universal work, the God-man has infinite adaptability. He is not attached to any one method of helping others; he does not follow rules or precedents, but is a law unto himself. He can rise to any occasion

and play the role, which is necessary under the circumstances, without being bound by it.

God-Man can Play the Role of the Aspirant Once a devotee asked his Master the reason why he fasted: and the Master replied, —" I am not fasting to attain perfection, since having already attained perfection, I am not an aspirant. It is for the sake of others that I fast." A spiritual aspirant cannot act like one, who has attained perfection, since, the perfect one is inimitable; but, *the perfect one can, for the guidance or benefit of others, act like an aspirant.* One, who has passed the highest examination of the university, can without difficulty write the alphabets for teaching children; but children cannot do what he can do. For showing the way to divinity, the God-man may often play the role of a devotee of God, though he has attained complete unity with God; he plays the role of a Bhakta, even after realisation, in order that others should be able to know the way. He is not bound to any particular role; and he can adjust his technique of helping others to the needs of those, who seek, his guidance. Whatever he does, he does for the ultimate good of others; for him, there is nothing, which is worth obtaining, because he has become everything.

Not only is the God-man not necessarily bound to any particular technique of giving spiritual help to others, but he is also not bound to the conventional standard of the good.

God-Man Uses Maya to Annihilate Maya

He is beyond the distinction of good and evil; but though what he does may appear to be lawless to the eyes of the world, it is always meant for the ultimate good of others. He uses different methods for different persons. He has no self-interest or personal motive, and is always inspired by the compassion that seeks the true well-being of others; therefore, in all that he does he remains unbound. He uses Maya to draw his disciples out of Maya, and takes to infinite ways and workings for his spiritual task. His methods are different with different persons; nor are they

the same with the same person, at all times. Occasionally he may even do something, which shocks others, because it runs counter to their usual expectations; but this is always intended to serve some spiritual purpose. *An interception of a short shocking dream is often useful in awakening a person from a long beautiful dream:* and like the shocking dream, the usual shocks which the God-man, in his discretion, deliberately administers, are eventually wholesome, though they might be unpleasant at the time of their occurrence.

The God-man may even seem to be unduly harsh with certain persons; but the onlookers have no idea of the internal situation and cannot therefore have a right understanding of the true justification of his

Saving a Drowning Person

apparent cruelty. But in fact, his sternness is often imperatively demanded by the spiritual requirements of the situation and is necessary in the best interests of those to whom he seems to be harsh. We have a good and illustrative analogy for such apparently cruel action in the cases of those expert swimmers who save drowning persons. It is well known that if a person is getting drowned in water, he has a tendency to cling to anything that comes to him; and, in his desperation he is so regardless of consequences that his thoughtless grip on the person, who has come to save him, not only makes it impossible for him to be saved but often becomes instrumental in drowning the very person, who has come to save him. The person who wants to save a drowning man, has to be very careful; and in fact, one who is expert in this art of saving drowning persons, has often to hit the drowning man on the head and render him "unconscious," so that he may not catch him, in an awkward manner. Through his apparent cruelty he minimises the danger, which the drowning man is likely to invite upon himself, and secures success for his help; in the same way, the apparent sternness of the God-man is intended to secure the ultimate spiritual well-being of others.

The soul in bondage is caught up in the universe; and the universe is nothing but imagination. But since there is no end to imagination, he is likely to wander indefinitely in the mazes of false consciousness. The God-man can help him

Cutting Short the Stages of False Consciousness *to cut short the different stages of false consciousness by revealing the Truth.* When the mind does not perceive the Truth, it is likely to imagine all kinds of things. For example, the soul can imagine that he is a beggar or a king, a man or a woman, etc.

The soul, thus goes on gathering the experiences of the opposites. Wherever there is duality, there is a tendency to restore balance through the opposite. For example, if a

The Seed of God-Realization person has the experience of being a murderer, it has to be counter-balanced by the experience of being murdered; and if the soul has the experience of being a king, it has to be counterbalanced by the experience of being a beggar. Thus, *the soul may wander "ad infinitum" from one opposite to the other without being able to put an end to his false consciousness.* The God-man can help him to arrive at the Truth by giving him perception of the Truth and *cutting short the working of his imagination, which would otherwise be endless.* The God-man helps the soul in bondage by *sowing in him the seed of God-realisation*, but it always takes some time to attain God-realisation. Every process of growth in the universe takes time.

The help of the God-man is, however, far more effective than the help, which some advanced aspirant may give. When the aspirant helps, he can take a person only

The Help of God-Man up to the point, which he has himself reached; and even this limited help, which he can give, becomes effective very gradually, with the result that the person, who ascends through such help, has to stay in the first plane for a long time, then in the second and so on. But when the God-man chooses to help a

person, he may, through his Grace, even take the aspirant to the seventh plane, in one second, though in that one second, the person has to traverse all the intermediate planes.

In taking a person to the seventh plane, the God-man is making him equal to himself, and the person, who thus attains the highest spiritual status, himself becomes a God-man. This transmission of spiritual knowledge from the God-man to his disciple is comparable to *the lighting of one lamp from another*. The lamp which has been lighted, is as capable of giving light to others as the original lamp itself: and there is no difference between them, in respect of importance or utility. The God-man is comparable to the Banyan Tree. *The Banyan Tree grows huge and mighty, giving shade and shelter to the travellers and protecting them from the sun, rain and storm; and in the fulness of its growth, its descending rooting branches strike deep into the fallow ground to create, in due time, another full-grown Banyan Tree, which also not only becomes equally huge and mighty, giving shade and shelter to the travellers and protecting them from the sun, rain and, storm, but has the same potential power to create similar full-grown Banyan Tree. The same is true of the God-man, who arouses the God-man, latent in others.* The continued succession of God-men on earth is a perpetual blessing to mankind, helping it onward in its struggle through darkness.

The God-man may be said to be the Lord and Servant of the Universe at one and the same time: as one, who showers his spiritual bounty on all, in measureless abundance, he is the Lord of the Universe; and as one, who continuously bears the burden of all and helps them through numberless spiritual difficulties, he is the Servant of the Universe. And, *just as he is Lord and Servant in one, he is also the supreme Lover and the matchless Beloved. The Love, which he gives or receives goes to free the soul from ignorance. In giving love, he gives it to himself in other*

forms; and in receiving love, he receives what has been awakened through his own Grace, which is continuously showered on all without distinctions. The Grace of the God-man is like the rain, which equally falls on all lands, irrespective of whether they are barren or fertile; but it fructifies only in the lands, which have been rendered fertile, through arduous and patient toiling.

Meher Baba

on

Violence and Non-Violence

MAN has a tendency to cling to catch-words and allow his action to be determined by them almost mechanically without bringing his action in direct relation to the living perception, which these words embody.

Going Behind Words Words have their own place and use in life; but if action is to be intelligent, it is imperatively necessary that the meaning, which these words are intended to convey, should be carefully analysed and determined. Among the words, which need this type of exploration, there are few which are as important as the words "Violence" and "Non-Violence"; they have a direct bearing upon the ideologies, which shape not only particular actions but also the entire tenor of life.

Spiritual life is a matter of perception and not a matter of mechanical conformity with rules, even when these rules are meant to stand for the highest values; *it implies an understanding, which goes beyond all words of formulations.* All words and formulations have a tendency to limit the Truth: therefore, those, who seek to bring out the spirit underlying these formulations, have often to launch upon a searching analysis of the formulated principles, and

Spiritual Understanding goes Beyond Formulation

supplement this analysis by constantly retaining touch with concrete examples taken from life. This is particularly true of those guiding principles of life, which are formulated with the help of the opposite concepts of Violence and Non-Violence.

The words "Violence" and "Non-Violence", are in ordinary references, applicable to such diverse situations in practical life, that no exposition of the issues involved can be complete unless it takes note of these diverse situations and

Starting with Representative Situations uses them as a starting point. However, for the purpose of exposition, it is not necessary to exhaust numerically all the possible diversities, which would be covered by these words: it is enough to consider some of the most *representative* situations. The representative situations mentioned below, have been selected because of their capacity to yield abundant light on the fundamental values, which centre round the concepts of Violence and Non-Violence.

Situation No. 1. Suppose a man, who does not know how to swim, has fallen in a lake and is being drowned and that there is near by another person, who is good at swimming and who wants to save him from

The Case of a Drowning Man being drowned. The man who is being drowned has a tendency to grasp desperately the person who comes to his help and the clasping is often so awkward that it may not only make it impossible for the drowning man to be saved, but may even bring about the drowning of the one, who has come to help him. One, who desires to save a drowning man, has, therefore, to render him unconscious by hitting him on the head, before he begins to help him. Striking upon the head of the drowning man, under such circumstances, cannot be looked upon either as Violence or as Non-Violence.

Situation No. 2. Suppose a man is suffering from some contagious disease, which can only be cured through an

operation. Now in order to cure this suffering man as well as to protect others from catching this infection, a surgeon may have to remove the infected part from his body by the use of his knife. This cutting of the body by a knife is also among the things which cannot be looked upon either as Violence or Non-Violence.

Situation No. 3. Suppose an aggressive nation invades a weaker nation for selfish purposes and some other nation, which is inspired solely by the noble desire of saving the weak nation, resists this aggressive invasion by armed force. Fighting for such resistance in the defence of the weak nation cannot be looked upon as either Violence or Non-Violence, but can be called Non-Violent—Violence.

Situation No. 4. Suppose a mad-dog has run amock and is likely to bite school-children and the teachers in this school destroy the mad-dog, in order to protect the children. This destruction of the mad-dog does imply Violence but there is no hatred in it.

Situation No. 5. Suppose a physically strong man is insulted and spat upon by an arrogant man who is nevertheless weak and suppose that the strong man, who has got the power not only desists from hurting the arrogant man but calmly explains to him the gospel of love. This action implies Non-Violence, but it is the non-violence of the strong.

The *first three* situations mentioned above clearly bring out that the question whether a situation implies violence or non-violence cannot be decided except by entering into many subtle and delicate considerations (1) with regard to the diverse details pertaining to the situation and (2) with regard to the nature of the *motive*, which prompts action.

And the *last two* situations bring out that even where it is easily possible to say that a particular situation implies violence or non-violence, the violence or non-violence may be characterised by the presence of certain *other factors, which substantially give it a meaning, which goes beyond the ordinary meaning attached to these words.*

A detailed analysis of the case of the hit on the drowning man (situation No. 1) shows that though it involves the use of force without the prior consent of the person on whom it is exerted the force used is ultimately used with the motive of saving the drowning man. The situation includes the, application of force without the consent of the man against whom it is used: and in this sense, it may be said to be a case of violence: but the force is used *for the good of the drowning man* and not with any desire to inflict injury or harm to him; and in that sense, it may also be said that it is not a case of violence. In these *special* senses, the situation can be said to involve violence and non-violence respectively; but in the *ordinary* sense of the words, it cannot be looked upon as a case either of violence or non-violence.

The case of the operation for the cure of contagious disease (situation No. 2) is slightly different from the case of the drowning man. Here also there is application of force (amounting even to the cutting of the affected part of the body); and the application of force is for the good of the person, against whom it is used: but in most cases of such operations, the patient gives *his prior consent* for the application of such force as may be necessary for the execution of the operation. Further; the operation is intended not only to protect the patient himself from the further ravages of the disease, but is also intended to protect *others* from the spread of infection. The application of force here springs out of the motive of doing unmixed good both to the patient as well as many others who might come into contact with him. Since

**Comments on the
Case of a Drowning
Man**

**Comments on the
Case of a Surgical
Operation**

no harm or injury is intended, the application of force in this situation does not amount to violence, in the ordinary sense: and it also cannot be adequately looked upon as non-violence, since it is a clear case of cutting a part of a living body.

The case of fighting with an aggressive nation (situation No. 3) is also very interesting and instructive. Here the fighting which is involved in offering resistance to

**Comments on the
Case of an Aggressive Nation**

the aggression of the nation with no selfish motive or personal interest but solely with the purpose of defending the weaker nation may entail much injury and even destruction upon the aggressive nation: and the use of force is not only without the prior consent of the aggressive nation against which it is used, but it is definitely *against its deliberate and conscious will*. But even in this situation, we do not have a clear case of violence, since in spite of the injury and harm involved, the application of force is not only for the good of the weaker nation, which is its victim, but is also, in a very important sense, for the good of the aggressive nation itself, because through the resistance encountered in its aggression, *it is gradually cured of its spiritual weakness or disease of having a tendency to invade and exploit the weaker nations*. This violence is really not violent and so we call it non-violent—violence.

The case of fighting with an aggressive nation (situation No. 3) is in fact very similar to the case of the operation of infected part. In the case of fighting with the

**Comparison of the
Case of Aggressive Nation**

aggressive nation the good of the weaker nation appears to be the primary result and the good of the aggressive nation (against which force is exercised) appears to be a secondary-result: and in the case of the operation, the good of the patient (against whom force is exercised) appears to be the primary result and the good of others appears to be a secondary result. But this is only a minor difference and when the two situations are carefully analysed and compared, it is found that they both

equally promote the good of the target of force as well as many others involved in the situation.

Defending the weak is an important form of selfless service and it is a part of Karmayoga; and use of force, when necessary for this purpose, stands completely justified as an

Defending the Weak is a Form of Selfless Service

Indispensable instrument for securing the desired objective. But any such fighting which may have to be undertaken to defend the weak must be without any selfish motives or hatred if it is to have unalloyed spiritual importance. It resembles the case of a man defending a woman who is being attacked by another man for vile purposes thus saving the woman's honour and life, and correcting the attacking man by punishing him and making him repent.

The case of destroying the mad-dog (situation No. 4) is definitely a case of violence, but it is justified because there is no hatred in it and because it is intended to promote

Comments in the Case of a Mad-Dog and the Case of Non-Violence of the Strong

the greater good of the children, who would be attacked by the mad-dog. The case of the strong man, who gives a sermon instead of seeking revenge (situation No. 5) implies non-violence: but it is not a case of inaction. It neither implies passivity nor weakness but strength and true creative action of an impersonal nature. It is non-violence of the strong.

The detailed analysis of the above diverse situations as well as their mutual comparison bring out the fact that questions concerning violence or non-violence, their justifi-

Spiritual Understanding is Above Rules and Requires Love

cation or otherwise and the ascertainment of their true value or lack of value, cannot be decided by any formal enunciation of a universal rule. They involve many delicate spiritual issues and implications: and a right understanding of the status of violence and nonviolence in the scheme of spiritual values, requires a true

perception of the meaning of the purpose of existence. Action, therefore, should not be governed by means of any slogans (howsoever high-sounding) based upon the incomplete and insufficient ideas of mere violence or mere non-violence; it should be a spontaneous outcome of Divine Love, which is above duality and of Spiritual Understanding, which is above rules.

Meher Baba

on

The Circle

AFTER several lives of search, purification, service and self-sacrifice, a soul has the good fortune to meet and get connected with a God-realised Master; and after several lives of close connection with the Master and love and service for the Master he enters into his Circle. When the Master takes an Incarnation for work, he always invariably brings with him all who are in his Circle. Those, who have entered into the Circle of a Master, are the souls, who have through their efforts, acquired the right (*Adhikar*) of having God-realisation; and when the exact moment for realisation arrives, they attain the realisation, through the Grace of the Master.

All actions in the world of duality are prompted by sanskaras of duality. Consciousness of duality implies the working of the impressions of duality. These impressions of duality first serve the purpose of evolving and limiting consciousness; and then they serve the purpose of liberating it so as to facilitate self-knowledge or God-realisation. *The soul cannot attain the consciousness of its own unity unless it goes through the experiences of duality; and these experiences*

of duality presuppose and require corresponding impressions of duality.

From the very beginning till the very end, the soul is subject to the momentum of impressions, which constitute the destiny of the soul. These impressions are called **Prarabdha Sanskaras**. *The Prarabdha Sanskaras are always in relation to the opposites of experience, e.g., the sanskaras of greed and its opposite, the sanskaras of lust and its opposite, the sanskaras of anger and its opposite, the sanskaras of bad thoughts, words and deeds and their opposites.*

From the stage of the atom, till the stage of the realisation of God, the soul is bound by the impressions of duality; and all that happens to it, is determined by these impressions. *When the soul gets realisation of God all sanskaras disappear.* If he remains immersed in the experience of divinity without coming back to the normal consciousness of the world of duality, he remains eternally beyond all types of sanskaras. He does not have any sanskaras and cannot have any.

But if the God-realised soul returns back to normal consciousness of the world of duality, he gets a universal mind; and in the universal mind with which he is endowed, he also gets superfluous and unbinding sanskaras, which are known as **Yogayoga Sanskaras of the Universal Mind**. In the beyond, state, the Master is eternally free from all sanskaras; and even when he is conscious of creation and is working in creation, he remains unbound by the *Yogayoga Sanskaras*, which sit loosely upon his universal mind. *The Yogayoga Sanskaras merely serve as channels of his universal work; they do not form a restricting chain, to his consciousness.*

The Yogayoga Sanskaras are *automatic* in their working; all the specific contacts and links to which the God-man

responds in his working are ultimately based upon these Yogayoga Sanskaras. *These Yoga-yoga Sanskaras do not create a veil on the universal mind; they do not constitute a cloud of ignorance: they only serve as a necessary framework for the release of definitive action.* Through these Yogayoga Sanskaras the universal will of God is particularised in its expressions. Any action, which is released in the world of space and time, must be in relation to certain definite situation or a set of circumstances; and there must always be some reason why a response is given to one situation rather than another and why it is given in one way rather than another. *The basis for the self-limitation of the actions of a soul, which is in spiritual bondage, is in his Prarabdha Sanskaras, which are binding: and the basis for the self-limitation of the actions of a soul, which is spiritually free, is in his Yogayoga Sanskaras, which are not binding.*

If the God-man were not to get these Yogayoga Sanskaras, while coming down to normal consciousness, he would not be able to do any work of a definite nature. *The Yogayoga Sanskaras help the God-man to particularise and materialise the Divine Will through him and to fulfil his Mission.* The Master is and knows himself to be infinite in existence, consciousness, knowledge, bliss, love and power and always remains infinite in the beyond state; but the work, which he achieves in the world of creation, is subject to the laws of creation and is, therefore, in one sense, finite. Since his work is in relation to the unveiling of the hidden infinity and divinity in everyone, and since the realisation of this infinity and divinity is the only purpose of the entire creation, his work is *infinitely important*; but when it is measured by the standard of results, it has to be, like any work, which is possible in the world, so much and no more.

But even when the work of the God-man is measured by the magnitude of results, the results achieved by the

worldly minded are mostly trivial in magnitude, as compared with the results achieved by the God-man. The greatest of souls, who are in spiritual bondage, cannot even in terms of the magnitude of results, approach the achievements of the God-men. The God-man has behind his work the infinite power of God; while the worldly man is working with the limited power which is available to him, through his ego-mind. But sometimes even a God-man achieves some limited task and then winds up his incarnation; this is not because he is limited in his power, but because, *the work which is determined by his Yogayoga Sanskaras, is so much and no more, and he is in no way attached to work as such.* Having finished the work, which is given to him, by his Yogayoga Sanskaras, he is ready to be re-absorbed in the impersonal aspect of the Infinite; he does not tarry in the world of unreality and duality a minute longer than is necessitated by his Yogayoga Sanskaras.

Like the Perfect Masters, the Avatar also has his Circle. When the Avatar takes an Incarnation he has before him a clear-cut mission, which proceeds according to a plan:

The Avatar and His Circle and this plan is always carefully adjusted to the flow of time. The process of the Incarnation of the Avatar is unique. Before taking on the physical body and descending in the world of duality, he gives to himself and the members of his Circle, special types of sanskaras, which are known as *Vidnyani Sanskaras*. The Circle of the Avatar always consists of [one] hundred and twenty members; and all of them have to take an incarnation, when the Avatar takes an Incarnation, The taking on of the Vidnyani Sanskaras, before incarnating in the physical body, is like the drawing of a veil upon himself and his Circle. After taking an Incarnation, the Avatar remains under this veil of Vidnyani Sanskaras until the time, which has been fixed by himself; but when the appointed time comes, he experiences his own original divinity and begins

to work through the Vidnyani Sanskaras, which now have been *transmuted into the Yogayoga Sanskaras of the Universal Mind.*

The Vidnyani Sanskaras are, to all intents and purposes, like the ordinary sanskaras of duality, though they are essentially different in nature. The Vidnyani Sanskaras

The Nature of the Vidnyani Sanskaras

prompt activities and invite experiences, which are similar to the activities and the experiences caused by ordinary sanskaras; but while the activities and the experiences, caused by ordinary sanskaras have a general tendency to strengthen the grip of illusory duality, the activities and the experiences, caused by Vidnyani Sanskaras, systematically work towards the loosening of the grip of duality. *The logic of the working out of the Vidnyani Sanskaras necessarily invites the realisation of the oneness of existence; they are, therefore, known as a threshold to Unity.*

The members of the Circle remain under the veil of Vidnyani Sanskaras, until they get realisation of God at the time fixed by the Avatar; and after they get realisation

Fixed Time for Realisation

through the Avatar, the Vidnyani Sanskaras, which they have brought with themselves, do not constitute a veil, but become the Yogayoga Sanskaras, serving only as an instrument for the fulfilment of the Divine Plan on earth.

There is an important difference between the Vidnyani Sanskaras and the Yogayoga Sanskaras. Though the Vidnyani Sanskaras ultimately work towards the realisation of

Difference between Vidnyani Sanskaras and Yogayoga Sanskaras

unity, they cause the experience of being limited, until realisation. But the Yogayoga Sanskaras, which come after realisation, do not in any way interfere with the experience of the Infinity, which is above duality, although they serve as instruments for enabling and determining the responses and activities in the dual world.

The working, out of the Vidnydni Sanskaras contributes towards one's own realisation, while the working out of the Yogayoga Sanskaras contributes towards the realisation of others, who are still in bondage.

In the beyond state, time, space and the whole world of phenomena are non-existent; it is only in the phenomenal world of duality that there is space or time or the operation of the law of cause and effect. So, when the Master works in the sphere of duality for the upliftment of humanity, his work becomes subject to the laws of time, space and causality; and from the point of view of external work, he at times appears to be limited, though, in reality, he is all the time experiencing his oneness and infinity of the beyond state. *However, though he is himself, beyond time, when he works for those who are in duality; time counts.*

The Master's universal work towards humanity, in general, is going on without break through the higher bodies; but when he works for the members of his Circle his action abides by a time, which he himself fixes with utmost carefulness and thought, for it has to be a precise and definite intervention in the mechanical working out of their sanskaras. He works for the Circle at fixed times; therefore, those who, in following the instructions received from the Master, abide by the time given by him, have the benefit of his special working. From the point of view of the special task, which the Master sets before himself, time becomes an extremely important factor. The special working, which the Master undertakes in relation to the members of his Circle, not only touches and affects these members themselves but also those, who are closely connected with the members of his Circle.

The Circle constitutes the most important particular feature, in relation to which and through which he adjusts

his spiritual duty towards humanity; and this particular feature has come into existence as a result of close links and connections of several lives. Every Master has such a Circle of very close disciples; but it does not in any way create a limitation to his inward consciousness. *In his God-state, the Master finds himself in the Centre of the Universe as well as in the Centre of Everything; and there is no Circle to circumscribe his being.* In the infinity of non-duality, there are no preferences; *the Circle exists only in relation to the duty and the work which the Master has undertaken in the phenomenal world.* But from the point of view of spiritual work in the phenomenal world, the Circle is as much a reality as the Himalayas.

Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEATH

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

The worldly man takes death to be the cessation of life itself, and he gives great importance to death, in his general outlook. There are few, who contemplate on death for prolonged periods; but, in spite of the fact that most persons are completely engrossed in their worldly pursuits, they can hardly resist being impressed by the incident of death, when they

are occasionally confronted by it, in their lives. For most persons the earthly scene of life has as its background the inevitable and the irresistible fact of death, which imperceptibly enters into their greatest triumphs and achievements, as well as in their keenest pleasures and rejoicings.

Apart from giving a general background to the scene of life, death also assumes an accentuated and overwhelming importance, even among the multicoloured incidents of life.

The Importance given to Death

Death is among the happenings, which are the most dreaded and the most lamented; it is also among the things, which people, in their malice or anger, try to inflict upon each other as the last penalty or worst revenge,—or which they rely upon, as the surest way of removing the aggression or interference by others. People also invite death upon themselves in token of supreme self-sacrifice; and, at times, they seek it with the false hope of putting an end to all the worldly worries and problems, which they are unable to face or solve. Thus, *in the minds of most persons, death assumes an accentuated and overwhelming importance.*

The overwhelming importance of death is derived from man's attachment to *particular* forms; but death loses much of its sting and importance, even for the worldly man, if he

The Persistence of Life in General

takes a broader view of the course of life. *In spite of the transitoriness of forms, and, in fact, even in and through these forms, there is an unbroken continuity of life, discarding old forms and forging new ones for its habitation and expression.* The recurring incident of death is matched by the recurring incident of birth; in spite of the unceasing activity of the hand of death, life continues to flourish; old generations are replaced by new ones; *life is reborn in new forms, incessantly renewing and refreshing itself;* the streams of life, with their ancient origin, are ever advancing onwards through the forms, which come and go like the waves of the ocean.

So, even within the limits of the experience of the worldly, there is much that should mitigate the morbid mood that spreads by falsely regarding death as an irreparable and unrelieved loss. *A sane attitude to death is possible only if life is considered impersonally and without any attachment to particular forms*, but this is the very thing which the worldly man finds it difficult to do, because of his entanglement with specific forms. For him, one form is not as good as another; the form, with which he identifies himself is by far the most important. The general preservation and advancement of the stream of life has for him no special interest; *what the worldly man craves for is a continuation of his own form and other particular forms, with which he has got entangled*. His heart cannot reconcile itself to his intellect; and, with the vanishing of the forms, which have been dear to him, he becomes a victim of unending sorrow, though life, as a whole, may have elsewhere replaced the lost forms with new ones.

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

Impersonal considerations go a long way to fortify the mind against the personal sorrow caused by death; but they do not by themselves solve the wider problems which confronted even the impersonal intellect of man, when he considers some of the implications of death, as it comes to him, within the limits of his ordinary experience. If death is regarded as the final annihilation of individual existence, there seems to be an irreparable loss to the universe. Each individual may be in a

position to give to the universe something so unique that no one else can exactly replace it. Further, there are cases of *the cutting short of the earthly career, long before the attainment of perfection by the individual*; all his struggle towards the ideal, all his endeavour and enthusiasm for the great, the good and the beautiful, and all his aspiration for things divine and eternal, seem to end in the vast nothingness created by death.

The implications of assuming death to be the termination of individual existence run counter to the ineradicable expectations based upon rationalised intuition; thus, there

Conflict between the Impure Intellect and Deeper Intuition *usually arises a conflict between the claims of intuition and the deliverance of the impure intellect, which assumes death to be the termination*

of individual existence. Such conflict is often a beginning of pure thinking, which begins by seriously challenging the usually accepted belief that death is the real termination of individual existence. Death as an extinction of life can never be wholly acceptable to the spiritual aspirations of man; and, therefore, the belief in the immortality of the individualised soul is often accepted by the human mind without much resistance, even in the absence of direct supersensible knowledge about the existence of life after death.

Those, who know the fact of the immortality of the soul, from personal experience, are few. *The supersensible knowledge about the existence of life after death is inaccessible to a vast majority of persons*; for them, immortality must remain just an agreeable and acceptable *belief* but nothing more. It becomes a part of *personal knowledge* for those, who through their scientific interest, have built up means of communication with the 'other world' or those, whose special circumstances, have invited in their personal experience, the appearance or intervention by the departed spirits, or those, who through their spiritual advancement, have automatically unfolded

certain latent perceptual capacities of the inner vehicles of consciousness.

Immortality of the individualised soul is rendered possible by the fact that the individualised soul is *not* the same as the physical body. The individualized soul con-

**The Material Basis
of Immortality**

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

Nature is much greater than what a man can perceive through the ordinary senses of his physical body. The hidden aspects of nature consist of finer matter and forces.

Three Worlds

There is no unbridgeable gulf separating the finer aspects of nature from its gross aspect. They all interpenetrate one another and exist together. The finer aspects of nature are not perceptible to ordinary man, but they are nevertheless continuous with the gross aspect, which is perceptible to him. They are not remote; and yet they are inaccessible to his consciousness. This is due to the fact that his consciousness is functioning through the physical senses, which are not adapted for perceiving those aspects of nature, which are finer than the gross aspect. Ordinary man is unconscious of the *inner planes*, just [as] a deaf man is unconscious of sounds; and he cannot deal with them consciously. For all practical purposes, therefore, they are for him other 'worlds'. The finer and hidden part of nature has two important divisions, *viz.*, the subtle and the mental, corresponding to the subtle and mental bodies of man. The whole of nature might, therefore, be conveniently divided into three parts—(i) the *gross* world, (ii) the *subtle* world and (iii) the *mental* world. When the individualised soul has incarnated itself in a physical body, it expresses its life in the gross world; but when it drops

the outer sheath of the physical body, it continues to have its expression of life either in the subtle world through the subtle body, or in the mental world through the mental body.

Ordinarily life in the physical body, is terminated only when the sanskaras, which are released for expression in that incarnation, are all worked out. But, in some exceptional

Effects of Untimely Death

cases, soul has to give up its gross body before the working out of these sanskaras is completed. For example, the man who commits *suicide*, cuts short the period of his life artificially and thereby prevents the working out of those sanskaras, which were released for fructification. *When, due to untimely death, the sanskaras released for fructification are withheld from expression, the discarnate soul remains subject to the propelling force of these sanskaras, even after the physical body has been discarded.* The momentum of the sanskaras, which were prevented from being worked out, is retained even in life after death, with the result that the departed spirit desires the things of the gross world very badly.

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

Obsessions

Thus the soul may want to drink wine so badly that it takes to unnatural methods of gratifying the craving. It awaits its opportunity. When it finds some person in the gross world in the process of drinking wine, it satisfies its own desire, *through* that person, by possessing his physical body and attaching himself to it. In the same way, if it wants to experience the gross manifestations of crude anger, it does so through a person, who, in the gross world, is feeling angry. Such souls are constantly *waiting to meet and obsess some incarnate persons of similar sanskaras*; and they try to maintain their contact with the gross

world through others as long as possible. *In life after death, any lingering entanglement with the gross world is a serious hindrance to the natural flow of onward life of the soul; and those, who are subject to this precarious condition must be looked upon as particularly unfortunate, since they invite upon themselves and others much unnecessary suffering by being impelled to seek unnatural gratification of coarser desires, through others who are still incarnate. As compared with these unfortunate souls, the posthumous life of other souls, is much smoother.*

In normal cases, *death occurs when all the sanskaras seeking fructification are worked out.* When the soul drops its physical body, it is completely severed from all connections with the gross world, though the

Death begins the Interval between two Lives

ego and the mind are retained with all the impressions, which have been accumulated in the earthly career.

Unlike the exceptional cases of the obsessing spirits, ordinary spirits try to reconcile themselves with the severance of connection with the gross world to the best of their ability. They soon acquiesce themselves in the limitations imposed by the changed conditions and *sink into a state of subjectivity*, in which there begins a new process of mentally going over the experiences or the earthly career by the revival of the sanskaras connected with them. Thus, death inaugurates a period of comparative rest consisting in a temporary withdrawal from the gross sphere of action; and it is *the beginning of an interval between the last incarnation and the next.*

Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part II

HELL AND HEAVEN

AT the time of death, the soul drops its physical body. Therefore, after death, there is no consciousness of the gross world, since it is directly dependent on the physical body. But, though the consciousness of the gross world is thus lost, the impressions or the experiences of the gross world are retained in the mental body; and they continue to express themselves through the semi-subtle sphere. During the interval between death and the next incarnation, the consciousness of the soul is turned towards these impressions, with the result that there is a vivification of impressions and the revival of corresponding experiences. The average man does not become aware of the subtle *environment*. He is wrapped up in complete *subjectivity*; and he is *absorbed in living through the revived impressions*.

In life after death, the experiences of pain and pleasure become much more intense than what they were in the earthly

life. And these subjective states of intensified suffering and joy are respectively called hell and heaven. Hell and heaven are states, of the mind; they should not be looked upon as being places; and, though, from the subjective point of view, they mean a great deal for the individualised soul, they are both illusions within the greater illusion of the phenomenal world.

In the hell-state as well as in the heaven-state, desires become much more intense, since they no longer require to be expressed through the gross medium; and like desires, the experiences of their fulfilment or, non-fulfilment also become greatly intensified. In the earthly career, desires, as well as the pleasures and the sufferings, which they bring, are experienced through the medium of the gross body. The soul is of course actually using his higher bodies, even in his earthly career. But, in the earthly career, the consciousness of the soul is bound up with that of gross body; and therefore, the processes of consciousness have to traverse through an additional veil, with the result that they get mitigated in their force, liveliness, and intensity, just as the rays of light would get more dim, if they were required to pass through a thick glass. *During the habitation of the body, desires and experiences suffer deterioration of intensity; but when the habitation is given up, they undergo relative increment of intensity.*

In the heaven-state, the fulfilment of desires is not, as in the gross sphere, dependent upon the having of the object of desire; fulfillment of desire comes merely through the thinking of the object of desire. For example, if a person is desirous of hearing exquisite music, he would get the pleasure of actually hearing it, merely by thinking about exquisite music; the imaginative idea of

exquisite music, becomes in this state, a substitute for the physical sound vibrations of the gross sphere. The pleasure, which he derives from the thought of exquisite music is, for him, very much greater than the pleasure which he, in his earthly career, derived from the actual hearing of physical sounds. *In the heaven-state, there are no obstacles between desires and their fulfilment; and the pleasure of self-fulfilment through thought or feeling is always at hand.*

In fact, even in the earthly sphere of existence, some persons develop this capacity of making their pleasure independent of the possession of the gross object. Beethoven

Heaven on Earth for example, was completely deaf; and, yet he could, through the exercise of imagination alone intensely enjoy his own compositions of music. So, *in a sense even on earth, he might, figuratively be said to have been in the heaven-state.* In the same way, a person who meditates on the Beloved with love, is deriving-happiness merely through the thought of the beloved, without requiring the physical presence of the Beloved. But, after death, in the heaven-state, the enjoyment of such imaginative fulfilment is infinitely greater since consciousness is then disburdened of the outermost veil of the gross body.

Some of the desires have a direct relation to the possession and assimilation of the gross objects through the gross body. The coarser desires of lust, gluttony, or craving

Coarser Desires contribute to the Hell-state for drinking wine are of this type. These desires are specifically earthly because of their being possessive and because of their involving an element of clinging to the physical object and fastening upon it; and in these desires, there is not only a preponderance of the sensations derived from the contact of the object, but also of those sensations, which constitute the response of the body itself. These coarser desires contribute to the hell-state.

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

Difference between Coarser and Finer Desires there is of course an element of wanting sense-contact with the physical sounds but these sounds become important for the man, not so much in their own right, as in their capacity to express beauty. In the same way, a desire to hear discourses has a hold upon the mind, not so much because of the sensations of sound, but because of the intellectual meaning, which they convey and the emotional appeal which they have.

Thus, in the finer desires, the actual sensations play a subordinate role as compared with the other ideational aspects based upon the sensations; but in the coarser desires, the chief element is provided by the actual sensations,

The Place of Bodily Sensations in Coarser Desires connected with the physical object and the sensations aroused by them in the bodily response to their possession. *The organic sensations of the physical body play the greatest part in experiences connected with the coarser desires; and through them the individualised soul feels its own existence as the gross body, much more effectively and vividly than through the experiences connected with finer desires.*

Almost the entire significance of experiences brought about by the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of coarser desires is constituted by the *bodily* sensations themselves; and, there-

Non-fulfillment of Coarser Desires due To Inaccessibility to the Gross Object fore, they can rarely, like finer desires, yield experience of fulfilment, merely through the exercise of thought and the imagination. It is characteristic of the coarser desires to insist on the possession and assimilation of the gross object itself; any imaginative idea of the gross object merely serves the purpose of accentuating their

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

Just as in this world, the presence of coarser desires leads to the preponderating balance of suffering over pleasure, in the life after death also, the revived experiences

The Sufferings of Hell and the Pleasures of Heaven in connection with these coarser desires, lead to a *preponderating balance of suffering over pleasure*, thus bringing into existence the *hell-state*: and, just as, in this world, the presence of finer desires, leads to a preponderating balance of pleasure over suffering, in the life after death also, the revived experiences in connection with the finer desires, lead to a *preponderating balance of pleasure over suffering*, thus bringing into existence the *heaven-state*.

But hell and heaven are both states of bondage *subject to the limitations of the opposites* of pleasure and pain; and they are both states, whose duration is determined, by the

Time in the Subtle world nature, amount and intensity of the accumulated impressions. *Time in the subtle world is not the same, as time in the gross world, owing to the increased subjectivity of the states of consciousness*; but though the time in the subtle world is thus *incommensurable* with the time in the gross world, it is strictly determined by the impressions, accumulated in the gross world. However, the important fact is that the hell-state and the heaven-state are far from being lasting; and, after they have served their purpose in the life of the individualised soul, they both come to an end.

The coarser sensual desires like lust and their emotional products like hate and anger, all contribute to the life of

delusion and suffering, prevalent in the hell-state; and, the finer desires like idealistic aspirations, aesthetic and scientific interests, or good-will towards neighbours and others, and their emotional products like personal love or fellow-feeling, contribute to the life of enlightenment and pleasure prevalent in the heaven-state. *These states for most persons consist in reliving through the experiences of the earthly life, by means of the vivification of the impressions left by them;* and their duration and nature are dependent upon the duration and nature of experiences through which the person went during his life in the physical body.

Just as the gramophone record is set aside after the pin of the sound-box has traveled through each indentation present on it, *the hell-state as well as the heaven-state comes to a termination, after consciousness has traversed the imprints left by earthly life:* and, just as the nature of the song produced by the gramophone record is strictly determined by the original song which happens to be recorded therein, the quality of intensified and magnified experiences through which the soul passes after death is strictly determined by the kind of life, which the person led on earth, in the physical body. From this point of view, heaven and hell are shadows cast by man's earthly life.

Heaven and hell would, however, serve no specially useful purpose in the life of the individual soul if they were to consist *merely* of mental revival of the earthly past; that would mean bare repetition of what has once occurred. Consciousness, in these after-death states, is in a position to have a *leisurely and effective survey of the animated record of earthly life;* and it can, through the intensification of experiences, attend to their nature with better facility and better results. On earth, the consciousness of most

persons is *predominantly objective and forward-looking* and under the pressure of unspent sanskaras, it is mostly concerned with the possible fulfilment of sanskaras through the *present* or the *future*. But, in life after death, the consciousness of most persons is *predominantly subjective and retrospective*: and, in the absence of forward-goading sanskaras, it is, as in reminiscences, mostly pre-occupied with reviewing and assessing the significance of the *past*.

The fret and fury of immediate responses to the changing situations of earthy life is, in life after death, replaced by a more leisurely mood which is free from the urgency of immediately needed actions; and, the accumulated experience of the earthy career is now all available for reflection, in a form which is more vivid than is possible through memory in earthy life. *The snap-shots of earthy life have all been taken on the cinematic film of the mind; and it is now time to study the original earthy life through the magnified projections of the filmed record on the screen of subjectivised consciousness.*

Thus the hell-state and the heaven-state become instrumental for the *assimilation of experience*, acquired in the earthly phase, so that the individualised soul can start its next incarnation in the physical body, with all the advantage of digested experience. The lessons, which are learnt by the soul, through much stock-taking and reflection, are by the power of their magnified suffering or happiness confirmed on the mind-body; and they become for the next incarnation part and parcel of the intuitive make-up of the active consciousness, without, in any way, involving the detailed revival of the individual events of previous incarnation. The truths absorbed by the mind in the life after death become in the next incarnation a part of the inborn wisdom. *Developed intuition is nothing but consolidated*

and compressed understanding, distilled through a multitude of diverse experiences, gathered in previous lives.

Different souls start, with different degrees of intuitive wisdom, which becomes their initial capital for the experiments and adventures of their earthly career. From one point of view, this intuition may seem to have been product of past experiences, thus adding to the equipment of the psyche. But, it is truer to look upon intuition not as a new acquisition, but as an unfoldment of what was already latent in the individualised soul. And, from this deeper point of view, *the experiences of earthly life as well as the reflective and consolidatory processes to which they are subjected in life after death, are both merely instrumental in gradually releasing to the surface, the intuitive wisdom, which is already latent in the soul from the very beginning of creation.* Like earthly career and its experiences the states of hell and heaven in the life after death, are integral parts and incidents of that journey of the individualised soul which is ultimately meant to get at the source of all things.

Contribution of Hell and Heaven to the Release of Intuitive Wisdom

Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part III

THE EXISTENCE AND THE MEMORY OF
PAST LIVES

THOSE, who have an immediate access to the super-sensible truths concerning the life of the soul and its reincarnation, know, through their unclouded perception, that the so-called birth is only an incarnation of individualised soul in the gross sphere. The unbroken continuity of the life of the reincarnating soul, is punctuated by the incidents of birth and death, which are both comparable to the gateways of the stream of life, advancing from one type of existence to another type of existence. They are both equally necessary in the greater life of the soul; and the interval between death and birth is as necessary as the interval between birth and death.

Like those, who consider death to be the termination of individual existence, those, who consider the birth of body

to be its beginning, are also confronted with conflict between their false assumptions, and the claims of rationalized intuition. From the point of view of individualistic justice the uneven lot of the good and the bad in respect of material happiness or prosperity seems seriously [to] impugn the rationality and justification for the entire scheme of the universe. The sight of the virtuous being, at times, in the throes of suffering and the vicious being in possession of the amenities of pleasure, creates unsurmountable difficulties for any one, who would rather look upon life with the faith, that it is meant to fulfil an eternal and divine purpose.

Unless there is some deeper explanation, human mind is riddled with agonising perplexities that tend to embitter man's general outlook on life and foster a callous cynicism, which in many ways is even worse than the deepest of personal sorrow, which death may cause. But in spite of all appearances to the contrary, human mind has in it, *an inborn tendency to try to restore to itself a deep, and unshakable faith in the intrinsic sanity and value of life*; and, except where artificial resistances are created, it finds acceptable those explanations, which are in conformity with this deeper law of the spirit.

Those, who have direct access to the truth of reincarnation are even fewer than those who have direct access to the truth of the immortality of the individual soul. The memories of all past lives are stored and preserved in the mind-body of the individual soul: but they are not accessible to the consciousness of ordinary persons, because a veil is drawn over them. When the soul changes its physical body, it gets a new brain; and its normal waking consciousness functions in close association with the brain-processes. Under ordinary circumstances, only the memories of the present life can

appear in consciousness, because *the new brain acts as a hindrance to the release of the memories of those experiences, which had to be gathered through the medium of other brains, in past lives.*

In rare cases, in spite of the resistance offered by the brain, some memories of past lives leak into the present life in the form of dreams, which are entirely unaccountable by

Memory of past lives means of the present life. A man may see in his dreams persons whom he has never seen in his present life; it often

happens that the persons, who appeared in the dreams, were persons whom he had met in his past lives. But, of course, such dreams when they are of the ordinary type, cannot be treated as *memory* of the past lives; they merely indicate that the imagination, which worked in dreams, was influenced by materials, taken from the past lives of the man.

The real memory of past lives is clear, steady and sure like the memory of the present life; and when it comes to a man he has no longer any doubt about his having existed in several lives, along with many others. Just as he cannot doubt his own past life in the present incarnation, he cannot doubt his life in his past incarnations.

The number of persons who can remember their past lives is very small as compared with the vast majority, who are so completely bound to the gross sphere of existence,

Release of the memory of past lives that they do not even suspect super-sensible realities. The release of such memories is severely conditioned by the limitations of the brain, as long as

consciousness is entangled with the physical body and its brain processes. *But, when consciousness is emancipated from the limitations imposed by the brain, it can recover and re-establish the memories of past lives, which are all stored in the mental body.* This involves a degree of *detachment and understanding* which only the spiritually advanced persons can have. The memory of past

lives can come with full clarity and certainty, even to those who are still crossing the inner planes but have not yet become spiritually perfect.

The memory of past lives does not, except in abnormal and rare cases, come back to a person, unless he is sufficiently advanced from the spiritual point of view; this

Loss of the memory of past lives does not affect spiritual progress

provision, made by the laws of life, secures unhampered spiritual evolution of the individualised soul. On the first view, it might seem that the loss of the memory of previous lives, is all a loss; but this is far from being so. *For most purposes, knowledge about past lives is not at all necessary for the guidance of the onward course of spiritual evolution. Spiritual evolution consists in guiding life in the light of the highest values, perceived through intuition and not in allowing it to be determined by the past.* In many cases, even the memory of the present life acts as an obstacle for certain adjustments, demanded by the spiritual requirements of the changing situations of life. The problem of emancipation may, in a sense, be said to be a problem of securing freedom from the past, which in the case of those who are bound to the wheel of birth and death, inexorably shapes the present life.

Life would be infinitely more complicated if one who is not spiritually advanced is burdened by the conscious memory of numberless past lives; and he would get dazed

Shielding from complications

and unsettled by the diversity of settings in which persons would appear to him in the light of his memory. But he is not called upon to face such confusion, because he is shielded from the resurrection of the memory of past lives. Things and persons come to him in a limited and definite context and setting, with the result that he finds it easy to determine his actions and responses in the light of what he knows from the present life. This does not mean that his

actions and responses are *entirely* determined by what he knows from his present life: all that has happened in the past lives also has its own unconscious but effective share in determining his actions and responses. But in spite of the actual influence of the past lives, the fact remains that, *since he is shielded from the resurrection of conscious memory, his consciousness is not subjected to that confusion, which would result, if the conscious memory of the past lives were to be among the data, which he has to consider for the purposes of determining his actions and responses.*

The resurrection of the memory of past lives can be faced without confusion or loss of balance, only when the person has become desireless and has lost all feeling of "mine" and "thine". The persons, whom he has once looked upon as belonging to him, might in the present life be seen by him to belong to some one else; and if he were to carry on his attachments and supposed claims, into the present life, he would create untold complications, misery and confusion for himself as well as others. *Possessiveness of all types has to be purged from the mind, if the aspirant is to be spiritually prepared for withstanding the disturbing influence of the memory coming back from past lives.*

When a man is spiritually prepared, he is completely desireless and full of impersonal love; all the entanglements of the personal ego have disappeared from his mind; *he can look upon his old friends and enemies with the same equanimity*; he is so lifted out of his limitations, that he is the same to his relations and non-relations of his past and present lives; and he is free from the idea of any pressing claims and counter-claims of himself against others or of others against himself, because he has realised the deeper truth of the unity of all life and the illusoriness of the mundane happenings.

It is only when a person is thus spiritually prepared that he is unaffected by the revived memory of past lives; and it is only then that it is worthwhile for him to have an

Wise use of resurrected memory access to it, for he can then have that judgment and pure and incorruptible love, which enable him to make right and wise use of the new knowledge, gathered through the resurrected memory of past lives. This knowledge opens to him a great deal of information about his own incarnations and also about the incarnations of others, connected with him in the past lives; and, *it not only enables him to advance further on the path by conscious karmic adjustments*, but also to help others, on the path, by directing them, in the light of their past lives.

The speed of spiritual evolution is faster after the natural recovery of the memory of past incarnations. Disentanglement from the mundane things is facilitated by

Advantages of recovered memory the conscious knowledge about the history of the development of such entanglements. Evolution, which so far was mostly unconscious of the limiting past, now becomes conscious of the limiting past; *the obstacles as well as the facilities created by the past, are now in the reach of consciousness, and, therefore, are capable of intelligent and careful handling*. Inarticulate intuition is supplemented by rationalised data; therefore, action has less possibility of error and becomes more potent, in producing desirable results.

The Masters of wisdom, who have become spiritually perfect, have no special interest in past incarnations; they are among the many unimportant facts of mundane existence. If they make any use of their

Shortcut through knowledge of past lives knowledge of the past lives of a person, it's only for helping him onwards towards the eternal Truth. Their knowledge of the past, places them in a special position of giving an aspirant, just that

guidance which he needs. The details of the Path are often determined by (i) the incidents of the past, (ii) the manner in which the aspirant has sought the highest Truth in his past lives, and (iii) the obstacles or the facilities, which he has created for himself, through his past doings. All these things, which are hidden from the aspirant, are open to the unclouded perception of the Master, who uses his knowledge in order to accelerate the spiritual progress of the seeker of the Truth. The Master leads the aspirant from the place in which he has landed himself, through the experimentation and search of several lives. *In matters spiritual, as in matters mundane, greater and unerring knowledge means economy of energy and, time.*

Violence and Non-Violence

FURTHER EXPLAINED

By Meher Baba

We regret, through oversight, the unfinished, copy of this article was submitted to the Press, Hence this Reprint, for the benefit of our readers, of the very same article from May 1942 issue, with the corrections in red ink.—Managing Editor.

<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Violence (I) <i>Non-Violence Pure and Simple</i> (based on Divine Love) Here one sees all as his own Self and is beyond both friendship and enmity, and never does a single thought of Violence enter his mind under any circumstances.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Violence (III) <i>Non-Violent Violence</i> (based on Unlimited Love) Violence done solely for defending the weak and where there is no question of self-defence or of self-motive.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">(II) <i>Non-Violence of the Brave</i> (based on Unlimited Pure Love) This applies to those who, although not one with all through actual realisation, consider no one as their enemy and try to win over even the aggressor through Love and give up their lives by being attacked, not through fear, but through Love.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">(IV) <i>Selfless Violence</i> (based on Limited Human Love) Violence done in self-defence when attacked treacherously, and with no other selfish motive;—for example—when one's mother's honour is on the point of being violated by a lusty desperado and when one defends his mother; so also when the motherland's honour is at stake and it is being attacked by enemies, the nation's selfless effort at defending the motherland is selfless Violence.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">(V a) <i>Non-Violence of the Coward</i> (based on Unlimited Weakness of Character and Mind) Those who do not resist aggression, because of fear and for no other reason, belong to this class.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">(V b) <i>Selfish Violence</i> (based on Hatred and Lust) When violence is done for selfish motives by an individual or nation for power and selfish gains, etc.</p>

NON-VIOLENCE, pure and simple, means Love Infinite. It is the Goal of life. When this state of pure and Infinite Love is reached the aspirant is at one with God. To reach this goal there must be intense longing and the aspirant who has this longing to realise the supreme state, has to begin by practising what is termed 'Non-violence of the brave'. This applies to those who, though not one with all through actual realisation, consider no one as their enemy and try to win over even the aggressor through love and give up their lives by being attacked, not through fear but through love.

As pointed out, 'Non-violence of the brave' is practicable for those individuals who have the intense longing to attain the supreme state. This longing is not to be found in the masses. If, therefore, it is intended to lead the masses to pure 'Non-violence', it is necessary to first prepare them for the 'Non-violence of the brave'. To achieve this aim in a practical way, it is necessary to make them follow, in the beginning, the principle of 'Non-violent Violence', that

is, violence done solely for defending the weak without any selfish motive whatever. In times of actual war, when the masses are taken by surprise and when they are not even in the mood to listen to advice about having intense longing to attain the supreme goal of life, the only practical way to lead them finally towards the goal is to begin by inculcating in them the principle of 'Non-violent Violence' and then gradually introducing the 'Non-violence of the brave'. A premature attempt to introduce 'Non-violence of the brave' amongst the unprepared masses in actual wartime would not only fail but, on the other hand, there is the serious danger of bringing in the fatal 'Non-violence of the coward', *i.e.*, the masses will not resist the aggression simply because of fear and for no other reason.

The masses may also be educated and led to the 'Non-violence of the brave' by making them follow the principles of 'Selfless Violence' instead of those of 'Non-violent Violence'. This selfless violence is violence done in self-defence when attacked treacherously.

No other selfish motive should be allowed to justify the violence. Thus, for example, when one's mother's honour is on the point of being violated by a lusty desperado and when one defends her by resorting to violence, he is said to have followed the principles of 'Selfless Violence'. Similarly when the honour of the motherland is at stake and it is being-attacked by enemies, the nation's selfless effort in defending the motherland is 'Selfless Violence'. A tinge of selfishness being there (as the mother is one's own mother), the love expressed here is limited human love.

'Non-violence of the coward' is, as pointed out, fatal; so also is 'Selfish Violence', i.e., violence for selfish motives by individuals or a nation to gain power or other selfish ends.

It will therefore be seen that while Non-violence, pure and simple, is the goal of life, this goal has to be attained by individual seekers of God by following 'Non-violence of the brave'. The masses who have not the requisite intense longing for being one with him, have to be gradually led towards this goal on the principles of

Non-violent Violence' or those of 'Selfless Violence' according to the circumstances. In conclusion, it must be very clearly understood that 'Non-violent Violence' and 'Selfless Violence' are merely means of attaining the goal of life, namely, the pure and simple 'Non-Violence' or the 'Love Infinite'. These means must not be confused or otherwise mixed up with the goal itself.

The motive and the result are always determined by the general acceptance of their being good or bad; for example, 'Non-violence of the brave' and 'Non-violence of the coward' are both non-violence, but, from the viewpoint of the motive force behind it, 'Non-violence of the brave' is born of *love* and 'Non-violence of the coward' is born of *fear* which is opposite to *love*; although as 'Nonviolence', they are not opposites, their motives are infinitely opposed to each other. The motive behind 'Non-violence of the brave' is losing one's life to gain Infinite Love, and the motive behind 'Non-violence of the coward' is to save one's own life and gain infinite contempt. So 'Non-violence' (of the coward) we

put under the headline of 'Non-love', as we put 'Non-Violence (of the brave)' under the heading of 'Love'.

'Non-violent Violence' is justified not under the heading of love but under the heading of *duty*—duty done selflessly to others according to *Karma Yoga*, which eventually is linked up with unlimited love,—but human love.

The difference between the two opposite forces cannot be

obliterated; but the transformation of one force to another can happen when expressed rightly through the right channels. Food given wrongly becomes poison and poison (like strychnine), given in small quantity as tonic, becomes food for the nerves. Although food in substance does not become poison and *vice versa*, the action and the result due to the expression become transformed.



Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part IV

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF AN INCARNATION

THE individualised soul has its beginning and source in the infinite, formless, sexless and indivisible being of God, who is beyond all forms of duality or evolution. And, *with the beginning of the individualized soul, there is the beginning of duality and evolution, though the specific form of duality consisting in the distinction and attraction based upon sex, makes its appearance at a later stage of evolution.* Duality exists as soon as there is subject and object, a centre of consciousness (howsoever dim) and its environment. But, sex is a specific kind of *bodily attraction*, which presupposes differentiation of forms, a specific kind of psychic entanglement with the forms, and specific expression of life and energy.

In the mineral kingdom, there is no sex. In the kingdom of plants and trees the bodily differentiations of sex,

with specialised biological functions, have come into existence. But plants and trees do not generate *sex-consciousness*, since the development of consciousness in plants and trees is rudimentary and its expressions are not influenced by these bodily differentiations. The possible contact between the male and the female in plants and trees is (due to their being fixed in the ground) *not direct*, but only *indirect*, through the intermediate agency of winds, bees, etc. Therefore, though from the point of view of the evolution of *forms*, sex-differentiation may be said to have begun to emerge, even at the level of plants and trees, from the point of view of their own *consciousness*, they cannot be said to have any sex, because *their consciousness of duality is not in any way coloured by sex*.

In the evolution of sex duality, plants and trees stand midway between minerals, who have no sex and birds and animals, who have it, in its complete form. Just before soul incarnates itself in a human form, it arrives in the animal forms, at full consciousness and energy; it then drops the animal body to take a human body. *Reincarnation of the individualised soul through human forms, is preceded by its transmigration through the sub-human forms.*

In the animals, sex not only expresses itself through the bodily differences and activities but is a deep-rooted factor, which affects consciousness. Since, the humans inherit their bodies as well as consciousness, from highly evolved animals, like apes, the humans also find themselves subject to sex-duality. *In the humans, sex is so completely developed that it is no longer a matter merely of the body, for it substantially modifies the psyche, which seeks its expression through the body, according to whether the form is male or female.*

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

Male and female incarnations

The normal course for the soul, which attained the human status, is to go through countless reincarnations in the human form itself, though the human form may sometimes be male and sometimes female, according to the *sanskaras* and the spiritual requirements of the soul.

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

Prerogatives of male and female forms

The general facilities and handicaps of an incarnation are always determined by the specific *sanskaras*, which the individual soul has accumulated in the past. *The needs of the further development of the soul are relative to the nature of its accumulated sanskaras; and, therefore, it is these accumulated sanskaras, which really determine whether the soul takes its incarnation on the earth in the East or in the West, or whether it takes its incarnation in the male form or in the female form, or whether it takes its incarnation in one cycle of existence or another cycle of existence.* The facilities afforded by a specific incarnation are dependent not only upon whether an incarnation is in the male form or female form, but also upon whether it takes place, in one cycle of existence or another cycle of existence, and whether it has its tenor of earthly life, in the Eastern hemisphere or in the Western hemisphere.

Facilities and handicaps of an incarnation are determined by accumulated sanskaras

Roughly speaking, today, the East on the whole has developed more on spiritual lines, than on material lines, with

the result that the Eastern mind has a spontaneous aspiration for God; and the West, on the whole has developed more on material lines than on spiritual lines, with the result that the Western mind has a spontaneous urge towards intellectual and artistic things. An incarnation in the East usually brings with it a greater tendency towards spiritual life than an incarnation in the West; and an incarnation in the West usually brings with it a greater tendency towards material life, than an incarnation in the East. But, *the soul has to experience the material as well as the spiritual aspects of life, before it is freed from the fetters of divided life*; therefore, the same soul has to incarnate in the East as well as in the West.

If a soul has had many successive incarnations in the East and then takes an incarnation in the West, it carries with it, the impressions of its lives in the East and though living in the West, it leads a life, which is essentially in conformity with the Eastern pattern; and if a soul has had many successive incarnations in the West and then takes an incarnation in the East, it carries with it, the impressions of its lives in the West, and though living in the East, it leads a life, which is in conformity with the Western pattern. So, sometimes we have the *European soul in an Indian form or an Indian soul in the European form*; but, it must be borne in mind that this distinction is only relative to past incarnations and sanskaras and that the soul, as such, is beyond such distinctions.

The facilities afforded by male and female incarnations respectively are not rigidly invariable. They change according to the cycles of existence as well as according to whether the incarnation is in the East or in the West. In some ages, men are more active, energetic and materially-minded than women; in some ages the reverse is the true. In the past, the women of the East were brave and intellectual. They

considered no sacrifice too great for the happiness and well-being of the husband; and their spiritual humility went to the extent of looking upon the husband as God himself. But now, in the Eastern hemisphere, the average man has greater spiritual inclination than the average woman, just as, in the West, the average woman of today has greater spiritual inclination than the average man. The man living in the East is different from a man living in the West; and a woman living in the East is different from a woman living in the West. The joke is that, in comparison with the members of the opposite sex, the *same* soul shows varying degrees of superiority, inferiority, or equality with regard to spiritual or material matters, according to the cycle of existence, the sex of its body and the earthly sphere, in which it takes an incarnation.

Meher Baba

ON

Reincarnation and Karma

Part V

THE NEED FOR MALE AND FEMALE
INCARNATIONS

THOUGH the facilities afforded by each sex are variable, according to the age and the place, in which the incarnation takes place, it still remains true that *each sex affords special facilities for the development of experience along specific lines*. The lessons which are readily learnt in male incarnations, may not be easily attainable through female incarnations; and the lessons which are readily learnt in female incarnations, may not be easily attainable in male incarnations. *Men as a rule excel in the qualities of the head and will; they are capable of sound judgment and steadfast purpose. Women, as a rule, excel in the qualities of the heart; they are capable of intense love, which makes them welcome any sacrifice for the loved one. It is owing to this capacity of women for love, that in devotional references, the name of a female has an invariable precedence,*

as when the *Bhaktas* sing of Radha-Krishna or Sita-Ram. In the qualities of the heart, women are usually superior to men; and in the qualities of the head and will, men are usually superior to women. The interesting point is that the same soul excels in the qualities of the heart or in the qualities of the head and will, according to whether it takes an incarnation in a female form or in a male form. *The alternate development of specific spiritual qualities goes on through the alternation between the male and female forms, until the development is all-sided.*

Since male and female incarnations are equally necessary for self-knowledge, it is not right to look upon one as being more important than the other. Though there are differences between the nature of the respective facilities afforded by them, they are both indispensable. *The soul must go through male incarnations as well as female incarnations, if it is to have that richness of experience, which is a condition of attaining the realisation that, the soul, in itself, is beyond all forms of duality, including the accentuated duality based on sex.*

Before the soul is set free from all *sanskaras*, it assumes numerous male forms and numerous female forms. If the soul were to incarnate only in the male forms or only in the female forms, its experience remains one-sided and incomplete. The duality of experience can be overcome only through understanding; and the understanding of experience is only partial as long as it moves within the limits of only one of the two opposites. *The unity of the subject and the object of experience is unattainable as long as there is in the object any aspect or element, which is not fully covered by one's own experience; and this applies particularly to sex-duality.*

The Psyche of the Soul has in it the gathered experience of male incarnations as well as that of female incarnations. Since

the soul identifies itself with the body, the psychological tendencies which harmonise with the sex of the body, get a suitable medium for expression, and the psychological tendencies which are characteristic of the opposite sex, ordinarily get suppressed into the unconscious part of the psyche, because they do not harmonise with the sex of the body, and find the medium of expression obstructive. When the soul takes a female body, the male tendencies are, so to say, held in abeyance and only the female tendencies are released for expression; in the same way, when the soul takes a male body, the female tendencies are held in abeyance and the male tendencies are released for expression.

*Identification with the body, involves identification with the sex of the body; it, therefore, implies a free play only for that limited part of the psyche, which is in tune with the sex of the body: and, since the other part of the psyche is repressed and latent in the unconscious, there arises in the conscious part, a feeling of incompleteness as well as a tendency to restore completeness, through attachment to persons of the opposite sex. **Genesis of sex-entanglements** *By getting entangled with the opposite sex, the buried part of psyche, which did not go well with the body, is seeking some kind of expression through another; from this point of view, sex-attraction might be said to be a result of the effort, which the mind makes to unite with its own unconscious part.**

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

When the soul is trying to overcome sex-duality through detachment towards the opposite sex, it is paving a way for understanding the experience associated with the opposite sex, from *within*. Then a

**U n d e r s t a n d i n g
through detachment** man tries to understand a woman, not through the eyes of the male, but through, the imaginative reaching out towards what the woman feels herself to be, in her own personal experience; in the same way, a woman tries to understand a man, not through the eyes of the female, but through the imaginative reaching out towards what a man feels himself to be, in his own personal experience. So, paradoxical though it may seem, the *form* of the opposite sex prevents the true understanding of *experience*, associated with the opposite sex; and, *detachment to the form of the opposite sex, facilitates the true understanding of the experience, associated with the opposite sex, because it removes the barrier created by sex-obsessed imagination.*

If a man is transcending sex-duality and trying to understand the experience, associated with the opposite sex, he sometimes actually exhibits the psychological traits usually associated with the opposite

**F r e e d o m f r o m s e x -
ridden imagination** sex. Thus, some aspirants, in the male body, at one phase or another, actually put on the clothes of the females, talk like them, feel like them and take on their psychic traits and habits. But this is only a passing phase; and when the inner understanding of the relevant experiences is complete, they neither experience themselves as male alone nor as female alone, but as being *beyond the distinction of sex*. The experiences connected with the male and the female forms are, both accessible and intelligible to the aspirant, who has transcended the sex-distinction; and he remains unaffected by the limitations of either of them, just because through understanding, *he has freed himself from the limiting obsessions characteristic of sex-ridden imagination.*

The completeness, which the mind seeks, is not attainable through attachment to other forms and their accession; it is

to be sought *within* by recapturing the lost unity of the mind.

**Reconciliation of
conscious and un-
conscious mind**

Reconciliation of the conscious and the unconscious mind is possible, not through sex-attraction or through other forms of possessiveness, but through non-identification with the body and its sex. Non-identification with the body removes the barrier, which prevents the amalgamation and integration of the total experiences, deposited in the Psyche of the soul. The completeness within, is to be sought by overcoming the sexuality and distinction, which accentuates identification with the body.

To be free from attachment to the opposite sex, is to be free from the domination of the sex of the body, in which the soul has incarnated itself; and to be free from the domination of the sex of the body, amounts to the

Divine Love annihilation of the major part of those sanskaras, which compel the soul to identify itself, with the body. The transcending of the sex-duality, does not itself amount to the overcoming of all duality; but it certainly goes a long way towards facilitating the complete transcendence of duality in all its forms. On the other hand, it is equally true that *the problem of sex-duality is a part of the problem of duality as such; and, its complete solution comes, when the wider problem of all duality is solved through Divine Love, in which there is neither 'I' nor 'You', neither man nor woman.* The purpose of male and female incarnations is the same as the purpose of evolution itself; it is to enable man to arrive at his own undivided and indivisible existence.

Meher Baba

ON

Action and Inaction

ALL action, except that which is intelligently designed to attain God-realization, creates a binding for consciousness:

Action might add to accumulated ignorance

it is not only an expression of accumulated ignorance, but is also a further addition to that accumulated ignorance.

Religious forms and ceremonies as well as rituals and injunctions of different creeds and spiritual institutions have a tendency to encourage the spirit of love and worship; and as

Ceremonies become a side-tracking on the path

such, they are to a limited, extent helpful in wearing out the ego-shell in which human consciousness is caught.

But if they are unintelligently and mechanically followed, the inner spirit of love and worship gets dried up; and then *they only result in hardening the ego-shell rather than wearing it out*. Therefore, rituals and ceremonies cannot carry a man very far on the Path: and if they are unintelligently followed, they create as much binding as any other unintelligent action. When they are deprived of all inner life and meaning, they might be said to be even more dangerous than other forms of unintelligent action, because man pursues them with the belief that they are helpful for God-realization, whereas they are in fact far from being helpful. Owing to this element of self-delusion, lifeless forms and ceremonies become a *side-tracking* on the Path; and often through mere force of habit, man becomes so much attached to these external forms, that he cannot be disillusioned about their *imaginary value* except through intense suffering.

Inaction is, in many ways, preferable to unintelligent action, for it has at least the merit of not creating further *sanskaras* and complication. Even good and righteous action creates *sanskaras* and means one more addition to the complications created by past actions and experiences. *All life is an effort to attain freedom from self-created entangle-*

Life seeks to free itself from self-created entanglement

ment; it is a desperate struggle to undo what has been done under ignorance, to throw away the accumulated burden of the past, to find rescue from the debris left by a series of temporary achievements and failures. Life seeks to unwind the limiting sanskaras of the past and to obtain release from the mazes of its own making, so that its further creations might spring directly from the heart of eternity, and bear the stamp of unhampered freedom and intrinsic richness of being, which knows no limitation.

The action, which helps in attaining God, is truly intelligent and spiritually fruitful, because it brings release from bondage: and it is second only to that action, which springs spontaneously from the state of God-realization itself. All other forms of action, (howsoever good or bad and howsoever effective or ineffective from the worldly point of view) contribute towards bondage, and as such, are inferior to inaction. *Inaction is less helpful than intelligent action; but it is better than unintelligent action, for it amounts to the non-doing of that which would have created a binding.*

Inaction is often a necessary stage between unintelligent action and intelligent action

The movement from unintelligent action to intelligent action (*i.e.*, from binding *karma* to unbinding *karma*) is often through inaction, which is characteristic of *the stage where unintelligent action has stopped because of critical doubt, but intelligent action has not yet begun because there has not arisen any adequate momentum.* But this special type of inaction, which plays its part in the progress on the Path should in no way be mixed up with ordinary inaction, which springs from inertia or fear of life.

Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part VI

THE OPERATION OF *KARMA* THROUGH
SUCCESSIVE LIVES

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

The intermittent incarnations in the gross world are only apparently disconnected. *Karma persists as a connecting link and determining factor, through the mental body,*

Persistence of Karma through the Mental Body

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

The plane on which one can possess physical consciousness is the gross world. The planes, on which one can possess the consciousness of desires are the subtle world. And the planes, on which the

Mental and Subtle Bodies

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

The Soul, which in reality is one and undifferentiated gets apparently individualised, through the limitations of the mental body, which is the seat of the ego-mind. The ego-

Formation and Continuation of the Ego-Mind

of the reincarnating

mind is formed by the accumulated impressions of past experiences and actions; and it is this ego-mind, which constitutes the kernel of the existence

individual. The ego-mind, as a reservoir of latent impressions is the state of the mental body; the ego-mind, becoming spirit and experiencing activated and manifested impressions is the state of the subtle body; and the ego-mind as descended in the gross sphere for creative action, is the state of a physical incarnation. Thus, *the ego-mind, which is seated in the mental body is the entity, which has all the phases of continued existence as a separate individual.*

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

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

Impressions in the Ego-Mind Determine the Particular Conditions of Incarnation

The ego-mind, in its turn, becomes modified through the deposited impressions of *Karma* (which includes not only gross and physical action, but thought and feeling), and *the circumstances of each incarnation get adjusted to the composition and the needs of the ego mind.* Thus, if a person has

The Game of Duality

developed certain special capacities or tendencies in one incarnation, he takes them on to the succeeding incarnations; and things that have been left incomplete in one incarnation can get completed in the incarnations, which follow. Through the persistence of impressions the Karmic links, which have been forged in one incarnation, are carried on and developed in succeeding incarnations, so that *those who have been closely associated with each other, through good or bad dealings, have a tendency to have recurring contacts, and carry on*

the game of duality, far enough to gather so much experience of the opposites, that the soul out of the fulness of its experience eventually becomes ripe for dropping the ego-mind, and turning inwards for knowing itself as the Oversoul.

If there has been a give and take between any persons, that forges Karmic and sansakaric ties between them and creates *claims and counter-claims*; and they have

Claims and Counter-claims are Created by Give and Take

to come together and carry on fresh deals in order to meet these claims and counter-claims. *That, which a person gives with a selfish motive binds him, just in the same way, as that, which he takes with a sense of separateness.* The deal of give or take, which thus binds, need not be purely on a material plane in the form of exchange of goods, or money, or the performing of some physical tasks; it might consist of exchange of views or feelings.

If a person pays respect to a saint on the higher planes, he creates a claim against him, so that even if the saint is himself crossing the inner planes and treading the

Karma of Interference

Path, he has to tarry and give him such help, as will bring the person who pays respect, to that point on the Path, which he has himself reached. Paying respect to a saint thus amounts to the *Karma of interference*. Though respect, as such, is a good thing to receive, in receiving it, the saint may have to stop on the Path until he has helped the person who came to him and gave him respect.

The quick and unfailing responsiveness of souls, is expressed in the law that hate begets hate, lust begets lust, and love begets love. This law operates not only during a

The Responsiveness of Souls

single life-time, but *across several lives*. A man feels impelled to hate or fear an enemy of past lives, although present life may not have provided him with any apparent reason for this attitude: and in the same

way, without any apparent reason from the present life, he is impelled to love and help a friend of past lives. The person may, in most cases, not be aware of the reason for his unaccountable attitude; but that does not mean that there is, in fact, no reason for it. Many things, which seem to be inexplicable on the surface, become intelligible, when they are considered in the light of the Karmic links brought forward from past lives.

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

The Law of Karma is the Law of Action and Reaction *an outcome of the responsiveness, of ego-minds. The rhythm, on which two souls start their relationship, tends to perpetuate itself unless the soul, through fresh intelligent Karma, changes the rhythm and raises it to a rhythm of higher quality.*

As a rule, accumulated *Karma* has a certain inertia of its own; it does not change the nature of its momentum, unless there is a special reason for it. *Before Karma is cre-*

Freedom of Karma *ated, the individual has a sort of freedom to choose what it shall be; but after it has been accomplished, it becomes a factor, which cannot be ignored and which has either to be expended through the results, which it invites, or counter-acted by fresh and appropriate Karma.*

The pleasure and the pain, experienced in the life on earth, the success or failure, which attend it, the attainments and obstacles, with which it is strewed, the friends and foes,

Fate *which make their appearance in it, are all determined by the Karma of past lives. Karmic determination is popularly designated as fate. Fate however is not some foreign and oppressive principle. Fate is man's own creation pursuing him from past lives: and just as it has been shaped by past Karma, it can also be modified,*

remoulded and even undone, through *Karma* in the present life.

If the nature of the *Karma* on earthly life, is determined by the impressions stored in the ego-mind, the impressions stored in the ego-mind are, in their turn, determined by the nature of *Karma* in earthly life. The impressions in the ego-mind and the nature of *Karma* are interdependent. The *Karma* on earth, plays an important part in shaping and reshaping the impressions in the ego-mind and giving it a momentum, which decides the future destiny of the individual. *It is in the arena of earthly existence that creative and effective Karma can take place, through the medium of the gross body.*

Creative Karma is possible only in the Physical Body

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

Becoming the Master of Destiny

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

Unbinding Karma

The *Karma*, which truly counts, comes into existence after the person has developed the sense of the distinction

between good and bad. During the first seven years of childhood, the impressions, which are released for expression are very faint; and they also entail a consciousness of the world, which is correspondingly less responsive to the distinctions of the world. Therefore, the actions of children under seven years, do not leave any strong or effective impressions on the ego-mind; and they do not play any important part in shaping their future. *True and effective Karma, which moulds the ego-mind and its future, begins after the soul develops a sense of responsibility, and this sense of responsibility is dependent upon the sense for the distinction between good and bad, which usually dawns fully when the soul has spent the first few years of childhood.*

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

It is through the systematic connection between cause and effect in the world of values, that the moral order of the universe is sustained. If the law of *Karma* were to be subject to any relaxation, reversals or exceptions, and if it were not strictly applicable in the domain of values, there would be no moral

Karma begins with the Sense of Distinction between Good and Bad

Comparison with the Law of Cause and Effect

The Law of Karma Maintains the Moral Order of the Universe

order in the universe; and if there is no moral order in the universe, human existence would be precarious from the point of view of attainment of values. In the universe, where there is no moral order, human endeavour would be perpetually fraught with doubt and uncertainty. *There cannot be any serious pursuit of values, if there is no assured connection between means and ends and if the law of Karma can be set aside.* The inflexibility of the law of Karma is a condition of significant action; significant human action would be utterly impossible if the law of Karma could be safely ignored or flouted.

In being inviolable, the law of Karma is like the other laws of nature. *However the rigorousness of the operation of Karmic laws, does not come to the soul, as the oppressive-*

Karma and Responsibility

ness of some external and blind power, but as something, which is involved in the rationality of the scheme of life. Karmic determination is the condition of true responsibility. It means that the man will reap as he sows. What a person gathers by way of his experience, is invariably connected with what he does.

If a person has done an evil turn to some one, he must receive the penalty for it and welcome the *evil rebounding upon himself*; and if he has done a good turn to some one,

Law of Karma is an Expression of Justice

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

Meher Baba

on

Reincarnation and Karma

Part VII

THE DESTINY OF THE REINCARNATING
INDIVIDUAL

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

All persons, with whom a man has *Karmic* links of debts or dues, may not be in incarnation, when he has taken

a body; or he might, owing to the limitations, imposed by his own capacities and circumstances, be unable to meet all the complex requirements of the situation. When he is trying to clear up the accounts in relation to those, with whom he has past links, he cannot, in this very attempt, help *creating fresh claims and counter-claims* concerning them: and even with regard to other new persons, he cannot but create debts and dues, of diverse kinds and magnitudes, and get involved with them. *A man goes on adding to his debts and dues, with the result that there is no getting out of his endlessly increasing and complex Karmic entanglements.*

The carrying on of the yarn of *Karmic* debts and dues would have been endless, if there had been no provision for getting out of the *Karmic* entanglements, through the help of

Master can Become the Medium for Clearing up Karmic Debts and Dues

the Master, who can, not only initiate the aspirant into the supreme art of unbinding *Karma*, but can, directly become instrumental for freeing him from his *Karmic* entanglements. *The Master has attained unity with God, whose cosmic and universal life includes all persons and, being one with all life, he can, in his representative capacity, become, for the sake of the aspirant, the medium for the clearing up of all debts and dues, which have come into existence, through his dealings with countless persons, whom he has contacted, in his incarnations.* If a person must get bound to some one, it is best for him to get bound to God or the Master; because this tie ultimately facilitates the emancipation from all other *Karmic* ties.

When the good *Karma* of past lives has secured for the aspirant the benefit of having a Master, the best thing that he can do is to surrender himself to the Master and to

Relation between Master and Disciple is carried on through Several Lives

serve him. Through surrenderance, the aspirant throws the burden of his *Karma* on the Master, who has to think out the ways and means or freeing him from it: and through service of the Master, he gets an opportunity to

get clear of his *Karmic* entanglements. The relation between the Master and the disciple is a relation, which is often carried on from one life to another for several reincarnations. If the Master who has given instruction and help to a group of disciples, takes an incarnation for his work, he usually brings them with him, his group of disciples in order to help them further on their Path. Those, who have been connected with him in past lives, are drawn to him by an unconscious magnetism not knowing why they are thus drawn. But there is usually a long history to an apparently unaccountable devotion which the disciple feels for his Master; and the disciple is, often beginning where he had left [off] in the last incarnation.

When the disciple invites the attention and grace of a Master, it is not without reason. Sometimes, the Master seems to impart spirituality to a disciple, without there being

Inviting the Grace of the Master any apparent effort or sacrifice on the part of the disciple; but these are always cases, where the disciple has earned the right to this favour by his associations and endeavours in past lives. The love and devotion, which the disciple may have felt for the Master through his past lives, has formed *deep connection* between him and the Master, so that the *awakening of spiritual longing in the disciple has its counterpart in the grace and help, which flow to him from the Master*. It is through his own past unbinding *Karma* that a person invites the grace of the Master, just as it is through his own binding *Karma* that he invites upon himself the pleasure and the pain as well as the good and the evil, of which he is the recipient in this life.

As a rule, the person, who has entered the Path gradually advances on the Path, until he attains the goal; but, this does not apply to those, who have not definitely en-

Spiritual Progress requires Active Effort tered the Path or have no Master to guide [them]. Through their chaotic pursuits of several lives, most persons are likely to go further away from the goal by the heaping up of binding *sanskaras*; so spiritual progress cannot be

said to be *automatic*, in the sense that it will come about without the active efforts of the person concerned. Sooner or later, the logic of experience gathered through several lives, drives every one to seek the highest goal and enter the Path; and once the aspirant enters the Path, he usually goes forward with steady progress. As he advances on the Path, he often develops certain latent capacities, which enable him not only to have conscious experience of the inner subtle and mental worlds, but also to manipulate the forces and powers, which are available on the higher planes. The first two planes are bad to know: there are many, who in some life or another have been through these planes. But, *the crossing of the first few planes does not necessarily ensure sure and steady progress*. There are many pit-falls on the Path itself; and unless there is the assured guidance of a Master, the aspirant is in danger of falling back.

From the first few planes, the aspirant may have such set-back, instead of going ahead towards God, he suffers severe retrogression. In some exceptional cases, the aspirant of the higher planes, may, through erroneous *Karma*, invite upon himself a fall that takes him back, so far that it takes ages for him to come back to his first point of progress. The aspirant, who has such a fall is known as a *yoga-bhrasta*. *Even the yogis are subject to the unyielding law of Karma, which knows no exceptions, concessions or preferences*. It is only when the aspirant has the advantage of the guidance of a Perfect Master, that the spiritual journey is rendered safe and steady; and it is only then that there is no possibility of a fall or retrogression. The Master wards him from erroneous *Karma*, in which he might otherwise have got involved.

The treading of the spiritual Path is carried on for several incarnations before the aspirant attains the goal. *Centuries of continued sacrifices, service, self-purification, suffering, and determined search have to roll on, if the aspirant is to be spiritually*

prepared for the final realisation of God. God-realisation, which is the goal of the reincarnating individual, is never an attainment of a single Life; it always is the culmination of the continued endeavour, which he has put in through a succession of many Lives. Unintelligent *Karma* of many lives has gone to create the bindings of the individual soul; and it has to be undone by the persistent creation of intelligent and unbinding *Karma*, which also has to be carried on for many lives.

The power that keeps the individual soul bound to the wheel of life and death is its thirst for separate existence, which is a condition of a host of cravings, connected with the objects and experiences of the world of duality. *It is for the fulfilment of cravings, that the ego-mind keeps incarnating itself.* When all forms of craving disappear the impressions, which create and enliven the ego-mind disappear; and with the disappearance of these impressions, the ego-mind itself is shed, with the result that there is only the realisation of the one eternal, unchanging Over-soul or God, who is the only reality. *God realisation, is the end of the incarnations of the ego-mind because it is the end of its very existence;* as long as the ego-mind exists in some form, there is an inevitable and irresistible urge for incarnations. *When there is the cessation of the ego-mind, there is the cessation of incarnations, in the final fulfillment of self-realisation.*

The life of the reincarnating individual has many events and phases. The wheel of life, makes its ceaseless rounds, lifting the individual to the heights or bringing him down from high positions; it thus contributes to the enrichment of his experience. Ideals left unattained are pursued further in the next life; things left undone are finished; the edges left by incomplete endeavour are rounded up; wrongs are eventually set right. The accounts of give and take between persons, receive renewed adjustment by the repayment of

Karmic debts and the recovery of Karmic dues. At last, out of the ripeness of experience, the soul, through the dissolution of the ego-mind, enters into the sole unity of Divine Life. In this Divine Life, there is neither the binding of giving nor the binding of taking, because the soul has completely transcended the consciousness of separateness or duality.

*The drama of the continued life of the individual soul has many acts. From the point of view of the worldly existence of the soul, a curtain may be said to be drawn over its life after the closing of each act. But no act yields its real significance if it is taken as being self-complete in itself; it has to be taken in its wider context as being a link between the acts that have gone and the acts, which are still to come; its meaning is entwined with theme of the whole drama, of which it is a part. The end of the act is not the end of the progressive theme. *The actors disappear from the stage of earth only to reappear again in new capacities and new contexts.**

The actors are so engrossed, in their respective roles, that they treat them as being the be-all and end-all of all existence; and for the major part of their continued life (running into innumerable incarnations) they are unconscious of the closely guarded truth that *the author of the drama, in his imaginative production, himself became all the actors and played the game of hide and seek, in order to come into full and conscious possession of his own creative infinity.* The infinity has to go through the illusion of finiteness to know itself as infinity; and, the author has to go through the phases of the actors, to know himself as the author of *the greatest detective story worked out through the cycles of creation.*